

## GOING STRONG AT 91



Paul Randell got started in rowing in 1987. He was 71 years old at the time and entered a rowing competition with very little rowing experience under his belt. He ended up winning the competition and a rowing machine and that was the beginning of a wonderful “career” of training, competing and traveling the world.

“I figured I had run 16,000 miles and I just needed a new challenge,” he says. Through competitions on a Concept2 rower and via the Concept2 web-based portals, Paul is finding the thrill of competition satisfying. “The air at contest time is electrical,” he says. “I feel like I’m walking among giants in the fitness industry!” Paul

takes great interest in his competition throughout the year. “I’m always asking them what they hear about my competition and they tell me there is no one in my age group and weight class that is my competition!”

Paul rows on a Concept2 rower at the Elkhart YMCA in Elkhart, Indiana about 4,000-5,000 meters almost every day. On sprint days he does closer to 3,000. “I’ve already won a 5 million mile T-shirt,” he says “and I probably have enough to be close to 10 million,” it’s just a matter of adding up his many log books to be sure. When he does reach 10 million he is looking forward to an embroidered sweatshirt from Concept2.

What does he love about rowing? One thing is that you don’t wear out very many shoes! Another is how young he feels. But, in the end, it’s the thrill of competition that keeps Paul going. This year’s Concept2 Euro Open is in Dresden, Germany and he is ready. Last year he missed the cut off for Amsterdam by just a matter of seconds. “Yesterday I took the day off and went fishing, but today I’ve got to get in to the Y and get rowing!”

# BUILDING A SENIOR COMMUNITY WITH THE C2 INDOOR

*Indoor rowing has seen a huge resurgence in recent years, and the senior market is no stranger to this fantastic, total body exercise. Many turn to rowing for the fitness aspect yet even more turn to rowing for the social aspect: both in indoor rowing group fitness classes and virtual group fitness classes. Meredith Haff, with Marketing - New Customer Development, at Concept2 shared some of her thoughts on why indoor rowing is such a great fit with seniors.*

**OSF:** I understand that many of your senior rowers participate in Concept2’s web based rowing competitions. How do you build a community that brings seniors together in a virtual environment?

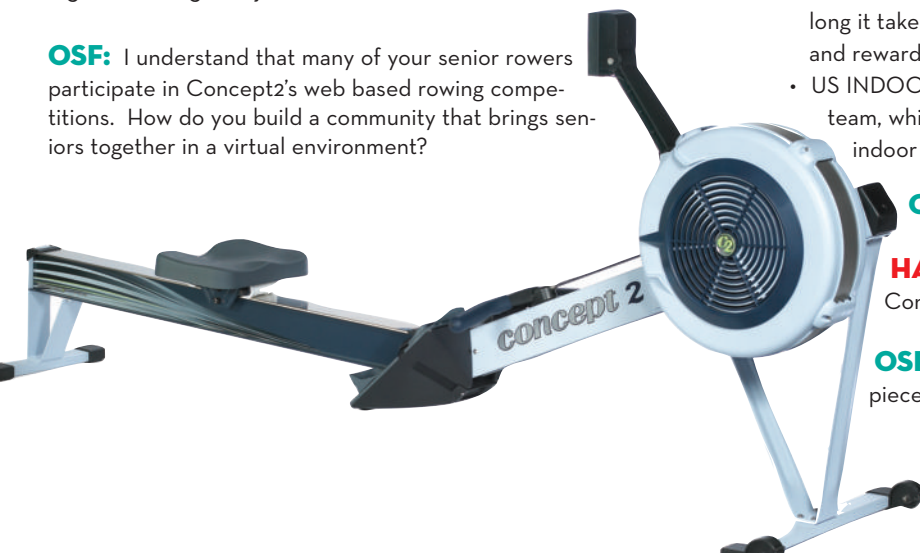
**HAFF:** There are a number of programs that we offer that have been working well for seniors:

