

The Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Story (1995-2021)

Much of this history was collected in a series of virtual interviews with Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) life-long member Rosemary (Baird) Henry. Additional details were provided by various Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) and Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) and False Creek Racing Canoe Club (FCRCC) alumni and many other individuals with familiarity of the events of the early years of outrigger canoeing in Canada. Official records on race results for Canada / California / Hawaii / IPCF / IVF events prior to 2000 are becoming increasingly difficult to locate in order to confirm historical events / results.

Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Roots

This chronicle is intended to capture unwritten history of outrigger canoeing at ORPC from 1995-2021, as records from prior to 2000 are becoming more and more scarce. The history of outrigger canoeing at ORPC is linked with the growth of various recreational and competitive paddlesports on Vancouver Island. Most Canadian outrigger canoe clubs are founded through the efforts of a single or small group of individuals with a vision. Rosemary Henry would be that individual who would start ORPC with the assistance of Brian Henry. This chronicle begins with the arrival of ORPC founder Rosemary Henry on the West Coast in 1981 and concludes with the amalgamation of Latitude 48 and ORPC in May 2021. There are essentially three paths that converged to lead to the development of outrigger canoeing at ORPC.



1. **Strathcona Park Lodge (SPL)**
2. **Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC)**
3. **Ocean River Sports (ORS)**

Strathcona Park Lodge (SPL)



Strathcona Park Lodge (SPL) was founded in 1959 by Jim / Myrna Boulding and has been committed to improve Canada's outdoor education industry. [01] Jim / Myrna Boulding would have 3 daughters (Elizabeth; Annie; Josie) and 2 sons (Jamie;

Nicholas). [02]

Strathcona Park Lodge (SPL) has been home for many individuals who have made significant contributions to Canadian outrigger canoeing:

- Flatwater Olympian and CKBC legend Sheila Taylor was a national level canoe instructor and spent her summers teaching canoeing from 1976-1980 at University of Alberta, before accepting a job teaching canoeing at SPL and acquiring the skills by 1985 to become a world-class white-water down river kayaker. [03]
- Annie Boulding had senior instructorship with SPL in both kayaking and canoeing, represented Canada at ICF Canoe Slalom (Whitewater) Championships between 1975-1987, [04] and launched the Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) in 1995. Annie would be one of the first Canadian women to participate in the Molokai Na Wahine race in 1985, when Annie and fellow National white-water team members Joanne Woods (1992 Barcelona Canoe Slalom (Whitewater) / Kayak Singles Olympian) [05] and Shelia Taylor joined the White Raven Canoe & Kayak Club [06] crew consisting of marathon paddlers and legendary steersperson Ruth Matson.
- 1986 Commonwealth Games rowing gold medal winner and Annie Boulding's sister-in-law Christine (Tina) Clarke with SPL ordered two Calmar canoes for Comox and had been a member of Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) in the early years. [07]

- Laurel Archer had been a canoe guide and instructor for 20 years with the Canadian Outdoor Leadership Training (COLT) program at SPL and had been a member of Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) for many years. [08]
- David Boulding, co-founder of False Creek Racing Canoe Club (FCRCC) and CORA, was encouraged to go to law school by his uncle Jim Boulding who believed that the family operation, SPL and Outdoor Education Centre, needed a lawyer. [09]

Rosemary came to the West Coast from Halifax, Nova Scotia to teach outdoor education at Strathcona Park Lodge in 1981. While on Vancouver Island, Rosemary competed in the Marathon Canoe leg of the 1994 Snow to Surf Race in Courtenay. The first edition of what is now the Royal Lepage Snow To Surf Race was run in 1982. The event, originally a program of the Comox Recreation Commission, has been run by The Comox Valley Snow to Surf Society volunteer Race Bosses for over 30 years. In that time period, in addition to the original Alpine, Nordic, Running, Cycling, and Marathon Canoeing Legs, Mountain Biking, and Kayaking have been added as these grew in popularity. [10]

Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC)



A Victoria Times Colonist article from June 1994 discusses Garry Mancell, co-founder of CORA and coach of the Lotus Eaters Outrigger Canoe Club, holding an outrigger clinic with Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC). [11] Arrangements had been made to add an outrigger canoe to the VCKC fleet by way of a one-year loan of "*The Burrard*", a 44-foot six-person outrigger canoe, that CORA was making available to new outrigger canoe clubs as a starter outrigger canoe.

