



# The Taylor Times



The Newsletter with "Schmaltz"

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Holiday 2019

Volume 25, Issue 1  
Seattle, Washington

## CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF NEWSLETTERS

### SANDS OF MAUI

After a wonderful trip to Kauai a few years ago, it seemed like a good idea to go back to Hawaii and check out Maui. Worldmark has two locations on the island, one on the west side just north of Lahaina (Kahana), and the other in Kihei along the populated stretch of beach on the west

c e n t r a l shore. The Lahaina location has 12 floors directly on the beach, and all units face the ocean with gorgeous views of Lanai, Molokai, and the sunset. The Kihei complex has buildings

that are only three floors, few that have any views, and is located across a busy street from the beach. It seemed a no-brainer to choose the Valley Isle in Lahaina. Unfortunately there were a number of shortcomings that had not been clear and had us questioning the choice right from the start. First was the fact that there was no air conditioning, and given that this was an unusually hot stretch even by Hawaii standards, it was uncomfortable at times. They did put us on the top floor, which allowed us to take advantage of the trade

winds blowing through, but it also meant everything had to be constantly tied down or it would blow up against the screen door to the balcony. Most of the building was privately owned or part of the Vacation Internationale system, only 14 units were Worldmark, so the office was under the control of VI, not Worldmark. They were

closed every day by 5 and were not able to provide the efficiency and services of all the other condos we've used. We also had to accept that there was no exercise facility, it having burned

down some seven years earlier and was still in the permitting process, not that it would have mattered as they would have charged significantly to use it. But after giving consideration to finding another place to stay, and realizing that it would be a big money mistake, we decided to make do. It was an OK decision.

We rented a car at the airport in Kahului and drove the half hour to the condo in Lahaina and used the (air-conditioned) vehicle liberally for the next six days, putting around 1000 miles on it



*Under the Banyan Tree in Lahaina*



*Maui's west-central shore near Makena*

and traveling every significant highway on the island. The road to Hana, at the easternmost end of the island, had been touted as one of the most beautiful drives in the world. Don't believe it! While there are a number of spots that provide great views of the ocean and forest setting, and waterfalls abound along the way, many easily accessible, it did not have the spectacular views we had expected to see, especially when you consider some 55 one-lane bridges to be negotiated with oncoming traffic, and the severely winding road for some two hours of driving. Hana, the destination, is not in itself a particularly scenic town, though it has its attractive features, some of which we didn't find out about until after our first trip there. (Yes, first.) On the return trip we stopped at an overlook that was also access to Ho'okipa Beach, home to the huge Hawaiian Sea Turtles. This was an exciting discovery that we both thoroughly enjoyed.

Donna had found several places in the literature that she wanted to visit. Among them were the Red Sand Beach, the Black Sand Beach, and the Secret Beach. It turned out the first two were, you guessed it, just outside of Hana so back to the east we went. This time, however, we took the south coast road, south of Haleakala volcano and national park. We had gotten mixed reviews of the road, from "not that

bad" to pretty much "treacherous." Turned out the latter was probably more accurate. All of the road, once reaching the last bit of populated area, was only one lane. Fortunately there were very few intrepid travelers to encounter, but the stretches about which we were particularly warned, the rough paved section and the unpaved section, were among the most uncomfortable on which I'd ever driven, even after all the back roads in Colorado that I'd experienced. I will say, though, that the views along that coast looking across at the Big Island, were quite impressive. I would love to have stopped to take some pictures, but felt it prudent to pursue the route to its end as quickly as possible, reserving any photography for the return trip. As it turned out, the option to return by that route was nixed as soon as we managed to get back into Hana's civilization, so that photography will have to wait for another day (or lifetime.)



*Hawaiian sea turtles at Ho'okipa Beach*

Once in Hana again, we found the trail (and thank goodness a parking place) down to the Red Sand Beach. The hike was not long, but it did go up and down along a sharply sloping drop to the sea. It was not like hiking a cliff ledge, but could have resulted in pretty serious injury if not traversed carefully. Amazingly, Donna and her cane defeated it admirably and we found ourselves at a gorgeous and secluded little beach. It was not very crowded, but there was a constant flow of hikers in and out. Still, it was a worthwhile destination.

