

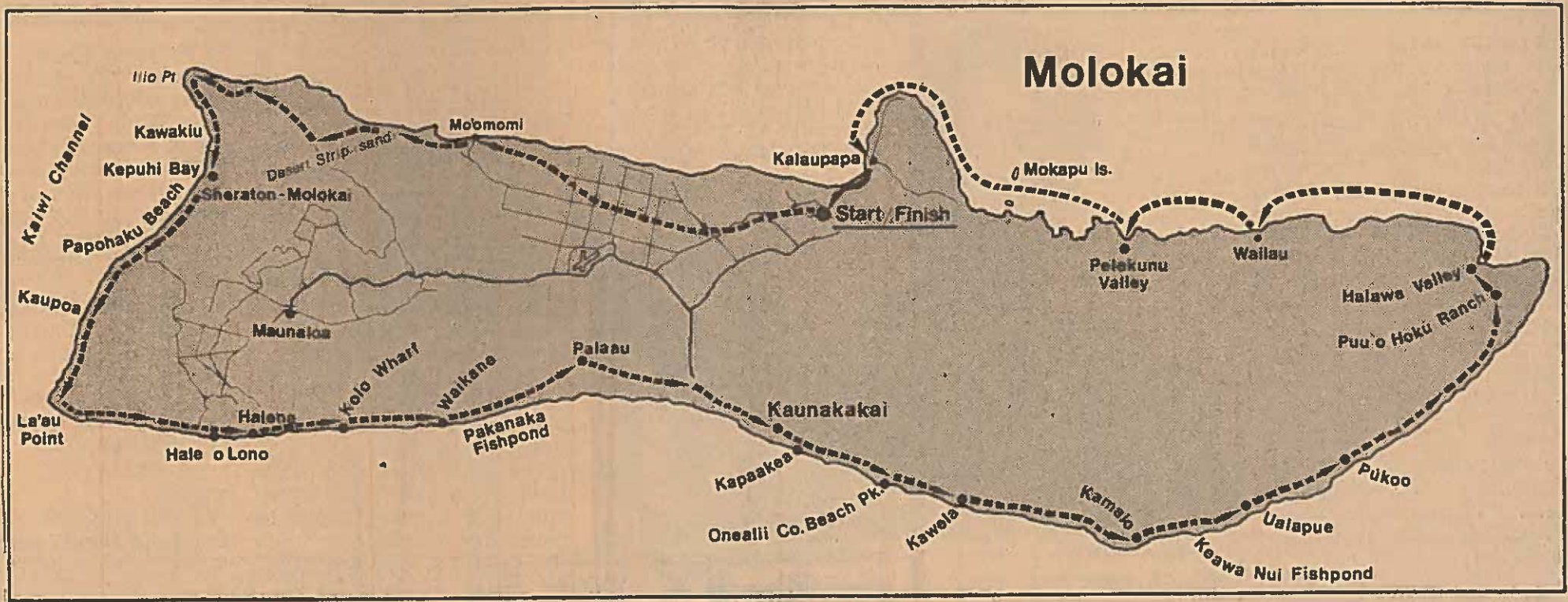
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FOCUS/ exploring

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molokai style

Molokai Style is the latest Honolulu Advertiser-sponsored trek around an island. Groups previously have hiked around Hawaii, Lanai, Tahiti, Moorea and Maui. This time, Hawaiian activists and Molokai residents joined Advertiser hikers for a 10-day trip around the island. Reports from two perspectives are presented — one by Advertiser columnist Bob Krauss and the other by Stephen Morse, a part-Hawaiian and writer-in-residence for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.



Trail's end: The old ways and young dreams

By Bob Krauss
Advertiser Columnist

THE END OF THE TRAIL — The trail out of Kalaupapa zigzags across the face of a cliff 1,666 feet high. It's about a mile and a half of rock-paved, lung-busting exertion.

At first, you are smothered by jungle. It's hot and humid. Higher up, the breeze penetrates. Then glimpses begin of Kalaupapa far below. And memories of that unforgettable place.

