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# WETNOTES

The Official Newsletter of International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics

March 1999

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## Atlantic Co-President's Report

**Jason Klugman, Co-President, Philly FINS**

It's been what, twelve years? The birth and growth of gay and lesbian master's swimming, water polo, diving, and synchronized swimming over the past decade amazes me. As I approach the final quarter of my term as IGLA Co-President, I'm in awe of the ongoing commitment to IGLA demonstrated by the constant flow of email from board members (new and old) and a dedicated group of volunteers. Though I am entirely consumed by research for my dissertation (on the process of becoming an urban teacher) and have been unable to train or coach, my computer connection to the world has kept IGLA on my mind.

It hasn't hurt that over the past three months our Products and Promotions committee has taken it upon themselves to begin a process of strategic planning for IGLA that will help us transition smoothly into our adolescence. I am thankful for the efforts of Lou Theunissen (formerly with Havana Thermos - Amsterdam, the FINS and now in Miami) and Dan MacGregor (Different Strokes Calgary, Canada) for taking their ideas, enthusiasm, and knowledge of queer aquatics to put on paper visions of the future of IGLA. With Lou and Dan's work, we are cyber-planning; discussing, reflecting, and teaching each other about our history and possible futures. It's exciting and challenging. Fortunately, having a background in

*See Klugman, page 2*

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## Happy Mardi Gras from Sydney

**Jamie Cole, Pacific Co-Chair, Wett Ones**

Mardi Gras brings to an end the summer swimming season Down Under. What better way to celebrate than join in the festivities of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras? It was great to have so many IGLA members down here for the party and parade to share in our fun. IGLA Policy and Procedures Committee Co-Chair, Ralph Doore, made his Mardi Gras debut by joining the parade as a Wett One with water pistol, following the Team Sydney and Sydney 2002 float. I'm sure this was an experience he will not easily forget.

As part of Mardi Gras, Team Sydney hosts a Sports Festival. The Sports Festival enables Team Sydney to gain the skills it will need to host GGVI. This year there were 30 sports represented, and Wett Ones hosted the swim meet. The competition attracted swimmers from all over the country, as well as swimmers from Cologne, London, Amsterdam and San Francisco. Two IGLA members

*See Cole, page 2*

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## Federation of Gay Games Report

**Charles Carson, TNYA, Delegate to the Federation**

Seattle lived up to its reputation as one of the rainiest spots in North America during the week of the Federation of Gay Games' 10th Anniversary Annual Meeting last November. But we had so much to accomplish there was little time to think about being outdoors.

Roberto Mantaci, my co-IGLA Delegate, and I delivered the first draft of the swimming and water polo evaluations to the Federation Sports Committee. The final reports are due 31 March, and at that point IGLA's reports will be available to all IGLA members upon request. We appreciate the help the following gave to us: Suzanne Shriner and members of IGLA's water polo committee; Manuel Bello (Team Florida), Paul Fortoul (TNYA), Karen Hoyland (Downtown Swim Club), Adrian Kalil (Different Strokes San Diego), Jim Lasersohn (Orcas), David Linton (Team Auckland), Barbara Love (TNYA), Julian Meldrum (Out to Swim), and Graham Perlman (Out to Swim). Roberto and I also asked Dave De Bruin to help us get the perspective of the meet organizers and some of the Dutch swim-

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*Klugman, continued from page 1*

non-profit organizations, I know it's not supposed to be easy. I look forward to the next few months of discussion and the possibility of implementing some exciting new ideas for the support and continued development of queer aquatics worldwide (See page 5).

The past six months has also witnessed the emergence of regular email discussion of women's development issues and queer aquatics. This effort, spearheaded by Tara Robertson (Out to Swim London) and Karen Sauvigné (TNYA) of the IGLA women's committee, could not be more welcome (see page 4). Most recently, Gruppo Pesce Milano sought out assistance with their team's outreach to lesbians in Milan. Meanwhile, I hope to see the women's water polo teams from Gay Swim Amsterdam compete alongside other women's teams in the first Women's bracket of the IGLA Water Polo competition in Atlanta (see Page 5). One day, I also dream of the participation of the women's team from Copenhagen as an IGLA member. Finally, with the IGLA Championships in Atlanta just around the corner, it is my hope that this involvement and discussion of women's development continues and results in the return of a female voice to the IGLA Executive Board after the elections at IGLA's General Meeting in Atlanta (see page 4).

IGLA teams in the Atlantic basin continue to grow and thrive. In March, Paris Aquatique once again hosted their annual Trophee. At the end of March, relative newcomer Ohio Splash is hosting it's first meet. In Philadelphia, we'll celebrate May Day with the fourth annual meet hosted by the FINS. Registration packets are ready for IGLA's second trip to an Olympic venue – the IGLA Championships in Atlanta this June. So, as much as the world is changing, we keep on swimming, doing egg-beater drills, back 1 and 1/2's (tuck), and all of that fancy synchro stuff. Hey, where's my nose clip? And remember, don't breathe off your turns. ✦

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*Cole, Continued from Page One*

making the trek South will be returning home with souvenir medals and fond memories of a festival of queer culture.

