LAI Report-Hawaii

The Land Economics Weekend was my first trip to Hawaii, which meant I needed some serious preparation. I started by picking up James Michener’s weighty historical novel, *Hawaii.* It proved to be a treasure trove of information about—everything, from geology to ethnology. For plane reading, I took Fodor’s guide to Hawaii, which offers an excellent overview of the entire state and lots of practical information. I also carried David Maraniss’s new biography of Barack Obama, which includes substantial material about the President’s boyhood in Honolulu and, at least indirectly, provided insights into the city’s culture, and, especially, its diversity.

After the trip, I asked longtime LAI member Les Pollock what stood out about the weekend. He said he was surprised to see how much the focus had changed in the eight years or so since he last visited Hawaii with Lambda Alpha. “Then it was all about development and real estate,” he said. “This time, the talk centered on things like sustainability.” That rings true to this first-timer as well. Throughout the weekend, I was struck by the emphasis presenters placed on energy-efficient construction, transit-oriented development, local food resources, and sensitivity to native Hawaiian culture. It was also apparent, however, that sustainability had not always been a goal, at least in what we saw of Honolulu.

To get a larger picture, I spent part of my first afternoon in Honolulu talking to Ramona Mullahey, a local planner who is active in the American Planning Association–as a past chair of the Divisions Council and past president of the Hawaii Chapter. I took the bus downtown from the Hilton Hawaiian Village to her office at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Once I mastered a couple of routes, I found the city buses an excellent way to see the neighborhoods—and to listen in on conversations. Traveling like this reinforces the point made by the *Honolulu Weekly* newspaper: Honolulu is in fact a “small big city.”

Ramona made it clear that Hawaii suffers from many of the same problems as the mainland, exacerbated by its isolation. “The overall challenge is that we are an island state,” she said. “Our land supply is limited, and the high cost of importing almost everything by sea or air automatically raises prices.” Affordable housing, obviously a concern of a HUD planner, is one area that suffers as a result, she said.

After several decades of boom development, Hawaii’s population has stabilized at about 1.4 million, according to Ramona; in 1995, it was about 880,000. The growth was stimulated by several factors: direct flights from the mainland, resort and second-home development on land once devoted to sugar and pineapple plantations, and an influx of service workers both from the U.S. mainland and from Asia. In recent years, particularly after the full force of the recession hit, the public began to listen more seriously to environmentalists’ warnings about the diminished carrying capacity of the land.

The question now is how long this new interest in sustainability will last. According to stories in the local newspaper, the *Star-Advertiser,* in October, tourism is reviving (particularly from Japan, South Korea, and China), and real estate investments are up. STR Analytics, a Honolulu- based hospitality consulting firm, reported that Oahu had the highest hotel occupancy rate of the top 25 markets in the U.S.

At the end of our visit, Ramona noted that there was still a lot of open space. “But it doesn’t provide local produce.” The hope is that the growing farm-to-table movement, which encourages restaurants to buy from local farmers, will change that. The Thursday evening LAI “dine-around” was a chance to highlight this movement.

**Learning day**

The following day, as part of my introduction to the islands, I had breakfast with David Callies, the former Chicago land-use lawyer who is now the Benjamin A. Kudo Professor of Law at the University of Hawaii at Manoa Law School. Our subject was the intricacies of land-use law in the state, a topic covered by Professor Callies in two books, *Preserving Paradise: Why Regulation Won’t Work* (1994) and *Regulating Paradise: Land Use Controls in Hawaii* (second edition, 2010).

David believes that the state’s laws are among the most complex in the U.S.—and that Hawaii “is the most regulated state in the nation.” That leads to all kinds of problems, he said, including high rents and a low proportion of homeowners. “The problem is the layers of requirements. It takes years to complete a project.” David Callies was named member of the year by the Aloha Chapter during the final event of the weekend.

