

In this issue:

[Youth Regionals, page 5](#)

[Hiking the PCT, page 7](#)

[Naming Boats, page 10](#)

[FAST Fundraiser, page 12](#)

[Survey Results, page 14](#)



What Lies Beneath

Shipwreck City's Phil Parisi launching his ROV from a dock along Westlake (Rick Olson photo)

Shining New Light on Lake Union's Hidden History

On bright summer afternoons, well after most rowers have returned to shore, Lake Union turns into a floating spectacle of movement and noise — sailboats, hydro bikes, floating saunas, yachts, kayaks, canoes, and wake boats crisscrossing one of Seattle's busiest waterways.

Beneath all the action, motionless and hidden in dark water only a few dozen feet deep, lies another fleet entirely—sunken workboats, abandoned hulls, and fragments of Seattle's maritime past, scattered across the lakebed.

In 2011, the state Department of Natural Resources,

the Center for Wooden Boats, and others began a sonar survey of the lake bottom. Eventually, more than 100 submerged objects were identified, things that could be wrecks or large debris fields. Divers later explored a lot of the sites, but many have never been seen up close.

That is beginning to change.

Using a relatively inexpensive remotely operated vehicle, or ROV, ocean engineer Phil Parisi and his team are revisiting known wreck sites and exploring new ones, pairing fresh underwater footage with earlier diver records to build the clearest picture yet of what lies beneath the surface. The work comes to life on

[Shipwreck City's](#) website, where anyone can follow the progress.

“Lake Union is in every Seattleite’s backyard,” Parisi said. “Only 40 feet deep—relatively easy to explore. Pollution aside.”

Parisi’s path to Lake Union began earlier in his career when he took part in a Puerto Rico Trench expedition that deployed sensors and shot video nearly 8,000 meters below the ocean surface.

In 2024, while volunteering in Sequim with Ben Griner of [Coastal Sensing & Survey](#) in helping retrieve crab pots with an ROV, Parisi learned about some of the company’s other work, including its mapping of Lake Union and Lake Washington.

After reviewing the sonar maps, he was stunned by how many targets remained unidentified. “I was shocked to see so many marked as ‘unknown,’” he said.

Parisi moved to Seattle about a year ago and quickly became attached to the lake. He has sailed in Duck Dodge races, paddleboarded near Gas Works Park, and spent time along the shoreline. Exploring the wrecks became a way to combine his technical background with a growing fascination for Seattle’s maritime history.

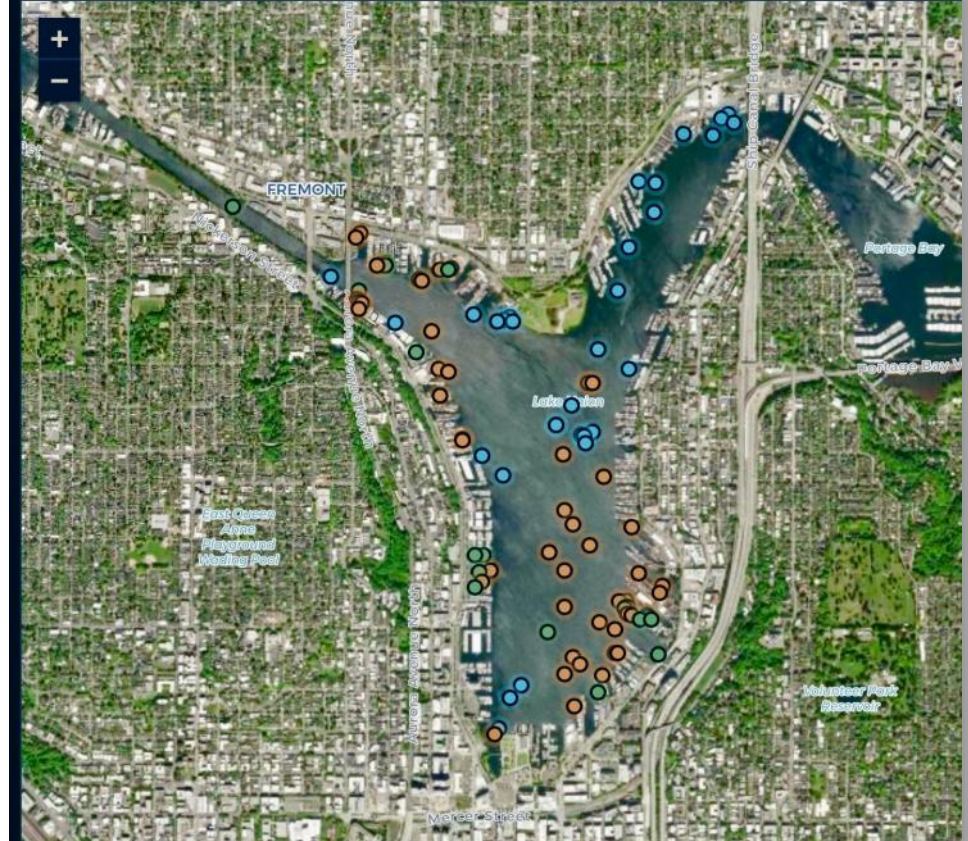
His first Lake Union ROV wreck dive took place in December 2025, when he explored three known wrecks and found another sunken boat, previously undocumented.

