

PAN AM ASSOCIATION



ALOHA CHAPTER



REMINDER

Sgt. Chris Kim, left, is the scheduled speaker at the April 20th meeting. Please read below for details on current masking rules. Proof of vaccination is no longer required.

WHY WEDNESDAYS?

We have been receiving questions about why we are not holding our meetings on the usual Tuesday as in the past. We must work with the club, restaurant, etc. which provides a room in which to meet. These venues have other customers and we are grateful to fit into their schedule on a day that works for them. Some days simply aren't available to us. It is important to always note the day of the week on which any meeting is scheduled.

Meeting reminders: Parking on the upper level is reserved for members. If available, handicapped spaces may be used with handicap card displayed. Drivers can drop off their riders at the main entrance and proceed to the parking lot below. There is access from the lower parking lot via ramps or steps. There is an elevator in the lobby for those who cannot climb the stairs from the main entrance to the main dining area.

As at our July 2021 meeting, lunch will be served at our tables. Please be on time and prepare to settle down as lunch will be served at 11:30. This is important because one of the choices is served warm. A choice of beverages will be offered by the waitstaff: Iced tea, Plantation tea or coffee. Please note that masks and proof of vaccinations are no longer required and the meeting is on a **Wednesday**.

ARE YOU ABLE TO HELP?

Unfortunately the printer we have been using for about 10 years has closed his business, partly because of losses during the pandemic. He gave us a very good price break on his services. We are now looking for another printer and we expect the cost to double. Only Annual Members pay dues and there are not many of them.

We are aware some of you have a computer but still receive the printed copy through the US postal service. It arrives in your mailbox about 2 weeks after the email version is sent. The printed copy is not in color. The advantage of the electronic version is that it will arrive in your INBOX faster and it is in color. We do understand that some of you no longer have a computer or still prefer the printed copy. If you don't mind switching to the email copy, please let us know. You can email me or John Medlock. Our addresses are on the top of page 6.

THE APRIL FOOLS DAY TSUNAMI IN 1946

April 1st is the 76th anniversary of the Alaskan earthquake and tsunami that hit the Hawaiian Islands with devastating force, especially on the Hamakua coast at Hilo and other towns on the coast such as Laupahoehoe. To this day, scientists have no idea why such a huge tsunami was created. It was measured between 7.8 and 8.6 (depending on the source) whereas the 2011 earthquake that caused so much damage in Japan had a rating of 9.0. The 1946 Aleutian quake generated a wave estimated to be approximately 130 feet high. It wiped out the Scotch Cap Lighthouse on Unimak Island, killing 5 lighthouse keepers. By the time it got to Hawaii it was 45 feet high.

According to my research (LiveScience.com), the term "tsunami" is Japanese for "great harbor waves". The 1946 tsunami took 4½ hours to reach Kauai and about 25 minutes more to reach Hilo. "The height of a tsunami is not apparent until it travels up from the deep sea into the shallow waters along a coastline and rushes inland. Just as your bathtub waves splash up on the edge, tsunamis are forced upward to a varying extent depending, in part, on the slope of the shore they meet. Contrary to popular belief the surge of a tsunami does not appear as a great crashing wave. Rather, it is a very strong and fast moving tide that can destroy homes, overturn train cars and deposit boats several blocks inland."

Scientists are still trying to figure out why the earthquake generated such a huge tsunami for its size. One conclusion was that the quake must have caused a major landslide. As recent as 8 years ago, the Scripps Institute of Oceanography undertook a seafloor mapping project in the Aleutians. "We found no landslide where there should have been a landslide, where I was positive there had to be a landslide," Gerard Fryer, a geophysics professor at the University of Hawaii, reported to Live Science. "I was stunned that there was nothing there."

The tsunami swept south, with fishing boats damaged as far south as Chile. Half Moon Bay, in the San Francisco Bay area, was swamped with a 14-foot swell. One person drowned in Santa Cruz about 50 miles down the coast. Hawaii received the most damage and loss of life. Of the 159 people killed in Hawaii, most were in Hilo and surrounding towns.