The university, where I spent part of the day, was much in the news during our trip. The board of trustees was under fire for excessive spending in remodeling the president’s house and the president’s staff was being questioned about a canceled rock concert that left the university financially responsible. On the way to the campus, I glimpsed the leafy hillside street leading to the Punahou School, President Obama’s alma mater. Later, I passed the East-West Center, where Obama’s father took classes as a graduate student, and walked around the Quad, where the oldest buildings are. On the whole, despite its beautiful setting, the campus seemed somewhat bedraggled. I was glad to learn later of plans for building rehab and more landscaping.

Late Wednesday, we were back on the bus for the LAI President’s Reception on the USS Missouri. Aloha chapter president Cheryl Soon welcomed the group and talked about the theme for the weekend: “culturally integrated by design.” She explained the connection to the logo on the program cover—a taro root (a symbol of the state) surrounded by the LAI key. “We are eager to share what is unique about Hawaiian culture,” she said, “especially our deep connection to the land.”

Pearl Harbor was a startling sight. Suddenly, the war in the Pacific seemed much closer in time and more real. The USS Missouri was launched January 29, 1944, the last battleship built by the Navy. It’s now a floating museum, the Battleship Missouri Memorial, and is moored at Pier F5 on Ford Island. The 887-foot-long vessel was the site of the Japanese surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945, the event that officially ended World War II. After two tours of duty in the Korean War, it was decommissioned in the mid-1950s, only to be deployed again in 1991 for service in the first Iraq war.

In 1998, the battleship was donated to the USS Missouri Memorial Association, towed to Hawaii, and opened to the public. The most impressive sight on board is probably the guns below deck, but a photo under glass of the surrender ceremony sent a shiver down my spine. So did the view in the distance of the concrete memorial (formally the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument) dedicated to the 1,177 crewmen killed on the USS Arizona on December 7, 1941.

The structure, designed by Honolulu architect Alfred Preis, straddles the sunken ship and is the most-visited site on Oahu. We were originally scheduled to visit the memorial but apparently arrived too late in the day. We did have time, however, to tour the Pearl Harbor museum, where we were guided by Daniel Martinez, the National Park Service’s chief historian for the Valor in the Pacific site and a great storyteller.

The tour was followed by the reception and then dinner on the Missouri’s fantail deck, a rare opportunity. In line with the LEW’s emphasis on local eateries, the dinner was catered by Chai’s Island Bistro, known for its Pacific Island Cuisine. LAI President Ian Lord, an attorney in Toronto, welcomed the group. The evening’s entertainment was by Mango Season.

**LEW-Day One**

The day began with a quick visit to another moving site, the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. The first war casualty buried at this site, informally known as the Punchbowl National Cemetery, was journalist Ernie Pyle. The remains of President Obama’s grandfather, a World War II vet, are also interred here.

Why the name Punchbowl? Our guide, Honolulu planning consultant Ray Soon told us that it refers to the fact that the cemetery was built in a punchbowl-like crater formed by an extinct volcano. There’s also some controversy associated with it because the site is sacred to Native Hawaiians, who refer to it as the Hill of Sacrifice.

The view toward Oahu’s south shore—home to 70 percent of the island’s population—was spectacular. Waikiki, clearly visible in the sunshine, was marshland until the 1920s when a drainage canal was built. Now it’s the most valuable mile-long strip of land in Hawaii. Most of the hotels and condo towers lined up along the shoreline were built in the last 15 years, Ray said. More are on the way although infill sites are hard to find on this narrow strip locked in by the ocean and the canal.

Given the shortage of land in Honolulu, developers—including public agencies—want to build ever higher. Ray referred to a proposal by Gov. Neil Abercrombie—much in the news that week—to build a 46-story tower to meet affordable housing requirements. (Gov. Abercrombie has also drawn criticism for his support of the Public Land Development Corporation, which has the authority to bypass some state and county land-use laws and zoning ordinances.)

Other news stories I followed over the weekend included the senatorial race between former governor Linda Lingle and U.S. Rep. Mazie Hirono (who won) and the pros and cons of bus rapid transit (favored by another former governor, Ben Cayetano, who was defeated by Kirk Caldwell, a light rail advocate.) There was also a brouhaha about Native Hawaiian human remains (or bones of the elders—iwi kupuna), which had been illegally disinterred at a church construction site. A *Star-Advertiser* editorial urged that relevant laws be reviewed before digging begins for the proposed light-rail route.

