



5:21

SWEEP

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THE WASHINGTON ROWING QUARTERLY

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A WASHINGTON ROWING STEWARDS PUBLICATION

W
ROWING

Sweep!

Yes, Husky fans, when dreams come true life becomes very, very special. No need to pinch yourself; it really happened.

Let's take it by the numbers. Five national championships – an all time IRA record. Our sixth consecutive Ten Eyck team award – an all time IRA record. Five course records – an all time IRA record. Our fourth varsity national championship in six years. Our fifteenth national title. Our first varsity repeat title in 70 years. A winning time of 5:21 – just two seconds off the world record time. Let us remind you that it was only a few years ago when the U.S. Olympic eight returned from Greece that they sported t-shirts with the number 5:21 on the back – a world record at the time. Make no mistake, the 2012 Husky varsity was a complement of very special student athletes – winners in the classroom as well as on the water.

What is the best number of all? Thirty-seven. That's the number of Husky athletes who, for the rest of their lives, will be able to tell their children and grandchildren about their amazing teams and their national championships. Make that 38 for certainly Peter Allen had a share of those titles.



The Varsity 8+ on the award dock

You have listened to the race calls and read the race reports by now so you know that the control demonstrated by our athletes under all conditions was magnificent. The margins of victory left no doubt in anyone's mind that our Huskies came to win and did exactly what they intended. It wasn't just the victories but the manner of those victories that truly impressed. These were very savvy, exceptionally well coached racers.

The best collegiate rowing program in North America. That's a sentence and a conviction that we've used in nearly every edition of Sweep since it was launched in February 2005. For the non-believers out there (read: the competition) there is nothing left to prove. After a tough few years, the women are back and now the men pulled off a feat that has never been accomplished in the long history of rowing in America. We are already salivating over the 2013 possibilities.

We have avoided lineups in these pages in the past but we are breaking the rule this issue. All of these athletes deserve to see their names recorded as a small way for us to say thank you for their courage, commitment and performance.



The team celebrates the Ten Eyck award for the sixth year

National Champion Open Four: Cox Josh Klein, stroke Edward Nainby-Luxmoore, 3 Tom Lehmann, 2 Reiner Hershaw, bow Michael Thornton.

National Champion Varsity Four: Cox Seamus Labrum, stroke Robert Squires, 3 Garrett Rinden, 2 Jeff Gibbs, bow Will Lytle.

National Champion Freshmen Eight: Cox Lisa Caldwell, stroke Alexander Perkins, 7 Henry Meek, 6 Marcus Bowyer, 5 Stephen Podwojski, 4 Aleksander Malowany, 3 Eric Ledbetter, 2 Michael Evans, bow Ian Drake.

National Champion Second Varsity: Cox Laura Denman, stroke Max Mannisto, 7 Julian Svoboda, 6 Myles Neary, 5 Patrick Marre, 4 Beddome Allen, 3 Ambrose Puttmann, 2 Alan Meininghaus, bow Jay Thompson.

National Champion Varsity: Cox Sam Ojserkis, stroke Dusan Milovanovic, 7 Alex Bunkers, 6 Ryan Schroeder, 5 Mijo Rudelj, 4 Sebastian Peter, 3 Sam Dommer, 2 A.J. Brooks, bow Robert Munn.



Sebastian Peter and Sam Dommer celebrate

NCAA Championships Recap



The Varsity Eight competes in the NCAA Grand Final

After good racing all year, the season ended on a promising note for the Husky women at the NCAA Championships. Going into the regatta, the goal was to get all three boats into the Grand Final to compete for boat and team National titles. The Grand Final was an especially important goal for the Varsity 8+, which had not been in the NCAA Grand Final since 2008.

The team battled through tough heats and semifinals, and both the Varsity 4+ and Varsity 8+ were able to secure spots in the top championship races on Sunday. Sunday's finals brought the only bit of bad weather the team had faced all week. A thunderstorm rolled in just as the 2V was lining up to start their race. The boat was locked into the starting blocks when the officials told them to row back to the boathouse because of the incoming storm. A bit of confusion ensued as some of the boats were unclear if the race had actually started or if they were being told to row in. After about 100 meters of racing, the teams all figured out the storm delay and rushed in to find cover.

