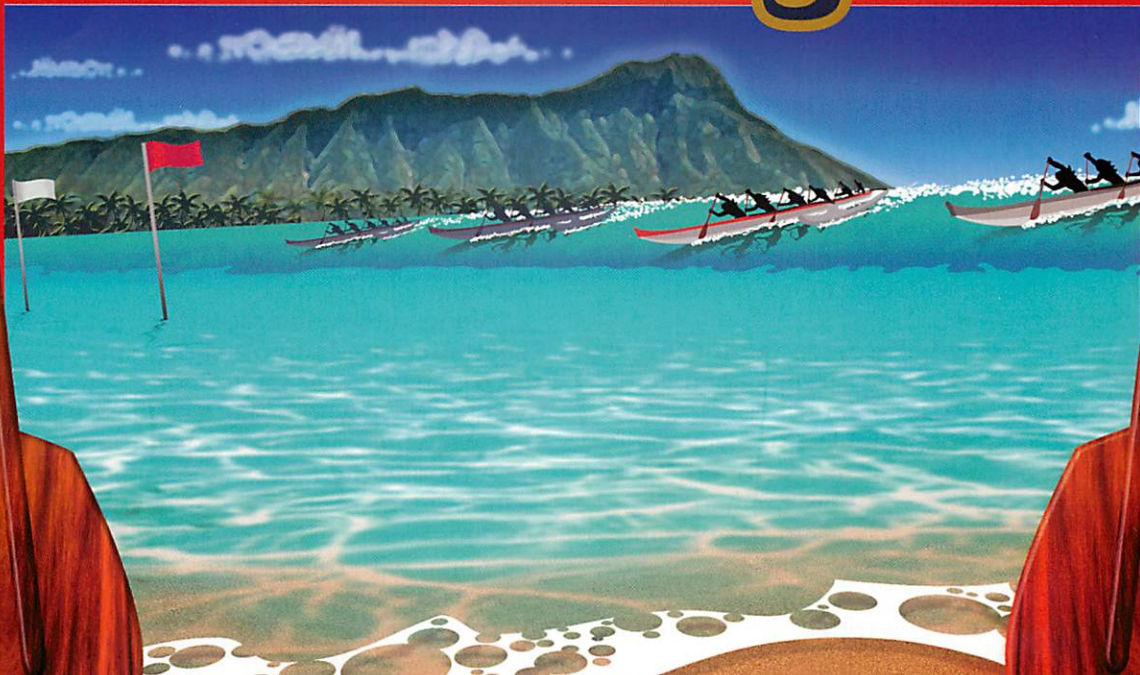


^{the} **Outrigger**

OUTRIGGER CANOE CLUB

Macfarlane Canoe Regatta



Waikiki Beach

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65th Annual Macfarlane Regatta

By Sarah Field



LEFT: Spectators watch the Macfarlane Regatta from the old Club.

TOP: Outrigger's winning 1943 Senior Men.

On July 4th, 1943, six crews competed in the inaugural Walter J. Macfarlane Regatta at Waikiki Beach. Sixty-five years later, the Macfarlane Regatta has become an annual tradition for paddlers and spectators who line the shores of Waikiki to take part in this special event.

In 1943, there were only 13 events. Now there are 39 events at the Macfarlane Regatta, which means a day full of fun and racing for all the canoes and people involved.

The first Macfarlane Regatta held a special significance for the sport of canoe racing. The sport was beginning to disappear with the last major races in Kona in 1938. After Walter Macfarlane passed away, Club Captain Bob Fischer worked with Bill Mullaney and John D. Kaupiko to start what we know as modern canoe racing. The first Macfarlane Regatta in 1943 was so successful that other groups expressed interest in forming canoe clubs.

Members of the first senior crew racing for the Outrigger in 1943 were Jim Fernie, Tom O'Brien, Bob Bush, Tom Arnott, Thad Ekstrand and Duke Kahanamoku. Thad Ekstrand is the last surviving paddler from this original group. His stories from the initial Macfarlane Regatta shed light on how the Regatta developed over time and how this event has become popular for paddlers, spectators and Outrigger members.

