

Madison FOURSQUARE

29

This issue of *Madison Foursquare* is brought to you by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, who live at 2825 Union Street, Madison, WI 53704.

Scott@unionstreetdesign.com

Jeanne@unionstreetdesign.com

This is *Madison Foursquare* #29, created using a Mac Pro with InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop, all CC 2019, and printed on a Ricoh Aficio CL7200 color printer.

All contents ©2019 by

Scott Custis [SC] and Jeanne Gomoll [JG]

March 2019 for *Turbo-Charged Party Animal* #393.

Planes, Trains, & Automobiles

also, catamarans, buses, sampans, helicopters, ferries & taxis

2/6-3/1/2019 a collaboration by Scott, Jeanne & iPhone camera

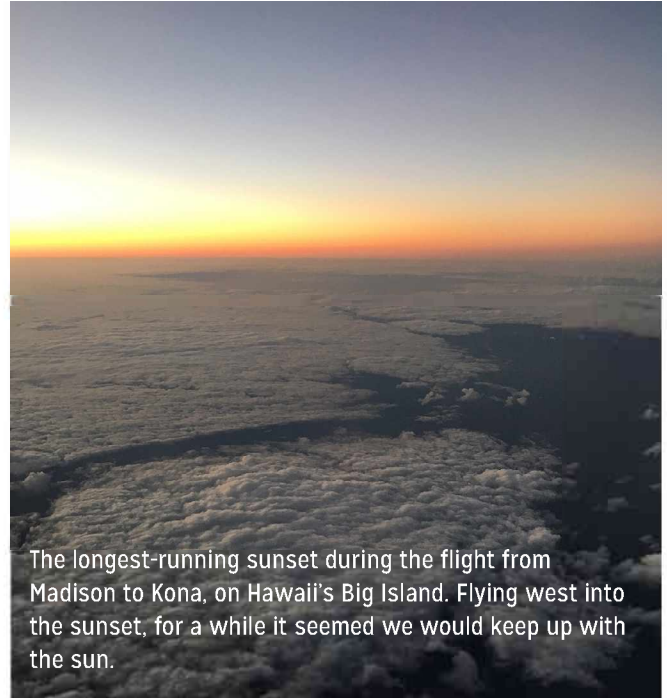
Getting There

We were fortunate to be able to go on a trip of a lifetime this winter to Hawai'i and Hong Kong, for a total of just over three weeks. The trip had been in the works for almost a year, but it seemed like a bit of a fantasy to us until we packed our bags and stood waiting for the cab to the airport. We had a fantastic time.

We had been looking forward to going back to Hawai'i with Kafryn Lieder and Craig Katz since our last trip to Hawai'i with them five years ago. We've been hoping for an even longer time to visit Hong Kong, where Jeanne's brother, Steve and his wife, Linda, live. Steve is an executive for distribution for Rockwell Automation. His territory the last five years has covered most of Asia, so while they live in Hong Kong, Steve spends most of his time travelling to South Korea, many cities in China, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and India. But he is planning to retire within the next two years and return to the U.S., so if we were going to take advantage of their guest room, we needed to do so soon. Sometime during the planning of our Hawaiian trip, we came up with the idea of combining it with a detour to Hong Kong.

So how bad of an idea could it be to combine the trips? After all, Hawai'i is about half-way across the Pacific, and after two weeks there, why not just go the rest of the way to Hong Kong for another week? It made sense to us, but it had a significant downside. In hindsight, we absolutely don't regret making the trip; we had a blast. Craig expressed frank bewilderment at our plan and Steve asked us at one point, "Why would you do that to yourself?" We think both of them were referring to the flying part.

It is impossible to obtain a direct flight from Honolulu to Hong Kong. To get to Hong Kong, we had to fly from Maui to Honolulu, then fly Honolulu to Guam, and then hop from Guam to Hong Kong, all in one day. The whole



The longest-running sunset during the flight from Madison to Kona, on Hawai'i's Big Island. Flying west into the sunset, for a while it seemed we would keep up with the sun.

trip was going to take over 12 hours of flying time plus layovers in Honolulu and Guam, probably a longer and far less pleasant travel day overall than flying to Hong Kong direct from, say, Chicago. 24 hours passed between the time we left our room in Maui to the moment we touched down in Hong Kong. That's because the Pacific Ocean is very big. Who would have guessed?

Getting to Hawai'i was not direct either, but it all went smoothly. Jeanne may not have been thrilled by the 4:15 AM wake up alarm for our 5:00 AM cab to the airport, but one mitigating factor was that we left behind a fresh crust of

crunchy, slippery snow mixed with sleet from earlier in the night that looked like it would be a huge mess the next morning ... except that WE were leaving town and had hired a snow removal company to take on our responsibilities. Our long day of flying took us to Minneapolis to Los Angeles, and finally to Kona on the Big Island by 8:30 PM (12:30 AM for the four of us.) We were pooped.





View from our window,
Courtyard King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel

The Big Island

Our first couple days were fairly quiet. The Courtyard King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel is located on its own quiet little beach on Kailua Bay on the west side of the Big Island, at the end of Ali'i Dr. The neighborhood has many pleasant restaurants and shops and some historic buildings. Those first couple days we strolled around, hung out and settled into the hotel. Along the Bay next to our hotel's property was a pier that was the launch point for several boat tours and also the site of the annual Ironman swimming competition.

[JG] The water was crystal clear, warm and inviting, and I was already beginning to miss my 1-mile lap swimming routine in Madison's YMCA pool. So I decided to swim at least part of the 2.4-mile Ironman course, which was marked by buoys through water too shallow for boats. I could see 4 or 5 buoys; it didn't look like a difficult distance. Scott watched from shore but he forgot to bring binoculars and after I plunged in he quickly lost track of my red swim cap. I was completely unaware of Scott's anxiety; I always feel safest in water, and besides there was so much to distract me! My goggles allowed me to see the corals (sadly, mostly dead) and hundreds of beautiful, colorful fish. Wow! I felt like I was flying. But then it occurred to me that I had passed buoy #5 a while ago and in fact may have passed #7 and #8 as well. So I

stopped swimming and looked ahead: again, I could see 4 or 5 buoys ahead of me. Treading water, I turned back to look at the shore, which was a very, very far away. I couldn't even make out the beach. Whoosh. Time to head back. Apparently, as I returned, I swam on the wrong side of the buoys, which worried Scott, but I made it back feeling exhilarated, to his vast relief and my laughter.

A day later, Scott joined me in the ocean, and with the additional buoyancy provided by salt water, felt for the first time in his life, the sensation of floating. What fun! Almost as fun as swimming the Ironman course.

One of the first things we had planned to do was a sunset tour up Mauna Kea to the observatories to see the stars, but the weather had been very overcast with cold and snow in the higher elevations. Our sunset trip got cancelled, and then a second, dawn reservation was cancelled a few days later, again because of weather conditions on the peak. That was our last chance to go up Mauna Kea on this trip. We did finally get to see the night sky and dawn from *another* volcanic peak on the island of Maui. But more on that later.

