

Sound Rowers AGM 11/10/2024

Minutes

The meeting was held at the Lake Washington Rowing Club with an option to join using Zoom.
Minutes taken by Michael Lampi.

Attendees

Peter Turcan
Michael Lampi
Shane Baker
Carrie Weisse
Rod Sternagel
Theresa Knakal
Jeff Knakal
Rainer Storb
Kathleen Crowe
Sean Halberg
Steve Chapin
Peter Hirtle
Shaun Holbrook
Noah Seixas
Kelly Johnson
Sarah Bitter

Zoom Attendees

Don Kiesling
Greg Gilda
Jon Harwood
Lance Romo
Francine Rose
Shaun Koos

Meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM.

Approval of last year's minutes: passed

President's report

Club President, Peter Turcan

- Welcome everyone to the meeting.
- Thanked attendees for working with the change of date, and suggested the AGM date should be flexible by a week or so earlier or later than the traditional 2nd Saturday in November.
- 2024 saw a good year of racing, some races well attended, some less so, and two canceled.
- Suggested we need to have some ideas to appeal to a broader, younger group.

Treasurer's report

Club Treasurer, Jeff Knakal

- Membership income up (\$2287 in 2023 vs \$3010 in 2024)
- Race expenses up (\$9234 vs 13978 in 2024)
- Overhead expenses down slightly (\$6643 vs \$5988 in 2024)
- Seattle Parks requiring special events permits, which have increased significantly (over \$700 for GXSC alone)
- Rat Island Regatta provides the greatest revenue
- Commencement Bay loss (\$82) covered by Todd
- Guano Rocks loss (\$252) covered by local club
- **Treasurer intends to cover the race losses so directors do not need to feel they have to cover the expenses if a race runs in the red.**
- Recommendations that race fees for some races be raised to cover races that have inordinately high expenses (Mercer, GXCS)
- Recommendation that everyone in a race should pay a fee, say, \$25 if member, \$30 if non-member. If more than 2 people in a boat, perhaps \$10 or \$20 per additional competitor. Race directors can define how much to charge and they need to inform Theresa so the web site can be updated appropriately.

Insurance report

Greg Gilda

- No difference from last year. Same costs, insurer easy to work with.

- Coast Guard permits were a bit wonky this year. Permits were not issued for the first few races, possibly due to the retirements within the agency. Very helpful once things were settled.
- Some Coast Guard commitments for safety boats were not followed through by them (Bainbridge).
- Certificates will be generated and sent to directors once the spreadsheet being sent to them has the details confirmed. Same for Coast Guard permits.

Race reviews

La Conner and Peter Marcus Rough Water Race Kevin Olney reported via email: both races were successful this year - well attended and the weather was good for both events. There were no notable safety incidents. La Conner is back to Feb 1, 2025 (There was a typo on the PNW-ORCA schedule). We have had good turnout from paddle boarders the last few years and I'm hoping to continue that trend.

The Peter Marcus Rough Water Race will be on March 8, 2025. Over the last year ACA has been making an effort to promote ocean racing (surfski) as a discipline. I am working to brand this race as a marquee event by increasing the long course distance to 12.6 miles with 50% or more downwind conditions. Holding the race earlier in the season offers a better chance of wind. My primary focus is providing adequate on-the-water safety. Working with Bellingham Fire, Whatcom Co SAR, Coast Guard, and my regular group of safety boat operators I believe it is feasible to run the race in conditions that would be a no-go in other circumstances.

Squaxin Island – Rod Sternagel:

Race was fine until just before the last competitor approached the finish line and winds and rain built up quickly. Fewer competitors than expected, i.e., mid-30's last year and 19 this year. This was possibly due to the severe weather forecast. Rainer's quad was first across the line. Five safety boats from the Outboard Motor Club, plus the Sheriff's boat. Tyler set the short course record. New finish line at the lighthouse on the point worked better.

Lake Whatcom – Lance Romo:

Some concerns about racers starting late and finishing later. Good race, but the awards ceremony seemed a bit random – an issue which is not limited to this race. Suggestions: try not to make the finish line turn so sharp, and have a bit more food.

