

# The Nanaimo Story (1980-2023)

Much of this history was collected in a series of virtual interviews with Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) members Wolfgang Presslauer and Ruth Matson. Additional details were provided by various False Creek Racing Canoe Club (FCRCC) and Jericho Outrigger Canoe Club (JOCC) and Lotus Sports Club 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.

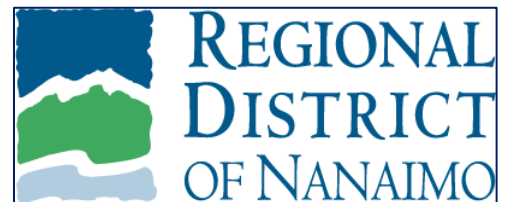
The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) for the purposes of this story is defined as encompassing paddling venues at Departure Bay, Brechin Boat Launch, Nanaimo Harbour, Long Lake, as well as Newcastle & Protection Islands (NPI). Although this story does discuss Cowichan First Nations, paddling venues in Chemainus, Maple Bay, and Cowichan Bay are not been included in this story. [01]

## Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Clubs

The club legacies that CORA had compiled in past years had been very much about individual clubs (False Creek; Lotus; Jericho; Penticton; Ocean River) with some "cross-over" references to other canoe clubs where there were connections. The "Nanaimo Legacy" is quite different. There are many connections between the paddlers, clubs, events, venues, and canoes related to the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) that are combined into this collective "Nanaimo Legacy" document. This chronicle has a "Chapter" for each of the threads that weave together the history of this "Nanaimo Legacy".

### Roots / Threads / Chapters

This chronicle is intended to capture unwritten history of outrigger canoeing in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) from 1980-2023, as records from prior to 2000 are becoming more and more scarce. The history of outrigger canoeing in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is linked with the growth of First Nations war canoe racing, Voyageur canoe racing, marathon canoe racing, downriver/whitewater canoe racing, sprint/flatwater canoe racing, and rowing. There are at least eleven threads / chapters that converged to lead to the development of outrigger canoeing in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN).



1. **First Nations War Canoes (1980-)**
2. **White Raven Canoe & Kayak Club (1965-1990)**
3. **Strathcona Park Lodge (SPL)**
4. **Canoe Kayak BC (CKBC) Sprint/Flatwater Program (1980-1984)**
5. **1981 Molokai Hoe "Blazing Paddles" Crew**
6. **1985 Molokai Na Wahine Crew**
7. **Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club (NCKC) (1988-)**
8. **GO Rowing & Paddling Association of Canada (GO) (1996-2014)**
9. **Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC) (2003-)**
10. **Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) (2018-)**
11. **Vancouver Variety Club Telethon (1979-1988)**

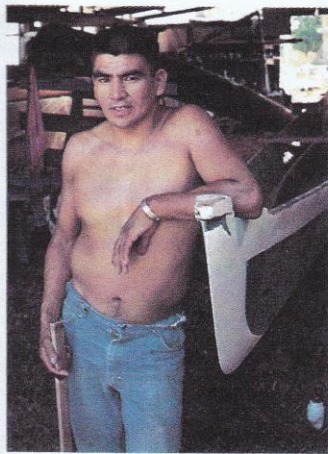
## First Nations War Canoes

Canadian Geographic  
Aug/Sept 1980

canoes are strung out in a long line, each fighting to hold its position, or to gain precious feet over old rivals. The competition between the crews, whether in sixth, seventh, or sixteenth and seventeenth positions, is acknowledged by cheers from shore as loud as those for the first place team. Village pride spurs even the last place team on and the race isn't over until it crosses the line.

"In a really close race, it's almost paddle for paddle, stroke for stroke," Harris explains. "Even though the canoes have the whole ocean to themselves, there are times when the pullers are pretty well rubbing shoulder to shoulder. In a race like that, whether it's for first, second, or even fifth or sixth, every stroke counts."

The winning canoes in recent years have been from the Cowichan reserve, near the small city of Duncan, 40 miles north of Victoria. Canoe skipper and canoe-maker, Arvid Charlie, is one of the main reasons why. Charlie is a driving force behind the *Cowichan Queen*, which is to canoe racing what the Montreal Canadiens are to hockey. His commitment to the sport is total. His desire to win sustains him during the long summer evenings of practice, and his love for canoes keeps him busy in his workshop most of



Arvid Charlie, skipper of the COWICHAN QUEEN.



By tradition, each crew member is required to help lift the solid cedar canoe out of the water after a practice or race. The canoes weigh between 300 and 400 lbs. This is the Shell Beach men's team. George Harris is on the right, second from the front.

each winter. Like most Cowichans, he comes from a long line of canoe paddlers.

"I don't think you can look at a family anywhere on this reserve that has never pulled on the canoes. It's pretty well the only sport that is totally Indian, so everybody is into it at one time or another. My grandfather and great-grandfather pulled together. They were champs for quite

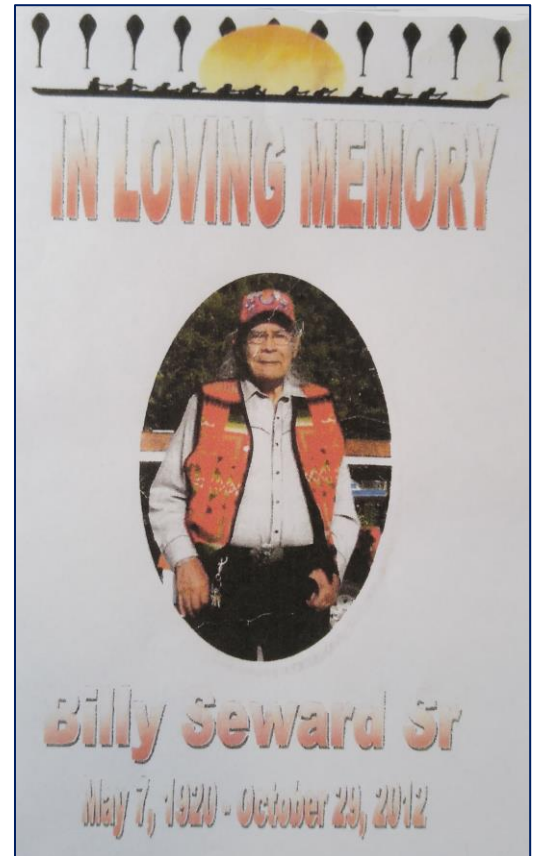
a number of years."

Arvid Charlie's interest runs deeper than most. His rippling arms and muscular torso are testimony to his dedication to the sport. His love of canoes extends beyond the summer races. When he is not skippering the *Cowichan Queen*, he is pulling on a mixed Indian and white voyageur canoe, re-enacting the early days of the fur trade down the Fraser River.

