LWRC

MAKING WAVES

The LWRC Quarterly

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In this issue:

Water Hazards, Page 6
Facing Reality, Page 9
Racing on Lake Whatcom, page 12

LWRC at HOCR!

LWRC and Moms Show Their Stuff

The largest-ever Head of the Charles Regatta was held in Boston October 21–23. Among the 11,000+ participants were 24 members of LWRC and Martha's Moms, participating in eleven events. We congratulate them all for representing us at this historic regatta!

Joan Linse, BJ Connolly, KC Dietz, Susan Kinne, and **Kayleigh Durm** (cox; Columbia University), competing as Watercat, placed first in the Women's Veteran 4+. This age class is included as part of the Women's Grand Master Four+.

Rachel Alexander (stroke), **BJ Connolly** (two), and **KC Dietz** (bow) joined five others in a composite LBRA entry to place first among 36 contestants in the Directors' Challenge Mixed Eight+.

Rachel Alexander competed as part of the LBRA crew in the Women's Grand Master Eights, placing third out of 20 entries. Each of the top three crews broke the course record for this event. A great race!

Megan Northey placed third in the Women's Club Singles race against 23 other rowers.

Defending champions **Wispy Runde** and **Evan Jacobs** placed fifth out of 44 competitors in the Directors' Challenge Mixed Doubles.

KC Dietz completed what is likely the only triple win of its kind in HOCR history. Not only did she row in two winning boats herself, but the Radcliffe lightweight women also cruised to victory in their eight, the *KC Dietz.* Well done!

Above: Men's Club Four+ Below: The Charles (Andy Rees photos)

Other entries:

Women's Senior Veteran I 1X	**Wispy Runde**
Women's Grand Master 8+	**Sue Monroe, Karin Martin, Kimberlee Lavacott, Lara Normand, Page Crutcher, Amy Yunis, Julie Smith, Lynne Robins, Rachel Le Mieux** (cox)
Women's Veteran 8+	**Barbara Smith** (composite)
Men's Senior Master Four+	**Spencer Cutter, Andy Rees, Saul Stashower, Jordan Tigani, Johanna Knight** (cox)
Women's Grand Master Four+	**Jan Chow, Sara Harmon, Jeanne Neal, Gunilla Luthra, Brooke McCulloch** (cox)
Men's Club Four+	**Alex Weatbrook, Bennett Shultz, Alex Lund, Jasper Tran O'Leary, Cecilia Krause** (cox)

Top: KC Dietz, Rachel Alexander, and BJ Connolly celebrate their victory in the Directors' Challenge Mixed Eight. (Courtesy KC Dietz)
Above: Andy Rees photo
Left: BJ Connolly, Joan Linse, Kayleigh Durm, KC Dietz, Susan Kinne won the Women's Veteran Four+ race. (Courtesy KC Dietz)

Erosion Alert

Some of you may have noticed the sign located on the slope east of the dock ramp. A few years ago, **Jim Roe** spearheaded the effort to prevent erosion of this embankment. However, in recent months reports have surfaced to indicate that these efforts are being undermined by individuals who have tampered with the vegetation.

The first incident occurred when hot-weather users (paddleboarders? kayakers? other?) cut back the vegetation on the east side of the dock so they could climb up after the gate was locked at 8 p.m. (Presumably, they had read the signs.)

Next, neighbors sent us photos of two divers in wetsuits who were removing one of the retaining logs that Jim had painstakingly installed—and then swimming off with it like a pair of oversized beavers! At that point, we installed the current signage about shoreline restoration, in an effort to make clear that the plants were *not* weeds or any other unwanted growth.

If you notice any kind of unwanted activity relating to these efforts at erosion control, please contact the office immediately to report it.

Jim Roe worked tirelessly to improve everyone's experience at LWRC. The embankment restoration project was his last major contribution to our community before his untimely death in 2015.

Editor's Note

Lake Washington RC members did well at Head of the Charles. We congratulate them and bask in their reflected glory! It takes a lot of effort and sacrifice to prepare for this granddaddy of all U.S. head races. You made us all look good.

Saul Stashower and **Mike Henderson** share their wisdom regarding safety on the water, especially in cold weather. It never hurts to refresh your memory when it comes to safety!

Once again, **Dave McWethy** braves the elements during a solo journey on Midwest waters. Alone on Lake Michigan in rough waters, he faces unexpected challenges. **Rainer Storb** and his crew show everyone else how it's done: racing around Lake Whatcom in foul weather, blinded by hail.

Best wishes for a mild winter—soon spring will be around the corner!

