

GOST – The Great Ohio Swim Team
By TNTripp

The only constant in life is change. Someone said that, probably a lot of people have said it, and that's what is happening here in the Ohio LMSC.

The first change is probably the biggest, the LMSC is going electronic. This will be our last paper newsletter. USMS is almost a virtual organization, it couldn't be run one-tenth as well, or as economically, without the internet. We at the LMSC level can do the same, save a lot of money, keep dues low, and be manifestly more efficient in the process. For those who do not have regular access to the internet the LMSC will be offering paper-based support for an additional \$5 fee per year. But that number will be few as almost anyone can be on-line with a minimum of effort.

The second change is that because we are going electronic, GOST will no longer have an additional \$2 charge, the team will be fee-free this year! We have collected dues in the past to cover the cost of postage, printing, etc., and as those costs now have disappeared there is no need to charge for GOST membership. As far as GOST news and information is concerned, I hope there will be a section on the Ohio LMSC web-page called 'Club News' where postings will be made periodically. There will also be an on-line LMSC newsletter which will be another avenue for club information to be disseminated.

The third change revolves around the make-up of GOST. A group of Cincinnati swimmers, headed up by CJ Rushman, who is also secretary of the LMSC, have decided they would like to revive SWOM as a separate club for the 2003 season. Thus, on this year's registration form you will see SWOM as a separate entity, with several Cincinnati sub-teams, and you will also see GOST with the remainder of its normal sub-teams. Although I am not particularly in favor of this arrangement as I feel that what is being accomplished can be done under the GOST umbrella, the Cincinnati swimmers certainly have my support for anything which we all feel will help Ohio and USMS swimming in general.

I believe the Cincinnati people feel they can generate more enthusiasm with a local, formal club, than they have been able to under GOST. On the other side of that equation I feel we are all so geographically spread out that anything we can do to get to know one another by being on the same team overall, especially those swimmers who travel to meets outside the LMSC, is better because that builds LMSC-wide enthusiasm. But, the real point is that any enthusiasm which we build, whether with one team or two, or ten, is good for all of us.

Not everyone in the Cincinnati area who has been on a GOST sub-team will probably want to join SWOM. Some of you will want to continue the affiliation and teammates we have developed over the last 10 years that GOST has been around. For that reason there will be a new GOST sub-team named the Cincinnati Area GOST Swim Team, which will be listed under the GOST club name. For those of you who still wish to maintain your GOST membership, and also have a local team for competition within the

LMSC, the Cincinnati Area GOST Swim Team is the box you should check as you register this year. If you wish to be on GOST without being on a sub-team, then simply check 'Unattached' under the GOST club name.

If you have any questions about how this is going to work, or what you want to do, you can e-mail me at gost_coach@yahoo.com.

Finally a few words about this year's long course championships in Cleveland in August. We had a large turnout for GOST, we were the second largest team after the host club, and we brought home a top 3 finish to achieve another banner for the GOST stable. I believe the most impressive swim of the meet, any age group, either gender, was by Beth Emery of GOST-Buckeye Masters. Beth entered the water 4 times, not counting relays, and brought back 3 world records, 50 fly, 50 free and 100 free. Some of her achievement was mentioned in the *SWIM* article about the Cleveland meet, but the sheer force of her performance simply stopped almost everyone at the meet in their tracks. Beth, who in her younger days, was a USA Swimming National Team member, had been working out at the Greenhouse Pool in Columbus, but only to be sure, in her words, she didn't do poorly. Her workout regimen obviously achieved her goal. Her performance will stand out as one of the best of the year by anyone, and our kudos to her.

The rest of us mere mortals didn't do badly either. I won't drag this out with individual performances as stories about our exploits appear elsewhere, suffice to say that we all had a great time at a national meet, an event that few of us normally have the time to go to. We fielded more than 30 relays and a lot of people who had never met one another before, and who swam on one or two or even three relays together as four 'strangers', went home friends with a commitment to 'do this again soon.' I don't know if that will happen, but I do know that the friendships made at meets in the past, generally through relay participation where people are thrown together in a quite random fashion, are often quickly and easily revived next time paths cross. I guess that was and is the point of GOST, to make us all feel a little more a part of our whole LMSC and to make swimming a little more than it is than when we are atomized in our various pools around the state.

I look forward to seeing all of you at meets this year. I do hope you will support local competition, the people who put on our events make a lot of effort seem easy, and in order to keep people thinking about having a meet and expending that effort we have to make sure to compete when we can so the meets are as successful as they can be. Thanks to those of you who have volunteered for GOST this year, you have each made a difference.