

# STROKEWATCH

BAY AREA ROWING CLUB OF HOUSTON • SEPTEMBER 2006



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## BARC Hat Races October 14<sup>th</sup>

By Alex Parkman



You don't have to wear a hat to race, but you do have to be at the boathouse on Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am to be a part of the BARC Hat Races. The names of rowers will be put in a hat, and drawn to make up whatever combination of boats best suits the group – quads, doubles, four, eight, or even a single. The seriously fun races will be 1,000 meters in length – starting at the power poles and finishing at the gazebo. We will start as many races as you like, or until it is time to stop for refreshments.

Even if you have never raced before, this is your chance to practice polishing your technique for about four consecutive minutes (just over 100 strokes) and enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow club members.

If you care to assist with the start/finish, or have any questions contact **Alex Parkman**. ■



## A Word from the Prez

By Hannes Hofer

### Please don't go there!

Recent incidents have prompted the BARC Board of Directors to review our club's safety rules. As a result of this review, the Board of Directors has decided to restrict the areas to which club boats are allowed to be rowed. To be precise, club boats are no longer allowed to go past the 90° port turn near the Nature Center's boathouse. The area beyond this point is littered with hazards, both above and below the water's surface. In addition, great care must always be taken when rowing beyond the fence posts on the north end of the lake. This area should be entered only by experienced rowers, and never when the water level is low. It is regrettable that we have to impose these restrictions. Many rowers, including yours truly, have enjoyed rowing in the "Big Island Slough", but the safety of our rowers and of our equipment takes the highest priority. ■

*13,025 kilometers have been logged with Cynthia Reiser leading the Club with 1319 km. & Ev McClendon right behind with 1028 km.*

## Bylaws of the Bay Area Rowing Club of Houston

By Theresa Tompkins

*"This is really a  
good time to step  
in and volunteer"*

*~Theresa*

The past couple of years, besides being on the BOD, Alex has been our equipment manager as well as your boathouse manager. He has been doing an excellent job, but all three jobs are a bit much. In the past, yours truly has done the (a) boathouse manager (not very well, but it proves that REALLY ANYBODY can do it.) He also has been the (b) equipment manager. Ladies, surely this would not be too bad of a position especially if you enjoy shopping! It is not impossible to find a knowledgeable person available to help when there is breakage and you need help. This last year, I have been on the BOD (again) – this time as secretary (and I still can not write – how did this happen?) Also I am still (c) rowing development coordinator. These “jobs” do take time, but both Alex and I still manage to hold down real jobs (OK, me, but maybe not so much him ;-)) and have personal lives (now that would be him, not me – well, we’re close on

each doing it all ;-). Now we have formed another committee to work out the details for the possibility of bringing coaching into BARC! This is really a good time to step in and volunteer. If you are interested in any of these positions or want to help in some area at any level, just contact one of us! PLEASE

### Article V, Section 1

#### Standing Committees (Paraphased below)

The Board of Directors shall ensure the formation of at least three standing committees and appoint chairpersons to oversee the responsibilities and duties of the committees. These committees shall be the Boathouse Operations Committee, the Equipment Committee and the Rowing Development Committee.

(a) The Boathouse Operations Committee Chairperson supervises and controls all operations associated with any facilities required

by the Club. These facilities may include, but is not limited to, temporary or permanent storage of boats and related equipment, work-out room, clubhouse and docks. The Boathouse Operations Committee Chairperson shall ensure the maintenance of all facilities.

(b) The Equipment Committee Chairperson shall be responsible for the acquisition, issuance and maintenance of all equipment belonging to the Club which includes, but is not limited to, boats, oars, safety equipment and tools.

(c) The Rowing Development Committee Chairperson shall be responsible for the organization of rowing (sweep and sculling) classes and clinics to be provided to members of the Club and the general community.

### Article IV, Section 2

#### Other Committees

“Other committees may be created by resolution of the Board of Directors...” ■

## BARC’s Boat Names

By Martha Hood

Have you ever wondered why the boats are named after birds? BARC decided on bird names because of the over 220 species we have here in the Bay Area. The Upper Gulf Coast is along the “Central Flyway”, one of North America’s largest migratory bird paths.

