



An Alliance to Improve Water Safety

The Red Cross, the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) and the YMCA have joined forces to make water safer for all Americans.

Representatives of the nation's major lifeguard-training organizations met in St. Louis last June to explore increased collaboration in water safety. In the short term, their goal is to improve and standardize lifeguard training. In the long run, this will make water safer for everyone.

"With a lack of real research on aquatics in terms of drowning studies, there is nothing to support scientifically the lifeguarding methods used today," explained Mike Espino, manager of aquatics technical development at the Red Cross. "Therefore, we are combining our resources to improve research."

Better research will lead to a scientific, research-based approach to development of lifeguard training and standards.

"While the Red Cross, USLA and YMCA have worked together informally for many years, the meeting was intended to find ways to better leverage the resources of all," said Chris Brewster, liaison officer for the USLA and president of the International Life Saving Federation.

The three agencies share many similarities. Each operates as a nonprofit entity. In addition, each is dedicated to the importance of promoting aquatic safety through public education and the provision of properly trained lifeguards. In addition, each has a long history of leadership in lifeguard training that significantly predates that of all other existing programs, except perhaps the Boy Scouts.

During the St. Louis meeting, key individuals and volunteers from each organization focused on lifeguard training, standards

and vigilance/attention. They also discussed ways to improve the compilation of statistics relating to water incidents.

A specific result of the nine-person meeting was identification of key issues that will require further attention and research. The broader result was an agreement to work on these and other issues as a coalition.

"There are many things we can accomplish together that would be much more difficult to achieve individually," said

and focus training needed to improve the efficacy of lifeguards.

- Developing minimum training standards.
- Studying in-service training components, such as scheduling, elements included, development of methods to enhance lifeguards' analytical and response skills.

The next step is deciding how undertake the collaborative efforts. "In some cases," said Brewster, "the cost of research might

be substantial. In others, existing resources may be available to jumpstart the process."

For example, meeting participant Roy Fielding, director of aquatics at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, offered the assistance of his institution in designing and administering the statistics-gathering process.

Meanwhile, grants, donations and related sources of funding will be sought for the other areas of need.

"If achieved," speculated Brewster, "the ambitious goals adopted by the three group likely would have a broad impact on lifeguard training and standards... basing lifeguard standards on reliable research and testing can only improve the consistency and quality of lifeguard training, standards and service. That would lead to realization of a goal all three organizations clearly share: the reduction of death and injury in the aquatic environment."



The American Red Cross, the United States Lifesaving Association and the YMCA are partnering to find ways to improve and standardize lifeguard training, which will in turn enhance water safety. Photos courtesy United States Lifesaving Association

Espino. "And by agreeing on priorities in advance, we can better ensure outcomes that reflect our collective goals."

After determining that the lack of scientific, research-based development in lifeguard training and standards an underlying weakness in aquatic safety, the group discussed various areas in which they could work together:

- Studying lifeguard vigilance and attention, including the length of time lifeguards should stand duty, the length of breaks and what activities they should include, and how lifeguards can minimize boredom.
- Examining various facets of victim recognition, including effective ways to scan the water, lifeguard positioning, and the sizing of lifeguard zones.
- Maintaining a database on accidents, rescues or other incidents. This could help determine training needs



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President's Column

By Ron Riberich, NWSC President

Once again it's winter and the wrath of Mother Nature has descended upon us. The December and January holiday celebrations are now a distant memory, and, for the majority of us the long-anticipated warm-weather water recreation season is beginning to come into view. And, based on the recent pattern of erratic weather most of us have been experiencing lately, milder temperatures cannot get here soon enough!

But as we all wait for the spring season to finally begin, let me bring you all up to date on what has been going on within the National Water Safety Congress.

In December last year, the Congress signed a formal Memorandum of Agreement to partner and share resources with the very distinguished Spirit of America Foundation. We think this is a win-win situation for both organizations. The Spirit of America had been looking for a way to promote their highly acclaimed youth boating and water safety programs on both regional and national basis, and by partnering with the Congress and promoting their programs under the Congress name, there appears to be a way to make it all happen.