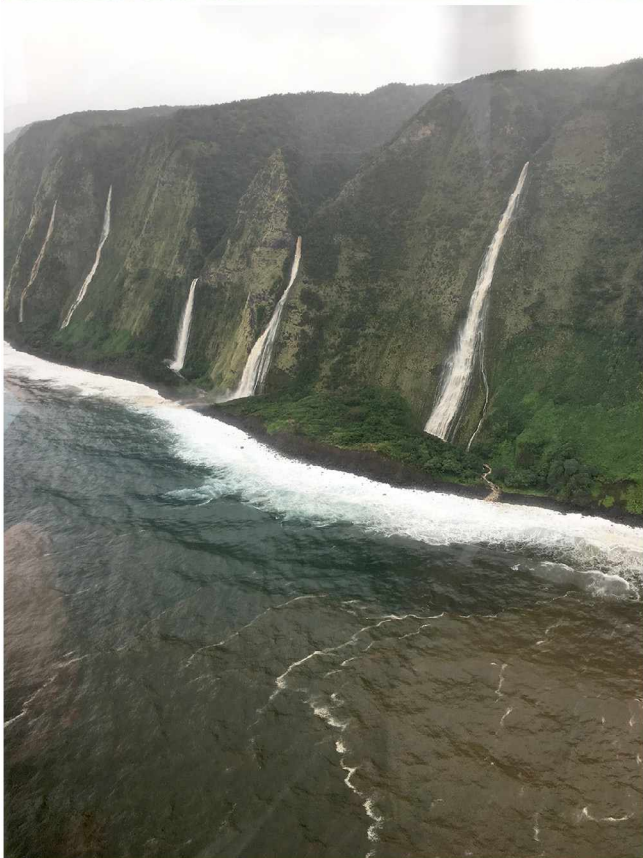
Weather on the Big Island cleared enough on the third day to make it possible to take a helicopter tour. We booked a helicopter tour on Kaua'i five years ago and really liked it. (Seeing Kaua'i's spectacular Waimea Canyon with its red rock, lush green landscape, and hundreds of waterfalls is something we will never forget.) So we were determined to fly over the Big Island. We got lucky in that our helicopter held six people but only four of us had signed up for our time-slot, so we all got window seats and no one had to look over anyone's shoulder. The day was brilliant on the west side of the island, affording us great views of lava fields; our guide pointed out and described the ages of the flows and differences in the types of lava. The Big Island's landscape transforms abruptly and frequently as a result of rainfall and elevation: all but two of ALL climate types found elsewhere in the world can be found in Hawai'i (missing: cold continental and polar icecap). We flew from the desert airfield, over cattle grazing on grassland, along rocky mountain slopes



The Kona beach and Ironman swim course



Helicopter ride!

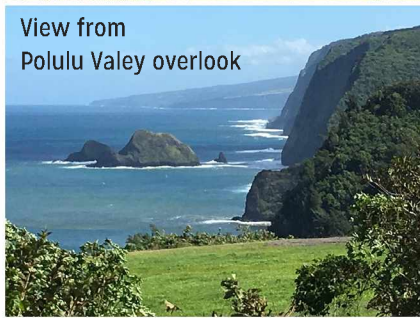


Helicopter views of cliffs, waterfalls and volcanic craters

decorated with patches of snow. We crossed over recent lava flows and still-smoking craters around Kilauea. The violent eruptions of 2018 have stopped, so we could clearly observe the paths of destruction (including some destroyed homes) and looked down the throat of one of the formerly active vents. From there, we flew over macadamia nut plantations and a rain forest area around Hilo. The weather changed (again): Clouds and rain seemed like a bad sign, but the pilot laughed and reassured us, reminding us that more rain meant more waterfalls. The blunt, spectacular Honopu'e sea cliffs on the North Kohala coast are broken by sharp, steep valleys and heavy vegetation; they are the truncated remains of a volcanic shield that once extended at least a mile into the ocean but long ago fell in a monstrous landslide into the ocean. Dozens of waterfalls fall from the cliff, dropping hundreds and sometimes over 1,000 feet down into the ocean. The pilot told us that the only way to see this area is from the air because the coastal waters are too rough for boats and there are no roads or paths. From there we headed back into the sunshine and the dry desert heat of Kona.



Kulaniapia Falls & swimmer



View from Pololu Valey overlook

We checked out of our hotel in Kona/ Kailua on Monday, Feb. 11, and took a long sunny drive in our rental car up Hwy 270 around the northwest end of the island to stop at the end of

the road at the Pololu Valley overlook which was beautiful that day. This is the closest one can get to the Honopu'e Cliffs on land. Then we drove eastward over a picturesque mountain drive to Waimea and on down the northeast coast to our next stop near Hilo. We claimed our rooms for a three-day stay at the Inn at Kulaniapia Falls, a small bed and breakfast, surrounded by macadamia nut farms. The hotel's three buildings overlook its own waterfall. The four of us had stayed there in 2014 and we all wanted to come back. The place is on a hill with a view to the east of Hilo and the ocean. Jeanne and Scott could see the summit and observatories of Mauna Kea through our bedroom windows, and our balcony overlooked the gorgeous Kulaniapia Falls, which empties into a small (swimmable) basin and then into a rocky stream that meanders through the property with a walking trail and bamboo garden alongside it. It's a beautiful, peaceful place.

Sushi was the dining theme during the Hawaiian portion of our trip, and in fact we ate the best sushi we've ever had at the Inn at Kulaniapia Falls, prepared by chef Daysen Masuda.



Sushi by Chef Daysen Masjuda

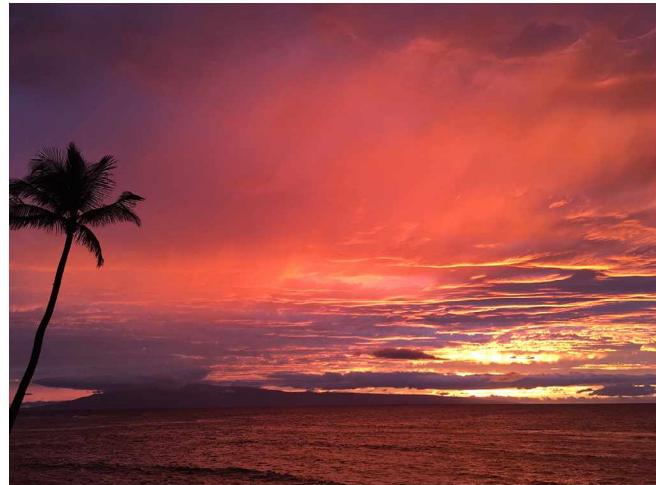
Traveling Companions



Kafryn Lieder, Craig Katz, Jeanne, & Scott

Kafryn and Craig were great traveling companions. They indulged in far more hiking than we did, partially because Jeanne's knee decided, rather suddenly, that it needs to be replaced sooner rather than later. (Jeanne will definitely have to make an appointment with an orthopedist soon.) But the four of us were happily comfortable going off on adventures separately and together, getting together in between for fabulous meals and conversation.

Maui

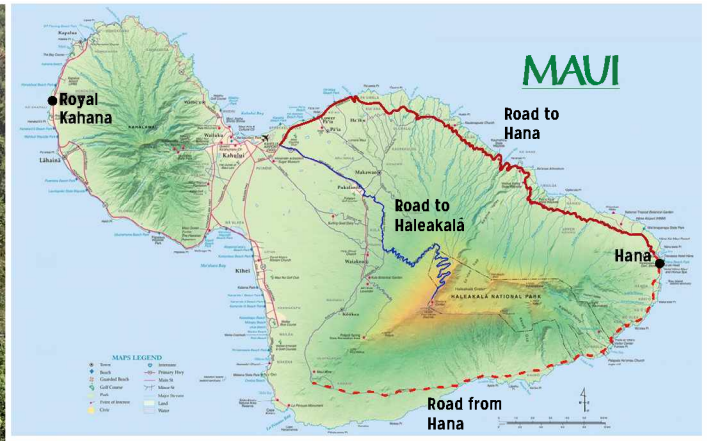


We flew to Maui on Valentine's Day, and checked into our two-bedroom condo in the Royal Kahana Maui by Outrigger Hotel on the west coast of Maui. The suite contained a kitchen, dining room, living room, washer/dryer and a long porch with windows with great ocean views overlooking Moloka'i and Lana'i islands. Some of the most spectacular Hawaiian sunsets performed for us while we stayed at the Royal Kahana.





