



# THE HANDBALL, ROWING, RUNNING & SWIMMING SOUTH ENDER

Fogust 2020

A Publication of the South End Rowing Club

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The South Ender is the newsletter of the South End Rowing Club, published three to four times per year since 1931. We publish material by our members that reflects the ideals, purposes, and accomplishments of the South End.

You can find digital copies of this and past issues, many in color, at [serc.com/about/newsletters](http://serc.com/about/newsletters).

It's our members who make this newsletter, so please send articles (up to 650 words), poems, jokes, and high-resolution photos to [newsletter@serc.com](mailto:newsletter@serc.com).

We reserve the right to edit all submitted material, but we'll be nice about it, we promise.

# Letter from the President

By *Simon Dominguez, SERC President*

G'day my South End friends,

Firstly I would like to publicly thank **Dylan Tweney** for all he has done to get this newsletter to the very high standard at which it currently sits. Thank you Dylan. Your efforts have been greatly appreciated by me and all of our members. I would also like to welcome **Eva Schulteis** and **Gabe Rosen** who have stepped up to take over the reins from Dylan (who is stepping down as the newsletter editor). Thank you guys for taking on this very important communication role for the club.



I have had a lot of time over the last few months to think about a bunch of things. What do I need to do to stay safe, how do I stop getting myself or others sick, do I like working from home (I do), should I go out for a run or bike ride, can I find somewhere to swim, what's for dinner, and so on and so on. I've had a lot of time to ponder a lot of things that in non-pandemic times I might not need to think too much about. What I have also been thinking a lot about is what do I really miss from before the lockdown and what do I not have now that I don't really miss (commuting to work being one of them).

What has jumped out to me as one part of my life that is "missing" and I need to get back as soon as possible is being around my friends at the South End Rowing Club. I miss our community. I miss interactions I have just walking through the club. I miss the funny conversations we have in the sauna every Friday morning. I miss being in the vicinity of the most positive, caring, and thoughtful people that I have ever had the pleasure of interacting with. Yes, we are social distancing and not seeing each other to help fight the spread of this virus, but if anything I think this pandemic has allowed so many from our club to shine and show why the South End community is made up of such special people. I couldn't be more proud of our members and what people are doing for others.

From making face shields, to calling upon other older members to make sure they are OK or need any help, to thanking our front line healthcare workers (including first responders), to planning how we are going to reopen once the shelter in place concludes. A number of our members are essential workers who have kept the city moving and food on our tables during the lockdown, risking their health every day. There have been so many thoughtful

moments and actions that really define who we are as people and as members of the SERC.

I would encourage all to check in with each other, particularly those members who live alone. And when you check in, especially with some of our older members, see if they need or would like actual help with grocery shopping or even choosing a new movie to watch on TV. Small gestures like this can make so much difference in people's lives during these difficult times.

I would like to thank everyone for your efforts to stay at home as much as possible when not exercising, and diligence in wearing masks whenever there is a chance of interacting with others. This has not been easy for any of us. But our efforts are paying off, as the city recently approved our partial reopening plan, allowing rowing and modified Sunrisers to resume. Having said this, it is now that we need to be extra vigilant—it is very easy to start dropping our guard, which could force us to step backwards. Let's keep up our efforts until we are given the green light by the medical officials, who make their decisions based on facts, that it is again safe to congregate traditionally.

I miss you all.

Take care and stay safe,

Regards,

**Simon Dominguez**

*President, South End Rowing Club*

# Board Introductions

By Van Cornwell



## Josh Sale:

**SERC position:** Secretary

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, hiking, downhill skiing

**When you joined the club:** 2007

### What you love most about SERC:

I'm an active pilot and help manage the club's piloting program. I love swimming in the bay and going on international swim adventures. I marvel at SERC's long and rich history and its amazing assortment of kooky members.



**Matt Montgomery**, but just call me Monty

**SERC position:** Director-at-large

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, rowing (aspiring), handball player (division D)

**When you joined the club:** 2017

### Anything else that makes you happy or you want to share:

I joined with my wife, Emily Gable, for the swimming, and fell in love with the South End community. While sheltering in place I've been keeping busy doing yoga, walking on the beach, bodysurfing, playing guitar, and reading.



## Fran Hegeler

**SERC position:** Vice president 2019-2020

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming and rowing

**When you joined the club:** 2014

**Family:** Married almost 28 years. Husband Bruce (cyclist and skier—not a water guy). Two fabulous kids, Louise and Audrey.

**What you love most about SERC:** The warm, generous, can-do, adventurous, creative, and community spirit of the members. You people are the best ever. (Who knew that being an adult could be so much fun?) There are few things better than being in or on the water with friends. I love the arc of a great swim—socializing pre-swim, swimming, shivering, showering, sauna-ing, socializing post-swim. (A similar pattern for rowing, but less shivering.) I also like to take and share photos of everyone having fun together. My happy places for sports: Aquatic Park and Bondi Beach.



Van Cornwell

**SERC position:** Swim commissioner 2019-2020

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, running, rowing (mediocre), handball (poor), surfing, kitesurfing, and any other way to get in the water

**When you joined the club:** 2015

**Family:** My wife Elizabeth is also a member and a swimmer. My dog Juneau sometimes swims.

I have two daughters (17 and 20) and two stepsons (13 and 15).



Bill Wygant

**SERC position:** Past president

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, sailing

**Past board role(s):** Swim commissioner

**When you joined the club:** 1998

**Family:** I was married for 44 years to a wonderful woman, and I am a proud father and grandfather.

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** I began to learn to play the ukulele and write every day ... my neighbors prefer I write.

**What you love most about SERC:** I have definitely received more from than I have given to club members. I am a lucky guy.

## Kevin Whalen

**SERC position:** Running commissioner

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, running

**When you joined the club:** 2017

**Family:** I have two sisters (NYC and St. Thomas USVI), and my parents still live in the Boston area. Big Irish family, my dad is one of eight siblings, Ma is one of five and I have 26 first cousins.

**Where you love to enjoy your**



**favorite sport:** Running in the Marin Headlands, the Presidio, steep hills around SF. Swimming in Newburyport and Plum Island, MA, and of course, SF Bay!

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** Growing out a shelter-in-place mustache. I measure my sanity by how overgrown it becomes. Tryin' to keep it sane and trim :-)

**What you love most about SERC:** Meeting people with all different backgrounds who share a common passion: swimming and athletics. The sense of community, casual accomplishments of novel athletic feats, and readiness to help each other.

**Anything else that makes you happy or that you want to share:** Beer tastes best when enjoyed after a long, cold swim—can't wait to be back in the water & sauna with my pod.



## Simon Dominguez

**SERC position:** President

**Sports enjoyed:** At SERC, swimming and running, but want to start rowing and playing handball too. Outside of SERC, mountain biking and snow skiing.

**Past board role(s):** Swim commissioner a few years ago

**When you joined the club:** 2010

**Family:** Wife and two girls—oldest one will graduate from college this week, younger one has two years left of her degree. Two small dogs and two rabbits.

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** Quality family time, Netflix, and a lot of running and bike riding.

**What you love most about SERC:** Our community. I am a member of a lot of other great clubs but none look after each other like everyone at SERC does.

**Anything else that makes you happy or that you want to share:** I want to thank all of our members for sheltering in place. This has not been easy for any of us. I am proud of the way we have supported each other in this.



## George Lazaneo

**SERC position:** Building commissioner

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, kayaking

**When you joined the club:** 2018

**Family:** Married to Nancy Luna (10 years)

**Where you love to enjoy your favorite sport:** AP, Alcatraz swims & Hawaii

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** Home-cooked meals and SERC building restoration

**What you love most about SERC:** The community, friendships, and history of the club

**Anything else that makes you happy or that you want to share:** My approach as Building Commissioner is to restore what has been neglected, maintain what we need for our sports/community, and to have a facility that we can all be proud of.



## Susan Blew or Sue Blew

**SERC position:** Treasurer

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, hiking and yoga

**When you joined the club:** 2016

**Family:** Husband, Dennis Puglisi, is a rower and boat nighter at SERC. We have twin sons, one of whom is a member, Gianmarco Puglisi. He's a cyclist, so doesn't get to the club often enough (LOL, mom's opinion!). We have a rottweiler, who is 10+. She came to a club social once, and she loved it.

