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# Pink Steel City Dragons: All For One, One For All

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Written By Christine McMahon Tumpson | Produced by Lydia Caplan Blank | Photographs by Michael Fornataro

## One boat. One dragon boat. One Pink Steel Dragon Boat.

One beautiful, soft, Pittsburgh sky-filled evening, women from all parts of Western Pennsylvania gathered on the long, gray wooden docks beneath the Fox Chapel Yacht Club for what many describe as their “happy hour.” While there are times this dragon boat paddle team imbibes in fermented liquids, tonight, it is all about the water.

Water, water, everywhere. The collection of hydrogen and oxygen molecules that because of their one-two structure, allows this most immense formulation to be both soft and hard at once. To have a fluid inner current and a hard skin, too. Together in their boat, seated two-by-two, the women stream in the Allegheny River. They embody the energy of that majestic water, ever-there since the beginning of time. What lies beneath since the times of the Almighty Flood may never be revealed again, its mysteries long hidden from where the waters rested after the total covering of the Earth. Maybe not at the level that was once. Maybe higher, so humans can experience more of the

sky, and the water molecules that swirl forever in the air currents above. And the things that are beneath the surface matter not all except that they were what was once was.

This team of breast cancer survivors rides the currents together, together as one heartbeat, marked ever so deliberately, and echoing across the river's banks. The striking of the jambe drum and the paddling of the women mesmerizes, mainly in its quietude. Mothers all in that long boat, regardless of children borne, they create currents within currents, paddles within one another's paddle, and breaths shared together. They give life together, as one machine, one body, one heartbeat. And yet, it is silent.

The only sounds are the birds as they swoon overhead, rejoicing in the opportunity to share in the experience, to have finally found members of their own flock, those who brace the headwinds and the strong currents, and who, when together as one, ride and glide the currents of the world.

The season lasts as long as the weather holds and the river stays steady. So far, this team has made strong friendships and alliances. It is not necessarily a seat one wants to take, they say, but at the end of their ride, after their beautiful glide, with beaming faces and soaring hearts, these athletic souls stand side-by-side, and take their boat into its slip.

As one.

+ As far as meaningful evenings go, this was one for my team and myself. Visit [whirlmagazine.com](http://whirlmagazine.com) for the videos we captured at the photo shoot. Special thank you to Naomi Herman. *To learn more about Pink Steel, visit [SteelCityDragons.org](http://SteelCityDragons.org).*



*Pink Steel City Dragon Boat team members pictured: Laura Schatzkamer (Drummer), Dani Grass, Naomi Herman, Lynn Wegrzynek, Anne Skreppen, Shelly Schuster, Laura McGinnis, Debbie Moon, Sonia Rogers, Maria Balestrieri, Cindy Umbaugh, Mary Lococo, Trish Nowalk, Coach, Lynne Franks-Meinert (Steersperson)*

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