On the road to Hana

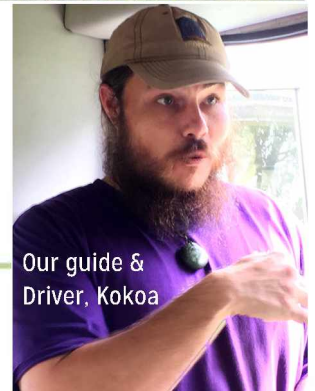


The Road to Hana

Our first big adventure was the all-day “Road to Hana” tour on Friday. The tour bus picked us up at 6:30 AM, sheesh. (You’d think we weren’t on vacation.)

But before we tell you the story of that tour, here’s some background about Maui. Maui was formed by two, adjacent shield volcanoes whose eruptions caused their lava flows to overlap and form an isthmus connecting what might otherwise have been two separate islands. The older, western volcano eroded into a series of peaks called the West Maui Mountains. The younger, eastern volcano is the massive Haleakalā. Only the Big Island’s Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa peaks have higher elevations. The road to Hana is called Hwy 360—it is the shoreline route along the north shore of the eastern (younger) side of Maui, arriving at the tiny town of Hana on the far eastern shore. In clear weather, Haleakalā would dominate the view to the south as one drives this portion of the road. (Sadly, it was too cloudy for us to see Haleakalā that day.) The famous route begins among the warm farmland and beaches around the city of Kahului on the isthmus, and ends in the thick rain forest around Hana. The road twists and turns along cliffs, over streams and past beautiful waterfalls and through lush vegetation. The tour bus carried about a dozen of us and was joined by many other tour companies’ buses on the Road to Hana. We stopped at a couple of organized stops to use restrooms, view an old church, snap photos of a scenic

stretch of rocky shoreline, and hike trails. Our friendly driver delighted us with his knowledge of Hawaiian geology and culture as well as for his ability to expertly navigate the sometimes treacherous road.



Our guide & Driver, Kokoa

[SC] I was distracted a few times watching Kokoa drive over one-lane bridges and maneuver around steep cliffs that left barely inches to spare for his side mirror—all the while talking to our tour group non-stop. We gasped and took pictures through the big windows. Our driver would slow down but there was not much time to stop and nowhere to pull over. We would squeeze around the few oncoming vehicles but one time we had to back down a hill to a barely-wide-enough spot for a larger truck. I was glad we decided to make this drive via a tour instead of driving it ourselves because, as our driver, I would get to see little else but the road immediately in front of me.

We stopped for lunch outside Hana in a steady rain in the rain forest. Lunch was good and if we got a little wet, it was warm and we dried off quickly. Most tour buses turn around in Hana and go back the way they came, even though the road actually continues on past Hana and around the southern



On the road from Hana



coast of Maui. On the south side of Maui, Hwy 360 becomes a county road and gets much rougher. One might even call it a trail at times. Car rental companies do not permit their cars to travel on this stretch and tour groups are supposed to turn around. But our guy did not turn around. He took us on a complete circuit around Haleakalā which was great because

the views were awesome. But our backsides were definitely able to attest to the primitive nature of the road. The northern part of Hwy 360 is a narrow excuse of a “two lane” road; nevertheless it is smooth and painted with a yellow center line. What luxury. The south road, beyond Hana, was old, pitted, broken up asphalt or dirt and gravel. There was no center line and it narrowed to one lane in most places. It was every bit as twisty as the northern part. We crossed bridges (one of which had lost its guardrails) clearly marked “Built 1910.” But we did not slow down.

The company had given our guide a schedule and he stuck to it, bouncing over the rough road and honking as we zoomed around blind curves with no leeway or guardrails. We wondered if someone sitting farther back in the bus would get sick, but the four middle-aged ladies from Missouri bounced around together in the very back seat, laughing and giggling like school kids. The views were breathtaking and we stopped for a breather at one point at the little church burial site for Charles Lindberg. According to our driver, Lindberg got tired of being famous so he appreciated Hawai’i, where no one recognized him. He happily spent his last years on Maui. On down the road we gradually drove out of the rain forest and as we curved around the island and Haleakalā started to block the prevailing wind stream and rain, we entered a countryside of open grassland. There was a lot of scrub brush, low trees and cows. In fact in a few places the road itself had cow-catcher crossings built in to keep the cattle in. We eventually reconnected to another, safer State Highway and headed home. A long day, but a glorious trip.

When Jeanne and Scott eventually left for Hong Kong, Kafryn and Craig were planning to move to a cottage in Hana to enjoy the last few days of their vacation. After experiencing the road to Hana, and suddenly aware of the difficulty of driving to Hana himself in our rented minivan, Craig decided to trade it in for a much smaller car. Good plan. Just so you know, they survived the trip to Hana and back again.



Lahaina Roads Channel, looking at Molokai Island



Humpback whale breaching, photo by Kafryn Lieder

Whale Watching

[JG] I blissed out for three hours aboard the “Ocean Spirit”—watching humpback whales, enjoying the sun and the waves. We saw dozens of humpbacks, including a mother-child pair, many flukes, and several breaches. But I put my camera aside almost immediately. We had arrived equipped with binoculars and iPhones but I knew I’d miss seeing the whales if I tried taking their pictures. So I am very grateful to **Kafryn Lieder** who captured some superb images, including a photo of a breaching whale.

We went whale watching with the Pacific Whale Foundation and it was a beautiful day, sunny and clear skies. Our sleek catamaran sailed through clear water that was deep royal blue in color and only slightly choppy. There were about 20 of us on board and we sailed through the Lahaina Roads Channel between Maui, Molokai and Lanai. Since it was whale season, we saw many humpback whales: in fact, the Pacific Whale Foundation publication *guaranteed* that we would see a whale during our trip. There were a few other tour boats out in the water along with some smaller, private fishing boats. Federal law requires vessels to remain 100 yards away from Humpback whales in Hawai’i and Alaska waters. If a whale swims close to the boat it must shut down its engines and wait until the whale has moved off so we frequently sat still in the water as whales played around us. The spotters were very good; they

saw whales long before the rest of us and identified males and females from brief glances of flukes and tails and brief breeches for air. We saw a mother and calf swimming together and the calf seemed curious about us. We saw a group of a male humpbacks competing with one another. We saw one female racing with (being chased by?) about eight males (she was winning easily.) Whales came up for air frequently but there were also larger breeches including at least one leap out of the water that Kafryn captured on camera beautifully. It was a blast and we were all thrilled.

Dawn on Haleakalá



The highlight of Scott's trip was watching the sunrise at the summit of Haleakalá ("House of the Sun"), which is a massive, dormant, shield volcano that forms more than 75% of the island of Maui. Jeanne enjoyed it too, but still insists that dawn comes too early in the morning.