To help facilitate this partnership, the Congress applied for federal grant funding for next fiscal year to initialize several start-up Spirit water safety programs in several areas of our regional jurisdiction. If we are successful in securing funding and developing the Spirit water safety curriculum on a national basis, a solid new water safety program will be available for children of all ages which can definitely make a difference in preventing future water-related incidents.

The Congress has also been hard at work on developing a new cold water safety program which will be part of this year's post-International Boating and Water Safety Summit in April. The training is targeted for professionals and volunteers of all levels who will be working in cold-water environments. The class will be taught by Gary Owen who has over 30 years experience in teaching, instruction and working in numerous cold-water situations. Please see the supporting article in the Journal for more details on this training.

In January, the Congress participated in the first Exhibitor Expo held at the United States Power Squadrons' 90th Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla., and exhibited at one of the largest and longest running boat shows nationally in Cleveland, Ohio. Both Expos turned out to be exceptional events. Our executive director reported that interest in the Congress was exceptionally good and several new members joined the organization at each event.

The Summit once again promises to be the premier boating and water safety training program of the season. The Summit Advisory Committee and our executive director have been working extremely hard this winter to bring you the latest information and training to help with your upcoming boating and water safety season. The program will feature general sessions and five breakout track sessions, including a separate track for Paddlesport Safety. We also have several on-water demonstration activities planned that should undoubtedly be an outstanding way to spend a beautiful spring afternoon in sunny Florida.

And finally, the Summit in April kicks off another Board election for the Congress. According to our bylaws, a new Board of Directors will be selected. Elections will be held at the Congress Business Meeting on Wednesday afternoon at the Summit. Please plan to attend this meeting and consider the candidates for election to the Board. Remember, this is your organization. If you want your voice to be heard, please come and vote. The candidates' vitas will be available at our exhibitor booth for your perusal at the beginning of the Summit.

See you in April in Panama City Beach, Florida.

NWSC to Elect Board of Directors

The National Water Safety Congress will be holding election to select Board members for the 2004-06 term. Elections will be held during the NWSC Business Meeting on April 21 at the International Boating and Water Safety Summit in Panama City, Fla..

A slate of candidates will be presented to the current Board for approval during its spring meeting.



To be considered for election as a Board Member, candidates must be interested in promoting and furthering the cause of water safety throughout the nation. Candidates are expected to have the support of their organizations, be able to attend two annual Board meetings, and participate in Board assignments.

If you have any questions, please contact Joe Morgan at 202.502.6753.

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Boating & Water Safety Summit Returns to Florida

The Eighth Annual Boating and Water Safety Summit will be held in sunny Panama City Beach, Florida, this spring. The dates are April 18, 21, 2004.

Each year this event draws hundreds of boating and water safety experts from around the world to share information about current issues and trends in boating and water safety.

The event's program will follow its traditional schedule, with an opening reception on Sunday evening, general sessions on Monday, breakout sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, closing sessions on Wednesday afternoon, and the awards banquet on Wednesday evening. This year's breakout sessions will focus on Education, Outreach & Communication,



Waterway Management, Paddlesport Safety, Law Enforcement, and Risk Management/Accident Prevention.

Below is the Summit program (*Editor's note: Events and times listed below are subject to change.*) Visit www.watersafetycongress.org and www.safeboatingcouncil.org for updates. The registration form is also available on these websites.

To preregister, the registration form and payment must be postmarked by **March 12**.

The Summit is being held at the Marriott Bay Point Resort Village. The room rate for the Summit is \$74 per night. Room reservations must be made by calling

850.236.6000 on or before March 25 to receive the Summit discount.

International Boating & Water Safety Summit Program

Sunday, April 18

11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Registration Open

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Exhibitor Setup

6:00-8:00 p.m.
Opening Reception

Monday, April 19

7:00-8:00 a.m.
Continental Breakfast

7:00-11:00 a.m.
Exhibit Area Open

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Registration Open

8:00-9:40 a.m.

