

<b>Committee Name:</b>	History & Archives	<b>Session#:</b>	<b>Report #:</b>
<b>Committee Chair:</b>	Kirk Clear	<b>Vice Chair:</b>	N/A
<b>Minutes recorded by:</b>	Kirk Clear	<b>Date/time of meeting:</b>	March 29, 2023 8pm EDT

## Actions Requiring Approval by the HOD: None

**Motions Passed:** *The History & Archives Committee does not agree with the USMS Board of Director's recommendation to sunset this committee.*

<b>Number of committee members present:</b> 6	<b>Absent:</b> 2	<b># of other delegates present:</b> 3
<b>Committee members present:</b> Kirk Clear (Chair), Bob Anderson, Maryanne Barkley, Anna Lea Matysek, Skip Thompson, Meegan Wilson, Ed Coates (VP Ex Officio)		
<b>Not present:</b> Barbara Dunbar, Walt Reid		
<b>Others present (guests):</b> Crystie McGrail; Doug Sayles; Mary Beth Windrath		

## Agenda

1. Welcome & Intro
2. BOD Future Plans for Committee & Responsibilities – Ed Coates
3. Living History Project
4. Relay Top 10 Project
5. Remembrances Video Project
6. Review History Page on USMS Website; determine value of information
7. Other H&A Efforts:
  - All-American Relay Lists
  - Updating & Maintaining Olympian List
  - National Record Chronology Project
  - USMS Rule Book Project
  - Physical & Digital Archives and Records Repository

## Minutes –

1. The Meeting was called to order at 8:02 EDT by the Chair, who welcomed all the members and guests. All members of the committee were returning, so, wanting to move things along expeditiously, the Chair determined that no introductions were warranted.
2. The Chair informed the committee that the USMS Board of Directors (BOD) had just concluded their annual retreat, and he invited Ed Coates, USMS Vice President of Local Operations, to share any relevant information, especially news on the future of the History & Archives Committee.

Ed related that there was a governance committee effort to delineate what roles USMS needs to deliver on its core services going forward. There was an ad hoc committee that looked at the work of various USMS committees and developed a recommendation of how to do that work in the future. It was determined that committees are needed for governance and oversight of the organization—committees like Finance, Audit, Investment, and Governance. They also looked at operating committees; permanent, on-going committees that help deliver on the core product

of the organization. Then they looked at the other way that work gets done—that being through individual contributors or ad hoc committees. The BOD put all of the committees into those buckets.

Ed shared that History & Archives, Records & Tabs, Fitness Education, as well as Membership and Sports Medicine—which have already been sunset—were all ones that the groups recommended be sunsetted and with either redistribution of work or have the work continue under the structure of individual contributors. He said the BOD wants to use those volunteer resources in a different manner, especially with focus on local volunteering. They want to make sure that these volunteer resources are used in an effective and productive manner in how they are contributing to the overall core mission of the organization.

He continued to relate that the Board is still supportive of that path—they affirmed that this past weekend. In our discussions of how to move forward with our recommendations, a lot of the activities of this committee are either short-term in nature or individual contributor-type of projects. Ed stated, “I know you are passionate about what you do, and we understand that. That passion can be used in many different ways to support USMS. So, we’d like to finish out some of these current projects and to continue some of these efforts on an individual basis or move on to other areas within USMS.”

Kirk asked Ed what the process would be from this point. Ed detailed that:

- The Board would take the recommendation to the House of Delegates (HOD) through the Legislation Committee to remove the description of the committee from the Rule Book, as that is the only place where the committee is referenced.
- Then, it would go to the HOD; if approved, the Rule Book would be modified.
- After that—and even leading up to that—we would, collaboratively, talk about certain things happening with the committee and determine “Does it continue to add value?” “Does it need to be moved somewhere else?” Does it need to be continued by individual contributors?”