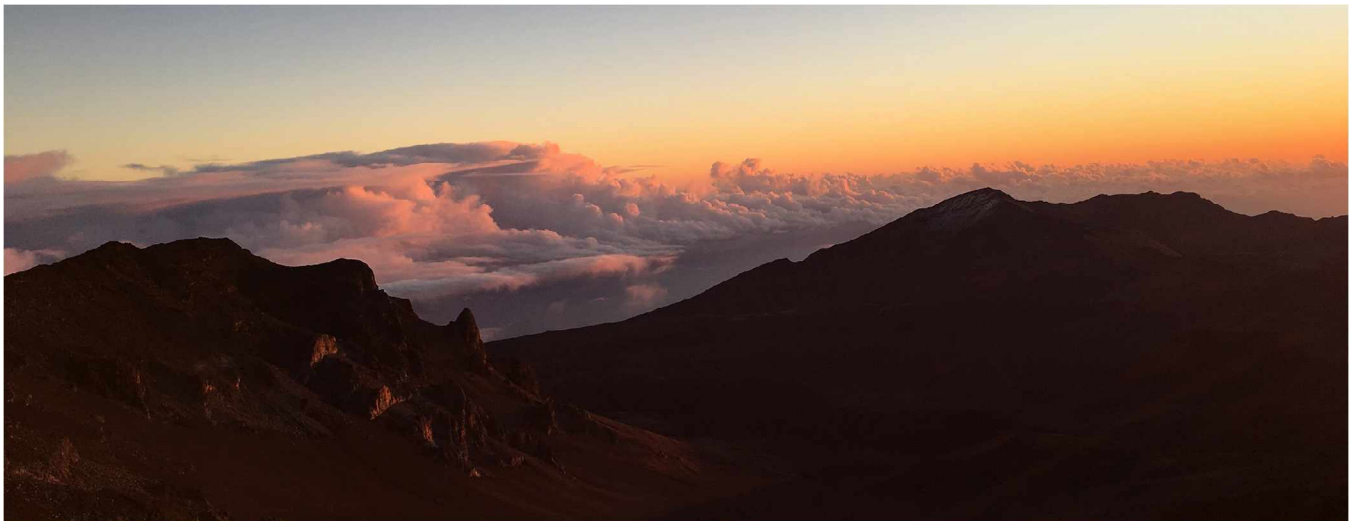
We had to get up at 2 AM to meet our tour bus in front of the hotel. Why another tour bus? Well, so many tourists want to see the sunrise from the rim of the volcano that the park has found it necessary to restrict access at dawn to tour groups only. We had prepared carefully for two winter-weather adventures—the trip up to the peak of Haleakalá, and the (cancelled) trip up Mauna Kea on the Big Island. We had purchased "packable," puffy, down-filled jackets and devoted precious space in our suitcases to fleeces, warm socks, hats and gloves. Still, those layers may have been insufficient if the temperature dipped below what was expected or if the winds were fierce. That morning we sleepily climbed into



Haleakalá viewed from the south side of Maui

our gear, walked past palm trees and other reminders of our tropical locale, and stumbled up into the bus. We all hoped it would be worth it. Jeanne grumbled that she doesn't usually acknowledge the concept of "dawn."

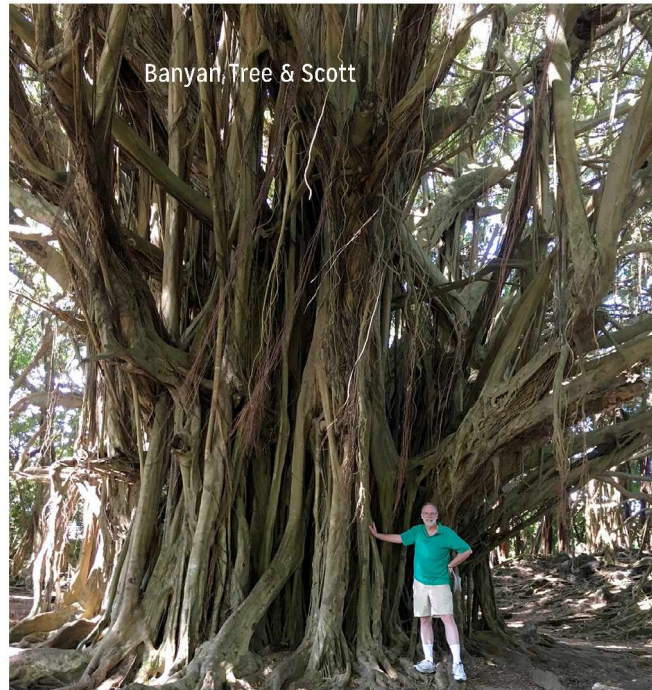
Most folks slept as we drove through the darkness, stopping once for a light breakfast and caffeine. The long drive up the mountain rocked us back and forth as the Crater Road wound through a nearly endless series of switchbacks on the route to Haleakalá National Park and the crater overlook. We were concerned about the weather: even through windows were obscured by condensation, the clouds looked dense on all sides. But we drove up and through all those clouds, and by the time our tour guide showed us the way to "our spot"



along the fence overlooking the crater and the side of the mountain, we gazed up into a sky that was crystal clear and calm. We had climbed 10,023 feet and the temperature hovered around 20°F. There was almost no light pollution. We looked up into a glorious night sky in which millions of stars burned fiercely, hardly seeming to twinkle at all. Venus and Jupiter sparkled like jewels.

People from the other tours gradually filled in spaces around and behind us and it quickly grew crowded. Our tour guys had done a great job, delivering us to the prime spots before most other people arrived. They offered extra blankets to those who hadn't dressed warmly enough.

As the eastern sky began to lighten up, we stared out across the crater and down the mountain. A gorgeous, sculpted bank of clouds framed the harsh landscape of the crater in front of us, and small drifts of snow decorated the black ash surface and scattering of volcanic cones. The rising sun gradually cleared the horizon and cast a pinkish glow onto the cloud bank. Eventually we would be able to look far off to the south and discern the summits of Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea with its sparkling observatories on the Big Island. It was a magnificent morning, especially thrilling because the weather had broken so perfectly for us. We were able to keep our place at the railing for well over an hour, huddling together to watch the show without needing to take a break in the van to warm up. We are from Wisconsin: no thanks, we don't need a blanket! The crowd of people grew quiet as the sun peeked over the horizon. One of the tour group leaders performed a very moving Hawaiian morning greeting song.



divers filmed humpback whales at close quarters and made us feel that we were swimming with the whales. Having just gone whale-watching a few days earlier, we were absolutely in the right mood for this. At one point, Scott looked at Jeanne and it seemed to him as if a humpback whale's nose hovered mere inches from Jeanne's face.

The rest of the center had impressive displays, too. We were reminded of the Milwaukee Zoo, in which the majority

of the space is devoted to animals; people walk through fenced corridors. At the Maui Ocean Center, the aquarium sprawls over the property while people walk around it and even through glass tunnels within it. We watched sharks and manta rays being fed by a naturalist in scuba and microphone gear, who answered questions from kids in the audience.



