



Fall Newsletter

'AS THE BLADE CATCHES'.

Welcome and Upcoming Dates



Greetings Coasties!

As I reflect upon our past season and the year that was 2023 and I write this on the last day of Fall Practice, we have made quite a bit of progress as a Rowing Club in the last year. We continue to grow at all levels as well as increasing our programming, not to mention taking the next steps with our various squads getting more competitive each season in the New England region.

November 14th: Town is pulling the docks
November 18th: Boatyard Clean up, 9am-12pm
and official yard closure



BOATYARD CLEAN UP

Please join us one on **NOVEMBER 18th, from 9am-12pm** to tidy and close the boatyard for the winter. We will be doing some raking, wrapping the big boats in Tyvek, packing riggers into the shed, and other tasks. If you are able to bring **rakes, scissors** (for cutting the Tyvek and tape), and **work gloves**, each would be useful. The yard will be officially closed following our work on the 18th, so please make sure to **remove any private boats/equipment** for appropriate storage.

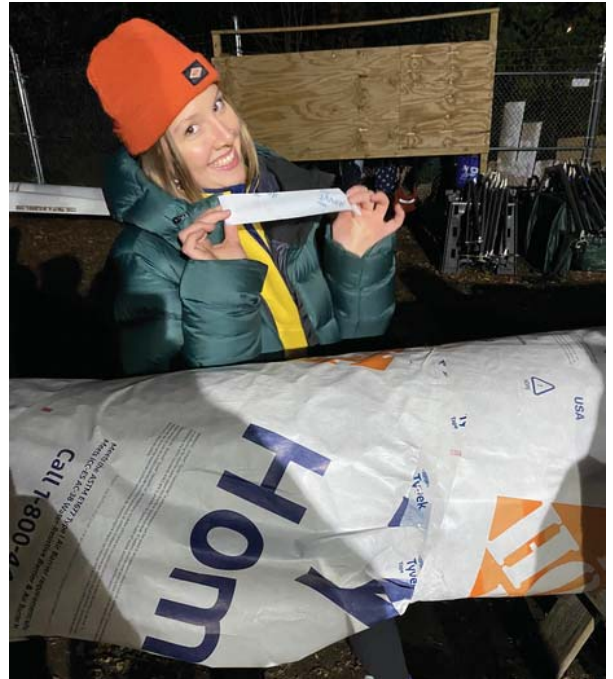


Reminders and Recognitions

Please see the dates listed previously in this newsletter as the town of Brunswick pulls the docks next week and we have our Boatyard closing gathering to **complete the winterizing** of equipment and putaway for the year on the morning of the 18th . Most of our boat owners have cleared their private boats from the Boatyard at this point, but any shells left in the yard after the 18th are left at members own risk. We would also ask kindly for any sculling oars left in the shed to be removed as well, as we have a lot to pack into the shed for Winter storage.

I would like to specifically thank Matt St. Cyr, Doug Welling, and Scott Bailey for helping to pull the launch dock out this past Wednesday morning. Despite the cold temps and wind, a significant seasonal task was accomplished with relative ease and the sections are settled into their winter resting place.

Last Saturday morning on the 4th , we had a **fantastic last group row** with many of our first year Masters Competitive Team joining our Juniors squad with the addition of several of our Fall 2023 Learn to Row/Scull class participants. We boated a quad, 2 fours, and the eight in full mixed lineups for a nice row out to the old crib bridge in Merrymeeting Bay and back to the docks. This in unto itself illustrates much of the progress we have made this past year to have such a turnout as well as **building our cohesiveness** in Masters and Juniors rowing together in such a fleet maneuver.





