

# *Berkeley Racing Canoe Center*

## *Annual Report for 2010*

### **Introduction**

Throughout the year, visitors to the Berkeley Marina and surrounding area have been intrigued by the sight of a dragon boat as it is being paddled in the waters of the San Francisco Bay by members of the Berkeley Racing Canoe Center (BRCC). For those curious enough to venture to



“M” Dock for a closer look, they will discover an organization that has dedicated itself to providing low-cost access to water activities in an environment that encourages teamwork in a unique setting. Whether it is a free dragon boat ride on the Fourth of July, or a

year-long commitment with other water sport enthusiasts, BRCC can offer these opportunities at a low cost primarily because every aspect of the organization, from safety training and equipment maintenance to administration, is run by its members on a voluntarily basis. The uniqueness of dragon boating also permits BRCC to provide a community service in a manner that other organizations cannot.

## History and Mission

The Berkeley Racing Canoe Center was formed in January 2004 as a public benefit corporation for the purpose of promoting international dragon boat competition and providing water access and educational opportunities for the Berkeley and East Bay communities. In November 2004 BRCC transformed into a non-profit organization under United States Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)(3) in service to the public, and has been serving the public continuously since then.

## Low-Cost Water Access and Educational Opportunities



Membership to BRCC, at \$100

for an annual membership

(\$20/year for college students,

free for students 18 years of age

and under), is one of the least-

expensive ways for the general

public to become a part of the

Bay Area's unlimited water

opportunities. BRCC encourages

individuals interested in dragon boat paddling to take advantage of BRCC's free trial

memberships before making a commitment to a paid membership. Full members have access to

BRCC's fleet of various "human-

powered" watercraft, including

kayaks, dragon boats and outrigger

canoes, and can enjoy new

opportunities for recreation and







fitness.

BRCC is able to maintain its low membership fees due in large part to the free berths and other marina services that the City of Berkeley provides to BRCC without charge. In addition, BRCC members volunteer their time to maintain BRCC's fleet and equipment, to run the day-to-day administrative functions, as well as to provide dragon boat paddling instruction and coaching to the local community. Although BRCC does not require its membership to volunteer for community service activities, it has fostered an atmosphere of cooperation and a spirit of teamwork through its competitive DragonMax dragon boat racing team that members enthusiastically volunteer their time to pass along their passion for water activities to the general community, especially to the youth. Given that BRCC members participate in a sport that is still amateur in nature and requires a great deal of personal and financial sacrifice and investment, the level of volunteerism within the organization is impressive.

### **Free Dragon Boat Rides**

As mentioned previously, BRCC encourages all individuals regardless of age to join BRCC's dragon boat team members on a trial basis during regularly-scheduled practices year-round

(conditions permitting) at no cost. One of BRCC's busiest (and most popular) events continues to be its participation in the City of Berkeley's annual Fourth of July celebration.

In 2010, approximately 25 members the DragonMax dragon boat team volunteered their time, as well as their "human" power, to provide free dragon boat rides around the Berkeley Marina to



over 300 people of all ages who came for the festivities. The enthusiasm of the volunteers was well-received by all participants, who experienced the Berkeley Marina and its surroundings in a unique way. Some enjoyed their experience so much that they became members of BRCC.

### **Youth Programs**



In 2010, BRCC provided dragon boat paddling programs as part of the outdoor activities organized through the Berkeley Boosters PAL program. These programs consisted of a series of eight outings that allowed elementary and middle school students to experience the sport of dragon boat

racing, many for the first time. A typical session consisted of ten to sixteen youths, accompanied

by at least two adult chaperones, and about three or four BRCC volunteers (mostly from the Berkeley area) who provided instruction and encouragement. A BRCC-certified steersperson was always in charge of the boat to ensure that all BRCC safety procedures were followed.

### **High School Teams**

BRCC hosts a competitive high school team from San Leandro High School, providing the boats, equipment and volunteer coaching at no charge to the school or to the participants. Race fees are largely subsidized by BRCC when the San Leandro team competes in the local high school dragon boat competitions. Efforts are currently in progress to create a Berkeley High School team under similar terms.

### **Other Community Service**

As part of its primary focus on youth outreach, BRCC hosted various school, camp and scout groups. BRCC also hosted training sessions for novice corporate teams for participation in the Paddle For Life dragon boat festival, a fund-raiser for breast cancer research. In addition, BRCC offered private dragon boat outings as silent auction items to approximately eight different non-profits in support of their various fundraising efforts. The item usually raises \$100 - \$200 each time it is auctioned off.

### **Membership**

In 2010, BRCC had 80 paid members, of which over two-thirds were active participants throughout the year. The majority of the membership consisted of adults, while three were student members, and ages ranged from 16 to 73. In addition, five individuals paid one-time race fees to participate on the DragonMax dragon boat team for local races, but did not have full access to BRCC's member services.

### **Finances**



In 2010, total income for BRCC was \$9,058. Expenditures for 2010 totaled \$11,921. Cash accounts totaled \$4,816. Income for 2011 is estimated conservatively at \$8,850. This includes \$3000 from a yet to be decided fundraiser. Expenses are estimated at \$13,434 and include \$3,000 for a new storage locker float, \$1,500 for dragon boat haul out and maintenance, \$750 for new paddles, \$1,000 to complete repairs on the Penn Yan, a continuation of the \$1,000 TI race fee subsidy and \$1,000 for Community Services in addition to required club expenses like insurance, taxes, dues and lease/option payment on the dragon boats. There is a shortfall of \$4,584. It is anticipated that this shortfall can be mostly made up by reducing costs and increasing the number of paid memberships, but cash reserves will probably continue to be drawn down for another year.

### **Plans for 2011**

BRCC's focus in 2011 will be to continue to develop its youth outreach programs, as well as

provide low-cost access to water

sport resources. It has already

received a commitment from

Berkeley Boosters PAL to continue

its youth program, with at least eight

outings scheduled in spring and

summer. Development of the

Berkeley High team will be a high

priority. BRCC also plans to continue

its participation in the Berkeley Bay



Festival on April 16 and the annual Fourth of July event through its free dragon boat rides.