

The VCKC Story (1993-2024)

Much of this history was collected in a series of virtual interviews with Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) members **David Hill** and **Janice (Henderson) Kyle**, with significant contributions from the "*VCKC – 50 Years of Paddling*" publication written by **Alan Thomson**, and graciously donated to the CORA Historical Committee. Additional details were provided by various Comox Valley Canoe Racing Club (CVCRC) alumni, Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) 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 Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) from 1993-2024, as records from prior to 2000 are becoming more and more scarce. Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) was founded in 1968 and the "*VCKC – 50 Years of Paddling*" publication was released in 2018. However, this CORA Historical Committee publication covers the years from 1993 when Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) first embarked on an outrigger canoeing program. The history of outrigger canoeing at Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) is linked with the all-Canadian 1985 Molokai Na Wahine womens crew, the travels of "*The Burrard*", the representation of each of the VCKC paddlesport disciplines on the VCKC executive, and the vision of 1994 / 1995 VCKC President David Hill. There are at least four paths / threads / chapters that converged to lead to the development of outrigger canoeing at Victoria Canoe Kayak Club. [001]



1. **1985 Molokai Na Wahine Womens Crew**
2. **"The Burrard"**
3. **Multiple Paddlesport Disciplines**
4. **David Hill – Agent Of Change**

Roots

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. [011] [012] [013]

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]

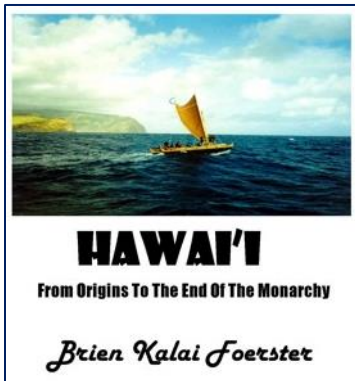


Annie Boulding would be one of the first Canadian women to participate in the Molokai Na Wahine race. The Womens crew trained in Southern California with Newport Aquatic Center Coach Billy Whitford for the 1985 Molokai Na Wahine race. When the Womens crew returned to California after the race, Annie 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 Salt Spring Island.



Brent Bagnall and Don Mulhall managed to locate "The Burrard" on Salt Spring 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 Salt Spring 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 Salt Spring Island in 1997 and started an online outrigger canoe paddle business, which flourished internationally. [023] After a few years on Salt Spring 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

Multiple Paddlesport Disciplines

VCKC is one of the few paddling clubs in the Province of BC to offer multiple paddlesport disciplines within one organization. VCKC has been able to support the differing needs of small craft and big boat and between recreational and competitive paddlers. Thanks to the location of the VCKC clubhouse on an inland urban waterway and in a moderately large urban centre, VCKC has been able to offer a diverse range of paddling opportunities including canoeing, kayaking, marathon canoeing, Voyageur canoeing, sea kayaking, dragon boating, and outrigger canoeing, even while more specialized paddling clubs have emerged.

VCKC was founded in 1968 initially as a canoe and kayak club, following the 1967 Canada Centennial human-powered boat race in the Gorge Waterway. VCKC provided community members an opportunity to participate in activities for social interaction, outdoors education, paddling trips, and enjoyment of paddling. There were several years where VCKC was active in canoe & kayak building to expand the number of affordable boats available locally.

Although the VCKC executive has a commitment to recreational paddling, racing has been an integral part of the club legacy. VCKC hosted the Gorge Canoe Races from 1969-1992. It was the arrival of the big boats (outrigger canoes; dragon boats) in the early 1990s that provided club members the opportunity to race with a team, that led to the end of the Gorge Canoe Races. VCKC members also participated in the Buccaneer Day Races, the BC Summer Games, and the Cowichan River Races. For both the recreational and competitive club members, there were many opportunities for river / lake / ocean adventure trips as well brigades. There were also challenging activities such as the Running Of The Cows, as well as lengthy trips on the Thompson and Yukon Rivers

There had always been a commitment by the more experienced club members in various paddlesport disciplines, to provide education / coaching / training / courses / clinics in various areas including paddling skills and techniques, safety, and equipment maintenance. VCKC has a long history of dedication to community service. VCKC members have volunteered to lead canoe rides, host courses / clinics, conduct clean-ups, provide moving water search and rescue, as well as fund-raising for many years through the Paddle For The Kids (PFTK).

A major change occurred as a result of the arrival of the big boats (outrigger canoes; dragon boats) in the early 1990s. Unlike the canoeists and kayakers who could paddle almost anywhere, the big boating programs such as dragon boating and outrigger canoeing, could only take place at the VCKC clubhouse where the boats were kept. The use of the VCKC clubhouse intensified considerably as the facilities to support the earlier primarily solo / tandem paddlesport disciplines of canoeing / kayaking / marathon canoeing / sea kayaking, were now contending with a large number of 6-20 person outrigger canoe and dragon boat teams. This led to the VCKC executive implementing a constitutional amendment whereby each of the paddlesport disciplines would have an elected representative on the executive to advocate for their specific needs.

David Hill – Agent Of Change

David Hill Early Career

Most of the background on David was provided by the "*VCKC – 50 Years of Paddling*" publication. David was raised in Falkland BC and would graduate from Salmon Arm Senior Secondary High School in 1978. David would graduate with a Bachelors degree in Physical Geography from University of Victoria in 1983. David would complete a 1-year Diploma program in Geographic Information Systems in 1989. David would graduate with a General Certificate in Business Information Systems, Business Administration & Management by way of the Continuing Studies Program from University of Victoria in 2013. David and Norman MacDonell paddled as white-water slalom paddlers from about 1983 to 1990. David & Delia Hill joined VCKC in 1991, following an introduction to VCKC by Norman MacDonell. David's main interest was white-water kayaking; he was a former member and President of the University of Victoria Kayaking Club and a Senior White-Water Kayak Instructor with the White-Water Kayaking Association of BC. [041]

David Hill Pioneering Achievements

VCKC was formed in 1968, and had been fortunate over the course of 50 years in having Presidents who have held the office for 2-3 years, as this has helped to provide continuity as VCKC has continuously grown more complex. David was VCKC President in 1994 and 1995. In 1986, **Janice (Henderson) Kyle** talked at a general meeting about doing the Molokai Na Wahine race in 1985 for one of the best ever showings by an all-Canadian Womens crew for at least 38 years. The 1st mentioning of Outrigger Canoeing at VCKC is an article by Gord Oliphant in the newsletter of April 1993. Three members (Gord, Don Munroe, and Sheila Schwab) had the pleasure of racing in Outrigger Canoes and were encouraging VCKC to be the 1st club on Vancouver Island to get one. VCKC paddlers went to False Creek Racing Canoe Club in Vancouver and learned about the different Outrigger Canoes including care, maintenance, and rigging, and watched demos on basic paddling techniques. There, they learned there was an Outrigger Canoe available as a "loaner" to any club interested in starting an Outrigger Canoe program and immediately expressed their strong interest. This Outrigger Canoe was called "*The Burrard*" and measured 44' and weighed 600 pounds. At the time, it was on loan to the Whistler Club. Interested VCKC members started sharing paddling articles and videos and began to practice using the old war horses, the Voyageur canoes. Members set up teams, sorted out what nights and times people could paddle, and started to think about how to pay for a club OC6 Outrigger Canoe. David worked with Gord Oliphant to acquire a loaner OC6 Outrigger Canoe for VCKC in 1994. The discussions at Club meetings as to the effect that a "team" paddling discipline would have on the organization were extended and at times contentious, but David was convinced that this was the right direction and he was successful. By May 1994, the loan of the OC6 was official, and the problem was how to get the boat from Whistler down to Victoria. A newsletter article was headed "OUTRIGGER IS COMING". "Your active Outrigger Committee has obtained the Outrigger Canoe "*The Burrard*" and now needs a suitable trailer to transport this 600lb. 44' rocket, and a group to pick it up in exotic Whistler." The next issue describes how David borrowed the UVic rowing club trailer, took it up to Whistler and brought back "*The Burrard*".

