

## President's Letter

Mitchell Hearn Bishop

Walking back from the banquet over the Morrison Bridge in Portland I had plenty of time to think. It was a short walk but seemed long and for the most part, I thought about conferences.

Many years ago in art school I had seen a movie about Portland's bridges by Richard Serra and had conceived the romantic notion of walking over several of them while I was in town.

What I failed to notice, even though I had crossed over it earlier on the way to the banquet with Hiawatha and other WAAC walkers, was that Morrison wasn't a Portland bridge anybody in their right mind would walk on alone late at night. Even by daylight, it has all the charm of a stroll on a freeway. Pedestrian friendly, the Morrison is not. But it does provide a good place for some citizens to huddle beneath and drink a quart of beer out of a paper bag and ponder the wonders of cement and steel. A subsequent stroll over the Hawthorne Bridge more than satisfied my longings for the industrial ambiance of bygone days. On the whole, I was completely charmed by Portland. A great city, a great conference, terrific Chinese garden, and amazing food at a reasonable price. Lunch at the Heathman was a minor revelation, and I am now addicted to Oregon Pinot Noir. Claire Dean and Hiawatha Johnson did an amazing job, and you all did yours by giving talks and attending. In short, a hard act to follow. But, follow it I must while many members dream of moving to Portland.

First a few words about changes on the WAAC Board. As many of you know, Chris Stavroudis has resigned as Treasurer and will step down entirely at the WAAC meeting in Honolulu in 2003. We paid tribute to Chris' many years of service to WAAC at the banquet at Montage in Portland. How many of you have been feted at banquets that served alligator? Is this a great organization or what? (Vegetarian fare was also available). Molly Lambert was elected Vice President, and outgoing President J. Claire Dean will fill the unexpired portion of her term as Member-at-Large. Claire will also be helping with the transition as Chris steps down and a new Treasurer takes his place. Odile Madden has agreed to take the job as Secretary. We welcome Donna Williams and Nancy Odegaard as new Members-at-Large on the board. Walter Henry has agreed to serve in a new non-voting board position as Web Editor and will advise us on ways to make better use of the WAAC web site and grow the web site as a resource for members.

Finally, a big thank you to our outgoing board members, Beverly Perkins, Susanne Friend, and Hiawatha Johnson. Hopefully we will see them back on the board in future as Vice Presidents and Presidents!

This coming fall, October 9-11, 2003 we will be convening for our annual meeting at the Honolulu Academy of Arts in Honolulu, Hawaii. We're putting together a day of talks on subjects relating to conservation in Hawaii. Ideally, we will have an overview of conservation issues in the 50th state. Hawaii is a real microcosm for the issues confronting conservation all over the world. For the remaining two days of the meeting, I want to encourage you all to submit talks around a Pacific-Asian theme if you can. However, please feel you can submit talks on any subject.

For those of you who haven't been there, a few basic facts. Hawaii is roughly a four-hour plane ride from Los Angeles or San Francisco. Hawaii represents the far western edge of WAAC territory. So much so that it is half way to what used to be called the "far east." It is a sub-tropical climate, which is to say that it is not tropical in the sense of the equatorial tropics but warm virtually all the time and dominated by the presence and occasional absence of trade winds since it is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Coconut palms do well there but not as well as they do closer to the equator. Hawaii is the extinction capitol of the world. Many species evolved in the isolation of the Hawaiian Islands, and since the first human landed on Hawaiian shores, things have gone from bad to worse for Hawaii's endemic species. The relatively light presence of the Polynesian navigators who settled Hawaii gave way to the sugar industry, agribusiness, and mass tourism.

In spite of the environmental devastation, Hawaii is a place of great beauty and considerable charm, not just a giant destination resort. It is a place where a wide variety of people work and live, and it is, of course, a place where a surprisingly wide variety of people come to rest and play. Sadly, you will see little of the Islands as they were known to the Hawaiians but with some effort, you can get a sense of what life was like during the Hawaiian Kingdom and before Captain Cook's arrival. The importation of laborers from Japan, Okinawa, Korea, the Canary Islands, China, the Philippines, and believe it or not Norway, has given the islands a rich cultural mix that shapes its unique culture today. What this means, among other things, is incredible food. A trip to Chinatown in Honolulu will reveal a wealth of ingredients

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## President's letter, continued

found in a very few places on the planet. As a result, food and restaurants in Honolulu are now some of the best in the world.

Other than Waikiki, Honolulu has a variety of cultural resources. The Bishop Museum, the Contemporary Museum at Makiki Heights, the Honolulu Academy of Arts of course, the Mission Houses Museum, and the Iolani Palace just to name the most obvious. I would also urge anyone attending the conference to visit one of the other islands either before or after the conference. Oahu is a splendid island but the Big Island (Hawai'i) has Volcanoes National Park, Hilo, and Kailua.

Maui is in the unique position of being a place where you can drive your rental car from sea level to over ten thousand feet on the top of Haleakala and enjoy a complete change of climate and enjoy one of the great views of the world. Maui also has the former capitol of the Hawaiian Islands, Lahaina. The Lahaina Restoration Foundation has a number of historic properties worth a visit. Down in Hana there is the Kahanu Garden of the National Tropical Botanical Garden which is the site of one of the Pi'ilanihale Heiau, believed to be the largest ancient place of worship in Polynesia.

Kaua'i has the distinction of having two properties belonging to the National Tropical Botanical Garden, the Allerton Garden that may be familiar to some visitors as the site where parts of Jurassic Park were filmed and I'm told, a German version of Fantasy Island. On the North Shore of Kaua'i is the Limahuli Garden which has seven hundred year old agricultural terraces used in Kalo (Taro) cultivation. The town of Waimea on Kaua'i is the site of Captain Cook's first landing in the Hawaiian Islands. At times, I sometimes think it is a sleepier place than it was when he landed.

Moloka'i has the remains of the ancient fishponds used by the Hawaiians for aquaculture along the southern side of the island. It also is the site of the Kalaupapa Peninsula, now the Kalaupapa National Historic Park, a site of incredible beauty, which was formerly used for the forcible isolation of sufferers of Hansen's disease. Moloka'i is a great place to rest after giving a paper at the WAAC conference.

In Portland a number of you volunteered to help with the arrangements. We certainly welcome any help or suggestions. In a few months, the WAAC web site will include detailed information on the islands as well as information on accommodations, papers, and travel.