

**TO THE ROWING COMMUNITY:
A New Initiative and A Call to Action
July 31, 2023**

**TO ALL GENERATIONS OF THE ROWING COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS:
PLEASE READ ON BEFORE YOU DISCARD OR STOW AWAY ROWING
RELATED ARCHIVES AND OBJECTS!**

The Urgency: Significant amounts of rowing history in the form of records, memorabilia, and Club and individual collections are perishing, or are without a plan for preservation and organization in an accessible manner.

The Goal: To tell the history of rowing both locally and nationally by preserving rowing-related objects and records (written, photo, video, audio) and making them accessible to the greater rowing community and public.

Objectives: (from immediate to long-range)

- Coordinate local efforts to organize archival materials.
- Provide resources and information to Clubs and individuals for:
 - o preservation of materials.
 - o developing Collection Management Programs.
 - o conservation and safe-keeping.
- Facilitate locating repositories and 'safe havens' for physical materials: trophies, awards, banners, boats, oars, etc.
- Partner with Institutions that might assist and ensure the continuation of the preservation process.
- Create a virtual museum for rowing-related materials.
- Link rowing repositories throughout the country.

Beginning in 2020, the HEAD OF SCHUYLKILL REGATTA (HOSR), in honor of its 50th anniversary, has sponsored Story Hours highlighting historical events and legends of rowing. The success of this effort has resulted in the recognition of a much larger initiative to preserve and tell the history of rowing, both local and national. The need has become increasingly urgent as Club and private collections are disappearing, or lacking a safe destination. As a result, volunteers along Boathouse Row have formed a Rowing Archives Committee to address this need and establish a coordinated path forward.

Time is of the essence; the Committee has laid the groundwork for this initiative by:

- Expanding the network of rowing historians and archivists currently doing this work, and collaborating to lay a path forward.
- Creating an inventory of known Philadelphia archives and collections.-- Encouraging Clubs/schools/organizations to identify their objects and records that are at risk of decay;
- Exploring the possibility of working with existing historical archives in

Philadelphia and elsewhere;

-- Creating a step-by-step resource guide for local Clubs to utilize when beginning to develop a Collection Management Program.

- Exploring creation of a charitable organization empowered to raise funds, and provide financial resources for restoration of rowing objects, preservation, and archiving.

The intention is to work with the best resources available to arrive at an achievable system of a virtual museum, and virtual haven for artifacts, and, where possible, have them displayed. Though one central repository or Museum would be a wonderful goal, it is more realistic to establish and encourage an array of mini-museums within the Clubs, schools, and rowing centers, nationally interlinked through virtual database(s).

For more information, or to get involved, please contact one of the following at rowingarchives@hosr.org

Rick Stehlik
Historian: Malta Boat Club

Chris Doyle
Historian: Pennsylvania Barge Club

Hilary Langer
Historian: Vesper Boat Club

Henry Hauptfuhrer
Historian: Bachelors Barge Club

About the HOSR Story Hours:

*Although rowing is one of the oldest sports, cataloging and archiving its documents, stories and objects unfortunately has been without a coordinated structure. **The HOSR Story Hours** ([all available for viewing on the HOSR YouTube page](#)) have allowed us to tell compelling, often unknown/forgotten stories and attract audiences, young and old, from the greater rowing community. The title of a recent Story Hour, 'No Small Feat: Preserving the History of Rowing, Its People and Places' staged a challenge to the daunting task ahead. Valuable archives dating back to the 1850's and rowing memorabilia such as photos, trophies, banners, etc. are often lost without documentation. Though thousands of books have been written about rowing it is often difficult to find a cohesive bibliography to direct someone to the right resource.*

That story hour also recognized that there are several people around the country who have been working to save archives throughout their community such as Bill

Miller (rowing history.net), the late Tom Weil (Henley Rowing Museum), Goran Buckhorn(heartheboatsing.com), Pete Mallory (the Sport of Rowing), Dotty Brown (Boathouse Row, Waves of Change), to name a few. It is important to build on their experience and identify others such as the Pocock Center being established in Seattle working towards the same goal.

THE CURRENT ROWING HISTORY TEAM:

Jen Wesson, HOSR and University Barge
Ellen Carver, HOSR and University Barge
Christopher Blackwall, University Barge
Hillary Langer, Vesper Boat Club
Dotty Brown, Vesper Boat Club, Author – Boathouse Row, Waves of Change
Rick Stehlik, Malta Boat Club
Chris Doyle, Pennsylvania Barge
Alan Robinson, University Barge
Henry Hauptfuhrer, Bachelors Barge
Lee Silverberg, Fairmount Rowing Association
James Dietz, All American Rowing Camps, NYAC
Stephen Malbouef, Detroit Boat Club
Al Mackenzie, Lake Washington, Pocock Center

LOCAL CONTRIBUTING INSTITUTIONS:

Pennsylvania Historical Society
Independence Seaport Museum