Both the Varsity 8+ and Varsity 4+ came in sixth in their Grand Finals. The 2V battled through the storm delay and secured second place in the Petite final for eighth place overall. Great racing over the three-day regatta put UW narrowly into 7th place. Every place counts for the team championship, and both the 2V's gutsy race in the petite final, and the Varsity's race to get into the Grand Final helped secure seventh place overall. The Huskies were tied with UCLA for the seventh spot, but the Varsity's higher overall placement proved the tie-breaker.

The results of the weekend only left the Huskies hungry for more. As Coach Ernst was quoted after the regatta, "Most of these kids are going to be back next year, and I know they'll be better. Man, I want to start practice tomorrow!"

Sixteen of the 23 rowers from the NCAA Championships will be back with the team next year, ready to train and race for another NCAA Championship. We can't wait for next season to begin!



Members of the second varsity eight (from left - Sis Odland, Maddie Cordner, Marissa Kump, and Adriene De Leuw)



The Varsity Eight closes in on the finish line at NCAAs

Commitment - by Michael Callahan

Four years is what we are given to compete in intercollegiate athletics: four years to make a mark on a program that has accomplished so much in the rowing world, four years of hard choices, four years of work, four years of competition, four years of frustration and one last opportunity. Rob Squires is an emblematic story of the Huskies this year.

Rob Squires, Class of 2012, came to this program with the characteristics we look for in our rowers. He is bright, disciplined, tall, well-developed physically, and driven. He came to study Naval Science in our Naval ROTC program and row for the Husky Crew. He turned down the Naval Academy, the Academy his father rowed for, to have an opportunity to row on the best rowing program in the country. He wanted the challenge, and he wanted to be a champion. This was a hard choice for a young man who knew he only had four years to compete as a Washington Oarsmen and a lifetime as a Naval Officer.

When I recruit young men I often tell them that they will commit to row for Washington, but at some point during their freshmen year they will recommit. This will be the moment where the contract really begins. I tell them after they commit again they will become a Washington Oarsmen.



Squires (center) and teammates Reiner Hershaw and CJ Miller at their commissioning ceremony in June.

The Class of 2012 is a class deep with talent. Rob's incoming teammates included Olympians, Under-23 World Champions, Junior World medalists and a host of other young men that made the same choice he did. They wanted to stand with the best and row for Washington.

To stand with the best we need competition. Competition is fierce on this team, so fierce many don't survive it. The elite survive. Rob initially struggled in this environment. Not because the work was too much or the competition too intense, but the level of his teammates rowing skill gave them the edge. During this time I could see him overcome his frustration and commit to the process instead of backing down, making excuses, or giving up. Rob got to work and recommitted.



Squires (second from left) on the award dock at IRA's

An unwavering work ethic is at the core of our ethos at Washington. Competition and commitment is our foundation. Rob's work ethic never wavered in his four years. If anything he worked too hard: trying to overcome undeveloped skill with raw horsepower and determination. This becomes very frustrating. Finally, at one point he realized he needed to learn to channel his frustration and to work smarter. With this he started to make progress.

It's difficult to stay motivated with the kind of workload we put on our students, especially when you aren't in the first boat. First boats always travel to the best regattas. Over Rob's four years at Washington he never traveled to San Diego, a Cal Dual, Stanford or the Intercollegiate Rowing Association National Championship. He spent his time in the second freshmen boat and the fourth varsity boats; always pushing the race boats but never making his way in, or getting recognition for his role.

At the Pac-12 Championship Rob Squires earned a spot in the stroke seat of the varsity four. This was his first airplane ride to a regatta, first time he would line up against Cal, first time he could win a Championship.

Rob's boat got off the line behind California with OSU, USC, WSU, and Stanford closely trailing behind. At the 500 meter mark Rob stepped on the footboard and bent the oar with four years of commitment, four years of choices, four years of work, and had his opportunity to put his bow ahead.

He didn't know that his parents and sister, natives of Washington who now live in Florida, flew out to surprise him and watch him compete. His sister jumped up and down on the beach as he put open water between him and his competitors.

Rob chose the hard route. Rob faced the hard work and attacked it. Rob learned to cope with his frustration and turned it into motivation and his reward included more than the PAC-12 Championship. On Saturday, June 2, Rob and the Varsity Four captured the National Championship at the IRA. Rob is a Washington oarsmen and he is the kind of man I want defending my country. Well rowed Rob.

