Alan Calhoun displays his prize catch of a 15-pound mahimahi caught off South Point, Big Island, in August 2003.

photo by Rusty Lillico
President’s Message:

Mele Kalikimaka and Hauoli Makahiki Hou! in the full spirit of our Club’s Hawaiian name.

[Note:  The literal definition of Hui Wa'a Kaukahi from Pukui's Hawaiian Dictionary reads "Single Canoe Club."]

I hope you will be able to join me and the other HWK Officers and Board members at our Annual Christmas Party to be held this year at the Elks Club on December 16, in lieu of our regularly scheduled monthly meeting. Gary and Peggy Budlong are again graciously sponsoring the event and we will have a great view of Waikiki while we party. Dennis Kees and his band will be providing the entertainment. Don't forget to bring a grab bag and the prize-winning kayak picture you photo'd this year.

We have a lot of paddles planned for next year so get ready for a full year of kayaking in 2004.

Safe paddling,

Joe Hu
President
2003 Easter Camp

photos by Ellen Dorsch

...and more kayaks

tent and kayak haven

unidentified mother and son......... families and fun are what the Easter Camp is about...

Ko Olina to Pokai paddle

photos by Kevin Ching

Anne Ashford and passengers sitting in the bay......

............and they all fell down.
Challenge of the Wind
by Kevin K.L. Ching, DDS

It was a perfect day for the technical sailor. The winds were moderate 10 to 20 mph and the tide was high. Strategy became the key rather than the use of brute strength, like last year’s edition of the Windbag Regatta when we had to paddle hard the whole way in quirky winds. The kiters were there: Paul Tibbetts, Merritt Burke, Jodi Dingle, Dave Lonborg and son, Chuck Ehrhorn, Stan McRae, and Tom. They were all flying parafoils; however, Merritt had a frame kite that looked like a giant moth. Chalsa Loo, Steve Harris, Phil Dang, Ed Rhinelander, and I had sails of various configurations. Chalsa and Steve had sails that featured a mainsail. Steve had a Jib as well and both were without amas or leeboards. Phil and Ed had their Scupper Pros fully rigged with sails and amas, and were impressive sights sitting on the shore at Maunalua Bay. I had two triangle sails rigged but, like Chalsa and Steve, no amas or leeboards. Representing the umbrella sail were Sam and Elly Cucinell; their Aire inflatable had leeboards.

HWK President, Joe Hu, had the honor of starting the race with everyone in the shallow waters off the boat ramp. Chalsa and Steve had jack rabbit starts and Joe declared Chalsa the fastest starter of the pack. Right behind her were Steve, Merritt, and me. The leading pack held tight until Paiko Lagoon, where Steve, Chalsa and Merritt decided to take an outside track to avoid the Paiko dead spot. I chose to sail inside the reef.

Outside the reef, the dogfight started with Merritt paddling hard, frame kite flying high, pulling ahead of Chalsa and Steve. The winds remained steady with the occasional gust rotating Merritt’s kite vertically, reducing traction on his Tarpon. “That’s why I had to paddle the whole way!” Merritt declared. Hooting and hollering, Steve turned on the adrenaline and gave hard chase to Merritt, paddling occasionally to catch up. Looking mauka, Merritt tracked my progress inside the reef. “I was actually ahead of you most of the way, but I had to make up the difference in the distance I was from shore compared to you,” as he described his predicament to me. The question became when to come in through the surf to finish the race. The answer came at “Graveyards” at Wailupe, the famous surfing break on the Kahala coast. “A huge wave was breaking outside, and I had to surf it in,” said Merritt. I had not seen Merritt the whole way, thinking I was way ahead of the pack.

Steve’s hooting had become softer and softer, giving me a false sense of security. Suddenly, at the Kahala Mandarin I looked makai and there was a giant Moth flying overhead. Looking back, I saw Merritt with his signature grin paddling hard. “Oh no! Not a repeat of last year!” I thought as the memory of coming in second to Steve in the race that year came to mind. I knew that I would never hear the end of it if I allowed Merritt to slip ahead so it was time to take some action! After a small prayer, a gust came. Pulling the foresail in to take advantage of the gust coming from the northeast, my Scupper Pro propelled to 8 mph and I saw Merritt fading back but still paddling hard. The gust continued all the way into the shore at Waialae and I land one minute ahead of Merritt.

