



BRASS NEWS

Berkshire Rowing and Sculling Newsletter

July 2015

Season coming to an end

Hopefully you have had an excellent season! If you are racing this fall, good luck on your endeavors.

Boathouse closing—November 7, 2015

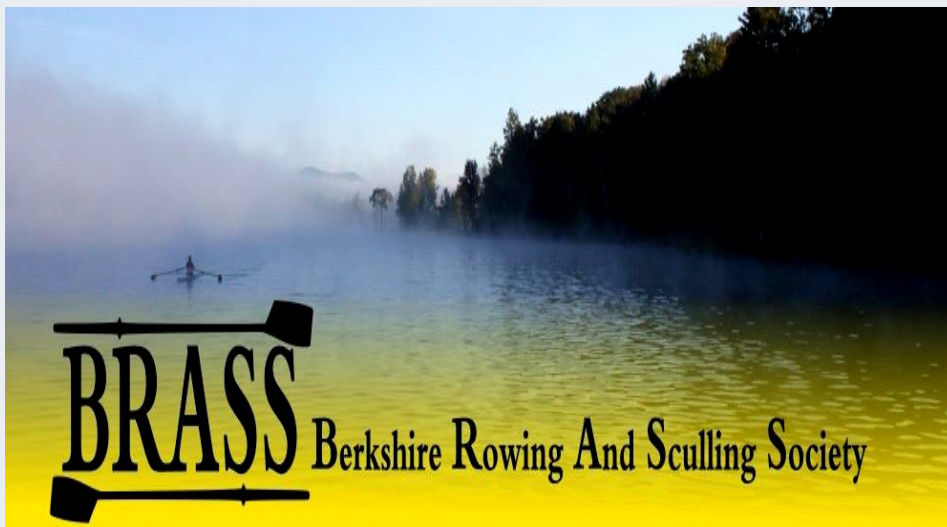
The boathouse will be closed on November 7th, we will need many hands to help with this. This entails taking out the dock, emptying most of the water and placing it into the boathouse. This is an event that many hands help make light work.

*"The future belongs to those **who**
believe in the beauty of their
dreams"*

— Eleanor Roosevelt

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Letter from our President

October! Already! How time flies.

If you haven't been out on the lake lately you don't know what you're missing. Even though it's cooler, or maybe even cold, the water is just as nice and the colors are incredible. Don't wait too much longer, October will go by quickly and then you'll have to wait 'til next year. And I do hope you plan on coming back next year.

The other thing the fall has brought is our juniors first regatta. This past Sunday the 4th they competed in Scotia NY and represented BRASS with good character, great teamwork and most importantly lots of smiles. The excitement they showed to the sport and what they were doing was exciting as well. It was also really nice to see parents there supporting and encouraging them. Their next event will be the Head of the Fish November 1st. Keep an eye out for what's to come.

As the season draws to a close I hope you will be able to keep rowing and enjoying the great outdoors. On November 7th the dock will be pulled in and the boathouse closed for the winter. If you are available on that day your help will be greatly appreciated. After that please plan to attend the end of the season pot luck supper on November 14th. Details will be sent with time and location. This is always a fun time to talk about the summer and what we can look forward to next year.

With all the activity at the boathouse this summer it was nice to meet so many new members and to see those of you that have been with us for a while. And one of my favorite things was the relay race at the Bernie Ryan. What a blast. If you weren't there ask someone who was and then plan to be there next time.

I hope to see you all soon,

Don Roche

*“Without continual growth
and progress, such words as
improvement, achievement,
and success have no mean-
ing.”*

-- Benjamin Franklin

November 15, 2015—End Of Season Banquet



As we have reached the end of the rowing season, celebrate the past Summer and see each other one more time before Winter.

This is a potluck dinner with a cost of \$5 for a single person or \$10 for a family. This is open to all members and their families and friends.

