

THE RUSTY Oarlock

CREW NEWS FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF SANTA CLARA ROWING

SINCE 1978

Happening Now

Black Velvet celebrates its 44th year as a Santa Clara University tradition on Saturday February 21, 2009.



2009 SCHEDULE

- March 7th
Sac State Dual
- March 8th
Davis Invitational
- March 14th
Sac State Invite
- March 28 - 29th
Pac-10 Challenge
- April 4 - 5th
San Diego Crew Classic
- April 19th
Stanford Invite
- May 1st
WCC Championships (Women)
- May 2 - 3rd
WIRA Championship
- May 8 - 9th
Dad Vail Regatta

WHERE DID ALL THE WATER GO?

By Brendan Bula

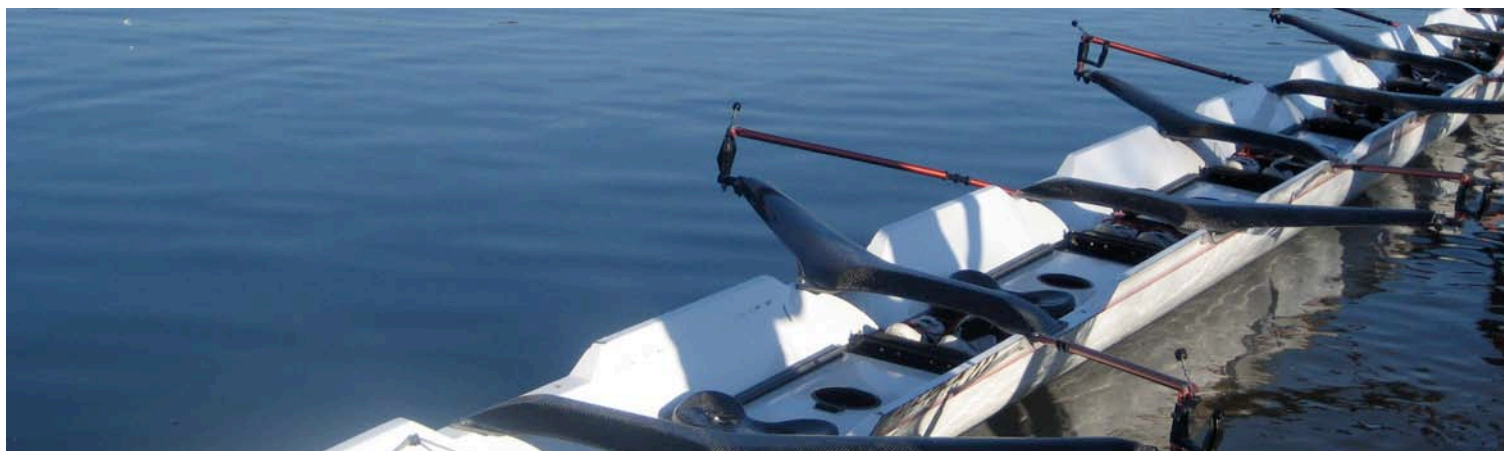
My freshman year one of the ways we would entertain ourselves after practice was to drive home past the James J. Lenihan Dam, stop just at the top and park. We would all pile out of the cars and walk towards the spillway to watch giant logs and other debris flood over the 200 ft drop to the creek below. It was a simple but powerful sight and easily entertained us after a long hard day on the water. That was the last year we were able to experience more than 3000 meters of uninterrupted rowing on Lexington reservoir.

In October of my junior year the Santa Clara Valley Water District began construction on a new pipeline through the dam to bypass water. In order to build the tunnel, they started draining our pristine training area nestled in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Eventually the water level became so low that boats were not permitted on the water. Luckily we were able to finish out our season at Lexington not knowing where we would be able to row the following year. In 2009 we moved our boats to the Port of Redwood City to join Stanford, utilizing a space on their facility grounds. In the past when our program was forced from Lexington the team had relocate to Alivso -- only to rig and de-rig every practice amongst the mud and pungent smell. Although I was unhappy that we were not at our home I reminded myself day after day that it could always be worse; we were lucky to be rowing on the water at all. We as rowers know that a bit more driving and a little more traffic on southbound 101 are small prices to pay for flat rowable water.