I have been asked quite a few times to identify a bird while rowing. Although many

individuals are familiar with the blue jay, dove, and other common birds in the area, I will try to share something unique about each species named on our club boats.

#### “OSPREY” - Vespoli 4+

Ospreys are the only raptors which dive into water, and therefore are sometimes referred to as “fish hawks”. Have you ever wondered

why they do not lose their grip on their catch? Osprey’s feet have spiky pads, called spicules, which enable them to keep a firm grasp on fish. When airborne, the osprey turns the fish to carry it headfirst. This reduces air friction as the osprey flies. Another interesting item is they swallow their fish headfirst, so that fins and tail slide down more easily.

So the next time you are rowing, take the time to watch an osprey as it hunts and fully appreciate its beauty. ■



## More from the Prez— LIGHTS!



As mentioned in an e-mail in July, the BOD has been discussing several issues relating to boat safety. One complaint that we have heard is that not everyone is using lights when rowing before dawn and after sunset. The handbook clearly states that boats must carry lights when rowing in the dark. One might ask, what kind of lights are appropriate?

I have searched the Internet for an answer, and the most authoritative answer appears to be from a website belonging to the Furniwall Scullers in the UK: <http://www.btinternet.com/~furnivall.sc/fsclight.htm>. This page references something called "INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR PREVENTING COLLISIONS AT SEA, 1972". Notice the section titled "**SAILING VESSELS UNDERWAY AND VESSELS UNDER OARS**". The full wording of this rule is as follows:

- (a) A sailing vessel underway shall exhibit: sidelights; a sternlight.
- (b) In a sailing vessel of less than 20 meters in length the lights prescribed in paragraph (a) of this Rule may be combined in one lantern carried at or near the top of the mast where it can best be seen.
- (c) A sailing vessel underway may, in addition to the lights prescribed in paragraph (a) of this Rule, exhibit at or near the top of the mast, where they can best be seen, two all-round lights in a vertical line, the upper being red and the lower Green, but these lights shall not be exhibited in conjunction with the combined lantern permitted by paragraph (b) of this Rule.
- (d) A sailing vessel of less than 7 meters in length shall, if practicable, exhibit the lights prescribed in paragraph (a) or (b) of this Rule, but if she does not, she shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.

A vessel under oars may exhibit the lights prescribed in this rule for sailing vessels, but if she does not, she shall have ready at hand an electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light which shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.

- (e) A vessel proceeding under sail when also being propelled by machinery shall exhibit forward where it can best

be seen a conical shape, apex downwards. *A vessel of less than 12 meters in length is not required to exhibit this shape, but may do so.*

Now, this is about as clear as mud, but the way the Furniwall Scullers have chosen to interpret it is that a rowing shell shall have a white light that is visible from all around the boat, i.e. at 360°. On a rowing shell, this can be achieved by having two lights, one in bow and one in stern, that each can be seen at 180° each.

Some rowing clubs in the US require their boats to carry sidelights as mentioned in the rule above. In those cases, shells must have red for port and green for starboard plus a white light in the stern.

Now, one can argue that rowing at Mud Lake hardly qualifies as being "at sea". Never the less, it is important that we are able to see other boats at night. Rowing shells make very little noise, and what ever noise another boat makes is easily overpowered by the sound of your own rowing. Therefore boats must at a minimum display a light in bow that is visible at 180°. While the official rule states that it shall be a white light, some argue that a red blinking light is easier to distinguish from other lights around the lake.

So where do you find such a light? Well, some people just attach a bicycle light to the shirt of the bow rower, but while it is better than nothing, such a light is hardly visible at 180°. A better solution is to attach the light to the bow marker clip and make sure that the light has a lens that is visible from 3 sides.

