

Women Do Outrigger Proud in Na Wahine O Ke Kai

Photos by Twain Newhart

Outrigger entered four crews in the 2017 Na Wahine O Ke Kai Long Distance Canoe Race from Hale O Lono Harbor on Molokai to Duke Kahanamoku Beach in Waikiki on September 24. Four crews, but four very different journeys. Here are their stories.



OCC Open - *Manu Ula*

Amy Lawson Woodward, Tracy Phillips, Anella Borges, Mary Smolenski, Shannon O'Neill, Nahoku Keala, Angie Dolan, Kahala Schneider, Julie Aio, Jennifer Fratzke. Overall: 3rd Place. Time: 6:00:41. Canoe: *Manu Ula*.

Open - *Manu Ula*

By Amy Lawson

"You can't always get what you want. . . But if you try some-time you find . . . You get what you need."

This year, the *Manu Ula* crew had an interesting channel crossing. While most of our crew would have probably preferred to get what we wanted during the Na Wahine O Ke Kai (total victory/world domination), the reality is that our team got so much more out of this race: we got what we needed.

What did we need? Well, first off, maturity. We are generally a young crew. And for most of the 2017 distance season, we had started races extremely well, finding ourselves in or near the lead. But the Na Wahine was a different beast, and off the line, our crew found itself in unfamiliar territory; sitting in around fifth or sixth place at La'au Point.

We were a little baffled. But... no one panicked and no one freaked out. We responded as if there was only one path for us to take: we would have a much better second half of the race. And that we did.

We also got to learn about how much fight we had in us. An hour and a half from the finish, an interesting race for second place started shaping up, and we were the ones that made it interesting. In the channel, Outrigger Australia, a team which outmatched us in size, had been running a more inside line (closer to Oahu) and had a four to five-minute lead on us. We were south of them, and behind, but we were surfing well. And I think we all knew and believed that we were going to get a chance to beat them.

After chasing Australia for hours, we finally pulled up next to them in our home waters out front of the Club. We had made up for our lack of size in our surfing efficiency. But, we had picked a fight with a dog twice our size. In the flat waters of Waikiki, their size was an advantage. Both crews laid it all on the line. We battled neck and neck with Australia across the bay, with our two canoes kissing as we rounded the buoy outside of Kaiser's at Hilton Hawaiian Village. At the end, we finished just behind the Australians, but we won so much respect for our teammates as everyone in the crew gave of themselves completely to keep it close.

Let's be real. It's not always fun to get the things you need out of racing instead of the things you want. While none of us were shooting for a third-place finish overall, after reflecting and

debriefing, we found ourselves extremely happy with what we had accomplished as a crew. We are looking forward to getting back into the boat soon (after a quick break), and building on this season. Our journey is not over.



OCC Koa

Front: Lindsay Shinall, Malia Gacutan. Back: Maggie Parks, Colleen Hall, Malia Boyd, Hilary Denison, Karin Hansen Del Rey, Marie Martel, Jenn Lee, Paula Crabb, Liat Porter. Overall: 14th Place: Koa Division: 1st Place. Time: 6:31:59. Canoe: *Leilani*.

Koa - *Leilani*

By Karin Hansen Del Rey

Let me tell you the story of *Leilani*, our canoe. She is a beauty. One cannot look upon her without stepping back in awe. She is a bright, golden brown, with a shiny, slim nose and a sleek trim. She carried 10 amazing women who paddled her across the Ka'iwi channel, through the rough current, and surfed her home. This was a journey of miracles and wonder.

Leilani jumped at the start. We paddled with all our heart and soul and found ourselves right up in the top four crews. Then, we hit the current. At this time of the day, the ocean was running against the canoe, and she felt like a log. I say this with all due respect, and reverence (of course!) We really had to persevere and paddle with all our might to move the boat through the ocean. After 45 arduous minutes, the first crew could make a change.

Four women climbed into the escort boat with our trusty captain, Jim Beaton, and our steadfast crew coach, Colleen Hall, when I heard Marie Martel exclaim, "Ouch!" She had stepped on a bee, and been stung. Unfortunately, Marie is severely allergic to bees. Fortunately, she remembered to bring her EpiPen.

This is when things got interesting. In the words of my first time Molokai crew mate, Jenn Lee, "I have been EMT trained and the only thing I saw worse than this was a gunshot wound." Yeah, we're incredibly lucky. If she didn't have that EpiPen or had she needed two it would have gotten really scary really fast.

Giving the shot was the easy part - once I figured out the safety cap LOL! It's a good thing we were all there to help alleviate the stress. I don't know if you believe in God, but that was a miracle.

Marie was a trooper. She was a goddess. She got right back into the canoe to continue to race for the rest of the channel. We all gave our best effort. Poor Jim, he's witnessed everything from boobs to booties, but is always so nonchalant and gentlemanly about our female escapades!