Ruth Matson graciously shared a photocopy of a single page from the Canadian Geographic issue, v. 100 no. 4 (August/September 1980), pp. 38-45, "*War canoe races still excite Coast Indians*", by Gordon Hamilton. This article highlights the impact of First Nations war canoe racing across the BC Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. When Ruth Matson was asked about major influencers in her paddling career, there were two individuals that Ruth chose to recognize.

*"My first innocent impressions were formed when I was embraced into the First Nations tribes. It was so humbling and gentle. Their cultural practises regarding the canoe, their confidence, respect and kindness among their crews. The spiritual aspect of war canoes. I was invited to many sacred events and moments. For this was the journey of a life-time. Experiencing the prejudice against them. And then being disliked because of my colour at big Reserves races. The tenderness and the sharing, this influenced me to be a better person. For this I say **Bill Seward (Bones) aka Tzuq'nustum of 'Snuneymuxw' Nation** who was the skip on our ladies" Klutchmen" team.*

*(Dr. Luschiim) Arvid Charlie of the Cowichan Quw'utsun tribe also influenced me. (His son is Charlie Charlie). Again, with the learning of First Nations with laughter and respect. Arvid taught me to read water. We would sit on the beach or study the rivers before launching for a river run or river races. I often paddled with my husband on the river and moving waters. There is much to learn about currents." [03] [04] [05]*



Kulleet Bay Races Klutchmen Crew with Skip Bill Seward (Bones) & Ruth Matson Seat 3 & Mavis Wyse Seat 1

First Nations clubs have continuously moved to embrace outrigger canoeing with acquisitions by Geronimo (Brentwood Bay) 1 Unlimited, Island Brave (Nanaimo) 1 Bradley Lightning and 2 Unlimiteds, Chemainus (Ladysmith) 1 Clipper Advantage, Star Nation (Cultus Lake) 2 Calmars and 1 Clipper Advantage, River Spirit (Chilliwack) 1 Clipper Advantage, Onake (Montreal) 1 Bradley Lightning and 1 Unlimited, and Chehalis (Harrison Lake) 2 Fijians from Gibsons. [07]

## White Raven Canoe & Kayak Club



The White Raven Canoe & Kayak Club originated in 1965 as a canoe racing club when four white men raced with the Nanaimo Indians on Cultus Lake. The four founders were Ted Barsby Junior, Wally Robinson, Marvil Schlitz and Bob Pederson. They paddled with skipper Bill Seward (Bones) aka Tzuq'nustum from the Snuneymuxw First Nation. Sometimes they raced in dug out war canoes but predominantly Voyageur canoes. They joined the CCA (Canoe Kayak Canada officially replaced the name "**Canadian Canoe Association (CCA)**" in 2005) from 1986-1990, and continued to regroup and race periodically. In 1988, the club was known as Nanaimo White Raven

Olympic Canoe Club with entries in local regattas. [08]

There have been several other notable individuals who raced with White Raven Canoe Club over the years including Norm Kogstad, Dick Tinga, Bob Strang, and Allan Matson. This group of men trained for Voyageur canoe races, and they were very tenacious racers. Often racing in the local narrows and around Gabriola Island. The Nationals were held in Vancouver. The highlight beyond racing turned to fund raising for the Vancouver Variety Club Telethon in February with the challenge to paddle to Vancouver and deliver the raised funds personally on stage, dripping wet and cold. All the support persons either paddled across or rode in the escort (usually fishing) boat. It was easier to stay in the Voyageur canoe than ride on the rolling rocking fishing boat with the fumes of fish and diesel. Many local personalities became involved.

Norm "Stormin' Norman" Kogstad was a notable member of White Raven Canoe Club. His passions in life were Scuba diving, camping with his family, hiking and walking with his many beloved pets. While on a dive in Boat Harbour he discovered an enormous anchor that he and his partner Dick Tinga and Darrell Fitzgerald raised and brought to shore. The anchor was dedicated to the City of Nanaimo and can now be enjoyed by all downtown in the Nanaimo waterfront. He also loved canoeing which inspired him to join the White Raven Canoe Club and raise money for the Vancouver Variety Club Telethon. [09]

James Richard "Dick" Tinga was also a notable member of White Raven Canoe Club. Scuba Diving with Norm Kogstad and Darrell Fitzgerald was a continuing adventure. When Norm found a huge anchor in Boat Harbour no one believed him until it was raised. It now rests at Nanaimo's water front for everyone to see. Dick was a member of the White Raven Canoe Club. He was part of the six-man Voyageur canoe teams that paddled from Nanaimo to Vancouver in February to raise money for the Vancouver Variety Club Telethon. They did that every year for 10 years. [10]

Robert (Bob) Strang was also a notable member of White Raven Canoe Club. Bob was a dedicated longtime employee of Canadian Stevedoring, now DP World. He was a lifelong sports enthusiast and he and his loving wife Kathy Gallagher Strang were once avid canoe racers. [11] [12]

Allan Matson was also a notable member of White Raven Canoe Club. Allan Matson would place 3rd Koa Open division in 1981 Molokai Hoe with "Blazing Paddles". Allan and Ruth Matson had 2 daughters (Helena & Carina) who were coached in sprint/flatwater by the legendary Hugh Fisher, and 2 grand-daughters (Caileigh Filmer would complete in Rowing at 2016 Brazil Olympics and would take Bronze in Womens Pairs with partner Hillary Janssens at 2021 Tokyo Olympics and is now preparing for her third Olympics Rowing Competition). [13] [14]



The White Raven Canoe Club hosted the Around Gabriola Island Voyageur canoe race for a number of years, followed with a seafood BBQ hosted by Nanaimo Fish & Game, through Ted Barsby Junior.



