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Jeremy and Eleanor Caves
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Dear Jeremy and Eleanor,

This is a blow-by-blow—or spout-by-spout—account of our trip to Hawai'i to celebrate Grandpa and Grandma's 50th wedding anniversary. The letter was written over a period of six months, beginning shortly after our return from Hawai'i. It represents to some extent the collective memory of all the participants in the trip. Undoubtedly more incidents and experiences could be included, but much is here. I specifically don't mention each game of hearts and dominoes and Skip-Bo nor each of the pineapples that we consumed, so I summarize at the outset by saying that there was plenty of all of these, especially dominoes and pineapples.

Saturday, 1995 December 23. Albuquerque to LA. Cold drizzle and a brisk wind greet our late-morning arrival in Los Angeles. I leave you at baggage claim and head to National Car Rental's off-airport facility to pick up a car, only to discover that my driver's license expired a month ago (a month after my birthday). This is certainly an inauspicious beginning. Back at the terminal, I surprise you and Mom by not having a car. Fortunately, Mom's license is good for two more months. After another trip to National, we finally obtain a car and drive to Abby Hellwarth's in Santa Monica, where we stay for the next three days. (My expired license keeps me from driving during the entire trip; we discover on our return that New Mexico doesn't send out any reminder to renew, but also doesn't care if your license expires.)

We spend an hour in the afternoon at the Allied Trains store in Culver City, where Jeremy picks up his standard order of seven Schabak model planes. In the evening Abby hosts a gathering of part of the Mom's gerontology group (Rosemary Knollman, Gene Dudley and Richard Lieboff, Gwen Williams, Lina and Alan Boardman); we have dinner at the nearby Acapulco Restaurant, your favorite LA restaurant, which Jeremy favors for the salsa and Eleanor for the servings of jello with the kids' meals.

Sunday, 1995 December 24. We go to Knott's Berry Farm with Kathy and Joe McCarthy and their two kids, Jordan and Justin. Though the weather is still cool and windy, there's no rain. The coolness and wind keep most Southern Californians at home, with the result that there are virtually no lines. Jeremy decides, as usual, to shun all the exciting rides, except his favorite, the parachutes, which is shut down repeatedly by the winds, and Eleanor, after accompanying me on a relatively tame new roller coaster, the Jaguar, decides that she, too, can do without excitement. I am forced to do the log ride and Montezuma's Revenge with the McCarthys, whose desire for excitement is admirably high. Highlights include a Snoopy ice show and Eleanor's getting Snoopy to help her put her sweatshirt on. The day ends with the traditional dinner at Knott's Fried Chicken Restaurant.

Monday, 1995 December 25. A cloudy day, yet nice enough to encourage two runs to the beach at Ocean Park, where we play in the sand and surf. Jeremy and I spend a considerable amount of time working on our skills at Koosh Ball. Eleanor falls down in the surf early in the second trip; her unhappiness, expressed long and loudly, is finally ameliorated when Mom improvises a change of clothes. We keep looking far out onto the Pacific, anticipating our journey beyond the western horizon.

Tuesday, 1995 December 26. We get to the airport in mid-morning. Leaving Mom to wrangle with Hawaiian Airlines about seat reservations (they only have seat reservations for Grandma and Grandpa, Jeff, and Jeremy), you and I go to Bradley International Terminal, where Jeremy collects schedules from the international carriers. We then meet Grandpa and Grandma, Uncle Doug and Aunt Sherry, Kevin, Jeff, and Josie in the American terminal and escort them to the Hawaiian check-in counter. Though Mom has succeeded in getting us seats, Uncle Doug, Aunt Sherry, Kevin, and Josie still have no seats, and the flight is overbooked; they are lucky to get on the DC-10-10 just before it pulls away from the gate shortly after noon. Scattered all over the plane, they sample in lonely isolation the general run of Hawai'i-bound tourists: Aunt Sherry sits by a couple in rut, and Uncle Doug, buried in the middle of the five-seat middle section and surrounded by grouchy tourists, declares it to be the "worst flight of my life." Jeremy, whose imagination doesn't extend to the notion of a bad flight, entertains the flight attendants with a pin-and-hole baseball game that Eleanor bought for Jeremy at a restaurant in Santa Rosa on the drive home from Aunt Linda's after Thanksgiving.

