

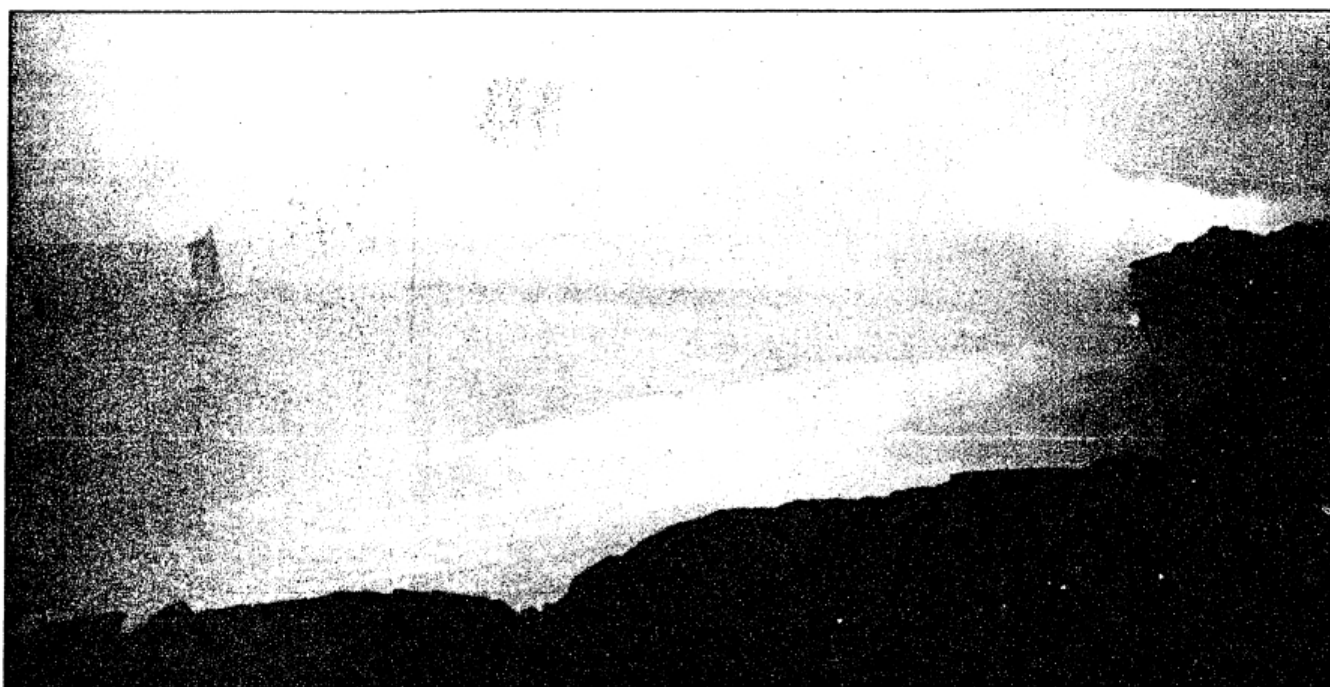
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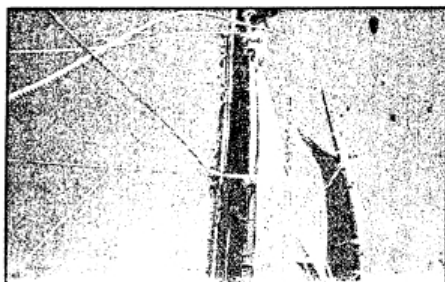
TOMORROW: Poetry series
features new voices

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Voyage of Rediscovery



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Story by
Floyd K. Takeuchi
Star-Bulletin

■
Photographs by
Monte Costa
Special to the Star-Bulletin





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Voyage of Rediscovery



Trainees work a sail aboard the Hokule'a off Waikiki as part of an ongoing program to train South Pacific Polynesians in traditional navigation on the open seas.

“
I know that when you go
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for the honor of all of us.
”

Nainoa Thompson
Master maritime navigator

Nine Polynesians learn the ancient art of navigation and about Hawaiian culture in a unique class led by Hokule'a pioneer Nainoa Thompson

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Hawaii is the northernmost point of the Polynesian Triangle, a geographic and cultural demarcation that has for decades marked differences rather than similarities between Hawaiians and their cultural cousins in the South Pacific.

The triangle's other two points are New Zealand and Rapa-nui, or Easter Island.