Looking much like a salmon that finally made it to his spawning ground upstream, Merritt still had a big grin on his face. “I could have gone farther if I had to!” he said in the true spirit of the Windbag! Steve, last year’s winner, came barreling in as he took a small keyhole channel in the reef to sail in between sets of waves. “I was really sailing coming into Waialae and I was catching up to both of you!” Steve informed us. Right behind him was Chalsa with her control line in her mouth as she deftly pulled up her rudder and paddled the short distance to shore.

The first fully rigged kayak came in when Phil sailed his tricked-out Scupper Pro in. “I didn’t have to paddle the whole way!” he said excitedly. Then the parafoil kites started to come in with Paul, followed by Chuck and Stan. Paul was still flying the parafoil when he arrived at the finish line. There was a clump of line 30 feet in the air which looked like a new sailing technique. “It sort of got tangled as I was letting the line out,” Paul explained. The tandem Lonborg father and son team came in with their kite a tangled mess in the kayak. Ed, with his experimental ama set up, finished next. This was the first time he took his new sail out, which was fashioned in the Polynesian crab claw style. Then Tom landed, followed by Sam and Elly with their parasol sail. Finally, Jodi pulled in.

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Another Windbag Regatta was in the bag with an exciting finish. Chalsa asked me what I thought gave me the edge to win this year and I told her in a very un-Windbag manner, “It was luck!” I knew the real reason, though. Mahalo, ke akua!

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**Paddling Fanning Island**  
*by Kevin K.L. Ching, DDS*

One prospect while cruising on the Norwegian Star this past summer was being able to paddle at Fanning Island in the Republic of Kiribati. Sun and flat water were obvious reasons; also, I had never paddled outside Hawaii and the notion of paddling in a third world country really appealed to me. There is only one way to get to Fanning Island and that is with the Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCL). NCL has gone to Fanning Island as part of the infamous “Jones’s Act” which prohibits foreign flagged ships from going directly from one American port to another without first stopping at a foreign port. As far as I was concerned, that was just fine.

After leaving Hilo, the Norwegian Star headed due south to Tabuaeran, as Fanning Island is known to the native population. The trip takes a full day and night as the boat must travel over 1,000 miles to get to the atoll. Along the way you see what only the most serious sailors see in the middle of the great blue ocean. On this cruise the ocean was very rough with waves over 15 feet striking the hull of the boat. I kept thinking about being on a kayak when one of those turquoise mountains would collide with us, sending plumes 30 to 40 feet in the air, rocking the boat in all directions. Mesmerized by the show the ocean put on, it served as entertainment beyond anything that could be seen on television. Occasionally, I would see a seabird fly by and we were over 700 miles away from Hawaii and still had over 600 miles to go to Fanning Island!

In order to leave the boat, guests need to travel to Fanning Island by “tender” boats. A free ticket determines the order of disembarkment onto Tabuaeran. I arrived right at the stated time only to find a long line waiting to get a ticket. Fortunately, I was on the second tender. Since the conditions were so rough getting to Fanning Island, our arrival was about 2 hours late; however, NCL was not going to change the time the Star was to leave the island. Normally, the excursion takes 6 hours but since we lost about 2 hours, it meant I would have about 3 hours to paddle around, and that included inflating my Dolphin inflatable kayak. I dragged the kayak out of the closet and loaded it onto a luggage carrier. Heading to the tender on the lower deck with the kayak in tow, I drew a lot of curious looks. The first tender had already left and we started to load the second tender. The Norwegian Star is too large to enter the lagoon so it must stay offshore in “idle” mode as the bow thrusters are used to keep the boat steady. We were told the water was too deep to drop anchor. The tender ride through the small break on the east end of the atoll was surprisingly bumpy and none of us were wearing life jackets! Once in the lagoon, the sea calmed down considerably as the tenders landed at the English Harbor, a small dock that encloses a small beach where guests eat lunch, swim, or explore the atoll by foot or bicycle; that is, with most guests. I had different plans.