The annual Hero Chocolate Fish Fun Swim Meet in Auckland, New Zealand, attracted 90 swimmers this year. The swim meet is run in association with the annual gay and lesbian Hero Cultural Festival. The meet has a mixture of serious, novelty and relay events; it proves a great way to introduce new swimmers to the club, since newcomers are often shy about making their first move to join a club. The informality of the meet plus a BBQ afterwards is been an excellent introduction to gay and lesbian aquatics.

Update from Sydney 2002 GGVI: The Sydney International

## HEY Y'ALL, IT'S IGLA 99!!

As most of you know, IGLA '99 is right around the corner and those of us in Atlanta can't wait to show you the Southern Hospitality for which we're famous. The Atlanta Rainbow Trout have been busily preparing for what we hope will be 5 days of friendship, fun, fast swimming and exciting diving and water polo. We are most proud to host this year's IGLA Championships in the Georgia Tech Aquatic Center, site of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. This facility is one of the fastest pools in the world! But more importantly, the size of the Center allows us to host all 3 competitions under the same roof. We also have a full agenda of social events lined up for everyone. We know our plans will allow you to discover Atlanta's greatest charms: its neighborhoods and people. We have made every effort to keep this year's costs at or lower than the past two Championships. Finally, we are pleased to announce that Atlanta will donate 10% of our proceeds to two local charities, Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative and Youth Pride.

We mailed registration packets to your IGLA Team Representatives. You can also download the entire packet at our website, <http://www.igla99.org>. Entries are due by May 18, 1999.

Dust off your goggles, grab a towel and get ready now for the best IGLA Championships ever! Make your plans now -- we can't wait to see you in June.

Best Wishes,

Jim Ebert  
ART Chairman

John Brown  
IGLA 99 Meet Director

Aquatic Centre, where the GGVI aquatics events will be held, will maintain 8000 spectator seats after the completion of the 2000 Summer Olympics. This will enable Sydney to host many more large events, such as the International Swimming World Cup. The best way to check out the sight for the swimming, diving and water polo events for GGVI is to tune into the telecast of the Olympics or visit their website. I will continue to be a member of the committee for Aquatics Sydney 2002 and will provide updates for the IGLA newsletter and its members.

Meanwhile, back in San Francisco, we hear the Tsunami will hosting a meet this year, the first gay and lesbian swim meet in San Francisco since GGII in 1986. "SF Swim '99" will be held on the 14th of August. Along with a range of swimming events Tsunami will also host

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# 1998-1999 IGLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Atlantic Co President**

Jason Klugman (Philadelphia): Jason@IGLA.org

**Atlantic Co-Chair**

Phillip Collins (London): Phil@IGLA.org

**Pacific Co President**

Jamie Cole (Sydney): Jamie@IGLA.org

**Pacific Co Chair**

Kevin Brauer (Denver): Kevin@IGLA.org

**IGLA Secretary & Internet Coordinator**

John Peller (Chicago): john@IGLA.org

**IGLA Treasurer**

Sean Fitzgerald (Atlanta): Sean@IGLA.org

**IGLA FGG Delegate**

Charles Carson (New York): Charlie@IGLA.org

**IGLA FGG Alternate Delegate**

Roberto Mantaci (Paris): Roberto@IGLA.org

**IGLA COMMITTEE CHAIRS****IGLA Water Polo Chair:**

Patrick Riordan, (New York): Bagone@idt.net

**IGLA Women's Development. Co-Chairs**

Tara Robertson (London): rober002@unbc.ca

Karen Sauvigné (New York): uncmlegacy@aol.com

**IGLA Products & Promotions Co-Chairs**

Dan MacGregor (Calgary): dmacgreg@cadvision.com

Lou Theunissen (Miami): weesp603@xs4all.nl

**IGLA Championship Rules Committee Co-Chairs**

Rex Toltschin (Dallas): Toltschin@aol.com

Robert Stofferson(Wash., DC): rstofferson@kpmg.com

**IGLA Policies and Procedures Committee Co-Chairs**

Ralph Doore (San Francisco): ralphd@slip.net

James Ridout (Wash., D.C.): jridout@ix.netcom.com

**IGLA Records & Top Ten Chair**

Rick Windes (San Francisco): windesr@usms.org

*Beyond Amsterdam, Continued from Previous Page*

dinners, parties and a range of social events. Hosted housing will be available and registration packs should be out soon.

