

GREAT LAKES SECTION
UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER, 2012

GREAT LAKES SECTION OFFICERS

Dr. Joseph S. Streb, Chairman, Columbus, Ohio, strebjaw@sbcglobal.net

Tim Mills, Vice-Chairman

Patrick Kelly, 2d Vice-Chair, Louisville, Kentucky

Secretary, Peter McOwen, Dayton, Ohio, pdmcowen@gmail.com

Jaison Laker, Treasurer, Ft. Wayne, Indiana

THIS ISSUE CONTAINS: 2013 USFA Summer Nationals come to Columbus, Ohio; Future of the GLS; Location of 2013 GLS Championships and Related Information; USFA Financial Picture and the Savior of USFA, New Executive Director, Val Belmonte. Interview with New USFA President, Donald Anthony; Future of Sectional Circuit Events; Other Sectional Issues; and Minutes of 2012 GLS Executive Committee Meeting at Louisville, Kentucky.

USFA SUMMER NATIONALS COME TO COLUMBUS, OHIO,
JUNE 28-JULY 7, 2013

Five years ago, your Chairman sat in a meeting with new Columbus Sports Commission employee, Christa Thompson, and discussed the probability of Columbus bidding to obtain the USFA Summer National Fencing Tournament. At the time, it was simply not possible because the largest flower show in the Midwest was booked for all of July every year. Five years later, the flower show had moved on to Indianapolis, and a new Hilton Hotel was under construction across High Street from the Columbus Convention Center. Christa Thomson saw an opportunity for Columbus. At about the same time, the National Events staff at USFA recognized that the Memphis Convention Center could not accommodate the projected size of the 2013 Summer Nationals. USFA was quietly on the hunt for a larger facility. In September, the USFA National Events Staff and its tournament housing contractor, PSA, visited several proposed venues, including Houston, Chicago, Cleveland, and Columbus. When the delegation from USFA arrived in Columbus, they received a royal welcome arranged by Linda Logan and her staff at the Columbus Sports Commission. A gourmet meal was arranged by Ms. Logan with the USFA national events staff, your Chairman, Vladimir Nazlymov of Ohio State, and a representative from PSA in attendance where the merits of Columbus were discussed. The next day, Ms. Logan arranged for a tour of the Columbus Convention facility complete with a receiving line including Julia Richey and Tim Mills of Royal Arts, representatives of the Arnold Fitness

Expo, various city officials, and new USFA President, Donald Anthony. Vladimir Nazlymov arranged for a tour of the OSU fencing facility. And, there was a tour of the hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, movie theater, and hockey area, all within walking distance of the Columbus Convention Center. To top it off, the annual Red, White & Boom fireworks show was touted as being one of the best in the Midwest which visiting fencers would be able to enjoy. Not surprisingly, USFA chose Columbus to host the 2013 Summer Nationals. This was announced at a gala press conference at the Columbus Hilton on October 30, 2012. Everyone involved with fencing in Columbus is overjoyed to host the Summer Nationals, and it is expected to be an excellent event for both local and Great Lakes Section fencing.

**WHAT ABOUT THE 2013 GLS CHAMPIONSHIPS?
YES, JUNE 22, 2013 at ROYAL ARTS FENCING CLUB,
COLUMBUS, OHIO**

Yes, my Dear, there will be a 2013 Great Lakes Section Fencing Championship, and it will be held in Columbus, Ohio at the Royal Arts Fencing Club operated by Julia Richey and Tim Mills. Of course, it is no secret that USFA eliminated the lifeblood of Sections by cutting-off funding and eliminating qualifying paths through the Sections to the Summer Nationals. Nevertheless, there remains a desire on the part of many GLS members to continue with the traditions of the Section, including the GLS Championships. That being the case, the Columbus Division has agreed to host the 2013 GLS Championships at Royal Arts Fencing Club. Yes, it was the turn of SW Ohio to host the event, but due to uncertainty over hosting, the SW Ohio Chairman, Lloyd Howell, had no objection to the Executive Committee decision to hold the event in Columbus since it is the most centrally located fencing city in the Section. It is expected there will be referee training available in connection with the Sectional Championship, although in keeping with recent prior practice, novice referees will not be involved in attempting to officiate tournament bouts.