“After that experience,” he said, “I was sold on doing the rest.”

The work is part exploration, part documentation, and part archaeology. Equipped with sonar, lights, and cameras, the small underwater robot glides through dark water over a mostly barren lakebed interrupted by

TARGET MAP →

● Shipwreck City Explored ● Historically Explored ● Not Yet Explored



wreckage, weeds, and junk. Parisi watches the live video feed on a laptop while steering with a simple joystick. A thin yellow tether links the ROV to shore.

“Honestly, if it weren’t for the wrecks, it would be an uninteresting place to dive ROVs,” Parisi commented.

The wrecks themselves often become collection points for garbage. “Barrels, plastics, Solo cups,” he added.

But the videos also capture traces of life. Small fish occasionally dart through the frame. Underwater weeds reach toward faint light. In one image, a small fish hides inside the structure of a wrecked hull.

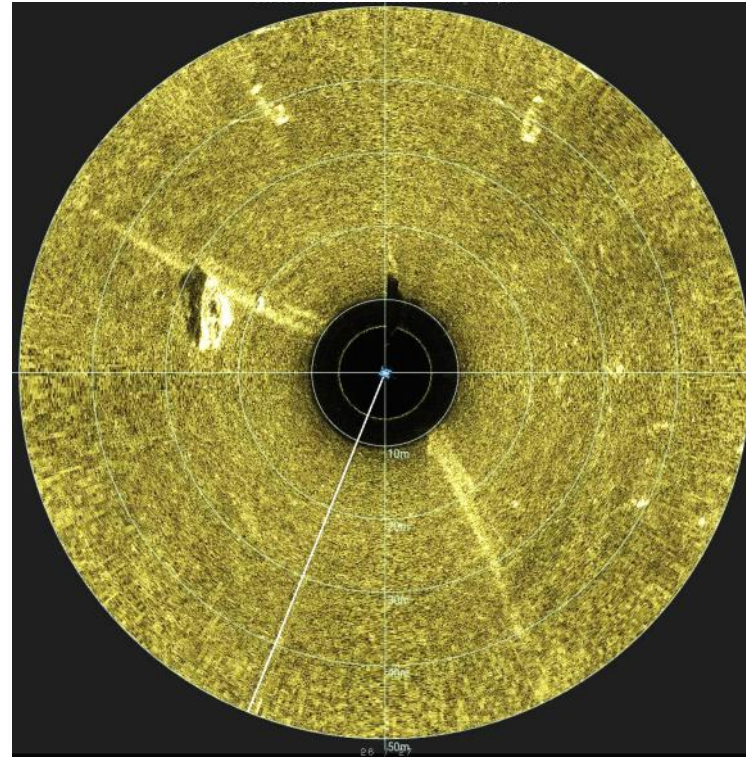
The lakebed holds not only abandoned boats, but also toxic remnants of Lake Union's industrial past.

"Lake Union has been a convenient place for people to get rid of things from the very beginning, and that includes boats," the late Dick Wagner observed in a [documentary produced by DCS Films](#). Wagner, who co-founded the Center for Wooden Boats with his wife Dorothy, spent decades documenting the history of the lake and its working waterfront.

Now, even as volunteer explorers document the lake's hidden past, a major effort is underway to reshape parts of the lake bottom itself.