A special thanks to the Products and Promotions Committee who have been working hard to improve services to our members. Also thanks to John Peller for a magnificent job on the IGLA website and to the Policies and Procedures Committee for their updates. I look forward to making more IGLA friends in the coming year and wish everyone happiness and success. See you in Atlanta! ✦

## Meanwhile, on the Atlantic Side...

### Phil Collins, Atlantic Co-President, Out to Swim

In the last issue of Wetnotes I introduced myself as the new Atlantic Co-Chair. Since then I have seen the enormous amount of work done by the Board and Officers of IGLA, who show much dedication to the interests of the sport. I have lost count of the number of mails that have passed my way – but five a day is not unusual. You can be assured that you have a diligent bunch of people working for you at IGLA.

There have been developments closer home. My club, Out To Swim, is getting very excited about the Paris Aquatique meet in mid-March. We are hoping to send a mixed team of around 40 swimmers, and are keen to match the success and fun of last year's team. Those of you considering IGLA Paris 2000 can be confident that Paris Aquatique knows how to run a successful meet.

I hope you all know of the meet that Out To Swim is organizing on July 31, 1999. This is our second meet and it doesn't seem quite so daunting this time round. We are some way behind other European clubs and the North Americans in experience of organizing meets, but we are rapidly catching up. We have booked the National Sports Center at Crystal Palace, South London. The facilities here are excellent with a 50m, 8 lane pool and lots of space for spectators and swimmers to watch the races. Crystal Palace is not just a swimming pool and we got thinking about making use of the rest of the facilities. So far we have Lesbian and Gay Volleyball, Football, Squash, Running and Sports Climbing clubs in London interested in joining in a multi-sport event. Watch this space!

The UK has been slow to catch on to the lesbian and gay sport thing. OTS was set up to ensure more UK swimmers took part in the Gay Games in New York. London, the main queer population center and a city that attracts people from around the world, has seen a rapid growth in gay sport in recent years. Gaysport finally is taking off elsewhere in the UK. Manchester, with a sizable Gay population and a scene to rival London's, now has Northern Wave. This is a swimming club aiming to provide opportunities for lesbian and gay swimmers to train and compete. I look forward to welcoming them at our meet in July and at future meets. A case of "out of the bars and into the pools"? ✦

## SAVE THE DATE! IGLA GENERAL MEETING

The most lively and interesting part of an IGLA championship is always the IGLA General Meeting. Intrigue fills the air as teams battle against each other to pass IGLA rule changes or change internal operating procedures. The pages fly in Robert's Rules as board members try to figure out how to out-procedure each other.

OK, maybe the IGLA General Meeting you attended wasn't like that, but we can tell you that the 1999 meeting will be as brief as possible, fun and interesting, and worth your while to attend. What better way is there to meet and get to know other team leaders and IGLA enthusiasts from around the globe? **Please join us on Thursday, June 17 from 2 PM to 6 PM at the Sheraton Colony Square in Atlanta.**

### IGLA Builds Woman Power

**Tara Robertson (Out to Swim London),  
and Karen Sauvigné, Team New York Aquatics**

After the meeting of the Women's Development Committee at the IGLA meeting during the Gay Games in Amsterdam, IGLA set up an e-mail list for women's development. The list serve was established to facilitate on-going discussion about ways to increase women's participation in IGLA. (You can sign up by visiting [www.igla.org/listserve.htm](http://www.igla.org/listserve.htm); the list you want to subscribe to is "igla-women"). A lively, albeit intermittent, discussion is helping participants to learn from one another ways to recruit and retain more women in gay and lesbian swimming. Here is an example of what we're discussing.

In early January, after we had gotten a look at the impressive IGLA '99 web site, and noting the organizers' strong commitment to expanding women's participation in the meet, WD Co-chair Tara Robertson posted the following pitch for women to come to Atlanta for IGLA '99: "Atlanta has set 250 women at IGLA '99 as their goal. Start planning your trip now and encourage your teammates. Wouldn't it be fun if there were two heats of women's relays?"

In response, Merrill in Philly wrote: "Wouldn't it be more incredible if the 200 women were all lesbians?? I worry that teams will just recruit straight women from local teams for the IGLA meet in order to win. Will past history repeat itself? Or will teams try to get lesbian swimmers to go to IGLA?"

Good point, said Karen (me) from New York: "The lesbian

part is the really important part of getting more women to IGLA -- and swimming with our teams. But our teams have a hard time recruiting women swimmers of any sexual orientation -- which is why it's so important that women work with our male teammates (and with each other) on recruiting women. And, from my perspective, pre-lesbian women are better than no women, most of the time."

From Tara: "Yeah, stacking one's team with local straight women is not good. But, for example, one of the founders (the only female one) of Out to Swim London was a straight woman and she worked her butt off to recruit dykes. In Wash DC we had a few awesome queer-positive straight women who regularly trained and competed with us, even at local straight masters meets. I wonder why straight men don't swim with queer teams the same way straight women do?"