"*The Burrard*" was with Victoria Canoe Kayak Club as a starter outrigger canoe from 1994-1995. Soon after "*The Burrard*" moved onwards to its next home, Victoria Canoe Kayak Club acquired the first of their two Calmar Canadian Class Racer canoes.

Rosemary knew nothing about outrigger paddling at the time, but she was invited to attend the Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) outrigger program in 1994 when a VCKC member saw her paddle the Marathon Canoe leg of the 1994 Snow to Surf Race in Courtenay that year.

Annie Boulding shared a first-hand account of herself and Sarah McLennan moving "*The Burrard*" from VCKC to Comox, and the mention of Rosemary prior to the formation of ORPC:

- *Back then a former SPL employee called Rosemary Henry was paddling out of VCKC that club before she founded Ocean River Sports. I picked up the Burrard from VCKC with the SPL truck roof racks when I was pregnant with my second child in March or February of 1996. My friend Sarah McLennan an up-and-coming paddler and great steerswoman was my co-pilot as I drove it up island with the very heavy boat inverted on top of the SPL truck. We stored it on the beach in front of Sarah's mom's house near the Powell River ferry Terminal. We had no trolley so we had to roll it in and out of the water on logs*



Please note the distinctive "Rhino horn" on the stern of "The Burrard"

Ocean River Sports (ORS)



The West Coast of British Columbia is wild, beautiful, and home to some of the best sea kayaking on the planet. Adventurous explorers had long been using sea kayaks as the craft of choice to travel these magnificent waters when Brian Henry started paddling the coastal waterways. [12] But Brian was a visionary, and as time went by, he saw the need for better boats and equipment for true kayak enthusiasts. It was at this moment in the late 1970s Current Designs was born. [13] Brian started small, as most boat builders do, designing and building kayaks to enable his friends and

him to better explore these waters. [14] Brian quickly became very well known locally for his kayaking trips and paddling skills. In 1981 he took his passion a step further by opening Ocean River Sports, a little specialty store on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, in Victoria, BC. Ocean River Sports is one of the premier speciality kayak and adventure companies in North America. [15] Their unique location just north of the Johnson St. Bridge allows them the opportunity to kayak from their own docks and explore the wondrous Victoria Inner Harbour. If it's windy or marine traffic is too busy, the upper harbour and the Gorge Waterway are also excellent destinations. [16]



Brian Henry - Current Designs Founder

Rosemary formed ORPC in order to encourage competitive paddling. VCKC at the time was not encouraging any competitive teams paddling out of their club. Brian Henry offered up his business' dock location (Ocean River Sports) for ORPC to start a second paddling club in Victoria in 1995. Once ORPC had their first Clipper Advantage OC6, the paddlers came. ORPC started with only six members and within three years ORPC was up to almost 100 members. Rick Nu'u and Jackie Webber came over once to do a clinic with ORPC when they were still pretty new to the sport. Rosemary developed a Learn to Outrigger Program which was advertised around town.

Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Outrigger Canoe Fleet

Brian Henry, founder of Ocean River Sports and Current Designs and benevolent husband of Rosemary Henry since 1990, parlayed his connections with Abbotsford's Western Canoeing & Kayaking to acquire a Clipper Advantage (Camosung) as the first OC6 for ORPC in 1996. ORPC would acquire a second Clipper Advantage (Kanaka) a year later.

