

GO Rowing!

2018 Learn to Row Issue: *Learning to Row with Grateful Oars Rowing Club*

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Welcome from [Gwen Cunningham](#), GORC President

Welcome to membership in the Grateful Oars Rowing Club and to Learn to Row! We're glad you decided to learn to row, and I look forward to meeting you if I haven't already!

Rowing has a long, interesting history, both here and in Europe and has caught on in Asia, especially in China. I hope you'll find some time to learn a little more about the sport. Being a librarian in my non-rowing life, I'd like to share a few suggestions for books about rowing that are fun and easily accessible. Many of you have likely read the book *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. If you don't have time to read the book, PBS made a documentary based on the book called *The Boys of '36* which is also excellent and only about an hour long. (Note: the club has a copy of this available; just email me and I'll get you the DVD!) A fun, quick read is *Small Puddles: The Triumphant Story of Yale's Worst Oarsman. Ever.* by Michael Danzinger. Another book of interest is *Red Rose Crew: A True Story of Women, Winning, And The Water* by Daniel Boyne. There's a more comprehensive list of books about rowing at: <https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/rowing>. The club has a small collection of titles in the boathouse you are welcome to borrow as well, and they include *The Boys in the Boat* and books on rowing technique and rigging.

I would highly encourage you to attend a regatta (any regatta, anywhere!) if you are able, even if only as a spectator. YouTube videos are pretty good, but there's nothing like being there, mixing in with hundreds of other rowing enthusiasts. Regattas give you a wonderful feeling of camaraderie with the sport in general as well as with other rowers. The closest to us is the annual "Head of the Rideau" in Ottawa in late September, and several of our members compete every year. Your goal may not be to become an "elite rower". There are plenty of us who are just doing it to challenge ourselves or for the social aspects or for the health benefits and all of those reasons are absolutely legitimate.

Again, a warm welcome to the club and I'll see you on the water soon!



Membership - [Carol Rossi-Fries](#), Membership Coordinator

As of July 23, our 2018 Learn to Row participants are Jamie Carey, Rachel Cook, Julie Depetry, Bill Eckert, Caitlyn Gollinger, Donna McGinnis, Joe Selleck, William Taylor and Rod Woodin, with others anticipated once the enrollment process is completed. This is one of the largest groups we've had the pleasure of teaching to row. Great to have you all!

A word of caution for the "others" referred to above: you must pay your dues and the USRA fee and complete the waiver and various membership materials as outlined for you previously before we can consider you enrolled for the season. Please do this very soon so that you are not excluded when the deadline date is decided. The process is easy and the dues reasonable, so please take ownership. If anyone needs assistance with the membership process, please contact me. I'll be only too happy to help! It's time to tuck this baby in!

As a member through the LTR program, you are in fact a full member of GORC and have all the privileges and responsibilities of membership. Until you advance in your skills, your crew will be the LTR crew. However, GORC does not limit members to one crew or to a certain number of rowing outings per week. More than one of our members is rowing regularly more than twice a week. One member rowed three times one Wednesday! Scullers, of course, are limited only by the availability of the Alden Star singles. More than one of our scullers who own their own boats row several times a week.

Carol's crews row Monday and Wednesday mornings, Chris's crew rows later on Monday and Wednesday mornings, and Joe has crews rowing Monday and Wednesday evenings, as well as LTR on Saturdays. These are all sweep *fours* except for LTR when it uses the 8. Ron Johnson and Rich Rubsamen row a sweep pair or a double scull together three times a week, and Alison Del Rossi's crew rows a sweep four on Wednesdays and will row the 8 when crew can be arranged. At least nine members have qualified to scull club boats independently, and five members scull their own shells. Some members scull with supervision. Brooks, Dick, Joe, Mike, Peter, Rich and Ron regularly enter racing events.

We may hold a full club mixer event sometime in August so LTR participants can meet other GORC members for a potluck picnic with some rowing and socialization. You might chat up a captain or two about subbing or get a head start on a development crew for 2019.



2018 Learn to Row – [Peter McCoy](#) - LTR Coordinator

Learn to Row will teach you basic sweep rowing skills. In sweep rowing, each rower uses one 12' oar, or *sweep*, in long boats ranging from the difficult two-person *pair*, or "2-", to the more stable 4+ or 8+, the "plus" referring to the cox (coxswain). In LTR crews the cox is also the coach.

