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"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."

A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker

June 12, 2001



Where Do Hawaiians Vacation?

M *any of our friends and neighbors from the Meadows vacation in Hawaii each year. Where do Hawaiians, who already live in paradise, go for vacation? Las Vegas!*

It sure can't be for better weather.

You may have trouble comprehending this, but there are roughly a million people living in the Hawaiian Islands. Last year there were 430,000 round trip tickets sold from Hawaii to Las Vegas. That just staggers me.

Obviously, many people go several times a year. One local, interviewed recently on TV, said she makes six trips a year.

Apparently the hotel of choice is one called The Californian, if the advertising on TV is to be believed. The affinity of Hawaiians to Vegas is so strong that the package deals offered to Hawaiians is something that is unheard of to mere mortals.

Jean and I travel so often to Hawaii that we annually join the American Airlines Senior program for \$72, and that lets us each buy



John and Carol O'Der celebrating their Anniversary at the Princeville Hotel

Hidden Meadows



a round-trip ticket for \$390. That is one heck of a deal when you compare it to any regular ticket or even most discount round-trip tickets.

Hawaiians can buy a package deal round trip for \$249 each - and for \$299 they can buy a package that includes airfare, a hotel room for three days and food.

One heck of a deal. That is good enough to cause an aluminum overhead between Honolulu and Las Vegas. You can almost walk from wing to wing. In fact, it is far cheaper for a Hawaii resident to spend a weekend in Las Vegas than to go to another Hawaiian Island for the weekend!

There is a HUGE population of Hawaiians living in Las Vegas, about 35,000 at last count and increasing about 6,000 a year. Part of this is the natural proclivity of Asian-Americans to gamble, part is the poor economy in Hawaii, part is tenuous medical support except in Honolulu, part is just "island fever" and part is the terrible condition of the public school system in Hawaii. There are plenty of other reasons of course, but those are good starters.

Of course this information does not change the course of human history, and can be easily filed under little known and completely useless information, except that many of us vacation in Hawaii and some even think about moving here.

Some of us are just dreaming, but a few might be more serious, and the new Hawaiian Airlines direct flight from San Diego to Honolulu commencing June 15 will increase the local interest. Aloha Airlines has new daily flights to Orange County and Oakland. American, United, and Delta have flown to the Islands for years, but there is now greater competition.

I am surprised how many people we know who vacation here in the Islands, many of them on our Island of Kauai. We often have drinks at the Princeville Hotel with friends and neighbors from the mainland - in fact we did that last weekend with John and Carol O'Der on their Wedding Anniversary. They helped us celebrate our anniversary at the Bull Shed in Kapa'a a few days later.

Even if you are just vacationing in Hawaii, it might be interesting to know something about the Islands other than what the Chamber of Commerce tells you. People vacation here because it is warm, and there are miles of uninhabited beaches, but there are some definite, and interesting quirks about Hawaii.

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Good manners can replace religious beliefs. In the Episcopal church they already have. Etiquette (and quiet, well-cut clothing) is devoutly worshiped by Episcopalians.

P. J. O'Rourke