His next move was to establish dragon boating at VCKC, entering a team in the 1st dragon boat festival in Victoria) and serving on the board of the Victoria Dragon Boat Society. On the initiative of the Victoria Chinese Community, the 1st dragon boats came to Victoria in 1994. Six boats were brought over from Vancouver to run 250-meter races in the Inner Harbour, as a demonstration sport for the Commonwealth Games. The event was so successful that the races were repeated in 1995. The Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival was held in June, while that in Victoria was in Mid-August. At VCKC, Sheila Allen and David put together a team, the Gorging Dragons, to compete. Sheila was the team's coach and David the stern. His appetite whetted; David requested permission to use VCKC's Voyageur canoes for weekly practices from mid-Spring to August in 1996. To support his case, he arranged that the May 1996 Executive watch a video of dragon boat racing. The team also requested the loan of \$650 to let them enter the 10th annual world championships in June and this was approved. In 1996, David and the team were tired of using the Voyageur canoes, which, while useful for building up stamina and team work, were not dragon boats and required different steering. David approached Lotus Sports Club in Vancouver to borrow 2 dragon boats for a month before the Victoria Festival to allow VCKC teams to practice. The cost of the loan of these boats was covered by levying a fee on the 3 teams practicing. Among the 1997 Festival teams were 3 made up of breast cancer survivor teams, 1 of which, the Island Breaststokers, was coached by David.

David Hill Coach-Builder Achievements

To launch and land "*The Burrard*", David, Norman MacDonell, Cameron Shankland, and Arpad Szatory devised a horizontal ladder or slipway with the rungs made of one-meter lengths of plastic pipe laid out a metre apart and held in place by chains. The OC6 could be lifted down onto the rungs and slid along the slippery pipes into the water. A Vancouver club had used a trolley to move their OC6, and so David and Norman MacDonell and others designed one with fat, smooth tires that could run down the beach keeping the hull a foot or so above gravel. David credits his early years in outriggering as being important for learning. Only by taking himself and his team out of their comfort zone did VCKC learn what the Outrigger Canoes (OC6s) were capable of and when to set limits for less experienced teams. David and his team were the 1st to huli "*The Burrard*" under the Craigflower Bridge, in the dark, in winter, no one wearing neoprene, and only one person in the boat who had hulled before. And David was in seat 1 when Malcolm Warrington was convinced that the Outrigger Canoe could be run under the Tillicum Bridge at low tide. They avoided the rock in mid-channel, but when the

ama got stuck in the hole behind the rock, the momentum of the hull exploded the front ama and the boat hulled. David built a mould for a new ama and the boat was back in use in a couple of weeks.

David Hill Exemplary Achievements

David was instrumental in having VCKC host the Canadian Olympic Flatwater team for several years and served as VCKC's Commodore for Sprint/Canoe Canada. The CORA Historical Committee accumulated a wealth of stories / photos during the COVID downtime on individuals / clubs / canoes that made significant contributions to Canadian Outrigger Canoeing. Discovering the complete story of how "*The Burrard*" arrived in Canada in 1986 until it made its final contribution to the Canadian Outrigger Canoeing community in 2006 would not have been possible without accounts provided by David Hill (VCKC), Gord Oliphant (VCKC), Annie Boulding (Comox), Jackie Bell (Comox), Heather Taylor (Nanaimo), Ruth Matson (Nanaimo), VPD Officer Dan O'Donovan (Jericho), Matt Kelly (Predator Performance Designs), and David Chambers (Vernon). [044] David and Susan Logan and Tim Marks (VCKC) provided CORA with a complimentary hard-copy of the "*VCKC – 50 Years of Paddling*" publication which has provided a wealth of information on the early history of Outrigger Canoeing and names of many of the individuals who have made significant and exemplary contributions to the Outrigger Canoeing community. [045]

Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) Outrigger Canoe History

This chronicle is intended to capture unwritten history of outrigger canoeing at Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) from 1993-2024. The history of outrigger canoeing at Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) 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. David Hill would be the individual who would introduce the outrigger canoeing program at Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC), with guidance from Don Munroe, Gord Oliphant, and Shelia Schwab. It is known that Don Munroe raced with a Canadian Team that would place 12th overall in the Molokai Hoe event, but although 1988 has been mentioned, it is unknown in what year this actually happened. This chronicle on outrigger canoeing at Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) begins with the participation by **Janice (Henderson) Kyle** in the 1985 Molokai Na Wahine event.

THE OUTRIGGER PROGRAM

The outrigger is a form of dug-out canoe that developed in the Pacific Islands. With no thick-trunked trees the islanders used what they had, which were (relatively) thin palm trees. As narrow boats are tippy, they added stability by attaching an outrigger, like a lopsided catamaran³⁶. These boats were fast and could be sailed as well as paddled. They were sea-going canoes in a way that the West Coast dug-outs were not, even the big Haida war canoes³⁷.

In 1986, Janice Henderson talked at a general meeting about doing the Hawaiian Molokai Hoe race in 1985. In the December 1988 newsletter, Dean Cierman wrote a report on how he and Don Munroe paddled in the same inter-Island race. According to a report in the Times Colonist, in 1989, there was one outrigger (OC6) in Vancouver; five years later there were more than 15.

The first mention of outrigger canoeing is in an article by Gord Oliphant in the newsletter of April 1993. Three members (Gord, Don Munroe, and Shelia Schwab) had had the pleasure of racing in outrigger canoes and were encouraging VCKC to be the first club on Vancouver Island to get one. VCKC paddlers went to the False Creek Club in Vancouver and learned about the different outriggers including care, maintenance and rigging, and watched demos on basic paddling techniques. There, they learned there was an outrigger canoe available as a 'loaner' to any club interested in starting an outrigger program and immediately expressed their strong interest. This outrigger canoe, an OC6³⁸ was called the Burrard and measured 44 feet and weighed 600 pounds. At the time, it was on loan to the Whistler Club. Interested Club members started sharing paddling articles and videos and began to practise using the old war horses, the voyageur canoes. Members set up teams, sorted out what nights and times people could paddle, and started to think about how on how to pay for a Club OC6 outrigger canoe.

³⁶ The outrigger canoe has of two main parts – the hull and the outrigger, which is called the 'ama'. The wooden spars connecting the two parts are called iakos.

³⁷ Of course, geography counts for a lot and the Pacific Islands are generally small pieces of land surrounded by the world's largest ocean, whereas the BC coast, for all its rocky shores and islands, is part of a huge landmass. Long-distance (multi-day) open water passages out of sight of land were unnecessary in the North West Pacific.

³⁸ OC6 = Outrigger Canoe for 6 paddlers. There are also OC4s, OC2s and OC1s.