There's Richard Marx, the sheriff and tour operator. He spends most of his nighttime duty hours with his feet on the desk napping because there is so little crime at Kalaupapa.

The last shooting occurred up against the cliff where a few of the patients allegedly are growing a little marijuana for home consumption, a common practice on Molokai. They were beset by poachers.

But not of the human variety.

have developed a taste for marijuana. They eat the plants. This infuriates the growers, who shoot at the deer, a SERIOUS offense.

It became Richard's duty to put a stop to this. However, the only weapon in the police department is locked in his sheriff's office and he probably doesn't know how to shoot it.

The whole affair became confused. Like the fire truck. It sits so long between fires that the battery runs down. So it won't start unless it is pushed by the garbage truck.

By that time, the building which caught fire has burned to the ground. It's a standing joke at Kalaupapa.

This hilarity takes place amid what should be despair and hopelessness. But Kalaupapa is a place of love and bubbling humor as well as dispute. It is a triumph of the human will to survive.

Can this fragile lifestyle be preserved? People here are





Bra Parker
A smile forever

legislation in 1980 designating Kalaupapa a national park. Will this unique place remain the same?

There has never been a national park dedicated to preserving a lifestyle, to depicting dignity and shame as well as history, the beauty of a smile in a mutilated face.

So much of Molokai is like that. At the top of the cliff, our expedition gathered for the last time. The uniqueness of this island struck me again when I asked Auntie Harriet Ne when was the last time outrigger canoes paddled up the North Coast.

"It was in 1917," she said as if she were recalling a grandchild's birthday. "There was a christening in Pelekunu. The baby's name was Luka (Ruth) Peleuli. A Protestant group came from Kalaupapa. Canoes

Columnist Krauss gets a fitting Molokai Style tribute — a head lei from Anne Ritte, who picked the flowers on the hike up the cliff trail from Kalaupapa.

paddled in from Mo'omomi and Halawa, seven canoes in all with 58 people."

As always during the journey, this gathering ended in a prayer circle, our hands joined. We had begun with a small circle. This time there were 65.

Most of them are young. That's what struck me most forcibly through the trip. These young Hawaiians are supposed to be belligerent. I had found them intelligent, concerned, warm, full of laughter.

And interesting. Take Bobby Alcaín, a skinny fellow with a long braid down his back. At first glance, you'd take him for

a beach bum.

The pose is deliberate. Bobby has seen the world. He worked on the Alaska pipeline. Now, at age 33, he's back on Molokai to fulfill his dream.

He has built his own house on a family kuleana where he lives without electricity. The plywood he used cost about \$5,000. He salvaged windows from an old fire station and did the labor himself.

Bobby is a person who can do anything: catch a fish, put in plumbing, grow vegetables, scale a cliff, build a house, swim like a seal, handle a boat, repair a motor.

Now he's clearing land, planting taro, hunting pigs for meat, fishing. He is living life on his own terms.

His dream is a common one among the young people of Molokai, to live off the land, to return to his Hawaiian roots, to resist development. But he also needs a job to survive. He works in construction. Construction means development.

So his job and his dream are in direct conflict.

Such conflicts really didn't surface on this trip because people on Molokai who understand development participated only briefly. It might have been use-

ful for both sides to come to grips with this in the relaxed atmosphere of the hike.

We ended in a warm glow of accomplishment, of a very special, shared experience. Already, the young people are talking about organizing an annual canoe trip up the backside of Molokai.

Bra Parker, who works for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, described how he felt about the hike as he waited at Molokai Airport for a flight back to Honolulu.

"I've got a smile on my face I can't wipe off," he said. "I want to just sit here and remember this."

Exploring the Pelekunu kapu, the Pali Trail (whew!)

By Stephen K. Morse
Special to The Advertiser

PALAAU STATE PARK, Molokai — From the Kalaupapa lighthouse, I watched the sunrise this morning, the ninth and last day of Moloka'i Style.

