

# STROKEWATCH

BAY AREA ROWING CLUB OF HOUSTON • MARCH 2009



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(Missing Original Content)

A teenage Helen Tompkins at one of many regatta's when Heather was her coach.

Helen Tompkins of the USA is exhausted after the Senior BWomen's Single Sculls race at the World Rowing Under 23 Championship on July 19, 2008 in Brandenburg, Germany

## HEART OF TEXAS 2009

By Hannes Hofer



About 15 BARC Rowers went to Austin to row in the 2009 Heart of Texas Regatta. The Texas A&M Galveston Rowing Team had been kind enough to take our boats on their trailer, making our lives so much easier than it would have been if we were to have transported the boats on our own. All we had to do was to de-rig the boats Thursday evening and get ourselves to Austin in time for races. Some of us were able to carpool, and I traveled to Austin with **Cory Logan** and **Anke Hielscher** who showed up with German punctuality at 3:30 PM Friday afternoon.

The weather forecast for Austin did not look good coming in to the weekend, and memories of cancelled races in the past were very much on our minds as we were descending on the capital city. When we arrived at the regatta site Saturday Morning it was indeed windy. The forecast called for 20 mph wind northwesterly winds, which would give us a very strong tailwind down the course. Luckily, the wind stayed northerly instead, which meant the course was somewhat sheltered by the river banks, and the regatta was able to go on as scheduled.

Saturday's Races were mostly in the "open" category, meaning that mainly college rowers and younger folks competed. That didn't keep those of us with a few gray or missing hairs from showing up in the races, but showing up was about all BARC rowers did. The bright spot of the day was when **Cory** and **James MacFarlane** took 3rd place in their heat and made the final. No BARC medals on Saturday.

Sunday's weather was much better. Winds were calmer, and temperatures soared into the low 80s. BARC was well represented in the master's races, and had boats entered in 9 events. Best performances of the day were in the Mens Single, where **Cory** took 2nd place, the Men's Double where **Cory** and **James** took Bronze, and the Mixed Double where **Catherine Roulet** and **Hannes Hofer** won silver. In addition, **Lisa Takagi** took home a gold medal in the Mixed 8 in a Tulsa/BARC combined boat. Mention should also be given to the **Great 8** which took an honorable 6th place in the Mixed 8+. Others who competed were **Rob Wydra**, **Tricia Miranda**, **Becky Morlier**, and **Susie Jones**.

All in all, it was a pleasant weekend with good rowing and good company, it was nice to see BARC so well represented at this great regional regatta. Thanks to ARC for a well run regatta.

More pictures from the regatta can be seen at <http://www.barchouston.org/photos/HOT09>, and all the results can be found at <http://www.austinrowing.org/liveresults/> ■

## BARC's Boat Names (A series continued)

By Martha Hood

Each issue will discuss yet another bird species which is named on one of the Club's boats.

### "Hawk" - Vespoli 4x

While there are a number of different hawks in this area, the Red-tailed is one of the easiest to identify because it is very appropriately named. However, this species can vary widely in coloration. The most famous Red-tailed Hawk is "Pale Male" who has gained widespread attention from media and birdwatchers because he choose to live in New York City instead of a rural area. If you would to learn more about the species and Pale Male check out the following website—<http://www.palemale.com> ■



A Red-tailed Hawk often seen here—mainly in the winter

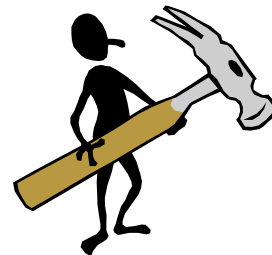
## Regatta Schedule—2009



March 28-29	Lake Woodlands Championships—Woodlands, TX
October 17-18	Head of the Charles—Boston, MA
October 31	Pumpkinhead—Austin, TX
November ??	Marathon Championships—Natchitoches, LA
November 7-8	Head of the Hooch—Chattanooga, TN

THANK YOU

A huge THANK YOU should be said to Peter Day, for all his work, efforts, and encouragement for making plans for a new dock after Hurricane Ike.



