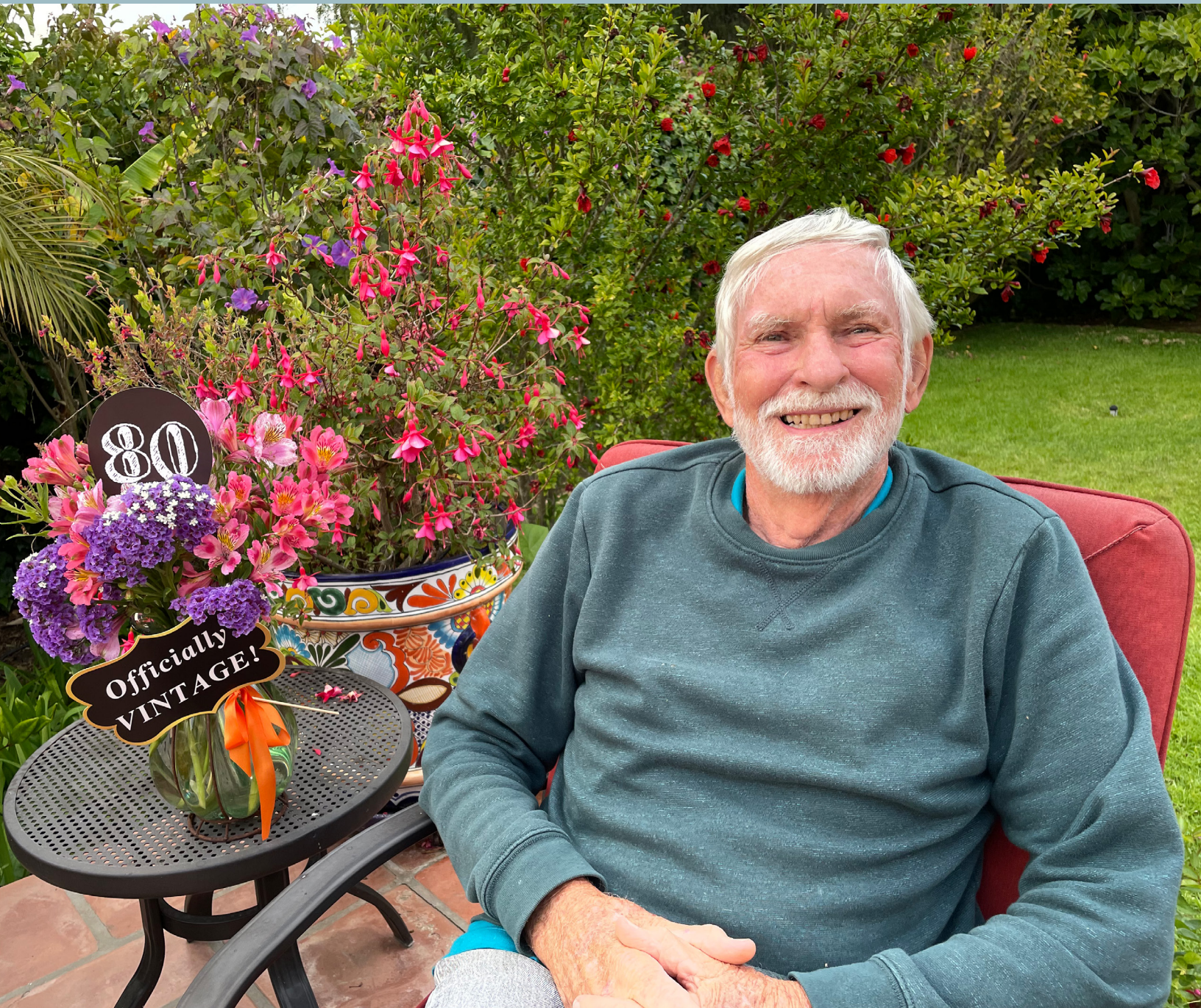




June - 2021

Issue No: 365



Bud Celebrates His 80th Birthday



Bud Turns 80!