Program Growth

In terms of numbers, our membership grew to over 50 Full Adult members, who participated in a variety of programs, whether as Independent scullers, Masters Competitive Team participants, or Open Row attendees. At our peak this summer, with sweep and sculling classes, U23's, and Juniors from age 12 and up, we came in around **150 active participants**. Thanks to generous donations we **added 3 competitive hulls** to our fleet, including an Empacher 2x, a Hudson 4-/4x convertible, and of course our first 8 oared shell that many of you had a chance to row in at one point or another. All of these hulls went into heavy use at all levels of programming and saw active duty in our various Fall 2023 races. As to our competitive endeavors, we took on New England's best, and even as a smaller club in terms of racing rowers, we collectively put up some pretty impressive results throughout the **4 training groups**. In addition to some of our Independent sculling racers, the Merrymeeting Training Group led by Mike Totta, and our Juniors Team, we added a Masters Competitive Squad that at its peak had about 15 or so members in the summer, debuted at both the NH Championships and the Head of the Fish in Saratoga. This group brought great enthusiasm to the next level of training and held up in some tough Fall racing against an ever more competitive Masters rowing scene in the greater region.

Cow Island Regatta

Despite losing the Cow Island Classic Regatta to Hurricane Lee, our teams did move forward with solid progress in the rest of the Fall. Thanks to our Juniors Boosters led by Caroline Sweeney and the help of other club volunteers, we were ready to go with the Cow and had **several corporate sponsors lined up** in financial support for that annual event. We look forward to better weather in September 2024 to continue that tradition in hosting a lovely small early season head race event for the Maine Rowing community and beyond. The stellar t-shirt, designed by our own Caitlin Sweeney, is **still available** and can be picked up at the Fall Boatyard closing on **November 18th for \$20**.





Fall Results and Recap

Spring Recap

As for our Juniors Program, from racing in the Saratoga Invitational early last April to a larger presence at the Northeast Regional Championships, with our Boys 2- making Grand Finals, and the Boys Novice 4+ just missing qualifying being in the fastest heat of their event, our Juniors Team brought home its first trophy to the Boatyard with the Dirigo Cup representing the Maine Juniors State Team Championship. Maine Coast Juniors dominated the regatta, including winning all Varsity level large boat events (Boys and Girls 4+'s, Boys and Girls 8) as well as the Girls Novice 4+ and a close 2nd place in the Boys Novice 4+.

Pembroke, NH

This past Fall season they continued against top notch competition with the largest number of team entries at the NH Championships in Pembroke, NH. That race had 393 entries from 50 teams in 39 events. Maine Coast, including Masters racers, led with 20 entries in 17 of those 39 events. Highlights included 2nd of 21 in the Girls Varsity 2x, 5th of 14 in the Girls Novice 4+, 8th of 19 in the Boys Varsity 2x, 11th of 23 in the Boys Varsity 4+, 8 th of 15 in the Boys Novice 4, and in exciting news, as we debuted racing in Boys 8's events, including the Boys Varsity 8, the Boys Novice 8 came in 6th of 23 crews.



Head of the Charles, Boston, MA

As the crews moved on to the 2023 Head of the Charles, the largest regatta in North America with top national and international competition, (11,000 rowers, 2598 entries, 792 teams, racing over 3 days) our Independent Scullers and the Merrymeeting Training Group carried the Maine Coast flag to some tremendous results. With 10 overall entries in the regatta, in the Men's Grand Master 1x, Scott Hornney placed 7th of 57 (9 th of 123 racing field), DJ Townsend placed 30th of 57 (39 th of 123 racing field). In the Women's Veteran 1 level 1x, Leslie Krichko 1st of 22 (9 th of 79 racing field). Leslie and DJ combined ran 4th of 42 in the Mix Master2x. In the Men's Grand Master 2x, Mike Totta and John Tunnicliffe posted 2nd of 25. In the parent/child 2x our own Ford Reiche with child Sam Reiche placed 21st of 47. In the Directors Challenge Men's Masters 4x, 2nd of 34, and in the Directors Challenge Mixed Master 4x, 1st of 32. Wow!!! Independent training commitment to fast rowing. Congratulations to all of those scullers for amazing achievements! In the Juniors events against the best competition in the country our Girls Varsity 2x of Caitlin Sweeney and Novice Audrey Brogan places 43rd of 53 crews, dealing with some brutal wind at the top of the course in the Charles Basin Sunday afternoon, and our Boys Varsity 4+ (comprised of mostly 11th graders) placed 71st of 90 crews. The experience for them was a lifetime level event and has served to motivate them to train ever harder.