OPENING GENERAL SESSION

- Color Guard - Presentation of Colors
- Invocation
- Recognition of Honored Guests
- Introduction of Summit Advisory Committee
- Greeting and Welcome
- *You're in Command*

Break -- Exhibits Open

10:00-10:55

- *Overview of Summit*
Virgil Chambers, Executive Director,
National Safe Boating Council
- *One Size Fits All?*
Chris Edmonston, Boat U.S.

12:00-1:30 p.m.
Lunch On Your Own

1:30-2:20 p.m.

- *Better Beaches*
Dr. Tom Griffiths

Break -- Exhibits open

3:40-5:15 p.m.

- Paddlesport Safety
- Corps of Engineers
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Hydropower Meeting

Dinner and Sightseeing on your own

7:00-9:00 p.m.
International Delegate Reception
(by invitation only)

7:30-9:00 p.m.
Paddlesport Leadership Forum Reception
(by invitation only)

Tuesday, April 20

7:00-8:00 a.m.
Continental Breakfast

7:00-11:00 a.m.
Registration Open

7:00-11:00 a.m.
Exhibit Area Open

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT TRACKS

The following breakout tracks will be offered:

- ED Education
- OC Outreach & Communication
- WM Waterway Management
- PSA Paddlesport Safety (Classroom)
- PSB Paddlesport Safety (Poolside)
- LE Law Enforcement

ROUND 1
8:00-8:50 a.m.

ROUND 2
9:00-9:50 a.m.

Break -- Exhibits Open

ROUND 3
10:10-11:00 a.m.

ROUND 4

11:10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

12:30-5:00 p.m.
On-Site Water Activities

12:30-5:00 p.m.
Waterfront Demonstrations - New Canoe & Kayak Designs

3:00-6:00 p.m.
Paddlesport Leadership Forum Meeting
(by invitation only)

Dinner and Sightseeing on your own

5:15-7:00 p.m.
BoatSmart Meeting

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

7:00-8:00 a.m.
Continental Breakfast

7:00-11:00 a.m.
Registration Open

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT TRACKS

The following breakout tracks will be offered:

- ED Education
- OC Outreach & Communication
- RM Risk Management/Accident Prevention
- PS Paddlesport Safety
- LE Law Enforcement

ROUND 1
8:00-8:50 a.m.

ROUND 2
9:00-9:50 a.m.

ROUND 3
10:10-11:00 a.m.

Continued on page 4

Tips for Boating Safely During Cold Weather

Each winter, hunters of all ages hit the water with their boats, dogs, guns, decoys, gear and enthusiastic attitudes. And each year several hunters lose their lives in tragic accidents involving overloaded boats, icy cold water and drowning. Why do these tragedies occur? Because hunters are failing to take the one simple precaution that would save their lives -- wearing a **life jacket**.

All boaters who use the waterways during cold weather must be encouraged to heed the following suggestions.

1. Plan Your Trip - Include in your planning not only the common sense things, such as when you plan to leave and return home, but also those items necessary in case of emergency and a plan of what your actions will be. A radio/cell phone, dry clothes and matches in a waterproof bag, food and fresh water, flashlight/batteries, flares or signal kit are just a few items that would prove very beneficial in an emergency.

2. File a Float Plan - Leave a description of your boat, the number of persons on board, the area that you will be hunting/boating in and the time you expect to return with a friend or family member. If your boat capsizes and you are overdue in getting back, it is very important that water patrol officers have a specific area to search. Time is of the essence in cold-water exposure and your time is limited.

3. Safety First - Many hunters utilize johnboats as their mode of transportation to and from their blinds/stands. It is very easy to overload a small boat (14'-16') with decoys, equipment, dogs, hunters, guns and game, which makes these boats unsafe in certain water conditions. As the operator of the boat, it is your responsibility to ensure that you don't overload the boat.

4. Weather Conditions - Winter weather changes with little to no warning. Always check the local forecast prior to going out on the water and **NEVER** rely on a small overloaded boat to get you safely across any body of water, especially one which is rough due to wind.

