



Along the Trail

Hawaiian Trail & Mountain Club

Newsletter

April - June 2015

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CRUNCH TIME FOR THE HAIKU STAIRS

Mayor Caldwell is about to rule on the fate of the Haiku Stars, a decision which will determine if a unique, priceless outdoor asset will be preserved for the enjoyment of ourselves and future generations, or will be dismantled and lost forever. Anywhere else in the world the decision would be a no-brainer. The Haiku Stairs are unique to Hawaii. Nowhere else in the United States are hikers and tourists able to access a nearly vertical climb with magnificent views by using a safe, steel stairway with a system of railings and platforms. The nearest counterpart to the Haiku Stairs anywhere in the world can only be found in places such as the alpine regions of Europe, where *via ferrata* and *klettersteigen* perform similar functions, but only for those willing to make long hikes to their locations. Hawaii has its own *via ferrata*, accessible from a nearby car parking lot.

Yet, despite the recommendation of an advisory group chaired by City Councilman Ikaika Anderson that the stairs be reopened, and a poll conducted by the Star-Advertiser showing that the public favors reopening by a 2 to 1 majority, the future of the stairway remains in doubt. Rather than focus on its benefits, city officials wring their hands about liability issues and erroneously perceived dangers. Properly maintained and managed, the Haiku Stairs with its steel hand railings and secure footing on rigid steel steps will be one of the *safest* trails in the Koolau Mountains. News reports of hikers needing to be rescued "on the Haiku Stairs" are in fact accounts of people trying to trespass on the closed stairway, and getting lost or endangered en route.

The fate of the Haiku Stairs will probably be settled in the next few weeks, and the issue is still in doubt. **If you want to see the stairs preserved, write the mayor, call the mayor, or email the mayor, and express your views. Time is of the essence.**

Listed below is a series of short articles from KHON2 which taken together provide a recent history of the struggle to reopen the stairs. They are arranged in the order of most recent first. Readers preferring a chronological approach might prefer starting from the last one and reading forward. Following these articles is a list of **Myths and Facts** about the stairs compiled by the Friends of Haiku Stairs (www.haikustairs.org).

AN ALTERNATIVE OPTION FOR THE FATE OF HAIKU STAIRS

(By Web Staff Published: March 5, 2015, 10:39 am Updated: March 5, 2015, 11:46 am)

The Stairway to Heaven, also known as Haiku Stairs, is facing closure after its owner, the Board of Water Supply, agreed in late February to commission a report to look into way to shut down the hiking trail. It's been closed for 30 years and yet, hikers still illegally access the trail. Now a nonprofit group, Friends of Haiku Stairs, is actively reaching out to the public and to lawmakers to find ways to keep it open. Dr. Vernon Ansdell, president of Friends of Haiku Stairs, talked about it on Wake Up 2day.

This group is a non profit organization formed in 1987 with a mission to reopen historic Haiku Stairs in Windward Oahu to the general public and preserve it for future generations. "For many years we have organized regular work days on the Stairs where we remove invasive plants and promote the growth of native Hawaiian plants. In addition, we remove trash and perform basic maintenance work. Recently our work has been blocked by a requirement from the Board of Water Supply to have \$1,000,000 insurance to work on the Stairs and although we now have the required insurance we are still waiting for approval to resume our work," he backgrounded.

In October 2014 an advisory group on Haiku Stairs put together by Councilman Ikaika Anderson recommended the Stairs be reopened to the general public under managed access. Removing the Stairs was dismissed by the panel as unrealistic for several reasons.

Recent events in 2015 involving minor storm damage and missing hikers have revived calls to remove the Stairs. "These calls are completely misguided! It is very likely that if we had been able to continue our maintenance work we would have prevented the storm damage resulting from fallen invasive octopus trees. In addition, if the Stairs had been already been reopened under managed access, all the issues regarding missing hikers would almost certainly have also have been avoided," says Ansdell.

"Estimates are that it will cost \$4 to 5 million of our money to demolish this Windward treasure. It is a unique hiking trail, a world class attraction and a very valuable historic site. Removing the Stairs makes no sense! This would clearly be a very unfortunate and misguided decision," Ansdell continues.

While Ansdell says the Friends commends the Board of Water Supply for actively seeking another City or State department to help to restore managed access to Haiku Stairs, keeping it open "is what the community wants and it's the right thing to do. If you agree, please call your city, state and national elected leaders and encourage them to empower their departments to take action now," he urges.