Maui Ocean Center

On the day before we left Hawai'i we visited the Maui Ocean Center in Wailuku. The center is associated with the Pacific Whale Foundation and has attracted local attention because of a brand new theater that opened in February—the Maui Ocean Center Sphere—and began showing the film, the *Humpbacks of Hawai'i*. The 20-minute movie is shown in a small 360° domed theater with 4k imagery, 3D active glasses and a 7.1 surround sound system. Its screen curves around and over the audience. Viewers recline far back in their seats and watch the movie, which basically occupies one's whole field of vision; whale song echoes from all sides. Scuba



After visiting the Maui Ocean Center we made a trip into Lahaine, which is an old and pretty town. It's famous for many things but the banyan tree park on Front Street is a popular destination and many people are also drawn to the many shops, restaurants and bars that line the rest of the street. We had a couple hours to kill, so while Jeanne and Kafryn took pictures

in the banyan tree park, Craig and Scott took a stroll down Front Street and sampled some "shave ice" treats.



John Shryock



Dana Daniels

Magic!

We treated ourselves to one last outing before returning to our hotel to pack for our trip to Hong Kong. The magic show at Warren and Annabelle's theater in Lahaine was weirdly different from anything else we had done in Hawai'i, but the travel guide we had consulted claimed it was one of Maui's must-see attractions. We have enjoyed comedy shows back home, so this sounded like fun, and Craig and Kafryn were (sort of) okay with the idea. We showed up for our 7 PM reservation, checked in and were shown into a sort of drawing room with about 15 other people. When the room was mostly full we were all challenged to use a set of clues to find our way out of the room to the bar. Jeanne read the full challenge aloud to the room. A young man near us picked up on a clue right away and pointed us to a possible solution. He was correct and we were out and on our way in a few moments, leaving us to wonder how many groups spend long minutes stuck there, maybe eventually needing rescue.

The bar was a large lounge, furnished in bordello red velvet and gold fringe, where we were served hors d'oeuvres, desserts and drinks, not dinner as we had expected, so it was lucky none of us was especially hungry. At eight o'clock we filed into the small theater which afforded good views of the modest stage from all seats. The two-hour show featured two magicians, John Shryock and Dana Daniels, who specialized in mostly slight-of-hand type tricks with cards, balls, ropes and other ordinary objects. This was not a big, dazzling David Copperfield type show. They call themselves magicians, but they were great comedians as well. It was a hilarious show. These guys were both pretty ordinary looking characters. No flashy tuxedos, sweeping hair styles or van dyke beards. They performed in regular suits and ties. Their

tricks and gags were low-key, but very clever and perfectly executed yet they had completely different styles and routines. Once they got a bead on who was in the audience, they were in control of the room. We think some of the funniest moments for us happened when they gently teased people helping with tricks or asking questions from the audience who had maybe taken a little too much advantage of the bar before the show.



Good-bye to Hawai'i

Westward into Yesterday

The next day we flew across the International Date Line into yesterday and into Hong Kong, which was not an experience we can commemorate as a highlight, except for the moment that our plane finally landed in Hong Kong. We stepped into the huge science-fictional airport, were guided to Customs and Immigration by an incredibly efficient process, and found our bags waiting for us. As soon as we landed, Jeanne texted her brother Steve to let him know we had arrived and he responded immediately that he was on his way to meet us. Warily, we figured that if he was just leaving home to come to the airport, we would need to wait awhile for him to pick us up. Not at all! He was waiting for us by the time we cleared immigration and retrieved our bags. As we headed to his place, the realization hit us that Hong Kong was very different from any other city we'd ever visited. We walked through a wide, elegant corridor to the nearby train stop in the airport where we waved an Octopus card, a rechargeable contactless stored value smart card which is used to pay for rides on public transportation, including ferries. We boarded a clean, quiet train that took us over Lantau Island, under the Hong Kong Harbor, and into "Central" Hong Kong, and made only one stop along the way. Once there, we walked through

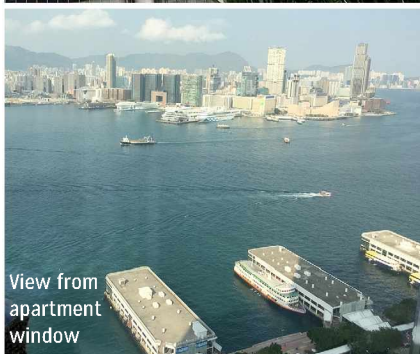


the shiny, beautiful train station and up some escalators into an enormous, extremely swanky shopping mall. As we chatted with Steve, we strolled through the mall and up more escalators, past extremely upscale stores whose names neither of us recognized, down another set of escalators, turned right and opened the door to Steve and Linda's building, Four Seasons Place! We'd never once stepped outside since disembarking from the plane. Steve spends most of his time flying all over Asia for work and says his walking commute to the airport from his apartment is only 20 minutes. Wow.

The View from the 37th Floor



Four Seasons Place (left)
Four Seasons Hotel (right)



View from
apartment
window



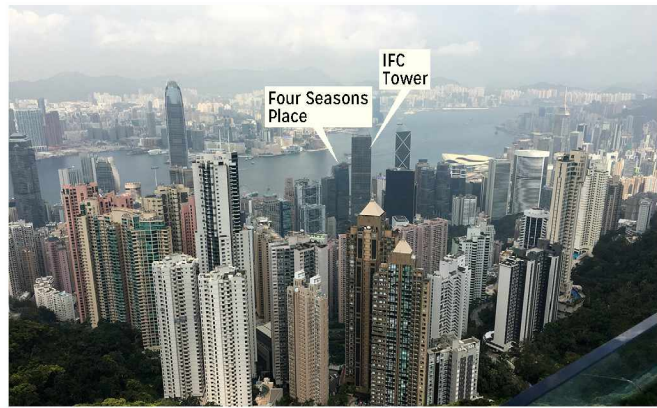
Next door
IFC building

Steve and his wife, Linda, live in the Central District near a series of harbor piers that serve the many ferries (including the famous Star Ferry) that run to points all over the Hong Kong harbor area, which is vast. They live in Four Seasons Place, right next to Four Seasons Hotel, which is part of the IFC tower group, three towers connected to each other by a three story shopping mall. The train line runs below that whole complex one level down. Their apartment is on the 37th floor of a 60 story building and they have a fabulous view of the harbor,

the city below and Kowloon across the harbor. We were very comfortable and felt very pampered.

Hong Kong is a really big, yes, a really BIG city. Its massive forest of skyscrapers, its science fictional, efficient and beautiful infrastructure, its

huge population—all made it easy to pretend we had traveled through space and time, into the future.



Exploring the City

Steve prepared a lovely breakfast for us on our first day and then he and Linda lead us over elevated walkways to the ferry piers and a ride on the Star Ferry across to the Kowloon side of the harbor. We then took a bus tour to get a more comprehensive feel for life in this megacity. The bus took us around to various points of interest but we were particularly interested in the middle and working class areas, where tall housing developments showed clear signs of age and wear. Individual air conditioner units hung from every window. Hong Kong appears to be a forest of gleaming and mostly new skyscrapers, but many older housing towers crowd the neighborhoods as well. There are no suburbs in Hong Kong; housing is restricted to several specified urban districts, which means that most people live in extremely crowded conditions. "Coffin apartments" are the norm. People and stores and businesses jam narrow streets. Eventually our bus turned into the garage below the 108-story International Commerce Centre (ICC, Hong Kong's tallest building) and the driver explained that we all had to get off the bus and get back on another bus set to arrive in 45 minutes. Steve was clearly confused by this development, having not experienced a similar diversion on a different tour on the other side of the harbor. We got off the bus, but having no interest in shopping or eating in the high-priced mall, we took a cab back to Central District. A bit later we all took a cab to a favorite restaurant of Steve and Linda's—a French bistro, Scarlett's, for lunch. We ordered a few dishes to share, and this became our habit for the week, allowing us to experiment and sample



Steve, Scott, Jeanne, and dessert remnants at Scarlett's

small bites of a wide range of cuisines. The food and service at Scarlett's were excellent and we began to understand that Steve and Linda were well known customers to most of the restaurants we would visit in our time in town.

