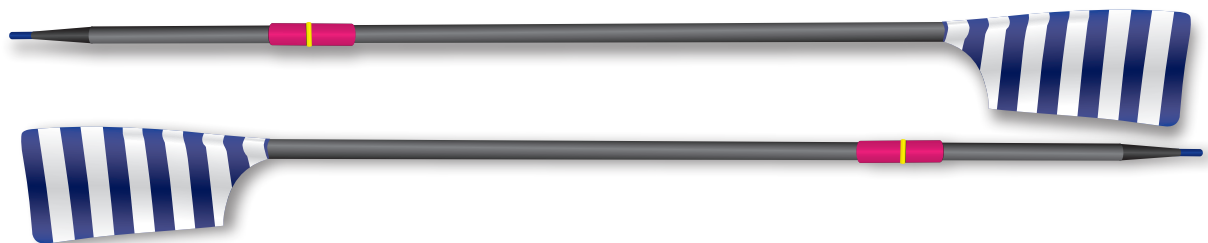


RIVERSIDE BOAT CLUB

Summer 2011





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A Word from the Editor

I am happy to be bringing back Riverside's quarterly newsletter. This is an auspicious time for our club, as it comes into its own as one of the premier club-level development centers in the country. Riverside does not strive to be a training camp—those already exist under the USRowing banner in places like Oklahoma City and Princeton, New Jersey. Rather, during the past several years, Riverside has been making official its long unofficial status of sending more than its share of athletes to the United States National and Olympic teams. To do this, we created the High Performance Group, started in 2001 by Kevin McDonnell and today coached by Bob Gillette for the men and already-legendary Tom Keister for the women. I won't list the members we've sent to Worlds and the Olympics in the past 5 years alone because it would take up the rest of this page. And our members aren't just attending—they're finding themselves on the podium.

But Riverside isn't just a training camp. It is first and foremost a rowing club for all abilities and interests. "Quality rowing at all levels" has been our motto for generations. We do not seek to have the best fireside cocktail hours—primarily because if we lit a fire, the clubhouse would go up in minutes—and yet we can throw one hell of a party (helloooo Head of the Charles!). We don't seek to be a preeminent learn-to-row, community service club, but we still put our best foot forward to help out our neighbors in Cambridge and work with the DCR and other organizations to keep the river clean and safe. We are as competitive as they come, yet we enjoy excellent relations and friendly rivalries with our fellow clubs on the Charles: CRI, Cambridge and Union. We may never be the richest club in the world (now there's an understatement), but we are on sound financial footing thanks to the long tenure of Treasurer Fred Good, who has literally righted our ship. The thing that makes Riverside unique, in my view, is that as we've increased our competitive success on the national and global stage, we haven't lost our friendly "club" atmosphere here at 769 Memorial Drive. And that's what keeps people flocking to our docks. Not just for the coaches, the equipment and the high level of competition, but also for the fun, the camaraderie and the "local" feel. We can't be all things to all people, but we can be Riverside, and that's what continues to tug the heartstrings of our members and alums.

I'm very proud of this first "new" issue, spectacularly designed by the talented Alexis Sneff. It contains a sampling of almost everything it means to be Riverside: Results from NSR II; program and member profiles; and an excellent first-of-two-part series recalling some of the club's most challenging history, well chronicled by Dick Garver. Kate Sullivan writes about our ongoing community service efforts, and we have a word from His Eminence, President (and, full disclosure, good friend) Igor Belakovskiy. Finally, Kate Chang provides a touching remembrance of long-time member Ann Fitzgerald, showing the impact that members can have on our club. 🏳️

—John Tracey



President's Message

"You sure picked a good year to be president!" Whether in reference to the ice damage to our porch or one of the three coaching positions we've had to fill, it's a comment I've heard a lot this spring. It is generally accompanied by a friendly pat on the back and an either audible or implied "Glad it's not me!" Well, I, for one, am glad it IS me. I get to work with a great board of directors, an awesome group of coaches, and a huge number of volunteers who are passionate about both rowing and Riverside. No challenge is too great when you have so many amazing people working together to make our club a better place.

So, what have we done for you lately?