Karel Tresnak of Outrigger Connection began to successfully manufacture OC1s in 1993. The first prototype of the Outrigger Connection Mirage OC6 was introduced in 1997. The second prototype of the Outrigger Connection Mirage OC6 finished first and second in the 2000 Molokai Hoe with Lanikai setting a new event record. [17] The Outrigger Connection Mirage OC6 introduced the "Puffy" ama and performs excellent in the flat conditions. Outrigger Connection opened its first franchise in 2002 with Current Designs in Victoria BC and then its second franchise in 2003 with Outrigger Connection Australia. [18] ORPC acquired its first Outrigger Connection Mirage (Lootsas) in 1998. It was Karel Tresnak's original boat (the plug) that was shipped over to Current Designs (Brian's manufacturing business) so that a North American plant could be established. ORPC acquired its second Outrigger Connection Mirage (Tillicum) in 2000. Only a half dozen were built on Vancouver Island before the Outrigger Connection Mirage plug was sent over to Western Canoeing & Kayaking who were better set up to build big boats.

Two of the Outrigger Connection Mirages manufactured by Current Designs were acquired by Westbay Performance Paddling Club (Kris Terauds & Pete Hartman) in Victoria circa 2004-2007. [19] When Westbay Performance Paddling Club dissolved, one of the Mirages (Ku Kanaka) was sold to FCRCC in 2007 [20] and the other (#510) was sold to Comox in 2007.

Current Designs were small boat specialists and continued to build the Outrigger Connection Stingray OC1 and The Viper OC1 models. [21]



Clipper Advantage *Kanaka*



Outrigger Connection Mirage *Tillicum*



Clipper Advantage *Camosung*



Outrigger Connection Mirage *Lootsas*

Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Events

Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Bridges

A significant part of the growth of ORPC was due to hosting races. Rosemary Henry saw a need for friendly competition on Vancouver Island so she developed the Bridges Race (6KM) in 1996 in the protected waters of the Gorge Waterway. The ORPC Bridges mid-distance OC6 race has been one of the longest continuous running OC6 races in Canada, second only to the Lotus Ice Breaker. [22]



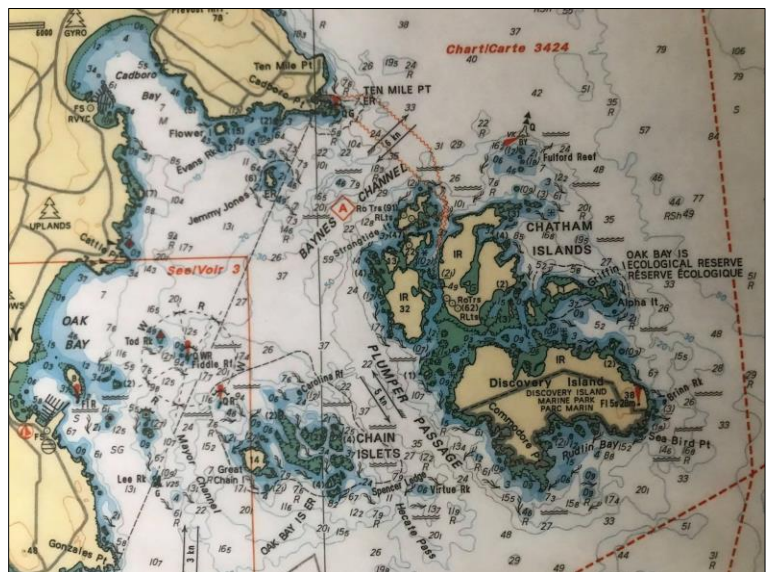
Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Inny / Outty

The ORPC Bridges small-boat race (Inny / Outty) was added the following year in 1997.



Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Island Iron

The ORPC Island Iron off Cadboro Bay was developed for open water racing in 1999. [23] ORPC and Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) have alternated hosting the Island Iron for many years. Rosemary had been race director for the 17KM Island Iron Race and the shorter 6KM Bridges Race for many years before hanging up her paddle in 2005, [24] shortly after Sproat Lake Canoe Club was formed. [25]



Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Luminaries

There maybe several ORPC paddlers who have contributed to outrigger canoeing endeavours, but one individual who stands out is Rosemary Henry.

Rosemary is recognized as the founder of ORPC and served as CORA Representative for ORPC through 2004 until Cindy Wright became the CORA Representative for ORPC for many years. [26]



Rosemary competed with Team Canada at the 2002 Tahiti IVF World Sprints. [27] Rosemary raced with Andrea Dillon, Daphne Brockington, Diane Shephard, Joanne Vance, Kendall (Kim) Macmillan, and Marina McCready as Team Canada to Gold in the V6 500M Masters Women and Sr Masters Women. Rosemary would also race to Bronze in the V1 500M Sr Masters Women. [28]

Rosemary has lots of fond memories about the time in Tahiti including the tremendous support from Andrea Dillon who believed in her and invited her to join their Vancouver team. Rosemary recognizes Andrea Dillon as a wonderful coach and mentor.

Andrea Dillon shared a first-hand account of Alan Carlsson contributing technical coaching to help the Canadian team take Gold in V6 Master Women at 2002 Tahiti IVF World Sprints.

"The best story out of this World Sprints is about the course and what Alan Carlsson, our coach, did during the practise week. Alan saw some unusual things when we were training on the course, with certain lanes. The middle 3 lanes saw the boat's speed stalling somewhat at race pace. Alan then swam the entire course underwater and saw the middle lanes, about half way through the 500 metres had a berm which impacted the run of our boat when following our race plan. I believe it was by adjusting our "race plan" we managed to beat a very strong and talented Australian Master's team."



Rosemary competed with Team Canada at the 2004 Hilo IVF World Sprints where she advanced to semi-finals in V1 500M Sr Masters Women. [29] Rosemary would advance to semi-finals in V12 500M Sr Masters Women, V12 500M Masters Women, V6 1000M Sr Masters Women, V6 1000M Masters Women, V6 500M Sr Masters Women, and V6 500M Masters Women with several Team Canada crews. [30]





Rosemary competed with Team Canada at the 2008 Sacramento IVF World Sprints. [31] [32] [33] Rosemary would advance to semi-finals in V12 500M Golden Masters Women, V12 500M Sr Masters Women, V6 1000M Golden Masters Women, V6 1000M Sr Masters Women, V6 500M Golden Masters Women, and V6 500M Sr Masters Women with several Team Canada crews. [30]

Rosemary did not compete with Team Canada at 2012 Calgary IVF World Sprints, [34] but was a member of the Sprint Council as team co-ordinator with the goal of building the strongest possible Team Canada 2012. [35]



ORPC would send one competitor to the 2005 Edmonton World Masters Games. Rosemary would take Gold and Silver in two OC1 events, finishing just ahead or just behind Neda Joss. [36] [37]

Rosemary and Brian Henry have instilled a passion for the sea in their sons Russell and Graham Henry. In January 2014, the two brothers from Victoria, BC, completed an ambitious 4,000 miles sea kayak expedition from Belem Brazil, passing through more than 20 countries and island-hopping across the Caribbean Sea to finish at Juno Beach Florida. [38] The brothers applied the experience of years spent paddling and guiding on Canada's wet and chilly coastline to their journey in the subtropics. With remarkable poise and expert style, the Henry brothers became the first to paddle across the Caribbean since a team led by sea kayaking legend John Dowd made the notoriously arduous journey in 1979. [39] Russell and Graham Henry would paddle to 7th place overall with Team Soggy Beavers in the inaugural (2015) Race to Alaska (R2AK) in a double-ama Clipper Advantage OC-6 with two sail rigs. [40]



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