## The Comox Story (1995-2023)

Much of this history was collected in a series of virtual interviews with Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) members **Annie Boulding** and **Jackie Bell** and **Melanie Whittall** and **Michele Genge** and **Zoe Norcross.** Additional details were provided by various 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.

### **Roots / Threads / Chapters**

This chronicle is intended to capture unwritten history of outrigger canoeing for Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) from 1995-2023, as records from prior to 2000 are becoming more and more scarce. The history of outrigger canoeing at Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) is linked with Strathcona Park Lodge (SPL), whitewater/downriver



canoe racing, the travels of "*The Burrard*", Hana Hou Paddlesports, and an ongoing relocation of individuals away from the BC Lower Mainland to the Comox Valley. There are at least four paths / threads / chapters that converged to lead to the development of outrigger canoeing in the Comox Valley.

- 1. Strathcona Park Lodge (SPL)
- 2. "The Burrard"
- 3. Hana Hou Paddlesports
- 4. Comox Valley ~ Home & Adventure Destination

### 1980s / 1990s 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. [001] Jim / Myrna Boulding would have 3 daughters (Elizabeth; Annie; Josie) and 2 sons

(Jamie; Nicholas). [002]

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. [003]
- Annie Boulding had senior instructorship with SPL in both kayaking and canoeing, represented Canada at ICF Canoe Slalom (Whitewater/Downriver) Championships between 1975-1987, [004] 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) [005] and Shelia Taylor joined the White Raven Canoe & Kayak Club [006] 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. [007]

- 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. [008]
- 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. [009]

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. [010] [011]

### Travels Of "The Burrard"

The story of "*The Burrard*" begins, traverses, and ends with Comox. This 20-year tale has been documented in the CORA publication "*The Burrard*" - First OC6 In Canada. [021]



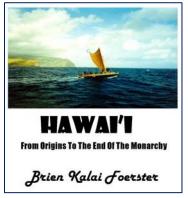
Annie Boulding would be one of the first Canadian women to participate in the Molokai Na Wahine race. The Womens crew trained in Southern California with Newport Aquatic Center Coach Billy Whitford for the 1985 Molokai Na Wahine race. When the Womens crew returned to California after the race, Annie Boulding explained to Billy Whitford that Canadian paddlers had to train for the Catalina Channel Crossing and Molokai races in Voyageur canoes. Billy Whitford had a 600-lb hull cut in half at the midsection and loaded onto the roof of Annie Boulding's

whitewater instructors (Brian Creer) motor home and Annie Boulding brought the two halves of the hull of "*The Burrard*" north to Canada. [022]

Canadian Outrigger Racing Association (CORA) was incorporated in 1992 through the efforts of Garry Mancell (Lotus), David Boulding (False Creek), and Hugh Fisher (Pemberton) representing the first three outrigger canoe clubs in Canada, to solidify a place for Canadian outrigger canoeing by filing the requisite documents with the federal ministry. When CORA was founded in 1992, a program was put into place whereby "*The Burrard*" would be a one-year loaner outrigger canoe for start-up clubs.



"*The Burrard*" was with Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) as a starter outrigger canoe from 1994-1995. When the VCKC loan was over, Annie Boulding borrowed the Strathcona Park Lodge truck with rook racks and drove to Victoria to bring "*The Burrard*" to Comox from 1995-1996. When the Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) loan was over, "*The Burrard*" moved onwards to its next home which is believed to have been Hornby Island.



Brent Bagnall and Don Mulhall managed to locate "*The Burrard*" on Hornby Island and trailered it to PRCC in 1997. When PRCC had acquired their Hawaiian Class Racer (HCR) in 1999, PRCC donated "*The Burrard*" to Brien Kalai Foerster on Hornby Island, who was making Kalai Custom Paddles at the time and was interested in turning "*The Burrard*" into a sailing canoe. Brien Kalai Foerster had moved to Maui in 1995 and learned how to make Hawaiian outrigger canoe paddles from master carver Keola Sequiera. Brien Kalai Foerster had moved to Hornby Island in 1997 and started an online outrigger canoe paddle business, which flourished internationally. [023] After a few years on Hornby Island, "*The Burrard*" which had been the starter outrigger canoe for False Creek Racing Canoe Club, Wailua Outrigger Club (Kamloops), Vernon Racing Canoe Club, Jericho Outrigger Canoe Club, Pemberton Canoe Association, Victoria Canoe Kayak Club, Comox

Valley Canoe Racing Club, and Penticton Racing Canoe Club, returned to Comox where it spent many years in retirement at the Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) outrigger canoe compound until 2006. There was no further mention of

"*The Burrard*" after 2006 except for CORA 2007 Minutes [031] where there was an enquiry by Prince Rupert Outrigger Association (PROA) for a loaner canoe and follow-up by Comox that "*The Burrard*" was no longer seaworthy.

Jackie Bell (Comox) was kind enough to share some photos from her 2006 wedding where "*The Burrard*" iakos and ama formed a wedding arch at her betrothal. Jackie also sent CORA several photos in June 2021 of "*The Burrard*" ama fading away into her garden and "*The Burrard*" hull slowly "giving itself back to the earth" in the furthest reaches of her property.



