

We are thrilled to have permission to bring you this article by Pamela Whitman Mattson, first published in the April/May 2011 issue of *The Ocean Magazine*. Thank you to Robert Wald and Pamela Whitman Mattson. As in the original article, all photographs are courtesy of the Whitman Family Collection.

EAST WEST - The William Francis Whitman Family

Introduction

In general, very little is known on the West Coast and beyond of the original East Coast surfing pioneers of yesteryear, including a most unusual family known as the Whitmans. *The Ocean Magazine* feels it is now time to pay due respect and honor this most unique family.

As will be revealed in the following article centered around the life of William Francis Whitman (1914 - 2007), you will learn of the remarkable influence that this incredibly sharp and highly driven, productive family



Pictured from far left are the Whitman brothers: William, Stanley and Dudley.

has had on surfing and culture. Three generations of family members have been, and continue to be, players in professional careers and hobbies from surfing, horticulture, free skin diving, spearfishing, fiberglass boat manufacturing, cinematography, aeronautics, and a host of other activities. Read on.

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William Francis Whitman was the first of three sons born to a Chicago industrialist who owned the second largest printing company in the city. Following William came the birth of his second eldest brother, Stanley, both of whom were born in northern states, and finally the

arrival of his youngest sibling, Dudley, who was born in Miami. After spending several winters in the sub-tropical weather of Florida to escape the wrath of the Windy City, his father, in 1920, had decided to build his first permanent winter home in Miami. It was there they lived a privileged life, where adjacent to their home, William's father built a servants' quarters which housed a butler, maid and cook. This was the 1920s. Everything was so much more inexpensive, and oceanfront cottages in Miami were spaced about a half mile apart, with vacant land in between - a far cry from the high density, close living quarters of today's civilization where people scratch and snarl over every centimeter of land . . . and penny.

Prior to a devastating hurricane in 1926, real estate prices soared in Miami, especially at the height of the Florida land boom. William's father became involved in this speculative gamble and wound up owning blocks of oceanfront property near South Beach, Miami. After the 1926 hurricane came ashore and finally subsided, it had deposited four feet of wet beach sand in the Whitman's ocean-facing dining room. A two-story structure just north

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Matson Lines Menus October 18 and 21, 1968

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Enjoy the Ride

Recently I was snooping around in the Grind for Life store and I noticed four prints on the wall. Jill, the proprietor, told me they had been her mother's. We talked about them for a few minutes and then, as I was starting to leave, I heard her say "Matson Lines." I ran back in and, holy smokes! We carefully removed them from the frames and found original Matson Lines menus from October 18 – October 21, 1968.

If you saw the Greg Noll movie *Search for Surf*, you'll recall the scene of Greg, Dewey Weber and a cast of cut-ups traveling to Hawaii on the "Lurline," one of the old cargo ships that also carried passengers. They exercised on deck every day doing military-style calisthenics and chin-ups in the rigging to work up their appetites for the last day of the trip. When the ship's steward handed them the menu (just like ours!) and asked "What will you have?" they responded, "Everything!"

The other surf history tie-in, as you'll read about in our feature article, *East West: The William Francis Whitman Family*, is that the "Lurline" was the same ship the Whitmans took to Hawaii. To a surf history geek, it doesn't get any better.



We are grateful to Jane Schmauss, Historian of the California Surf Museum, Oceanside, CA, for sending the Whitman Family article to us, and to Robert Wald of *The Ocean Magazine* and Pam Whitman Mattson, the author of the article and Bill Whitman's daughter, for permission to reprint the article here. As Pam and I spoke about the article, I realized adventure and generosity run in the family.

I am also especially thankful to all of you who make this museum work so well – members, volunteers and board. You all keep our stoke going!

See you in the water, *Tony*

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of the Whitmans was gone without a trace. On calm ocean days, when the offshore water was clear, the red brick chimney could be seen a short distance out in the ocean, resting on the seabed. Fortunately for the Whitman family, they were out of town when this devastating hurricane hit full-force.

In 1929, the Great Depression hit. William's father felt the impact of a slowed economy and decided to have William attend home schooling on Miami Beach. "It was exciting to be able to spend my first winter back in a snow-and-ice-free subtropical climate," William said in an interview before his death. "The high school instructors proved to be outstanding and I graduated with the class of 1934.

"After attending the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor for two years, I entered the University of Florida at Gainesville, where I graduated in 1939, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration." By the time William's father passed away in 1936, he was a well-respected Miami Beach pioneer and developer. His wife, Leona Erickson Whitman, proved to be a shrewd businesswoman and greatly enhanced the Whitman's family fortune. Together they built a ten-story, one-hundred and fifty-room hotel called "Whitman by the Sea."

Love for the Ocean Leads In Many Directions

William and his youngest brother, Dudley, had always been marine-oriented. At an early age they learned to body surf and ride waves prone out on belly surfboards. Then, during the winter of 1930, they observed for the first time three Virginia surfers actually stand up and ride a Hawaiian-type board on the incoming waves off Miami Beach. After borrowing their board for a few trials, William built a similar board of his own. This is believed to be the first surfboard ever constructed in Florida.

"Using a drawknife on a four-inch thick white pine plank," William recalled, "I came up with an eighty-seven pound board. Dudley did the same thing using redwood. These were pioneer wave-riding days, and we believe we were the first Florida residents surfers to take up this aquatic sport."

