



# BRASS NEWS

Berkshire Rowing and Sculling Newsletter

July 2015

## Warm weather

Hopefully by now, you have had a chance to get into a boat, winter definitely didn't want to leave the Berkshires. And as you may have noticed the Boathouse is very busy some mornings. Lauren and her crew are doing an awesome job getting everyone in boats. Be sure to thank them!!

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*"Just keep going, everybody gets better if they keep at it."*

— Ted Williams

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## Special Meeting at First Club Day

Although the rain and wind were whipping away it didn't stop those of us in attendance at the June Club Day from enjoying the various foods brought, and visiting with each other. A special meeting was also held to pass the new ByLaws. If you would like to read them they are located at <http://berkshirerowing.com/brass-bylaws/>.

## In This Issue

- Warm Weather
- Special Meeting
- Annual Meeting
- Whistles
- Club Days
- BRASS Juniors
- Drifting Away—Part 1
- 4th of July Parade
- July Club Day



## What it means to go to the Annual meeting

As we strive to move forward with the club we also strive to come together. Each April we hold the annual BRASS meeting and while sitting at the meeting on April 19th, I realized that maybe many members do not know why we hold this annual meeting. So here is a brief overview.

The Annual meeting goes over the balance sheet from the previous year, the proposed budget for the current year, elections of new trustees if their term is up. Along with speaking about our plans for the upcoming rowing season; getting ideas and feedback from you, displaying the areas we have volunteer opportunities in within the club.

And last but not least, enjoying food and time with others that enjoy the same sport. If you have not attended in the past, we hope next April we will see you!

The current Board of Trustees and the year their term expires:

Don Roche—President (2017)  
Dorothy Smith—Treasurer (2017)  
Carol Morrison—Secretary (2018)  
Harriet Cuyler (2018)  
Linda Dulye (2018)  
Anne Faber (2016)  
Sue Hanson (2018)  
Chris King (2016)  
Tina McLaughlin (2017)  
Joanne Murphy (2016)  
Randy Oberle (2018)

\* Trustees terms expire in April at the Annual meeting.



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*"There is just one life for each  
of us: our own."*

*-- Euripides*

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## Whistles

All boats are now equipped with whistles. We realize that not everyone wears a life vest, which has a whistle on it. So a whistle has been added to each boat. The whistles are attached to lanyards, which in turn are attached to the rigger in front of the foot stretchers.

Remember, to signal for help, the sound pattern is:

***3 short blasts-3 long blasts-3 short blasts***

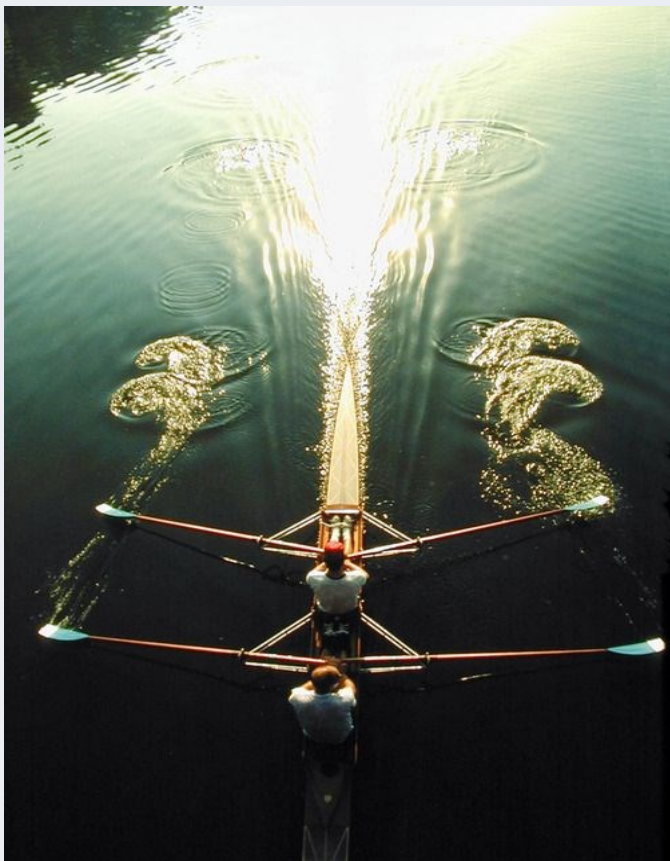
should that be difficult, the following is also recognized as a distress signal:

***3 blasts***

## Club Days

The following Saturday dates are the remaining club days for the season:

- August 8
- September 12, Ultimate Bernie Ryan Regatta



Just thought that this was a cool photo.  
Photo found on [andybaird.coim](http://andybaird.coim)

## BRASS Juniors

BRASS was founded 20 years ago, but most of the rowers around us at the boathouse have been at it for a very short time. Those of us who have already come to love it intensely might wish we'd started a little earlier, like maybe when we were twelve. We have a few like that, and we're looking for more (age 12-ish to 17-ish).

These young people are not only the future of rowing, they are faster maturing, mentally and physically stronger and really fun to be around! For a little insight, read part one of "Drifting Away." Olivia calls this a true fable; it's certainly a fable, but it captures the essence of the rowing experience, combined with a fever-dream of the unexpected. We spend quite a bit of time imagining unexpected troubles and how we should best react to them. This is not only an important safety exercise, the kids love the sheer horror that they can conjure. Fun!

All of us at BRASS would like to send a special thank-you to parents and grandparents who have gone the miles to get these kids to the boathouse. None of it can happen without your support. Thank you thank you thank you!

If you have sons or daughters, grandchildren, or there's that really interesting kid across the street, send them our way; drop a note to Lauren ([berkshirerowingandsculling@gmail.com](mailto:berkshirerowingandsculling@gmail.com)) with a name and email address and we'll give them either a learn to row lesson, or put them right into the Juniors program.



Raeayn, Coach Randy, Coach Lauren, Catie, Matt, Olivia, Marie.  
Not Pictured: Coach Nick, Abbie, Jacquie



This is a short story by one  
of our Junior rowers...  
Please enjoy!!

Drifting Away  
"A True Fable"  
By Olivia Douhan

*Part 1*

I pulled the oars to my chest, setting my hands on the very edges of the oar handles. Sitting in my safety position, I let my arms rest out in front of me, still clutching the oars. I straightened my back and set my legs down and level with the boat. I looked to my right watching the oar rest on the water.

I watched as a tiny droplet of water dripped off of the oar and landed in the water. I looked over the edge of the boat into the cloudy murky water and noticed the blurry reflection of the oar on the surface. My eyes trailed up the oar handle looking at its design, over the boat, all the way to the left side of the boat and down the left oar. I looked at the left oar suspended on the water. Tightening my grip on the oar handles I began to row.

Sliding up to the catch, I bent my knees and leaned forward, squared my oars and let them drop. They fell from the air and dove into the still water, submerging under the surface. Pushing backwards with the strength in my legs, I pushed the blades forward through the water, as I leaned backward in my seat on the boat, pulling the oars to my chest again.

When I couldn't lean backward any more, I turned my hands, feathering the blades and lifted up. With a fit of splashing the oars slid, smooth as a snake back to the top, reemerging out of the water and swung over the top of the water as I began to slide forward again on the seat. I pulled the oars towards me drawing them towards the edges of the boat folding them like the wings of a bird, as I slid up to the catch.

I stared straight ahead, watching the shore on the other side of the lake, far off in the distance. The bright sun shined down from the sky, peeking around the corner of a very large, fluffy, white cloud. I blinked and quickly dropped my head to avoid being blinded by the brightness. Quickly shaking my head, I shifted my gaze back to the water in front of me and continued my peaceful, majestic, stroke.

I watched as the sun reflected off the water in the form of tiny little sparkles that were scattered over the water's surface, like thousands of glimmering crystal fragments. I smiled, closed my eyes, and allowed myself to relax as I felt the pattern of the stroke come almost naturally. I wasn't even thinking about it anymore, it just happened by itself. It sparked a feeling of happiness that I couldn't describe, spreading through my whole body until it reached my fingertips making them tingle as I clutched the oars. I swore I could hear a faint shout off in the distance, but I could barely hear it so ignored it and blocked it off.