**Where you love to enjoy your favorite sport:** Candidly, I would never have picked the bay for swimming. I was afraid of sharks (and I still am), but I started doing Alcatraz swims with a wetsuit and did 15 of them—one a year, until I decided that I wanted to try to swim the English Channel, and I knew I had to get into the cold water sans wetsuit and acclimate. Now I love it, but I especially love the camaraderie of swimming with my open water friends at SERC.

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** Cooking and doing something every day for someone else

**What you love most about SERC:** Like Simon, I love our community. I am a member of a lot of other great clubs but none look after each other like everyone at SERC does."

**Anything else that makes you happy or that you want to share:** I'm really happy about the "return" of the natural world. I've been seeing and hearing a lot of birds that I hadn't heard in my neighborhood. I spend quite a bit of time in India, and seeing the before and after photos of Delhi and other places in the world makes me extremely happy. This lessening of human resources is showing us a beautiful silver lining during the pandemic cloud.

Wishing all SERC members good health and sending much love to all.



## Tom Wurm

**SERC position:** Boathouse captain

**Sports enjoyed:** Rowing, swimming





**When you joined the club:** 2001

**Family:** San Francisco native with a wife and daughter. My stepdad joined SERC in 1945 and introduced me to the club a long time ago.

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** I seem to be sleeping a lot with the shelter in place.



## Brian Ip

**SERC position:** Director-at-large

**Sports you enjoy:** Swimming

**When you joined the club:** 2015

**Family:** Not married ;-)

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** Tiger documentaries on Netflix

**What you love most about SERC:** Sauna gossip

**Anything else that makes you happy or that you want to share:** Van's real name is Vanderson. I will be so happy if you call him that in this newsletter. It is time the world knows.



## Jerry Pural

**SERC position:** Rowing commissioner

**Background:** I am exclusively a rower member since joining SERC in October 2004. Prior, I belonged to and rowed with the Los Gatos Rowing Club. I've been rowing for about 18 years and in that time have usually been rowing three times a week.

**Family:** I live in SF with my wife of 65 years. We have two children living in the area and three grandchildren who live in the city of SF. Both my wife Jean and I were born and raised

in Wisconsin and we both graduated U Wisconsin, Madison, where we met. We've lived in various California locations since 1960, in SF since 2004.

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** Our routine has changed very little during the shelter in place.

**What you love most about SERC:** SERC is my physical conditioning outlet, and my social connections are primarily with other rowers and rowing partners with whom I row in a double. I am grateful for members who I meet at the SE. I miss the contact with them during this shutdown.

I look forward to many many years to come with SERC!



## Mary Page Riley

**SERC position:** Director-at-large

**Sports enjoyed:** Handball, rowing, swimming, RIB piloting, tennis, hiking

**When you joined the club:** 2018

**Family:** I have two older brothers and an identical twin and best friend who is an advisor at Cal.

**Where you love to enjoy your favorite sport:** Handball at SE, but on or in the bay is my favorite place to be.

**Something keeping you going during the shelter in place:** What has been keeping me grounded during this upside-down, apocalyptic sci-fi film of a life is working on *Saving Face*, writing daily, exercise, and picking up my harmonica again—cringeworthy, but fun.

**What you love most about SERC: Our community.** At SE we are like a big crazy family, all flavors, but with a common thread of humanity ... we love to laugh, we are all adventurers, we truly care about each other and we have each other's backs.

**Anything else that makes you happy or that you want to share:** The South End has given me more than I could ever give back (but I'm gonna try).

PS: I miss playin' handball and bartending with my badass sisters, most of all!



Photo by Silvia Valle

## Juan Carlos Ocampo

**SERC position:** Handball commissioner

**When you joined the club:** 2013

**Sports enjoyed:** I practice one of the most interesting and addictive sports, handball. I played soccer for 29 years. Currently I am a soccer coach, and I have been for 18 years, training kids in the spring, summer and fall. I would never change handball for anything, it is the best.

**An interesting fact about yourself or something funny about the club:** There is something that makes me very happy: Two years ago I started training women in the club. Historically we never had so many women playing handball—and they are all SERC and Dolphin members.

**Something that's been keeping you going during the shelter in place:** I personally took advantage of the time that has passed to rest as, before this terrible disease, I had some injuries and discomfort with one knee, my shoulders, and my Achilles. This break helped me, but I need to play handball again—very sure life is not the same without handball!

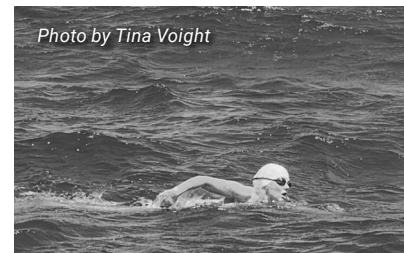


Photo by Tina Voight

## Suzanne Greva

**SERC position:** Director-at-large 2019-2020

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, RIB piloting, running, rowing

**When you joined the club:** I started swimming in the bay off the Aquatic Park bleachers in 2004. After a few SERC Alcatraz Invitations, I decided to join the club in 2008.

**Previous positions:** I did a short stint on the board a few years back (as Treasurer) and I am on my second year as Director at Large now.





**Something that's been keeping you going during the shelter in place:** I really enjoy traveling around the world to take part in swims. Now, with the shelter in place, I find myself back on the bleachers. I miss the comforts of the club, but staying in the water has really kept me healthy both in mind and spirit.



### Andy Ramelmeier

**SERC position:** Membership Commissioner

**Sports enjoyed:** Swimming, rowing (once), gym, erg (a lot)

**When you joined the club:** This is up for debate ... I think 2012

**Something that's been keeping you going during the shelter in place:** Keeping my company's essential business going (we make medicines!), swimming at Aquatic Park and China Beach, and socially distanced beer Friday!

**Anything else that makes you happy or that you want to share:** I won two gold medals at two world championships 20 years apart, but not in swimming, running, handball, or rowing! The rowers and swimmers in our club are total studs, so I am lucky to just be keeping up. Also, my picture is a selfie from the South End sauna, taken Christmas Day!



### Patrick "Bobby" O'Malley Daly

**SERC Position:** Gym Commissioner

**Sports Enjoyed:** Swimming

**When you joined the club:** 2011

# Jesse's Jump

By Alex Lentz

On the "Dreaded 9th of February", at around 8:30 a.m., the waves and wind surrounding Aquatic Park were intense. The Dreaded 9th was living up to its reputation. A quick weather check by your author revealed the winds that day reached a peak of 36 miles per hour, right around 8:30 a.m. For reference, 36 mph is faster than 35 mph - which is roughly the top speed of an angry bull moose.

These conditions did not deter a small group of men from the South End. Part of a sub(sub)-elite group who dubbed themselves "Buck's Sunrisers," they had faced wilder and windier conditions (allegedly). **Noah Kirchner-Allen, Ryan Allen** (no relation; stop asking), **Angelo Barbieri**, and **Jesse Kershner** assembled at the famed South End and gazed at the sea.

The decision had been made the day prior that they would do a jump off of the tip of Muni Pier. As they made their way out and walked along the beach, passing the bleachers, the sights they beheld would have shaken lesser souls to the core. As I have heard it told, even birds were afraid to fly, preferring the safety of their nests. Fish were said to have purposely flopped into fishermen's creels to avoid the rollicking sea. Yet these brave (possibly unhinged) men continued on their path, each one wishing another would say, "Hey, let's just do a flag?"

The foursome arrived at the terminus of their route, the edge of the pier, at the "wedding cake." While the tide was relatively high (so a short drop), the leap into the foamy waters wasn't by any stretch inviting.

