



KEVIN POST is an operations specialist with Counsilman-Hunsaker in St. Louis. Post's experience includes pool management, aquatic recreation and feasibility study analyst, facility audit coordinator.



MICHELLE SCHWARTZ is a contract writer for the Counsilman-Hunsaker team. She focuses on research and writing feasibility studies, master plans, strategic plans and marketing narratives.

Getting the Message

Chances are, your teen lifeguards use and embrace technologies such as texting and Twitter. Here's why you should, too.

Yep, teens, for the most part, represent the face of the aquatics facility. A teen work force has always come with countless challenges, especially because many teens get bored quickly. Teen lifeguards have been known to snooze, flirt, horse around, gossip, read and daydream while on duty. Today, the temptation to become distracted from duties is further heightened with the information-sharing phenomenon.

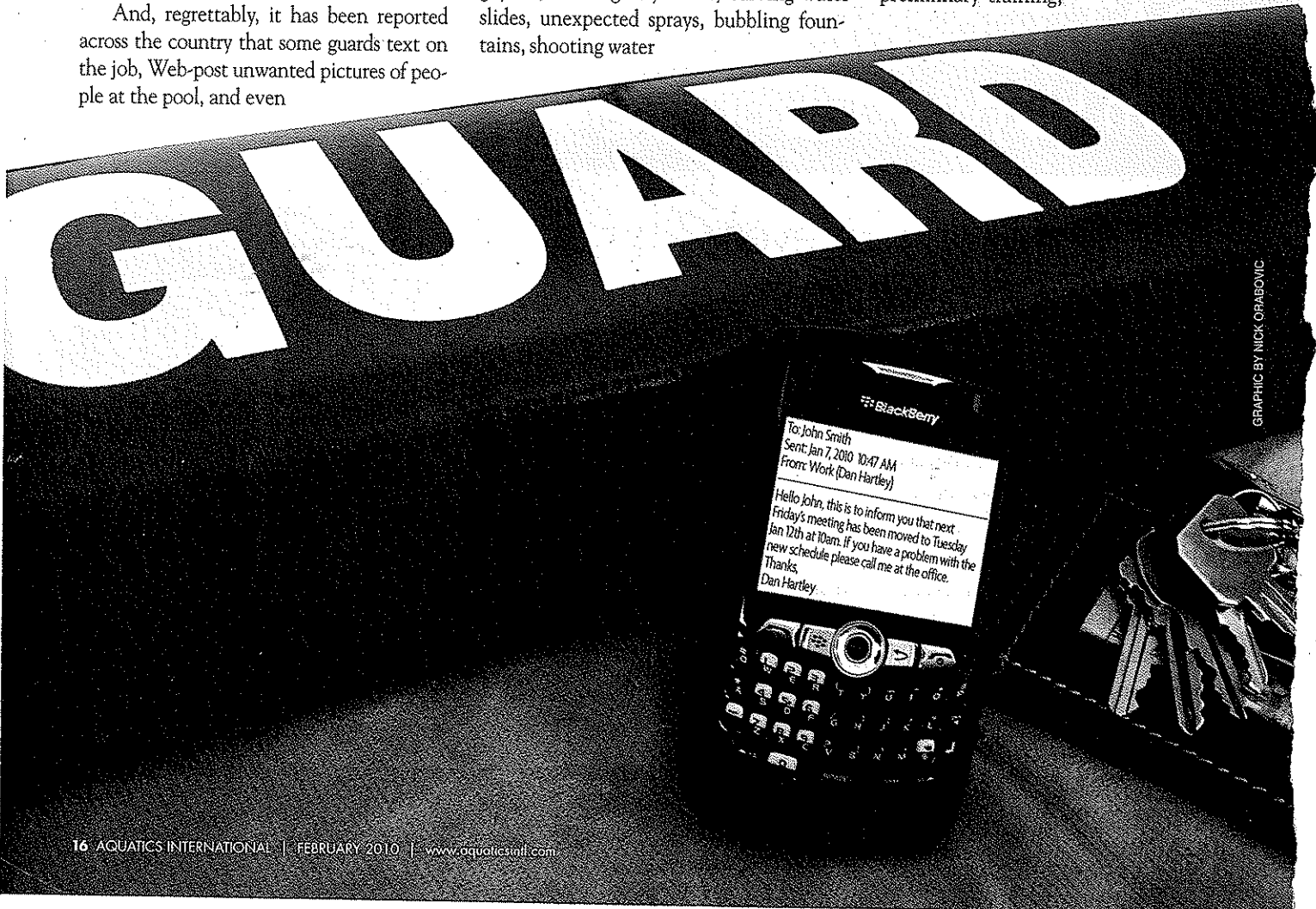
And, regrettably, it has been reported across the country that some guards text on the job, Web-post unwanted pictures of people at the pool, and even

post acts of employee vandalism to video sharing sites — a disastrous cocktail for the aquatics center — all via concealable cell phones.

