



In late January 2016, I flew to San José del Cabo at the tip of Península Baja California and boarded the dive-boat *Quino el Guardián* along with 16 other divers from 8 different countries. In the subsequent official report to the overseeing French bureau, I was classed as one of 11 “Eco-Plongeurs” – a French designation certainly adds class.

Two days out we passed close to Socorro Island, where I had enjoyably dived in years past, but the captain reminded us that we were headed beyond, so we did not slow down. Though confined to the boat, we had good company, fine food and quite adequate entertainment, including professional-appearing picture-shows given by our intrepid Greek colleague Babis, who had recently toured remote parts of Russia. Not a diver, he was an adventurer seeking to visit as many of the world’s islands as possible. (He told me his next trip would be to the nearly inaccessible tiny sandspit in the Caribbean called Isla de Aves; he seemed a bit disappointed to learn that I had been there, twice. Really, I did not mean to upstage him.)

Five days out, we raised the fabled Clipperton Island. Legally, no one is allowed ashore without written official French governmental permission, which had been prearranged for us, but how that prohibition is enforced on an uninhabited island is uncertain.

The next day, Groundhog Day, we headed ashore in a panga for a “wet landing.” Equipped with snorkeling gear and waterproof bags (mine to carry glasses, visored hat, sunscreen and my new expedition t-shirt – my camera could fend for itself), we tumbled off into 4-m deep water and let the surf carry us ashore until it deposited us on the sandy beach in the midst of an astonishing amount of plastic, metal and wooden trash, the consequence of the collision of the Eastern Pacific Garbage Patch with one of the few obstacles in its gyre.

Leaving our masks and fins behind, we walked along the narrow ridge between sea and lagoon to a cairn topped by a pyramidal monument and a guyed flagpole sporting a thin ribbon of faded blue fabric, the only remnant of the French Tricolore that had flown in a lot of wind since the previous August. In one bag was a new flag, in another a boombox that serenaded us with *La Marseillaise* as one of our official French hosts removed the battered flag and replaced it with the new one, a reassertion of French sovereignty. Then we donned our t-shirts and posed for pictures with the new flag and the national (and other) flags we had brought along. Next, crewmen unveiled the fine picnic lunch they had packed and imported, and we ate on the beach.

Not wanting to hike the 12-km long ring around the lagoon, I opted to check out the vegetation, rapacious orange crabs, nesting blue-footed boobies that would not move out of my way and whatever else I could find in the vicinity, including the rusting hulks of large machines left behind by the US military in WW II. I swam in the ocean to cool off but heeded the warning not to touch the water of the lagoon because of its purported toxicity. In late afternoon we snorkeled back to the panga and rode thence to the boat for the night.