"The Burrard" ama and iakos as a wedding arch for Jackie Bell

### 2021 Comox Pilgrimage (Field of Dreams)

"Imagine if you will", a line of cars stretching down a country road on a journey to someplace special. The last weekend in September 2021, yours truly made a pilgrimage to Jackie Bell's Garden in Comox to meet "The Burrard" in person. Yours truly came to a "T" in the road and was uncertain which of the two roads to follow. Then a convoy of cars with OCs on top blew past me and so yours truly turned to follow them. Five minutes later, we all pulled into a long driveway that led onto an endless garden.



Car doors opened - Mel Whittall, Lyse Fortin, Annie Boulding, Sheila

Taylor (1988 K2/K4 Olympian), Zoe Norcross, and Johnny Puakea. Jackie Bell greeted us with cold drinks, hugs all around, and then she led us far back into the forest where many of us saw "*The Burrard*" for the first time.

Johnny immediately recognized it as a Dennis Campbell Rhino, the OC6 chosen for the inaugural 1984 Long Beach California IPCF World Sprints. For the next 2 hours, there among the towering cedars, stories were shared of how Johnny started his business, how Zoe and Rick Nu'u met, how the first womens iron crew did Molokai Na Wahine against the wishes of HCRA, how Mike Billy brought OC to North Van Canoe Club, how the first all-Canadian Womens crew did Molokai Na Wahine in 1985, how "*The Burrard*" did indeed spend time on Hornby Island, and how "*The Burrard*" was rolled on logs to/from the sea over and over.

Should you find yourself in Comox, yours truly highly recommends a pilgrimage of your own to see "*The Burrard*" and the thick layer of fibreglass patching applied to the cut at the midsection that has since been exposed from wear-and-tear. Lay your hands on a piece of Canadian outrigger canoeing history. Bring a story to share.

### 2011 / 2013 Hana Hou Paddlesports & Outrigger Zone (OZone)

Rick Nu'u and Don Irvine met in the winter of 1990 in New Zealand. They became good friends and chased each other around the world for years of paddling with and against each other, with mutual admiration. In 2009, Rick, his wife Zoe and their two daughters moved to where Don's family lived, the

Comox Valley, on Vancouver Island in Canada. In 2011, Rick and Don achieved a long-time shared dream and established a paddlesports oriented business, which they named Hana Hou Outrigger. It was geared towards the manufacture of wood canoe paddles and providing coaching opportunities in a wide variety of paddlesports. If you look at their fish hook logo, inside the two hooks you can find an 'r' and 'd'. Rick's wife Zoe was heavily involved in the background of this business, most visually with the website, most effectively with her organizational skill, but most influentially as a sounding board. In January of 2013 Rick's life ended. The business stopped. On a trip to Maui in 2013, Don met with Mike Giblin, owner of Outrigger Zone (OZone). OZone is a world leader in the design and manufacturing of Outrigger canoes. Mike was a close friend of Rick's, and Rick and Don had always wanted to sell Mike's boats, but prior to 2013 circumstances had not allowed that to happen. [041]

With new opportunities opening up, Don and Zoe agreed to become the Western Canadian distributors for Outrigger Zone, and Hana Hou Paddlesports was created. Hana Hou Paddlesports has been instrumental in assisting Western Canadian clubs with acquiring Puakea Malolo and Giblin Vortex OC6s. [042]

### Comox Valley ~ Home & Adventure Destination

The Comox Valley (Comox; Courtenay; Cumberland) has been a long-time home and an adventure destination for paddlesports enthusiasts:

- Annie Boulding, Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee, returned home to Comox after an illustrious paddling career with False Creek Racing Canoe Club.
- Rick Nu'u, Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee, made Comox home after an illustrious paddling career with Maui Canoe Club and False Creek Racing Canoe Club.
- Cheryl Skribe, Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee, made Comox home after an illustrious paddling career with False Creek Racing Canoe Club and Vernon Racing Canoe Club.
- Peter Forand, Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee, made Comox home after an illustrious paddling career with Lotus Sports Club and Jericho Paddling Club.
- Melanie Whittall, Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee, returned home to Comox after an illustrious paddling career with False Creek Racing Canoe Club and Delta Outrigger Kanu Association.
- Don Irvine, Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee, made Comox home after an illustrious paddling career with False Creek Racing Canoe Club.
- Heather Taylor, Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee, spent much time at Comox after an illustrious paddling career with False Creek Racing Canoe Club.
- David Boulding, Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee, returned home to Comox after an illustrious paddling career with False Creek Racing Canoe Club.







The Comox Valley is Vancouver Island's adventure and culinary destination. The Comox Valley is bordered by the Strait of Georgia and hosts the renowned Comox Lake, fed by the Comox Glacier. Rivers weave through the valley with the largest one being the Puntledge. Despite the travel challenges of only a small regional airport for flights to Victoria or the BC Lower Mainland, and a 2-hour drive to the Departure Bay ferry crossing to the BC Lower Mainland, and a 4-hour drive to Victoria, there is something about the seclusion of this community that has attracted many paddlesports enthusiasts to this adventure destination in the northern area of Vancouver Island. [051]



### Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) History

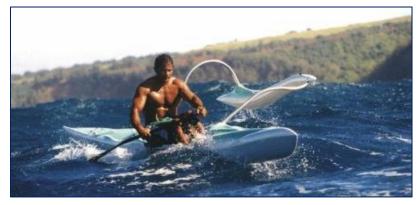
This chronicle is intended to capture unwritten history of outrigger canoeing at Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) from 1995-2023. The history of outrigger canoeing at Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) is linked with the growth of outrigger canoeing at other Vancouver Island clubs. Most Canadian outrigger canoe clubs are



founded through the efforts of a single or small group of individuals with a vision. Annie Boulding would be the individual who would start Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC). This chronicle on outrigger canoeing at Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) begins with the participation by Annie Boulding in the 1985 Molokai Na Wahine event.