We finally arrive in Honolulu. Following a brief lay-over, devoted primarily to enriching the fast-food concessionaires in the inter-island terminal, we embark for the short DC-9 flight to Hilo (Jeremy's first flight on a DC-9), where we arrive after dark. While two mini-vans are being rented, everybody under twenty (Kevin, Jeff, Josie, and you), plus me, plays a game of limbo with a long piece of baggage tape we find lying on the ground. The participants must make their way under the tape by leaning backwards, bending only at the knees. As the tape is lowered, the game proceeds in an atmosphere of increasing noise and hilarity, providing quite a spectacle for other travelers.

The two mini-vans rented, we drive through intermittent drizzle and fog to Volcano and check in at Chalet Kīlauea. We are admonished not to wear shoes in the houses and then are given instructions for finding our two houses. Secluded in clearings in the forest at the end of long, narrow driveways, the houses would not be easy to find in the middle of the day. In the misty, dripping dark they nearly defeat our search. We eventually stumble onto the Royal Hawai'ian Haven, where we and Uncle Doug's family are to stay for the next three nights, but we have no such luck with Hoku Mana House, whose marker is said to be two white rocks next to its driveway. The Archers, having preceded us to Hawai'i by several hours, are already at Hoku Mana House. We call them and ask Aunt Linda to stand in the road next to the driveway, hoping that she will be both more visible and more animated than the two rocks. Aunt Linda reports that the driveway is so long that she will have to drive the car to the road. The scheme works. Perhaps fooled by the fog, Aunt Linda has misjudged the driveway, which turns out to be only about a hundred feet long. The two marker rocks, which we had perhaps envisioned as boulders, might charitably be called stones, but are really more like pebbles.

Grandpa and Grandma join the Archers in Hoku Mana House. The vans are unloaded. Tired, but happy at last to be settled in Hawai'i, everyone is ready to go to bed—everyone, that is, except Eleanor, who, awakened from the snooze she took during the drive from Hilo, melts down under the accumulated stress and has a screaming fit for an hour. After she calms down, everyone is glad to hit the sack.

Wednesday, 1995 December 27. The Royal Hawai'ian Haven is spacious and furnished in Victorian splendor. The location of the washer and dryer on the back porch testifies to the mild climate—and to the age of the house—yet the dawn air is quite chilly at our altitude of nearly 4,000 feet. Uncle Doug fires up the wood stove this morning and the next to take the chill off our breakfast and the early morning cartoon viewing.

We face a problem that we had hoped to avoid: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which we have come so far to see, is closed because of the budget confrontation between President Clinton and the Republican-controlled Congress. The national parks remain closed for the entire trip, preventing our visiting Haleakala National Park on Maui. Here an early morning reconnaissance mission through the entrance station as far as the Steam Vents nets a sighting of several nēnē (native Hawai'ian geese and the state bird) and suggests that the park can be entered with impunity. We decide to trespass.

We park alongside Highway 11 at Nāmakani Paio campground and walk half a mile uphill to the crater rim at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory and the shuttered Jaggar Museum. We are treated to a magnificent view of Kīlauea Caldera, uncluttered by the presence of other tourists. Under sunny skies, but with a brisk wind, we follow Crater Rim Trail along the northwest side of the caldera, hiking nearly two miles to the Steam Vents. White-tailed tropicbirds (koa'e kea) float serenely across the crater beneath us, disappearing occasionally into nooks hidden in the sheer cliffs that make up the side of the caldera. Grandma is not thrilled with the length of the hike to the Steam Vents, especially after she discovers that the reconnaissance team had gotten to the same place by car.