Our next destination on the LEW’s official Day One was a tour of the laboratories at the University of Hawaii’s Center for Microbial Oceanography: Research, and Education, on the Manoa campus. C-MORE was established in 2006 by the National Science Foundation as a science and technology center. Its aim is to give scientists a comprehensive understanding of the biological and ecological diversity of marine micro-organisms. Last February, C-MORE Hale (house or building in Hawaiian) was named in honor of the Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, who died in December.

As part of its mission, C-MORE regularly brings together teams of experts, and the high-tech equipment in its LEED Platinum headquarters allows scientists in different time zones to collaborate via videoconference. An informative demonstration made us all instant experts.

The center is a collaborative effort involving MIT, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, UC Santa Cruz, and Oregon State University. UH Manoa coordinates its activities.

Architect Stephen Meder, the university’s assistant vice chancellor for physical environment and long-range planning and director of the Center for Smart Building and Community Design, talked about UH Manoa’s focus on sustainable coastal development. A new campus planning effort, now under way, will include proposals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. “Our plans are indicative of the way this university is looking at the 21st century,” he said. “We want to bring controversial issues into the classroom and to show students they can have an effect.”

Current campus planning initiatives include strategic and long-range plans and an energy policy. Meder said his department is now working on a building design and performance plan and a landscape master plan that includes a GIS map of campus trees. Coming up are plans for water and sewage, space management, emergency preparedness, and transportation (including options like ride sharing and short term car rentals). Meder’s staff is also working on a plan to meet ADA requirements and is creating a new campus map. The architecture school is focusing on “greenhouse” projects and a three-dimensional model of the campus.

In his talk, Kem Lowry, emeritus professor of urban and regional planning, noted that significant sea level rise is likely for the islands. Still, he said, “we’re dealing with great uncertainty, so we need a plan that will be effective even if climate change is less than we thought.” He projected images of models showing what Waikiki would look like with up to two feet of sea level rise. “Major parts of urban Honolulu would be flooded, and the beaches would be severely eroded.”

In 1961, Hawaii passed a pioneer statewide land-use law that required the collaboration of large landowners, state elected officials, and representatives of the agricultural labor unions. But now more is needed, he said, referring to the state’s lingering drought and the danger to the fresh-water aquifer.

He suggested three possible approaches “to overcoming institutional inertia” to cope with potential storms and flooding. One approach would be accommodation, which could mean building floating structures and artificial barriers (“what the Dutch do”). The second is protection (seen at the Honolulu Airport). The third approach is retreat (not building on the shoreline). “That has big consequences,” he said.

“Setbacks are something we can do now,” Lowrie said. Variable shoreline setbacks are already in place on Kauai and Maui. Dealing with erosion is another challenge given that 25 percent of the sandy beaches on Oahu have been lost or narrowed by seawalls. “We need robust policies,” he concluded, “and flexible ones.”

**Kapolei**

Friday’s lunch was at the Salvation Army Kroc Center in Kapolei, which is becoming Oahu’s second urban center. Attorney Bruce Graham introduced the program with a presentation on the history of Hawaii land ownership.

He started in the 1840s when the British were on the verge of taking over the islands. In 1843, the monarchy was restored (an event marked every July 31, a public holiday in Hawaii).

Five years later, the land was divided and stewards were appointed. Four thousand acres went to one woman, Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the great granddaughter of Kamehameha I (the Great). She established a trust, the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate, which is now Hawaii’s largest private landowner. Bishop’s will instructed the trustees to establish two schools, “one for boys and one for girls,” to be called the Kamehameha Schools. Today, there are three K-12 campuses and 31 preschools, and the trust owns some 373,000 acres of land in Hawaii.

