

begins Thursday

NORTH WILDWOOD -- Throughout the Jersey Cape and as far south as Florida, it is known as "The Challenge," 21 miles of heat, sweat and pain that tax the ability, skill and endurance of the best athletes.

Again this year, over 30 teams of rowers will tackle this challenge, known better as the Around-The-Island Row.

Hosted by the North Wildwood Beach Patrol and sponsored this year by Coors Brewing and Kramer Beverage, this athletic challenge enters its 14th year on Thursday, Aug. 17 at 7:45 a.m. off the 15th Avenue beach, here, and promises to continue in its growth.

The Row, as it is fondly called throughout the Jersey Cape, began in 1976 when a couple of area residents wanted to see what it would be like to row the 21-mile course around the Wildwoods. This idea developed into a competition among area beach patrols, since ocean and bay rowing is part of the necessary lifeguard rescue skills.

The first year, the race only included the local beaches, the Wildwoods and Cape May. The second year the same, then the third time as far as Avalon was invited to attend. The fourth year, crews from Atlantic City, Ocean City, Sea Isle City and other South Jersey beaches became interested in pitting their skills against this formidable course.

Harry Zander and Jim Troy are on record as being the first Around the Island Row winners with a time of 2 hours and 58 minutes, which stood as a course record until 1983 when Ron Kirk and John Herron of the Ocean City Beach Patrol broke that mark at 2:57.5. That mark stood for just four years, as Dennis Funk and George Miller, Ventnor City Beach Patrol alumni, set the existing time of 2:56.6.

The new record holders will be back this year, as will the 1988 champions Kirk and Chuck Dunn of Ocean City. Also competing is a crew from Hollywood, Fla., Joe Taylor (formerly of the North Wildwood Beach Patrol) and Jerry Falconer.

Funk and Miller are a perfect example of what "The Challenge" stands for. The pair set a South Jersey record by winning three straight doubles South Jersey championship rowing titles from 1973-75 and have long since retired from lifeguarding competitions. Miller is an attorney in Atlantic City and Funk is a builder. Still, they use the Around-the-Island Row as a reason to continue rowing and stay in shape.

But, it is the challenge of this North Wildwood event that keeps drawing them back.

"When you begin the race, your goal is just to finish," exclaimed Funk after his 1987 record win, admitting that the course record was not a goal that day.

What is so difficult about this rowing challenge?

First, there is Hereford Inlet. The race begins off the 15th Avenue beach and heads north to the inlet. Here, the rowers encounter their first challenges, navigating the rough seas at the inlet's mouth with the exchanging tides and maneuvering around the sandbars.

The course continues up the inlet, underneath the Ocean Drive bridge to the Grassy Sound drawbridge where it enters the calmer waters of the backbays. Though the waters may be calmer, the challenge is not. Heat, dehydration and the ever-present greenheads (biting flies) menace the rowers, as do rude boaters who refuse to give the right of way to the competitors.

Committee powerboats escort and patrol the rowers, who after about an hour are stretched along several miles. These volunteers offer fluids and any assistance needed during the race. It should also be noted that there are many more courteous boaters than rude ones and many times people not even involved with the race will offer any help they can.

Racers continue along the backbays through the West Wildwood Trestle and under the George Redding Bridge and continue to the Cape May jetty underneath the Ocean Drive Bridge. Here, they again must battle the exchanging waters of the inlet and ocean as they head out to sea.

Now, they are in the home stretch, the five-mile sprint up the Wildwoods beachfront back to the 15th Avenue starting point.

The most memorable finish in the Row's history came when the course was reversed and the finish came out of Hereford Inlet, against the tide.

Throughout the race, Avalon's Dan O'Malley and Pete Soderman had trailed Mark Spencer and Rick Dove of Brigantine. However, as the Brigantine boat came out of the inlet it got caught on a sandbar, causing them to lose valuable time and energy.

Now totally drained, of both body fluids (due to the heat and humidity) and energy, Spencer and Dove were unable to fend off the last-minute challenge of O'Malley and Soderman.

"With 100 yards to go, O'Malley told me to 'fire the retro-rockets' and I said 'Absolutely!'," related Soderman as he and O'Malley sped by the Brigantine boat just yards prior to the finish line to win the 1981 Row by 30 seconds.