—Roberta Scholz, Editor

Designer's Note

Making Waves is meant to be read on-screen, laid out in monitor proportions (landscape). You can print it on letter-size paper at 94%, but text is purposely large, and underlined links are live. Use the full-screen setting (*View > Read Mode)* in Adobe Acrobat for the most legible view.

—Suze Woolf

Board Profile

Allison Thomas, Secretary

One of the first things a non-rower wants to know is why we get up so early in the morning.

"I ask myself that question on a regular basis," admits LWRC Board Secretary Allison Thomas. "But once you get out on the water, it's such a fun experience! I just love rowing."

Allison takes a break from water sports.

Thomas is a regular member of the Club's growing competitive team. You can find her rowing in one of the big sweep boats, or training in a double with her rowing partner, **Amy Hildebrandt.** In fact, it was a telephone conversation with Hildebrandt that first brought Thomas to LWRC after she graduated from college and moved to Seattle in 2016.

"I thought I needed a break from rowing after college, but I'd been here about a month before I went, 'Well, I'm bored,'" Thomas says.

She was living in Bellevue at the time and checked out a few boathouses near her home, but the phone call with Hildebrandt convinced her to give LWRC a try.

"She was super nice," Thomas says. "She was like, 'Come to practice tomorrow!' and that was basically it."

Thomas grew up near Anchorage, Alaska; she didn't start rowing until she enrolled at Washington State University, where she was part of a lightweight club team. She didn't plan to compete when she joined LWRC, but when **KC Dietz**

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Board Updates

Winter 2023 Focus Areas

Thank you to all the amazing volunteers who helped to make Head of the Lake 2022 a success! While the weather once again presented some challenges, we've received many compliments on how well organized the regatta is. Any feedback or ideas for next year? We'd love to hear them!

We are preparing for the annual meeting and elections coming up in January 2023. If you're interested in joining the Board, or curious what this might entail, please reach out!

We are still fundraising for our new Comp 8+ and oars! If you haven't donated yet, you can do so here, or through MindBody.

As always, the Board welcomes all members to join our monthly meetings. Please contact Allison Thomas, Secretary, with any questions (board@lakewashingtonrowing.com).

Check out our programs!

http://lakewashingtonrowing.com/home/programs

Allison Thomas, Secretary

continued from previous page

organized the race camps, Thomas signed up, intrigued by the group camaraderie. And for somebody who didn't envision racing, Thomas has been part of the heart of the competitive team, eventually traveling with them to compete at the Head of the Charles and the San Diego Crew Classic. She counts the 2018 Opening Day as one of her best experiences, especially because she and her teammates won the women's 8+ event.

"It was super fun. We didn't win many races, any races, in college," she laughs. "After the Opening Day victory, I was like, 'Oh great, I have a good track record. I should stop now!'"

Despite Thomas's passion for rowing, early in the pandemic she had a hard time motivating herself to get up and head out onto the water in a single. She learned to scull but discovered that rowing with other people is a big reason why she finds joy in the sport. Her innate sociability may be what drew her to serve as a board member. That, and a nudge from LWRC Board President KC Dietz.

"I like to be busy," Thomas says. "I really can't help myself. I just like to dig in and make a difference."

Helping to guide LWRC through the pandemic's ups and downs has been part of the challenge of her tenure. Although the club attracted new members from other rowing facilities that remained closed, others left the area when their jobs went remote. Maintaining a stable income stream has been important, especially as the club gets ready to negotiate a new lease with Fremont Dock Company. Thomas credits former Treasurer **Janet Walker** with laying firm financial groundwork for what will be a significant increase in LWRC's monthly expenses.

Thomas is more concerned about rebuilding what she calls the LWRC "vibe," the sense that the boathouse is a community that needs everybody's time and energy to thrive. In particular, the once-required volunteer time commitment disappeared.

"It kind of fell off during COVID," Thomas explains. "Now we're trying to find a sustainable model moving forward; how do we get that sense of community back?"

That community spirit is extremely important to Thomas, not only because it's critical to the club's financial stability. "It's a place where you can meet people you might not normally interact with," she explains. "You meet and talk with people who have different jobs than yours, or are different ages. People you might not hang out with normally. It's just really cool."

For Thomas, age 28, watching such longtime LWRC stalwarts as **Barb Smith** continue to race—and win—is an inspiration.

"I want to be like that when I grow up," Thomas laughs. "If I can still walk when I'm her age, I think I'll be doing great!"