Meanwhile, westerners were also accumulating land. In 1877, industrialist James Campbell bought 40,000 acres on Oahu—where Kapolei is today. Twenty years later, said Graham, the U.S. government “grabbed the Philippines, Guam, and Hawaii. The land was held in trust by the feds until 1959 when Hawaii became a state.”

Today, he concluded, “the state owns holds huge swaths of the former crown lands (land owned by Kamehameha and his descendants) in trust for the benefit of the Hawaiian people—another fascinating topic.” That public land, currently once again a subject of interest, is now managed by the Department of Hawaiian Affairs, which was created by a constitutional amendment.

Steve Kelly, the Kapolei property manager, picked up the story from that point. He noted that the acreage that had been held in trust by the James Campbell Company, is now in the hands of the Kapolei Property Development corporation and several affiliated companies. “Our ongoing mission is the development of a secondary urban center on Oahu,” he said, citing a 1977 act that made it a public policy mission to spread growth across the island.

The Kapolei region—including the Ewa Plain—is now the fastest growing region in the state, with a population of just over 100,000. The villages of Kapolei began development in the early 1990s in line with the Kapolei Area Long Range Master Plan. A shopping center is already in place, as is the James Campbell Industrial Park.

The development has attracted some $1.5 billion worth of investment, including Disney’s Aulani Resort, a Walmart, and offices for the Social Security Administration and FBI. The harbor, Kapolei Harborside, is the second busiest in the state.

Kelly’s presentation provoked lots of question. One woman asked what would happen if the proposed high-speed rail line—front and center in the mayor’s race that week—was not built? “How can H-1 support all that traffic from Honolulu?” The response was that “rail was never seen as a silver bullet,” although the Kapolei developers “strongly believe in mass transit. We are centered on creating a job center here and altering the pattern of growth on the island,” said Kelly.

Another questioner wondered if there would be enough people to keep seven million square feet of commercial development going. The answer: “Our plan is to get more people from Honolulu out here.”

Maybe the most important question came from someone who pointed out that Oahu is a tiny island with only so much water.“ Where will the water for Kapolei come from? “ At some point desalination will come into play” was the response.

Salvation Army Major Phil Lum, the Kroc Center administrator, then stepped up to the podium to outline the center’s history. Ray Kroc was of course the immensely wealthy owner of McDonald’s. He and his wife Joan, who also owned the San Diego Padres, lived in California. When Ray died in 1987, Joan continued his tradition of making large donations to organizations he believed in. The mayor of San Diego suggested the Salvation Army. In 2002, Joan gave $90 million to the San Diego Y to build the first Kroc Center. And when she died, she left her $1.5 billion estate to the national organization. There are now some 20 Kroc Centers throughout the U.S.

In 2006, the Hawaii branch received the largest grant to date, $110 million, and in February 2012 the East Kapolei center opened on a site that had been used for agriculture. The total cost was $133 million.

**Back to Ford Island**

The next leg of the LAI tour took us back to Pearl Harbor and Ford Island. Cheryl Soon noted in her pre-LEW letter to participants how important Hawaii was for its strategic military location for much of the 20th century. Today, some third of the state is devoted to military purposes, a fact that has “profound social, economic, and land implications.”

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, what’s now called Ford Island, was pasture land. Later it became the property of the Oahu Sugar Company. The War Department bought the island in 1917, and in 1937 it became part of Hickham Air Force Base. After the disastrous Pearl Harbor attack and the loss of four battleships moored at Ford Island, the Navy built runways and hangars. In 1962, the island was officially deactivated as an air base and two years later, most of Pearl Harbor, including Ford Island, was designated a national historic landmark. Legislation passed by Congress in 1999 allowed the Navy to sell or lease its off-base properties in the area and to use the proceeds to pay for improvements on Ford Island.

Until 1999, with the completion of the floating concrete drawbridge officially called the Admiral Clarey Bridge, the island was accessible only by ferry. (The loss of the ferries is another story—a sad one for some.)