By May 1994, the loan of the OC6 was official, and the problem was how to get the boat from Whistler down to Victoria. A newsletter article was headed **OUTRIGGER IS COMING**. "Your active Outrigger Committee has obtained the outrigger "The Burrard" and now needs a suitable trailer to transport this 600lb, 44' rocket, and a group to pick it up at exotic Whistler." The next issue describes how Dave Hill borrowed the UVic rowing club trailer, took it up to Whistler and brought back the Burrard. Who knows how he did this on his own, but it got done.

Practising in the OC6 gave the paddlers enough confidence to enter the Green Lake races in Whistler that fall. There they paddled in canoes provide by the Whistler club and Lotus in Vancouver. These boats were noticeably lighter than the Club's "Burrard". One of the Club's teams finished fourth overall in the recreational class, thanks to Don Munroe's sterning and Sheila Schwab's never-stopping verbal encouragement. By the end of 1994, there were 18 paid outrigger members.

The outrigger program had one year to raise the money to buy their own boat. An OC6 was expensive and would come with ongoing maintenance and care. At their monthly outrigger meeting, they decided that anyone paddling the outrigger regularly would pay the Club \$50 a year on top of their membership fee and that this money would be for the program's expenses.

The executive agreed in principle to support the purchase of an outrigger, guaranteeing a loan of up to \$6000 and to pay one-third of the costs. The program had to raise the rest of the money. The executive also agreed that regular outrigger paddlers should pay an extra annual fee; \$80 was suggested but soon dispensed with it³⁹. Funds raised at the garage sale in April were applied towards the purchase. The first sale raised \$750, and a second one in June added \$300.

³⁹ In principle, the Club wanted all members to be able to paddle in any Club boat without extra fees. It was also hard in practice for the Outrigger program captains to be sure who had/had not paid the extra fee; and how they should handle the matter of other members asked to come and fill in for missing outrigger paddlers.

Additional funds came from the sale of surplus stock from Van Isle Windows, where Norm MacDonnell worked and from the sale of a VCKC Cook book put together by Kathy Baur. The new outrigger arrived in early May and was paid off by the end of Sept. 1995.

In November 1995, Dave Hill was on the board of directors of the Canadian Outrigger Racing Association⁴⁰ (CORA) and was proposing a race date for an official CORA race in Victoria. The Club joined CORA in 1999.

Interest in outrigger paddling grew in Victoria. More and more people wanted to try it out, so they joined VCKC. The outrigger program continued monthly meetings with the first half devoted to planning fundraising, courses and teams. The second half was for videos, demonstrations of techniques and more. One person could not run it all – boat scheduling, boat maintenance, Wake Up The Gorge Races (WUTG); safety matters, clinics and courses; race coordination, linkage with CORA, monthly meetings, etc. There was only one program director, but other tasks were delegated and spread throughout the teams. Beginner Wednesday was created for novice paddlers. A qualified stern and bow paddler took out new people every week and taught them the basics.

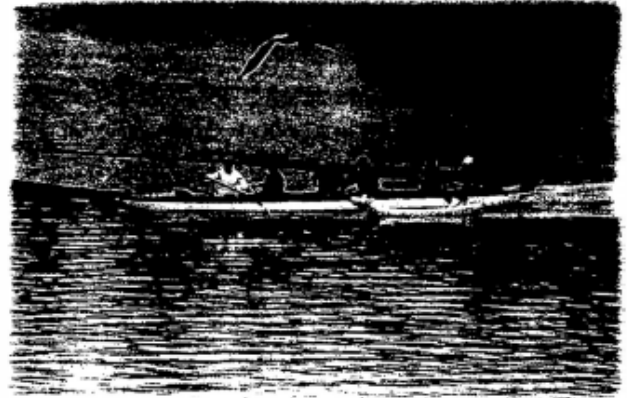
As with all growing programs, there were tensions, especially with one six-person boat to share. It was scheduled throughout the day and evenings. The biggest demand was for the after-work time slots. The main conflict was between the competitors, who wanted to paddle three times a week; and the recreational paddlers who wanted to paddle for the social and fun aspect.

Teams wanted more coaching for competitions and novice teams wanted just to learn how to paddle correctly, all of which was done by volunteer members. The original group of outrigger paddlers became burnt out and felt unable to meet the demands of the growing program. They had been teaching all aspects of outrigger paddling, fund-raising and running the program, while other regular paddlers had just showed up and paddled.

The executive referred to the Club's basic mission. VCKC was a community club with low fees to make it affordable for everyone. Competitive teams were welcome, but their members were expected to volunteer for boat maintenance, club events or being on the executive.

⁴⁰ CORA was established in May 1992 as a non-profit association to foster and develop the sport of outrigger racing in Canada. It sets standards of equipment and safety, organises races and represents Canadian outrigger races internationally.

Two other paddling clubs were formed in the city, giving a choice that some paddlers took. Those interested in competitive performance paddling elected to move to the Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC) which specialised in outrigger racing with a full-time coach. Others moved to the Gorge Rowing Club (GRC) which had recently formed at the Selkirk development further down the Gorge. There were teams for novices to competitive paddlers with coaches to teach the basics of paddling as well as racing techniques. Both clubs started with two new outrigger canoes and did not require members to volunteer, but they both charged a much higher annual membership fee. This meant that by 1998, there were three clubs with outrigger canoes, all the better for competition and a larger paddling group with more choices.



In 1998, more than 60 paddlers used the outrigger canoe each week. Stroke improvement, sterning and coaching clinics were held. There was sufficient demand that 2 evening slots were now scheduled, and many teams paddled all year. In winter, this meant paddling in the dark, which some claimed to prefer as being more restful and focussed.

In early 1999, the Club agreed to buy a second outrigger. A second-hand OC6 was available for \$5000 from Strathcona Park Lodge, and this time the program only had to pay back 50% of the cost. Other outrigger-related costs were borne by the Club. These included a skiff or coach boat to accompany competitive teams and for use as a safety boat during races. The skiff was cheap; the outboard motor was not.

The second OC6 arrived in April 1999, with green trim to distinguish it from the first OC6⁴¹. That old stand-by, the garage sale, brought in \$500.

Another fund-raising idea was the sale of cobalt blue coffee mugs, and the program director of the time, Cameron Shankland, enlivened every general meeting that year by his exhortation to buy one of them. (The last seven of these mugs were handed out as prizes at a general meeting in 2017 – they are now collector's items.)

Paddling in the Gorge three times a week can get a bit monotonous – same boat, same houses, same people – but, it isn't all dull and repetitive. In early 2000, a team was paddling up in Portage Inlet when they noticed the soles of two sneakers floating side by side. The team picked up garbage as part of their paddling, so they circled round to pick them up, only to find that they were floating together not because they were tied as a pair, but because they were on the feet of a body! The RCMP were called from a house on shore (pre-cell-phone days) and the body recovered.

In recent years, the program director has usually served for two years, thereby giving some continuity. Delia Hill was the director in 2004/2005 and established many of the routines for safe paddling including the need for teams to practise hulis⁴² and to be prepared for things to go wrong. She has been a member of the program since its start and has the credibility of a long term sterner and team captain. Since their members are retired, many of the recreational teams paddle during the week, leaving the late afternoon and evening slots for the teams whose members still work.