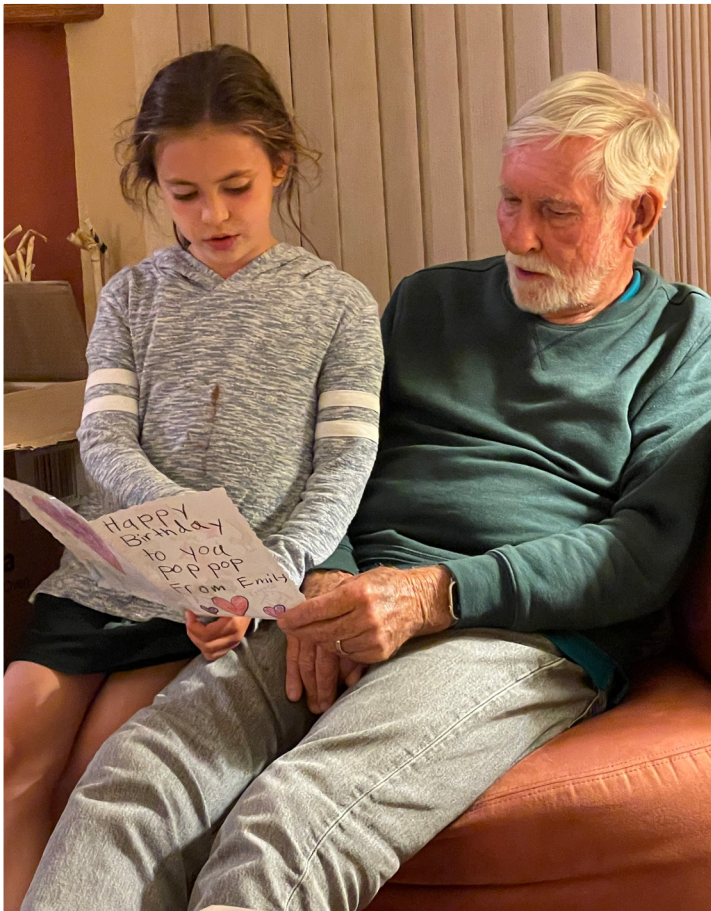
By Margaret Riel

Bud turned 80 celebrating the occasion with his close family Me, Megan, Michael, Ashley and their two girls, Emily, and Addy. Megan surprised him by coming here for the week, wandering nonchalantly into our kitchen early one morning. For once in a lifetime “birth month” Bud received gifts every day. He has new clothes and a hat and Michael made sure he had a new UCLA tee-shirt. In the garage there are new gardening gadgets, gloves, and tools to make his projects more enjoyable. The garden has a few more ornaments to add to our daily lunching atmosphere. And then there are some tech gadgets, as well.

On his birthday, the MacMitchell family surprised him with an outdoor pizza oven so we could enhance our search for the best pizza ever. The grandkids made books and cards. While all the gifts were greatly appreciated for the love that they convey, the best gift of all time came from Megan and appeared across a time span of 5 months.



For Christmas she gave Bud a lovely box (donated from Randy's extensive box collection wrapped and delivered), a lovely wooden letter opener and a Zoom chat letting him know that the meaning of these gifts would become clearer in good time. What he did not know at that point was that Megan had collected a list of 80 of Bud's friends stretching far into his past and she had invited them to be part of her birthday project. Once they agreed, she sent them addressed and stamped brightly colored envelopes and writing prompts about important memories, and pictures. These priceless letters began arriving in January and continued to his birthday. They included stories about how he personally affected their lives and reminders of events long lost in the multitude of memories that crowd the minds of people who has lived such a rich and storied life as Bud. Some of the letters were so deeply personal that they touched both of us for days. Both of us looked forward each day for one of those magical brightly colored envelopes that Megan organized.



