



# Dragonflyers of Michigan Newsletter

July 2023

## A Message from our President

Dear Dragonflyers and Our Supporters

It's hard to believe our 2023 season is already more than two months underway! What a great season it has been so far! First, a shout out to our coaches, Alyona and Ellen, for the great job they are doing. I have really appreciated the weekly emails letting us know the training goals for the week. We are really building our skills and endurance as we approach our first race in late July.

I also want to thank everyone who volunteered time in a variety of ways that support our team and our organization. These include working on the dock, putting in the new fence and gate, building the website, helping at our first yard sale, and supporting the river and river trail clean up event. It is exciting to see our nonprofit becoming more connected in the community with other nonprofit organizations that have related missions of supporting environmental stewardship of our natural resources and of our health and well-being. It is also great to see our team adding new members. The first part of the season has been great, and I have no doubt that the remainder will be as well. Paddles up!

- Julie

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## The 2023 Board Members

The following are the 2023 elected board members:

President – Julie Sinclair

Vice President – Ginger Martz

Secretary – Sarynna Lopez-Meza

Treasurer – Lin Hirai

At-Large Member – Mary Guerriero

At Large Member - LouAnn Stark-Dykema

Past-President – Samantha Caughlan



Photo by Mike Stout

## Dragonflyers' Website

The Dragonflyers of Michigan website is up and available for viewing at [www.dragonflyers.org](http://www.dragonflyers.org). The area for photos is still being developed along with the sponsorship opportunities, but the rest of the site is active and available to the public.

The analytics of the website show the month of June had 120 site sessions (unique email addresses) at 100% new contacts from the following traffic sources: direct 68, Facebook 27, Google 17 and Bing 6. This is very promising to see that people beyond our team are accessing our website. Please continue to share our website with family and friends.

## The 2023 Season

Practice Days / Time: Practices will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays, until mid-October  
Warm-ups will begin promptly at 5:45PM\*

We will have a goal to be finished by 7:30 (off the water by 7:15)

\*Please arrive by 5:30 for your first practice so that we can complete paperwork.

Location:

1284 N. Cedar St.; Mason, MI

Off Cedar St between Holt and Mason.

Cost: Available upon request; based on prior experience and date joining

Races:

In 2023 we will participate in the following races:

- Chicago International Dragonboat Festival, July 29, at Busse Woods in Schaumburg/Elk Grove, IL
- Dragons on the Lake Boat Festival, August 12, in Akron, Ohio
- Capital City Dragon Boat Race, September 17, in Lansing, MI

Our two out-of-state races are both exceptionally well-organized events and offer very different races. Chicago is a 500-meter event, so it is a bit longer race than what we did last year. Akron is a favorite event, and we're pleased to return there again.



The Lansing event is sponsored by the Women's Center of Greater Lansing (WCGL) and is our local event. It's a great opportunity for us not only to race, but also to recruit for our organization and to be ambassadors of the sport of dragon boating in our community.



## River and River Trail Cleanup Day

Dragonflyers of Michigan supported Michigan Waterways Stewards (<https://www.miwaterwaysstewards.org/>) in their June event to clean up our area rivers and river trail. CEO Mike Stout attended our first weekend paddle in May and then shared about the event at a team practice. Our Dragonflyers team, along with numerous other local organizations, supported a very successful effort, with some team members doing clean up by boat on the Red Cedar and Grand Rivers, and others walking a section of the Lansing River Trail. We collected everything from small trash items to old tires and other large items that are now removed from our waterways and trails. Michigan Waterways Stewards has become a wonderful partner for us and is regularly sharing about our team and opportunities to paddle with us.



The next clean up with Michigan Waterways Stewards is September 22, 2023. Please join Dragonflyers of Michigan in supporting the efforts of Michigan Waterways Stewards to clean our rivers and river trail.





## Update on Spring Activities

### **Dragonflyers' Open House:**

Our season started with two open houses to introduce the sport of dragon boating to family, friends and interested people. The first open house took place on Sunday, April 30, 2023, where we had 19 people attend. Unfortunately, we had to delay our second open house, originally scheduled for Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> to Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, due to bad weather. Thursday was fine and we had 18 people attend. Overall, we had successful open houses in 2023.

### **Name Our Boat Contest:**

Thank you to everyone who submitted boat names. We had 19 names submitted. The Board voted and narrowed the list down to five names, which were sent to the membership to vote on. The name of our dragon boat is *Blue Heron*.

