



Happy holidays from your friends at Minnesota Boat Club!

ROWING SHORTS

WINTER 2008

Minnesota Boat Club

TO:

# ROWING SHORTS

Winter 2008

## A word from the chair



It's official – 2008 has been a galactic year. Every single practice, learn-to-row session, Thursday night barbeque get-together, erg test, and race has proven this to be true. But 2008 has not just been another good year – it has been a great year. For one, I am happy to announce the resurrection of the club newsletter The Rowing Shorts. A copy is attached, and we hope to publish it at least bi-

annually. But before you tear your eyes away from this lovely letter, read on...

In early spring the junior team, led by coaches Gabe and Miriam, once again headed south to find open water and get a break from ergs and weights. Their persistent winter preparation and overnight boat club retreats gave them a sizable competitive edge for spring, summer, and fall racing. The juniors took first in the Varsity women's pair and second in the Varsity lightweight double at the Midwest Regional Junior Championships, dominated in the Junior Women's 8 at NWIRAs, and secured another guaranteed entry by finishing 8th out of 65 women's youth fours at the Head of the Charles this fall.

The Competitive Team had its share of excitement despite the pain (and enjoyment) inflicted on the group by Head Coach Peter Morgan. The team saw the product of their hard work indoors and on the water this summer and fall, racking up numerous victories in the Master Women events, topped off by an amazing, record breaking victory at the Head of the Charles in the Master's Women Four.

2008 also brought one of the swiftest Novice Team that Minnesota Boat Club has ever seen, which is a testament to the work of both John Cavanaugh and Matt Franke. By the time the fall head races arrived, our Novices were blazing down the course – finishing well in front of the competition at the Head of the Des Moines Regatta. Last, but not least, the Club Team, under the tutelage of Matt Solnitsky also grew in numbers and reluctantly put away their oars this fall. Rumor has it that many of these crew members are examining the race schedule for 2009.

Highlight of the year, however, has to go to MBC Alumnus Micah Boyd's bronze medal winning performance in the men's eight at the Beijing Olympics. A score of club members cheered him on while watching the race – live at 3 am in the morning. We do think he heard us.....

After the dock had been put away and oars and boats had been washed one last time, it was time to party! Despite the difficult economic times, the Star Oars gala raised \$20,000 this year, which will help cover a portion of our

2009 expense budget. This continues to be an exciting time for Minnesota Boat Club. Given our successes, we expect to see a continued growth in the School of Rowing and junior, novice, club, and competitive teams in 2009. It is easy to see that we will quickly come up against several constraints if we don't act now. On the slate for 2009: Growing our coaching staff, increasing the size and scope of our programs, and adding to our fleet. If we can add \$10,000 to our annual fund, we can continue our work to accommodate the increasing demand for Minnesota Boat Club and our mission to promote health and excellence through the sport that has given us all so much. Micah Boyd so eloquently put it at the gala – he would not have had the opportunity to compete at the Olympics if it were not for a club like MBC.

MBC uses the annual fund to pay for coaching staff, programming, and equipment. The annual fund does not cover things like gas for launches or electricity for the boathouse. Dues alone cannot cover all of our operating expenses.

Making your contribution now will ensure that there are seats for new rowers to sit in and coaches to provide instruction.

When new rowers get hooked on the sport and have coaches to guide them along the way, long-time members have more members with whom to row and race. So, that's what's in it for you!

Stay warm, enjoy the Rowing Shorts, and please take a moment to think about what MBC has made possible for you this year and what the boathouse has meant to you. A meaningful gift from you today will yield another great year of superlatives in 2009 – and maybe a 2012 Olympian.

Happy holidays and may the "Oars Be with You",

Charlene

P.S. You can send your tax-deductible gifts, payable to the Minnesota Boat Club, c/o Tom Klecatsky, 2078 Theresa St., Mendota Heights, MN 55120. Thanks again.