Skip Thompson mentioned that he did observe the BOD meeting during the retreat where this was proposed. He noted that the Task Force, or whoever it was, said that our committee was an “administrative burden and a drag on resources, with results that are an ineffective use on volunteer resources.” He also heard a response to the statement that “We don’t cost anything,” with a mention of, “That shouldn’t be a factor as committee members can be deployed to productive work that provides value to the mission, and the work that is being done now does not align to the strategic objectives.” Skip disagreed with those observations and stated that we do a lot of work, and we’ve been doing a lot of work for multiple years. He mentioned, we all saw a slide a few years ago when the Task Force came up with some recommendations, but no one officially told him, when he was Chair, and now they just drop this on us. Skip mentioned that several years ago when he was on the Board and the Volunteer Task Force was recommending sunseting another committee, they took those recommendations back to the committee to communicate with them before any vote. He questioned why that process was not followed and now we are two months before June, when proposals are due to Legislation, they are coming to us to sunset the committee? He stated that if we were informed back in the Fall, or with some kind of lead time, that would have made more sense. Skip asked Ed to explain that process and the reasons for the timing.

Ed stated that this was laid out last year, by the Board to the membership; it was not all of a sudden out-of-the-blue. He mentioned he did not think it was a surprise and the Board has been talking about this for over a year.

Meegan Wilson said she considers this push by the Board to get rid of volunteer committees, “crazy.” She asked Ed, why are they getting rid of volunteers? Is it to reduce the number of delegates in the House? She stated, “As Skip mentioned, it costs USMS nothing and a lot of members appreciate what our committee does. I know now that USMS doesn’t care about it. It’s just a little irritating that we’ve spent years doing this, and now to be told that our work is not appropriate, not good for USMS, not what USMS needs, is a little annoying.”

Ed stated, “The work you have done is good and it’s not that it’s not needed; it’s just that we want to do the work in a different manner.” Meegan replied, “Well, the National Office cannot keep up with what we need them to do. So how do you expect them to keep up with what we’re doing, plus what we need to have them do since our access to make updates on the website have been reduced? We used to have a little bit of access, but now we’ve got nothing.” Ed said he understood, but part of the effort as an organization is to evaluate the work we do and how we go about doing it. It’s also not a means to reduce the size of the HOD; that’s determined by the size of the LMSCs. He said, “It’s really a way to have the work we need done by the appropriate type of entity in the organization. And we don’t anticipate all this work being done by National Office staff. That’s why we want to look to see what is the best way to continue the work. Some of this work has a finite lifetime, and it will

eventually be done, and we will move on. The ideas we want to focus on are our core products, use volunteers in the most efficient way possible, and give them more opportunity to contribute to the organization.”

Bob Anderson asked Ed, “Do I gather that the organization doesn’t value history?” Ed responded, “I wouldn’t say that. I think what we want is to change the direction of the way we go about keeping our history, and we don’t feel that is through a formal committee that is outlined in our governing documents.” Bob responded to Ed’s notion of individual contributors taking on many things, but he also expressed that if it’s not in the core mission of the organization, it probably won’t happen. Bob said, “Nobody is going to ask individual contributors to do any of the work that this committee is doing...What better entity to do history is there than a History and Archives Committee?” Ed said he understood; but didn’t feel it needs to be through a formalized committee in our bylaws. Bob asked, “What is the harm of it being a formalized committee in the bylaws?” Ed replied, “There may be no harm. But again, we want our bylaws to represent the governance of how our organization is governed and operated. You typically wouldn’t see committees that aren’t supporting the governance and operational structure in an organization’s by-laws.” Bob said, “Sorry—you absolutely would...at one point history was important to the organization, as it was added to the governance in the past. So, now you’re telling me it’s less important today than it was in the past?” Ed responded, “The Board is saying that we think it can be done in a different way and in a different structure. It’s not that we don’t think it’s important; we think there is a different way we want to manage this process going forward.”

Bob asked, “Then what do you think is a more appropriate way of maintaining other than a history committee?” Ed stated that the organization has changed over time; we have a lot more resources; we have the National Office staff that does a lot of the communication material that our committee used to produce (stories, biographies, magazine articles, website info). The BOD thinks there are a lot of different ways we can go about it outside of the committee structure, such as using individual contributors, posting things on social media, etc. Bob pointed out that posting stuff on social media does not maintain the history—social media is ephemeral; as such, the organization needs a History and Archives Committee even more today. Bob affirmed, “You need people who actually think about this question more today. As I talked to some of the different LMSCs, many say they use Facebook to put out photos and stories—this is not an archivable media.