Commencement Bay – Todd Silver:

Fewer racers this year, possibly due to the weather. Tacoma Metro Parks providing some assistance, but requiring a food handler's permit if we offer non-peeling fruit or warm food – so none of that will be provided. This year's race had a great registration and finish line staff members. Want to work on trying to get younger people in the races.

Guano Rocks – Shaun Koos:

This year's race went well, Peter Hirtle let the local club president win. Food was excellent as usual, though the further shelter was used.

Rat Island – Steve Chapin:

50 to 60 boats, down from previous years. Went smoothly, with 5 safety boats. Online registration only made it fairly easy this year, with pre-race registration closing the day before the event. Each safety boat was able to be given a list of competitors.

Alternate viewpoint: day of registration would be a good thing, but still a problem for directors at big races. Have to pay a per-head fee to State Parks (but have to guess that number), plus shelter fee. Those fees have been reasonable so far, compared with Seattle. State Parks is planning to demolish the pier where the Marine Science Center is located, so the finish line will eventually be changed.

Budd Inlet (Jeff Wong not in attendance):

Participation of young rowers was included this year. Several racers got confused as to which dolphins were the right ones to turn around – especially for the short course. Adding buoys or having the safety boats near them might be helpful. Use of GPS or electronic headings is recommended.

Elk River – Jon Harwood:

A bit of a breezy day, deciding to stay behind the bridge for protection. Length of the races (3 and 8+ miles) were somewhat longer than intended. "Family course" added to the short and long events for 3 races overall. Turnout a bit lower than previous years (~40 racers), and with extra clam chowder at the end. Tried a lower race fee to encourage more local attendees.

Shaw Island – Carrie Weisse:

Had a number of people camping, used two big buoys marking the finish line, including one from Fisheries Supply. ~20 boats participated. Peanut butter & jelly provided for lunch. A bit foggy at the start. At Broken Point the ferry goes through the same area that racers typically travel. Question raised about whether or not a Coast Guard permit was obtained for the race.

Great Cross Sound – Jeff Knakal:

Seattle Parks is now requiring a Special Events permit, which was obtained for this event. Small Craft Advisory forecast for the race, so the event was canceled. The weather was not quite as bad the day of the event, but still marginal. Looking for a replacement race director, or dropping the event as attendance has been lower year after year.

Motion made and carried to drop the race from the calendar.

Bainbridge Island – Kelly Johnson:

Weather was very good, currents were noticeable but not overwhelming. Boats in both half and full marathons went clockwise. 29 racers in 16 boats participating. Early start for slower boats in the marathon (9 AM vs. 10 AM). Half marathon started at 11 AM vs. noon in previous years. Had

both on-shore and on-water safety crews monitoring the event, using cell phones. Text messaging used to inform the safety personnel as to the number of racers, and race status. Lots of big boats in the passes created big wakes. Bainbridge Island Rowing Club provided the food at the shelter, and was also where the awards ceremony was held. Some BIRC members also participated in the race.

Lake Samish – (Steve Scoggins not in attendance):

Race canceled due to the bridge construction obstructing the course. Steve Scoggins is stepping down as director after 10 years. Bill Auchterlonie is taking over the event for 2025.

Mercer Island – Rainer Storb:

55 racers this year (41 boats in the results), lower attendance possibly due to massive road closures. 4 chase boats, one of which was quite close (too close?) to the last racer on the course. Early start for slow boats on the long course. Lots of food afterwards, with a new sausage cook. Buoys borrowed from LWRC and Sound Rowers inventory. Rainer did not race this year so as to manage the finish line. Want to require boat numbers to be on the bow of the boat so the numbers can be seen by the finish line officials.

Great that this race is popular with large-crew Dragon boats - lots of participants and photogenic.

Website report

Theresa Knakal

- Race directors were very good about providing updates to Theresa for the web site.
- Four races used Pacific Multisport, nine used WebScorer.
- Looked into setting up online registration payments using WebScorer, with Squaxin Island as the first test race in 2025.
- No photos provided for Bainbridge. Kelly to provide some.
- Looking for expertise on making sure the web site is secure, and preventing unauthorized access.
- Want to get all the registration info for all of the races on the race pages by the end of February. If changes are needed, then the page can be updated later. This will help people thinking about attending the races earlier in the year.
- Want help selecting banner photos for the races on the web site.
- Squaxin Island photos link needs to be added to <https://www.soundrowers.org/racephotography/>

Race proposals and ideas

Port Angeles race proposal

Sean Halberg

Trial race: Very foggy day (October), with the course inside the breakwater. Rod had a police escort on the long course (12K), had problems finding the waypoints due to the fog and number of log booms to choose from. Roughly 20 racers participated in the 5K short course. Two in the long course. Looking to get more volunteers to assist.

