



Lyme Old Lyme  
High School

**Old Lyme Rowing Association**

<http://www.oldlymerowing.org>

*"Come row with us"*



Blood Street Sculls

## Blood Street News                      September 2011

Greetings to all members of the Blood Street Family!!

Now that the mess that Irene created is behind us, it is time to reflect upon the summer and to look forward to the fall training and racing season. I thought I would take a moment to get everybody up to speed on what has been going on, and to review our plans for the fall. This is my favorite time of the year for rowing activities. There is nothing like the beauty, challenge, and camaraderie that you will find at the regattas during the head race season in the northeast. Let's all hope for many cool, crisp and sunny days as we make our way down the racecourses this fall!

I.        We started the summer by hosting the **USRowing Junior Women's Development Camp** June 20-July 10. This was the third year in a row that we hosted this group. The feedback from rowers and coaches alike was very positive. The young women who participated really recognized what a gem of a rowing venue we have in Rogers Lake. Once again, we worked with the Camp staff to ensure that they did not interfere with OLRA activities. The Camp asked to rent some of our older eights, doubles, and launches this year. The Board agreed to this request, and OLRA received a rental check of \$1,600 for the use of our equipment. OLRA hosted a welcome cookout for the Camp as well. The young women were very appreciative and smiles were in abundance.

II.        The **summer juniors** wrapped up an exciting summer season with a trip to the Canadian Henley. It had been quite a few years since Blood Street rowers made the trip. Our kids learned that the competition out there is pretty stiff at the highest levels. Under the leadership of Coaches Tyler and Erica Page, our summer junior program was really enhanced this year. In addition to Canadian Henley, our kids raced in big numbers at the Independence Day Regatta in Philadelphia, the Cromwell Cup in Boston, and Narragansett Sweeps and Sculls in Providence. The two-tiered system of a "High Performance" group and a "Competitive" group was well received, and we intend to keep that model going forward into the fall. We have appreciated all the feedback that we have received from parents and rowers

alike. The OLRA Board is really working hard to take our junior programs “to the next level”. We intend to work through our growing pains as we try to make our programs the best that they can be.

III. The second (hopefully annual) **Rogers Lake Stake Race** took place on August 13. This fun event was organized by Sarah Kukich as part of her Girl Scout Gold Project. In addition to some good racing in a novel format, the day provided an opportunity for our rowers to interact with our neighbors on Rogers Lake, and to learn more about the environmental concerns on the Lake.

IV. For the fall, **the Fall Juniors** will have a strong coaching staff which includes Tyler Page, Clai White, and our very own masters rower Melanie McConkey. It should be a terrific fall season for the juniors. Tyler has demonstrated his strong credentials and enthusiasm over the summer. Clai is a former Syracuse rower who has experience coaching at Community Rowing in Boston. He works with Tyler at IHP here in Old Lyme. Mel will make a terrific addition to the team, as she is one of our most experienced and competitive masters rowers. Parents will find Mel to be passionate and highly organized. She will be a tremendous asset in working out logistical and boat sharing issues to ensure successful race days. Although John Laundon is not part of our junior coaching staff this fall, we are all so appreciative for the many years of dedication and coaching service that John has given to Blood Street. No doubt John will be a strong presence on the racecourse this fall as he competes on the head race circuit. Of course, John and Louis Zubek will be back in their coaching roles as LOLHS varsity crew coaches come spring!

Parents have, of course, noted that the Board has decided to increase the **session fees for the juniors this fall**. We are really making a strong effort to increase the depth of our coaching staff, which necessitates a quite significant increase in coaching pay. It is the vision of our Board to create a junior program that attracts the best athletes in the region, thus building a program that is very competitive at the highest levels. We hope to do this while still encouraging those rowers whose main goals are primarily recreation and fitness. Further, our juniors have been spending a great deal of time on the water, which greatly increases the wear and tear on the boats. We will no doubt need to accelerate our boat purchase plans and major boat maintenance in the future as a result. Please keep in mind that OLRA/BSS receives NO money from the town or school to purchase our equipment. All OLRA boats, oars, and equipment are purchased from the proceeds of masters dues, Park and Rec income from summer/fall juniors and learn to row programs, and fundraising/gift income. Thus, the session fees will be put to very good use!