BWS TAKES FIRST STEP TO DEMOLISH HAIKU STAIRS

(By Kristine Uyeno Published: February 23, 2015, 5:44 pm.
Updated: February 23, 2015, 6:14 pm.)

The first step has been taken to demolish Haiku Stairs, also known as Stairway to Heaven. The stairs have been closed for nearly 30 years, but people still hike it illegally.

“I’m told it’s a beautiful hike, but it isn’t core to our mission of providing safe drinking water to our community,” said Ernest Lau, manager for Board of Water Supply. The Board of Water Supply’s board of directors agreed to spend half a million dollars to figure out how to remove Haiku Stairs. Money would be released in the upcoming fiscal year, and the study would include an environmental assessment. “To have people go up into these watershed lands and do all kind of things in the watershed lands, it isn’t helping the quality of our water,” Lau said.

KHON2 learned the Board of Water Supply spends \$167,000 a year on security guard service, trying to keep people off the trail, and officials say up to 150 people a week are caught illegally hiking there. The Board of Water Supply says the property is a liability and has become more dangerous since last week’s strong winds uprooted trees on the trail. “Our preference would be to transfer the stairs and that parcel where the stairs sits on to another government agency that is better equipped to handle the managed access,” Lau said. Board of Water Supply officials say they asked DLNR and the National Parks Service to take over the stairs, but both agencies declined.

Officials say they will proceed with this first step of demolition, but still welcome any agency to take over the stairs and the parcel under it. But they would like to see interest in writing, along with a plan on how to manage access to this trail, a plan that would not impact the community. It could take one to two years to figure out the best way to remove the stairs. When the plan is complete, officials will go back to the board to get the final green light to demolish the trail.

GROUP WILLING TO CARE FOR HAIKU STAIRS WITH GOVERNMENT BACKING

(By Brent Remadna Published: February 18, 2015, 6:07 pm.
Updated: February 18, 2015, 6:21 pm.)

To demolish or not to demolish—that is the question regarding Haiku Stairs, also known as Stairway to Heaven. Right now, the answer seems to be leaning heavily towards demolish. We’ve been following the story since Monday after strong winds damaged the restricted and already dangerous trail. What to do with the restricted trail has been a talking point for many years, but this recent damage could be the final straw unless someone steps in soon.

For groups like The Friends of Haiku Stairs, fighting to save the trail is their main priority. “Folks would fight to save the stairs,” said former president John Goody. “As you know, they are very popular.”

“We know a lot of people do want to take care of it like us,” said vice president Jill Radke. “We prefer it to stay in a public entity like the city or the state, but we know there are other non-profits that can take care of it.”

The Board of Water Supply is in the process of drawing up plans to remove the stairs, but did say it would also be willing to part with the property. “It could be done, but essentially I think we need a government partner,” said Goody. A government partner has yet to step forward. There are also questions if a smaller group could take on the liability of managing the stairs. “We can obtain insurance for it. It’s a low-risk relatively or an unknown risk, but yes, it’s all

feasible. It all can be done. It needs a willing cooperating government body,” said Goody.

Another issue that came up is the cost of removing the stairs. While the Board of Water Supply still has to do a study to find out how much it would cost to dismantle the trail, previous estimates put the number at between \$4 million and \$5 million. “You could take half of the cost of removing the stairs and put programs for management of the access and put some facilities in the valley that would allow folks to arrive in the valley without bugging the neighbors,” said Goody.

KHON2 reached out to the Board of Water Supply and received this statement:

“The mission of the Board of Water Supply is to provide safe, dependable, and affordable water to the residents of Oahu. Access to the stairs has been prohibited since 1987 due to safety and liability concerns and maintenance of this trail for recreational purposes is not a prudent use of ratepayer money. Any government agency interested in taking over the stairs must be prepared to study and accept the financial and liability costs associated with responsibly overseeing the site.” The Board of Water Supply also pays for security on the property which costs \$160,000 a year.

HAIKU STAIRS, A LEGAL AND COSTLY BURDEN?