Then it began to wax philosophical: "I think straight men are a lot more homophobic than straight women. Especially athletes. Women athletes know that there are a lot of dykes in the locker rooms and most don't care. I think straight male athletes are more threatened by the possibility of gay men being there in the locker room with them. I think this is all rooted in the (wide) intersection of patriarchy and homophobia. (See Adrienne Rich on homophobia as a weapon of sexism.)"

But the circle gets completed and we get back to swimming and building women's participation. One question is the relative merits of women-only work outs or events. Sonia from Paris Aquatique commented: "... the idea of women-only events does not appeal to me, unless one considers we are an endangered species. However, we'll try in Paris to come up with new ideas, especially since Paris is organizing IGLA in 2000 (1st time outside the USA & Canada / Quebec), so we have to set a good example."

And Tara reminds us: "Women's development is supposed to deal with swimming, water polo and diving. Please encourage your friends, especially divers and water polo players to subscribe to this list and let everyone know what's going on. But I don't know of any queer female divers in IGLA. Can we find them? Please help keep Women's Development alive."

These discussions have shown that we need to reach out, celebrate our victories when we get women involved, make an effort to truly welcome all swim/polo/dive participants, and remember that achieving diverse participation -- think beyond women to people of color, people with different abilities, etc -- is a goal that will enrich us all. ✦

## Products & Promotions Moves on Sponsorship

**Dan MacGregor, Calgary & Lou Thuenissen, Miami**

After spending several months developing a strategic plan, the Products and Promotions Committee turns its attention and resources to implementation. In particular, we are working on building corporate partnerships.

The current Strategic Plan surrounding sponsorship sets out the following action plan:

- Register IGLA's name, logo and acronym under the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office.
- Define IGLA's assets and create others that can be sold to prospective sponsors.
- Develop a list of potential corporate sponsors.
- Communicate with sponsorship chairs of IGLA 1999 in Atlanta and Paris 2000 to discuss their plans.
- Develop sponsorship packages.
- Open negotiations with potential corporate sponsors.

This is a long-term effort; we expect it will take approximately a year to complete, and at that point, we will just be ready to begin negotiations with potential sponsors. In addition, while we may negotiate with many sponsors, we may be successful with only a few.

Over a longer period of time, this success ratio will improve. How much will depend upon how well IGLA services its sponsors and IGLA's growth in membership over the next three years between now and the next gay games in Sydney, Australia.

Recognizing that size of our membership base is a prime consideration for successful negotiations with financial sponsors, the IGLA board has initiated a program of developing and expanding IGLA's membership, with a particular focus on Europe. "With twenty-five gay swim teams in Germany and another ten in the Netherlands, there exists a natural opportunity for IGLA to swell its ranks by only opening the door." says Lou Thuenissen. "It is just going to take a little effort."

But it seems that there already appears to be some success on this front. IGLA members from Paris, London, Milan, and Copenhagen are taking IGLA's message to other European teams at upcoming European swim meets. Further, it appears that European swim meets are taking on more of the competitive swim meet aspects that IGLA teams have been enjoying and are doing it in a way that should perk the interest of those same IGLA teams. It appears that both sides of the Atlantic can benefit from each other's experience. ★

## LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD OFFICERS: IGLA BOARD POSITIONS OPEN

The following positions will be up for elections at the IGLA general meeting: **Atlantic Co-Chair; Pacific Co-Chair; and Treasurer.** The Co-Chairs are responsible for making sure IGLA functions properly internally. After one year, the Co-Chairs become Co-Presidents. The Treasurer collects dues, writes checks, maintains IGLA's finances, and participates in board decisions. If you like long nights hunched over your e-mail building the future of queer aquatics (not getting dates, silly!), this is the job for you. We are particularly looking for women to fill these positions. Become a part of the IGLA board and help make aquatic history!

## Water Polo Update

**John Peller (Chicago) and Patrick Riordan (TNYA)**

We are pleased to announce that Patrick Riordan has volunteered to take over as chair of the IGLA water polo committee from John Peller, who had been interim chair for several months. Patrick, of Team New York Aquatics Polo, is very excited about the position, and has been around IGLA for long enough to know how to keep himself out of trouble.

The Polo Committee chair and his minions are working hard to help Atlanta plan the IGLA '99 polo championships. Tere Ma, a long-time friend of IGLA, has agreed to referee the events. Tere was named the United Airlines Referee of the Year for 1998; a unique honor for a national-level USWP ref. We are very pleased that Tere is joining us.

### Woman's Water Polo

In conjunction with the Atlanta Organizing Committee, the polo committee is working hard to put together a woman's water polo tournament at Atlanta. This would be the first time that we had enough all-woman's teams to play. If we don't have enough teams (three is the minimum), we will without a doubt have a Woman's All-Star game.