Returning to the vans, we decide that it's not too soon to hit a Hawai'ian beach and so proceed south on Highway 11 to Punalu'u Black Sand Beach Park. The sand is indeed very black, and the beach is famous for hawksbill turtles ('ea) that feed on the rocky bottom just off the beach. Initially everyone is occupied with investigating the marine life that lives on the rocky outcroppings fringing the beach. Grandma, Natalie, you, and I become so preoccupied examining an interesting sluggish creature that an enormous wave escapes our attention, crashes on the rocks, and soaks us all. After lunch we discover that the power door locks on one of our mini-vans are malfunctioning, probably as a consequence of a window's having been left open overnight in the rain. Cycling up and down uncontrollably, the locks threaten to exhaust the battery. This behavior continues erratically through the afternoon and then stops, to our considerable relief. While most of us are trying unsuccessfully to figure out what to do about the locks, Sonia spots the turtles, and everyone rushes to get a good look.

Uncle Doug, Aunt Sherry, Josie, you, and I spend the afternoon at the beach. Though the afternoon turns cool and cloudy, Josie, you, and I, all holding hands, spend most of it standing knee-deep (that's knee-deep for me) in the cold water watching the turtles feed, sometimes right at our feet. I wonder why I am so much better than you three at spotting the turtles and finally realize that my polarized sunglasses allow me to peer beneath the surface far better than you.

The rest of the party goes to the Puna district, in an attempt to see the current volcanic activity from Pu'u 'Ō'ō and Kupaianaha vents, since we will not be able to get the better view from Chain of Craters Road within the park. They see a plume far in the distance, where lava is flowing into the ocean, and collect some fresh basalt. They also visit Lava Tree State Park, where the lava trees look more like modern sculpture than anything else. Some of the live trees in the park are huge, and Kevin climbs part way up one of these enormous trees before the group departs.

Everyone returns to Hoku Mana House for a spaghetti dinner. In addition to the standard accompanying dishes, we sample poi, the Hawai'ian staple made from taro root. Though its color is a very appealing light purple, poi is, judging by the response of our group, an acquired taste.

Thursday, 1995 December 28. Uncle Doug, Kevin, Jeff, and I trespass into the park along a service road to Thurston Lava Tube (Nāhuku) and then hike the loop trail that crosses Kīlauea Iki Crater. Crossing Crater Rim Drive to get to the trailhead, we spot a Kalij pheasant crossing in the other direction. Descending to the crater floor on the east side, we find a humpy puzzle of fairly smooth, but ill-fitting slabs of basalt, the remains of the 36-day 1959 eruption. Steam oozes out of cracks between the slabs, a disturbing reminder that another eruption is a certainty and could come at any time. The basalt floor roughens as we approach the lava vent at the southwest corner of the crater; this vent filled and then drained the crater several times in 1959. The park's closure does have a benefit: we encounter only one other group of hikers in the crater. Just as we are about to depart along the service road, we are gently admonished by a ranger who suggests politely that we leave the park. Other rangers, not so polite, make sure we exit at the far end of the service road.

After an improvised lunch at Hoku Mana House, I decide to enjoy an afternoon of rest and views, while Uncle Doug, Kevin, and Jeff return to Punalu'u Beach to snorkel among the hawksbill turtles. Though the water is so cold that they are able to stay in for only a few minutes at a time, they nonetheless report many close encounters with the turtles. The turtles are monitored and protected—all of them wear metal tags on their rear flippers—and it is illegal to touch them, but many people cannot resist a gentle pat on one that crawls up onto the beach to sleep on the black sand.

The rest of the party sets off in the morning along the scenic Hamakua Coast, stopping at Laupahoehoe Point, where enormous waves crash onto a rocky shore, and then at Kalopa State Recreation Area for an extended walk through the rain forest. Tom, Mom, and the kids make a mad dash through the forest, while the rest of the group enjoys a leisurely stroll, using a trail guide to identify the plants. Lunch at the Honoka'a Club provides exposure to the informal local style of service and cuisine; the waitress, asked by Mom what is in the stir-fry, replies, "Oh, whatever they can find back there."

After lunch the party fissions again. Grandpa and Grandma and the Archers spend the afternoon viewing the spectacular Waipi'o Valley and then return to Hoku Mana House. You and Mom, together with Josie and Aunt Sherry, proceed to Hapuna Beach State Park, reputed to be the best beach in the state of Hawai'i, for an afternoon of sand and surf. Josie spots a mongoose in the shrubs at the edge of the beach, and Aunt Sherry body surfs, two times successfully. Hapuna Beach is about halfway around the island from Volcano, so your group decides to return by the southern route, thereby circumnavigating the island. On the barren slopes near Kona, you see graffiti, both in English and Japanese, made out of white rocks perched on the black basalt, and you have dinner at Na'alehu, the southernmost town in the United States.