A \$73 million cleanup project overseen by the Washington State Department of Ecology is expected to begin next year. It will focus on 56 acres of shoreline and water surrounding Gas Works Park. Funded through a legal consent decree involving Puget Sound Energy and the City of Seattle, the project will remove or contain contamination left behind by decades of industrial activity around the former gas plant, which operated on the site from 1907 until 1956. Along the shore, polluted sediments will be removed. Crews will "cap" portions of the shoreline and lakebed, sealing toxins from being disturbed and spreading into the water.

At the same time, Seattle and King County are nearing completion of the massive Ship Canal Water Quality Project, a roughly \$700 million underground storage tunnel intended to reduce combined sewer overflows into Lake Union and the Lake Washington Ship Canal during heavy rains. Together, the projects reflect a changing relationship between Seattle and its urban lake.



Left: Sonar on the ROV shows the outlines of the Betty W, creating a target for closer inspection by cameras.

Below: The Betty W, a 35-foot wooden boat, rests in 40 feet of water just off East Lynn Street in Eastlake. (Shipwreck City photo)



For much of the last century, Lake Union absorbed what the city wanted to hide—industrial waste, raw sewage from houseboats, abandoned vessels, and storm-driven sewage overflows. Today, the same waters still support maritime industries, along with rowing programs, floating homes (now connected to sewers), and recovering salmon runs.

Parisi is documenting what remains on the lake bottom before parts of the underwater landscape change forever.

The biggest challenge, he says, is access. Many wreck sites sit beneath marinas or piers, difficult to reach without cooperation from property owners. Funding is another obstacle. The project currently relies heavily on volunteers and crowdsourced support for equipment, batteries, and boat fuel.

Interest in the work has grown rapidly, and new partnerships have emerged. What began as a largely solo effort now includes Libbie Barnes of the Museum of History and Industry and George Spano, captain of the 19-foot Boston Whaler *Montauk*. Part of the appeal is simple curiosity. Even people who spend years on Lake Union rarely think about what lies beneath.

For rowers crossing the lake at dawn, the water can appear almost featureless—gray, reflective, and constantly moving. But Parisi’s cameras reveal

another landscape below: silent hulls and scattered debris embedded in silt.

The wrecks offer no treasures. Most are ordinary working boats, long forgotten.

But together, they reveal a hidden Seattle beneath the lake’s busy surface—one shaped by industry, recreation, and generations of change.

—Rick Olson



The www.shipwreckcity.org website contains numerous photos illustrating what lies at the bottom of Lake Union. It also contains links to [television reporting](#) on this work.

IF YOU ENJOYED AN ARTICLE

Let us know—we’ll pass your comments on to the author!

HAVE AN IDEA FOR A STORY?

Please contact us at lwrnewsletter@comcast.net

Editor’s Note

Next time you venture out, give a thought to what lies beneath those Lake Union waters we row on. **Rick Olson** describes the fascinating work being done to map the many wrecks resting on the lakebed.

Rob Foreman deftly describes the near-chaos that is Youth Regionals at Vancouver Lake—and its rewards.

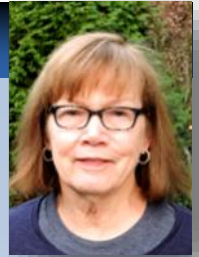
Showing that there is more than one way to maintain fitness, **Amy McGhee** recounts the months-long effort she undertook with her husband in walking the 2,655-mile-long Pacific Crest Trail.

Susan Kinne explains the origins of some of our boat names, putting to rest any speculation that these names are chosen at random or simply because they are quirky. Yes, there is a system behind them!

Jean Lee and **Karolin Neubert** provide more information on the recently activated FAST Fundraiser program, and **Layne Fisher** examines the results of our annual member survey.

Enjoy!

—Roberta Scholz, Editor



Designer’s Note

As always, *Making Waves* is designed for screen reading in monitor proportions. You can print it on letter-size paper at 94%, but text is large, underlined links are live. Use [full-screen setting](#): Menu > View > Full Screen Mode, or the page icon in the lower-right sidebar, in Adobe Acrobat Reader.

—Suze Woolf



Youth Rowing



A Marathon Weekend at NW Youth Regionals

Fueled by a love of rowing, caffeine, and vibes

I'm writing this article in a post-regatta stupor. Along with 13 other junior rowing coaches, I just spent 30 hours over three days at Vancouver Lake Park in Vancouver, Washington, corralling 105 youth athletes at the culminating spring-season races: the Northwest Youth Regional Championships. The Pocock Youth Rowing (PYR) team, where I'm an assistant coach, together with 27 other clubs and 1,200 junior athletes, descended on the course to compete.