In addition, IGLA sent a letter to United States Water Polo praising them for including "sexuality" in their recent mission statement. We think this is a critical step to ensuring that water polo welcomes all players. In the letter, which was sent by the IGLA board, we praised the excellent service we have always gotten from the national office in organizing tournaments and other events.

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Finally, we hear rumors that Jim Ruggiero, a former New York player who moved to San Francisco, has started a gay water polo team. Although we're still waiting for the IGLA registration form to come in, we hear that they have pool time, USWP membership, and all the other logistics worked out, and are ready to play. We hope to see them in Atlanta. In the meantime, keep playing! ✦

## **IGLA 2001: { FILL IN YOUR CITY HERE }**

Tired of schlepping across the state, continent, or world for IGLA Championships? Well, why not host one? You could have the pleasure of hosting swimmers, polo players, divers, and synchro enthusiasts, and organize fabulous events that would make even Martha Stewart green with envy. More importantly, you'll overrun your hometown with more gay and lesbian aquatics athletes than you thought possible. Intents to bid letters are due to the IGLA board on April 17. Full bids must be presented at the 1999 General Meeting in Atlanta, so start preparing soon. In fact, we know of one team out there already that is considering a bid. Come on! It's your turn!

## **Records and Times Committee Report for March 1999**

**Rick Windes, SF Tsunami**

Gay Games V: I've imported and entered results from the Long Course (LCM) competition last August. I've generated reports for Gay Games and IGLA LCM individual and relay records, and am in the process of proofing these reports before sending them to the Board for approval. The LCM records should appear soon on the IGLA website. The Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA) will publish the 1998 World Masters records and rankings for metric courses in April.

1996 IGLA Championships: Jack Markey from DCAC has gotten me a copy of the results from the 1996 IGLA Short Course (SCM) Championships, which I'm now prepping for import. I expect to have the updated Gay Games and IGLA SCM individual and relay records ready in late March. I've informed both John Brown and Kevin Mylod of the Trout that I will also forward them a copy. Jack has agreed to join Charlie Carson and Ralph Doore on the Records and Times Committee. Additionally, Alain Perie from Paris Aquatique will receive the committee's reports

to assist him with his European records project.

At the U.S. National Governing Body level, I would like to congratulate our past Pacific Co-Chair, Dr. Jessica Seaton, on her appointment to the U.S. Masters Swimming (USMS) International Committee. Lucy Johnson, the Registrar for Southern Pacific Masters Association managed to obtain the paperwork that will verify the pending U.S. National Masters records set by the Southern California Aquatics Club and West Hollywood Aquatics at the Gay Games in Amsterdam. We need to populate other NGBs with IGLA volunteers and rely on a good working relationship with those NGBs in order to alleviate some of the confusion that obtains within the relatively new (to FINA) sport of Masters swimming. I will present a full, but hopefully succinct, report to the IGLA membership in Atlanta. ✦

## **New Waves Get Wet in Edmonton**

**Dan MacGregor, Calgary**

It appears that on the North American continent, the distances that exist between some of the farther flung teams of IGLA has fostered a sense of loneliness. So much so, apparently, that IGLA's most northerly team on the North American continent, Different Strokes Calgary, traveled another 200 miles north to help establish a new "mostly gay and lesbian" swim team in its provincial civic rival, Edmonton.

Although, initially, not a big deal to drive the 200 miles north to Edmonton, the task became considerably more challenging when snow started falling shortly after the Different Strokes left Calgary. Undaunted, the Calgary swimmers continued their trek north into falling and blowing snows and a declining thermometer, finally arriving in Edmonton where two to three feet of snow lined the streets and the mercury was settling at minus 25 to 30 Celsius, without factoring in the wind-chill. For those of you in the U. S. who are not familiar with Celsius, even Canadians read these temperatures as COLD.

The extreme of the weather was diametrically opposed by the warmth of the reception of Edmonton's new swimmers. A camaraderie developed quickly that was cemented with an introductory swim practice and an evening social hosted by two of Edmonton's new swimmers. It is amazing to note how readily people doff their clothes, sprint across 30 feet of frozen snow to slip into a steaming hot tub after eating Edmonton's pizza. Not that the pizza had everything to do with this phenomenon, but it is a strange relationship.

Apparently, Calgary's efforts were fruitful, if you will excuse the expression. Edmonton's New Waves Swim Team has now started its swim program with some 45 swimmers registered and typical practices drawing up to 30 swim-

mers. Instead of having to go all the way to Vancouver, B. C. (800 miles away), Calgary now has another gay and lesbian swim team within a three hour drive. It will be the friendliest of these two cities' rivalries. The recruitment of a new swim team appears successful, and orders are in for new toaster ovens for the swimmers in Calgary. ✦

## IGLA Calendar

### **Trophée Paris Aquatique**

Paris, France  
March 12-14, 1999  
Contact: pjr@club-internet.f  
With rare 1500m. event!

