

MAKING WAVES

The LWRC Quarterly

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A quiet contributor

Remembering Dave Rutherford: 2 March 1944 — 17 Sepember 2025

first encountered **Dave Rutherford** around 1998, when he was newly returned to LWRC. He was one of several guys from Garfield who came up to do something to the wherry dock. Dave stood out because he was not acting like a guy—i.e., telling other people what to do. He stood back, saw what was needed, and started doing it. I was impressed.

He once alluded very generally to past racing, so one day I paddled up to him under the Fremont Bridge and asked him if he presently raced. He said yes. I asked if he'd race with me. He said yes. So we did—at Regionals and the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival and the Victoria Wooden Boat Festival; at Otter Island, with his daughter Anne in the old wooden triple; in Head of the Lake in 2004 or 2005, when we had a triple event; and in Head of the Gorge (to which he sailed) and Head of the Charles (in the inaugural mixed masters quad race, which we won). He said nothing in all those races but pulled so hard he sometimes turned an interesting shade of pale green. He loved rowing and held onto it as long as he could. He rowed three days a week in the triple until he lost the ability to take a stroke several years ago. In his last months, he closed every visit by making a rowing motion and saying, "We have to get back out on the water soon."

Dave did not talk a lot, but he did stuff. He once drifted into the Sow's Ear shop to ask about the sort of paint to use on his elderly Pocock single. Soon he and



Dave at home in the Sow's Ear (KC Dietz photo)

John Robinson were rebuilding the keel of Frank Cunningham's Thames wherry and helping Frank and Hugh Lade build dories. One winter, he built and painted all those blue wooden stretchers we still are using. As an experienced sailor, he knew about anchors. Word of this got out, and subsequently, over several years, he spent many, many hours running the set-up and anchoring of the UW crew's fancy start platform in Union Bay as well as the finish line for the Head of the Lake Regatta. And, as a sideline to his business of manufacturing recycled sail bags, he sewed us boat covers, biminis for the launches, LWRC flags for the boathouse flag poles, tidy sacks for the sandbags we still use to anchor the HOTL tents, and cunning little bags of all sorts for small workshop objects. They're all still in use. Every one of them is

a reminder of his caring generosity.

As his son **Ethan** notes in <u>Dave's obituary</u>, he could tell a very good (this is understated) story, once you got him started. **George Pocock** coached Dave as a highschool sculler. Dave described vividly how George had rescued him after Dave flipped in the Montlake Cut. George was rowing through in his single, noticed the swimming Dave, and backed up to him. He towed Dave back to the Canoe House, with Dave hanging onto George's stern with one hand and holding the bow of his own single in the other. He said George was an utter gentleman about the whole episode and never reminded Dave of it, something Dave certainly never forgot. As we will not forget him.

—Susan Kinne

Dave Rutherford was a stalwart of our club for many years, quietly finding ways to improve everyone's experience. The next time you grab a blue sling or put one away, think of Dave.





Left: Tyler
Peterson with
Dave (Susan
Kinne photo),
Below: Karen
Rogers, Dave,
and Susan
Kinne row
Head of the
Lake, 2004.



Dave and

tume for

Troll (all

Head of the

Susan Kinne

photos this

page)

friends in cos-

Memorial for Dave Rutherford

wants to let you know that there will be a celebration of Dave the first week in December, and if you would like to come, we'd love to see you. It will be casual, as he would've liked it. But we will have some food, and we will be telling some stories and remembering him—just gathering in a good way to say goodbye.

There's no need to RSVP. Just mark your calendar and know you are welcome—with kids, friends, adults, anyone. He was not a stuffy guy, and this will not be a stuffy event.

Saturday, December 6 from 2 to 4 p.m. Lake Washington Rowing Club 910 N. Northlake Way, Seattle, WA 98103

We are also <u>fundraising</u> for a single scull—to be named <u>Archimedes</u>—to honor Dad at LWRC.

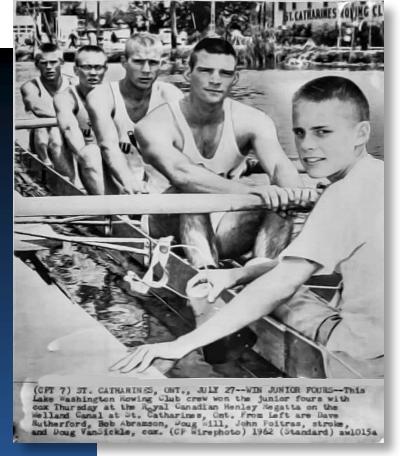
Finally, we thank everyone who has contacted us with stories, pictures, memories, and good wishes. It has meant the world to us.

