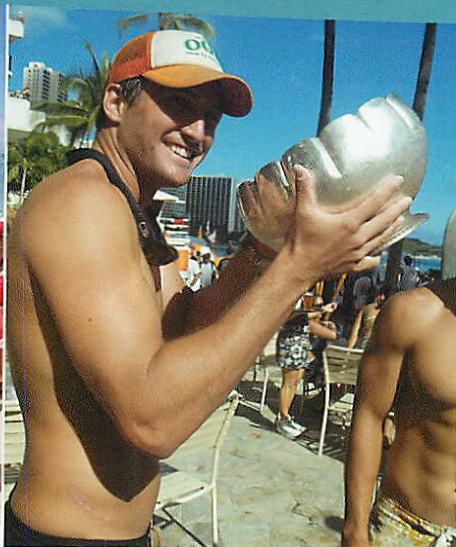


Macfarlane Mania at Waikiki on the 4th of July

By Barbara Del Piano



Paddlers line up in front of the Club's koa canoes during a past Macfarlane.



Craig Gamble drinks champagne after his crew won the Senior Men's race in 2008.



Al Darling (front) celebrates after his crew won the Novice Race in 2009. Photo by Twain Newhart.

What's so special about the Macfarlane Regatta that every paddler in the islands wants to be a part of it? Why is this event so different from all others on the summer paddling calendar that it brings thousands of fans to Waikiki each 4th of July to cheer and celebrate?

Ask a paddler who has ever crewed in the Macfarlane Regatta what he or she remembers most about the races. The odds are good that the first word that comes to mind is "fun".... followed closely by "exciting" and "unpredictable." Many paddlers bring up the subject of "tradition" which has special meaning for young and old alike.

A big attraction is that the Macfarlane is the only Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association regatta that includes wave riding; races begin and end right in front of the old Club's site on Waikiki Beach.

Also, it's the only regatta that allows fiberglass canoes and open steersmen, the only one held at Waikiki beach, and although gold medals are highly coveted, the Regatta does not count as a qualifying race for the Oahu or State Championships. This enables paddlers to feel less stressed and enjoy the camaraderie and spirit of aloha that permeates Waikiki beach on that special occasion.

The day starts with an early breakfast at the Club after which young paddlers are inspired by the heartfelt pep talk delivered each year by Macfarlane descendent and outstanding steersman, Walter Guild, whose words elicit a rousing cheer of "Outrigger! Outrigger! Outrigger!" heard all the way to Waikiki. Then the paddlers begin the trek from Diamond Head to the old club site, all part of the long-standing tradition.

Waikiki Beach is lined with colorful tents of participating clubs, which includes all 18 members of OCHRA, consisting of more than a thousand paddlers. The line for a specially designed Macfarlane tee-shirt forms early and stretches down the beach as far as one can see. They're sold out by noon.

A goose-bump opening ceremony, culminated by a stirring

rendition of *The Star Spangled Banner*, sung for years by opera singer Guido Salmaggi, and more recently by different Club members or paddlers. Robert Cazimiro's, *Hawaii Pono* is the final touch before the races begin.

The unpredictability of the waves and luck of the draw in lane assignments play important parts in the outcome. Excitement builds throughout the day until the major events, the Senior Men and Women races, take place in early afternoon.

When the last race is over, and the last weary, but exhilarated paddler is out of the water, festivities are far from over. Medals and trophies are awarded and the magnificent silver bowls, filled with champagne by members of the Macfarlane family, is relished by the winning Senior crews, who then share the chilled bubbly with the runners-up.

The highlight of the post-paddling celebration is the big party at the Outrigger Canoe Club that evening. It's no wonder that the day holds such special significance!

This year marks Maureen Kilcoyne's 22nd year of paddling in the Macfarlane and she looks forward to it each year with the same enthusiasm as she did in 1988. Her sister, Maile, met husband Doug Ostrem at the Macfarlane in 1968, and hasn't missed one since. Maile once skipped an important family wedding to paddle; her daughter Mekia, is worried because her baby is due this July 4th and she's wondering if her mother will be there.