—Marcie Sillman

Hazards on Open Water

*Captain **Mike Henderson** on the importance of safety on the water*

In recent years, participation in water sports has expanded enormously. Inexpensive watercraft, such as plastic kayaks and paddleboards, have made the sport accessible to the masses. Many of those involved in these entry-level water sports are uninformed (or ill-informed) about the hazards of our Pacific Northwest waters. Despite having a world of information at their fingertips, they don't take advantage of it to learn about environmental conditions that will heavily influence their experience.

For the last four years, I've been part of volunteer marine search and rescue in the north Whidbey Island area, including the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Deception Pass, and surrounding waters. We've done numerous rescues of people in kayaks, paddleboards, small boats, and even larger craft. Sometimes they have overturned in choppy waters, and sometimes the current has carried them away so that they cannot make headway back to their launch point or on to their destination. We've had boats that got hit so hard by waves that the windows were broken out and the boat filled with water, capsized, and sank. We have had some fatalities.

The biggest danger to boaters, including rowers, is our relatively cold water. It pulls heat from our bodies, heat that our muscles need to function. As our extremities cool, we become less able to maintain a safe posture in the water. Our hands can no longer grip an overturned kayak, boat, board, or even a paddle or PFD (personal flotation device). Eventually, our mental processes slow, and poor decisions (or no decisions) are made. Even Michael Phelps, Olympic gold medalist, would drown if he spent enough time in our cold waters.

Basic precautions

How do we protect ourselves from the effects of cold water? First and foremost, *stay upright and out of the water*. (If you capsize and can't right your watercraft, climb onto the hull if possible.) Wear a PFD *and* a wetsuit or drysuit—they aren't fail-safe, but they do buy you time. Some of them auto-inflate, some require pulling a lanyard or cord to inflate, and some are the traditional positive-buoyancy foam. The low-tech foam is least likely to fail, requires less maintenance, and always works—*if it is worn*. You might be surprised to learn how difficult it is to don a PFD, once you are already in the water or, even worse, in turbulent water.

Hazards on Open Water

What more can you do to stay safe?

- Know how to right yourself. Practice until you can do it in almost any conditions.
- Educate yourself about currents. (Even Lake Union and the Ship Canal can have currents, especially after heavy rains.) Recognize that they can carry you faster than you can paddle or row against. Learn to use a website or app for predicting currents. I personally like www.deepzoom.com.
- Check the wind forecast before heading out. (I like www.windy.com.) Don't trust any marine forecast more than 24 hours out. Be aware when current and wind oppose each other—that's when waves get higher, steeper, and closer together. This phenomenon can create dangerous and confused seas. (As a reference: Whitecaps start to form at around 12 knots of wind speed.)
- Have a plan. Know where you are going and when you will be back. Share it with someone on shore, so that if you're overdue, searchers know where to start looking for you.
- Always paddle or row with a buddy or, better yet, a small group. There is safety in numbers.
- Swimming long distances is not generally recommended; moving your extremities saps even more heat from your body. If you do try to swim to shore, bear in mind that waves hitting a rock wall or boulders are quite dangerous and to be avoided. Be aware of any places you can safely go ashore to wait out dangerous conditions and/or summon help.*
- Don't try to swim against currents. It will just wear you down and lower your core temperature—and you will make no progress.
- Use lights to make sure you can be seen in conditions of restricted visibility, including low-light conditions.
- Carry a hand-held communication device. (Larger vessels should have a waterproof marine VHF radio or personal locating and communicating device, such as an EPIRB (locator beacon), a SPOT (satellite GPS messenger), or a Garmin inReach (satellite communicator). Cell phones can sometimes be used to summon help, but most are useless once they get wet.

Wise words

Recognize how difficult it is to locate a person bobbing in the water, especially with significant wind and waves. Don't go out in marginal or unsafe conditions, under the assumption that "someone will save me." Murphy's Law can strike, and the holes in the Swiss cheese might line up—you will have a bad outcome. *Carry a whistle or visual signaling device, such as a waterproof flashlight.* Wait until rescuers are nearby before employing these devices, so your battery isn't run down by useless signaling when no one is near.

If you follow these suggestions, you will most likely have an enjoyable and safe experience on the water. My teammates and I look forward to seeing you out there someday—without a 911 or mayday call beforehand. Be safe! Have fun! Carry on!

—Mike Henderson

LWRC's **Hugh Lade recently compiled a list of safe havens found in our city's waterways, complete with descriptions and advisories. See "Emergency Docking Locations" under the Members tab.*

You think rowers have rough water? It could be worse.

Marine Search and Rescue of North Whidbey Island has saved many lives. Here's a sample of the conditions and situations they face.

The Deception Pass Dash, December 12, 2021 (video): Members of the Ancient Mariners Rowing Club fight the elements in a double kayak. It was a bit dicey.