The day after his birthday the Riel family [OR: My brothers and sisters] family surprised Bud with a birthday party complete with a catered lunch, famous Riel chorus, and a much-appreciated gift. Because of medicines that Bud now needs to take (he made it to his 79th year without taking any prescribed medicines), he is supposed to avoid, or highly restrict, alcohol. He prefers to follow the

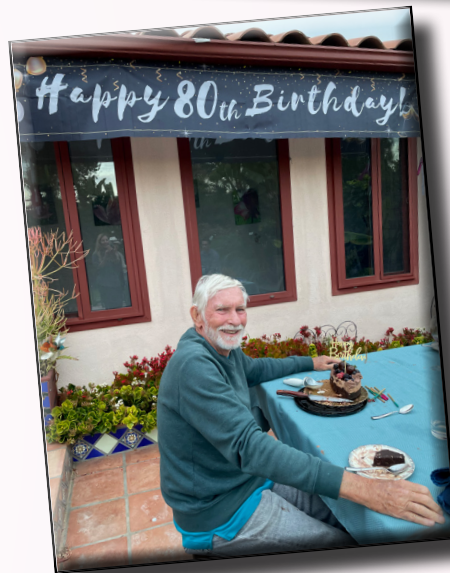
“restrict wine” advice. The problem with that advice is drinking only a glass (or two) of fine wine can cause the remainder to sit and get old. To solve this problem, the family got him a de-corking system that enables the extraction of a glass (or two) of wine from a very nice bottle without removing the cork. It replaces the extracted wine with a gas that preserves the wine even better than the cork. Now he can enjoy wine while almost following the doctor’s orders.



Next was followed by a birthday trip to Hawaii with Jeff and Carol. It was our first time on a plane for well over a year and it felt safe and somewhat normal. The travels are described in the RFNL article by Carol.

And so now the first of us turns 80. When you are kid you can't wait for it to be your birthday and each new year is about new strengths, privileges, and responsibilities. At some point those expectations shift to preserving strengths, with less focus on either privileges or responsibilities. But fortunately, we have models like Bud Mehan who makes aging less scary. Sure his 79th year brought some medical challenges, but he is well on his way to recover from all of his body's attempts to slow him down. Learning to play pickleball with his now double set of reconstructed hips is going well with weekly improvements as his body is remembering his once strong tennis skills.

He continues to share his wisdom on educational boards and participates on environmental justice projects that benefit the same population of children that have been the focus of his highly successful professional career. We are still planning one more celebration—this one will be marking Bud's 80th and Michael's 40th birthdays, hopefully in July or August, with our wonderful extended family and friends. So here is to Bud, the King of Years!





Travels Begin Again for the Gillinghams

By Listy Gillingham



As the Covid restrictions are beginning to lift, the Gillinghams are ready to start traveling once again. Not to be too risky, we started our travels in Palm Springs for a Marriott vacation at the Shadow Ridge Resort. The weather was perfect and the timing for us to do absolutely nothing but vacay, was just what the doctor would have order if you could easily visit a doctor these days.



We stayed in a villa (which is a fancy term for a two-bedroom condo) allowing us the ability to cook and relax on the 17th hole of their golf course. That proved to be a great location because we could watch the golfing hacks miss the green and shoot it into the running water on their right. Luckily, Bob had his handy golf ball retriever (thank you Carol and Jeff) and spent each evening collecting the lost balls. We found time to golf (three different courses); swim, read, hang with friends (two couples joined us); walk; shop the outlets; and play tennis every day. A perfect way to help prepare us for our next trip in June to Hawaii.



Bud and Jeff and Carol and Margaret Visit Maui!