⁴¹ The two outriggers were identified as the 'green boat' and the 'red boat', and in time they were given names. The green boat was christened Pio'ole - meaning 'inextinguishable fire', or eternal or everlasting fire. In the context of an OC6 it means unsinkable or untipable. The red boat was christened Ka'ula – meaning 'flame' and referring to the flame of Hawaiian culture. In the Oceanic legend of Papa and Wakea, Ka'ula is the seventh born child. Also Ka'ula is a small islet 37kilometres SW of Ni'ihau, which is the westernmost Hawaiian island. So Ka'ula is as far out as it is possible to go in Hawaii.

⁴² A "hul" is a capsize in an outrigger canoe. Since all outrigger canoes have an ama, righting an outrigger is relatively simple. One paddler stands on the upside-down hull and leans back holding on to a rope that is attached to the ama. The person's weight is enough to lift the ama off the water and over the hull, thereby levering the hull itself so that it floats open side up. In larger waves (when, of course, capsizing is more likely) this is not easy, sometimes not possible at all. And bailing takes time.

With the success of the OC6 outriggers, the program proposed that the Club acquire two OC1s, so that members could use them to practise in the absence of a full team and for racing. The purpose of getting the boats was to allow members to try out this type of paddling. If they liked it, they were expected to buy their own boats.

Buying the OC1s was not a good idea. These boats were constantly out of commission being repaired. OC1s have a seat that must be adjusted to each paddler. With multiple paddlers using the same boat, the adjustment mechanism kept breaking. Also, the hulls were lightweight and were easily damaged. The message is that, as with almost all other small boats, regular paddlers should buy their own canoe.

Like most programs outrigger canoeing has gone through peaks and troughs. It has been increasing in popularity lately, in part because of the strong leadership and commitment of Shawn and Molly Hamilton who took on the role in 2015 and 2016 with enthusiasm and drive. They developed programs for training, kept the boats well maintained and obtained grants to get new iakos for the OC6s. Their promotion of the need for a replacement boat and the detailed work done to find the right replacement lead to the Club acquiring its third OC6 in 2017. This boat, a Mirage, cost of \$23,000. It came in

three parts, so it can be dis-assembled for easier transportation. The boat was christened 'Kaimana'⁴³.



Today (2018), there were 14 OC6 teams, most of which are recreational in nature – i.e. do not enter races – paddling for exercise and socialising. Within this group some are committed and paddle regardless of weather conditions (provided it is safe, of course), while others are fair-weather paddlers, who go out for fun and fitness. These latter teams usually paddle two or three times a week and typically stay within the Gorge Waterway. Post-paddle lunches or mid-paddle breaks are part of their charm – 'nice and easy, no need to go faster'. The team names such as 'Easy Riders', 'Monday Muse', 'Wednesday Wonders' and 'Sufficient Thrust' tell it al

⁴³ The name is of Hawaiian origin and means "power of the ocean". Kai = sea or ocean; Mana = power. (Although similar in sound, the name has no connection with the BC geographic names Kemano or Caamano).

BOAT MAINTENANCE

The two older OC6s have been in regular use now for almost 20 years, and over time, rocks have been struck, the old Admirals Bridge with its many wooden (but barnacle-encrusted) piers has been an occasional target for near misses and the odd huli, and sheer wear has meant regular maintenance. Members like Arpad Szatory, Doug Linton and others have done most of the repair work, but sometimes an expensive professional repair job is needed.

With many teams and changing paddlers, and no on-site supervision, it is an ongoing struggle to keep the boats and the necessary equipment up to the mark, despite a logbook meant to serve as a record of observations and damage. It works as well as it does due to the devotion and energy of successive directors and team members – usually the sterns.

Although the OC6s were stored near the water, it was still hard to get them launched and brought back to shore. At over 400lbs each, no gunwales to hold on to and only six paddlers, teams needed some mechanism to move them. And being on tidal waters, the 'carry' could be as short as 3 metres or, at low tide, up to 10 metres.

To launch and land the Burrard (the original loaner canoe), Dave Hill, Cameron Shankland, Norm MacDonnell and Arpad Szatory devised a sort of 'horizontal ladder' or slipway with the rungs made of one metre lengths of plastic pipe laid out a metre apart and held in place by chains. The OC6 could be lifted down onto the 'rungs' and slid along the slippery pipes into the water.

When the first 400-pound outrigger arrived, it was kept on two long logs, which had been used for the voyageur canoes. The OC6 could be lifted down onto the "rungs" and slid along the pipes into the water. This was hard on the boat and it was difficult to lift it on and off the logs. A club in Vancouver used a trolley to move their boat, and so one was designed with fat, smooth tires that could run down the beach keeping the hull a foot or so above the gravel. This has worked quite well, although it is still an effort to lift the hulls on and off the trolley and on to the racks. The next change was to store the boat still resting on the trolley towards one end and the other on a rubber car tire. This has allowed older paddlers to move the boat more safely.

Another wrinkle in the care and maintenance of the OC6 canoes was the need to have covers on the boats when on land. The hulls have no drainage or bung holes, and cannot be stored upside down, so something must be done to prevent rain from filling the boats and possibly breaking the hulls.

Over time, thick rubber sheeting has been the most durable and effective cover. It is too heavy to flap in the wind and old car tires are placed on the sheets to make sure they stay in place in gales.

OC6s also require spray decks for open water paddling. Without them, waves can spill into the boat and the paddler in seat five has to spend a lot of time bailing. Getting effective, durable spray decks is a challenge: saltwater and zips "gang nae weel thegither" to paraphrase Burns.

SAFETY



HULI PRACTICE

The outriggers were regularly being paddled outside the harbour limits and this raised safety concerns. General guidelines were issued - 'A group leader should be chosen who is confident with the handling of the canoe and the teamwork of the paddlers' – and huli practices were discussed.

A full set of standards was developed in 1999, covering not only outriggering, but also dragon boating and voyageur canoes when paddled in open water. All outrigger paddlers (OC6 and OC1) were required to undertake regular huli practices. Lights for night time paddling were installed on both OC6s and two on the Club dock. Both outriggers were Coast Guard approved (with extras) with a safety kit containing a small first aid kit, six flares, flashlight, whistle, duct tape, and a buoyant heaving line.

In 2000, one of the OC6s was moved to Cadboro Bay for the summer so that teams could practise in open waters and more varied conditions without having to paddle through the Inner Harbour and have to deal with the Tillicum Narrows and the fast currents. This has happened every year since, although not without some anxiety for safety – the waters around Cadboro Bay and Oak Bay are subject to strong currents and are exposed to winds. Paddlers who plan on paddling from Cadboro Bay take the Outrigger Navigation Course (or its equivalent) and Advanced Outrigger Ocean Paddling.

The sterns need to know their own abilities and that of his/her crew, especially when paddling in the open ocean. Crews have got into trouble a few times. Twice teams have huli-ed and been unable to right the boat and get to shore. The Club marine radio was bought for exactly these circumstances. One men's team had to stay on Discovery island for a few hours to wait out a very strong current and winds.

To get back, they lashed a log to the ama to give it enough weight to keep the canoe from huli-ing. On another occasion, a team got into trouble out by the breakwater. The waves were breaking over the sides faster than they could be bailed. After this, spray skirts were made mandatory for trips beyond the Coast Guard station.