Place: Berkshire Humane Society
214 Barker Rd, Pittsfield, Ma

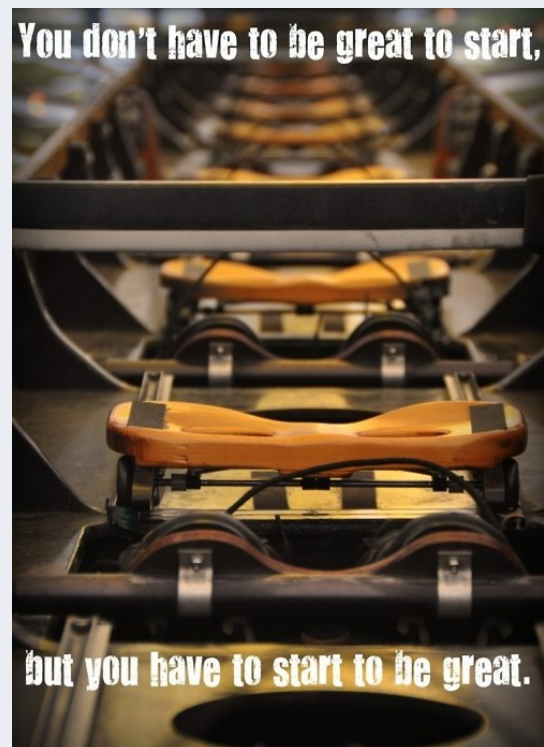
Enter at side entrance, parking towards the back.

When: November 14, 5pm to 8pm.

Bring: a Potluck dish and beverage of your choice.
(You may bring beer and wine)

RSVP: by November 7, 2015

Please reserve your spot on Sign Up Genius and to reserve the food item you are bringing.
Please state how many attending and what dish you are bringing.



*"The starting point of all
achievement is desire."*

-- Napoleon Hill

Hydration

It is the end of the season, however it came to my attention recently, that we need to assure that our bodies are properly hydrated before a workout. Since we row in the morning, we need to be diligent in hydrating. We have gone about 7 hours or so without any fluids. Proper hydration improves the quality of your workout, reduces fatigue and increases your overall happiness with your workout.

Here are several links for more information on good hydration:

<http://greatist.com/fitness/hydration-during-exercise>

<http://www.active.com/nutrition/articles/how-to-hydrate-before-during-and-after-a-workout>



Club Member Races

I will be sending out a separate newsletter at the end of the season with information and pictures of club members who participated in any races.

If you would like to be included, please send me the information at tmm0103@yahoo.com



Drifting Away Story

If you missed the first part of the story, please go to this link before you read the conclusion on the next pages.

https://k4747x.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/brassnews_v4.pdf

Bernie Ryan Regatta 2015

This club day started with comradery and food. It quickly moved to competition. All present separated into 2 groups both consisting of Salty Dogs and Wet Behind the Ears rowers.

The goal, a relay team row in the ocean shells, out to the stick buoy and back to the dock, hand off to the next team mate. All participated, no matter the level.... It was great fun!! By the way Team 2 won!!... Congratulations to all who were on that team!!! There were about 13 members on each team....excellent turnout on a gorgeous day. I apologize for the lack of pictures on the relay race, I was too busy enjoying the fun and participating.

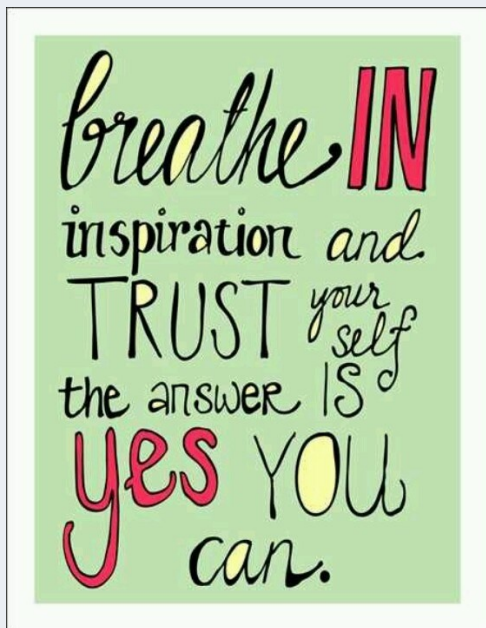
Next races were the doubles and we finished off the day with a Star race.

It appears everyone had a great time!! Thank you to all who helped set up and who participated!!



*Please check the
BRASS website for
more pictures.*

Berkshirerowing.com





The thrilling conclusion of
the short story by one of
our Junior rowers... Please
enjoy!!

Drifting Away

“A True Fable”

By Olivia Douhan

Part 2

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.

I slipped into the water, my body spinning like a hurricane sending up a storm of bubbles as I broke the surface of the water. I shivered as the freezing cold water surrounded me. I ducked my head as I saw my oar fly towards me. The boat had turned upside down. I leaned back just in time, the oar missed me by centimeters. The rough water tore at me with such force that I felt I was quickly sinking. Tumbling down I fell through the murky water. My heart was beating like a drum.