In 1995, former False Creek paddler Annie Boulding launched the club with a small but enthusiastic group using an OC6 borrowed from the Canadian Outrigger Racing Association. Sarah McLennan and Annie Boulding, drove to Victoria and picked it up from the Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club (VCKC) location. They tied the canoe on inverted on a borrowed truck with a big kayak rack from Strathcona Park Lodge. They drove carefully and slowly back to Comox as the beast of a

boat weighed at least 600 pounds. Sarah McLennan arranged to have the canoe reside on a private beach near Little River, close to the Powell River ferry terminal. The paddlers did not yet own a cart so it was rolled across small logs down to the water and back, sometimes 100 metres at low tide. It was really a tough day if only five paddlers showed up for practice so the club would recruit the neighbors to help launch. Launching and returning the boat to its resting spot was back breaking, and on occasion a harder workout than the paddling. A huge thank you to Tina Clarke who



fronted the money (\$350) for the first CVCRC OC6 cart, it was a godsend.

Early on the club had 1994 Western Samoa IVF World Sprints V1 500M Open Gold Medalist Jackie Webber up to give a technique clinic to the club in spectacular weather which was a huge success. This really helped build the interest and sometimes the club had enough ladies paddling for two crews in the first couple seasons. Don Irvine, former Olympian and False Creek dragon boat coach (also Annie Boulding's then husband) got involved when he started coaching some kids from Highland school in 1995. One of them Jonas Hudson still races today. Early on the club had some great people show up to paddle so it was a lot of fun. The club did have some obstacles to overcome such as the Burrard Ioan was over so the club had to purchase a new boat. Two generous club members Carol Millar and Tina Clarke came forward and purchased one Calmar for use in Comox and one that the club had the option to buy from Strathcona Park



Lodge. The club also had to move the club off the private beach so the club moved it less than a kilometre to the King Coho Resort. That spot had a great little set of surfing waves coming into the edge of the ferry terminal until sadly they built condos there and the club got the boot. Luckily Jackie Bell found the club a spot at Bates Beach ten minutes drive North. This location was good but, in the winter, as it was a bit exposed to the storms and at times the OC6 paddles were survivor wild. Over the years the main team that prevailed through thick and thin was the Wahines attending many races around BC as well as the USA.

As time has passed the club had a few setbacks such as the enormous loss of good friend and beloved outrigger coach Rick Nu'u in 2013 who had moved here with his family from Maui in 2009. Additionally, the club had some serious problems with the first race that the club hosted. In June of 1995, the club held the first race off of Airforce Beach which was running smoothly until the third heat when one of the Victoria boats filled with a novice crew had their ama fall off out in the middle of the strait. This turned into a serious situation as it diverted the Powell River ferry and involved several water craft including a large cutter and a Coast Guard helicopter. Luckily, there were no fatalities but one woman got quite serious hypothermia. It turned into a very expensive rescue so the club was fortunate to not be charged. The club tactfully avoided hosting an event for quite a few years after that. Thankfully, despite the stress of this canoe capsizing many club members stayed involved or the club would have folded as so much energy was put into race preparation only to have an upsetting finish to the day. The club is still feeling the emotional effects of losing Rick but the club feels closer to him out on the water with the winds blowing.

After Laurel Archer moved up to Comox, she used her float plane connections to help get the club a compound in Courtenay at the Air Park which has been a great location for winter and foul weather paddling. Jackie Bell, Laurel Archer and Lyse Fortin and the rowing club representative Cheryl Howard [061] took turns meeting with the Town of Courtenay to get the actual compound. Laurel Archer even helped pay up front for the fencing and gate which was much appreciated. The club now have three OC6s including one of the original Calmars and two Mirages stored in a lockup shared with a local rowing club. It is great to be near the launching ramp, heated washrooms, Comox Valley Kayaks [062] and the Air Park Cafe [063]. The club now have mens, womens and mixed racing crews. The club are hoping to keep growing by recruiting some younger paddlers in the next few years. At the Tuesday night small boat races at the Goose Spit the club have really enjoyed having the SUP paddlers, surf ski paddlers and kayakers come out to join the club.