Bob responded to words from the BOD retreat that we are an administrative burden. He asked Ed to elaborate on what ways we are an administrative burden. Ed replied, “I’m not speaking about you or this committee, but maintaining committees that aren’t serving the core mission do distract from that core mission. We want to have those in an organizational structure, whether it’s an individual contributor or ad hoc committee, get that done in an efficient and effective manner, but not distract from delivering on the core mission.” Bob responded with, “A couple of times you referred to using volunteer resources. I think that not only you, but a lot of people, have this idea that people from this committee will equally jump into any task that they are asked. I would put forward to you that the people in this group are keenly passionate about the history of this organization.” Ed stated, “I think there’s a lot of opportunity within the organization for everybody to volunteer and contribute; it’s not just at the national level, but also at the local level. We have a lot of focus on our local efforts because that is where we drive our membership from. We hope they will continue to support the organization by volunteering and contributing.” Bob concluded by stating that, “I know that this was recommended by the first task force years ago; but I didn’t get it then. There is a heart of USMS. And I think you’re killing the heart of the organization.”

Anna Lea Matysek stated that the National Office staff does publish a lot of articles. But she also said that they come to us to find the subjects for those articles. She related, “I can’t even begin to tell you how many times some of us ‘old-timers’ have been contacted by USMS staff members asking if we knew anybody that they could interview that falls into a particular category. It’s kind of surprising to me that I get asked this, but apparently, they need someone that knows the organization and the history so they can find them a subject to interview.” That was especially true during the 50th anniversary of USMS.

Referring to the often mention of individual contributors, Kirk asked Ed, “Has the Board laid out a plan, a structure of what this actually looks like? Is there a Transition Plan in place? Has the BOD thought about what this is going to look like? If the HOD approves this, is there something or someone in place that can take over all of our current work?” Ed replied, “Well, that’s part of our plan for this year—to look at the things that are being done by the committees that are being sunset; to kind of map those activities to where they will go. What will move, what group of individual contributors will do that, etc. We have an idea of those activities; we just need to continue to refine that as an ongoing activity.”

Maryanne Barkley chimed in, stating, “I’m the newest member in this committee. I’m in awe of everybody who has done so much work and the depth of the knowledge of this group. When individuals speak about something,

they just have so much knowledge—those are the types of people you want to lead this effort. But if we are talking about Living History going forward, maybe with the LMSC Development Committee, then there would need to be at least one history and archives person within each zone who would be the person to go to for answers and other history-related things. What happens when somebody turns something over to us that has been sitting in a closet for 40 years, and it has the name of someone on a relay that we have been looking for...that may be the last piece of a puzzle we have been looking for—who will have that overall knowledge to know where that piece fits? Those little details for accuracy and our history in our sport are very important. In some ways those can't ever be closed, because as we find things, we're going to be able to add to those things left unaddressed. So, who's going to do it? What will this really look like going forward to do this work?"

Ed stated that, "The committee is still in effect for this year. The idea would be to look at the work you guys are doing and see what is the best way to continue it, if it needs to be continued. If it is something that is of a finite duration, we need to determine how long do we need to take to get it done, and what are the resources needed to finish it out. That's what we're working on."

Skip mentioned that this committee was formed 25 years ago, and it has done a lot of work. Some of this is ongoing and will still take time to complete. Skip said, "I just don't see the work continuing under individual contributors because, who is going to manage the process? Is it going to be under a BOD vice president? Are we going to report to the National Office? We've seen nothing on that. Is this committee just going to die and be out in space? We need to have a work plan of who is going to pick this work up because it's valuable work... Committees have different priorities, and I believe we do meet the mission objectives. I'm just wondering how this is going to work."

Kirk mentioned that he looked at the current Legislation guidelines, and there is no rule to sunset a committee. As he understands it, the Board has to formally propose this to the Legislation Committee; they, in-turn, will come to us and ask if we agree. Legislation would take our responses back and discuss in their committee, come up with a recommendation which would then be presented to the House of Delegates in September. He asked the committee members, "Do we wait for Legislation to come to us officially or do we make a motion and vote ourselves on what we think, so we can make it known?"

Skip responded, "I think legislation proposals are due in June. Whatever happens in Legislation, when it goes to the HOD floor, it's got to have two-thirds to overturn the Legislation Committee's recommendation. If they agree not to sunset the committee, then it's a simple majority. We, as a committee, have to decide based on what we know, whether we agree with the BOD recommendation or not. So, I feel we need to make a motion, vote on it, and have it on the record in the minutes so they know how we feel."

