

2022/23 Ontario Adventure Rowing (OAR) President's Report

It is fitting that we gather in Barrie for this AGM.

This year Barrie Rowing Club and the Ontario Adventure Rowing Association (OAR) concluded a mutually advantageous agreement to host a **mobile touring unit for coastal boats** at the Barrie Rowing Club. The use of the boats will be prioritised as follows:

1. OAR tours
2. Barrie Rowing Club tours
3. Rentals to other OAR Clubs.

Barrie Rowing Club is the host to a gem of a river tour: the **Nottawasaga Tour**. Last year we went upstream. Only Matt Gleben would be audacious enough to lead us upwards through the swifts.

In 2019 at the AGM in Barrie I talked about '**la relève**' (renewal of volunteers) and we did recruit some new directors. They were absorbed – with some bumps on the road – and we have achieved **successes**: revival of tours after COVID, a successful WRT, more touring boats, and the creation of a mobile touring unit for coastal boats. We are going further to renew our directors this year. Two years ago Donna Speigel and I made a pact to continue on the Board until now. Unfortunately Donna did not make it. This year I am finishing 15 years as President.

In our **strategic plan** we put finding sites for mobile touring units as a top priority. The Barrie agreement is the first, but we need two more sites for touring boats. We also listed trailer drivers and greater publicity as part of the strategic plan. The strategic plan helped us a lot to take action on our priorities. It was supposed to be a three year plan, but we have done a lot in less than a year. It is good to have an action oriented strategic plan around which there was a consensus.

Now some words of wisdom for the future which people may ignore, but I will say anyway.

- **Be fiscally conservative** – Of our total income, the percentage distribution for the last two fiscal years (with the addition of the WRT 'surplus') is as follows:
 - Tours: seat fees/'surpluses', rentals: **21.9 %**
 - Covid grants including WRT tourism recovery grant: **60.5 %**
 - Surplus from World Rowing Tour: **17.6 %**

The Covid epidemic is gone, so there will be no more Covid grants. No World Rowing Tour in Ontario is on the horizon. So in future years, our revenues will be down considerably. Tour income amounted to an average of only \$8,561 a year in the last two years from which we will have to pay Association fees, insurance, and repair costs. So let's be careful with spending money in the future.

(It is good that we took advantage of these inflationary times to increase our fees. For example, our daily seat fee is now \$30 instead of \$25 in 2022.)

- **Be ambitious but be realistic** – to maintain relevancy, you must try different things. But you cannot deplete the reserves of the volunteers, nor the finances available.

*Richard Vincent, President OAR
April 22, 2023*