—Ethan Rutherford



Above: Dave with Karen Rogers and Bob Thoreson Below: Relaxing (KC Dietz photos)





Dave at the Canadian Henley

Roosevelt High School, Dave Rutherford drove in convoy to St. Catherines, Ontario, in 1962 to participate in the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta. Their coach, Ted Nash of the Lake Washington Sculling Club—a subset of LWRC—had promised to enter them, under one condition: they had to remain unbeaten in all competition prior to the entry deadline for the Canadian Henley. Dave, Ron

Abramson, Doug Will, John Poitra, and Doug Van Sickle met the challenge.

But that was the easy part. They first had to raise the money to get there. They sold decals door-to-door and eventually were on their way — in a station wagon, a Volkswagen, and a sedan, with their shells strapped to the top of the cars. They brought sleeping bags and camp stoves to feed themselves en route. In Buffalo, New York, across from St. Catherines, they camped out at the fabled West Side Rowing Club, where they made the spur-of-the-moment decision to race for the chance to participate in the 1963 Pan American Games. They finished third, less than a length behind Lake Washington's senior crew, the winner.

At St. Catherines one week later, the five Roosevelt guys won the Canadian championship for high school fours with and without coxswains. Impulsively, they also entered the junior heavyweight race and won that, too.

Doug Van Sickle also coxed the LWRC senior four to victory. This was the first time a coxswain had ever won three gold medals in a major regatta.

The road trip was plagued by adversity, however. In Montana, a deer crashed into the radiator of the sedan. (A friendly mechanic repaired it for \$25.) In St. Catherines, the Volkswagen—its engine

at the back—was rear-ended, with parts strewn over the street. Two witnesses, former East German rowers, repaired it at a cost of \$2. And in Buffalo, their food ran out. Ted Nash decided to sell four of their eight oars to West Side RC, then took the boys out for a steak dinner. He also offered his own father a "lifetime membership in the Lake Washington Sculling School" for \$75. His father complied.

All together, the young men financed their trip with the original \$70 plus whatever they raised on the road. They were unable to bring the trophy home because that would have required them to post a \$1,000 bond.

Nash commented: "The kids told me they wanted to be oarsmen. I can't claim any credit for what they did. They would have done it for any coach—or without a coach. They told me why they were willing to work so hard and go through what they did. They wanted to make it good, because they knew they would never row together again."

-Roberta Scholz

Thanks to locally renowned sportswriter and *Seattle Times* sports editor Georg N. Meyers for the information contained here. This article is based on his "Sporting Things" column of August 9, 1962, found in the archives of the *Seattle Times*.

Thanks also to Susan Kinne for taking

The Blister That Sent a Rower to Harborview

'd never thought much about the occasional blister I get from rowing—always on my right hand—until I learned that a blister had landed a fellow LWRC rower in the hospital last summer.

A very casual survey of dozens of club members revealed that most of them routinely get blisters, despite their best efforts to avoid them. The cause is usually unwelcome pressure or friction, often combined with heat or dampness. For new rowers, blisters often pop up from gripping too tightly. Experienced rowers may blister during intensive training or when switching seats, trying something new, or using flawed equipment.

Some rowers use special gloves to fend off blisters—but gloves aren't foolproof.

Over time, blisters evolve into calluses. One of the club's most competitive athletes has had hands speckled with calluses since college.

And sometimes blisters can go dangerously haywire in just a few days.

A Long Weekend at Harborview

One of LWRC's most seasoned and dependable rowers—and a valued club member—developed a blister last summer after changing his grip during an otherwise routine Monday-morning row. He decided to visit a clinic later that day "because it appeared to be very long, although still a blister."

"Let it take its course," was the first treatment plan,

Joel Osborn recounted, although "I had some slight
swelling in my knuckles that I attributed to favoring my
palm and gripping differently."

Wednesday night, the blister popped. "I thought it would lessen the discomfort," he said. The fluid drained clear. "By Thursday my hand was really swelling."