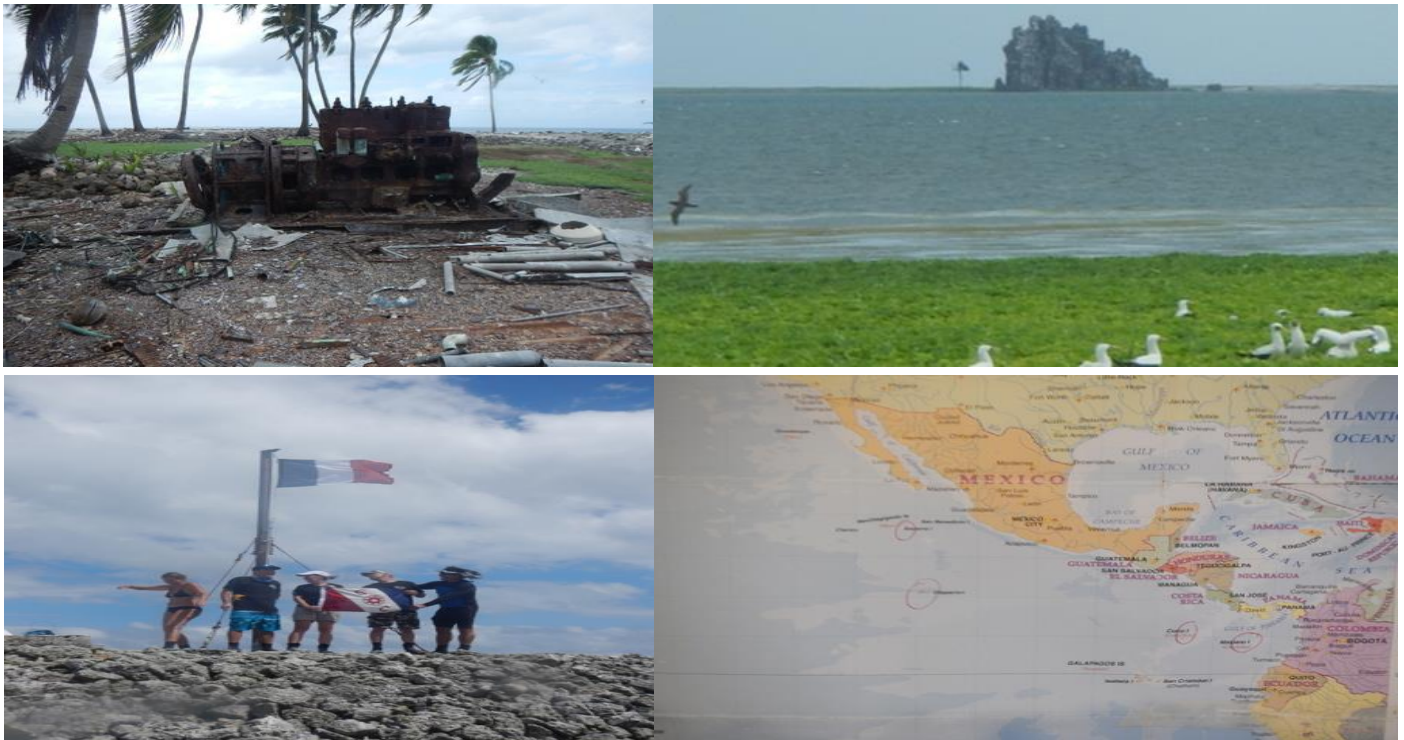
The next morning we started our scientific work under the guidance of the French researchers Eric and Mauricio. Crewmembers caught sharks on baited hooks, and we helped drag them aboard for the surgical implantation of radio transmitters to track their movements. As a team, we cut slits along the sharks’ abdomens, put the devices inside, sewed them up (a process not noticeably harming a hardy shark), logged measurements and tossed our patients back overboard to swim away.

Over three days, we made several pleasant but not highly rewarding dives to check out the sharks and other wildlife and reef-life and help restore the electronic receiver of the sharks’ signals mounted on an underwater tower. Then we set out on the 5-day cruise back to Mexico.

This time we had a day’s stop at Socorro, where we made some very enjoyable dives. Huge manta rays hovered above us, wanting our exhaled bubbles to bounce off their bellies, and swooped close enough so we could squeeze the remoras riding them. Swift playful dolphins eagerly entertained us but let us know that we could not touch them.

I was invited to make a return trip the next year, but I decided to pass on it. There are other places where I still want to dive. As a couchsurfing host over several years, I have hosted a number of traveling French guests. Not a one of them had

heard of the remarkable island that is part of his own country.



## Fresh Snow on the Mountains

by Kay Limbird *Copyright 2021*

There is fresh snow on the mountains today following a season of barren grey rock and unadorned peaks in our distant view.

Today the horizon flaunts unblemished slopes with their quiet message of hope and renewal.

There is fresh snow on the mountains today as Earth's people anticipate the aftermath of a global pandemic, sidestep the deep crevices that separate us, ignore the careless abuses of our precious resources.

There is fresh snow on the mountains today arriving as a fragile witness to our planet's destiny.



## UNEXPECTED TRAVEL

### Destination Nananu-i-Ra

By Art Limbird

Nananu-i-Ra is an island about 2 miles off the north coast of the main Fijian island of Viti Levu and it has no towns or villages. The nearest town, Raki Raki is located on the north coast of Viti Levu. The island is about 2 square miles and has a maximum elevation of about 550 feet. The name "Nananu-i-Ra" means "Daydream of the West" in Fijian. Nananu-i-Ra is privately owned. Wind turbines provide most of the power to scattered residents' homes, the hostel for backpackers, and three rental cottages.

