

# LWRC NEWSLETTER

March 2008



## Manager's Scoop: Coaching Supply & Demand, Part I

Conor Bullis

In my time here at LWRC, the demand for coaches and instructors has far outweighed the supply. Like many other clubs, LWRC needs coaches for sweep, sculling and Learn to Row programs. Unfortunately, the search for qualified coaches is not an easy one. Although the coaching clinic by Hugh, Bill and Frank in 2007 drew over 40 attendees, advertisements placed on row2k.com produce few results and word of mouth requests come up similarly light.

On any given sunny Saturday morning, we have up to 15 boats going out with Bill and sometimes five sweep boats with John. To be a coach in this scenario is far from enjoyable and more often akin to "herding cats." Coaching can become an afterthought when one person is in charge of the safety of so many rowers. This is obviously an issue when individuals pay program fees to support coaching at LWRC and want something in return.

The Learn to Row (LTR) classes are different in that the number of participants is limited to six to ensure that people get adequate instruction. But even LTR classes don't run at times because there is no instructor to teach them.

The demand for great coaches is clear at LWRC and throughout the region. Our sculling classes have waiting lists even with the absence of advertising. The sweep team currently has over 50 members, but only one coach. The scullers don't have an official roster, but I am sure I have seen 25 rowers with one launch. The Evening League struggles with incoming LTR grads trying to row with experienced Leaguers. Last year approximately 50 new members joined LWRC, but the growth of the coaching staff has not kept up with the increase in membership.

In our region, if a program wants to find a coach they had better start early. Some teams start searching in September

for a coach to start the following spring and still don't have one lined up until a week or two before the season begins. In these case, the coach that they manage to find is either too young, very new to the area or has never coached before. Here at LWRC, the issues are all the same. We need more coaches for current club programs and classes, as well as for new programs that we want to start.

Over the past months I have asked many sources how to find more coaches for LWRC. The answers span a wide range from "Only from inside the club," to looking on row2k.com, an international Web site. I have tried both options with some success for the LTR and the Evening League programs. However, I placed an ad on row2k.com in the middle of February to find a coach for the sweep team without a single response. Granted we are late in the year to find a coach for the spring season, but I tried last year as well. My ad in September produced one response

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## Coaching Supply & Demand, Part I

(cont.)

for a coach for the sweep team, from an individual who had never coached before, was young, new to the area and will not be continuing this year. Our large programs and LTR still have a disproportionate ratio of rowers to coaches, and I need to find another solution.

Last year the Board created a Coaching Committee to address the growing need for coaches at LWRC; this year the Board created the Programs Committee to address the current club offerings and classes. The Coaching Committee had over 40 attendees at clinics. The Program Committee has easily proved a need for more coaches to fit the needs of the club members. You can see how these committees might barter with each other.

Lake Washington Rowing Club is comprised of outstanding members who place a high value on great coaching, rowing well, and winning. All of these factors are important to our continued growth and success. It is crucial that we find more great coaches to add to our talented staff. The Board of Directors, Coaching and Programs Committees, and the club manager are all working on a solution to solve this problem. Stay tuned for more next month in *Coaching Supply and Demand, Part II*.

## Much More Than a Famous Face

Julie Smith

Our LWRC manager Conor Bullis embodies the word “easygoing,” but behind his laid-back demeanor lie intense goals for himself at the ripe young age of 24.

Envisioning a career in collegiate athletics, Conor is gaining experience this year as a volunteer assistant to freshman men’s crew coach Luke McGee at the University of Washington. Envisioning a career in modeling, Conor is losing 20 pounds before posing for still shots in his portfolio.

Why is he volunteer-coaching? “I’m thinking about potentially having coaching as a career. My goal is to work in collegiate athletics. My major was business management at OSU and my minor was athletic administration.”

About his Husky role, Conor says, “I usually work with the second and third freshman boats, six days a week, Monday through Saturday.” On Tuesdays and Thursdays, he helps

coach two-a-days. “It’s good,” he says of working with the so-called grunties. “I have a really good time. I’m learning a lot from Mike Callahan, head men’s coach, and Luke.”