The DPD, again (video): Dancing with the crowd, but some of them stumble. About 15 paddlers had to be pulled from the water, and the race was canceled.

—Courtesy of Mike Henderson

Above: Kayaker accompanied by safe boat, 2021 DPD
Left: Paddleboarder trying to make headway against a five-to-six-knot current during the DPD. He eventually fell off his board twice and was rescued.
Below: Helicopter prepares to rescue swimmers during training.

Common Sense Triumphs over Ambition

Facing Reality on Lake Michigan

The journey begins

Looking at Lake Michigan on a map before my trip, I see the water is flat—totally flat. The reality, experienced in a boat, is quite different.

My prior voyage, a year earlier, was in a 30-foot powerboat: 3,200 miles south from the Chesapeake to the Gulf Coast, then north on the rivers to Chicago. This time I wanted to go farther, starting in Chicago and sailing on Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Erie—then would come the Erie Canal and the Hudson River until I reached New York City. This time the boat would be a Scamp, a mere 12-foot boat, with room to accommodate one person sleeping aboard. Envisioned from Seattle, this boat, when sailed in moderate winds on quiet water on sunny days, seemed like a good choice. From Chicago, I would sail along the shore, where I could flee to the beach if necessary. A simple and straightforward plan.

> **"Maybe it was a bad choice—or one of two bad options …"**

The boat was trailered to Chicago, to Crowley's Yacht Yard, my starting point. They had brokered the sale of my previous boat and generously welcomed me to depart from their dock. In the yard, I met a 40-year veteran of sailing on Lake Michigan. He advised me to keep an eye out for squall lines, which bring bursts of wind that can be deadly.

Friday brought all-day heavy rain. Monday promised perfect conditions, but on Saturday I got impatient. I loaded my one-person tent, which, when set up, would fit overnight into the well of the cockpit. Food. Clothes. An iPhone with GPS maps. A marlin spike.

The rain had stopped, but the supposed winds were 15 to 20. Wave heights, two to three feet. With a reefed (shortened) sail, my Scamp could handle this. I pushed off the dock, motoring with my tiny, 2.5-hp Suzuki outboard out of the Calumet River, under the huge drawbridge, and onto the lake.

The map may have had the boundaries right, but the surface was lumpy. I headed south on a reach with a steady wind from the west. I intended to follow the shoreline around the industrial south end of Lake Michigan before heading north on the Michigan side. The day was gray. Despite being summer and Saturday, the only other boats I saw were tugboats leaving the river.

Dave McWethy and his Scamp

The waves were steep and close together. Jerry Dennis wrote in his book *The Living Great Lakes*: "Great Lakes waves are "not rollers, but steep, short-period waves. Fresh water is less dense than salt water, so lake waves rise quicker and run faster … than the long rollers of saltwater seas."

Out beyond the lee of the shore, the waves were a steady three feet; over the next hours, they rose, with even an occasional five-footer. (If anything, I try to be conservative in judging wave height.) Reefed, the Scamp sailed over them

handily, without ever showering me with spray. Remarkably, she is what you would call a "dry boat."

It was a good sail, but after however many hours, I was starting to tire. I was also concerned the waves might build further. Despite hoping to sail to Gary, Indiana, I stopped short in the South Chicago Harbor, an industrial basin which would give me some overnight protection from the wind. In the harbor, there was a choice: to anchor in shallow water behind the breakwater, with the best shelter from wind; or to anchor further back, with deeper water and more wind. I chose the former.

Maybe it was a bad choice—or one of two bad options. Late in the night, I awoke to a grinding bump, and then another. The wind had shifted, despite the forecast, and swung the boat onto the rocks of the breakwater. Adrenaline overcame sleep stupor as I tried to push and paddle off the rocks, each sized like a quarter of the boat, each a mortal threat to the boat. The wind pounded in gusts, bringing with it rain and lightning. I struggled with the anchor line, eventually discovering it was snagged underwater on the rocks. Finally, I pulled it clear and shortened the line as the weather eased. Now, at 4 a.m., I ate breakfast and waited for a gray dawn.

This day presented lighter winds and three-foot waves. I sailed and motored to Burns Harbor. The next day brought me to Michigan City, illogically located in Indiana. Both days were under a reefed sail.