The Pocock squad brought 14 coaches to manage our gaggle of 105 hormone-addled teenagers (it's not their fault—it's all part of growing up). An eights program could easily handle that number of athletes. But instead of the easy route, PYR prioritizes small-boat rowing. The

team philosophy is that athletes develop more holistically in sculling boats. We don't bring anything larger than a four to the regatta, and 90 percent of our entries are in sculling events.

Loading 28 shells onto the trailer is a remarkable feat in itself. It resembles an expensive game of Tetris. Newer boats are placed on the inside of the trailer to protect them. Singles are slung underneath racks to efficiently use space. Innumerable pool noodles are sacrificed as padding. Fours are loaded onto upper racks in a precarious transfer from athletes on the ground. Teenagers dangle like monkeys high on the trailer to receive the shells. On the I-5, flagging tape streams behind the boats in a vain attempt to protect them from oblivious motorists.

*Left: Heading to the start
Below: Trailer is locked and loaded. (All photos Rob Forman)*



During Friday's time trials, 70 boats raced down the course. Coaches live and die by the color-coded master spread sheet, which shows each day planned out to the minute. Event numbers, lane assignments, coaching assignments, equipment usage, and timing are all necessary. Everything is maximized to give each athlete as many opportunities down the race course as



possible. At a race earlier this year, one of the PYR girls hot-seated twice between three consecutive events—running up and down the course for a total of three back-to-back-to-back, 1500-meter races.

I'm continuously amazed at how "normal" all of this seems to anyone who has spent time around the sport. It's what makes our community so unique. We load a trailer full of boats whose combined value is that of a cheap Seattle home, then drive them three hours to Vancouver. We first de-rig them at the boathouse, then load them onto the trailer, drive them to the course, unload them, re-rig them at the race course, de- and re-rig them between races, de-rig them again, load them back onto the trailer, drive the trailer home, and finally unload and re-rig them again at the boathouse. No one would go through



Making Waves—June 2026

Youth Rowing

that much trouble for a sport they didn't truly love.

The highs and lows of racing are on full display. Months of training can be derailed by penalties or traffic-pattern violations leading to disqualification. Collisions with buoys deprive athletes of their mo-

ment on the podium. Crabs in the last 250 meters make for exciting finishes. The learning curve is especially steep for novice athletes. Then there are the crews who surprise themselves with their own capabilities. They take top finishes in national qualifying events where they'll be rewarded with another three weeks of training before traveling to Sarasota, Florida, for the US Rowing Youth National Championships. Coaching these impressionable athletes is the reason we all keep showing up to this circus.

Ultimately, it's worth it. The buy-in from coaches, athletes, and families is what propels the sport forward. At the end of the weekend, we've done our job well if—despite weather delays—our athletes raced down the course and expanded their experience in the sport. They may not fully appreciate that experience in the moment, but as they get

older and reflect on their high school rowing, they'll see how they were supported by coaches and programs—such as PYR—that instilled the values embodied in our team culture. Or maybe I'm just telling myself that for comfort after a marathon weekend of coaching the wildest event I've ever been a part of: Northwest Youth Regional Championships. Fueled by a love of rowing, caffeine, and vibes.

—Rob Foreman

Most of us know Rob through his strength-training classes at LWRC. He was a collegiate rower and began rowing again at LWRC in 2020. Rob has been a full-time coach since 2008 and has worked with the Pocock youth squad since 2019.



© Lake Washington Rowing Club 2026 Page 6

Walking in the Wild

A Pacific Crest Trail Adventure

Being on the water is not the only way to challenge Mother Nature. Amy McGhee describes how she and her husband, Rolf Gersonde, faced the ups and downs of the Pacific Crest Trail last year.

Anyone who hears about my tale of walking the length of the western mountains in the United States has questions.

“When did you start?”

“Where did you start?”

“How many miles a day did you walk?”