### **Yard Sale Fundraiser:**

Club members and friends were extremely generous, donating items for the sale in the Lansing Sycamore Park Neighborhood on June 2nd and 3rd. A huge Thank You to the many members who were involved in the hard work of transporting, pricing, and selling items over 3 days of unseasonably hot weather. The result was over \$2400 for our non-profit organization. It was a successful first-time fundraiser!



### **International Dragon Boat Festival:**

Dragonflyers celebrated International Dragon Boat Festival on June 22, 2023. The Dragon Boat Festival is a folk festival integrating worship of gods and ancestors, praying for good luck and warding off evil spirits, celebrating, entertaining and eating. This traditional Chinese holiday occurs on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese calendar. One story is the festival commemorates the death of the poet and minister Qu Yuan. Yuan committed suicide by drowning himself in the Miluo River. The story is that the local people, who admired Qu Yuan, raced out in their boats to save him, or at least retrieve his body. Some believe this is the origin of dragon boat races. The locals could not retrieve Qu Yuan's body, so they dropped sticky rice into the water for the fish to eat, instead of his body. This rice dish is now known as zongzi.

To celebrate we had a small ceremony where we learned about the festival, and we enjoyed yummy zongzi from Hong Kong Restaurant of Lansing.





## Upcoming Events

### **Weekend Paddle Opportunities:**

This year we want to offer opportunities to paddle on some Saturdays and/or Sundays. There will be a \$5.00 charge to paddle on a given weekend day. The next Weekend Paddles are scheduled for:

Saturday, August 26, 2023, at 11:00am

Sunday, September 24, 2023, at 4:00pm

Please watch your email for more information.



## From the Maintenance Shed

Greetings fellow paddlers!

The maintenance crew received outstanding assistance from paddlers with installation of the dock, building and connecting a dock extension, and launching the dragon boat by the first week in May. Thank you to everyone who volunteered!

We have posted a partial “wish list” for materials and equipment needed to maintain our boat on our website and we are open to additional suggestions: <https://www.dragonflyers.org/support-us>.

As a team, we continue to learn about caring for a Champion Dragon Boat and a floating dock. The stern (back of the boat behind the oar lock) became loose in June and required tightening and a new calk strip along the oar lock. Checking the bolts in the stern was not something the maintenance crew realized was necessary but has since added to the list of regular maintenance, along with tightening of seats. In addition, we have added the need for rubber washers to reduce the loosening of the bolts over time. Erin also lowered the floating dock extension to facilitate the ability for that part of the extension to float as the water recedes but remain attached to the stationary extension.

The next step in maintenance involves gathering the materials to re-wire the trailer and install the equipment to make loading and unloading of the dragon boat to/from the trailer easier and to prevent damage. We plan to install a bow stop and rollers to prevent the boat from hitting the trailer as it is loaded and unloaded. The rollers will also assist with guiding the boat into the proper position without concern the boat will slide off the trailer or drag over the tire fenders. The Maintenance Committee Co-chairs will notify the team for volunteers once all parts are received.

We continue to seek the donation of a shed for storage of our equipment and hope the fall will involve the construction of a new shed. Once the dragon boat season ends, members can plan to be available to assist with pulling and cleaning the dragon boat in mid-October.

If you would like to join the maintenance committee, please reach out to Erin at [Dragonflyersofmi@gmail.com](mailto:Dragonflyersofmi@gmail.com).

Paddles Up!

Erin & Ginger, Maintenance Committee Co-Chairs



## Coaches Corner

I saw a movie about how ships are put together. It was riveting!

Also, remember to never, ever trust stairs. They are always up to something!

And now for information and tips you can actually use, although do feel free to share the jokes. Laughter is said to be the best medicine, right after actual medicine.



First, I want to express my appreciation for the dedication and commitment of the wonderful people who make up the DRAGONFLYERS! This community of paddlers is very special. In and out of the boat, I see folks stepping out of their comfort zones to rise to the challenge of making our team better, stronger, faster, and more cohesive.

I want to encourage everyone to spend time focusing on balance. I'm not talking about your life, work balance, I am referring to your actual, physical balance. As you probably know, our left and right side of the body is not in perfect sync even when you are not dragon boating. Paddling can contribute to one side of the body being significantly stronger than the other. We can't always compensate for this by switching sides every practice, so here are a few suggestions for exercise to do at home to keep yourself a bit more even.

### Side Plank

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgaYt4Hi6-g>

Just getting into position and holding for a few seconds is valuable while you gain enough strength to do the complete lift off the floor. In this particular exercise, I always notice a drastic difference in strength from my left to right side.