Callahan says the Huskies are learning from Conor as well. “He brings a lot of enthusiasm to the boathouse. He’s really great with our walk-ons here, teaching them the fundamentals of rowing. And I think the guys really enjoy being coached by a celebrity. It’s fun for them to have a famous face behind the megaphone. He’s definitely livened things up around here and we really like having him around.”

About that “famous face,” many of you recall Conor’s beguiling appearances in BECU radio and TV commercials. How did he attract that gig? “A talent agency wanted a rowing coach in the age range 20s or 30s and they went around to Seattle rowing clubs.” That experience “was fun and I got paid really well.”

As for previous college coaching experience, Conor says, “I did the same job at OSU in 2005-06” while finishing his undergraduate degree.

Asked about this year’s freshman crew, Conor says, “There is a lot of talent on the team, more talent than I’ve seen on any other freshman squad.” Despite a trend in all college sports to attract athletes from other countries, the UW freshmen are “mainly from the Northwest, which is great,” Conor adds.

What’s it like coaching grunties? “The freshmen are...new to college and new to the entire environment, including sports. They’re almost kind of like kids in a sense. There’s a level of fun that’s still around from their high school days. Even the walk-ons have developed a really cool appreciation of rowing.”

Conor’s volunteer skills will first be tested at the Class Day races on March 29 and again at the Windermere Cup races on May 3.

And what about his budding modeling career? “I’m in the process of losing 20 pounds and then I’m going to get still shots taken to send to a talent agency.” As of this writing, he’s down nine pounds with 11 to go. Don’t offer him any cookies.

## New Shoes on the Dock

LWRC's Newest MST Members

**Ruth Frantz.** This spring will be my 10th as a rower, almost half my lifetime! I recently graduated from Syracuse University with a BA in English and Sociology, so as you can imagine I had numerous job offers. I took some time before I became a 'real' adult and lived in Canada and London this past summer and fall. I couldn't be happier



Ruth holds the PGA Tour trophy at the Waterford Crystal factory in Ireland. Imagine how much Guinness you could put in this thing...

to be back in Seattle and working at my old high school (The Northwest School) as the Alumni Director/jack of all trades. My hobbies include watching college sports, texting and rowing. My favorite rowing moment was winning Brentwood by open water in the Junior 'B' quad my freshman year of high school.

**Erin Moeur.** I started rowing because I am the worst volleyball player in America. A couple of my friends convinced me to try crew in high school after it became clear that the volleyball team would be better off without me, assuring me that I'd have more fun in a sport that didn't involve a ball. Fortunately, they were right! I coxed for one season and then rowed at Mount Baker for three years, as well as during my first semester of college. After a long hiatus, I started rowing again in the fall of 2005. I currently live in the Montlake neighborhood, and work in print production and graphic design on Capitol Hill. I enjoy photography, skiing and football season... and I have a new-found appreciation for sleeping in on Sundays.

**Jill Gresham.** I have been rowing for about 6 years, as a Jmaster. I had a brief stint in highschool as a coxswain, and promptly forgot about the sport. It all came back to me when I saw the crews on Lake Washington after moving to Seattle. I started rowing at Mount Baker and have tried out a few other clubs - I'm hoping to find a long term home at LWRC. I live on Phinney Ridge and work in the chemical dependency field managing programs.

**Meg Barry.** I started rowing in seventh grade at Buckingham Browne & Nichols School (BB&N, that little red boathouse next to CBC on the Charles River) in Cambridge, MA. I then went on to row all four years at Connecticut College. I have coached at BB&N, Belmont Hill/Windsor and CRI in Boston, and the Pocock Rowing Center and Mount Baker in Seattle. Rowing has allowed me to travel to amazing places like Russia, England, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and Vancouver, WA... I met my husband Peter next to an erg at the Pocock Rowing Center. We live in Madrona and are very happy to finally have a similar Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday team schedule after years of rowing M/W/F and T/T/S. I work for LuxuryRealEstate.com, the most-viewed luxury real estate Web site in the world.