There are very few people that have the Santa Clara Valley Water District Reservoir Storage Values page set as their home page each time they open a new browser window, but I am proud to say I am one of them, and maybe the only. It has rained more in the month of February than it has in the last 12 months. We are not the only ones that have been praying for rain. The website has a current elevation and a max elevation as well as current volume and max volume. The best statistic is the overall percentage! My teammates and I have constantly been monitoring this percentage, especially over the last few weeks. At the beginning of the month the reservoir was around 4-5% and is now over 20%! The water elevation has increased almost 40 vertical feet!! All we need is one more big rain and there should be enough water to bring us back home to our boathouse. We are looking forward to that day, but until then will remain satisfied that we get to go out on a body of water at all!

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MORNING ON LEXINGTON

By Jill Walker

The alarm sounds, it's completely dark,
Starting before for the sun, to practice we embark.
Getting equipment and taking it down,
The water in Lexington, perpetually brown.

Boats down the mountain, to the puddle below,
How is there even enough water to row?
In pairs or in fours, that's the best we can do,
As we reach the water, mud head to shoe.

By pairs we begin, dreadfully tired,
It is way too early to be inspired.
Coaching from a single since the waters so low,
The light of dawn beings to grow.

Golden light of sun in the sky appears,
Tiredness of all soon quickly disappears.
Power tens and swiftly rowing,
Through the water blades rapidly flowing.

Power through the drive, finishing strong,
Arms then body, recovery stays long.
After each stroke letting the boat run,
Catching in sync, rowing as one.

Taking it in, docking far side,
Today the boat took a smooth ride.
Up the mountain, hands on the shell,
All under the magic rowing spell.

Putting shells and oars away,
What a great start to a new day.
Driving back to campus happy are we,
Row again tomorrow, we all agree.



MY NEW "BEST" FRIEND

By Jill Walker

Dear Ergometer, my new best friend,
Pain, agony, and torture you lend.
At first I loved you and expected fun,
But then the erg tests quickly begun.

I love you, I hate you, depends on the day,
Please give me a boat I always say.
Up and down the slide at such intense force,
If we were married, I'd file for divorce.

This friendship is tough, a lot to manage!
But once in a boat, you earn me the advantage.
Working out with a trash can constantly nearby,
Most of the time I would rather stop and cry.

Six k, two k, eight-minute pieces,
The resistance of your fan never ceases.
Collapsing off and dying on the floor,
Getting back on again, I continually implore.

As the season ends and our time draws short,
I enjoy so much more the boat in this sport.
Your constant challenge is too much for me,
It's time for a break, I think we both agree.



A LUCKY MISTAKE

By Carolyn Biemer



“Crew is like crack. It interferes with your sleep. It destroys your body. It introduces you to totally weird people. It’s expensive. It takes you away from the real world and into a fantasy land. You start doing it way too much, as you build up a tolerance. You can’t stop. You love it, but you know that you shouldn’t. You stick with it, because you have this bizarre idea that life would just not be the same without it.”

According to dictionary.com, a fluke is a fish. It is also, “an accidental advantage, or a stroke of good luck.” That pretty much sums up my experience on the Crew team.

I arrived at Santa Clara with no plans of rowing and a combined boating experience of three hours in a kayak and a week on a Carnival Cruise ship. After a failed lacrosse tryout, I found myself without a team and desperate for some cool matching sweats. That’s about where I was when Jill from six doors down and across the hall convinced me to try out rowing.

Before I knew it I was waking up at five thirty, getting schooled by my new friend the erg, and splashing around Lexington Reservoir in a novice eight. I definitely considered quitting more than once. When it got to that point I would tell myself to wait until we got team sweats, and just make it through the day. This got me all the way through fall training and a winter full of frozen fingers.

Or so I thought. Then the sweats came. It was super exciting to trek into Benson sporting our new, matching, obviously-team gear. But I also realized that they weren’t the reason I was staying anymore. Somewhere between the finish and the catch, between my blistering hands and screaming thighs, maybe sometime near the end of the Lex, flying it out after an impossibly hard piece, squinting against the sunrise, I got hooked.