Uncle Doug, Kevin, and Jeff drive to a grocery store in Hilo to get fresh fish for dinner and return with an ample supply of ahi tuna, recommended by store employees who are eager to advise visitors from the mainland. I broil the ahi according to my special recipe (heretofore used only on salmon): a healthy dose of black pepper and repeated dowsings with olive oil and lemon juice. Mom, who has already eaten dinner anyway, sniffs disdainfully at the finished product, declaring that ahi must be eaten raw, but everybody else enjoys it. After the majority of the party has gone to bed, Grandpa, Grandma, Kevin, Jeff, and Natalie watch an episode of *Fawlty Towers* from Hoku Mana House's skimpy video selection, grandiosely called a library in Chalet Kīlauea's publicity; the episode is hilarious, confirming yet again that quality is more important than quantity.

Friday, 1995 December 29. We load the vans and car and check out of Chalet Kīlauea. Although we have an evening departure to Kahului on Maui, we persuade the Hawaiian Airlines gate agents in Hilo to check our bags in the morning, so that we don't have to haul them around all day. One of the gate agents, a self-proclaimed authority on the history of Hawaiian Airlines, explains to Jeremy that the airport code for Kahului, OGG, is the last name of an early Hawaiian Airlines pilot.

We spend the morning at the Hawai'i Tropical Botanical Garden, just north of Hilo. A very late picnic lunch at Liliuokalani Park in Hilo is bungled because of difficulties in coordinating the movements of fifteen people. Mom and Aunt Linda, having fetched the food from a grocery store, deliver it to an agreed-upon location at one end of the park, only to be informed by Jeff that I have taken most of the party to a better site on Coconut Island, at the far end of the park. Before they can get organized to move the food, Grandpa, Uncle Tom, and Uncle Doug, who are fainting from hunger, attack the grocery sacks and begin to eat. They succeed in satisfying themselves, but at the cost of imminent starvation on Coconut Island. Food is eventually distributed to both sites, and everyone's hunger is assuaged. The breakdown in organization is more easily tolerated under the cloudless skies of a beautiful, but windy afternoon in Hilo.

Aunt Sherry, Josie, Kevin, Jeff, you, and I spend the afternoon on Coconut Island, messing around and playing in the gentle surf, while the rest of the party visits Akaka Falls State Park north of Hilo. Small and unpretentious though it is, Coconut Island turns out to be a surprisingly nice place to while away an afternoon. There's an intimidating fifteen-foot tower to dive off of; Kevin and Jeff both take the plunge. The small, unripe coconuts that litter the ground are just the thing for an extended game of keep-away, which ultimately includes everyone but Aunt Sherry, who is absorbed in a book. Fulfilling a long-standing promise, Kevin and Jeff play Monster with Josie, Jeremy, and Eleanor. The re-united party enjoys dinner at Cafe 100, a Hawai'ian fast-food joint whose specialty is the original (only?) Loco-Moco: rice, main course, and fried egg in a plastic container.

We board our flight to Kahului after dark. As the plane takes off to the south, we try unsuccessfully to spot evidence of the volcanic activity below. On arrival in Kahului, we rent two mini-vans and a car and drive through drizzle to the Kapalua resort on the far northwest corner of Maui. En route Uncle Doug, Kevin, and Jeff listen to a Jimmy Buffett tape in their van. At the end of each song on the tape, Jeremy loudly sings a song from his standard repertoire, eventually annoying all the other occupants of the van. After checking in at Kapalua and then blundering around a bit in the dark, we find our three palatial apartments. Disoriented by our nocturnal arrival, we go to bed with little impression of Maui generally or of our immediate surroundings. That awaits the morning.