Let us backtrack for a moment. "Took a cab" is a misleadingly simple phrase. Although most people in Hong Kong can speak English, most cab drivers speak only Cantonese, which means that if you do not speak Cantonese, you need to bring a note written in Cantonese that you can hand to the driver to let them know where you want to go. Pointing to a map with English captions does not work. Getting to Scarlett's was complicated by the fact that the helpful staff person from the ICC Tower who wrote a note for us with Scarlett's address, had gotten the address wrong. When we arrived at the street address described in the note, Linda protested, "No! this isn't the place. It's across the street from the Sex Toys Shop!" Needless to say, the driver didn't understand what she said and wanted us to exit his cab. "Linda, I don't know what to do," said Steve. Linda rescued the day by calling the Four Seasons Place staff, explaining the situation, and handing her phone to the cab driver who received the correct address and then whisked us to a delicious meal at Scarlett's. As it turned out, we took cabs fairly frequently because Jeanne's knee was not enjoying our extended, active vacation so much as the rest of her body. *Sigh*

So many lessons. Bring a note written in Cantonese. Don't get out of the cab until you are sure you have actually arrived at your destination. Rely on Steve and Linda to find the most interesting restaurants.

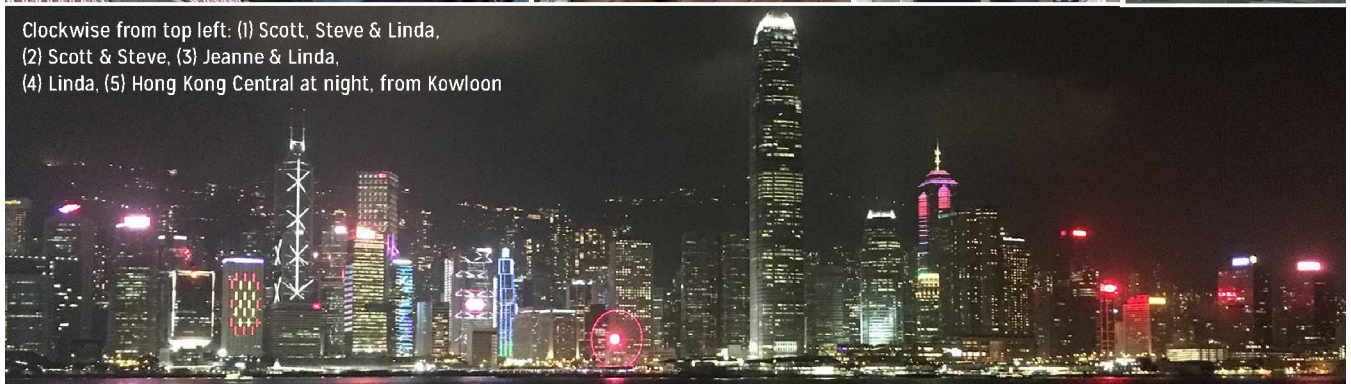


Museum of Hong Kong History

The next day we again walked over the ferry landings and this time took a ferry tour of Hong Kong harbor. It was cool and a bit overcast, but not foggy at all and we enjoyed the view and being out on the water. We got off on the Kowloon side again to visit the Museum of Hong Kong History. Its fascinating exhibits trace history all the way back from pre-history to Britain's recent departure from its former colony city and its reunification with China.



Clockwise from top left: (1) Scott, Steve & Linda, (2) Scott & Steve, (3) Jeanne & Linda, (4) Linda, (5) Hong Kong Central at night, from Kowloon





Touching the Void

After dining at a fabulous Greek Restaurant, where, once again, Linda was greeted warmly, we attended a play. Steve and Linda were really excellent hosts: they tailored a suggested itinerary based on what they knew we liked, and they knew we liked to attend theater. So, a couple months before our visit, Steve asked Jeanne to pick a performance from the schedule of the Hong Kong Arts Festival which would be happening during our visit. Staying true to our weird mutual mountain-climbing mini-obsession, we chose the play, *Touching the Void*. The play is a story originally produced as a book and a 2003 film by the same name about an actual mountaineering incident from 1986. Two climbers attempted to climb Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes. They made it to the summit, but during their decent, one of the climbers breaks his leg. The other climber tries to rescue him, but cannot and is forced to cut him loose and leave him behind after he drops into a crevasse. (The picture above shows the fallen climber's sister, who he hallucinates during his struggle to survive.) It's a powerful story and this

was the first time we had ever heard about it. The actors were superb and the staging of the climbing action was very inventive and effective. Great show!



From top: (1) Seafood for sale, (2) Fishing village on Cheung Chau island, (3) Sampan

A Ride in a Sampan

The next day we boarded a fast ferry across the harbor to Cheung Chau island to visit a fishing village. It was another partly overcast day, but no rain. We strolled along the market street that followed the shoreline. The island does not permit cars, but noisy little motorized delivery carts were common. We stopped at a restaurant along the market where Steve had a fond memory of a friendly, grandmotherly woman who served him there in the past. It turned out that she was retired, but her granddaughter served us our first real "Chinese" meal, all delicious. We shared a spicy, crispy chicken dish, a type of oyster frittata, fried rice and a tender, mildly seasoned poached fish. It was all great but we were stuffed by the end. Steve suggested a boat tour of the harbor, which was full of traditional Chinese fishing boats and sampans and Steve soon found a sampan for hire. The tour was very pleasant and our local driver took us for a long, relaxing ride. On the way back around he started speaking excitedly about a local harbor rowing boat race he apparently participated in. He spoke no English and none of us knew Cantonese but he got the general idea across. He was very proud and it was fun watching his wild hand gestures as he tried to tell us about it.



Captain, Jeanne & Scott on a Sampan

So Much Good Food

Steve flew to Shanghai on business Tuesday and Wednesday and we spent most of Tuesday doing laundry, reading and relaxing. During our trip, we kept up to date on the news by listening to MSNBC podcasts of Rachel Maddow and Chris Hayes, and also by reading the *New York Times* Newspaper on our iPads. So Jeanne happened to notice an article about Hong Kong in the *NYTimes*: a glowing restaurant review for a place called Yardbird. It seemed like a suspicious



Yardbird dish

coincidence and we fell into a discussion about whether the *Times* knew that we were in Hong Kong and was starting to promote feature stories appropriate to our location. When we mentioned this to Linda, she responded, "Yardbird? Oh yeah, Steve and I have been there. We like it a lot. Do you want to go tonight?" It was not the response we expected. But of course we said, "Sure!"

The Times wrote: "Yardbird is not the world's best restaurant. But if you were to pool the world's best modern restaurant trends and traits—the polished technique of Tokyo, the sophisticated warmth of Sydney, the design acumen of Copenhagen, the nose-to-tail ethos of San Francisco, the tattooed bartenders and strong drinks of Berlin, the beautiful people of Los Angeles and the global culinary mix of New York—Yardbird is pretty much the restaurant you would end up with.... Chefs from all over consider Yardbird their clubhouse when they visit the city: It's a place they often say they wish they had opened themselves."

