

WELCOME TO DHARMA VOYAGE

What is Dharma Voyage?

Dharma Voyage is a non-profit organization located in Westport Massachusetts founded in 2009 by internationally trained martial arts instructor, and international coastal rowing competitor, Ben Booth. We offer adult community rowing, skills sessions, and race training programs on the river and youth coastal rowing. What sets our programs apart from others is a training system that increases the participant's skills in attention, creativity, and insight while building strength and endurance.

What is the Organizational Structure?

Board of Directors:

Reed Austin & Cindi Zembo, Co-Presidents
Sue Benfeito & Alicia Green, Co-Treasurers
Nancy Weinstein, Secretary
Sue Daylor
Wendy Henderson

Staff:

Ben Booth, Founder and Instructor
Desiree Brunton, Manager (info@dharmavoyage.org)

Dharma Voyage functions smoothly with the large number of dedicated volunteers who devote countless hours, energy and passion to ensure its success. Find a committee where you might enjoy contributing your effort. Learn a new skill (boat maintenance or coxing), make new friends, help us to build this invaluable resource for our community.

Community Rowing

Youth Programming Outreach

Fundraising

Grantwriting

How do we communicate?

- 1.) Web Page: www.dharmavoyage.org
For new rowers, write to Barbara @ newrowers@dharmavoyage.org
For rowing administrative questions, write to Maureen @ rowing@dharmavoyage.org
- 2.) Sign-Up Genius (web-based scheduling system)

I want to row. How do I make that happen?

- 1.) Fill out a current registration form, sign the required Waiver and Liability Release; Photo and Publicity Consent; and Health Emergency Information and Consent for Medical Assistance forms. The completed forms may be emailed or mailed to Barbara Pontolilo, the Coordinator for New Rowers, as noted in the registration packet.
- 2.) We traditionally hold a group orientation at the Westport Free Public Library every year in April. This has been an informative and valuable experience for our new rowers to get to know our rowing leadership team, as well as answer any questions. When the orientation is scheduled, you will be notified. Please plan to attend.
- 3.) Following the orientation, you will be scheduled for a mandatory, instructional rowing session with Ben Booth that takes place at Hix Bridge Landing. The tentative dates and times will be reviewed at the orientation meeting, and you will have the opportunity to sign up at that time. Please plan to arrive a few minutes early for your instructional row and check in.
- 4.) After completing your instructional row, if you are still interested in joining the rowing program, a membership fee of \$240 will be requested. This may be completed by check or online at the Dharma Voyage website. Payment entitles you to sign up for Open Rowing sessions and Special Event Rows through November plus access to our "Sign-Up Genius".

Rowing Sign-Up

We schedule all our rows using a web-based scheduling system called "Sign-Up Genius". We ask that you don't sign up for more than two rows in a given week (2/week). If a particular row is not filled twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled row, then anyone can sign up for that row.

Please sign-up no later than 6PM on the night prior to the scheduled row, as the coxswains need to plan the boats to be used. If the event is cancelled due to weather conditions, you will be notified by e-mail by our scheduler.

Instructions for signing up with the "Sign-Up Genius" software program will be emailed to you upon membership.

Rowing Logistics

We row from Hix Bridge Landing, located on Hix Bridge Road, in Westport, on the east branch of the Westport River. Westport Town residents can obtain a parking permit (\$30) from the Selectman's office at Westport Town Hall. You will not need to obtain a parking permit until you decide to become a member. Dharma Voyage has some visitor parking permits for non-residents and new rowers. When you park at the Landing parking lot, please park to the rear of the lot, leaving room for boaters and fishermen to park their trailers. The parking at the Landing can sometimes be limited so please park close to the next car to maximize the number of parking spaces.

Our Coxswains

Dharma Voyage has trained coxswains who are invaluable to the process of rowing. They not only steer the boats, but they arrive early to bring the boats to the docks for each assigned row. For purposes of planning which boats to use, we request that you sign up for the row, or cancel the row if you're unable to make it, by 6:00 PM the night before. Also, someone is always needed on the docks to catch and secure lines, or unhitch the lines. So, coming about 15 minutes early for the assigned row helps to run things smoothly.

Safety

Our first priority is to make every rowing experience a safe one. Each boat is equipped with PFD's, and all rowers are encouraged to wear them. Rowers should dress for the weather conditions expected. We recommend dressing in layers, because after about five minutes of rowing your body temperature will increase. Bring some fluids to drink if you wish.

Weather

We try our best to schedule rows on beautiful, blue-sky days. Sometimes that doesn't work out. If a scheduled row is cancelled, you will be notified by e-mail to the address you provide when signing up for the row. We typically row in light drizzle conditions.