William and Dudley would soon meet world surfing legend Tom Blake and his advanced hollow wood surfboard designs of that era. Soon the Whitmans took to riding and building much lighter, hollow-built surfboards, which they introduced to Daytona Beach.

In a recent interview with Dudley (who in his 90s still resides in Florida), the following story is how his brother William and he had met Tom Blake:

"Tom Blake, John Smith and Babe Ridgeway were the first surfers on the East Coast from Virginia Beach. They headed south to Florida surfing and heard about the surfing brothers from Miami Beach—Bill and Dudley Whitman. William had already finished his first surfboard made out of Sugar Pine that was 10 feet long, 24 inches wide and 10 inches thick. I was finishing the final touches on my first surfboard in the home workshop that our father had built in Miami Beach, located between 32nd and 33rd streets on Collins Avenue. I looked out the window and saw a guy named Tom Blake, paddling a hollow surfboard. Not long after, the three of us became the closest and best lifetime friends.



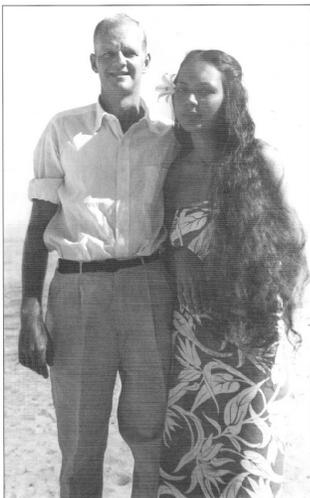
Whitman Family in Waikiki – 1961 – (l-r) Bill, Chris, Pam & Dolly

"Blake was an orphan and met Duke Kahanamoku at a gathering in a Detroit theatre near where Blake grew up. By then, the Duke was a famous athlete and five-time Olympic Medalist in swimming and spreading the sport of surfing. After meeting The Duke, Blake immediately decided he wanted to become a world-class swimmer and surfer. Blake soon went to Hawaii and became life long friends with Duke Kahanamoku."

After surfing for almost a year, it was during the summer of 1937 that William and Dudley put their homemade hollow surfboards atop their convertible and drove to California. On arrival in Los Angeles, they were joined by Tom Blake and spent their first week in California riding West Coast waves with Blake.

"After that first week in California," William said, "we took our surfboards and boarded the Matson Steamship 'Lurline' bound for Honolulu, Hawaii."

And according to Dudley, "Before we left California for Hawaii, Blake wrote a hand written letter addressed to Duke Kahanamoku to introduce us to the surfing world in Waikiki. We hoped to get invited to join the prestigious Outrigger Canoe Club located at that time in the center of Waikiki, right in front of Canoe's Surf. When William and I arrived on the beach in Waikiki, we had our state-of-the-art surfboards wrapped in canvas on the sand and presented the letter to The Duke at the Outrigger Canoe Club. He read the letter from Tom Blake asking him to make us honorary members of the club and he said, "I'm sorry. I'm not doing it! Good bye."



During his one year of filming in Tahiti, William discovered other delights of French Oceania, such as the lovely Leisa Doom, who fortunately did not live up to her rather dramatic name!



William Whitman proudly stands next to the largest fish he ever speared – a 375 lb Grouper. Jupiter Inlet, Florida.



William holds up an Atlantic Barracuda, known for their razor sharp teeth and extreme speed underwater.

The Whitman brothers then unpacked their surfboards from the canvas on the beach and a crowd of at least fifty Hawaiians crowded around the surfboards marveling at the craftsmanship and innovative hollow wood design. These surfboards were literally state-of-the-art and no one had seen such craftsmanship and beauty."

One day, with nothing to do but "hang out," William and his brother Dudley saw a native Hawaiian walk by on the wet sand. He was carrying goggles, a spear, a sling, and a long string of rainbow-colored reef fish. They immediately approached the local Hawaiian and asked how he acquired the fish. He replied that the fish were speared underwater and the same equipment he was using could be bought at a nearby local Japanese fishing supply store. It was there they purchased a complete outfit to spear marine life beneath the sea. "Our problem," William remembered, "was that the carved wooden diving goggles gave us double vision. As two fish swam by, we observed four, and it was impossible to decide at which to aim our rubber propelled spear (known as a 'Hawaiian Sling')."

They soon learned that substituting the poorly fitting goggles with a glass face mask (originally developed by the Japanese), worked wonders. Gone was the double vision, and on their first spear fishing trip with their new face masks, they returned home in less than a half hour with a long string of speared fish. As their surfing safari came to an end, the Whitmans wondered if these same Hawaiian spearfishing techniques would work in Florida's coastal waters. "It appeared no one back home had thought of spearing fish while submerged, Hawaiian-style," William said. "Florida's fish population in the 1930s was unbelievable. Viewed

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from inlet bridges, on the clear incoming tide, the bottom was obscured by thousands of snook swimming against the swiftly flowing current." The outer coral reefs of the Florida Keys had a saltwater fish population unequalled anywhere else in the United States.

William and Dudley did most of their Florida skin diving and spear fishing off Key Largo on the outer reefs. Soon, others from Miami followed suit, and over a period of time, there developed a confrontation with charter fishing boat captains working out of this same boat launching area. The final result was that the commercial boat interests, with help from *The Miami Herald*, were able to have legislation passed establishing a coral reef state park, effectively putting an end to spear fishing in the Upper Keys.

