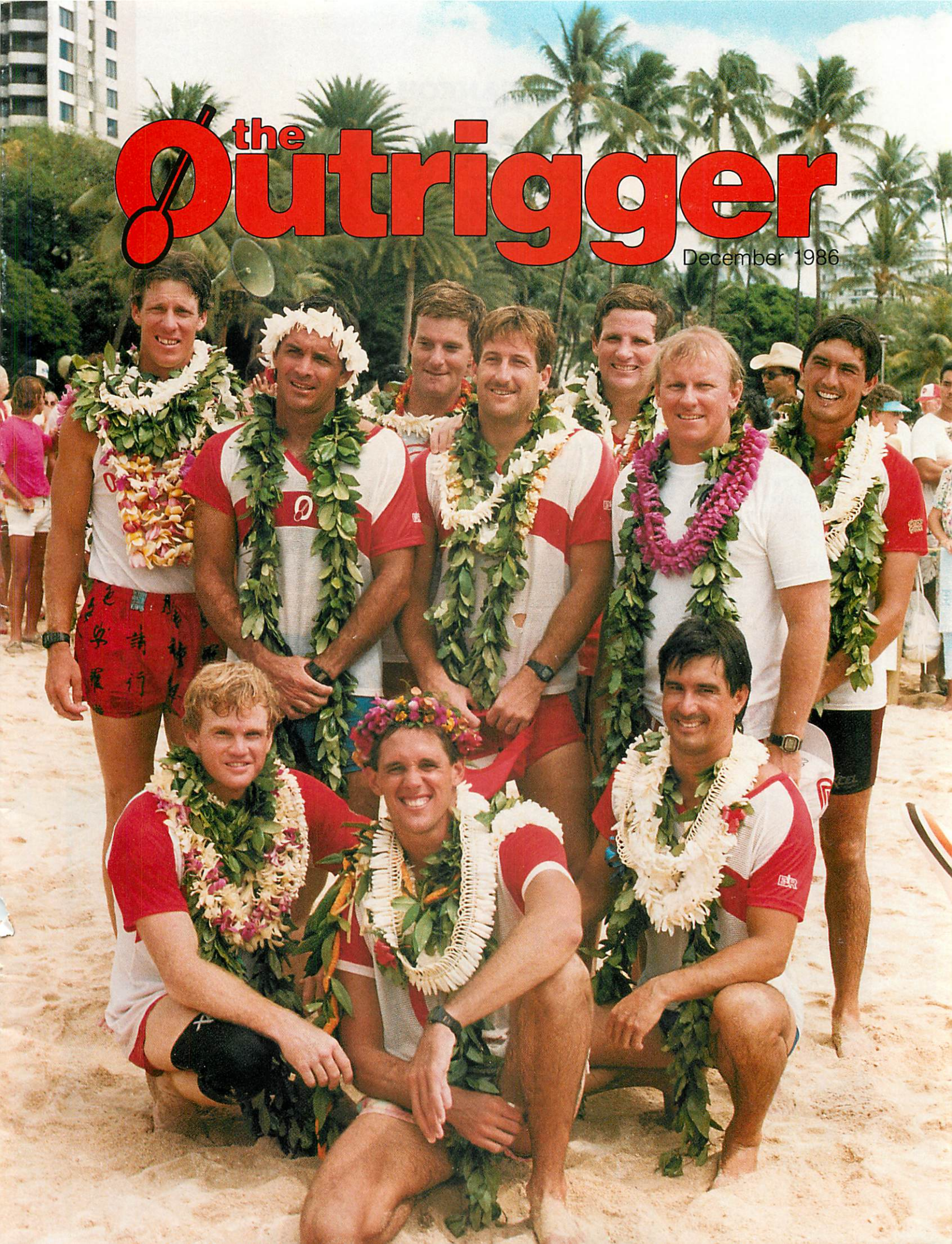


the Outrigger

December 1986



BANKOH MOLOKAI HOE 1986



Outrigger Brings Molokai Hoe Championship Back to Hawaii

By Steve Scott

The Bankoh Molokai Hoe is the premier outrigger canoe race in the world, attracting the top crews from the Mainland, Tahiti and Canada, as well as most Hawaiian canoe clubs.

