

Bill Eldon
Candidate for Director

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?

The use of the boathouse itself is regulated by the lease agreements between the various tenants and the City, and does not appear to have been a major issue as the various constituencies tend to make heaviest use at different times. LBRA as the master tenant should abide by the terms of those leases and ensure that each subtenant does the same.

Each group has its own rowing equipment and should not use others' equipment without specific prearrangement and a clear understanding of responsibility for damage.

Commonly used or shared equipment, in particular the ergometers and other equipment in the gym, should be shared based on clear written agreements among the parties; should those agreements not be upheld, the shared use of that equipment should be terminated so that LBRA does not bear the brunt of the equipment maintenance. We must work to maintain existing amicable relations with our subtenants and see what can be done to improve the relationship with LBJC by working with their coaches and parents.

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?

As someone who came to rowing later in life, I have seen the importance of having a clear program and a welcoming atmosphere for new and potential members. Until the revamping of our Learn To Row program several years ago, there was no particular organization for new rowers and we had to make our way on our own, forming our own groups. We now have a more structured environment for LTR and the camaraderie built among the new rowers and our existing membership is vital to the future of the club. While a substantial portion of our membership displays little or no interest in interacting with new rowers, many of us have spent considerable time volunteering in LTR groups (I did almost 60 hours this summer alone) and go out of our way to welcome these new rowers into our ranks. We could consider a "big brother/sister" arrangement or other way of linking incoming new rowers to the membership as well as continuing occasional informal social events. Our current coaching arrangement has evolved from this program and is working but possibly needs support by helping to build crews from the incoming rowers interested in moving into team boats.

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?

Our facility is strained to its limits, but use of the gym area has been generally workable with the different constituencies tending to use the facility at differing

times, other than weekend mornings. Part of our review of our own fleet should also be a review of the storage of private boats in the boathouse, many of which have gone un- or underused for years. Unused boats could be moved to storage outside the boathouse (e.g. in the city-owned storage yard) or their owners advised to remove them from the facility so that we can utilize our space more effectively. Establishment of more regular boathouse cleanup days and more organized assistance to the boat captain could aid in keeping the north end of Bay 5 more orderly and allow better access to the boats and equipment in that bay.

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?

The opportunity to have a part-time paid administrative staff member which was made possible by our successful LTR program has been a tremendous boost for the club. I do not see that we are in a position to employ or in need of a full-time manager or coach. I find that our current arrangement of approving individuals to offer coaching and allowing the coaches to charge rowers directly for their services is adequate and would not want to have coaches paid by the club when only certain members utilize coaching services. Coaches as well as their students should be LBRA members, however.

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?

We do not seem to have a grand plan for reviewing boat use; the old "Blue List" is woefully out of date, predating my own membership, and listing specific members allowed to use individual hulls is neither workable nor appropriate. I would work to establish a committee which could work alongside the boat captain to maintain an inventory and review the usage rates of all club-owned equipment with an eye to removing non- or underused boats from the main boathouse. Unused privately-owned boats should also be removed where appropriate to allow for more effective use of our limited space.

The Board should develop a budget line for replacement of equipment and solicit information from the boat captain, the fleet review committee, and users to determine what gaps there may be in our fleet and what existing under-utilized boats could be moved on to make room for new acquisitions. A master plan for continuous replacement of more heavily-used boats while they still have some potential resale value could allow for systematic ongoing refreshing of the fleet.

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?

As a member who is a rower, a frequent LTR volunteer, an occasional competitor and a licensed USRowing Referee, I have found the regatta situation at Long Beach most unfortunate. Our club is suffering a decline in its reputation, especially among Referees, due to the disorganized nature of our recent regattas, to the extent that most of our local Referees will no longer even work our events. We need to establish a standing Regatta Committee so that we have a solid Local Organizing Committee

which will ensure that each regatta can be planned well in advance and then go off as planned. This would require volunteers willing to take on specific roles and develop job descriptions as they learn the role so that we can plan for succession as volunteers roll off. We have relied too much on shooting from the hip, with the result of regattas failing and being cancelled. We have an amazing venue and should be increasing our visibility locally and regionally. Our LTR program shows that there are dozens of LBRA members willing to pitch in when needed; we need to harness that enthusiasm. We should also amend our volunteer hours requirement to include service at regattas. We must also continue our move toward using the same technology other venues use for registration, setting of heat sheets, and timing, to move toward a more professional regatta experience for our own volunteers and the participants we depend on to make our regattas successful.