

The Original NCOCA Six in 1978 & First Regattas

The origins and founding of the NCOCA goes back to the year 1978. This was a time when the Northern California Hawaiian Community yearned to revive their beloved sport of Hawaiian Outrigger Racing here on the mainland. The community fundraised and worked hard to secure and build their canoes from the Malia molds that were proliferating in the late 1970s.

Today these Malia that founded the NCOCA are still on the water. They are revered and respected because they gave birth to the NCOCA. The mantra in the 1970s was "Build it and they will come!" At today's Malia regatta, you may recognize "Kehaulani and "Kaimanu II" who continue to have the racing spirit and are still racing today. But more on our founding Malia in a later chapter.

The birth of the NCOCA was more about community and a longing to bring a piece of the home islands to the mainland. Hawaiians far and wide would come and support the NorCal community and its desire to paddle. Talk story turned into desire, and desire turned into plans to form an outrigger canoe association. First thing was to build a fleet of canoes and second was where to race and paddle? It was a natural inclination for the Hawaiian to paddle in salt ocean water, but with a rugged and cold coastline where would they find a safe place to race the Malia?

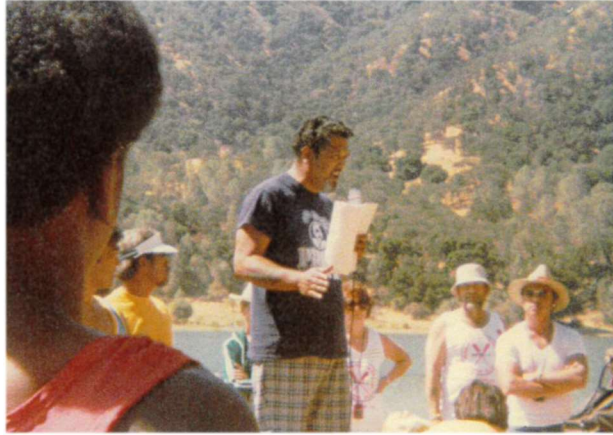
In 1978 the first unofficial regatta was hosted by newly formed Kaimanu, and held at Princeton Harbor, Half Moon Bay. Though hosted by a canoe club, it was a community effort with all six clubs working together to figure out how to run a regatta. It was hard work, but the allure of the ocean and beach was so great that they did find a way.

Yes, competition was a big part of the drive, but those summer months in 1978, was also centered around *Aloha* and *Ohana*. It still is today! With the first regatta a success and the early foundations of running a regatta set, a second Labor Day regatta that same summer was set just down the beach at Pillar Pt Beach.

Some of us still remember the days when regattas were two day affairs of disco dancing on the sand, milk jugs for turn lanes, shifting currents and fog covered lanes off Pillar Pt in Half Moon Bay. Harsh by today's standards, we did not know any better, and simply enjoyed our summers paddling.

It would be two days of eating as founding clubs offered BBQ and Hawaiian favorites to anyone who walked the beach buffet line. No need for ice as the cold weather of Pillar Pt would keep the beer cold. Beer bets and grudge matches would result in loud cheering for their crews.

As the races finished for the day, the keiki enjoyed the evening by the bon fires roasting wieners and marshmallows. But it was off to moi moi land as chaperons and curfews ensured our keiki were ready for racing the next day. The rest stayed up into the wee hours of the night talking story, and Kanikapila into the night by the fire. Today some of those keiki are now running their own respective outrigger canoe club, and their keiki now paddling...paddling is in our blood and DNA.



Vernon Ha'o leading the Coach's Meeting, Lake Del Valle, Livermore circa 1979. Vernon was from SoCal and instrumental in helping the fledgling NCOCA set the foundations of hosting a regatta in 1978. Photo Credit Debbie Green, NCOCA

The next morning was Sunday and the second day of racing. You would hear the Race Chair, Ray DeCoito, yell "Paddles on the Gunwales" followed by "Ready All" and then "Go". And before the crews landed on the beach, the protests would begin in earnest. Back then there were no Official NCOCA Race Rules. But because of those first races, we now have today's Official Race Rules...the result of progress and innovation that would follow since 1978.

