

The Brittingham Bruit

The Official Newsletter of the Camp Randall Rowing Club

January 2006

Camp Randall Rowing Club, 15 N Butler St Suite 404, Madison, WI 53703
www.camprandallrc.org

President's Letter

It seems like yesterday when in late November 2000, a small group of us met in the "W" Club conference room at Camp Randall Stadium to discuss the idea of forming a rowing club dedicated to promoting competitive rowing in Dane County. Our group was made up of UW and Club coaches, collegiate rowers, former Olympians, current and former Junior parents and a few master rowers. As I recall our first meetings, the coaches and the Junior parents wanted to form a Club that offered a healthy and supportive competitive sporting opportunity for Junior rowers. On the other hand, the elite rowers wanted a place to row and train for national and international competitive events. But most importantly, we were all committed to working together to expand the opportunities for competitive rowing. We had plenty of passion and we didn't lack for ideas.... Unfortunately, we had no boathouse, no boats, no trailer, no truck, no oars, no launches, no motors, no ergs..... no coaches and no members.....

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Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, March 1: Winter erg-a-thon fundraiser, 4-6 PM, Hilldale Mall

Saturday, April 22: Midwest Rowing Championships

Sunday, May 7: Brittingham Regatta and Open House, 7:30 am-12 pm, Historical Brittingham Boathouse

What a difference five years has made!!!!

Today, Camp Randall Rowing Club is successful and growing with a small fleet of boats, a trailer, a truck, launches, ergs, motors oars, training equipment, a first rate coaching staff and a wonderfully successful group of Junior, Senior and Collegiate Rowers. Over the past few years, we formed a partnership with the Madison School Community Recreation Program for all of our community based Junior programs and worked closely with the UW to provide support for elite competitive rowing opportunities for Collegiate and Senior crews. Camp Randall took responsibility for staffing the Midwest Rowing Championships on Lake Wingra and hosted its own “scratch” regattas on Lake Monona and our crews won honors at the Canadian Henley, the Head of the Charles and at numerous Junior regattas. But 2006 marks the beginning of a new and very exciting chapter for both Camp Randall Rowing Club and for community-wide competitive rowing!!!

Within the next month, renovation of the Brittingham Boathouse & Training Center is scheduled to begin. This project was made possible through the support of the UW Athletic Department, Downtown business leaders and local developers, Dane County, the City of Madison and countless supporters, who generously donated to the Brittingham Boathouse Renovation Fund. As a result of this community-wide effort, sufficient funds were raised to complete Phase I of the project. This month the Madison Parks Department awarded Joe Daniels Construction Co., the construction contract and work on the new foundation begins in January. The boathouse is scheduled to be moved onto the new foundation in late Winter. Daniels Construction hopes to complete the new seawall and the new addition to the boathouse this Spring and with “good luck” our Learn to Row novices will be rowing out of the renovated Brittingham Boathouse & Training Center in the Summer.

Thanks for all your hard work and continued support.

Steve Schaefer, President
Camp Randall Rowing Club, Inc.

Captain's Corner- KJ Hansmann

Sitting ready at three-quarter slide – ready to drive my legs down as hard and fast as I can to get the jump on the other crews – my eyes glued to the back in front of me, I wait for the call. The referee announces the crews in lane order, “Lincoln Park, Mendota, Camp Randall...” I see the flag go down out of the corner of my eye as the referee says “Attention...row!” And we’re off, three-quarter, half, three-quarter, lengthen, full. Spring season is still months away, but the thought of those exhilarating moments before the start of the race can already tie my stomach into knots. (Continued on next page)

But crew is not just something that happens in the boats. Crew is running sprints up Topping until you realize that no matter how hard you try you just can’t run any faster. It’s sharing Cheez-its on the way to regattas and choking down green beans and gummy

bears for eating contests at Ryan's Buffet. It's learning how to strap boats to a trailer like your life depended on it.

Crew is more than the starting line and the finish line. It's every stroke in between. It's all the hours on the ergs, all the drills, all the weights. It's the team dinners and all the nights sleeping on gym floors before a regatta. You could be pounded by hail while waiting at the starting line or engulfed by heat waves as you cross the finish line. It's the gold medals and the broken oars. You do your best, you pull your hardest, and you see what happens.

So I row because of the strength I've built. I row because I love cooking breakfast with my team over spring break. More than the technique and the endurance I've developed, I row because it teaches me to keep going – to get 'er done. Crew has taught me to break through walls.