Then abruptly without warning, my hands stopped rowing without me controlling them. Sensing that something was wrong, I felt my blood run cold. My eyes quickly opened and widened as I looked down at my hands in confusion. I tensed by arms and tightened my grip to try to square and feather the oars, to push them through the water and continue rowing, but it was no use. My oars were suspended on the water.

*This is weird I thought, what's going on?* I tried to look around me and over the edges of the boat, frantically searching for an answer, but nothing worked. It was if time had stopped, frozen, and trapped me. I couldn't move my body.

The whole lake was dead silent. Not a sound could be heard. The boat continued moving; sliding through the water as quiet as a mouse and the sound of the oars trailing over the water was as if someone had muted it with the click of a remote control for a TV. You could drop a pin and someone could hear it for mile around. I squeezed my eyes shut again and tried to concentrate on what I could hear.

"Power 10 in 2!" A loud shout rang through the air, running through every tree along the lake, and rustling through the leaves, breaking the silence. I could feel the cool wind pick up. The sun's warmth began to fade.

"One!" the shout became louder as I could hear waves splashing around me, like a tidal wave. "Two," A gust of cold water flew up, hit my side and I flinched at its sudden touch. "Power 10 now, Go!" I heard a chorus of splashing followed by a painfully loud, ear-splitting smash of the sound of oars crashing into each other.

My eyes shot open. Suddenly I could move again, as if nothing had happened. I was rowing the whole time. I had actually never stopped. I was no longer by my self though, but in the quad. I looked at my hands and then quickly noticed that my oars had clashed with another pair of oars from behind me; Matt's oars. Untangling them, I popped them loose, and dragged them forward so we both could continue rowing. I jumped right into the power 10 pace that Raeayn, who was stroke, was setting. *It was all a daydream, I thought, shocked. I'm still at practice.*

“One!” called Lauren, as we all took a stroke. She steered the coach boat to the left of our quad. Nick, who was also on the boat, pulled a granola bar out of his pocket and started unwrapping it, “Two,” he called out.

“Sorry Matt!” I panted, looking over my shoulder, apologizing for hitting his oars.

“Three!” I dug my oars into the water, attempting to pull harder.

“It’s okay,” Matt grunted, through gritted teeth as he forced the oar through the water with all the strength he had. I turned back around and took another stroke.

“Four! Five! Come on, push it guys,” shouted Lauren, bending slightly over the edge of the boat. The coach boat zipped alongside us. “Six! Seven! Eight! You should be gritting your teeth! You’re almost done!”

I watched Marie who was sitting in front of me as her oar locks clicked back and forth and turned, allowing me to know when to feather and square.

“Push it! Nine! Last one, make it count!” with that we hauled the oars with all of the energy and strength we had. “Okay, that’s good! Nice job, back to the normal pace now, continue rowing.” The two quads slowed the power in their stroke and we relaxed our arms as our pace decelerated a little.

Taking everything in, I quickly looked around. Our oars all hitting the water in sync, the boat gliding through the water, the other quad at our right rushing alongside us. I took a second to watch them take a stroke: Abbie in stroke, Jacquie in seat 3, Catie in seat 2, and Randy in the bow seat.

Turning my head back to our boat and looking ahead of me, I saw Marie go up the slide, following Raeayn who was in front of her. I gripped my oars and started rowing. I saw out of the corner of my eye, Matt’s oars joining mine, rowing in sync. I looked back up to the sky. *That doesn’t look good!* Dark gray clouds stretched across the sky covering every inch, getting darker by the second, creating a shadow across the lake. I think it’s going to thunderstorm. I watch as darkness descends over the lake eliminating all the sun light.

“Those oars can go deeper!” Nick pointed at the water. “Put your back into it!” he finished opening the granola bar and took a bite out of it.

I yanked the oar back again, pushing it deeper into the water as I tried to incorporate my back into the pull.

“Hey do you think that dead fish is still around here?” asked Abbie.

Jacquie turned around. “What fish?” she asked cocking her head to the side.

“The fish that was swimming on its side and waving its fin around for like four days.” said Catie. “We had named it-”

“Was that a raindrop?” asked Marie changing the topic. She was digging her right oar into the water, and squaring it. “I swear that was rain.”

