

the Wave

Newsletter of the McGill University Rowing Club

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Fifth Anniversary Edition

Just Visiting

by Kate Matwychuk

I found myself explaining to almost everyone I met during my first few days here at McGill, that "no, I am not an American, but I am just visiting from an American school. Actually, I am from Hamilton, Ontario: a full-blooded Canadian." I have gone through similar identity crises within the sport of rowing, both when I took to the water for the first time at Radcliffe, and then again this past summer when I rowed at Leander Boat Club in my hometown. I remember Liz (the varsity coach of the Radcliffe Heavies) calling to me from her launch that fateful day of my first row on the Charles: "You're in America now, Kate. Row like an American!" And so, from then on, I was referred to by coach and athlete alike as "Kate from Canada."

I worked hard for two years adapting to the American style. Something must have worked, because the first practice at home on the rough waters of Hamilton Bay, my coach talked frankly to me after a two minute piece. "You're in Canada now. You're going to have to row more like a Canadian, and get rid of that American layback and those sluggish hands at the finish." I looked at him and wondered just where I fit in.

Rowing at McGill has certainly been another learning experience for me, and has given me a new outlook on the sport. I will never forget my first Metro ride to the Basin, being left behind stepping off the train at Berri-UQAM while everyone else zipped past me and were down the stairs even before the doors of the train closed behind me. "Why the rush?" I asked myself. When reaching the connecting platform, I was all alone; the others had run to catch the train to the island. I never did get used to that early morning sprint to catch the connecting train, but I was

**"You're in Canada now.
You're going to have row
more like a Canadian!"**

never left behind again.

At Radcliffe, the Weld Boathouse is located minutes from campus, on the Charles River. Weld is used strictly by women, just as Newell Boathouse (located on the other side of the river) is used by the Harvard men. Inside Weld are fourteen ergs, two lifecycles, a weight room with Nautilus equipment at gamut ergs, a locker room with showers, and six

bays filled with boats. All the equipment is maintained by the resident boatmen, and is available only to those affiliated with Radcliffe Crew. Practices are in the afternoon to early evening, not in the morning. [ed. note: another Americanism?]

How do you compare a programme such as the one I just described, a programme with outrageous alumni and school financial support with the programme at McGill? I have to admit that, on the first early morning voyage before practice, I wondered why anyone would want to row here. I am now a little wiser, and with a full fall season behind me, I understand why the McGill programme has continued as strongly as it has, even without any school support, finan-

continued on p. 5

Contents

	page
Editorial	2
More Friends for McGill Rowing	2
To row, perchance to dream...	3
McGill Invitational Regatta	6
Lightweight and Junior World Championships: Montreal 1992	6
On the Racks	7
Alumnotes	7
MURC Coaching Staff, Fall 1992	7
OCAA / OWIAA Results:	8

Editorial

On January 13th, Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) announced its Video Recruitment Contest, whose winner will be the club which attains the "highest factor for new registrations." Coaches newly attaining level two certification and all new athletes are counted as "factors." Winning clubs will receive rowing equipment as a prize.

What a great idea! Until you read the fine print, that is. To be counted, athletes must be under 21 years in 1993, and men must be at least six foot four and 190 pounds, while women must be at least five foot eleven and 160 pounds. There are other criteria which affect the factor for new registrations, but it is the size criterion which is a poor choice.

This contest suggests that RCA has forgotten that it is the size of the fight in the dog which counts. At the MURC, it is the inner strength of our prospective athletes, not the outer size, which determines who will be in each crew. This is not a contest to increase the involvement of Canadians in rowing; it is a contest to feed the national team. A team which chose a Brenda Taylor, five foot eight, 145 pounds, to stroke the winning eight at the Olympics.

The National team may choose to recruit big people for their programme; this is their prerogative. Our national association should not, however, be encouraging its member clubs to recruit only certain people. Not because it is a bad idea philosophically (it is), but because it is not an effective way of encouraging Canadians to row.

Canadian rowing needs to empha-

size self confidence in its crews. When the members of club crews believe in themselves, the national team hopefuls will also. Any sports psychologist will tell you that you gain self confidence by great accomplishments, not by being big.

The MURC continues to stress these fundamentals to its members. Anyone seeing our lightweight women's eight charging down the championship course this year, after an extremely difficult season, will agree they had two goals in mind: to believe in themselves and to race as well as they could. Thus they won the race, *not* because they had to win, but because they believed their best was at least as good as the competition. As a group, these women might get passed over by another programme because of their size. At the MURC, they have the opportunity to show their unbelievable strength.

