



Vol. 2-3

## PGRC Pitch Meter

Fall 2011

### Founders' Day Celebration

PGRC members celebrated our founding members' contributions to women's rowing in June. The grand reception for members and invited guests, including the families of founders who had passed away, was scheduled to coincide with the first meetings and club

rows during May and June of 1938. June 4<sup>th</sup> was a sunny and pleasant day. Members did a wonderful job of painting the front room, rehanging all of the club photographs in chronological order, polishing the silver platters and trophies and cleaning the house and boat



We're always remembering former PGRC rowers! Contact us via our website:  
<http://www.philadelphiagirlsro>

Next Members' Meeting  
Thursday, October 6 @ 8 pm

Summer Race Results  
on page 4

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## Founders' Day (cont.)

bays. Suzy Dorrance, who graciously volunteered to coordinate the catering and decorations, spruced up the boathouse marvelously. The buffet was generous and delicious.

The reception started at four in the afternoon, and by five o'clock, the boathouse was filled to overflowing. We were especially happy to welcome Ernestine Bayer, as well as Stella Sokolowska's daughters and several members of Lovey Farrell's family. Tom Farrell, Jr., brother of Nancy Farrell, stroke of the Vichy eight, stopped by. Other Vichy crew members who attended were Barbara DePena Hoe, Janice Saudargas and Faye Bardman Donovan. Many former members were there, including Olga Powzaniuk, Susan C. Anderson and Roz Crawford. The city of Philadelphia was represented by Stephanie Craighead, Deputy Director for Planning, Preservation and Development at Philadelphia Parks and Recreation. Among the friends of PCRC in attendance were Cine Braxton from the Braxton clan, as well as members from other clubs along Boathouse Row including John Hogan, Commodore of the Schuylkill

Navy, and former Commodore Clete Graham.

At five o'clock, president Sophie Socha welcomed the attendees, recalling the challenges for a group of young women establishing PGRC in 1938. Socha went to pay tribute to one of those seventeen founders who has been an active member continuously since then—a founder and a member for seventy-three years. On behalf of all of the members, Socha announced that the main room of the boathouse would be named in honor of Ruth Robinhold, an inspiration to the members because she has done so much for the club over so many years. Ruth graciously accepted this tribute and said a few words. Following this tribute, Ernie Bayer Jr. came forward and presented Sophie Socha with a gold bracelet that had belonged to her mother, Ernestine Bayer, while she was PGRC president. Ernie Bayer asked that the bracelet be handed down to club presidents in perpetuity.

The reception continued—boisterously—until after seven o'clock, when photographer Bill Bowen gathered members and friends on the apron for a group photograph. Hearty thanks to everyone who came together in the best PGRC spirit to make this a great day! Founders' Day was a great success!

## Update from the Building Committee

During the last year, the Building Committee has obtained several reports describing the structural stability of the Boathouse. GAI Geotechnical Engineering consultants dug test pits and prepared a report describing subsurface conditions. Engineers Keast and Hood recommended doing immediate work (without waiting until the Exterior Package for Preservation of our club is undertaken) to stabilize the house from further settlement, after they discovered that bowing had begun unexpectedly in a wall in the Ruth Robinhold room. They found that structural bracing had been cut during the installation of mechanical

work, accelerating the settlement. Remedial work was completed around the first of this year: shoring up the first floor framing with wood timbers alongside existing cast iron columns and reinforcing the framing of the cupola with steel. A new column was installed at the door between the kitchen and front room. The bowing of the wall in the main room is now arrested, and settlement of the cupola has been stabilized. Further structural stabilization will take place with the Exterior Package. The entire boat bay slab will be removed and new column footings installed. The first floor will be jacked up to reduce the sloping of the floor near the bar area. 2

# PGRC Pitch Meter

## Captain Blake Adams and Crew Handle Double Trouble



## Hurricane Irene and Mudder Cleanup Crew Then Hurricane Lee Floods Unexpectedly



... calling for another rescue and cleanup.  
A raccoon helped by taking the dead fish.  
Thanks to the members who kept showing up!

## Building Committee (cont.)

Additional joists will be 'sistered' (an appropriate term for a women's rowing club) to existing joists, which are not currently seated properly in bearing walls. The existing foundations for the stone piers at the rear extension are insufficient and twisting, and associated movement is occurring in those locations at the boat bay doors. These piers will be removed, and new foundation piers will be installed, which will create an opportunity to gain some additional space within the boat bays. The result of these stabilization measures will be a house that still retains some charm of not-entirely plumb walls and floors, but whose structural integrity is assured for decades.

Stabilizing the structure is the necessary first step before any cosmetic and weather-protective improvements can take place. Roofing, stone pointing and window installation can occur only after we are confident that the building is structurally secure.

Meanwhile, Schade Engineering (member Linda Schade) has developed the mechanical, electrical and plumbing drawings and specifications. The finalized documents were sent to a professional estimating company to develop a cost that can be used by the Capital Campaign committee for grants applications. This cost estimate is now being reviewed by the Building Committee and will be made available shortly. If you are interested in looking at or learning more about the construction project, please contact Judi, Dori or Dona. A set of drawings is located in the boathouse for review. Specifications are also available upon request.