The Executive Committee of the GLS wishes to thank Patrick Kelly of Louisville, head of the organizing committee for the 2012 GLS Championship, for an excellent 2012 GLS Championship at the University of Louisville.

WHAT ABOUT FUTURE GLS CHAMPIONSHIPS?

Whether there will be future GLS Championships depends upon what the GLS members desire for the future. At present, the GLS is an unincorporated association sanctioned as an administrative subdivision of USFA. There is certainly no legal impediment to the GLS continuing as an unsanctioned unincorporated association, regardless of what USFA does or does not do with respect to Sections. The problem, of course, is lack of funding.

Nevertheless, fencing is and always has been largely supported by volunteers, so the GLS is expected to continue. The same thing applies to Divisions, should USFA also attempt to eliminate Divisions.¹ In fact, some Divisions, such as, the Columbus Division, are already stand alone non-profit corporations. And, as stated in past editions of this Newsletter, USFA has no valid claim to funds already paid to Sections and Divisions or to funds independently raised by Sections or Divisions.

WHAT ABOUT FUTURE GLS SECTIONAL CIRCUIT EVENTS?

For now, the Sectional Circuit events will continue. However, it is up to Divisions to schedule and designate events as Sectional Circuit events.

USFA TOUTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VAL BELMONTE, AS THE SAVIOR OF US FENCING

As many of you may recall, for the past several years, the Executive Director of USFA has been Greg Dilworth who was previously best known as a fencing official. Mr. Dilworth

¹ In the views of some members, the notion that USFA should consolidate power at the national level and strip power from Sections and Divisions started during the Stacy Johnson presidency (2000-2004) along with the notions that big corporate sponsorship dollars were just around the corner – all USFA needed was an Olympic medal to promote – and that fencing officials were professionals (as opposed to volunteers) who deserved more pay so they could one day quit their weekday jobs (fencing officials do work incredibly hard, but the economics of fencing do not allow for professional pay). In keeping with power of these notions and the fact that many adults in leadership positions are more referee than fencer, the organization started spending as though the corporate dollars were already in the bank. The problem was the financial accounting and reporting abilities of the national office were (and still, in part, remain) abstract, underdeveloped, and arcane. So, as far as anyone knows, the national office had no idea of the magnitude of the mounting deficit. To make matters worse, US Fencing did win an Olympic medal, Mariel Zangunis' gold in women's saber, but no big corporate donations followed. Allegedly, this was because the national office went on collective vacation after the Olympic Games ended and there was nobody to take calls from interested members of the press, etc. But, Zangunis won gold again in 2008 at the end of the Nancy Anderson presidency (2004-2008) and the start of the Kalle Weeks presidency (2008-2012), and still no big corporate bucks materialized. Instead, under Ms. Johnson, the million dollar deficit came to light when USFA could not pay its share of the costs of sending Olympic fencers to the Games, and then there was the painful and unsuccessful recall election. Under Kalle Weeks, the power consolidation plan continued with the elimination of qualifying for the Summer Nationals through Sections, the elimination of Sectional funding, and the reconfiguration of the USFA Board Of Directors from geographic representation to "interest group" representatives. Divisions were next on the chopping block under Ms. Weeks and her executive officers, along with a motion that came before the USFA Board Of Directors in July, 2012 to allow the Election Committee discretion to run only one person for director and officer positions, under the assertion there are just not enough qualified people to have contested elections. The last published list of members of the Election Committee: Sam Chervis, Stacy Johnson, Kalle Weeks (the current composition remains unclear as of this writing). Further, some Division officers in the Midwest who have worked diligently for years to stay within limited budgets have been scratching their heads over the Weeks administration's reaction to the million dollar deficit, i.e., establishing two new committees (an audit committee and finance committee) but otherwise resisting calls for auditing standards (including the reporting of litigation to which the organization is party) and the adoption of common sense categories of accounting (like payroll expenses and utilities) to deal directly the financial issue, apparently, under the blind hope the organization would grow its way out of the problem. It did not happen, and the Weeks administration unfairly handed an approximate \$800,000 budget deficient to new USFA President, Donald Anthony. It may be time for USFA to face the music and to develop a plan for extricating itself from the financial swamp and for remaining clear of it in the future. Perhaps open and accurate accounting and realistic budgets would help, along with opening elections to more and not less participation, along with the recognition that the sport grows from the bottom-up, not the other way around.