Lisa Livingston started paddling in the Macfarlane when she was 12. What appeals to her is that the Regatta is "a little bit of everything" but for her, its greatest appeal is the history and tradition that it represents.

Al Darling first paddled on the Fourth in 2009 on the Novice A crew. He'll never forget the thrill of beating Lanikai by less than a second when catching a wave and going all out in the home stretch gave his crew the close victory.

Kiele Schwinn will be paddling on the Fourth for the second time. She especially likes catching waves; she says, "That's what makes it so exciting!"



Catching waves is a fun part of the Macfarlane.



Sisters Maile Ostrem and Maureen Kilcoyne are Macfarlane regulars.

BOTTOM: Open steerswoman Kisi Haine gets a jump on a wave. Photo by Twain Newhart.



Macfarlane family members present the wave trophy to the winning club each year. Front: Maree and Makena Miller. Back: Marion Miller, Lissa Guild, Billy Philpotts, Walter Guild 2002, OCC Head Coach Mike Mason, and Di Guild.

For the Kincaid family, the Macfarlane is a family affair; They're one of many second generation families since daughters Jessica and Rachael are also avid paddlers. Genie hasn't missed a Macfarlane since she started in 1986.

Suzy Hemmings, who has both paddled and coached, says the Macfarlane conjures up adjectives like "fun," "exciting" and "challenging." She and daughter Kauai are another two-generation family of paddlers.

Ivanelle Choy's memories of the Macfarlane go back to the 1940s at the old Club. "Fun" and "unpredictable" are her words to describe the colorful event. Lorraine "Brownie" Williams paddled in the first Macfarlane in 1943. When another Outrigger crew was chosen for the Women's Four, coach and steersman Johnny Hollinger, managed to get his crew of "Brownie," Lois Gilman, Yvonne "Blondie" Boyd and Loretta Carter, entered as a team called Queen's Surf. Brownie will never forget the thrill of winning the race.

For the past 25 years, Gerri Pedesky has spent her mornings on July 4th, along with Maureen Kilcoyne, Maile Ostrem, Gerry DeBenedetti, and others selling tee shirts to benefit ODKF and the Club's paddling program. In the afternoon they all paddle. Gerri is the only one of the original crew still paddling in the Masters since it was established in 1977, and has never lost her enthusiasm for it.

The Haine family holds the distinction of being a three-generation family of Macfarlane paddlers. Tom and Marilyn paddled for years, as did their kids, Marc and Kisi. Now Marc's son, Reese, has taken on the challenge

It's not just Outrigger paddlers who love the Macfarlane. Waikiki Surf Club coach, Glenell Kaio Choy has paddled in 40 of the Regattas and says her club's paddlers can't wait for the Fourth.

Mollie Paylor, is looking forward to the excitement of the day, when she will paddle for Hui Nalu for the third time this year in the 12 and Under class. Stan Dickson, founder and coach

of Kahaluu-based Keahiakahoe, says his paddlers love the Macfarlane because of the opportunity to catch waves, and also just being in Waikiki is a treat the Windward kids rarely get.

Fred Hemmings holds the record for the most recorded wins in a Macfarlane, having steered 61 different crews to victory. Paddling since age 12, Fred cherishes his many memories of July 4th at Waikiki.

Everything always runs smoothly on race day due to months of behind-the-scenes planning. Scrappy Lipton organized the Regatta for years until turning the job over to Siana Hunt, and now chaired by Kim Darling and Diane Esecson. It's an enormous job but with the help and cooperation they get from committee members, Duke's Restaurant, Outrigger Hotels and others, everything runs like clockwork on the big day.

The only thing that isn't predictable is the surf.

And so the tradition continues with the 68th consecutive Macfarlane Regatta this July 4th, the longest continuously held paddling event in Hawaii. First held in 1943 in honor of recently deceased Outrigger President, Walter Macfarlane, it is held at the site of the original Outrigger Canoe Club, established in 1908.

Kawika Grant expressed his feelings, which echo those of many paddlers and Outrigger members, "The day, befitting the site, is a celebration of who we are as Hawaiians on the day that made us what we are...Americans."

