

**MANUAL OF THE  
LANSING ROWING CLUB  
Rev: August 2009**

The Lansing Rowing Club (LRC) is a club for those who share a common interest in rowing. This manual is a compendium of policies and procedures of the Rowing Club set by the Board of Directors under authority of the Club's Bylaws. Members and guests of the Club must comply with provisions of this Manual.

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**GOAL - MORE ROWERS ROWING MORE BOATS BETTER**

## I. ORGANIZATION

**Club Membership.** All persons who have paid membership fees and completed required forms, meeting conditions as specified in the Bylaws, are members of the LRC.

**Board of Directors.** The Rowing Program will be operated by the Board of Directors. The Board will develop policies & plans and be responsible for rowing activities.

### **Board Membership.**

Board members will be selected as provided in the Bylaws.

### **Board Responsibilities**

1. The Board shall select officers as specified in the Bylaws.
2. Officers shall perform duties as specified in the Bylaws.
3. Board members will be responsible for coordinating the following:
  - A. Safety
  - B. Boat and Boathouse Maintenance
  - C. Learn-to-Row Program
  - D. Open Rowing
  - E. Coaching
  - F. Development/Fund Raising
  - G. Competition
  - H. Publicity
5. Other duties of the Board shall be as specified in the Bylaws.

## II. MEMBERSHIP AND FEES

**Membership.** The Robert Ryden Boathouse is the home of the LRC. It is in Grand River Park of the City of Lansing. LRC has a lease with the City and the contact is with the Lansing Department of Parks and Recreation. Since LRC relies upon a public facility, any person may apply for membership in the LRC. They must however comply with the policies of the LRC contained in this Manual and the Bylaws.

**Fees.** To become members of the LRC, persons must pay fees as set by the Board of Directors under authority of the bylaws. The fees shall be set at a level that makes rowing as affordable as feasible while covering the costs of operating the LRC. The fees will consist of 1) an annual base fee paid by all members for the use of the boathouse and equipment; 2) an annual fee for a rack in the boathouse for privately owned boats; 3) an annual fee for a key to the boathouse; 4) a fee for participation in the Learn-to-Row Program; 5) a fee for those persons in the Learn-to-Row to continue as members for the balance of their first season; 6) an adjustable fee for

persons who become members for a part of the season. A reduced fee schedule may be established for persons who, during the academic year, are full-time students.

**Key Policy.** The fee for a key to the boathouse is an annual fee for the privilege of having access to the boathouse and equipment. Requests for keys must be approved by at least two members of the Board of Directors, and will be communicated by one of them to the rest of the Board. Only a member in good standing may obtain a key. The criteria for having a key concern safety of the rower and proper use of equipment. To obtain a key rowers must demonstrate that they can handle boats and oars without damaging them, can be safe on the water, and will comply with club policies as documented in this Manual and the Bylaws. A person with a key may not give the key to another who is not approved for a key. Keys must be returned upon termination of membership or upon written request by the Board of Directors.

**Guest Rowers.** Members are encouraged to invite others with rowing experience to visit the club to see if they wish to become a member. The Club is also hospitable to rowers from outside the greater Lansing area who are visiting town and wish to row. The Club also supports rowers from other rowing programs training with rowers from our program.

1. All guests must be accompanied by a paid-in-full member of the LRC.
2. All guests must sign a Waiver Form.
3. All guests must be informed of proper procedures for the handling and use of club equipment BEFORE they are allowed to row. This should be done by one of the experienced rowers.
4. If guests have never rowed, they must be given full instruction on rowing technique BEFORE they are allowed in a boat. The instructor must meet qualifications outlined in this document under “Coaching.” Once allowed in a boat, the guest must be closely accompanied by their host for safety reasons.
5. Guests with prior rowing experience can only be placed in boats commensurate with their level of experience. An experienced rower should make this determination.
6. Guests, like members, must have reasonable swimming skills.

