

TRAVEL

Wonderful Hawaii

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"I wonder," said my seat mate thoughtfully as we looked at the snowy runways on our approach to Metro Airport last March. "I wonder if anyone gets off the plane, turns right around and asks for a ticket back to Hawaii."

The idea of heading back to this paradise was especially tempting after a 10-day stay that included an American Hawaii cruise among four islands — Oahu, Kauai, Maui and Hawaii, which is also known as "the big island."

Much of the uneventful night back on Northland had been spent listening to passengers debate which of the four was the "best" island.

That would be a tough debate to win. In my travels, from Alaska to the Virgin Islands, no other state provides opportunities for such varied contrasts in climate or activities. The islands hold something for everyone, from the lush greenery of Kauai to the moonscape of a dormant volcano on Maui to the snow-capped Mauna Loa on Hawaii.

Snow skiing in Hawaii? Yes, it's possible in winter on Mauna Kea — at an elevation of 13,700 feet.

In contrast are the picture-postcard beaches for sunning or catching the 20-foot waves offshore on Oahu in December. Visitors can look up at the largest telescopes on earth, look down at living coral while snorkeling and watch out for humpback whales playing at sea. There is, of course, much more.

The people, the culture

If travelers look only for the typical tourist sites, however, they will miss much of what the islands are all about. There is the temperance of the island people, which is as mild as the temperature. Both vary little from season to season or subject to subject. Even when a native Hawaiian gets passionate about his heritage or protecting the



Offshore beauty: The island of Mokolii offshore Oahu is a way station for those who want to catch a wave. Watch out, warns a tour guide, for gray shadows swimming beneath you.

state's environment, it is done so only in the most gentle of voices.

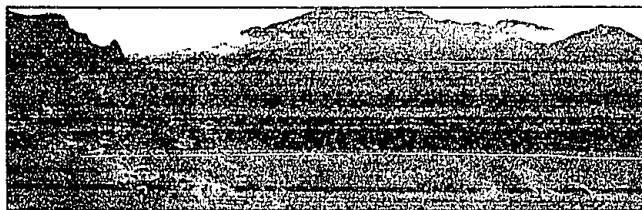
"Cousin," tour bus drivers will say, looking back over their shoulders. "We're all cousins, you know." You know a story is coming, no doubt one of many you're likely to hear on the trip.

Drivers like to remind tourists it wasn't just traveling ships discovering the islands. Missionaries and capitalists from the mainland, some of whom were missionaries themselves, came and conquered the islands. That's why, the tour leaders add,

there are few people left on the islands who are solely of Hawaiian heritage.

Many native Hawaiians have gone to the mainland to earn a living, while big venture capitalists own much of the property. Programs are now in place to reestablish the Hawaiians' land ownership rights.

An average home can cost \$250,000 and, as everywhere, location is everything. Waterfront property is prime, but a downturn in the Japanese economy has made some sites more



Moonscape: What looks like a forbidding scene from the moon is actually a portion of the dormant volcano Haleakala on the island of Maui. Its pink cones and unusual shapes were formed by erosion.

"affordable" in recent months.

Concern for the environment is paramount on the minds of those who live in the islands to preserve their biggest revenue source — tourism — as well as for quality of life reasons. Tourism became their biggest industry, since the sugar cane industry all but dried up. Hawaiians know that without their unpolluted air and unspoiled waters, few would make the trip of nearly 5,000 miles from the metropolitan Detroit area.

Island adventures

My adventure in Hawaii began with a stay in Waikiki. Yes, it's a typical tourist town and, frankly, its famed beach is outdone by those elsewhere on Oahu and the other islands. The Waikiki/Honolulu area is built up, but it's the place to go if you're interested in nightlife or shopping. Don Ho is still crooning, and it seems as though every hotel is touting its own version of shows representing cultures in islands of the South Seas.

There are several major shopping areas, and transportation is easily accessible by way of The Bus.

To be fair, there are the Arizona Memorial (see related story), fine museums, churches and a zoo which make a stopover there worthwhile.

Get outside the city, however, and it's like being in another world best seen from the top of Mt. Tantalus. Take a circle tour of the island and climb to the rim of Diamond Head, and enjoy

the coral and fish which swim up to bathos on Hanalei Bay beach, a non-smoking area. Sometimes it is so crowded in season it needs to be closed to protect the environment.

Time it right on the tour, and you might get to see the "blow hole" rock formation spouting sea water. While in the area, be sure to keep an eye out for the green sea turtles. Look offshore for Molokai Island, and around on the north shore are friendly, smaller communities playing host to beautiful beaches and monster waves.

Travel is easy between the islands, by air or by boat. Those of us — and there were many — who chose a cruise smiled at how one could watch airplanes lift off one island and rise slowly in the air only to quickly set wheels to firm ground on a neighboring island.

Traveling solo

We left Honolulu at the Aloha Tower aboard the S.S. Independence in festive style, to the sounds of kettle drums and water spouts from a fire boat, all courtesy of the Honolulu City Council.

The trip for many of us had been organized by AAA Travel branches throughout the country. Lucky for solo travelers like myself, the Independence has a few rooms for passengers traveling alone. That's a distinct advantage over other ship lines, which may charge a hefty supplement to those solo passengers who wish to bunk alone.