By Carol Benesch

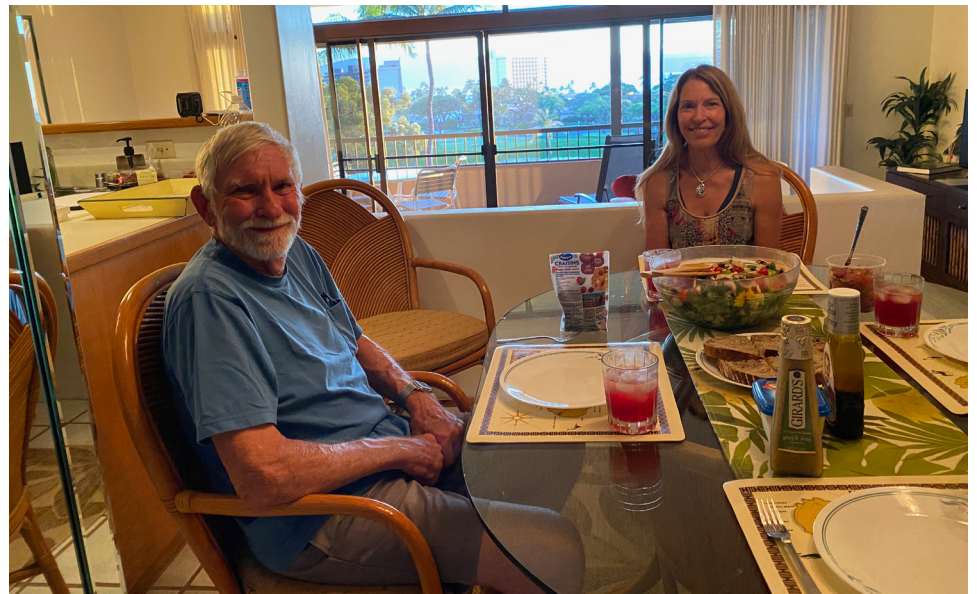


Memorial Day meant the Riel-Mehans and Beneschs could travel once again to the beautiful shores of Maui for 8 days of R & R. They shared a nice condo in the middle of Kaanapali Beach, overlooking a well-maintained championship golf course, and with a Western view that was full of righteous sunsets every night. The island of Lanai was clearly visible every day right across the channel. All that was missing were the leaping Humpback whales, but they left in March.

After all of us vaccinated Californians went thru the Island requirements of testing (72 hours ahead) and clearing a gauntlet of varying degrees of airport arrival protocols, we hopped in our rented SUV and made the 30-minute drive to Lahaina and the Kaanapali seashore.