Of his most memorable experiences skin diving, William remembers "the time I was bitten by a shark and later a moray eel, none of which were too serious injuries. What could have ended my skin diving for good occurred off Hobe Sound, Florida. Swimming a block offshore with a boat, I saw a huge school of ladyfish approaching. Entering this cloud of closely packed silvery fish had completely obscured my vision. Finally, when I did see the light of day, there was an eleven-foot shark trailing the passing school. The shark held its course, closing in on me, and I had only seconds to act. Now, with this predator only a few feet away, I used my spear to give it a warning nose jab, hoping to fend it away. What happened next I am unaware of, as the shark violently churned up the sandy bottom, obscuring everything in sight. When I could see again, the shark had disappeared. I have found it best to be aggressive with sharks, and fortunately this saved me. The largest fish I have successfully speared was a 375-pound grouper, big enough to clamp onto and drown a person. It was on the very same day I captured this huge grouper that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor."



Dorthea Carroll Whitman – Yokohama Bay, Hawaii - 1964

Wartime Service

With the U.S. at war on two fronts, it was a common sight to see Allied oil tankers aflame off Florida's East Coast after being hit by a German sub. One year prior, William had enrolled in an aircraft metal working course, and with this new background, he qualified as a sheet metal template maker with an aircraft manufacturer.

"As World War II heated up," William recalled, "I enrolled in the U.S. Coast Guard. It was our assignment to maintain navigational aids along the Intercoastal Waterway. At that time German subs were torpedoing coastal shipping, so smaller freighters used a channel between Miami and Key West, a protected waterway too shallow for undersea enemy subs to enter. During our work assignments I was able to slip overboard off the Florida Keys' outer coral reefs and capture fish and lobster using a face mask and spear. Our crew preferred the seafood to their more frequent wartime diet of canned Spam."

William next attended the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. There he served aboard a square-rigged cadet training vessel. "When we were underway," William recalled, "we had to trim the sails. This required climbing up in the rigging to hoist and unfurl thick canvas that felt as if it were made of lead. From nearly one hundred feet above deck, the rolling and pitching of the vessel was magnified so that I felt as if I were on the end of a swinging pendulum."

Following the end of the war, both William and his younger brothers became involved in the construction industry, erecting speculative homes in the exclusive Bal Harbour area of Miami Beach. Later, Stanley decided to enter the real estate business, while both William and Dudley began new careers in the documentary film business.

Capturing the Ocean In a Metal Box

"We decided to specialize in underwater photography," William recalls of his earliest days in film.



Dorthea Carroll, Paradise Beach, Nassau, Bahamas 1949

“This was before Jacques Cousteau, and no submersible camera housings were available, so Dudley and I had to start from scratch, setting out to design and construct our own. We purchased and taught ourselves to use a metal turning lathe from Sears Roebuck, along with other basic equipment. Fortunately, I had my two years of pre-engineering at the University of Michigan, along with my metal working experience in the aircraft factory. Our final product worked to perfection. We now had a compact, watertight housing that allowed full camera control from beneath the sea except for changing film. On April 7, 1948, the U.S. Patent Office issued us a patent on our design.”

Both William and Dudley participated in two marine sports in which the film industry took an interest. Waterskiing was one, and underwater spear fishing was the other, both of which were new sports at the time. With their recently completed watertight camera, they worked on Paramount’s films enabling them to learn cinematography above ground from professionals in the industry.

“Dudley excelled at lining up promising contracts,” William recalled. “Our first film in which we participated was a Paramount release on water skiing, titled ‘Riding the Waves.’ This was followed by another Paramount movie, ‘Five Fathoms of Fun,’ where we shot all the below-sea footage. Paramount Pictures thought enough of this latter film to submit it for an Academy Award.



Dolly & Bill Whitman Spearfishing, Bahamas 1952

The next film my brother and I shot twelve thousand feet of film on the Hawaiian Polynesian Islands prior to statehood. To capture on-location close-up surfing action, we constructed a very lightweight wooden tripod large enough to support two cinematographers and their equipment. Using a hollow surfboard permitted us to float our platform out onto the submerged coral reefs.”

Passage to Tahiti

Shortly after their work with Paramount Pictures, Louis Valier, an old school mate, invited William to join him and a native Tahitian aboard his thirty-two foot sailboat, “Teri”; their destination: Tahiti in French Oceania. William had always dreamed of visiting the South Seas and this presented too good an opportunity to pass up.

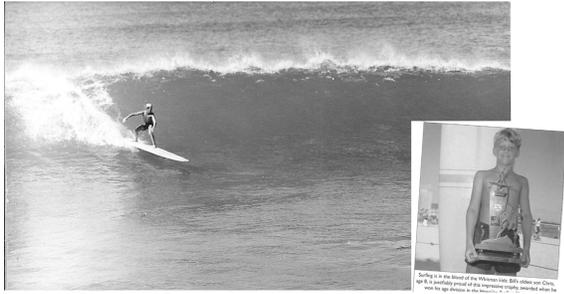


Pamela Whitman surfing in the Women's Pro Class Trials, Haleiwa, Oahu, November, 1981

“I gathered my camera equipment together along with thousands of feet of film for our November 3rd, 1949 departure,” William remembered excitedly. “Our passage across the equator and beyond into the southern latitudes was time-consuming. We finally entered Tahiti’s Papeete’s Harbor in a tropical downpour on December 16th.