The 1970s Northern California Hawaiian Community was a close knit group with a profound respect and appreciation for their culture and traditions. It was Ray De Coito, who grew up paddling in Hawaii, and would collectively encourage and gather others to form the Northern California Outrigger Canoe Association or NCOCA starting in 1977. Ray would eventually be appointed to lead the NCOCA as its first President.

Gabe Young, Co-founder of Kaimanu, served as the first NCOCA Treasurer. Gabe paddled with Waikiki Surf since he was a child and knew the rules from his paddling days. Others included Oliver Kalaau, Co-founder Kaimanu, who paddled and coached Kawaihae Canoe Club Big Island. Another was Vernon Ha'o from Ventura Canoe Club supported and helped the NCOCA.

Arma Fonseca, was appointed Secretary, and would also write the NCOCA Newsletter "Paddling Around" that was circulated to the various canoe clubs and to individuals interested in the Hawaiian Outrigger. Arma Fonseca was also editor and owner of the "California Hawaiian News." Arma would write excellent recaps of the NCOCA races, events, parties, who won, who got married to whom, and all things Hawaiian. Arma would also eventually head the NCOCA and found the Ke Anuenue Outrigger Canoe Club in 1980.

The goal then and today remains to perpetuate the history and culture of our people, and to revive the sport of outrigger canoe racing. Our founding Kapuna did a tremendous job in difficult situations to build what we take for granted but enjoy today...racing a Malia in the cold choppy waters of our windy San Francisco Bay in April with no covers and big Hawaii Five-0, style paddles. Today those 6 original clubs now number 21 and we are still growing and perpetuating.

We are forever grateful to those that have gone before us as we stand tall due to these names, De Coito, Young, Kalaau, Ha'o, Fonseca, and many others not mentioned. They brought their childhood experiences of Hawaii to share with generations to come. Much Mahalo to these Hawaiians and their contribution to who we've become today.

So, who knows the original 6 NCOCA clubs and which ones are still in existence today? Below are the original 6. But in 1978 there was only one regatta. It was a 2 day event and only 5 canoe clubs raced. The 6th original canoe club, Hui O' Sacramento, did not race in the 1978 inaugural race, but worked feverishly to complete the build of their canoes.

1. Hui O Ke Kai Outrigger Canoe Club
2. Kaimanu Canoe Club
3. Ehulani Youth Group
4. Holo Wa'a Pa'a OCC
5. Hui Wa'a O San Jose
6. Hui O' Sacramento (founding member, but did not race in 1978-1979)

Over the years I would meet some of our founding Kapuna at "Ia Oe Ka La" Hula Competition at Pleasanton or the Foster City May Day Polynesian Festival. They would come up to us and talk story. I always enjoy their stories on the efforts to build canoes to be a part of the fledgling NCOCA. They are amazed at how far we've come in numbers and level of competition. I always give my Aloha and gratitude for their efforts in achieving their objective...to perpetuate the traditions and cultures of Hawaiian Outrigger Canoe racing. They succeeded and are a testament to the Polynesian voyager and explorer who sail to new lands in search of adventure and opportunity while never forgetting where they came from. It is now in our hands to keep it going...Imua!

I hoped you liked this story and hope to write more with your kokua. Mahalo to Debbie Green for the endless archive of pictures and stories. Stay tuned for the next chapter in this series entitled "The Race to Build the NCOCA's Malia Fleet" followed by "The NCOCA's First Full Year of Racing 1979." – Bernie "Ihitaiaara" Bernal