Saturday, 1995 December 30. A clear, cool dawn, with a strong kona wind heralding an approaching storm. We wake to find that our villas overlook the golf course and, beyond it, a dramatic sweep of ocean, with Lanai looming on the left and Molokai matching it on the right. The resort provides easy access to four beaches: Napili Bay, Kapalua Bay, Oneola Bay, and D. T. Fleming State Beach, from south to north. Uncle Doug, Grandpa, Kevin, and Jeff scout the beaches, and almost everyone else spends some time at Kapalua Bay, a secluded beach partly protected from the big breakers that are now pounding the coast. Further evidence of the approaching storm comes at lunch, when we learn that our planned whale watching expedition has been canceled. The beach scouts report spectacular sightings of a humpback at D. T. Fleming Beach, so after lunch we all drive there and find the whale frolicking just off shore in the midst of dolphins. As we leave the beach, the storm hits with dramatic force. Violent winds and sheets of rain continue for the rest of the day and into the night.

The party splits up for the afternoon. Doug, Sherry, Tom, and Linda go to the Maui Tropical Plantation, where, in a torrential rain, they get a shortened tour of the fifty acres of tropical agriculture and horticulture. Everybody else goes to the Whaler's Village shopping complex in Kaanapali. Though some shopping is done, partly just to stay out of the rain, the most interesting part of the complex is the Hale Kohala (House of the Whale) Museum, which has two parts, one on the history of whaling, the other on the great whales, especially the humpback. Grandpa is fascinated by the historical exhibit, and Eleanor is attracted to the exhibit on the great whales. Kevin, Jeff, and Josie see an outdoor Christmas tree spit sparks and catch fire as the heavy rain shorts its wiring.

Dripping and bedraggled, looking like nothing so much as a party of drowned rats, we all meet as planned at the Old Lahaina Cafe, right on the beach, and discover, to no one's surprise, that the scheduled luau, for which we made reservations two weeks ago, is canceled. We make new luau reservations for Wednesday evening, regretting that this means that the Archers, who leave Monday, won't be able to attend. The wind and rain, heaviest just as we arrive at the Cafe, encourage us to stay put for dinner, which we do, thus allowing the Archers at least to sample the luau fare.

Sunday, 1995 December 31. A cloudy day. Though the rain and winds are gone, the beaches are closed by heavy surf. We attract the local birds to our breakfast by distributing bread crumbs on the patio. Especially gregarious and eye-catching is a species of cardinal with a red head, dark gray back and wings, and white breast. They share our breakfast all week.

For each of the fifteen participants, Aunt Sherry distributes a white T-shirt and assigns a letter to be drawn on the T-shirt. When assembled in the right order, the participants spell out MARY & MORRIS 50th in a crooked, but legible style. Photos preserve the canonical order and others not so canonical.

Grandpa, Grandma, Uncle Doug, and Aunt Sherry attend the United Methodist Church in Lahaina. The local congregants are pleased with yesterday's heavy rain; within a couple of weeks it will transform the presently barren west-facing slopes of the West Maui mountains to a soft green. Barred from the beaches, Mom, Josie, you, and I spend the morning in the four pools and two spas at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Despite the heavy seas, our whale watching expedition materializes in the afternoon. We board the Pacific Whale Foundation's 53-foot motor vessel, *Whale One*, at Maalaea Harbor. Under cloudy skies we plow toward Lanai for about thirty minutes before spotting a pod of humpbacks spouting in the distance. The boat approaches this pod, but the whales remain several hundred yards off the bow and then leave us behind. Not long after another pod approaches, and this time the boat is able to maneuver very close. The whales, all within a few hundred yards off the port side, some within a hundred, treat us to a series of round outs and peduncle arches (these describe the humped back as the whale prepares to dive, which gives the humpback its name), fluke-up dives, and head rises. The whales are accompanied by Pacific dolphins, which come right next to the boat. Josie and Eleanor, hanging onto the rail in the bow, are mesmerized by the show. The crew's excitement confirms that we are seeing something out of the ordinary. The only down side is that the rough seas make Mom really seasick.

After the boat trip, we are lured by the promise of free posters to the Pacific Whale Foundation's store in Lahaina. We end up providing a brisk trade in whale-related clothing and jewelry. Eleanor acquires the jade whale tail that is one of her treasured possessions.