“A few days later I met a tall, slender Tahitian in her early twenties named Leisa Doom. I found her intelligent and attractive, with long dark hair that fell almost to the ground. After a night of dancing she accompanied me to my thatched roof cottage and spent the night. The following morning I almost thought I was still in a dream. Surrounding the bed were a number of chairs occupied by my Tahitian girl’s Wahine friends. Leisa and I got along well and she proved a valuable companion.

“During my year in the South Seas I exposed fifteen thousand feet of sixteen millimeter Eastman color film. My plans were to reside in French Oceania about two months. Unfortunately, we arrived just as the rainy season commenced. It wasn’t until March that the rain tapered off and I was finally able to shoot the first foot of film.



Chris Whitman, Yokahama Bay, Hawaii. Chris proudly displays his beautiful trophy for winning his class in the Hawaiian Surfing Championships. He was only 8 years old.

“My visit in the South Seas became six times longer than I expected. Once finished, I then flew back to Miami and spent the next six weeks editing the nearly three miles of Tahitian film into a logical sequence. The film completed, I then flew to New York and presented it to Norman Moray, Vice President of Warner Brothers in charge of documentary films. Fortunately, my footage made an impression and Warner purchased it. They re-edited it, added a soundtrack, and nominated it for an Academy Award.

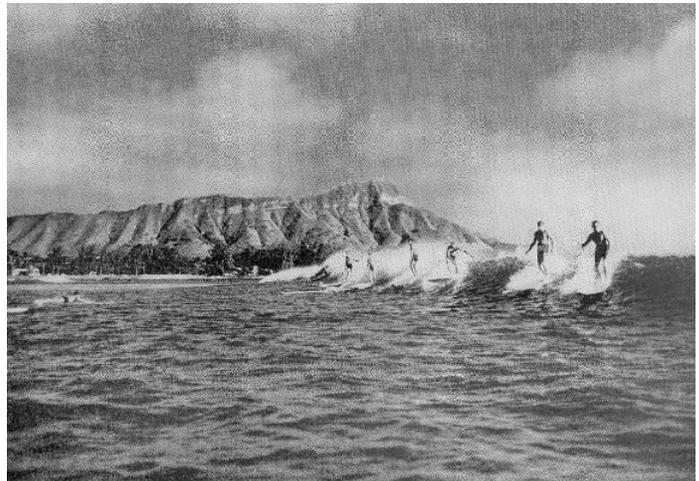
A later movie by R.K.O. Studios did receive this coveted status. The film ‘The Sea Around Us’ won an Academy Award for a documentary, of which Dudley and I filmed one-third of the underwater scenes for this highly publicized release.”

Upon his return from the South Seas in 1949, William became deeply involved with tropical fruit culture. Over the years he had been active in making new tropical fruit introductions. “I believe I have introduced more tropical and subtropical fruit and fruit varieties in the U.S. mainland than any other experimenter except Dr. David Fairchild,” William said. “The mainland areas that are able to grow some of these are California and Southern Florida.”

William’s visits to collect rare fruit included the West Indies, Asiatic Tropics and Central and South America. He continued to work in horticulture until the end of his life. He wrote and experimented extensively on the subject, including launching a worldwide organization called “The Rare Fruit Council.”

Marriage and Raising a Family

Following World War Two, William and Dudley spent a lot of time in the Bahamas, waterskiing, spearfishing and shooting undersea footage for the film industry. One afternoon William met a Bahamian named Dorothea Carroll, who would soon become his wife. Dorothea was born on December 16, 1931, in Georgetown, Great Exuma, Bahamas. Her family goes back 300 years in the Bahamas, and this is where she met William water skiing, in Nassau, Bahamas. The two had many great years together surfing and spear fishing, both being natural water athletes and sharing the love of the ocean. Dorothea was petite at 5’2” and 98 pounds when they met but could out-spearfish the men and free dive to over 60 feet. In the years that followed, they had four children; the first had a defective heart and did not survive. The other three were named Christopher, Pamela, and Eric.



Classic 1940’s Waikiki, Hawaii postcard. William Whitman is the surfer third from right. Notice no high-rise hotels?

Over the years, members of the Whitman family have surfed the West Indies, Europe, South and Central America, Hawaii, The South Seas and Australia. Chris Whitman won the Hawaiian Championships at only eight years old. Dudley’s daughter Renee took top honors at the first East Coast Surfing Championships held near Cape Kennedy. On January 10, 1998, both William and his brother Dudley were inducted into the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame as surfing pioneers. For the Whitmans, their legacy of surfing for fun does not end here. Following in their father’s footsteps is the second generation of Whitmans, Chris, Pamela, and Eric, as well as an up and coming third generation. Chris was one of the first commercial longan grove operators in

Miami, Eric worked for NASA at the Kennedy Space Center and Pamela became an airline Captain.