Spring was a blur. I stepped into a world where spandex is the norm and no one bats an eye when you talk about stroking or coxing. I was introduced to the water launch on Lake Natoma. I traveled to Philadelphia and raced on the Schuylkill. I roomed in turn with bow four and stern four. The races were an encounter with adrenaline like nothing else in the world. You haven’t really lived until you’ve sat ready at the catch and then pulled a “half, half, three-quarters, FULL,” straight into a high twenty. You haven’t really loved until you’ve heard the “click” and felt the send of the boat in the middle of a race. And I had never really been exhausted, until I crossed my first finish line.

Last year I accidentally joined women’s crew. I stayed for cool sweats and something to do. I ended up with an amazing team, a new definition of my limits, and a totally unexpected passion for rowing.



OUR FOUR YEARS

Last week, our whole team was cooking breakfast after practice in honor of our teammate, Gabby's, birthday. While we were flipping pancakes, myself and the other seniors started reminiscing about the past four years we spent rowing here. We started telling the underclassmen about how Lexington was so full our freshman year the water was going over the spillway.

About how Carlo accidentally took us to a "clothing optional" beach to run stairs, which were really logs stuck into the side of a sand hill. How Matt Pinschmidt would perform gymnastic tricks while we were erging. How Kristin Williams hit a floating port-o-potty as we were heading to the start of our last novice 8 race. How Christine "Spike" Szelong, who had not yet spoken a single word our entire novice season, began to grunt quite forcefully during the last 500 meters of our last novice race. How Heather Lynch has, over the years, been a port, a starboard, and a coxswain. About Christlei Hessler's many admirable, but unmentionable rowing-related shenanigans. How Brigid Kelleher came to our rescue last year as an extremely experienced coxswain when we had none. The stories kept pouring out, and before we knew it, hours had flown by and the seniors were left sitting there, feeling a mix of pride that we had made it through, sadness at the realization that this would be our last season, and excitement for what we still have yet to do. Realizing how much we have gone through in 3 years, with another only just starting, we cannot even begin to imagine all of the stories that can be told from the past 34 years. With a 4th year still to finish, we thought that we would share a bit of how this '08-'09 season began.

We started out this year extremely excited and motivated, despite having no water to row on, and did everything we could to ensure that this wouldn't deter us from having a fast season. Strenuous land practices every morning kept our minds off the disheartening sight of an empty Lexington.

We are lucky this year to have a great group of dedicated and enthusiastic novices. They went through their first quarter without once getting in a boat! Anyone who can stick with crew without having ever been on the water is obviously a star! Also, we owe a big thanks to our alumni Katie Fahrer and

Tracy Flecky for coming back to coach our novice women and pass down the Santa Clara Rowing tradition.

With construction and draining of Lexington finally finished, we are the only people at Santa Clara who cheer when it starts raining. Any discomfort that comes from sloshing through the puddles while walking to class is nothing compared to how excited we are to be back rowing on "The Lex." Braving harsh weather out in the middle of the lake with rain and hail beating down on us is made worth it by the fact that each raindrop that falls is another that flows into the reservoir.

The limited availability of water has also been a blessing in disguise. Shallow depths forced us to row in pairs and fours, and we are able to focus on our technique like never before. But with the sudden downpour of rainfall, we are now finally able to take eights on Lexington!

As seniors, we cannot wait to watch the novices at their first regatta, to cheer them through the finish of their first race and see the looks of pain, fatigue and accomplishment on their faces that we ourselves know all too well!

We're thrilled that the Varsity women have made such a great effort to encourage both the novices as well as their fellow teammates to move forward, improve, excel and never give up. They have shown incredible commitment and passion for the sport by their continued enthusiasm about the upcoming season. It makes us proud to be a part of such a dedicated group of girls who, every day, give 110% to the team. We are more than just teammates, we are friends who push each other and push for each other. Personally, we cannot wait to see what we will accomplish this year! Sha na na na!

Much Love,
The Women's Senior Class of 2009

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A decorative oar is positioned diagonally across the text. The blade of the oar is at the top right and features a small white star symbol. The shaft of the oar extends towards the bottom left.