Under the terms of the Ford Island Master Development Agreement, the Navy entered into a public-private partnership with Florida Properties, the joint venture that is redeveloping Ford Island for housing and work space adjacent to the Naval Station Pearl Harbor. The Navy agreed to exchange 1,600 acres on five underused properties on Oahu—including housing around the former Barber’s Point Naval Air Station (now called Kalaeloa Airport) and 40 acres on Ford Island—for infrastructure and other improvements on Ford Island. The development agreement was signed in 2003 by the late Sen. Daniel Inouye who was then a U.S. congressman from Hawaii. Inouye is renowned locally as a World War II hero.

At the time of the LAI meeting, the Navy was in the process of preparing a master plan for Ford Island.

The afternoon session took place at the Navy Lodge, a national historic landmark built in 1941 (the interior has been completely modernized). The presentations began with a description of the new regional headquarters for the National Oceanic and Aeronautical Administration building, which was under construction. Presentations were made by Aloha Chapter members who were involved with the development of Ford Island, along with the architects for the new facility.

Since 2003, we learned, the Texas-based Hunt Companies have invested $483.9 million in infrastructure improvements on the island. The firm has leased three vintage hangars and the iconic Ford Island control tower from the Navy and sublet them to the Pacific Aviation Museum. It has also built 231 new homes for military families, created the 4.5-mile Ford Island history trail, and, with the Navy, renovated the Navy Lodge.

Steve Colon is responsible for the Hawaiian development activities of the Texas-based Hunt Companies. He noted that the company, which is responsible for rental housing in 38 states, has long experience with military housing in Hawaii. Six projects are under way on three islands, 1,800 acres in all. The list includes Oahu projects, which were acquired from the Navy under the terms of the Ford Island Master Development Agreement.

Next came a presentation on the NOAA facility, the Pacific Regional Center, led by site director Steve Gallagher and Paul Wolfert, the design director for the interdisciplinary team that is building the 310,000-square-foot, LEED-certified building . Wolfert is a vice-president of HOK in San Francisco, the architect for the project, which will be part of a 30-acre campus..

Gallagher explained that Ford Island (its Hawaiian name is the “island that attracts”) is the one place on Oahu where you can see all the river basins. That makes it important to Hawaiians—and to NOAA, which is charged with the stewardship of the oceans. The agency, which was created in 1970, encompasses five organizations, including the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Tsunami Warning Center. The PRC, which is expected to have a staff of 700, will consolidate 12 offices.

Wolfert described the plan to restore two historic hangars designed by Albert Kahn and connect them with a new addition to create the new facility.

**Dine Around**

The Friday dinner was a “dine around,” organized by the Aloha Chapter. In a letter urging members to attend the LEW, Cheryl Soon said Hawaiian Regional-Pacific Rim fusion cuisine, with its emphasis on local seafood and produce, was Reason 5.

The dine-around dinners were all prepared by well-known chefs and held in very different places: a restaurant in the “windward” beach town of Kailua; a home on Mt. Tantalus; an architect’s studio, and an engineering company office on a pier in the Waimanalo district.

I went to number four, hosted by Makai Ocean Engineering (Ray Soon is one of the directors). . The excellent dinner was catered by the Chais Island Bistro, but for me the attraction was the office itself—on an industrial pier. The company, which was started in 1973, has built pipelines for a variety of purposes, including an ocean thermal energy conversion plant on the island of Hawaii.

The talk was a good as the dinner. We heard about an innovative way of reducing air conditioning costs. The company was to learn the following day whether it was a finalist in the competition to construct a seawater air conditioning system, which would be in operation by the end of 2014. The idea is to drill shafts to a depth of 1,700 off the Kakaako shoreline and install pipes to transfer cold seawater to a heat exchanger connected with a closed loop of fresh water. The chilled water would then be delivered to buildings for air conditioning. The system is expected to cut electric costs up to 75 percent and to save 77 million kilowatts of power a year. The engineers pointed out that, after personnel, air conditioning is the biggest cost for most companies.