Thad Ekstrand joined the Outrigger Canoe Club in 1930. In 1943, he was a young, fit paddler coached by Duke Kahanamoku. Duke selected the racing crew for the first Senior Men's race. Thad raced in seat four to offset the weight of Duke who was the steersman. Imagine having Duke Kahanamoku as a coach and steersman - what an incredible experience!

According to Thad, "Duke kept us out of trouble and made us work hard. He really worked us on style and technique." In addition to being an excellent coach on the water, Duke was a mentor off the water. Thad describes Duke as a father figure. "He took all of us kids to the movies and would sit in the back of the the-

ater and sleep while we watched the movies." Duke's leadership created a group of Outrigger paddlers that was a group that bonded closely and enjoyed paddling together. Not to mention that they were excellent racers.

Thad giggles as he comments on the distance race. "Back then we raced 4.5 miles with those big old paddles. The distance nowadays is so much shorter, but the trophy is the same." The race course in 1943 was different than the current course. Thad recounts the course for the first race: "We went in and out around the buoy three times, came back in and turned and finished parallel to the shore." The course now has individual lanes for each crew and a flag buoy for each canoe to turn on. The race distances range from a quarter mile to two miles. Since there are so many canoe clubs, crews must qualify in order to compete at the Macfarlane Regatta.

Along with canoe races, the first Macfarlane Regatta featured tug-of-war competitions, relay races, and canoe races for servicemen. "There was a crew from the Navy who tried to challenge us," Thad jokes, "but we would beat them every time."

Although the Macfarlane Regatta no longer includes many of the events described by Thad, Outrigger members enjoy a day filled with excitement, beginning with the paddlers' breakfast at the Club. Paddlers of all ages - from the 12 and under crew to the Golden Masters - walk down to Waikiki Beach to start a day full of racing and cheering. Colorful flags marking the lanes flap in the trade winds, canoes glide on the water, propelled by paddlers and occasional bumps from waves, and the beach is crowded with paddling enthusiasts cheering on their teammates, family and friends. Thanks to the efforts of the original Regatta organizers and paddlers in 1943, along with the efforts of the thousands that have come since then, the sport of canoe racing is thriving and the Macfarlane Regatta has become a wonderful way to celebrate paddling and the Fourth of July.

Enjoy the Macfarlane Regatta from the Hula Grill

By Siana Hunt

As Outrigger members we pride ourselves on tradition. This year, one of our favorite traditions, the OCC sponsored Walter J. Macfarlane 4th of July Regatta will be celebrating 65 years of canoe racing competition. We are happy to announce that we have once again secured the Hula Grill exclusively for Outrigger members for a lunch buffet and a view of the events from a front row seat.

Hula Grill is directly above Duke's on the second floor of the Outrigger Hotel. It has a covered lanai and fantastic views of the race course. The air conditioning, padded seats and buffet lunch make it a prime place to take in the events of the day. If you need more convincing, all you need to do is ask the 200+ members who took advantage of it last year.

Tickets will once again be pre-sold before the regatta, it will be for Outrigger members only and each person must have their own ticket. Children under age 5 are free. No tickets will be sold at the door on the day of the race. You must have purchased your tickets ahead of time – no exceptions.

Tickets will be \$25 each and will be made available along with a presale of Macfarlane T-Shirts on Saturdays, June 23th and June 30th for two hours beginning at 6 p.m. at the Club BBQ. Following that sales period, whatever tickets remain can be acquired by contacting Anthony and Siana Hunt.

This is rare and exclusive opportunity for Outrigger members to come and show their support for the Club in a comfortable environment. Be sure to mark your calendars for the ticket sales because they will likely sell out quickly.

We invite you to put on your "red and white", join us at Hula Grill or on the beach for a piece of the action and celebrate the 65th Walter J. Macfarlane Regatta!