Under normal circumstances, up to three free guest rows is appropriate as an introduction to the club and rowing. Any additional or regular free rowing must be approved by the Board of Directors. If a guest wishes to continue rowing beyond the free guest rowing sessions, they must pay the appropriate club fee for the appropriate portion of the rowing season.

If one is acting as host for a guest rower for regatta training, the host must inform the Board and obtain approval for guest rowing sessions beyond three. Club members are encouraged to compete under the LRC name, and the Board will exercise flexibility in such situations. If, however, such guest training for competition is regular, then the Steering Committee may elect to levy a fee consistent with the duration and frequency.

### **III. THE ROBERT RYDEN BOATHOUSE**

The boathouse is named after Robert Ryden a founding member of LRC, then called the rowing program of the Lansing Oar and Paddle Club. Bob died in 1992 and left a trust for the development of rowing on the Grand River. The Ryden Boathouse houses club owned boats and oars and private boats and oars. In addition there are tools and other equipment and materials. Because of the value of this equipment, security and safety concerns are paramount.

Boathouse security is the responsibility of everyone who has access. The boathouse is equipped with a locking front door, and two large bay doors for the movement of boats. The front door must be locked with a key when the boathouse is left unattended for any period of time.

The bay doors have a series of chains and pins to secure them. It may seem like an excess of security, but it was designed to prevent repeats of previous break-ins. When rowing, a majority of the locking mechanisms should be used. When leaving the boathouse with no one else present ALL of the locking mechanisms should be in place.

In general, everyone should leave the boathouse in either the same condition in which it was found, or in better condition. Equipment should be stowed in its proper locations after use, and treated according to instructions discussed elsewhere.

### **IV. BOATS AND OARS: THEIR CARE AND USE**

Aside from the boathouse itself, club-owned boats, oars, and other equipment are our greatest single investment, and everyone benefits from their proper maintenance. The more boats we have, and the longer they are properly maintained, the greater the number of members who can enjoy their use. Minimally, the following procedures should be followed when removing, using, and returning boats to the boathouse:

**Privately Owned Equipment.** Some club members own their own boats, oars, and other equipment, which may be stored in the Ryden Boathouse. In the spring of each year, when club dues are payable, boat owners who store equipment pay a fee for rack space. Privately owned boats are stored in racks throughout the boat house, and the rack should be labeled with the owner's name. (LRC-owned boats are in racks labeled "club"). Privately owned oars are in the last racks of oars, toward the rear of the boathouse, and normally are not painted in LRC solid light blue. Privately owned equipment is NOT for general use of club members. It may be used only with express permission of the owner. If you are uncertain whether equipment is club owned or privately owned, please ask.

Because of limited boathouse space, members may not normally store equipment other than boats and oars. Members are allowed to store up to a maximum of three boats (plus oars) and must pay a storage fee based on the number of boats stored. The board has the authority to

determine where any boat is stored in the boat house. The board reserves the right to change the number of boats a member can store at any time, and furthermore if the board determines that a boat is not actively being used then the board can require the owner to remove the boat within a time limit specified by the board. Small items (clothing, water bottles, etc.) may be stored while rowing. Any other small items left temporarily in the boathouse (while not rowing) should be labeled with the owner's name. Items not labeled may be discarded without notice, though an effort will be made to place useful items in the "lost & found" bins under the counter near the front of the boathouse. When requested by the Board, members and former members are expected to promptly remove personally owned items or surplus boats. If the items or surplus boats are not removed promptly, the items or surplus boats will be abandoned property and the Board can use or dispose of the items or surplus boats at its convenience, and can charge the member or former member for removal of the offending items or surplus boats.

**The Rowing Log.** The Ryden Boathouse contains a rowing logbook which is essential for safety and the continuation of our insurance coverage. All rowers are required to log in and log out if they are taking a boat on the water. Please, for safety reasons, log in before you go on the water! Please complete all essential information in the log, which includes: your name, initials, or call sign, the date on which you are rowing, the type of boat you are rowing, your time out, and the time you return, and the route you are rowing. Please remember to log out with your time so that we know you are off the water!