Note the insouciance concerning PFDs, which perhaps had not yet been invented.
*(*Breezing Up*, Winslow Homer, oil on canvas, 24" x 38" Creative Commons photo)*

In this part of the voyage, I began to see the high sand dunes which characterize the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan. In New Buffalo, the next port, the morning brought with it a small-craft advisory. A walk to the beach confirmed that conditions were no worse than on the previous three days, so despite the certainty that the Scamp was indeed a small craft, I ventured out. Along this shore, the ports have long and parallel harbor-entrance breakwaters. At the opening to New Buffalo's harbor, I was facing more big waves and upper-teen winds. But this would turn out to be the best sailing so far. With a double reef and a quartering wind, the boat raced along, rising and falling, at a stunning five mph, according to the GPS. It had the feeling of Winslow Homer's *Breezing Up*, even though my boat was smaller and the waves larger.

The journey nears its end

I had been finding that four hours on the water would leave me exhausted. On this day, it was something like 26 miles to Saint Joseph harbor. My intention was to sail partway and try a beach landing, to

camp ashore for the night. Again, in concept it sounded great. In practice, however, as I ground onto the sand, with waves pounding from astern, it quickly became clear that the boat was too heavy to roller up onto the beach. Amid my chaos, some beach-goers came to my rescue. With their essential help, we got the boat refloated to where I could start the motor and resume the voyage to St. Joe. At the breakwater entrance to St. Joe, the waves intensified and gave me a wild amusement-park ride into the protected waters inside.

Two days later, I set out again. The night before, a powerful storm came through, and I spent most of the night fighting the elements to keep the boat's interior (and myself) dry. We both survived. Today's destination, 20 miles north, was Palisades Park and the beach cottage that had been in my family since 1923. There, I would meet up with family members for a picnic, just as we had in our childhood. Fifty years ago, a nuclear power plant had been built there, and now it was facing the 19-year process of being decommissioned. Its main value now is as a navigation point.

That evening, I motored six miles north to South Haven, where I met the family again for dinner. By this time, I knew that my trip would end here. It was startling to realize that I had been on the boat for only seven days! It felt like a month. But my goal of reaching New York City was unrealistic. After another couple of days in South Haven, I took the train to Chicago, returned to my van and trailer, and retraced my steps to the Scamp. Then I brought her home to Seattle.

Looking back

Going out on the lake daily in the boat had begun to feel like I was inside a huge and violent machine. Day after day, I arrived at my destination totally exhausted. I wasn't adequately prepared for so much rain and hail.

Another major and unexpected problem was that I could not use beaches as a refuge from harsh weather or as an overnight haven. My beach rollers did not work to get the boat out of the water. Once under way, I could not adjust my rig nor do anything else that involved taking my hand off the tiller. If the wind came up, my only option was to drop the sail and continue by motor. At every point, it seemed the right decision to stop the voyage. It took a bit of rear-view thinking to see that I was pushing the limits of safety. I had started this voyage with a planned destination but ended at another. This was not at all my expectation or intention. But it seems powerfully valid to me now.

—Dave McWethy

Dave comments: People ask me whether it (or any other trip I've made) was fun. That's the wrong question. Better to ask: Was the venture satisfying? My reply is yes—I felt stretched and tested—and am here to tell.

Pass the Word

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

Report Oil Spills 24/7

1-800-OILS-911

Washington Division of Emergency Management

Harbor Patrol

206-684-4071

Also on the bulletin board in the boathouse

Serious Challenges on Lake Whatcom

LWRC rowers face difficult conditions in 12-mile head race

May 7, 2022. On the way to Bellingham with LWRC's **Cody** and **Kelton Jenkins** and my son **Adrian** inside, and the *Beluga*, a four-seat quad, on top of the VW Eurovan, we drove through a tremendous rainstorm, perhaps an omen of things to come.

Seventy-plus boats were lined up on the beach at Lake Whatcom's Bloedel Park in anticipation of the race, many of them high-performance kayaks (surf skis) and rowing shells, but also fast Indigenous war canoes. Getting ready to launch the quad, I discovered with dismay that the backstrap of my cap—with the rearview steering mirror—was broken, with tooth marks, presumably due to the efforts of our Cairn terrier puppy, Cricket, earlier that morning. A quick fix lasted for about two miles, when suddenly the cap's beak slipped over my nose. Given the quad's speed, we were in the lead by then, despite having missed the faint, cowbell-generated start signal.

We had four surf skis drafting us, making use of the *Beluga*'s effort-saving stern wake (the von Kármán vortex street): three doubles (Olney/Maloney, Klevak/Turcan, Reavley/Sawyer) and a single (Greg Barton, world and Olympic champion). After several futile attempts to fix the cap's backstrap while the others kept rowing, I called for a stop—and the surf skis slipped by immediately. Another repair lasted for about half a mile, when I gave up and tossed cap and mirror into the footwell. Steering without the rearview mirror was difficult: at nearly 87, I no longer could turn around as easily as when I was 40 without messing up stroke and rhythm.