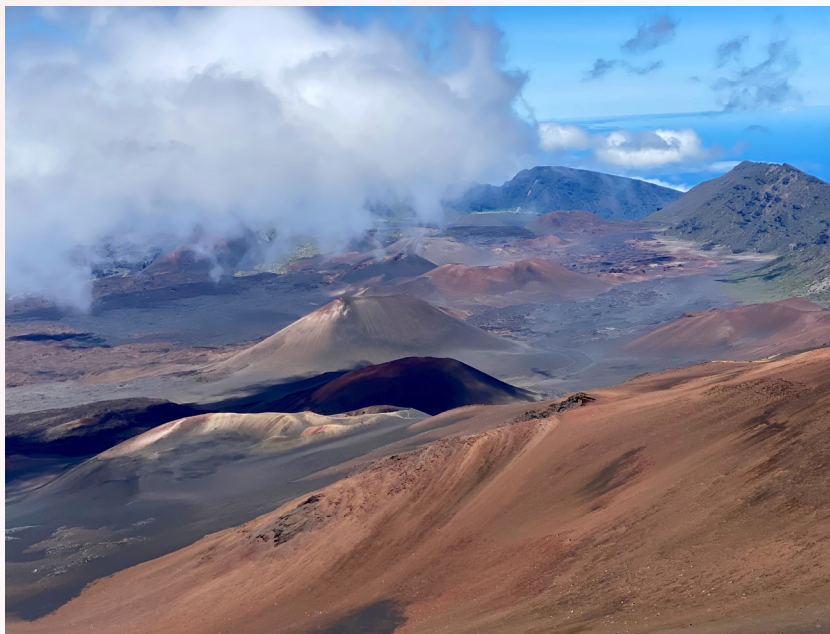


There was hardly a dull moment. (Except the weather, which never differed from a high of 83 and a low of 70, the entire 8 days!) Our early tasks included grocery shopping, (nothing but healthy food, coffee, fruit, and liquor), and checking out the pool, the pickleball courts, and the BBQ area. We cooked and ate-in about half the time but had some memorable meals at Roy's (in the course clubhouse), Dukes on the Beach, Down the Hatch and Cool Cats in Lahaina, and many servings of Gelato at a great place in Whalers Village, which was walking distance from our condo. We played many spirited games of pickleball, snorkeled a couple of times, once in a beautiful calm reef full of fish and coral just north of us in Kapalua, and even got in a green turtle sighting on the beach. Evenings were always filled with gin rummy games in which we smartly rotated winners.



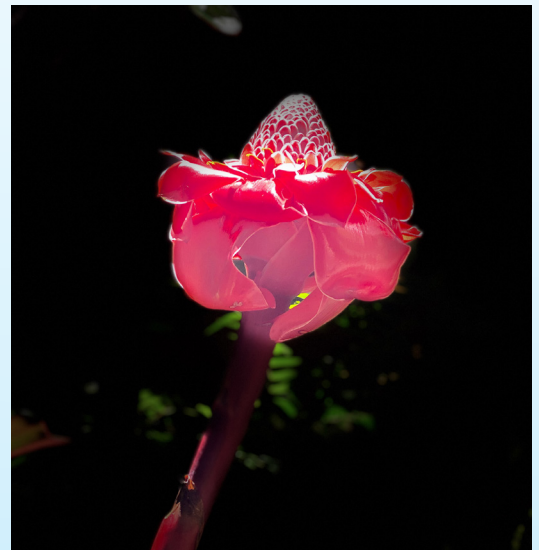
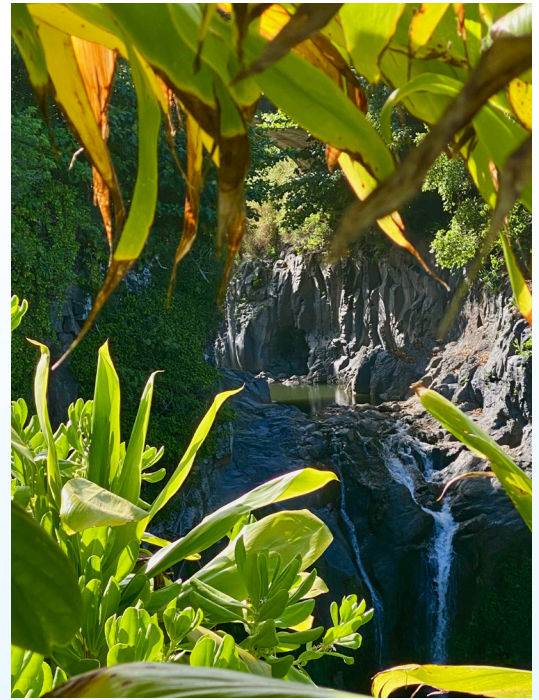
We window shopped in Lahaina's galleries and shops, and found the crowded streets and restaurants reminiscent of pre-covid days. Two of our 8 days were travel days. Early on, we drove up to Haleakala, the 10,000-foot volcano that dominates the island. We drove through clouds to find the summit crater clear and moon-like from almost any vantage point. Margaret and Bud reminisced about their several day backpack and hiking around, through and down the far side of the mountain some years earlier. Not sure they would want to repeat that fantastic journey at this juncture. But Carol and Jeff were just happy to be able to see the inside of the huge crater after having it be "fogged in" and unseeable on their honeymoon visit to the top some 42 years earlier.

The view from the summit also included great shots of the surrounding islands, including Hawaii with its twin 13,000-foot peaks, Lanai, Molokai, and maybe even Oahu far off to the north.