More Friends for McGill Rowing

by Tony Tremain

The Friends of McGill Rowing will be holding its Annual General Meeting on February fourth, sometime during the printing of this letter. It is expected that the members will approve of the recent decisions of the Directors, these being the following:

The Friends be divided into regions headed by committees of a certain location. Said regions will be Montreal (governed by the Directors of the FMR, including most of Canada), Toronto (including people on the Kingston-Toronto-London-Hamilton-Niagara corridor), and America.

It is hoped that a division of labour will increase the strength of the Friends. The first steps in the operation of the Toronto region are underway:

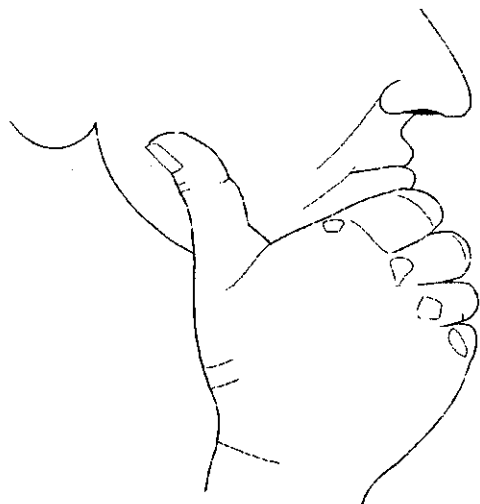
The Toronto Committee, whose chair will be Terry Mactaggart, will

muster support in Southern Ontario (as defined above). The immediate goal for the region will be to produce a truck for the Club, or the funds to buy one (about \$25 000). I am extremely pleased with the support and interest of a core group of individuals from this area, particularly since it is comprised of alumni, parents and rowers (rather than the usual: only rowers). I am sure the editor will not mind if I list their names: Greg Peters, Al Sorrenti, John Younger, Jeff Grange, Kate McCowan, Terry Mactaggart, Larry Bourk and Peter Edwards. If you know of anyone who would be interested in helping with the organization of the FMR in any region, please contact me at (514) 844-7402.

Despite the competitive successes of the MURC, and the ability of its members (students) to raise the operating funds necessary year after

year, the first question asked is always "yeah, but isn't the team about to fold?" This team has soul, and anyone watching *any* of the crews at a race will see the serious dedication of its members, the commitment to greatness. Now we have that commitment returning in the form of alumni and friends: we will not fold.

There will be a number of fundraising initiatives happening in the next few months. This is your chance to help out with our organization; let us know what you can do to help. At least as important as fundraising is the knowledge that there are many of you who are interested in the Club and who can give even a little moral support. Keep in touch!



To row, perchance to dream...

by Jay Sinha

Alas, there is life after rowing ... or is there? There is the perpetual snooze button unchallenged by thoughts of eight other bodies and a boat waiting ever so impatiently. There are Montreal's cinnamon and raisin Fairmount bagels eaten, not naked, but generously smeared with butter, Liberty cream cheese and smooth, sweet raspberry jam. There is beer. There is unrestrained frivolity and dancing past 10:30 P.M. There is re-acquaintance with friends and relatives who had feared you lost to the crew (little do they know). There is re-acquaintance with courses, the oft painful reality of learning. There is time to savour the sunset as opposed to sweating at the

sunrise as you "hard twenty" past it. You are free; you can do whatever the hell you please whenever the hell you please. Life is a joy. Life is a festival. The bliss, it's overwhelming. Catch me as I swoon. Let 'ER run. Is this really living life the way it should be lived? Or, better put, is this really living life in the fullest, the most fun, the funkiest way that it can possibly be lived? Hardly, there is no lunacy to it.

During rowing season, a friend, who is not a rower, once said to me "I just cannot believe you get up at 5 a.m. every morning to row a boat around in circles when its cold and dark. You know what you are? You are a lunatic." I thanked him for the compliment and told him he ought to try it, then he would believe it. He obviously needed a new outlook on life. I shudder to think how boring life would be if I wasn't a little crazy. That would be like growing up and turning into an adult and leaving childhood totally behind. Yuckola. Non-rowers often refer to rowers as crazy, sometimes even as lunatics. They are right, but only rowers realize just how crazy they themselves are. Only rowers realize that rowing = lunacy = happiness. There is so much more to rowing than meets the eye. Rowing is a state of mind. In fact, you might even say it's a dream, pure and simple yet intensely com-

plex and enigmatic.

So what is a dream, you ask? Who knows. That's part of the beauty and the mystery, nobody really knows. Some might say Freud and Jung knew but it seems to me they were just throwing out educated guesses. The folks at Random House propose a few definitions that may be on the right track - "a succession of images, thoughts or emotions passing through the mind during sleep; an involuntary vision occurring to a person awake; a vision voluntarily indulged while awake; an aspiration, goal, aim; a wild or vain fancy; something of an unreal beauty or charm". However, they neglect to mention the archetypal real dream: rowing. Allow me, if you please.