Fall Results and Recap Continued...

Head of the Fish, Saratoga, NY

Masters

In the final race of the Fall season, Maine Coast Rowing headed over to Saratoga, NY for 2 days of late fall weather at its wet and windiest. The Head of the Fish (1872 entries from 147 Teams in 90 events) features top notch Northeast and NY State competition. Maine Coast, including the Merrymeeting Training Group, the Masters Competitive Team, and our Juniors Team combined for 22 entries in 18 of the 90 events. In the Men's Masters 1x, Scott Hornney 1st of 25 and Mike Totta in the Men's Veteran 1x, 1st of 20 brought home the coveted "Fish Head" trophies. Mike continued building his Fish head collection, bringing home 2 more, the first in the Mix Masters 2x, 1st of 5 and in the Men's Masters 4x, 1st of 8. Our Masters Competitive Team entered the Mix Masters 4x, 17th of 22 (Mark Steciuk, Bill Jackman, Ronda Steciuk, and Anne Henshaw) putting up a solid showing in a tough field. Anne combined with Genny LeMoine later in the day for one more crack at the racecourse in the Womens Masters 2x putting up a good fight in a huge field as the conditions continued to deteriorate with significant gusting winds that made for challenging racing.

Junior Girls

As for our Juniors Team, shout out to 4 year senior and Girls Captain Caitlin Sweeney, who placed 23rd of 40 in the Girls U19 1x, and then combined with partner Audrey Brogan on Sunday in the Girls Varsity 2x for 16th of 33 in that events results. Cat Lajoie and new Novice Ireland Heller stepped up to the challenge of racing in the Girls U17 1x in addition to their team boats. Ireland despite being in a 1x for the 6th time EVER, showed no fear and finished her race dry and smiling. The increasingly difficult conditions of cold and rain did not diminish the spirits or drive of the Girls U16/Novice 2x, rowed by Novices Ireland Heller and Elizabeth Lajoie. The last race of the day, placing 7th of 15, was the Girls Varsity Coxed 4x+, finishing out the exciting weekend of racing for the Girls squad and all MCRA rowers.

Junior Boys

On the Boys side some super solid performances against top New England teams continued. On Saturday racing, Henry Ginsberg stepped up to the challenge of the Boys U19 1x, 36th of 43. Novices Ollie West , 53rd of 63, and John Nicholas took on the challenge of the Boys U17 1x. In his first 1x race, John in his 5 th time in a single, posted a respectable 55th of 63. Also Saturday, Junior Co-Captain Graham Baybutt teamed with Aksel Moon to post a 7th of 12 in the Open Pair taking out several collegiate boats. Senior Captain Noah Kessler teamed with Ben Duda to put up a 10th of 12 in the same event, again taking care of a tandem of Skidmore College entries. Those four along with coxswain Noah Sahagian improved their performance in the Boys Varsity 4+ gaining 30 to 40 seconds on rivals Bromfield Acton Boxborough and Greater Lawrence and beating Bedford(NH) and Northhampton, who they had previously dropped to at the NH Championships race 3 weeks earlier for a 20th of 31 in the highly competitive field. In the Boys Varsity 8 later in the day Sunday as a second race, they significantly improved time again from NH Champs on archrival Great Bay and even against top crew Saratoga, even though ultimately finishing 20th of 26 crews. For 3 races in 2 days the fact that we are now racing the Varsity 8 in regional competition is a huge step forward for our Boys program this year.





Fall Results and Recap Continued...

Head of the Fish, Saratoga, NY Junior Boys Continued...