**Getting on the Water.** Make certain that you have been properly instructed in safe procedures for removing and returning boats to racks, both to prevent personal injury and damage to the equipment. If you cannot remove and return boats by yourself, you should always seek the assistance of someone else.

Before removing boats from their racks make certain the boathouse doors are open enough that they will not foul the boat on removal. Also, make certain that you have put slings outside the boathouse on which to place the boat!

When removing and returning boats to their appropriate location, make certain that you do not bump, crash into, or otherwise scrape or damage equipment above and below the boat you are accessing.

When placing the boat in its slings, be certain not to place the skeg on the sling.

Any equipment or materials you will need in the boat should be moved to the dock BEFORE bringing the boat from the slings to the water. Oars, water bottles, lights, etc. should be on the dock when the boat arrives. When carrying oars, do not carry them over your shoulder. You should be able to see both ends of your oars!

Before carrying the boat to the dock, open the oarlock gates, close all hull vents, and if possible adjust the foot stretchers to your position. Check to see that all nuts and bolts

are tightened, and that there is no damage that would be a problem on the water.

If you see damage to a boat, replace it in its rack, and notify a member of the Board of Directors or write it in the log book. If the boat's rowability is in question, put a note on the boat saying "do not row".

Before carrying the boat to the dock, if you are the only person present lock the boathouse. Also, make certain there is room at the dock to put the boat in the water.

When putting the boat in the water be sure that you are not going to hit another boat when placing it on the water, that you are not placing the boat on the dock itself and that the skeg does not hit the dock. If a wake is present hold the boat away from the dock so it is not bumped, and if a wind or strong current is present do not let the boat drift away from the dock.

Place oars in the oarlocks, lock the gates, load your stuff, and away you go!

**Returning to the Boathouse.** Reverse the above procedures when returning equipment. However, please remember the following:

All boats must be wiped down completely before being returned to the storage racks. Use the rags in the tubs, and put wet or dirty rags on the drying rack. Wipe down hull, cockpit, and seat slides. Please make sure the boat is dry before returning it to a rack.

Lock the oarlock gates, and open all hull vents. Please place oarlock covers (old socks donated by members) over the oarlocks on both sides in order to prevent scratching nearby boats when returning the boat to its rack.

Return lights, oars, etc. to their proper locations. If oars are dirty, dip them in the river, and wipe if necessary.

All boats are stored with their bow facing the boathouse entrance, except for the privately owned boats on the left of the boathouse near the door.

Replace boat slings inside the house.

Before leaving, check the dock and the exterior of the boathouse for equipment, close and lock the sliding bay doors, log out, turn the lights off, and key lock the access door. Check to make certain the door is locked.

**Laundry.** Yes, the Ryden Boathouse generates dirty laundry! Furthermore, it is everyone's responsibility to make certain that the laundry gets done. The most notable item of laundry is, of course, wiping rags. If you see that a) there are few clean rags left, and b) that there are lots of

dirty rags in the bin, please take them home with you and wash them. If everyone does this on a periodic basis the task will not fall to only one or two individuals, and there will always be enough clean rags with which to wipe down boats and other equipment.

## **V. ROWING SAFETY**

In the interests of personal safety, the following should be considered minimal guidelines for safe rowing:

You must have basic swimming skills adequate for self-rescue.

Always log in before going on the water, with your name, type of boat, and log in time. If possible give your prospective route. This will allow us to monitor who is out, and whether they might be encountering difficulty.

Never take a boat out alone if it is beyond your skill level. When trying a new level of boat make sure you are accompanied by a launch or an experienced rower in a second boat.