### **Ohio Splash Sink or Swim**

Columbus, Ohio, USA  
March 27, 1999  
Contact: wilsong@battelle.org  
Ohio State Pool

### **Miami Beach Swim for Life**

Miami Beach, FL, USA  
March 27, 1999  
Contact: sflmiami@aol.com  
One-mile open water swim AIDS benefit

### **Liquid Assets New England Swimteam**

Boston, Mass, USA  
April '99  
Contact: kuchar@pldac.plh.af.mil

### **FINS Aquatics Club**

Philadelphia, PA, USA  
May 1, 1999  
Contact: JRob2SWIM@aol.com  
PrideFestAmerica weekend

### **Queen's Birthday**

Royal Oak, Michigan, USA  
May '99 (tent.)  
Contact: sean\_read@peoplesoft.com  
Suburb of Detroit

### **IGLA '99 Championships**

Atlanta, GA, USA  
June 18-20, 1999  
Contact: questions@igla99.org  
'96 Olympic pool at Georgia Tech

### **Seattle ORCA Swim Meet**

Seattle, WA, USA  
July 3, 1999  
Contact: brad.palmer@alaskaair.com  
Part of Team Seattle Sports Festival

### **Out to Swim**

London, UK  
July 31, 1999  
Contact: philc@dircon.co.uk  
Crystal Palace Nat'l Sports Centre, 50M pool

### **San Francisco Swim '99**

San Francisco, CA  
Aug. 14, 1999  
Contact: nuderry@aol.com  
First meet since GGII. About time!

### **Annual Columbus Day Classic**

Washington D.C.  
October 9 '99  
Contact: scottbloom@JHU.edu  
A fall tradition

### **Coupe de Montréal des Nageurs Gais et lesbiennes**

Montreal, Canada  
Nov. 26-28, 1999  
Contact:  
Paul.Boisvert@kin.msp.ulaval.ca  
American Thanksgiving weekend

### **2000 and Beyond Calendar**

#### **IGLA 2000**

Paris, France  
Early 2000  
Contact: paris-aquatique@gaysport.org  
The first IGLA Championship in Europe!

#### **Eurogames VII**

Zurich, Switzerland  
June 1-4, 2000  
Contact: info@gaysport.org

#### **Gay Games VI**

Sydney, Australia  
August 31-Sept. 6 2002 (?)  
contacts2002@gaygamesVI.org.au  
"Under New Skies"

mers but they did not respond in time for the Federation meeting.

Hanging like a dark cloud over the week in Seattle was the Federation's bleak financial situation. The Federation is very close to broke for two reasons. First, we have a loss of fees owed from Gay Games V (more below). Second, sponsorship goals have not been met. Despite our ongoing sponsorship by Kodak, we have yet to secure an airline or other large-category donor on a long-term basis.

The Federation was owed more than US\$70,000 in licensing fees from the Amsterdam organizers ("Stichting"). Stichting also held about US\$19,000 in Federation Affiliate Membership fees, which were sent to Stichting along with GGV registrations. Stichting estimated a total loss of about US\$3.5 million. The City of Amsterdam agreed to pay the money owed by Stichting to the Federation (the City did not, however, agree to cover all of Stichting's other debts). As I write, it is my understanding that the entire sum owed to the Federation has not yet been collected.

Because the Federation's monthly operating costs have been about US\$10,000, in Seattle the Directors pledged to raise US\$30,000 in operating funds for the 1998-1999 fiscal year. With Roberto's support, I pledged \$500 as IGLA's one-time share – and I stressed "one-time." (IGLA's officers later agreed that this was a special case worthy of our support, and sent a check to the Federation for that amount.)

### **Amsterdam Report Highlights**

The meeting began with Stichting's four delegates speaking for several hours about GG V. Although the Games is over for the participants, their Board is still on the job. There is a lot of paperwork still to be done, including for the Federation itself.

The overall sports report was first but it was fairly brief. Figure skating was singled out – the lesson learned is "you cannot have contacts soon enough with governing bodies." (Yes, Roberto and I looked at each other.) The only comment on swimming was that they sold more tickets to the Pink Flamingo than they expected. (If that was their only concern! The ice skating problem got them so much bad publicity that we looked tame by comparison.) They said that in track and field they'd goofed by changing the normal age groups. (Roberto and I looked at each other again.) Stichting also proposed that the cultural festival for artists be changed, saying the number of participants did not merit the money and time spent organizing it.

Another Stichting delegate gave the statistics: 16,026

participants, including 1,250 "guests" at the marathon. There were 14,843 athletes, 914 choir members, 52 in the bands. There were 78 countries and 42% of the total number were women.

They discussed the circumstances around letting Managing Director Marc Janssens go. The Board had frequent meetings as the Game approached, focusing on two main topics: ticket sales for the opening and closing ceremonies and the overall financial situation. On the Thursday before the Games, Marc told the Board that the cash flow and deficit were worse than thought. The Board met that night and realized the gap was between 3-5 million guilders and that technically they were bankrupt.

