

OCC Model Brings Back the Memories of Old Club

Photos by Steve Riede

Barbara Del Piano in front of the model she made of the old Club at Waikiki.

By Marilyn Kali

Many fond memories of the Outrigger Canoe Club at its old site in Waikiki were brought back to members in the form of a model created by Barbara Del Piano and which adorned the Lobby Display Case in August.

The model has met with raves from members much to Barbara's surprise and delight. "I've received phone calls and emails and so many people have approached me; some I know, some I don't know, to tell me how much they have enjoyed it.

"Of course the most touching compliments come from those who really remember the old Club. Several wahine actually told me they cried, remembering the good times we had there. More than one guy pointed to the big window in the bar and told stories about young rascals jumping out of that window. Truly, I never expected such an enthusiastic reaction. What a delightful surprise!"

Barbara says she got the idea for the model last year while looking through the Club's photo archives for a picture to use on the cover of the program for the Oldtimers' party.

"It gave me the idea of making a dimensional replica of it to advertise the Oldtimers' in 2007. I thought about it all year and had it in my head but wasn't sure how I would actually do it.

"I started with the dimensions, or I should say proportions. I'm not much at math but fortunately my son visited in June and helped me with that. The painting I was inspired by and most of the photographs show the Club at an angle and I started out doing it that way. But the math part got so complicated, especially when I realized that even the stripes on the awning decreased in size as it went backward.

"I got really discouraged and finally gave that up and started over from scratch, with a straight-on view. That made it so much easier. That's when it really started to be fun. I couldn't wait to get started each morning and during the night I dreamed of ways to do what I wanted to do."

Barbara says she looked at every photo she could find of the old Club and tried to incorporate as much of it as she could.

Other than the doll houses she made for her daughters when they were little, she says she had never done anything like this before. Her training as an interior decorator and some art classes over the years helped a bit. "I thought about it for months and collected things for it but I actually spent about two months working on it, full time," she said.

Nancy Quillin helped her cut out the coconut fronds and did a few faces on the "people". "I bugged Paul Dolman to death by email asking questions about where things were."

And about those people. Members have spent hours looking

at the faces in the display and trying to figure out who they might be. But, according to Barbara, the only real person in the display is Sally Hale behind the Outrigger Beach Services Desk.

"The others, Barbara says, "are just representative of the different types of people, from the summer coeds to the sun-burned haole tourists, to the beach boys, little kids playing on the beach and service men. I tried to get in the different styles of bathing suits of the era, the Linn's style Outrigger suits, palaka trunks, etc."

The basic clubhouse is made out of foam board and poster board, corrugated cardboard, plastic and colored papers. "I searched and searched for some artificial greenery that looked like Hau leaves but couldn't find any. Then my daughter suggested I try a pet shop and check out the aquarium plants. Sure enough, they had some with round leaves that were just right. I found different shades of heavy paper for the different skin colors and cut out snippets of prints from clothing catalogs for the shirts, blouses, etc."

The original plan for the model was for just the sky and main clubhouse. But Barbara says one of her favorite memories was floating on her back in the ocean in front of the Club and gazing at the mountains.

"So I decided I had to have mountains. Some movers left an enormous 12 foot long carton in the garage of my condominium and it was perfect. Then I knew it wouldn't be complete without a Hau Terrace so I added that and then put the volleyball court behind it with the boys' locker room behind that.

"Then when I thought I was finished I realized I had to have the surf board lockers on the Diamond Head side which would

of course provide a view of the Snack Shop. A few people have said they would have liked to see Richard behind the counter at the Snack Shop but I just put some people standing in front of him. I do say "in front of him" because I really did imagine Richard there; such a wonderful character!

Barbara built the model in her home office which she says wasn't easy. The counter was long enough but there are cupboards behind the counter and she couldn't open them for two months without moving the whole thing.

Everyone who has seen the model has been very impressed, and Barbara admits that when she saw it in the Display Case she was too. "I really didn't know how it would look when it was finished. There was no place I could actually assemble it until it went into the display case. So I was a bit nervous when Nancy and I got together one morning to install it, piece by piece.

"First, I found that the clubhouse was too big to fit in my car, but Mark Dias, OCC Maintenance Manager, came to my rescue and picked it up in the Club van. Then the maintenance men kindly removed the glass panels from the display case which made it so much easier to install. But even then, its not easy working in that cramped space. I was pleasantly surprised when it all came together."