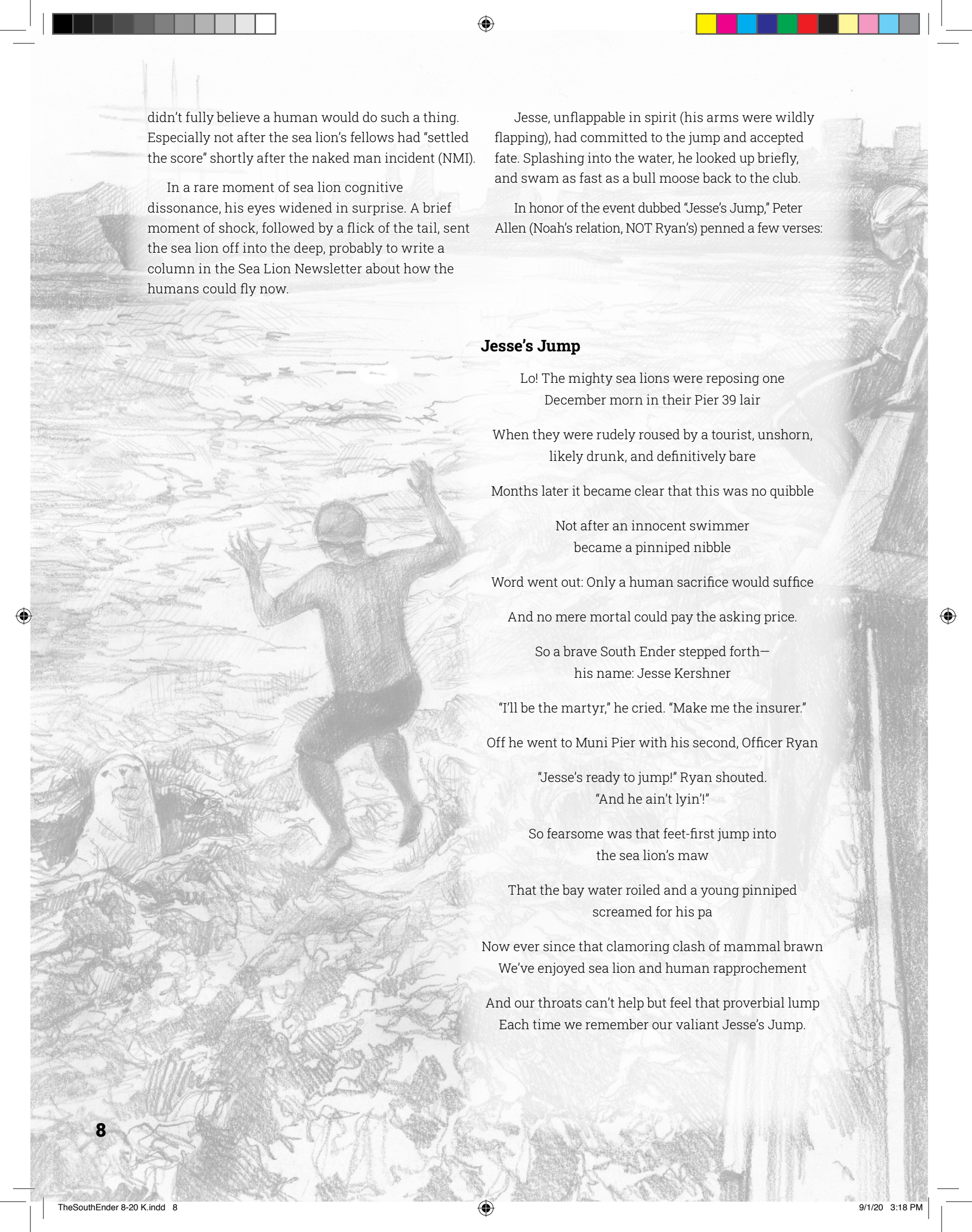
Now we turn to Jesse. Jesse is a lover of jumping into the bay. The first to recommend a jump, the first to jump. By all accounts, he laughed at the sea as he threw his leg over the railing of the pier. He mightily swung his body over the railing and stood, back to the wall, hands gripping it, maybe, just maybe, doubting his decision to swim that day, his laughter suddenly dying.

Jesse, making a 3'- 5' drop seem more exhilarating than it is, shouted "Geronimo!" and leapt into the waters not unlike a bull moose crashing through a northern Minnesotan boundary water.

Unbeknownst to any, and especially Jesse, a sea lion had been cruising along the pier. The sea lion, just having swum under the wedding cake, breached the surface for a look at the Golden Gate and a breath of fresh air, like most of us do at "the opening."

Angelo, Ryan, and Noah looked on, the sea lion emerging directly underneath Jesse. The sea lion, having seen a lot in its life, had never seen a human flying. Oh, he had heard the tales of the naked man at Pier 39 who taunted his fellow pinnipeds, but the sea lion, a skeptic,





didn't fully believe a human would do such a thing. Especially not after the sea lion's fellows had "settled the score" shortly after the naked man incident (NMI).

In a rare moment of sea lion cognitive dissonance, his eyes widened in surprise. A brief moment of shock, followed by a flick of the tail, sent the sea lion off into the deep, probably to write a column in the Sea Lion Newsletter about how the humans could fly now.

Jesse, unflappable in spirit (his arms were wildly flapping), had committed to the jump and accepted fate. Splashing into the water, he looked up briefly, and swam as fast as a bull moose back to the club.

In honor of the event dubbed "Jesse's Jump," Peter Allen (Noah's relation, NOT Ryan's) penned a few verses:

### Jesse's Jump

Lo! The mighty sea lions were reposing one  
December morn in their Pier 39 lair

When they were rudely roused by a tourist, unshorn,  
likely drunk, and definitively bare

Months later it became clear that this was no quibble

Not after an innocent swimmer  
became a pinniped nibble

Word went out: Only a human sacrifice would suffice

And no mere mortal could pay the asking price.

So a brave South Ender stepped forth—  
his name: Jesse Kershner

"I'll be the martyr," he cried. "Make me the insurer."

Off he went to Muni Pier with his second, Officer Ryan

"Jesse's ready to jump!" Ryan shouted.  
"And he ain't lyin'!"

So fearsome was that feet-first jump into  
the sea lion's maw

That the bay water roiled and a young pinniped  
screamed for his pa

Now ever since that clamoring clash of mammal brawn  
We've enjoyed sea lion and human rapprochement

And our throats can't help but feel that proverbial lump  
Each time we remember our valiant Jesse's Jump.



# Saving Face

*By the Saving Face Advisory Committee*

If we tune our memories back to March 2020, you will certainly recall hearing of California's Shelter-In-Place order. It was proposed to be just a few weeks long in an effort to slow the inexorable advance of COVID-19. At this time, most of us were happy to do our part ... a sentiment that would wane in the coming months.

For some, however, that restlessness and urge to do *something* - to do *more* - began a couple of weeks earlier, around the beginning of March.

**Cy Lo** is a building contractor and is a gifted problem-solver. When he began hearing that our hospitals were in desperate need of personal protective equipment (PPE), he was motivated to make a difference.

Cy reached out to another South Ender, **Dr. Alex Lam**, to better understand the needs of the medical worker community. Together, Cy and Dr. Alex agreed on a design for an inexpensive, limited-use, disposable face shield that would protect hospital staff and other first responders while providing critical care to members of our community.

Once the prototype was accepted, a production team was assembled with the goal of putting a sizable dent in the PPE gap our hospitals were facing. Cy knew exactly which friends to reach out to for their unique expertise in different areas. Specifically, he needed people to design, assemble, and deliver face shields to local hospitals.

Aptly named *Saving Face*, the team includes a diverse group of roughly 20 of Cy's friends, many of whom are South End members, as well as people he knows from years of working with other volunteer organizations.



Alex Lam, (2nd from R.)

Saving Face members were given assignments - logistics, acquisition, transportation - just like bootstrapping a small business. The team began assembling face shields in 10 "shops" located in San Francisco and the East Bay. The first delivery of 180 shields went to CPMC/Sutter Health Davies Campus on March 31. The Saving Face team had no way of knowing that this humble output would be just the beginning.

Word about Saving Face got around, and requests started flowing in from new hospitals all around the

Bay Area: 360 for CPMC Bernal/Mission, 300 for Seton Hospital, 200 for SF Zuckerberg General, and more. Eager to meet the demand, the team streamlined production and, with many of the components of the mask in high demand, had to get creative about sourcing materials. The team now produces about 1,000 shields *per week!*

As former boathouse captain, Cy is experienced with not only repair and restoration of the South End's vintage wooden boats, but also the creative problem-solving capability of Boat Nighters. When a suitable plastic sheet



Left: Cy Lo, Right: Mary Riley. Photo used by permission, Spencer Brown, Photographer, Nob Hill Gazette

material became difficult to source, Boat Nighter **Steve McDonald**, a construction law lawyer, identified legal report covers as a substitute - one that lawyers are glad to donate. When it became apparent that the report covers were susceptible to tearing where the elastic is affixed, Boat Nighter and former board member **Alan Lapp** suggested reinforcing them with the *sui generis* of hacking materials: duct tape. Another Boat Nighter, **Laurie Elliott**, offered a solution from her profession (making custom boat upholstery): clear vinyl film, which is available in very large rolls.

The team has raised over \$21,500 through a GoFundMe campaign, with 100% of funds going towards making and delivering shields. Many of the donations have come from our generous South End community. The direct donation of materials has been equally inspiring. We sincerely thank everyone who has contributed!

