

News From OWRC and Beyond

Open Water Rowing Center
Sausalito, CA



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North Tahoe Rowing Regatta

To paraphrase Charles Dickens; it was the best of times. The North Tahoe Rowing Regatta has existed in various forms since the 1970s. The 2011 edition was the tenth staged by Tahoe Yacht Club and an organizing committee made up of three OWRC members. They must have made a deal with the devil on the weather front. The morning that greeted the 40 rowers on Saturday, June 18th could not have

been better. It was cool but bright and a passing Stellar Jay's wings created more wind than flowed across the water. The deep snow on the high mountains provided a perfect frame for the placid lake. This contrasted vividly with last year's weather when 20+ knots of wind and 2-foot waves forced postponement until Sunday.

Though the entry numbers were down



First leg of NTRR long course

a bit over previous years there were new faces from the fledgling Reno Rowing Club. Lake Merritt was also well represented and the winner for the award for traveling the farthest went to a rower from New York. The traditional two triangular courses were offered, with almost equal (continued on page 2)

Welcome to Open Water Rowing Center's Newsletter 2.0

Like many new versions of something that has existed before, Newsletter 2.0 is not necessarily an improvement over the old newsletter, it's just new. Our goal is to keep you up to date on what's going on around OWRC and our local rowing world in general. To do this in the best way possible we don't want your help, we NEED YOUR HELP. Please let us know what's important to you and how we can help you enjoy your rowing. Send your comments, suggestions and yes, complaints, to bluffernutter10@yahoo.com. Thank you, Bruce Brown, Monika Varga and Shirwin Smith.



Los Gatos RC and UC Santa Cruz rowers – NTRR Long Course

North Tahoe Rowing Regatta (Continued from page 1)

participation. The 8.75-mile long course out to Dollar Point drew 16 entrants (19 rowers) and the 3.75 mile State Line Point course attracted 21 rowers in 18 boats. The 0816 start sent all boats on the long course off together, the doubles plowing wakes in the glassy water. Five minutes later all the men and the doubles on the short course started. After another seven

minutes (there was a hold to wait for some late arrivals) the women took off. The wind stayed down and there were smiles across the water as competitors enjoyed the pristine conditions.

Please go to Tahoe YC's website at tahoeyc.com for complete results.

North Tahoe Rowing Regatta First Place Finishers

Course 1 (8.75 nm)

Mixed Double	Chris Dadd and Cam Sutter	1:14.04
Women's Double	Rosalie Frankel and Jan Ehrhardt	1:29.05
Men's 24 and Flyweight	Don Hunt	1:18.32
Women's 24 and Flyweight	Jackie Snyder	1:25.27
Men's Aero	Henry Warren	1:36.36
Women's Aero	Colene Mace	1:33.55

Course 2 (3.75nm)

Women's Double (<i>New Course Record</i>)	Jessica Gammell and Venessa Marlin	34:45
Men's Double	Joe and Greg Cech	48:21
Men's 24 and Flyweight	Randy Hixon	33:35
Women's 24 and Flyweight	Sunny Blende	37:21
Women's Aero	Angela Moquin	36:42
Men's Aero	Allen Yan	36:00

Flying Boats

To continue our theme of pillaging from Charles Dickens; it was the worst of times. In rowing there are any number of experiences that can give you an adrenalin spurt. I submit one of them is watching a roof rack and two shells blow off the roof of your vehicle at 70+ miles per hour on a crowded freeway. After a delightful weekend of rowing at the North Tahoe Rowing Regatta we loaded an Aero and Flyweight back on the truck for the drive home. A couple of hours later we were hugging a freeway divider while dragging the boats out of traffic. We were not the only people to lose a boat on the trip back from Tahoe; a Maas double got loose on the trailer too.

I've been rowing since sometime in the mid 50s and carrying boats on cars and trucks since the early 60s without an incident, and some of these boats were traditional boats with considerably more weight and windage than a shell, but it only has to happen once. Roof racks have improved immeasurably in the last half century but carrying a boat on top of your vehicle still requires quite a bit of thought and care. When the bows of the boats disappeared from our view out the windshield my first thought, well second thought really, was "the straps!", but then "all four straps?!?" As soon as we got the truck stopped we discovered the straps (in my mind always the weak link in the system) hadn't let go; the racks had parted company with the truck. When we got back to the scene of the carnage both boats were still firmly strapped to the racks. The racks on my truck are Thule, a combination of clip-ons over the cab and rain gutter clamps on the camper shell. They've been on the truck for three years and carried boats and paddleboards several thousand miles successfully. I feel that two contributing factors to our incident were; a very strong cross wind and the fact that we were crossing a bridge at the time. I wish I



Greg Lewis, 2nd leg of NTRR long course



Chris Dadd/Cam Sutter, leading the pack on the NTRR long course

could blame the whole thing on wind and bridge, but I can't; you have to expect and be prepared for the unexpected. I have to shoulder a large measure of the responsibility. Over the years I've gotten lazy; I had stopped securing the boats with bow and stern lines led to the bumpers or tow hooks. Also in the lazy, or maybe complaisance, column is checking the racks each time I used them. Both Yakima and Thule recommend checking the racks EACH time you use them. I did check their security before leaving for Tahoe and everything was fine. I did not check them after loading the boats in Tahoe. Several hundred miles of driving with two boats up top could have easily loosened the clips enough that the perfect storm of crosswind and bridge were all it took to cause disaster. Afterwards when we ran into Shirwin (continued on page 4)

Flying Boats (Continued from page 3)

at OWRC she told us we were not the first to have their racks part company with their vehicles. Over OWRC's lifetime she remembers three previous incidents. Interestingly they all shared a few traits in common; they were clip on racks (the same as we had on our cab) or they were attached to factory racks (which are typically secured with rubber "nutlets" which can pull out under a heavy load). None of these lost boats had bow or stern lines securing them.

