



Newsletter 2020-1 From Hawaii



Warmest Aloha's to our dedicated group of newsletter-readers !

We arrived at the Kona-Kailua Airport on February 5th. Alaska Airlines did a fine job of getting us here safely and with all our luggage. We actually departed from the Orlando International Airport and then flew to San Diego. Due to the departure time of our flight from San Diego to Kona, we had a big layover (8 hours). We got to San Diego in the evening and elected to stay in the airport terminal overnight instead of going to a motel. The accommodations in the baggage claim area were not posh, but they were secure. We took turns napping and people-watching. We went through TSA around 5:30am so they were not too busy. We prefer to sit in the last couple of rows in the plane. There are several advantages to this. First, you are right next to the restrooms. Second, sometimes there are vacant seats in your row. There are three seats abreast, so if there are only two of you, it is like sitting in first class. This happened on our flight out of San Diego.

We picked up our rental car (a Nissan Rogue) in Kona and had lunch at a nearby taco shop (Killer Tacos). Since we were on the west side of the island, we just had to go shopping at COSTCO. This place is always busy and the gasoline prices are some of the best on the island. We then motored to the other side of the island and up slope to our rental apartment at Keolamauloa. If you would like to get some background on our rental living accommodations, click on this link .

<https://www.vrbo.com/219419?noDates=true>

[You might have to use Control + left click in order to open the link]

I have included some additional photos in the album that I will mention at the end of this newsletter. There are a few key items that I would like to mention about our apartment. We have very nice tile floors throughout the apartment. We have a nice kitchen with gas stove and stainless steel countertops. We have a "split level" apartment. By this I mean that there is a 9" step-down from the main level of the apartment into the bedrooms and the bathroom. There are no handrails and we get our daily aerobic exercises going from one level to the next level. The indoor shower is very nice, but entry into the shower is difficult. The top edge of the threshold to the shower is 20" above the main floor level. Landy has figured out an athletic (for him, at least) method of getting into the shower. Nancy prefers to use the outdoor shower.

A Google Earth check of the elevation of the house is pretty interesting. They calculate the height above mean sea level to be 1900 feet. The road to the house is pretty steep. Traveling to and from the house is an "ear-popping experience".

We spent the next few days exploring the property, obtaining a Post Office box, unpacking, setting up our computers, learning how to turn on the TV, more shopping in nearby Honokaa, etc. A few days ago, I got an e-mail from one of my nephews that his son had just obtained the rank of Eagle Boy Scout (Boy Scouts of America) . For those of you who do not know, this is the highest rank in the Boy Scouts organization and is a really big deal. It takes a lot of time, energy, and dedication to become an Eagle Scout. I have a bit of personal knowledge regarding this item since I obtained the rank of Star Boy Scout. Shortly after reaching this goal, I discovered girls and that was the end of my Boy Scout merit badge quest. Anyway, my sister and I decided that we should send this young man a gift. His father mentioned that his son had expressed an interest in owning a sheath knife. Enough said.....I launched a marathon internet search for such a gift. This project occupied way too much of my time (according to Nancy) so I had to make a decision and stop researching. I chose an awesome-looking knife that would make that Boy Scout the envy of other Scouts within a 100 mile

radius.

On Friday 2/7/2020, I accompanied Nancy on a shopping trip to Hilo (same side of the island and 40 miles away). One of the places we went was to the local Safeway market. She had a long list of items to procure, but gave me specific instructions. She told me that there were only two areas where I could go. One was to the wine aisle and the other was to search for Spam (the food kind, not the internet kind). Well lo and behold, I found the Spam Department and there was a sale. If you bought 6 cans, the price per can was a mere \$1.88 (US dollars). You probably do not know this, but in Hawaii there are **13** types of Spam available. Low sodium and lite varieties are there to purchase. Seeing all that delicious Spam, made me hungry. After leaving the Safeway, we went to one of our favorite places in Hilo (pronounced hee-low, not high-low). The Cosmic Cone is an old time drive-in near the wonderful Hilo library. We ordered some snacks and one of their fabulous Chocolate Milk Shakes to share. I don't know the exact size of this drink, but it could serve as an entire meal for two folks. The price - \$4.99 (US \$\$).

Sunday is church day for us. We went down slope to the local Episcopal church – St. Columba's. This is a small mission church that has the motto “Aloha Lives Here”. They really mean (and practice) the Aloha spirit. We reunited with many of the parishioners that we had met on previous visits to the Big Island. The priest, Linda Lundgren (can you tell that she is from Minnesota) is a real dynamo and a delightful individual. The church's original bell tower had been attacked by island termites and they took the bell down before it fell down. They built a nice bell tower in front of the church and reinstalled the bell. This Sunday was “Bell-ringing Sunday”. The bell was blessed and commissioned and everyone took turns at ringing the bell. The congregation is comprised of many ethnic groups from around the Pacific Rim. There are also quite a few children. We were comforted by the fact that there were folks there that are older than we are. All of this is quite a bit different from our church in Florida.