The next step is to start the Philadelphia Historical Commission final approval process. Explicit guidelines are in place for Historical Commission approval, and we look forward to starting that arduous process this fall.

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## Impressions of the Bill Braxton Memorial Regatta

(by Cine Braxton, sister of Bill Braxton, Jr.)

*“Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.” – Ryunosuke Satoro*

After my father’s death in 2006, I unofficially appointed myself the Braxton family liaison for the Bill Braxton Memorial Regatta, which has been, for so many years, graciously sponsored by Philadelphia Girls’ Rowing Club. I approached Sophie Socha with my idea of becoming a committee member, and was welcomed aboard with a hug and a kiss.

Little did I know what a wild ride I was in for! Scholarship Committee meetings involve tons of food, (lesson learned: make sure your committee is comprised of great cooks!), crazy conversations and lots and lots of laughs. Then...getting down to business...at this point, the year-long planning of each regatta works like a well-oiled machine. I am amazed at how efficient the Regatta Committee is. Agenda passed out, discussion of topics, agreement, minutes sent out before we even get up from the table. Meeting adjourned. DONE!

The founders of the BBMR envisioned this as a regatta especially for the participants, for the rowers travelling to Philadelphia to compete on my brother’s hometown river, the Schuylkill. Important to the original committee, my father especially, was that all the rowers felt, whether or not they won their race, that the committee had been honored by their presence. The commitment to that vision by the members of PGRC, their friends and families, has been astounding. From updating

the website, taking care of entries and scheduling, ordering medals and making sure the trophies have been returned by previous winners, early morning set-up the day of the regatta, coach’s breakfast, gassing up the launches, T-shirt design and sales, “Philly Snacks”– free pretzels and juice for the rowers, timekeepers in the towers, dock-masters, launch drivers, referees, command tent, photographers, keeping toilet paper in the Porta-Potties (a never-ending job!), bikers riding back and forth from start to finish, the wonderful party at the end of the day, and determining who will win the BBMR Scholarships, this is, truly, an all-volunteer regatta. All are volunteering for one thing: for the rowers to have a great day at our regatta.

Which brings me to the beautiful quote that I started this article with, but to customize it a little, I would say: Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are a river. I have come to see, not being a rower myself, that rowing is the ultimate team sport. The movement, the synchronicity, everyone working together on the river. The same can be said of the many volunteers who, for the past 38 years, have never failed the job at hand, working together to put on an incredible regatta, one for the rowers. A few years ago, a group of students came up to the T-shirt tent at the start-line and told me that this was their favorite regatta to row in. I shed a few tears, knowing the work that went into making the day a wonderful one for them, and knowing how happy this would have made my dad. Many, many thanks for the warm embrace I have felt from all of PGRC. Your work, as always, is awe-inspiring.

### **Schuylkill Navy Regatta**

Northrup 1x: 3; 4x: 3

Fittipaldi & Zimmaro: 2x: 2

### **Independence Day Regatta**

Northrup 1x: 1; 4x: 3

Savard & Trocky mixed 2x: 2

### **Catch the Cooper**

Savard & Trocky mixed 2x: 1

### **Diamond States**

Savard & Trocky mixed 2x: 1

### **Masters” Nationals**

Savard & Trocky mixed 2x: 2

# PGRC Pitch Meter

## **Who Made Founders' Day a Success? You Did. Special Thanks to:**

Suzy Dorrance  
Ann Northrup  
Diana Post  
Jean Morris  
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Barbara Rosaco  
Dorsey Donovan  
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Mary Kiely  
Faith Goldstein  
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Patti Patrizi  
Lori Zimmaro  
Laura Polillo  
Rosemarie D'Alba  
Davy Harwi (w/ Bill Bowen)  
Judi Repp  
Joanne Timmins  
Ginny Ward  
Rosy Nissley  
Anastasia Dorrance (w/ Rob Grillo)  
Carter Dorrance (w/ Mike Marotta)

## **Workers Who Showed up Again – and Again! – at the Boathouse before, during and after the Hurricanes**

Blake Adams  
Emily Davis  
Rosemarie D'Alba  
Sophie Socha  
Jocelyn Tarbox  
Ann Northrup  
Ann Butchart  
Davy Harwi  
Julianne Rametta  
Michele Baymor  
Janet Christman  
Diana Post  
Sandi Pierantozzi  
Wendy Epstein  
Nancy Bocchino  
Lisa Fittipaldi  
Lily Milroy  
Lori Zimmaro  
Rose Flynn  
Ginny Ward  
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Joan Lukas  
Andi Levin  
Joanne Timmons  
Erin Abler  
Amber Coppola  
Jenna Osborne  
Jacquie Himes  
Jean Yudin  
Essie Abrahams

### **PGRC Pitch Meter**

Diana Post, Editor-in-Chief

#### *Material contributed by:*

Dori Bova  
Cine Braxton  
Dona File  
Lily Milroy

Apologies for any errors of omission!