There are several manufacturers that make lights specifically for rowing boats, here are a few that I found on the internet: <http://arcnav.com/> (These are designed and sold by Kourt de Haas from Austin RC)

<http://www.chesapeakerowing.com/boatlights.html>

Some BARC rowers are using homegrown clip mounted lights that are built with lights from Tektite <http://www.tektite.com/src/products.php?c=6>. Tektite is now also selling their own model specifically for small boats: [http://www.tektite.com/src/product\\_info.php?id=2162](http://www.tektite.com/src/product_info.php?id=2162).

In conclusion, displaying lights while rowing in the dark is mandatory, and it is up to the individual sculler or crew to acquire the needed lights. A coaching launch going out in the dark must carry lights as well. ■

## Coaching at BARC

By Hannes Hofer & Theresa Tompkins

One thing that is common at most rowing clubs, but absent at BARC is coaching. Sure, we teach beginner's classes throughout the summer, but once classes are over, BARC rowers are on their own. Those who want to continue to better themselves for whatever reason are left to so without the help or guidance of anyone, except for an occasional hint from a fellow rower. "Back in the day" it was a tradition in many clubs that some of the more experienced rowers would volunteer to coach their less experienced fellow rowers. We have even had some of that at BARC in the past, though at a very limited scale. These days, however, there seems to be a trend, especially in the bigger clubs, to pay coaches to do their job.

Hiring a paid coach has been the subject of discussion on the BARC Board of Directors lately, and on June 5, 2006, a small group of members met at **David and Norine Gill's** home to discuss possible coaching needs of BARC. It was determined at the discussion that the goal of coaching at BARC could first be to encourage and improve the rowing of new to intermediate rowers. Hopefully, this would lead to higher retention rates and it would therefore eventually pay for itself. If successful, we could then open discussion again for an advanced rowing/competitive coach.

The findings of the meeting were discussed at the BOD meeting held this past July. After lots of discussion, the BOD decided that since the intent would be to retain new members and improve the basic rowing level at the club, the club should pay for this initial investment (If and when a competitive coach would be involved in the future, that person would be probably funded at least in part by the crews). We figure that a coach could be hired to coach for 2-3 hours just two 2 days per week. We should be able to this for about \$5000-\$10000 per year, an amount the club should be able to handle with existing dues.

Since hiring a coach (or hiring anybody!) is a major change in the way BARC does business, the decision to do so should be subject to approval by the general membership. A committee will soon be formed to draft up a set of guidelines and responsibilities of a potential coach and after approval by the board, a proposal will be presented to the general membership and brought up for a vote, hopefully at the Annual Meeting in February.

The information meeting held in June was an excellent first step in this process. We appreciate the time and effort put forward by five members present, but we also hope that more people will get involved with making it happen. Much work remains to be done. So step up to the plate and let us know what you think and what you know. Your help will be much appreciated by present and future BARC members. ■

## Olympian Sean Hall Coaches BARC Members

The Rowing Club of the Woodlands conducted a special coaching clinic by Olympian Sean Hall. This clinic was open to members of the Woodlands, BARC, and Greater Houston. The clinic was a success even though it was incredibly hot outside. **Mary Gormanson**, took advantage of learning more about her rowing and said, "It's always amazing meeting someone who competed in the Olympics. I mean how often do you say you got to meet a three time Olympic rower let alone train with one?" To accommodate

more rowers, Sean primarily coached rowers in quads. **Mary** expressed that Sean had some really good pointers and took videos of each of the rowers. I left knowing a lot more about my rowing! ■



*Susie Jones (bow) along with other members of RCTW receive coaching from Sean*

*Mary Gormanson shows good form.*



*3-Time Olympian Sean Hall coaching at the Woodlands Rowing*

## BARC Members Go To Camp!

By Ev McClendon

Calm Waters rowing camp is everything the name implies and more. Located 85 miles due east of Richmond, Virginia in Lancaster, storms barely manage to disturb the surface of the water. Dubbed the “Camps Millpond,” the lake is literally a former logging millpond surrounded by heavy forest which together with its unique “Y” shape insures at least one of its 1000 meter or 1500 meter arms will be sheltered from the stoutest wind. In addition, because the millpond is privately owned by the camp’s coaches, John Dunn and Charlotte Hollings, you never have to compete for space with anyone except other camp participants.