We have dinner at Roy's Nicolina in Kahana, which is festively decorated for New Year's Eve. We are a bit *déclassé* for the upscale atmosphere, Roy's being the sort of place where every time someone leaves the table, a waiter rushes over, refolds the napkin, and puts it back in its place. Many of us enjoy the fresh seafood prepared in eclectic and colorful styles. Uncle Doug has Southwestern scallops, the Southwestern referring not to the scallops, but to the style, there not being many scallops in the Rio Grande. In recognition of her imminent birthday, Natalie receives a complimentary piece of cake, with "Happy Birthday, Natalie" written artistically in chocolate on the plate.

Back at our apartments, we celebrate the arrival of the New Year on Central Standard Time (8:00 pm locally) with champagne and sparkling cider toasts. You and Mom and I are so tired that we barely make it to midnight on Mountain Standard Time. Others, including Josie, stay up very late to welcome the New Year on local time (it's nearly the last New Year, there being only one more time zone—and that one very thinly populated—before the Date Line).

Monday, 1996 January 1. The Archers leave very early this morning to begin the long journey back to Lubbock. They drive from Los Angeles to Lubbock, stopping in Ruidoso to let Natalie join her church group for a few days of skiing. Josie wakes up very cross, presumably as a consequence of her midnight activities. The weather turns fine (and remains so till we leave), but the surf all along the coast is still very heavy.

We spend the morning at Fleming Beach. As one gigantic wave after another rolls in, Josie and you wisely stay close to shore, out of the thundering surf. Uncle Doug, Kevin, Jeff, and I throw caution to the winds, trying to catch the waves and ride into shore. Uncle Doug, Kevin, and Jeff, sharing two boogie boards, alternate between body surfing and boogie boarding, while I stick exclusively to body surfing, partly because getting the boogie board through a breaking wave appears to be a terrifying experience. After being in the water for only a couple of minutes, Kevin loses one of the beach shoes that he has just bought for 30 bucks. He is especially annoyed because he complained to the sales person that the shoes were too big, only to be assured that they fit perfectly (later he was able to get a replacement pair). To be truthful, it's probably madness to be in the heavy surf, but luckily none of us gets killed or injured despite being blasted repeatedly by the gigantic waves. I have three wonderfully exhilarating body surfs, the best of my life, before a wave slams my head into the bottom and persuades me to quit. Kevin takes a photo that shows my arms sticking out of the front of a breaking wave, everything else hidden in the crash of surf.

Late in the afternoon Grandpa, Grandma, Aunt Sherry, Mom, you, and I drive to Nakalele Point to see the Hawai'ian hobbits and the Nakalele blowhole, through which each incoming wave produces a burst of spray. The road, not yet improved to be straight, winds through pineapple fields and in and out of deep inlets. At Nakalele Point we find a dramatic coastline of steep cliffs and crashing surf. Humpbacks blow in the distance. Blustery northeast tradewinds carry clouds shoreward. Leaking mist as they encounter the coast, the clouds are shoved against the West Maui mountains, where they threaten rain before vanishing. To the east and south the mountains are clothed in the bright green of the wet side of the island and are dappled by deep cloud shadow and a gauzy sunlight that, filtered through the mist, seems itself to be a light shade of green. The hobbits turn out to be hundreds of foot-tall stacks of rocks—you call them Hawai'ian snowmen. We speculate that the hobbits are small religious shrines, but later learn that they are a whimsical expression of Hawai'ian humor. Our guidebook warns that the Nakalele blowhole is hard to find; we spot several candidates before settling on what we think is the real thing.

A hamburger cookout at our apartments is the prelude to a relaxing evening.

Tuesday, 1996 January 2. Uncle Doug, Kevin, and Jeff are off at dawn to catch a fast boat to Molokini, a crater-rim island where they spend the morning snorkeling in exceptionally clear water. Uncle Doug pronounces it the best snorkeling he's ever had. The trio spends the afternoon in Lahaina, where Jeff does what any sensible person ought to do in Hawai'i—he takes surfing lessons.

