

Now taking items for the Summer 2020 Newsletter!

## **WFencing**

### ***Advancing the Sport of Fencing***

Welcome!

This is a bi-monthly update on everything happening in WFencing . . . .

This is a new organization determined to *be the change we want to see* in the sport we love. Covid-19 has caused unprecedented disruption. Loss, which has intensified the need for **diversity** in our sport to **unify** by building **equity** between women and men, has taken on an immediacy. We are shifting our short-term vision in order to supply much-needed support to the clubs and individuals in our community immediately impacted and in need because of this crisis. Here is what we are planning:

**WFencing Covid Support Zoom Meeting:** Starting this Thursday at 4pm EST and moving forward every Thursday 4:00-4:45 pm, through June, learn from each other about how you are adapting your fencing during this pandemic. We will have a different host each week who will share their own experience and help generate group discussion. Zoom discussions will be monitored for security. If you are willing to be a host, email Jen. We are learning as we go, so we appreciate your patience as we grow and adapt to how communities are formed.

*Please enable video and use your first and last name when signing on. This may delay your invitation into the meeting!*

Topic: WFencing Covid Support

Time: May 7, 2020 04:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Thu, until Jun 25, 2020, 8 occurrence(s)

May 7, 2020 04:00 PM Vinnie Bradford and Ina Harizanova

May 14, 2020 04:00 PM Sara Kass

May 21, 2020 04:00 PM Julie Seal

May 28, 2020 04:00 PM

Jun 4, 2020 04:00 PM

Jun 11, 2020 04:00 PM

Jun 18, 2020 04:00 PM

Jun 25, 2020 04:00 PM

**COVID-19 FINANCIAL SUPPORT PLAN:** Our first fundraiser will be to collect monies which will go directly into the coaches' and club owners' hands. We are soliciting a committee which will determine where these funds will go and creating a fair and equitable vetting process. Please email Cathleen Randall

**WFencing De Facto Board Meetings:** We are still participating in our monthly Zoom meetings to discuss the direction of WFencing. Our next meeting will be NOON EST, Monday, May 18th. You must email Cathleen Randall to get the Zoom link invitation.

**WFencing Report Card:** Vinnie Bradford, Molly Hill, and Addy Bourgelais have been working these past few months to collect data on professional women in fencing today. They have just completed this "report card" which we can use for future reference and is currently being submitted for publication. The report card can be updated periodically to measure the progress of professional women in fencing. Email Vinnie if you would like to see a copy of the report.

**2020 WFencing Strategic Plan:** After collaborative work sessions at the Charlotte NAC and several Zoom meetings we feel we have our first strategic plan. Thank you to Donna Murray for this effort. Our plan is already being tested with this pandemic and will be listed on our website as soon as it is operational.

**Organizational Development Update:** We need website development people ASAP. We have a shell and are working on as fast as we can to get something appropriate up for fundraising. We also need some help writing our by-laws. Are you someone willing to donate your time? If you are interested, please email Jen Oldham

**NAC Networking:** NAC Networking is ON HOLD. We are creating other ways to get together. One way is the Thursday Support Conversation (above). We do want to connect with you!

**Candidate Support:** We support the following candidates. It is important to diversify the representation on national boards to help us all achieve the equity that is our due. As recent events and reporting has shown, the participation of women improves decision-making. Please consider voting for Vicki, Susan, and Donna! Thank you!

#### **Running for USA Fencing National Board**

**Vicki Miller:** [Watch video by clicking here.](#)

**Vicki's website is:** <https://www.vickiemiller.org>

#### **Running for Referees Commission**

**From Susan Borgos:** I've been a fencer since I was 14. I have been a referee since 1986. I've held officer positions within my division and my section and I am dedicated to improving the sport of fencing and improving conditions for referees, which will ultimately help the sport of fencing. I am passionate about increasing the size of the referee cadre (while retaining and improving upon the quality) and of growing and

keeping new referees, especially women. I am running for chair of the Ombudsman Committee because I see that as one of the important ways that we can improve the working environment of our referees. I want to increase the visibility of the Ombudsman Committee so that it can be utilized to its fullest. I want to make sure that all referees feel comfortable speaking with us so that we can address their concerns. I want to improve communications between the committee members and the referee cadre. I am hoping to make the Ombudsman Committee stronger and more effective so that we can achieve the goal of improving referee quality of life and through that, improving fencing tournament conditions for all.

### **Running for USFCA Treasurer**

**From Donna Cohen Rios:** I began fencing in 1987 as Freshman in college and after 2 decades of 'retirement' due to the demands of work and parenting, returned to active competition in 2012. I recently earned Moniteur Certification in Epee and am currently working towards my Prevoit in Epee. Coaching has brought me rewards and fulfillment that I hadn't expected, and I am excited that I have the opportunity to enrich our sport by adding a female perspective.

Throughout my life, I have held treasurer positions: from high school, college, Girl Scout, and Cub Scout volunteer positions, to business financial positions for a commercial condo association and dental practices. I have current Quickbooks Online certification and am self-employed, performing dental billing and accounting services for offices across the country.

Profit and loss statements and balance sheets do not recognize business/volunteer organization types. They rely on accurate data entry and reporting. I am running for Treasurer because this position brings two things I love to do together, it is a way that I can use my talents to give back to the fencing community, and it offers an opportunity for women's leadership in our wonderful sport of fencing.

**Focus on NCAA:** It is clear we need to invest in the youth in our sport to build our professional future. Many ideas are being generated on how to do this. Jennie Salmon is leading up the discussions. Email her if you want to be involved.

**Additional Plans:** These are ideas floating out there and need cultivation from everyone in our sport:

- 1) Opportunities for female athletes to develop as referees and coaches.
- 2) A spotlight for and support of programs led by women coaches.
- 3) A foundation to support collegiate athletes to fence internationally while fencing in their collegiate programs; this will support the long-term development of our Olympic team.
- 4) Workshops and training on building a more inclusive sport.

Especially as we face unique circumstances in this time of pandemic, there may be other ways we can help. Let us know what you think!

**Referee Development:** We are in the research phase for pushing for a ratified referee development/mentorship program in the United States. Right now, as we think about what will work based on our diverse geographic regions, we need to hear from other representatives on how they do their education and training. The United States is unique and our solutions will not look like any other country. Ask around, network, get ideas, and ask yourself if you are a person willing to work to reduce the great frustration fencers, parents and coaches are experiencing. This is not a \*referee issue\* -- this is a growth and development issue that needs community intervention and constant tending, revisioning and attention as we work for a future of fencing. Many referees are involved in this discussion. KEEP THE TALK GOING as the action plans materialize. Even though we are not participating in tournaments, let's be ready when we go back to work!

Thank you for your time and attention to thinking, talking and putting your energy into our community.

**Reminders:**

Join any of the discussions! Share with your friends who may need support too.

Ask to join the WFencing Coaches and Professionals Facebook Group. Many contributors are having great discussions which are helping us move forward.

During this trying time for many, thank you for your patience as we look to each other to heal and allow space for the support needed to generate. We do have the courage and leadership strength to evolve fencing's values of justice and equality for all.

**Newsletter authors:** Cathleen Randall and Jennifer Oldham

***Sending many thanks to our developing co-creators in the WFencing effort!***