Meg rocks it in 2-seat at her very first Head of the Charles in 1999  
photo © SportGraphics.com

### Submissions Wanted!

If you're new to the boathouse, please submit a short bio (and photo!) for next month's "New Shoes on the Dock" column.

Also, we are always looking for stories and photos to keep the newsletter interesting, so please feel free to submit updates about your group, racing experiences, etc.!

Submissions can be e-mailed to  
Tina Cha (tina.cha@gmail.com) or  
Erin Moeur (erinmoeur@gmail.com).  
We look forward to hearing from you!

## Captain's Corner

Ginny Senear and KC Dietz

There has been some phenomenal rowing the past several weeks and more and more crews are getting out on the water. Just a few reminders for courtesy and safety:

**Be quick:** Gather up what you will need in the boat before you get hands on. Do a quick visual and make sure the boat is in good working order (hardware tight, seats in place). Attach your lights at the boathouse. Once at the dock, move quickly to gather your oars, count down and push off.

**Be quiet:** We are crazy enough to be up at 5 a.m., but most people are not. Please keep your voices very quiet and lower your cox box volumes. We need to be mindful that voices carry over the water. Other areas that are quiet zones include the houseboats directly across from our dock and the houseboats on Westlake and Eastlake Avenues and Portage Bay.

**Be safe:** Just as it was starting to get light in the morning, we have moved back to daylight savings time. Continue to make sure that your boats are well lighted and consider wearing florescent clothing, or at least white, so you will be more visible. Make sure that you know the traffic patterns and buoy placements. (Thanks to Melissa Hayes

for contacting the Harbor Patrol to light the speed buoys in Lake Union!)

**Be respectful:** Please ensure that you are rowing the correct boats. Private boats (yellow tags) are never to be used unless you have the specific permission of the owner. Restricted boats (pink tags) are to be used only if you have permission from the captains for that specific boat and time frame.

### San Diego Crew Classic, April 5 & 6

LWRC is entering three races at the San Diego Crew Classic: Women's Masters Club Champ (Thalia Kelly Considine Cup), Women's Masters A (Hudson Cup), and Women's Masters B (Fred Rickon Memorial Cup). The line-ups should be in place by mid-March. Please cheer on the women representing LWRC at this major regatta.

### Opening Day, May 3

It is very exciting that we have received a lot of interest from members for the Opening Day regatta. We are in the position of fielding very competitive boats in the women's eight, mixed quad and mixed eight in multiple age categories. We will be submitting our choices for entries by March 1, and should hear by the middle of March what entries we have been invited to participate in. There will be a short time frame after that in which to select the rowers to represent the club and for those boats to practice.

Our thoughts on selecting the boats are as follows:

**Scullers:** Time yourself, in a single, from the Ballard Bridge to the Fremont Bridge (approximately 2300 meters) at least three times before April 1, 2008. These times will be used to create a ladder, with ages and gender noted. At this point, we would suggest lineups, with coach and athlete input, and trial races will be conducted. This process will take place between April 5 and April 16.

**Sweep Rowers:** Time yourself, in pairs, from the Ballard Bridge to the Fremont Bridge (approximately 2300 meters) at least three times before April 1, 2008. These results, as well as results from San Diego, if applicable, and coaching input will be used to determine line-ups. Challenges, in the form of seat races will take place between April 11 and April 19.

### Spring Racing Opportunities

#### Green Lake Spring Regatta

March 15 • Seattle

#### Lake Stevens 2K/Novice Regatta

March 15 • Everett

#### Lake Sammamish Open Water

March 22 • Issaquah

#### Lake Whatcom Open Water Classic

May 3 • Bellingham

Club boats can be requested by e-mail,  
or you can sign up at the boathouse.