Paddling the OC6 to and from its summer home has sometimes been quite challenging. One year, Dave Hill and his "Grey Hairins" team took 4 ½ hours to paddle from Gyro Park back to the clubhouse. There were 40km+ winds and four-to-six foot waves as the team approached Trial Island. Assured by Steve Taylor that the 'wind waves will die down once we get through the channel', the team pressed on. The wind and waves did not die down and the paddling got a lot tougher. From Trial Island to the breakwater, about four nautical miles (8km) that would normally take an hour or less to paddle, took three hours. The only respite was when the Harbour Pilot brought a tanker close enough to them to give them a break from the wind.

Safety practice doesn't always pay off, however. During a race in Comox the VCKC women's team experienced the unexpected. It was a long-distance race; the weather was rough and the teams were spread out along the course. There was one motorized safety boat. Sandi Robinson's team was paddling in a borrowed outrigger when the ama lashings came off, causing the boat to flip. Sandi's spray skirt zipper would not unzip, so she was under the water a lot longer than she should have been before wiggling out through the unzipped spray squirt hole. Meanwhile her team members started to panic as Sandi was the stern and captain. Luckily, Sandi was an experienced white-water canoeist and took it all calmly.

The boat was in pieces. They tried lashing it back together, to no avail. The safety boat could not help, as it was too small to carry all the paddlers, and the Coast Guard had to be called to rescue them. The paddlers were in the water for nearly an hour before the Coast Guard arrived and they were taken to the hospital to be checked out for hypothermia. After this race, CORA created more safety rules for all its outrigger races. There had to be two safety boats, one bringing up the rear of the racers, and they must be large enough carry a full team of six paddlers. The safety boats also had to carry spare lashing and duct tape in addition to the Coast Guard safety requirements.

In spite of the policy requiring regular huli drills, incidents happen. At the 2017 Wake Up The Gorge races, the Club's novice crew capsized before their race and were unable to get back in the boat. The safety boat was at the far end of the course and not in radio contact so was unable to help. Luckily, the capsizing happened close to shore and the paddlers were soon brought to land. One result was an attempt to tighten up on the requirement for huli practices.

A reality of a volunteer-run organisation is that policies are drawn up with the best of intentions, but it is hard to ensure that they are followed when the teams all paddle separately and largely unsupervised.

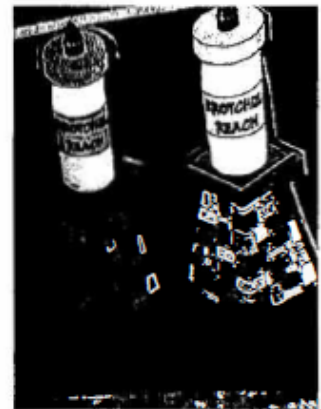
RACING

Within the first year of the outrigger program, the Club had a women's team, a men's team and a mixed team, as well as recreational teams. At the Club's second entry into the Whistler races in 1995, the team came in second in the mixed category.

The Canadian Outrigger Nationals were held in Vancouver in August 1997. There were nine teams and paddling conditions were bad; seat five had to do a lot of bailing. One of the other boats swamped and had to be towed back. But practicing in the Strait of Juan de Fuca paid off and VCKC's 'V6' team won the mixed category, 10 minutes ahead of the second team.

As the program grew, it began entering into races on the Mainland. A number of Club members took part in clinics put on in Vancouver. In some cases, the clinics lead to certification by the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP).

On Vancouver Island, racing began after the establishment of the three outrigger clubs in Victoria and one club in Comox. This meant there were enough boats and people for racing. Each of the Victoria clubs put on one race, which were largely attended by Island paddlers. ORPC started the Bridges race in 1998 and GRC put on the first Brotchie Ledge race the same year. VCKC teams took part the Bridges Race in 1999, when the Huki Mamas and Aleing Paddlers came second in the women's and the men's races respectively. In 2000, Club teams won the Men's and Mixed Open categories. Four or five Club teams also entered the Brotchie Ledge race, which was won by the Club's 'SS Minnow' team two years running.



ISLAND IRON OUTRIGGER CANOE RACE

VCKC organised a mid-distance outrigger race in July 1996 – the first Island Iron Outrigger Canoe Race. The organising committee worked hard and long to set up this new venture. Rosemary Henry, Arpad Szatory, Kirsten MacPherson, Jacquie Tuttle, Norm MacDonnell, Gord Oliphant and Cliff Dunajski were the core team, with Kevin Peterson soliciting trophies, prizes and arranging accommodation. In addition, other members turned out on the day to help staff the booth, safety boat, refreshments and all the other off-water tasks. The event was based in Cadboro Bay, with a 15-kilometre race route out round Discovery and the Chatham Islands.

A total of 23 teams were entered from Portland, Seattle, Vancouver and Comox as well as VCKC. The weather cooperated and visiting teams were impressed by the “awesome glass trophies”. Thanks to the organising committee’s efforts, it was a big success and made a slight profit.

The following year, VCKC held the second Island Iron race with 16 teams taking part. In 1998, the outrigger program leaders at VCKC felt they needed a break as it was a lot of work for the core few, and the organisation of the event was taken over by Ocean River Paddling Club (ORPC). In 1999, the race was run in Comox, to encourage the development of the sport in the North Island. In 2000 and 2001, the event was run in Victoria, jointly organised by VCKC and ORPC.

At that point, the outrigger program was running two major races each year – Wake Up The Gorge in March and Island Iron in July. The program decided to focus on Wake Up The Gorge as it was held at the Clubhouse, and to pass the Island Iron Race to ORPC. Since 2002, the event has alternated between Victoria (even years) and Up-Island (odd years).

WAKE UP THE GORGE

With ten teams and a solid core of committed and enthusiastic paddlers, the outrigger program put on the first “Wake Up The Gorge” (WUTG) race in March 1999. These races were not limited to outrigger canoes: voyageur canoe sprints, recreational canoe racing and marathon canoe racing were also included. It was the Gorge Regatta come to life again. The first outrigger races had eight teams, most local. Marathon racers came from Wenatchee, Toronto, Calgary, Kamloops, Prince George, Nanaimo, Nanoose Bay, Comox and Victoria. Many sponsors helped attract good competitors.



WUTG 2017

The second WUTG race attracted 28 teams from Vancouver, Kamloops and Bellingham. It was extended to two days to include marathon and solo (OC1) outrigger races. Cooperation between the clubs meant that more boats and more rescue skiffs were available. It also brought in money to the Club and helped pay off the cost of the second OC6. OC1 races were added this year and the event extended through to Sunday for the smaller boat races.

Since then, WUTG has been a regular fixture on the CORA race calendar. It is usually held in mid-April, after the PFTK has taken place. On two occasions it was held at the West Bay Marina, not at the clubhouse on the Gorge, as no-one at VCKC was willing to organise the event, although Club teams took part.

In 2010, WUTG had a beer tent for the first time, an addition that was approved of by all the visiting teams. Service started after the races were finished. By 2012, the races had expanded to include categories for Stand-Up Paddleboards (SUPs) and Surf-skis.

Although consistent statistics have not been kept, the event has seen over 50 teams taking part and has brought in considerable revenue for the Club in good years. The date is chosen each year so that there is high tide about mid-day so that all teams get roughly equal current assistance. This makes it unique among the races on the CORA schedule because the dates cannot be fixed on the same weekend every year.

The outrigger program took the OC6 boat to Craigflower Beach as part of the original Sunfest – now Canada Day - event. While popular, the fact that the canoe could only take four paying customers per trip (there needed to be an experienced stern and bow paddler) meant that the outrigger canoes have not become a regular part of this event. Taking an OC6 on the Paddle For The Kids to Port Angeles was also tried, but the OC6 moved so much faster than the voyageur canoes that it wasn't practical to do this again.

