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MRRA AUGUST 2004 Newsletter

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ASSESSMENT REMINDER

FINAL REMINDER: If you have not paid your \$50 assessment toward the new rental agreement with the State, remember that your payment is due and payable immediately.

There will be a motion floated at the next monthly meeting to reject the membership applications next year of anyone who (a) has not paid this assessment by the date of the September meeting and/or (b) has not materially participated in the activities of the Club. Once released from your membership with the MRRA, you of course will be free to join any one of the numerous clubs in the area that charge \$350 and more for an annual membership -- The MRRA is still the best value for your rowing dollar.

FAQ:

Q: How do I pay?

A: Leave a check in an envelope in the drawer at the desk in the boathouse, or send your check to the PO Box. Optionally, wait for a guy named Salvatore to come collect it from you late one night.

Q: I'm a student, do I have to pay?

A: Child, you pay in other ways. All you need to do is show up at the boathouse cleaning party on August 28th to fulfill your obligation. Watching a teenager scrub porcelain is worth much more than \$50 to most adults.

Q: I joined late, or I'm a LTR student and joined late, do I have to pay?

A: You should have received special dispensation by now, if you haven't then write the check.

Q: I don't think the assessment is fair. Do I have to pay?

A: Talk to The Hand, then call ARC to see what a \$350 membership feels like. And don't waste your time or ours by filling out a membership application next year.

Q: Aren't you being a little harsh about all this?

A: I just got back from a week in Sicily with the godfather. Yes, you could say I'm feeling a little *arrabiata*, but lucky for you, club rules prohibit the busting of heads in most circumstances. Just write the check.

MINUTES OF THE August MEETING

Date 17 August 2004, 7:00 pm

Place Bellegarde Boathouse
Lowell, MA

Attendees JayF, AnnB, WilmaB, BobB, ShirleyJ, MikeS, BobS, MollyB, RayS, PaulaK, BobL, JimP, CarlP, MarkR, JimS.

Another light turnout. Must have been the summer reruns of American Idol. A motion by Jay to move the meeting along at a 50spm beat was seconded and unanimously passed.

Item 1 Financial

Finance update [5 minutes] [John]. high level review of the numbers, surcharge paid rate, regatta success, first boathouse payment

- AnnB reports on behalf of Treasurer John that the Festival netted \$5400 profit.
- We are short on the collections of the \$50 assessment that was voted on back in May. Logic has it that we will refuse membership applications next year for anyone that has not paid the assessment.
- In short, our financial condition indicates that we will have approximately \$6k available toward the purchase of new boats. JayF cautioned that there are tremendous uncertainties facing the club and assuming that these funds are available for boats could be dangerous. (changes in assessment amount, card access costs, cost of cleaning the boathouse if membership is unwilling, etc).

Item 3 Boathouse

Boathouse, agreement, status, cleaning party.

A quick review of the current status of the boathouse agreement was presented by Jay.

- UML is close to having an agreement with the State. Since the dollar amounts involved are significantly larger than our assessment, it was expected it would take longer.
- Our \$1k quarterly payment was sent to the State on time.
- Apparently, a commercial cleaning company was contracted by UML to spruce up the boat house (no details), so this is why you may have noticed less than the usual amount of scrunge at every turn. However, the possessed urinals and sinks continue to be a source of amusement for some and frustration for others.
- The artwork consisting of an anonymous white floor fresco on the MRRRA side near the back of the boathouse will be eliminated as soon as someone can figure out what it's made of and how to remove it.
- We will be changing the combinations to the front door

and gate on or around September 1st. Members in good standing will receive an email with the new information. Pay your assessment now.

AnitaC and WilmaB are organizing a cleaning party on Aug 28 at 9am after your normal Saturday rowing. Also, Anita is soliciting bids to have the upstairs floors stripped and cleaned.

**Item 4
Summer LTR
Programs**

Review of Summers [5 minutes] [Jay/Jim]. Numbers, successes, failures, needs.

- Learn To Row was unusually successful this year. We had more than ample coaching, and usually enough boats, and of course a crowd of eager students with a good sense of humor.
- Light discussion about boats ensued. Jay feels there is a gap in the fleet between the wide ocean-liners and the more narrow near-racing shells as it relates to the LTR program. The logical progression for a student is not always attainable due to this gap. (More boat discussion below)

**Item 5
Coaching**

Idea for club fall coaching sessions. [5-10 minutes] [Jay]

- "Save a Stroke" -- Jay will be running in the Disney Marathon and would like to arrange a tie-in to the charitable component of this race, namely the American Stroke Association. To this end, Jay will be providing on-water coaching including video (similar to last year's sessions) and will accept donations toward this worthy cause in exchange for the coaching sessions. The suggested donation amount has yet to be determined, as well as the details of when the sessions will be held.

**Item 6
Accessible
Rowing**

Accessible rowing program for next year. [5 minutes] [Jay]. There has been an indirect inquiry for the club to take on the accessible rowing program for the physically challenged.

- MRRA may be approached to administer this handicapped-accessible rowing program next year. Details to follow. If you are interested in being a paid volunteer, talk to Jay.

