



**Boathouse Construction Update**, by Pat Luppens, President

Clarkson's contractor has informally told the club that the final phase of construction of the new boathouse will begin as soon as weather allows. Grateful Oars has leased one of the three bays for its exclusive use. The building has been constructed, but final trim and roofing work will commence when weather allows. The concrete floor will be poured as soon as temperatures warm. Although we do not have a firm date for our own part of the work to begin, we need to do it before we can start the rowing season in earnest. This is usually in late May or early June. Our smaller boats are accessible now on the trailer, and rowing the fours, the pair and the single sculls can begin as soon as the dock is available for use. The racks for the boats and oars have been planned. Help will be needed with assembly. Volunteers will be needed for certain tasks, such as installing lockers, putting up racks, etc. We will not be able to move boats and oars inside until the racks have been installed. The 8 will remain on the rack and unavailable for rowing until it has been relocated to the boathouse, but other boats can be rowed from the trailer, though this is not easy. Spare gear, lockers, and other items were moved to other locations last fall. Workers will be needed for moving those items as well. The goal is to complete the move-in before Learn to Row Day on June 6<sup>th</sup> (See below).



**Learn to Row Day is Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>**, by Peter McCoy, LTR Program Director

The 2015 Learn to Row (LTR) program will begin on Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, with an open house and demonstration rowing starting at 9 AM. Peter McCoy is program director for Learn to Row. Club members should turn out to meet prospective members of the club and to give them personal tours of the facility and the boats. The LTR format will be the same as in recent years, with an initial period of weekly basic instruction in June to give LTR participants the basis for deciding whether to join the club and receive twice-weekly instruction in July and August. Peter will need assistance from many club members throughout the summer to provide the club standard of two experienced rowers in the 8 or 1 in the fours, coxing, and substituting for absent members. Please let [Peter McCoy](#) know that you will help. Nineteen members of the club helped out with LTR last summer. ***With lots of willing members, no one member will need to commit to more than a couple of sessions.***

The fees for LTR are \$30 for the introductory month and \$90 for the balance of the season. The June 6<sup>th</sup> open house/demo day is free (a waiver must be signed).



### **Strategic Planning**, by Ron Johnson

The Board of Directors has begun a strategic planning process with a survey of members' needs and goals for their rowing experience with the club. The survey will be distributed soon after the board's March meeting. Questions asked in the survey will be designed to help make decisions about fleet improvements, instruction, coaching, and the general direction that the club should take in the near and long-range future. Please ask Ron if any assistance is needed with completing the survey. Every member's response is important to the project. Return instructions are provided on the form.



### **2015 Directors and Officers**

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, members elected Pat Luppens President, Joe Vitale Vice-President, Ellie Menz Secretary, Sandy Fisher Treasurer, and Brooks Washburn, Dick Mooers, Gwen Cunningham, Larry Reece and Ron Johnson At-Large Directors. Terms for the nine-member Board of Directors run one year, with no limit to the number of terms. Joe and Brooks have served on the board since the club was founded in 1997.

The Board of Directors is responsible to the membership for running the club between membership meetings. The Board's principal jobs are ensuring the club has adequate insurance, equipment consistent with available funds, a safety program, liaison with Clarkson University and Clarkson Crew, instruction in rowing and sculling, and promotion of the sport of rowing in the North Country.

Membership on the Board of Directors is a great way to contribute to the work of the club. When the annual call for nominations to the board is issued later this season, please consider stepping up to serve. Other ways to contribute include maintenance of our boats and assisting with Learn to Row.



### **Development Crew for 2014 Learn to Row Participants**, by Carol Rossi-Fries

2014 Learn to Row members can look forward this season to developing their rowing skills further under the mentoring of Gwen Cunningham. Crew Captain will be Carol Rossi-Fries. Anyone who completed the 2014 program may join this crew. Given seat availability, other club members who feel they need further development of their rowing skills may join if there is space. Contact [Carol Rossi-Fries](#) if you are interested in rowing each week with the Development Crew this season.