## Heel Ties: Who Needs Them?

by Margot Zalkind (Printed with permission of author)



When I first rowed in a sweep boat, archeological layers of duct tape were wrapped round and round the shabby, shredded shoes in the worn-out sectional eight (more tape than shoe). The frayed string pretended to be heel ties (when they were on). Now that I know better, I should have panicked. It was not until my first race (with referees checking heel ties, pre-launch) that I learned how heel ties kept the rower safe, when done right.

I have since spent many days as dockmaster and have been amazed by how many rowers (from teenagers to 80-year olds) have NO idea why the heel ties are there, or why it is bad if they are NOT. We see the annoyance of rowers when control commission interrupts their intent to launch and pulls them over. They run back to the trailer and grab shoelaces/rope/string/plastic ... anything to get heel ties on the shoes, and still may not know why.

### From the USRowing Rules of Rowing: Foot Release

*Where the feet of the competitor are held in place by footwear affixed to the structure of the boat, the design of such footwear shall provide for the quick release of the competitor's feet in case of emergency, without the use of hands. Any pull strings shall not allow the heel to raise more than three inches (7.5 cm) above the footboard to which it is anchored.*

I asked some savvy rowing historians about the history of the heel tie. USRowing Masters Committee member Norm Thetford of New Haven said, "I am pretty sure they came into being when a rower could not get out of a shell that had flipped. I saw the latter happen up in Toronto in 1985 at the FISA Veterans regatta when a four flipped. The oarsman reached down and just ripped the shoes out of the boat in his (successful) effort to get free. He was lucky and strong enough, but a weaker person might not have been able to do that, so the combination of Velcro closures and heel ties makes exiting the boat easier. With safety becoming a priority issue in the '80/'90s, the heel ties were considered the primary release and became required. The Velcro release is considered a secondary release."

Rowing history is well-documented by Bill Miller. He wrote, "Heel ties were used soon after the first track shoes were installed in boats instead of clogs. The first shoes I remember were in 1972. They were regular track shoes with tie-up laces and no safety release mechanism. It was clear at that time that there was a safety issue with these shoes. In 1973, European boat builders had specially-made shoes with Velcro heel releases where the heel of the shoe separated. Schoenbrod installed shoes in his eights about 1974 and for safety, he punched holes for heel ties. (For more Rowing History, visit <http://www.rowinghistory.net>.)

Rob Slocum, a masters sculler from Norwalk, said, "My heel ties used to be like most, 2-3" or so of slack, and, for me, useless in an emergency. In a race, I hit a buoy at the finish line, went over in a flash, and just about drowned. I mean that. I'd gone over before, but never when racing and always had enough breath to go under and release my heels by hand. In this case, I floundered in a panic until I realized I could get my arm around my hull. I was lucky. I got my breath back and released my heels. Ever since I've had tie-downs set at an inch or so. This also means when I finish a row, I just step out, like ski bindings." (Some less flexible rowers may need longer ties to allow their heels to come up at the catch.)

**ALWAYS:** Make sure your heel ties are on, secure, made of strong fiber and no longer than three inches. ■

*Margot Zalkind is the chair of USRowing's Safety Committee and Executive Director of the Foundation for Rowing Education, a non-profit organization devoted to safe rowing practices and an USRowing partner organization. This article is the first in a series of seasonal, safety-related articles written by members of the Foundation. If there is a topic you would like to have addressed, please email [Margot@rowingeducation.org](mailto:Margot@rowingeducation.org).*





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#### Club Officers

President Theresa Tompkins

Vice President Carlos Westhelle

Treasurer Becky Morlier

Secretary David Nutt

Board Members: Peter Day

Dennis Leenhouts

Anke Hielscher

Vince Hisler

Membership Dir. Theresa Tompkins

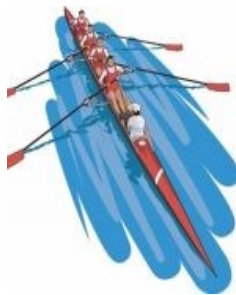
Rowing Dev.

Equipment Chair Larry Price

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

"Only the guy who isn't rowing has time to rock the boat"

~Jean-Paul Sartre

#### Fun Stuff

We have BARC cards! They are in a box on the cubbies - help yourself, keep a couple in your wallet, pass them to potential rowers (everyone)!



*"The Best Little Oar House in Texas"*

[www.barchouston.org](http://www.barchouston.org) • Clear Lake Park, Houston, TX