Check regularly for floating debris, other watercraft, or downed trees near the shore. When rowing in the dark or in low visibility conditions, always use a bow light, and a flashing red light.

During dawn and dusk hours, when lighting may be poor or homogeneous always use high visibility outerwear such as International Orange, white, or luminescent green.

During cool or wet conditions, dress appropriately for the weather. It may be necessary to wear pogies to keep your hands from losing feeling on the oar handles. During warm summer conditions use a hat, and bring water to avoid heat exhaustion or sun stroke.

If conditions are poor, or potentially dangerous such as early season and late season or winter rowing, use a buddy system. Do not row alone.

Do not tie your feet tightly into the stretcher shoes. Check the tie-downs and make sure the heels can only rise an inch or so, in order that you can easily yank your feet out in an emergency. If the tie-downs are worn, please leave a note telling us. These precautions are important because if the boat overturns you might have difficulty extricating yourself!

Always observe the appropriate direction of travel on the river - counter-clockwise. Keep the shore close to your left. It is best to stay out of the middle; leave that for power boats and the Michigan Princess. The river has turns, so to stay on course you have to keep an eye on the shore and move to the left when the shore is getting further and move right when the shore is getting closer.

The most commonly used circuit is upstream to the Waverly Road Bridge and downstream to the Logan/MLK Drive bridge. Beyond the Logan/MLK bridge are cooling towers and a dam, both of which should be avoided. Upstream of Waverly Road Bridge there are numerous shallows and hidden obstacles. Unless you have been familiarized with the safe route in this area it is best to avoid it.

While unpowered boats, such as rowing shells, legally have the right of way over powered motorcraft, NEVER assume that power boats will yield right of way, nor that they will provide ample passing distances. The best strategy is awareness and avoidance. Avoid the ski jump when it is in use, avoid the ski slalom course when it is in use, avoid the river boat when it is in use, and when possible yield right of way to passing motorboats. Be aware of wakes from boats and jet skis traveling at high speeds. Be cautious in the vicinity of the boat launch.

LRC shares the Grand River with other rowing groups, MSU Crew Club and the MSU Women's Crew. While these groups use unpowered boats, the boats they use are larger, less maneuverable, faster, and with less forward vision. There are also at times many of them, and they may occupy a large part of the river. They are usually accompanied by coaching launches. The launch driver may be focused on the boat she is coaching and may not see a single scull. Again, awareness and avoidance are the best policies.

While rowing shells are technically exempt from the use of Personal Flotation Devices, vests are available in the boathouse for use, and can be placed in the boat with you. If you do not use a PFD or bring a vest, it is good policy to review and practice procedures for righting a capsized boat, and getting back into a boat. The procedures for this will be demonstrated from time to time, and it is a good idea to practice this when someone is around to help. Late fall, winter, and early spring are not the times to practice this or to have to do it.

If you have to make a choice about saving yourself, or saving a boat, save yourself!

When rowing at night make certain to use a bow light and flashing red light on the back of your shirt or cap.

When rowing during early morning or twilight hours be certain to wear visible clothing, either white, International Orange, or luminescent green are best in these situations. It is near impossible to see a single or double scull when the rowers are wearing grey, blue, dark green and other colors that blend into the background or water and trees.

Any accident, injury, or collision occurring on the river, dock, boathouse or immediately surrounding area, and involving Club members/guests or equipment, must be reported to a Board member (who will report to the rest of the Board), or recorded in the rowing log

with contact information so that the Board may obtain details and adjust Club safety provisions as appropriate.

## VI. DAMAGE AND REPAIR OF BOATS

For reasons, both avoidable and unavoidable, boats or other equipment may get damaged and require repair. The LRC carries equipment insurance for such eventualities.

If damage is minor, and something that can be undertaken by qualified club members at the boathouse or locally, the costs for repair may be minimal. If you do not know how to repair boats do not attempt to do this on your own! Notify a member of the Board of Directors or note the needed repair in the log book.