## MANY THANKS TO MBC'S 2008-2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS...

Paul Olson, Kirsten Lamppa, Eric Otterness, Leah Sorensen (Junior team representative), Mike Harper, Kerry Korman, Charlie Stockwell, Mark Johnson, Doug Olson, Gabe Masiulis, Jacque Hamilton (Captain), Charlene McEvoy (president), Susan Tietjen (vice president), Jeanne Roffee (secretary), Tom Klekatsky (treasurer), and Bruce Hamilton (treasurer).

## ...AND MANY THANKS TO MBC'S 2008-2009 COACHING STAFF...

Miriam Baer, Junior Team

Jon Cavanaugh, Novice Team

Matt Franke, Novice Team

Gabe Masiulis, Junior Team

Peter Morgan, Competitive Team Coach and Director, MBC School of Rowing

Matt Solnitzky, Club Team

BOARD MEMBERS AND COACHES, WE OWE OUR SUCCESSFUL YEAR TO YOUR HARD WORK AND GUIDANCE. WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!



## Ode to the old sweep spoon blades

A POEM BY KIRSTEN LAMPPA

You sit in the dark corner collecting dust  
 While your new hatchet cousins row every day  
 We drill holes in you and paint you bright orange  
 We file your splintery wooden handles to fit our hands  
 We let the newest rowers abuse you in the barge  
 We fight over who has to use you and pick you last  
 Now you dream of your glory days on the water  
 Before carbon fiber and honeycomb composite  
 When you were fast and bright and new  
 When you won races and were loved  
 Someday you'll be used again

And not just for

B  
 A  
 T  
 R  
 E  
 M  
 O  
 V  
 A  
 L



MBC's favorite jazz trio plays MBC's 2008 gala, 'Star Oars'.

## MAY THE OARS BE WITH YOU...



Micah Boyd poses with Junior rowers



Gala guests danced into the wee hours of the morning



## Notes from the Novi

BY ABBY BAKER

It was during the first Learn-To-Row class that I knew this time around was going to be a bit different than last time. I had taken the second to last Learn-To-Row class about five years ago and decided I would just "wait until next spring" to join. Then I got pregnant, and, well...here I was looking a little bit begrudgingly at taking the class again. This time we had a smaller class and two teachers. It took a while to meld together and I often felt, while I am sure this may shock those of you who know me, that I was the only one who ever said anything. Skip ahead a couple of weeks, a BBQ and a round of beer at Joseph's, and you have what we fondly refer to as "the incident".

I don't know what a normal return on a Learn-To-Row class is. However, after sinking Tenacious, I imagine that six out of 10 becoming members may have been a surprise. Of those, five of us were in the women's novice eight that won first at the Head of Des Moines. While I cannot speak for the entire novice team, I can say that my experience has furthered my love for rowing and ensured my membership for years to come.

Initially slightly irritated by a loud and crabby coxswain who seemed to have forgotten her manners at charm school, I have grown not only a greater understanding of the necessity of her barking, but now count Becca among my friends. Spending a summer rushing to the boathouse three nights a week has done little to improve my road-rage. It has, however, provided the opportunity to slow down and see the St. Paul skyline from a vantage point few can. Amazingly we all did this without our eyes ever leaving the boat!! The idea of rowing with the competitive team has always seemed out of reach and intimidating. Not only does one rarely see most of the team due to their crack-of-dawn practices, but one could also argue a certain sense of hierarchy in the boathouse. I see the hierarchy now as (mostly) a myth and the competitive team as an attainable goal.

My experience at the MBC on the novice team has been one of the greatest of my life. I have learned a lot about rowing and about myself. Arguably one of the most important things is to come back again and again. You never know what is in store.

And, for God's sake, SET THE BOAT!!!

### ... and a word from their coxswain...

NOVICE COXSWAIN AND ROWER BECCA GERAGI RECOUNTS THE HEAD OF THE DES MOINES WIN TO MBC CAPTAIN JACQUE HAMILTON

Jacque,

I just had to tell you - at Des Moines my novice eight women won GOLD!!!! We were the fourth boat to go and we passed two Des Moines boats and caught the Minneapolis eight (they had a 50 second head start on us). It was awesome - they were in



Novice women's eight takes home gold at the Head of the Des Moines regatta, fall 2008.

sync, they were strong, and they kept a 27-30 stroke rating the whole way!!!! Prior to the race every time they went over a 26 they fell apart but not Saturday.