By the time LTR says “let it run” for the season sometime in early fall, our goal is that you will be proficient in the basic rowing stroke and able to coordinate with the other rowers in your crew. Rowing is a crew sport in which complex individual skills are blended with the skills of others. Few of us become good rowers in one season. Becoming a very good rower is difficult when you row only once or twice a week. All we ask is that you keep focused and try your best. Be patient with yourself and you will become more and more keen to row as the season progresses. The more you row, the more you will love it. With good health, you might row for nearly the rest of your life.

The club mainly rows in sweep boats such as the 8 that you are using, or the less stable 4's, but we also own “sculling” boats, the yellow “Alden Star 22's” in the rear of the boathouse. The other sculling boats belong to club members who rent rack space. We do not coach sculling at a high level, but we welcome safe use of the Aldens. We have specific criteria for their use, and there is a qualification process for independent use. Peter can tell you about this. The “pair” is not used by beginners.

What of next season? The skills that you develop this summer will be a little rusty next spring, so we anticipate that you will row next season in a development crew with a mentor or coach. See the article below by the captain of this season's development crew, Chris Daggett.



2018 Officers and Board of Directors

In addition to President Gwen Cunningham, the club's officers and Directors at Large for this season are Peter McCoy-VP, Ellie Menz-Secretary, Sean Cunningham-Treasurer, and Directors at Large Brooks Washburn, Carol Rossi-Fries, Dick Mooers and Joe Vitale. Gwen, Sean, Brooks and Joe will complete their two year terms this year and Carol, Dick, Ellie and Peter have begun two-year terms. Peter maintains the web site and is Learn to Row Coordinator, Carol is Membership Coordinator, Joe and Pat Luppens co-manage the club's fleet, Pat maintains the launch and motor, and Dick coordinates boathouse and yard work. Contact information is posted on the bulletin board at the boathouse.

The Monthly board meetings are open to members and are announced in the previous month's board minutes that are sent to all members by email. The meeting space is small, so the board would appreciate your letting Gwen or Ellie know if you will attend so that we can make space arrangements. The board manages all the affairs of the club, including obtaining and maintaining the fleet of boats and our equipment and facilities and holding club events like Learn to Row Day, the annual Mixer (rowing in mixed crews), and the annual meeting. Members themselves arrange for racing under the club's colors at regattas in Ottawa, Rochester, Saratoga, Syracuse and elsewhere. The club does not provide financial support for racers, although it encourages all members to develop racing-level skills and to compete.



2018 Development Crew, the “RocknRow Crew” – [Chris Daggett](#)

There were six “graduates” from LTR last season. All six of us grew to love rowing, but the realities of life and labor meant that only four of us could form a development crew for this season. We took responsibility for this ourselves, and you must do the same. We have Boat Captain Chris Daggett and Danielle Jerry, Susie Parisian, and Robin Woodin. Rod Woodin from LTR, Carol Rossi-Fries and Cindy Edwards have been subbing for us, but it’s mainly the four of us. We row on Monday and Wednesday mornings. Dick and Carol have been our advisors. The crew normally rows the 4+ *For Pete’s Sake*. Anyone interested in joining the crew to sub, pressure cook their skills, or help with mentoring should contact [Chris](#). The purpose of a development crew is to build on first season rowing skills and to introduce and practice coxswain skills. The goal is that before the end of the season we will be a five-member crew that will function independently of a coach. Within limits, our crew is open to other members who want to work on technique, practice being coxswain, or just add another weekly row. Interested in joining the crew or being a sub and can row from 9:30 to 11:30 AM on Mondays and Wednesdays this summer? Send me an email by clicking on my name in the title.



A Short History of Grateful Oars RC

Grateful Oars began 21 years ago. The club was formed by Joe Vitale, your head coach for “LTR”, and a few friends, who obtained our oldest boat, *Jimmy Row*, and four spoon-shaped oars from the Syracuse Chargers on the cheap and hand built a solid, roomy boat shed. (Our history of keeping expenses down started early!) Clarkson University’s crew club, formed shortly after Grateful Oars, shared space with our club until it erected its first shelter, a fabric-covered hoop building. Over time, Clarkson’s structure weathered substantially, and ours aged, too. With the necessary cooperation of Grateful Oars, the university leased land from the Village of Norwood, demolished both buildings, and built the present facility three years ago. Our club sub-leases a bay from Clarkson.

