LWRC

MAKING WAVES

The LWRC Quarterly

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On Puget Sound

A Century of Sailing

Now over a century old, the wooden schooner SV Suva *rests comfortably at its berth in Coupeville on the eastern shore of Whidbey Island. Its quiet dignity while under sail is reminiscent of the feel of pulling a shell through calm waters.*



Cat and Mike aboard the Suva
(All photos courtesy Cat and Mike Henderson)

When I was in my early twenties, I had my first opportunity to go sailing on a 39-foot boat on Lake Washington. On that beautiful spring day, a fresh breeze of about 15 knots carved two-foot whitecaps. We motored away from the dock and hoisted the sails under the watchful eye of our very experienced captain, the boat's owner. Once the sails were up and properly trimmed, the diesel auxiliary was turned off—and for the first time, I experienced the raw power of wind alone sending a 15,000-pound boat crashing through the waves. We were heeled over, and I felt and heard the sound of the waves parting, the crinkle of the sails, the wind on my cheek, and the hum of the rigging. I was hooked instantly. Learning to sail became a priority.

I had been interested in sailing and in boats for as long as I could remember. As a boy, my favorite book was an illustrated children's edition of *Moby-Dick*. At 70 years of age today, I still have that book. My dad built a boat when I was a young boy, and I have a photo of myself sitting on the back seat at two or three years of age. As a teen, I attended scout camp for several years. It provided small sailing dinghies, but there was never any wind. For my 12th birthday, I received an eight-foot pram. I still use it, just for the pleasure of rowing it around the bay we live on (this kept me sane during the Covid lockdown) and for fly fishing on protected waters.

I think the sea is in my blood. My grandfather, who passed before I was born, stowed away on a ship in Liverpool at the age of 13 and went on to spend many years plying the oceans of the world as a member of the British Merchant Marine. What I would give to hear some of his stories! Another side of my family lived next to the sea in Denmark.

Fast-forward to today, and I have the pleasure of being one of the captains of the historic sailing vessel *Suva*, homeported in Coupeville, Washington, on Whidbey Island. *Suva* was built in 1925 in Hong Kong. After her hull and deck were completed, she was shipped to Victoria, British Columbia, for installation of her



Left: Suva *at the Coupeville dock*
Right: Happy at sea

masts, rigging, and sails. Being built of old-growth Burmese teak means that most of her structure consists of 500-year-old wood at this point. *Suva* is 68 feet long overall, with 45 feet of waterline. She is rigged as a schooner, meaning she has two Sitka spruce masts, the taller being 66 feet. She has five sails now, though originally only four. Several years ago, her rig was changed to make it easier for a small crew to manage her on excursion sails. She draws six and a half feet and has a beam of 14 feet. She reportedly weighs in at 56,000 pounds.

Suva was commissioned in 1924 by Coupeville attorney Frank Pratt and was designed by Seattle naval architect Ted Geary. She was designed for cruising the waters of the Salish Sea with a family on board.

Not many wooden boats survive for 100 years. *Suva*'s longevity speaks to the care and stewardship she has received from her owners and from shipwrights over the years. Saltwater is actually good for wooden boats: it acts as a preservative. However, freshwater from rain is the enemy of a wooden boat. If it seeps in and is allowed to pool, it creates dry rot.

Suva was purchased in 2015 by Coupeville resident Mark Saia from a Craigslist ad. Mark built a community of supporters who raised funds for the purchase price and completed the work to obtain a US Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection, so she can legally carry up to 26 paying passengers. In December 2025,



Suva was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today it is owned and operated by the nonprofit Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation in Coupeville.

Suva has a 140-horsepower diesel auxiliary that we use for docking and undocking. But as soon as the sails are up, the diesel is turned off and those on board can experience the sights, sounds, feelings, and smell of sailing in Penn Cove and surrounding waters. We regularly see marine mammals and multiple types of sea and shore birds. Orca sightings are less frequent, but seeing their spoutings and an occasional breach is an unforgettable experience. A little paradox: Docking a 56,000-pound, single-screw boat without a bow thruster is in some ways easier than bringing in much smaller craft. *Suva* has tremendous momentum that, when properly used, allows for smooth and controlled dockings.

Not many boats survive for 100 years.

Now you know a bit about the history of this historic vessel. Taking care of her, and our passengers on board, is a responsibility my co-captains and I take very seriously. The thrill of turning off that auxiliary and starting to sail on wind power alone never gets old.

—Mike Henderson

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It's amazing what a boat can do.