Mileage is a challenging one to answer because distances varied to a large degree. In the beginning, we started out with low mileage in order to build muscles, acclimate ourselves to the weather, and gradually immerse ourselves in our new way of being. Other times, we hiked 20 miles—terrain and weather dictated our limits. Every section brought its own rhythm—from slow climbs through the Sierra Nevada to swift strides in Oregon’s flatter stretches. Along the way, days blended together, marked by landscapes and hikers we met. Endless stretches of wildflowers were as intoxicating as the enthusiasm of the 20-somethings who were on hiatus from their studies or delaying the start of a career. Though some folks start at the Canadian border and travel south, we were NOBOs, or northbounders.

I remember vividly the morning I set foot on the Pacific Crest Trail: the three vertical and rectangular wooden pillars symbolizing the freedom of a six month-walking tour, just steps away from the 30-foot high Mexican bor-

der wall. The air was hot. Feeling exposed, I walked quickly north onto the sandy trail lined with low, dry grasses and marked by big rocks with poison-oak skirting. The date was March 22, 2025. After all, I had decided that I couldn’t be left behind when Rolf retired and started out on the adventure he had planned in detail over five years of following Reddit posts, buying the lightest-weight gear, and hiking sections in Washington.

The Pacific Crest Trail distance varies from year to year, depending on re-routes around hazardous or protected zones or around new land purchases. Last year, it was 2,655 miles from the Mexican border in California to Canada’s border in Washington. Conceived in the 1930s and completed as a National Scenic Trail in 1968, the PCT weaves through



(All photos Rolf Gersonde)

*Above right:
Starting out
March 22,
2025, the
spring
equinox*

*Below right:
Hiking in the
mountain
ranges of
southern
California,
with the
desert below*



deserts, forests, and high mountain passes. Each year, thousands of hikers set out to conquer it; in recent years, around 3,000 permits are issued annually, but only a fraction—about 20 to 30 percent—complete the entire journey. The trail's length and its challenging conditions make it a test of endurance, resilience, and resourcefulness. Not many people have four to six months to escape life's usual duties. Nor the money to purchase expensive equipment, specialized food, and lodging in town once a week or so for resupply and a shower.

I began with the intention of hiking for a month or two with Rolf and then following along with some trail support. Even though I had to leave the trail four times, I kept going back for more. In the final tally, I hiked just over half of the 2,655 miles in six months and two days, from the vernal equinox to the autumnal equinox plus a few. Rolf did it all, except the burn zones of previous wildfires between Quincy and Burney, and smoke from fires between Dunsmuir and Seiad Valley in northern California.



“Are you going back to the parts you skipped?” listeners asked after learning of the travails that sent me off the hike: norovirus and rotavirus (together!); two nasty stomach bugs; elevation sickness; infected toenails; infected tooth that needed to be extracted; and, finally, painful contusions from a nasty fall. My answer: I will probably not return to the missed sections, because of partial vision loss in both my eyes that makes hiking a larger challenge than ordinary. But I have certainly considered it, and I may do some more sections but probably never fully complete it.

Even though we ate MUCH of the common hiker fare such as ramen noodles, peanut butter, and beef sticks, we spent more money on food than many other hikers do. Most dinners were freeze-dried meals. We special-ordered powdered coconut milk and hummus to add to meals for extra flavor and calories. Beforehand, Rolf had dried some lentil meals that were also more deli-

First sun, after a cold night at Mission Creek Spring, California

Left: Back on the PCT after resupply: Kearsarge Pass, California (11,760 feet elevation)





Above:
Thousand
Islands Lake
and Mount
Banner

Right: Mission
accomplished!
Northern
terminus:
September 24,
2025

ciuous than the average trail food. We splurged on fancy nuts and dried fruits for morning oats. We both lost weight (but not dangerously so).

There were stretches where I felt removed from the world—much like while being on the water for days on Ross Lake, completely immersed in and influenced by my surroundings. Both environments foster a sense of vulnerability and heightened awareness, but also a profound peace. On the PCT, I learned to relish the quiet and then come alive with the “sociability high” of meeting new, like-minded hikers from all over the world.

Reaching the northern terminus brought a mix of emotions; it was hard to decipher elation from bone weariness. The trail taught me the value of slowing down. I learned that discomfort is temporary. I valued the small victories and the big moments of beauty—a sunrise over the mountains, the kindness of strangers, the resilience of my own spirit. The sweetest discovery, especially after 30 years as a couple, was the pleasure I felt spending long days together with Rolf. I reconnect-

ed with the bond that had brought us together, adventuring in the wild.