Back at the clinic Friday morning, "the fluid was *not* clear." The doctor had seen something similar before, so called ahead to the Northwest Hospital Emergency Room. At the ER, Joel received intravenous antibiotics, had some skin cut off, and underwent a scan. "The doctor told me I needed to see a hand surgeon, called ahead to Harborview Medical Center, and asked if I wanted an ambulance."

Eight hours after arriving at the clinic, he drove to Harborview. About four hours later—by then, it was nighttime—a nurse and a doctor looked at his hand. Joel was told he'd be admitted as soon as a bed was available. He started receiving intravenous antibiotics every twelve hours and on Saturday morning underwent a successful operation to remove infected tissue and clean the wound to prevent the spread. Joel finally left Harborview Monday evening, nearly 72 hours after he had arrived. His car battery was dead.

"Before I was released, I was interviewed by three infectious-disease specialists who told me I had two infections. The one causing the most concern was normally the result of a penetrating wound." (The two most common hand infections are MRSA, which is resistant to many antibiotics and strep.) The specialists dismissed the idea of dock water as the cause.

For the next 21 days, Joel soaked his hand and changed bandages twice a day.

(Creative Commons photos)

Five weeks after that Monday-morning row last July, he was—thankfully—back on the water.

Blister Care Matters

Preventing blisters can be as simple as checking your handle grips before getting on the water. It's best to maintain a relaxed, loose grip—even in rougher water.

The Mayo Clinic offers straightforward guidance on treating hand blisters.
Here's a summary:

If it hasn't popped and isn't too painful: Leave it alone. It will heal faster.

If you need to drain it: Clean a needle with alcohol, pierce the blister from the side, drain it, then wash with soap and water and apply an antibiotic disinfectant such as Neosporin[®].

If you return to the dock with an open blister: Wash your hands, use disinfectant, and cover it with something that will stay put—such as a hydrocolloid bandage.

If it looks worse, burns, or isn't healing: Seek medical attention.

Infections Happen

Chatting around the club with other rowers opened my eyes. Blister stories led to other stories. One rower had scraped her leg on rigging at a regatta at Vancouver Lake and developed MRSA.

Another contracted MRSA simply by walking barefoot on a rowing dock. (MRSA is a type of staph bacteria resistant to many antibiotics.) The Centers for Disease Control lists athletes among people most likely to contract MRSA.

Dock water isn't sanitary. In Seattle, we share our docks with geese and ducks. Cleaning up the poop isn't a precise sport.

Washing your hands after a row is always a good idea. For me, an easy alternative is finally using the nearly full bottle of hand sanitizer that has been sitting in my car since COVID days.

-Rick Olson

IF YOU ENJOYED AN ARTICLE

in Making Waves, let us know—we'll pass your comments on to the author!

HAVE AN IDEA FOR A

HAVE AN IDEA FOR A STORY?

Please contact us at lwrcnewsletter@comcast.net



Editor's Note

In this issue, **Susan Kinne** remembers **Dave Rutherford**, who gave so much to LWRC and asked for nothing in return. His quiet demeanor be-



lied his ability to bring people together for whatever job was at hand. We all owe Dave for having made us a better community.

Speaking of giants, **Dennis Williams** describes a stellar event in the life of **Frank Cunningham**, who also left his unique legacy with us. **Lynne Robins** introduces us to **Suzy Whitehead**, a relatively new member who is committed to the LWRC ethos. **Rainer Storb**, role model *extraordinaire*, exemplifies the spirit of rowing as a lifetime sport. **Rick Olson** reveals the potential danger of a common rowing affliction, and **Saul Stashower** reminds us to pay attention to our surroundings—or else!

Enjoy.

-Roberta Scholz, Editor

Designer's Note

s always, *Making Waves* is designed for screen reading in monitor proportions. You can print it on letter-size paper at 94%, but



text is large, underlined links are live. Use <u>full-screen setting</u>: *Menu > View > Full Screen Mode*, or the page icon in the lower-right sidebar, in Adobe Acrobat Reader.

—Suze Woolf

An Ode to Frank

ew rowing clubs can boast of a founder and guiding coach as remarkable as Frank Cunningham. Frank passed on to the land of 70 degrees and perfect water over a dozen years ago, so many of our members never had the privilege of knowing or rowing under him. They have probably heard many references to Frank from our coaches and older club members; indeed, the unique sweep-rowing style that he embraced lives on in our club.