was an interim ED, but his stay was extended. Recently, Mr. Dilworth decided to go back to the private sector, and the organization began again to find a new Executive Director. As many of you know, the ED position is crucial to the well-being of the organization because the ED is in charge of day-to-day operations of the USFA national office, and, of course, public relations and fund raising efforts. Despite the recent audit report indicating that USFA is still approximately \$800,000 in the hole financially, it has been said that Mr. Belmonte, who is reportedly very well connected in USOC circles and sports management in general, will be able to raise funds and right the USFA ship. Mr. Belmonte comes to Colorado Springs from Chicago, and his personal sports background arises out of the sport of hockey. Mr. Belmonte was in Columbus for the press conference of October 30th.

**INTERVIEW WITH NEW USFA PRESIDENT AND SABER FENCER
EXTRAORDINAIRE, DONALD ANTHONY**

See the attached Interview. Mr. Anthony was gracious enough to take time from his busy schedule to provide an interview regarding saber fencing and USFA administrative matters.

MINUTES OF 2011 MEETING GLS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Attached hereto please find a copy of the Minutes of the 2012 Meeting of the Great Lakes Section Executive Committed held on August 25, 2012 at Louisville, Kentucky.

--See attached Minutes--

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**OF
GREAT LAKES SECTION, USFA, INC.**

AUGUST 25, 2012

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the GREAT LAKES SECTION, USFA was held, pursuant to the notice given in accordance with the By-laws, at 7:00 o'clock P.M. at the site of the 2012 Sectional Championships on the above-captioned date.

JOSEPH S. STREB, acted as chairman of the meeting, and PATRICK KELLY acted as secretary. The meeting was called to order by the Chairman.

ROLL: A roll of persons present was taken by the secretary, and it was reported that the following members of the Executive Committee and Officers entitled to vote were present at the meeting and, pursuant to Article VI(A) of the Bylaws, a quorum did exist:

Voting Members of Executive Committee:

Chairman, Joseph S. Streb (Columbus), streblaw@sbcglobal.net
Patrick Kelly (Kentucky), usfakdiv@insightbb.com

Interested Members of GLS:

Shawn Shumate (Kentucky Div.)
Andrea Hine (Indiana Div.)
Liran Gross (SW Ohio Div.)
Michael Zeng (Columbus Div.)

READING OF MINUTES: The minutes of the prior meeting of April 2, 2011 were unanimously approved.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chairman -- Mr. Streb reported that USFA has not technically eliminated Sections but USFA has cut-off funding and removed all qualifying paths from Sectional Championships to the Summer Nationals. As a result of this, Sections remain but have no official function. Nevertheless, many members of the Great Lakes Section prefer to attempt to hold-on to the traditions of the Section and continue to have a Great Lakes Section Championship. Whether or not USFA also intends to eliminate Divisions remains unclear. Certainly, had Kalle Weeks been re-elected to the office of President, that would have occurred. However, the attitude of new administration toward Divisions is currently unknown. Of course, USFA will continue to be dominated by its Executive Committee, and with elimination of geographic representation from the Board Of Directors, there will be little formal dissent regarding the fate of Divisions. With respect to USFA's financial condition, despite prior reports that it had gotten better, this

seems to have been wishful thinking caused by a lack of properly audited financial statements and coherent financial reporting.

Secretary – Mr. McOwen was not present.

Treasurer – Mr. Laker was not present, he reported that the Section bank account contains \$1769.41.