Our family of six was planning to make a trip to the South Pacific in the spring of 1988. Before we finalized our travel plans, we mentioned our trip to a good friend, telling her we were flying on Air New Zealand that allowed travelers to make a stop enroute to New Zealand. One of the choices was Fiji. She had been to Fiji and enjoyed the "special experience" of venturing to a small island where she was treated very well by the McDonalds -- hosts of private rental

cottages right on the beach! That island was Nananu-i-Ra. We followed her advice and chose to include Fiji and the island for our “stopover”. We contacted the McDonalds and arranged for a weeklong stay.

After departing from Calgary, we had stops in Los Angeles and Honolulu, and arrived at the Nadi (Pronounced Nan-dee) Airport in Fiji on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> (having crossed the International Dateline). A message from the McDonalds was waiting for us at the airport. It instructed us to proceed to the Nadi Bay Hotel instead of traveling on to Nananu-i-Ra. No reason was given for the change in plans. The hotel had a swimming pool and a poolside barbeque. Otherwise, all shops were closed on Sunday and it was a long, hot walk to the nearest beach!

On Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> we checked out of the hotel, leaving our large travel packs in storage at the hotel to pick up after our stay on Nananu-i-Ra. We took a taxi to the town of Lautoka, then an open-air bus to the town of Ba, and an “express” bus to Raki Raki. The buses were a thrill ride – quite a lively experience riding with Fijians who sang and chanted and waved and called out to anyone walking along the roadsides!

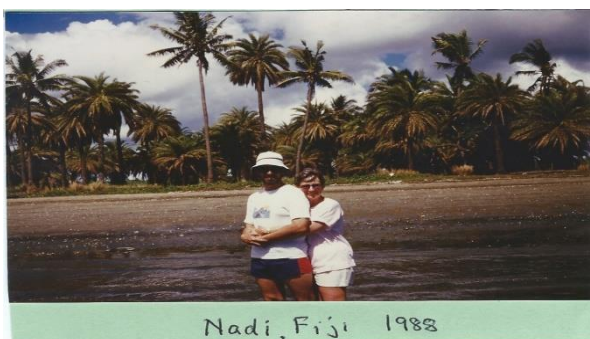
In Raki Raki it was raining. Despite the rain, we found a store near the bus station to buy provisions for our stay on Nananu-i-Ra. We hired a taxi to take us to the wharf where the boat taxi to Nananu-i-Ra was located. The boat captain was expecting us and handed us a message from the McDonalds that told us to stay at the Raki Raki Hotel for the night because the sea was “too rough” to cross to the island! The hotel was pleasant with lovely flower gardens and shaded lawns.

On Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> we left early to cross by boat taxi to Nananu-i-Ra. There still was a lot of rain, but it was a smooth crossing. We were greeted by Mrs. McDonald and escorted to a lovely cottage right on the beach and only about 50 feet from the dock. She supplied us with spools of fish line and hooks to catch fish off the dock. The fish were unfamiliar to us. So, we had to ask her son after each catch “can we eat this one”?! Most were edible, and the varied fish provided us with tasty dinners cooked on a small propane stove. Mrs. McDonald demonstrated how to open coconuts to get both the coconut water to drink and the coconut meat to eat. Our son Dennis climbed one of the coconut palms and retrieved enough coconuts for us to eat and drink during our stay.

We fully enjoyed each day on the island. We got up at 6:30 to eat breakfast with the sunrise. Then, we ventured out to sit on the beach near the cottage, to walk along an extensive beach farther down the shore where we found many beautiful shells, to explore “goat” trails inland away from the beach, to wade through mangroves on the leeward side of the island away from the wind and waves, to snorkel on the offshore reef, and just to lie on hammocks in the shade and watch the patterns of the clouds overhead.

Since our cottage did not have electricity, dinners were eaten under Coleman lantern light after dark near 6:30. Then we played card games by lantern light before going to bed at 8:30 each night. The five days were magical – just our family together sharing the experiences (even the huge island cockroaches!) without any interruptions from phone, TV, or other distractions. We were so glad we chose to make Nananu-i-Ra our “stopover” destination!

And now, 33 years later... When I “Googled” the McDonald cottages, they still are in business renting for \$25 U.S. per night! Oh! So tempting...