### Quadruped Alternate Arm and Leg Lift

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Skxum7EtU5Y>

In this exercise it is very important to remain square to the floor and NOT collapse your weight into the hip that provides stability while you lift the opposing leg and arm. Your core should be fully engaged to help you keep the correct position. In the video notice the woman demonstrating this is keeping form rather than lift her arm and leg higher.

Paddles up and see you soon.

Coach Alyona

## Coaches and Sterns

Our coaches and sterns are trained through Dragon Boat Canada, taking courses from Scott Murray's Alkame Dragon Boat Services or other providers, such as Jim Farintosh, approved by Dragon Boat Canada.

In October 2019, both Coach Alyona and Coach Ellen completed the Level 1 – Community Coaching course, taught by Scott Murray. Alyona and Ginger also completed the Sterns course that weekend and were given the level of Trained Sterns. Ellen had previously taken the Sterns course and was already at the level of Trained Sterns. In fall of 2021, Ellen moved up to the level of Race Ready Sterns. The final level of Sterns is to successfully stern a dragon boat in a dragon boat race.

Coach Ellen completed all requirements of Dragon Boat Canada to be a certified Level 2 – Competitive Dragon Boat Coach in June 2023. This is the highest level of dragon boat coaching given by Dragon Boat Canada. The requirements included completing a two-day course (taught by Jim Farintosh), including homework that consisted of a 5-7 minute video of Ellen coaching; completing a Red Cross First Aid Course; obtaining a Canadian Boating License (or US state equivalent); and completing Safe Sport Training – Direct Athlete Contact course.

If anyone is interested in learning to steer a dragon boat or coaching a dragon boat team, please contact Coach Ellen at [DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com](mailto:DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com) with your questions.

## Fundraising Committee Report

Fundraising for Dragonflyers of Michigan continues to be a very important part of supporting our nonprofit organization, affordability for paddler participation, and affordability of programs. The fundraising committee members set a goal of raising a minimum of \$5000 for 2023 and developed a list of fundraising ideas.

Mary G provided a good start to the fundraising by organizing our first yard sale which raised approximately \$2400. Thank you to everyone who assisted in the sale and donated items! See article on Page 5.

Dragonflyers of Michigan is now registered with FlipGive (<https://www.flipgive.com/teams/327372-dragonflyers-of-michigan>) an online shopping option that provides a percentage of funds to sports teams. There is also a donation button that allows individuals to make a direct donation to Dragonflyers of Michigan without the fees associated with PayPal. See FlipGive article on Page 12.

Committee members have written letters requesting support from several donors and the committee continues this pursuit by applying for grants. We are making progress on our fundraising with hopes of exceeding our goal. We welcome participation from all members.

If you are interested in assisting with fundraising or have ideas of sponsors/organizations to contact, please get in touch with Julie Sinclair or Ginger Martz. We are happy to work with you to provide template letters and to reach out to funding organizations, businesses, and individuals.

Julie and Ginger

Fundraising Committee Members 2023  
Julie Sinclair and Ginger Martz Co-Chairs  
Bess German  
Mary Guerriero  
Lin Hirai  
LouAnn Stark-Dykema  
Joyce Ochowicz  
Sarynna Lopez Meza  
Samantha Caughlan





## Dragonflyers' Donors

Dragonflyers would like to recognize and thank our 2021, 2022 and 2023 donors and sponsors. Through their contributions, Dragonflyers is working towards our goal of multi-generational comradery, team building, healthy exercise programs, and education regarding the technique and wellness features of dragon boating. Proceeds from donors and sponsors also supported charitable racing for a women's center, the arts, and cancer programs.

Darling Hardware in Perry, MI

Great Northern Docks in Vermont

South Lansing Lowe's

South Lansing Menards

Lynda Heinig

Rebecca (Becky) Saul

Bess German

Ellen Lurie

Mary & Rich Kimball

Virginia Martz

Capital Region Community Foundation (Guerriero Family)

Beth Wing

Paige Lawson

Joyce Ochowicz

Rob Flanders

Laurel Winkle

Performance Project, LLC (M-43 Gym)

## FlipGive

FlipGive helps teams to raise funds using something many of us are already doing: shopping. This replaces attempts to raise money through a car wash, bake sale, or other method of fundraising. We encourage everyone to share the link to the Dragonflyers of Michigan FlipGive account (<https://www.flipgive.com/teams/327372-dragonflyers-of-michigan>), so as friends and family shop at local or national retailers, they are also assisting our organization with our fundraising efforts.