(By Brent Remadna Published: February 17, 2015, 10:28 pm
Updated: March 5, 2015, 8:10 pm)

A major landowner says it wants to get rid of a popular and illegal hiking trail. KHON2 reported on a landslide that damaged Haiku Stairs, also known as the “Stairway to Heaven. After years of back and forth discussions between the state, city and community leaders it appears Mother Nature may have the final say in the future of Haiku Stairs.

“We are going to be proposing to the board through our capital improvement program the money to begin the process to plan and design the removal of the stairs,” said Ernest Lau with the Board of Water Supply. Part of the stairs were damaged by a landslide over the weekend and the Board of Water Supply, who owns part of the property, says it may be time to just get rid of it.

KHON2 asked if the stairway is a burden. “At this point the stairs are not part of the core mission of the BWS,” said Lau. “We don’t need to access the ridge to maintain the watershed, so it is a financial burden right now because we are using security to keep the stairs closed and keep people away.” The Board of Water Supply says the property is a liability. That’s why a decision on what happens next could be coming very soon. “It’s important to move the ball forward here on this issue which has been languishing on since the early 2000’s,” said Lau.

“I think it would be a huge mistake to demolish the stairs,” said Jill Radke, vice president of The Friends of Haiku Stairs. She says there are a number of groups that would like to take control of the stairs, but time is working against them. “Time is not on our side we know the longer we wait the less likely it is to be affordable, to be safe there are going to need to be some repairs.” There have been proposals to legally reopen the trail, one of which is establishing a managed entrance, but that would mean someone else would have to take control of the property. “I believe it’s time to try to bring this to closure and hopefully by doing this there will be an agency that will step forward and is interested in pressing the stairs as a resource,” said Lau.

As far as when we could see something happen? “The CIP budget proposal we’re trying to put in the budget would be for FY 16 so the funds would become available from July 1st of this year and we would only then be able to move forward to procure a consultant to begin planning for the removal then,” said Lau. The BWS will still send crews up the stairs soon to look at the recent damage and see what needs to be done.

It is illegal to hike Haiku Stairs. Last June through December 135 citations were given to hikers who trespassed onto the property. Six people were arrested and 100 warnings were issued.

HAIKU STAIRS DAMAGED BY LANDSLIDE, MAY NEVER REOPEN

(By Brent Remadna Published: February 16, 2015, 10:46 pm.
Updated: February 17, 2015, 11:22 am.)

Mother Nature may have put an end to a popular and illegal trail. Haiku Stairs, also known as Stairway to Heaven, was damaged by a landslide. Hikers say it happened between Friday night and Saturday morning, when the islands were hit by a storm that brought gusty winds and rain. Haiku Stairs has been closed for nearly 30 years, but people still hike it.

“There’s an either/or solution. You keep it or you get rid of it for safety sake,” said resident Bob Crosby. For residents living near the entrance to the Stairway to Heaven, there is a downside. “There are cars, more cars than there should be,” said Crosby. Foot traffic through private property and parked cars lining the neighborhood are all problems many residents would like to see go away. “We have residents who are being confronted in their front yards, being assaulted in their yards, being verbally accosted. That’s not acceptable,” said Honolulu City Council member Ikaika Anderson.

Last year, a task force made up of landowners and residents was created to agree on a plan on what to do with Stairway to Heaven. Now, with the recent damage to the stairway, what will be done next? “We really need to know from the Board of Water Supply standpoint, what’s it going to cost to fix the damage and are they willing to fix the damage?” said Anderson. Anderson helped form the task force and would like to see a managed access point that would allow the trail to reopen. “In order for that to happen, my understanding is the current owner, the Board of Water Supply, would have to be willing to transfer the property to another government entity,” he said. “If it’s a managed access point not through the community, then that’s fine and if it’s safe, that’s fine, but right now, it’s not looking very safe,” said one resident. As for the future of the stairs, if a decision can’t be met, the stairs could be removed all together.

GROUP OFFERS PLAN TO REOPEN, MANAGE HAIKU STAIRS

(By Nestor Garcia and Marisa Yamane Published: October 9, 2014, 1:48 pm. Updated: October 10, 2014, 11:32 am.)

For nearly 30 years, hikers have been denied legal access to Haiku Stairs, also known as “the Stairway to Heaven.” Now, there is a call to reopen the hiking trail, but only if all interested parties agree to a so-called “managed access plan.” The stairway was blocked off in 1987, shortly after the U.S. Coast Guard closed down its station at the top of the stairs. Still, people brave the close to 4,000 metal steps to get to the top of the mountain on Windward Oahu, and also risk arrest. Residents at the foot of the stairs have complained for years that hikers disrupt the quiet of their neighborhood.