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### *Amsterdam's outreach program was a success, with women making up 48% of the 265 participants from developing countries.*

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The Board met with the Mayor, who agreed that they could not cancel the Games. The City agreed to give money so that the Games could continue. Vendors would be paid to ensure that all services were delivered as promised. But they decided they could not go on with Marc. The public dispute with his past business partner added greatly to their belief that he no longer had the Games under control. Marc was dismissed and the Board stepped in and divided responsibilities among themselves. The Amsterdam board members stressed that since the Games Marc has been very cooperative, and their relationship is good now.

Stichting cancelled some services, but decided to keep others (like the daily newspaper). They realized that logistics was one of their weakest spots and had not been budgeted correctly. After the Games they found they had about 400 creditors. Their priority would be to ensure that the small creditors would get all their money back. The City will help them on the final deficit of 7-8 million guilders as long as they raise a minimal amount of the shortfall.

The Amsterdam organizers are investigating to see where financial controls failed. As a Board, they have personal liability, although there is some insurance. It will take another 3-4 years for all issues to go through the courts.

On a happier side, the outreach program was a success, with women making up 48% of the 265 participants from developing countries. They assumed that the barrier for gays and lesbians in developing countries was social rather than athletic, and geared the program around giving participants skills they could use once they returned home.

This was the first "internet" Games, and it is obvious that computers will become increasingly important. Hosts need to focus on having experienced individuals handle this side of the business. Stichting feels that the computer side of accreditation during the Games was a bright spot, and they believe their volunteer training in that area paid off.

Media and marketing went well, with a beautiful logo and good merchandise. More than 200 mainstream papers around the world printed articles, and the BBC produced a major documentary. Some local papers did print negative "Why Gay Games?" articles, but the many subsequent letters in defense of the Games put an end to that.

Other topics included handling journalists, women's issues, individuals with special needs, and problems with the website. There were questions and comments from Federation Directors – many pointed, but many positive and complimentary. It cannot be denied that Gay Games V was highly successful in many, many regards. However, on aquatics Roberto and I decided that what was past was past so we didn't address any specifics about our sports.

### **Sydney 2002 Situation**

After Stichting's report, the Federation was forced to suspend the planned agenda because the Sydney 2002 organizing committee had come to Seattle saying they could not and would not meet their first payment obligation of US\$25,000 by December 31, 1998. They wanted to renegotiate the contract they had signed just last June.

Some background: the Federation's Officers and a representative of each committee make up the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). I am the Policies & Procedures representative on Strategic Planning. The SPC met several hours during the week, focusing almost totally on the Sydney 2002 situation. At our first meeting, the Officers told us they could not support Sydney's proposed revenue sharing plan whereby the Federation would get a percentage of 2002's income. We agreed that a fixed payment schedule was the Federation's only protection and shared concerns that renegotiating a contract at the whim of a host was a bad precedent.

The Officers relayed this information in a full Board meeting and then Tom Seddon, Cath Phillips, Stuart Borrie and Gary Cox represented 2002 in an initial presentation.

The Sydney organizers reported they could not honor the contract as written and signed in June. The local government could not support them the way Amsterdam had done with Stichting. They repeated the phrase "the lesson of Amsterdam must be learned." They said it was clear they now could not meet the license fee structure of US\$1 million and in fact could not make their first payment. They said it was about cash flow, and that if they didn't have it they couldn't give it to us. Therefore, they had to look to a revenue sharing plan.

The Australians cited a lack of public Australian philanthropy – people do not give to organizations the way they do in the USA, for example. The government was to be their chief support for the event, but the government argued that the US\$1 million license fee was too high.

The gay and general press criticized them for agreeing to give US\$1 million in the first place. But at the time of the bids, all bidding committees predicted a profit near that amount and in fact 2002 forecast a figure higher than that. We settled on one million as a "round figure." When the contract was signed, Stichting was still predicting its own US\$1 million profit.

2002 did not, however, come with any proposed counter-offer or alternate proposals to meet the contract. They did not bring a minimal check as a gesture of good faith. They had no papers to provide any figures to show how their budget was going so far, yet they made frequent comments about how this was an issue of mutual trust.

Many of us were shocked. It was not lost on me that IGLA had received far more information from the Wett Ones about the 2002 aquatics plans than the overall managers brought with them to Seattle. The contrast between the way their bid committee approached business and the way some of those same people were addressing us in Seattle was a huge disappointment.

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*The Sydney organizers reported they could not honor the contract as written and signed in June.*

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Part of the speeches did not make sense to me. I asked where they expected to get the first license fee before Amsterdam lost money. After the respondent rambled on for a couple of minutes it was clear that they simply didn't know. Yet they signed the contract.