Coach's Note - by Michael Callahan

How does a coach take it all in after a season in which his athletes managed to execute at every level on each and every race day? It is difficult to comprehend the scope of what these student-athletes have achieved; even more so when one considers that they won each race with the weight of expectations building with every victory. I've noticed the word "perfect" has been used to describe this 2012 season and team. In reality this team was far from perfect: there were missed goals, bobbled strokes, mental cracks, illness, fatigue, etc... No, this 2012 team was not perfect, but it was great, and Washington Rowing will always remember it as so. The fact that I got to be a part of it still gives me goose bumps.

Amid this success comes a lot of opportunities to communicate with a wide audience. Normally, I prefer to take wins and celebrate quietly, but here I want to do two things: first, thank all of our supporters; and second, tell everyone how exceptional our student-athletes really are.

A lot of people have asked me, "How did you do it? What's the key to Washington's success?" The short answer is simple: the student-athletes and the people who support them. "Supporters" include donors, alumni, friends, parents, academic advisors, and athletic department staff. Saying "we did not do this alone" does not capture what happened. WE - the athletes, coaches, and supporters - all did it together. One does not succeed without the other.

From the Chair by Chuck Turbak

Chuck is the current Washington Rowing Stewards Chair.

Last year my class (1961) gathered at the Varsity Boat Club banquet for our 50th reunion and presented two sets of oars to the program. The next morning we returned to the shellhouse at sunrise and, with some in boats and others riding in the launch, we christened the new blades with a row through the cut. While we proved that we no longer are threats on the water, we may have started a new tradition.

This year the class of 1962 under the leadership of its Commodore, John Magnuson, mirrored our efforts. They, too, presented oars at the banquet and completed a row through the cut. But something new was added. At the banquet John described the slogan his class painted on the bulkhead near the finish line the night before their first Class Day race, and he even drew the original design on a napkin. Apparently, it was discovered on the table after dinner by a freshman who picked it up. It must have touched a chord with that young man's classmates because the next morning when the old guys sat at rest in the cut, exhausted from perhaps fifty strokes, they spied something new on the bulkhead: The Winning Crew 1962. After the previous night's banquet, the Grunties took the napkin and cans of paint to the cut and produced a replica of the '62 motto. Out on Hunts Point that morning, they probably heard the cheers of the old guys.

Generous donors and alumni allow us to row in the best boats, attract the top recruits, and provide financial aid so every student can have the opportunity to become a Washington oarsman. The athletic department and University provide us with state of the art facilities, incredible trainers, and a top-notch academic environment. And of course, there are the parents who are there to answer emotional phone calls from their children, fund tuition, and somehow find a way to always have the best tent on any regatta shore.

In some ways the coaching staff also gets to parent these students along the way, and like any good parent, I like to brag about my kids a little. These men (and women) are great. Spring quarter we had 22 athletes, including five from the Varsity 8+, make the Dean's list (GPA above 3.5.) Rob Munn was given the "Top Dawg" award this year, and Sam Ojserkis was awarded the PAC-12 scholarship. There are also three student-athletes graduating from ROTC, and many other achievements that are not listed here.

The evening before the IRA final I told the varsity that they didn't have to be someone they weren't in order to win. After they won, superlatives like "perfect" and "best ever" began to swirl. But they were just being themselves, doing exactly what they had practiced over and over again in the Montlake Cut. It wasn't perfect, but it didn't need to be. The achievement was real and it was great, and so are the student-athletes and the supporters that make up Washington Rowing.

I filled in at the bow position for the 1962 row. As we left the dock, our old cox, Dave Amundson, fiddled with the electronic megaphone, a new toy for him, as we struggled with the familiar, yet strange new boat. As Coach Callahan guided us into the cut, it was impossible to miss the sense of pride among my teammates in who they are and were.

Just about everything in our sport has changed but in a very real sense nothing has changed. Our experience as individuals and as teams, the response of our minds and bodies to the demands of our sport, and our capacity to rise above exhaustion, defeat and even victory mark us all. Rowing at Washington requires a fundamental honesty. We learned what it means to pull one's weight. I can attest that the same lessons we learned are being taught today by the great Washington coaching staff. And I can also attest that in spite of all the changes in our sport, one thing hasn't changed at all: we are still known by the size of our puddle.