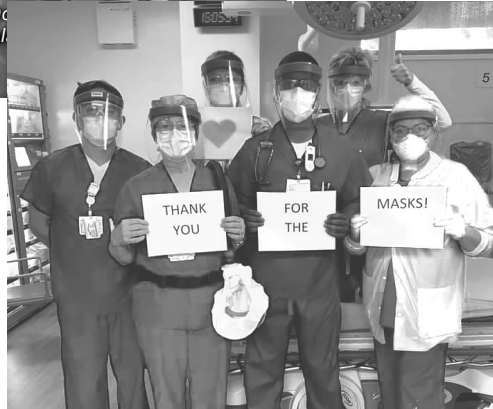
A local news station (KTVU Fox 2) highlighted the project in an early April television segment. The coverage focused on the creative use of legal report covers. The story circulated in the legal community across the country, and within days the team began

receiving inquiries from court reporters and law firms, from local counties to as far as Florida, Oklahoma, and Texas. Together, their report cover donations helped build over 500 shields. The South End's very own **Jenn Lawson** sourced and donated 2,300 yards of elastic, contributing to the fabrication of over 5,900 shields. **Kevin Buckholtz** worked with his company, Salesforce, to purchase a laser cutter to produce more durable, sustainable, and better-quality shields.

To date, the Saving Face Team has delivered nearly 15,000 shields to almost 50 hospitals and several Native American reservations (including Pine Ridge, South Dakota, where **Nancy Iverson** runs the Pathstar program). We continue to receive requests and the team is working tirelessly to meet the demand. Although at times it is exhausting, every one of us is thrilled to be part of something bigger than ourselves, providing material support to first responders, and contributing to our community.



Steve McDonald  
Sally Coghlan



Unknown doctors & nurses, CPMC



Nurse Erica (ER nurse CPMC Davies Campus). Photo by unknown.

**Saving Face Team:**

*\* Denotes South End Members*

Deborah Aghib\*  
Joe Amato\*  
Darlene Bagley\*  
Bob Barde\*  
Susan Blew\*  
Francie Bright  
Bill Bright

Maria Vasquez Brosnan  
Earl Davis  
Chas DeFerrari\*  
Mark Elliot  
Laurie Elliot\*  
Alyse Falconer  
Steve Phillipow\*  
Kathleen Kennedy  
Mike Kesselman  
Rachel Kesselman

Alan Lapp\*  
Cy Lo\*  
Steve McDonald\*  
Megan McDonald  
Danielle McPherson\*  
Jim Molesky  
Alessandra Noelting\*  
Eva Palacio\*  
Tirtza and Barry Pearl  
Dan Peterson

Dennis Puglisi\*  
Mary Riley\*  
Yoel Sberlo  
Dee-Dee Sberlo  
Doug Seiler  
Lou Vasquez  
Virginia Waik\*  
Wikek Zych

# SERC in the Time of Flu

By Bob Barde

Influenza hit hard here a century ago. More Americans died of the so-called "Spanish Flu" of 1918-19 than in all of World War I—an estimated 675,000, with tens of millions more around the world. It did not spare San Francisco, with a final toll estimated at over 3,500.

All through the summer of 1918, headlines heralded the march of the influenza. In June it ripped through the German army, then through other countries' armies. It killed the high and mighty as well as the doughboy. Ottoman Sultan Mehmed V died on July 4 of congestive heart failure probably related to the Spanish Flu. Two weeks later, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany was reported to have the flu. Even Franklin Delano Roosevelt, then assistant secretary of the navy, and President Woodrow Wilson got it.

On September 12 came the first reports of flu in East Coast cities. A week later, it was claiming 70 lives a day in New England. San Francisco saw it coming: on the twenty-second, local health authorities said that "males and robust persons seem particularly more susceptible." That was taken to mean soldiers, but athletes—rowers, swimmers, handballers—were in the same category. On the twenty-fourth, the city's first flu case made the headlines. But it wasn't until mid October that San Francisco issued guidelines—mostly of the "social distancing" sort—and only on the twenty-fifth did the wearing of masks become mandatory.

Schools and movie theaters were among the first to close. By the twenty-sixth, the *Examiner* was reporting "Clubs Close 'Gyms' and Natatoriums; Indoor Sports take Tumble with Postponement of Swim and Basketball Practices." But the presumption was that it was *indoor* activities—"contests staged under a roof"—that put participants at risk. *Outdoor* activities were deemed less risky.

Hard-hit were clubs like the YMCA and the YMHA that relied on indoor swimming, basketball, boxing, and handball (the South End did not yet have

courts). When wearing masks became compulsory, "it virtually shut down the Olympic Club for a month."<sup>1</sup>

And the South End Rowing Club?

The South End did make a minor concession to Señor Flu: the October 27 Ladies' Day was postponed, rescheduled to December 8. The club was probably eager to host the affair, as "the perpetual trophies of the Pacific Association of Amateur Oarsmen will be presented to the club, *which holds all the championships*" (emphasis added).

But South Enders were not going to let influenza get in the way of the *Examiner's* second annual Golden Gate Swim! **Clifford Morehouse** and **Austin Messerschmidt** were among the 53 men who signed up and the 41 who jumped on October 27. Messerschmidt was seventh among the 10 who finished. In the only sign of the flu influencing the race, a contingent of navy swimmers started from their own boat; they were under quarantine and had to avoid contact with other swimmers.

Post race, the flu was still a presence. The Dolphins had defeated the Olympic Club for the club trophy, but they and other trophy winners had to wait a week for their swag. Supposedly this was due to a flu-induced shortage of help at the city's jewelers, or perhaps it was because "so many of the boys who won cups are in the service and subject to quarantine." And rather than an awards ceremony, "it has been found more convenient to give out the cups at *The Examiner* office."

So life went on. Even as a second wave of influenza struck San Francisco in January, the South End held its annual meeting to elect officers on January 11, the same day that a rising death toll forced the board of supervisors to reinstate the mask order.

There is no reason to think that the South End ever closed its doors or curtailed its activities. Rowing and swimming were, after all, outdoor activities. What risk could there possibly be?



<sup>1</sup> Ron Fimrite, *Winged O*, p. 119

# A Salute to SERC's Healthcare Workers

*Compiled by Mary Riley*

The South End community sends a heartfelt shout-out of gratitude and support to our member healthcare workers and essential providers. We started with this list. Please contribute additional names to us for the next issue: [newsletter@serc.com](mailto:newsletter@serc.com).

"They also serve who only stand and wait" –Milton, Sonnet XIX

<b>Tom Abbott</b>	<b>Chris Forni</b>	<b>Michael Mullaney</b>
<b>Lawrence Aguiar</b>	<b>Joseph Gabany</b>	<b>Liam Murphy</b>
<b>Thomas Aller</b>	<b>Megan Grant</b>	<b>Philip Murphy</b>
<b>Brenda Austin</b>	<b>Jennifer Greene</b>	<b>Danielle O'Donnell</b>
<b>Deborah Bergman</b>	<b>Amy Gubser</b>	<b>Dan O'Neill</b>
<b>Tom Bollinger</b>	<b>Kathryn Hall</b>	<b>Dave Ogden</b>
<b>Jen Brokaw</b>	<b>Cathy Harrington</b>	<b>Scott Pasternak</b>
<b>Janie Bryant</b>	<b>Susan Herder</b>	<b>Nina Ray</b>
<b>Stephanie Carnes</b>	<b>Jenna Howell</b>	<b>Marcy Reda</b>
<b>Patricia Carr</b>	<b>Kate Howell</b>	<b>Danielle Ruymaker</b>
<b>Josiah Child</b>	<b>Terri Hunt</b>	<b>Kendrick Shunk</b>
<b>Diana Coffa</b>	<b>Nancy Iverson</b>	<b>Nancy Sorrell</b>
<b>Greg Collaco</b>	<b>Robert Ivory</b>	<b>Russel E. Staffen</b>
<b>Mike Creehan</b>	<b>Manuela Kogon</b>	<b>Gary Stedman</b>
<b>Jeff Critchfield</b>	<b>Mitchell Kristoff</b>	<b>Dorothea Sterling</b>
<b>Marc Cruciger</b>	<b>Alex Lam</b>	<b>Patricia Sweeney</b>
<b>Marcus Dobrowolski</b>	<b>Rebecca Margulies</b>	<b>Sage Wilkerson</b>
<b>Aaron Dudum</b>	<b>Jenny Martin</b>	<b>Adam Wood</b>
<b>Jeany Duncan</b>	<b>Luis Mercado</b>	<b>James Yee</b>
<b>Kyle Dunne</b>	<b>Carol Merryfield</b>	<b>Corey Yeo</b>
<b>Paddy Dunne</b>	<b>Luke Michaelis</b>	
<b>Helge Eilers</b>	<b>Sheila Monaghan</b>	

