

Candidate Questionnaire

Rob Glidden

Candidate for President

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?

Each organization has its own rowing equipment, the use of which need not be coordinated except in special cases where, say, CSULB requests use of an LBRA shell for a specific one-time need, or vice versa. To allow for this, there should be a written understanding between each that the borrowing organization shall be financially responsible for any damage. So long as this in place, we should strive to say 'yes' to one another unless there are compelling reasons not to.

Use of the facility is a different matter; the Pete Archer Rowing Center is shared use at its core by virtue of lease agreements, with LBRA as the master tenant. The facility is on city park land administered by the Marine Bureau, part of the Parks and Recreation Department, and also subject to the regulations of the California Coastal Commission. Sometimes these third parties have a say in how the facility is operated, managed or improved.

Our lease agreements define the space utilization by each party. If renegotiation of the lease is suggested by the mutual best interest of both parties, it can always proceed when and how circumstances require. But, there should be little need to invoke formal legal agreements, when good will and good faith efforts are more than sufficient. College crews tend to use the boathouse weekdays in the early morning, Juniors in the late afternoon on weekdays and early morning on weekends, Masters in the early to late morning all days, and CARP in the late morning on weekend days and selected weekdays. Roworx uses the erg room for classes in the late morning and afternoons in a way that seldom competes with others. Saturday morning is the peak time when demand overlaps, and simple respect for one another is what should continue to be expected.

One caveat to the equipment question involves the ergometers and other land workout equipment. By precedent, nominal use fees are paid to LBRA by the other lessees to cover normal wear-and-tear and maintenance. Payment of these fees by LBJC has been delinquent, and documented agreements have been dismissed as irrelevant. If this should become the case again, LBRA should enforce its agreements by all means at its disposal, including access to office or boat storage space if necessary. Similar issues have arisen with regard to paying each organization's fair, pro-rata share of the monthly janitorial fees, all of which are modest.

I find that trust and confidence runs very high between LBRA and CSULB. Situations and opportunities are discussed amicably and questions resolved quickly. I also find generally enthusiastic acceptance of Juniors athletes and their coaches among Masters members. In the interest of building similar trust with LBJC parents and leadership, I would enlist LBRA members who are parents of past LBJC rowers – as Terri and I are – to engage in constructive dialogue with current parents. Encouraging and engaging in joint projects, such as boathouse work parties, gets the business of both organizations done with lasting effect.

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?

Addressing this most important of issues has three components:

- A. "Pay it Forward". New members benefit most from a welcoming attitude and inclusion by established members. Some members do this by nature, others do not. It can be encouraged by simple means such as e-mail messages introducing new members by name, and by asking both new and established members to greet unfamiliar faces as a matter of course. We have also talked about a 'big brother/sister' mentorship program whereby new members can be paired with established rowers as an icebreaker. This is a great way to show interest in the novice's development and promote integration on the part of those of us who were once 'newbies' ourselves. This should be a discretionary activity supported by volunteer members and only novices who choose to 'opt-in'. It's time to take action on such a plan.
- B. Periodic social events. In the last year we had a particularly nice winter holiday party, a '3rd of July' potluck and fireworks viewing, and a well-received end-of-summer Learn-to-Row 'graduation' and new member welcoming ceremony. These were made possible by the initiative of several key members. Speaking for myself, I find LBRA members to be always interesting, always engaging company given our diverse yet highly-accomplished backgrounds, and I want to see this tradition of 'work together, play together' continue.
- C. Coaching opportunities. Coached programs for advanced novices and intermediates provide the third leg of the triad. These will certainly involve skill development, but what really helps novice and intermediate rowers thrive is a coach or coordinator that organizes team rows. Scheduling times and setting lineups helps new members acclimate while they are 'finding their voice', whether their interest is recreational or turns to competition.

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?

There is no question we are bursting at the seams. Something on the order of 250 shells are stored at the boathouse. We have members who have waited over a year to be assigned storage. The Board must for once act on this issue.

I see three facets to an effective long term solution to this problem:

- a. Consider offsite long-term storage, such as the existing storage yard at the corner of Eliot and Boathouse Lane, for unused club and private boats. We already do this for such things as old wherries, trailers, and launches, paying the City by the square foot; therefore, the question becomes one of how much expansion space we need and how to provide adequate protection from the weather.

- b. Perform a comprehensive review of shell usage with an eye to divesting the last few obsolete, seldom- or never-used club boats.
- c. Working with the Marine Bureau, look into cooperative use of the Boy Scout Sea Base site at 5875 Appian Way (at the Davies Bridge) as a satellite facility.

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 dues represent an outstanding value relative to other rowing clubs and gyms in part due to our frugal management of expenses. This should remain the case. I am not fond of the "pay to play" systems I have seen at other clubs in which I have been a member, requiring payment of seasonal coaching fees of hundreds of dollars every three months. Supporting even one permanent, full-time employee – much less a modest coaching staff – would be well beyond our means. With salary and the related payroll costs required by Federal employment laws, we would spend more on one person than what we take in from three successful regattas. This is money we urgently need for equipment and facilities.