STORIES

One of the recreational teams was paddling round Ten-Mile point one day in 2009 when they stopped by a small beach.

'We were lying broadside to the beach when a few of us saw an enormous tail fin disappear into the water right at the entrance to the cove where we had been a minute before. We were thinking "whale" when the unmistakable dorsal fin of a VERY LARGE orca broke the water seconds later. We watched, transfixed, as the orca splashed around at the mouth of the cove on a fishing expedition, getting tangled in kelp and shaking it off, and blowing each time he (or she?) surfaced. Within minutes, a small trawler joined the party, along with a larger whale-watching boat whose deck was crammed with tourists. They had undoubtedly paid \$100 each for the privilege, but we were getting a jellyfish-eye view for free! Here's where our advancing age betrayed us: none of us was tech-savvy enough to use the photo feature on our cell phones. After 15 minutes, our whale headed north, blowing and hopping. Our memories will last considerably longer.'

Dave Hill credits his early years in outriggering as being important for learning. Only by taking himself and his team out of their comfort zone did the Club learn what the outrigger canoes (OC6s) were capable of and when to set limits for less experienced teams. Dave and his team were the first to huli the Burrard under the Craigflower Bridge, in the dark, in winter, no one wearing neoprene and only one person in the boat who had huli'ed before. And Dave was in seat one when Malcolm Warrington was convinced that the outrigger could be run under the Tillicum Bridge at low tide. They avoided the rock in mid-channel, but when the ama got stuck in the hole behind the rock, the momentum of the hull exploded the front ama and the boat huli'ed.

Dave built a mould for a new ama and the boat was back in use in a couple of weeks. After that the OC6 was sometimes lined down the rapid under Tillicum Bridge at low tide. An attempt to reverse the process – i.e. to track the boat by ropes the rapids at low tide - was less successful. The boat got away, and the team watched it circle around in the big eddy until it got close enough to snag. But they did have a nice moonlit paddle back to the clubhouse when the current allowed it, around midnight!



Like the Club itself, outrigger started off under the impetus of competition, and has become, for most paddlers, a refreshing and agreeable way to keep fit and be part of a team.

OUTRIGGER PROGRAM DIRECTOR

1995 Sandi Robinson	1996 Sandi Robinson/Cliff Dunajski	1997 Kathy Baur
1998 Shawn Toporowski	1999 Cameron Shankland	2000 Cameron Shankland
2001 John McLeod	2002 John McLeod	2003 Wendy Espinosa
2004 Delia Hill	2005 Delia Hill	2006 Mavis Pillar
2007 Keith Larusson	2008 Keith Larusson	2009 Keith Larusson
2010 Max Nock	2011 Dave Schweter	2012 Dave Schweter
2013 Ryan Ovens	2014 Ryan Ovens	2015 Shawn & Molly Hamilton
2016 Shawn & Molly Hamilton	2017 Ralph Rossman/Jennifer Yee	2018 Tony Hopkin



Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) Outrigger Canoe Fleet

Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) 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. Commonwealth Games rowing gold medal winner and sister-in-law Christine (Tina) Clarke with Strathcona Park Lodge had 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 (Ka'ula – red trim), it was sold in 1995 to VCKC by Strathcona Park Lodge. Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) would acquire a second Calmar Canadian Class Racer canoe (Pio'ole - green trim), in 1999. Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) would acquire a three-part Outrigger Connection Mirage (Kaimana) in 2017.



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



VCKC Blue-Deck (Repainted From Green) / White-Hull Calmar Canadian Class Racer



VCKC Blue-Deck (Repainted From Red) / White-Hull Calmar Canadian Class Racer



VCKC Three-Part Blue-Deck / White-Hull Outrigger Connection Mirage

Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) Outrigger Canoe Events



In November 1995, David Hill was on the Canadian Outrigger Racing Association (CORA) Executive and was proposing a race date for an official CORA race in Victoria. He served on the CORA Executive where he helped to develop that organizations racing and safety guidelines. He lobbied and was successful in getting Island Iron and **Wake Up The Gorge (WUTG)** races on the CORA race schedule. VCKC joined CORA in 1999. As the Outrigger Canoe program became well established, the program put on the 1st WUTG race in Mar-1999 with 8 mostly local teams attending. The 2nd WUTG race was held Mar-2000 with 28 teams from Vancouver, Kamloops, and Bellingham, as well as VCKC attending. Since then, the WUTG has been a regular fixture on the CORA race calendar held in mid-April. It started out as an Outrigger Canoe (OC6) competition but has grown to include small-boat racing. [061] [062]

A poster for the 'Switch Blade Paddlesport Relay Race'. The top half has a blue background with silhouettes of paddlers and the text 'SWITCH BLADE RELAY'. The bottom half has a white background with details about the race. The right side of the poster has a pink and red background with silhouettes of a kayaker and a canoeist.

SWITCH BLADE PADDLESPORT RELAY RACE

Saturday May 9, 2020/Victoria BC
9 am start at Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club

TEAMS:
6 paddlers (3 women and 3 men)
1 ocean kayak: 1 standup paddleboard:
1 tandem marathon canoe; 1 OC1;
1 surfski and all into an OC6.

COURSE:
Small boat legs 30-45 minutes each
+ OC6 leg 60-90 minutes

BOATS:
Teams are responsible for their own crafts.
If you need assistant please contact:
marathon@vckc.ca
COST:
Early bird: \$300 before Apr 20.
After Apr 20. \$360/team. includes dinner
REGISTRATION: Deadline May 1, 2020

Registration: switchbladeregistrar@vckc.ca | Information contact: marathon@vckc.ca

Sponsors

The VCKC Marathon Program had hosted the innovative **Switch Blade Paddlesport Relay Races** for many years since 2012. The Switchblade Paddlesport Relay Race consisted of 6 different paddling sports and was an exciting combination of race legs that would challenge any 6-paddler team to bring their best efforts both as individuals and working together. The 6 legs of the racecourse involved 1) Recreational Ocean Kayak (1 paddler); 2) Stand Up Paddleboard (1 paddler); 3) Marathon Canoe Tandem (2 paddlers); 4) OC1 (1 paddler); 5) Surfski (1 paddler); 6) OC6 (all 6 paddlers). [063]

STORMIN' NORMAN CANOE RACE

Following the passing of Norman MacDonell and his induction into the Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame, VCKC introduced the **Stormin'**

Norman Canoe Race in honour of Norman MacDonell. The 2024 event was held in April and was well attended, with 5Km, 10Km, and 20Km distances. The 2025 event was moved to Autumn, and it is hoped that this new event on the CORA Race Schedule will continue for many years to recognize the memory of Norman MacDonell. [064]

Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) Outrigger Canoe Venues



Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) has had 1 venue over the course of the history of the club. 1982 was a significant year for VCKC. It was the year that VCKC took on the lease of the clubhouse from Saanich. In mid-1981, Don Munroe was looking for a place where he could train for marathon canoe racing. He noticed the house at 355 Gorge Road West which was rented out by Saanich largely to single people and he approached Frank Harris, the Lands Director at the Municipality to see if he could rent an apartment there. After explaining that he was a canoeist and a member of VCKC, Mr. Harris suggested that VCKC might like to make an approach to Council to become the tenant of the house. When the proposal by VCKC to lease the Gorge Road Boat House was discussed at the Saanich Council Meeting, there was general support, the lease was approved, and VCKC took on the management and care of "Bob's Boathouse" at 355 Gorge Road West.

