

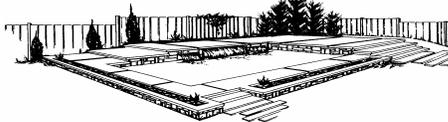
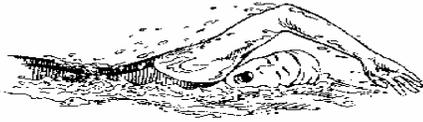


# Water Digest

San Diego Chapter

www.Spa.and Pool.org

January 2001



## Calendar of Events

Feb 2-3, 2001	Region X Show	Nashville, TN
Feb 8-10, 2001	Western Pool & Spa Show: 23rd Annual	Long Beach, CA
Feb 11-13, 2001	SPATEX	Brighton, UK
Feb 14-16, 2001	Region V/VI Mid-America	Chicago
Feb 15-18, 2001	Region II Conference & Exhibition	
Feb 23-24, 2001	Region VII Show	Orlando, FL
Mar 3, 2001	San Diego IPPSA Table Top Show	Scottish Rite Center
Mar 22-24, 2001	Board of Directors	Austin, TX
Mar 25, 2001	Retailers Council	
Jul 26-28, 2001	Board of Directors	Sun Valley, ID
Aug 24, 2001	Deadline for Submission of Pool Award Entries	
Aug 27, 2001	Judging of Pool Award Entries	
Aug 28, 2001	Pool Awards and Golf Tournament	Carlton Hills Country Club
Nov 28-30, 2001	NSPI International Expo	Phoenix, AZ
Dec 9-10, 2001	NSPI Canada	Toronto, Ontario

## PRESIDENTS LETTER

Greetings to all.

The new millenium, century, or decade has begun. The pool industry is off to a flying start, at least in San Diego.

You can anticipate that there will be some changes in NSPI as time passes. The final outcome of the Mellenee case will surely impact NSPI. The retirement of Dave Karmol, who has done a great job, will create a change in leadership in the organization. I wish that I could gaze into my crystal ball and say that both of these events will generate changes for the better. But only time will tell.

One thing that I can predict is that the San Diego Chapter will keep heading on its road to excellence.

We've already started on this year's awards program. There are also education, promotion and recruitment programs in the works.

Here's to a great future.

*Phil Grider*, NSPI San Diego President

**San Diego NSPI Board of Directors**

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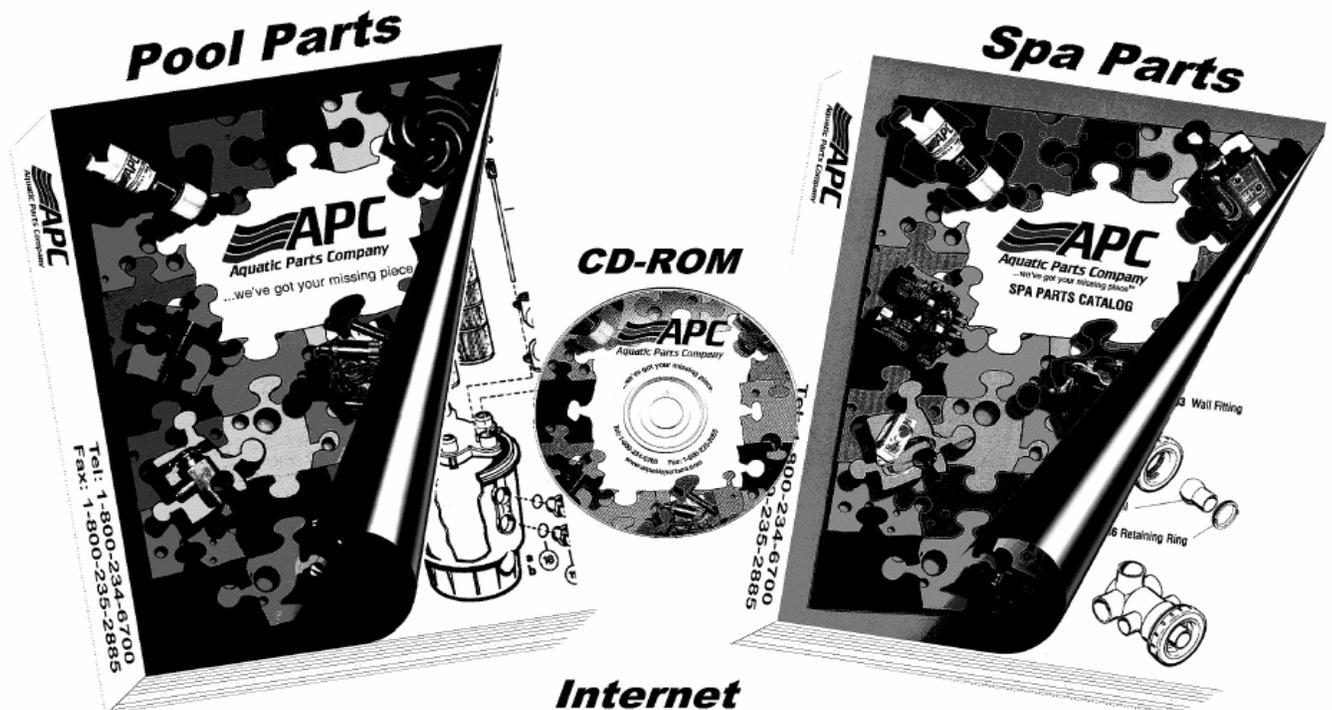
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# Breezes of Change by Rick English