That said, I am a strong proponent of targeted investments in "human capital". Having a part-time dedicated office manager (Dara Lampe, succeeded by Sarah Mackenzie) to return phone calls, address membership inquiries, and coordinate learn-to-row programs has been a godsend. Similarly, we are rich in coaching talent, and our group of Board-approved coaches (Katrin, Anna, Carlos, Ala, Sarah, and A.C.) has served us brilliantly and cost-effectively.

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 must go to the areas where demand most greatly outstrips supply, especially where expansion of the fleet is required to address membership growth. Second priority should then go to replacement of older boats while they still have decent resale value, replacing them with newer equipment regularly and as financial resources allow. Many clubs of lesser means would be thrilled to receive equipment that is 15-20 years old but still serviceable; meanwhile, we should buy boats that are lightly used (1-3 years old, or demo models) when we can, from the factory if we must, and place it into a nominal 10-12 year service life.

A certain amount of our annual budget should be earmarked for boat purchases, first by deciding how much we can afford after income and fixed expenses are allowed for, then making a semi-annual prioritization of what shells (trainers, singles, doubles, quads, pairs, fours or eights; weight class; race-restricted or daily use) represent the greatest need.

Deciding where to place priorities should be an organized and consultative process, where we monitor usage trends and make conscious decisions based on data. Every member should have access to a comprehensive list of the club's equipment and who is authorized to use it based on skill level and demonstrated competence in its safe use. In identifying unfulfilled needs, whether for training boats or high-performance racing shells, the views of the membership should be actively sought, then discussed openly and constructively. We

did this at my urging this past year in realizing the purchase of two 4+ boats appropriate to the needs of multiple women's crews. The evaluation process was inclusive and thorough, and took action on a need that had fallen on deaf ears for years.

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?

There are three critical components to this answer:

- A. Create a bona-fide Local Organizing Committee to plan and execute our regattas. LBRA has come perilously close to having regattas shut down indefinitely because of poor planning and crisis-mode execution. Several times in recent years, referees were requested from USRowing at the last minute (i.e., the day before), or the regatta was not registered in a timely manner (six months in advance is expected, not two weeks). We must allow for orderly assignment of officials, many of which have to be brought in from out of town. It turns out one of the responsibilities of being a referee – which I know firsthand from having been one -- is the opportunity to review regatta plans well in advance to ensure safety and fairness. USRowing has every right to know beforehand, and not from verbal assurances, that there will be such things as adequate coverage of launches and provision for first aid.

Meanwhile, the Referee Corps has gone on record saying they'll never support another LBRA regatta. This is a non-starter, because sanctioning of our regattas by USRowing is crucial to the insurance coverage required by the City, and staffing by licensed referees is mandatory in allowing us to proceed. Since we stand to make tens of thousands of dollars from each regatta – that's a lot of new equipment – this situation must be fixed. *A recovery plan centered around forming an LOC, with a well-thought out written plan and with timely registration and involvement of USRowing, is essential.*

- B. Bring technical solutions to regatta operations. This year we put a regatta up on RegattaCentral for the first time, in spite of reluctance to pay the nominal cost (about 8%). Going paperless made it easy for athletes and coaches to register and pay their entry fees, and greatly simplified our collection of funds and management of late entries, scratches, and waivers. In my view, it paid back the limited expense many times over, and the increased participation helped the Summer Solstice Regatta make a profit where it otherwise would have failed. I subsequently received unsolicited comments from visiting clubs noting the improvement relative to their previous experience with us. Registration via RegattaCentral is a question that has been answered affirmatively by virtually every LOC in the country, yet we were one of the last to convert.

Now, it's time to build on that success by using companion tools (Regatta Workbench) to create heat sheets and post results. Similarly, we should be moving away from manual timing systems that are inherently prone to error; we can employ more sophisticated automated methods for instantaneous and more accurate results. Brandin Grams has provided early access to a particularly promising timing tool

(ClockCaster) and he has been working with RegattaCentral to integrate the tools seamlessly.

These steps are each a part of reducing manual labor and promoting enthusiastic participation. *Other clubs honor us by attending our regattas, and we owe it to them to give the best possible experience, making our races 'must do' events.*

- C. Effective staffing of volunteer assignments. We are fortunate to have a huge breadth and depth of skills across LBRA. The talent pool is impressive, and everybody has something of value to contribute. Volunteers have been used to great effect in our Learn-to-Row Day and novice programs, and the same principles should be applied to our regattas.

Given the amount of money at stake in sponsoring a successful regatta – one that is welcoming, fun, satisfying, and where participants from other clubs want to come back – it is imperative that we take a more systematic approach to recruiting, training, and empowering volunteers. Planning and organization are the keys to motivating enthusiastic participation. A well-planned event begins with identifying work stations, how many people are needed to fill each, giving consideration to who is good at or enjoys certain tasks, setting up time slots, and communicating the assignments well in advance. From our Learn-to-Row Days I've witnessed overwhelming support for volunteer coverage once the tasks are thought through and communicated properly. *Volunteers should have no doubt that their efforts are important, non-duplicative, and respectful of their time.*