The clubhouse is a two storey + basement family home built in 1923 for the Hamilton family on the north shore of the Gorge Waterway, opposite the Gorge Park in Esquimalt. The clubhouse, with direct access to the water, gave the members a place to meet, run programs with direct access to the water and to store equipment and materials. Without this, the later development of the outrigger canoe and dragon boat programs could not have happened, nor could VCKC have acquired and stored other items such as life-jackets, paddles, and safety equipment, which let it run programs for the public. [071]

VCKC's first dock was one that was attached to pilings in the water off the property to the east. In 1988, Don Munroe got a call from Saanich offering VCKC the use of the public dock from below the Tillicom Bridge. The offer was happily agreed to and suitably refurbished, it lasted for nearly 20 years. When VCKC decided to replace it with an enlarged dock in 2000, it was towed down the Gorge to Ocean River Sports.

Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) Outrigger Canoe Highlights

2023 Hall of Fame Induction Tribute (2023-Nov-11) By Mhairi MacDonell For Norman MacDonell

Before I begin, I would just like to say that Norm was a great person. Norm was born in Grande Prairie Alberta in 1954. So, you may wonder how a boy from the prairies got into whitewater kayaking. That all came about when he moved to the Yukon in 1980. He belonged to the outdoor club and his friend Sue took him out on the river. He was immediately hooked. One of his highlights from that time was paddling down the Colorado River. Norm wasn't much of a swimmer and as a beginner paddler he spent a lot of time upside down in the water. For the sake of survival, he learned very quickly how to roll a kayak; with and without a paddle. He later commented to Lisa that paddling was the one sport he had the perfect build for. He had skinny hips, wide shoulders and wasn't very tall. He was also an adrenaline junkie. An example of which was when, under the guise of training for waterfalls, he got his brother-in-law Bruce to push him off the Riverdale Bridge into the Yukon River in his whitewater kayak. Not once, but twice. He told Lisa the next day he must have slept wrong because his neck was sore. I believe Lisa put on her nurse's cap and set him straight on that score.

The other extremely important event that took place in the Yukon is that he met Lisa. Both his love for Lisa and his love for paddling lasted for more than 40 years. Norm and Lisa traveled around New Zealand for 6 months in 1982 with Norm going down rivers and Lisa riding horses. When they returned to Canada in the summer of 1982, they settled in Victoria. Lisa told me that one year Norm was the sole member of the Yukon team at the Canadian Whitewater Championships where he met Dave Green. When the decision was made to move to Victoria, Norm phoned Dave and introduced himself as the cute little redhead from the Yukon. Fortunately, Dave remembered that cute little redhead and offered them a place to stay. After a few years Norm and Lisa started a family. They have 3 children; Julie, Anna and Greg. Norm loved being a father. He managed to combine fatherhood and paddling by taking the 2 girls canoeing on the Gorge with him. One was in a cooler and one was in a laundry basket. They both had lifejackets on and had umbrellas for sun protection. Julie commented that while other kids were at the playground with their dads, they were at Thetis Lake learning how to roll a kayak.

Norm and Greg shared a love of hockey and he was very involved with the team while Greg was playing. Norm played hockey when he was younger and enjoyed watching hockey as well as boxing and wrestling. He also loved westerns. If there was a duster on TV he would watch it, even if he had seen it a dozen times. Norm has always been a self-starter; a Jack Of All Trades with an entrepreneurial spirit. In Grande Prairie he and my brother Sandy both built spec houses which they later sold. Norm had many jobs. He worked in the Arctic on the rigs and doing carpentry, laid flooring, worked for Xerox and spent much of his life as a salesman, selling everything from furniture to windows. He also owned a few businesses. In Grande Prairie he owned a waterbed store called Dusk 'til Dawn which he sold when he moved to the Yukon. In the Yukon he started a furniture repair and refinishing business which he called Professor Phurniture. He started the same business in Victoria and ran it for quite a few years before he sold it. Later in life he bought and ran a stucco company and an insulation company.

I can't speak about Norm without talking about his sense of community and his kindness. Norm was one of those people that when he asked "How are you?" would actually listen to your answer and ask follow up questions. He was truly interested in what other people had to say. He was a great listener. He told me about one of his friends who was suffering from depression. His way of supporting his friend was to first listen. Then when his friend finished speaking Norm said, "Tell me one small thing you want to accomplish. When you have done that come back to me". When his friend came back, he said, "Okay now tell me another thing you want to accomplish". That was Norm's approach to tackling difficult situations; one step at a time. He was able to share that ability with his family and friends. I have heard several people in the paddling community refer to "Normie's paddling tips", where he would give people a couple of things to work on in a positive way without overwhelming them. He loved to coach anyone, young or old who was enthusiastic about paddling. Norm was also

very supportive of his friends in the Eckankar community. He would drive people to meetings if they were unable to drive for any reason. Some of them he ended up driving for years. A couple of them got to be good friends and he would take them out on Sundays for a drive and sometimes a burger and ice cream.

The paddling community has been a huge part of Norm's life. He was a member of VCKC for almost 40 years. He went from whitewater to flatwater canoe and kayak and then into marathon and outrigger racing. He has enjoyed many paddling experiences and nurtured many friendships over the years.

One of his best friends from VCKC, Ron Williams, introduced himself to me as Norm's paddling brother. I would like to read a message from Ron as he is unable to attend. "Norm was a great friend whom I have had the privilege of knowing for over 40 plus years. Part of our relationship encompassed racing, training, repairing boats and loving the sport of canoeing. As a fierce competitor in a six-man race or as a partner in a tandem, he always had a positive and supportive focus for himself and his teammates. When coaching either beginners or fellow competitors he had the special gift of looking for and finding the best in others and sharing it in a constructive and positive way. It did not only apply to canoeing. I also shared many hours repairing both boats and paddles and helping with renovations around his home. He was always listening and open to new and innovative ideas on how to tackle any project. He was a loving, kind and caring person. A true gentleman and a dear friend." – Ron Williams

Norm had a great sense of fun. He loved a good water fight, which he always seemed to win. There is one story I would like to share about a strawberry fight. It's the only time I have heard of where Norm was bested. The cast of character included Norm, Lisa, Lisa's sister Heidi and her cousin Sarah. They were out picking strawberries when a strawberry fight erupted. Afterwards they got into 2 separate cars and Norm thought the fight was over. Sarah managed to lob a nice juicy, ripe strawberry through Norm's open window and nailed him on the side of his face. It was stuck in his glasses and dripping down his cheek. Well!! The chase was on! To my knowledge he never managed to get back at Sarah even though he made several attempts. She is one of my heroes.