In addition to serving as one of the captains of Suva, *Mike Henderson is also a certified training coxswain with North Whidbey Marine Search and Rescue. He notes that, thanks to the nonprofit Whidbey Island Maritime Heritage Foundation in Coupeville,* Suva *offers excursion sails from May through October and is also available for private charter. Passengers can help hoist the sails and even take a turn at the wheel, under the watchful eye of one of the co-captains. "If you've ever sailed, come on aboard and experience that feeling of exhilaration once again. We have a volunteer crew of at least three, in addition to the captain, on every sail. Come see for yourself!"*
For more information about Suva, *check out the foundation's website.*

Wooden Boats on Puget Sound Waters

Restoration Is Alive and Well

The schooner *Suva*

Enjoy a short visual trip aboard the 101-year-old schooner *Suva*, from Port Townsend through Deception Pass and into Penn Cove to her home port at the historic Coupeville Wharf.



Tally Ho under restoration

Bring Her Home: video and photos by Cat Henderson; music and lyrics by Suno AI. See also Tales with Tug: video and photos by Cat Henderson; music and lyrics by Suno AI.

Restoring the *Tally Ho*

British sailor and boat builder Leo Goolden purchased a historic 1910 sailing yacht named *Tally Ho* for one dollar back in 2017 and spent seven years restoring it. His first workshop was in Sequim, Washington; *Tally Ho* eventually moved to Port Townsend for further restoration. Goolden's friend Darlene Marmol once commented, "It's amazing what a boat can do." To commemorate the launch of the rebuild in April 2024, Cat Henderson wrote a poem inspired by Darlene's thought, asking Suno AI to provide the music for her original lyrics. See Cat's video (It's Amazing What a Boat Can Do) for glimpses of the *Tally Ho*'s restoration.

Editor's Note



As we approach the end of the year, we can reflect on what rowing means to us as a group and also as individuals. As you will see inside these pages, there is much life on local waters: human-powered (rowers), wind-powered (the schooner *Suva*), and other-powered (hydrofoil paddleboards). We all share that love of being on the water.

Personal growth is part of the rowing experience, as we all know. **Sara Fischer** teaches us about resilience, and **Susie Landsem** describes her growth experience.

LWRC icon **Frank Cunningham**'s early years in Seattle are described in a recent series of articles published by *My Edmonds News*. He was much more than a rowing coach, as you'll see.

Finally, we thank **Suze Woolf** for twelve years of making us look so good. Over the years, we have received many compliments about the professional look of our magazine, and she is the reason why. We will miss her!

—Roberta Scholz, Editor

Designer's Note



Making Waves is designed for screen reading. You can print it letter-size paper at 94%. In Adobe Acrobat use full-screen setting: *Menu > View > Full ScreenMode (*page icon in lower-right sidebar).

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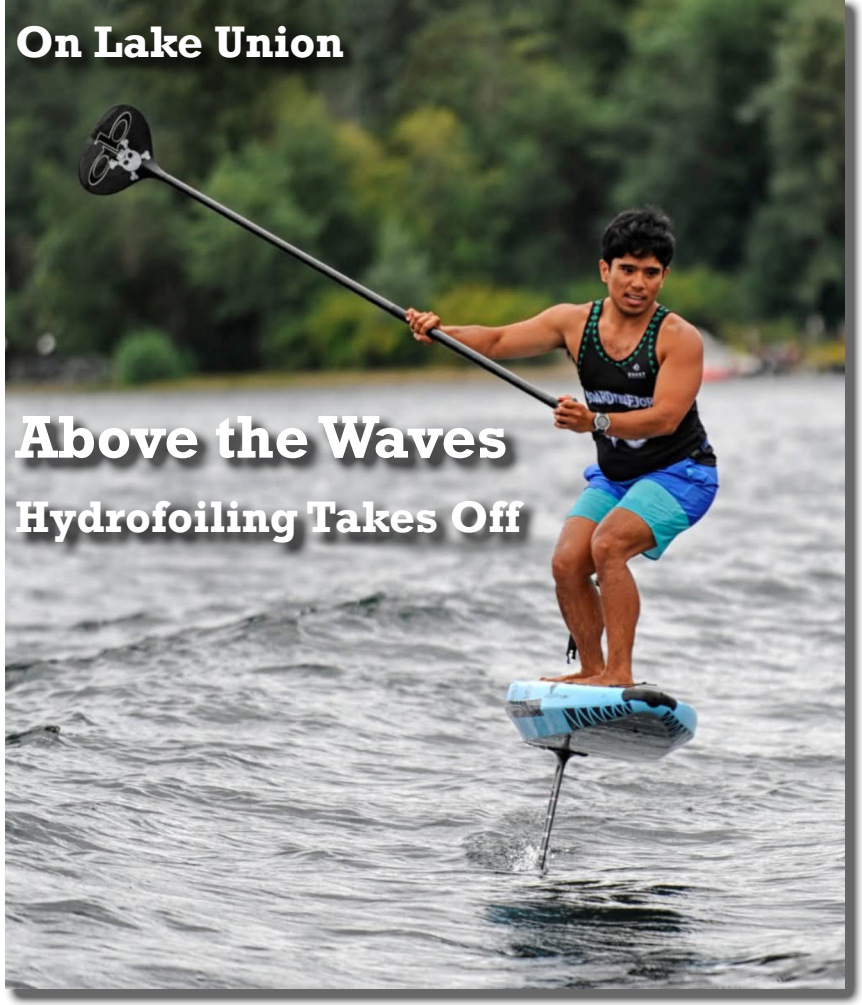