Even though the club is small the members have really got the racing bug. Over the years the adventurous members have attended a wide variety of Canoe races stretching around the globe. Some countries that the club members have raced in are New Zealand, Australia, Europe, United States, Central America, Hawaii and the Cook Islands. The club even have at least one member participating in the World Sprints in Rio, Brazil. [064] [065]

### Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) Outrigger Canoe Fleet

Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) has had an interesting evolution in their six-person outrigger canoe fleet. "*The Burrard*" was with Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) as a starter outrigger canoe from 1994-1995. When the VCKC loan was over, Annie Boulding borrowed the Strathcona Park Lodge truck with rook racks and drove to Victoria to bring "*The Burrard*" to Comox from 1995-1996. When the Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) loan was over, "*The Burrard*" moved onwards to its next home which is believed to have been Hornby Island. Commonwealth Games rowing gold medal winner and sister-in-law Christine (Tina) Clarke with Strathcona Park Lodge ordered two Calmar Canadian Class Racer canoes for Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC). The Comox club paid for the first Calmar Canadian Class Racer canoe and when Comox could not afford the second Calmar Canadian Class Racer canoe, it was sold to VCKC by Strathcona Park Lodge. The Calmar Canadian Class Racer canoe was sold by Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) to Campbell River in 2019. When Westbay Performance Paddling Club dissolved, one of the Outrigger Connection Mirages (Ku Kanaka) was sold to FCRCC in 2007 and the other (#510) was sold to Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) in 2007. [071] Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) would acquire a second Outrigger Connection Mirage several years later. Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) would acquire a Puakea Malolo in 2018 and then a Giblin Vortex in 2019 to bring their six-person outrigger canoe fleet to four boats.



FCRCC to Kamloops to Vernon to Jericho to Pemberton to VCKC to Comox Dennis Campbell Rhino "The Burrard"



Comox To Campbell River Green-Deck / White-Hull Calmar Canadian Class Racer



Westbay to Comox White-Deck / White-Hull Outrigger Connection Mirage (510)



Comox White-Deck / White-Hull Outrigger Connection Mirage (224)



Comox White/Blue-Deck/Hull Puakea Malolo (945)



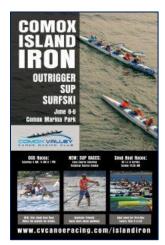
Comox White/Grey/Orange-Deck/Hull Giblin Vortex

### Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) Outrigger Canoe Events

The Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) Island Iron off Cadboro Bay was developed for open water racing in 1999. [081] Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) and Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) / Latitude 48 have collaborated on one of the longest running outrigger canoe racing events on Vancouver Island by alternating hosting the Island Iron for many years.

The Comox Island Iron inaugural event took place in 1995. Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) hosted the Island Iron event in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022, and 2023. The Comox Island Iron event is usually a CORA Cup Series event. The Comox Island Iron was held as the CORA National Distance Championships in 2022. [082] [084] [084] [085] [086] [087] [088] [089]

Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) has also hosted a Small Boat Classic event in 2012 and 2014. [090] [091]



## Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) Outrigger Canoe Venues

Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) has had at least 4 venues over the course of the history of the club.



The Comox club Calmar Canadian Class Racer resided at a (second) location less than a kilometre east to King Coho Resort.

The Comox club "*The Burrard*" loaner OC6 originally resided at a (first) location on a private beach near Little River, close to the Powell River ferry terminal.





The Comox club moved to a (third) location at Bates Beach ten minutes drive north of King Coho Resort.



The Comox club current (fourth) location is adjacent to the Courtenay Air Park in a lockup shared with a local rowing club, near the launching ramp, heated washrooms, Comox Valley Kayaks and the Air Park Cafe. [101]



Comox Courtenay Air Park (fourth) Location Street View

### Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) Outrigger Canoe Achievements

Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) social media has some mention of their achievements in terms of participation in Western Canada or International paddling events. However, the Canadian Outrigger Racing Association (CORA) website race results indicate that Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) has fielded crews and done well in the CORA Cup Series events over the course of many years. It is known that Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) has sent individuals to IVF World Sprints / Distance events over the course of many years. This section may be updated with further research.

The Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) club itself and many of the club members have notable achievements. The following is a chronological table of known achievements:

- 1985 ~ White Raven & Annie Boulding (Whistlers CC) place 5th overall at Molokai Na Wahine
- 1990 ~ FCRCC & Annie Boulding place 7th overall at Molokai Na Wahine
- 1995 ~ Comox hosts inaugural Island Iron OC6 event
- 1999 ~ FCRCC & Zoe Norcross do first ever Molokai Na Wahine Iron
- 2005 ~ Comox Womens crew place 1st Masters and 10th overall at Catalina Crossing
- 2006 ~ Wahine Ice with Laurel Archer & Michele Genge place 2nd overall in Tandem Canoe Women at Yukon River Quest
- 2006 ~ Comox Womens crew place 1st Masters at Howe Sound Iron
- 2007 ~ Comox Womens crew place 36th overall at Molokai Na Wahine
- 2008 ~ Aloha Eh & Laurel Archer place 1st overall Tandem Canoe Women at La Ruta Maya Belize River Challenge
- 2010 ~ Comox Womens crew place 27th overall at Molokai Na Wahine
- 2011 ~ Team Sprint Canada & Zoe Norcross place 4th overall at Molokai Na Wahine
- 2011 ~ Hana Hou Outrigger founded
- 2012 ~ Comox Womens crew attend Cook Islands Vaka Eiva
- 2013 ~ Comox Womens crew place 3rd Masters 50+ and 36th overall at Queen Liliuokalani
- 2013 ~ PNW Molokai Na Wahine All-Stars with Jacinta Sheridan & Laurel Archer place 26th overall at Molokai Na Wahine
- 2013 ~ Hana Hou Paddlesports and Outrigger Zone collaboration
- 2014 ~ Comox Womens crews (2) with Laurel Archer & Annie Boulding attend Hamilton Island Outrigger Cup
- 2017 ~ Team Canada & Laurel Archer place 4th overall at 2017 Tahiti IVF World Distance
- 2019 ~ Annie Boulding steers Team Canada Womens crew to 2019 Australia IVF World Distance Silver
- 2021 ~ Annie Boulding inducted into Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame
- 2021 ~ Rick Nu'u inducted into Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame
- 2021 ~ Cheryl Skribe inducted into Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame
- 2021 ~ Peter Forand inducted into Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame
- 2021 ~ Melanie Whittall inducted into Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame
- 2021 ~ Don Irvine inducted into Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame
- 2021 ~ Heather Taylor inducted into Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame
- 2021 ~ David Boulding inducted into Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame
- 2023 ~ Annie Boulding steers Team Canada Womens crew to 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance Gold
- 2023 ~ Team Canada Womens crew with Zoe Norcross take 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance Gold
- 2023 ~ Annie Boulding recognized as Hugh Town Memorial Builder Award Recipient