All this and without a working cox box, I tried to call it out into the hull of the boat hoping my voice would carry to the bow four but I found out later they never heard me - when we did power tens the whole boat would count it out load together - what a rush!!!!!! Nine voices in sink powering each other together!!!

I have yet to confirm but Peg looked on the Des Moines website and it seems Des Moines may have won that race every year for the last several and we just broke their winning streak - not to mention they didn't even take second or third, I think they took fourth, fifth, and sixth places.

Jacque it was so awesome!!!! I wish you had seen it...

Anyway if I recall each year there is a newsletter announcement to the whole club on the accomplishments of the year - could we please make sure this year the novices are mentioned - last year they took second and per Jaymie and John C. we had not entered a novice at HOTD before (or at least not in a long time) and they were never mentioned (not a big deal but this is so important to them and so important to having them all come back - keeping them included). The bar has been set for all future years and all teams entering a novice 8 now know who they have to beat. They have worked so hard and I am so proud of them!!!!

Thanks,

Rebecca

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MINNESOTA BOAT CLUB'S 2008 NOVICE TEAM - WHAT A SUCCESSFUL SEASON**

## Interview with Micah Boyd, Olympic medalist and MBC Alum

BY LEAH SORENSEN, MBC JUNIOR

The road to Micah Boyd's rowing career began right here in Minnesota. In fact, it all started when Micah sat down on a rowing machine at the Minnesota Boat Club (MBC) in downtown Saint Paul.

Now Micah Boyd is a National Champion and Olympic Bronze medalist.

In the fall of his sophomore year at Central High School in Saint Paul, Micah's twin brother Anders took up rowing. By winter, Anders had gotten Micah down to the boathouse with him. The brothers rowed together through high school under the coaching of Miriam Baer, who still coaches high school rowers at MBC. They did well rowing together at The Minnesota Boat Club. During their time there they won medals at regattas, or races, such as The USRowing Youth Invitational.

Both Micah and Anders Boyd gained acceptance into the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They both made the rowing team together there.

Besides being a hugely physically and mentally demanding sport on its own, rowing and starting college is extremely stressful. Boyd said that when he started college it was a big transition. "You want to quit because there's a whole new workload," Boyd said.

Luckily, he didn't drop rowing, and "after college it was easier to just manage it and not think about quitting, but just kind of continuing going on and realizing it's your goal to make the Olympics."

After their time rowing with the Madison crew, Anders was ready to move on to other things. But Micah wanted more. He went to train out east in Philadelphia at the Pennsylvania Athletic Club (Penn AC). He had trained at Penn AC for three years when he was invited to train with the national team.

"I ended up training at Princeton because it's where the National team trains. I got invited to go there and it was Olympic year so then I decided I might as well go with [the national team] because that way I'd have a better shot at making the Olympics," Boyd said.

In Princeton he, along with the national team, trained almost everyday, going out two, sometimes three, times a day. They averaged eleven to thirteen practices a week.

Boyd made it through the grueling process of Olympic trials. He earned himself a seat in the US Men's eight.

At the Olympics in Beijing, China he raced as four-seat in the eight race. The eight is the most prestigious rowing event to race in. It is an event in which eight people row together, each with one oar. The eight is the fastest boat in the sport of rowing.

When asked about racing in China, Micah stated, "Once you get down to the basics of it, it's any other 2k course with buoys."



Micah Boyd speaks to an audience of boat club members at MBC's Star Oars gala in November.

He did find it exciting however, that, "The last 500 meters had grandstands on both sides so it would get pretty loud towards the end of the race." In those grandstands he had his parents, his aunt, some friends, and, of course, his twin brother Anders cheering him on.

This October Boyd was named USRowing's Male Athlete of the Year. This is an award that is voted on by your peers, this year being the 2008 Olympic Team.