With the largest field ever of 52 crews, 1986 was to be the toughest and most competitive race in recent years. Looking at the entry list, this was the year for select or all-star crews.

In 1985, Illinois Brigade stunned the canoeing world by winning the Molokai to Oahu Canoe Race. How could a crew from the Midwest win an outrigger canoe race in Hawaii? Yet looking beyond where they came from, their crew was made up of the top marathon canoe paddlers in the United States.

They were back in 1986, along with last year's second place Tahitian crew, two select crews from Tahiti, a hand

picked Offshore Canoe Club and Imua from California. By all press reports, the winner would be one of these crews, with no local crew being mentioned as a contender.

After last year's race, The Outrigger Canoe Club was supposed to be in a building year. Being considered the underdog or dark horse, we could build a serious contender without pressure.

Using this year's Senior Men's crew of Chris Kincaid, Mark Rigg, Walter Guild, Steve Van Lier Ribbink and Keone Downing as the nucleus, four additional paddlers could be added to complete an already strong crew.

It is a tribute to every paddler in the Men's program that this year's effort was so successful. The final four paddlers selected were Tom Conner, Bill Bright, Kainoa Downing and Scott Rolles.

In order to be prepared for Molokai, the men's long distance race schedule started with the Catalina to Newport Canoe Race. This is the only race where The Outrigger Canoe Club is exposed to Mainland crews we will eventually meet in Molokai.

This year, the two Tahiti select crews were there, and while Outrigger finished third behind Tahiti #1 and Imua, we were encouraged with our showing having had only two weeks of practice together.

It also provided the incentive and direction our training for Molokai should take. Following this race, the Outrigger placed first in both Kona and the Skippy race on Oahu. Our next race was Molokai, which we approached with guarded optimism.

The first order of business on Molokai was for the advance crew to prepare our racing canoe Onipa'a, and



Flashing victory signs, Outrigger's jubilant paddlers pose with their trophies and prizes. Front, Scott Rolles, Coach Steve Scott, Bill Bright and Mark Rigg. Rear, Kainoa Downing, Keone Downing, Chris Kincaid, Tom Conner, Walter Guild and Steve Van Lier Ribbink.

Photos by Marilyn Kali

get the escort boats to Hale O' Lono. By Saturday afternoon the equipment and crew were ready to race, and Sunday morning couldn't come soon enough. Race day started with breakfast at 5 a.m. and by 6:30 we were at Hale O' Lono taking care of last minute preparations.

The race started at 7:30, with the Outrigger positioned on the outside, away from the All-star crews on the inside.

At Laau Point, 30 minutes into the race, Outrigger was in eighth place, having had to work our way to the inside line where the current was moving better.

The first change of paddlers was made, and we set our line directly for Koko Head. Within 20 minutes we

were in third place, but by this time the field was spreading out and relative position was getting harder to determine.

Our only encounter with another crew was with FFPP from Tahiti, last year's second place crew, at the 2 hour mark. They challenged us for 20 minutes, but we were able to pull away. This helped fire everyone up, and from then on we were by ourselves.

It was at the 3 hour mark that it became very evident to me that we were going to win the race. We had the better line, and had paddled ourselves into the lead. We were also encouraged by reports from our reserve Whaler and eyes on the ocean, Kala Judd, as to our position relative to Ta-

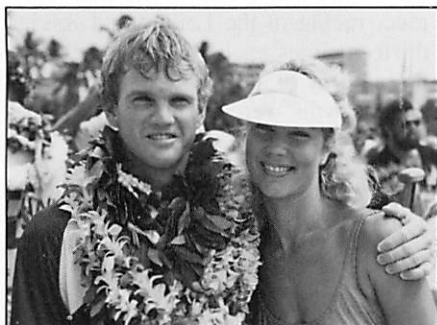
hiti #1.

As we passed Koko Head, the race officials finally acknowledged that Outrigger was in the lead, and the flotilla of boats closed in behind us.