In July 2014, the Haiku Stairs Working Group task force was assembled, made up of representatives from the Board of Water

Supply, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Kamehameha Schools, residents, Windward Community College and native Hawaiian cultural practitioners. Their task: use the next 90 days to agree on a plan on what to do with Haiku Stairs.

Kaneohe resident Ken Rose was a member of that task force. “It was a positive experience and it was a feasible solution most of us could agree upon,” he said. In its final report released on Thursday, the group concluded that it would be too expensive to dismantle the stairs. The cost was estimated at between \$4 million and \$5 million. So it recommended that Haiku Stairs be reopened, but with a managed access point at Windward Community College.

“There were a couple of residents on the task force working group and our primary concern was safety and security of the residential area and our recommendation that got the most consensus was through a more public area,” Rose said. The college says any access plan would have to meet three conditions, including ensuring that hikers park at nearby Kaneohe District Park, that hikers not disrupt students, faculty and staff at the college, and that whoever manages the hikers must also take care of the vegetation at the access point.

Honolulu City Councilman Ikaika Anderson, who represents the area where the stairway is located and who was instrumental in forming the group, said he plans to meet with Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell and Board of Water Supply’s chief engineer Ernest Lau. “We need to get approval of the Board, through the chief engineer, to access the stairs. The Board of Water Supply actually owns the stairway as a means to protect the watershed in the area, and has recently taken steps to fence off the stairway,” Anderson explained. He says any cost to reopen and maintain the “managed access” could be borne by a non-profit, or third party, that would implement the business model that enables the stairway to be reopened and maintained.

The report, and any plan to reopen the stairway, must also be reviewed by all the landowners in the area. In the meantime, Rose says he’s noticed a significant drop in the number of hikers trying to get to Haiku Stairs, a handful every day, ever since the BWS set up a 24-hour security guard service with the help of the Honolulu Police Department. “They’ve been citing hikers, warning hikers and have had a great presence in our community over the last couple of months,” he said.

As for the fate of Haiku Stairs, Rose said “if we can make it work so people who are visiting our paradise can enjoy a great hike and learn something about the valley and we can have a safe and secure community, then it’s a win-win.”

NEW EFFORT TO REOPEN HAIKU STAIRS

(By Marisa Yamane Published: July 7, 2014, 10:25 pm. Updated: July 7, 2014, 10:44 pm.)

It’s one of Hawaii’s most popular hiking trails, even though it’s been closed to the public since the 1980’s. Day after day hikers sneak in to climb Haiku Stairs, also known as Stairway to Heaven. Talk about its future has been dragging on for years, and now a city lawmaker is putting his foot down. Councilman Ikaika Anderson has formed a Haiku Stairs working group task force. It includes all three of the landowners and managers — the Board of Water Supply, the State Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, and Kamehameha Schools, along with residents, native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, and members of a group that’s been working to reopen Haiku Stairs. “My hope with this task force is with all of these folks being able to sit down, meet and talk story that we will be able to come to a consensus to help open up the stairs for access at some point,” Anderson said.

The stairs were initially built as a way to reach a Naval radio antenna. It was closed in 1987 because of vandalism and disrepair. The state took it over, then the city. Under Mayor Jeremy Harris the city spent \$875,000 to repair Haiku Stairs with the intention of reopening it. But there was too much opposition from the neighbors.

“Our primary concern is constant noise, add to that crime, add to that trash,” said Kaneohe resident Ken Rose, who lives near one of the entry points. Rose is on the task force. “If the route does not go through our community and neighborhood if there’s a way to set it up where the large amounts of traffic doesn’t go through our community then we would be overly supportive of that,” he said. “If we can deal with all of the issues that everybody brings to the table I think we can come up with a great solution,” said Mo Radke of the Kaneohe Neighborhood Board.

The Friends of Haiku Stairs was formed back in 1987, the same year it was closed, and all these years they’ve pushed to reopen the stairs. “I’m delighted this group is being put together. I think all the main actors are going to be involved in this group, and I think there’s a solution to this that will satisfy everyone who’s involved in this,” Friends of Haiku Stairs President Vernon Ansdell said. “It would be a crime to close the stairs permanently.”