We slipped in early on a weeknight and got a good seat within sight of the kitchen's yakitori grill that burned an especially hot hardwood charcoal called binchofan. Yakitori is a type of seasoned chicken on a skewer popular in Japan. We ordered several of these skewers and some larger plates, all to share. It was excellent and by the time we were ready to leave, there was a line of people out the door. They gave us some packets of the spice mix that we've since used to flavor ric and Jeanne bought a t-shirt.

On Wednesday, Linda took us to dim sum at Tim Ho Wan, a restaurant in the mall connected to their apartment. It was down on a lower level, not far from the train station and although it had recently expanded, it was so popular that it was important we get there early. Even so, we stood in



Dim Sum

a line for seats. Once seated, we shared a table for six. The other seats were quickly filled. Dim Sum was ordered off a menu with pictures and short descriptions. Linda suggested a couple things and then let us go wild. We ordered plenty of food to share. Everything was good to excellent but the winner for both of us, I think, was the buns that tasted like a sweet biscuit/corn bread roll, filled with a hot BBQ pork filling. By the time we left there, the line outside was three times as long as it had been when we arrived. We aren't able to treat ourselves to dim sum often, because it seems like good dim sum restaurants can only be supported by large cities, but we love it and try to go out for dim sum whenever our travels allow it: Chicago, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Seattle, etc. The interesting thing about Tim Ho Wan's dim sum was that NONE of the dishes were familiar to us. Our Hong Kong dim sum meal was excellent and sort of kind of *like* the dim sum we've had in the U.S., but one could almost call it a different cuisine, or at least a different culinary dialect.

The Height of Luxury

[JG] In Hong Kong, I swam in the most stunningly beautiful swimming pool I've ever seen—on the 59th floor of Steve and Linda's apartment in the Four Seasons Place. The ceiling opens to the sky and the windows look out at Hong Kong Central's skyscrapers. The pool is an infinity pool—the water flows over the edges, producing a visual effect of water with no boundary between it and the city outside. Except for my long swim on the Ironman course back in Kona, and one frustrating session swimming laps in a small kidney-bean-shaped hotel pool in Maui, I had not been able to really swim laps during our trip. So I happily took advantage of the very large pool to do a mile of laps three times during our visit to Hong Kong. As I swam, I gazed at the sky and skyscrapers and the jewel-like tiles on the pool floor, which made those swims a visual treat. Very different from sensory deprivation/meditation, which is my usual swimming mode. But then, something completely unexpected happened: When I climbed out of the water an attendant hurried to my side and draped a big, warm towel over my shoulders, and handed me a glass of water. What luxury! I am officially spoiled. Perhaps I will mention this experience at the YMCA when I go there for my next swim.



Jeanne



A View from the Heights

Thursday was our last day in Hong Kong and the weather finally cleared enough for us to make a trip up to Victoria Peak, the Number-One-Thing-to-Do promoted by all the online lists of “things to do in Hong Kong.” Steve took us by cab up the very snakey drive to the top of the hill overlooking the city and the harbor, to a tall building with a semi-circular top. Inside you buy tickets to the viewing platform at the top, then take escalators up several floors (past many shops and eating places, including a Bubba Gump’s Shrimp outlet) to the large open viewing floor where you can gaze across the whole area. It is a truly spectacular view on a clear day in all directions. There are also several walking trails through the surrounding neighborhood and forested hills. It turned hot so we eventually settled down to a nice nearby restaurant for a snack and cold drinks. It was a great way to end our stay.

Back Home

Besides keeping up on the news via podcasts and NYTimes, we also read emails from a local Madison newspaper which posted almost daily winter warnings. Every day, it seemed, the *Cap Times* published news or predictions of more snow, more ice, or more bitterly cold weather, and sometimes all three at once. One day we read that the city had decided to ignore their rules against massive salting of roadways because the day’s freezing rain had left all roads coated in ice, and when covered by the next expected morning’s snowfall, it might prevent snow plows from getting enough traction to plow. Wow. We couldn’t believe how lucky we were to have missed one of the worst Februaries in Madison history and spent it, instead, in paradise. And we were so relieved that we’d hired a snow-removal company to take care of our driveway and sidewalks while we were away. It must be said however, that the news of the Midwest’s icy apocalypse may have made our fruit drinks on the beach a *bit* more delightful.

We left for home on Friday, March 1, an endless travel day we’d rather not revisit here. Still, we’re very glad we got to visit Hong Kong, even if it turns out we may have chosen to get there the long way.

– Scott and Jeanne
March 2019

Comments on Turbo 391

Jeannie Berman

[JG] Wonderful cover art—“Where the Wild Lizards Are”? Thank you for showing me Lizard King in color!

Greg G.H. Rihn

[JG] Emily Blunt has a lovely voice, but Scott and I left the theater after seeing *Mary Poppins Returns* without being able to remember any of the tunes. The plot was story-by-analogy and I was most excited when I recognized the songs from the original movie heard in whispery phrases, between the new songs. And the story was a really low-stakes story. (Oh no, I forgot to pay the mortgage, even though I have plenty of money.) I left shaking my head, asking wasn’t there a family with slightly more need of rescuing than the Banks kids? Perhaps some persecuted immigrant kids? I would have loved seeing Mary Poppins get involved in *that* situation.

Steven Johnson

[JG] I believe you should be awarded something like a boy scout badge attesting to your rescue of an asparagus fern plant. And perhaps one for your persistence in work on the orbital mechanics project. Wouldn’t it be cool if we all received badges with obscure artwork that celebrated private victories? Sort of a mundane McArthur Award for the rest of us.

Jim Hudson & Diane Martin

[JG] I am curious about what lengths you would have had to go to if you had chosen to invest in basement improvements that would be impervious to a repeat flood.

I need to consider the next round of our book collection downsizing. If I come to a conclusion of what/how I want to do, I may offer you a list of books. Also, as soon as you are ready, I have the almost complete run of Janus/Auroras and Tiptree cookbooks to give to you.

Yes! A Milwaukee-Rep-and-dinner road trip! Let us know.

Jim & Ruth Nichols

[JG] My left knee has let me know that it is ready to be replaced soon, so I know what you mean about the benefits of swimming to ease the pain of aching joints. I am just happy that my knee issues don’t prevent me from doing the crawl in the pool. After tomorrow’s swim, my cumulative mileage since April 2016 will be 420 miles, the length of the Wisconsin River. On the other hand, I start limping badly on land after only a few blocks. Hope to see you one day doing laps!

I’m glad to hear that Jim is doing better.

Andy Hooper

[JG] Good summary of the evolution of the American Hemisphere's anthropology theories. It's been really interesting watching how genetic research has shaken up the various narratives.

Jeannie Bergman

[JG] I loved "Verdant" – a whole novel's worth of story and ideas in one poem. Amazing. Thank you!

Joe Adams

[JG] February was indeed a good month to absent oneself from Madison. Florida was nice I'm sure, but Hawaii was outstanding.

Comments on Turbo 392

Darlene Coltraine/Cover

Nice!

Lisa Freitag

[JG] I have been enjoying your (and others') explanations to Walter about why and how picture-taking can heighten one's perceptions rather than blinker them, and also how the actual photos jog the memory, not replace it. I thought a bit on the subject in February on Scott's and my adventures in Hawaii and Hong Kong. The only time I had to lay aside my phone camera entirely was while we watched whales. It was a matter then of choosing: mostly failed photos or seeing as much as possible.