Our paid membership at this point in the season is expected to be 36 rowers when all the paperwork and payments are complete. This is more or less typical of the years since 2014, which is a sort of watershed year for the growth of interest in rowing in the United States. Membership dues support our lease and rent, liability insurance, fleet maintenance, and our small yearly savings toward upgrades and unforeseen expenses.

Our fleet is maintained by boat maintenance coordinators Pat Luppens and Joe Vitale. They will respond concerning repairs reported on a special clipboard hanging under the bulletin board in the boathouse. Anyone can report a problem (and can volunteer to help fix it!)

By George, our “8”, was made of Kevlar in the 1990’s by Dirigo Corp. in Maine. Its crew weight rating is not known. **BG** was purchased from Russell Sage College in Albany in 2011 and extensively repaired and refitted by GORC at the SLU boathouse. Its name honors George Repicky, the SLU varsity men’s coach, who has been very helpful and generous with his time for many years. Several of our members learned to row from George, coming

to GORC in 2009 as a full crew, complete with their own Empacher 8+, now broken up. The 8 was deaccessioned by the SLU program. Most of our oars were sold to us by George at a substantial savings over market price and repaired in house.

For Pete's Sake is a mid-weight fiberglass Vespoli 4+ purchased in 2006 (first in service 2007) from Saratoga Rowing Association, Saratoga Springs, and once owned by Columbia University. It is our workhorse boat, popular due to its relative stability, but it is somewhat heavy to carry. ***FPS*** is named for Pete LePage, now deceased, who was our guide and supporter as the Norwood Director of Recreation and manager of the beach and play areas. Pete was extremely important to the founding of GORC, the construction of our first boathouse, and in our relations with the Village. The beach is named in memory of Pete.

North Star is a vintage Kevlar Dirigo 4+ designed, we think, for heavyweight crews. The boat was given to GORC in 2016 in derelict condition and extensively refitted upon acquisition, then extensively repaired and refitted again after major structural problems developed. ***NS*** is used mostly by Joe Vitale's crews and is Joe's favorite boat, bearing the name that he favored.

State of Mind is a featherweight Kaschper 4+ purchased in 2004 in Toronto, the second boat we acquired. Made of a combination Kevlar/carbon fiber fabric, it is the lightest and easiest to carry of our 4+'s, but can be somewhat hard to set. ***SOM*** came to us with that name.

Jimmy Row is a vintage Pocock fiberglass 4+ acquired in 1997 from Syracuse Chargers and was our first boat. ***JR*** is a good boat that sets well, but it is quite heavy, which is why it is rarely used. The name is taken from a Grateful Dead song, *Row, Jimmy Row*.

The ***Pair***, unnamed, is an unrated vintage Vespoli acquired in 2009 from Nereid Boat Club in New Jersey and equipped with toe steering shortly after purchase. Club members rowed the pair in the 2010 World Rowing Masters regatta in St. Catherine's, Ontario. The pair is fast but tippy, so considerable skill is needed.

The two carbon fiber ***Alden Star single sculls*** can be rowed by a wide range of rower weights and are designed for intermediate scullers. Basic instruction is offered so that anyone can qualify to take them out alone, but advanced sculling technique is not offered by the club. For information on the qualifying process, contact [Dick](#). Alden 1 was purchased from a private owner in 2013 and Alden 2 was donated the same year in derelict condition and restored. The Aldens are somewhat delicate and must be handled with care.



“Volunteer” Opportunities in GORC in 2018

Grateful Oars is not a large club, but it has to do all that any large club undertakes, so all members contribute to the work. Maintaining boats, the yard, the dock, and the club's portion of the boathouse, cleaning up the dock after the geese have blessed us, helping at LTR, organizing and working at the season's picnic, serving on the board of directors—there are lots of ways to help. Each member is expected to contribute two hours of work for

the club each season. Want to help with the work? Please speak to Gwen or any other board member.

The boathouse sweeping assignment list is posted on the boathouse bulletin board and every 2018 member is on it as things stood before LTR began. Please add your name at the bottom of the list if you can sweep. It's done once each week into October and takes an hour or less. Thanks much! If you have any question about tools and procedures, please see Dick.



Grateful Oars RC is on the web and Facebook:

<http://gratefuloars.weebly.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/grateful.oars/>