Anderson has given the task force 90 days to come up with findings and recommendations. After that, he’ll turn it over to Mayor Kirk Caldwell, who really has the ultimate say in whether it gets reopened. Caldwell recently told KHON2 that he’s looking for a solution that includes a new access point away from the homes, and that shields taxpayers from liability issues. In the meantime the stairs remain closed and trespassers can be cited by police.

BWS WORKING TO TIGHTEN SECURITY AT STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

(By Marisa Yamane Published: May 30, 2014, 10:36 pm. Updated: May 30, 2014, 10:42 pm.)

Despite fences, a security guard, and warning signs, people continue to break the law by hiking Haiku Stairs, also known as Stairway to Heaven. But sneaking in is about to get more difficult. Ken Rose lives in Kaneohe near one of the entry points. KHON2 asked: “How bad does it get?”

Rose replied: “I counted last Saturday between three hours in the morning 86 hikers come down, all making noise, making trash, general nuisance. Some were quiet, some were respectful but majority were just noisy and intrusive.”

The entry point is also near Ke Kula ‘o Samuel M. Kamakau School which is a small Hawaiian immersion school. “The disruptions to our campus are daily,” said parent Mehana Hind. “We’ve had a couple of instances where the hikers have had run-ins with our students and our parents too because we use the roadway to bring our children to school and take them home from here.”

The Board of Water Supply started managing Stairway to Heaven earlier this year because it has a well and the watershed in the area. BWS recently added gravel at the start of the trail, and the formerly muddy area will become a staging area for project to install better fencing and more signage to warn trespassers they’re on private property. “This is an effort to address an ongoing problem with hikers illegally entering the property. Haiku Stairs is just one of many BWS properties receiving security upgrades,” BWS Spokesperson Jill Kuramoto said.

“As a Neighborhood Security Watch and our community, we think that is great,” Rose said. “Very happy the Board of Water Supply is

stepping in taking some responsibility how they can best manage that site,” Hind said. “Either we convene a working group, bring people together, give them 90 days to come up with a solution or we remove the stairs. That would be my proposal,” said Honolulu Councilman Ikaika Anderson, who represents that area. Anderson said dismantling the stairs would cost at least \$500,000. That’s what the City Department of Parks and Recreation told the Honolulu City Council several years ago.

Even though BWS manages it, the City still owns Stairway to Heaven, and it would ultimately be up to the City to decide what to do with it. “Our ultimate recommendation is for the City and County to make a safe and controlled access way because it’s a beautiful area and everyone should be able to enjoy it safely,” Rose said. “Mayor Caldwell continues to seek a solution that could allow the public to safely access Haiku Stairs from a new access point away from the residential neighborhood and shield taxpayers from liability issues. In the meantime the stairs remain closed and trespassers can be cited by police,” Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell’s Communications Director Jesse Broder Van Dyke said.

“We’re not against the people enjoying our spaces here in Hawaii. That’s not what, we’re not anti that, but we’re just concerned about our school,” Hind said.

VIOLENCE ERUPTS NEAR STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

(By Nestor Garcia Published: May 14, 2014, 11:20 pm. Updated: May 15, 2014, 11:31 am.)

The Stairway to Heaven remains one of the most popular trails in Hawaii, even though it’s closed to the public. While the City figures out the trail’s future, one resident hopes an answer will come soon. The resident, who lives near the trail, says a recent encounter with a group of hikers turned violent when he and his wife were assaulted. Ken Rose said he and his wife, Regina, approached the hikers in the early morning hours of March 20 and he took pictures of the group.

“As we were taking pictures, they shouted verbal insults and then they came directly on my property,” said Rose. “They threatened us and, as we backed away, one shoved my wife. I pushed her back and then I was jumped by three other individuals... I was beat up. I was bruised, pushed to the ground, scrapes.” Police have opened two assault cases and are also investigating possible criminal property damage. Rose said he is aiding in the investigation and will soon review a photo lineup of possible suspects. Police said they do go after hikers for trespassing and hand out citations. Those caught have to go to court, because there is no fine attached to the citation.

While there may be more than a couple of ways to get to the stairway, the most popular is where the Roses live, a fenced-off roadway at the end of Kuneki St., because hikers can park their cars nearby. Even if they find a locked gate, they can still get through because there is a hole on the side of the gate.