The Original NCOCA Clubs Racing in 1978

Photo Credits - Debbie Green, NCOCA



Hui Wa'a O' San Jose Outrigger Canoe Club



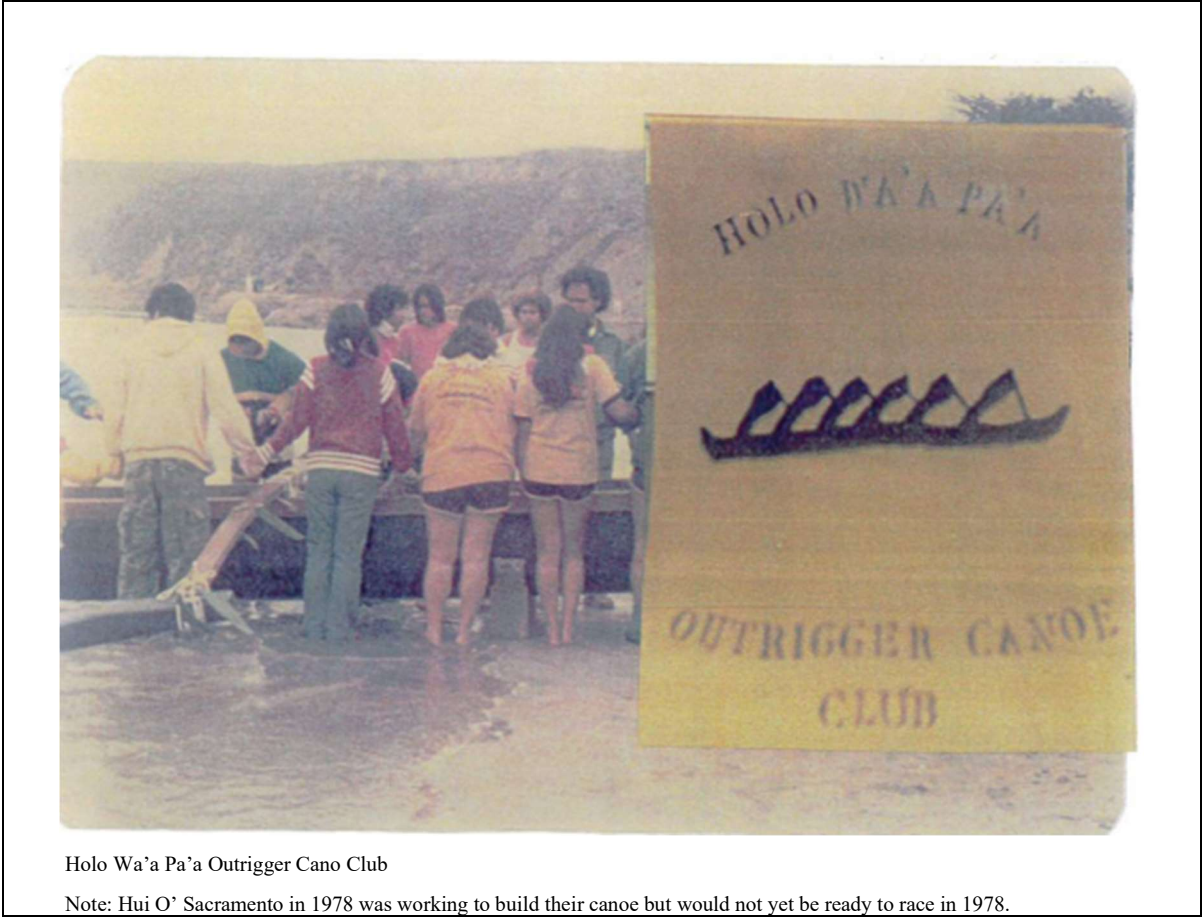
Kaimanu Canoe Club – Kaimanu II, Pillar Pt, Half Moon Bay with Hanale I in the background



Ehulani Youth Group – Hanale I and her paddlers



Hui O' Ke Kai – Kehaulani and the big Hawaiian style paddles



Holo Wa'a Pa'a Outrigger Cano Club

Note: Hui O' Sacramento in 1978 was working to build their canoe but would not yet be ready to race in 1978.

Post 1978 Season Letter from Ray De Coite, NOCA President

Photo Credits - Debbie Green, NCOCA



NCOCA
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA OUTRIGGER
CANOE ASSOCIATION

3625 Bercaw Lane, San Jose, Ca. 95124

September 11, 1978

TO: Gabe Young, President
KAIMANU CANOE CLUB
2536 Lancaster Court
Hayward, Ca. 94542

Dear Gabe:

The Association would like to thank Vice President Oliver Kalaau, the members, their families and friends of the KAIMANU CANOE CLUB who helped to make the recent Labor Day weekend outing at Pillar Point Harbor, Princeton, Half Moon Bay, another successful outing. Oliver did a fine job while you were away.

Special thanks go to the host club HUI O KE KAI and their Vice President Fred Siarot who was in charge of the preparations. Vice President Siarot and his Committee had an awesome task of making sure that everything went smoothly. They certainly did a first rate job from the beginning to the end.