Norm was always keen to learn new things. This extended to alternative medicine and therapies. As his unwitting guinea pig, I became familiar with some of these as well. Those of you who have known him for many years may remember his forays into One Brain, Touch for Health and the somewhat famous and ineffective eye exercises to name a few. Norm had a keen sense of humour. He loved puns. When Lisa brought their first dog home from the SPCA, he named her Genny. G-E-N-N-Y, because she was a generic dog. When his kids were fighting and slamming their bedroom doors, he told them that the doors must be broken, otherwise they wouldn't slam. He removed the doors and took them for the shop to repair them. It took about a week for diagnosis and repair before the doors were re-installed. I have a lot to thank my big bother for. Norm was the oldest of the 4 of us. As a brother, I always felt he had my back. He moved out of the house when I was 5 years old. At that point he could have cut ties and gone out to live his life. Instead, he made a point of getting to know and keeping in touch with his younger siblings. He and Sandy worked together in Grande Prairie. When he moved to the Yukon, Norm flew my sister Elizabeth up for a visit and when he moved to Victoria, he flew me out for a visit. He also encouraged me to move to Victoria and helped me settle here. Norm was always available when I had questions or needed advice. I also have him to thank for my introduction to paddling and this wonderful paddling community. He was someone I looked up to for many reasons, not the least of which was his ability to overcome challenges and move forward. He was a very positive person.

As a competitor Norm was very humble about his accomplishments. I did hear about a couple of highlights. One was in 2014 when he won the CORA Nationals in Gibsons. The other one was when he went to Australia representing Canada in 2019. Norm worked hard, played hard and made a good life for himself and those fortunate enough to be around him.

Thank you very much CORA for honoring him. - Mhairi

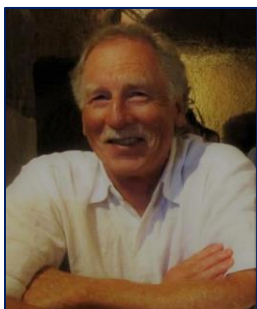
Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) Outrigger Canoe Achievements

Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) social media has some mention of their achievements in terms of participation in Western Canada or International outrigger canoe paddling events. However, the Canadian Outrigger Racing Association (CORA) website race results indicate that Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) has fielded crews and done well in Vancouver Island events over the course of many years. It is known that Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) has sent individuals to Molokai Hoe and Molokai Na Wahine events in the early years. Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) teams in the recent past are recreational in nature – paddling for exercise and socializing.

Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC) Luminaries



David Hill, as VCKC President in 1994 and 1995, was a major change agent. The Outrigger Canoe program came into being on his watch and he was on the first dragon boating team, well before the idea of forming a separate program or buying a boat. He had the rare strength of mind to drop out of the VCKC Executive after 4 years, only to be replaced year later by his wife Delia, who served as VP for 3 years. Without the drive and commitment of David & Delia Hill to expanding its range of programs, VCKC would be a very different organization today. See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for David Hill. [081]



For those who knew **Norman MacDonell** he epitomized "*the salt of the earth*" (a very good and honest person). The August 2022 obituary for Norman MacDonell is replete with platitudes and condolences from far and wide conveying sadness at the loss of this remarkable individual. The words that friends and family shared about Norman say it all - *True and trusted friend; A gentle, kind and caring man who was always happy to help out when he could; Such an interesting, adventurous, and kind man; Genuinely engaged in any conversation we had; Quiet confident manner; Always a great support and helper; He was thoughtful, careful and wise; Whenever I had concerns or challenges I could always talk with Norm; He would listen quietly and carefully and when he responded to me it was always gentle with kindness, encouragement and spiritual wisdom.* This Canadian Outrigger Hall of Fame bio is a testament not only to Norman MacDonell, but also to the 100s of individuals across Canada like him who have made a lifetime commitment to the paddling community by working tirelessly out of the limelight. Norman MacDonell, like so many other members of the paddling community, does not have an illustrious bio of Olympics or IVF or Molokai or Catalina or Queen Liliuokalani paddling achievements. What Norman is recognized most for is a lifetime of selfless contribution to the paddling community and for having made a lasting positive impact on everyone that has ever had the good fortune to have spent time with him. See Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Norman MacDonell. [082]



Alan Thomson is a lifetime member of the Victoria Canoe Kayak Club (VCKC). As VCKC was approaching 50 years, he took it upon himself to prepare a comprehensive history of the club, entitled "*Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club: 50 Years of Paddling*". Alan drew on information from local archives, newsletters, and member stories. This 214-page publication included 14 pages dedicated to the VCKC outrigger canoe program. [083] It was via this VCKC publication that the CORA Historical Committee was provided comprehensive details to fill in gaps to complete the story of "*The Burrard*", found never-before-seen photos of "*The Burrard*", acquired contact information on **Janice (Henderson) Kyle** to complete the story of the 1985 Molokai Na Wahine crew, acquired background on David Hill for his Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio, and acquired background on Norman MacDonell for his Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio. Alan also provided an eloquent video-recording as a Guest Speaker on behalf of David Hill for the Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame 2023 Induction event. [084]



The first-ever all-Canadian Womens 1985 Molokai Na Wahine Crew that placed 5th overall in that race for one of the best ever showings by an all-Canadian Womens crew for at least 38 years, was comprised of ten of the top marathon canoe paddlers and white-water down river kayakers from all across Canada. Whereas Hugh Fisher and a band of BC flatwater paddlers were the first men in Canada doing outrigger canoeing, it was this all-Canadian womens crew that paved the way for women in Canada doing outrigger canoeing. The VCKC 50 Years Of Paddling on Page 122 states that *"In 1986, **Janice (Henderson) Kyle** talked at a general meeting about doing the Hawaiian Molokai Race in 1985."* David Hill of VCKC noted that

Janice (Henderson) Kyle paddled with Don Munroe in the 1980s in marathon canoe.

References

Note	Article	Link
[001]	VCKC Home	https://vckc.ca/
[011]	1985 Molokai Na Wahine Results	https://nawahineokekai.com/archive/
[012]	1985 Molokai Na Wahine Crew CORA Town Hall	https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/cora-town-hall-october-2023-the-wahines-in-the-boat/
[013]	1985 Molokai Na Wahine Crew Honolulu Star Bulletin Article	https://cdn.outriggercanoecлубsports.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/28170114/1985-09-26-HSB-Canadians-in-Paddling-Challenge.pdf
[021]	“The Burrard” First Outrigger Canoe In Canada	https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-Burrard-Legacy-2021-07-Jul.pdf
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[031]	2007 CORA Board Minutes	https://canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2007BoardMinutes.pdf
[041]	2023 David Hill LinkedIn Bio	https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-hill-34192093/?originalSubdomain=ca
[043]	2005 Edmonton World Masters Games	https://d3tfdru9q5sbcz.cloudfront.net/2020/09/All-canoe-results-2005.pdf
[044]	“The Burrard” First Outrigger Canoe In Canada	https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/the-burrard-first-outrigger-canoe-in-canada/
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[061]	2018 VCKC Newsletter	https://www.vckc.ca/resources/Newsletters/2018/2018-05-VCKC-Newsletter.pdf
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[063]	2020 VCKC Switch Blade	https://www.vckc.ca/Switchblade-Paddlesport-Relay
[064]	2024 VCKC Stormin' Norman	https://vckc.ca/event-5496431
[071]	VCKC About Clubhouse	https://www.vckc.ca/About-VCKC
[081]	Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for David Hill	https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HOF-CORA-David-Hill.pdf
[082]	Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Bio for Norman MacDonell	https://www.canadianoutrigger.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HOF-CORA-Norman-MacDonell.pdf
[083]	Emerging Local Authors Collection 2019 Pages 68-69	https://issuu.com/greatervictoriapubliclibrary/docs/elac_authorprofiles_2019
[084]	Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club: 50 Years of Paddling	https://books.google.ca/books/about/Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club.html?id=lmR2zQEACAAJ&redir_esc=y