



# CANADIAN OUTRIGGER HALL OF FAME

## Melanie Conard



### Summary

There is an intriguing story here that is yet to be pieced together. Melanie relocated from Saskatoon SK to Victoria BC in 2004. At some point, Melanie would join ORPC. Melanie would then somehow become connected with many legendary Vancouver Island paddlers (Annie Boulding; Heather Taylor; Helen Currey; Jacinta Sheridan; Julie Kippen; Laurel Archer; Lisa Robertson; Lyse Fortin; Michele Genge; Rani Johns; Shannon Brenner), with whom Melanie would participate in the 2007 Molokai Na Wahine and the 2011 Hamilton Island Outrigger Cup. The earliest mention of Melanie with regard to Small Boats is a Jericho Website race results posting from 2009 for the Fresh Water Challenge Small Boats where Melanie would place 2nd OC1 Open Women. At 2012 Calgary IVF World Sprints, Melanie would advance to Semifinals in V1 500M Open Women, and race with Team Canada crews in V6 500M Open Women, V6 1500M Open Women, and V12 500M Open Women. It is notable that there were 56 V1 500M Open Women entries including Canadians Kamini Jain, Christine Pogue, Leanne Stanley, Chelsey Tidmarsh, and Leanne Zrum, yet Melanie would advance to V1 500M Open Women Semifinals. Melanie would then participate in the 2013 Molokai Na Wahine with the PNW All-Stars. Something remarkable happened when Latitude 48 Paddling Club was formed in 2016 by James Hill and Melanie. There were 3 major themes. Melanie was doing OC1 2015-2019 at Small Boats races and now placing 1st OC1 Masters 40+ Women, including a 2018 Gorge Downwind Champs 1st OC1 Masters 40+ Women. Melanie was then doing V1 2020-2025 at Small Boats races and placing 1st V1 Masters 40+ Women. Latitude 48 mens/womens crews were consistently placing 1st in CORA races. At 2023 IVF Samoa World Distance Championships, Melanie would race with a Team Canada crew that would take Gold in V6 Women Masters 40+. This transition from 2012 V1 Sprints competitor to 2023 V6 Distance Champion is a compelling story.

### Early Career

There is some information available on the early career of Melanie that led to her involvement with outrigger canoeing, and this is the storyline still to be pieced together. Melanie was born in 1974 in Lethbridge AB where she went onto study at Lethbridge Collegiate Institute and University of Saskatchewan. Melanie fell in love with Victoria while completing her Bachelor of Science at the University of Victoria. Melanie returned to Alberta where she graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (Saskatoon) in 2002. Melanie began her career in Calgary, but she came back to Vancouver Island in 2004, where she has been a veterinarian at Breadner Veterinary Services in Saanichton ever since. [11] [12] [13] [14]

### Outrigger Canoeing Achievements

From 2009-2025, Melanie amassed an impressive portfolio of wins in OC1 distance events, V1 distance events, and OC6 distance events. [20] [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [31] [32] [33] [34] [35] [36] [37] [38] [38] [39]

Melanie has represented Team Canada at International Va'a Federation (IVF) World Sprints/Distance from 2012-2023. At 2012 Calgary IVF World Sprints, Melanie would advance to Semifinals in V1 500M Open Women, and race with Team Canada crews in V6 500M Open Women, V6 1500M Open Women, and V12 500M Open Women. [41] [42] At 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance, Melanie would race with an all-Canadian crew including Leanne Stanley, Zoe Norcross Nu'u, Kelsey Siddall, Ashley Barker, and Cheryl Skribe that would take Gold in V6 Masters 40+ Women. At 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance, Melanie would race V1 Open Women and place 8th overall. At 2025 Brazil IVF World Distance, Melanie would race with an all-Canadian crew including Carole Fullerton, Kim Inglis, Marnie Conklin, Sheila Kuyper, and Whitney Horstman that would take Bronze in V6 Masters 40+ Women. At 2025 Brazil IVF World Distance, Melanie would take Gold in V1 Masters 50+ Women [46] [47] [48] [49] [50] [51] [52] [53] [54]

The Comox-Strathcona Canoe Club would send a crew to the 2007 Molokai Na Wahine event. For many in the crew who had been training for nearly 2 years, this would be the 1st time competing in the event. The crew of 8 Canadian paddlers included Annie Boulding, Heather Taylor, Jacinta Sheridan, Laurel Archer, Lisa Robertson, Lyse Fortin, Rani Johns, and Melanie, were joined by 2 Hawaiian paddlers (Tracy Capman, Midge Horwood), and were coached by future Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Famer Jackie Webber. The Comox-Strathcona team would place 31st Open non-Koa and 36th Overall. [61] [62] [63] [64] [65]

The Hamilton Island Outrigger Cup in Australia has evolved to become a 4-day multi-disciplined outrigger paddling regatta and Australia's premier outrigger canoeing event with every combination of OC paddling and distances including OC1, OC2, OC6, Stand-up paddle, 8KM, 16KM and 42KM marathon change race. Canadian paddlers racing as Comox Canucks including Annie Boulding, Heather Taylor, Helen Currey, Jacinta Sheridan, Julie Kippen, Laurel Archer, Lyse Fortin, Michele Genge, Shannon Brenner, and Melanie would compete at the 2011 Hamilton