**Skip Thompson made a motion that the History & Archives Committee does not agree with the USMS Board of Director's recommendation to sunset this committee.**

**Meegan Wilson seconded the motion.**

**There was no further discussion on the issue and the Chair called for a vote. The committee members present voted unanimously in favor of the motion—the History & Archives Committee does not agree with the USMS Board of Director's recommendation to sunset this committee.**

3. The Chair moved on to other agenda topics—the first being the **Living History Project**. As a reminder, the Living History Project is designed to help LMSCs document and archive their LMSC history as it happens through photos, documents, stories, newsletters, websites, and social media outlets. We have approached this by interviewing multiple LMSCs and talking to individuals about what works for them and suggestions they may have to ensure their history is maintained. Kirk explained that we are probably at a point where we can start writing some best practices. We interviewed some good LMSCs and have seen some good stuff that they do. We can probably start to document these best practices, and maybe even work through the LMSC Development Committee to present some of these findings through one of their webinars.

Bob expressed some reservation at continuing to work on an effort that doesn't seem to be appreciated by the BOD. However, he agreed that we are at a point that we are ready to start writing a paper. Bob explained that it was wonderful to talk with the LMSC representatives; they loved the discussions, they are excited when we talk to them, and they want to see our conclusions. Just having the conversations puts energy into the LMSCs, and they love what we do—but the fact that the BOD doesn't care, just takes a lot of wind out of our sails. It would be nice if the BOD recognized these efforts. Skip added that he thinks this is important. He feels that we have made

pretty good progress over the last two years, because we didn't do much the first year due to COVID; but we can write these best practices and take them to the LMSC Development Committee and go from there. Bob reminded everyone that we still have a challenge of where do we retain stories and images in a way that survive LMSC platform upgrades? Skip mentioned that he just learned of the change to the CRM platform and suggested we look into how that may be able to help us. Kirk suggested that he, Skip, and Bob get together separately and decide how to press forward with developing a best practices paper.

**Relay Top 10 Project:** Meegan provided an update. This effort started in 2013, and it involves transcribing data from paper copies of prior USMS Top 10 Reports into digital files. Following transcription, missing first names are researched, added, and then verified. Last names and ages are checked for accuracy and proofed for spelling. When files are completed and proofed for accuracy, permanent swimmer IDs are added by Mary Beth Windrath and Walt Reid. The last step in the process is reformatting the data for upload into the USMS Top Ten Relay database by Mary Beth. Just recently, Mary Beth received confirmation from a swimmer named Jill Friedman, who confirmed she was the swimmer in an identified relay. She seemed very excited to be informed that she was in the USMS Top 10 list, again stressing the value of our work.

As far as our progress goes, according to Paul Windrath, all of the old Top 10 Relays have been “transcribed” from the printed version to the Excel format. Mary Beth and Walt are trying to get all IDs for these swimmers before uploading them to the website. Obtaining IDs for those swimmers who have no ID requires help from Jessica in the National Office. The first year that Relay Top 10s were documented was in 1972. So far, all Relay Top 10s have been posted except for 1973 – 1980 for SCY and LCM. The first year that SCM was designated in the Relay Top 10 was in 1986. Many of the individual names are still missing IDs, but the Relay Top 10s are being posted anyway; IDs will be added later as they become available. There is an online search issue when relay age group designations changed for LCM in 1984 and 1985 to be the same as SCY age groups; the Relay Top 10 for those years are listed under SCY age group designations. The 1986 SCY Relay Top 10s are listed under LCM age group designations. We are not sure how to solve this search issue. [One suggestion is that a note could be added to the search page stating, ‘LCM relay age groups for 1984 and 1985 were the same as SCY age groups (i.e., 25+, 35+, etc.), and 1986 SCY relay age groups were the same as LCM age groups (i.e., 120+, 160+, etc.)]