My last blog entry: Wednesday, September 24, 2025

We plan to go 16 miles today. We are on the return from the northern terminus of the Pacific Crest Trail. This year, because the border with Canada was closed, all hikers of the 2,655 miles need to turn around and do 30 more miles back to Hart’s Pass, the last road crossing in the U.S. In a normal year, we would have walked eight miles past the northern terminus to a lovely Canadian resort.

To finish yesterday, we slackpacked from our campsite to the terminus, drank a can of champagne, and ate some hard cheddar cheese and delicious crackers. Mostly, we celebrated with the other hikers, took many photos, and recorded parting words in the last trail register. We hiked back to our beautiful spot, the viewpoint on the last high point before going down, down, down, down, down, down to the Canadian border. We shared a nip of whiskey and ate dinner as the sun set.

Nestled at the base of the trailhead sign, I accepted my last trail magic. Covered with a square of cardboard, three cans of Coors Light awaited us with the message: “Congratulations for finishing the PCT!” I took one and cracked it open. I drank, breathing in the beauty of cool night creeping into the rocks around me and the sun grabbing hold of the golden larches. The approaching lights of my ride home let me know I was done.

—Amy McGhee



In Case You've Wondered . . .

What's in a name?

Who was Emma Peel? For the answer, Google "The Avengers," a TV series from the 1960s.

LWRC's **Bill Tytus** named the first of his new women's eights for Ms. Peel and gave it to LWRC. When we later got a matching eight, it was inevitable that it be named *John Steed*, for her polite,

bowler-wearing spy boss. This demonstrates one pattern of naming our boats: if you give it to us, you get to name it—within certain limits. Most of the club's singles and several of

the eights got their names in this manner. Hence the odd mixture: *Boo* (the donor presented it with a ghost decal); *Thea* (given by a guy who maintained the renowned *Thea Foss*); *Beverly* (named by **Rainer Storb** for his wife); *MiniPearl* (was the donor perhaps a fan of the Grand Old Opry?); and, most recently, *Archimedes* (a memorial to **Dave Rutherford** and named by his family after his pet owl.) The red Hudson single was christened *Rufus* ("red" in Latin) because its donor never came through with an alternative name. The eights *Nip* and *Tuck*

were given by **Dr. John Tytus**, Bill's father, and named to connote not cosmetic surgery but rather the vintage usage describing a close race between equals.

Most of our doubles and fours/quads are named for rivers, a tradition dating at least to the early 1970s and allegedly a compromise when then-members disagreed about whose name should go on the next new boat. The current—and very informal—river protocol says only that boats can't share

a river name with a Washington State ferry or a casino. Earlier, such names were confined to obscure rivers on the Olympic Peninsula

(remember the *Dosewallips*? *Hump-tulips*? *Skookumchuck*?), but now we range as far as northeast Oregon with the quad *Owyhee*, named for a northeast Oregon river first explored by three Hawai-

ians. Past triples have been graced with resurrection-themed names (*Lazarus*, *Phoenix*) because they were constructed from wrecked boats, but *Palix* got a river name because it was built from an undamaged UW men's four given us by John Tytus. (The three-forked Palix River, all 14 miles of it, flows into Willapa Bay.) The *Swinomish*, an eight, was named after the wide Swinomish Channel.

Anomalies in naming have accrued over time. *Hotspur* was named by Bill Tytus. He generously gave us a number of small boats but did not respond immediately to our request that he name his gifts. After some threats ("We will



name them after your family members!"), Bill, a former English major, proposed Shakespearean names—*Ariel*, *Puck*, *Rosenkrantz*, *Guildenstern*, and so on. Of these, only *Hotspur* remains in

"If you give it to us, you get to name it."



Silk Purse got its name because it had been reduced to the condition of a pig’s ear by an untimely cartop-rack failure on the I-90. Rebuilt, it became the fine racing double it is today. *Scud*, now a triple, was originally a 1980s double with a partner: the similarly missile-themed double *Patriot*, which departed some-time in the 1990s.