# [111] [112] [113] [114] [115] [116] [117] [118] [119] [121] [122] [123] [124] [125] [126] [127] [128] [129] [130] [131] [132] [133] [134]

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 womens 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 Womens 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. [141] [142] [143]

### 1999 Molokai Na Wahine (Iron)

### Introduction ("Sliding Doors")

A virtual session with Zoe Norcross in Summer 2024 revealed that an about-face by HCRA regarding permission to do the 1999 Molokai Na Wahine iron, may very well have led to an incredible chain of events. Had HCRA not changed their minds, then Rick and Zoe might not have met, they might not have had two daughters, they might not have relocated to the Comox Valley, and Hana Hou Paddlesports might not have been founded. But the events leading up to these six women doing the 1999 Molokai Na Wahine iron, described in the introduction to this section, has had an impact on outrigger canoeing that has continued to present day.

Back in the late 1990s in Hawaii, there was the Sprints Regatta season and the Autumn OC6 distance racing season, but no real small-boat racing season. Zoe was paddling surfski and Kaiwi Challenger in the 1996-1999 timeframe. The 1999 Molokai Na Wahine iron crew had evolved over 3 years. Most of the women were endurance athletes (tri-athletes; runners). Patrick from Comox went to Portugal on vacation where he met a fellow from Hawaii who told him about the 1999 Molokai Na Wahine iron needing another paddler, and so Patrick returned to Hawaii and told Zoe about the crew. Zoe was invited onto the crew in early 1999 when the sixth woman stepped aside to be part of the support crew. Dad Center was one of two long-distance OC6 races that Zoe and the crew did as training for Molokai Na Wahine. HCRA had initially given permission for the iron crossing but after 1 year of training and shortly before Molokai Na Wahine, HCRA changed their mind and threatened to revoke racing permissions for one year for any clubs that provided a canoe or assistance. Rick Nu'u was coaching at FCRCC in 1999 and Mel Whittall arranged for Rick and Zoe to meet and discuss the HCRA situation. Rick Nu'u was racing with Team NZ/HI at the time and Rick started discussions with Karel Tresnak and Nappy Napoleon to find a solution. Rick / Karel / Nappy located a Bradley Lightning at Waikiki Surf Club that belonged to Michael Thompson (?), HCRA President at that time, who was away in Tahiti, and as the canoe did not belong to a canoe club, the sanctions would not apply. Nappy handled the logistics and had the Bradley Lightning loaded on a barge and shipped to Molokai. The crew followed the rules by having an escort boat and 4 "spare" paddlers for changeovers, if need be, and Rick Nu'u on the escort boat as a coach. An interesting side note is that Rick Nu'u was hosting downwind paddling camps on Maui in 1999 and this was where Zoe met Bob Stewart who was building a hand-made guitar and was quite a good guitar player.

### **Back Story**

At the 1999 Molokai Na Wahine, 58 Womens crews crossed the Kaiwi Channel. One of those crews was the first and only Womens crew to cross the Kaiwi Channel iron. [151] The part of this story that has to do with the training for and completing this event was captured in a 1999 Pacific Paddler article (*False Creek goes iron across the Kaiwi Channel*). [152] The part of this story that has to do with the challenges the crew dealt with in terms of being able to complete their goal given the lack of support from the event organizers was recollected in the backyard of Jackie Bell in Comox in Autumn 2021. Three years before the 1999 Molokai Na Wahine, a group of women who had completed Molokai Na Wahine numerous times, decided they were up for a new challenge – a return to the original concept of human endurance that was conceived by Toots Minvielle – to cross the channel using only six paddlers. Their training for the regular long-distance



season consisted largely of iron sessions lasting 4 hours or more, and they believed that if they took their training one step further to include regular sessions of over 6 hours, they could be prepared to cross the Kaiwi Channel iron. Linda Gehring, steersperson for the crew, and paddler Rome Esperanza worked for three years to gain support for their goal. The crew also had a mission – to finish within two hours of the winning crew, as well as a cause – to raise money for breast cancer research. Over the three-year period, changes were inevitably made to the crew, as personal commitments and new opportunities arose for some of the members. The final crew of Linda Gehring, Rome Esperanza, Peed-Jean Saldania, Rachel Lyon, Zoe Norcross and Erica Klohn came together in March 1999. CORA may not have been able to recover this story were it not for the mention of this 1999 Molokai Na Wahine crossing on the Zoe Norcross bio on the Hana Hou Paddlesports website. [153] The crews training initially consisted of two sprint interval sessions and one long distance session every week. Distance sessions reached over 20 miles by the third month and were up to 36 miles (6.5 hours) by the fifth month. The first leg of these ran usually upwind for up to four hours – often in gusty headwinds, followed by a downwind leg for several hours. The crew also completed the Dad Center race as a six-person crew, finishing 26th out of 31 10-person crews. As with any sport, the longer the race, the longer the taper leading up to the race. The crew began its taper three weeks before the Molokai Na Wahine race.



