

**2084 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, San Francisco**

**RecComm Notes**

**10-09-07**

Meeting started at 7:00 PM

**Attending:** Joseph Mucelli, Dr. James Storm, Tom O'Connell, Mike Pisas, Joe Boone, Dan Leininger, Jim Stark, James Grant, Dennis Shea, Dick Allen

**Agenda:** To review and discuss a request by Matthew Barrowclough, San Francisco State Sailing Program Instructor, to have access to the South Lake from 3:30 to 5:30 PM during the week to conduct sailing classes.

**Dr. Jim Storm** opened the meeting by providing us with a 15-minute insightful history of rowing and sailing on Lake Merced. Jim has rowed on Lake Merced for over 40 years. Points made by Jim:

1. Rowing has existed on LM since the late 1920's
2. Dolphin Club used to have their own Boathouse and constructed the dock for the rowing community.
3. Stated that the rowing organizations have worked together and have supported each other's Jr. and Masters rowing programs on an informal basis for the past 30 years. This formula has worked very well.
4. Highest priority is water safety.
5. Stated that sailing, even though popular at one time has never had the organizational commitment that is enjoyed by the rowing community.

**Tom O'Connell** Varsity Coach for Saint Ignatius College Prep presented a history of SI Crew. Started in 1977. They have about 100 High School rowers.

1. In response to the request by SF State for after school water time devoted to sailing lessons, Tom stated that the Lake is way too small for both (sailing and rowing) programs to safely share the water at the same time. Eight man crews travel in a straight line at about 10 to 15 miles per hour and take a long time to stop. An eight-man crew and coxswain plus the weight of the shell weigh a little less than one ton. Sailboats being pushed by an erratic, gusty afternoon wind could easily end up colliding with a crew boat resulting in major damage to the boats, but more importantly could cause very serious injuries to the sailors and rowers.
2. The Eight's cost approximately \$32,000. plus 8 oars.

**Mike Piasias**, Pacific Rowing Club (PRC). Agreed with Tom's comments. Pacific started their rowing program in 1977. Their student athletes come from all the High Schools in San Francisco. PRC has about 100 rowers.

1. Since there is only one dock to serve all the rowing clubs, trying to launch sail boats during their practice time would create a nightmare and reduce the amount of actual water time for practice.
2. Mike was also very concerned about the water safety issue raised by Tom. He feels very strongly that to have sailboats and rowing shells on the water at the same time would create a major safety hazard.

**Dan Leininger**, America True/SFSU. Dan began his remarks by

observing all the issues that were introduced. He stated that he was filling in for Matthew Barrowclough and did not have any solutions to the issues and concerns that have been raised by the rowing community. He gave us background on the America True Foundation. The Foundation provides seed money to start up sailing programs, such as the one being discussed by SF State.

**Dick Allen. Lets open up our meeting for comments and questions.**

**Dan,** Any chance to have the South Lake after school during the week for sailing instructions? Would the high school coaches be able to give up their practices on the South Lake for several days a week?

**Tom.** It would seriously hurt and compromise our program to be competitive if we gave up water time during the school week. We belong to the California Jr. Rowing Association which numbers about 32 High School teams. Our student athlete's train six days a week to get ready for the State Championship Regatta held in May. If the races go well for our teams at the State Championship Regatta, are team(s) are then invited back to the Jr. National Championship Regatta held in Cincinnati in June.

This is why our kids give up holidays, spring break and family travel during the school year in order to train and be competitive. This is what they want to do.

Our weekly training schedule is dictated by our school class schedule. We can only train before school so we start practice at 5:30 AM or after school starting at 3:30 PM.

**Mike:** We have the same training schedule as Tom except we start in Sept. and train through May/June. Pacific Rowing Club also has

a summer outreach rowing program open to everyone going into or already in high school.

**Jim Stark**, Lake shore Acres. Jim introduced himself and expressed support for a sailing program at Lake Merced. He reviewed his involvement as a current sailing instructor and is a very enthusiastic supporter for sailing programs.

It was soon discovered that others around the table have been active sailors.

However, no one at the meeting other than Dan suggested that the well-established rowing programs be required to give up their limited practice time on South Lake

A suggestion was made that the sailing program remain on the North Lake. Dan said that Matthew preferred the South Lake but did not know why.

**Dick Allen:** Matthew had said at our previous RecComm meeting the North Lake has shifty winds and that is why he preferred South Lake for providing sailing instructions. However, four years ago, the first America True sailing instructor said North Lake had an advantage over South Lake. He stated that because North Lake is much shorter than South Lake, it made it easier to chase down sailboats blown to the far end of the lake.

**Rowers:** South Lake has major wind shifts and that rowing shells get swamped and sometimes need to be towed back to the dock. At the far end of the Lake there can be white caps in the afternoon due to the westerly wind. The North Lake is not as rough in the afternoon as the South Lake.

The meeting gradually came to an end with a better understanding of how South Lake is being used successfully by several hundred high school student athletes six days a week.

**It was suggested that we rotate scheduling this agenda item. The next meeting will be scheduled and conducted by San Francisco State.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM

Dick Allen

Chair, RecComm. Lake Merced Task Force