Aunt Sherry, Mom, Josie, and Eleanor get up a bit later than the early crew and go horseback riding at the Ironwood Ranch in the West Maui mountains behind the Kapalua resort. Meandering through forests and the pineapple fields of the Maui Land & Pineapple Company, they enjoy splendid views of the ocean and hear a detailed description of how to cultivate pineapples. After the ride the horseback riders, joined by Jeremy, head for the beach for the rest of the day.

Grandpa, Grandma, and I drive to the Maui Tropical Plantation, where we tour the grounds and have a very slow lunch in the restaurant. We then venture into the Iao Valley west of Wailuku to see the 2,250-foot Iao Needle, which, though it appears to be an enormous free-standing dagger thrust into the sky, is actually the exposed end of a long, thin ridge.

Unable to find attractive fresh fish at a reasonable price, we settle for steak instead and enjoy another cookout at our apartments.

Wednesday, 1996 January 3. Over breakfast Grandpa and Grandma reminisce about the events surrounding their wedding 50 years ago. Grandpa's parents, Fred and Grace (Morris) Caves, farmed about 400 acres a mile west of the tiny town of Blair in southwestern Oklahoma. Grandpa grew up there with an older sister, Ruth, and two younger sisters, Ferne and Frances. Grandma's parents, Curt and Doris (DeValon) Buddrus, had both grown up in Muskogee, where Grandma also spent most of her childhood and adolescence. Before they were married, Grandpa had visited Grandma's family in Muskogee, and Grandma had visited the Caves farm, where at that time there was no electricity—lighting was by Aladdin lanterns—or indoor plumbing.

Grandpa and Grandma were married on 1945 November 11, not long after the end of World War II. Grandpa had just been commissioned as an officer in the Navy, having graduated from midshipman's school in Ithaca, New York. He took a train from Ithaca to Muskogee, arriving in the wee hours of the morning preceding the wedding. The wedding was held in the afternoon at the First Methodist Church. Grandpa's family was represented by his parents, his sister Ruth, her husband Chauncey, and their three-year-old child Dana; they all stayed with Mrs. J. Fred Akers, Grandpa's first-grade teacher, who had moved to Muskogee. Chauncey served as Grandpa's best man. Gasoline was still being rationed, so Grandpa's family had to save enough coupons to permit them to drive from southwestern Oklahoma. Grandma's family in attendance included her parents, her paternal grandfather, David "Pa" Buddrus, and her maternal grandmother, Naomi Grace "Granny" DeValon. Grandpa's brother Ed had not yet been discharged from the Army, so he and his wife Betty were not at the wedding. Grandma's bridesmaid was Genevieve Vaughn, her roommate at Oklahoma A&M. The reception was held at Curt and Doris's neat red brick house on F Street, just a short walk from the church.

After the wedding Grandpa and Grandma spent a couple of days in Tulsa and then had several weeks together in Muskogee before Grandpa departed for his Navy assignment in the Philippines. Grandma stayed with her parents in Muskogee, and Grandpa traveled by train to San Francisco, where sometime between Christmas and New Year's, he boarded a Navy ship for the ten-day trip to the Philippines. Grandpa was part of a group of officers who were training Filipinos to operate several decrepit wooden ships that the Navy was turning over to the Philippines for coastal patrol duty. As soon as he had accumulated enough points to be discharged, Grandpa caught a boat back to San Francisco, from which he took a train to Memphis, where he was mustered out of the Navy. A couple of buses brought him to Muskogee, where he and Grandma commenced their postwar life.

After breakfast we all go to Kapalua Bay, where I learn to snorkel using equipment borrowed from Michael Gross. Michael snorkels with a mask into which he stuffs a pair of glasses without temple pieces. I find that Michael has left the glasses in his mask and discover that the prescription is pretty good. Presto! I'm a snorkeler, exploring the extraordinary underwater world of brightly colored fish and coral. The non-snorkelers abandon Kapalua Bay in mid-morning and go to Fleming Beach, where Jeff surfs and everybody else splashes in the now gentle waves.