#### **Race Day**

From the start of the race, the crew established a solid steady pace in the low 60's and maintained this with slight variations for the duration of the race. Halfway across the Kaiwi Channel, the crew did a seat change, with the stroker jumping out and moving back to seat five, and all the other paddlers moving up one seat. At a few other points during

the crossing, a paddler would leave the canoe from some form of physical discomfort, which was usually rapidly relieved upon spending a minute in the water. During this time, the other five paddlers would continue paddling, and the escort boat would pick up the one who had exited and drop her off in front of the canoe again. Four of the paddlers had to deal with seasickness at some point during the crossing, but all were able to keep paddling through their moments of illness. The crew completed the Molokai Na Wahine in 7 hours 31 minutes, just over an hour and a half behind the winning 10person crew. They found that having a close bond as a team was an integral part of their success, on a challenge as physically and psychologically demanding as a 41-mile iron race requires excellent communication and support amongst all team members. [154] [155] [156] [157 [158]

### 2011 Molokai Na Wahine & CORA 2012 Sprints Council

Canadian women had an exceptional performance at 2010 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints, but the Canadian women were considered "sprinters" by the paddling community. [161] John Roberts and the CORA Sprints Council offered assistance to the Canadian women to do the 2010 Queen's Race (after New Caledonia) to advertise the upcoming 2012 Calgary IVF World Sprints. The Canadian women (Kamini Jain; Leanne Stanley; Cheryl Skribe; Leanne Zrum; Chelsey Brooks Tidmarsh; Helen Currey) raced as Calgary CC #1 #406 and placed 1st Iron Open Non Koa (NK). [162] John Roberts and the CORA Sprints Council challenged the Canadian women to do it again at 2010 Molokai Na Wahine, but the Canadian women did not have the cash flow or the time off. The Canadian women carried the Sprints Banner as Canada Sprint Team to 2011 Molokai Na Wahine. This 2011 Molokai Na Wahine crew consisted of 8 women from the 2010 New Caledonia IVF World Sprints (Chelsey Brooks Tidmarsh; Cheryl Skribe; Helen Currey; Kamini Jain; Leanne Stanley; Leanne Zrum; Sheila Kuyper;



Sue Porter), as well as Shannon Bell (Jericho) and Zoe Norcross. [163] [164] [165] [166] This 2011 Molokai Na Wahine crew would finish 4th Place Overall for the best ever showing by an all-Canadian Womens crew (to present day).

### 2013 Cascadia - Paddlers Without Borders

"Team Cascadia" [171] is a concept that has been around for many years that involves paddlers from Oregon / Washington / Canada forming crews for outrigger canoe racing events and quite often taking the podium. The concept of Team Cascadia has gone by many names over the years. The following excerpt is taken from a CORA website article that captures four memorable occurrences of this concept.



**Molokai Na Wahine 2013**. Lance Mamiya, who has a reputation for innovation and inspiration and bringing together quality individuals for memorable adventures, former Tri-Cities Outrigger Canoe Club coach [172], father of two stellar baseball player sons, steersman for the 2012 Olamau Crossing [173], founder of the "Ninjas" [174] (Mark Mayeda, Vance Hashimoto, Jasen Kaya, Stephen Pauelua, Dave Williams), founder of Team FreeLance that became home for dozens of orphan paddlers, owner of the first Giblin Vortex in the Pacific Northwest, had a vision of a Pacific Northwest Molokai Na Wahine crew. Lance had assembled a core group of six rock-star paddlers from five different clubs that included Jackie (Kaya) Nagano (WA), Lori (Hashimoto) Miyasaki (WA), Minnie Fontenelle (WA), Terri Mayeda (OR), Rhonda Bintliff (OR), and Nattie Blue (OR) from PNWORCA. Lance reached out to his Canadian contacts to complete the 10wahine roster and the six PNWORCA wahines were joined by Linda Warren (False Creek), Melanie Conard (Latitude 48), Jacinta Sheridan (Comox), and Laurel Archer (Comox).



The Pacific Northwest Molokai Na Wahine

crew trained all of 2013 and were joined on the adventure by the support team of Lance Mamiya and three HWOPS paddlers - Vance Hashimoto, Jasen Kaya, and Stephen Pauelua. The support team had some great footage of water-changes in the middle of the Kaiwi Channel [175].

Boy Chun Fook, then President of PNWORCA, sent out a communique to the Pacific Northwest paddling community inviting everyone to follow along on this adventure.