This is the 13-foot saltwater crocodile crossing Collins Avenue headed west to Indian Creek after a long day at the beach. Soon this native species would be forced out of its habitat by development. Photo © Whitman Museum, Bal Harbour

Editor's Note: I first met La Jolla resident Pamela Whitman Mattson several years ago and we discussed producing some sort of editorial on her family. Thus, it has finally come to be. Before we conclude, a short autobiography about Pamela must be included, for it is obvious she definitely inherited the Whitman drive for success and adventure.

Pamela Whitman Mattson

I started surfing in Waikiki at the age of five in 1961. My father pushed me into a wave in front of the old Outrigger Canoe Club on the inside against my will and I panicked. That ended my surfing until our next visit to Hawaii in 1963, and at age seven I totally took to the sport. Literally, everyone in my family surfed. My father, mother, older brother Chris (by 16 months), younger brother Eric (by 7 years), Uncle Dudley, his four children Dudley Jr., Renee, Billy and Todd, as well as Uncle Stanley. It was a family affair and we took many surf safaris together. Some of the most notable were trips to Hawaii and Eleuthera, Bahamas. My father took our family all over the world surfing. As children we spent alternate summers surfing in Hawaii or Europe (Biarritz, France and Newquay, England). As teenagers we took many surfing safaris to Barbados, Puerto Rico, French Polynesia and Bali. The most memorable surf trip was in the summer of 1975, when our family traveled all through Southeast Asia. We took a train from Thailand to Malaysia, flew to Singapore and on to Java. We visited one of the largest botanical gardens in the world in Bogar, Java, then took another train to the tip of Java and a boat to Bali and we surfed Kuta Beach. I didn't even know where Bali was back then. It was unbelievably magical at that time, with few tourists and uncrowded waves. In Thailand, because of my father's tropical fruit connections, the government met us and took us to remote jungle locations in the golden triangle where three countries meet (Thailand, Laos & Cambodia) searching for new rare tropical fruit varieties. After spending three weeks in Bali we flew to Sydney, Australia, and then Tahiti. In French Polynesia we surfed at Huahine, then returned back to Miami, Florida. To this day that was the trip of my lifetime.

My father was such an adventurer and loved to travel and explore. If it was an off limits area my Dad would make sure he explored that! He had a very curious mind. After graduating from The University of Florida with a Bachelor's Degree in Advertising, I moved to the North Shore of Oahu in 1979, and still reside there part time. I competed in the surf contests covered by The ABC Wide World of Sports at Sunset Beach, and The Women's World Cup of Surfing in Haleiwa (1980, 1981 & 1982). Since I didn't follow the circuit around the world, I had to pre-qualify each year by entering the Women's Pro Class Trials. In 1982, I started flying helicopters on a whim and enjoyed it so much I became a flight instructor in the Hughes 300C, a small two seater piston engine chopper. The owner of the company who trained me, Steve Fern of Hawaii Pacific Helicopters, hired me for my first job as a Flight Instructor. I trained over ten students, many who earned their Commercial Rotorcraft ratings. I then transitioned to the jet helicopter Hughes 500D and flew tours out of Waikiki at a heliport located right in front of the Ala Moana Bowl surf spot. After flying helicopters commercially for three years, I got my airplane ratings, seeing an opportunity to perhaps apply to the airlines, which offered higher pay and benefits. I flew small Cessna 206 cargo planes inter-island to build up my hours and then finally got my first break flying for Mid Pacific Airlines in 1987. I flew a sixty passenger turbo prop plane called a YS-11 inter-island. I worked for that company for one year until they went out of business. Aloha Airlines expanded at that time and I got hired in February of 1988 to fly the 737 inter-island jets as a First Officer. In June of 1988, I made history piloting the 737, making the first all female crew with Captain Mimi Tompkins. I upgraded to Captain in two and a half years in 1991. I continued to fly for Aloha for 15 years until 2003, at which time I elected to take early retirement. Unfortunately, a few years later, Aloha went out of business after over sixty years in operation, leaving many employees devastated and unemployed. My career at the airlines was remarkable, exciting and very rewarding. I still fly from time to time for pleasure and my love of surfing has never diminished.

Surfing has influenced my entire life from my choice to live in Hawaii as well as my career flying the airways. The Whitman legacy continues with my daughter, Marina, who is on the surf team at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and will tell you that surfing is much more than just a sport!



Aloha Airlines Captain Pamela Whitman Mattson pauses while inspecting her Boeing 737 jetliner before taking off on another Hawaiian inter-island flight. She flew for Aloha Airlines for fifteen years before retiring in 2003.



Marina Mattson

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Current Exhibit

Kelly - A history of Kelly Slater as only Cocoa Beach can tell it. Don't miss the first-hand perspective this unique exhibit brings to the greatest surfer who ever surfed.



Tuesday-December 20, 6 - 8:30 pm

CBSM and Surfrider Christmas Party at the Museum. Wear your best Aloha shirt for the Aloha shirt contest between museum members and Surfrider members.

Chris Dixon will be signing his new book *Ghost Wave*, about the Cortes Bank.

Entertainment by Dave Miller and friends. Please bring a dish or snack to share. BYOB.



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ROUGH WEATHER, TOUGHER COMPETITORS

By John Hughes / Photographs by Georgette McWilliams

The 5th Annual Cocoa Beach Surf Museum's Causeway to Causeway 22/11 Challenge, held on Nov. 5th, was host to our biggest turnout yet. A record 57 paddlers took off on 45 paddle craft against the most brutal weather conditions in the event's history. Geographically, paddlers from out-of-state traveled from North Carolina, Maryland and Vermont. Once again SUPs and prone paddleboards were well represented as well as an OC-1, several kayaks, one surfski, a one-man and two-man surf dory and four Cayuco canoes.