We were recently named one of 11 USRowing Training Center Partners, recognizing our continuing contributions to developing athletes for the US National Team. Our athletes and alums continued to prove their worth on the waters of Mercer Lake, as well as at the World Cup in Munich. Hillary Saeger was third at both NSRI and NSRII, while Kyle Lafferty and Greg McKallagat were 4th at NSRII. And with Tom Keister and Bob Gillette at the helm of the women's and men's HPG, Nikolay Kurmakov and Jeff Forrester leading the women's and men's sweep teams, and Gordon Hamilton running the sculling group, we can't wait to see what the summer racing season will bring.

We fixed the ice damage to our porch and began working on a permanent solution that will make sure that it will never happen again. Special thanks to Cindy Larson for leading the charge on the effort, as well as Captain Sean Wolf for making sure everyone got out on the water as soon as possible, even as repairs were in full swing.

Our community outreach has been great, with many members participating in Earth Day Cleanup, and Riverside co-hosting the Cambridge Port Neighborhood Association Potluck and learn-to-row. Many long time residents came away forever impressed with the work ethic of our athletes, and the generosity of our volunteers. Thank you, Kate Sullivan for spearheading these efforts.

Finally, with the boathouse more active than ever, we've begun to plan for the future, and dealing with the challenges and opportunities of our growth over the last few years. As we look towards our one 150th anniversary in 2019, we are working on making sure that our colors still proudly fly above the Charles in 2169! 🏳️

—Igor Belakovskiy

History of Riverside

Late 1970s, Early 1980s: Riverside's Near-Death Experience

By Dick Garver

Riverside Boat Club has launched a major initiative intended to prepare it for the decades ahead. Its officers have surveyed the members on their aspirations for the club's future and the physical and programmatic improvements they hope will take them there. In this context, it is interesting to look back at how the club dealt with challenges facing it in the late 1970s and early 80s and see what lessons can be gleaned. The membership meeting minutes for period from 1976 to 1982 were recently located. They show the club confronting three principle issues, each entangled with the other: Physical expansion to cope with the space needs of a growing membership and those of its tenant, Northeastern University; its contentious relationship with its landlord, the Metropolitan District Commission, and with the Cambridgeport neighborhood; and its policy toward women's membership. In the course of addressing them, the club found that it needed a revised governance structure if it was to cope with the decisions facing it.

Riverside was at its nadir in the 1950s. Membership and resources had dwindled. In 1963, it leased space to the Northeastern University's fledgling men's rowing program for \$2,000 a year and the school's agreement to maintain the boathouse. The university constructed the present downstream bay, while the club was confined to the two upstream bays and the first floor locker room. Northeastern's name was over the door. Although this arrangement sometimes produced strained relations, it allowed the club to survive. By 1977, the university's annual

rent had risen to \$7,800. At that point, however, interest in rowing at Riverside was rebuilding and, as a result, space for members was becoming tight. A proposal was made to extend the north bay into the locker room. At the same time, Northeastern, needing more room, began to consider the options of adding to the boathouse again or of building elsewhere. While Riverside had elected officers, a three-person board of trustees, a captain, and membership and rowing committees, decision making at the time was town-meeting style. Senior members voted at monthly meetings. There were three provisional women members, but the senior members were all men. Their average recorded votes totaled a little over twenty, only a handful of whom were active rowers. In response to Northeastern's deliberations, the members voted to make an expansion proposal to the university and formed a building committee chaired by Bob Cutler, an architect. Alternative designs were developed. Among them were sketches for an addition capable of having a floor added at a later date and another for a separate building dedicated to boat storage. In August of 1978, with Riverside and Northeastern on good terms, a motion was passed to ask the university to construct an addition in exchange for a rent reduction. But in December of that year, the MDC, whose permit to the club was to expire the following year, rejected the idea. In July 1979, the university told Riverside it would need two additional bays and men's and women's locker space. At the same time, the

club felt it needed an additional bay for its own members. Space constraints had reached the point at which the club was considering capping total membership. In December 1979, Riverside presented a proposal to Northeastern for a 99-year lease with provisions under which it could build new bays on either side of the boathouse. In April 1980, the university accepted the lease, which called for an annual rent of \$10,500. The two parties discussed three alternative expansion designs, each resulting in a boathouse of seven bays.

