

"The Importance of Competent Personnel"

By

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The importance of competent personnel in swimming pool work is something which has been, I believe, rather frequently overlooked. For many years inadequate salaries, discrimination between candidates for pool positions based on other considerations rather than ability and poor preparation on the part of candidates for positions, have marked this field of endeavor.

Today, faced with a growing public recognition of the value of recreation, of which swimming and aquatics form a very important phase, it behooves us to examine our thinking as to what determines competency insofar as the handling of swimming and swimming pools are concerned. It will be assumed that most of us are interested in situations involving pools to which the general public is admitted - pools maintained by and for the community certain questions of policy must be answered.

First, should the pool operate on a fee basis, or should it be open to all free of charge?

Second, should the pool promote free lessons for children in the mornings?

Third, should the pool promote games, contests, pageants, etc., with the intent of entering more fully into the leisure time activities of the community?

These, and similar questions should be answered fully in the minds of the park board or other agency which has the task of hiring personnel for their pool. For knowing what is wanted in the way of a program makes it easier to employ the proper persons to carry it out. (Parenthetically it might be added, that I am one of these persons who believes pools should be used to the widest possible extent by the community, giving free lessons to children, selling itself in many other ways as an agency of highest value to the community. One who worries too much how to make a profit with a swimming pool is doomed to many grey hairs or the loss of them entirely. What profit one can gain from a swimming pool will have to be the feeling of a job well done - a benefit in the social sense).

Starting then, from the premise that a community pool should operate for the greatest possible community benefit, let us ascertain the personnel necessary to operate the pool and discover if we can what are some of the desirable characteristics to look for when filling the positions.

First we have the manager. It is my belief that every municipal pool should have a manager whose time is occupied fully by his managerial duties. He should not be required to guard or do similar work. His task should be first to see that all others of the staff are functioning efficiently.

Secondly, he should be responsible for the proper operation of the pool according to the standards laid down by the State. This implies a knowledge of the techniques of pool operation, the taking of various water tests and other fundamentals of good pool operation.

Third, he should have a good knowledge and appreciation of swimming and, whenever possible, should have preceded his present position with experience in guarding work.

Fourth, he must be an organizer capable of producing interesting and attractive water shows, meets and similar events, as well as a broad and comprehensive teaching program.

Fifth, he should have some ability at writing and speaking - a big help in advertising the pool and what it is doing for the community.

Sixth, he should possess some knowledge of simple bookkeeping methods.

Finally, he must have a pleasant personality and yet possess enough iron in him to lay down the law when the occasion warrants. It should be made clear