## Equipment Reminders

**Boat Use:** We will be restricting the use of some of the newer club singles in the boathouse. Please be sure you have permission from the captains before you row. We want to keep them in good working order for upcoming racing. Thanks.

**New Boat in the House:** The Susan Kinne double has arrived and is currently shrouded in bubble wrap in the middle bay. Look at the web site for information on the inaugural row by Susan and Dave Rutherford. The boat will be a restricted use boat.

**Boats for Sale:** Be sure to check out the LWRC web site for information on boats for sale.

**Boat Storage:** We have moved many private and club boats at the Fremont boathouse in order to accommodate the needs of our members, and will likely be moving more boats in the future. Thanks for your cooperation.

We still have ample space in the Garfield Boathouse for singles, at the low price of \$200 per year. It has funky charm, a dock attached to the boathouse for those who don't want to carry your boat very far, and peace and quiet on the busiest mornings.

## Coming Soon: Flip Tests!

We will be waiting a bit longer until the water warms up. Remember, you need to do a flip test before you can take out a club single or double/pair.

## Spring Work Party

Tina Cha

Thanks to all members who came out for the Spring Work Party. Members were put to work trimming blackberry bushes; gardening and pruning; removing graffiti; washing and rinsing boats; cleaning and sweeping the boathouse inside and out. There's nothing like some sweat equity to appreciate our beloved boathouse.



Top: Rachel Alexander washes windows

Below: Don Linnertz (and an unidentified man wielding a chainsaw) trim blackberry bushes near the wherry dock

Bottom: Amanda Lee is part of the cleaning crew



## Race Report: La Conner, February 9, 2008

John Alberti

“The third quarter is when you have to decide if you will be a warrior or a wimp.” This was the oft-repeated distance racing theory of my high school cross country coach, MSgt. Fritz Mehlert, USMC, ret.

Nearly half a century later, in the third quarter of the Sound Rowers’ La Conner Open Water Race, the echo of Coach Mehlert’s favorite speech brought a faint smile.

We were in the lead, just coming into the lee of Goat Island, the water becoming smoother. Our boat was running well, answering every catch willingly and running off a little more distance from our pursuers with every release. Perhaps we had channeled the spirit of the Swinomish warriors who had paddled these waters in my grandfather’s time and before. It was, indeed, a moment to savor.

The journey to this moment had begun months earlier with a custom as old as the sea itself. In these politically correct times, involuntary servitude has fallen into disrepute, but many’s the sailor who awoke on the deck of a square rigger outward and bound for Cape Horn or Shanghai after some enterprising young lady, in the employ of a clever crimp, had slipped a bit of opium in his drink in ports like San Francisco, Portland and Port Townsend. The Quota and Press Gang of Olde England accomplished the same end with less subtlety. Likewise, the oarsmen who toiled in the galleys of ancient Rome or the Barbary Corsairs were commonly recruited at sword-point.

So it was that the Lake Washington Rowing Club, seeking funds to pay for the smart and lovely “Susan B. Kinne” that now graces its center boat bay (I refer to the new double rowing shell of that name. The other smart and lovely Susan B. Kinne graces our boat bays at no cost to the club.), perpetrated a human trafficking event—an auction whereby, 13th Amendment notwithstanding, members could procure a rowing experience with its best and brightest rowers. I had the good fortune to win the bidding for a row with Tyler Peterson, who, having just auctioned several brother

and sister rowers into servitude, found himself auctioned off by his own partner and North American Open Water Rowing co-champion, Evan Jacobs.

Evan advised that his partner was at his best in an actual race (a statement I will certainly not dispute) and I named the La Conner Open Water race as the venue.

Rainer Storb kindly lent us his spare Maas 2x. Two sea trials and we were dialed in, rowing, turning and deftly extending and retracting the boat’s quadruple bailers (This is a serious open water machine.)—and with a small craft advisory for 15-25 kt winds and 2-4 ft chop on race day, having four bailers was looking like a good idea.