The spaces allotted to the other outrigger canoe clubs proved satisfactory to everyone. The youngsters enjoyed the bonfire and weiner and marshmallow roast. They especially enjoyed dancing on the sand to the disco sounds transmitted from Strade Lua's van. Strade's with Hui O Ke Kai.

This was the second unofficial regatta held under the auspices of the Association and, thanks to the combined efforts of the six (6) clubs comprising the Association, the regatta was both exciting and successful.

Also, the Association Race Committee made its debut. There were many problems and racing protests lodged by both the officials and coaches of the various clubs; however, it is hoped that these problems were resolved to the satisfaction of the clubs concerned.

The Race Committee is now aware of what lies ahead for them when the official regatta season opens in 1979. As soon as they elect a Race Chairman, they will be busy drafting the NCOCA Official Race Rules.

Kaimanu Canoe Club was the overall winner of the unofficial regatta, scoring a total of fifty-three (53) points. They won 9 first places, 2 second places, and 2 fourth places. Standings for the other clubs are as follows:

Hui Wa'a O San Jose	40 points
Hui O Ke Kai	35 points
Ehulani's Youth Group	18 points
Holo Wa'a Pa'a	10 points

The Association is grateful to the individuals listed below for their time and effort expended on the regatta:

NCCOA Race Committee

Clayton Park, Kaimanu Canoe Club
Ed Fonseca, Hui Wa'a O San Jose
Herb Hew Len, Hui O Ke Kai
Ruth Manaois, Holo Wa'a Pa'a
J.D. Wilson, Ehulani's Youth Group

Official Race Starter

John Kellett, Head Starter, Hui Wa'a O San Jose
Ben Munar Sr., Asst, Hui Wa'a O San Jose
Frank Abigana, Asst, Hui Wa'a O San Jose

Official Race Clerks

Kiki Place, Head Clerk, Hui O Ke Kai
Arma Fonseca, Asst, Secretary, NCCOA

Timers

Audrey Elderts, Head Timer, Kaimanu Canoe Club
Doreen Williams, Holo Wa'a Pa'a
June Mock, Hui O Ke Kai
Frank Abigana, Hui Wa'a O San Jose

Turn Flag Officials (West)

Clayton Pao, Head Official, Kaimanu Canoe Club
Lorna Rawlins, Ehulani's Youth Group
Rose Earle, Hui O Ke Kai
Delores Gee, Hui O Ke Kai
Janet Baptiste, Kaimanu Canoe Club
Lorraine Kakalia, Kaimanu Canoe Club

Turn Flag Judge (East)

Albert Ross, Head Judge, Hui Wa'a O San Jose
Laverne Madeira, Ehulani's Youth Group
Marie Wilson, Ehulani's Youth Group
Pat Cameron, Holo Wa'a Pa'a
Linda Moi, Hui O Ke Kai

PA System

Dodo Alesna, Hele On and Kaimanu Canoe Clubs
(Dodo and Ed Fonseca alternated as emcees
during both race days.)

Herb and Bea Hew Len, Hui O Ke Kai, donated the MacDonald coupons for the Lollipop Race winning crew. The ribbons awarded to the first, second and third place winners in this same event were made and donated by Venus Goodiell, Hui O Ke Kai club member.

Silver platters awarded to Kaimanu Canoe Club who was declared the overall winner and to Hui Wa'a O San Jose who placed second, were donated by Fred O'Riley and Yvonne Mayorga, Hui O Ke Kai.

Eddie Hookano, Kaimanu Canoe Club booster, generously donated two cases of beer to the winner of the Makule Race held Sunday.

The Association would also like to thank Don Fredriksen of Balboa Outrigger Club, Newport Beach, who drove up here to join us. He had hoped to bring one crew to compete with our paddlers but didn't have enough time to finalize his plans. Don participated in two race events, serving as a steersman for a Hui Wa'a O San Jose crew, and as a paddler with another Hui Wa'a O San Jose crew. He made many friends and everyone enjoyed talking to him. We look forward to meeting more of the paddlers from Southern California.

Remember, this was only our second regatta and since we didn't look too bad, we should pat ourselves on the back for a job well done!

Aloha,

RAYMOND W. DE COITO
President