Aloha Friends, please join in supporting the "Pacific Northwest Wahine" as they race across the Kaiwi channel in the 35th Annual Molokai Na Wahine race this Sunday, Sept 22. These tough competitors have been training yearround in preparation for this epic outrigger event. Team captain Jackie Kaya, Lori Hashimoto, Minnie Fontenelle, Terri Mayeda, Rhonda Bintliff, Nattie Blue combined with veteran Canadian paddlers Laurel Archer, Linda Warren, Jacinta Sheridan, and Melanie Conard, are your PNW Wahine. Watch as they battle 41 miles from Molokai to Oahu with water-gals from around the world in the spirit of all Wahine O Ke Kai who pioneered this race some



35 years ago. Sponsored in part by Kialoa and Ocean Minded, PNW Wahine give a huge shout out to all supporters, sponsors, family, and friends. Watch the live feed courtesy of Ocean Paddler TV on Sunday, starting at 8:00am HAST (11:00am PST). [176]

The Pacific Northwest Wahine would have a very respectable showing finishing 32nd overall and 23rd Open Fibreglass. [177]

### 2023 Lifetime Achievement Tribute By Michele Genge For Annie Boulding

*If you were ever to be introduced to outrigger you would want Annie Boulding as your coach, mentor, and teammate. She is a patient, encouraging, warm hearted paddler and a cunning steers person.*  When she came to Comox at the top of her game rather than continue racing with her fast friends on the Mainland, she chose to go back to square one to start a club and train yet another crew of women to race with. No easy feat. She rivaled Ted Lasso's optimism and powers of persuasion to make this happen.

She wrangled every athletic woman she knew in the area (Jackie Bell from her high school swim team, her sister-in-law Tina Clarke the Olympic rower, Lyse Fortin the white-water paddler, Wai Ling from the World Champion Dragon Boat crew, myself a volleyball player no less, and many more).

She got a boat and a storage space for free: "The Burrard", which we log rolled in and out of the water, and Sarah McLennan's mother's lawn. "Just extra weight training," said the pregnant Annie Boulding.

She got us hooked on racing. After mere months in the boat, she convinced us that we were ready to race at Lotus. Her last-minute encouragement on the start line was "Whatever happens just keep paddling!". Within seconds we were crunched left and right with amas riding up on our boat in the start jam. We eventually got clear to race— and have continued ever since.

She coaxed us into international paddling by getting us to go to Queen Liliuokalani in 2013 on the Big Island. "We can just camp to save money" was her sales pitch. Despite airline strikes, stomach bugs, stolen paddle, fatigue from swimming kilometers to see the dolphins the day before we raced, water system breakage on the start line, Annie Boulding came out smiling, celebrating our success, and envisioning our next big race. We drank the cool aid, took over the travel planning, and have been racing abroad ever since.

It is not just Annie Boulding's indomitable spirit but also her incredible paddling skills that are to be celebrated. Annie Boulding is a master steersperson who believes in building capacity. When in pea soup fog, trust Annie Boulding to get you back home. When is huge wind and waves, trust Annie Boulding to thread the needle to move you from 5th to 2nd place. When out on an OC1 white knuckling your first downwind run, trust Annie Boulding to stay alongside to quell the fears and teach you to surf. When it is snowing and you're trying to train for Tahiti, trust Annie Boulding to help dig out the compound, shovel off the ramp, and go train with you. We have more steerspeople than any other club due to her commitment to continue to train newcomers.

In strength but also in injury and illness, Annie Boulding has been inspiring. Her resilience is legendary. She strove against any odds (be it a bum shoulder or bladder cancer) to get her body back to racing. She got her shoulder moving to join us at Molokai and Hamilton Island. She battled through cancer to return for medaling in Australia (2019) and Samoa (2023).

To sum it up, Annie Boulding recognizes that although it is competition that motivates us, it is community that sustains us. Thank-you for the 27 years you have given us Annie Boulding. We love you dearly! Congratulations on your Lifetime Achievement Award.

## **Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) Luminaries**



Annie Boulding has a paddling career that began as a kayaking instructor in the 1970s at Strathcona Park Lodge, travelled the world competing in whitewater kayaking, was with Burnaby Canoe & Kayak Club in the 1980s, was with FCRCC when it was founded, brought the first six-person outrigger canoe to Canada in 1986 to become the starter canoe for outrigger canoe clubs, would be one of few outrigger canoe club women founders with Comox in 1994, taught at Lake Trail Community School in Comox since 1993, and travelled to Distance / Sprints events in Hawaii, Australia, and the US West Coast over 35 years. See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Annie Boulding. [181]



Rick Nu'u was a beloved husband, father, brother, son, coach, mentor and inspiration to many paddlers, giving his time, energy and expertise to developing and promoting outrigger canoeing (waka ama) in New Zealand, Hawaii and Canada. [01] Rick and Don Irvine met in the winter of 1990 in New Zealand. They became good friends and chased each other around the world for years of paddling with and against each other, with mutual admiration. Rick took up a coaching position with False Creek Racing Canoe Club in Canada from 1998-2001. He then moved to Maui and coached / paddled with Hawaiian Canoe Club on the north shore of Maui for many years before moving back to Canada in 2009 with his family to live in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island. In 2011, Rick and Don achieved a long-time shared dream and

established a paddlesports oriented business, which they named Hana Hou Outrigger. [02] See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Rick Nu'u. [182]