Once on our FlipGive site, there is an option to donate or shop on-line. To shop you have an option to shop by Brands (stores) or Departments (Gift Cards; Sports & Outdoors; Fashions; Grocery& Essentials; Home & Garden; Travel & Tickets; Electronics; etc.). You can also shop gift registries, once you are at the store. FlipGive has over 700 stores and brands you can shop from.

Dragonflyers of Michigan will receive a percentage of any purchases made when using FlipGive as the venue to access retailers. Our website, [www.dragonflyers.org](http://www.dragonflyers.org), has a direct link to the Dragonflyers of Michigan FlipGive account and allows paddlers, their families, and friends to shop online through local retailers and national retailers.

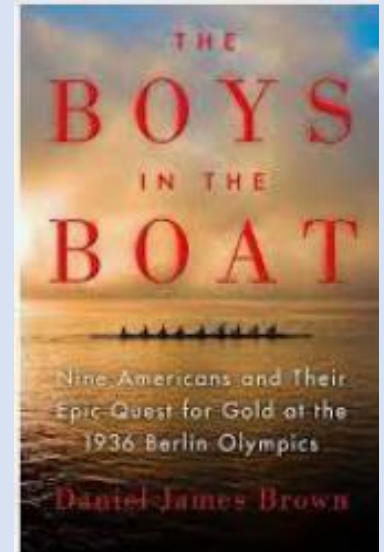
Please share this with family and friends!

## Reading Recommendation

The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown, 2013.

This book is an historical account of nine American rowers on a quest to compete at the 1936 Berlin Olympics against the best teams in the world, including Adolph Hitler's German team. It was a Depression-era University of Washington 8-oar varsity team that beat the odds to rise above rival college teams and a national field of qualifiers to make it to Berlin.

Some of the images and feelings of passion, determination, striving for excellence, and the triumph of teamwork reminded me of the experience in a dragon boat. Here's a quote from Joe Yeoman Pocock, an internationally famous designer of the fastest racing shells in crew.



"Rowing is perhaps the toughest of sports. Once the race starts, there are no time-outs, no substitutions. It calls upon the limits of human endurance. The coach must therefore impart the secrets of the special kind of endurance that comes from mind, heart, and body".

An inspiring read, which I highly recommend.

Mary G.

## Extras

### Race Captains

We are happy to announce we have captains for our three races this year. The following have graciously volunteered to be captains for our races.  
GWN Chicago International Dragon Boat Festival – July 29 – LouAnn  
Dragons on the Lake Dragon Boat Festival – August 12 – Lynda, Katie, and Ginger  
Capital City Dragon Boat Race – September 17 - Sarynna  
Thank you to each of you.

### Dragon Boat Training Erg

A training erg was generously donated to Dragonflyers by Rob Flanders. An erg is used to work on paddling form and will primarily be used off season. Additional information will be provided in the fall.

## Committees and Chair-people

No organization can succeed without the help of countless people serving on committees. Dragonflyers is no different. We are always looking for people to join our committees.

Membership Committee – Bess German

Fundraising Committee – Co-chairs Julie Sinclair and Ginger Martz

Finance Committee – Lin Hirai (Treasurer)

Social Activity Committee – Sarynna Lopez-Meza

Maintenance Committee - Co-chairs Ginger Martz and Erin Linn

Social Media & Website/IT – Looking for chair and members - Contact Julie Sinclair

Election/Nomination – Bess German

Safety – Alyona Troitski

Race – Co-chairs Alyona Troitski and Ellen Lurie

***We are especially looking for people who can help with our Facebook accounts.***

If you are interested in joining any of these committees, please contact the chairperson or the board President Julie Sinclair at [DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com](mailto:DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com).



## Dragonflyers Board Meetings

The Board holds quarterly meetings, which are open to members and the public. Meeting dates for 2023 are tentatively scheduled on the following dates:

- ~~January 25, 2023, at 7:00pm~~
- ~~April 26, 2023, at 7:00pm~~
- July 26, 2023, at 7:00pm **Changed to July 19, 2023, at 7:00pm**
- October 25, 2023, at 7:00pm

Initially, the meeting will be held on Zoom. You may contact us at [DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com](mailto:DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com) for the link and meeting details.

Additional details will be provided at least one week before the meeting. All are welcome to attend these meetings.

We hope this Newsletter can be published quarterly. If you would like to help with the newsletter, please contact Ellen at [DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com](mailto:DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com)

Ideas for articles are welcome.

For questions or more information regarding Dragonflyers of Michigan please email us at [DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com](mailto:DragonflyersofMI@gmail.com)

Dragonflyers of Michigan is a 501(c)(3) organization