So, we got down to business. The crew worked together seamlessly and rode the beautiful *Leilani* through the channel

to Moanalua Bay. This is when the conditions became really fun. *Leilani* loves to surf! We gathered our breath as six women working together, leaned forward, hit the front of the stroke, and that canoe surfed all the way home to Waikiki. It was glorious!

Our crew was superb. The take away from this experience, is that we were honored and privileged to paddle in a beautiful wa'a, and we worked together to have a fast, fun race. Our coach, Johnny Puakea, always asserted, "Fast is fun." He's right! Well done, *Leilani*. Well done team. We crossed the finish line at 6:31, first Koa canoe, and I swear, *Lelani* was smiling!



OCC Masters 55

Front: Debbie Deshais, Genie Kincaid, Marcie Nowack, Lisa Livingston. Back: Joan Bennet, Kim Heyer, Mary Quinn, Tana Feeley, Anne Perry, Wendy Wichman, Laurie Lawson, Katy Bourne. Overall: 24th Place. Masters 55 Division: 2nd Place. Time: 6:47:31. Canoe: *Kapua*.

Masters 55 - Kapua

By Genie Kincaid

The Masters Women finished a successful regatta (sprint) season coaching themselves and decided to continue to distance season under their own leadership. Led by steersmen, Wendy Wichman and Anne Perry, they were supported by the Open Women's program, which provided whaler support and some invaluable coaching sessions by John Puakea and Liz Perry.

The distance season is comprised of three races. The masters finished a close second in the 55s Division at Dad Center; first in the 50s Division at E Lau Hoe; and second in the 55s Division for the Na Wahine O Ke Kai championship.

Steersman Anne Perry observed, "These woman stepped out of the box, they believed. They never, never gave up, and paddled their hearts out. (Throughout the season) they welcomed change, fresh ideas, and incorporated disciplines and training strategies from an endurance sport philosophy. They worked on all facets of themselves individually and as a team/tribe. It became about the greater whole versus the "I". It was an honor and a privilege to train, race, and embrace excellence with these women."

And everywhere along the line, these ladies knew how to have fun. The crew extends sincere mahalo to Geoff Graf and Chris Kincaid, who took time from their training schedules (both raced the Molokai Ho'e on October 8) to provide indispensable escort support for the race; to Athletic Director Shannon Pelkey for all her efforts coordinating and organizing all the logistics, equipment, and supplies necessary for the crew to execute at race time; to the Open Men for their assistance with post-race refreshments (these guys make a mean vegetarian chili!!) and care and maintenance of the canoes and equipment; and to the Canoe Racing Committee for the infinite hours of planning all the details to get our crew to the starting line.

And last but not least, to our Outrigger Canoe Club family for all their support, be it a fragrant lei, or kind encouragement, thank you for the privilege to race and represent you in the sport

of Hawaiian outrigger canoe racing. We felt your support all the way!



OCC Open - Henry Keawe Ayau

Annmarie Mizuno , Keely Carey, Ashley Kruse, Coach Liz Perry, Kelsey Barden, Malia Hirschmann, Ayako Anchetta, Pam Davis, Christen Kam, Leela Goldstein, Kau'i Robello. Overall: 31st Place. Open Division: 19th Place. Time: 6:57:02. Canoe: *Henry Keawe Ayau*.

Open - Henry Keawe Ayau

By Ashley Kruse

My first Kaiwi Channel race began with a proper send-off from a strong, pepper-haired Hawaiian woman with a warm voice. She recalled paddling from Oahu to Molokai with her girlfriends in 1975. It was the first time women had ever paddled the channel. They had no shoes and didn't pack for their stay on Molokai. And, she chuckled, they did it because the men told them that they couldn't.

Her story of courage and love for the ocean brought tears to my eyes, and later gave me the motivation to get through the brutal third quarter. The race itself was grueling at times and euphoric in others.

My thoughts rolled in my consciousness as much as waves rose and fell. I thought mostly about pivotal people in my life, moving past the physical pain, and correct paddling form.

Finishing the 42-miles felt electric! The flower lei smelled particularly sweet when we got to shore. After finishing, I have gained a great respect for the disciplined training that the race requires. However, my biggest take away has been the awesomeness of women supporting other women. I feel a part of something bigger than myself, a sisterhood of fearless water women.

CUTTING-EDGE LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR TEENS/TWEENS
WINNERS' CAMP
LIFE SKILLS TRAINING FOR TEENAGERS
PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS!
Ho'omaikai'ana
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR WINNERS' CAMP SUMMER 2017 GRADUATES AND LEADERS.
IMPROVED GRADES
GOAL ACHIEVEMENT
FUN, FRIENDS & FAMILY
ASK US ABOUT CONDUCTING SEMINARS & YOUTH RETREATS AT WINNERS' CAMP!
CONTACT US: WINNERSCAMP.COM