**Friday morning in Kakaako**

Kakaako is the revitalizing area at the edge of downtown Honolulu. The neighborhood is the home of the Honolulu Children’s Museum, artists’ studios and galleries, and small industrial plants. It’s also the location of the University of Hawaii medical school and cancer center.

Anthony Ching, the executive director of the Hawaii Community Development Authority, which is overseeing the development, talked about the agency’s plans for a mixed use and mixed income, transit-oriented community. The target audience includes working families and empty nesters. Affordable housing is an important component of this public-private partnership. Ching listed the varied sources of funding, which include federal New Market Tax Credits.

The agency is also entering into a partnership with a private company that will rehab and run the Kewalo Basin Harbor, the only commercial small boat harbor in state. HCDA is also looking ahead to the possibility of a future Barak Obama Presidential Center in Kakaako. “We’ll let Chicago have the library. But we’ll take the center,” Ching said (only half jokingly). All of this development, he added, is part of an effort to diversify the Hawaiian economy. “We need more than military and service jobs if we care to keep our kids here.”

The proposed redevelopment includes several high rises, a point that has drawn opposition from some residents. Ching countered that the new buildings “will contribute to our skyline.” LAI member Elizabeth Davison, former housing and community development director for Montgomery County, Maryland, questioned the numbers. Would affordable housing work?

LAI member Les Pollock asked about the enabling legislation. “As a regulatory agency with supergovernmental powers, you seem to be exempt from city zoning codes. How do you coordinate with the city and state? Who sets the rules for streets and subdivisions?”

Some of those questions were answered by Paul Kay, director of real estate development for the Kamehameha Schools, which owns a large part of the land. He explained that the schools have two missions: the primary one—education—and a secondary one—commercial. The latter mission is aimed at bolstering the educational goals, he said.

Kay described the Kakaako Master Plan, which was approved by HCDA in 2009, as being in line with the goals of the Kamehameha Schools 2000 strategic plan. “We believe Kaakako can become a global model for urban revitalization.”

The nine-square-block plan envisions a neighborhood with some 2,750 residents in 550 housing units, both for sale and rental, and with a wide range of pricetags and of designs. Kay noted that Honolulu has not had much rental housing in the past. “We see that changing,” he said. The first phase will include 150 loft-style units aimed at a middle-income market. “Where towers are programmed,” he said, “the plan calls for wide setbacks and townhouse liners.”

Commercial uses will focus on retail shops serving the neighborhood—not shopping centers. “We need to be different from Ward Center,” Kay said. Some buildings will be preserved for adaptive reuse. Design guidelines will guide development. “The broad objective,” said Kay, “is to create a first-class urban village” that will elevate the quality of development in downtown Honolulu.

Kay noted that some builders were put off by the project’s design requirements. The developers responded with a short set of guidelines that are more suggestive than prescriptive. The guidelines are intended to foster diversity and enhance “place making.” But, he added, people must understand that place making must be balanced with financial viability. “The project’s concepts must work for all the parties concerned.”

**UH Medical School**

A point of pride for Kakaako is the University of Hawaii’s John A. Burns School of Medicine, which opened in 2005 on the site of a former city incinerator. A medical school representative, Jeffrie Jones, outlined the history of the facility, including the efforts of former Gov. Ben Cayetano, who helped win a $150 million state grant. The school, one of 18 medical schools in the U.S., is unusual because it is community-based—not attached to a hospital. It is currently expanding its training opportunities to the neighbor islands.”

Also unusual, according to Jones, is school’s reliance on case studies and its use of volunteers to talk about cases.

**Waikiki Redux**

The LEW’s final lunch brought us back to Waikiki. It turned out that our restaurant, Doraku Sushi in the Royal Hawaiian shopping center, was founded by Kevin Aoki, the son of the founder of the Benihana chain. This lunch—as was true of other events and even the bus rides—gave participants an excellent opportunity to meet LAI members from all over the globe.