Micah is not sure what his future plans for rowing are yet. He's taking a year off, staying in shape, and then reevaluating whether or not he wants to go back to serious training again. "Next year I'll decide whether I want to keep rowing or not," Boyd said.

Here at the Minnesota Boat Club though, we can't help but hope to see more from this hometown hero.

Interested in learning more about Minnesota Boat Club's junior program? Contact head coach Miriam Baer for more info.

## No Regrets

COMPETITIVE TEAM'S WOMEN'S MASTER 4+ WINS AT HEAD OF THE CHARLES

BY MICHELE BASSETT

On October 16, four MBC rowers — Michele Bassett, Kirsten Lamppa, Lynn Randazzo, and Kris Miller — one coxswain, Erika Twedt, and coach Peter Morgan flew to Boston to race in the 44<sup>th</sup> Head of the Charles Regatta. Despite cool temperatures and swirling headwinds, the weekend turned out to be historic. Starting first in the Masters Women's Four race ahead of the Toronto Sculling Club, MBC finished first and broke a course record.



Masters women's 4+ races the Head of the Charles course.

In our last practice on the Mississippi, coxswain Twedt told the boat that she would ask us right after the race if we had any regrets. We all knew that the only answer we could give her, regardless of our finish order, would have to be 'No.' We had trained at 5:00 a.m. for six long weeks without being able to see much in the dark; there had been various intestinal illnesses and six different seating arrangements; and Kris Miller had to learn to row sweep — but the boat really came together in the final two weeks before the race.

We arrived on Thursday with the intent of practicing on the Charles Friday. Thanks to the University of Minnesota Men, who trailered our boat to Boston and who timed the trailer arrival perfectly, we made it onto the water 45 minutes before river practice closing time. Also due to the trailer's late arrival, we were fortunate enough to secure the sling spaces directly next to the Minneapolis Rowing Club. We had a great and very focused practice, followed by hot showers, a delicious pasta dinner, and an early bedtime in anticipation of the race the next day.

The morning of the race dawned cool but sunny, with swirling headwinds. After a leisurely morning, we launched at 1:15 p.m., with the wonderful good luck emails and phone calls from MBC members fresh in our minds. Our race plan was to make a big move on Toronto in the first 1,000 meters of the race — and with Twedt's help, we did exactly that. As we slid under each of the next five bridges we took another power 10 to push the bridges and Toronto away. Of course no one looked out of the boat during the race, but we seemed to know that we were building our lead on Toronto. The boat surged as Twedt asked

for power 10s, and the pressure never sagged. By the time we reached the Cambridge Boat Club, we could hear the announcers complimenting Twedt on her course and we knew that MBC was watching us.

With burning legs and lungs, we drove on to the finish line with a final burst of adrenaline. At that point, we knew that we had beaten Toronto, but we didn't know if a boat further back in the race had had a faster time. As promised, Twedt asked us if we had any regrets. No one did. We docked and then waited an agonizing 15 minutes to find out whether we had won. With Christine Smeby on his cell phone, Peter walked towards us, holding one finger in the air. We knew then that we had won; shortly after, we found out we had also smashed the course record by 12 seconds. With happy sobs, flying fruit, lots of hugs, and the vague sense that this couldn't be real, we started the four-hour wait until the awards ceremony.

Fortunately there were wonderful congratulatory calls from MBC members, friends and family to help us pass the time, along with meeting Canadian Olympian Malcolm Howard.

We were awarded our medals at 5:00 p.m. in front of a cheering audience that included the Minneapolis team, who received their medals for the Masters Women's Eight right after we received ours. We then set off for a wild and very happy victory dinner at Legal Sea Foods in Cambridge.

Proudly displaying our medals, we spent Sunday on the course shopping, meeting Rowing Royalty, buying out a Dunkin' Donuts, and cheering on the juniors — who did great in their race, placing 8<sup>th</sup> overall in a field of 65 crews. Peter gave us a great tour of the Harvard boathouse, and we watched the afternoon races from there in the esteemed company of Charlie Butt and Harry Parker. We knew that Peter is an alumnus of Harvard — and he seemed to know the building fairly well, giving us a much-enjoyed tour of the men's locker room — but we were surprised that everyone actually seemed to know him. (All joking aside, he has quite the celebrity status in those hallowed bays.)