The Federation held a fairly emotional meeting where every Director, Delegate and Alternate had an opportunity to speak to the subject of the contract dispute. The consensus of the room was that we not walk away and try to reach an agreement with 2002. A small 5-person negotiating team was chosen to represent the Federation. The negotiating team was to report directly to the Strategic Planning Committee before the full Board was notified of progress.

Once the negotiations began, the rest of the meeting got underway. This was a great relief to the observers who had been patiently waiting in the lobby and in hotel rooms while the Federation and Sydney met behind closed doors.

However, the negotiations did not proceed smoothly at first and for two days we seriously considered canceling the contract completely and starting a new bidding process in 1999 for a 2003 Games. This was personally painful for many of us. The 2002 representatives were our friends, but we now found ourselves on opposite sides of a business transaction and could not speak with each other casually until negotiations concluded.

One of the biggest weaknesses on the Federation side – and I think 2002 exploited it fully – was that we settled on the one million figure without any plan of our own as to how to spend it. However, by Thursday we were in general agreement about enough points on each side to settle on a figure of about US\$600,000. (As I write, the revisions have yet to be signed by both parties.)

We were in enough agreement that 2002 was able to proceed with its report on logistical progress toward running the Games. The report was similar enough to what is on their website that I direct you to that for details. Go to <http://www.gaygamesVI.org.au/>.

Note that the dates for Gay Games VI may be changed. Many Federation participants believe that early September is a potential conflict for all northern hemisphere countries and too early in the southern hemisphere's spring. A November date after Australia goes on daylight savings time may be proposed. About 90% of the Federation agreed that this sounds like a positive step.

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*While starting out the week a little shy, Roberto was well known and respected by week's end – I even let him raise his hand to vote on the meeting's last item before adjournment!*

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A personal concern: The Sydney organizers have taken no heed of Stichting's remarks about the cultural program, and are wedded to its bid proposal of a two-week cultural festival. The cultural festival has been a perennial money-loser and I discussed it with Cath. She dismissed my concerns, sure that this time things will be different. I note with concern that the recent Sydney Festival lost AUS\$740,000 at the box office, but I guess we have to agree to disagree on this issue.

While I may seem overly critical of 2002 to those of you hearing about this situation for the first time, the Games is now a huge business and there is no turning back from that. Having been in their shoes in New York, I know it can be a thankless task sometimes. But I would not be doing my job if I tried to gloss over the events in Seattle, and this is the way I saw it.

### **Other Federation Happenings**

Because of the unforeseen problems with 2002, we accomplished little else. We decided to have a special mid-year meeting in Montreal in April. (Fortunately, there is a cost sharing program for travel expenses and we have free accommodations in a hotel courtesy of a local business tourist program, a big savings.)

Roberto, who was elected by the IGLA membership as IGLA's FGG alternate in August 1998, joined the Sports and Site Selection committees. He became particularly involved with several Sports Committee projects. While starting out the week a little shy, he was well known and respected by week's end – I even let him raise his hand to vote on the meeting's last item before adjournment! As for me, I have left Sports for this year because I am also on Membership, Archives, Policies & Procedures and Strategic Planning. As P&P Co-Chair, it is my not-always-pleasant job to remind the whole Board when its standing rules are not being followed.

Three years after the last public relations committee was disbanded, a new one has been created. In my opinion, we have not managed to establish in the public's eye an identity separate from the current Games host. In relation to that, we spent three hours in a roundtable discussion about how the Games is perceived by the rest of the world and what our goals should be. There was lots of talk about how the event can break down stereotypes, bring everyone together (gay and straight), forge new partnerships between gays and government and corporate sponsors, and break down barriers that stand in the way of complete equality in the world. It sounds glib but, you know, the usual. To me, our number-one priority should be safeguarding conditions for a well-run sports event. If we could just do that, all the other things would begin falling in place.

I also want to acknowledge that IGLA Co-Chair Kevin Brauer was there as the Alternate Delegate from Team Colorado. Roberto and I met with Kevin off and on throughout the week and enjoyed each other's company.

Three organizations were voted onto the Board: the British Gay & Lesbian Sports Federation, Team Philadelphia, and TOGS from Johannesburg, South Africa. The 1999 November Annual Meeting will be held in Berlin.

The minutes have not come out yet and I may be forgetting something. There are a number of issues Roberto and I will be discussing with IGLA's officers prior to the Montreal meeting. Right now, specific aquatics issues are not in the forefront and issues of how the Federation conducts itself internally are being stressed.

Keeping fund-raising going will not be any easier in 1999 because the Federation is losing Executive Director Scott Mandell. Scott received an employee evaluation from the Federation's Officers that he disputed; his lawyer sent the Federation a letter of resignation with a request for severance. Negotiations about the terms of severance may have been concluded by the time you read this.

As always, if you have any comments or questions about this report, please feel free to contact me or Roberto. ✦