Cody Jenkins, Kelton Jenkins, Adrian Storb, Rainer Storb (Michael Lampi photo, courtesy Sound Rowers)

Instead of feeling frustrated, the quad's crew was undeterred by the difficulties. Semi-blind, we managed to pass the surf skis of Barton and Olney/Maloney and catch up to that of Klevak/Turcan, who immedi-

Serious Challenges on Lake Whatcom

ately glued themselves to our stern again. Reminiscent of the 2019 Bainbridge Island Marathon (when we forgot the steering cap at home), they helpfully guided us with shouts of "port," "even," "starboard," and so on. That way, we avoided running into pilings, docks, or mooring buoys. Eventually, we found and then rounded Reveille Island, the race's midway point.

On the way to the island, an ever-increasing south wind had come up, generating correspondingly increasing waves that hit us head-on. Then it pushed us broadside south of the island and finally from astern on the return leg.

Cody stroked at an average rate of 33 per minute throughout the race. Periodically, he called for 1,000-meter sprints at 80 percent and then 90 percent power. These were useful, in part because they broke up the monotony of the row and in part because the *Beluga* woke up and accelerated. In one of those sprints, we lost the surf ski of Klevak/Turcan and caught up with and passed the surf ski of Reavley/Sawyer. We then rapidly widened the gap between ourselves and the surf skis behind us.

A couple of miles before the finish, the south wind suddenly shifted to a strong westerly, giving rise to side chop. The sky turned white, and we found ourselves immersed in an almost incredible hailstorm. Hailstones bounced all over the boat—and off us. Visibility dropped, and everything went white. The storm seemed to last an eternity but passed through in time for us to locate the finish.

We nearly lost the lead in the last 100 or so meters, due to a recently introduced (and complicated) placement of the finish buoys. Getting to the actual finish required a 90-degree turn around a large orange buoy; it was so close to the docks jutting out from the lake's eastern shore that I thought it unsafe to attempt a wide and fast rowing turn. So we wrenched the quad around by rowing on starboard while holding down on port. In the process, we lost togetherness and rhythm. The two double surf skis of Klevak/Turcan and Reavley/Sawyer approached alarmingly fast. They took the turn side by side, seemingly effortlessly. Once around, I searched for the finish buoy, locating it about a hundred meters directly behind us. Whenever I turned to look for the buoy, I got out of sync with the others. Things became frantic.

The finish bell came to the rescue. Our time was 1:31:28 hour—not too bad, considering the frustrating challenges and time squandered with futile steering-cap repair, poor steering, and wrestling with the inimical finish arrangement. Klevak/Turcan and Reavley/Sawyer finished six and seven seconds behind us, respectively. Olney/Maloney were fourth, more than five minutes back, and Barton was fifth, roughly seven minutes back. Behind them came the rowing shells.

After returning home, I talked to Cricket about the steering hat. Before I finished, he ran off, triumphantly waving a pair of my socks in his muzzle.

—Rainer Storb, LWRC and Sound Rowers

For information on Sound Rowers, see www.soundrowers.org.

Knowledge Is Power

Saul Stashower shares wisdom gained from a lifetime on the water, mostly as captain of an oil tanker. Rules are rules, whether on the open sea or the lakes and ship canal we row on in Seattle.

When we are rowing our boats in Lake Union and Lake Washington, we are governed by specific rules and regulations. Chief amongst them are what are known as the "Rules of the Road."

For the U.S., there are two sets of these: the U.S. Inland Rules, which are set by Congress through the U.S. Coast Guard, and the International Rules of the Road (technically known as the COLREGs for "Convention On the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea," which are based on international treaties. (It's complicated. You may wish to familiarize yourself with the published U.S. Coast Guard and Inland Rules, especially Rule 25.) Oddly though, Congress has defined all of Puget Sound—including the Ship Canal, Lake Washington, and Lake Union—as falling under the International Rules. Go figure.

The rules require *all* boats to be lighted when under way in hours of darkness, rowing shells included (sort of). This isn't optional, and it isn't dependent on a boat being registered. *It is literally the law.* The lights we rowers like to use are, to be blunt, wrong. Most of us light our shells with the ubiquitous 180-degree red and green lights for the bow, and 360-degree ("all-around") white lights aft that have been marketed to rowers for quite a while. The problem is that these lights are configured in such a way that we're actually marking ourselves (badly) as motorboats (aka machinery-propelled vessels). Let me explain.