*Around Gabriola Island Voyageur Canoe Race 1988*

The Family Fun Rosedale Canoe Race was an event that took a 13-Kilometre route meandering its way from the ballpark on Old Yale Road in Rosedale to the Young Road Bridge in Chilliwack, generally held the first Sunday of May each year. The event first took place in 1973 and was finally cancelled in 1997 after 24 annual races. There were only a small number of categories for many years including two-paddle-open, two-paddle-mixed, two-paddle-youth, and single-paddle. The Nanaimo / White Raven Canoe Club were among the 124 canoeists attending the 1978 (6th annual) event and did very well. Ruth Matson and Mavis Wyse would place 1st in the ladies two-paddle event. Bob Strang and Ted Barsby of Ladysmith would place 1st in the mens two-paddle-open event. Alan Matson and Bill Seward of Nanaimo would place 2nd in the mens two-paddle-open event. Wally Robinson and (Dr. Luschiim) Arvid Charlie of Nanaimo would place 2nd in the mens racing dugout. [16] [17] [18]

### **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. [20] Jim / Myrna Boulding would have 3 daughters (Elizabeth; Annie; Josie) and 2 sons (Jamie; Nicholas). [21]

Nicholas). [21]

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 whitewater/downriver kayaker. [22]
- Annie Boulding had senior instructorship with SPL in both kayaking and canoeing, represented Canada at ICF Canoe Slalom (Whitewater/Downriver) Championships between 1975-1987, [23] 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 whitewater/downriver team members Joanne Woods (1992 Barcelona Canoe Slalom (Whitewater/Downriver) / Kayak Singles Olympian) [24] and Shelia Taylor joined the White Raven Canoe & Kayak Club [25] crew consisting of marathon canoe 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. [26]
- 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. [27]
- 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. [28]

These individuals associated with Strathcona Park Lodge (SPL) would bring a wealth of marathon canoe and whitewater/downriver and competitive rowing experience to the growth of outrigger canoeing on Vancouver Island and across Canada. [29] [30]

### **Canoe Kayak BC (CKBC) Sprint/Flatwater Program**



Sprint canoe kayak is about speed on flatwater. Strength, technique, endurance and raw speed combine in this Olympic discipline. Sprint/Flatwater racing takes place on a straight course divided in lanes, on calm water. The distances recognized for international races are 200M, 500M, and 1000M. One, two and four person canoes and kayaks are used. CKBC offers competition opportunities, training camps and participation in BC Games, on provincial teams and at national events to registered sprint members.

The Canoe Kayak BC Strategic Plan for each 4-year planning period builds on the successes of the previous planning period and works to better support and deliver programming and services for all members. The Canoe Kayak BC Strategic Plan for the early 1980s focused on increasing participation in Sprint/Flatwater racing by providing more venues for Sprint/Flatwater racing.

Drew Mitchell (FCRCC Alumni) was involved with the Canoe Kayak BC Strategic Plan in the early 1980s and was in Nanaimo and Burnaby when the daughters of Allan & Ruth Matson were sprint/flatwater paddling. Drew Mitchell & Hugh Fisher & Alwyn Morris came to Nanaimo to visit with Allan & Ruth Matson regarding sprint/flatwater paddling. Hugh was coaching the daughters of Allan & Ruth Matson. Not only were they scouting for young sprint/flatwater paddlers, but also for a venue to create a sprint/flatwater paddling centre. Loudon Park at Long Lake in Nanaimo was selected as a site. [31] [32] [33]

See the Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club (NCKC) chapter for contributions by White Raven Canoe Club members towards the support of sprint/flatwater paddlers at Loudon Park.

## 1981 Molokai Hoe "Blazing Paddles" Crew



The "Blazing Paddles", a makeshift crew of North American Mainland paddlers, stunned the canoe paddling world and Hawaiian competitors by winning the 1978 Molokai Hoe race.

In 1981, a different crew racing Molokai Hoe as "Blazing Paddles", consisting of Canadians (Andras "Andy" Toro (Canadian National team), Ron Williams (Smithers BC), Bruce Hawkenson (Prince George BC), Bob Strang (Ladysmith BC), Allan Matson (Nanaimo BC)) and 4 other USA whitewater/downriver racers fresh from Europe races, coached by legendary Waikiki Beach Boy Albert "Rabbit" Kekai, would place 3rd Koa Open division.

Once upon a time (1971) an American called Andras "Andy" Toro built a canoe to race in Australia's 404KM 5-day Murray Marathon. He made it in pieces so that he could carry it on the plane. Andras "Andy" Toro won the race and returned to the US leaving the canoe that he built behind, with the race renamed in his honour as the Great Toro Race.

One of the most interesting things about this team comprised of BC & USA paddlers was that their paddles were not allowed in the Molokai Hoe race. Their paddles were a composite mix with 1/2 wood. The guys quickly found a fellow who would allow them use of his workshop. They went to a local lumber supplier to purchase wood that they could use to make their own paddles. The paddles were made in time to race and place 3rd Koa Open division. Several of the crew were from the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) and paddled with White Raven Canoe & Kayak Club. [34] [35] [36]

## 1985 Molokai Na Wahine Crew



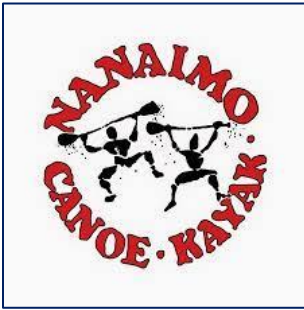
The October 2023 CORA Town Hall virtual session (*The Wahines In The Boat*) on Sunday 2023-Oct-15 featured a reunion of the all-Canadian women's 1985 Molokai Na Wahine crew comprised of Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Famers, Canadian National Team Members, Canadian Olympians, CKBC Legends, and Provincial Hall Of Famers from all across Canada, that placed 5th overall in that race for one of the best ever showings by an all-Canadian women's crew in 38 years.

This CORA Town Hall virtual session showcased a roundtable of what it was like to build an outrigger racing crew in 1985 with Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Famers Ruth Matson and Annie Boulding, Canadian Olympians Sheila Taylor and Joanne Woods, and all of the stellar crew members that CORA had been able to locate including Cathy (Nixon) New, Sheila (Chadwick) Cupp, Kathy Gallagher, Gail Timmer, Janice (Henderson) Kyle, and Diane Chippindale (Team Manager). There was also a special guest appearance by legendary Molokai Na Wahine Board Member "Auntie" Rosie Lum, with

recognition of legendary Waikiki Beach Boy Albert "Rabbit" Kekai, who coached the all-Canadian Womens crew for the 1985 Kaiwi Channel Crossing.

This 1985 Molokai Na Wahine crew was primarily based out of Nanaimo, Victoria, and Comox. Whereas Hugh Fisher and a band of BC flatwater paddlers were the first men in Canada doing outrigger canoeing, it was this all-Canadian women crew that paved the way for women in Canada doing outrigger canoeing. A collection of material on the 1985 Molokai Na Wahine crew will be available on the CORA website. [37] [38] [39]

## Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club (NCKC)



The Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club (NCKC) is a non-profit amateur sport organization that provides entry-level to high-performance canoe/kayak training to people of all ages & skill levels within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). Started as the Nanaimo Flatwater Racing Club primarily for the racing of sprint/flatwater canoes & kayaks, the club has now grown into a diverse, multi-disciplinary paddling club offering recreational & competitive paddling opportunities in sprint/flatwater, dragon boat, recreational canoeing/kayaking & community summer camps. In 1997, the Club was re-named to reflect this direction and provide more clarity in the Club name. NCKC has been a small, but dedicated group of paddlers throughout the years and has provided paddling services to School District 68, community special events, and the training and hosting of local, provincial and inter-provincial canoe-kayak athletes and competitions. As a member sport of Sport BC's Regional Sport Delivery System, NCKC is proud to be recognized as the PacificSport Island Regional Canoe-Kayak Training Centre.