The MDC upset these discussions in June, when it informed the club that it would not approve an addition unless the boathouse was opened to the public. With Riverside's permit lapsed, the commission also raised the issue whether, in light of the university's "windfall" lease payment, the club's \$500 annual fee should be increased. At the MDC's encouragement, Northeastern considered building its own boathouse, but its proposal for a site at Magazine Beach was not well received by the Cambridgeport neighborhood or City Councilor and State Representative Sandra Graham, who looked at Riverside and rowing as alien presences. Then in October 1980, alerted to a leading member's harassment of the club's women rowers and his organized opposition to their becoming senior members, the MDC sent the club a letter alleging sex discrimination. It would not grant Riverside's permit unless the situation was cured. President Jim Moore, with the assistance of Bob Cutler, now a trustee, and vice president Jim Hanley, employed a series of maneuvers to overcome the women's opponents, an episode that will be set forth in the next newsletter. The prospects of expanding the boathouse were dampened in the spring of 1981, however, when the club learned that the loss of park space required for an addition would require a two-thirds vote of the state legislature. Some, including captain Ted van Dusen, began to argue that the club should regain the use of the entire boathouse. Others raised the specter of rising dues if Northeastern were to vacate. Despite support for the club's expansion from the Charles River Basin Committee, a group composed primarily of agency and power boat representatives, matters came to a head in August when MDC Commissioner Moran informed Riverside that the terms of its lease with Northeastern were objectionable, that in his opinion the club provided no public benefit, and that he opposed its being maintained as a private facility. At this point, Representative Graham entered the fray. In an October meeting with club representatives and the commissioner, she objected to the impact of a large construction project and asked that the expansion

be scaled back to one bay. She requested that the river bank be cleaned up but opposed the MDC's imposition of a public rowing program. In November 1981, the commission voted in favor of the club's permit and approved its lease with the university.

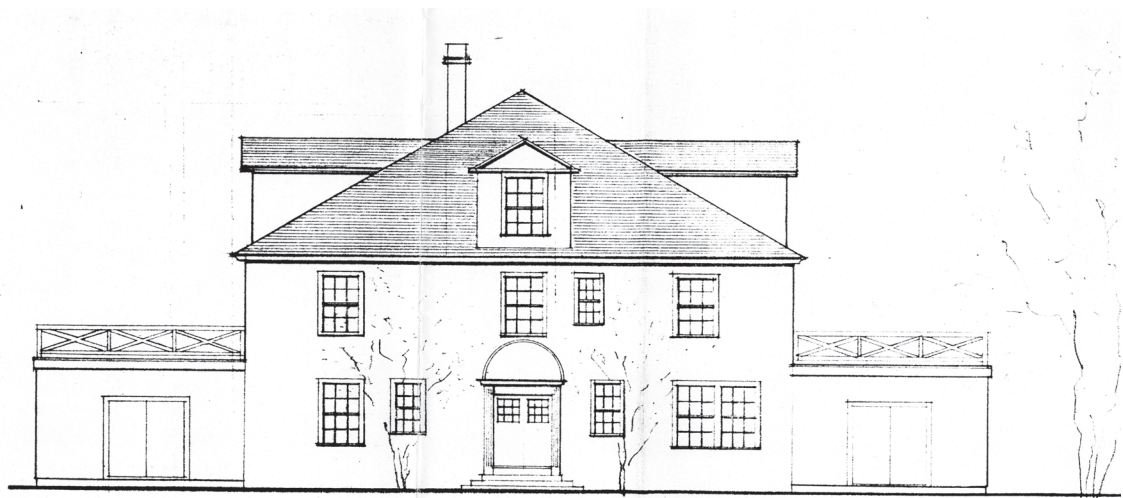
The challenge of issues like these led to the recognition that Riverside needed to improve its executive capacities beyond those provided by a town meeting-style governance structure. In August 1981, a revised constitution draft was distributed for discussion in the September membership meeting. It proposed that the board meet monthly, while members would meet periodically to consider general business, including the approval of new members. It retained the offices and committees recognized by the previous constitution. Despite the concerns of some, the new constitution was adopted in the October meeting by a vote of 19 to 1.