The fall juniors begin on September 6 and will practice and compete through the end of October. As noted above, the fall junior program will include a High Performance group and a Competitive group. The HP group will practice Monday through Friday at approximately 5 pm, going earlier as the days get shorter. They will also train on some Saturday mornings. The Competitive group will practice after school Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Breaking up the juniors into two groups

will go a long way towards improving the supervision of the juniors. It will also reduce the strain on the amount equipment that we need when we have big numbers of rowers on the water. **Boat sharing issues** are a concern for the fall season, and we have worked out a mechanism to ensure that everyone will have the boats that they need for practice. Tyler and his coaching team are well aware that masters have priority on the equipment in the fall.

It is also our plan to offer a **program for novice juniors this fall, and possibly also a fall learn to row session for adults**. We will have more information on this in the very near future.

V. At this time we have three **coaching/safety launches** available for use, all with quiet 4 stroke Yamaha motors. We have had serious problems with the inflatable launches that we got from AMI inflatables. The first boat, although it performed well on the water, suffered serious damage to its transom during normal operation. We got a replacement boat from AMI, and unfortunately the transom on that boat also was seriously damaged, rendering the boat useless. We are working on getting our money back from AMI. In the meantime, we are looking for a larger flat-bottomed aluminum boat to replace the inflatable. We have a nice 25 hp four-stroke Yamaha ready to go for the replacement boat.

VI. Through the careful management of our Club's resources, OLRA/BSS has an excellent fleet of training and racing shells at this time. We have really been trying to foster a **"culture of caring" for our equipment**. This goes for everyone in the Club, both juniors and masters alike. It is very frustrating when we find scratches on a new boat that are there simply because the boat was not put into or taken out of the rack correctly. Many of you may be surprised to learn that most of the damage to our boats occurs in just this way. Please let's ALL take responsibility for caring for and maintaining our equipment. Wipe the boats down after every row, report any damage to a coach or captain immediately, and exercise the greatest care when moving the boats in and out of the racks and when taking them in and out of the water.

VII. **Plans for the renovation and expansion of the Fred Emerson Boathouse.** By now, many of you have heard that we have exciting plans in the works for our Boathouse. Our Club leadership has been maintaining an ongoing dialogue with Town leaders for about two years now. The Town recognizes the positive impact of rowing in our community, and has been very supportive of our concepts. As usual, money to fund the project has been an issue. This past June, I learned from Selectman Skip Sibley that the Town of Old Lyme is eligible for a STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grant. With the support of Skip and First Selectman Tim Griswold, we have made an application to the State of Connecticut for a STEAP grant. This plan has been reviewed and endorsed by the Board of Selectmen. In brief, the plan calls for a 3,000 square foot expansion and renovation of the Boathouse in conjunction with enhancement and beautification of Hains Park. John Parker, a masters rower and architect, has drawn up a plan which is a great starting

point. The plan includes a third bay for additional boat storage, bathrooms, exercise area, changing rooms, coaches room, and a second floor storage/exercise area overlooking the Lake. The application also includes state-of-the-art telescoping boat racks, AND new state-of-the-art docks. Enhancements to Hains Park include relocation and renovation of the basketball court, improved landscaping and grading to make the Park more environmentally friendly, construction of a beach volleyball court, and other enhancements. We have submitted the application with a budget of \$490,000. This represents a HUGE opportunity for us, and it is most certainly in line with our goal of taking OLRA/BSS to the next level. We understand that the State will inform us about a decision on the grant application sometime this fall. Let's keep our fingers crossed!!

Well, that's it for now. I hope that you have found this to be interesting reading! Please contact me or any Board member if you wish to discuss any rowing-related concerns.

Best wishes,

Greg Hack

President, Old Lyme Rowing Association/ Blood Street Sculls