This was the first time Cayucos have participated in a stateside event. Cayucos are modern version of traditional 4-man dugout canoes indigenous to Panama. Each year they participate in an ocean to ocean race through the Panama Canal.

Winds were forecast to be 10-15 mph early out of the NW increasing to 15-20 mph later in the morning. If that held it would provide a good downwinder on the first leg with a tough, but manageable upwind return leg. However the wind decided to really kick up about two hours into the event which happened to coincide with the time most paddlers would be making the turn around the buoy. Nearly all the SUPs wisely decided to head in at the south end of the course, having completed a fun 11-mile downwinder. Top five finishers for the 11 mile were: (1) Darrell Canamas (Orlando, FL) / Richard Grimison (Merritt Island, FL) / Steve Mallia (Maitland Lake, FL) / Scott Roche (Orlando, FL) - Cayuco "Diablo Rojo" 1:40:00; (2) David Cohen (Wesley Chapel, FL) / John Magee (Wesley Chapel, FL) / Peter Pusztai (Miami Beach, FL) / Matt Rigby (Lake Park, FL) - Cayuco "Chancleta" 1:43:00; (3) Ian McFarland (Merritt Island, FL) - 1:59:00 - SUP - 14'; (4) Matt Wise (Miramar Beach, FL) - 2:04:45 SUP - 14'; (5) Jamie Twigg (Indialantic, FL) - 2:04:47 SUP - Unlimited.



Those who chose to take on the return leg met with 20-25 mph headwinds from the NE which provided no protection from the wind chop and occasional rain squalls. Temps in the 60s added hypothermia into the mix. Wind resistance prevailed, as no SUPs finished the 22-mile course. A total of nine paddlers who attempted the 22 miles were unable to complete the return leg. The top (and only) finishers for the 22 miles were: (1) Gary Wise (Miramar Beach, FL) - 4:25:30 OC-1; (2) Bodgen Cursovic (Dania Beach, FL) / Jose Bolivar (Hollywood, FL) - 5:44:00 - Surfboat; (3) Geoff Pletcher (Cocoa Beach, FL) / Wyatt Werneth (Cocoa Beach, FL) / Megan Kramer (Satellite Beach, FL) - 5:46:52 - Cayuco "Evil Twin"; (4) Eric Dijon (Melbourne Beach, FL) - 5:59:39 - Unlimited, prone paddleboard; (5) Cynthia Aguilar (Hialeah, FL) - 6:49:00 - Stock, prone paddleboard; (6) Kie McCarthy (Cocoa, FL) - 7:03:07 - Kayak, 16' Epic.

Special recognition goes to boat operator and Cocoa resident George Trossett, whose local knowledge of the area enabled event staffers to quickly locate stranded paddlers and return them to the contest site. The Cayuco group also provided valuable assistance with two additional support boats. Recognition also goes to our Museum volunteers who make these events possible.

We would also like to thank our sponsors whose cash and product donations made the event a success: Nu Wave SUP, Lavacore International, Dr. Janet Amendola, Amendola Chiropractic, MTI Adventure Wear, Village Outfitters, Fathom It Distributing, Historic Cocoa Village and Ocean Potion.

Finally, the photographs in this article are by Georgette McWilliams. If you would like to purchase copies of these and others: http://photos-by-georgette.smugmug.com/Events/C2C-2011-CBSM/19925768_7t2wtb



John and Marie Hughes produced the 5th Annual Causeway to Causeway 22/11 Challenge.



FLORIDA WOMEN OF THE WAVES

The Second Annual Florida Women of the Waves Weekend on September 30 through October 2 was another chance for the surfing sisterhood to relax and enjoy the company of friends and family on the beach and in the water, without the stress of a competition environment. A surf movie at the Cocoa Beach Library got the weekend started, courtesy of Ray Dickinson and his fine team of Library folks. As usual the Library's popcorn machine was churning out the best organic popcorn this side of Jetty Park, courtesy of the fine folks at Sunseed Co-op, where the Museum's original Curator and President Emeritus, Sean O'Hare, keeps us in the good stuff.

Saturday morning began with the Ladies' Surfing Social, continued Saturday afternoon with an SUP paddle in the river at the Cocoa Beach pavilion, and ended with a cookout - delicious food and music by The Aquanauts.

The weekend ended in true surfing fashion with an informal Sunday morning surf session. In this casual atmosphere exceptionally fun waves were shared among women ranging from legendary heroes to stoked gromettes, from just a few streets away, to the far reaches of the state, and beyond. We can't wait until next year.

Special thanks to co-producers of the Second Annual Florida Women of the Waves, Melody DeCarlo and Sharon Wolfe-Cranston, as well as all the tireless volunteers who gave their time and energy to make the weekend a success.



YEAH BABY, SHE'S GOT IT

© Tom Fucigna Jr., Hobe Sound FL

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Some surfers may throw a shaka and never think twice about its origin. Not me. Here's an amalgamation of information and paraphrases from a variety of sources, and an interesting realization.