I would ask all rowers who are reading these words to think back to the recently completed rowing season. Does it not seem like it was ages ago? I mean, does it not seem like a long time since we were on the water? Now our lives are filled with school and work and play and the whole routine is different. Sure there may still be workouts but they are not the same as the water. Does being on the water seem a distant dream? It was not that long ago but it does have dreamlike qualities: intense pain and pleasure melded into one. You remember the pain of exhaustion, the cold, the mornings. You also remember the pure, crisp pleasure of the run when the boat works for you. It is a high, a definite high that, although difficult to attain, when you do attain it, it is delicious; and you don't forget it. It may seem to a non-rowing bystander that I am romanticising to death something as simple and primal as pulling a boat through water. That is just my point. Non-rowers don't see most of what makes rowing dreamy and funky and downright fun. They see the finished product but

continued on p. 4

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McGill Invitational Regatta

*by Hugo Miller, with material
lifted from an article by Jen
Mactaggart*

It was a typical October day in Montreal; deceptively warm in the morning, but with mist leading into rain, and progressing into wind and cold by the afternoon. But while others crammed for midterms, furiously wrote essays, or just simply slept in and stayed warm, there was a flurry of activity at Montreal's Olympic Basin. The McGill University Rowing Club's first ever invitational regatta was underway.

Five rowing clubs from Quebec and southern Ontario joined McGill in competition at the Basin. One of them was arch-rival, Queen's University, however they were not to take away from the impressive showing of our McGill crews. In fact it was McGill that took away the lion's share of gold medals at day's end. Amidst the clicks of numerous local photographers, both parental and professional, and the frequent bouts of

rain, McGill crews dominated on the world class racecourse.

The novice women's A and B boats finished first and second respectively, out of a field of six crews. The novice women's 4+ took home another gold. The novice men's A and B crews not to be outdone, likewise crushed the competition. The McGill varsity heavyweight men's 8 also struck gold, followed closely by our men's lightweight. The varsity heavyweight women's 4+ dusted their competition as well, in their newly christened boat, the "Mike Lizée."

In equally exciting racing, the McGill women's single, the men's lightweight 4+ and the women's lightweight 8 all came in second. In the women's double, McGill's novice crew finished a solid third, as did our heavy women's eight. Needless to say, it was a happy moment for many at the medal ceremony. Not only did the regatta run well and smoothly, but McGill crews performed almost flawlessly.

1992 marked the first time in the MURC's long history that it has hosted a regatta. It was very pleasing to see such high-calibre rowing at the intercollegiate level in Montreal, indeed another first, on the Olympic Basin. The genesis for the regatta came from an executive meet-

ing back in the snowy depths of February. Going outside, let alone rowing, was barely conceivable then, nevertheless, initial plans for a regatta were made.

The reasons for the MURC hosting a regatta were manifold.

Firstly, we felt that it would be a very good way of promoting the MURC in both the McGill community as well as the rowing community at large. Secondly, we believed that a regatta in Montreal during the fall rowing season would be a good way of bringing together for competition, clubs from Ontario and Quebec that might otherwise not meet until the following summer season. Thirdly, we felt that a regatta would be of immeasurable benefit in terms of promoting the Basin itself, a truly world class facility attested to by its hosting of the 1992 World Junior and Lightweight Championships this past summer. The MURC Invitational Regatta was very effective in terms of meeting those goals. The regatta was also successful in fulfilling the MURC's own mandate, to give our rowers as much competitive experience and as much fun as possible. So while we can't guarantee the weather for, we'll guarantee that the 1993 MURC Invitational is both bigger and better.

Lightweight and Junior World Championships: Montreal 1992

by Tony Tremain

Many McGill rowers were involved in the organization and operation of the Championships on our home course. We put over 900 athletes (and their boats) onto scales, into lodging, in front of many cameras, onto the water and some onto the medal podium. Two

of our illustrious alumni were competing: Lisa Carey (Lightweight Single, USA) and Rachel Starr (Lightweight Four, Canada, on the injury list).

Thanks to you all have been sent from the Federation International des Societes de l'Aviron, who indicated

that it a very well run regatta, with time enough for everyone to have fun. As history repeats itself, Montreal is bidding for the World Championships in 1998 (lightweight and heavyweight). See you there!

On the Racks

by Anne-Marie Sorrenti

In one swooping motion, the boat is lifted from the water, and lands squarely on everybody's shoulders. Except for mine. I hold the boat beside my head, for I am short. A wrinkle in the order of things, but we seem to be dealing with it.