“Yeah,” Jacquie called, looking around from the other boat, “I think it was. I felt it too. I hope it doesn’t rain”

“Unfortunately, it looks like it might.” I said, pulling my oars out of the water.

“Do you think we will go back if it rains?” asked Catie, questionably looking up at the sky. “I don’t want to get rained on!”

Raeayn shrugged from the front of the boat. “Probably depends on how hard it rains, especially if it starts to thunder. Row at the same time guys, our oars are all over the place.”

I glanced out of the corner of my eye at my right oar and tried to match the pattern of Marie’s oar in front of me.

“What if the water starts to come in the boat,” asked Abbie, clutching her oars. “Now is definitely not the time to flip in!” She shook her head, vigorously.

I shuddered, imaging the quad flipping into the freezing cold water. “Let’s not do that,” I agreed. “It’s too cold!”

“Oh, I know what can help in that situation if we flip!” Matt yipped excitedly from behind me. “More sponge?”

I smiled and opened my mouth to respond. “Yes ha-,” I started to say, but my mouth snapped shut when Randy started talking.

“Quiet in the boats,” bellowed Randy, silencing us before we all bust out in a fit of laughter.

I turned my attention ahead once again, concentrating on having good form. Pushing the fear of falling in to the back of my mind, I tried to keep my hands even when I brought them to my chest to avoid rocking the boat. It was at that moment I realized that the boat was rocking from left to right more than usual as it cruised through the water. A low grumble came from the clouds. *Was that thunder?*

“It looks like the waves are picking up,” said Lauren, pointing across the lake to the shore where the waves were crashing over onto the land, soaking the grass. She turned her head back as both of the quads took a stroke together in perfect time.

Nick peered over the side of the boat, carefully placing both hands onto the side of the boat. “I think we should head back in,” he paused. “It looks like whitecaps are forming and its going to storm. It’s too dangerous to stay out any longer. We need to get off the water... Now,” there was a slight hint of urgency in his voice.

A bright light flashed before my eyes. I blinked. *Was that lightning now? I think its going to storm.*

Lauren nodded to Nick and turned her head. I pricked my ears up to listen. “Were going back in! Head to the boathouse!” she screamed over the howling wind.

“What?” asked Matt as he flipped the oar handles. “Do what?” he repeated.

“Go back to the boat house.” I called over my shoulder.

“Oh okay,” he looked at the boathouse, then at our oars. “Left pressure, 5 strokes!”

I noticed the wind begin to pick up, blowing cold water droplets into my eyes, whipping my hair around, and hitting my sides with such force I almost fell over. The waves splashed against the side of the quad. I could see the wind was taking its toll on the water as white caps began to form swirling the water around, making it spin in all directions at once.

“Okay that’s good! Even pressure!” yelled Matt.

The waves swiftly, one after another hit the side of our boat, traveling from one end of the lake and crashing onto the other side of the lake. I flinched a little as the rain hit my shoulders sending a shiver running up my back, as the cold rain drenched my clothes. I squinted my eyes trying to see, through the pouring rain. It pelted my skin and whipped my face. A wave smashed into the side of our boat.



My oars became uneven as the waves rocked our boat, knocking us off course. Each time I went to take a stroke only one oar managed to hit the water while the other dangled above. The boat started following the pattern of the waves instead of the pressure we were setting by rowing. Our strokes were getting out of sync, as we were almost hitting each other's oars as we were trying to continue our stroke.

"Whoa!" I let out a shriek as I almost let go of the oars and fell out of the boat. I saw a two large waves coming towards our boat, from opposite sides of the lake, followed by a group of smaller waves. A rain drop fell into my eye, causing me to blink. With each stroke the waves drove into our boat. I looked off to the mountains just in time to see a white light zigzag down to the trees from the sky, lighting up the whole lake before fading. *That was definitely lightning I thought. It's storming and we are still out here. This isn't good.*

"You see that too, right?" asked Marie, looking back at me from the corner of her eye. A gust of cold water flew over the boat, temporarily blinding me from seeing when Marie turned her oars. Relying only on sound, I listen for her oar lock to click before I turned my oars.