A side note: the oars used by the men's varsity eight at Cal were those donated by the class of 1962. That's the next best thing to being in the boat. And for the record, the class of 1963 is now on notice.

GO DAWGS!

Stroke of Tribute *by Jeremy Cothran*

Beddome Allen's voice cracked as he remembered his close friend. The junior oarsman at Washington stood in front of a packed-in crowd inside the Conibear Shellhouse dining room, and described how his teammate Peter Allen would come back to their apartment last year from the gym, buzzing with endorphins following a workout.

After taking a year off to focus on academics and his dedication to God, Peter (Class of 2013) was making his return to the crew team. His rowing ergometer numbers were making a precipitous drop; his fitness was up. Peter had broken 20 minutes on a 6,000-meter erg piece, a significant benchmark on the machine.

Peter never had his chance. The Puyallup, Wash., native died last September in a hiking accident at Snoqualmie Pass, just days before the Husky men's crew program was scheduled to report. It was a tragic moment that stunned the Washington family at the time; the number of tearful faces inside Conibear on Friday was evidence of how the loss is still keen.

On a resplendent Seattle afternoon, the Washington crew program honored one of its fallen athletes by dedicating a boat in his name. The eight-oared William Peter Allen shell was officially christened in a ceremony outside Conibear Shellhouse. A bottle of champagne was cracked over the stern, followed by the pouring of finish-line water over the boat. Finally, a group of rowers from Peter's class shouldered the boat to Union Bay and took it for a row to Lake Washington.

The William Peter Allen was in action less than 24 hours after the memorial, with Allen's teammates honoring their fallen friend with a win in the 111th annual Class Day Regatta. The Class of 2013 rowed so well in the race, coxswain Seamus Labrum said it felt as if the Huskies had 10 rowers in the boat.

"We were really able to hammer it home," Labrum said. "We felt there was a spirit with the boat."

What broke the race open was the call Labrum made at the half-way point on the 2,000 meter course. The Grunties had pushed the juniors right from the start, and trailed by just two seats when Labrum sensed it was time to move. The coxswain reminded each of the eight oarsmen in the boat who they were rowing for, and the corresponding power surge moved the juniors to an open-water lead.

Friends and family members described Peter as an incandescent soul, always brimming with optimism and dedicated to sports, academics and the church. Peter was an experienced outdoorsman, summiting Mt. Rainier last July. His close friend Mick Connors remembered a person who cared for his teammates and the UW crew program, and faced a hard decision to leave after his freshman season in order to concentrate on his biochemistry major, where he held a 3.30 GPA.

"His teammates weren't just his teammates," Connors told the crowd. "He loved you guys."

"Peter's Dad, Mike Allen said: "He knew that being a Husky was special, but really understood the special honor it was to be part of the University of Washington crew team ... the character, discipline and the perseverance you develop in this program are the cornerstones of the man Peter became."



The Class of 2013 leads their newest racing shell, the William Peter Allen, to the water for its christening.

Olympic Preview

The 2012 Olympics are set to begin, and once again Washington Rowing looks to have a strong contingent of Olympians! Here are some Huskies to look for in London.

USA - Men

The Class of 2005 is well represented on the USA squad. Scott Gault will return to his second Olympics, this time in the straight four. Scott came in 5th place in the quad in Beijing. Giuseppe Lanzone and Brett Newlin will both be rowing in the men's eight for the USA. Lanzone and Newlin had to row the eight through the last chance qualifier regatta in Lucerne this spring, and are looking to ride the momentum from that regatta to the medal stand in London. After a tough loss at the Olympic Trials in the men's pair, Ty Otto '10 will be heading to London as a spare for the USA men.

USA - Women

Three Huskies will compete on the USA women's squad. Mary Whipple '02 will be back in the coxswain seat for the USA eight that is looking to defend its gold medal from Beijing. A world's fastest time, as well as a close win in a near-photo finish against Canada at the World Cup races in Lucerne has certainly put some pressure on the USA eight, so this race promises to be fast and exciting! Megan Kalmoe '06 and Adrienne Martelli '10 will compete in the women's quad. This will be Megan's second Olympic games - she raced to 5th place in the double at the 2008 games. Kalmoe and Martelli were both in the quad that came in second at the 2011 World Championships.

