

Speaking to the Act 47 Coordinators

Statements from Mark Rauterkus on April 28, 2004, at the Public Meeting held at the North Side Church.

My friends, Bob and Maurice are going to pass out a handout for everyone here while I speak.

My name is Mark Rauterkus, I'm from the South Side. I know a lot about recreation. I play in the centers. I go to the swim pools. I've hosted a number of community meetings on these subjects.

I've coached swimming in the WPIAL, this past season, in an affluent suburban district. I've been a NCAA Division I coach for six seasons. I've been to the Pan Am Games. I've published 100 how-to technical sports books in the past. I've seen many different perspectives.

The book I want to talk about tonight is a new one -- a position paper on Pittsburgh's Parks, Recreation and Pools. It is more than 100 pages, and I'm just an individual, not a think tank. I'm a dad. I've been an outspoken antagonist to the approach we've seen on Grant Street for some time.

If you are really jazzed about saving Pittsburgh, then let's, "Think Again!"

- Please explore a new position paper at <http://DSL.CLOH.Org>

This position paper puts forth grassroots solutions:

54 near-term, 38 mid-term and 6 long-term suggested objectives.

The mind leads and the body follows. Kids, parents and people of sports know this mind/body formula. Summertime, sandlot fun has little to do with one's wallet and more about one's heart.

Priorities of growth, wellness, learning and community can be achieved through engagement. Playing well with others is NOT expensive. Cash and handouts are

nice, but we NEED to take care of our public life, our shared spaces and civic priorities.

With your help with your awareness, new solutions can soar. Pittsburgh's population can rebound after we dig to the roots of the problems.

"Save Our Summer 2004" is a band-aid on a band aid without an address for the real hurt, a lack of cooperation. Everyone understands SOS is for the short term. The next step needs to come with vision.

Think again!

If you can, perhaps we can meet again at 6:30 pm on June 17, 2004, at South Side's South Vo Tech High School library, East Carson & 10th Street. We could hold a real debate and focus just on recreation with coaches and parents.

Dan Onorato has said that he'd like to merge the city into the county. Part of the paper calls for that merger to happen -- but let's start with the parks. Let's involve Pittsburgh Public Schools. We can make a Pittsburgh Park District.

In the city there are five different office to visit if you want a permit. Then in the county or schools, there are others. We should put all permits and parks efforts under one roof. Permits don't work.

We need more volunteerism. We also need some paid staffers.

These solutions are not expensive. We knew that The Great Race did not need to be cancelled -- as it made money.

Our parks are shared spaces, public spaces. I want them to be part of the public process and not run like private grounds, as one might run a country club.

I hope to hear from you soon. Thanks for considering these suggestions.