Viewing platform near the course where one could see most of the course, which is unusual for a SR race. Not much current, but a fair amount of driftwood and seaweed present.

Motion made and carried to add the race to the schedule.

Biathlon

Discussion started by Peter Turcan as to whether or not a biathlon (boating & mountain biking) event should be something Sound Rowers should consider supporting. Recommended that Peter could try setting up a trial run to see how well it could work. Some are concerned over the complexity of it, though some are interested in participating.

2025 Schedule

Don Kiesling

Feb 1:	La Conner
Mar 8:	Peter Marcus Rough Water, Bellingham
Apr 5:	Squaxin Island, Olympia
May 3:	Lake Whatcom, Bellingham
May 10:	Commencement Bay, Tacoma
May 31:	Guano Rocks, Wenatchee
Jun 21,	Rat Island, Port Townsend
Jul 19,	Budd Inlet, Olympia
Aug 2:	Round Shaw Row, Shaw Island
Aug 9:	Elk River Challenge, Aberdeen
Sep 6:	Bainbridge Island Marathon
Sep 20:	Lake Samish Salmon Row, Bellingham
Oct 11:	Sausage Pull, Seattle
Oct 19:	New Race, Port Angeles
Nov 8:	Annual Meeting, Seattle Location TBD

Membership report

Don Kiesling

- Lots of renewals, some new members, over 70's paying for memberships. Renewal reminders being sent out to members prior to La Conner.
- Question as to whether SR could have an institutional membership, with Seattle Canoe & Kayak Club as a member as an example. No resolution on this.

Photography report

Michael Lampi

- Camera and battery are fine.
- Upgraded album creation software was purchased (iAlbum) as the previous version was about 10 years old.
- Battery bank purchased for iPad was handed to Jeff W. at Budd, and got lost between there and Elk River - remains lost. Video camcorder and tripod used at several races, with varying results. Pocket drone videos taken at some races as well, with varying results.
- Recommendation: Have shorter videos, with better editing of them. Drone experimentation should continue, possibly with one that can be used over water. Try to have better training of volunteers in the use of the camcorder.

Ribbons report

Shane Baker

- Lack of response by race directors has been a bit frustrating.
- Shane wants to order the ribbons all at once to reduce the logistics involved.

Motions

Renewal of membership with WWRC at the \$250 level passed.

Safety

- Recommendation: Put link to suspender-like PFDs on SR web site. Vaikobi suggested.

- Have race directors put more emphasis on competitors wearing PFDs. Saw top racers who are taking the greatest risks not wearing PFDs or not taking other safety precautions.
- Try to get more safety boats for the races, but emphasize that they are not omniscient nor omnipotent.
- Some concerns were raised about the Shaw Island race having no safety boats.
- Discussion of safety at the 70/48 race (not a Sound Rowers race) especially racers racing through the night. Consensus was not to get involved in races outside of the SR schedule.

General discussion

- There will be a memorial row/paddle for Rob O'Brien. Theresa Knakal will inform us as to when and where this will occur.
- US Rowing Referee comment: willing to work with Sound Rowers to add our events to their calendar.
- Need to work around or with other large races (Seventy48, WA360, Gorge), possibly suggesting to some of them that some of the SR races might be good training events.
- Check into RideWithGPS or Strava as possible route following tools one could use.
- Issue raised as to some contradictions in our rowing boat classifications. The Open Water class seems to include a wide variety of different boats that aren't necessarily competitive with each other. Steve Chapin to look into it and make a proposal with assistance from other rowers.

Stipends

Treasurer, photographer, webmaster, membership, insurance/permits – Keep them the same as last year.

Trustee elections

Purpose of trustee: oversight of Sound Rowers activities.
Trustees re-upped for the next term.

Officer elections

Motion made to re-elect the current slate. Carried.

Meeting ended at 1:51 P