Carl made it look effortless.

"It's as close as you can get to flying. I feel like Aladdin on the magic carpet." That's how Joe Kelly, an employee at Urban Surf Seattle, describes riding an electric hydrofoil, or eFoil.

If you've seen people gliding across Lake Union on small surfboards above the surface of the water, you might have wondered how they're doing it. Attached to the bottom of the board is a mast with an underwater wing, or hydrofoil. As the board gains speed, the wing generates lift and elevates the board above the water's surface, reducing drag. According to "Foiling: the history of the hydrofoiler," published in *Yachting World*, hydrofoil technology was added to boats in the early 1900s to achieve faster speeds. Eventually, hydrofoil technology appeared in recreational watersports. Most hydrofoil sports rely on wind, waves, or human-powered methods to gain enough speed for the hydrofoil to lift the board above the water. However, within the past decade, the hydrofoil board with an electric motor—called an eFoil—became commercially available.

To learn about hydrofoiling on Lake Union, I met Carl Delica at the UW dock on a sunny summer Friday afternoon. Previously an avid skier, Carl started stand-up paddle boarding after a knee injury, as a way to stay active that would be easier on his knee. When he saw people gliding above the water on hydrofoil boards, Carl knew he had to try it. Today, he is using a stand-up paddle (SUP) hydrofoil, which is not electric. To get his board above the water, Carl gains speed by paddling and pumping his legs up and down. I watch from the dock as he stands on his board and quickly digs his paddle into the water while simultaneously squatting up and down. The board starts to bounce on the surface of the water, and after a few seconds, the board lifts above the water and he steers toward the wake of a passing boat. Even though it's possible to SUP hydrofoil on flat ater, Carl told me it's more fun to ride boat wakes.

Carl graciously let me try out his SUP hydrofoil. Knowing that the whole setup cost $5,000, I was careful not to ding it on the dock. Having paddle boarded before, I was surprised at how unstable I felt, even while sitting on the SUP hydrofoil. It's much shorter and narrower than a normal SUP and has a long mast extending beneath the surface of the water. While Carl had made it look effortless, I came away understanding just how much technique and effort it takes to successfully ride a SUP hydrofoil.

A fellow hydrofoiler joined us at the dock, and I asked whether either he or Carl were interested in an eFoil. They both quickly dismissed the idea of trading their human-powered hydrofoils

for electric ones. From what I could see, it takes a lot of balance, coordination, and intense bursts of energy to get a human-powered board to ride on the hydrofoil. But it seems that mastering this skill is part of the enjoyment of the sport.

To learn about the appeal of eFoils, I spoke with Völk Vàlchęv, who has owned an eFoil since 2020. Völk described the feeling of hydrofoiling as "similar to riding on an air bubble." Being above the waves on a hydrofoil means he doesn't feel the choppiness of the water, and it causes less impact on his joints. Völk prefers wind-powered hydrofoiling but pointed out that the eFoil allows him to get out on the water, regardless of wind conditions. With the potential to reach 25 miles per hour on the eFoil, Völk takes several precautions to stay safe on the water. He wears a helmet and an impact vest, a padded life jacket reinforced with thick rubber segments to help protect him in the event of a fall. He has also learned to fall off the side and back to avoid getting hit by the eFoil board, which weighs around 70 pounds.

It's easy to see why people are drawn to hydrofoiling.