I wanted to title this article, "Winds of Change." But, I thought that it was too harsh.

Two articles in the Jan 10, 2001 issue of Pool & Spa News gave me an uneasy feeling. They were titled "Mergers, Acquisitions Affect Show Exhibitors" and "Water Pik to Skip 2001 NSPI Expo."

Why did this bother me? Let's go back in time.

Ten years ago the industry was in a bit of a recession. Sales of pools were down. Pool buyers were scarce. Pool owners were stretching their dollars. The whole industry knew that we had to cut cost. We also knew that we had to beef up customer service.

If that last pool buyer did not have a good experience with the builder then the cost of that bad experience would ripple through all the industry. If a pool owner had a bad experience with a product, service company or warranty then we all felt his or her pain. We felt it right in the wallet.

The changes that occurred were spectacular. We saw building and service firms going the extra mile.

The manufacturers and distributors? Wow, these guys really came through. Products were replaced, redelivered and reinstalled with very few questions and a cheerful attitude. Manufacturer's and distributor's reps called on us often. They brought welcome assistance and products.

We've seen a lot of consolidation in the manufacturing and distribution of products that many of us install, re-sell and service for pool owners. That didn't bother most of us because our favorite brands were still available. The brand consolidations were gradual. Other things started to change as well. Many of the sales forces were overhauled. The familiar faces



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that came along with the products also changed.

The economy has been good. There have been lots of customers for everyone. So we can relax. Right?

Another change is in information technology. The dot coms may be going broke, but the internet is fulfilling the mission of getting information out to the populace. Now, if you want information about ozone, ionization, salt chlorination, etc. just go to any search engine and you'll get lots of information. So now instead of calling a pool technician or builder the buyer calls up the internet. If a builder or technician does give advice then the owner can and does check the veracity of that information online.

There are still dozens of online firms that will sell your customer a pump, filter or heater for about what you might pay for that product. The buyer does have to pay shipping. But they do not have to pay sales tax. One online firm quoted \$65 to ship a heater. (I don't think that it was overnight.) Sales tax on that same heater is over \$100.

Its not just equipment. I have found online firms that will design your pool and provide engineering. On line permits are already here.

Another thing that changed is the consumer. The Baby Boomers were fun. They are wealthier, better educated and much more self centered than their parents. That was good news for our industry. Generation X is our up and coming market. These folks are not very trusting or loyal, especially in business.

So ask yourself, "When the next squeeze comes, what firms will be able to survive?" Then plan accordingly.

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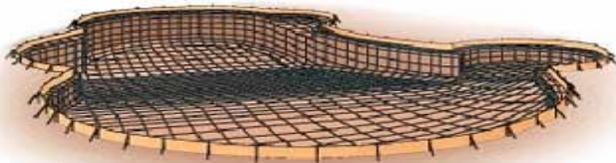
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**S**PEC sent us an update about pending legislation to mandate installation of a Vac-Alert safety valve on all pools. This company already got a similar bill passed in Florida. Meanwhile SPEC noted that the CA Department of Health Services has no record of any entrapment accidents. SPEC told the manufacturer that it would not support such legislation.

**AB1382** was signed into law. It creates housing code enforcement programs.

**AB1849** failed. This bill would have created a CSLB unit to investigate criminal acts by contractors.

**AB2370** failed. It would have allowed the CSLB to deny Home Improvement Certification to those who commit dishonest or fraudulent acts.

**AB 576** - Mechanics' Liens. This new law will require additional declarations to be included in the preliminary lien notice prior to the recording of a mechanic's lien.

**AB 2513** - Prevailing Wage Requirements Violations. A contractor or subcontractor is ineligible to bid or contract on prevailing wage jobs if he or she has a willful violation of the applicable provisions. The Labor Commissioner will publish and distribute the list of contractors who are ineligible to bid. The list will be distributed to interested parties.