The shaka sign ("extending the thumb and smallest finger while keeping the three middle fingers curled and raising the hand as in salutation with the back of the hand facing the person that is being greeted") is a common greeting among surfers. It can be used to signal "hello, goodbye, take care, or right on", and it's even one of the two signs used for surfing in sign language. All seem to agree that it has its roots with surf and beach culture in Hawaii, where locals use it to convey Aloha Spirit, a gesture of friendship and understanding. The shaka is "more than just nonverbal communication. When you use it, you acknowledge the true concept of Aloha and participate in the synergistic heartbeat of Hawaii."

The shaka is a simple yet powerful reminder of the way people look out for each other on the islands and strive to spread Aloha, in keeping with the Hawaiian principle of "malama i kekahi i kekahi" or "take care of one, take care of all." Aloha can mean love, hello, goodbye, affection, compassion or gratitude for blessings, and the shaka - "always given freely, from the heart, without anything expected in return" - can communicate all this with a wave of the hand.

I found a variety of shaka origin anecdotes, but nothing solid, and no explanation that seems to truly fit. Several of the theories are based on islanders who lost their middle three fingers in a variety of grisly accidents, and went on to wave with their only remaining digits.

In Honolulu, local lore credited the gesture to Hamana Kalili, who lost the three middle fingers of his right hand while working in a sugar mill in the 1940s, and was shifted to guarding the sugar train. His "all-clear" wave of thumb and pinkie is said to have been imitated by children and evolved into the shaka greeting. A different missing-fingers version claims that the symbol was born when one of the first surfers in Hawaii raised a shaking pinky and thumb out of the water after having his middle fingers bitten off by a shark. Yet another tale, set around the turn of century in the "plantation days" involves an unfortunate old fisherman using dynamite on the reef, whose resultant three-fingered greeting wave was returned by the locals.

There are gentler theories, including the idea that the symbol was used by Spanish immigrants who folded the middle fingers and brought the thumb to the lips as a friendly gesture to symbolize sharing a drink with the natives they encountered in Hawaii. Some contend the finger configuration is based on the Hawaiian custom of placing a flower lei necklace on the shoulders of another in an Aloha greeting. The three middle fingers grasp the lei from over the top while the thumb and small finger rest under the lei, spreading the necklace open.

One version of the shaka has been attributed to 'Baby Alan' Machado of Molokai, who would hold his hand at shoulder height and swing it down with a twist. I also found references to many other variations, including the Choke Kine shaka (one shake, quick and easy), Moke shaka (loud and furious, keep the middle three fingers straight, with thumb and pinky way out to the side. Stick your arm straight out and up), Shaka Brah (punch a shaka and leave it extended), Double shaka, Shaka pause, and the Secret shaka (hold it way down low, pointed to the ground).

Some believe the word "shaka" was derived from an ancient Buddha named Shakyamuni, who prayed with his hands in the shape of two shakas pressed together. Another story tells that the word was derived from the term "shark eye", a traditional compliment given to respected friends and family members.

None of these origin tales seem to match the simple yet sincere spiritual message that the shaka conveys. So, I went looking a little deeper. It seemed plausible that the shaka might carry over from another Hawaiian tradition involving meaning-filled hand movements.

Hula has been described as “the soul of Hawaii expressed in motion.” Like the shaka, there is little doubt that the dance originated in Hawaii, but there is scant evidence of the genesis of the art form, although it is commonly agreed among Hawaiians that the first hula was performed by a god or goddess. There are other related dances that come from other islands including Tahiti, The Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, and even New Zealand.

Hula dancing is a complex art form, with hand motions used to represent the words in a song, signifying aspects of nature, or a feeling or emotion such as fondness or yearning. Traditional female hula dancers wore the everyday pāū, or wrapped skirt, and were topless, with bare feet. Dancers also wore many lei and decorations as headpieces, necklaces, bracelets and anklets.

In Hawaiian mythology, Hi`iaka and Laka, sisters of the volcano goddess Pele, are the spiritual patrons of hula. Hi`iaka lived in a grove of Lehua trees, where she spent her days dancing with the forest spirits. She had been conceived in Tahiti, and carried across the sea to Hawaii by Pele, in the form of an egg. Pele fell in love with a young chief named Lohiau, and decided to send a messenger to bring him to her. Hi`iaka volunteered to go, and Palauopalae, the Guardian of the Ferns, was sent to be her companion. According to the story, a woman by the name of Wahine`oma`o ("light-skinned woman") joined them somewhere along the way, and perhaps accompanied them on their return journey to Hawaii.

Laka, guardian of the woodland, is an intriguing figure, because she seems to have emanated from a variety of places and times, sometimes even referred to as a masculine entity. It is unclear whether she came from, or traveled to, Hawaii. In Samoa, Laka is Lata, who built a huge out-rigger canoe on the island of Ta'u and sailed to Savai'i. From there, Lata sailed to Tonga (where Laka is known as Lasa) captured the chief of the forest elves, and compelled him to build a great canoe and pilot it to Fiji. In the Marquesan version, Aka made a historic voyage to Rarotonga in a great outrigger canoe with 140 paddlers. In other parts of Polynesia, Laka is known by other names including Rata and Ata. In some accounts, Laka is described as the daughter of Pele's sister Kapo "not in the ordinary sense but rather as a breath or emanation." Laka is at once a spirit in the wind, a playful girl, an intrepid traveler and a force to be reckoned with. She is known as the goddess of forest growth, creatix of the Hula and the goddess of love.