Frowning, I nodded my head, when I could see again. "Those waves look big, way bigger than size of our boat."

"Way an-enough!" Lauren began spitting out commands. "Stop rowing!" Instantly we all dropped our oars, letting them trail and hop over the bumpy waves as we rocked side to side.

Lauren turned to Nick. "What are we going to do?" she asked. "We can't have them continue rowing at this point, it's not safe. The wind is too hard, the white caps are too rough, and the waves are too high." The water was beginning to fill the bottom of the boat soaking my feet, as it sloshed around.

"I know," he shook his head. "And we are almost there too, the docks right over there. If we could just pull the boat over there." He pointed with his finger. "Then we would be okay."

I turned my head to see the other quad had already reached the dock and they were hurrying to get out of the water. *Why did they keep going?*

I could just barely see Randy screaming out commands and moving his arms around like a bird trying to take off, as Abbey, Catie, and Jacquie scurried around like ants: unhooking oars, grabbing shoes, taking off life vests. Lifting the boat up, they rushed it to the boathouse, looking over the ground so they wouldn't slip from the puddles. I watched as they all rushed back out to the dock and lined up to help us.

"Uh...guys?" Matt started to say. Raeayn, Marie and I slowly turned our head to look in Matt's direction.

The waves. They were coming from both sides of the lake and at this rate they would collide right where our boat was. They had grown bigger and were as high as some of the trees along the lake. They were so long they stretched all the way to the other side of the lake. They seemed to grow by the second, collecting more power.

"Lauren!" yelled Raeayn, looking back and forth between the waves and the coach boat. "What do we do?"

The waves cornered us. I watched as the massive waves towered over us on both sides of me. I looked left and right. *There's no escape! Now what?*

There was no time. It was too late. Nick and Lauren turned their heads at just the right moment to catch the wave smashing down on us. My heart rate increased rapidly. I could feel it loudly beating, all throughout my body.

Both waves collided over our boat. The water flooded over the side of the boat, smacking straight into us. Like a waterfall the water rushed down. I felt my blood run cold. The water flew over my head and pushed me from my seat. My feet slid out of the foot-stretcher. The boat began to tip. For a split second I saw Matt thrown from his seat, his brown hair now soaked and plastered across his forehead, Marie tumbled away as she dropped both of her black oars, Raeayn dragging her left oar as she tried to hold on to the edge of the boat, Nick and Lauren's shocked faces as they rushed toward us in the coach boat, our other teammates and Randy staring at us, still as statues from the dock.

Then the water flew over my head, cutting off my vision. It surrounded me, pushing like an invisible weight down on every inch of my body. Clawing at me like I was prey that was being hunted, it tried to drag me under.

Knocking all the wind out of me, I felt the water force me backwards, as I felt myself fall away from the boat. Falling into a back flip, I hurtled head first into the water. I narrowed my eyes. I watched my reflection over the water as I neared the surface. For a second I saw my body right above the water, just before the rain washed the image away.

Then everything suddenly slowed down. I hit the water, shattering the top like glass. Complete silence.



**Stay tuned for Part 2 in the next newsletter!!!**

## 4th of July Parade

If you missed us in the parade, here are a few pictures. Many thanks to those who volunteered their time!!! Thank you Don Roche, Sue Hanson, Kathy Cota, Raeayn Warren, Olivia Douhan, Randy Oberle, Giovanna Fessenden and Liz Goodman and their kids, Harriet and Lew Cuyler, Linda Dulye, Tina McLaughlin and Patty Murphy

And to Don Roche's family for dealing with a truck and trailer in their driveway!!

And a **huge** thank you to Craig at White Wolf Trucking and Excavation for giving us a truck and trailer to use!!



## Awesome– only way to describe it!!

If you weren't there, you missed an **AWESOME** July club day!! We used all the oars and many boats—2 quads, some doubles, several Maas', several Stars and even the sweep! The weather was perfect , it was warm, sunny and calm water!! Did I mention it was awesome... Here are a few pictures to show what a great time everyone had!!



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## Newsletter Ideas

If you have a topic or would like to write something for the newsletter send me an email, Tina at [tmm0103@yahoo.com](mailto:tmm0103@yahoo.com)