Open Recreational Rows

We have a group of coxswains who lead Open Rows at various times and days of the week. The rows last about ninety minutes, beginning and ending at Hix Bridge Landing. If you are unable to commit to this time period, please do not sign up for the row.

Special Event Rows: These are usually scheduled several times a season.

Row from Hix Bridge to the Head of Westport and back, scheduled when it is high tide at the Head. Includes a stop at the "Head Store", the official coffee and donut shop of Dharma Voyage.

Row from Hix Bridge to Westport Harbor and back when the tide is in our favor.

July 4th Row, and several Moonlight Rows, and added recently for the hearty rower, a Row to the Let (approximately 11 miles round trip)

Race Training/Fitness Program

This program is open to any rowing member who wishes to learn more about rowing, gain fitness, and be part of a team. You do not need to be fit or have a lot of rowing experience. As this is primarily a recreational team, the goals will be inclusion, fun, camaraderie, and education.

Ben Booth will coach the rows. In every session, all participants will be taught how to refine their technique, come together as a crew, and discover the safe and fun challenges of gaining the skill and strength to make the boat go! It is understood that there will be a wide range of interest, from those who want to race seriously, to those who do not want to race at all and simply want to learn more about rowing and fitness on the water. There is a separate charge for this twelve-week program.

Races our teams participate in include: Onset, Come Boating Race, Belfast ME, Gloucester Harbor Race and The Head of the Weir Race. There are additional entrance fees for these races.

Skills Training with Ben

Further your rowing artistry, in the boat with Ben Booth, coaching individual and team instruction. Sessions will be tailored to the needs of the crew, focused on personal needs and goals. These will be divided into fundamental and advanced sessions, with fundamentals geared toward new rowers & any rower wanting to delve into the fundamentals and advanced, geared toward more nuanced skill & team building (for racing or the sheer artistry of a well-executed stroke). Cost: \$27/person. Please note: You must first have secured a seat for a specific session through Signup Genius. Following that you may pay online or by check to Dharma Voyage, PO Box N-104, Westport, MA 02790

Due to high demand and limited training opportunities please sign up for no more than 3 training sessions. If 48 hours before a scheduled training session a seat is still available, you may sign up and pay for an additional session. If you have to miss a session you have signed up for you forfeit the payment, however you may find a Community Rowing member replacement. If a training row is cancelled due to weather or other reason you will receive an email at least 45 minutes before the scheduled row and the row will be rescheduled later in the season.

Additionally, Ben now offers free training to members who wish to explore the skills of coxswain, i.e., steering the boats.

Our Fleet

Dharma Voyage has the following boats:

“Voyager” is a thirty-two-foot Pilot Gig with six rowing positions, plus a coxswain.

“Spirit of Westport” also a thirty-two-foot Pilot Gig similar to “Voyager”. This boat was built in 2016 by 8th Grade students in the Westport School System, as part of Dharma Voyage’s Educational Program.

“Mariner’s Endeavor” is a twenty-five-foot rowing dory with four rowing positions and a coxswain. This boat was built in 2016 by high school students in the Westport School System as part of Dharma Voyage’s Educational Program.

A second, twenty-five-foot rowing dory, “Fiona,” was also built by junior/senior high school students, and is in use by the rowing program.

A national class, coastal rowing quad with sliding seats. At this time, the use of the new quad is limited, however, Dharma Voyage is currently creating avenues for a bigger part in the rowing/racing program.

Volunteerism

Dharma Voyage is a community organization. The success of our programs is based on the willingness of its members to step up and help out. The more time we give, the more opportunities will become available for rowing and racing. Volunteering will engender new

friendships and perhaps develop new skills. Many committees in the organization will be seeking help throughout the season and we ask that you help out. Two of our committees, as noted below, are the ones most needing volunteers.

Boat Maintenance

The boats require routine maintenance at various times of the year. This could include sanding, painting, varnishing, carpentry and general cleaning. Email announcements will be sent out as the need arises. We ask that all help with this facet of the program.

Fundraising Activities

Dharma Voyage has a real sense of community, and in addition to having a robust adult rowing program, we also sponsor no-cost youth educational programs that require funding. Although it is not a requirement for our members, we encourage support, in any way you can, of fundraising events we sponsor.

“You only miss 100% of the chances you don’t take” Wayne Gretzky. One year gives you 365 chances to embolden the impact of Dharma Voyage. Bring your ideas, skills, and energy front and center – this is YOUR organization.

Welcome!

Revised 1/05/2024