Island Outrigger Cup and do very well in the 16KM Iron, 42KM Changes, and 250M-1000M Sprints events. The Comox Canucks crew placed 2nd in the Masters Women 16 km Iron, and placed 1st Masters and 2nd overall in the Womens Change Race. [66] [67] [68]

At the 2013 Molokai Na Wahine, Melanie would race with a PNW Molokai Na Wahine All-Stars crew including Jackie (Kaya) Nagano (WA), Lori (Hashimoto) Miyasaki (WA), Minnie Fontenelle (WA), Terri Mayeda (OR), Rhonda Bintliff (OR), Nattie Blue (OR), Linda Warren (False Creek), Jacinta Sheridan (False Creek) and Laurel Archer (Comox), finishing 32nd overall and 23rd Open Fibreglass. [69]

## **Coach-Builder Achievements**

The coaching staff at Latitude 48 of Jim Pearson, Corey Teramura, James Hill and Melanie, who have tailored coaching programs to paddlers from 19 to 70 years of age, bring decades of outrigger canoe racing experience including Molokai Na Wahine, Molokai Hoe, Catalina Crossing, Queen Lili'uokalani, Hamilton Cup, Pailolo Challenge, Maui to Molokai, IVF World Sprints / Distance Championships, PNWORCA distance/changes races, and many CORA mid/long-distance races. [71] [72] The Latitude 48 coaching staff of James Hill and Melanie, have put together a range of training programs that include a recreational program ("Horizon") created for people who love to be on the water in a fun, supportive environment, an introductory competitive program ("Meridian") for eager new paddlers or experienced paddlers wanting to train and race but without the commitment required for the competitive team, and a high-performance program ("Competitive") for paddlers looking to train and race at a competitive level. [73]

Since beginning her paddling career in dragon boating, Melanie has now done most of the big outrigger canoe races in the world, and has raced on Team Canada at both the World Sprints and the World Distance Championships. To this day Melanie maintains her effectiveness by rolling up her sleeves and taking everything personally. Melanie got into serious paddling by accepting any and every challenge put in front of her, she has now become the true force behind the scenes at Latitude 48. Melanie enjoys seeing paddlers develop and reach their potential, and has a special passion for helping women unleash their inner paddling beast. [74]

The CORA Town Hall Committee has been fortunate that so many individuals have been willing to step forward as Guest Speakers and showcase their public-speaking skills. Melanie generously volunteered her time to speak at the CORA Town Hall (11 November 2023 4PM Pacific): *Stellar Seven*, as a Guest Speaker on behalf of Leanne Stanley. Her personal account of the 2023 Samoa IVF World Distance Championships V6 Women Masters 40+ event shared insights on the character of Leanne Stanley that had contributed to her induction into the Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame. [75]

## **Pioneering Achievements**

Latitude 48 Paddling Club was formed in 2016 by coaches / leaders in the Victoria outrigger canoe and dragon boat paddling community of British Columbia, including co-founders James Hill and Melanie. There is very limited water access in the Victoria Gorge Waterway (the narrow tidal inlet connecting Victoria Harbour to Portage Inlet), known simply as "The Gorge" to Victoria locals. Latitude 48 Paddling Club and Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) shared dock space at Village Marina behind Value Village on Store Street until the amalgamation of Latitude 48 and ORPC in May 2021. This amalgamation of Latitude 48 and ORPC provided many benefits to Latitude 48 and ORPC club members specifically, as well as the paddling community in general. ORPC contributed 4 traditional Spec OC6s (2 Clipper Advantages; 2 Outrigger Connection Mirages), while Latitude 48 contributed 3 Unlimited OC6s (2 Puakea Malolos; 1 Kamanu Nanahope). This expanded OC6 fleet allowed Latitude 48 with James Hill and Melanie to provide training in a diverse set of OC6s to a growing club membership. ORPC and Rosemary Henry had founded the mid-distance Bridges Race in 1996, the Bridges Inny / Outty Small Boats in 1997, and the Island Iron in 1999. By virtue of Latitude 48 bringing a larger club membership and commitment to continue these 3 legacy CORA races, Latitude 48 with James Hill and Melanie brought **continuity** to the outrigger canoeing community that these events would remain on the race schedule. [82]

## **Exemplary Achievements**

Breadner Veterinary Services Ltd. was established in January 1988 by Dr. Shelley Breadner. The practice was designed to provide quality veterinary medicine in a warm and caring environment. Dr. Breadner graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon in 1983. After graduation, she began her career on the Saanich Peninsula. The dedicated team is committed to providing professional and compassionate care, striving to create personalized health plans for every animal. With a focus on preventive care, the hospital emphasizes the importance of routine wellness exams, vaccinations, dental care, and diagnostics to maintain pets' long-term health and well-being. Dr. Melanie Conard joined the team at Breadner Veterinary Services in March 2004. Working as a veterinarian is a dream come true for her as it combines her love of animals with her passion for medicine. Dr. Melanie Conard has a special interest in internal medicine, dentistry and cardiology, as well as the medicine of birds and other exotic species. [91] [92]

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