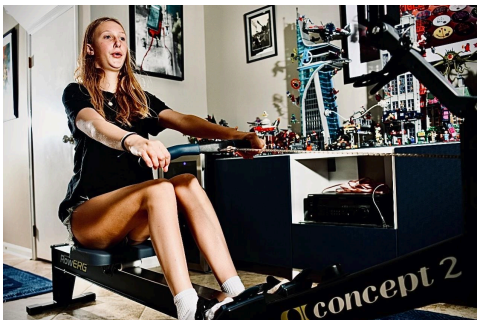
November 2026 Berkshire Community Rowing Newsletter

President's Message ~ Connell McGrath

It is the last few weeks of the season. Cold mornings, but we've been blessed with few fog days this fall. Rowing in the fall is such a delight when we can get on the water, warm up in the first 500 meters and enjoy the calm, the soft light and the peace of a near-empty Onota. I'll miss it when it's over! See you at the potluck (and at closing too).

Random Rower's Corner ~ Molly O'Meara Sheehan



I was lucky to win in the BCR raffle last year. While I was tempted to keep the erg for myself, I sent the new Concept II to Emma Beemer-Ross, then 14 years old because she had just started rowing that fall, as a freshman for Oakton High School in Fairfax County, Virginia, and she does not live as close to easily accessible rowing machines as I do. She indeed has made fantastic use of the erg. Last week, her team named her Rower of the Week.

Emma is now the same age as her mother, Hope Metcalf, and I were when we met in a 10th grade English class at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Maryland. In my senior year at Whitman, I helped found a rowing team, and went on to row at Williams College, while Hope became the captain of her rowing team at Bowdoin. For several summers during our college years, Hope and I rowed at Capital Rowing Club in Washington, DC.



The summer after our first year in college. Hope is in 4 seat and I am in 3 seat.

One of my college classmates, Joe Sheehan, is now my husband. We've lived for many years in his hometown of New York City, where he has worked in finance and I have been a freelance writer focusing on education and the environment. In 2015, after seeing city park workers ask our then 7-year-old sons not to climb trees too often, we bought a house in Williamstown, where we have enjoyed many weekends - and 18 straight months in the pandemic - away from the city.

Somehow I only learned about BCR in 2023, when I was looking for a place where my visiting niece, Madeline Murphy, might be able to try rowing. While I wish I'd discovered it sooner,



and regret that I've not been on Lake Onota enough over the last three years, I've been so inspired by the rowers I've met at BCR, and I'm planning to organize my schedule better so that I can spend more time on the water next year.

Hope and me in a double on Lake Onota, when she visited in the summer of 2025.

Erg Giveaway– get your tickets by November 20th ~ Jean Marie Stein

It's that time of year again, your chance to support Berkshire Community Rowing *and* possibly take home a brand-new erg! If you love erging all winter long, this is your moment. Make a donation to support BCR's mission, and you might end up training on your very own machine. Already have a RowErg? No Problem! This year you can choose between a Concept2 RowErg *or* a Concept2 SkiErg, your pick if you win!

How It Works:
For every $25 donation made between now and November 20th, you'll earn one entry into the Erg Giveaway. When your name is drawn, you'll receive a brand-new Concept2 Model D RowErg or a Concept2 SkiErg (value $1,100), shipped anywhere in the continental U.S. at no cost to you.

Rules of the Game:
- Trustees cannot participate.
- All other participants are welcome - please invite your fitness enthusiast friends from anywhere in the nation to participate! Please forward this note!
- We must raise at least $1500 to make the giveaway viable. If we fall short, the winner will receive a 50/50 split toward the erg cost.
- Contributions are capped at $3000 — that's 120 chances to win. Incredible odds. Spread the word nationwide and help us hit the cap!
- The giveaway runs until November 20th.

Ways to Contribute:
1. Use your credit card - Link to Contribute: BCR on PayPal
2. Send a check to:
   BRASS
   PO BOX 787
   Pittsfield MA 01202
3. Regatta Central: Make a donation in increments of $25 on your Regatta Central account.

All payments must be received by Saturday, November 20.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and support of Berkshire Community Rowing

Regatta Results ~ Ted Humphrey

Head of the Fish Regatta ~ October 24 and 25 - Fish Creek, Saratoga Springs, NY



BCR rowers journeyed to Saratoga Springs for the Head of the Fish Regatta, one of the premier New England events. More than 160 teams, 1600 crews, participated.

The first day was a very competitive day for Masters and Collegiate Rowers. The Berkshire Mixed Quad (Paul St. Germain, Linda Dulye, Tina Whitmore, and Randy Oberle) rowed a fast race, finishing in the middle of the pack until you looked at the list of teams finishing ahead and noticed the number of crews who were rowing on their home course.

Paul and Randy showed amazing club stamina and competed in the Men's Quad (Paul St. Germain, Tom Perlmutter, Ted Humphrey, and Randy Oberle). They finished at the middle of the pack, but just seconds off of the fourth-place finishers

On Sunday, the heart and soul of the Berkshires competed. Juniors opened up with one of the first heats of the day and stayed until one of the last. Praise to the parents who cheered their rowers, provided food and spirit, and represented the Berkshire fan base.





