

128 1st Street
Troy, NY 12180

Spring 2002

Dear Rensselaer Crew Alumni

The birds are chirping and the grass is beginning to turn green once again. This can mean only one thing – the spring rowing season is upon us! Our athletes trained throughout the cold winter months in anticipation of future races to come. Their motivation and dedication would make all of you proud.

Hard work pays off. Our first races of the season have taken place. The Varsity Men's 8+ is currently sporting 2-0 record having bested Wittenberg University and Choate-Rosemary Hall. The Varsity Women's 8+ also carries an undefeated record having defeated Wittenberg University by a wide margin. Both crews will put their records on the line against conference opponent St. Lawrence University on Saturday, April 6.

Listed below is our full spring race schedule should you wish to attend or cheer us on in spirit from a distance.

Spring 2002 Schedule

April 6	**St. Lawrence University (Canton, NY -- away)
April 13	**Union College (Schenectady, NY -- away)
April 21	**Skidmore Invitational (Saratoga, NY -- away)
April 27	**Clarkson University (Albany, NY -- home)
May 4-5	N.Y.S. Collegiate Championships (Whitney Point, NY)
May 10-11	Dad Vail Regatta (Philadelphia, PA)

** Denotes UCAA Conference Opponents

There have been other exciting developments with the program since I last wrote. These developments have kept me busy and prevented me from responding to many of your e-mails -- for this I apologize. I believe that you will understand and become as excited by the news as the rest of the team.

New Developments

Trailer

We have taken possession of our "new" used trailer. The trailer proved invaluable during our annual spring break trip to South Carolina. The basket in the bottom of the trailer allowed us to store oars, riggers, toolboxes, spare parts, and even some of the athlete's luggage. It is also much lighter making it easier to pull than the "big red beast" of the past.

New Shell

The Robinson Fund has committed \$12,000 towards a new Women's 8+. The Club recently received permission from the Student Union to reallocate funds from this year's budget to make up the difference between the Fund's financial commitment and the cost of the new shell. The Committee in charge of the Fund will reaffirm their financial commitment at their next meeting. We are looking forward to placing an order for the boat at that time (*please read section about the Alumni Weekend and Boat Dedication below.*)

New Truck

One of the biggest hurdles that the team has faced in recent years is obtaining an adequate and reliable vehicle to tow our shell trailer. The team had access to a truck in the past, but it proved to be too small for our needs. As a consequence, the engine was damaged on three occasions. Ultimately this rendered the truck inoperable.

Through the generous support of the Union, this hurdle has been removed. Based on the recommendation of the Director of Club Sports, Steve Allard, the Union purchased a new F-350 dually pickup truck capable of towing up to 10,000 pounds. It may very well be the most beautiful color red that anyone has ever seen!

This is tremendous vote of confidence in Crew by the Institute. Having a reliable tow vehicle of this size will permit the rowing program to make an enormous leap forward. We will have the capacity to travel to higher caliber regattas with a larger number of athletes. With reliable transportation to races we may now begin to plan for the long-term growth of the program.

Crew Alumni Weekend and Boat Dedication

We are in the initial planning phase for the 2002 Crew Alumni Weekend. It will take place the weekend of September 28 and will coincide with the 16th Annual Head of the Hudson Regatta. A number of Alumni have expressed an interest in racing at the regatta. Please contact me if you would like to participate. It would be great to see folks out on the river again.

During this gathering we would like to dedicate our new Women's 8+. More details will be forthcoming. We look forward to seeing you there!

Docks/Erg-a-Thon

As my last letter indicated we have moved to a great new facility. While the boathouse itself is fantastic, the docking situation is problematic. During the fall season we made due with wooden docks that we did not own. These sank shin-deep when we stepped on them. We believe that it has become time to invest in our own dock system.

We are currently borrowing a 41-foot section of docks from a local rowing club and must return it before the end of our spring season. It will cost approximately \$5500 (Phase #1) to replace the docks that we are currently borrowing. We estimate that it will total \$8000 (Phase #2) to purchase enough dock sections to make ourselves fully independent and capable of launching an 8+.

As all of you know, this is a significant amount of money. While the school has been very supportive of the team, we must make our own efforts to ensure that we will continue to be able to row for the remainder of the season. The Club will be undertaking an Erg-a-Thon on April 9th and 10th to raise funds for the project.

Members of the team will complete 1 Million meters on the ergometers as part of an effort to purchase enough cubes to complete Phase #1 (the initial 41 feet of dock.) The financial breakdown this Phase of the project is listed below. Athletes will be soliciting support for their efforts from family, friends, and neighbors. We are asking that donors consider purchasing cubes of docks, connecting pins that attach

these cubes together, and/or the bumpers that will protect the shells from damage. As Alumni of the program, please consider contributing. Your generosity will last for years and help in the Club's efforts to foster successful rowing at Rensselaer. If each of our Alumni commit to purchasing just one cube and connector the program would be well along its way to having the best docking system on the river!

Phase #1: Docking System (41 feet)

Item	Cost per Unit	Units Required	Total Cost
<i>Cubes</i>	\$35.75	125	\$4,468.75
<i>Connecting Pins</i>	\$6.50	96	\$624.00
<i>Bumpers</i>	\$13.00	12	\$156.00
<i>Assembly Key</i>	\$17.00	1	\$17.00
<i>Shipping</i>	\$250.00	1	\$250.00
Total			\$5,515.75

Detailed information about the Erg-a-Thon is obtainable from the team's website www.rpicrew.com. Information regarding the progress of our efforts to purchase docks will also be available from the website. Please make contributions payable to Rensselaer Crew. They may be mailed to Rensselaer Crew, RPI Student Union, 110 8th Street, Troy, NY 12180.

New Coach

I would like to take an opportunity to introduce the newest member of the Rensselaer Crew Coaching Staff, Jennifer Cecatiello. Jennifer assumed the position of Novice Rowing Coordinator at the beginning of February. She will be responsible for coordinating our Novice Men's and Women's programs while preparing our athletes for intercollegiate competition.

Jennifer completed her undergraduate studies at Skidmore College and received her Master's Degree in Education from the University at Albany. Jennifer had a great deal of competitive success as a college coxswain competing for both Skidmore College and the University of Bath while attending Oxford University. Jennifer also brings a broad background in coaching to Rensselaer. She has coached nearly every age group imaginable. Trained as a teacher, she brings an incredible expertise in the area of introducing new rowers to the sport. We are lucky to have her as a member of the team.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you would like more information regarding Alumni Weekend or the Erg-a-Thon please e-mail me at toddrutecki@aol.com or call 518-852-3368.

Best wishes,

Todd Rutecki
Men's and Women's Head Crew Coach
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute