

# STROKEWATCH

BARC • P.O. Box 580374 • Houston, TX • 77258-0374



## DID YOU KNOW?

by Don Erwin

Did you know that BARC has not always had the nice facility and boats it has today? Not too long ago, things were much more primitive. About six years ago, the initial dozen founding members bought two old wooden eights (one of which is still in use by the Rice Crew). We stored the boats under plastic tarps in the fenced yard behind the boathouse for about four years. It was not until we built our fine boathouse that we could even think of buying nice equipment. The outdoors destroys rowing shells in no time.

Without a boathouse, hurricanes, hail storms and even high winds meant a trip to the park to secure equipment or check for damage. Those boats also required a lot of maintenance, which all had to be done outside: hot sun, mosquitoes, mud, etc. Using power tools usually meant organizing a clandestine operation to plug a 200 foot extension cord into the secret outdoor power outlet at the Bay Area Museum. We also relied on the museum's water faucet for hosing equipment after practice. No one really asked, but I am sure they were happy as we were to see us put all of our junk inside and out of sight.

The next time you are standing on that nice, dry concrete floor in the boat-

house, know that everyone spent several weekends hauling concrete and pouring it into the forms. Rowing teaches you things you never thought you'd need to know...

We all take those beautiful docks for granted. In the beginning, boats were launched by walking them into the water and climbing up into them. Imagine doing that in February! Yep, it was a little chilly. Low tides were always a welcome site. The docks were designed and built by some of your fellow club members. No contactors here.

The point of this little walk down memory lane is to help us all appreciate

the fine facility we have and the opportunity it affords us. Please think of it as exactly what it is, your boathouse. Don't wait for someone to ask you to tidy it up, put something back in its place or care for the landscaping. The brooms on the wall don't just whirl around the house at night when no one is looking and keep things in clean. (hint, hint...)

Even though we pay for the privilege of having the facility in the park, it is still a privilege and like it or not, we have a public image to maintain. Thanks to all of you who put in a few minutes to keep the place looking nice.



## THANKS, BOARD MEMBERS!

by Don Erwin

As you may know, we have recently installed some new members of the Board of Directors. Here's a big THANK YOU for all of you who have served on the Board to date and to our new Board members. Many of us enjoy our sport through the efforts of these fine people who put in many off-the-water hours getting things ready for us to use. Special thanks to Jeff Tave who put in many, many hours as Treasurer keeping track of all the BARC dollars and preparing very detailed reports for the Board to review. With such detailed information, our Board has been able to make informed decisions.

Board members, keep up the good work and thank you! Everyone else, please make yourself available when these nice people ask for help.

## AGGIE CREW PART OF THE FAMILY

by Don Erwin

This is just to introduce you to the student rowers from Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG). The Aggie Crew, as they are more affectionately known, has been using BARC facilities in one way or another for about a year now. The Aggie Crew is comprised of about a dozen male and female students. They raced a Mixed Novice Eight, a Men's Novice Four and Women's Novice Four in last fall's Head of the Colorado regatta in Austin. All the students came home with medals, most of them gold.

This semester, the crew will race a Women's Novice Four, a Men's Novice Four, and a Men's JV Four. They have rowed in the informal Rice Invitational Regatta on Mud Lake which was also attended by the University of Texas and Tulane and plan to row against North-

## **DOLLARS & SENSE: RAMBLINGS OF AN EX-TREASURER**

*by Jeff Tave*

Well, it's hard to believe, but after **4 years** of pestering y'all about dues, I am free! Yes, free at last! (Imagine the sounds of wild whoops of hysterical laughter echoing through the night, as the lone figure prances off into the darkness ...) Now, don't get me wrong, there are a ton of things I'll miss ;-). Oh, you bet! Scrambling at the last minute to put together the Treasurer's Report before a BOD meeting, sure, counting up all the change from our annual garage sale, uh huh, figuring out how to apply someone's dues/shell storage check when it doesn't correspond to their balance, oh yeah, ... Fond memories that'll be the subject of humorous anecdotes, I'm sure. On a more serious note, these memories will also include such major club acquisitions as: the Strokinator, Karankawa, the Raj, Kaschper 4X, and most important of all, the BARChouse. Which, by the way, has

an outstanding loan balance of approximately \$5200 and will be completely paid off by February 1996, less than 1 year away!!! Thanks to all the members who made loans to the club, gave donations, or just paid their dues in a prompt manner!