In Laupahoehoe, on the coast 23 miles north of Hilo, a school and the nearby teachers' cottages on Laupahoehoe Point were wiped out with the loss of 21 students and 3 teachers. About 50 years later, the community decided they should interview the survivors. Some had never talked about it, even to their children in later years. A community leader thought it would be a good project for the students in the school, which was rebuilt on higher ground after the disaster, to do the interviewing. The students were stunned by what they heard. The stories add detail to the devastating wave. One man, who was now in his mid-60s, said, "At first we thought it was fun. We walked back and forth with the water as it came and went several times. Then the waves ceased for a while but then the water started coming in again and this time kept coming. I don't



People in Hilo fleeing the tsunami in 1946



The teacher cottages in Laupahoehoe were washed out to sea as were many students and teachers.

know how deep it got because I made it out." The other youngsters and teachers ran for their lives. One of the four teachers survived and her story is very interesting.

A year earlier, Marsue McGinnis had arrived to take a teaching position in Hawaii after responding to a flyer she had seen. She was from Ohio. She was assigned to Laupahoehoe School on the Island of Hawaii, where she shared a teacher's cottage with 3 other new teachers. At that time the teacher cottages were on the school grounds even closer to the ocean than the school itself. School did not begin until 8 a.m. but she said, "The kids began to arrive at 6:30 because that's when their parents were due in the fields. . . We teachers were still in our pajamas because we had a whole hour before we needed to be in school." In the meantime the kids were playing on the school grounds.

McGinnis continues: "There was a knock on the door and a teacher in the next cottage said, 'Come and see the tidal wave!' I quickly pulled on some clothes, and with the others, went out to watch. I did not expect a second wave but the waves kept coming and getting bigger." With another teacher, she ran through the front entrance of the cottage trying get out the back door to safety. But the cottage collapsed as they were caught by the wave. They, with several others, tried to hang on to the floating roof of the cabin. As the water kept coming they got separated. McGinnis was pulled out to sea, struggling to keep her head above water. She was a good swimmer and eventually found a floating door, and clung on to it. She saw others bobbing in the water but none close enough to communicate with. When she floated on the door among the debris, she noticed most of her clothes had been stripped off by the power of the wave. She was wearing only a long flannel shirt and her undergarments. Later, she found a stronger piece of debris floating nearby and climbed on it. She was no longer seeing anyone else bobbing in the water and had no indication there was anyone else out there. A couple of hours went by. The waves would go down and then crest and her float would bob up. She suddenly saw 3 boys with white faces on another crest and thought their skin was peeling off. She later learned the 3 teenagers had washed ashore at Kohala. They had found a can of Crisco and spread it over their faces to protect their skin. They disappeared in another trough of a wave. Some time later, another boy clinging to something suddenly appeared near her. He pointed to an interisland ship in the distance and yelled that he was going to swim to it. She yelled back, "It is too far. You can't get to it!" But he said he was going and began to swim. She lost sight of him and never saw him again.

As it began to get dark, she realized it had to be nearly 7 p.m. She could see a small plane flying overhead. At first it seemed as if the pilot did not see her. They dropped a raft too far away for her to reach. But they finally did come close and dropped a raft nearby. She was able to inflate the raft and, letting go of the door, climb into it. She drifted along and was finally rescued by some men in a boat, one of whom later became her husband.

Editor's note: When I moved to Hawaii in the 60s I often heard from locals what a tsunami was like. The stories always peaked my interest. I have been intending to do a little research and add a tsunami article to this newsletter for some time but April always seemed to sneak by!

A word on my research: Many of the various websites do not agree on the strength rating of the Aleutian earthquake nor did they agree on the number of teachers who died at Laupahoehoe, e.g. reports vary from 1 to 5. Even the total number of deaths differed, though only slightly. Much of Marsue McGinnis's account comes from historical interviews years later. Lastly, one online site said that the devastation caused by this disaster resulted in the creation of the Seismic Sea Wave Warning System, which became the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in 1949.