We flew home to Saint Paul on Monday afternoon, still wearing our shiny medals and huge smiles. It was a magical weekend filled with laughter, lactic acid, Starbucks runs, and truly No Regrets.



## Sandi Says...

Q&A WITH PERSONAL FITNESS GURU SANDI MCCARTHY



Hello everyone,

Thanks for the great questions. Regardless of rowing experience level, many of the questions were related so I found it best to write one long response. I hope you find it interesting enough to read from top to bottom.

**Last winter, just having finished the novice program, I did a fair amount of erging and did some weight training. For us less experienced rowers what are the best cross-training activities for rowing?**

If your desire is to mainly be a recreational rower, then you can do quite a bit more cross-training than someone who chooses to be a competitive rower. Immediately following the fall season, it is best to start working on your base (over-all aerobic) training and that can be accomplished with any aerobic activity that keeps your heart rate in its aerobic zone: running, cross country skiing, swimming, cycling etc.

**Is erging necessary in the off season?**

If your desire is to improve your rowing, then basic aerobic fitness is not enough and you will need to erg as well to build the proper "neuromuscular coordination." In other words, you need to get those rowing muscles to respond at the proper time and in the proper sequence. Rowing specific training is essential if you are looking to improve.

**What is the optimal mix of erging and cross training?** This is a tough question as the "optimal mix" is defined differently based on each individual. Some may need more time on the erg for technical purposes or for neuromuscular purposes. Those wishing to be competitive will need more time on the erg over those wanting to row for recreational purposes. Some may not be able to spend as much time on the erg due to injuries and/or over-use issues. For those who did not correct muscular imbalances following the rowing season, they may be in for some trouble as winter progresses. This applies to rowers of all levels, which leads me to the next question...

**How important is weight training for rowing? Should it be done all year long? How often?**

Weight training is also highly important for many reasons for both recreational rowers and competitive rowers. Absolutely, it should be done all year long, but the kind of weight lifting needs to change throughout the year as does the intensity, duration and frequency. In the off season, it is important to spend time building those muscles that tend to get ignored while rowing. Imbalances are a sure way to produce injuries and the off season is a great time to strengthen weaknesses, build stability and increase range of motion in the joints. As winter progresses it is essential to switch to more rowing specific exercises to stimulate proper neuromuscular adaptations and to develop the main muscles responsible for rowing. As rowing is a power and endurance sport, both power and endurance need to be addressed with weight training. Exercises will shift to higher reps and lighter weight with an emphasis being put on simulating the same speed your muscles will have to move while rowing.

A good progression is:

Phase 1: Train the core and weak areas

Phase 2: Build maximal strength

Phase 3: Build power and endurance

Phase 4 (competitive phase): Maintenance.

Through all of this, the number of repetitions, sets, exercises and frequency of days changes as well. (This is why I have a job. All of this can get very confusing!)

**Should one take a rest between seasons? If so, what types of activities should be included? Excluded? How long?**

The fifth and final phase of a well designed program is called the "Transition Phase" and is generally considered the "off season." I like to think of this as the transition from one well-designed yearly program to the next even-better-designed yearly program! For serious athletes, this should last no more than 4-6 weeks to prevent a loss in fitness. Strength is hard to gain, but easy to lose! Activity should be reduced by 60-70% during the Transition Stage, but that does not mean that activity stops. This is the time to work on stabilization and to strengthen imbalances in the muscles that were not used during season. This becomes especially important if you are a sweep rower and only row one side! As far as aerobic activity, this is your time to try new things and let those rowing muscles recover which leads me full circle back to the first question of cross-training....You can continue to do aerobic activities other than rowing if your main goal is to be a recreational rower, otherwise, for the competitive rower, this is your 4-6 week physical and mental break from rowing but you'll start gearing up again for that next even-better-designed yearly program.

Questions for Sandi? Contact her at [sandramn \(at\) msn \(dot\) com](mailto:sandramn@msn.com).

