



BOB
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REARVIEW MIRROR

Readers' assistance sought on Blaisdell, H-1 queries

Last week, I wrote about the Palolo Golf Course, at the request of one of my readers. This week, I've gotten a few more requests.

Tanya Harrison is looking for people with knowledge of the opening of the Neal Blaisdell Center in 1964.

"I'm collecting oral histories related to the early history and planning of the Honolulu International Center, now Blaisdell Center," she told me. "I'm trying to find anyone that has knowledge of the formal dedication of the HIC by the city and state as a War Memorial in 1964, as well as any knowledge of a Memorial plaque placed there that went missing some years later.

"Knowledge of the Memorial has been lost to the city, state, and as far as I can tell, to society at large. We're also researching the larger historical context of how this War Memorial was planned and then forgotten, which spans many years, so any memories re-

lated to the HIC would be of interest."

The HIC replaced the Honolulu Civic Auditorium on King Street, which has been on my list to write about. The Civic Auditorium was the site of sports, music and conventions. Many fondly remember roller derby, wrestling, basketball and other events there.

Do any of my readers have any stories to tell about these two places?

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Eric Perkins asked me if my readers or I knew any stories or facts about Bumpei Akaji, who was his wife's grandfather. He was one of the artists whose work could be found in the Kuhio Grill. "Grandpa Bumpei was a very talented man but was also very quiet and humble."

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Chip Davey began teaching at Damien in 1968. He asked if the H-1 freeway replaced a World War II-era service road. My old maps show the freeway taking some of Lunalilo Street in

Makiki and largely going through housing toward Kalihi. Can anyone recall such a service road?

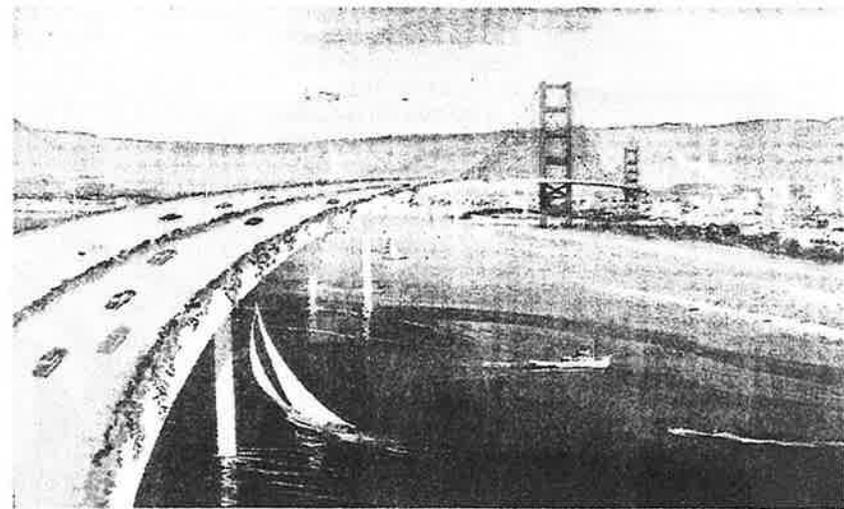
It did take out the Liliha Theatre and caused Liliha Bakery and a Dutch Girl Pastry Shoppe to move.

The H-1 freeway (H stands for Hawaii) is both the westernmost and southernmost interstate freeway in the United States. OK, I can see it's the farthest south and west, but how is it an interstate?

The H-1 was originally called the Mauka Arterial. A second cross-town freeway along Ala Moana was planned after World War II and referred to as the Makai Arterial. It was never built.

The Mauka Arterial was 1.25 miles long when it first opened in 1953. It went from Waiialae Avenue to Bingham Street. The Mauka Arterial name was dropped because state planners felt there might be a freeway farther mauka of it one day. I can't imagine that, but that's what the news reports said.

Helen Morita, who founded Charley's taxi with her husband (of the same name) had an idea for a Makai Arterial and had an artist create a painting of it, which I've included today. They show a Golden Gate-inspired structure that would take cars offshore, and smaller ramps that would connect them to Waikiki.



PAINTINGS COURTESY OF HELEN MORITA

Helen Morita envisioned a Makai Arterial that would cross Sand Island, and go offshore near downtown, top, in a painting she did about 60 years ago. Onramps and offramps, above, would connect it to Waikiki and the Mauka Arterial, now called the H-1 freeway.

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Many of my readers ask me what I'm working on for future columns. I'm usually researching 10 to 20 topics at any one time. Next week I'll be writing about some interesting sites in Chinatown. In the coming weeks, I'll be writing about how some local restaurants got their names and the nuclear tests at Johnston Island in 1959 that were visible in Hawaii.

I'm also working on a story about the Hawaiian Humane Society, but am stumped by where the term "poi dog" came from. One source said they were so named because Hawai-

ians fed taro and sweet potato poi to them, but others say poi was sacred and would not have been fed to dogs. Do any of my readers know?

I have found out where the term "popoki" (cats) came from but you'll have to wait for the article to find out.

I'm also working on stories about The Waiakea Pirates (baseball team) on Hawaii island and stories about the private jet termi-

nals at our airports and the celebrities that have come through them.

In the coming months, I plan to write about Harry & Jeanette Weinberg, Dr. Ralph Cloward (one of the C's in KCCN), Kapiolani Medical Center, and the TV show "Living Local with the Baraquios," whose 10th anniversary is coming up.

If you have any memories of the questions I posed above, please send me an email.

Bob Sigall, author of the "Companies We Keep" books, looks through his collection of old photos to tell stories each Friday of Hawaii people, places and companies. Email him at Sigall@Yahoo.com.