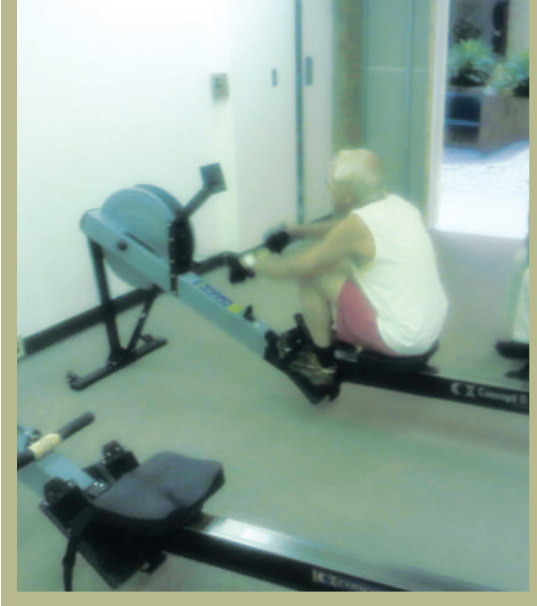
- ONLINE RANKING - where you see how you stack up with others in your age group
- VIRTUAL TEAMS FOR ONLINE CHALLENGES - here we have entire teams of over-60 athletes. For example, the “Ancient Mariners”. They even have their own newsletters!
- INDIVIDUAL ONLINE CHALLENGES - it doesn’t matter how long it takes you, if you get to the goal, you will be recognized and rewarded.
- US INDOOR ROWING TEAM - there are several seniors on this team, which will travel to Europe this winter to compete in indoor rowing competitions.

**OSF:** How do seniors find out about these programs?

**HAFF:** From friends, health club trainers and the Concept2 website.

**OSF:** Do they find the “techy” side of the on-line piece challenging?





- issues with knees, ankles or feet.
- This seated exercise can also be a great choice for a person with balance issues.
- Rowing offers cardiovascular conditioning, builds strength and develops flexibility – one exercise that does all three things for the whole body
- Rowing is also a great choice for someone with vision loss or impairment. The monitor features a “Large Print” display option, among others.
- Rowing can be done as hard or as easily as you like. The intensity is totally user-controlled. This is why it is used in many rehab centers – while at the other end of the spectrum it is a training tool for Olympic athletes. **OSF**

**HAFF:** Many seniors seem very comfortable with the online entry. Yes, there are a few who are not online....sometimes coaches and trainers will enter their data for them.

For more information contact Concept2 at 800-245-5676, or [www.concept2.com](http://www.concept2.com)

# COMMUNITY FOR ROWERS

**OSF:** With your many on-line communities, do you have requests for a seniors only page?

**HAFF:** It's something we have been considering....and will probably happen soon.

**OSF:** Do most of your senior participants have rowing experience or are they introduced to the sport as seniors?

**HAFF:** Both. Many have never rowed on the water. Some meet rowing in cardiac rehab and get hooked. Others find it when they are forced to stop running due to leg issues.

**OSF:** What makes rowing a good exercise for seniors?

**HAFF:** There are a number of reasons that rowing is good for seniors:

- The seated exercise minimizes impact on the legs and feet – yet there is still large involvement of all the leg muscles, and they are put through a wide range of motion – so rowing offers a great way to keep your legs fit, strong and flexible even if you have

## THE ANCIENT MARINERS

Bill Keating started rowing about 62 years ago and is now part of the The Ancients Organization (TAO), an on-line community of senior citizens, at Concept2. “To know that we are in our own small way encouraging other men and women in our age group to believe that the best is yet to come and to make sure our bodies and minds are ready when it does come,” is a great inspiration for him and his group, he says. “In the meantime, it also feels great to just plain feel great! The Concept2 people are always there for us and the site (community) they have created also helps keep me going. It is an amazing company. I would have to say that they are UNIQUE.”

Bill visits the Concept2 website several times a day to see how his four team boats (the Ancient Mariners, Tasmania, Tierra del Fuego, and Timbuktu) are doing. “I also check on my own progress within the boat and where I am at on the particular Honor Board which I have at the time earned a right to be listed upon,” he says. “A few times a week I also visit the Rankings to see where I stand in one of the recognized distances and times compared to other people in my age range worldwide. Hopefully I then take another stab at improving my time or distance during that week. This is a great way to bring some diversity and real physical and mental challenge to my regimen.”

The Ancient Mariners has had about 120 members over the past four plus years and continues to reach out to seniors. “I am continually amazed at the sense of community which each of our boats has been able to create. When you consider that the only thing we initially share is rowing, it does speak well for the world when people from several points on the globe can suddenly come together and create an amenable community.”

“But, it is actually about so much more than rowing. Just doing it also encourages one to do some weight lifting and other practices which improve strength, flexibility, and endurance. Several of our people also bike ride extensively, swim, and run. Many of our members also actually row on the water and compete in some of the major rowing/racing events. Most important of all, we have many members who just quietly row regularly and enjoy it. Indeed, that is the only rule we ever put on paper for our members. Just row regularly and enjoy it. Emphasize: enjoy it!”