The Matson family donated 3 sprint/flatwater kayaks, paddles, and equipment to support Loudon Park sprint/flatwater paddlers. Nanaimo has hosted the BC Summer Games in 1985, 2002, and 2014. The 1985 BC Summer Games Legacy funds of \$2000 was awarded to White Raven Canoe Club for hosting canoe races at the 1985 BC Summer Games. Ruth Matson was BC Summer Games Canoeing Event Coordinator. These Legacy funds were then donated to start the Nanaimo Flatwater Racing Club at Loudon Park. A shipping container was purchased and set up for use as a club house. In 1988, the NCKC (at that time the Nanaimo Flatwater Racing Club) incorporated and began its history at Long Lake out of the transformed picnic shelter compound at Loudon Park.

Shortly after that, two of the Voyageur canoes were acquired from the Nanaimo White Raven Canoe Club (WRCC) that was based at Departure Bay by the Kin Hut. The WRCC was active in the community throughout the 1970s and 1980s with its members occasionally competing successfully in war canoe events hosted by the Snuneymuxw. At that time, BC had a series of Voyageur canoe races where White Raven Canoe Club dominated. They gained respect locally at those events and later in their fundraising efforts over multiple years for the Children's Vancouver Variety Club Telethon. Club members would paddle the Voyageur canoes across the Salish Sea from Nanaimo to Vancouver in February while accompanied by safety boats for around a decade. Prior to the White Raven Canoe Club, these Voyageur canoes were used in part of a Cross Canada Tour and a race called the Double 20 as part of a Centennial Year Celebration to paddle the route of the settlers.

The Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club & Nanaimo Rowing Club partnered with Nanaimo Rotary North to build a training centre & shared boat storage house at Loudon Park on Long Lake.

Wolfgang Presslauer (Commodore of NCKC then and now NOPC for 14 years) and Chris Breakey were significant in those early development days. They still continue with their positive influence and very active in gentle governance of the NOPC. First funds for the NCKC outrigger canoes were from GO Rowing & Paddling Association of Canada. The outrigger canoes were stored outside at Loudon Park on Long Lake, but Long Lake was far too small for the outrigger canoes. Wolfgang & Chris strategized a partnership with the City of Nanaimo and the Search and Rescue to store the outrigger canoes at Brechin Boat Launch. [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] [46] [47] [48]



## GO Rowing & Paddling Association of Canada (GO)



GO Rowing & Paddling Association of Canada (GO) existed from 1996 to 2014 with a mission to "engage and participate in activities and projects that support, promote and advance rowing and paddling sports in Canada". GO was a non-profit Amateur Athletic Association, and registered charity, dedicated to sharing the benefits of sport with Canadians of all ages and athletic abilities. Concentrating on rowing & paddling sports, GO strived to encourage participation, personal challenge and the pursuit of excellence from the grass-roots to the Olympic podium. GO broadened access to sport by offering programs that encouraged broad participation, by producing dynamic community events and by developing new and expanded facilities (FACT 36 - GO Rowing and Paddling Association).

The history of GO is one of extraordinary generosity and passion for the sports of rowing and paddling. An alignment of resources combined with hard work, unique skills and dedication facilitated thousands of on-water experiences for people across Canada, particularly in British Columbia, where GO was based and where its influence was strongest.

GO's work began in December 1996 with the creation of Foundation 2000 Plus, a not-for-profit Amateur Athletic Association. This original foundation was formed through the generous support of Peter (Canadian Rowing Hall of Fame Inductee) and Marilyn Copland in order to build the sports of rowing and paddling in Canada. The foundation provided the funds to open and manage rowing & paddling centres nationwide, and operated many successful, large-scale rowing and paddling programs and events.

In 2002 the name was changed to the GO Rowing and Paddling Association of Canada (GO) to better reflect their mandate and activities. GO's mission and principal focus was to develop new programs and facilities in communities across the country. Over the past 18 years, through funding from their benefactors and self generated revenues, they invested over \$25 million into rowing and paddling sports. GO established rowing and paddling centres in Victoria (now Gorge Narrows), Nanaimo (NPC), Vancouver, North Vancouver, Port Moody (now Inlet Rowing Club), Fort Langley, Richmond (now Thunder Rowing), Vernon (now the Vernon Rowing and Dragon Boat Club), Kelowna, Penticton, Winnipeg, and Fredericton - investing over \$25 million into rowing and paddling sports.

GO also provided resources to assist new clubs in many other communities, in addition to operating large-scale youth and adult rowing regattas and outrigger canoe and dragon boat events. Go also initiated and acted as the Provincial Sport Association for Dragon Boating for the BC Seniors Games. Dragon boating quickly became the largest participation sport in the Games. GO also worked in partnership with Dynamic Mutual Funds to run nationwide rowing programs for youth at risk.

Approximately 10,000 people participated in GO programs, events or activities on an annual basis, ranging from single-sessions to full-year intensive training programs. To accommodate so many people across many communities, GO acquired fleets of boats and related equipment – but more importantly, a dedicated network of staff and volunteers. GO's staff team included administrators, centre managers, coaches, summer students, equipment repair people and kayak instructors, and thousands of volunteers who helped with events and programs. Without the passion and contributions of this ever-evolving team GO could not have provided so many opportunities over almost two decades.

Most of the centres that GO opened or supported since 1996 have had their operations successfully transferred to other societies, clubs or educational institutions over the years. As GO closed its doors in 2014, it transferred their operations to other societies and clubs to ensure continued community access to rowing and paddling in the province. GO was very active in British Columbia over its history, establishing paddling centres in Victoria (now Gorge Narrows), Nanaimo (NPC), Vancouver, North Vancouver, Port Moody (now Inlet Rowing Club), Fort Langley, Richmond (now Thunder Rowing), Vernon (now the Vernon Rowing and Dragon Boat Club), Kelowna, and Penticton and investing over \$25 million into rowing and paddling sports.