## FROM THE EDITOR

I know Encore members are readers, so I would like to introduce a new section: the *Book Nook*. The Nook is not about book reviews – it's about books you have read that have surprised you, motivated you, changed your life or remain unforgettable. It might be a book you couldn't put down; a book you hated but read anyway, or a book that you know you are supposed to read, tried again and again, but somehow couldn't get through it. I will kick the section off with this brief piece:

## THE BOOK NOOK

### *The Inferno, from Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy*

I read the *Divine Comedy* in high school and found that *The Inferno* has shaped my ideas of justice and fairness for 60 + years. Dante's nine layers of hell, the inhabitants of each tier and the punishment received for their crimes speak true justice, not just for the 14<sup>th</sup> century but for all time. Now that is one impressive book.

We would love to hear from you.

## AND MORE...

### Close Call

It felt like a dream come true. The U.S. Army had finally promoted me. My final parachute jump had gone smoothly, even though the C-130 plane had been somewhat unsteady in the gusty NW wind. Soon I'd be home to enjoy the rest of the summer. We'd go on a long-delayed driving vacation to the Northshore of Lake Superior. I made myself comfortable; Fort Campbell and the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division were behind me. I was flying home.

Suddenly, there were strange noises, like something rubbing against the outside of the plane. I woke up fast. We had flown at normal altitude so far, but now trees stood on both sides of our apparent landing approach. There was no obvious reason why the big jetliner had to fly so low and close to the trees. But it did. Again, I could hear the scraping of the limbs against the aircraft. I was not totally aware of the precise location of this dangerous maneuver, but the big elm trees reminded me of the Park Blocks adjacent to Portland State University. So far, the plane had cruised normally, but now, we seemed to fly way too low. Something made the pilot come down, as if preparing for a crash landing. The jet was gliding below the crowns of the elm trees on each side of the street which the pilot had apparently chosen as his landing strip. I was fearful that some of the trees might stand too close together to let the plane fly through without ripping off its wings. But wait. The pilot must have got lost. We were supposed to be east of the Rocky Mountains. (There were no American elm trees left east of the Continental Divide; they had all died of Dutch Elm Disease in the last 50 years.)

I knew that pilots can make mistakes. Some years ago, when my wife was flying to Frankfurt, Germany, the plane had accidentally landed in Brussels, Belgium. But this plane here was flying just a few feet above the ground, just under the canopy of what appeared to be elms. Twigs and limbs continued slapping against the fuselage. None of the other passengers seemed to be unduly alerted. How could this end other than in a fiery crash?

Suddenly a firm shaking on my right. "Are you having a nightmare?" a voice was asking?

### Incarcerated

After the first few times I went behind the Iron Curtain into East Germany, I had nightmares about being thrown into prison. Not that I engaged in any illegal activities there. I never took a camera, lest I be accused of espionage. But the East Germans were particularly unforgiving with persons who violated their currency restrictions. Since my mother or siblings did not charge me for food or lodging when I visited there, I almost always had the compulsory daily currency exchange left over before I returned to the West again. I'd always mail the money from an East German post office to my boyhood friend near the Czech border. But, even if Westerners did not violate any of the East's restrictions, one could be imprisoned.





end of each discussion we decide on a topic for the next meeting. Over the intervening week we contribute videos and written references on the chosen topic. Then on Monday we share our perspectives and explore

implications of the topic chosen. Humanist Discussions will be held through Winter term, January 10 through February 22. We meet on Monday mornings from 10:00 to 12:00. Sign up by contacting Tod Lundy at [todlundy@gmail.com](mailto:todlundy@gmail.com). You may also call. My phone number is 503-442-2446.

Tod

## Understanding Contra and Square Dancing

Two and a half years ago an email was forwarded to me from an ENCORE senior member which said "I am interested in square or contra dance lessons, maybe 4-8 classes, to be given to seniors in the Astoria Senior Center. Do you know some dancers who would share their time and talent?". In the meanwhile much thought has been given to such lessons. Ours will differ from traditional lessons in that we'll make use of the 70" TV in the ASC classroom to follow dance animations and two well illustrated online texts (found here and here) in addition to demonstrations and practice.