Head of the Charles Report, 2006- Bob Curry

In 2005 the Camp Randall Rowing Club sent two boats, including a Youth Women's Four (YW4+) to the Head of the Charles, Boston's huge international regatta. They earned this year's number eight seed with a time 5% off the winner at the 2004 Charles, good enough for 9th. For the coxswain and three of the rowers it was their second trip to the big show and they were focused and primed. They showed no first-year jitters, just a quiet, well-earned confidence. And on a cool, squally morning they rowed the best race of their career.

There were many well-oiled crews in Boston this year, but you had to watch a lot of rowing to find a boat as smooth as Camp Randall's little entry in the Youth Women's 4s last week. "Little" is not a pejorative here, but an accurate description of CRRC's girls when compared with the rangy athletes that make up the college freshmen recruit boats that also race as youth women. None of CRRC's YW4s are much over 5'8," and Anna Kolden, rowing in the bow seat, is 5'3," closer in size to the typical coxswain than the 6-footers rowing for Princeton and Northeastern.

Joining Anna in the CRRC boat were Claire Tradewell, Brianna Buhr, Georgia Curry, and coxswain, Annie Heiner. They are coached by the indispensable MB Blanding. They'd won the YW4+ at the Head of the Rock earlier in October and suspected they were fast over the long course – a distance that partially equalizes their height disadvantage – but the Charles is a tricky river, fraught with bridges, curves, gusty winds and a lot of boats.

As a mobile spectator (and parent) skating the bike trail along the course, I saw they were on form from the start. Over the first thousand meters they reeled in the boat in front of them, and by the first bridge they were ready to pass. Their split at the first time check would be the fastest of the 45 boats in the class.

But in this race, as in all athletic endeavors, they would need more than speed, endurance and fluid teamwork. They would need Lady Luck, and she was elsewhere. (Continued on next page)

One rule of head racing, of course, is that slower boats give way to faster boats, but as Camp Randall overtook the slower boat beneath the bridge, the other coxswain did anything but. This boat, from a Chicago prep school (named for the patron saint of heartbreak) inexplicably veered toward the CRRC boat, already hugging the bridge wall. Oars clashed and both shells stopped dead in the water. The seconds passed. And passed.

One Camp Randall oar was deep under the other hull. By now a third boat was bearing down on the clogged bridge passage.

After half a minute of shrill words and fending oars, the girls freed themselves and took off, quickly dropping St. Nemesis and all followers. Their third split would be second only to the winning Northeastern freshmen women, and the fourth split among the half dozen best, but this silver medal pace would get them only ninth. The small consolation was that their 2.64% off the winner earned CRRC an automatic entry next year.

Every athlete has a personal story of getting the short oar in a big contest and Charles rowers could write books. The memory is exponentially more painful than the blistered hands, the sore back, and the black tunnel of oxygen debt in the final sprint. It's the emotional risk athletes take when they invest body, heart and soul, day in and year out. It's too bad ninth place out of 45 crews has to feel like nothing, but when you row a silver medal pace it does and always will.

Seventeen-year-old athletes and, I admit, their parents may find scant consolation in what felt like aggravated larceny, but athletic contests are both life and a metaphor for life. They are real but also play, practice for life's inevitable disappointments and misfortunes. Emotionally, victory is nectar and ambrosia, a week at a spa. Defeat teaches us the value of fair play and being realistic; most athletes, after all, never stand on a podium. But great bad luck expands the contestant's emotional world, steels character, instills wisdom and fires determination. The short-term pain equals the degree of each athlete's commitment; the unseen compensation is an equally profound fortification of character.

The Head of the Charles award medals are simple, elegant things that to a rower are worth the entire rest of the trophy room. The Camp Randall Junior Women should own one, but they don't. Instead of happiness they brought home a life lesson that will make them more resilient adults and, for now, tougher competitors on the water. Back in the boat a week later, they brought home gold in both the YW4+ and YW8+ at the Head of the Iowa. Hats off to them.



Novice Boys at the Chicago Chase, Fall 2005



Varsity Girls 4+ at the Chicago Chase, Fall 2005

Spring 2006 Schedule

- Spring (water) practice times Brittingham BH: Mon-Fri 4:15-6:30PM, Sat 7-9AM
- Fri March 10 - Sat March 18th Spring Break Training Oak Ridge TN
- Fri-Sat (Date TBA) **St. Louis Sprints**, St. Louis MO
- Sat April 22 - **Midwest Rowing Championships**-Lake Wingra, Madison WI

- Sunday, April 30 - **Judge Dunn Regatta**, Skokie IL
 - Sunday, May 7 - **Second Annual Brittingham Regatta on Lake Monona** (Camp Randall RC host)
 - Fri-Sunday May 20-21 **Midwest Junior Championships**, Cincinnati, OH
 - Mon/Tues May 22-23 No practice
-

Camp Randall's 2nd fall season EVER was not too shabby....