Cheryl Skribe raced with two World Dragon Boat champion crews before attaining a high level of excellence as an outrigger canoeing padder, steersperson, coach, and sports writer over the course of 30 years. Cheryl started with the paddling community at False Creek Racing Canoe Club. Her worldwide travels would see her racing with crews from FCRCC, Vernon, Kamloops, Penticton, Mooloolaba in Australia, Hui Lanakila in Hawaii, Team Canada (Sacramento; New Caledonia; Australia), and Comox. Among her many achievements would be 4 IVF World Sprints Golds, 4 IVF World Sprints Silvers, an IVF World Distance Bronze, a Molokai Na Wahine Gold, a Molokai Na Wahine Silver, and a "Dad" Center Memorial Canoe Race Gold. Cheryl has made further contributions to the sport as outrigger steering coach and as sports writer covering

Canadian outrigger canoeing events for Pacific Paddler magazine. See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Cheryl Skribe. [183]



Peter Forand was a British Columbia paddler who held memberships with Lotus Sports Club, Jericho Paddling Club, and Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC). The CORA website article "*Remembering Peter Forand*" pays homage to the legacy of an individual who could "walk in every camp", known to many as a man with an easy smile and a kind word for all. [01] Peter exemplified many qualities that made for an unforgettable personality including integrity, sportsmanship, character, and contribution to the sport as a paddler and as a volunteer with the Executive of each of the CORA clubs he was a member of, as well as with the CORA Executive. See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Peter Forand. [184]



Mel (Melanie) Whittall has been involved in the paddling community for over 25 years. Mel leveraged Hawaiian paddlesports contacts to provide canoes, paddles, and sportswear in the early days of outrigger canoeing in Canada. Mel was able to support the growth of suburban clubs through access to first class equipment. Mel is an established entrepreneur as partner / owner of several Canadian sports and outdoors organizations including Ocean & Outdoors Sales, Pulling Water Canoe Sports, and Open Ocean Outriggers. Mel provided coaching for several outrigger canoe and dragon boat teams. Mel acted as race Director for Gibsons Pulling Water Challenge and Delta Sprints for many years. Mel has volunteered as Timing Official with Nordic Canada events and the 2010 Winter Olympics. Mel founded Delta Outrigger Kanu Association (DOKA) and coached there for

15 years. Mel has board member experience with BC Sports Rep Association, HUB Cycle Coalition, Canadian Outrigger Racing Association, and Filberg Heritage Lodge and Park Association. See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Mel (Melanie) Whittall. [185]



Don Irvine has made significant contributions as athlete, coach-builder, and pioneer through his career of 40+ years. Don has competed at national levels in marathon canoe racing, and at international levels in whitewater kayaking, sprint kayaking, dragon boat racing, and outrigger canoeing. Don was selected to the Canadian team for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Don would be Canada's first IVF V1 500M Open Men Silver medalist. Don would co-found False Creek Racing Canoe Club in the 1980s. Vincent Lo and Don would co-found Six-Sixteen dragon boats in the early 1990s. Rick Nu'u, Zoe Norcross and Don would form Hana Hou Paddlesports as the top distributor of OZONE Unlimited OC6s in Canada in the 2010s. See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Don Irvine. [186]



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 Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Heather Taylor. [187]



David Boulding has a place in Canadian outrigger canoeing history rarely noted in online articles. David is known mostly for his role as a criminal / family lawyer from Vancouver BC and his commitment since 2000 to the topic of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and the law. [01] David is among a group of individuals responsible for introducing the first two generations of sixperson outrigger canoes to Canada. The Canadian *Malia*, the Lotus Hawaiian Class Racer (HCR), and the Calmar Canadian Class Racer (CCR) are part of Canadian outrigger canoeing history due to significant contributions by David. See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for David Boulding. [188]



Calling the Strathcona Park Lodge home since 1992, Christine (Tina) Clarke oversees the internal decisions that govern the day-to-day operations of the Lodge. Christine has a passion for outdoor pursuits, and has achieved excellence in sport. From 1983 to 1988, Christine was National Team rower, winning fourth place finish in the 1984 Olympics, two bronze medals at the 1985 and 1986 World Championships, and a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in 1986. Annie Boulding's sister-in-law Tina Clarke with SPL ordered two Calmar cances for Comox and had been a member of Comox Valley Cance Racing Club (CVCRC) in the early years. Tina Clarke also fronted the money (\$350) for the first CVCRC OC6 cart. [189]

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		jaFRpbWUiOjE3MTkzNzg0Nzl9LCJJcEFkZHJlc3MiOnsiQVdTOlNvdXJjZUlwIjoiMC4
		wLjAuMC8wIn19fV19&Signature=KT9RtpoWe5EKMKyXUnHz-
		oZmiHDpwXBuVABm8vycwGQSohIDd4HW6vk7voa3LzipXm8uqX~51cuFFSFDe1
		TQWIP8j3SUP~WBRf-BB-
		obfYCKHUPZf4iv6o7NjpB5l~qHXJAf0voKThkWln8RGyYvHQXVC1CaVBuaeMNu6-
		IVGqlwu2KILGKI6O8DjUd1-ZTccZI7Irog6jnZ-
		RREZ1bzaYf8S47PTvy2F4eQWDaLNylasdwr6ud2vDUAmkSmMIVYnF6KiejfMQ~A
		MZjN-gw-KtjNFbOOtv-l2mk~rhxiHdMIRnuYY1j6mpbZB-
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