**AB 2888** - Professions and Vocations – Among

other things, this bill will make it a crime to manufacture a license and to buy or receive a fraudulent, forged, or counterfeit license. The Board can take actions with respect to an application following a hearing.

**SB 1889** - Internet Licensee Information - Requires boards to disclose information about licensees on the Internet.

**SB 2029** - Contractors State License Board - This bill adds two members to the Board. The Board studies and reviews (a) home equity lending fraud. (b)The CSLB reengineering plan, (c) Consumer recovery fund programs(d) Surety bonds to compensate homeowners for injury(e) Recommend changes in disclosure policy, and f) Schedule completion of an analysis of current examinations. It requires that home improvement contracts and estimates must contain a statement regarding general liability insurance and a checklist for homeowners. The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) will also appoint an Enforcement Monitor to oversee the CSLB's enforcement program.

CPVC is now approved (by the California Department of Housing and Community Development ) for the California Plumbing Code.

The CA Supreme Court ruled that a Homeowner's Association may not recover damages for construction defects that have not caused property damages.

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## 2001 AWARDS PROGRAM PLANNING UNDERWAY

Well here we are off and running into another exciting year. Even though our Pool Design Awards and Golf Tournament aren't scheduled until Sept. 28th, we need to start doing our planning right now! Planning will help make sure that it comes off as well as it did last year. Actually we hope that it will be even better.

You are an important part of this event. We wanted to get the word out to you now. Part of our planning involves reminding you of the important dates. We also want to encourage you to start making plans now for how and when you will be getting all of your pools selected. Start taking those pictures!

Many of you told us that there were pools that didn't get entered, or you didn't get the pictures that you wanted because of waiting until the last minute. (Yes, there were more than one of you).

Please mark your calendars with the important dates listed below. Maybe you should put a deadline on yourself ahead of these dates to make sure everything is

completed in plenty of time (just a thought). Hopefully those of you who participated last year will be back again, and some of you who missed out last year will take part in our biggest event of the year.

Here are the dates to make note of:  
⇒ Deadlines for entries- Aug. 24th,  
⇒ Judging- Aug. 27th,  
⇒ Awards and Golf- Sept. 28th.

If there is anything that I or any of the committee members (listed below) can do to be of any help, please don't hesitate to call, fax or email any one of us.

Committee Members:

- Mike Ramey- Chairman,
- Lisa Adams,
- Red Barrett,
- Rick English,
- Matt Gardner
- A.J. Wilson.

## THE SOFT LANDING

The term "soft landing" is all over the news. I interpret this as newspeak for: "Yes, we are going into a recession, but it won't be as bad as the recessions of the early years of the last two decades."

It seems that the pool industry is the first hit and the last to recover from any economic activity. That's why the "BUSINESS OUTLOOK" article By James C. Cooper & Kathleen Madigan in Business Week caught my attention.

They say that consumer spending on big durable items like cars (they don't mention pools) in December was "one of the worst showings since 1991." Service spending is actually growing. They seem to feel that interest rate cuts will help on the big ticket items. Housing demand and a relatively stable job market are keeping the economy pretty strong.

Consumers are in debt but not overextended. Banks are still lending to consumers. They say that refinancing is taking off. This is a mixed blessing to the pool industry. Consumers often try to finance pools

with money generated from a refinance. But, the process is slow and uncertain. A lot can happen that will cause your customers to change their minds. You could be sitting on a contract for months before you dig. On the other hand, customers do spend more on pools when they package it with a refinance.

The authors say that the stock market is the key. A lot of our customers became wealthy "on paper." That gave them the freedom to spend lavishly. If they feel that the wealth is disappearing then the spending may stop.

So we should plan for the best but prepare for the worst. We lose a few members with each economic down-turn. So work on your contingency plan. Watch out that you don't take on too much debt. Watch out that you are not letting inventories build up. Be careful that you are not too dependent on any one other firm. (Supplier or customer.)

Meanwhile it should be another great year.

## Bidding for Bargains

You've all heard of them. Online auctions are one of the success stories of the dot com debacle. The best known sites are eBay (<http://www.ebay.com>), Yahoo (<http://auctions.yahoo.com>) and First Auction (<http://www.firstauction.com>). These sites get buyers and sellers from all around the planet.

But these sites are primarily for businesses.

There are plenty of auction sites for B2B (business to business) as well. The nice part is that you don't have to be an industrial giant to take advantage of them.