So, I didn't find the origin of the shaka, but I was intrigued by the identity of the light-skinned woman, and the idea that the paths of the ethereal Laka and the mysterious Wahine`oma`o crossed, or perhaps merged, somewhere in the mythology surrounding the origin of hula, and perhaps the shaka. Identifying the most logical connection involved a bit more research.



If the statue of Venus de Milo in the Louvre in Paris is accurate, she stood six feet, eight inches tall, with a solid womanly frame, that famous face and those infamous breasts. Although she's wearing only a drape slung dangerously low about her waist, with a bare foot peeking out, experts agree that back when she had arms she would have been adorned with armbands, a necklace, earrings and probably some sort of crown.

Like Laka, she was known by several names. The Roman's Venus was known as Aphrodite to the Greeks, but to both she was the goddess of love and beauty.

One might think that a beautiful Goddess could live a carefree existence, but her life was anything but simple. Her father was "either Uranus or Zeus", her mom was Dione "the mother goddess", and her birth was "the consequence of a castration" in which "Cronus severed Uranus' genitals and threw them behind him into the sea." The genitals "were carried over the sea a long time and white foam arose from the immortal flesh; with it a girl grew." Aphrodite "floated ashore on a scallop shell, born as an adult, nubile and infinitely desirable." She is said to have been "born" on the island of Cyprus. Aphrodite means "she who shines from the foam (ocean)", and she was associated with the sea, dolphins, shells and pearls. In other tales, she was literally a daughter of Thalassa (the sea). Some opine that Aphrodite was an equivalent of Rhea, the Earth Mother, represented as the earth or fertile soil. Her siblings were "The Tree Nymphs, The Furies and The Gigantes."



The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli, ca. 1485

The gods believed her beauty would disturb the peace and lead to war, so Zeus married her to Hephaestus, "the dour, humorless god of smithing" who was overjoyed, and forged her beautiful jewelry that made her even more irresistible. Aphrodite, who was sometimes described as "vain, ill-tempered and easily offended", had many lovers, both gods and mortals, including somehow becoming "both Adonis' lover and his surrogate mother." Her children included Eros, Phobos, Deimos, Harmonia, Pothos, Anteros, Himeros, Hermaphroditos, Rhode, Eryx, Peitho, Tyche, Eunomia, The Graces, Priapus and Aeneas. Aphrodite even managed to get herself tangled up in the narrative of The Odyssey, in which she is attracted to Ares, the god of war, and his violent nature, perhaps revealing other issues, and she played a major part in the original cause of the Trojan War by offering Helen of Troy to Paris. Life was complicated.

All of this no doubt took a toll emotionally, and could have led any girl to consider just blowing town and hitting the road or, in her case, the high seas, because Venus (or Aphrodite, or whatever name she chose to travel under) was, after all, an island girl.

Maybe it was time to climb aboard the scallop shell and set out to some place where she could get back to the earth and fertile soil. Who knew who she might meet along the way? Ending up on a voyage to some exotic destination in the company of 140 strapping young paddlers, a few newfound female kindred spirits – she'd never really had any girl friends before – and a handsome young chief might have been just what she needed.

I can see it now: Approaching the palm-fringed shoreline after their adventure-filled journeys, she and her companions beheld the islanders joyously celebrating all things beautiful, as they paddled their boards among the breakers, rising to their feet to trace the curling path of endless azure waves. Daughter of the sea, mother of the earth, sister of the tree nymphs, and mother of a herd of slightly strange but wonderful children,

she felt all the hurt and insecurity and frustration just melt away in the balmy breeze, cooled by the salt spray, and rocking with the rhythm of the groundswell. It had been a long, strange trip, and in that moment she realized it was time to just forget her crazy past, end the drama, drop the vanity, get back to basics and start acting like a real Goddess, embracing true beauty, giving Love freely from her heart without expecting anything in return, and expressing gratitude for her many blessings. She recognized that she had found the people who could understand all that and carry it forth across the earth for generations to come.

Yearning to convey all she was thinking and feeling, with hips and hands in fluid rhythm she employed the graceful sign language that she and the girls had developed to bridge their Greco-Polynesian language barrier. She stood joyfully in the bow of the great canoe, dug deep into her immortal repertoire, and greeted the wave riders in the best way she could find, transcending time and spoken language. The riders, welcoming and appreciative, smiled and returned her greeting. Her heart was filled with peace, and she was happy.

Choke Kine, Moke, Brah or Secret, we understand. We carry forth the message.



Hi'iaka in Lehuas
Surfers in the sea
Love & Beauty, Gratitude
Malama i kekahi i kekahi

Baby Alan, Hamana Kalili
Buddha Shakyamuni
Rarotonga, Samoa, Tonga
Wahine'oma'o
You and me

Aloha Venus Aphrodite
Take care of one, take care of all
Hula Shaka Aka Laka
We heed the timeless call

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PARTING SHOT

Toby Taylor recently ran into Kelly Slater, *EEEE*-leventh world champion, and got to congratulate him in person. All of us at the Cocoa Beach Surf Museum would like to throw in our appreciation, congratulation, admiration, salutation, and adoration to Kelly. Seriously, man.