I came to rowing late in life and had much to learn. Frank was free with his critiques and spare with his compliments. I eventually deduced that if he didn't have anything to say about your rowing, you should probably move on to another sport

because he felt you were hopeless as a rower and a waste of his time. His comments were often introduced with "[Your name], you terrible man/woman," followed by his observation of what you were doing wrong. He

> could quickly analyze the problem and had the perfect correction. When I started rowing a double, Frank showed me a trick for setting the boat on the recovery. It was intuitive, but it took me a month to make this a natural part of my stroke. He patiently introduced me to the pair, for

which I am forever grateful and indebted. I can't get

into a pair without silently thanking Frank for banishing the fear and instilling the joy of the pair for me. Beyond rowing, Frank was a Renaissance man, erudite and wellrounded. As for me, I was educated at a prep school and have much useless poetry bouncing around in my brain. One beautiful fall morning after rowing, I started to quote Wordsworth ("This City now doth, like a

garment, wear the beauty of the morning; silent, bare ... all bright and glittering in the smokeless air"), and Frank quickly completed the quatrain. Another morning (probably after suffering through a chowderheaded square-blade drill), I complained, "Terence, this is stupid stuff," which Frank quickly finished. Forty years after memorizing these lines, I had found a use for them, and someone who could match me, line for line!

There is an adage that a prophet is recognized only in his own land.

"He was free with his

his compliments"

critiques and spare with

Frank with

Governor Christine

Gregoire and

her husband.

Mike

Gregoire

(Dennis Williams

photos)



Coach Frank with former rower Although we at LWRC revered Frank, the world outside of rowing was oblivious to his genius. As he was approaching his ninetieth birthday, I determined that his light had too long lain hidden under a bushel. I contacted State Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles and Governor Christine Gregoire, and very quickly February 2, 2012, was established as **Frank Cunningham Day** in the state of Washington.

The legislature was not in session on that day, but Frank and a small coterie (Frank's daughter Laurie, Marilynn Goo, and I) drove to Olympia for the noon ceremony. Frank cut a handsome figure in a gray suit and sky-blue tie and his abundant white hair. First order of business was the reading into the Senate record by Senator Kohl-Welles; we were in the gallery while Frank beamed, basking in the accolades. Senator Kohl-Welles then led us to the Governor's Mansion, where she intro-



duced Frank to the governor and her husband.

Frank regaled the governor and her staff with his history, recounting his adventures rowing with Harvard, establishing the Green Lake rowing program, and training many Olympic rowers. One member of the governor's staff shocked us by noting that Frank had coached him as a teenager—an example of how many people Frank had affected during his life.

Frank was the center of attention in the governor's office, and I think he enjoyed it thoroughly. It was a great day.

-Dennis Williams

Marilyn Goo, Frank, and his daughter Laurie

Check out our programs!

SENATE RESOLUTION 8675 12 February 2012

WHEREAS, Francis Cunningham, a Lowell, Massachusetts native, has lived in the Seattle area for over 60 years; and

WHEREAS, Frank served his country in the United States Marines during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Frank resumed his studies at Harvard College after his war service and distinguished himself with the Harvard Crew; and

WHEREAS, He stroked the victorious 1947 Harvard Varsity Eight to national prominence and won the invitational race that summer at the University of Washington, besting eleven other college rowing teams; and

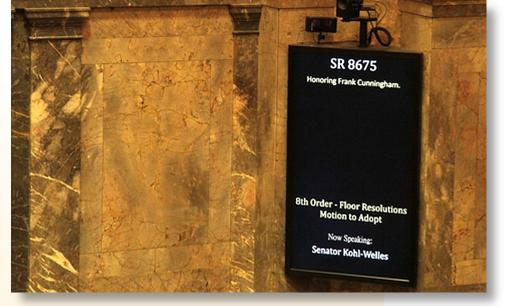
WHEREAS, Recognizing the unsurpassed beauty of the Pacific Northwest, he relocated to Seattle following his graduation from Harvard in 1948; and

whereas, Frank immediately immersed himself in the established rowing scene in Seattle, coaching for the summer Junior Rowing Program, and was instrumental in expanding it to become the Green Lake Junior Crew, a year-round, coeducational sports program for high school students, for which he served as coach and boatwright for 20 years; and

WHEREAS. Frank married his beloved wife, Lara Jane, and together reared their three children, and he now dotes on their five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, He taught at Edmonds High School from 1950 until 1968, and then at the Lakeside School from 1968 until 1980, instilling in his students the values of integrity, perseverance, and the joys and beauty of the English language and literature; and

WHEREAS, Frank has endeavored to carry on the tradi-



On the Senate agenda that day ...

tions of his friend and mentor George Pocock and George's son, Stan, and has been the head coach of Lake Washington Rowing Club for many years, training national and Olympic competitors and local residents in the art of rowing; and

WHEREAS, For his lifelong dedication to the sport and to teaching and coaching, Frank was awarded the 2010 USRowing Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of his students, academic and rowing, have benefited from the kindness, expertise, patience, counseling, and advice of this true "Renaissance Man";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate honors Frank Cunningham on the 90th anniversary of his birth for his service to his community and the nation as a teacher and a coach.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby honor Francis Cunningham on his 90th birthday and declare him a Natural Resource of the great state of Washington, whom we gladly share with the entire nation!

Meet Suzy Whitehead

Rowing, Creativity, Connection



Suzy behind Bellamy (Bellamy Pailthorp photo)

ne year ago, Martha's Moms welcomed Suzy Whitehead—athlete, creative spirit, and retired veterinarian—to the team. Like the quilts she sews, Suzy's recollections in a recent interview form a patchwork of vibrant pieces—distinct on their own, yet taken together, creating a design that celebrates creativity and connection.

Early life and education

Suzy grew up in New Jersey and attended St. Lawrence University in

northern New York state, followed by veterinary school at the University of Pennsylvania. There, she met her future

> husband, Russ, also a student athlete and veterinary student. After graduating in veterinary medicine in 1985, Suzy completed a nutrition residency focused on dairy cattle—a specialty that continues to influence how she plans meals for herself and her family. She explains that dairy cows, producing more than 80 pounds of milk per day, are like elite endurance athletes. "It was eye-

opening to see how tiny changes in their diets could make huge differences in their health and ability to meet the physical demands of milk production." Recognizing the importance of nutrition, Suzy adds: "I'm pretty disciplined about eating and cooking healthy food."

Suzy and Russ moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1996, drawn by its beauty, its proximity to family, and career opportunities. She balanced raising two children with part-time veterinary work while embracing outdoor adventures, including annual rafting trips led by Russ, a former raft guide. "We've done them every summer since we moved out here," she says. "It's a way to connect, to be in nature, and to share something meaningful."

Athletic pursuits

When I asked Suzy how long she had considered herself an athlete, her answer surprised me: "I don't even consider myself an athlete. I was always the tall one, but not very coordinated. I still feel like a klutz." Yet her story tells a different tale. From field hockey and track to crosscountry skiing and soccer, Suzy explored a wide range of sports. In college, she found her stride as a cross-country skier—despite having skied only twice before joining the team. She loved the feeling of being "fit" that these sports gave her.

Suzy continued to balance work and

parenthood with athletic pursuits, playing soccer with the Mud Mamas and eventu-

"It's a beautiful sport."

ally learning to row. It was during her time with the Mud Mamas that she came to appreciate the "team thing"—the camaraderie beyond competition and the satisfaction of staying in shape.

MEMBER PROFILE

Suzy's introduction to rowing came through her daughter's participation in a summer program at Green Lake. "I was desperate for her to do something," she recalls. Crew was one of the few sports where everyone started as a beginner. Even though her daughter didn't continue as a rower, Suzy was captivated: "It's a beautiful sport. I wanted to try it."

She began at Green Lake, progressing from learn-to-row classes to the masters team. "Crew was the first sport where I could see the amount of effort I was putting in actually making me better," she says. Despite early struggles—"Some women were not shy about letting me know they didn't want me in their two seat"—Suzy stuck with it. She raced and trained with Green Lake Adult Crew for five years but eventually stepped away when life got too full.

Just at that time, her sister **Betsy** started at Conibear Rowing Club. For more than a decade, Suzy watched Betsy compete and build lasting friendships. Betsy told her: "I love the rowing. I do love winning. I love being fast and training hard, but for me, the team is the most important part." Eventually, Suzy was ready to return, and she wanted a club experience like her sister's. Betsy suggested trying the Moms. Now rowing with Martha's Moms, Suzy says: "This is the most important team I've

ever been on. It's not just about winning. It's about the people." Her goals are to keep rowing, keep improving, and stay connected. "I'd like to get better in a single," she says. "And maybe still be rowing in my 80s."