Sometimes these sites are used to clear inventories or overstocks (Another great site is [www.overstock.com](http://www.overstock.com). It is not an auction but they have some great deals.) Let's face it. If a business has to get rid of product that it can't sell then it usually hires a broker specialist. The broker will sell the product at a deep discount. Then the broker gets paid a commission. The buyer, of course, is going to get the best deal that he or she can negotiate. So the only way that these firms can eliminate the broker and the buyer

is by going on line.

Com Auction (<http://www.comauction.com>) is a site that has raw materials for manufacturers, business services, finish goods, trucks, trailers. You name it! Trade Out (<http://www.tradeout.com>) bills itself as the worlds leading business surplus marketplace. They even have electric power generating and distribution equipment. Other sites are specialized. For construction equipment try out Trade Yard (<http://www.tradeyard.com>).

When you look at a site make sure that it has very secure ways to handle money and product delivery. What happens if something goes wrong? How is the money handled? Is credit or some other type of financing available? How much is the site getting for its services? Flat fee, percentage or free? Does a buyer or seller own the site?

Now that you feel safe, go and register with the sites. They will want more than a username, password and email address. Be prepared to fill out a detailed fact sheet. They will verify the information. I'd be very concerned if they didn't!



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**Robert W. Lowry** is a chemist who has bothered to learn everything about the swimming pool and spa industry from retailing to pool service tech, from spa chemical manufacturing to hydraulics & repairs. He is one of those rare individuals that can explain complex chemistry and technology in everyday language.

**Mr. Lowry** started Service Industry News and wrote 119 technical articles, the three books he wrote have become industry standards: "*Service Industry News Guide to Chlorine*", "*Service Industry News Guide to pH, Alkalinity, Water Testing & Water Balance*" and "*Service Industry News Guide to Alternative Sanitizers*." In addition, he re-wrote and re-published the book "*Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Pool Care*." He also wrote the "*Swimming Pool Maintenance Manual*" and the safety training manual for Leslie's Swimming Pool Supplies. He edited the Nation Swimming Pool Foundation Certified Pool Operator (CPO) Handbook. For two years he wrote a monthly column in Pool & Spa News called "*Lab Notes*."

He is a CPO, HAZMAT and HAZWOPR instructor. He wrote the entire Injury & Illness Prevention Plan, the Safety Plan and the total chemical safety training for Leslie's. He served on the NSPI Chemical Treatment and Process Committee for eight years. That committee wrote the Chemical Operational Standards for Pools and Spas.

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## SURFING SPOTS

Some web sites that you should see. Some will be fun. Some will rattle your cage.

<http://www.poolspanews.com/trade/bottomline.pdf> - Aside from shopping the competition, pool and spa professionals can gauge their company's financial health compared to others using the National Spa & Pool Institute's Bottom Line Survey.

<http://www.livemanuals.com> - This site has manuals for all kinds of appliances and tools. Mostly free.

<http://www.4anything.com>. This network has lots of sites. You might look at <http://www.4swimming.com>, <http://4pools.com> or <http://www.4Ponds.com>.

<http://www.fsec.ucf.edu/Solar/TESTCERT/COLLECTR/Tprpool.htm> Pool Collector Thermal Performance Ratings from the Florida Solar Energy Center Last updated in November 2000.

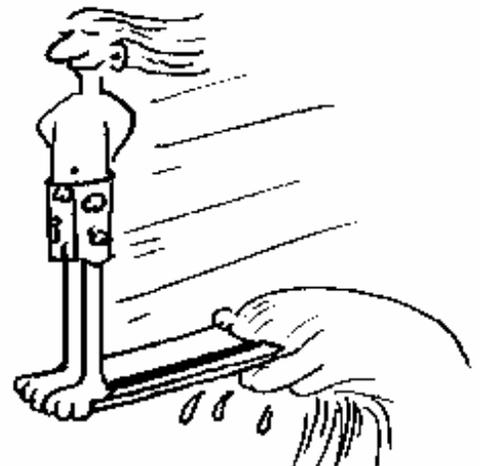
<http://www.pooldesign.net> Pool design for homeowners. Pool design assistance for pool builders, architects and engineers. I will design your custom pool for 99 dollars.

<http://www.eren.doe.gov/rspec> - The RSPEC! Program was developed by the U.S. Department of Energy to assist pool owners and operators to Reduce Swimming Pool Energy Costs.

<http://www.bsc.ca.gov> - California Building Standards Code

<http://www.uglassit.com> - Do-it-yourself swimming pool resurfacing will save you \$5,000 to \$10,000 up front! Now you can resurface your in ground swimming pool and stop the stains and leaks for up to 30 years!

<http://www.nspi.org/PetitionforReview2.pdf> NSPI's Petition for review of the Maneely case.



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