PAN AM PEOPLE

Leilani Maguire writes: I was working as Purser from London to Los Angeles in FICL when F. Lee Bailey, the famous trial lawyer got on the plane, looking very handsome and dapper in a dark blue velvet suit. London was being sent a lot of new hires at that point and at least one was working in FICL with me. Shortly after take-off she came to me and asked if we had a pants hanger. "What! No! Passengers don't usually take off their pants!" A bit shocking! Well, it

turns out that Mr. Bailey just wanted to keep his velvet suit in pristine condition and change into a sweat suit, something that Virgin Atlantic has all its "Upper Class" passengers do these days. (*Edit. Note: Bailey was married 4 times. His 4th wife, Patricia Shiers, was a flight attendant. He was in the news a lot because of his high profile cases, including that of O.J. Simpson. I had heard more than once from other stewardesses that she flew for Pan Am. They were married in 1985 until she passed on in 1999.*) . . . I had a recurrence of a problem that occasionally sends me to the ER. Though I was looking forward to St. Patrick's Day, turns out the Ides of March disrupted my schedule by necessitating admittance for a 2-day hospital stay. During that time I was given an IV and orders were no food or beverages. I was also told to "ambulate" as much as possible, which was not a problem though I had to push the IV trolley. The doctor assigned to me came into my room late in the morning and said the nursing staff said I was moving "very fast" in the hallways. (It was just the usual pace I have when I go for a walk in my neighborhood.) He said, "You obviously take care of yourself. You look at least 20 years younger than your age. You never smoked, and you must eat properly." I said that I really could not take all the credit. I was fortunate to have had a non-sedentary career as a stewardess for 42 years. He asked who I flew for. I told him I was with Pan Am for 23 years and then with United for 19 more. He actually got excited and said, "Pan Am?" I said, "Oh, you've heard of Pan Am?" He replied, "Only in documentaries and in the film *Catch Me If You Can*. You ladies all looked so elegant in those days. You are my first patient who was a Pan Am stewardess!" It was clear I made his day!

END OF PAN AM IN SINGAPORE; MY LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT—Arthur Wee



Arthur Wee

If I remember correctly, there was only one U.S. Pan Am employee in Singapore, Stan Gluck, when I became an employee. I had been a general sales agent for a cargo company when I was hired in 1952. Stan was later replaced by Jim Ilenfelt. We contracted out many operations services.

In 1955 Pan Am decided to establish its own office in Singapore (SIN) with Jerry Wilburn as the District Traffic/Sales Manager, Herb Schiro as Airport Manager and Clarence Wilson as Line Maintenance Manager.

In 1960 Bert Torrance took over Wilburn's position and Abe Gonzales replaced Schiro. Hank Best was Customer Service Manager. Five years later Tom Bready replaced Torrance.

There was a weekly 747 freighter service from San Francisco, Tokyo and Kuala Lumpur. We often carried body bags from Saigon destined to Australia. Singapore was also one of the R&R (Rest & Recreation) destinations during the Vietnam War. I was promoted as the Reservation and Ticket Office Manager in 1965 and moved to the downtown District Sales Office. In 1972 I became the Director for Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei, replacing Tom Bready upon his retirement. It was the first time in 25 years the position was not held by a U.S. employee.

The thrice weekly service operation was changed from utilizing 707s to 747s in about 1974. Unfortunately there were practically no passengers to fill the larger aircraft. Service was temporarily suspended. Pan Am returned to Singapore with daily service utilizing a 747SP to Hong Kong and San Francisco. Jim O'Hagan was the Line Maintenance Manager for 3 years, replaced by John Bonarno. In 1980 Bob Hisatomi replaced him and held the position until Pan Am's sale of its Pacific Routes.

Sometime before that sale, Pan Am established a Flight Attendant Base in SIN. One hundred flight attendants were recruited and trained locally. United discontinued the Crew Base in Singapore after about 3 years.

When Pan Am's operations ceased in 1986, I was laterally transferred to United as the Country Manager. One day, CEO William Sewell called me to ask how I was doing with UA. I told him everything was fine but nothing like the old Pan Am. UA awarded me the Exemplary Plaque for the Pacific Division at a UA presentation dinner held in Hong Kong. I retired from UA on 31 December 1989.