# Tom & Jerry's Three Buoys Regatta: Memories from Years Past

By Jules Marenkova

*The 2020 Tom & Jerry Three Buoys Regatta was scheduled for Saturday, April 25. Sharing the misfortune of many other club events—but necessary for the health and safety of our community—the regatta was canceled. Missing the camaraderie, I took comfort in connecting with other SERC rowers to reminisce.*

In his book *South End Sport and Community at the Dock of the Bay*, **Bob Barde** provides a lighthearted description of this regatta: “No, not those cartoon characters! The South End’s **Tom (Lundgren)** and **Jerry (Purmal)**, two characters who have been rowing together forever, and who are always ready to mentor new rowers or encourage experienced ones.” 2020 Rowing Commissioner Jerry shares how this regatta came to life: “Tom initiated the course casually after he first rowed [it]. He mentioned it to me one morning, and we rowed it together. Then, in the annual [rowers’] meeting of 2011, I mentioned having rowed the course with Tom and suggested we set it as Tom’s Regatta for the following season. Tom suggested we call it The Tom & Jerry Three Buoys Regatta, and that was how it began. The course is nearly square, about 1/2 mile on each leg.” Tom Lundgren recalls, “I used to row the three buoys starting in the dark winter mornings. And showed the course to Jerry and **Gail (Brownell)**, and the three of us rowed it often: Jerry and Gail in a double, and myself in the *Savigliano*.”

In 2019, the regatta took place on Memorial Day, May 27. The first-time race director **Beth Sutey** communicated with clarity prior and during the Regatta, “The course is counterclockwise. First buoy is Blossom Rock bell buoy, then around the second buoy (no bell on the Bay Bridge side of Alcatraz), followed by the Little Alcatraz buoy, and finally back to Aquatic Park ... The course does cross active shipping lanes. There could be strong currents or wind.” And sure

enough, as noted by **Fran Hegeler** in her Facebook post, it ended up being a “glorious morning out there despite the wind and chop.” In addition to the challenging waters, the rowers faced high vessel traffic crossing the course: Two tankers traveled between the city front and Alcatraz, and fishing boats bustled between the first and second buoy.



**Janie Bryant**, the one rower in a shell, shared her encounter: “It was a bumpy row out to the island with some hissing whitecaps, and I fell well behind the pack. When I was coming up to the second buoy, I could see the wooden doubles off in the distance as they approached the third buoy. All had lost sight of me, and I found out later that people saw a white cap floating on the water and had assumed I had met my end out on the course.

Turns out it was **Mee Lee’s** cap that she lost as she rowed in a barge. I was unaware of all the radio chatter and concern until I returned to the cove with my cap on my head and myself in the *Queenie Moon* and was greeted with people expressing joy at my arrival, intact.”

The Tom & Jerry Three Buoys Regatta was my first event as a new SERC member. Entrusted with the important responsibility of flag-waving at the finish line on the Muni Pier, I felt welcomed by the community of rowers. And I recall **Dennis Puglisi** noting that this was the first time “anyone around here can remember” that the three barges—two from the South End and one from the Dolphins—were on the water together.

I hope these reflections from the 2019 Regatta brought you joy and gratitude for the many wonders of rowing in the San Francisco Bay and belonging to the South End Rowing Club. Cheers to many more years of the Tom & Jerry Three Buoys Regatta, resuming in the spring of 2021.

# Goodbye Darrin

By Cappy Benton

Shouts of “*Goodbye Darrin, we love you!*” punctuated the night sky as 18 South Enders launched themselves off Fort Mason’s Pier 2 for a singular Full Moon Experience on Thursday, January 9, dedicated to **Darrin Connolly**, who’d died suddenly earlier in the week.

Swimming under a full moon is an incredible experience. The audacity of jumping off a pier 15 feet into hypothermia-inducing water engenders bewildered expressions, equal parts wonder and disdain.

Darrin had served as swim commissioner. His name appears three times on the Golden Gate Swim plaque. He especially enjoyed sharing the experience of the full moon swim. He kept an eye out for newbies, and his calm demeanor and friendly smile were integral to the endeavor.

Initially, there was talk about whether January’s full moon swim should be canceled. Ultimately, we agreed that we’d swim as a small tribute to Darrin.

Full moon swims have a dedicated following, and as news of Darrin’s passing circulated, the regulars were determined to swim. **Kat Hall** was still chagrined about her big toe’s encounter with a kettlebell, but figured she could hobble over and be swim sherpa. **Myles Cope** totaled his car earlier that day, but emerged unharmed, and texted that he’d be there. **Ryan Nelson** would be returning from a business trip at the last minute, fingers crossed.

Everyone started gathering in the Day Room at 7 p.m. There was candlelight, a crowdsourced buffet fit for the St. Francis Yacht Club, chocolate chip cookies, a large pizza, and the quiet chatter of swimmers shifting out of work mode.

Ryan landed at SFO at 7:25 p.m and raced uptown in an Uber, arriving in time to hear **Matthew Williams** say a few words. After a moment of silence, we headed to Fort Mason.

The air temperature was 49.5° F. You could see your breath. The water was 53.4° F. A gibbous moon had risen at 4:15 p.m. and was high in a clear sky, freshly scrubbed by the previous day’s storm. The reflections of the Golden Gate Bridge lights stretched seemingly for miles.



SERC’s rowing community came with two wooden rowboats and a paddleboard. **Virginia Waik, Mary Riley,** and **Tatum Nevils** (on her first-ever South End row) rowed *No. 10*, a wooden double, **Janie Bryant** rowed *Thor*, a wooden single, and **Eddie Peinado** took the brand new paddleboard dedicated to **Pat Cunneen. Cy Lo** had outfitted the boats

with colorful paper lanterns for the occasion.

At 8:25 p.m. everyone was stuffing clothing and flip-flops into trash bags. There was the usual nervous excitement. Three people had never done a full moon swim before. They’d never met Darrin. But they were eager to make new memories with new friends, just as when Darrin had been present.

Kat passed out yellow chrysanthemums, and Mary carpeted the water with rose petals. Finally, we started jumping. Plunging into the inky water’s chill embrace always snaps your synapses wide awake. Tonight, that awareness laid bare Darrin’s absence, and our howling at the moon was bittersweet.

Back on land, Virginia summed up the evening as “another bead of magic on my little string of time.” Darrin’s time may have passed, but his memory will live on in all of those lucky enough to have swum beside him.

# Trudy Molina, 1948-2020

*By Nancy Iverson*

**Trudy Molina's** wonderful blend of authenticity, pragmatism, a passion for water, and enthusiasm for challenging herself made her a great fit for the South End Rowing Club. Her presence enriched the experience of every South Ender she met and rippled out to members who never got to meet her. Whether or not each of us remembers the exact circumstance of first meeting her, we most definitely recall that sense of her being a cherished friend we've known for a long, long time. And, with her death March 29, 2020, we also know that however long that time felt, it now feels way too short.

Trudy embraced the water, especially in Hawaii, Tahoe, and the San Francisco Bay. In the water (swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving), on the water (rowing, paddling), and near the water (growing the tradition of the December Babies swim/breakfast, organizing the PATHSTAR swim angel roster, lending a helping hand or words of wisdom to fellow swimmers/rowers), she led with her unique blend of vitality, earnestness, joy, and humor. Her quiet enthusiasm shone through even the darkest waters of the pre-dawn Sunrises swims.

Bigger than her love of being in or on the water was Trudy's love of people, especially her family. Her love and devotion to her husband, children, and grandchildren was unassailable. Family members were with her every step of the way through her diagnosis of cancer and the treatments, successes, and setbacks. Even so, Trudy's generosity extended to her South End family as she found ways to also

welcome and include the South End love and support that is part of the heart and soul of our community. The immense outpouring of care and concern from her South End friends was testimony to the heartfelt connections she inspired.

For over 10 years, Trudy provided an extraordinary resource to PATHSTAR with her behind-the-scenes volunteer help in recruiting and scheduling swim angels for the PATHSTAR Alcatraz Swim Program. (PATHSTAR is a program dedicated to encouraging



health within Native American communities; the PATHSTAR Alcatraz Swim Week is the key program.) With our Starfish Award, our PATHSTAR team pays tribute to those who contribute outstanding support to our work. PATHSTAR chose Trudy as a Starfish Award recipient in 2019 in acknowledgment of our deep gratitude and respect for her.