But over two weeks early this month, in a Hawaiian classroom that had the heavens as its roof and the sea as its foundation, the lines of the Polynesian Triangle once again became links rather than divides.

Said Tura Koronui, a Cook Island Maori who was a student in the unique school: "The most important thing is that we have been able to bring the Polynesian Triangle into one place. We've been able to bring all of the angles together."

Koronui was one of nine South Pacific Polynesians who traveled to Hawaii to study with master maritime navigator Nainoa Thompson.

The men — seven Cook Islanders, and one each from Tahiti and New Zealand — spent hours learning traditional navigation by studying the stars at the Bishop Museum planetarium and sailing aboard Hokule'a, the Hawaiian voyaging canoe. Thompson guided Hokule'a through Polynesia on a two-year voyage of rediscovery during the 1980s.

Thompson learned the ancient art of navigating by the stars and waves from Mau Piailug, a Micronesian. Now, with 15 years of experience at sea of



Nainoa Thompson, above left, and Bill Rosehill search for adz in an ancient Hawaiian adz quarry at the 12,500-foot elevation of Mauna Kea

"Blanks" of basalt stone were found at the quarry. Stones like these will be turned into traditional tools to build a new canoe.

SAIL: Chance to learn the ancient ways

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his own, Thompson is passing on his knowledge to a new generation of Polynesians.

It is unusual for South Pacific Polynesians to come to these islands to learn ancient ways.

For decades, Samoans and Tahitians and Maoris, all of whom maintain rich cultural and language traditions, looked down on Hawaiians. They were Polynesians who had forsaken their culture. No more.

"The Hokule'a's arrival in Rarotonga changed our view of where the Hawaiian people were at," said Tua Pittman, a towering Cook Island Maori whose gentle voice belies his size. That trip by Hokule'a, part of the voyage of rediscovery, spurred Pittman and others to search for their own past.

Pittman and his brother began that search by going down to the Rarotonga dock every day just to watch the Hokule'a crew.

"One day, they invited us on the canoe, and that was it. There was no looking back," recalled Pittman.

During their two weeks of study in Hawaii, the class also learned of the cultural traditions of Hawaiians. The group traveled to the Big Island and ascended Mauna Kea, nearly to the peak. There, at the 12,500-foot level, they held a blessing ceremony at the site of an ancient Hawaiian adz quarry.

Basalt stone will be taken from the quarry to make traditional carving tools. Those, in turn, will be used to make a new canoe, part of a related project.

Myron "Pinky" Thompson, the Bishop Estate trustee, president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and father of Nainoa, attended the bitterly cold, early-morning blessing. He thought of how his ancestors had found that desolate place, and how they had survived on Mauna Kea as they sought out the valuable basalt.

"You could feel the mana (divine power) there," he recalled.

The South Pacific Polynesians are convinced Nainoa Thompson has also been blessed with the gift of mana. These brawny men, whose thick shoulders mark them as watermen, speak of the slender Hawaiian in reverential terms.

Thompson is soft-spoken, admittedly more comfortable listening and watching than talking. Yet, as teacher and students gathered this month to mark the end of their unique school, Thompson did not hesitate as he spoke of his vision.

"I can't always say what my heart feels," he told the small gath-



Tua Pittman, a Marquesan Islander who lives on the Big Island, examines basalt at an ancient Hawaiian adz quarry on Mauna Kea.

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Tua Pittman
Cook Island Maori

ering sitting under a canopy of stars at his father's home.

"We started in Hawaii on a quest that was centered around a vision. And that vision was to sail in the wake of our ancestors. If we can understand where they came from, we can better understand who we are as a people."

Facing his students, Thompson said, "I ask that you continue to study, and continue to stay a team, a group. I know that when you go back, you are going to sail for the honor of all of us."

That will happen next year, when the South Pacific Arts Festival will be held at the Cook Island capital of Rarotonga. Five islands in the Cooks, New Zealand and Tahiti will sail canoes to Rarotonga. Hawaii will be there, too.

Shortly before the summer festival, Thompson and most of the South Pacific navigators will meet on Raiatea, part of the Society Islands in French Polynesia. They will hold a ceremony at a marae, or stone temple, where navigators long ago also met.

In fact, it will be the first time in centuries that so many Polynesian voyaging canoes and navigators will gather in one place. The remarkable thing is that the navigators on all of those canoes will be Thompson's students. A dozen years ago, there were no Polynesian navigators.