No trip to Maui would be complete without the incredible road to Hana. 3 hours each way of sharp curves, one lane bridges, emerald pools, giant ferns and trees, streams and waterfalls, and absolutely stunning vistas of coastline far below. We drove as far as the 7 sacred pools, which included a good hike, and unfortunately, a dip in the water was prohibited at the time. All of us agreed the park and pools had changed since our last visits decades before, but it was still a stunning walk filled with historical significance to visitors and islanders alike.

The highlight was perhaps the fact-filled narration and history lesson from the famous “Gypsy Guide”, an app that Carol found which made our long drive, and 6 “must-stops and get-out-of-the-car” places of interest, a most valuable part of the beautiful trek to Hana. All in all, our trip to Maui was unforgettable, and a great way to celebrate Bud’s 80th birthday, and end our Covid-19 induced travel restrictions.



Look
who else
went to
Hawaii!



Br Bridy Hartman Hall

This certainly is the year of the Hawaiian adventures for the Riel Clan. Lyle and I decided that his 65th birthday was the perfect reason to schedule a trip to the Big Island, followed by our favorite island of Kauai. So, we set out on May 2, armed with Covid tests and masks to stay safe.

The Big Island was new for me. We stayed at the massive Waikoloa Beach Marriott. It had a tram to take you from one end of the hotel to the other, which was a fun ride. Lyle had torn his Achilles heel a week earlier during a hot match of pickleball at Bob and Listy's. So, the hikes that we had planned to take took a back seat for this trip, but Lyle managed to hobble his way through the fun. The good news was that he still could golf. And so, we went to the Waikoloa Golf Club and enjoyed a nice game together.

The weather was quite nice with a constant breeze keeping us cool and happy. Lyle also took me to the top of the Mauna Kea Summit which is Hawaii's tallest mountain top. It features the world's largest telescope. But what I found to be the most extraordinary was the lack of plant life. It looked like we were standing on the moon and not on a tropical island due to the lava flows that burned years ago. We saw some patches of snow and were happy that we had planned well for the drop in temperature.