With her inexorable balance of dignity, determination, and resolve, Trudy persevered through all oncology treatment options. When these were all exhausted, including clinical trials, she chose to invite hospice in and was able to be home with her family throughout the last part of her life. She died knowing she was loved dearly, by her family who was with her and by her wide circle of friends and loved ones.

The many messages of sorrow from SERC members, swimmers from the 'Arizona kids' program (Foundation for Aquatic Safety and Training), and Bondi Icebergs speak to the enormity of the loss we're feeling. And, at the same time, they reverberate with the immense gratitude for the great gift to our lives that Trudy has been.

Farewell, Trudy. We'll miss you in ever so many ways, and we'll also treasure memories of how you, your wide wonderful smile, and your way of being graced our lives.

# Never Too Late for Gratitude

*Kate & Sam Howell*

Times are strange and life feels weird, but some things never change. Things like how much you love your family and friends and how grateful you are for your community. It is never too late to say: *THANK YOU*.

On April 15, 2018, my brother Sam fell from his bike while on an AIDS Life/Cycle training ride and broke four cervical vertebrae. He was immediately paralyzed from the neck down and unable to breathe unassisted. I got the phone call from his partner Troy as I was leaving the club after a morning swim. "Accident ... broken neck ... paralyzed"—things you never want to hear about anyone. After a six-hour emergency surgery, Sam spent nine days in the UCLA ICU and was then transferred to an unequipped and incompetent hospital for seven days due to insurance reasons where they nearly killed him, multiple times. We had to supervise his care 24 hours a day and fight hourly, daily, with the hospital administrative staff to get him transferred to an appropriate facility. He was transferred to USC ICU where he had great management but again got stuck due to insurance reasons. After three weeks, he was finally transferred to Rancho Los Amigos to begin his spinal cord injury rehab. We had to pay \$25,000 up front to get Sam to Rancho due to more insurance complications, and this is where I need to thank the South End Rowing club for all the love. "Swimming for Sammy" raised those much-needed funds.

Thank you for donating your time to the swim, thank you for your support and encouragement when I was severely undertrained and unprepared but intensely in need of a way to grieve and move forward. Thank you for asking, "How is your brother?" every time I came to the club. Thank you for caring.

Marcus Dobrowolski was by my side every step/stroke of the way, **Tom Linthicum**, aka Reptile, volunteered his boat and his time, **Ranie Pearce** was generous enough to be the observer, **Catha Worthman** and **Patty Norman** were crew/paddlers/support swimmers. **Kim Peinado Howard** and **Miriam Hiser** were head "cheerleaders" on the digital front and facilitated many donations.

## Now, some words from the man himself:

*As Kate mentioned, it's never too late for gratitude, and I couldn't be happier to have an opportunity to thank you all for your incredible support!*

*Sometimes it's easy to forget how far you've come when you live it day to day, but even today I have to fight back tears looking back on how bad it truly was.*

*When I was released from Rancho two days before my 29th birthday, I vowed to walk out that door and did just that. Without the support from so many of you, that would have never been a reality for me.*

*I continue to be humbled by the whole experience. Having so many people—many of whom I'd never even met—show up for me in such a meaningful way is so amazing it's hard to put into words. It has kept me motivated, hopeful, and determined to find a way to pay it forward someday.*

*It makes me happy to report that I have improved so immensely. I recently took a three-mile hike and have become a die-hard spin lover since quarantine began. I have worked with a specialized gym in LA and have regained nearly all the 35 pounds I lost to atrophy. Even though I remain unable to extend or lift my arms much, I have been getting back to doing the things I love like drawing, painting, and sewing while trying out some new obsessions like jewelry-making and writing. Recently I was also awarded an Employment Achievement Grant through Triumph Foundation. This grant allowed me to purchase a computer to get back to working—something I wasn't sure I would ever be able to do again.*

*As I start out on this next chapter I can't help but think of all the people who helped get me here. Someday I might find the words that fully express my gratitude to all you life-savers but until then, from the absolute bottom of my heart, *THANK YOU!**

-Sam





# Rowing at the South End

By Ellen Campbell

**“There’s nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as messing about in boats.”**

—Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*

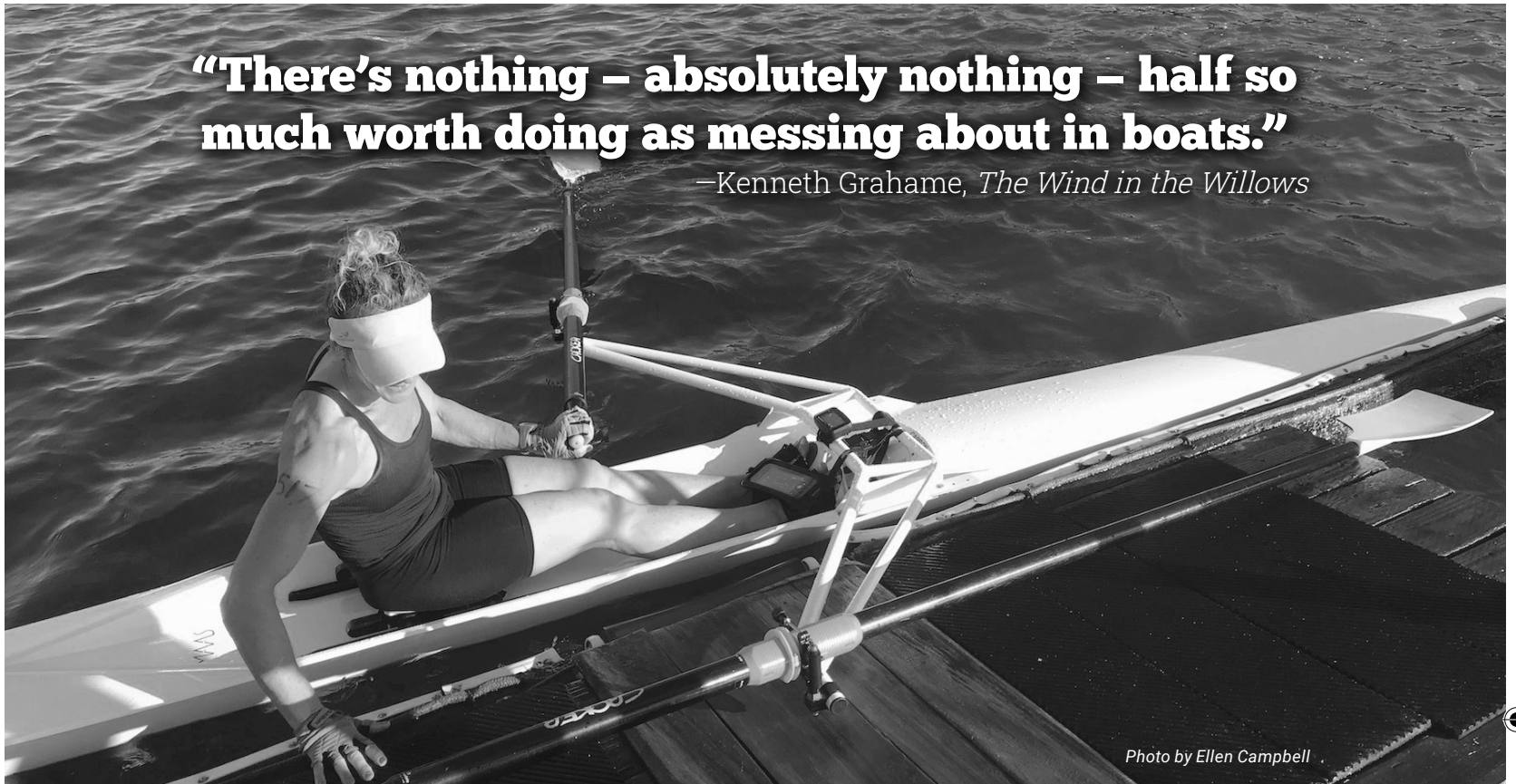


Photo by Ellen Campbell

Many folks think of SERC as a swim club, but the name embodies its true heart: the South End Rowing Club. Like those mysterious many-gloved folks that play handball, swimmers sometimes view the rowers as a world apart. I know that I did, during my years as a club swimmer. Visitors sometimes believe the original boathouse is a museum of wooden magic. “Does anyone ever take these on the water?” they ask. Yes, folks, we do—and how! From the swan-like shells to the lovingly restored *South End* barge, our boats are on the water weekly, even daily. To get some perspective on what it is to row, I contacted a few members to get their thoughts.