Anyway, as you may read elsewhere, unless you were at the "heavily-attended" BARC Annual meeting, Shari McCormick has leapt into the stroke seat and volunteered to be our next Treasurer. I know she'll do a great job, besides the fact that she's an accountant. I'll be working closely with her over the next month or so so as to ensure a smooth transition. However, there's some things that we all could do that would make her start as straightforward as possible (Please, no trial by fire!):

1) Please pay your dues/storage

fees promptly, no later than 2 weeks into the quarter! And, send in your check with the invoice or at least fill in the memo line on your check to explain what the check covers.

2) Please mail your dues to our P. O. Box, don't post 'em up on the boathouse bulletin board.

3) If you need to take a leave of absence, please notify Shari or a BOD member prior to the start of this period (as stated in BARC handbook). Or, if you know you'll be terminating your membership, please let us know via phone or mail.

4) Finally, please thank her for volunteering for this critical position, one of the most important in the club.

Yep, that's it for me, on to other duties. I am outta here! Have a good one, and we'll see you on the water!

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### **COLLEGIATE LIAISON**

*by Jeff Tave*

I'm baa-aack! You'd think that after many months following Anil Raj's trail blazing of the BARC-Rice Agreement, almost a year after Anil got the whole thing going, I wouldn't want to be involved in the whole situation any more, but I must be a glutton for punishment! Seeing as our Rice liaison designate, Eric Richards, has taken a temporary leave of absence from BARC, I have volunteered to take his place. In fact, I suggested that this role also act as a liaison for all collegiate rowing clubs that want to be members of BARC (such as Texas A&M, more affectionately known as 'the Aggies', though as a 'Texas Ex', I'll try to treat them with respect ;-). As this is a new position without much defi-

inition, I'll flesh it out as we go along. I'm open to any suggestions y'all may have. Some of the key things I'll try to do are: 1) Keep a free-flowing communication line going on between all organizations, 2) Ensure that all current/future agreements are followed as written, 3) Resolve, through the BARC BOD and Liaisons of RRC and A&M, any conflicts that may arise, and finally 4) Work toward cementing positive relationships with RRC and A&M and to create a harmonious rowing environment for all (ugh! I almost sound like a politician!).

If you have any comments on the current relationships, or anything else I should know about, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail me.

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### **KEEP BARHOUSE CLEAN**

*by Marc Bonin*

Some furry little critters have been sighted in the boathouse. To discourage our rodent guests, please dispose of food wrappers and so on in the trash cans OUTSIDE the boathouse. They also appear to be getting fat on fire ant killer of all things; so please store this outside the boathouse in the plastic footlocker.

### **PLEASE LOCK SIDE GATE**

A non-email savvy BARC'er asked me to pass the word: Monday crews have found the side gate unlocked! If you're a weekend launch user (or are in the side yard), please be sure the gate is securely locked. Rotate the tumbler and give it a tug. No one wants to lose equipment!

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### **SAFE ROWING ON MUD LAKE**

*by: Don Erwin*

Recently, Hannes Hofer, one of the Rice students and I removed all of the remaining underwater obstacles between the second and third telephone poles from the far shore. This is where you are supposed to go when heading upstream. pole. It's kind of scary to think that all that stuff was just below the surface of the water.

Just a reminder - the official traffic pattern for Mud Lake is to stay to the right, like driving a car. Boats going upstream should stay to the side of the lake near the boathouse shore. Boats rowing toward NASA Road 1 should stay to the side of the lake near the opposite shore. Boats crossing the lake should give those rowing up or down the right

of way. When going between the telephone poles, go between the second and third pole from the far shore while heading upstream. Go between the far shore and the first pole when heading toward NASA Road 1. Leave the middle set of poles as a safety area.

## EQUIPMENT CARE

by Don Erwin

We have been pretty lucky to date with our shells and oars. There have been no significant repair jobs due to accidents. (Knock on wood!!!) We have, as would be expected, experienced some breakage due to wear and tear, but we can minimize the amount of this kind of repair with a little attention.