A small motor-driven vessel (less than 50 meters long) is required to show a white masthead (bow) light, white sternlight, and red and green colored sidelights. The sidelights are supposed to cover a sector that goes from dead ahead to two points abaft the beam (a point on the compass is 11.25°, dating back to when we didn't use numbers on the compass and steered courses like "SW by S"). A sternlight should show a white sector of 135° (so if you're doing the math, adding the two sidelights and the sternlight makes 360°). The masthead light is a white light with a sector of 225°. For smaller vessels (like our launches) the bow and sternlight can be combined into one all-around white light. These lights are designed to help a mariner understand a vessel's direction in the dark, and to identify different types of vessels. A red light with a white light? That would mean you are looking at a power-driven vessel's port side. A single white light could only be a sternlight and would mean you are overtaking another vessel. Both red and green lights? They are headed right for you. In short, since we rowers show an all-around white light, we are all running around claiming to be motorboats, but without proper sidelights.

> **"...we're actually marking ourselves (badly) as motorboats (aka machinery-propelled vessels)."**

So how should we light our shells? There are two choices: light ourselves like sailing vessels (sidelights and a sternlight) or carry a bright, white flashlight which you are supposed to exhibit "in sufficient time" to prevent a collision (good luck with that!). It is theoretically OK to use just one white all-around light. That's what we used to do, before the lights we currently use became popular. That worked OK back in the nineties, but nowadays there is a lot more rowing-shell traffic, so the sidelights/sternlight approach makes more sense; nevertheless, the improper lights make me a bit crazy. I am working on a solution for myself in my secret underground lab, so stay tuned.

Knowledge Is Power

So why is this important? Because of safety and liability. The messed-up sidelights make it harder to determine whether a vessel is overtaking, since they would see the sidelights indicating the rowing shell was crossing. Remember that collision I mentioned in the September issue, the one that was eventually decided by admiralty law? The fender-bender involving two scullers? It's a reminder that all of us on the water are subject to admiralty law, meaning that in the case of a collision, each side will likely be held at least partially liable. Should your boat be improperly lighted, no matter what the circumstances, you are likely to be held more at fault after an incident than you would have been, had you been properly marked. (It is well to remember that under the COLREGs and admiralty law, you're never allowed to crash—that's in the rules too.) It is certainly something to think about.

It has been suggested in various places (including some years back in this newsletter) that rowing shells should be considered as vessels that are "restricted in their ability to maneuver" and are therefore privileged over other vessels. As someone who works as an expert witness in this field, I can tell you that guys like me would chew up that claim and spit it out faster than you can say, "Way enough!" A rowing shell is not a "vessel which from the nature of her work is restricted in her ability to maneuver as required by these Rules and is therefore unable to keep out of the way of another vessel." (Rule 3[g], should you be so inclined as to look it up; plus, I've never seen a rowing shell show the ball-diamond-ball day shapes or red-white-red lights required of a restricted vessel). Rowing shells are not well represented in the rules, so it would be "prudent," as we like to say, to assume we don't have any special privileges.

No matter what, the General Seamanship clause of the rules (Rule 2—the rule which shall rule all other rules) requires all vessels to avoid a collision; therefore, it's never OK to bump into someone else, so be careful out there.

—Saul Stashower

Saul has something to say about terminology:

*Some of us have the odd habit of calling buoys "**cans**," but red buoys aren't cans—they're "**nuns.**" If you look at red buoys, you'll notice that they are conical at the top, resembling a nun's habit. The green buoys, however, are cylindrical and thus are called "cans." So the traditional LWRC practice head-race piece is really "Locks to Nun," which doesn't have the same ring to it, does it? In the U.S., we follow the "red-right-returning" rule, whereby the red buoys are even-numbered and are on the starboard (right) side when returning to port. Most of the former colonies, dating from the days of the sun never setting on the British Empire, are set up the opposite way—this is because in reality, the rule was "red-right-returning to Mother England." Nowadays, the world is roughly 50/50. If you happen to care, our buoyage system is known as IALA-B. The maritime, like the U.S. Navy, loves acronyms.*

Steinbeck? Ship Canal? Huh?

Rowing west through the Ship Canal between SPU and the Ballard Bridge, some of you may have noticed a sleek motor vessel partially hidden under a tarpaulin on the north side of the canal. If you look carefully, you'll see its name: *Western Flyer.*

This is the painstakingly restored craft chartered by John Steinbeck for a summer spent on the Sea of Cortez in 1940. Joining him in this endeavor was his friend, ecologist Ed Ricketts. Both men shared a deep interest in marine ecology.