*Moments later, we pass  
Rainer and O’Brien,  
exchanging war whoops  
and insults. Lucky for us,  
they have a worse time  
making the turn than we  
did. Not so lucky for us,  
Meenck makes a perfect  
turn and, in an instant,  
has eclipsed most of the  
lead we had so patiently  
built in the first half.*

Race day dawned cold and drizzly, but the wind and sea state were moderate and race directors Greg and Kristin Gilda elected to use the standard, 7-mile course.

Forty-eight boats lined up at the start. Tyler got us a front row position on the favored East end of the line. Rob Meenck, last year’s winner, is nearby in his Maas 24 Rec-III; Rainer Storb (who holds the course record) and Rob O’Brien in Rainer’s #1 Maas 2x chose the West end, as did Theresa Knakal and Sandra McGinnis, who have rowed this course within a minute of the record, in another Maas 2x. Brian Boatman and David William, in a double openwater canoe, crowd close on our quarter—perhaps hoping to move into our slipstream and catch a draft. There is a fine turnout of high performance kayaks and other paddle powered boats who were hoping for rougher water.

The gun fires and we pull away smartly to get out of traffic. The plan was to stay in contact with the leaders for the first quarter, rowing as economically as possible. The competition is experienced and talented and we do not dare fall too far behind. Likewise, a 10k erg piece earlier in the week had provided a stern reminder of the folly of going out too fast at the start of a long distance race, so we dare not run away at the start.

Heading South under the LaConner Bridge and down the

## Race Report: La Conner, February 9, 2008

(cont.)

Swinomish Channel we keep it long and low, cautiously pulling away. This feels very good; the water is protected and we continue past the cliffs at the south end of the channel and turn West out through the mud flats toward Skagit Bay. By Goat Island, the field has spread out; Meenck is about 50 meters back with Rainer and O'Brien a few lengths behind him. A stone jetty extends about 1000 meters past Goat island, but the waves wash over it and it provides minimal protection. The course continues another 600 meters West past the jetty to a green can buoy, "C1," where a 180-degree turn takes us back to the start/finish line. In the choppy water, Meenck nibbles away at our lead.

Tyler calls, "There is the can—starboard." A peek over my right shoulder reveals the can right where it should be; a perfect turn-in, just as we had practiced. A moment later, notwithstanding our efforts to turn the boat, "C1" is rapidly disappearing behind us and our course has hardly changed. We are Whidbey Island bound!

We back port oars, drag our wayward craft to a stop and forcibly press its bow through the cross chop with a river turn. At length, our craft is pointed back toward La Conner, but dead in the water. An impromptu racing start imparts some momentum and we pass "C1" just as Meenck is approaching it from the other direction. Moments later, we pass Rainer and O'Brien, exchanging war whoops and insults. Lucky for us, they have a worse time making the turn than we did. Not so lucky for us, Meenck makes a perfect turn and, in an instant, has eclipsed most of the lead we had so patiently built in the first half.

Tyler is utterly fearless in rough water and his spirit is contagious. He reminds me to catch with the legs, especially good advice in rough water, as it keeps the upper body loose and better able to ride out the waves. Our lead is holding—just 1500 meters and we will be under the protective lee of Goat Island where our ancient spirit-warrior will guide us safely to the finish.

We finish first overall in 52:15, Rob Meenck is 1:55 back and Rainer and Rob O'Brien are third, but Rainer's course record remains intact.

