



Alexandria Community Rowing

ACR Sliding Seat

May 2005 issue

www.rowalexandria.com

ACR: Back in the Swing of Things

It was a long, cold winter of erging and lifting weights—or swimming and spin classes, for those who needed to unplug from the boathouse scene and rowing thing—but now we're back in full swing!

Can't believe it's nearly the end of May, and before we know it, Stonewall Regatta on June 11 (the same day the Mike Tyson returns to D.C. to fight) will be here, and we'll get our first chance to show the D.C. area rowing teams (and our loyal fans) what we're made of, down here in the industrial part of the Potomac River. ☺ Good luck with your training, everyone!

Here's just a bit of news for you—of course, do keep checking our Web site for regatta schedule updates, class schedules for the summer, and other current news we need to know as a community.

Our current meter ranking as ACR on Concept II rowing log, for the University/Club Standings for 2006 Season (May 1, 2005-April 30, 2006), is #24 out of 356 teams! So far this season, we have logged in 567,347 meters, or 33,373 per member. Check it out for yourself at

<http://www.concept2.com/sranking03/challenge/univStandings2006.asp>:

get inspired to keep raising our ranking, only 17 of us are registered—so log on and keep adding those meters!

Want to have a friend join an ACR program? **Programs are still open**—and registration is easy and now online! Here's how to do it: Just go to our main Web site, <http://www.rowalexandria.com>, and you'll see there the blue word "Register" on the homepage to click through for a series of different program options and pricing listings. You can also register for sculling and sweep-to-sculling programs this same way, just scroll down the page a bit. Plus, there are membership agreements, waiver forms, etc., everything you need, online.

Interested in what's up "behind the scenes"? Check out the "Members" section of the Web site for the latest minutes of steering committee—be the first to know!

See you at the boathouse, then. It's nearly time for sandals & unis and being able to row right at 5:30am in the daylight...

Note from New Editor: Send me stuff—news, ideas, poetry, etc. I want to hear from you...story ideas that you'd like to write, proposed columns, etc. This *Sliding Seat* newsletter is a group effort! Write me at Kathryn_mullan@hotmail.com--no weird e-mail, blurbs with run-on sentences, or strange photos, please. Thanks—I look forward to hearing from you soon! ☺ --Kathryn Mullan

Announcements & Notices

BY AMANDA MEREDITH

Got Junk? Time for a Spring Yard Sale!



April 2004—Sara Uberman, Beth Westlund, and Leslie Shinnners smile proudly under their yard sale sign.

GOT JUNK? Need to clean out your closets? Busy with your spring-cleaning? You're in luck! The Women's Sweep 5-Day (a.k.a. "Nationally Competitive") program is holding its annual yard sale fundraiser. We will gladly take that junk off your hands—we will even pick it up!! And remember, **donations are tax-deductible**. (We will give you a receipt for tax purposes, to keep the auditors off your backs.☺)

DATE: 4 June 2005 (RAIN DATE: 5 June 2005)
PLACE: 20 W. Braddock Rd., Alexandria, VA

We will happily accept all donations until May 31, and would especially appreciate high-ticket items like cell phones, radios, TVs, VCRs, other electronic equipment, sporting goods, kitchen items, and furniture.

Donations can be dropped at the yard sale site at any time (20 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria, please drop at the end of the driveway by the fence) or can be dropped in the a.m. in the boathouse stairwell by the front door. If you would like us to pick up any items, please contact us at acryardsale@hotmail.com.

Thanks for your support. Spread the word among those beyond the rowing community... it will be a fun ACR team-bonding day, so please plan on coming out and seeing what we round up with your help! This is the flyer you can forward to your friends,
<http://www.rowalexandria.com/docs/acryardsalev2.doc>, and here is the receipt form:
<http://www.rowalexandria.com/docs/acrdonationreceipt.com>.

Births

ACR rower Edie Ashton and John Sheridan are the new parents of Catherine Joyce Sheridan, born on Friday, May 6, 2005. Catherine weighed 7lbs 8oz, was 20 inches long, and reportedly is as "cute as a button!!"

ACR & Me

BY MARY CLAY BERRY



When I first joined Alexandria Community Rowing in 1990, the club consisted of the shed and a motley collection of boats. Our daughter Clay, who had rowed for T.C., was off at college, but my husband and I continued to receive Crew Boosters' newsletter. Since the rowing program had been part of the agreement with the city when the boathouse was built, I saw a notice about rowing lessons in the newsletter. I was 52; I had been running, but my knees were hurting, and I was looking for another way to exercise. I spoke to Royce Drake who was listed as "dockmaster." He said he would be happy to teach me—so the following Saturday morning, I went to the boathouse.