The Black Sand Beach was located in a state park just north of Hana, the name of which I won't bother to try to spell here... suffice it to say it started with a "W." This beach was much more crowded, as one might expect of a park, but it was a pleasant concrete stairway to the bottom and back. After our stop we got back on the Hana Highway and headed back toward Kahului, not forsaking a second visit to the turtle beach!

The Secret Beach, as the name seriously implies, was quite elusive. Located somewhere in or near Makena, south of Kihei, we tried several times to verifiably find it, asking numerous people in various places. We found a number of beaches that we thought might be it, but they had other names and none could be confirmed as our destination. Of course, every place we stopped was unique and beautiful, even the beach at the very end of the road at the King's Trail Lava Fields at La Perouse Bay, which was comparatively devoid of vegetation. This location was reportedly a daily feeding area for the dolphins living nearby, but you had to get there at 5AM. Since the sun did not come up until 6:30 or later, it's rather doubtful



*Donna on the trail to the Red Sand Beach.*

anything could have been observed even if it HAD been possible to get there at that time.

The north shore from Lahaina and back around to Kahului, was by far the most beautiful drive. There were a few one lane sections, but the road was well paved and easy to navigate, and the stops along the way more than made up for any difficulties, including the Nakalele Blowhole and the Seven Olivine Pools. This is the drive we would recommend far more than the Hana road.



*Lahaina Sunset*

We had dinner at a number of restaurants, but I think our favorite stop was Bubba Gump's Shrimp House. Yes, it's a chain, and yes, there are bunches of them around the country, but it was pretty inexpensive, had a gorgeous view, and was totally yummy!

### **Expanding Worldmark: Choice or Coercion**

The Worldmark time share system has been a good fit for us for many years though I admit I fought it at first. Originally purchased in 1994, points have been purchased and added several times since then. With only a limited amount of vacation time each year (and two other vacation club memberships in Puerto Vallarta) we had pretty much acquired all the points we were going to need as well as the maintenance dues we were willing to pay. We've traveled to some 19 resorts in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. In April we again visited Long Beach, and as usual went to one of the "owner updates", (an ambiguous term as we cannot sell the timeshare through the company), sales



presentations, which we only attend for the free gift. These can sometimes be high pressure sales assaults, but with appropriate decisions already in mind, can usually be successfully navigated. This time, however, we were confronted with a sales person whose ethics were greatly in question, and who did not have our welfare in mind. She lied, misrepresented, and misled us to believe that with additional points we would be able to do things that we were unable to do before. While there was limited truth to this, these things could only be done under certain limited circumstances, about which we were not told. Due to space constraints I won't go into detail here, but the bottom line is this, if you're going to purchase Worldmark, and at this point I would not recommend it, DO NOT go to their owner updates unless you plan to buy. If they told the truth and really gave you a chance to evaluate, it might be worthwhile, but their sales staff are liars and can't be trusted. You have been warned!

### IN MUSIC

This year's musical output has included a 6-movement piece called "Elements" for brass band, a number of additional etudes for tuba extending progress on the overall book, and completion of the second movement of the Second Symphony, reaching about the halfway point of that overall composition. Work on it has not been consistent, and has stretched over some 7 years thus far, but the progress is promising.

Later this season, Brass Band Northwest will again be performing "Rainier" from Washington Statements, and the Eastside Symphony has last year's

Ambrosia Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra scheduled for the May concert, with pianist John Lee to perform. I'm looking forward to hearing it done by this exceptional pianist.

### OTHER EVENTS AND DOINGS

In April I had the "pleasure" of experiencing my first, and hopefully only, kidney stone. Donna has always said every man should have to go through childbirth so he knows the pain. I believe this qualifies.

The 50th and final organized high school reunion was held this year. The trip to Chicago allowed us wonderful visits with Scott and Natalia, and Aunt Marilyn and Cousin Pam.

We went to Disney on Ice, but were so uncomfortable with the extremely loud volumes in the performance we had to leave at intermission. It was good. Take earplugs!



*January's lunar eclipse*

*Wishing you all peace, quiet, and happiness in the New Year!*

*Jeff and Donna*