Canada - Men

The Canadian squad is also well represented with Husky rowers. Dave Calder '99 is back for his fourth Olympic games, competing with pair partner Scott Frandsen in the pair event. Calder and Frandsen won silver at Beijing, and will be hoping to improve on that finish by one spot in London. A trio of Huskies will be racing in the eight for Canada. Will Crothers '09, Rob Gibson '09, and Conlin McCabe '13 set a worlds fastest time in the eight at the World Cup stop in Lucerne, and are considered one of the stronger crews to compete for gold. With Lanzone and Newlin in the USA eight, we could be looking at five Huskies competing against each other for gold medals in the men's eight event! Also look for Anthony Jacob '10 in the men's straight four.

USA - Medical Staff

Husky rower Erik Brand '98 has been named as a sports medicine physician for the USA Olympic team, and is tentatively scheduled to work at the rowing venue. Congratulations, Dr. Brand!



Megan Kalmoe, Mary Whipple, and Adrienne Martelli will represent the USA at the 2012 Olympic games



Anthony Jacob and Conlin McCabe will row for Team Canada

Under-23 World Championships

UW will also have representation at the U-23 World Championships in Lithuania. Madison Culp '13 will compete in the USA women's eight, while Fiona Gammond '15 will row for Great Britain's squad. Alex Bunkers '13, Ryan Schroeder, '13, Ambrose Puttmann '12 and Sam Ojserkis '12 are all in contention for spots in the USA men's eight, which is coached by UW assistant coach Luke McGee. And rising seniors Seamus Labrum, Max Mannisto, Patrick Marre, and Garrett Rinden won the opportunity to race for the US at U-23 Worlds by winning the U-23 trials race in the 4+.

Huskies Win at Henley!!!

The Class of 2015, straight off of an undefeated season and IRA Championship, traveled to England to compete in the Temple Cup at the Henley Royal Regatta. The Grunties defeated Brown's 2V in the final race to win the Temple Cup. This edition went to print before all details were posted, so be sure to check www.gohuskies.com and www.huskycrew.org for more.

Senior Profile - Veronica Tamsitt *by Seamus Labrum*

The Class of 2012 was full of talent and achieved great success on both the men's and women's side of the program in their four years at Washington. Seniors Veronica Tamsitt and Rob Munn finished out their Husky careers as captains. The two outstanding rowers and scholars sat down with me to reflect on their senior seasons, academic success, and future plans.

Veronica Tamsitt (B.S. oceanography) rowed in the 2012 women's second varsity eight. She spent four years as a member of the women's varsity squad. Now, Tamsitt is headed to graduate school at the University of California, San Diego to earn her Ph.D.



Seamus Labrum: How would you summarize your senior season here at the University of Washington?

Veronica Tamsitt: I'd say it was the best year I had of my four years here, both with rowing and the team. It was pretty sad to miss Spring Break this year, but it was really important for me to go on a research cruise [for oceanography].

SL: Can you tell me more about your research cruise for school?

VT: I went on the R/V Thomas G. Thompson for 10 days from San Diego down the coast of Baja California and basically collected a lot of water samples. Then, I spent the next ten weeks writing a big research paper about it.

SL: How was your experience at the NCAA Championships and how do you feel about the conclusion of the season?

VT: I thought it was a really good step getting our varsity boat into the Grand Final at NCAAs this year and I was really excited for them. In the JV, it was a little disappointing to miss out on the final, but we had our best race of the year in that Petite Final and there's not much more you can ask for than that. So, no one was disappointed when we left, everyone was proud of what we had done.

SL: What was your final year like in terms of the turnaround of the team and the transformation to get back to national prominence?

VT: The really important change was in the mentality. I think everyone was more on the same page. We had a really great group of seniors this year, a really hard-working, focused group, and that really helped the younger girls on the team. We had a lot of strong rowers, but I really think it was a shift in the focus.

SL: How is the program different from your freshman year?