Both Völk and Carl noted that there's a steep learning curve to human-powered hydrofoiling; it sometimes takes years to master. eFoils provide a more accessible way to try hydrofoil sports. Urban Surf, located near Gas Works Park, offers lessons and rentals for all types of hydrofoil sports. I talked to Joe Kelly specifically about their eFoil lessons, which cost $350 for two hours of instruction on Lake Washington. Joe said that many people successfully ride the eFoil by the end of their first lesson. He mentioned an accessory called the Blowfish that looks like an inflatable dinghy and surrounds the perimeter of the board, making it more stable. Usually by the end of the lesson, riders can even get the board above the surface of the water to experience the flying sensation that Joe described to me.

With the promise of soaring above the water, it's easy to see why people are drawn to hydrofoiling. And with so many ways to experience it—both human-powered and electrically powered—I expect we'll continue to see more riders gliding above the surface of Lake Union.

—Lydia Marks

Lydia Marks is a Seattle-based writer and neuroscientist with a passion for the outdoors. This article is based on an earlier write-up that appeared in the Eastlake News. We thank Lydia and Eastlake News editor Nick Harrison for sharing it with us.



(Photos courtesy Lydia Marks)



Head of the Lake a success!

A huge thank you to the many volunteers who helped make this year's Head of the Lake Regatta possible. From months of planning to early-morning setup and race-day operations, the event depends on the extraordinary efforts of our members and the broader rowing community. Head of the Lake is also one of LWRC's most important annual fundraising events, generating revenue that helps us pay for major repairs and facility upgrades. Your volunteer efforts make a meaningful difference to the club's financial health, and we're grateful to everyone who contributed. (Photos on page 11!)

New faces at LWRC

In October, the club introduced a new, land-based erg-training program and welcomed members of the recently closed Row House South Lake Union studio to LWRC. Please join us in welcoming Niki, Nathan, and the rest of the former Row House crew to our community. We encourage all LWRC members to check out our new classes, whether you're looking to build fitness, improve your erg technique, or try something different.

Have your say in LWRC — survey closes December 6

There's still time to complete our 2026 Program and Member Survey. Your feedback will help shape member services, programming, and club priorities for 2027. Whether you have ideas for new offerings or suggestions for improving existing programs, we want to hear from you. You can read about last year's survey results in the June 2026 edition of *Making Waves.*

Please complete the survey by Sunday, December 6!

Help shape LWRC's future — join the Board in 2027

At our 2027 Annual Meeting, members will elect candidates for four Board positions: Vice President, Secretary, and two At-Large Directors. Members will also vote on proposed bylaw amendments to expand the Board by adding two more At-Large Director positions with one-year terms.

Serving on the Board is a great way to help guide the club's future, represent fellow members, and contribute to the LWRC community. Whether you're interested in running for a position or simply want to learn more about what's involved, we'd love to hear from you!

Interested? Contact board@lakewashingtonrowing.com.

Save the date: Sunday Social and 'The Crew Behind the Crew'— December 6

Join us on Sunday, December 6, for our first Sunday Social, followed by "The Crew Behind the Crew," a celebration of the people who make LWRC possible! Enjoy food, refreshments, and raffle prizes as we recognize the many members and volunteers who contribute to our club.

We'll also share opportunities to get more involved in 2027, whether through volunteering, serving on the Board, or joining a Board committee. It's a great chance to connect with fellow members, celebrate our community, and learn how to help shape LWRC's future.

Please RSVP by Thursday, December 3, so we can plan boat lineups and refreshments. RSVP here: Event link

Thank you for being part of LWRC and for everything you do to make our club a welcoming, vibrant, and thriving community.

—Jean Lee, Board Secretary



Our 'professional' look is a tribute to Suze's skill.



Suze studies her painting Twisted *at the Schack Arts Center, Everett, Washington.*

We'll Miss You!

Suze Woolf Heads in a New Direction

It is with some degree of sadness that we have put together this forty-eighth issue of *Making Waves*. For the past twelve years, Suze and I have collaborated to provide articles that inform and entertain our readers, introducing them to a variety of topics of interest to anyone who loves being on the water—or even just close to the water. Now that partnership is coming to an end.

As many of you know, Suze is an accomplished artist and has been recognized in numerous ways for her work. Within the past few years, this side of her life has grown in importance. As a result, she has welcomed new opportunities to expand her artistic reach. In particular, as manager of a group of local *plein air* artists, she finds less and less time for rowing and for our quarterly publication.