## Rowing for Beauty

For me, rowing in a wooden is a chance to enjoy the outdoors, see wildlife, wave at Nancy Sorrell gliding by in a shell, and still be able to enjoy a cup of coffee. **Tom Lundgren**, 2019 Rower of the Year and mentor to many, answered this question with a spiritual twist: “I row to see God’s beauty.” **Gail Brownell**, who finished 10th in the Women’s Veteran

Singles competition at the 2019 Head of the Charles, rows because “I love water and the beautiful scenery of being on any body of water.” And **Rosanna Lerma**, member of Los Tres Amigos and Boat Night volunteer, comments, “I love being on the water—it is so peaceful and serene.”

## Rowing Is a Challenge

The opening quote from *The Wind in the Willows* is well known. But one must read the book to find out that the inexperienced Mole, in his first attempt at rowing, flipped over backwards, tipped the boat, fell in the water, and had to be rescued by Ratty. Gail comments that rowing “takes total attention and is challenging, and feels so amazing the few times I take a perfect stroke.” I envy her—I don’t think I’ve ever taken a perfect stroke. It is easy to row badly, hard to row adequately, and the work of a lifetime to row well. For Rosanna, who commutes from the East Bay, the challenge “is finding the time to get on the water ... like all sports, the more you practice the better you get.” And Tom points out a challenge



known to us all: "Getting up the dock is the hardest thing about rowing." Rosanna and Virginia can attest, one windy day it took around 15 attempts to get their boat out of the water safely.

### Rowing Can Change Your Life

It changed former Rowing Commissioner **Virginia Waik's**. "Life always brings challenges, and five years ago health requirements kept me from enjoying swimming. The only reason I got into rowing is because I was forced to stay out of the water for a long period of time. One day I walked into SERC after years and years of walking past the boats, and I suddenly realized I could be on the water again." That led to Virginia becoming one of our top mentors and most frequent rowers: "I'm not the most experienced rower, nor the best, but I think I am the happiest rower at the club."

### Rowing Can Be Dangerous

The water is beautiful, but it can be your enemy as well. **Al Jaurique** and I set out to "pilot" the 2019 Alcatraz Invitational, only to find ourselves battling wind and current for three hard hours. **Tom Lundgren** and I got caught in a potato patch (a swirling current of water) on the east side of Alcatraz during a club regatta and had to be towed to safety (thanks **Suzanne Greva**). Former Boathouse Captain **Dan McLaughlin** admonished us to know our tides and currents and know them well: "I don't want to get a phone call that you and the boat are stuck somewhere." Gail tells this cautionary tale: "One early dark morning, **Jerry Purmal** and I were in a Viking double, **Tom Lundgren** in a single. We launched while it was still quite dark, rowing towards the Bay Bridge. I said to Jerry, 'Look at that! Some of the lights are out on the Golden Gate Bridge!' We realized that a container ship was blocking the lights and heading for us, and then we heard a loud horn! We got out of the way quickly, and spent some worried minutes wondering where Tom was, but found him and all was well."

### You've Caught My Interest, I Want to Row!

In order to row at the club, you must be a member, and attend one of the clinics (coming soon to a reopened SERC near you). The prerequisite for the clinics can be found here: [http://serc.com/rowing/start\\_rowing\\_at\\_the\\_south\\_end/](http://serc.com/rowing/start_rowing_at_the_south_end/)

Get on the ergs! "Erg" is short for "indoor rowing ergometer." The great thing about SERC is that you

can erg outside on the deck. Pretend you're rowing to Alcatraz while working on your form. Find a fellow rower to show you the basics of erg care and feeding. Training videos can be found on the website above, or check out Concept Row videos, such as my personal favorite:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ai64EEexIOI>.

Find a Mentor: This list is only representative of the mentors past and present. We each have been mentored by many people. Gail was mentored by our own rowing commissioner, Jerry Purmal. Rosanna was mentored by Boathouse Captain **Tom Wurm**. Virginia was mentored by Dan McLaughlin, **Tony Gilbert**, and the affable **Mr. Steve McDonald**. Tom Lundgren was mentored by **Patty Payton**. Tom recalls being "handed an application to **Diane Davis's** *Bridge to Bridge to Bridge*. I followed **Norm Peterson** around the course and never caught him."

Virginia says, "I love rowing and I'm available to anyone that wants to try it out. When rowers show competitive potential, I pair them up with the folks that have had years of coaching in competitive rowing. When learning, I tried to experience as many different boats in the fleet as I possibly could." Virginia adds, "Try out everything! Then make your choice. Go outside your normal and experience the exceptional!"

Note: Mentors are in demand. If someone agrees to mentor you, be grateful. Honor their schedule. Bring them offerings, small and edible (OK, this is optional). Respect their advice. If you got up at five to meet your mentor at six and that mentor says it's a bad day to row, then it's a bad day to row.

When the club is fully operating and we are all out on the water, I hope to see some of the readers here gearing up to row at the Mighty South End!

**"And so in time the rowboat and I became one and the same – like the archer and his bow or the artist and his paint. What I learned wasn't mastery over the elements; it was mastery over myself, which is what conquest is ultimately all about."**

—Richard Bode

# To Row a Barge

By Vanessa Marlin

Photos by Arianna Churchill

A barge rower has two jobs: the first is to *listen*, and the second is to *respond*. This is a strict rule. There are no observations to be made. No distinguishing between a sea lion and a harbor seal. No decision-making. Should we row past the cruise ship or get stuck in the channel? Do we assume that our beloved swimmers see that we're coming in for a landing with the control of a freight train? These are the decisions we think about when rowing on our own, but in a barge, we rely upon on a coxswain. As a team, we put our trust into her hands.

On the day of the 2019 SERC vs. DC triathlon, all the work that the barge rowing team put into weeks of practice led up to this very moment. The only thing we had to do is exactly what we've trained to do—from pulling the barge down to the end of the dock, to launching, to warming up, to rowing hard—everything has been carefully cultivated to ensure that we, like Beyonce, were flawless.

I cherish small moments like these, but remember very little about the start of that barge race. After all, I had my white visor pulled down the top of my eyebrows, like I always do at the start of each race, just to block out the noise. And by the time I dared to look beyond my peripheral vision, to my exhilaration, our boat had pulled away from the island and left the Dolphin barge safely behind. Our stroke, **Catriona Fallon**, remembers things more distinctly. "The waters were fickle that day," she said. "We lined up just on time while the Dolphins couldn't find their point on the line and kept adjusting. We remained calm, knowing that we had a strong start and planned to take a few seats at the first 250 (meters). The adrenaline drove our stroke rate to 30+ but there

was power and send. We kept moving, and by 500 meters we had a sizable lead."

Our coxswain, **Arianna Churchill**, remained focused on the bay's ever-changing nuances: "Thanks to many hours with **Dan McLaughlin**, I knew the most important thing would be to pick a strong line and pay attention to the changing conditions. So that's what I did! True to Dan's advice, keeping a steady line was key."

We look forward to the training season, and every year it comes back around again. We've had numerous alternate rowers training on the barge, and we embrace each other as one team. No matter who gets to row on race day, we are in this together.

By the end of the training season, it's not unusual to see us walking in lockstep, like Laverne and Shirley, to grab an Irish coffee at the Buena Vista. We have been trained to embrace our patterns and relish the synchronicity.

While our team's practice and racing schedule is uncertain during this pandemic, we remain true to each other as rowers, teammates, and sisters. From our newest member, **Rita Feld**, to long-timer **Andrea Kellogg**, all are committed to the barge team. "It was great to see positive team vibes and pulling together to get as many practices together as possible," Andrea noted about the 2019 season.

One of our longest-running barge rowers, **Catherine Lovazanno**, has these words of wisdom for a sure win in 2020: "an experienced boat, a focused cox, and a lighter boat." And the seasoned rower **Elena Keamy** added, "When we relax into the swing, minds and hearts open so we can respond to the sometimes subtle, sometimes screaming demands of the boat, water, and crew. Magic happens!"



# Ninja Handball, or Alone at the Wall: Handball in the Age of Coronavirus

By Emily Gable and Mee Lee

These past few months have been tough for the people who call those big beautiful courts that flank the bar home, but handball players are staying fit and busy. Here's what we've been up to.