As part of OCC Centennial in 2008, Barbara is now crafting a display of the first OCC clubhouse which consisted mostly of grass houses and a big lagoon, as well as the second clubhouse, two big dark green pavilions, which she remember vaguely.

"My neighbors in Manoa were the Ernest Stenbergs. His daughter Martha was my best friend so they often invited me to the Outrigger on weekends. Mrs. Stenberg would prepare a

continued on page 20





continued from page 19

great meal at the Uluniu and Martha and I would spend the day in the water or on the raft in the ocean in front of the Club.

"As part of the centennial celebration, we plan to display the grass house model in January, then the second one in mid-year and bring this one back sometime toward the end of the year. Of course people won't relate to the others like they have to this one but it should be interesting and amusing to see the progression of the clubhouses as well as bathing attire, etc."

"I hope that the models will provide members with some sense of the history and progression of the Outrigger Canoe Club from its humble beginnings to the great stature it enjoys today as a place to enjoy the ocean sports of old Hawaii.

"Thousands of Hawaii residents may not realize that the Outrigger Canoe Club and that little mahini haole from South Carolina, Alexander Hume Ford, are really responsible for the popularity of surfing and outrigger canoeing that rightfully are enjoyed in Hawaii today.

"And although it really gives away my age, I must admit I am one of the few people who actually remember "Pop" Ford. And to brag a bit, as a young teenager, I was sitting on an upside-down canoe near the beach entrance to the Club, and "Pop" came by and said "You have pretty knees." How about that!



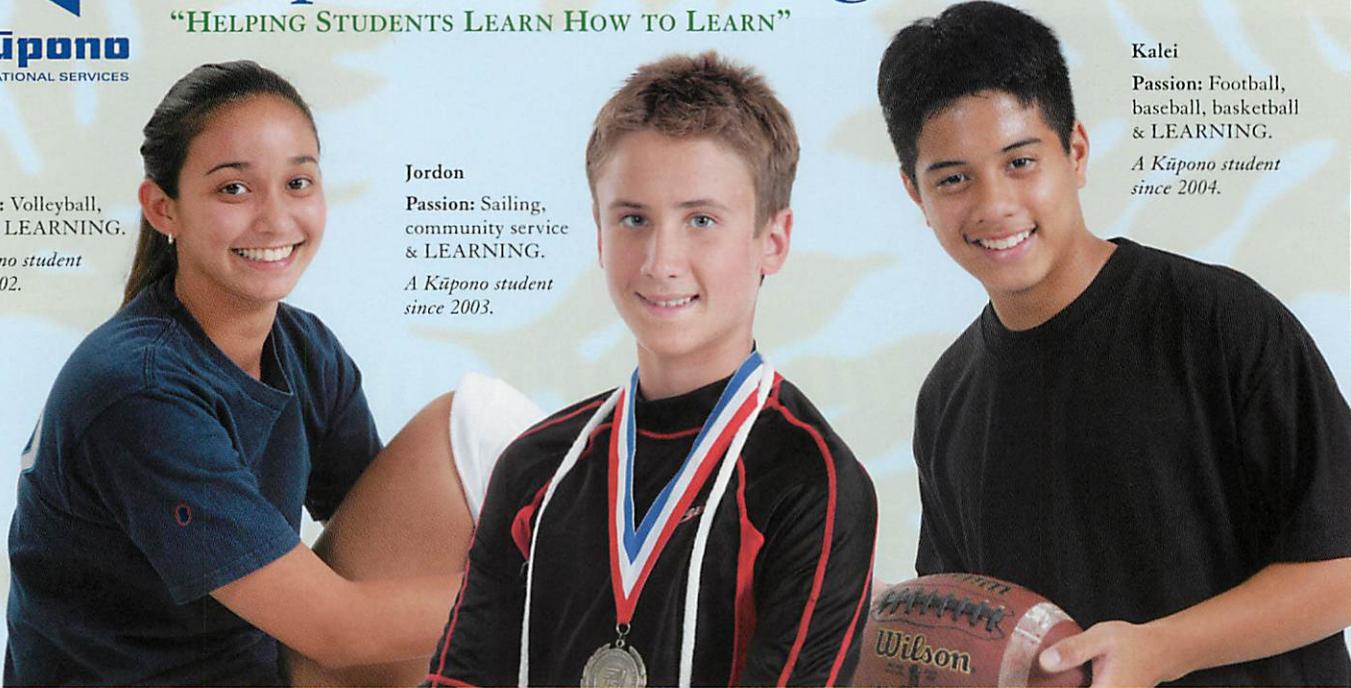
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