The Boys Double (Robyn Gregg, Jasper Sharkey-McQuinn) began the day with a fast race. Another Boys Double (Ben Hatcher, Sean Morin) followed. A Middle-School Girls Double (Olivia Hatcher, Jae Reynolds), young athletes powering our future, also competed. Berkshire's High School Girls (Averill Oxborough, Catherine Hennessey) competed in the U17 Double, and without any time to rest, competed in the Mixed Junior Quad (Averill, Robyn, Jasper, Catherine). That same event featured another Berkshire entry (Ben, Jae, Sean, Olivia).





As part of Berkshire Community Rowing's outreach, the squad features rowers from Miss Hall's School who have been training with the team, learning the fundamentals of rowing, and participated in their first regatta. What an introduction to the sport!

The energy and commitment of the Juniors, who are committed to continuing and extending their training, owes so much to Sofia Bové. Her focus, engagement, and ability to get the best out of our young rowers has been a joy to observe.



Regatta ~ Save the Date

Jack-Row-Lantern ~ October 31

A fun invitational at the PVRC in Springfield, MA

Boathouse Closing ~ Sunday, November 1, 8 am to 12 noon

Lots to do. Please come pitch in. This is a great opportunity to fulfill your volunteer hours commitment. Juniors, please come down to participate; we need your strength.

End of Season potluck ~ Saturday, November 7, 5:30 pm to 7-ish pm

At the Chapel of the Church on the Hill, 55 Main St., Lenox, MA (across from Loeb's Grocery Store)

Random Rower ~ Take 2! ~ Paul Hirt ~ winter coached erg training story



When Randy Oberle convinced me to train with the coaches over the winter, I had no idea what to expect. I was more of a yoga and tennis guy. My first winter of coached erg sessions was quite a journey. At first, I could barely generate 60 watts of power at any pace. Coach Randy and Coach Ted began improving my technique with drills and pointers during the 45-minute class—all while some great classic rock was playing.

After several months of focused indoor rowing—straight-arm drills, reaching for the catch, rowing without foot straps, and more—I really started to see improvement. Every few weeks, I added another 5–10 watts as my technique improved. By the fourth month, I was comfortable generating 130 watts during a training session. Improved fitness certainly played a part, but most of the credit goes to my coaches, who helped me row smarter, not necessarily harder.

Just as I was getting comfortable, Ted introduced the dreaded "Norwegian Protocol." Simply stated, you row as fast and hard as you can for four minutes.

My first attempt ended in less than a minute. I was the poster boy for "fly and die." Eventually, I figured it out, and I'm happy to report that by the end of winter training, on a good day, I could average 200 watts for four minutes. Our summer Williams coaches might chuckle at that number, but I've got 45 years on them!

So, my point is: give winter erging a try. You might surprise yourself, just as I did. You can improve your technique, get stronger and fitter, and enjoy some classic rock along the way.

Winter Erg Program at BCC ~ Paul Hirt

As our fall rowing season comes to an end, there's no need to stop rowing. Your club has an exciting new offer for all members who want to keep training indoors this winter.

BCR, in partnership with Berkshire Community College, will offer coached erg training in the Paterson Field House on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at both 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. The sessions will run from November 2, 2026 through April 30, 2027, for only $200—20% less than we had to charge for the Y facilities! In addition to coached erg sessions, you'll receive a membership that includes access to the Field House facilities and programs. Check it out by clicking on the Berkshire Community College Paterson Field House link - Pittsfield Gym | Berkshire Community College.

Here's a quick summary if you'd rather not click the link:

Field House Hours

- Monday – Friday: 5:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.
- Saturday – Sunday: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Fitness & Recreation Offerings

- Full fitness center (cardio + weights)
- Basketball court
- Turf field
- Grass soccer fields
- Outdoor tennis courts
- Locker rooms

Fall 2026 Calendar Class Sampling

- **Practical Pilates:** A music-driven, mat-based workout that builds core strength and works the whole body. Beginners are welcome.
- **Power Yoga:** A dynamic yoga flow using weights and resistance bands to build strength, endurance, balance, and core stability.
- **Slow Flow Yoga:** A gentle, breath-focused practice that combines mindful movement and rest. Ideal for recovery or anyone looking for a slower-paced practice. No experience is necessary.

  There are also open sessions for pickleball, badminton, and basketball.

Private Oars ~

We are exploring how we store private oars. If you store your private oars with us, please put your name on your oars AND write your name and a description of your oars on the clipboard next to the private oar storage in the singles boathouse. We will be back in touch once we understand the needs of the club and assess the process of oar storage more carefully.

Best Resource Ever!

You can always find the most up-to-date information on the club's activities by visiting BCR's website, berkshirecommunityrowing.org.

Come Row with Us!
info@berkshirerowing.com

The newsletter has been brought to you for the last 18 months by the Marketing and Communications Committee (MarCom): Liz Goodman, Melissa Greenlaw, Joanne Murphy, and Anne Pinkston

If there's something you'd like to see covered in your newsletter, please let one of us know!