The afternoon’s focus was on tourism, which is—as Cheryl Soon pointed out in her pre-conference letter—the most important element in Hawaii’s economy. In 2012, the islands were expected to attract more than eight million tourists, a record number, who will bring in almost $9 million in revenue. Many of them are repeat visitors, and many of them head directly to Waikiki, which is known for its beaches, retail, and entertainment. According to a newspaper report on a study by Smith Travel Research and Hospitality Advisors, pent up demand, fewer visa restrictions, and Japan’s post-earthquake recovery all account for the boom.

The LEW group divided into three tours for the afternoon: retail, historic hotels, and the Hilton Hawaiian Village. I joined the tour of historic hotels, which was led by the very articulate Robert Iopa of WCIT Architecture (who, indidentally, is also involved with Makai Ocean Engineering). We began at the all-pink Royal Hawaiian, where Rob talked about the idea of Hawaii as a melting pot (“a better image is beef stew,” he said), and moved on the Moana Surfrider, which combines an elegant Victorian hotel with a modern addition.

**Final dinner—Washington Place**

The final reception and dinner at Washington Place was catered by chefs Lanse Kosaka and Derek Watanabe from Café Julia, which is located in the beautiful Julia MorganYWCA (where I had lunch on Day One). Both chefs were formerly with Alan Wong, perhaps Hawaii’s most famous restaurateur.

Ian Lord, a member of Toronto’s Simcoe’s chapter and the international president of Lambda Alpha, offered thanks to all of the people who helped make the Hawaii LEW a success. “We’re making this organization better and better,” he said. “Our job now is to bring in new chapters.”

Lord also praised LAI’s new website as one of the building blocks “that allow us to go on to talk about land economics.”

Lord then asked LAI past president Dr. James Fossett to present the International Member of the Year award to David Callies of the Aloha Chapter. Finally, he encouraged members to sign up for the upcoming LAI weekends in Boston (April 25-27) and San Francisco (October 3-5). San Francisco, we heard, will be an all-transit event—no buses.

The evening ended with sort of a hula tableau that involved David Callies and his wife Laurie in a mock rowboat. Sensational!

SIDEBAR

Memories

**Kathline King,** chief of planning for the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, says her most vivid memory of the Hawaii LEW is the view of the Punch Bowl Cemetery. “Overall, I was struck by how much the local economy was influenced by historic events and culture. I think of the speaker who talked about the way the original land divisions reflected the pattern of the watersheds. And I think of the long history of the land owned by Kamehameha Schools.”

Did Kling miss anything on this trip? “Just one thing,” she said: “The chance to go scuba diving.”

Elizabeth Davison is the former housing and community development director for Montgomery County, Maryland,and former president of the George Washington LAI chapter. “There seems to be a paradigm shift in Hawaiians’ notion of economic development and community development,” she said. “People seem eager to make development more in tune with native Hawaiian culture. We heard a lot about LEED development, for instance, and reclaiming brownfields. And we heard about the desire to provide good jobs in a variety of fields—not just tourism.

“I’m curious about how that paradigm shift happened—how Hawaii changed from a place where natural resources were being used carelessly to a place that is focused on conserving those resources. It seems to me that they have come quite far.”

**Leslie Pollock** is the president of Camiros, Ltd., in Chicago, and a former president of LAI. He and his wife Sharon were among the 20 or so weekenders who took the post-LEW tour to the Moana Key observatory on the Big Island.

“It was quite interesting,” he said, “especially when we reached the research station at the 8 or 9,000-foot level—kind of an upscale dorm. Above that the landscape was moonlike. Those who were prone to altitude sickness were advised to stop. At the summit, there were 13 observatories—stark against the sky. The air is amazing clean when we got to the Keck telescopes 1 and 2, where the technicians were setting up for the night’s viewing.

“I picked up a couple of stones up there—a cheap gift for my grandson. When I told Ray Soon what I had done,” he said “this is a spiritual place—you should have asked permission. “From whom?” I asked. He said the ocean would be a good idea. So when we got back to Waikiki, I did just that.”

“There’s also a land-use story here. There has been dissent between the academic community and the islanders about building another observatory. I bet nobody thought to ask permission.”

Ruth Knack, AICP

Ely Chapter

Chicago