Names of open-water boats show more consistency. When we first acquired *Aeros*, we named them after pigs: they were not svelte. Later, deciding this was rather disparaging, we switched to naming them after clouds (think white, round, floaty . . .). After several obvious names (*Cirrus*, *Stratus*, *Nimbus*, *Cumulus*), we extended the cloud theme to *Maas* 24s and looked for more obscure cloud types: *Pileus*, a cloud cap; *Mammatus*, a breast-shaped cloud; *Fractus*, a type of broken cloud. *Bay* 21s are named for . . . yes, bays: *Willapa*, *Clallam*, *Coos*, and others. *Maas*

doubles are named for straits (*Haro*, *Hecate*) or passages (*Harney*, *Hakai*), based on the principle that you’d prefer a larger boat to negotiate those sorts of crossings.

Wherries are named for dwarfs. This happened because we had a wherry double named *Snow White* (its name’s origin is now unknown). We also had 12 single wherries, identified only as the “blue-topped wherry” or the “old red wherry.” Someone had the idea to name and label these single wherries for the seven dwarfs (*Grumpy*, *Sleepy*, *Doc* . . .). But we needed more names. Credit **Dave McBee** with *Smarmy* and *Smug* (alas, now sold). Only the wherry *Lucy*, a gift from **Lucy Pocock Stillwell**’s family, escaped dwarf nomenclature.

Yes, there are patterns to our naming practices. Now you’ll have something to think about next time you’re out on the water.

—Susan Kinne



service. Bill also gave us the *Frank Cunningham* and the *Jane Cunningham* doubles, to “assure that there are always LWRC boats that bear their names.” *Lethocerus*, the coxed six built by a former member for Learn to Row classes, is perhaps the only boat named by member contest (it is the name of a six-legged water bug).

The unnamed double that became

Above left: Mammatus clouds
Below left: Nimbus
Above right: Stratus
(Creative Commons photos)

FAST Fundraiser a Huge Success: We're Almost There!

On Saturday, March 14, the FAST Fundraiser Committee hosted the first fundraising event for supporting LWRC members. Below, Karolin Neubert describes the action that evening:

Hello to our amazing LWRC community—Wow, Saturday was a huge success and so much fun! We couldn't have imagined it turning out as well as it did. Even though the sound system had its moments, the popularity of Bingo definitely exceeded expectations. Lesson learned for next year: more time for Bingo and for browsing the auction items—and maybe even for eating, since many of you were so busy you almost forgot there was food!

Jon Turvey, as always, kindly took plenty of [photos](#). On behalf of the **FAST Fundraiser Committee**, thanks to all of you who showed up and made this event so special. It was wonderful to see everyone connecting, meeting new people, and supporting the community.

A huge thank-you goes to everyone who contributed money, bought a raffle ticket, and donated or bid on an auction item.

Special thanks to **Georgetown Brewery** for generously donating so much beer!

In his very touching speech, **Tyler Peterson** also made sure we shared a few laughs along the way. (If you missed the event but would like to hear Tyler's story, be sure to ask him next time you see him at the boat-

house!) And if his story inspired you to contribute, here is the [donation link](#).

We're thrilled to share that the fundraiser brought in **\$13,800** including bar, raffle, and auction proceeds. With your wonderful support, and the generous donations received before the event, we have nearly reached our goal of **\$25,000**.

We hope you left the evening feeling excited about LWRC's future and our

ability to support members in meaningful ways. Most importantly, we hope you had a chance to meet someone new. Our community is what makes LWRC such a special place. You are the reason people join and stay.

Thank you!

*—Karolin Neubert
for the FAST Fundraiser Committee*



*Lots of fun at the fundraiser!
(Jon Turvey photos)*

Now Accepting Applications!

The FAST Fund is here to help

LWRC is committed to keeping our community **inclusive, accessible, and on the water**. This year, the Board of Directors launched the Financial Assistance Support Team (FAST) to ensure that financial hardship does not prevent anyone from continuing to row at LWRC.

Applicants are eligible for a discount of up to 50 percent on one year of full membership and may reapply for continued support each year. The fund is currently open to applications from current members.

Interested in applying?

Learn more about the application process [here](#). You may also reach out to fast@lakewashingtonrowing.com if you have questions or would like to speak to someone in person about your eligibility. All information about applicants and potential applicants will remain strictly confidential.

Interested in contributing to FAST?

Contributions to the FAST fund are tax-deductible and will help keep rowing accessible for all members of our community. If you are interested in contributing, please reach out to us at fast@lakewashingtonrowing.com.

—Jean Lee, LWRC Board Secretary



(Creative Commons photo)

PLEASE HELP!!