GO believed that sports play a signal role in society, and that they should be accessible to every Canadian. GO was proud to have created and stewarded accessible programs for youth and adults from introductory to advanced, and for providing the training foundations for competitors at local, national and international levels. GO programs have fostered and supported the goals of countless athletes and their coaches, many of whom have represented Canada at world championship and Olympic levels. International success for the very few has been a positive byproduct of sharing rowing and paddling sports with thousands of people every year. [49] [50] [51] [52]



## Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC)



The Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC) was formed in 2003 under a non-profit organization of Foundation 2000 Plus with the mandate of teaching the sport of dragon boat and outrigger canoe paddling. Foundation 2000 Plus then later changed its organization name to Go Rowing and Paddling Association of Canada. In 2014 the association made the decision to sell its centres in British Columbia. A group of passionate women (Nusa'Lon Dragons) did not want to see the sport perish in Nanaimo, so they purchased the centre with one (1) dragon boat, one (1) six-man outrigger canoe, two docks and a shed. Today NPC is thriving and has 4 dragon boats and several outrigger canoes.

The Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC) offers adult co-ed recreational sports in dragon boating and outrigger canoe for outdoor adventure, social events and festivals for people ages 19+. The Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC) offers OC1s, an OC2, and OC6, as well a small dragon boat and several standard dragon boats. [53] [54]



## Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC)



The Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) is a non-profit amateur sport organization that provides entry-level to high performance outrigger canoe training for individuals of all ages and skill levels within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN).

The Brechin Paddling Dock is home to the Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) outrigger program. Right on the ocean, close to Newcastle and Protection Islands.

Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) has steadily become the centre for outrigger canoe paddling in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). The Voyageur canoes acquired by White Raven Canoe Club migrated to NCKC. The outrigger canoes acquired by NCKC migrated to NOPC. The GO Rowing & Paddling Association of Canada funding supported NCKC & NOPC. Some of the NCKC Executive migrated to NOPC. Some of the paddlers from the White Raven Canoe Club migrated to NOPC. Some of the paddlers from the 1981 Molokai Hoe "Blazing Paddles" crew migrated to NOPC. Some of the paddlers from the 1985 Molokai Na Wahine crew migrated to NOPC. Some of the paddlers from the CKBC sprint/flatwater program migrated to NOPC. There has been a continual migration of paddlers and canoes to NOPC from 2005-2023. [55] [56]

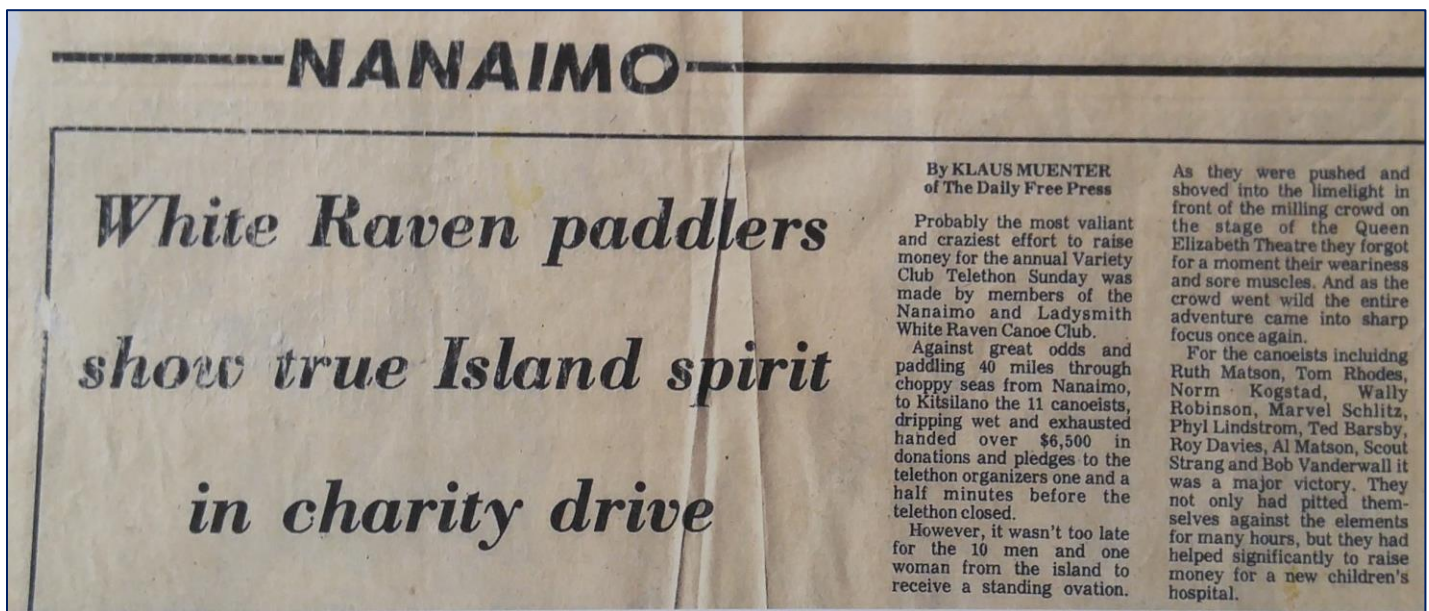
## Vancouver Variety Club Telethon

Although this topic has been mentioned at several places through-out this document, this thread is deserving of a chapter unto itself. Ruth Matson has been very kind in sharing many newspaper clippings and photos from her extensive collection. White Raven Canoe Club did their first six-man Voyageur canoe crossing of the Salish Sea from Nanaimo to Vancouver to raise money for the Vancouver Variety Club Telethon in February 1979. White Raven Canoe Club would continue this for a decade. It was during these 10 years that many developments in BC canoeing took place:

- White Raven Canoe Club members would participate in the 1981 Molokai Hoe "Blazing Paddles" Crew.
- White Raven Canoe Club members would host canoe races at the 1985 BC Summer Games, be awarded 1985 BC Summer Games Legacy funds of \$2000, and then donate those funds to start up the Nanaimo Flatwater Racing Club at Loudon Park that would eventually become NCKC.
- White Raven Canoe Club members would participate in the 1985 Molokai Na Wahine Crew.
- White Raven Canoe Club members would participate in the 1986 Expo Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival.

The Nanaimo Daily Free Press article from Wednesday, Feb 21, 1979 captures the history and players of this incredible tale. Members of the Nanaimo and Ladysmith White Raven Canoe Club (Ruth Matson, Tom Rhodes, Norm Kogstad, Wally Robinson, Marvel Schlitz, Phyl Lindstrom, Ted Barsby, Roy Davies, Al Matson, Scott Strang, and Bob Vanderwall) had paddled 40 miles through choppy seas to deliver over \$6,500 in donations and pledges to the Telethon organizers less than 2 minutes before the Telethon closed. The whole adventure had started 3 weeks before the Telethon when club members suddenly decided to raise money for the Telethon by paddling a canoe from Vancouver Island to Kitsilano and then racing by car at break-neck speed to the Queen Elizabeth Theatre just minutes before the Telethon closed. [57]

Ruth Matson has provided names for many of the White Raven Canoe Club members in photos taken during training sessions and Salish Sea crossings from many years of that decade of charity fund raising by the Nanaimo and Ladysmith paddlers.