Finding flow in creativity

Even though she had always considered herself a science person, Suzy began taking art classes as an adult and found herself increasingly intrigued by the people she met as well as the immersive and freeing aspects of the artistic process. "I'd go eight hours without eating or drinking, just experimenting." She has taken courses in jewelry making, printmaking, and 2-D design. And even though she denies being "a big sewer," she has made quite a few quilts. One of her proudest creations is a quilt made entirely from fabrics dyed with plants she and her daughter gathered. "My daughter and I got really, really interested in the natural plant dyeing of fabrics. It was pretty cool."

As a scientist, athlete, artist, and parent, Suzy values connection. She sees community as essential—for support and for growth. "When I joined the Moms, I felt welcomed. That has made all the difference."

—Lynne Robins





Part 2: Rules of the Road, Rowing Safety, and Everything

Staying Safe in the Waterways

In our September issue, Saul familiarized us with the basics of maritime law as they affect rowers versus motor vessels. Of paramount importance are the international rules known as the "COLREGS"—regulations for preventing collisions at sea. In this issue, Saul navigates us through a few of the specific regulations.

ule 2 of the COLREGS: Responsibility Some rules we should all keep in mind. The most important one for all mariners is known colloquially as "The Rule of Good Seamanship," and its subtitle is "Responsibility." The gist of the rule is that you will be not be exonerated from the consequences "of any neglect to comply with these Rules or of the neglect of any precautions which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen, or by the special circumstances of the case." It goes on to point out that "due regard shall be had to all dangers of navigation and collision and to any special circumstances, including the limitations of the vessels involved, which may make a departure from these Rules necessary to avoid immediate danger." Do rowing shells have limitations? Absolutely. Do large tugboats with limited maneuverability in a narrow channel have limitations? Yeah, they do, too. No matter what the case or what the rest of the COLREGS say, you must do whatever you can to avoid a collision—even if you have the so-called right of way.

Rule 5: Look-out

The other universal rule is especially challenging for rowers: "Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing cir-

cumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision." Because we row looking aft, we are not doing a bang-up job of maintaining proper vigilance. That alone puts us at risk of a Rules violation. All vessels must share responsibility for safe navigation. Sight and hearing matter.

Terminology

A big change came with the adoption of the COLREGS in 1972: removal of the term "right of way." Instead, the terms "standon" and "give-way" vessel

"Little boats make bigger wakes at 7 knots than big boats do."

were instituted. The stand-on vessel (the rowing shell) must maintain its course and speed, whereas the giveway vessel (the motor vessel) must maneuver to avoid risk of collision with the stand-on vessel. Neither vessel has the right of way, since both vessels have specific responsibilities.

Regulatory role of the state

Despite the dominance of the COLREGS, Washington state does have certain regulatory powers—for example, it can set speed limits. In the Ship Canal, from Shilshole through the locks to Webster Point, it's 7 knots. Shocking as it seems, I rarely see power vessels exceeding the speed limit.

Wakes

So if they're not speeding, what's up with the big wakes? Boat speed is generally limited by a concept called hull speed. A boat moving through the water

"You must do whatever you can to avoid a collision—"

develops a bow wave. The faster it goes, the longer and higher the wave. The speed at which the wave length equals the boat length is called *hull speed*. The closer a boat gets to its hull speed, the more energy is put into the wave—and the bigger it

gets. So little boats make bigger wakes at 7 knots than big boats do.

That's why smaller boats are the worst, and often the great big boats aren't much of an issue at all. Does that make it OK for a little boat to throw a huge wake? Not really. But if its wake caused harm or damage, it could certainly be held accountable for not maintaining a safe speed for the circumstances (that would be COLREGS Rule 6: Safe Speed). But good luck trying to enforce that while you are out on the water.

Rule 13: Overtaking other boats

"Any vessel overtaking any other shall keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken." If you are overtaking anyone (swimmer, kayaker, aircraft carrier—it doesn't matter), then you are the give-way vessel. The vessel being overtaken is the stand-on vessel and should maintain its course and speed.