This is a prime example of the competitive spirit that has become synonymous with the Around-The-Island Row. As for why these tandems do it, since there is no prize money involved, 1982 champion Rick Shoyer of the Ocean City Beach Patrol states it perfectly.

"I made it," an exhausted Shoyer responded after his 3:00.01 time in 1982 with Tom Morrison. "I set my own personal record completing the row and that's all that counts."

1989

ite duo wins rowing marathon

G-L 8/23/89

Kelly, Grant Around-The-Island-Row champs in 3:00.8

By Mark Stone
NORTH WILDWOOD -- John Kelly and Stu Grant of the Margate Beach Patrol knew they were among the best, if not the best, rowing tandems in South Jersey. The only thing now was to prove it to everyone else.

For one day, they did.
 Kelly and Grant overtook three boats along the final stretch of the 21-mile course to win the 14th Annual Around-The-Island-Row in three hours and eight seconds on Thursday, Aug. 17.

Hosted by the North Wildwood Beach Patrol and co-sponsored this year by Coors Brewing Company and

Kramer Beverage, the Row featured a record-tying field of 38 boats that began the trek off the 15th Avenue beach at 8:06 a.m. That field was narrowed down to one, Kelly and Grant, when the race concluded at 11:06:08 a.m.

The Margate Beach Patrol pair survived the challenge of 37 other rowing crews, not to mention the heat, humidity, cramps, tides, currents, bugs and other hazards along the 21-mile course that encompasses the oceanfront, inlets and backbay areas of the Wildwoods.

The Row does not offer prize money for the victors. So, why accept this challenge?

"We know that there are three or four good crews every year and we thought we were one of them this year," stated Kelly. "There are only three big races each year (Dutch Hoffmans, Margate Memorials and South Jerseys) and we didn't win any of them. So, we had to win this one."

Kelly and Grant, who have been rowing as a team for three years, did win the Brigantine Memorials, but finished second at the Dutch Hoffmans, fourth in the Margates and fifth in the South Jerseys. They finished 13th in last year's Around-The-Island-Row.

As the pair knew and realized as the race continued, it takes more than brawn to win this rowing challenge. It takes knowledge and experience. They had both. Kelly is a collegiate crew rower at the University of Pennsylvania. Grant the same at Rutgers University. The pair used every bit of rowing know-how they had to conquer this challenge.

First, they had to overcome the day's

heat and humidity. Several rowers, including Row veterans Ron Kirk of Ocean City and former champions Dennis Funk and George Miller, experienced cramps during the opening miles that hindered their progress.

Cramps and dehydration dealt a severe blow to Chris McCann and Jim Gibbons of the Wildwood Beach Patrol. They were leading by 50 yards two thirds through the race, but had to withdraw when Gibbons severely cramped up. He spent 48 hours in the intensive care unit of Burdette Tomlin Memorial Hospital and was released Saturday.

The Margate pair knew this possibility could happen and took measures to counter it.

"You have to approach this race like a marathon. You have to take fluids. We were taking drinks every 20 minutes at the end," Grant noted.

With the physical problems handled, the Margate pair could concentrate on the race itself. They were fourth entering Cape May Harbor, but soon passed Kirk and Dunn of Ocean City. Moving North along the Wildwood beachfront to the finish, they passed Chris Oves and Joe Sheffer of Ocean City and Paul Murray and Jim McDewitt of Ventnor.

"We got our stroke back and just overtook everyone. We wanted to have a good lead on Ventnor going into the home stretch and they key for that is to have an efficient stroke. We have as good as stroke as anyone," related Kelly.

"Once we got the lead, our goal was to just hold them off," Grant added on the homestretch strategy. "Every time we saw Ventnor take a drink, we tried

to row a few strokes ahead of them." Grant and Kelly finished 50 yards ahead of the Murray and McDev winning by a scant 23 seconds. O and Sheffer came in third, one minute behind the Ventnor crew.

As always, there are many side stories to the Row. One of them had to do with age. Among the 38 crews was that consisted on an original Row and the youngest Rowers.

