

St.Catharines Rowing Club

President's Report to the Annual General Meeting, January 22, 2019

I am starting my final president's report with "thank you's". Thank you to our club leadership; the SCRC Board of Directors, its executive and the Board for the St.Catharines Recreational Rowing League, our coaches who continue to be the envy of other clubs and who provide so much time to our athletes, our regatta volunteers who not only help at our SCRC regattas but at the many other events hosted on Henley Island, our supporting organizations; The St.Catharines Rowing Alumni and The Henley Island Helpers and our island partners the CHRC. Thank you to our many donors who help our club with financial support allowing us to provide the best racing and safety equipment for our programs. Thank you to our committed club staff; Mark Welsh our Club Manager and Head Coach who is now starting his 14th year with the SCRC, our boat house assistant Ryan Malcowski and our Youth Rowing School coaches.

The year started with our attendance at the RCA AGM weekend held in Toronto where SCRC alumni Wendy Wiebe and Jack Nicholson were installed into the RCA Hall of Fame. There was also special recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the 1968 Mexico Olympic crew, many of whom were SCRC members. The business meeting of the weekend saw much discussion and negative response to multiple changes to the rules of racing, some of which have made it difficult for our club when hosting regattas this past season. We continue to advocate for our club members and I am confident our club will remain diligent ensuring changes continue to be challenged when appropriate. We must remain supportive of lightweight rowing and its important place in club and high school programs. This message was clearly delivered to both our provincial and national associations during their respective AGMs.

The 2018 season was the first in which the new fee structure (seat fees) and Regatta Central Canadian system were implemented. Unfortunately this was not a smooth or successful implementation with numerous issues, financial challenges and negative impacts that affected our club and athletes. Our club and its volunteers spent hours working with both Row Ontario and RCA over the year as we dealt with issues using the new system. These issues caused extensive grief for anyone running regattas or entering regattas. RCA has now acquiesced and recently announced it will be returning to the Legacy system. We look forward to improvements for this upcoming season and continue to push back on the increasing fees.

On a more positive note our club and athletes despite these challenges continue to excel. Congratulations to our athletes who have had a successful year competing at the high school, club and international level. We continue to offer very strong entry programs into our sport with our Youth Rowing School and recreational adult programs and try-it days to encourage people into rowing. The SCRC continues to be well respected as a development ground for elite athletes that go onto racing internationally and for developing excellence in coaching. This past year two of our coaches were recognized, Kathy Boyes by the Ontario Coaching Association as "Good-to-Great" Coach and Brian Fisher by Row Ontario as Competitive Coach of the Year. Congratulations, as well, to Tammy Jacobsen and Gord Duncan who were recognized as Umpires of the Year by Row Ontario.

I am confident the club will continue to work with both our provincial and national rowing associations ensuring our issues are heard and that club rowing remains in their priorities as they develop policies and programs.

We have an exciting year ahead for all our programs in particular for our Recreational Rowing League which will see the delivery of newly refurbished shells thanks to funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. We continue to work with the Canada Summer Games group on the development of an on-island indoor training facility that will be ready for the Games to be held in 2021. We are now working with the architects and waiting for more details on funding that will be provided for the facility.

I have been honored to have represented the club these past six years as President and thank everyone for all their support for me in this role. I look forward to continued involvement at the club as a volunteer and competitor and wish everyone a fantastic 116th season. Forge Ahead!

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Kerr
President