This December issue will be the last one to benefit from Suze's outstanding skills as a graphic artist. She has designed the layout for every one of the forty-eight issues, always finding ways to make room for one more tweak. Readers often tell us how "professional" *Making Waves* looks, and that is a tribute to Suze's skill.

It has been a great pleasure for me to collaborate over the years with Suze, and I will miss that. (I will also miss her sense of humor!) But I know that she will find fulfillment in her new endeavors, and others will benefit from her expertise. It's been a good run.

—Roberta Scholz, Editor

HELP WANTED!

We are still seeking someone who can step into Suze's shoes and do the graphic design for our publication. This involves several hours every three months. If you have such skills, or know someone else who does, please let us know at lwrcnewsletter@comcast.net.

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Resilience

At NW Regionals in June this year,
I flipped my single. Twice.
Maybe you heard about this.
It's a great story …



"I made it": Heading for the medical tent

(All photos courtesy Sara Fischer)

Before we get to the story, let's back up to what got me here. This, my second year with Martha's Moms, was going to be my year. I was lucky to row in the women's eight for the Husky Open and joined my teammates on the sprint of a lifetime through the Montlake Cut. I'd finally made the big-girls' boat and was getting better every day. Regionals felt like the next best step in my rowing career—race a bunch of different boats in different configurations with some of the best teammates a girl could ask for. I was also excited for a weekend getaway with the gals—hotels, bonding, road trip. I'm in!

About six weeks out, the Moms released the lineups for Regionals, and I was stoked. My name was listed everywhere—an eight, a four, a quad, a couple of doubles, and even a pair. Then my eyes locked in on the singles race. What? Me? Oh, boy! Who did this lineup? The excitement of being in the big boats quickly turned to anxiety as I grasped the reality of being in a single. Sculling. By myself.

The thought of the single had me swirling in fear and uncertainty. I'm not ready to race as a sculler. I'm not going to be fast. I can't do it. I was about to give up, when suddenly I shifted gears to another thought—my teammates don't think that way. They think I can do it. How lucky am I to be on a team with people who believe in me, even when I am not so sure of myself? I flipped that negative energy into something positive and went to work.

I got into a boat almost daily. I worked with my double partners and sculled. I gained security and confidence in the safety of others. I worked in enough practice to feel optimistic about what was to come, and by the end of June I was ready. Dexter Lake, here I come.

The conditions over the racing weekend weren't bad, and I was lucky to race in the four, quad, pair, and one of the doubles before having to go out alone. My self-esteem was high, and I learned a ton with each race. I was ready. And here is where the story gets good. On the second day, I launched my single with plans to do a few laps in the warm-up area before heading to the start. I made it around once and was feeling good. My confidence was there, even as the wind picked up. And then, *boom*! I'm in the water! How did it happen? I can't recall. What I do remember is being in the water and struggling, I mean *really struggling*, to get back into the boat. Eventually, a launch came over and helped. I got back into the boat, pumped out 30 liters of water, and asked whether I'd been DQed. He told me no one needed to know about this, but if I still wanted to race, I needed to get to the start line.

I couldn't let the team down. I was a bit cold but carried on. I went to the start line and got myself lined up. I reviewed my race plan and gave myself a pep talk—go slow and steady, take your time, don't flip again. A few big deep breaths, and the flag went down. Off I went.

All of this I remember well. My pep talk worked, and I was actually feeling great! Confident, calm, excited. I felt awesome in

© Lake Washington Rowing Club

the boat. After about 600 meters of the 1K, I had the feeling I was going to pull this off! I could hear my teammates cheering me on, and I knew I was looking good. I even caught a glimpse of my competitors and began to increase my rate. Then, boom! Back in the water. Oh, boy! However, this time I had an out-of-mind-and-body experience and was back in the boat within seconds. I think I impressed the launch with my speed and ability in returning to the boat, post-flip. With a sad expression, and in desperation, I asked to finish the race. (I assumed I had been DQed.) The launch crew allowed me to finish but informed me I must head to the medical tent as soon as I crossed the finish line. Fair enough; I continued down the course and finished the race. Upright after two flips. Thankfully, the row to the hot-seat dock was quick. My teammates were waiting for me, all beaming and screaming. I thought they were trying to be supportive and cheer me up despite the flip, but instead they were desperate to tell me the news—I had qualified for the finals! A woman in the following heat had scratched, meaning I had made the top six, despite my flip. (Side note: If you flip and return to your boat unassisted, you can finish the race!) The tears I wanted to release after my difficult and cold race quickly disappeared, and I headed to the medical tent. I needed to get ready for the finals! Oh, boy!