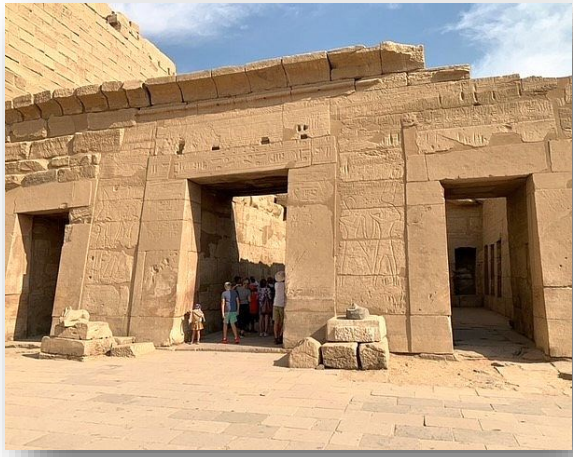
Restoration of the *Western Flyer* took place in Port Townsend. Interior finishing work will be completed here in Seattle at its current moorage.

Read more about the *Western Flyer* here and here.

Top left: Western Flyer *in Port Townsend, WA, April 2015. Top right: In her heyday. Bottom: Rehabilitation at the Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-op.*

Waterborne in Ancient Egypt

Margaret Berg, longtime LWRC/Moms member, shares her impressions from a recent visit to the Temple of Karnak:

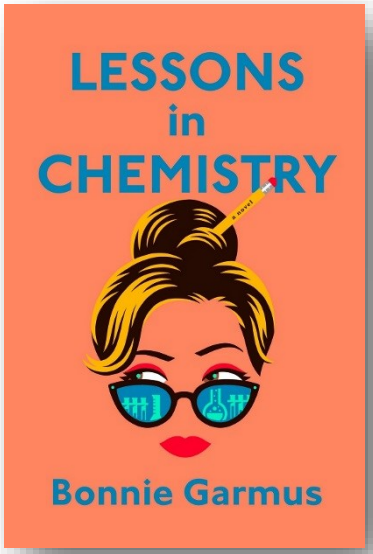


One day I visited the Temple of Karnak, thought to be the birthplace of creation and of the gods Amun, his wife Mut, and son Khonsu. Every year, ancient Egyptians would transport the statues of these gods in three gold-plated boats along the Avenue of the Sphinxes to the Temple of Luxor 1.7 miles away, where they would be put on display for 24 days before being returned to Karnak. The three-bayed boathouse above, built in 1500 BCE, is probably the oldest boathouse ever!

Book Shelf

Lessons in Chemistry

by Bonnie Garmus



In her debut novel, author **Bonnie Garmus** draws on experiences learned as a rower at Green Lake in the early 2000s. The main character, brilliant chemist Elizabeth Zott, struggles to establish herself in the male-dominated scientific world of the early 1960s. She finds acceptance, understanding, and love in Nobel-prize nominee Calvin Evans. Out of necessity, she eventually becomes the host of a television cooking show that is unlike any other such venture. By treating her audience of mainly housewives with respect, she succeeds in empowering them to see themselves differently—and, in the process, benefits from their loyalty. Her own neediness strengthens them.

This book cannot be pigeonholed as a "women's book" or as frivolous reading. Garmus uses humor to tell what is essentially a sad story. Anyone who came of age in the 1960s, or who has a parent who did, will recognize—and perhaps empathize with—what Elizabeth Zott accomplished. This brilliant scientist emerges from a troubled life with her dignity intact.

Learn more about *Lessons in Chemistry* at goodreads.com or npr.com.
Apple TV+ began production on the series *Lessons in Chemistry* in August. Brie Larson stars as Elizabeth Zott, and Beau Bridges plays the role of Wilson. It is scheduled for release in 2023.

Historic Race in Seattle

Check out this video of the 1947 invitational eights race hosted by the University of Washington. Elite collegiate crews from around the country gathered at Montlake to test themselves against their peers. Harvard won, stroked by **Frank Cunningham**—who later founded Lake Washington Rowing Club.

Right: One of the Gas Works, *Suze Woolf, watercolor on paper, 11"x15"*

Calling All Artists
We'd like to feature your work. Please share your creations with us!
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Gas Works Park Cleanup Coming

The shoreline and lake bed surrounding Gas Works Park will be cleaned up, with construction beginning in 2027. This area extends as much as a quarter-mile from the shore into the entrance to the Ship Canal. The targeted contaminants include carbazole, arsenic, nickel, and dibenzofuran—byproducts of past coal gasification and tar manufacturing on the site.

The greatest risk presented by these chemicals is to organisms living near the lake bed. However, the contaminants could be passed on to humans through the food chain.

Read more about this project in the November 12, 2022, issue of the *Seattle Times*.