That's even more concerning because today's sophisticated aquatics centers are no longer flat-water rectangular pools with a handful of swimmers. They now consist of multilevel, free-form bodies of water that shimmer with tumbling waterfalls, gushing geysers, twisting lazy rivers, curving water slides, unexpected sprays, bubbling fountains, shooting water

cannons, swirling vortexes and dumping buckets. Dedicated lifeguards are crucial to observe droves of swimmers who can be found in nooks, crannies, blind corners and areas where the bottom of the pool may not always be visible.

Most aquatics center managers require applicants to be certified in lifeguarding, CPR and first aid. But even with preliminary training,



GRAPHIC BY NICK ORABOVIC

guards are still teenagers with short attention spans — and access to a plethora of information-sharing technology and know-how. As Ken Whiting of Waves for Success notes, "Today's teen work force is an age group whose entire lives have been enveloped in a world of information and communication sharing."

Employees of all types say they e-mail, text, blog and tweet at work when not busy. And new technologies can create quite an enticement to lifeguards because concealable cell phones have access to information-sharing sites.

This needn't be a problem, however. Savvy operators can harness this trend and use information sharing to make their staffs more motivated, productive and dedicated

to saving lives at aquatic facilities.

For example, teen workers can help you use information sharing as a business tool with services such as Vimeo and YouTube. These can be used as a free Web host for professional video tours of the facility as well as ongoing training videos for staff.

A Facebook business page can be a free Web host of amenities, hours of operation, and employee and program scheduling. You can even offer e-mail access to "fans" regarding specials, coupons and special events. Twitter can quickly tweet cancellations or reminders for lessons, classes or programs to followers.

Harness this trend by having teen workers help you use information sharing as a business tool with services such as Vimeo and YouTube. Twitter can quickly tweet cancellations or reminders for lessons, classes or programs to followers.

Other information-sharing techniques include placing schedules online, where lifeguards can post time-off requests and substitution forms. This keeps everything organized rather than in a binder, which is guaranteed to get wet.

Programs also are available that can help manage the entire process. Instead of spending hours calling your staff to inform them of an in-service training, you can text them all in one easy blast. They'll likely get the text before checking a voice-mail anyway.

Remember, a teen work force typically enjoys demonstrating the latest in interactivity expertise to adults. As such, they can show you how to engage information sharing to augment the agency's exposure in a positive way — via up-to-the-minute links, discussions, posts and videos.

Meanwhile, you can educate them about how to save lives and build skills that will last a lifetime. ■

KNOW YOUR LIMITS the FYI on CYA

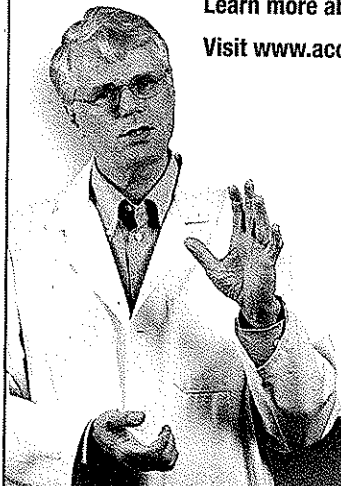
PPG ACCU-TAB® ADVISORY BULLETIN

FREE
exclusive
survey findings
for recreational
water facilities

28% of commercial pools with moderate to high stabilizer (21–100 ppm) have been shut down due to water quality issues since 2007. This contrasts with shutdowns of only 13% of pools having CYA levels maintained at 1–20 ppm.*

Learn more about this and other useful operational information.

Visit www.accu-tab.com/cya for a free download.



800.245.2974

Accu-Tab is a registered trademark of PPG Industries, Inc.

*Survey of >100 commercial swimming pools conducted by PPG Industries, Inc. in 2009.

Dr. Stanley R. Pickens
Sr. Research Chemist, Accu-Tab® System