Honolulu city council member Ikaika Anderson said he has been in discussions with the mayor to find a resolution for the stairway. Anderson said he is looking at two options: Either reopen the stairway and provide a safe and secure access to prevent confrontations with residents, or remove the stairway entirely.

“You (must) be respectful, you (must) be quiet, and leave it the way you found it,” said Matthew Alexander, a hiker visiting from Seattle, Wash. Rose, who is a member of his Neighborhood Security Watch, said his issue is not with the hikers. All he wants is a safe and secure neighborhood.

While discussions are ongoing at City Hall, there is no timeline on when a decision will be made to determine the future of the stairway. Discussions will involve the three landowners at and near the stairway, the Board of Water Supply, which claims ownership of the stairway because it abuts a watershed, Kamehameha Schools, and the Hawaii Dept. of Hawaiian Home Lands.

MYTHS VS. FACTS—Debunking the myths about Haikū Stairs

The Ha'ikū Stairs is an historic treasure with great potential for recreation, education, history, and even Hawaiian culture. Since its closure by the Coast Guard in 1987, the stairway changed owners, received a \$950,000 restoration but remains closed to the public.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?—Two events created the problem in 2003–2004 that continues today:

One: After spending several thousand dollars creating a gate and entrance from the Hope Chapel property onto the H3 construction access road leading to the trailhead, the City found they made their agreements with the wrong parties, and they had to cancel their access and parking plan.

Two: The enormous popularity of the Ha'ikū Stairs meant huge publicity during the restoration. TV, radio, newspapers posted multiple comments, stories, interviews and pictures, making it clear to the hiking public that the Stairs were repaired and safe to climb. Unfortunately, some members of the hiking public were not willing to wait for a legal opening and began hiking through nearby neighborhoods to gain access to the trailhead. This annoyance to the community created a very strong anti-Ha'ikū Stairs attitude among many of the residents, who began a strong campaign to prevent an opening and even an effort to have the Stairs dismantled.

Security guards were hired and were successful in reducing the huge numbers of trespassers, but in recent years, the number remains fairly steady at a reported 100–150 climbers a week during good weather.

Myth: The stairs will be expensive to repair.

Fact: The stairs were expensive to repair, and most of that has already been spent. During the administration of Mayor Harris, the City spent \$950,000 to refurbish the then deteriorated structure with the intent of reopening it to the public. Since that restoration, the Friends of Ha'ikū Stairs has worked with the city to maintain the stairs.

Myth: The stairs are dangerous.

Fact: Tens of thousands of hikers have climbed the Stairs with no reported serious injuries—despite the fact that timing most of the climbs being made since 2003 have started in the dark to beat the security guard to base of the stairs.

Myth: There is too much liability in case of injury to climbers.

Fact: With more than a hundred climbers per week, the City is already subject to liability claims.

Myth: Keeping the stairs closed results in fewer emergency calls and resulting risks to emergency personnel.

Fact A: Allowed or not, people are climbing now—unsupervised and under more dangerous conditions than during daylight hours.

Fact B: The only two rescues to hikers related to the stairs have in the last year. One rescue was by hikers who left from Moanalua Valley and were looking for the stairs and not actually on the stairs. As cell phone use increases, the likelihood of the illegal hikers

calling for emergency aid will increase—particularly if there are no other solutions for education and assistance in place.

Myth: The financial burden of managing the Stairs is too great.

Fact: The City has a financial burden now. The cost of maintaining the only partially effective security guards is an estimated \$70,000 per year. There is good reason to believe that were the Stairs open under an effective management program, cost to the City would be lessened.

Myth: The best solution to the problem is to tear the stairs out.

Fact: The suggestion to tear out the structure is impractical. In addition to the abatement requirements for demolishing such a large structure that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the loss of a hugely popular and valuable hiking asset, the likelihood of a required and lengthy environmental impact study, and the legal actions that would almost certainly follow, would make tearing out the stairs the most lengthy and arduous solution.

Myth: Neighbors do not support opening the Stairs.

Fact: The majority of neighbors support solutions to stop the hikers from parking and accessing the stairs in the middle of the night in front of their homes.

Myth: The reopening would increase the negative effects to the nearby homes.

Fact: The Stairs and trailhead are hundreds of yards from the nearest home.

Myth: Reopening the Stairs will increase trespassing.