**Item 7
TRR**

TRR regatta prelude [10 minutes] [Jim]. Announcement of TRR only meeting, club's responsibilities and first request for help.

- JimP reports that we are on track for a better-than-ever TRR. This year's registration process will be handled by Regatta Central, and this should eliminate a whole lot of anxiety.
- There is an insurance issue to be resolved, either with USR or MRA.
- The September meeting will devote 1.5 hrs to the TRR and one half hour for the normal MRRA business.

**Item 8
Boat Usage and
Reservations**

Club boat usage for the TRR. [10 minutes] [Bob]. With the TRR coming up we always have boat sharing problems. Lets find out who needs what and who is signed up for what.

- Still working on a policy to establish a priority system for boat reservations. CarlP: Seat racing. MarkR: Club participation should count for something, and the first tie-

breaker on a reservation should be to let the interested parties try to work it out. A third option could be to run a variation of the popular TV show -- we'll call ours "Merrimack Survivor" -- and if you can rappel down the Tyng Bridge and swim back to the boathouse, you get the boat. As a tiebreaker, you must hunt and kill a river rat and then eat it while watching the US Rowing safety video.

- It was agreed we need to accelerate work on this policy and have something clearly defined before the need arises. JonR, PaulaK and BobS to meet in person.
- Segue into the Policy/Handbook update. No news, but agreed that there needs to be a non-email warm-blooded meeting on this to keep the ball rolling.

Item 9 Boat Purchase

Equipment purchase discussion. [15 minutes]. ? premature - there has been a proposal to get a new boat or 2. Do we have the \$\$\$, what needs do we have?, what boats leave the boathouse to make room?

- BobS tells us that a mid-weight Fluid Design single is available for \$4500 and we should act on it.
- Raucous discussion ensued
- CarlP relayed Ginny's preference for a Quad, and more spirited debate followed. The fundamental nail for this coffin was the experience of having a four two summers ago, and the fact that it was barely rowed one day per week. Having a quad as a training device didn't seem to impress the crowd and they continued to shout "Single! Single! The Club needs a Single!!!"
- JayF: Too much fiscal uncertainty to entertain spending all \$6k of the anticipated profit now for boats. On the other hand, as a non-profit we should strive to get to the financial finish line with as little as possible in the accounts.
- MarkR: Fiscally more responsible to eliminate a boat, perhaps raising a few dollars, which would coincide with the purchase of the FD.
- Jay: Which boat gets replaced?
- Oy, we also need better LTR boats.
- MarkR: Two Charlie boats would be good. Kits can be had for less money and might be a fun winter project.
- A voice broke through the clamor, the crowd went hush, and RayS made the following motion:

MOTION: Purchase the Fluid Design single for \$4500

- Not content that a motion could be that simple, further discussion ensued to amend the motion.
- **Motion to amend the original motion: Purchase of the FD contingent on eliminating one NON-LTR boat from the racks.** Which boat? Stay tuned. Boat usage survey is underway (PaulaK and BobS).
- **Another motion to amend the original motion: If the FD costs \$4500, then the \$1500 remaining of the budget should be spent on a new or used LTR boat (Alden Star, Maas, something with positive stability, and maybe this means another Charlie boat).**

- Oy, rack space. The motion plus two amendments implies the need for at least one new rack space. Rack space discussion brought everyone to a fever pitch.
- BobS: In conjunction with the motion to buy the boats, and consistent with the effort to come up with a Boat Usage Policy, a decision on rack worthiness will be completed as part of the Boat Usage Policy, and this is to be completed post haste. The purchase of one or two additional boats implies very simply that we must make room for them. In short, if you have a rack, use it or lose it. Details to follow.
- BobB: New club boats should take priority on the racks over personal boats. Nods of approval all around.
- **FINAL AMENDED MOTION by RayS: Purchase the Fluid Design Single for \$4500, dispose of one non-LTR boat, and purchase a new or used LTR-suitable positive-stability boat, for at least \$1500 plus whatever we can shake from the TRR tree.**
SECOND: MikeS. Vote: 993 aye, 1 opposed (Jay).

It was like watching the low-speed OJ car chase, only in slow motion.

Miscellaneous

WilmaB reminds us all that your order for an MRRA unsuit should be placed with her ASAP. Row, or row in style, it's your choice.

Submitted by C. A. Popolo, MRRA Secretary

SECRETARY'S NOTES

- Meeting notices and LINKS to meeting minutes will continue to be distributed by email, but the minutes themselves are only on the web site. The index to meeting minutes is on a hidden page not available to the general public. Bookmark www.merrimackrowing.org/members -- This is a PROTECTED FOLDER, you will need to sign in with a username and password: username = **mrta** and password = **renovate** -- both username and password are entered lowercase. PLEASE NOTE that the password will probably change in June after the 2004 memberships have been processed. Members in 2004 will receive an email with the new password.
- (repeat) The LINKS page on the web site is growing. Add your favorite rowing links to the site by sending them to webmaster@merrimackrowing.org.
- The MRRA **BULLETIN BOARD** -- It's fun and easy to use -- don't be left out.

Send your comments, critiques, ideas, facts, fiction, questions and future newsletter ideas to me at Carl@merrimackrowing.org.

-- Secretary Carl

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