By MB Blanding

Each year, more junior rowers participate in our Midwest region with existing programs growing larger and new programs starting up. This is very exciting for us competitively. I am very proud that in less than two years, the CRRC program has been able to immediately earn a reputation as a competitive program among Loyola Academy, St. Ignatius Prep, New Trier, Mendota, Lincoln Park Boat Club and the many other programs we race against.

In the 2005 fall racing season, Camp Randall's most winning results were in the four oared shells:

- The girls' 1st varsity junior 4+ won the Head of the Rock, Head of the Iowa and the Head of the Chicago.
- The boys' novice 4+'s highlight of the fall season was a win at the Chicago Chase.
- The 1st Novice Girls 4+ placed an impressive 5th at the Head of the Rock in the Open Novice event competing against many collegiate novices.
- The CRRC 2nd varsity junior 4+ placed 2nd place at Iowa.

The CRRC girls 8+s' results proved very respectable, with a 1st & 3rd at the Head of the Iowa and a 3rd place at the Head of the Chicago. With the promise of more growth in our program, the new boathouse and an increase in participants, highly competitive performances in both girls and boys varsity 8+'s are on the very near horizon,

Please see the newsletter on the Camp Randall Rowing Club website for full results (<http://www.camprandallrc.org/newsletters/Brittingham%20Bruit%202006%20January.pdf>)

We have many new faces on the team from the CRRC/MSCR summer rowing classes and new fall additions to the squad. Our returning rowers have logged another year, with many more rowing miles under their belts and more racing experience. Currently our team consists of 2 varsity girls 8+'s, 1 novice girls 8+ and 1 novice boys 4+ a few, plus a few boys' spares. We have 7 seniors on the team with several of them interested in pursuing rowing at D1 schools. Senior coxswain Annie Heiner recently signed a National Letter of Intent at the University of Texas. For full story see:

http://www.texassports.com/index.php?s=&url_channel_id=25&url_article_id=2828&url_subchannel_id=&change_well_id=2

The recent hire of Coach Nate Altfeather (UW '02) helped launch the first CRRC boys program this fall. Nate's versatile character is a perfect fit for our scrappy Camp Randall

style. He has already spent hours behind the wheel of our '93 Ford diesel towing the shell trailer, and has proven himself as a boathouse handyman. But most importantly, Nate has a strong passion for coaching kids, enjoys chatting with parents on the shoreline, is not shy about recruiting rowers, and has genuine commitment to high school age youth.

Lake Monona's west shoreline has proven to be a great site on which to row as we are rarely blown off the water. On the rare occasion when the east winds blow, we pull the ergs out of the boathouse or run on the Lake Monona bike path. In November, in the unfortunate early darkness, we made the best of rowing in Wisconsin. We bundled up and rigged the shells and launches with safety lights. We had the lake to ourselves with beautiful November sunsets, the lights of the Monona Terrace on one shoreline and the Holiday Festival of lights on the other shoreline. In the final days of fall practice we moved out of the Brittingham boathouse to the Brittingham bathhouse. Consistently, in all the miles of rowing, in the land training, and in the tasks we ask these kids to do, they maintain a very positive, fun-loving attitude. It is part of Camp Randall Juniors' aura. They just yell "This is Crew!" then of course laugh with each other and move on to the task ahead....

Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in helping the Camp Randall Rowing Club move forward? As our young Club takes a big step forward we need your help both financial and time. This spring there are plenty of opportunities to help out including at Midwest Rowing Championships on April 22, and the 2nd annual Brittingham Regatta and Open house on April 29. If you are interested in helping out at these or other events please contact Deb Curry at Curryclan@aol.com, 608-576-4740.

Interested in making a monetary donation? As we add a boy's team we are in need of new/used equipment as well as scholarship funds. Send donations to Steve Schaefer, CRRC President, 15 N Butler St Suite 404, Madison, WI 53703.

Interested in sponsoring a rower at the erg-a-thon on March 3? Please fill out and return form found in this newsletter.



Novice Boys at the Chicago Chase, Fall 2005

A big thanks to the contributors to the Brittingham Boathouse Fund:

Anonymous local donor
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Todd McGrath
Charles and Sally Miley
Norman Bassett Foundation
Robert and Barbara Schaefer
Brad and Fran Taylor
UW Athletic Department



Novice Girls, Fall 2005

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