Nanaimo  
**DAILY FREE PRESS**

Wednesday, Feb. 21, 1979 9

With them on the stage also were three of the wives, Dee Vanderwall, Maureen Kogstad and Bev Rhodes who had made the trip to Vancouver in a B.C. ferry and who had been helping to organize the venture.

It all started three weeks ago in a Nanaimo bar when club members suddenly decided to raise money for the telethon by paddling a canoe from the island to the mainland. From then on a lot of work had to be done to gather pledges and now the club is happy about the generosity of Nanaimo people.

When the time came to launch the Voyageur canoe 6 a.m. Saturday, the trip had to be cancelled because of

strong winds and the adventure was re-scheduled for the following day.

Meanwhile however, escort naval vessels had left and the crew's spirits were somewhat subdued, because of the uncertainty whether or not the trip would be feasible in time for the telethon. On Sunday morning the sea appeared to be as calm as a mill pond and the canoeists put to sea at about 10 a.m.

At the last moment George Wells and his deckhand Johnny Jansen volunteered to escort the canoe in Wells' 37-foot fishboat Klekane.

Reaching mid-point of the voyage the sea began to churn like water in a boiling kettle. Determined to pull all the way across to the

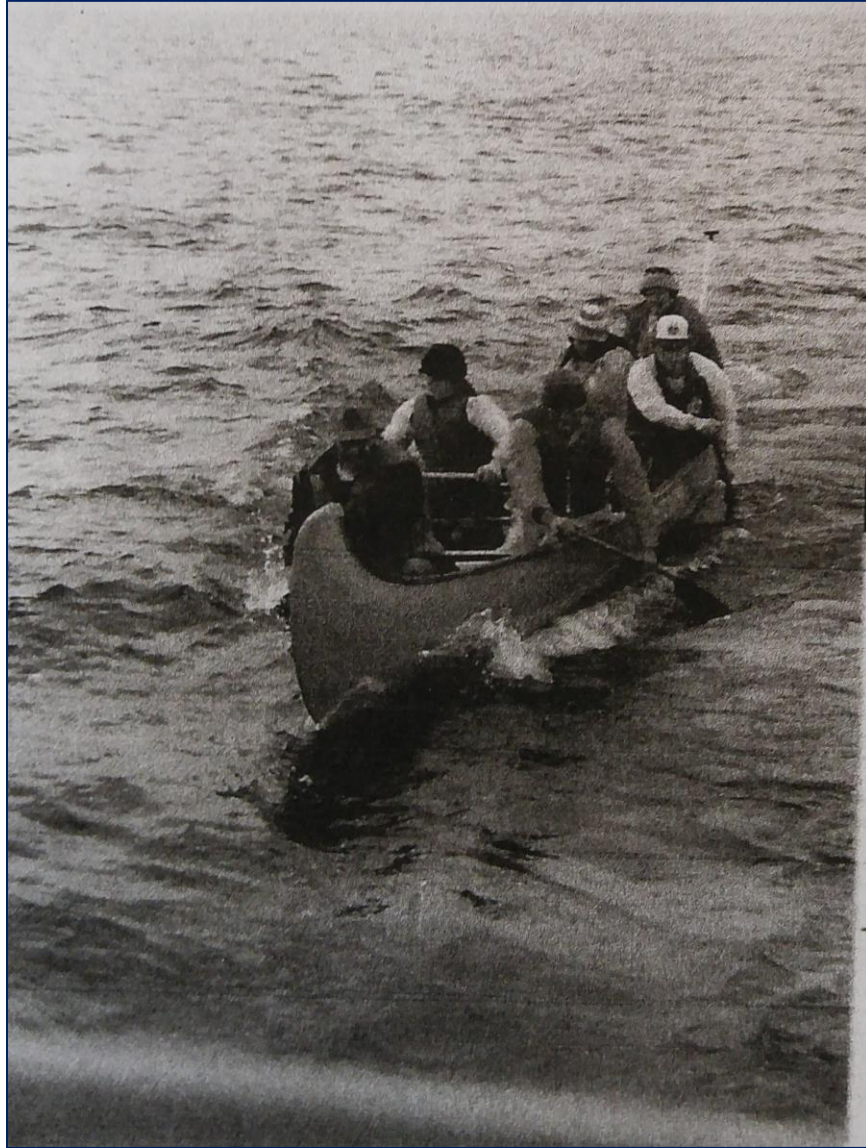
mainland the crew was encouraged by news flashes that more pledges were coming in for the venture.

Finally reaching Kitsilano beach they were taken at break-neck speed to the Queen Elizabeth Theatre just before the telethon closed. And even then they almost didn't make it to the stage because nobody knew what to do with the dishevelled characters trailing water through the theatre.

It was then that a quick-witted official ushered them into the limelight and shortly after they were given a heroes' welcome by the large crowd on and off stage. Asked whether they would do it again next year the crew replied they would.



**White Raven Canoe Club Vancouver Variety Club Telethon Stage 1981**  
 Roy Davies, Norm "Stormin' Norman" Kogstad, Ruth Matson



**White Raven Canoe Club** Vancouver Variety Club Telethon Crossing Early-1980s  
Roy Davies (Stern), Ruth Matson, Ron Williams, Sandy Tinga, Al Matson, Ted Barsby



White Raven Canoe Club Vancouver Variety Club Telethon Crossing Mid-1980s  
Bob Strang (Stern), (?), Ron Majeski, (?), (?), Gail Timmer



White Raven Canoe Club Vancouver Variety Club Telethon Crossing Mid-1980s  
Roy Davies (Stern), Ruth Matson, Ron Williams, Sandy Tinga, Al Matson, Ted Barsby



**White Raven Canoe Club Training For Vancouver Variety Club Telethon Mid-1980s**

**Left Canoe Crew: Ron Majeski (Stern), Patty Ann Barsby, Kathy Gallagher, Bob (?)**

**Right Canoe Crew: Bob Strang (Stern), Ron Williams, (?), Mary Smith, Marilyn Smith (?) Smith**

**Centre Canoe Crew: Ted Barsby (Stern), Liz Williams, (?), Ruth Matson, Sandy Tinga**



# Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Paddling Outrigger Canoe Fleet

An initiative began in 2020 by the CORA Racing Committee as an effort 1) to capture an inventory of CORA "big-boats" (OC6s/OC4s) (much like the SCORA / OHCRA / HCRA Registries) and 2) to capture details (names / IDs / colours / weights) of CORA "big-boats" (OC6s/OC4s). This initiative led to an extensive Registry of "big-boats" (OC6s/OC4s) details as well as an as well as an extensive Registry of "big-boats" (OC6s/OC4s) photographs for visual reference.

## Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC) Outrigger Canoe Fleet

OC6s/OC4s are sparse in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). CORA has been able to identify a total of 9 OC6s/OC4s located between the BC Ferries Departure Bay Terminal & the BC Ferries Duke Point Terminal. This dearth of OC6s/OC4s within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) has been a hindrance to CORA Sanctioned Events within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN).

Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC) has 1 Clipper Advantage OC6. This red-deck/white-hull & a red-top/white-bottom ama had the GO Rowing & Paddling Association of Canada logo at sometime, although this logo has long since been removed.



*NPC Clipper Advantage With Red Deck & White Hull & Red/White Ama*

## Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) Outrigger Canoe Fleet

James Van Nostrand of Clipper Canoes was one of the most prominent and reputable recreational canoe and outrigger canoe and kayak designers in Canada. In addition to the Clipper Advantage OC6, James was also responsible for the resurgence of the C-Lion OC1 and the Clipper North Beach OC4. There are presently 2 Clipper North Beach OC4s at Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC). One of these Clipper North Beach OC4s has an all-white hull & an all-white ama. One of these Clipper North Beach OC4s has an all-white hull & a white/black ama.



NOPC Clipper North Beach OC4 With White Hull/Deck & White Ama



NOPC Clipper North Beach OC4 With White Hull/Deck & White/Black Ama

There are presently 2 Bradley Lightning OC6s at Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club. These two OC6s are almost indistinguishable. Both Bradley Lightning OC6s have a white deck & white/red hull & white Hawaiian Hawk ama.



*The First NOPC Bradley Lightning OC6 Is Forward-Viewing & Named NO & "Extreme Fibreglass" As The Sponsor*



*The Second NOPC Bradley Lightning OC6 Is Mirror-Viewing & Named ON & "Extreme Fibreglass" Reversed As The Sponsor*

There is presently 1 Calmar Canadian Class Racer (CCR) OC6 at Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club. A second Calmar Canadian Class Racer (CCR) OC6 was sold by NCKC / NOPC to Maple Bay.



The NOPC Calmar Canadian Class Racer (CCR) OC6 Named N05 & With Blue Deck & White Hull & White/Blue Ama

### **Island Brave Outrigger Canoe Fleet**

We have included the OC6s owned by Island Brave (First Nations) for completeness, as Island Brave, although becoming a CORA Member Club in 2024 for the first time, has been a frequent participant at CORA Sanctioned Events. Island Brave owns 1 Bradley Lightning OC6 & 1 Puakea Malolo Ultralight OC6 & 1 Giblin Vortex Ultralight OC6.



The Island Brave Bradley Lightning OC6 With Grey Deck & White Hull & White Hawaiian Hawk Ama



The Island Brave Puakea Malolo OC6 With Green Deck & Green/White Hull & Green Ama



The Island Brave Giblin Vortex OC6 With Yellow Deck & Yellow/Black Hull & Yellow Ama

## Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Paddling Events

Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club (NCKC) & Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) have collaborated on one of the longest running outrigger canoe racing events on Vancouver Island. Traditionally held in mid-March each year, the NCKC Crazy Eight (OC6) 13-kilometre figure-eight course around Newcastle & Protection Island, and the NPI (Newcastle & Protection Island) Attack (small-boat) has been held annually since 2005. This event missed the 2020 season due to the COVID Global Pandemic, but returned once again in 2021. [59] [60] [61] [62]



## Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Paddling Venues

White Raven Canoe Club launched their Voyageur canoes from the Kin Hut situated nearby to Kinsmen Park and the sports venue at Departure Bay Activity Centre at 2730 Departure Bay Road, Nanaimo BC.

Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC) is located at 50 Anchor Way on Nanaimo's waterfront next to Harbour Air and Lighthouse Pub. Note that VI Paddling (VIP) partners with the Nanaimo Paddling Centre (NPC) to offer high-performance training to their mid-island members and offers coached dragon boat practices at this location throughout the year as the program allows.

The Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club (NCKC) & Nanaimo Rowing Club partnered with Nanaimo Rotary North to build a training centre & shared boat storage house at Loudon Park on Long Lake in Nanaimo BC.

The Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) outrigger canoe program runs out of the Brechin Paddling Dock at 1890 Otter Way, Nanaimo BC. Both recreational & high-performance OC6 & small-boat coaching is available through members & hired private world-class coaches. Several members have placed in IVF World Championships (OC6 / OC12) events.

The Island Brave, a Snuneymuxw First Nations team, whose members are of the highest calibre at racing OC6 / V1 in local waters, practice in the Nanaimo River Estuary.

Kinsmen have been busy since early spring erecting a Kinsmen's hut at Departure Bay. Every Sunday a group of carpenters and would-be carpenters from the club, has been in attendance nailing joists, shingling or trying to hang doors on the new premises. Funds raised by the week-end carnival will go towards completion of the hut which will be used as a bathhouse in the summer and a community centre for church, Sunday school and community activities.

Building is well on its way and plumbing has been installed. However, the club's efforts were victims of vandalism this past month when plumbing fixtures, new and modern were wrecked one night.

Kin expects an attendance of 5,000 over the holiday and they are sponsoring a monster fireworks display on Monday night to climax the event. Pony rides, pocket rides, speed boat rides and speed boat races will be featured along with the usual carnival fun and food. Inboard speedboats will compete Monday afternoon between 2:30 and 4:00 p.m.

## Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Paddling Achievements

Nanaimo Canoe & Kayak Club (NCKC) had acquired several outrigger canoes by the early 2000s. Wolfgang Presslauer and Chris Breakey convinced Ruth Matson to join the outrigger canoe program at NCKC. Just weeks before the 2010 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints, Ruth Matson was invited to steer a Masters and a Senior Masters Women V6 and V12 crew. In 2011, Ruth Matson would steer a NCKC Masters 40+ Women crew, that she affectionately named "Just for Kicks", through rough seas to their 2nd consecutive CORA Distance Championships title, and then again in 2012 for 3 consecutive years "hat trick". Ruth Matson would be a Finalist at the 2012 Nanaimo Sports Achievement Awards in the Masters Athlete Of The Year category. In 2013, Ruth Matson would steer a NCKC Women V6 crew on Saturday, a Mixed V12 crew on Sunday, and a Mixed V6 Change crew on Monday at Queen Liliuokalani. Ruth Matson would steer crews at Queen Liliuokalani 3 times and once with an all First Nations Womens crew. In 2014, Ruth Matson would steer a NCKC crew at the 20KM FGPC Wet-Dashe dock change-out event. In 2018, Ruth Matson would steer a Powell River Masters Women crew for Team Canada to Gold & Silver at the 2018 Tahiti IVF World Sprints. In 2022, Ruth Matson would steer a Masters Women crew for Team Canada to Gold & Silver at the 2022 London IVF World Sprints. In 2023, Ruth Matson would steer a Masters Women crew for Team Canada to Gold at the 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance. [66] [67] [68] [69] [70] [71] [72] [73] [74] [75]

## Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Paddling Luminaries



Heather Taylor has a paddling career that spans 40 years. Heather was a Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival and Hong Kong Dragon Boat International Festival medalist many times between 1986-1993. Heather would be Canada's first IVF V1 500M Masters Women Gold medalist and compete with FCRCC outrigger canoeing teams at the international level for many years. See the Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Heather Taylor. [76]



Ruth English Matson is a living legend. During the worst of the COVID Global Pandemic (early/mid/late 2020), the CORA Historical Committee was building a massive collection of Canadian outrigger canoeing history. One of the elusive threads was the story of the emergence and disappearance of a mysterious OC6 named "The Burrard". [78] The pursuit of this story led from Heather Taylor to Jackie Bell to Annie Boulding to the mention of someone named Ruth Matson. Three years of research by the CORA Historical Committee has finally resulted in this story waiting to be told for almost 40 years. Whereas Hugh Fisher and a band of BC flatwater paddlers were the first men in Canada doing outrigger canoeing, it was Ruth Matson and an all-Canadian women crew that paved the way for women in

Canada doing outrigger canoeing. Ruth Matson would race with a Canadian team to Silver at the Hong Kong Dragon Boat International Festival in 1986 and would compete with False Creek Racing Canoe Club as steersperson at the 1986 Expo Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival. [79] See the Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Ruth English Matson. [80]



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[57]	1979 Vancouver Variety Club Telethon	<a href="https://atom.lib.bcit.ca/uploads/r/null/7/9/9/7992f647235374779bbe98f321c234dccb679a077eefdf8d18ed257f111f165/thelink_1979-01-17.pdf">https://atom.lib.bcit.ca/uploads/r/null/7/9/9/7992f647235374779bbe98f321c234dccb679a077eefdf8d18ed257f111f165/thelink_1979-01-17.pdf</a>
[59]	2012 Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) Crazy Eight & NPI Attack (8th Annual)	<a href="https://www.nanaimobulletin.com/sports/paddlers-set-pace-at-crazy-8-race-1021950">https://www.nanaimobulletin.com/sports/paddlers-set-pace-at-crazy-8-race-1021950</a>
[60]	2012 Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) Crazy Eight & NPI Attack (2nd Annual)	<a href="https://www.jerichooutrigger.com/races2006.html">https://www.jerichooutrigger.com/races2006.html</a>
[61]	2005 Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) Crazy Eight & NPI Attack (1st Inaugural)	<a href="https://www.jerichooutrigger.com/races2005.html">https://www.jerichooutrigger.com/races2005.html</a>
[62]	2012 Nanaimo Ocean Paddling Club (NOPC) Crazy Eight & NPI Attack Visuals	<a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/kmcvay/5574977503/in/photostream/">https://www.flickr.com/photos/kmcvay/5574977503/in/photostream/</a>
[66]	2010 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints Results	<a href="http://www.ivfiv.org/2010-new-caledonia.html">http://www.ivfiv.org/2010-new-caledonia.html</a>
[67]	2011 CORA Distance Championships NCKC	<a href="https://www.nanaimobulletin.com/sports/outrigger-paddlers-win-on-choppy-seas/">https://www.nanaimobulletin.com/sports/outrigger-paddlers-win-on-choppy-seas/</a>

[68]	2012 Nanaimo Sports Achievement Awards	<a href="http://nanaimosportachievementawards.com/awards-archives/2012-awards/">http://nanaimosportachievementawards.com/awards-archives/2012-awards/</a>
[69]	2014 NCKC Newsletter	<a href="https://nckc.ca/news/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/September-2014-Newsletter-NCKC.pdf">https://nckc.ca/news/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/September-2014-Newsletter-NCKC.pdf</a>
[70]	2015 NCKC Newsletter	<a href="https://nckc.ca/news/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/December-2014-newsletter.pdf">https://nckc.ca/news/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/December-2014-newsletter.pdf</a>
[71]	2018 Tahiti IVF World Sprints Powell River	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/canadianoutrigger/posts/great-article-on-our-amazing-70s-crew-at-the-world-sprintshttpswwwprpeakcomsport/2013319912019734/">https://www.facebook.com/canadianoutrigger/posts/great-article-on-our-amazing-70s-crew-at-the-world-sprintshttpswwwprpeakcomsport/2013319912019734/</a>
[72]	2018 Tahiti IVF World Sprints Powell River	<a href="https://www.prpeak.com/local-sports/powell-river-paddlers-capture-gold-in-tahiti-3408005">https://www.prpeak.com/local-sports/powell-river-paddlers-capture-gold-in-tahiti-3408005</a>
[73]	2018 Tahiti IVF World Sprints Results	<a href="http://www.ivfiv.org/uploads/2/5/3/8/25381158/world_sprints_results_all_days_2018.pdf">http://www.ivfiv.org/uploads/2/5/3/8/25381158/world_sprints_results_all_days_2018.pdf</a>
[74]	2022 London IVF World Sprints Results	<a href="http://www.ivfiv.org/uploads/1/3/7/9/137911945/results_-_all_days.pdf">http://www.ivfiv.org/uploads/1/3/7/9/137911945/results_-_all_days.pdf</a>
[75]	2023 Samoa IVF World Distance Results	<a href="http://www.ivfiv.org/uploads/2/5/3/8/25381158/world_distance_results.pdf">http://www.ivfiv.org/uploads/2/5/3/8/25381158/world_distance_results.pdf</a>
[76]	2021 Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee Heather Taylor	<a href="https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/HOF-CORA-Heather-Taylor.pdf">https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/HOF-CORA-Heather-Taylor.pdf</a>
[78]	"The Burrard" – First OC6 in Canada (1985-2006)	<a href="https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-Burrard-Legacy-2021-07-Jul.pdf">https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-Burrard-Legacy-2021-07-Jul.pdf</a>
[79]	1986 The Expo Celebration: The Official Retrospective Book (Pg. 109 Bottom)	<a href="https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/expo-celebration-official-retrospective-book-3">https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/expo-celebration-official-retrospective-book-3</a>
[80]	2021 Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee Ruth Matson	<a href="https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HOF-CORA-Ruth-Matson.pdf">https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HOF-CORA-Ruth-Matson.pdf</a>