Shocked from the impact, I opened my jaws to let out a scream, but it accidentally let all the air I was holding in escape, taking my breath away. I snapped my mouth shut. I couldn't breathe and so I began to panic. My hand went up to clutch my throat. The water filled my throat. I covered my mouth realizing with shock what I had done. *That breath was my last chance.*

My whole body felt frozen, heavy from the weight of the water. I couldn't move as fast as I wanted to. I didn't realize how deep I had fallen in. My long hair swirled around me as the water current pushed it around. My head felt cloudy. My lungs burned for air. The water clawed at my throat. I stopped struggling, letting the water carry me down, deeper. *If I don't get back there fast enough, I'm going to drown!* I could feel myself sinking deeper and deeper into the water. My heart rate slowed down. *But I'm so tired though. If I could just close my eyes for a minute.*

Everything hurt. My eyes closed, shutting out all the light that was left. Then it hit me. I was sinking. *Get up! Get up Now!* I subconsciously began to think. My head was spinning as the voice got louder. *GET UP NOW!*

Suddenly my eyes shot open. *Get up!* I could feel energy cursing through my veins. The water released its grip on me, taking the weight off of me. Slowly dragging my legs together I began kicking. Gritting my teeth, I forcefully swallowed a mouth full of water as my senses began to dull. I could see darkness creeping up around the edges of my eyes. *Almost there!*

My body felt numb, my eyes closed and darkness began to engulf me. I let it control me, letting my body relax, and forgetting the feeling of the water I started to drift off in to unconsciousness. I reached a hand up to the water. It broke the surface.

Suddenly I felt something grab my hand and yank upwards, just before I blacked out. I blinked, half aware of what was going on. Then I saw Lauren and Nick and I realized what was happening. They had dragged me to the surface and together had pulled me out of water and set me on the now overturned quad. I let out a gasp for air, as I coughed up a mouthful of water. My hair, flattened, against my back was dripping wet.

"Th-thanks!" I sputtered, hugging the boat, for dear life. I rested my face against it, letting out a sigh of relief; I looked down the boat to see Marie and Raeayn treading water. Water hit my face and I just lay there too exhausted and shocked to move. *They must have come out of the water before me. It was only a matter of seconds, after all.* Lauren began quickly sifting through the boat trying to get out life jackets for us. The rain continued to pour down, slamming into the boat. I shivered, feeling cold from my drenched clothes.

"We survived," was all that I could manage to say, as the waves continued to rock the boat. I kept lying on the boat.

"Yeah," Marie just slowly nodded her head, and turned to Raeayn who replied, "That was terrible, and of course it was my first time flipping!" she laughed.

I smiled. I had no idea how they got back to the surface, but I was glad everyone was okay. *Wait weren't there four of us?* I frowned, staring at the water. *Marie and Raeayn were stern pair. For bow pair it's me an—*

"Is everyone okay?" asked Nick frantically looking around, stopping me from thinking.

I suddenly felt a sick feeling come over me. I whipped my head back towards the water.

"W-where's Matt?" I asked. A feeling of dread came over me. *He didn't come to the surface. Which means... He is still under the water! He must have fallen later than I did and was still sinking! Why? Why didn't he come up?*

Marie and Raeayn exchanged a worried look. Nick's eyes widened and he opened his mouth to say something, but no words came out. Lauren paused and stopped getting the life vests.

"We have to look for him, he didn't come up. He is still under," I could hear the panic rising in my voice. I wasn't thinking clearly. I stared at the water. Forgetting that I nearly just drowned, I let go of the boat. *What am I doing?*

"Olivia! Wait!" Called Nick, but I dived back under before he could finish his sentence. I couldn't hear anything. I blocked everything else out. Just silence remained.

I opened my eyes. I put my legs together and pushed them up and down like a dolphin to propel myself to the bottom of the lake. My feet hit the soft, muddy sand of the bottom of the lake. I lifted my head back, my hair swirled around me.

I looked around me. Scanning my surroundings, I found lots of mud, dirt, leaves, rocks and quickly located a large patch of reeds that stretched all the way up to the surface of the water.

I almost turned my head and ignored them, until I thought I spotted something moving. I looked back. A hand shot out of the reeds and fluttered around pulling at the reeds trying to get free. It moved around then grabbed hold of a strand of the reeds and started pulling. I swam closer. Another hand swung across the reeds making it clear that something was there. I quickly grabbed the long plants and stretched pulling and pushing them out of the way, to see what was there. *It's him!*

Suddenly Matt's head popped out from behind the long stems of the plants that I pulled away. He looked me, his hands pulling at the reeds. Squeezing his eyes shut, he reared his head back opening his mouth, and letting all the air go that he had been holding for so long. Bubbles exploded from his mouth and twirled up to the waters surface. *No! No! No!* I thought shocked.