Vice Chairman -- Mr. Kelly expressed his view that the Section should continue, regardless of what USFA does or does not do, and that the Sectional Championship remain a large event.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: There were no committees with reports.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

(1). **LOCATION OF 2013 GLS CHAMPIONSHIPS:** The following resolution regarding location of the 2013 GLS Championship was made, seconded, and unanimously passed:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2013 Great Lakes Section Championship shall be held by the Columbus Division at time and location to be determined, as the SW Ohio chairman has no objection (2013 would ordinarily have been the turn of S.W Ohio to host the event).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to tradition, the Columbus Division appoints Tim Mills to be responsible for organizing the 2013 GLS Championship, and he shall also function as Vice-Chairman of the GLS for the next year.

(2). **TIMES OF SECTIONAL CIRCUIT EVENTS:** The interest in the Great Lakes Section's Sectional Circuit Events was found somewhat lacking; however, it was determined to go forward as in the past; hence, the following resolution was made, seconded, and unanimously passed:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following schedule shall be used for Great Lakes Section Circuit Events for the 2012-2013 fencing season:

August	N/A
September	Northern Ohio Division
October	Michigan Division
November	Kentucky Division
December-January	Columbus, Ohio Division (may be deferred to Sectional)
February	Indiana Division
March	Southwest Ohio Division
May/June	Sectional Championship

Note: Results must be reported to the GLS Secretary, Peter McOwen, as soon as possible after each Circuit Event in order for points to be tabulated.

(3). CONTINGENCY MATTERS: The resolution first passed in 2010 was ratified:

Whereas, the United States Fencing Association (“USFA”) may in the relative near future take actions deemed by the Executive Committee of the Great Lakes Section (“GLS”) to be detrimental to the sport of fencing in the Great Lakes Section; and;

Whereas, the Executive Committee of the GLS seeks to foster and promote the sport of fencing in the relevant geographical area;

Now therefore, the funds of the Great Lakes Section in the hands of the GLS Treasurer, which are deemed to belong solely to the GLS under past and current rules and regulations, and as a result of efforts of the GLS, shall be distributed equally to the Divisions comprising the Great Lakes Section or such similar organizations, concurrently with the passage of any bylaw, rule, or resolution by USFA calling for the disenfranchisement, dissolution, or termination of the Great Lakes Section of USFA.

(4). ELECTIONS: The following officers were either unanimously appointed or duly elected to the following positions:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Officers of the Great Lakes Section for the next year are:

Chairman, Joseph S. Streb (Columbus Division)
Vice-Chairman, Tim Mills (Columbus Division)
2d Vice-Chairman, Patrick Kelly (Kentucky Division)
Secretary, Peter McOwen (SW Ohio Division)
Treasurer, Jaison Laker (Indiana Division)

MISCELLANEOUS:

(1). The next meeting of the GLS Executive Committee was set for the end of the first day of competition of the 2013 GLS Championships.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned by the Chairman.

/s/ Peter McOwen

Secretary, Peter McOwen

/s/ J. S. Streb

Chairman, Joseph S. Streb

**INTERVIEW FOR GLS NEWSLETTER
WITH USFA PRESIDENT, DONALD ANTHONY**

Q. Where were you born?

A. I was born at Marymount Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio

Q. When and how did you discover the sport of fencing?

A. I discovered the sport of fencing when I became captivated with Zorro at the age of 7. I told my mother that I wanted to learn how to that and pointed to what Zorro was doing...sword fighting. My resourceful librarian mother found a cultural center in inner city Cleveland, Karamu House, that taught acting, painting, dancing and fencing.

Q. Why did you become a saber fencer?

A. I fenced some sabre when I was between the ages of 7 and 11. However, I started exclusively fencing saber when I was a freshman in College. In my freshman class there was a NJ High School All American and a NYC Champion in entering class. I realized that if I was going to get any competitive time that I needed to switch weapons given that I hadn't fenced competitively in 6 years. The Sabre team needed more depth and Coach Sieja thought I would be very good at it.

