

OAR President's Report

Report for 2019-2020

2019 was a good distance rowing season for the Ontario Adventure Rowing Association (OAR):

- We resolved the RCA imposed sanctioning/registration situation
- We determined to do a 2022 FISA World Tour
- We held, in conjunction with member clubs, ten tours and helped out a Beach Sprints Regatta.
- Our Club membership grew to 15 and participation was stable.
- We increased capacity for tours.

The RCA sanctioning/registration process taxed our volunteers, especially the botched Regatta Central system. But in the end we ended up with a reasonable sanctioning process and we were allowed to either register participants by ourselves (without RCA/RO fees) or register through Regatta Central with RCA/RO fees. Thanks to Board members and organisers who participated in this process.

We submitted a 2022 World Tour proposal for a tour in the Bay of Quinte and through the Thousand Islands for September 2022. The tour would be in coastal boats and/or touring boats depending on the availability of coastal boats. There are logistical details to work out, including emergency land spots and rest stops (including toilets), especially through the rocky Thousand Islands. As well we need to ensure the viability of visiting the United States on one day. Overall this has progressed well, we have time to work out details, and this will boost our registration numbers in 2022. Thanks to Peter J for spearheading this initiative.

Our tours, mostly organised by member clubs, worked out very well this year. Some of the tours were full, e.g., Muskoka and Nottawasaga tours. The new tour, the Gaudaur Brothers Heritage Tour sponsored by the Orillia Rowing Club, was a welcome addition. The two marathons, the Canadian Sculling Marathon and the Icicle Chase, were successful. We also made available our two coastal quads to the AMP Group for their initial Beach Sprints Regatta in St. Catharines. Thanks to all the organisers of tours in Ontario.

We orchestrated a Florida tour. Because we only have one quad there, only four people participated, but they had a great experience. However, having only one quad in Florida, puts the future of this tour, certainly beyond 2021, in doubt.¹

Our Club membership grew to 15, though a few formerly very active Clubs are no longer active. We had nine individual members. We discovered that RCA registers the number of individual participants, not just members. Most of the RCA members on our tours were registered, but the registrar did not receive the lists for three tours. Therefore the number registered, 69, was an underestimate. Everyone needs to recognise the importance of the registration process. Thanks to Elaine, our registrar. Our objective should be to increase the number of registered participants to over 100 to gain more visibility at the level of the rowing governing bodies.

Thanks to all our active Board members. In addition to Elaine and Peter J, there's Homam (newsletter), Arnold (equipment and trailering), Donna (finance), the three Hanlan members (Cynthia, Shelagh, and Shannon) for tour organising and facilitation as well as promotion, and Peter B. (secretary).

We purchased another quad, so that we could always have four quads (20 person capacity) available at our Mobile Touring Centre. This will help out the tours using OAR quads which are at capacity.

Finally we will get some grant money through the True Sport Foundation (about \$412 for OAR and \$686 for Hanlan) in recognition of the joint effort to promote youth-at-risk sports. Also we need to update By-law 1 to include a membership year, AGM timing, and virtual meetings.

It was a good year, but not a breakthrough year in terms of recognition by rowing governing bodies and clubs which are both preoccupied with competitive sprint racing. This was evident by redesigns of the RCA and Rowing Ontario websites which both dropped the content on 'row touring'. We will have to work to get this information re-instated.

In terms of long term goals, we could perhaps agree on the following:

- To develop distance rowing (row touring plus marathons) in Ontario
 - To introduce international row touring to Ontario rowers
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For 2020, I suggest that we have as objectives:

- Prepare well for the 2022 FISA World tour
 - Work to increase registration so that the number of registered members and participants be over 100 in 2022 and in subsequent years
 - Pull off a successful year of tours.²
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Should we have as additional objectives for this year A) the repair of the existing trailer associated with the mobile touring centre and B) the costing and design of a trailer³ which could handle i) coastal boats and ii) touring boats? As well Arnold mentioned that we will need more oars; should we budget for these this year or next?

Richard Vincent, Ontario Adventure Rowing Association (OAR)

March 30, 2020; updated April 20, 2020

¹ The quad, an excellent Swift touring gig, is not used by the host Club in Florida – they are a traditional sweep Club. The Florida liaison officer wishes to step back from organising tours. We may be able to mount a 2021 tour. Then our choices are basically to sell the quad to an American Club or trailer the boat back to Canada (and incur HST).

² We must recognise that the Covid-19 pandemic will limit the number of tours and participants in 2020.

³ We should aim for this trailer to be light, i.e., ideally a car with a towing capacity of 3,500 lbs. could tow it.