We don't really have a sucker, I mean volunteer, to head up equipment maintenance. Repairs are usually made by the person who needs the broken equipment. Obviously, it would be great if we had someone to go to and report problems and who could plan some preventative maintenance. But without such a magnanimous person or group of persons, here are some things you should consider when handling equipment which should help prolong its useful life.

These tips apply to both sweep and sculling equipment.

### • Allow Time

This is probably the simplest thing you can do to help care for the equipment. When you plan your rowing time, remember to schedule in time to care for the equipment. Rowing is more than pulling on oars. You must be prepared to spend a little time on YOUR shell to make sure it is in good shape for the next person to use. Get to know the equipment and ask questions of others if you are not sure if something is wrong or not.

Before you row, inspect the equipment for any loose nuts or broken parts. Don't row if something is not right.

### • Washing

After every practice, wash the inside and outside of the hull. Don't forget the riggers. Just because aluminum does not rust that does not mean it won't corrode. Wipe the boats down as much as possible. There were actually mushrooms growing from under the tracks in one of the fours recently! (No towels?? Maybe it's time to go buy some new ones for your home and donate your old ones to the boathouse!) Hang the towels up after use on the "clothes line" between the first set of racks in the middle of the boathouse so they will dry out for the next person. Don't just throw them anywhere.

If there is a scum line on the shell, wipe it off with a rag or your hand. That stuff builds up over time. Yuck... If there

is a permanent looking scum line, consider buying some car polishing compound and polish the shell to remove it. Remember, this is YOUR equipment. YOU row it. You should keep it in shape.

Every few times you use the shell, place it upright in a set of slings and give it a good scrub on the inside. Wipe out the tracks. It may appear that grease has been placed in them. Any gunk there is not intentional.

Wipe it out. Wipe the wheels off, too.

### • Seats

If your seats come out of the shell, intentionally or not, set them down in such a manner that the wheels do not touch the ground. In other words, place them wheels up. If you have several, stack the others on top of the first one, etc...

If your seat moans and creaks or sticks while rowing, something's not right. If you do not feel comfortable tinkering with it to make it work smoothly, call me at the number below and I will try to work on it.

### • Placing the shell in the water

Avoid contact of the shell with the dock when placing it in the water. Seems pretty obvious, but you'd be surprised. Recreational singles can get away with being placed on the dock, but even these should be placed in the water rather than being slid in. Crews should all face the center of the shell when placing the shell in the water or slings. In this way, you can see what the shell is doing and keep it level. Press down on the gunwale near you to keep the shell level from side to side and the fin away from the dock, a common source of damage.

### • Oars

Wash 'em after every use. Keep the collars out of the dirt. Wipe the collars off with a rag every once in a while. When you hang the oars in the racks, make sure they are not swinging when you leave them. They start to rock back and forth and walk right out of the rack. Spoooooooky!

Never lean oars up against a wall or a tree. The wind could blow them over. Composite oars should not be left lying in the sun for prolonged periods. When you're done, put 'em up. I noticed that

there is at least one pair of wooden club sculls that are in dire need of repair. The varnish won't just jump out of the can onto them. Consider sanding and varnishing them yourself.

### • Foot stretchers

Don't force them. If they are difficult to move, try to determine what is making them bind. If a screw is sticking up from the track, get a screwdriver and screw it back in. If the stretchers are crooked, that can cause them to bind. Gently tap them straight. Loose the wing nut enough to lift the stretcher slightly. On the Schoenbrod shells, you must also lift a little plastic piece with the stretcher. It seems like it take three hands to do it, but a little patience works pretty well.

Have you ever gotten into a boat and had to put your feet into yucky shoes? Can be gross, huh? "Why don't they replace these?", you ask. Well, there simple is no "they". You and I are "they." Consider bringing a new pair with you next time to replace the old ones.

### • Tools

Yes, tools need care, as well. If you use one, put it back where you found it. This is where a little planning can help. Too often I have seen people grab tools in a rush and then run off with them or just return them to the desk instead of the workbench. Look in the desk next time you're at the boathouse. Chances are there will be a wrench or a screwdriver in there...

### • Summary

I know I have rambled a bit here, but our equipment is getting old. It is still in good shape, but we can't forget why it is in good shape - people take time to care for it. If you make attention to the equipment part of your routine, it will last much longer. Just have a look at the time private shell owners put into their equipment. You should treat the club equipment the same way.