5. Equipment - No piece of equipment on any boat is more important than your **personal flotation device** (PFD). The importance of wearing your PFD, especially during colder parts of the year, is very much understated. If you are a victim of a capsizing or falling overboard in the cold water months and you are not wearing

your PFD, your chances of survival decrease dramatically.

6. Emergency Actions - A boater who ends up in the water may begin suffering from hypothermia in just a matter of minutes, so quick action is often the key to survival. Hypothermia means losing heat faster than one's body can produce it, causing a drop in (inner) body temperature. Cold water-immersion hypothermia happens quickly. The victim of a cold-water immersion should focus all of his efforts toward getting out of the water. **DON'T** remove heavy clothes in the water; they trap air and help keep you afloat in addition to trapping body heat. Keep your head above water; the majority of heat loss comes from the head. Draw your knees to your chest and your arms to your sides in the Heat Escape Lessening Posture (H.E.L.P.) position, protecting the major areas of heat loss. If there are other people in the water with you, huddle together with your arms around their shoulders.

A number of factors influencing a person's cooling rate and survival time in cold water (less than 70 degrees) include:

- Age, body size, physical condition and reaction

- Activity - trying to swim, floating, thrashing about
- Water temperature
- Amount of clothing being worn
- Alcohol consumption.

7. Alcohol Effects - Alcohol and cold weather, particularly cold water, can be fatal. Common sense and responsibility are the keys to avoiding possible injury or death. Alcohol consumption, unfortunately, accounts for many of these tragedies. Drinking clouds common sense, which in turn creates a false sense of security. Since alcohol lowers the body's resistance to cold water, it greatly increases the effect of torso reflex (the unexpected blast of cold water causing an automatic gasp for air) by increasing the metabolic rate and demand for oxygen in frigid water. As the alcohol level in a person's body increases, coordination abilities decrease.

Traditionally people view the boating season to run from Memorial Day to Labor Day and recognize boating dangers during that period. However, boating and water safety organizations work to instill safe boating practices to use year-round.

Summit Program continued from page 3

ROUND 4

11:10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch On Your Own

1:00 p.m. - 1:50 p.m.

National Safe Boating Campaign

Randy Smith, NSBC

2:00 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.

Canada PFD

Barbara Byers, Canadian Safe Boating

Council
Break

3:20 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Closing General Session

4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Announcement of Poster/PSA Winners

6:00 p.m.

Networking/Reception

6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Awards Banquet

Thursday, April 22, 2004

7:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

NWSC Board of Directors Meeting

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

NSBC Instructor Course

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Ice Safety/Hypothermia Awareness Course

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch On Your Own

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Summit Advisory Committee Wrap-up

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

NSBC Instructor Course

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Ice Safety/Hypothermia Awareness Course

Friday, April 23, 2004

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

NSBC Instructor Course

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch On Your Own

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

NSBC Instructor Course

Safe Boating Campaign Advocates Life Jacket Wear

BOAT SMART. BOAT SAFE. WEAR IT!

Following these three simple guidelines can go a long way toward safeguarding a recreational boating excursion. And that's why they remain the slogan for the North American Safe Boating Campaign this year.

The theme for the Safe Boating Campaign was updated in 2003 to reflect our nation's focus on homeland security. *Boat Smart. Boat Safe.* is the key slogan of the campaign. The effort to encourage life jacket usage is still in the forefront, and shown by the inclusion of the words *Wear It!* in the campaign slogan.

By wearing life jackets, following the rules of navigation, abstaining from drinking alcohol and following other safe boating laws and

suggestions, boaters will decrease their needs from state and federal safety forces. This, in turn, will allow those safety officials to direct more of their attention to homeland security issues.

The North American Safe Boating Campaign begins with a kickoff event in the Washington D.C. area on May 20, 2004. The exact location will be announced soon.

Sponsored by the National Safe Boating Council, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and the U.S. Coast Guard, and in cooperation with the Canadian Safe Boating Council and the Canadian Coast Guard, this annual campaign heightens boater awareness just prior to Memorial Day, the unofficial start of boating season.

Resources for use in North American Safe Boating Campaign events will automatically be sent out to most groups and individuals per the mailing list provided by the parent organization's headquarters

or central office. These campaign kits will be received by April 2004.

Another valuable source of information about the campaign is the website www.safeboatingcampaign.com. Beginning in March, this site will offer the latest resources and graphics available for campaign events.

Many resources will be available online before campaign kits arrive in the mail. In addition, the National Safe Boating Week proclamation, appreciation certificates and evaluation will be available only online.

An important service offered on www.safeboatingcampaign.com is a listing of campaign events scheduled across the nation. Be sure to **post all your boating safety events** on this site and encourage your local partners to post their events online as well.

Campaign partners encourage boaters to *Boat Smart. Boat Safe.* by:

- Wearing a life jacket while boating;
- Avoiding alcohol use when operating a boat;
- Taking a boating safety class;
- Getting boats checked for safety and maintenance concerns; and
- Being aware of U.S. Coast Guard regulations established since September 11, relating to security zones near U.S. naval vessels.

The North American Safe Boating Campaign is made possible through a grant from the Aquatic Resources (Wallop-Breaux) Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard. E-mail any questions or comments about the North American Safe Boating Campaign to campaign@safeboatingcouncil.org.

The Dos and Don'ts of Boating Safety

Following these simple dos and don'ts of boating safety will help boaters chart a safe course towards the fun and excitement of recreational boating:

- **DO wear a life jacket. Life Jackets. They Float. You Don't.**
- **DON'T mix alcohol and boating.**
- **DO observe the nautical rules-of-the-road.**
- **DON'T stand in a small boat.**
- **DO check the weather forecast before getting underway.**
- **DON'T overload your boat.**
- **DO keep a good lookout.**

These suggestions are constant reminders of one very important thing in regards to boating safety: **USE COMMON SENSE!**

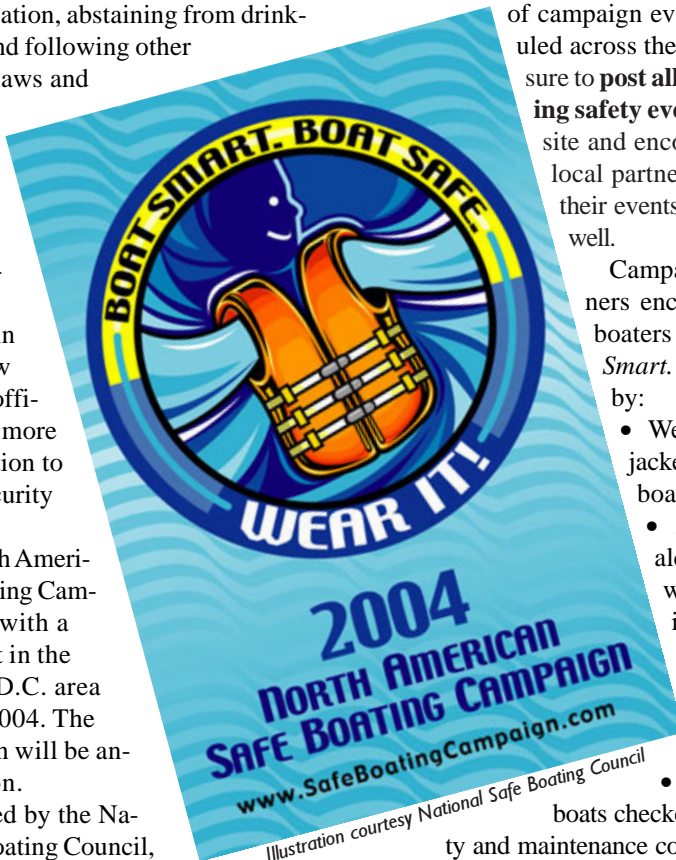
The waterways offer an open invitation to all types of boating. Boaters should be aware of the outcome of their actions. Accidents result from a chain of circumstances or behavior that can be easily avoided. Boaters should be encouraged to remember to follow the above boating dos and don'ts and to take a boating safety course. It could save lives.