## 2008 Board of Directors

### Contact Info

#### President

Marcie Sillman  
206-322-4476  
rowermarcie@yahoo.com

#### Vice-President

Bill Tytus  
360-579-4155  
bill@pocock.com

#### Co-Secretary

Kate Brooks  
206-218-6555  
kbrooks@thevilla.org

#### Co-Secretary

John Robinson  
206-236-1994  
jrobinson@entrix.com

#### Treasurer

Ben Porter  
206-523-7344  
bporter@porterkohli.com

#### Co-Captain

KC Dietz  
206-284-8384  
dietzkc@hotmail.com

#### Co-Captain

Ginny Senear  
206-525-0943  
gsenear@msn.com

#### Program Manager

Conor Bullis  
206-547-1583  
conor.bullis@lakewashingtonrowing.com

Boat Bay: 206-547-2668

Fax: 206-547-3549

## LWRC Coaching Staff

### Theresa Batty

Developmental Sculling

Theresa trained with the National Team pre-elite lightweights from 1986-1989. In 1989 she was selected as an alternate for the National Team. She won several U.S. titles and competed in Canada and Europe. Theresa started the crew program (with Cath Johnson) at The Evergreen State College. She has coached at Green Lake, Mt. Baker and Stockholm Rowing Club.

### Frank Cunningham

Coach to All

Frank started rowing as a schoolboy in 1937. He stroked during his years at Harvard, winning numerous races. His heavyweight 8+ at Harvard was inducted into the Rowing Hall of Fame in 1975. Frank has coached Seattle Junior Crew, Lakeside School Crew and many LWRC crews.

### Melissa Hayes

Intermediate Sweep

### Hugh Lade

Sculling Technique

Hugh raced in college (and summers at LWRC in the mid-'60s) and as a Master, winning U.S. and Canadian national titles. He leads the twice-weekly Sculling Technique sessions and instructs both beginning and intermediate Learn-To-Scull classes.

### Anna Noble

Intermediate/Advanced Sculling

Anna joined LWRC in 1995, as part of the collegiate summer program. Since then she has competed in both sculling and sweep events, for a variety of clubs at numerous races throughout the U.S. and Canada. She has coached youths and adults, sweep and sculling, beginners and advanced rowers.

### Bill Tytus

Competitive Scullers

Bill has raced at the national level since high school. He won Junior Nationals (4+), placed 2nd at IRAs in college (8+), finished 2nd in Diamond Sculls at Henley (1x), stroked the US 8+ at European Championships, 2nd at PanAm Games in 1x. Bill has also coached the UW Men's lightweight crew. An LWRC member for nearly 40 years and an LWRC coach for almost 20, Bill has coached Masters and Junior National Champions.

### John Tytus

Mixed Sweep Team

John rowed four years in college, training at many USRowing and Elite camps. Highlights include the silver medal at the National Championships in the Senior 4-. John began coaching the MST in 2001. His crews have won gold in regattas across the country.

### Molly Zeaske

Evening League

Molly has been coaching the Evening League since 2004. She previously rowed for the Mixed Sweep Team and in college at the University of Puget Sound.



## LWRC Programs

Do you know someone who is interested in rowing,  
or just want to learn something new yourself?  
Visit our Web site for more information on the following:

Experience Rowing Class

Learn to Row

Competitive Sculling

Sculling Technique

Fridays with Frank

Evening League

Martha's Moms

Mixed Sweep Team

## Our Web Site

Previous issues of the newsletter are available on the new and improved Web site at [lakewashingtonrowing.com](http://lakewashingtonrowing.com). If you have anything you would like posted, updated, or deleted, send an e-mail to Tina Cha at [tina.cha@gmail.com](mailto:tina.cha@gmail.com).

We are always looking for photos for our site, either from practice, regattas, or just hanging out in your shell. E-mail your digital images to Tina, or leave a disc in the Secretary's Box at the Boathouse. Thanks!

## Easy Fundraising!

Buy books through Amazon.com and Amazon gives a percentage of the sale (5-15%) back to LWRC! Every time you enter the Amazon site, remember to go through the LWRC link ([www.lakewashingtonrowing.com](http://www.lakewashingtonrowing.com)) and LWRC will make money on whatever you buy at no additional cost to you. Try it!

### Lake Washington Rowing Club

*wins*

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### The Rowers' Code

1. Always do what's best for the team.
2. Every seat has equal value.
3. No talking in the boat (it's not what you think).
4. Balance the boat.
5. Timing is everything.
6. Carry your load.
7. The coach is in charge.
8. Everything stays in the boat.

-Marilyn Krichko, Founder, The OARS Program

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