When damage is more major, the rower(s) responsible for the damage will be responsible for the first \$500.00 of repair costs, which is the deductible on our club insurance policy.

Any damage to a club boat must be reported to a Board member, or noted in the rowing log. In the event that the boat is not safely rowable until repaired, or if there is doubt about its safety status, the member who notes the problem should also put a note on the boat saying “do not row”. Any member who notes serious wear to a boat, that seems likely to risk imminent breakage, should also note this in the log book.

## VII. COACHING

All rowers, no matter how good they are, or think they are, need coaching. It is not easy to row so well that you can't be helped by a coach. Coaching is provided in Open Rowing, the Learn-to-Row Program and by arrangement between individuals.

**Open Rowing.** Open Rowing are times of the week when someone who is an experienced rower volunteers to open the boathouse, help rowers with boats and coach anyone who would like it. For the past few years, Open Rowing has been on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 to 7:30 pm and Saturdays from 9:00 to 10:30. This is the pattern for Spring and Fall. In the Summer coaching for intermediate and advanced rowing has also been provided on other weeknights for an additional fee.

**Learn-to-Row Program.** Every Summer a learn-to-row program for adults is schedule for eight weeks beginning in June and running to the end of July/early August. Those who complete the learn-to-row program and wish to continue for the balance of the season may do so for an additional fee. This program introduces beginners to sweep rowing in 8's and 4's and to sculling.

**Individual Arrangements.** Members of the program may wish to have coaching that is more individualized and/or at time other than scheduled Open Rowing. Persons who wish such coaching and persons willing to do such coaching should post a note in the boathouse.

**Requirements to Teach Rowing.** As a safety provision, in order to teach a novice how to row, the coach/teacher must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Completion of level 1 or higher US Rowing education for coaching certification (or equivalent training from another country's rowing oversight organization);
2. Experience as a coach at another club or team; or
3. Approval of the Lansing Rowing Club Board of Directors.

This provision applies to both formal and informal teaching; that is, it applies not only to formal classes, but also to a member or guest teaching another member or guest one-on-one. Both the trainee and teacher must meet other provisions of this manual, for example (but not limited to) waivers, swimming skills, status as a member or guest, etc.

## VIII. COMPETITIVE ROWING

The line between a recreational rower and a competitive rower is rather wavy. Bob Ryden advocated T-shirts with “Recreational Rower” on the back and “Wanna Race?” on the front.

**Club Travel to Regattas.** There are many regional regattas, e.g. in Grand Rapids, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Wynadotte, and Toledo, among others. The LRC occasionally plans and organizes trips to these regattas. Normally, when a group of LRC rowers is traveling to a regatta provisions will be made for boat transportation by the club, through the MSU Rowing Club, or the MSU Women's Crew. Some boats will be transported on the cars of individuals. Most regattas charge entry fees, individuals who compete must pay these fees; they are not included in the membership fees nor in the Learn-to-Row Program fee.

**Individual Travel To Regattas.** Many members of the rowing group enjoy competing in regattas, both local and distant. It is often the case that one or more members will want to travel with club-owned boats to these events.

Permission must be obtained from the Board of Directors before removing equipment from the boathouse and traveling with it. This can be undertaken by a club member in good standing requesting permission either verbally or in a note, with sufficient lead time for the Board of Directors to convene and come to a decision. While in most cases any reasonable such request by a member will be honored, depending on circumstances such as potentially competing boat use, equipment repair, or inadequate training in boat transport, it is possible that some requests may be denied.

It is the responsibility of the person borrowing the boat to make certain that they are properly trained in boat rigging and unrigging, procedures for attaching boat carriers to vehicles, and boat and rigging maintenance. The borrower is also responsible for repair of any damage incurred by the boat while in their care. It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to make certain

anyone to whom they loan a boat is familiar with transportation procedures.

Normally, requests to take a boat for any purpose other than a regatta will not be approved.