

President's Report
Ontario Adventure Rowing Association
Annual General Meeting, March 30, 2022

The last two years have been tough in that COVID restrictions have shut down many of our tours. We did manage to squeeze in two exploratory tours of routes involved in the 2022 World Rowing Tour in the Bay of Quinte and among the Thousand Islands. Both tours were extremely useful in providing lessons. We had a half season of tours from mid-July to October, 2022. One of the tours was a re-creation of the first tour in 1995 on Big Rideau Lake.

Despite these challenges, the number of Club members is up to 16 which is higher than our normal dozen or so (though we had 15 Club members in 2019). This is due to the Kawartha tour which brought in the Peterborough Rowing Club, the World Tour pilot which encouraged a couple of participants to ask their Clubs (Argos and Kingston) to join; as well the Cornwall Rowing Club joined. The rest of the Clubs are loyal members over many years.

Despite the paucity of tours, we have been busy with many meetings over ZOOM and have become expert at making Covid grant applications. We updated the by-laws to conform to the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA); we will ask you to vote on the revised by-law at the Annual General Meeting on March 31. Also a number of policies were updated and the Row Canada Safe Sport policies were enacted. The Safe Sport policies represent massive overkill for a small organisation with no elite athletes, no coaches, no employees, and no minors. Fortunately we have had no complaints over 14 years of operation, so we expect none. ZOOM has changed our culture. It has allowed for more meetings and more productivity. However, as many organisations have found, there is no replacement for person-to-person meetings to encourage empathy and understanding of complex issues.

We have recently adopted a strategic plan which focuses on four goals:

1. To maintain and improve touring capacity
2. To increase and renew membership
3. To increase our respect within the rowing community
4. To increase our ability to reach rowers through the on-line media.

In the first goal we identified having more trailer drivers as the top objective. So if you know anyone who would volunteer to drive a trailer, please contact one of us. We have already moved on the second objective to create a second mobile touring centre by agreeing to purchase three used T-11 touring quads. With this acquisition, once we have refurbished the used T-11s, we will have eight touring quads on two trailers ready for use. In the fulfillment of our goals, we have created an additional committee, the Outreach Committee, to reach out directly to individual Clubs and independent rowers. The mandate of the Newsletter Committee will be expanded to deal with publicity to the Row Ontario community. We are

soliciting people with social media skills to make our social media platforms buzzing with activity.

In terms of relations with the rowing governing bodies, we may be on the cusp of better recognition. The World Rowing Tour is embraced by Rowing Canada (RCA), the revised Touring Manual will be converted into a RCA document, and sanctioned tours will now be publicised in the Row Ontario Community News.

All our directors and tour organizers are volunteers who give freely of their spare time to encourage and deliver touring in Central Canada. I want to thank all of them for their contribution. We also appreciate very much the contribution of our equipment manager and main trailer driver, Arnold Vandermeer. And finally we mourn the loss of our long time treasurer, Blackfly tours organiser, and FISA World Tour organiser, Donna Speigel.

Richard Vincent, March 2022, revised