## **BARC AND RRC SOLIDIFY ALLIANCE WITH SIGNED CONTRACT**

*by Bill Dixon*

The long awaited agreement between the Rice Rowing club (RRC) and BARC was ceremoniously signed on February 18. Simply stated, the agreement says RRC can store their two 8+'s and use the Karankawa when BARC crews have not scheduled it. In return, RRC pays BARC a membership fee, storage fees for the two 8+'s, and a rental fee for the Karankawa.

We see much of the Rice Crew these days. It's great to see such activity at the boathouse. Since there is so much going on at once, remember to stay alert when in the boathouse.

There are a couple of components of the agreement that you should know about. RRC members are bound to the rules that appear in the Membership Handbook, just as you and I are. In addition, the agreement says that the combination to the boathouse is to be given only to the RRC coaches. Help us keep the boathouse secure by referring questions regarding the combination to the Club Treasurer. When opening or closing the boathouse, please spin the numbers on the padlock to conceal the combination.

Since RRC is using our equipment, it is vital that you schedule the use of the 4+'s with Paula Berman, our "Scheduling Goddess". We have agreed to schedule the Raj before the Karankawa. However, if two BARC crews schedule both 4+'s at the same time, the BARC crew will have priority use of the Karankawa. RRC will then have to negotiate with Paula for another time.

I hope you join me in looking forward to a long and favorable relationship with the RRC. If anything develops that you are concerned about, please see a board member, speak to Hannes Hofer or the RRC launch driver. During this first year of the agreement, the board is monitoring the terms of the contract, and may modify them if necessary.

Special thanks to Cheryl Dasco, Anil Raj, Jeff Tave, Eric Richards and the Board of Directors for their dedication to this effort.

## **BARC SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

### **MARCH 1995**

March 5 Board Meeting at Jim Potter's 7:30 p.m.  
March 8 Newsletter Articles Due  
March 18 Sculling TIYLI - 9 a.m.  
March 25 & 26 Heart of Texas Regatta - Austin, TX  
March 31 BARC night out 6:30 p.m. at Sam's Boat

### **APRIL 1995**

April 2 BOD Meeting, Dixons' at 7:30 p.m.  
April 29 Space City Sprints V - Volunteers Needed!!

### **MAY 1995**

May 5 Dallas Sculling Regatta  
May 6 Sweep & Sculling Classes begin

### **NOVEMBER 1995**

November 11 Bill Dixon's Birthday (and the Natchitoches Rowing Marathon)

### **SWEEP CLASS**

A sweep class will be starting on Friday, May 5, 1995 at 6:00 p.m. The class will meet on Fridays and Saturdays. The Saturday time is TBDL (to be determined later). This class will also include a coxing class. Volunteers to teach the class are needed. If there are any novice sweep people that want both extra rowing time and coaching, working with new students in the class is a great opportunity. Please contact Brenda Jamison Claire 474-3820

### **SAVE YOUR MILK JUGS!!**

The Space City Sprints Regatta Chairpeople would like to request that all BARC member please save your empty milk jugs or other large plastic containers. Since we are trying a 2000M course this year, we will be marking the lanes with buoys instead of laying the cables (we don't have enough cable), and we may not have enough buoys either so we will substitute painted plastic containers where necessary.

We will gather everyone's **RINSED** (if our furry friends like ant killer, they'll be crazy for spoiled milk) containers at the boathouse closer to the regatta date, and paint them in preparation for marking the course.

### **BARC NIGHT OUT**

*by Marc Bonin*

You are cordially invited for dinner and drinks with your fellow rowers on Friday, March 31, 1995 at Sam's Boat. This is a great opportunity to get acquainted with your fellow rowers, find new folks to row with, and have a general good time. The festivities will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Sam's Boat (formerly Kristine's and Pink Flamingo), which is located on NASA Road 1 near the Hilton.

### **GOING AWAY BREAKFAST**

A going away breakfast for Desiree, Michele and Mike Brint will be Sunday March 19th at 11:30at Jay's on Upper Bay in Nasa.

### **WOODEN OARS**

There are 8 wooden sweep oars available for sale at \$100 each. Please contact Brenda JamisonClaire, 474-3820. Some have already been promised others are available on a first come first serve basis.