

President's Lane – August 2010

Dear Members,

First, thank you very much for renewing your membership this year. As the final year of our lease extension begins, it has certainly been a trying period for Swim Club families. We are pleased to report that all the work required by the County has now been completed to their satisfaction and all three pools are open as usual as of Monday, August 9. A special thanks to Chief Speakman and the PFD for helping us reopen a day sooner by using fire hoses to top off the pool. We very much regret the inconvenience to all parties affected by this unforeseen closure, including the Swim Team, lesson customers, Rec Department programs, family and lap swimmers. We hope those of you who took advantage of the Swim Club's substitute swimming arrangements with The Hills were satisfied with the experience.

We do not believe the closure order was justified, and we were most certainly not warned about it beforehand, despite what you may have read in the Piedmont Post. A detailed chronology of our experience with County regarding the Virginia Graeme Baker Act and subsequent pool drain regulations is posted on our website. We appealed the decision, but it was evident from the outset that the fastest way to get the pool open would be to do the work to the County's satisfaction. A special thanks to our manager, Joe Perez, for his diligent and professional handling of the permitting and repair work by our contractor, which cost about \$12,000. We are working with our lesson customers and the Recreation Department to make up or, if necessary, refund lessons. For the most part, our customers seem to be opting for make-up lessons, which we appreciate.

The good news is that our staff, led by Joe and Amanda, were able to do a thorough cleaning of the facility and take care of some other maintenance issues while the main pool was shut down, so we are not planning any further multi-day maintenance closures for the duration of the lease, which expires June 30, 2011.

Speaking of the lease – the board has been trying (for the past five years) to negotiate a 15-year extension with the City, on terms that would allow us to continue to maintain the existing facility and provide some modest compensation to our members if the City were to terminate the lease early to build a new facility. I am sorry to report that the current round of negotiations are not going particularly well. Geoff Grote, the City Administrator, has indicated that the Board's lease proposal – more or less a streamlined version of the current arrangements – is not acceptable to the City Council, even as a basis for negotiations. The Board has informed the City Council that its incomplete counter-proposal introducing many new obligations for the Swim Club is, in many respects, not acceptable to us. Our lease proposal and the City of Piedmont's responses to date are being posted on our website in the Member section.

Please encourage your friends, including nonmembers, to express their thoughts on the lease to the City Council and City Clerk. Our proposal remains valid through December 31, 2010. If there has been no further progress by then, we will be forced to plan for closure on June 20, 2011, at which point the pool will be the City of Piedmont's responsibility. If we close, any funds remaining after the Club's obligations are met will be refunded to the membership.

Members interested in running for the Board of Directors on this November's annual ballot are encouraged to submit a 75-word statement, in writing, to the office. More information will be posted in September.

Thank you for your continued support of Piedmont swimming, and see you around the Club!
Tim Rood, Board President