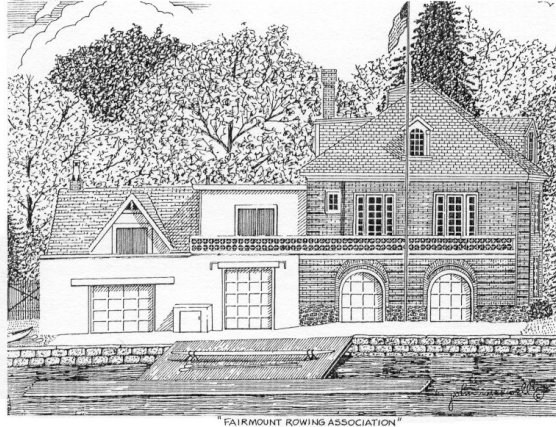


Once known as the MRA Championship Regatta, then the Subaru Schuylkill Sprints, the regatta is now in its ninth year, and its fifth as Quaker City Masters Regatta (we finally kept a name for more than two years!!!). The regatta is hosted by the Fairmount Rowing Association, a club predominantly made up of masters rowers on Philadelphia's historic Boathouse Row. Fairmount (est. 1877) absorbed Quaker City Barge Club (est. 1858) in 1945, thus the name of the regatta. In the Fairmount spirit, we try to provide a fun, relaxed atmosphere with plenty of great competition. And beer.



*Artwork by John Maxwell. The right half of the building dates from 1904, the left half from 1858.*



*Bob Beaty pours the beer in the Fairmount barroom.*

### **Some mail from our 2006 competitors:**

“Sagamore Rowing keeps coming back because it is a great regatta!”

“Thoroughly enjoyed the event.”

“Congratulations on another terrific rower-friendly Regatta. The Quaker City Masters Regatta is the only regatta that offers a first place prize that is of any use to the winner.”

“A fun and on-time regatta!”

“Thanks for a great regatta!”

## “The Masters of Masters Rowing”

by Janit Stahl

posted on Row2k.com on August 9, 2006

The folks at Fairmount Rowing Association take a certain pride in putting on the most festive race on the masters racing schedule every summer. They build this race into the matrix of summer races: Schuylkill Navy, Carnegie Lake, Independence Day, Diamond State-all in preparation for Masters Nationals, ideally. However, with Independence Day Regatta cancelled due to flooding; Diamond State's venue, Noxonton Pond, choked with weeds; and Nationals on the left coast, Quaker City had a heat sheet full of eager participants ready to throw down at the starting line. (Details on shouting match to follow)

Here's what Quaker City Masters Regatta does beautifully and with great cheer: create an event, and builds rowing into the list of party games. Masters rowers take their games pretty seriously, and all these mildly competitive athletes grabbed their oars like they were winding up to hit the piñata. Fairmount Rowing Association provided the infrastructure. The result: fast rowing, a schedule that went like clockwork, gorgeous summer day (credit goes to a higher power here), healthy and lovely lunch, complementary t-shirt, beer mugs to winners (who needs another metal disk, make awards useful!), pizza and beer afterwards. It is a grown up version of a kegger at the boathouses that is dimly remembered from college years in Philadelphia. Martha Stewart would be proud of you, Lee Silverberg. (Race Director of QCMR) They even had a cake; can you beat that?

"I think there is something for everyone and everyone leaves happy," says Silverberg, "we got a lot of positive feedback." QCMR nearly doubled its participants to 566, and the FRA was on top of that issue with warnings to the teams about potential parking problems (none known problems with local law enforcement, although a few dragon boat athletes picked up a ticket or two when they showed up mid-regatta to train, sorry guys!), concerns about the timing of heats and staying on the centers, enough mugs to go around for the added heats/age categories/officials...well, they all worked out, and folks did indeed leave happy. (The beer helped.)

A casual observer would notice that masters rowing is growing, and US Rowing will confirm this phenomenon. A more trained observer would note that the quality is rising as well. "I have noticed more crews that not necessarily traditional 'masters rowing strongholds' are becoming better and better," says Frank Biller, captain of host Fairmount Rowing Association, "the overall level of masters rowing has improved and having a few ringers in an eight doesn't do it anymore." Nevertheless, a few crews tried that strategy, and both strongholds like Vesper and homegrown teams like Whitmarsh appeared ready and swathed in Lycra.

Racing was indeed heated, partially due to the temperature, which rose to 90 degrees, and partially due to local turf wars. In the Men's Masters E Eight, there seemed to be nine coxswains in each boat as University, Occoquan and Fairmount rolled into the last 200 meters. A cacophony of grunts, shouts of encouragement and frustration, trash talking filled the air space nearing the finish and oh, perhaps the coxswains squeezed a few words in too. University came out ahead in this category, hosts Fairmount claimed their own lofty spot and temporarily empty mug in the Men's B/C eight. The Men's B/C quad required a re-row when lane 4 Pelham went into lane 5 Fairmount. The gracious host team certainly exclaimed politely (it is reported they took the shouting match), but the Pelham team came out ahead on the water.

Singles racing had some decisive victories: Frank Rowe from Undine in the B, Mark Malone Navesink River in the C, Joanna Rubini of Alexandria in the A, Shannon Connor in the B, Ellen St. Clair of Vesper saw lots of open water in the C category, Andrew Washburn of Naragansett saw a similar expanse in the Men's D; Bill Cox, Fran Sutter, Nancy Faigan enjoyed the same in their categories.

In true masters tradition, mixed events were a big hit, and Vesper, Albany, Annapolis, Fairmount, Passaic, and others found winning combinations. Event #41 (Mixed F Double) was the family values event, with each entry related-a testimony to the unity of these amiable doubles. Local hot shots Red and Sara Sargent put aside whose turn it is to do the dishes and drove hard with the legs to come out on top of this category.

Water bottles poured throughout the day in the heat, and many folks raced multiple events due to the low, one entry-fee-only cost of this race, so the end of the day was welcome and satisfying for many. For a complete listing of results: [www.boathouserow.org/reg06/result\\_20060805.htm](http://www.boathouserow.org/reg06/result_20060805.htm)

A list of additional kudos, in no particular order:

- To Mary Rose Burnham, who raced in the Albany RC D/E eight, 6 months pregnant with her first child. According to my sources, she swears this is her last race. Can you imagine the glare she reserves for husband/coach Steve Knapp when he asks her for a "tad more body angle at the catch"?
- To launch driver Steve Malloy of FRA who managed to drive a cantankerous rig with 150 pounds of row2k in the bow and official Bob Suter at his elbow. I understand his training as a Navy helicopter pilot prepared him for this task.
- To Skidmore Community Rowing Masters Women's C 8, who had the fastest women's 8 water time. (Reporter was paid to say that by a band of pink women)
- To assistant reporters Tracy Barlok (who schmoozed the party for row2k incognito), Sarah Tucci, (who always has loads of info she sniffs out), and Kim Mariotti, (who took row2k camera for a ride)
- To amazingly accommodating Greg Liscio, who coordinated launches for the big show, and kept in contact via cell-y on regular intervals.

The Quaker City Masters Regatta was a big hit, and likely all those 566 rowers will be putting it on their calendar for next year."