VT: When I arrived freshman year there was a bit of an expectation that we were going to do well. They had done well the year before. So, on the tail of that there was this expectation that we were going to win races without a lot of hard work. Since then, I feel like we've realized that if we want to get up there we can't assume anything and have to try and work harder than everyone else. I think this year we didn't take anything for granted and pushed ourselves.

SL: What was your academic standing at UW and what helped you succeed academically here?

VT: I graduated with a 3.77 GPA and was an oceanography major and a math minor. Oceanography is a really small program. Interacting with classmates and knowing so many of the professors in the department really helped me excel. When it came to getting into graduate school, I had so many people to write me great recommendations and so many people to ask for assistance. I know people that will be out to help me through the rest of my career. It's great that at such a huge university there are these small departments where you can really get to know a group of people and hone in on what you are interested in.

SL: What are your future plans and goals?

VT: I'm off to San Diego in September to start my Ph.D. and that takes an average five years, so that's keeping me busy for a while. Beyond that, I don't really know yet. I'm not sure if I want to do research or go into some type of public or non-profit thing like that. I think I want to go back to Australia eventually. As long as I get to spend time out on the water and I am doing research I think I'll be happy with that.



Tamsitt and Sam Ojserkis '12 were awarded PAC-12 postgraduate scholarships for their academic excellence.

Senior Profile - Rob Munn *by Seamus Labrum*

Rob Munn (B.A. political science) rowed in the 2012 men's varsity eight. He helped to set a course record in the varsity event at the IRA National Championship. Munn is currently training for the Under-23 World Rowing Championships in Seattle, where he has also secured an internship with the UW's Department of Athletic Communications.



Seamus Labrum: What was it like to finish your rowing career at UW undefeated and win an IRA Championship in the Varsity 8+?

Rob Munn: It was pretty special. Coming in as a freshman I had the goal of winning an IRA in the varsity eight. I knew it would be really tough. But having it come together as well as it did towards the end and being able to put all the work in and see the end result that I wanted and that [the team] drove to get, it was a pretty incredible feeling.

SL: How do you see the team in the future?

RM: I think the team is really strong. I think the senior Class of 2012 is going to step out and the Class of 2015 is going to pick up the slack right away. That boat has a lot of guys that are game changers. The guys that we have here still are also game changers and are going to develop into even better rowers than they already are. I think the team is in great shape, I really don't see a misstep in the next year.

SL: How are things different now from your freshman year?

RM: I think the coaches have made an effort to change the overall culture of the team. I think we've seen [the result]. It's a tough group in every aspect and every way, from practice, to races, to how everyone presents themselves, everyone just has the winning mentality. They may have had it to an extent when we got here, but it has just been more and more solidified each and every year that I have been here.

SL: This year you won the UW Athletic Department's Top Dawg award. Can you talk about winning the award, given annually to the school's top student-athlete?

RM: I didn't see it coming. It was a little unexpected and it was a great honor to get. I was sitting with a group of guys and they told me afterwards that my expression was priceless. It just goes to show how much this program is valued at the University of Washington. I think it was a great step in terms of recognition from other teams, they know that we work really hard here. I think it's special to be valued by your entire university. To have your sport valued by your university is huge and that kind of support is what helps us drive further and bring us more success.

SL: You maintained a 3.53 GPA and graduated with a degree in political science, what enabled you to be so successful academically at UW?

RM: Once you go through your freshman year, you start to realize how you can organize your classes and be successful in the classroom as well as on the race course. In the Spring season, it gets really tough when you miss the last week of school right before finals and you need to learn how to organize your time when you're on trips. The trick [for me] was learning to organize my priorities and know what's important and what I wanted to accomplish. Once you have those goals set in line, it's pretty easy to get school work and practices done at the same time. It's even more encouraging when you start to see the results that you want, so you keep doing it. It's an addicting thing.

SL: Can you talk about your future plans, both in terms of rowing and your career?

RM: There is a definite possibility that I am going to try and train with the Senior U.S. [National] Team within the next four years and see if I have the potential to do the Olympics in 2016. But at the same time, I'm looking to take a step into the business world at some point. And if it's with a sports team, any kind of sports team, I am definitely going to try and jump on that opportunity because that has been a dream of mine since I was a kid.



Seamus Labrum is a coxswain for UW, and is an intern in the UW Athletic Communications Department this summer.