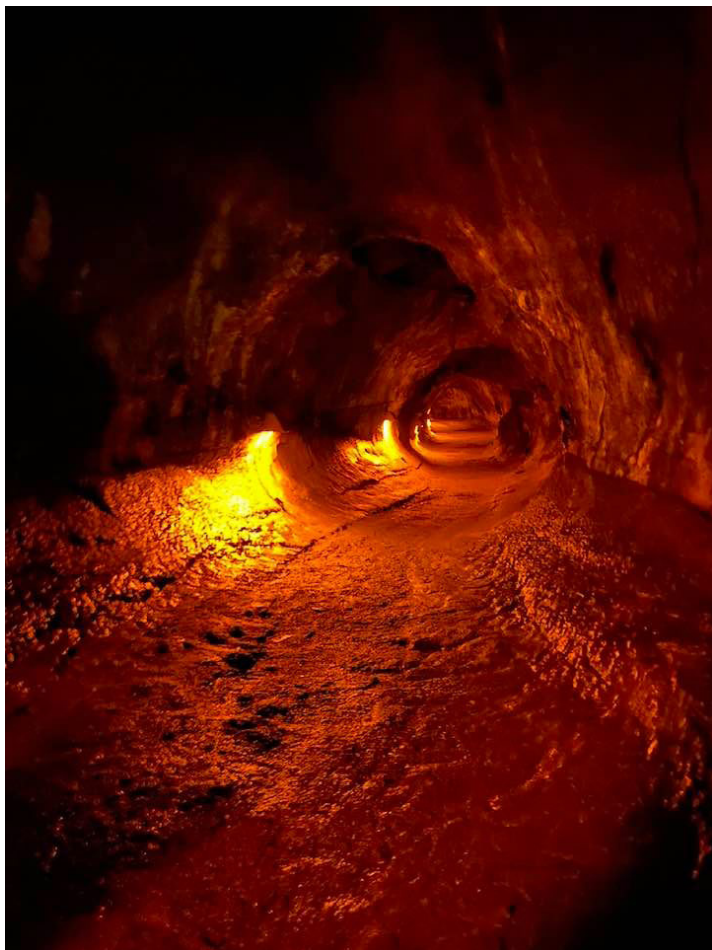


After two days in Waikoloa, we moved to the rainforest side of the island. What a contrast I saw! We went from the blackened lava landscapes and goats that seemed to be everywhere munching on the grass that sprouted, to the lush jungles of Volcano Village. The cottage that we stayed in was so cute. It was nestled deep into a rainforest which gave you the illusion that you were the only one that existed. It was a bed and breakfast kind of cottage and we loved waking up to a home cooked meal prepared to be enjoyed whenever we were ready for it.





We were also very close to the Volcano Village National Park. Now this was the true treat for me because I got to see my first volcano. Again, the beauty of nature is quite astounding. The desolate destruction that happened from the lava flows was incredible to witness. And if you should need a reminder of the heat and force that just laid beneath your feet, just go stand by a lava vent. The air hisses a mighty groan and blows steam into your face if you get too close. I enjoyed looking down into the cavity of the volcano. But my favorite part was when we got to walk through the rainforest to enter the Thurston Lava Tube. It is a 500-year-old lava tube where a river of 2,000 degrees of lava once flowed. It was a little eerie walking through it, but I loved every minute of it. Lyle took me from the top of the volcano down a winding road that took us to the beach so that I could see how the lava kept going, destroying everything in its wake. We ended our visit with a stop at Rainbow falls which was close to the airport. Lyle really made this trip magical for me.





Next, we flew to my timeshare in Princeville, Kauai where we met up with long-time friends, Boone and Cindy Hellmann. They were such great companions as we enjoyed the riches of Princeville life. We golfed at Wailea which had some of the most spectacular views of the ocean. We took a golf cart sunset tour on the Princeville course as well. That really is a spectacular tour, and the sunset was first rate.



Cindy also celebrated her birthday on this trip and so we had to do something a little wet and wild. So, we took an inner tube flume ride deep in the island's interior. These flumes were hand dug by the Chinese laborers to deliver water from the rainforest to the thirsty sugar cane fields in Lihue. It really is a fun way to see the island's history. And it was nice to enjoy a birthday dinner with the Hellmanns. We had a great trip with them playing countless games, walking, snorkeling, eating, and relaxing. We want to thank them for coming out with us and making our trip memorable!



Camping with Friends!

By Carol Benesch

Just like a million other people, Jeff and I have been toying with the idea of buying a teardrop trailer so we could do some vacationing during the pandemic. Due to COVID, the prices have soared, the wait is anywhere between 3 months to a year and there are no campsites left anywhere in the U.S.!! Early in the year, we were able to get 2 campsites at Green Valley Falls for a long weekend in May, but we never did get a trailer. Instead, we rented a cute little teardrop with all the necessities of home, except a bathroom. Luckily the campsite had useable bathrooms and showers. We thoroughly enjoyed our trip! The good news was, the teardrop was very easy to rent and trail, and very inexpensive. The bad news is, Jeff did the math and unless prices come down, and because we plan on traveling less by car and more by air, we will never buy our own. He is the smart one, I'm the smart, fun one! Haha

The trip to Green Valley Falls brought back lots of good memories from our annual trips with the Guindons, and Robert to site 76!! We were not able to get that site, but we were able to get sites 74 and 75. I was able to explore site 76 and it felt just like yesterday that we were playing on the hill near the stream and climbing the big old tree and enjoying a birthday cake that a Mrs. Guindon would make for me in the coals of the grill!! We hiked to the falls and hiked Stone Wall Peak. It was a great trip with good friends and a lot of warm memories.



Campsite 76 - 56 years ago at the time there was still beaver in the sweetwater river right below the campsite