



Roger Baldwin
P.O. Box 97
Floriston, California 96111

baldwin.roger@gmail.com

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To All of you at this year's Region 1 Championships:

Every year I am asked to sit down and write a letter for the Souvenir Program. When I sit down and start thinking of what I want to say, I somehow always get emotional.

This year's letter will be the hardest I have ever written. This will be my last one as the Region 1 Chairman. By the time you read this, the Region 1 Board will have elected a new Chairman.

I usually start every letter expressing my amazement at last year's achievements, and how I can't imagine achieving that much ever again. Well, in my last letter to you, I must do that again, and this time I am sure that while we may match last year's performance at J.O. National Championships, exceeding it really will be impossible. For those of you who were not a part of it or somehow managed to miss the hundreds of letters that went around expressing (yes, I will use the amazing word again) amazement at the accomplishments of Region 1 at the Championships, I will just "humbly" say that we won just about everything there was to win, except the raffle. We took first place in every level at the event, and that has never been done before.

Enough back patting. My back is still sore from last year.

This year's Regional Championships promises to be even more exciting than last year's. Many of the same boys will be back, and I know they and their coaches have every intention of repeating the accomplishments of last year. I want to wish all of them good luck.

This year's Regional Championships is being hosted by myself, my wife Debbie Baldwin, and Tim and Melany Klemptner. I hope the hundreds of hours put in to make it a quality event have paid off, and that it is an event that lives up to all of your expectations.

As you look around you will see, and probably are a part of, the volunteer force that adds the icing on the cake, and finally makes the event happen.

Answering the call to volunteer and help put the event on makes you a part of it, and being a vital part of the best Region in the country should make you feel as proud as I feel. Please never stop being involved at the Regional level. The only way to have a Region as successful as ours is to have the best States, Clubs, Coaches, Parents, and Gymnasts in the Country. This all goes together and is the secret to our success.

Finally, after "winning it all" last year, I have been asked "how the heck did you do it?" Everyone is looking in the wrong place. They are trying to find the amazing coaches, what we feed the amazing kids, how we build the amazing training facilities, how we get amazing State Chairmen, how we got an amazing Regional Chairman (me). I have never missed it, and I know the absolute correct answer. Look all around you right now, just as I often look throughout the stands, I smile and shake my head. The answer has been in front of them all of the time.

Thank you all for making Region 1 and all of us involved in it the best in the Country.

Roger Baldwin

Region 1 Chairman