True to his word, Royce took me out in an ocean-going Maas double. Royce rowed while I struggled with the huge oars. All the while, Royce explained to me in engineering terms how to row. Although I didn't want to admit it, I was baffled. Eventually, we returned to the dock and found that two other women had showed up: Anna Leider, a former T.C. rower, and Celia Merzbacher, a newcomer to the sport. We all went out in a wooden quad, the Douglas that belonged to the high school. By this time, it was hot and the river had been churned up by the passage of many motorboats. I prayed that we would make it back to the dock before I got sick. When we did, I was covered with blood because my fingernails were too long. Years later, Celia told me that she looked at me and thought, "That woman will never come back." I went home and went to bed for the rest of the day, but the following weekend, I filed down my nails and returned to the boathouse.

The ACR fleet consisted of an odd craft assortment, although a few individuals like Jaime Rubini, Tom Burke, Frede Ottinger, and the Digilios had their own single shells, and Dave Joy had a recreational single. In addition to the Maas, there were two singles named Icarus and Pygmalion, known as "the Ick and the Pig." They had been filled with a substance resembling

Styrofoam, making them unsinkable; but rowing one was like propelling a log down the Potomac. There was also a Japanese single, a Fuji fitted out with a pair of Kashper riggers that looked like something from a Japanese print. I once took it out but could not get back to the dock. I sat becalmed among the pilings, close to tears, when my daughter came along in a single. Together, we managed to get the boat ashore.

Everyone was generous with boats and advice. Tom let Clay row his Vespoli. He, Royce, and Jaime offered tips and encouragement. Frede Ottinger gave me rowing lessons. She also started a "Mom's Class" on summer evenings. Under Frede's watchful eye, about 10 of us paddled around in whatever boats we could assemble. (Frede, Bette Gorman, and I are the only ones still rowing with ACR from that group, although a later class included Therese Crahan.)

At Frede's suggestion, my daughter and I went off to Craftsbury Rowing Camp in August, where Clay excelled, and I began to feel comfortable in a shell. When I returned, ACR had acquired a Peinert single. Anxious to show off my new skills, I jumped into it and rowed to the airport. I almost made it back. Most of ACR's tiny membership was assembled on the dock as I approached, then a keeper opened, the oar flew out of the lock, and the boat flipped, the first of my many immersions in the Potomac.

That fall, Steve Weir offered ACR's first sweep rowing program for adults. About 20 of us—men and women—assembled every morning in darkness to row two wooden Pocock eights. These boats were so heavy that it took a dozen of us to carry one. Our goal was to race at the Head of the Occoquan in early November. The day of the race was beautiful, the foliage at its peak, the sun shining. We arrived to find a crowd of college students staring at our boats; they had never seen wooden shells. Our women's crew included a trio of current ACR rowers, Alice Reid, Bette, and me, and Frede Ottinger was our cox. We felt great about ourselves until we looked at the photograph Sportgraphics had taken of us (**see photo** this page). It looked like every woman was rowing a different race!

That winter I trained for my first erg sprint. I did it in my basement, not something I would recommend to anyone. Someone loaned me a video that enabled me to row on the Charles River "behind" world-class oarsman Tiff Wood. Up and down the river Tiff and I went. Last year, when Bette and I rowed a double at the Head of the Charles, I had a strong sense of *déjà vu*. Tiff and I had already done this many times! The erg sprint was horrible but exhilarating—and I was briefly the third fastest lightweight woman between the age of 50 and 60 in the world.

[To be continued in June 2005...stay tuned for more and a pic of ACR's first MEN'S 8!]

Save the Date:

U.S. Rowing Convention, Dec. 1-3, 2005

Although it is still some months away, here's a heads-up about the 2005 U.S. Rowing Convention this year. It will be held in north Baltimore (Sheraton Baltimore North, 903 Dulaney Valley Rd. Towson, MD), December 1-3, 2005 (Thursday to Saturday).

This conference will have many rowing training lectures, coaches & referees clinics, vendors, and the usual bag loads of "free stuff." See

<http://www.usrowing.org/ItemDisplay.asp?id=284> for details...

Start thinking about it now! This year's convention should be within even the more frugal person's budget for any rower in this area, as taking the public transport up and back will

shave off costs of about \$100/day. Carpooling up and back (at least on Saturday) would also be very cost-effective, as **parking is FREE** on Saturday at the hotel.

On Thursday, December 1, and Friday, December 2, it is also possible and practical to take the MARC train from Union Station in Washington D.C. to Penn Station in Baltimore (\$14 round trip), and then connect with the No. 11 bus (\$3.20 round trip) to the conference hotel. Total=\$17.20/day +conference fee (not yet published). The hotel costs this year are \$115/day, plus \$14.95 taxes, and then parking fees. Total=\$ 129.95 +parking +conference fee (not yet published).

What Else Could Be Here?

Another column...perhaps a notice/rental board of things for sale or rent from our members...something like this...Coming soon!