First, a message from our champion handball commissioner **Juan Carlos Ocampo**:

"Hello friends, I hope all is well with you and your family during the coronavirus pandemic. It has not been possible to do what you want, and we have not been able to play our favorite sports. I personally took advantage of these past two months to rest. Before this terrible disease that is happening all over the world and harassing everyone, I had some injuries and discomfort with one knee and shoulders, and discomfort with my Achilles. This break was very good for me, and I have recovered well. I started training at the Golden Gate Park one wall. I wish that you and your family stay safe and healthy."

**Jay Grenfell**: "I've been chasing my young kids around the house. Sometimes they bounce off the walls faster than a back wall shot from **Loren Collado**."

**Mee Lee** has been searching the internet archives for handball videos and she found one: an old fashioned naked version! Though they were wearing jock straps, so maybe not completely naked. Ask Mee for the Link if you're curious ... may not be suitable for all audiences. And with no balls to hit, she's been hitting the streets—7.5% of San Francisco walked so far!

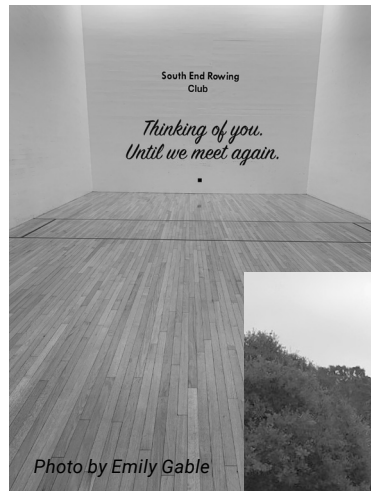
**Dennis Dunne**: "Playing 50 years. To keep in shape I do squats in front of an open fridge throughout the day, as well as sit-ups to find the TV remote. I'll be in perfect shape to give Ann Dunn a game when this thing is over!"

**Janie Bryant**: "I have taken some walks around the hood with my camera, and at the start did swims in the cove and finally got my garden in shape, but for some weeks I have been painting. Is painting a workout? Yes, it is. I wasn't able to get the building ladder, so to reach crown molding and the ceiling I pushed a chest around and climbed up and down. My walls had antique plaster that I put on years ago and have enjoyed, but has been a bear to deal with in getting walls prepped for painting. I tried the electric sander,

but hand sander has been more effective. So lots of bending, stretching, climbing, and scraping going on over here. Just ordered more paint this morning;

Farrow and Ball has free shipping, how can I resist? Hallways, shoe hutch, dresser, kitchen, living room, garden furniture ... with this new stay-in-place order in effect, I am putting down my brushes for a bit and heading out to hike in Marin but will continue to use the painting as a way to keep me occupied at home. So glad I always chose playing handball, rowing, and swimming over household chores when I had the choice."

**Emily Gable**, usually a social butterfly, has been spending her time and energy nervously dodging people on trails while running. During her runs she wears a mask to protect others around her which has mimicked the training of elite athletes who use this method to prepare for high-altitude events. Being so close to sea level, she will be unstoppable on the court after this. Watch out. On second thought, the amount of wine she's been consuming might cancel that all out.



# It's Not Heaven, It's Cull Valley

By Lou Barberini



All handball players know that after a while, the game becomes an addiction. And after the coronavirus closed athletic clubs like dominoes, indoor players' last resort was outdoor 3-wall courts. Are Petaluma's outdoor courts open? No, they're locked. Cupertino 3-wall? Locked.

Finally, refuge came at the outdoor courts in Castro Valley. How ironic it is that someone we avoided associating with now accounts for this tucked-away place that has restored our handball normalcy.

In the 1970s and 1980s there was an eccentric player named **Steve Evert**. He was a portly C-player, weighing in at about 270 lbs. In November, while the Golden Gate Park players would layer on the clothing, Steve would play without a shirt —full beer belly exposed. I never knew whether he was a genius or crazy. Outrageous talk of gravitational pull affecting shots does not retain most players' interest.

If you hosted a tournament, Steve would be there until the last beer was poured, talking your ear off

with scientific information or pure ludicrousness. He was a friendly and loquacious character. Tournament directors had to literally push Steve out the door, or he would have spent the night.

But like all hardheaded handball players, Steve was tenacious. And in the '80s, he pestered Castro Valley into building an outdoor court in a tiny, tranquil place off of Cull Valley Road.

So now when I get my HB fix, I smile and think of Steve, crazy as he was. Like the works of a starving artist, the masterpiece he built is infinitely more valuable after his passing, and it is now the sole source of my friends' mental equilibrium.

Thank you, Steve, for what you did and who you were. You would be happy to know you have not been forgotten.

Photo by Lou Barberini (L-R) **Dean Crispen, Sean Haley, Ron Strausbaugh, Isaac Burns**

# Elizabeth Glass, 1965-2020

*By Jenny Hoffman and Laurel Condro*



## **For Elizabeth, with Love**

**Elizabeth Glass** was a rower, swimmer, runner, pilot, photographer, cook, bartender, volunteer extraordinaire, and a beloved friend to so many South Enders that it'd take an entire newsletter dedicated just to her so every one of us could pay tribute.

There was nothing she loved more than to cook a meal for all of us. She once told me that one of her greatest joys was to feed people. It made complete sense because of how nourishing she was to anyone within her radius. She was one of those rare people who you saw and spent time with and each time you walked away feeling nourished, no matter how you felt when you first arrived.

How someone embraces you really speaks to their character. Elizabeth gave all-encompassing, warm, comforting hugs that told the lucky recipient, "I've got your back." And she did. Through and through, she had all our backs. She embraced us all, wherever we were on any given day. If you showed up in pain, if you were joyful or sad, whatever it was that you were carrying with you, she embraced you and never made you feel that you had to be any other way.

As firmly planted as her feet were on the ground and as unwavering in support of others as she was, Elizabeth had dreams of her own and her last week with us was spent making plans for the future and dreaming of what she would do this year.



The last time I saw her, we decided to meet for the Five Coves of Death. "Five Buoys of Death?" she asks. "I'm in!" I reply. We park on Van Ness and do our usual routine of scampering quickly to the water. We enter the water and swim down the buoy line and run into **Patrick O'Malley Daly**, who has just finished his first cove and is starting his second. He looks up and shouts, "Yer goin' the wrong way!" I look over at Elizabeth and she beams, "I guess we are going the wrong way," and shrugs her shoulders with a smile as we continue on.

On our way back to the flag (our 2nd Buoy of Death) she told me about a video that she wanted to show me when we finished. It was a clip from the previous South End trip to Sydney, Australia, to visit our sister club, the Bondi Icebergs. "It's not the same as our beach," she tells me. "You've got to get in from the reef and time it just right so that you get out and under the waves. We are going to swim two coves," she said. "We will get in shape so that when we get to Bondi it will be easy. We already swam through

winter so we can handle the temperature; now we just need to handle the distance." I reply, "Yeah! We are gonna get in shape! And we will go to Bondi and swim with the Icebergs and duck dive through the waves like it's nothing."

Outside her car, she shows me the video: "Here, watch this." We see one by one each swimmer step onto the reef and wait for their moment to hop into and under the waves, timing it just so as each set comes in. Towards the end, a swimmer hops in slightly off beat with the waves and gets picked up and plopped right back where he started. "That's not going to be us," she says.

EG, I miss you my friend. I will see you on the shore of our beach, along the buoy line, at the backside of the *Grace Quan*, and at all the places we would swim. I will carry on the quiet tradition we had where we would pause to float, to take it all in, and to dream.

*By Jenny Hoffman, Elizabeth's swim buddy:*



### What Would Elizabeth Do?

Every day this week something triggered me to ask Elizabeth how to do this or that—pick fabric, cook a dish, organize my new office, design my website, edit a photo, stage my home, fold a perfect guest towel ... the list is endless. She was usually the first one to arrive to set up for a club event and the last to leave after cleaning up. She piloted countless long swims for me and dozens of other South Enders, often on little sleep. She taught me how to row, how to cook, how to use Excel spreadsheets, and pretty much everything in between. She was generous, kind, and incredibly reliable. As a tribute to Elizabeth, every time I want to "ASK" Elizabeth, I'm going to "ACT" a little more Elizabeth. I'm going to emulate her kindness, patience, and generosity in my daily life.

*From Laurel Condro,  
Hurley Girl crewmate*



South End Rowing Club  
 500 Jefferson St.  
 San Francisco, CA 94109

*Alcatraz Swim, July 28, 2019. Photo by Alan Lapp*