I am forever grateful to the late Bill Cowden, George Doubleday and Jack Foley, Regional Managing Directors—SE Asia, who were my immediate bosses during that time. I am also grateful to the

late Ed Swofford, VP Pacific Division, in making my career with the World's Most Experienced Airline" so memorable and such a rewarding one.

After retiring from United Airlines, I was a consultant to the North West Airline's GSA, Straits Transportation & Co, Ltd., for a year. Then, for two years I consulted for Aero Leasing Co., Ltd., which is a Swiss Company based at Seletar Airport. They were starting an Emergency Air Ambulance service utilizing the Lear Jet-35.

Finally my wife, Patricia, and I settled in Thailand where we lived for ten years. We migrated to Australia on 25 December 2010 so that we could be together with our son, Jeremy, his wife, Chastina, and their three children, Jayden, Braxie and George. We love living together and enjoying life in Australia.

Editorial Note: This was written and submitted before Patricia passed away in January of this year at the age of 86. Her obituary was in the last issue of the newsletter.

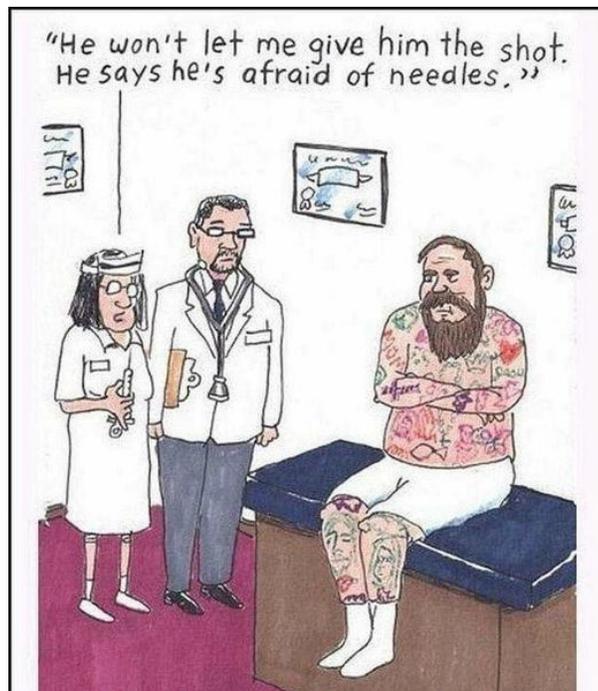
LAUGHS TO LIFT OUR SPIRITS



We airline people can identify with the poor soul who wrote this.



H E
A P
P S
Y T
E R



A wonderful attitude towards Life

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Newsletter Items:

If you have any news item that would be of interest, please call Diane VanderZanden at 200-4322 or send mail to 500 Lunalilo Home Road, #26-D, Honolulu, HI 96825-1734 or by e-mail: alohadvz@gmail.com.

Members, we encourage you to print this page and give the application below to your Pan Am friends who are not members. If you are a former employee and not a member of the Aloha Chapter of the Pan Am Association, we encourage you to complete and submit the application below and help keep our association healthy. Thank you.

PAN AM ASSOCIATION—ALOHA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please check all applicable boxes and complete all applicable lines.

- Renewal New Member
- Retiree—Pan Am retiree who received lump sum pension or is receiving PBGC checks.
- Associate—All other former Pan Am employees
- Ohana—Child or relative of above; sponsored person with close connection to Pan Am-
(subject to BOD approval).

PRINT CLEARLY PLEASE

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Home Phone: _____ **Cell phone:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

Would you like to receive the newsletter by e-mail, which is in color? Yes _____ No _____

Retiree/Associate: Dept: _____ **PAA Service:** _____ **Receiving Pension?** _____
of years worked Yes or No

Ohana: Pls. state category & PAA sponsor (See above): _____

- Annual Membership: \$ 30 US Residents \$ 35 Overseas residents
- Lifetime Membership: \$150 US Residents \$175 Overseas residents

Please make check payable to **PAA** (Pan Am Association) and send with this application to:

John Medlock, 411 Kaelepu Drive, APT F, Kailua, HI 96734-3309