Matt's arms and legs were tangled and wrapped in the reeds; so much that they covered his entire body and kept him from escaping. His arms were raised above his head, reeds tangled around his wrist and down his left arm. His legs were tied and disappeared into the center of the plants. Like ropes, they were tied around him holding him under the water. Flailing around he pulled and tugged to escape.

Instinctively, my hands shot out and began grabbing the plants trying to tear them apart, but it was no use. *I need help; I can't do this by myself. I have to do something! I need something sharp to tear these plants.* I looked behind me while still trying to tear them, up at the upside down boat. Then it hit me. *I could use the oars! That might work!*

I looked back at Matt, who shot me a helpless glance. His eyes fluttered opened and closed, his mouth slightly open. He had stopped struggling and let his arms hang. His head slumped against his chest. He was losing consciousness.

I will be back Matt, please hang on, I will help you! I set my feet against the sand and bent my knees, using the ground to thrust myself up. I gradually started doing the breaststroke, kicking my legs like a frog and circling my hands up and down to push through the water, as fast as I could.

As I neared the surface I stretched my hands out and grabbed onto an oar using it to climb up. I popped up at the surface gasping for a breath, letting my hair fall against my back, but then quickly turned my attention to unhooking the oar from the oar lock. Marie and Raeayn resurfaced from searching for Matt and held on to the turned over boat.

"I found him. We don't have time. I need help now!" I shouted, looking up and down at everyone as I twisted the oar lock. Lauren was just beginning to pass out life vests tossing them at our boat. Nick rushed to the edge of the boat. He opened his mouth to speak but I interrupted him before he could say anything, and I started yelling out commands.

"Marie, Raeayn follow me and grab an oar, both of you. I found Matt but he is tangled in a patch of reeds at the bottom. The oars can get the tangled reeds away from him. Quick he is losing consciousness. Let's go!" I shrieked popping my oar loose as thunder roared around the lake, followed by a blinding flash of light as lightning descended on us. Nodding quickly, they silently did as I asked and started unhooking the oars.

I took a deep breath and dived back under, swimming faster than I would in a swim race. I pushed myself as hard as I could go to get there faster. My feet hit the ground and I started pushing the reeds out of the way. I was almost completely sure Matt was unconscious now. He dangled, still caught in the leaves.

Sticking my oar in front of me I started hacking at the reeds attached to the ground that held them all together. Marie and Raeayn soon joined me underwater as they carefully poked the oars through the plants without hitting Matt and started ripping through them. I brought the oar behind my back and swung it over my shoulder slamming into the center of the green weeds. I saw the roots begin to loosen and begin to drift away. Long strands fell from where Marie and Raeayn were breaking the stems and thin branches.

I could feel my heart pounding everywhere in my body. *Just a little more, almost there! I can feel it.* My lungs began screaming for air again. My vision started becoming blurry and everything looked as if it was swaying back and forth. With a last forceful swing, we all together struck the plant at the same time.

It exploded out of the ground and dispersed through the water around us like a flock of birds, flying off into the sky. Yes! *We did it!*

Raeayn pointed to the oars then back at the boat trying to tell us she was going to bring the oars back. I nodded my head, showing my approval. She grabbed her and Marie's oars and started swimming back to the quad. I held onto mine.

The plant released its grip on Matt, who lifelessly floated, landing on his knees at the bottom, sending up a cloud of dust. He started to fall and was heading to land face first on the muddy sand, his arms drifted next to him, eyes closed. Dropping my oar, I shot out digging my feet into the ground to catch him. His head fell limply into my shoulder and I let one leg drop to kneel down.

I felt Marie's presence and she swam around my back to the other side of Matt. We each put an arm under one of his and together pushed off the ground, rushing to the surface. Gratefully bursting through at the surface, I used my other hand to grab Matt's hair and move his head that was still resting against his chest so he could breathe.

"Matt? Uh...Matt? Can you hear me?" I tried to ask him, shaking his arm. He didn't respond. *Oh no!* His head flopped to the side.

"Marie, is he breathing?" I asked frantically; as I adjusted my arm, kicking my legs to tread water. She turned his head to face the sky so he wouldn't choke on the water.

She leaned in a little, perking up her ears to listen for Matt's heart beat. Meanwhile I felt my own heart racing. "Well?" I asked again, gritting my teeth. *There's no time for this! It's like watching the sand in an hour glass fall.* I looked at the water.

She paused and looked up at me. I turned my head to her. "I can't tell? The waves are making it impossible to hear anything." She responded. A wave glided over Matt's face, threatening to push him under water once again. I lifted his head back above the water as he bobbed back and forth in the waters raging waves.