I learned to define myself as a rower.

To this day, I don't know who carried my boat and oars from the hot-seat dock to our tent. I don't know whose idea it was to sign me up for a single. What I do know is that I did it—and I raced my single in the finals without a flip. I finished dead last in that race, but with a first-place story to tell.

I'm wrapping up a year of many wins. It was a stellar year, one where I learned to define myself as a rower. I completed an entire season with the Moms, where I had the honor of rowing with an awesome team of women who inspire, coach, and support me every day. This team believed in me and provided me with the nudge I needed to take risks. They knew I could do it, and now I do, too! I am a rower. I am a Mom. I row for LWRC and could not be prouder.

So here's to a great year of rowing and many more to come. To the many friends, both Moms and LWRC: thanks for saying hi in the crazy early mornings, for erging with me upstairs, or for simply asking how my row went as I wipe down a boat. I am grateful for the camaraderie, friendships, and teamwork that are ever present in our boathouse. I hope 2027 brings each of us the opportunity to see a flip of the boat as something spectacular—and be surrounded by teammates who help us see something in ourselves that we didn't know was possible.

—Sara Fischer



At Regionals with her teammates. Sara is on the right.

Deep Breaths and Stronger Strokes

Learning to Breathe

As a new member of Martha's Moms, one of the teams that share the Lake Washington Rowing Club boathouse, I recently joined LWRC. Exploring what it has to offer, I found out that a local physical therapist was offering a free breathing workshop. I wasn't sure what to expect, but the experience turned out to be great.

We started with basic mobility work that most of us are used to: thoracic movement, core stability, and standard stretching. Then she focused specifically on rowing—diving straight into "gear physiology." She walked us through the aerobic and anaerobic continuum, what net metabolism means for us, and how to sequence our transitions through five distinct gears. She showed us how, instead of just breathing on autopilot, matching our breath to these physiological shifts *with intent* actually improves our posture, ribcage expansion, and power in the boat.

The fun part came when she handed out party balloons with stripes on the neck. The goal was to use the techniques we'd just learned to fill the balloon as much as we could, using the stripes to measure how far it had expanded. This was when I knew I had found my community—surrounded by adults lying on their backs, feet in the air, blowing into balloons to improve their rowing.

This workshop was a great reminder of how easily the basics can be overlooked. I honestly hadn't realized how vital focus is to the art of breathing. We had a fantastic teacher who clearly understood rowing mechanics; she packed in so much information that I'd gladly take the class again, just to absorb it all.

This was a wonderful way to spend a Saturday morning, and I'm already looking forward to future classes at LWRC.

—Susie Landsem



(Photos courtesy Susie Landsem)













Jon Turvey photos from 2026 Head of the Lake

Rowing History

Early Days in Philadelphia

Rowing programs for collegiate women were few and far between until after the passage of the federal Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX of this legislation bars sex-based discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. As a result, collegiate rowing programs for women became the gateway for compliance: with typical rosters of 40 to 80—or even more than 100— athletes, they could easily balance the numbers of participants in already established male athletic programs, especially football.

To get a sense of the pre-Title IX rowing scene for girls and women in Philadelphia, read "About Us." And check out this history provided by the Philadelphia Girls' Rowing Club.

Times have changed. Today, according to USRowing membership figures, female rowers outnumber male rowers, especially in the youth category. Among masters rowers, membership is equally divided among men and women—a remarkable achievement.

Thanks to Toni Ventenbergs for contributing these links.

Frank Cunningham: The Early Years

Frank Cunningham holds a special place in the history of Northwest rowing, especially when it comes to Lake Washington Rowing Club. Long-time members have fond memories of his somewhat crusty coaching style, one that was tempered by his dedication to coaching and commitment to finding that "perfect stroke."

In recent months, *My Edmonds News* has run three installments of memories from Frank's early years, when he and his wife Jane were raising their children in Edmonds. Off the water, Frank taught history at Edmonds High School and at Lakeside School. As anyone familiar with his coaching style might suspect, he was known as an innovator.

Thanks to **Alex Parkman** and Frank's daughter, **Ellyn Cunningham Van Houten**, for calling these articles to our attention.

- Part 1 appeared in print August 20, 2026.
- Part 2 was published October 13, 2026.
- Part 3, appearing October 14, 2026, concluded the series.





Frank breaking ground in Fremont (Craig Smith photo) and rowing on Lake Union (Joel Rogers photo)

Andy might need a little coaching…



(Courtesy Dave McWethy)

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