Air was included in the pack-

age and as with many ship lines, that meant transfers were taken care of — a welcome aid for those of us who have difficulty handling baggage.

Agent Diana Ralston of the Birmingham AAA branch recommended a large table for dinner on board ship, to avoid getting stuck with an obnoxious passenger. That was never the case on this trip, as congenial passengers laughed and chatted our way through a day at sea before arriving in Kauai.

A warning: The venerable ship was built during the 1950s and doesn't have the stabilizers or size of more modern ships. So if you're prone to sea sickness, come prepared.

But don't let that stop you. The captain and his crew are proud of their ship and can't do enough to make your stay memorable.

Next week share the adventure aboard the S.S. Independence with a helicopter ride on Kauai, whale-watching off of Maui and viewing a live volcano in Hawaii. Try, if you will, to think of the "best" island to visit.

Sandra Armbruster is editor of *The Lake Orion* and *Oxford Eccentric* papers. She recommends spending time to "know before you go" by reading about the history, culture and adventure of Hawaii and its people in books such as "Adventuring in Hawaii," a Sierra Club travel guide available on the Internet or at your favorite book store.

GREAT ESCAPES

Great Escapes features various travel news items. Send news leads, story ideas or your own travel adventures to Keely Wygonik, Observer & Eccentric News-papers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, 48150 or fax to (734)591-7279 or e-mail to kwygonik@oe.honolulu.hi.

UP NORTH

Every summer, regular as the season's turn, residents of southeast Michigan head Up North for recreation, relaxation and inspiration.

We'd like to know where you go when you go Up North. Tell us about your favorite Up North spot. Is it a beach house on Lake Michigan, a resort around Traverse City, a cabin in the deep woods, a river cottage near Lake Huron, a bed and breakfast on Mackinac Island or a hideaway in the UP? Do you enjoy boating on the Great Lakes, golfing on the designer courses, hiking the rugged trails, biking the back roads, antique hunting, fudge eating or simply watching the sunset on a beautiful beach?

Tell us in 50-75 words about your favorite Up North place and if you have a photograph send it along for a travel story about Michigan's special paradise.

Send your stories and pictures to Keely Wygonik at the Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Or e-mail your comments to kwygonik@oe.honolulu.hi.

TORONTO STREET FAIR

Yongo Street comes alive July 9-11 with entertainment as part of the second annual Celebrate

Toronto Street Festival. Five interactions will be closed for events ranging from a bench party to extreme sports. The festival will have 10 multiple stages. For more information, call the event hot line at (416) 338-0338.

TOUR HOSTS

Jane and Ed Wojtan of Livonia are hosting several tours in the coming year. The couple have been hosting tours to Poland since 1993. This year, they are again hosting a trip to Poland and have added a tour to Ireland and a tour of the Southeast Asian countries of Malaysia and Thailand. For the year 2000, they have a limited number of spaces

for the once-a-decade Passion Play staged at Oberammergau, Germany.

Jane is a retired registered dietitian, who worked at Oakwood Hospital. Ed is retired from the automotive industry, having held management positions at Ford Motor Co., American Motors and Chrysler Corp.

For information on these tours, call Jane or Ed at (437)425-2727.

MYSTERY TRAIN

A train excursion will run from Dearborn to somewhere at 8 a.m. July 17. Lunch will be served, and the train will return at 5 p.m. For what little more information is available or for tickets, call (248) 541-1000.

SUMMER '99

THIS WEEK

The Neville Brothers/Little Feat
Fireworks after the show

Boyz Scaggs
Wujake Andrews

Aladdin
American Family Theater's Broadway for Kids

JULY

14 **MI Faith Hill**
Wujake Andrews

15 **Air Supply**
American Family Theater's Broadway for Kids

21 **Carrot Top**
American Family Theater's Broadway for Kids

AUGUST

4 **Dan Fogelberg**
A solo acoustic evening with 20 Jack

10 **Cinderella**
American Family Theater's Broadway for Kids

13 **Weird Al Yankovic**
American Family Theater's Broadway for Kids

SEPTEMBER

10 **Jethro Tull**

23 **Sleeping Beauty**
American Family Theater's Broadway for Kids

28 **Cowboy Junkies**

21 **Don McLean**
Wujake Andrews

22 **Alice in Wonderland**
American Family Theater's Broadway for Kids

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For Advertising Info. in the Cruise Week program:
Call Bill Clugston at 248-901-2501
Event Hotline: 248-204-6060

EUROPE 1999

DESTINATION	DATE	PRICE	DESTINATION	DATE	PRICE
BERLIN	SEP 10-12	\$179	PARIS	SEP 10-12	\$179
BRUSSELS	SEP 10-12	\$179	ROME	SEP 10-12	\$179
AMSTERDAM	SEP 10-12	\$179	VIENNA	SEP 10-12	\$179
LONDON	SEP 10-12	\$179	PRAGUE	SEP 10-12	\$179
BARCELONA	SEP 10-12	\$179	BOLOGNA	SEP 10-12	\$179
PARIS	SEP 10-12	\$179	GENOVA	SEP 10-12	\$179
ROME	SEP 10-12	\$179	LAZIO	SEP 10-12	\$179
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