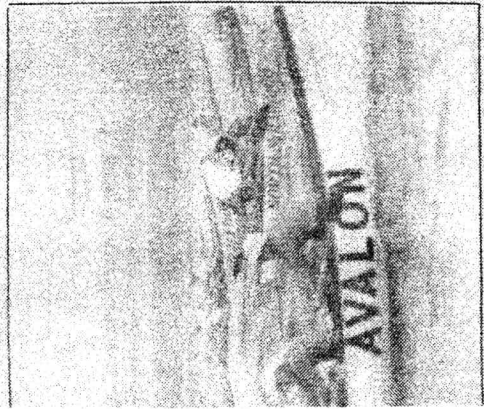
Ralph Atwell of the Cape May Beach Patrol participated in the first Row in 1976. He noted that every year (he participated in 10 of the 14 Rows), takes a new partner on this journey. His partner this day was Todd DeSnick, age 16. Was DeSnick ready for this journey that has conquered veteran rowers twice his age?

"I have been rowing all year and most of my friends kept telling me to go for it," DeSnick noted on his desire to compete in this event. "We did surprise me on the Row was length. After we got through Cape May Inlet and into the ocean, I realized we still had five more miles to go. He'll tell you that I would do it again."

The lone female competitor this year did an excellent job. Linda Kelly of Wildwood Crest Beach Patrol teamed with George Glover and finished 28th (out of the 36 finishers) with a time of 3:22:55.

If there was a team award for the Row, it would have gone to the Ventnor Beach Patrol. It entered five boats and all finished in the top 10.

Please turn to Page 3B
 "Row"



Photos by Mark Stone

Around-The-Island-Row...



em of John Kelly and Stu Grant overpowered the competition to win the

- 1989 -

BY GUY GARGAN
For The Press

NORTH WILDWOOD — The 14th annual North Wildwood Regatta, which will be held at the South Jersey beach town, will begin at 10 a.m. Thursday.

An expected field of 40 two-man boats will get a head start at the 10th Street beach and rowing competition will be held around Wildwood Island.

The early start is because of the incoming tide. North Wildwood Beach Patrol Chief Tony Cavalieri said, "The high tide is at 8:49. They'll go through the Hereford Inlet with the tide and later also have it going out to sea at the Cape May Inlet."

The crews will race the Hereford Inlet, 99 under the Stone Harbor Bridge, turn into the Wildwood back bay, 69 under the Cape May Bridge, 69 through the Cape May Inlet, and travel upward through the ocean back to 15th Street.

Darren Ford and Bob Dougherty, the 1963 South Jersey doubles rowing champions, have not entered, but several competitors are expected to be in the field.

Dennis Funk and George Miller are usually listed as the favorite to win the regatta.

They finished fourth in 1967 and fifth in 1968.

They also finished fourth in 1969 and fifth in 1970.

They also finished fourth in 1971 and fifth in 1972.

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They also finished fourth in 1983 and fifth in 1984.

They also finished fourth in 1985 and fifth in 1986.

They also finished fourth in 1987 and fifth in 1988.

They also finished fourth in 1989 and fifth in 1990.

Let the rowing crew should certainly be in the hunt. The two veteran rowers, Kirk and Dunn, recorded a time of 2:09.34 in 1983 and were second in the regatta on Monday.

Ventura's Jim McDewitt and Paul Morris, third on Monday, will also be competing. Mike McGrath and Don McEachern have been knocking on the door for a long time, and Thursday they'll get another chance.

The Longport veterans were third in the row around Wildwood in 1983, and second in 1984, 1985 and 1987.

Another contending crew will be Terry Randolph and Marty Franco from Cape May. The Cape May boat of Rich Demers and Geoff Rife could also challenge.

Joe Sheller and Chris Oves of Ocean City were fifth in 1983 and should do well. Bill Howarth and Jim Mason made an early start, a year ago and will also be on hand Thursday.