If you arrive via the Richmond airport around noon, you have the option of being shuttled to the camp by either John or Charlotte. Since the rowing program allows little time to visit the surrounding area (unless you play hooky or use one of the few “nap” breaks), you may as well save yourself the cost of a rental car. I found the shuttle ride to be a great opportunity to get to know John, and found him quite amenable to personalizing my learning experience at the camp (the first time I attended the camp, I wanted to learn about rigging, too, so he added an extra tutorial on the subject).

Once you arrive at the camp, be prepared to settle into a schedule of “row, eat, row, eat, row, eat.” Be prepared to row the first afternoon after you arrive, and before every meal after that. For many individuals, the camp provides them with the opportunity to row more than they have ever rowed in a single day. Taping your hands or wearing gloves is recommended, and most participants use the down time to sleep. While you are on the water, you will be videotaped and coached by John and Charlotte. The post breakfast break includes a review of videotapes and a critique of participants rowing skills.

*Continued on page 6, see “Calm Waters”*



*BARC members & others learning at Calm Waters located in Lancaster, Virginia*



*Mary Gormanson (far left), Anne Shoemaker (back row, right) & Ev McClendon (sitting) are just a few enjoying the expertise instruction from the dock*



*Anne Shoemaker watches the instructor, John Dunn while enjoying the scenery as well*



*The group shot of Calm Waters attendees—including BARC member Jack Quigley (right kneeling)*

## Calm Waters

Continued from page 5

Between them, John Dunn and Charlotte Hollings bring more than 50 years of rowing and coaching experience to the table. Both have rowed and medaled at Worlds with the US National Rowing Team. Both have coached at Cornell University. Charlotte has also coached at both Stanford and Boston Universities. In 2001, they started Calm Waters Rowing to cater to the Master's rower at every level (I have seen them teach sculling to complete novices, as well as coach competitive masters). Experience with other rowing programs had taught them both the strengths and weaknesses in various camps, and with Calm Waters, they have combined all the strengths with none of the weaknesses into an inti-

mate and personalized setting.

Least you think you won't be up to the schedule, let me reassure you that the rowing is punctuated by dining on some of the best food you've ever eaten. Meals are served family style, in an elegant dining room at the couple's B&B, the Inn at Levelfields. The cook prides herself on a variety of cuisines with an international flair. In addition, every effort is made to cater to guests' culinary idiosyncrasies. Although the Inn caters to the rowing population, there are those who come to the Inn just for the food and the surrounding ambience.

I have attended Calm Waters Rowing twice (two years apart). My videotapes are testaments to the progress

in my rowing skills and the efficacy of John's and Charlotte's coaching. During my first visit, the focus was primarily on more gross aspects of my rowing stroke. As my skills have matured, the focus this past visit dealt with more subtle aspects of the stroke and coaching was aimed at making me a more efficient marathon rower. Whatever one's skill level, I believe that everyone can benefit from the tutelage of these fine individuals. ■

*"With Calm Waters, they have combined all the strengths with none of the weaknesses into an intimate and personalized setting."*

## More On Calm Waters

When I asked **Mary Gormanson** to comment about her experience at Calm Waters, she replied, "What was there not to like about this trip?" Calm Waters has been attended by several BARC members in the past, and some even return more than once. As Mary will testify "I learned the most about my rowing from this camp than any other I have every attended." ■

## Going to Masters Nationals & FISA Worlds

By **Susie Jones**

If it were not for **Hannes** announcing the sweep camp at MIT taught by coaches found on the website [masterscoaching.com](http://masterscoaching.com), I would not have met a wonderful group of ladies known as Avalon Rowing Club. Since the camp, we have competed in several competitions together.