Today we will be going topside, some of us by foot up the steep, 2½-mile Pali Trail that leads to the Kalaupapa Lookout located in the Palaaau State Park. The others, mostly members of the Mana'e Canoe Club (our traveling companions along the northern coast of Moloka'i), will paddle to Mo'omomi Beach in their outrigger canoes.

Someday soon, Mo'omomi may well be the finish line for a long-distance canoe race from Halawa Valley, sponsored by the Mana'e Canoe Club.

But as the sun continued its steady climb above the horizon and illuminated the cliffs and valleys of the island's north coast, I thought about Zennie Sawyer and her children in Pelekunu Valley.

Last night I spoke with Zennie's husband Richard for more than an hour in the comfortable living room of the Richard and Grace Marks home adjacent to the lighthouse. Next door, the rest of our group was celebrating our last night on Moloka'i.

Richard spoke freely and candidly about the experiences he and his family have had living in the isolation of Pelekunu. Three other families, including

Walter Ritte's, live there but, at least for now, the Sawyers are the only ones who have established permanent residence.

In order to preserve the natural state of Pelekunu, ensure the safety of its families, and make certain that the valley will always provide them with subsistence, Richard said, he and the valley's other residents have made Pelekunu off-limits to hunters, commercial fishermen, and transients, who he says "are only interested in growing pakalolo and don't give a damn about the valley and those of us who live here."

He realizes the bans are not popular with some people, and he talked at length about the problems caused by unwelcome visitors, including some near-violent confrontations.

"The problem," he said in his mild-mannered way, "is that they go crazy in there — shooting up the place and leaving their garbage," the latter of which attracts flies that spread disease.

In one highly publicized incident not too long ago, Richard was charged with terroristic threatening and attempted murder for firing shots at a group of visitors who were entering the valley by boat to do some hunting. One of the visitors was Honolulu businessman Lex Brodie.

"The shots were way over their heads and were meant to



Members of the Mana'e Canoe Club dive into the waters off Kalaupapa for the paddle to Mo'omomi Beach in their outrigger canoes.

Advertiser photo by Tom Coffman

let the others in the valley know that we had visitors," said Richard. He added that everyone in the valley backs each other up in letting uninformed visitors know that there are certain rules they need to abide by while in the valley.

"If they come in to enjoy the beach, explore the valley and catch some fish to eat, I have no problem with that — as long as they take all their opala (trash) with them."

Land security is a long-range concern of Richard. While the others, like Walter, have legal tenure to the parcels of land they occupy, the Sawyers have only an "understanding" with the major landowners in Pelekunu — Moloka'i Ranch and the Brown Estate — to use the land.

According to Richard, one major concern about Pelekunu at this point is water, which the ranch plans to divert to dry

west-end lands through a tunnel in the mountain. But financial difficulties have forced the ranch to close down construction of the tunnel.

Richard believes, however, that title to land in Pelekunu is unclear because property in the valley was once all kuleana land. He thinks that someday a descendant of some old Hawaiian family from Pelekunu will make a claim on that land.

When I asked him what he

thinks the future holds for Pelekunu, he said the valley can support about 20 families "that have the right attitude and respect for the land."

As for himself, he added: "Zennie and the children are happy. We plan to stay here forever."

From the lighthouse, we were driven to the Kalaupapa Wharf to send off the paddlers and say farewell to some of the most generous and hospitable people on the face of this earth. Then we headed up the Pali Trail.

What can I say about the Pali Trail? The view was great but, halfway up, most of us wished we had gone to Mo'omomi with the canoes.

I have heard that some Moloka'i men regularly run down and up the trail for lunch. But that sort of thing, wasn't a motivating factor for us as we continued our ascent. We made it nonetheless — the first in just 45 minutes, the last in two hours and 15 minutes.

We had our last pa'ina (party) a short time later in Palaaau State Park. The paddlers were waiting for us when we arrived.

We closed Moloka'i Style as we had begun it — with a circle of prayer and words of mahalo and aloha.

To the people of Moloka'i and The Honolulu Advertiser for making it possible, "mahalo, aloha and ahui hou" from this writer.