The Press, Atlantic City, N.J., Friday, August 17, 1989

ISLAND ROWING

Kelley-Grant row to victory in North Wildwood event

Wildwood duo stopped by illness in Gibbun's

By GUY GARGAN
For The Press

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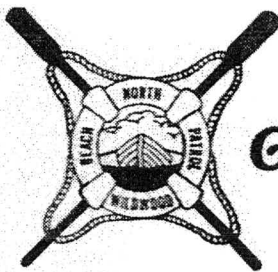
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CITY of NORTH WILDWOOD

CAPE MAY COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

BEACH PATROL

14TH ANNUAL AROUND THE ISLAND ROW - 8/17/89

ORDER OF FINISH

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>BEACH PATROL</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>CREW</u>
1	MC	3:00:08	John Kelly Stu Grant
2	VC	3:00:35	Paul Murray Jim McDevitt
3	OC	3:01:36	Chris Oves Joe Sheffer
4	L	3:04:35	Don McCasheen Mike Mc Grath
5	VC	3:05:50	Dennis Funk George Miller
6	VC	3:08:48	Bill Howarth Jim Mason
7	VC	3:10:08	Scott Jones Tom Skewitt
8	NW	3:10:49	Dave Dumaldi Steve Cordasco
9	AC	3:12:05	Butch Joseph Mike Hughes
10	VC	3:12:17	Paul Money Ed Herrold
11	A	3:12:22	Dave Con John Domb
12	CM	3:13:31	Tom Randolph Marty Franco
13	H	3:15:14	Joe Taylor Jerry Falconer
14	CM	3:15:30	Geoff Rife Rich Demers
15	W	3:15:50	Lois Ehlers Doug Likens
16	OC	3:16:26	Ron Kirk Chuck Dunn
17	BB	3:17:35	John Niedenstein Steve Knapp
18	W	3:19:08	Glen Nardelli Steve Kowalik
19	MC	3:19:58	Kevin Corcoran Bill Money
20	WC	3:21:25	John Fair John Lincke
21	WC	3:21:51	Ron Peters Ron Ayees
22	A	3:21:58	Mark Duzak JF Masley
23	WC	3:22:55	Linda Kelly George Glover



CITY of NORTH WILDWOOD

CAPE MAY COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

BEACH PATROL

14TH ANNUAL AROUND THE ISLAND ROW - 8/17/89

ORDER OF FINISH

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>BEACH PATROL</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>CREW</u>
24	OC	3:23:14	Robert Desjardis Tom Fries
25	BC	3:28:52	Willie Baldwin Fran Masino
26	CM	3:29:00	Tom McLaughlin Hwy Bach
27	UT	3:29:30	Steve Cill Greg Kamp
28	W	3:30:24	Ed Macklin Bl Abington
29	NW	3:32:20	Mike Burke Vinc Adgan
30	CMP	3:32:51	Keith Jackson Bill Kessel
31	CM	3:33:40	Ralph Atwell Todd De Satnick
32	A	3:37:28	Kevin Zuenn Jim Zerek
33	LBT	3:38:12	Mike Woodland Ken Gallant
34	W	3:41:16	Vince Fitzpatrick Pat Sherbin
35	NW	3:44:02	Har Jennings Tom Berry
36	CMP	3:48:50	Bob Curb Steve Beech
37	LBT	Did not finish	Harold Buck Dieter Kamm
38	W	Did not finish	Jim Gibbons Chris McCann

Row

Continued from Page 1B

8/17/89

The top 15 finishers for the 1989 Around The Island Row and their times are:

1. John Kelly/Stu Grant, Margate, 3:00.08.
2. Paul Murray/Jim McDevitt, Ventnor, 3:00.35.
3. Chris Oves/Joe Sheffer, Ocean City, 3:01.36.
4. Don MacEachern/Mike McGrath, Longport, 3:04.35.
5. Dennis Funk/George Miller, Ventnor, 3:05.50.
6. Bill Howarth/Jim Mason, Ventnor, 3:08.48.
7. Scott Jones/Tom Hewitt, Ventnor, 3:10.08.

8. Dave Grimaldi/Steve Cordasco, North Wildwood, 3:10.49.
9. Butch Joseph/Mike Hughes, Atlantic City, 3:12.05.
10. Paul Money/Ed Herrold, Ventnor, 3:12.17.
11. Dave Cox/John Glomb, Avalon, 3:12.22.
12. Terry Randolph/Marty Franco, Cape May, 3:13.31.
13. Joe Taylor/Jerry Falconer, Hollywood, Fla., 3:15.14.
14. Geoff Rife/Rich Demers, Cape May, 3:15.30.
15. Loy Ehlers/Doug Aikens, Wildwood, 3:15.50.