At the Novice Boys level, the Boys Novice 4+ put in a great second race of Sunday, coming in 14th of 34 crews. Earlier in the day in the **Boys Novice 8**, with two 9th graders in the lineup, the group showed its moxy by overcoming the challenges of a broken rigger, broken foot stretcher, and the cox box system dropping out, by still placing **5th of 23 crews**, beating BC High from Boston, Greenwich B, CRI B, and Greater Lawrence, a mere 5 seconds behind rival Concord(NH)(4th). No doubt with no equipment issues they would have challenged Wayland-Weston for 3rd and given CRI (2nd) and Greenwich(1st) a run for their money. Congratulations to that crew for such a stellar performance despite it all in a tough regional 8 level race.

Congratulations go out to all those representing Maine Coast in the various competitions this year!!!

They have represented our growing club with distinction across all levels and shown not only good composure and discipline, but positive sportsmanship all along the way.



Congratulations, Audrey!

For a particular congratulations, our best goes out to Novice senior, Audrey Brogan, who **signed her national letter of intent**, having been recruited by **Division I NCAA** program, **Colgate University**, in a ceremony at the Boatyard this past Wed afternoon. We wish Audrey all the best as she moves forward to continue her rowing journey beyond Maine and we look forward to watching her race at the collegiate level. She will join 5 graduates of our class of '23 who have gone on to row in college at all collegiate levels across the United States and Canada.





Coach Jenn's Thoughts

And like that, the fall 2023 season has come to an end. This season felt long yet flew by at the same time. This fall I stepped into the role of Associate Coach and am taking on more administrative duties; I appreciate everyone's grace through this transition and am open for feedback and suggestions. I worked primarily with the Juniors program but supported Coach Dave and Coach Maisy with their learn-to-row classes and competitive Masters. Some words that describe what I saw this season include progress, commitment, team camaraderie, and support. Both on a daily and seasonal scale, I have seen tremendous progress of our rowers on all levels. Each person who comprises MCRA expanded their skills, whether learning to row top to bottom, fine tuning technique, competing at new levels, or increasing endurance. The commitment shown by all is supporting the growth of our program. It was great to see the support for one another and between the junior and masters' rowers. I was filled with such glee seeing how many people came out for the last row of the season! What a great row!

Like all things in life, there were challenging moments this season, however there are times that reinforce why I love being apart of MCRA. The sense of pride I felt watching the boys' varsity 8+ push off the dock in Saratoga, in unison say "COAST", seeing the kids support the master rowers at races, watching the hard work, drive, and smiles from the launch as rowers work collectively for themselves and their crew to make their boat work better and move faster. I am proud that despite being a small, growing team, we are mighty, fighting our way towards the top and against teams that have way more people, funding, water time, and equipment.

I am looking forward to the coming months. I hope everyone can spend time with family and friends, being grateful for the time we get to spend with those who mean the most to us. Come January, winter conditioning can be a frustrating time, it's difficult having to sit on the erg but getting to encourage and hold each other accountable helps make the time go by quicker and creates faster rowing come spring. I'm eager to see all that comes in 2024.





CLOSING NOTES

Thank you to all who completed **the recent membership survey**. This will help us tune our programming and structures to serve all of our membership better as we move forward into 2024. We will be looking at this feedback closely as the Board of Directors meets in early December for a board retreat hosted by our non-profit consultant, Bull Moose, who as a result of significant development grant monies was hired to help us mature as an organization and **develop a specific 5 year strategic plan** as well as create professional structures for corporate giving programs to boost our fundraising efforts that will continue to improve both our equipment and infrastructure for the benefit of the entire rowing club. Additionally, be on the lookout for our **Annual Fundraising Appeal** email and letter. The funds we raise are critical to our operations and ability to continue developing both infrastructure and improving our fleet of boats.

In closing, I personally would like to thank all of you for your time, effort, and support this past year to help Maine Coast Rowing grow and continue serving the Midcoast Maine region as **the premier rowing club of Maine**. I believe the future looks bright for the club as it continues to strive for continual improvement for both serving our membership and in competitive rowing in Maine and New England.

May your water always be fast and smooth...

Best,

Coach Dave