Let's say there's a group rowing ahead of you. You notice they've all stopped so their coach can give them important pearls of wisdom. Suddenly, you're bearing down on a channel choked off by a raft of shells, so you stop. You are no longer maintaining your course and speed, so you must move out of their way.

Coaches, if you are reading this: I beg you to pay attention to traffic and consider whom you are imped-

ing when you gather your shells together. This seems to be especially true in the Fremont Cut. It is partially your responsibility as coach to ensure that you do not impede traffic behind you. (I ran my shell under a catamaran launch one dark morning when a coach stopped right in front of me. I was not a happy camper.)

One last thing about overtaking: Even when you're theoretically the stand-on vessel, it's good manners to move aside for an overtaking rower whenever possible. Make sure to let them know, so they're aware you've moved, and give them space to pass. This falls under common sense and the Rule of Good Seamanship. Do the right thing.

Traffic patterns

The same goes for following the common traffic pattern. All the local clubs have come to agree on a common traffic pattern, but sometimes you need to deviate for safety's sake. For example, if you're eastbound and heading into Portage Bay, and there's westbound traffic coming through the University Bridge, it just might

be safer to cut inside the red buoy at the Pocock turn.

Even though our traffic pattern says not to, the Rule of Good Seamanship *requires* you to do so, while taking precautions not to cause a new unsafe situation. Such deviations from the normal traffic pattern should not be taken lightly. Yet there are loads of examples where dogged insist-

"even if you have the so-called right of way."

ence on following the rules without exception have led to disaster.

Heading onto Lake Washington

Don't be shy about moving outside the ship channel through Union Bay (between the Montlake Cut and the lighthouse). There is no requirement to navigate within the marked channel—i.e.,



Wikipedia Map

between the red and green buoys. Staying out of the channel when it's safe to do so takes you out of harm's way. If you are in this channel (the official Lake Washington Ship Canal channel, as pictured above), the rules require that you do not impede vessels that have to stay in the channel (Rule 9 – Narrow Channels).

Stay safe

Above all, be aware of your surroundings and follow the rules for good sea-

manship. We share the waterways with many types of vessels and their operators, some of whom are not familiar with these rules.

-Saul Stashower

If you'd like clarification on any other maritime regulations, let us know at lwrcnewsletter@comcast.com, and we'll pass the word to Saul.

Resources:

<u>Updated COLREGS and Inland Rules</u> <u>Seattle Police Harbor Patrol boating safety handbook</u>

Harbor Patrol 206-684-4071

Also on the bulletin board in the boathouse

PASS THE WORD

Has an LWRC member done something worth recognizing, on or off the water? lwrcnewsletter-@comcast.net

A MATTER OF DIRECTION

Challenging row around Shaw Island

ndian Cove, August 2, 2025

For 47 years, ever since the first annual 14-mile rowing and paddling race around Shaw Island took place in 1978, pre-race discussions centered on which direction was best around the island—clockwise or counterclockwise—without ever reaching agreement. Shaw lies in the Salish Sea, at the center of the San Juan archipelago—surrounded by Orcas to the north, Lopez to the east, and San Juan to the west. Several smaller islands dot this seascape. West of San Juan Island, the Strait of Juan de Fuca connects with the Pacific Ocean.

This year, a flood tide was forecast to persist through— San Juan Islands out the race. That, along with strong southwesterly winds, augured for gnarly conditions in the roughly five-mile stretch of the San Juan Channel west of Shaw Island.

Armed with these two facts, most teams elected to go clockwise. Their reasoning rested on three slightly wobbly assumptions, all focused on the San Juan Channel. First, the tide would be with them in the channel. Second, wind and waves might give a helpful push through the channel. And third, "Let's get done with the channel first, while we're fresh." This kind of narrow thinking ignored most of the racecourse.

In contrast to the majority, a handful of teams heeded Steve Chapin's advice. A Port Townsend friend and an old hand at openwater rowing and sailing, Steve advised going counterclockwise. This way, he argued, given how Shaw Island is set among surrounding islands, the tide would be with us all the way except for San Juan Channel, and ditto the wind. The opposite would be true for clockwise teams. Moreover, instead of bucking tide, wind, and waves for the first 1.6 miles out of Indian Cove on the clockwise course, counter-



San Juan Islands. Shaw Island is immediately northwest of Lopez Island. (Mapquest)

clockwise promised the opposite: a fast, almost flying final 1.6-mile run from San Juan Channel to the finish.