Grandpa, Grandma, Uncle Doug, Aunt Sherry, Kevin, and Jeff spend the afternoon at the Whaler's Village complex. You, Josie, Mom, and I wander along Front Street in Lahaina, trying to decide between the very overpriced souvenirs and the only moderately overpriced ones. You and Josie have fun climbing on the famous banyan tree that spreads over an entire block.

The two parties meet at the Old Lahaina Cafe for an evening of food and entertainment at the Old Lahaina Luau. A photograph taken as we arrive shows us all standing on the beach, wearing our leis, looking tanned and fit, in the background Lanai silhouetted by the setting sun. Eleanor is attracted to a Hawai'ian lady who is making craft items out of coconut fronds. Eleanor buys a bright green basket, decorated with a coconut-frond cricket and a coconut-frond rose, and two matching head bands, each topped by a huge (this one's real) flower. The head bands, together with their leis, make Eleanor and Josie the ali'i nui of our party. Faded to a dull gray, with only a hint of green, the basket now adorns our hearth.

We watch the uncovering of the the kalua pig, which has roasted all afternoon in an underground oven (an imu). The buffet offers a selection that is generally delicious and certainly more than ample—banana bread, raw ahi, crab salad, kalua pig, cubes of coconut pudding (you can't eat just one, though you certainly ought to), and plenty of other goodies. Jeremy declares it the best dinner on Hawai'i, Kevin is pretty enthusiastic, too, but Eleanor eats only the banana bread. The Hawai'ian music and dance begin after dinner. As anniversary celebrants, Grandpa and Grandma dance on the beach to the Hawai'ian wedding song. The beach at dusk, the gentle breeze, the food, the music and dance—all create an ambiance, even amid 250 tourists, that permits a fleeting glimpse of Hawai'ian life.

Eleanor's beloved Blue Bear is missing when we return to our apartment after the luau. The most plausible theory is that he didn't scramble out of the sheets when they were changed and so got hauled away to the laundry. Frantic efforts to recover him do not succeed. Eleanor is devastated, but ultimately all we can do is hope that Blue Bear is able to make a new life for himself in Hawai'i (if you're going to get lost, you could pick worse places).

Thursday, 1996 January 4. Early in the morning, Uncle Doug, Aunt Sherry, Kevin, and I reconnoiter rocky Namalu Bay—between Oneola and Kapalua Bays—for snorkeling sites, but find the potential entry and exit points too rocky and wave-battered for our taste and return to Kapalua Bay for a couple of hours of snorkeling. Everybody else goes to Fleming Beach for the day, the snorkelers joining them in the afternoon. The big breakers have disappeared; one can stand for hours, bobbing up and down in the gentle swells, never encountering a wave big enough to propel one to shore. Emboldened by the gentle surf, both of you venture much farther out than you have before, only to find yourselves swamped several times and thrashed by breaking waves. It's a sign of having spent several days at the beach that you enjoy the thrashing.

As we return to our apartments at about 3:30 pm, we see several humpbacks breaching perhaps a mile off the coast. They are plainly visible from our apartments, especially with the aid of binoculars, and we spend about half an hour watching them. Then it's off to Lahaina for last-minute shopping and our last dinner in Hawai'i. Everyone seeks a tasty way to preserve a bit of Hawai'i through the winter back on the mainland; selections include Kona coffee and chocolate-covered macadamia nuts. We choose for our last dinner the charmingly named Cheeseburger in Paradise, which, situated on the beach side of Front Street, offers a magnificent view of Lahaina Harbor and the ocean beyond. The atmosphere is pleasingly casual, the smoothies and hamburgers are good, and a spectacular ocean sunset is a nearly too perfect background for the final scene of our Hawai'ian adventure.

Friday, 1996 January 5. We leave Kapalua at 4:45 am to get to Kahului in time for a 7:00 am flight to Honolulu. Drizzle all the way to Kahului signals the approach of another storm. Three flights bring us home without incident. Snow on the ground from a New Year's Eve snowstorm reminds us that New Mexico, wonderful though it is, is *not* Hawai'i.

Love,

Dad

CMC/TEX

P.S. Mahalo to Aunt Sherry, Kevin, Uncle Doug, and Mom, who checked my account for accuracy and contributed vignettes of many of the experiences I have included.