A bead of water slides over the curve of the hull, hesitates for a moment at the edge, and reluctantly pulls itself away, changing from a sphere to a circle as it hits the dock. As I watch this event, I think that I feel a drop of sweat slide down the middle of my back, but I am not quite sure.

We are moving now, in step. Inside foot, then the outside foot. We pivot, and aim at our target. Bay number four, right hand side, middle rack. We are out of step now, and this annoys me because it is so much simpler, so much more balanced, to stay in step. But who said that anything would be simple, or balanced?

We have reached the shelter of the bay, and stand in its shifting shadows. Behind us are the twelve kilometres we covered and the sun which rose a little more with each trip to each end of the basin. Standing here, we are still attached to the vessel we moved, and which moved us to this state of fatigue. Anxious to let go, I feel a certain satisfaction and relief as the shell lines up with the racks "just so." The riggers are free of all stress, each one like a wing creating an illusion of effortless, hovering suspension. The shoelaces dangle languorously from the belly of the hull, like sleeping bats.

We scatter, the chatter commences, and the quiet order of our morning routine dissolves as we prepare to go about the business of the day. The shell, meanwhile, released from our grasp, is unhindered by other concerns. It will sleep all day, and wake in the middle of the night to prepare for the congregation of its members sometime tomorrow morning, in the dark.

Coaching Staff Fall 1992



Rob "the Rooster" Henderson

Henry "don't even ask me to coach" Hering (!)

Jen "I'll be a better cox" Mactaggart

Ellen "where's my boat?" McAleese

Thomas Krusty O'Connor

Julie Andrews Tees

Tony the Trumpet Tremain

Tosha "just ask" Tsang

Allison Turner

Greg "hey!" Williams

Marcello Ausenda: Alive and well in Bermuda

Rob Baxter: Stirring up support for the Club in Montreal; has booked Redpath Hall for next year's banquet.

Craig Duffield: Was surprised to find he was hosting a Christmas party this year.

Jeff Grange: Getting serious; down to some hard work in Toronto.

Steve Gregory: Laughing it up in Vancouver; was lucky to be in Montreal for New Year's Eve with Fred and Matthew.

Grant Gush: Arrived with a flourish at the Duffield party. He is the trim Grant we all came to love.

Michelle Jones: Engaged?

ALUMNOTES

Alex Kuilman: Lost in a drift, in Whistler.

Matthew Lella: Is only now working on the interior of the cottage; living all too close to the Mars Restaurant in Toronto.

Kate McCowan: On the ball in Toronto.

Douglas Mason (from a letter last fall): "Thanks for *the Wave* and congrats for all of the good work. It has been great getting all of your news."

Pam & Paul: Need we say more?

Fred Scarth: Finishing her PhD in

Toronto.

William Tinmouth: Loving uwo. The tar and feathers are in the mail, Will.

Dave Wilson: Studying the Spinal Tap tapes at Oxford. Going for the big boat: watch the news this spring.

Deena Wohl: Perfecting her Sadie Bronfman imitation.

Steve Woodside: Studying chemical engineering at UBC. "We don't get much news out here."

John Younger: Having a serious affair with his housemate (a Montreal woman) in Toronto.

Peter Zandstra: Out west with his sidekick, Woody.



OCAA/OWIAA Results: October 31, 1992

Event / Place				1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Womens	Heavy	Coxed	Four	Western	McGill	Toronto	Queens	Trent	Waterloo
Mens	Heavy	Double		Toronto	Western	Queens	McGill	Waterloo	
Mens	Heavy	Single		Brock	Western	Queens	Toronto	McGill	
Womens	Lightweight	Single		Queens	McGill	Carleton	Western	Toronto	
Womens	Heavy	Eight		Western	Toronto	Brock	Queens	Trent	McGill
Mens	Heavy	Eight		Queens	Trent	Western	McGill	Brock	
Mens	Lightweight	Single		Brock	Western	McGill	Toronto	Waterloo	Queens
Mens	Lightweight	Coxed	Four	Western	Queens	Waterloo	McGill	Trent	
Mens	Lightweight	Eight		Western	Queens	3. McGill (tie)	3. Brock (tie)	Toronto	Trent
Womens	Lightweight	Eight		McGill	Toronto	Queens	Western	Trent	Brock

Our Novice crews participated that day in the "James Dean Memorial Pre-Olympic Identification Regatta". The Men's Eights finished first and second, the Women's Eights finished first and third and the Women's Coxed Four finished second. Congratulations on an outstanding performance!

If undeliverable, please return to:
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