Now that *Making Waves* has entered its twelfth year of publication, you are reading its forty-fifth issue! And that is too much of a good thing, perhaps. We need to index past issues so that readers can easily and quickly access previous articles.

We estimate that four or five helpers could complete the task fairly quickly. What's more, you will earn volunteer hours for your commitment—what's not to like?

If you would like to be part of this short-term project, please let us know at lwrcnewsletter@comcast.net. We'll get back to you!

—Roberta Scholz, Editor

What Do Our Members Tell Us?



Managing an organization is much like rowing, where hundreds of micro-mechanics culminate in one visible stroke, moving the boat into the future. Those micro-mechanics determine the measurement and quality of forward movement. Similarly, a club can progress and find success only through a true

understanding of its members' needs, wants, and goals.

The 2026 Programs & Membership survey, administered in January, was a tool to look beyond data in MindBody and one-off observations and comments and to hear directly from members. Famed management thinker Peter Drucker teaches that “Quality in a service or product is not what you put into it. It is what the customer gets out of it.” The responses from this survey will inform decisions on programming, special events, and clinics. It will also influence how LWRC connects with members.

Overall, we learned that *members like what LWRC offers and want more of it*. We heard that members value quality coaching, well-maintained equipment, the boathouse environment, and the freedom to row independently. There was a clear desire for additional classes and special clinics as well as a desire for more off-water opportunities to learn or socialize.

In response, LWRC has developed a series of special events running through September. It includes informational sessions ranging from oar measurement

to fall training; a demonstration on how to carry a single, scheduled for June 7; and a couple of off-water socials (another popular request). Keep an eye on email bulletins and boathouse flyers for more information; these formats are preferred by most members, according to the survey.

Member Services and Programs Manager **Jenn Thomas** authored several questions in the survey to support her work in scheduling on- and off-water programs. She works closely with coaches to keep a variety of classes available to LWRC's spectrum of rowers. The survey provided new insight into members' appetite to compete, as well as requests for both team and small-boat rowing opportunities.

The survey indicated a preference for small-boat rowing. A great option for this group, especially those who desire more advanced training in a single, is **Karolin Neubert's** Sculling for Endurance class on Tuesday mornings. Advanced scullers will also see that **John Robinson's** Saturday class has returned to the lineup! Additionally, Spring Evening League tran-

(Layne Fisher photo)

“Members like what LWRC offers and want more of it.”

Board Notes

“Our goal is to be a welcoming community where everyone can find their place.”

sitioned to primarily singles and doubles before going on a summer hiatus. (The club’s longest-running class, it will take a break due to increased boat traffic but will resume after Labor Day, if not earlier.)

Members report that keeping costs low increases their time on the water. This truth makes the 2026 goal of increasing membership even more salient. Strong membership numbers remain the most reliable way to minimize the need for substantial fee increases. To this end, LWRC has initiated marketing and communications actions to meaningfully connect with existing and potential members.

Board President **Carolyn Fletcher** sums it up nicely: “Our goal is to be a welcoming community where everyone can find their place, regardless of whether they are a new or a long-term member. We want to focus on offering relevant programs and opportunities to all our mem-

bers seeking that connection.”

The core of connection is understanding, and the core of understanding is asking. There is a common conundrum in the pursuit of gleaning data directly from the source: some people love to talk about themselves; others, not so much. Survey design and interpretation can adjust for that imbalance; but in the end, the more responses from across the board, the better.

And here is where you come in! When next year’s survey comes around, please respond. This really does matter. It increases confidence in perceivable trends, and it matters on an individual basis. The nature of our sport, and the soul of this club, is to satisfy a range of goals, needs, and wants. We hope you’ll feel the positive impact of the 2026 survey feedback, however you experience LWRC.

—Layne Fisher



Check out our [programs!](#)



Former LWRC Board member Layne Fisher led the 2026 survey design and interpretation team. She is a 2023 Learn To Row grad with a passion for the sport that keeps growing, year after year. Off the water, with a background in strategic marketing, she has a special interest in customer analysis.

(Karolin Neubert photo)

THE BACK PAGE

Regatta season begins — time to get going!

(Jon Turvey photos from Seattle Sprints)



PASS THE WORD

Has an LWRC member done something worth recognizing, on or off the water?
lwrnewsletter@comcast.net