What Husky Rowing Means to Me *by John Wilcox*

For the last eight years I've written commentary for these pages in June, and nearly all of it discussed program funding. Because this will be my last issue as editor, it seemed fitting to conclude the tenure by responding to the question I've asked so many alumni this last year: What does Husky rowing mean to you?

Well, in my case it changed my life.

When I arrived on campus in 1957, I knew little about the sport but I was attracted to its sublime grace. How hard could it be, I wondered, a sport performed sitting down. The answer came to me as it did to many of you on an October afternoon when I first sat in the gray, hulking barge we knew as Nero and tried to pull an oar. After only a few strokes I was ready to quit. My eyes had deceived me; there seemed to be no grace in the effort whatsoever, and far more discomfort that I had bargained for. But I stuck with it and by spring I was in the mix.

That first afternoon I weighed in at a chubby 245 pounds; by spring two-a-days I weighed 195 pounds, a physical transformation that foretold more important changes that would follow. My unlikely success at an oar marked my college years but it was later, when the hubbub and the victories and the losses were behind me, that I understood the more important legacy of Washington rowing. In every way imaginable, the program yanked me from a fine but predictable life and placed me in one infused with new colors and flavors and standards. The sport gave me the great gift of focus, filled me with a passion for excellence, and showed me the true face of honesty. That's not to say it led to a perfect life, only that I learned that to strive for anything less than perfection was dishonest.



Wilcox (second from right) training in 1961

Still, I drifted from the program after graduation, connected but not engaged. Yes, my rowing buddies remained among the best friends of my life and, yes, my experience remained a high point of my life, but it took the 2003 Centennial banquet, a launch ride with Bob Ernst and Mike Hess, and a chance friendship with an oarsman to pull me back in the boat.

The timing was perfect; together, we got some things done. I've received kind words and public recognition for my efforts but the

work of the last eight years contains a larger truth. Rowing is a team sport off the water as well as on. Without Eric Cohen, Al Erickson, Jon Runstad, Blake Nordstrom, Al Forney, Mike Hess, and the other stewards and volunteers at the figurative oars, nothing much would have transpired. And that's the true beauty of our sport, both as fact and as metaphor.



Wilcox received the Dave & Ruth Cohn award in 2010 for his incredible contribution and commitment to UW Rowing

George Pocock wrote that rowing at its finest is a symphony of motion, and so it is. But without everyone rowing in unison, there is no music – at least at the symphonic level. And George's thought is easily extended: without the rest of you hearing that music and remembering and responding, the magnificent teams of the last few years might never have come together.

We Husky rowers are lucky for the obvious physical advantages we possess. Where else is the water and the shellhouse an integral part of the campus? Where else is the shellhouse an iconic center of the athletic facilities? Where else do student athletes from all sports congregate daily in the rowing facility? I've discovered, however, that we possess another advantage that sets us apart and above the other collegiate programs, and that quality comes directly from the coaching staff. By offering the least gifted the same acceptance, participation and fulfillment as the most gifted, they have managed to create true teams, not just teams of boats. We all know this hasn't always been true but it is today.

What does Husky rowing mean to me? Awe at the great, good fortune of stumbling into a sport that builds so much character and teaches so much about life; respect for an activity that creates so much growth and change; gratitude for the opportunity it gave me to compete in an atmosphere where victory was expected and always within grasp.

I knew for fifty years that I had a debt to pay and I'm thankful that you allowed me to pay back a small measure of the gifts I took from the program. I'm not leaving, just moving down to the four seat where I'll do my best to pull hard and keep my eyes in the boat.



Varsity Eight



Second Varsity Eight



Freshman Eight



Varsity Four



Open Four

Pledge/Gift Form

Name _____

Address _____

Home or Business Phone _____ Email _____

____ Check (Payable to University of Washington) Amount: _____

____ Credit Card (V/MC/Amex)- Amount: _____ Card Number: _____ Exp Date _____

____ Pledge \$ _____ total (\$1,000 minimum) in _____ equal installments beginning _____ charged to above credit card.

____ **Payment Information:** I have arranged a matching gift from my employer

Return to: University of Washington Athletics, Attn: Husky Crew Fund, Tye Office – Box 354070, Seattle, WA 98195

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