Very funny story of Pokemon vs. Bird listers. Serious birders who try to complete their life lists have a reputation for lacking senses of humor. So, even more funny.

Greg G.H. Rihn

[JG] Just a note to alleviate confusion: I spell my name as "Jeanne;" Jeannie Bergman spells her name with an "i."

I have written down the titles of books read since 1981. However, I stopped while I was reading for the 2016 Tiptree Award because there were a bunch of books I didn't finish or skimmed. That wasn't a problem when I was a judge for the 1996 award, but with all the formats for 2016—online stories, eBooks, etc.—I just sort of gave up on trying to keep track of the books I'd actually finished. It makes me glad that I have never had a job that required me to read novels. I've been able to keep that activity almost entirely in the "for pleasure" category.

Scott and I found *The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.* to be great fun to read aloud to one another. There have been quite a few books that Scott and I have read to one another that I think I might not have enjoyed nearly as much if I had read it silently to myself. Just like audiobooks: sometimes they are improved, especially with a good reader, sometimes not.

Jim Hudson & Diane Martin

[JG] I was very happy working on my own before retiring and had no interest in hiring staff. So it's hard to imagine how I could use an intern post-retirement. But I look forward to meeting Kaeley. Maybe we can think of some art-related activity to play around with together while she is staying with you.

I'm confused. You DON'T need replacement copies of *Janus/Aurora*?

As you can imagine I have a huge amount of sympathy for Diane's hip pains!

Jeannie Bergman

[JG] Fantastic poems. Thank you!

Kim & Kathi Nash

[JG] Wow, that seems like a spectacularly bad rule for a contest. I suppose the rule turned out to be a good fundraiser for the group, practically guaranteed to raise money through sales the top competitors. Just as happened in your game. But it certainly is not something that encourages teams to come back and play next year. Bad, bad. I would have been steaming. If you had known what was going to happen, would your group have purchased a membership in the Optimists' group to keep your high score?

Julie Zachman

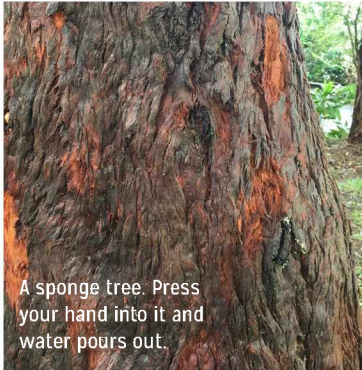
[JG] I enjoy running our (gas) snow blower, I really do. But it turns out that what I really enjoy is *reading about* snow and ice and cold from Hawaii or Hong Kong, where temps hovers in the mid-70s and we wear flip flops and swim in the ocean, and sip on coconut milk through sugar cane straws, all the while congratulating ourselves on hiring someone to shovel our driveway and sidewalks while we are gone. Who knew?



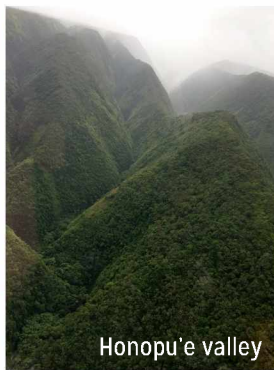
Andy Hooper

[JG] Congratulations on your new old saber! It must have been fun to open the package.

Sorry, but none of the ideas you offered for making it easier to contribute to the apa would actually change things for us. The issue that has been making it difficult for Scott and me is simply the shrinking amount of time between picking up the last zine and the next deadline. With two of us reading and commenting, there just hasn't been enough time for us. It isn't any trouble to drop our zine off; we usually deliver and pick up the zines while we're doing errands. Printing our zines on my printer is easier, cheaper and faster than asking Hope and Karl to do it.



A sponge tree. Press your hand into it and water pours out.



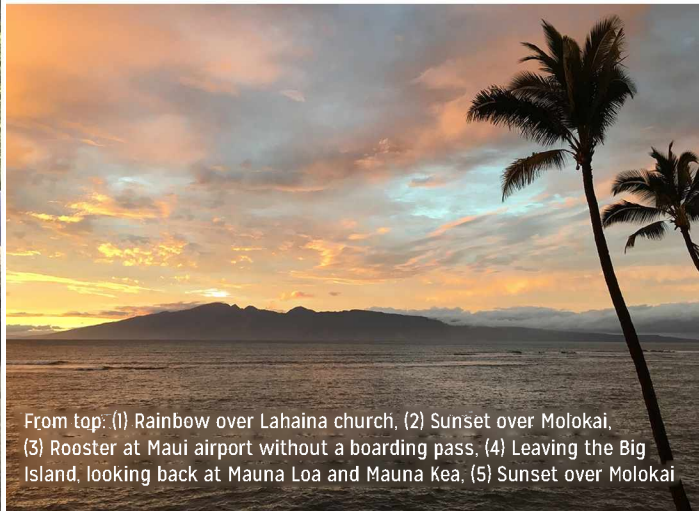
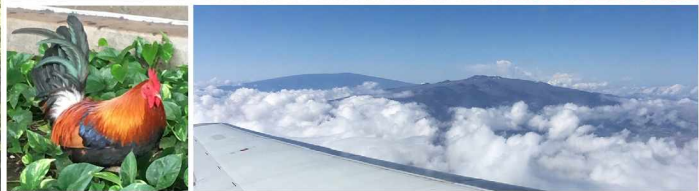
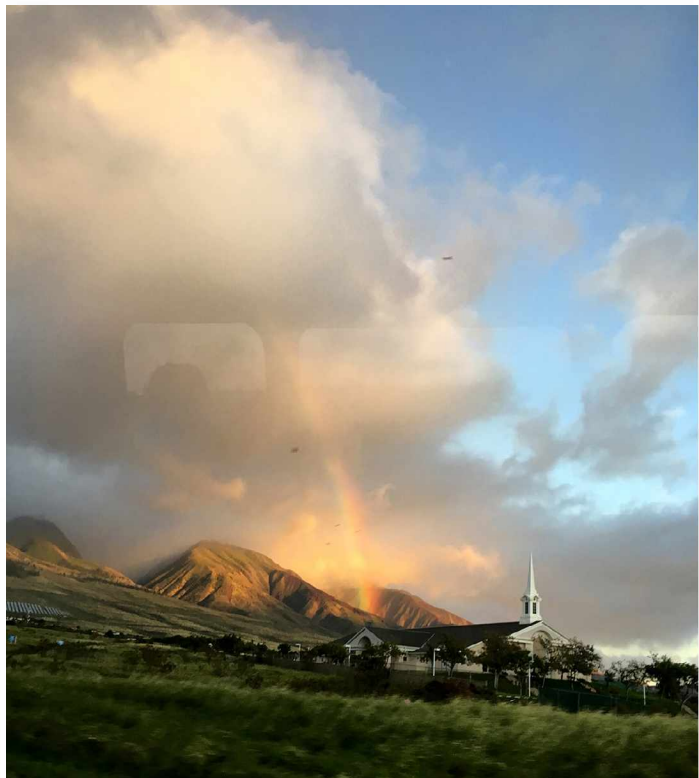
Honopu'e valley



The island of Kaho'olawe



Waterfall, Jeanne & Scott



From top: (1) Rainbow over Lahaina church, (2) Sunset over Molokai, (3) Rooster at Maui airport without a boarding pass, (4) Leaving the Big Island, looking back at Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea, (5) Sunset over Molokai