

## **A Swim Meet Conundrum** *by Greta van Meeteren*

It is hard to imagine, but it seems like we have come to a point where it becomes even tougher than it already was to organize a Masters swim meet in North Carolina.

Pools are becoming more expensive to rent, and there is a lot of insecurity about the number of swimmers who might sign up to swim in a meet. Often organizers have to wait until the very last minute to find out whether or not they can even hold a meet.

Point in case: the most recent meet - our first Short Course Meters meet since 2005!! Jerry Clark has had to grovel to even get 96 swimmers to sign up, and with that he has had to take a loss on this wonderful meet which was extremely well organized and held in a great pool.

And another one: our very own State Championship two years ago was in danger of being canceled because one week before the deadline only 24 swimmers had signed up.

The LMSC for NC has around 1,100 members and I am well aware that not everyone likes to compete. But there are enough of us who do - just check the number of swimmers who went to Atlanta this spring to participate in the USMS National SCY Championship, if memory serves me that number was 121.

So what might be the answer to this problem? Having smaller meets spread out more throughout our state so that people do not have to travel? But then we would never see swimmers from other parts of the state, and we would not have a lot of competition in the various age groups - no fun there! I always enjoy seeing my friends from various parts of the state and from other states and it is a lot of fun to swim with them.

I swim with a small team in New Bern. We have about 20 active swimmers. Eight of our swimmers made the track to Charlotte for the SCM meet, where we had a blast, and seven went to the Sunbelt meet - twice - this winter because we have a great time together and enjoy the atmosphere at a good meet. Five went to the Frank Clark meet, and five to the State Championships in Hillsborough. I think that the larger teams could do much better than we are doing in terms of meet participation.

A little more promotion would help matters along. Swimmers and coaches alike could take the lead on this. The meet schedule is available on our Web site and it is planned well in advance, as a matter of fact, there are meets already scheduled through 2011!

Let's mark our calendars for those meets and plan to sign up well in advance, so we do not lose out on the opportunity to swim with like minded friends from around the state and outside of the state.

I welcome any helpful suggestions on rallying our competitive swimmers.