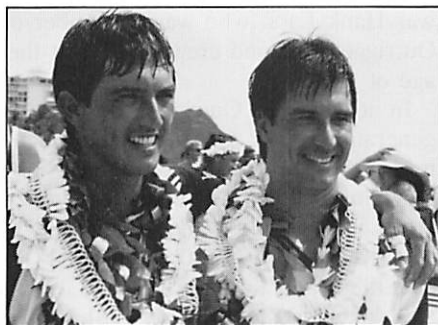
The Outrigger Canoe Club was back. By all reports we had won a race we weren't supposed to win, in sea conditions that should have favored crews from Tahiti and the Mainland.

We had paddled a canoe that was equal to but no better than what every other crew had. The determining factor was the crew, whose hard work and determination to win Molokai started last April.

The Outrigger Canoe Club can be proud of this effort, as I am, and look forward to next year's Bankoh Molokai Hoe. ☺



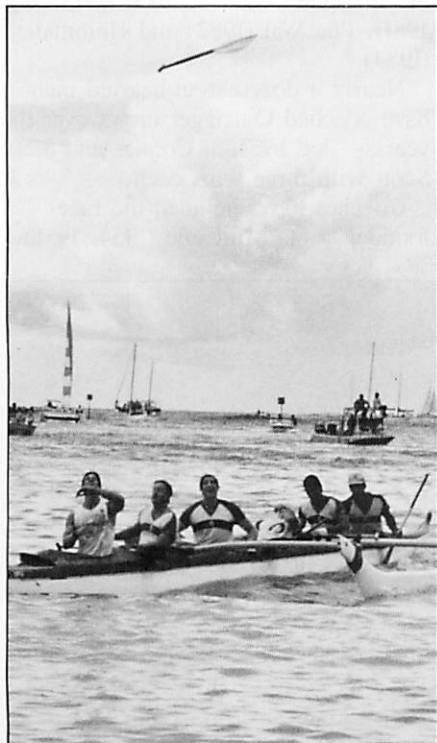
Scott Rolles is greeted by wife Susu after making his first crossing.



Kainoa and Keone Downing kept a family tradition alive.



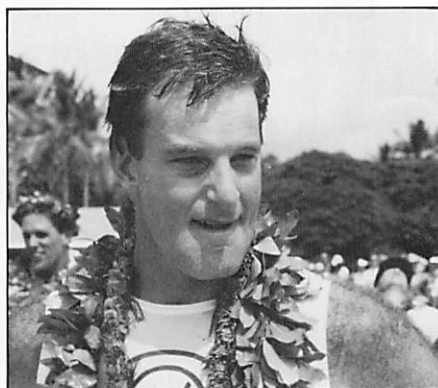
Chris Kincaid is welcomed by wife Genie.



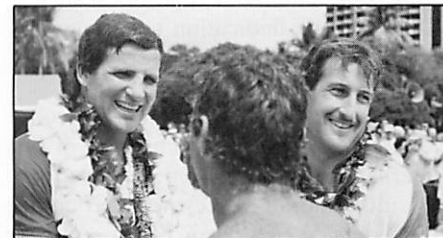
Walter Guild tosses his paddle high into the air after Outrigger won the 1986 Bankoh Molokai Hoe in 5:27:45.



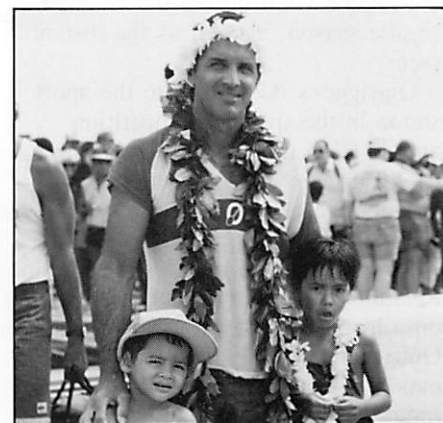
Mark Rigg's family was waiting at Fort DeRussy for him.



Bill Bright has competed in eleven Molokai races and won five.



Wellwisher congratulates Steve Van Lier Ribbink and Chris Kincaid.



Tom Conner's sons were happy to have him home. It was Conner's 13th crossing and sixth win.