**Director’s Message-----January, 2021**

***Ampro-ipro racquetball***

***Note: This article is targeted for the next USA Racquetball Magazine***

**With the onset of this new calendar year, we are now enjoying our 45th year of operation. Three key components have defined our organization over the years:**

1. **Education**
2. **Service**
3. **Community support**

**Per our mission statement, we believe in providing educational and recreational opportunities to the largest cross-section of the population. In a perfect world, this includes youth, adults, and ‘special groups’. Once we had the luxury of over 90 indoor, four wall courts available in our largest city, Albuquerque. Today, with 23 courts, it is more difficult to continue this quest. Yet, we are committed to the task, making programming adjustments, recruiting statewide and beyond, and surrounding ourselves with individuals who have a passion for the sport (s). Opportunities continue to evolve; with emphases on junior development, referee and skill certifications, outdoor events, and a range of competitive options.**

**As a service organization, we try to bring in volunteers and others with strong interpersonal skills. In addition, having backgrounds in teaching and coaching in individual and group settings, promoting/marketing, and fundraising. Building relationships is critical for long term success. Targeted are those individuals who are business leaders, heads of other not-for-profits, heads of other sport governing bodies, and leaders of racquet sport manufacturing groups. Probably the most important target is the owner/operator of venues. Being in a transient industry, we designate board members and members at large to build and nurture club partnerships in all communities where courts exist. IHRSA notes that court sport club members, as opposed to ‘fitness only’ members, have a significantly higher retention rate and they generate more income. To protect and grow the court infrastructure, club personnel are encouraged to actively participate in our events. This becomes a win-win whereby they are energized and become promotional advocates. A fitting quote from PW of the local Budweiser/Michelob distributorship: ‘We don’t support you to sell beer; we support you because we like you.’**

**As a business entity, New Mexico Racquetball takes part in the USOC Safe Sport initiative; files annually with the Secretary of State and IRS; and procures liability insurance to protect board members. Drafting and reviewing an annual budget is crucial. Adjusting to changing environments helps keep us one step ahead from falling into a crisis mode. Finally, interacting and supporting our NGB (USA Racquetball) is an important component for having continuity and instilling pride of ownership.**

**Support to communities at large keeps us engaged. Our WSRC event has contributed over $500,000 toward the International Racquetball Federation Development Fund Campaign. Other recipients are on our table as well; including USAR, American Cancer Society, Boys & Girls Clubs, NM Senior Sports Council, and Pennies for the Homeless. Growing our network with individuals and groups locally, across New Mexico, throughout the Rocky Mountain region, nationally, and internationally, will continue to serve us well. We are fortunate that many of us have a strong sphere of influence stretching across borders.**

**On the horizon are: 36th edition of the IRF World Senior Racquetball Championships, Paddleball Nationals, Racketball Regionals, Squash Pro-am, Outdoor one wall & three wall racquetball, handball, and paddleball State Championships, and a host of performance camps. In closing, we hope to be in business for another 45 years.**

**MORE ANECDOTES:**

**…Incorporated as a 501C3 Organization in 1983.**

**…Board of Directors has included up to 16 members.**

**…Organize and operate events ranging from in-house to World Championships.**

**…Hold 20+ events/year--racquetball, handball, squash, paddleball, & racketball (squash 57).**

**…Live streaming during most of our activities.**

**…Our proximity to the southern border facilitates collaboration with Mexico players.**

**Quote of the month**

***‘The mind is like a garden; you can plant trees & flowers, or you can plant weeds’ Anon***

**UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL:**

**…March 27-April 3 Pan Am Championships; Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia**

**…August 31-Sept. 4 36th IRF World Senior Championships; Albuquerque, NM USA**

**…Summer of 2022 World Games; Birmingham, AL USA**

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