4. **Remembrances Video Project:** Anna Lea provided the update. She sent a document to all committee members, laying out the process. She is stepping back this year while she works on hosting Summer Nationals in Sarasota. Maryanne and Meegan are taking the lead. Basically, what we do is search the Internet, looking for obituaries of members who have passed away during the last year. When we find one, we add them to our database, then we start to create a slide for each member that is combined into the presentation that is shown at Convention. We have been working on that and building our list. The big effort involves finding the deceased members. Anna Lea said that over the last few years, she would do a search about once a week. She also set up alerts through some obituary software that would send an alert when a keyword created a hit. She would then look through that obituary to try and determine if that individual was in fact one of our members. The last few years, we have had between 120-140 people in the presentation. This method has been successful for finding all but about 10 of the people in the presentation. Those few remaining names came from the National Office where a Membership Coordinator or individual notified them of someone's passing. So, it would have been a really small presentation over the last few years if it wasn't for our committee going through this time-consuming process. Once we have the slides built, Bob Anderson goes in and sets the music and creates the video.
5. **Reviewing History Page on USMS Website:** Kirk stated that we have a need to review the History page ([www.usms.org/hist](http://www.usms.org/hist)) because a lot of members—or prospective members—go there as it's one of the main links under “About USMS.” There's a lot of great information there; but much of it is old and stale, and not relevant anymore. We need to look at what is valuable there and what maybe needs to be archived and not so visible. Many of us get asked all the time about the swimmer stories on the site. Unfortunately, the capability to update those or write new ones was taken away from us by the National Office several years ago. Kirk is going to lead that effort to review and come up with some recommendations to make this page more valuable to our membership. He opened it up to the other committee members if they want to provide any suggestions.

Skip noted that when we discussed this last August, Ed Coates recommended that we look into developing a Communications Plan in coordination with the National Office staff. With the committee possibly being on the chopping block, we will table any work on a Communications Plan until a final decision is made.

## 6. Other History & Archive Committee Efforts:

- **All-American Relay Lists:** We recently discovered some broken links from swimmer profiles to some All-American relay lists from the early-to-mid 1990s, shortly after the House of Delegates voted to recognize All-American relays. The relay can show up in a swimmer's profile under the Top 10 listing but does not show up as All-American. Mary Beth Windrath, from the Records and Tabulation Committee, stated that the only relays not linked are from 1991 to 1995 and 1997. She thought now that all of the Top 10 relays are posted, we could just run the same process we do to get the All-Americans. But when the process was tried, it did not work since many of the swimmers in those relays do not have IDs, and every single swimmer in the relay has to have an ID for the process to work. Anna Lea asked Mary Beth if she had any idea of how many of those swimmers were missing IDs. Mary Beth said they only looked at 1991 and 1992; there were about 25 missing from 1991 and somewhere around 37 on 1992, so they decided to quit trying since it was so many and it would just be wasted effort. They did find some, but there are still many missing. The other problem is that a date of birth is needed in order to get an ID assigned, and DOBs are unknown for many. So, they could either ask the National Office to assign an ID using an estimated DOB, which would probably take months or they could ask the IT Department to enable upload that does not require IDs for those years, which may take years. The Records and Tab Committee feels at this point that it will be impossible to get those USMS All-Americans listed.
- **Updating & Maintaining Olympian List:** Effort aimed at researching and verifying USMS members that are Olympians, whether in swimming or another sport.
- **National Record Chronology Project:** Our committee has been helpful in researching and locating missing national records dates to add to the USMS National Record chronology lists.
- **USMS Rule Book Project:** Project designed to locate and scan missing USMS and AAU Masters Rule Books. Skip provided an update on the old AAU Rule Books (1972-1980). He has all of the copies; but he may have to take pictures or figure out some other way to upload since the books are more than 40 years old and getting pretty fragile. *Update since meeting*—Jessica, from the National Office, recently uploaded about 10 more years of rule books that are now available on the website: [www.usms.org/volunteer-central/us-masters-swimming-rule-book](http://www.usms.org/volunteer-central/us-masters-swimming-rule-book); so we now have from 1997-2021 posted.
- **Physical & Digital Archives and Records Repository:** Kirk mentioned that we need to really start thinking about a repository for all of our historical artifacts. Meegan has been storing a lot of stuff at her home while we wait for the ISHOF Museum to reopen, and even after that, they may be limited in what they can receive and store. Meegan mentioned that the National Office provided a Drop Box account but she has yet to upload anything. We really need a type of repository that is like a research library that is indexed and data can be retrieved by anyone wanting to do research. The main concern is if stuff is just in a drop box, who will have access and what kind of search features would be available.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 EDT.