I started this piece off with "it was the worst of times", it wasn't, that was a bit of literary license and hyperbole to get your attention. We could have killed someone, maybe several someones. Picture yourself and your family following behind a truck with two boats on top when suddenly two boats and their attendant racks are air born headed for your windshield. I still shudder at that thought. I believe the crosswind saved us there; it blew the boats towards the center of the bridge. The butcher's bill for this was far less than it could have been; the Aero ground off a three-inch section of the bow which I was able to fix and suffered quite a bit of cosmetic damage which I've touched up with some success. The Flyweight took the brunt of the damage. Possibly because of it's greater length, it appears to have hit the ground first, splitting the stern and buckling the hull athwartships about 18-inches forward of the stern (possibly

sep. stringers from hull). The truck received quite a bit of cosmetic damage and the racks needed some first aid before we were able to get them back on the truck again. The double was not tied to the uprights in the center of the trailer and slipped aft until the stern was dragging on the road. Six inches of the rear deck were abraded away, one rigger was broken and there was damage to a gunwale. Ever since I saw my first Vancouver 21 over 30 years ago I've been impressed by the Maas Boat Company product, it's a tribute to the boat's construction, and a surprise to me, there wasn't more damage. At this writing the Flyweight and the double are at Maas waiting to be made as good as new.

There are lessons here for anyone who cares to learn them. You're all bright people so I'm not going to insult you with a laundry list of what to do every time you put a boat on top of your vehicle; just do all the things we didn't do.

Shirwin, who has probably carried more boats on more cars for more miles than most of us has put together some thoughts on car-topping.

- Bruce Brown



First leg, NTRR long course

Car-Topping Tips From Maas Boat Co., Gordie Nash and Almost 30k Miles of Personal Experience



- Whether you intend to travel with it or not, insurance for your rowing shell is inexpensive and good for your peace of mind. You can usually obtain a policy through your homeowners' insurance or an agent specializing in shell insurance. (Mine is through Allstate for \$65/year).
- When installing racks on your vehicle, separate them as far as possible. While 6-8 feet is ideal, on smaller vehicles you're lucky to get a 4 foot span. If you have a short span between racks - and also if you are attaching the boat, or boat rack, to a factory installed rack - you need to add front and rear tie downs. This will stabilize the boat longitudinally and provide a safety back up if your boats - or worse your rack - loosens. Tie downs should not exert a lot of pull, just be firmly tied to the vehicle and putting only gentle tension on the bow and stern.
- Front and rear tie downs are a good idea even with more than 4 ft. between racks.
- Carry your shell on saddles or a well padded bar which allows the boat to "seat" itself. Small L-shaped fittings sold as kayak or canoe brackets are helpful to further secure a shell carried upside down and prevent it from moving on the bar.
- Never use bungee cords for car-topping. When they give, they don't just loosen, they let go. The convenience is not worth the risk.
- When tying down a shell in saddles, it's helpful to run the straps under the bar in between the attachments that bolt the saddle to the bar - holds the straps in place on the bar.
- Don't use polypro rope, any kind of "hard" strap to tie down the shell as they will abrade your boat.
- If you use straps with buckles, don't attach them with the buckle against any part of the shell. This too will abrade the boat.
- An oft-repeated point from Maas about Thule and Yakima systems – do not use the "Hully Rollers" or whatever else the stern set of rollers someone may try to sell you instead of a second set of saddles, supposedly to help load/unload the shell. They are meant for kayaks and can put too much point pressure on the more delicate hull of a shell and cause damage.
- When traveling with boats, stop and check the tie downs after the first half hour or so, any time you stop, and absolutely any time you see the boat or oars (if they're on top as well) move in a way that's different from what you've been seeing. As an example, if the boat seems to lift, or shift abruptly to left or right, pull over immediately and check all the straps. Some, or all, have likely just loosened.

- Shirwin Smith



Heading for Dollar Pt., NTRR long course

OWRC July Calendar

Friday	July 8	Technique Clinic
Saturday	July 16	Rough Water Clinic
Friday	July 22	Technique Clinic

One new feature of the Newsletter will be advertising for members. If you have a business or service that you think other members could avail themselves of, send us your business card and we'll scan it into the newsletter. The cost for this service will be \$25.00 per issue.

Upcoming Rowing Events and Regattas:

- July 21: National Open Water Rowing Championship at the Blackburn Challenge, Gloucester, Mass www.blackburnchallenge.com www.openwaterracing.com
- August 20: Monterey Bay Crossing, Santa Cruz Rowing Club www.scrowing.org
- August 21: Wooden Boat Classic Regatta, San Francisco South End Rowing Club www.south-end.org
- September 2: Petaluma River Marathon, Petaluma www.northbayrowing.org
- September 18: Bridge to Bridge Regatta, San Francisco, South End Rowing Club www.south-end.org
- November 5: Head of the Marina Regatta, California Yacht Club, www.calyachtclub.com

If you know of an event or regatta not listed here, please email bluffernutter10@yahoo.com . We'll be happy to include it in the next newsletter.