Discussions with Northeastern on alternative expansion configurations and possible condominiumization of the boat house continued into 1982, even as the issue of the university's neglect of its maintenance obligations resurfaced. The club approved a new development plan, but in August 1982 Jim Hanley reported that Northeastern was pursuing other sites. There was a growing membership consensus that the club should assess the impact of the university's departure and evaluate its financial options, including raising dues, charging for rack space, and renting the boathouse for social events.

The minutes end at this point, but, as we know, Northeastern would soon build a new boathouse upstream. When it was occupied in 1989, its bay reverted to Riverside's control. The club, faced with the loss of annual rent that funded roughly half its budget, considered replacing Northeastern with Tufts University or another tenant but decided to go it alone. Riverside emerged from the challenges of the late 1970s and early 80s with the boathouse configuration, system of governance, financial structure, full participation of women, and the program policies that have made it one of the most successful rowing clubs in New England today. It will be interesting to see how it may be reshaped as it deals with the issues that will face it in the decades ahead.



Editor's Note: We recognize that, despite our best efforts, some of the material in this article may be inadvertently mistaken. Dick would like to hear from anyone who can augment or correct this account of Riverside at this critical juncture in its history.



Undated photo of RBC boathouse expansion plan, Cambridge Historical Commission

Racing: NSR II

By Andrew Neils

If anything, Riversiders were hoping for better weather at National Selection Regatta (NSR) II after a weekend full of chop and wind at the first NSR a few weeks prior. At stake at NSR II was the chance to represent the United States in a World Cup in the M2x, W2x, LW2x, M2- and W2-. Additionally the LM2- was held as a speed order event, in which the top three boats would be selected for Camp.

NSR II was held the weekend of May 12-14 at the Casperson Olympic Rowing Center on Lake Mercer in Princeton, New Jersey. Riverside's High Performance Group (HPG) competitors first had to undergo a 1,900-meter time trial to seed themselves for the subsequent heats. In the time trial format, only two lanes of the course were utilized, with one boat from each lane being sent every 20 seconds. The competitors thus had to execute their race without being able to take information from the field.

In the women's double, RBC's duo of Siobhan Steyn and Lauren Schmetterling took 13th in a time of 7:09 while, Lib Diamond and Emily Huelskamp came in 16th in a time of 7:18. Representing the stripes in the LW2x was Claire Wallace and Sarah Schwegman who placed 10th in the time trial with a 7:19. RBC member Hillary Saeger also competed under the USRowing Oklahoma City Training Center, placing 3rd in her time trial, which was just 4 seconds off of the leader. Finally Greg Mckallagat and Kyle Lafferty were the solo contingent from the men's HPG, placing second in the LM2- time trial – only 1.9 seconds from 1st – in a time of 6:31.

The heats went off that afternoon, and both of Riverside's women's doubles placed 5th in their respective heats. They met again in the third final the next day; Diamond and Huelskamp placed 1st with a time of 7:34 and Steyn and Schmetterling finished 2nd, just 3.5 seconds back.

In the LW2x semi-final, Saeger and her doubles partner Nicole Dinion placed 2nd while Schwegman and Wallace came in 5th. Moving onto the finals, Saeger and Dinion went on to place 3rd in the A final, just 6 seconds off the leader! In the B final Schwegman and Wallace came in 4th, which was good for 10th overall.

The men's lightweight pair went straight to final after their time trial. Mckallagat and Lafferty placed 4th overall in a time of 6:50. The three top pairs were all US Rowing entries, with the leader bringing it home in 6:43.

"It was a tight race all the way down the course," said Kyle Lafferty. We were in contention for most of the race, but the U.S. Training center boats were able to slip away in the second 1,000. It was great to be in contention with some of the fastest boats in the country, but a little disappointing to fall just short at the end."

Well done Stripes! 🏳️🏳️🏳️🏳️



Women's sweep team out for a frigid early-spring practice

Program Profile: Women's Sweeps

By Stephanie Bakkum

In each issue, we will include a profile of a program, written by one of its members (if he or she so chooses). This edition profiles Riverside Women's Sweeps.

Welcome to the Women's Sweep corner of the Summer 2011 RBC Newsletter. Without any spring racing under our belts I am compelled to report on happenings outside of the buoy lanes. Coming off of successful finishes at HOCR, we charged into winter training...er, jogged into it. We actually have become quite the running group with many marathoners on our roster. We made it through winter training with a few injuries, but with plenty of massage deals (thanks to Groupon) we managed to bounce back.