The Lake Washington Rowing Club crew in the 35-foot open-water quad *Beluga* thought Steve's reasoning persuasive. Crew members included **Cody Jenkins** (bow), **Karolin Neubert** (stroke), my son **Adrian** (3 seat), and me (2 seat).

As we launched the quad, waves swept over her gunwales, filling the cockpits with water—an inauspicious beginning. Perhaps because of noise from wind and waves, nobody heard the start signal. Two minutes past the scheduled start time, somebody finally shouted, "Start!" and all took off. It remains a puzzle how this came about. What prompted "somebody" to shout and everybody else to listen? For the future, lovable race directors Herbie and Carrie Weisse must get an audible start horn.

Counterclockwise
turned out mostly as
Steve predicted. Tide,
wind, and waves were
with us almost two-thirds
of the way, blowing us out
of Indian Cove through
Canoe Passage, continuing as we rounded reefstrewn Picnic Point, helping us through Upright
Channel, and nudging us
around Hankin Point and
Point Hudson past the



Left to right: Karolin Neubert, Adrian Storb, Rainer Storb, Cody Jenkins

ferry landing into Cayou Channel. Then, largely unmolested by ferries and much other marine traffic (many power boaters attended Seattle Seafair that weekend), we rounded Broken Point and were assisted through Wasp Passage, squeezed between Shaw Island and Bell and Crane Islands. Periodic tide rips didn't slow us much.

As we left Wasp Passage, just before Neck Point, clockwise rogue sculler-turned-paddler Ivan Medvedev flew by us toward Wasp Passage on his Fennix Elite S surf ski—impressive. After Neck Point, we met battered-looking clockwise teams as well as pounding waves and wind coming from an approximately 25-degree forward angle from starboard—neither encouraging.

In line with these first impressions, San Juan Channel was wild. Karolin, undeterred, kept a steady, high stroke rate, though periodically things turned tumultuous. Strokes were cut short when *Beluga* bounced on chaotic waves—and equally chaotic backwash from Shaw Island's rocky shore—or crossed fields of tide rips, topped off by power-boat wakes. To drain out water breaching the gunwales, the aft cockpit's bailer remained open the entire time. These punishing conditions seemed to go on endlessly, but they eventually relented after *Beluga* rounded the island's southernmost rocky promontory, where

San Juan Channel meets Upright Channel. Here, we turned into Indian Cove for the last 1.6 miles to the finish.

It began well. Wind, waves, and tide now were at our back. We flew into the cove at 36 strokes per minute. Someone said, "Holy cow!"

However, Cody lost orientation—not surprising, since this was his first counterclockwise experience around Shaw Island and the Cove is an amorphous body of water without clear landmarks. Things got muddled. *Beluga* meandered—first east toward Canoe Island, then west, and so on, Flying Dutchman—style. During these peregrinations, and unnoticed by us, we crossed the finish line twice, not hearing a finish horn! Eventually, we dropped the oars when arm-waving Herbie on shore cut short further efforts just as we were gunning for a third finish. He shouted, "Stop! You already finished twice!"

According to Herbie, our first finish time was 1:37:14 hours, just two minutes shy of *Beluga*'s all-time record set in 2023. The inflexible Webscorer recorded a time of

1:39:14 hours and refused to deduct those two minutes lost at the start. Thus, at least for us, the 2025 Shaw Island race ended as enigmatically as it had begun—the perennial magic of the San Juan Islands.

Shoreline's Ivan Medvedev, clockwise on his surf ski, was second overall at 1:58:02 hours, the only other boat finishing in under two hours. He muttered the timeworn "I should have gone the other way." Bellingham's Vendovi, a counterclockwise Gemini double-outrigger canoe, was third at 2:07:03 hours, and Port Townsend's counterclockwise Steve Chapin in a Maas Flyweight scull was fourth at 2:11:41 hours. Due to conditions, finish times were spread widely; the last boat, the Maas 24 scull of Oak Harbor's A. Denny, clocked in at 3:33:00 hours. He is in line for a perseverance medal.

In contrast to the pre-race directional disagreements, post-race conclusions were unanimous: Nature won and made Shaw Island 2025 a hard race, both clockwise and counterclockwise. Moreover, also happily unanimous, all 21 teams felt seriously wiped out.

-Rainer Storb