"The tree grows and the fruit is coming out," said Tauviahiani Cowan, a barrel-chested sailor who speaks English with an accent touched by French and the lilt of his native Tahitian.

Cowan comes from a sea-faring family. He has continued the tradition. Last October, Cowan paddled a one-person outrigger canoe over 260 miles of open ocean between Tahiti and Maupiti atoll near Bora Bora. He made two stops at islands along the way.

Cowan said the inner determination to make that physically punishing trip, and his interest in long-distance voyages to come, formed early in life. French schools in Tahiti taught Cowan that Polynesians were related to the Vikings, that Capt. James Cook "discovered" them.

Said Cowan: "The question that really bugged me was, 'Where did the Polynesians come from?'"

Cowan has used the sea to answer that question.

It is also the reason he was in Hawaii to study with Thompson. For Cowan, like Thompson and the other Polynesian sailors, the lure of discovering themselves in their cultural past is strong.

"It is in the blood. It envelops you. It surrounds and wraps itself around you," Cowan said.

The Hawaii navigation school was run by the Polynesian Voyaging Society. It was administering a grant from the Native Hawaiian Culture & Arts Program.

TELEVISION

Reality's not a bum

By Mike Hughes
Gannett News Service

John Langley can't help noticing the line forming behind him.

"I've been ripped off more times than Velcro," he says with a grin. "I'm getting used to it."

What Langley has done — in three Gerald Rivera specials and the "Cops" series — is point a camera at real life. This is not a new idea, of course.

The results, however, have made TV drama that is sometimes tough, tense ... and terribly cheap. A trend born.

"Reality programming has taken a bigger hold than I think we all expected it to," says Arthur Annecharico, whose "FBI: The Untold Stories" is one of the new copies. "And the ratings seem to show it."

They do, alongside lower budgets. That combination is considered magical in TV circles.

The Fox network discovered it first, with "America's Most Wanted" and "Cops." NBC then stepped in ... carefully. "Unsolved Mysteries" had seven specials, before we ever did a series," producer Terry Meurer recalls.

CBS scored with "Rescue 911." Last spring, ABC tried "American Detective."

The latter followed the "Cops"

formula ... an same cops. "The can see is that v motion," Langley

All of those ratings, "NBC ha ciative," says A grove-Meurer co movie, a series and more reality

There are only shows this fall, survived and the

This fall, the n nine shows from three more with people. "They'll : their news depai

That adds up : on real life, eati hours available. : cheap, is taking

This year's nev

■ "FBI: The Unt 8 p.m. beginning FBI files, Annecl a treasure chest. wonderful, fabu there."

For co-produce the next step is to who were involv of stuff, a lot of w al that they doi about."

The stories are few demands on h

NEW TV: Picks, pans of t

Continued from Page E-1

actors bring robust life to the Baltimore home of garbageman Roc Emerson (Charles Dutton), a hard worker, dreamer and provider. Funny and blissfully free of kids, here's a discovery.

■ "Pacific Station": KHON, 7:30 p.m. — "Barney Miller" at the beach, with Robert Guillaume the sole voice of normalcy at the Venice, Calif., police station, populated by loonies like Richard Libertini and Ron Leibman.

■ "Herman's Head": KHNL, 8:35 p.m. — Not tonight, he has a headache. Literally. Herman (William Ragsdale) is a frustrated young writer stuck in the research department of a national magazine. His every fear and emotion is comically articulated by a supporting cast of characters (Angel, Wimp, Genius, Animal) inside his head.

Returning series

■ "Life Goes On": KITV, 6 p.m. — With a new baby just arrived, the last thing the Thachers need is to have their diner burn down. But the title applies, as the family hunkers down to get by. In another

er attempt to refl Lowe will recur at teen.

■ "60 Minutes": — Minus Harry granddaddy of carries on as ratir er.

■ "True Colors": While no "Jungle ly), this interracial com promises to lated social issu seriously this year.

■ "Parker Lewi KHNL, 6:30 p.m. — start hanging at where Nick the s (new regular P: seems to know e kids are up to.

■ "America's Fu eos": KITV, 7 p.m. camcorder mish prizes. More bad l

■ "Murder, She p.m. — With Cat quotient pretty Jessica (Angela L teaching gig in N get to rub shoul co-stars, some of come recurring news, she's in ev