The months of ominous weather forced the team to keep sane by kicking up our social calendars outside of the boathouse. With a full-blown masquerade party, clothing swap, picnics on the banks of The Charles and a Kentucky Derby soirée, we've kept our off-the-water spare time fully booked.

We are now back on the water in full force with two practices a day. With the incredible Nikolay at our helm the team has continued to grow. 14 U23 members have joined us for the summer in addition to the five full-time members recruited since last fall. We are gearing up to fly out of the stake boats this summer. First on the list: Elite Club Nationals and IDR! 🏳️🏳️🏳️🏳️

“If you want to win in Canada, training started yesterday.”

Nikolay Kurmakov
Women's Sweeps Head Coach

Magazine Beach Cleanup a Huge Success

By Kate Sullivan

Riverside's traditional Earth Day cleanup effort in April planted the seed for another Riverside-instigated project in June. On Earth Day, Dick Garver and I met with Cathie Zusy, a dynamic Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association leader, to discuss other neighborhood projects. Cathie had the idea of saving the powderhouse, an important historical building that was built as a gunpowder magazine in 1818. That project, in turn, led to another cleanup/social on June 11, at which more than 50 people turned out to help improve Magazine Beach. We focused on the wildly overgrown bed in front of the DCR pool next door to Riverside. It was weeded and mulched, which was a considerable undertaking, and some of the area trees were pruned and beautified. The occasional rain did not dampen the enthusiasm, and the pool looked fantastic when the work was done. Several other volunteers picked up trash along the riverbank.

After all the work, and to get out of the rain, everyone retired to Riverside's repair bay to enjoy a pot luck lunch complete with music from bluegrass band, Best Ever Chicken, which gave it a real garage-party feel. The rain let up long enough to inspire some hearty neighbors to try rowing. Kelsea Gusk and a few summer members took out

the Community Rowing barge (thank you CRI!) for a paddle, and the feedback from participants was fantastic.

We are grateful to our many partners, including the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association, the Boston Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and the Charles River Conservancy. Thanks are also due to Best Ever Chicken, the New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, Starbucks, Star Market, Pro EMS, Community Rowing, Inc., Simmon's College, Alexis Sneff, Howard Brightman, the Cambridge Historical Commission and the Cambridge Historical Society. Representative Marty Walz and Senator Anthony Petrucci both contributed tremendously to the effort as well.

Many RBC members worked hard at the event, but a special shout out must go to Jeff Forrester and Kelsea Gusk for transporting the barge to and from CRI in the rain, Kelsea and her team of learn-to-row coaches, Tim Villabona for non-stop grilling in the rain, and finally to Dick Garver and Cindy Larson for their continued community efforts.

All in all the day was a huge success with a cleaner, better-landscaped park and many new friends made. 🎵



Jamming in the downstream bay. Photo by Kate Sullivan

Member Profile: Cindy Larson

By Helen Fremont

First Childhood Memory: Sitting in the dirt, building roads and houses and skyscrapers (small scale)

Favorite Color: purple, orange, intense colors

Correction: Favorite Color: Blue and White Stripes

Favorite Beatle: Mick Jagger

Meet Cindy Larson, RBC Architect, athlete, and well-exploited member of the club. Notice how nice our windows look in the workout room? How tight and energy-efficient? We let Cindy help figure that out. Notice how our docks didn't visit the Museum of Science this spring? And how the porch allows you to place your weight on it without crashing to the ground? Cindy helped with that problem, too. (Ok, full disclosure: we also took advantage of the indentured servitude, hard labor, and endless hours of work of about thirty other members.) Working with contractors, structural engineers, the board and others, Cindy has helped RBC manage and coordinate repair efforts, and find solutions to RBC's building problems. "I really love this old building," Cindy says. "The bones are really good, and I like the challenge of coming up with options for the board that take into consideration RBC's long-range goals, and also its fiscal constraints."