"Quick, flip him on his back." I told her, urgently, trying to take control of the situation.

Lauren maneuvered the coach boat to the right side of the dock. She had picked up Raeayn who was holding all the oars we had used. Holding onto an oar she dragged the quad with her. They parked the boat next to the dock and Raeayn set the oar down on the water, leaving the boat next to the dock. Hopping off, into the grass Lauren rushed over onto the dock. Randy jumped up and ran past Lauren off the dock and into the boat house, returning with towels. Raeayn began calling out orders.

"Okay guys; let's get this boat out of the water. Get those oars out! I can't lift this boat by myself!" rushing the oars into the boat house and running quickly back out, Katie, Abby, Jackie and Randy lined up along the side of the quad.

"Bring him over here. We have to get him out for the water!" Lauren exclaimed. Nick jumped out of the boat rushing to Lauren's side. It was then that I realized that we had slowly treaded water until we could stand on our feet. It was waist high for Marie, but chest high for me, since I was a lot shorter than her.

Lifting Matt's arms and legs up to the top of the water, we laid him on water so he would be floating on his back, stretched out like a starfish. Marie picked up his arm and gently pressed down on his wrist to take his pulse.

"H-how about now?" I asked, afraid of her answer.

She set his arm back down in the water. I looked up at her, anxiety fluttered though me.

"It's faint," she paused. My eyes widened. "But he has a pulse." She finished.

I let out a sigh of relief. *Good, thank God!* "Get him on the dock!" I told her.

We waded through the water towards the dock keeping him above the waves. Keeping both legs on the dock Lauren stretched her arms out when we neared the dock to help us. Together with the help of Nick we pulled Matt up out of the water and onto the dock. Marie put both hands on the dock and pushed herself up. Standing up she got onto the dock.

"Matt!" called Lauren. "Matt, can you hear me?" she shook him lightly. His arms hit the dock not moving.

I quickly set my hands on the dock and climbed out. Shaking my head around to attempt to dry my hair out, it hit my back as I stood up. Randy, Raeayn, Katie, Abby, Katie, and Jackie walked on to the dock. Marie turned her head and seeing that they were walking over meet them halfway. I stayed at the end of the dock.

"Lauren, the boats and oars are all away," said Randy, looking down at Matt.

Lightning flashed across the sky lighting up the water's surface like a glow stick. I looked around the Lake. Thunder growled as the clouds rumbled up in the sky. The waves clashed hitting each other in all directions. White caps foamed at the surface. The water looked like a tsunami with raging waves, howling wind, fierce thunder, and blinding lighting. And we stood there. In the cold, pouring rain. Our hearts all pounding waiting to see if Matt was okay. The wind rustled the leaves on the ground by the dock sending them swirling up to the sky. The wind blew through my wet hair, raising it off my back a little.

"Uhh-," a muffled cry called out. I stopped looking at the lake and turned my head around back to Matt. His hand twitched.

"He is regaining consciousness," yelled Lauren. Randy, Raeayn, Katie, Abby, Katie, Jackie, Marie, Nick and I crowded around Matt and Lauren.

Matt slowly opened his eyes. Turning quickly over to his side, he entered into a coughing fit. His hand flew up to his neck clutching it as he tried to clear his throat from all the water. Once he stopped coughing he stopped moving, and laid on his side panting.

"Matt are you okay? Does anything hurt?" Lauren asked. She glanced around at us. Turning back onto his back, he stared up at the sky, watching the clouds move across the sky. He linked as a rain drop landed in his eye.

"Y-yeah thanks," he panted. "I'm fine, I think. Nothing r-really hurts" he coughed.

For a while we just stayed there on the dock, in total silence. Rain continued to pour down pelting my shoulders. The waves pushed the dock up and down, side to side, threatening unhook the dock from the shore and float away. However, the sky seemed to be getting less dark. The wind died down. The storm was ending as quickly as it had started.

"But alas," Matt began to speak, breaking the silence. The waves slowed, still hitting the dock in a rhythmic pattern. He dramatically lifted his hand up, reaching to the sky. "We never used..." he paused. The sky lightened up. "We didn't bail with the..." The rain stopped falling. The clouds broke apart and the sun peaked though shining down on the dock.

"The sponge!" He squeezed his hand into to a fist, shaking it around. "MORE SPONGE!" he cried out.



Newsletter Ideas

If you have a topic that you would like to see or would like to write something for the newsletter send me an email, Tina at tmm0103@yahoo.com



Onota Lake depicted in a c. 1910 postcard

Contact Us

How to contact or find us

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