Fact: It is only the illegal hikers who affect the neighborhood and they are there precisely because there is no legal access. If reopening plans include access and parking, hikers would not need, nor want, to park hundreds of yards away in the neighborhoods. They would also not need to go through the streets at irregular hours.

MEMORIES OF MARY BOOTH

Joyce Oka

Mary had been a nurse on the Mainland and when she came to live in Hawaii she easily found work. For play, she went on an HTM hike and met Dick Booth. I seldom saw Mary without Dick being nearby. Mary Booth was one of the three original Mary's in the club. They were Mary Booth, Mary Neilson and Mary Davis. They all knew their husbands from the club and all three men were President of the Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Club at varying times. Perhaps these marriages are where the legend began that HTMC is really the Hawaiian Trail and Matrimony Club.

Mary was good friends with Thelma Greig. They hiked together a lot and at one time they co-led shoreline hikes. Thelma once confided that they had intended to lead Saturday shoreline hikes to circle the island of Oahu. Donna Davis-Brown remembers being on one hike with them hiking the shoreline from Makapuu to Blow Hole, perhaps in the late 80's.

Mary never went to the clubhouse in Waimanalo without donning her swimsuit and heading for the beach for a swim.

Mary was a generous person and freely gave time weekly to the thrift store at her church. She was always seeking out merchandise, sorting and helping to sell it.

Her son-in-law, Hermann Dombrowski, remembers her as a "nice lady". Early on when Herman and Myra came to live in Hawaii, they celebrated Thanksgiving at the Booth home. Herman was of the opinion that he could help with the Thanksgiving dinner and volunteered to cook the next year. He went all out and cooked the turkey with all the trimmings including the gravy. Sadly, the gravy ran out early and Mary kindly told Herman that they really like their gravy. Well, the next year, Herman again cooked the turkey and made a huge pot of gravy to which he added pieces of the turkey. As the family ate the dinner with large amounts of the gravy, Mary quietly told Herman, "You learned your lesson very well." Herman remembers her as a very giving person who volunteered at her church thrift shop.

Mary tried to keep up with her children who were scattered from Australia through Hawaii and to the Midwest. She traveled several times to Australia to visit her two daughters there. When Myra was living in Germany, I happened to be working there also in Ulm. Dick and Mary came to Germany to visit Myra, looked me up and we all got together. We did our own type of volksmarch near where they lived. Myra's daughter rode her trike while we walked the country roads. Her youngest two children, Myra and Phil, carried on the family tradition of leading hikes for HTMC.

Mary was always supportive of HTM Club events and committee efforts. Her last contribution was as a member of the Schedule Committee and for many years she hosted the committee as it met at her house. The old Booth estate is now occupied by Myra and Hermann and the Schedule Committee is welcome to continue its monthly meetings there.

MEMORIES OF MAUREEN BRUBACHER

Joyce Oka

Maureen and Miles Brubacher were long time members and supporters of HTM club. They followed in the footsteps of iconic club member, Irva Brubacher, Miles' sister. Maureen then, was the sister in law of Irva. Maureen was a petite woman but a powerful hiker and often went ahead of her husband on the trail. The couple was always together in whatever was going on. They were often co-leaders of hikes and one of the last they led was the New Years Day hike up Koko Crater.

They had a lovely home in Kailua. They chose Kailua to be near Miles sister Irva. Pictures on their walls told of their hiking adventures. They went to the Dolomites in Italy, the first hikers I knew who ventured there from the club.

Maureen was an original at recycling as related here: When the couple came to schedule meetings at Thelma's house, I remember that once there was a small plastic bag on the table left over from the snacks we had. Miles asked Maureen if she didn't want to take it and she did take it home to clean and recycle. This was twenty years ago, before recycling caught on.

It was a big loss to HTMC when the Brubachers decided to move to the Mainland to be closer to their grandchildren. This had to be nearly twenty years ago.

A fond aloha to these two lovely ladies.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

ALONG THE TRAIL is a quarterly publication of the Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Club designed to inform the membership of club activities and matters of interest to the hiking community. HTMC members and any other interested parties are welcome to submit articles to ALONG THE TRAIL. Submissions must be received by the 5th day of March, June, September, and December in order to appear in the newsletter published for the following quarter, and may be sent in any of the following ways (email preferred):

email: richard27@hawaii.rr.com

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<http://htmclub.org>

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