Even as a toddler by the shores of Gitche Goomee (Minneapolis), Cindy proved her mettle as a natural builder, creating cities of tiny houses and buildings on any undeveloped pile of dirt—attaching windows, doors, and boat bays. (Some of us get an earlier start on our careers than others.) By high school Cindy (nickname "Brillo") was also an avid athlete (softball, tennis, basketball, you name it). With twin goals of becoming an architect and downhill skier, Cindy took off for the University of Montana in Bozeman, and emerged five years later with a Master's in Architecture to an economy in recession. She found her first job as an architect in San Antonio, Texas. Not long afterwards, a long-lost classmate from college came to visit, (conveniently Mark was also an architect) and the two have been together ever since. (continued on page 12)



Photo by Kate Sullivan

“...there's always a new challenge in every project.”

Cindy Larson

Member Profile: Cindy Larsen (continued)

In the mid-90's, the couple moved to Boston, where Cindy joined a downtown firm and worked on retail and commercial jobs—her favorite being movie theatres. (She did the Westboro Theatre and the Stuart 57, among others.) But after awhile, Cindy decided she needed something more challenging. So in July 2001, she took the leap and set up her own architectural business, creating Centrepont Architects, of which she is the owner and principle.

She began by hiring one employee and got a few small projects, which led to larger jobs (including renovating a police station in Union Square into fourteen condos, which is a nice way to clean up law enforcement).

While building her business, Cindy decided to find herself a new sport. She had been a runner, cyclist, and tennis player,

but injuries finally led her to consider rowing, which seemed like such an “easy” and graceful sport. She joined CRI about five years ago, took Sculling 1 & 2, passed her Captain's test, tried her hand at racing, and then cast about for a club to call home. Kate Chang, Cindy's neighbor in Somerville, told her to join Riverside, and the rest is history.

“I've really enjoyed working with everyone at RBC,” Cindy says, claiming that we're “a good group to work with, and there's always a new challenge in every project.”

Her next plans? Her company, Centrepont Architects, turns 10 this summer, so she'll just keep on messing around with buildings, crank her rowing up a notch, and continue to help Riverside in whatever way she can. 🏠

Advertisement

SAVE THE DATE: CROMWELL CUP

Sunday, July 10, 2011

Register at regattacentral.com

Deadline for entries is July 7th



Remembering Ann Fitzgerald

By Kate Chang

Ann Fitzgerald was a member of Riverside for approximately 10 years, quietly volunteering many hours to the club and enjoying recreational sculling with the 5:30 AM sculling group. She was a graceful sculler who contributed significantly to the club.

I don't know when or how I met Ann. I don't know who asked whom to row the 2x. I am guessing me. I don't know when we started. I am guessing more than 5 years ago could be much longer. Guessing. We had a boathouse friendship: We'd see each other at the boathouse. Sure we talked. We laughed, we whined, we knew a lot about each other and yet we didn't.

I can't tell you where she went to school, how old she was or what her job title was. I know she learned to row as an adult and like me loved mornings. She never raced. We talked about it. Every spring, “This was the year.” She really wanted to race the Head of the Charles. Her logic was, home course, no travel—pretty easy. Under the cover of then being either marginally employed or unemployed, I begged off on the entry fee and tried like crazy to have “our first race” be Cromwell Cup.

We never managed it. July weekends were filled with other things; her family's house on the shore; birding with her son—his hobby/passion then hers; going to New York to see friends and art shows. There she would gather up inspiration for her own work. She was just getting back to en plein air watercolors.

We talked of art; hers, mine, what we saw, what we wanted to see. We talked of our families, her son who she loved fiercely. Her pride in his accomplishments, her delight in his mischievousness her worry about his future, his schooling. We talked of trips we were planning. Over the years we both went to Costa Rica, Ann and her son for birding and me for surfing. We talked of trips we would take and places we would go back to, for her Lebanon. (no not NH).

We watched and the changes on the river as the seasons changed. Ann always spotted more turtles than I. We worried about the dearth of ducklings and reveled in the increasing numbers of fish we'd see leaping out of the water.

Sometime we even rowed. Sometimes we even rowed well and it felt like flying...

Ann Fitzgerald died late February 2011 after a battle with lung cancer. She leaves behind her son, Liam, their cat Rose and her extended family—mostly in Medford. According to her wishes, Riverside Boat Club made a donation in her name to The Massachusetts Audubon Society. 🏠