Q. Where did you go to school and did you fence in school?

A. I went to Princeton for undergraduate and I fenced all four years.

Q. Who was your first fencing coach?

A. Leroy Jones, in Cleveland, Ohio

Q. Who was your favorite fencing coach and why?

A. Maestro Csiszar, was my favorite because of his keen wit, small stature, warm personality and exuberant energy when I trained with him when he was around 90 years old.

Q. What were your best results in open fencing competitions and when?

A. Senior National Team Finalist many times, US Olympic Festival Champion, National Veterans Champion, Silver Medal Veteran World Championships

Q. What were your best results in veteran fencing competitions and when?

A. National Champion in 40 and 50's. World Championship Silver Medalist 2010.

Q. What are some of the more significant changes you have witnessed to the sport of fencing since you first became involved?

A. The introduction of Electric Sabre, the advancement in Kevlar in equipment. The timing on scoring machines. The dumbing down of sabre via marching timing and rule changes.

Q. Who is the best fencer you have gone against?

A. Stan Pozniakov, Lamour, Philip Daurelle.

Q. Who is the best fencer you ever saw?

A. Emre Gedovari.

Q. Who is the best fencer you ever beat in competition?

A. Pozniakov.

Q. What makes a person a great saber fencer?

A. The ability to manage nerves, emotions, foot speed and aggressiveness.

Q. Have your training techniques changed over the years?

A. Yes, I am older now.

Q. Why did you settle in Columbus, Ohio?

A. I came here to take a position with Borden Foods and never left.

Q. What offices have you held in USFA and when?

A. National Secretary, and President.

Q. What made you decide to run for the office of President of USFA?

A. I was drafted by a number of individuals that I hold in high esteem and it became clear that I could make a difference in a sport the I love and help USA Fencing take better care our membership who I truly care about.

Q. Now that you have been on the job for a few months, explain whether the role of USFA President what you expected?

A. The role is what I expected. I didn't expect to be engaged as soon as the results of the election were announced. That was the biggest surprise but has made a huge difference in addressing all of the challenges we faced as an organization.

Q. What do you see as the most important task facing you as USFA President?

A. To get our house financially in order and help our leadership team be as effective as possible.

Q. Where do you stand on the issue of the future of Divisions within USFA?

A.

Q. What plans do you have for fund raising efforts on behalf of USFA?

A.

Q. Some people have criticized USFA for allegedly hiding its elite athletes from the youth in the sport. Where do you stand on USFA continuing to hold the Division I Championships separate from the Summer Nationals?

A. I think our Elite athletes should be part of the larger community, shared and appreciated. I think it would be best to have our National Championships combined. However, I appreciate the reasons why this has been a challenge.

Q. What are you expecting from the new Executive Director, Val Belmonte, that we have not seen from prior Executive Directors?

A. The level of professionalism Val brings to the table with a broad sports background is something we haven't had before.

Q. What was your impression of US Fencing at the 2012 London Olympics?

A. We were a young team in many weapons and the team was not as cohesive as I think it has been in the past

Q. What are you expecting from US Fencing for the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil?

A. I expect great results to match our performance in Beijing.

Q. Do you intend to study Portuguese in preparation for the 2016 Games in Brazil?

A. That would be very appropriate but I will start with Spanish.

Q. Do you know how to Samba (It is the national dance of Brazil)?

A. I do.

Q. Is it possible for a man of your age with the right training and coaching to qualify to compete in the next Olympic Games, or will you be sticking to the role of executive?

A. With time and money anything is possible. However that is far from my agenda or thoughts☺.

Q. What is more important for the growth of the sport of fencing, local efforts or national efforts?

A. The growth of the sport has to happen on the National level to facilitate on the local level and support the grass roots development.

Q. Do you believe, as apparently some do, that fencing is in danger of being eliminated from the Olympic program?

A. No I do Not.

Q. What do you see as the future of the sport of fencing?

A. I see it being more professional and having more revenue for our athletes.

Q. Is there anything you would like to say to the members of the Great Lakes Section, in light of the de-emphasis of Sections by the recent past USFA executive officers?

A. I don't have any comments specifically except for that I think we should revisit our organizational structure and put one in place that is going to enhance our governance and growth at the local , regional and national level.

--END--