The International Boating & Water Safety Summit

April 18-21, 2004

**Panama City Beach
Florida**

**For more information, visit
www.watersafetycongress.org**



National Safe Kids Week to Focus on Water Safety

According to the Nation SAFE KIDS Campaign, “despite a 34 percent decline from 1987 to 1998, drowning remains the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death to children ages 14 and under, taking nearly 1,000 children’s lives each year. And for every child who drowns, four more are hospitalized for near-drowning; for every hospital admission, approximately four children are treated in hospital emergency rooms.”



To help raise awareness and prevent such deaths and injuries, the nonprofit organization selected water safety as the theme for this year’s National SAFE KIDS Week, which will be held May 1-8, 2004.

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign is the first and only national non-profit organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injury - the number one killer of children age 14 and under.

This campaign offers a great opportunity to partner with other public safety organizations and promote boating and water safety messages.

For more information and to find out how to get involved, visit the Campaign’s website at www.safekids.org.

More than 300 state and local SAFE KIDS coalitions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico comprise the Campaign. Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, M.D., Sc.D., is chairman of the Campaign.

Water Safety Tips

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign offers the following tips to protect children from drowning:

- Do not leave children unattended near water in sinks, tubs, buckets, wells, streams, rivers, or other bodies of water.
- Empty all water containers after use and store them upside down or with a locked/latched cover.
- Teach children to swim after age 4.
- Children should always wear approved life jackets or personal flotation devices when on boats or other watercraft.
- Do not allow children to run, push or jump on others near water.
- Allow children to swim only in areas supervised by a trained and certified lifeguard. Obey any rules and posted signs.
- Make sure children always swim with a buddy.
- Know how to use rescue equipment and where emergency phone numbers are located.

NASBLA Futures Forum on Recreational Boating a Success

In conjunction with its 44th annual conference, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) held the second installment of the Futures Forum on Recreational Boating.

Dubbed the *2003 Stakeholders Forum on the Future of Recreational Boating*, the meeting presented attendees with a wealth of information ranging from a look at changing demographics in America to a session on funding issues with Chairman James Muldoon.

Other sessions covered the politics of land and waterway use, boating access issues, homeland security, boater and environmental regulations, and new watercraft and the growth areas of recreational boating.

Ellen Engleman Conners, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), held a luncheon presentation for Forum participants. She asserted that the number of boating deaths and injuries occurring in the United States each year is unacceptable.

Chairman Engleman Conners explained that to ensure safety for the public

the recommendations made by the NTSB must be followed. The Board’s top recommendations are mandatory boating safety education, mandatory personal flotation device wear laws for children, stricter enforcement of boating under the influence laws, and increased safety measures for personal watercraft.

During her address, Engleman Conners announced that three NASBLA member states – Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Tennessee – had earned the Board’s State Advocacy Award for their acceptance and completion of NTSB recommendations issued to improve recreational boating safety.

Barbara Byers, chairman of the Canadian Safe Boating Council, also held a special luncheon presentation during the Forum. Byers discussed the Council’s recently completed study on the mandatory wear of personal flotation devices (PFDs).



The study found that boating-related drownings warrant action, PFD wear is the risk factor to address in preventing such drownings, mandatory wear legislation is the intervention to use to increase PFD wear rates, and finally that such legislation should be feasible in Canada.

The conference breakout sessions involved sharing information about current issues and trends in recreational boating safety. Participants learned about human error reporting, the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators’ National Motor Vehicle Title Information System, the latest information on carbon monoxide and recreational boating, boating under the influence officer training, how an education course gets NASBLA approval, the *Guide for Multiple Use Waterways Management*, the Connecticut Clean Marina Program, and emerging technology in accident investigation data capture.

A resource book was developed for the conference and is available on the NASBLA website, www.nasbla.org. This document is a wealth of information and links about the aforementioned topics.