



SANDER C. ZAGZEBSKI—October 2016 Candidate for Reelection to Board of Directors, Long Beach Rowing Association

Introduction: While most of you know me just as one of the twins or as the weak link in Kresimir's double, I've served two terms on LBRA's Board and have a good sense of how the organization works. By way of background, I'm a corporate and securities lawyer and have been practicing for nearly 20 years. A significant part of my practice includes counseling corporate Boards and management teams on their fiduciary duties and other aspects of good corporate governance. In addition, I have served for 10 years on the Board of Trustees, and as Chair of the Audit Committee, of Catholic Charities of Los Angeles. Catholic Charities is one of the largest social services organizations in Southern California and, with a Board consisting largely of lawyers and accountants from top local firms, holds itself to the highest standard of non-profit governance. Accordingly, I try to bring some relevant (and free!) perspective to LBRA's Board of Directors, and I humbly request your support and vote for another term of service.

Nominating Committee Questions:

1. The Board is responsible for coordination between the LBRA and its lessee organizations, the CSULB Crew, Long Beach Junior Crew, CARP and Powerhouse Fitness. As a Board member how would you help to coordinate use of the facility and equipment between these organizations?

One of LBRA's most important jobs is to act as the master tenant of the Boathouse. While this inevitably puts LBRA in the middle of disagreements among the various Boathouse subtenants, LBRA's leadership and the Board should be able to broker informal compromises to meet the needs of all parties in most instances. Since LBRA's leadership includes members often with decades of service and commitment to the Boathouse, we are in the unique position to draw on that experience to craft workable solutions that minimize frustration among the various Boathouse participants. It is my strong view that cooperation and compromise should be the goal whenever possible.

In my view, cooperation and compromise involves open communication. Most disagreements can be avoided and dealt with as long as the various groups are

speaking openly and respecting the needs of the other groups. Accordingly, as a member of the Board, I will seek to engage informally in coordination with the rest of LBRA's leadership with the leadership of the other organizations. It is my sincerest hope that by having multiple channels of communication with the other organizations in the Boathouse, disagreements and friction can be minimized, and we can even begin to foster a sense of mutual respect with (and even reciprocal loyalty to) the other organizations in the Boathouse.

That being said, I'm not suggesting that we govern LBRA and the Boathouse without any sort of backbone. If and when disagreements cannot quickly be resolved with informal communication and compromise, we need cool and creative heads to support LBRA in resolving these disputes. My day job tends to give me a unique perspective in these situations.

2. Membership in the club is growing by leaps and bounds primarily due to Learn to Row Day and the new lesson programs that have grown out of that effort. How do you propose to keep those new members happy and continue their development as rowers and effectiveness to the club as new members?

I am uniquely sensitive to this issue, because my brother Walter joined LBRA after Learn to Row 2015. So I have perhaps a better sense than most of our leadership of the challenges faced by LTR graduates. I think it is important, not just for the morale of our novices but for LBRA's long term viability as well, to create more options for novice rowers. It isn't fair to graduate novices from LTR and then just to leave them to figure out what's next. We need to find ways to integrate them into boats, so the new novices can continue to develop and don't feel abandoned.

Novices can look across the yard or the water to see some of the best Masters crews in the country, but the path to a seat in any of those boats is far less than obvious. Without having someone to help chart that path with additional coaching, invitations to row in boats, training tips, etc., I fear many novices will lose interest out of frustration. We can and should do better, if only because having an organized pipeline of new talent will make us more successful on the water.

One suggestion would be a weekly "big boat day" of 8+s and 4Xs, in which more experienced LBRA members would be forced to boat up with novices in crews that our coaches think will be roughly equal on the water. Ideally we would put several boats on the water each of these days (service hours could be used as an inducement to more experienced members) with the goal of increasing the skill level of novice and intermediate rowers. I think this would increase interaction, and foster a sense of teamwork, camaraderie and loyalty, among the membership.

3. As the club continues to grow so does the need for space and ongoing issues over boat storage, use of ergs and other equipment. How can the club continue to manage its existing storage and needs in the future?

This will always be an issue, and we need to prioritize space for boats that are used regularly. We can also expand a little more with rolling racks for smaller boats.

At the outset, we need to get more data on the actual usage of individual LBRA boats. Some boats seem to be on the water multiple times a day, while other boats gather dust. With space at a premium, we need to cycle out boats that aren't in use to free up space for additional boats that may better meet the needs of the members. This ties into new boat purchases, which I've addressed below.

4. What is your perspective on paid staff? Should or shouldn't the club hire a manager or regular coaching staff? Why or why not? Pros and cons?

LBRA has a proud volunteer tradition, and I think we should use volunteer talent whenever possible. That said, if we can afford to pay for professional management and/or coaching, I'm willing to consider it. On this topic, I would defer to the experience and input of others and ask how other top clubs manage their operations and coaching functions. To the extent it isn't broken, I'm not in favor of fixing it. But to the extent something seems to work particularly well for one of our friendly competing clubs, I'm certainly willing to consider it.

5. The LBRA fleet is aging and new boat purchases are ongoing and will continue. How should boats be prioritized for purchase in the future? What would you suggest we do with our older boats?

Priority 1—Buy boats that I want to row. Priority 2—See priority 1.

Just a test to see if you're still reading. Priority should be based on an examination of the club's equipment along with data on usage by the membership. It really is that simple in my mind. If we have an aging shell that is consistently in use, we should consider replacing it with a newer shell (or just getting another one) to meet the needs of the members. Of course this involves a balancing of interests, as some competitive groups may want the fastest boat available while others may want something more forgiving, and judgments will have to be made. That said, I think we have taken a pretty healthy attitude on this topic.

As for old boats, I think we should act as prudent fiduciaries and do whatever makes sense in the given situation. If we can sell a boat for cash to offset a new purchase, we should sell it. If we can't sell a boat for real money, we should consider donating it or even scrapping it to free up the space. It's a case-by-case decision.

6. LBRA has typically hosted 2 -3 regattas per year (Christmas, Spring/Solstice and Beach Sprints). There have been concerns with the organization of the events by prospective officials and other clubs who might participate in our events. What are your suggestions or thoughts on how to improve our regattas?

Given LBRA's history and tradition, we should host nothing less than a first class regatta. Period. I have read the concerns of officials about some of our recent regattas, and I have participated in a number of discussions on the subject. So I am very aware of the concern, and extremely interested in seeing those concerns addressed.

In my mind, we simply need to give ourselves more time to plan our regattas, and we need to include a larger group of Board members and Club members in that effort. The City wants to rent the Stadium as often as it can, so we now need more advance notice to reserve the course. We need time to coordinate with other clubs, the online resources, sponsors, etc. We all want the same thing, and I don't really see a basis for disagreement.

I would suggest a standing Regatta Committee comprised of LBRA's President, Boat Captain and a Regatta Director that is not burdened with any other responsibilities. For each regatta, the Committee would invite participation from LBRA's referee corps (hopefully more than one, including a Chief Referee) and others to coordinate sponsorship and the like. The Regatta Committee members would then coordinate with the City, the online sites (regattacentral, etc.), other clubs, etc. to help pull off a successful regatta.

I think the Board has paid close attention to this issue in recent months, and I'm particularly keen to see this translate to a successful Christmas Regatta. I would also suggest offering an incentive to members to volunteer not only on the day of the regatta, but in the planning and coordinating of it as well.

If you're still reading, I thank you for your attention and hope for your support.

All the best,

Sander