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'Fly while you still have your wings'

A do-it-yourself tour through 4 Hawaiian Islands

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

A brother and sister who pedaled 400 miles through four Hawaiian Islands completed a six-week trip for \$40 a day.

The requisites are a lot of stamina, a lot of preparation, and a few lucky breaks.

Mary Harmala is a French and German teacher in Farmington High School who is single and had the summer off to take the extended trip.

Doug Harmala, a Southfield resident and spring graduate of Lawrence Institute of Technology, took time for the long vacation prior to launching his career as an architect.

Opting for the do-it-yourself tour was best expressed, they said, on a T-shirt worn by a glider pilot who flew them along the shores of Oahu, a spot not accessible by bicycle.

The shirt read: "Fly while you still have your wings."

Miss Harmala commented, "What better time for us to fly?"

The two stopped and went as they chose, rented cars when it seemed the smart thing to do, adhered only to a very loose schedule, had no ahead of time reservations, "and didn't hold up a bus full of tourists if we wanted to stop to take a picture," Miss Harmala said.

TRAVELING LIGHT is a must, with 50-70 pounds maximum balanced well on the bike panniers, and even then, some things were thrown out, some left behind, and some stored with friends made along the way for short periods of time.

"We're not experienced bikers," Harmala said, "so we were even overloaded with brochures." But all of the brochures, either gotten beforehand or picked up along the way did let the two know what the terrain ahead was going to be.

Depending on that, interim transportation came by way of airplanes, gliders, helicopter, hitchhiking, rented cars, and for one day, roller skates, a popular way of getting around in Honolulu, through the rental of "road skates."

Overnights were spent in some motels, some camp sites, some hostels, and once, in the back yard of a church, "which had a priest who just happened to be a biker," Miss Harmala said.

"That's one of our experiences that comes under the heading of lucky breaks. He saved us \$50 for a hotel room that night because we arrived in that town too late to get a camping permit."

Another lucky break came from a motel owner who had one empty suite, way out of the bikers' price range.

"But she gave the rooms to us for a price we could easily pay, then brought us fresh mangos and plums as a gift for our breakfast," Miss Harmala said.

Another lucky break came when the two were given the free use of a car.

This offer came from a youth hostel hiking group who weren't sure two of its members could make it up a 4,000 foot elevation.

"We drove the girls up to the top, then had the car for the rest of the day for ourselves," Harmala said.

On another occasion they were invit-

ed to stay with an Hawaiian family as guests.

ALL OF THE literature the two accumulated prior to their journey warned of theft and of the "booles," the native born Hawaiian who is prejudiced against tourists in general and white ones in particular.

"But we experienced nothing but friendliness, from the people who gave us rides when we were hitchhiking, from the local shopkeepers, from the Hawaiians, from tourists, from the itinerant travelers, everybody," Miss Harmala said.

The two met a woman who had won a trip to Hawaii after a Pillsbury bake-off contest and just stayed there. They met a man who had run away from home when he was 11 and is still traveling.

They meet college students who are working their way traveling around the world, and a one-time Detroit executive who is now driving an ice cream truck in Maui, and happy with the laid-back life style.

"It was these kinds of things and these kinds of people that distinguished our trip from a tour," Miss Harmala said.

ONE OF THE spots the bikers got to see that only the most daring of motorists will go and tour buses are not allowed to go is the 55-mile trip in Maui up the Hana Highway.

"It was all uphill and headwinds all the way, with at least 600 twists and turns and across one lane bridges," Harmala said. "It brought us into the most lush jungles with waterfalls and pools and the most spectacular scenery and view in the world."

Another spectacular venture was through the Haleakala Crater, but only for the hairy.

A rented car brought them up 40 miles from sea level in time to see the sunrise at 4 a.m. From there the two biked 2,000 feet down into the crater through switchback and hairpin trails.

"If we hadn't done all that biking before I don't think we would have made it," Harmala said. "My legs were sore



Doug Harmala and his sister Mary don rain gear for the showers that come and go quickly from the clouds that drift through Haleakala crater, the world's largest dormant volcano. The two hiked 14 of the

30 miles of trails made for hikers and horseback riders. They stand about 3,000 feet below the surrounding peaks.

the next day but Mary could hardly walk."

Even so, the two could name but one edge the motorist has over the biker, and that only during the sugar cane burning season.

The smoke from the burning might cause a little visibility problem to the motorist, but on a bike our eyes watered and we coughed, I think, for about 30 miles," Miss Harmala said.

MARY HARMALA suggests "Bicycling in Hawaii," by Robert Immler (Wanderlust Press) for any one who wants to make their own itinerary for the islands.

She also advises to write for anything pertinent from the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. or the applicable Hawaii state departments.

On a whim she wrote to the mayor of Honolulu who got her in touch with the

state's Chief of Information, and the couple had a personal tour of the city.

"Most people write for a map and that's that," she quoted the city official as saying, then added, "Yet, he seemed honestly pleased to meet us and show us around."

Miss Harmala suggests visitors not overlook airport information booths.

"They are loaded with valuable information that removed a lot of guesswork for us, she said."

Another suggestion is that if the alone-traveler ever gets stuck for anything, contact the nearest church of your own denomination.

"We had to do that once," Miss Harmala said. "There was only one Lutheran Church listed in the phone book in that town. We called for information about a place to stay, and were invited into a family's home for four nights as their guests."



Mary Harmala took this picture of one of The Seven Sacred Pools while her brother was getting ready to join local people, as well as visitors, for a dip in the popular swimming spot within the jungles on Maui.



Along the Hana Highway, just east of Kahului on Maui, Doug Harmala stops at a look-out point near a wind-blown tree and sugar cane fields to get a view from a 10,000 foot elevation.

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