Upon reaching English Harbor, the sound of ukulele and angelic voices singing in a strange language came through the tender’s door. As I walked down the dock, the music became louder and louder. There on a corner of the dock were about 10 to 15 of the 1,800 islanders, mostly women and children, singing, strumming ukulele, and slapping pieces of wood. A line to board our tender back to the Norwegian Star had already formed, suggesting some cruise guests had had enough of the Tabuaeran experience in the short 20 minutes they were on the island. I immediately set up on the beach, pumped up my Dolphin, and was ready to go in 20 minutes. The prevailing wind was from the southwest so I paddled upwind as far as I could in 1 ½ hours. Along the way there acres of coconut trees that ring the atoll. Near the shore were hundreds of sticks that protruded out of the water looking very intimidating to my inflatable. There was no place for me to land since the sticks were everywhere; some of them were just below the water.

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making them ideal for sinking my inflatable while my
attention was occupied by the awesome scenery. Along the
way I passed a paddler fishing with a hand line. He had a
stone for a sinker and swung the line over his head like a
lasso, flinging it 20 feet ahead, then winding it back on his
left hand. I called out “Aloha!” but did not get a response. I
thought that since Tabuaeran is in the Polynesian Triangle,
they would have a similar word in their language. I later
found out the population is Micronesian, not Polynesian, and
they were brought to the island as workers. Fish were
swimming all around and beneath my kayak but I couldn’t
identify them. I’ve been told that the islanders eat Awa most
often, eating Papio and other species on occasion. His canoe
was of the one-man outrigger variety but he had what
appeared to be mast housing and a sail that was piled up in
the back of the canoe. I passed numerous hales made of
coconut leaves that served as canoe shelters as well as
dwellings for the population. This was one place where the
people still lived in “grass shacks.” The hales were in
clusters spaced far apart as if they were mini villages.
Finally, I saw a break in the sticks and paddled to shore. It
couldn’t have come at a better time as I had spent one and a
half hours paddling as far as I could and had that amount of
time to paddle back to English Harbor in order to make the
last tender. If I missed the tender, it would have meant
another week in Tabuaeran before the next visit by the
Norwegian Star. I pulled the inflatable up on the beach and
looked around. On the sand were some really large dog paw
marks but no dog in sight. The beach was a small white
sand shore which was covered in debris, not trash but
vegetation parts, mostly from the coconut trees. It was very
quiet and there wasn’t a sound from any direction, just the
wind swishing through the dense palm forest. Looking
about the shore for some choice seashells, I didn’t venture
far from my inflatable, not wanting some huge dog to
investigate my kayak by taking a bite out of this curious
yellow banana. I really didn’t have a whole lot of time to
paddle back so, without finding any shells, I jumped back
into my kayak. As I walked my boat out to deeper ocean,
the water felt like a bathtub. It must have been at least 89
degrees. Paddling hard down wind, I knew I was going to
make it in time barring an inadvertent puncture from the
ever-present sticks on the shore. I passed another canoe
paddler in a similar canoe as the fisherman but he was not
fishing; he was paddling full tilt upwind.

I actually got to English Harbor in enough time to fold up
my inflatable, pack it on the luggage carrier, and go for a
nice swim in the area that was provided by NCL. The
serenade was still going on at the dock and I just let all my
troubles melt away as I floated in the small cove. One
question burned in my head while I was relaxing -- what
were all those sticks in the water for? When I asked one of
the NCL staff, he told me that the islanders were cultivating
seaweed for export. Capitalism at work in remote
Tabuaeran! I recommend that, if you are going on the cruise
to Fanning Island, you, too, try to paddle and see a view of
the island that few outsiders have seen. It was well worth
the effort dragging my inflatable over but remember to keep
an eye on your watch as you enjoy the awesome scenery.
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