On August 10th, we competed at Masters National in Seattle. We again came together on September 9th in Princeton, New Jersey to compete at the FISA World Masters Rowing Regatta. Although we never medaled in any of the events, the experience alone, rowing next to several Olympians was phenomenal. Thanks again **Hannes**. ■



*Susie Jones (6 seat) rowing with Avalon Rowing Club at World Masters Nationals in Princeton.*

## Regatta Schedule



September 30	Head of the Oklahoma—Oklahoma City, OK
October 8	Slay the Dragon—Woodlands, TX
October 14	BARC First Annual Hat Race—Clear Lake, TX
October 21- 22	Head Of The Charles Regatta — Boston, MA
October 28	Pumpkin Head of the Colorado — Austin, TX
November 4	Head of the Chattahoochee — Atlanta, GA
November 11	Marathon Championships — Natchitoches, LA

## Summer Rowing Party

By Bob Albright

The summer rowing party is an event that is announced in mid July. The party is always planned for mid August. July always seems to me that the long hot days are never going to end. When they announce the party, I realize that time is moving forward. BARC's summer party means that you will see people that you have not seen for a while. I always look forward to the occasion. It's also a good time to get caught up with what is going on in the club.

In the past, **Marilyn** and **Preston Bullard** have always offered their home as the location for the party. This year they are in the process of moving to a new house. **Marilyn** even though busy with the new house, teamed up with **Lynn Leenhouts** to help organize and get the word out about the party.

This year, **Theresa Tompkins** has offered her home as the location for the party. Everyone in this club knows **Theresa**. She is the initial contact person for new members, is an instructor, has served as boathouse manager, board member, and sells BARCwear. Thank you so much of opening up your home to us.

As you know, everyone is asked to bring a covered dish and indeed there was plenty of food for everyone. **Theresa** and **Dennis Leenhouts** also grilled hamburgers for those who wanted them, and they were great. The many dishes and desserts of all variety all contributed to a great party. The food was of a more international variety, which made it interesting. **Carlos Westehelle** and his wife brought homemade beer, which was excellent, and a huge hit.

It is always good to see new members show interest, and take part in club functions. **Mary Gormanson** seemed to be having a good time, and it is always good to see her. Longtime members like **Pam Falk**, **Ev McClendon**, **Jeff Tave** and wife **Ellen**, **Bill & Kathy Dixon**, **Karl Zimmer**, **Philip Tompkins** and **Tommy Holmes** were all on hand to make the party a big success. These are the people who always volunteer to teach classes and help with Space Center Sprints.

**Hannes** was having a good time visiting with all the members and taking lots of pictures. I don't know how you keep up with all the stuff you do for the club, thank you for being our leader. **Bill Geissler** and wife **Joan**, enjoyed the party, **Joan** has planned to have some surgery in the near future, good luck to you. To all the people who missed the party, you were each missed. To all the people who came, thank you.

Take care and see you on the water. ■



*Bob Albright enjoys celebrating his birthday at the BARC summer party!*



Bay Area Rowing Club of Houston  
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For membership information visit us  
 on the web or e-mail us at  
 membership@barchouston.org

**Club Officers**

- President Hannes Hofer
- Vice President Marilyn Bullard
- Treasurer Lynn Leenhouts
- Secretary Theresa Tompkins
- Board Members: Bob Albright  
 Henry Epstein  
 Maxine Epstein  
 Alex Parkman
- Membership Dir. Theresa Tompkins
- Rowing Dev. Theresa Tompkins
- Equipment Chair Alex Parkman
- Newsletter Martha Hood
- Webmaster Hannes Hofer

*BARC offers members the opportunity to sweep & scull. The club owns an eight, a four, quads, doubles, pairs, & singles, & can provide storage for privately owned boats. We also offer sweep & sculling classes, as well as 'Try It, You'll Like it' sessions for those new to rowing. Members' rowing objectives range from racing to recreation. BARC has a very good feeling of camaraderie & has frequent social outings.*

**Rowing Quote**



*Not everybody wins, and certainly not everybody wins all the time. But once you get into your boat and push off, tie into your shoes and boot stretchers, then "lean on the oars," you have indeed won far more than those who have never tried.*

(Unknown)

**A Little Humor**