## **Athlete Protection Policy Adopted to Meet USRA “Safe Sport” Requirement**

The club has submitted its new Athlete Protection Policy to US Rowing. USRA initiated the new policy in response to a number of incidents in the sports world of abuse of athletes, sometimes by other athletes or by coaches. Abuse is the catch-all for bullying, sexual abuse, or physical abuse. The Grateful Oars Rowing Club’s “safe sport” policy is available below via the on-line version of this newsletter and is provided on the club web site at [www.http://gratefuloars.weebly.com/forms.html](http://gratefuloars.weebly.com/forms.html). Members will need to have read the policy before signing the membership form this season. It’s very important that everyone understand that the club is serious about protecting its members from every source of abuse. If you experience or witness any situations that appear to be abusive, please contact any member of the board of directors. We have NO history of abuse; let’s keep it that way.



### **Sign-Up for Rowing in 2015**, by Ron Johnson, Membership Coordinator

Members have received their membership renewal materials by email. The 2015 Rower Preference Sheet and USRA waiver need to be completed and returned with the dues before members will be eligible to row. Reading and agreeing to the GORC Athlete Protection Policy, which is on the web site, is part of the process. This season, you are also able to download and print your membership form and waiver form from the club [web site](#). Send the signed forms with your dues payment to Ron Johnson, 6298 State Highway 56, Potsdam, NY 13676.

Dues this season are \$120 for regular members and \$70 for alternate members (substituting only). Your check should be made out to Grateful Oars Rowing Club. The private boat storage fee has also risen, and is now \$70 for the year. Only regular members are assigned to a regular crew

Why have dues gone up this season? Although the club has adequate funds at this time, the club decision to participate with Clarkson in the new boathouse means fulfilling a twenty-year obligation to pay off the note held by the university. Also, given the age and condition of our current fleet of boats, and the rising interest in sculling, we need to anticipate the eventual purchase of affordable, inexpensive replacement boats, which will need refurbishment before being put into use.



### **Bylaws Committee Working on Extensive Revisions**, by Dick Mooers

Working on bylaws isn’t exactly fun, but it’s necessary, or so say Dick Mooers, Ellie Menz, Peter McCoy, Rich Rubsamen and Ron Johnson, the members of a bylaws committee formed last November by the Board of Directors. Changes to the election process are planned so that the process is more orderly and transparent. Responsibilities of each of the officers and the At-Large directors will be made more specific, and there will surely be other changes, large and small. The draft bylaws revision will be distributed to the members in time for consideration and action at the 2015 Annual Meeting.



## **Boat Maintenance Workshop**

Grateful Oars RC rows good old boats, but they are tired—let's face it. With top of the line racing shells costing tens of thousands of dollars, the club will probably always own boats that need restoration at the time of purchase, followed by more or less constant maintenance. This is where you can come in. If you've been kind of interested in working on our fleet but are unsure of your repair skills, come to a boat maintenance workshop this season and get dirty. Dick, Joe, and Pat will work with you on restoring and repairing paint, varnish, fiberglass, carbon fiber, seats and other parts of our fleet of good old boats. The tentative date is June 13<sup>th</sup>. Email [Dick](#) if interested in being part of the on-going work of boat maintenance.



## **GORC Website**, by Peter McCoy, Web Master

The club's web site, [gratefuloars.org](http://gratefuloars.org) is updated continuously with fresh content, including photos. Among other photos, the site has a photo archive showing the history of construction of the new boathouse. New material is welcome! Please forward photos or other website content to [Peter McCoy](#). Include information about the photo such as who is in it and when and where it was taken.

The web site is also a source for club forms, such as the waiver and membership forms, and for the complete text of documents, including the new Athlete Protection Policy (See above).



**Introduce a friend to rowing with the Grateful Oars this year.  
Word of mouth is the best publicity!**

**Remember to sign up with Pat for boathouse work and with Peter for help  
with Learn to Row in June, July and August.**