



By Ron Haworth

Riddle:

What spends approximately eight months of the year in dry dock and four in wet dock?

Answer:

Kekumuhoe'ana... OCC paddling trainer

HOE WA'A MAU

History usually records precisely dates of inventions. Eli Whitney's cotton gin in 1793 separating cotton fiber from the seeds, Alexander Graham Bell's first phone call in 1876, and Alexander Fleming's 1928 drug penicillin are epic examples.

But the forerunner to today's pioneering *Kekumuhoe'ana* challenges conflicting modern memories, however, evidence strongly suggests it was late 1971 when John Cline Mann and Mike Holmes put their heads together to build *Kekumuhoe'ana*, (translated), "the teacher of the canoe."

"Cline and I discussed how much time was lost in training new paddlers when five sat idle to correct the technique of one," Holmes explained. "Why not a trainer seating two?" But when Cline, who at the time was on the Board of Directors, presented the idea to the BOD the response was tepid and felt by many as unnecessary.

"I was an assistant coach under Mark Buck and many on the BOD had never coached and it was a hard sell" Holmes continued. "So Cline and I decided to design and build the trainer in near secrecy and present the finished product for evaluation. We asked Keith Wallace, who was an engineer serving on the Building and Grounds Committee, to help us in the design features. We knew we had several technical obstacles to overcome and Wallace's engineering background would be helpful."

Better Than Brinks

Cline and Mike enlisted the aid of Keone Downing and Mike Mason and the foursome set about finding a secure location to "invent" Hawaii's first stationary canoe trainer. Holmes fittingly volunteered his place of work the Hermann Safe Company warehouse on Koapaka Street near the airport.

"George Downing had taught me how to make a mold and float a canoe off it and so our first goal was to "borrow" a three man to make a mold," Holmes said. "Cline made arrangements with the beach attendants to load and trailer a 22-foot long canoe so work could begin. But when it hadn't shown up by the appointed hour I got worried and made several phone calls only to learn the guys hadn't tied the canoe down well enough and it fell off in front of Ala Moana Center during rush hour!"

The crew was broken into pairs with Mason helping Holmes fiberglass while Downing and Cline made the tank which was to hold the water. Domie Gose remembers that section was done onsite in the garage maintenance room behind a curtain, and because he began his OCC career in August 1971 it agrees with Mike's recollection it was late '71 the work progressed. Dale Hope was on the mainland and remembers



Cline Mann invented the trainer in the 1970s.

receiving a letter from Cline with a hand drawn sketch of the trainer in 1970.

"Wallace engineered the tank," Holmes explained. "He calculated what the water pressure would be on the outside verticals, how far apart the 2x4's had to be to hold that kind of weight against a vertical surface, how to prevent backwash and how to decrease resistance with the training paddle."

No Bingo

"At first it didn't work too well as the standard paddle built up too much water on its surface in the first few strokes and the backwash was ridiculous," Holmes admitted. "The solution was to router out the training paddle blade for less resistance and install Formica circular forms on each side under the "hull" to get the water traveling in a circle on both sides of the canoe. Once this was done it had the forward motion feel of a canoe."

The completed *Kekumuhoe'ana* was assembled at the bottom of the driveway next to the employee's locker room and a demonstration was arranged for BOD; seeing, it made good sense they approved and funded the trainer. Later it was moved to its present docking in the garage.

The championships and gold medals held dearly by so many who learned paddle technique in *Kekumuhoe'ana* will forever reward Cline for his inspiration.

Koa Log Shavings

Cline's trainer, leaking beyond repair, was replaced by one built by Domie Gose and dedicated March 4, 2004. Cline passed away in September 1996 and Domie poignantly remembers Cline's last visit to Outrigger when he stood before his beloved *Kekukuhoe'ana* with arms crossed submerged in memory, his aloha image reflected in the training mirror on what many think of as Cline's proudest Outrigger achievement and paddling contribution.



Mark Sandvold coaches two of his paddlers in the trainer.