Just like a course in the physical sciences, we'll need a laboratory to hone our skills with a caller - for this we'll join lessons given by a local square dance club Sunday afternoons (optional). A contra dance takes place in downtown Astoria monthly which you can attend right away. Field trips are planned as the year progresses: a contra dance in Portland with live music, a square dance club in Kelso, and a little later one in Vancouver.

This class begins the Monday January 10, 2:15 until 3:45 p.m. continuing weekly Until February 28. Square dancing and contra dancing are cousins, so we'll study them both simultaneously. Contra dancing uses a subset of square dance moves, some done a bit differently, others unique to contra dancing. Long lines are formed, you keep your partner and every 64 beats of music you'll be dancing with a new set of neighbors. Contra dancing is always done to live music and is fast paced - this is where you'll learn to "swing your partner". Square dancing is much more involved; after going through many moves, it's quite satisfying to get back home from where you started. We'll start out with things you may know already such as "Dosado" and "Promenade" - months later we'll progress to "Follow Your Neighbor" and "Ping Pong Circulate". Wear normal everyday clothes and leather soled shoes if you have them. Everyone's welcome. It's a lot of fun.

Craig Holt . . . [craig.holt@me.com](mailto:craig.holt@me.com)

## Writing Exchange Class

### 5 Reasons in 8 Short Weeks for You to Become the Writer You Were Born to Be!

Wow. The fourth quarter of a football game, or of your life, is by definition the final quarter. There is no getting around this. But it can also be the most exciting part. Any doubts? Watch a championship game!

So, though you may not be a player in an athletic contest in a massive metropolitan stadium, you still need to balance your time, your budget, your energy, and your stress level to do what most interests you.

Perhaps you've pondered writing a memoir, a poem, or some other story, but the right circumstances never presented themselves. Perhaps now is finally that time.

Amy Tan, best-selling author of *The Joy Luck Club*, began writing relatively late in her life. Something which inspired her was joining a weekly writing group focused on two things: kindness and honesty.

ENCORE offers such a group, and it fits within your budget.

Our Writing Exchange class provides 5 Key Benefits to You as a New Writer:

1. Encouragement.
2. How to Constructively Give Feedback to Others.
  - This is Not Entirely an Altruistic Act. By Analyzing What Other People Write, it Improves Your Own Work.
3. How to Effectively Receive & Use Feedback.
  - Each week, you'll received emailed Audio and downloadable Video copies of Your Writing with Constructive Feedback from our class. This allows You to Both Listen and Watch People React to Your Work. Look for Nods of Appreciation.
4. A Series of Soft Self-Imposed Deadlines, i.e., Eight Chances to Share Your Writing during the Winter Term.
5. Brief Lectures on the Techniques & Craft of Writing: Based on Master Classes from a Diverse Group of Writers! Borrow Techniques from One Master or More. You Can Be a Better Writer!

ENCORE Winter 2022's *Writing Exchange* Course begins Tuesday, January 11 (and runs just 8 weeks till Tuesday, March 1) from 9:45 to 11:45 A.M.

*COVID-19 Protocol: For Winter 2022, the Writing Exchange class plans to use a Hybrid Access Approach: (1) meeting in the Pool Room of the Astoria Senior Center (for those who prefer face-to-face), while (2) also linking to Zoom (for those who prefer online access).*

*Please note that face-to-face class access depends on approval from the ENCORE Board of Directors, because of Pandemic Health Considerations. Face-to-face attendance may also require Wearing of a Face Mask and Proof of Vaccination or other conditions as set by the State of Oregon or the Astoria Senior Center.*

For more information about ENCORE's *Writing Exchange* class and how to access it, please email the instructor, Eric Anderson, at [EricCander@aol.com](mailto:EricCander@aol.com) or call (503) 325-3131.

### **New In-Person Class for winter term: History of the Bible**

**General comment and objective:** This is not a course on religion; rather, it deals with how the Bible came into being over the centuries. It is my intent to strip away information which is not scientifically accepted or acceptable. Nor is it my intention to elevate one of the three monotheistic religions —Judaism, Islam, Christianity -- above any other. From the outset one should be open minded to consider that modern scientific research reveals that the Bible did not come together as is often depicted.

According to the Guinness Book of Records, over five billion copies of the Bible have been printed. The King James Bible of 1604 contains 783,137 words, and not all Bibles contain the same information. I'd be surprised if we had a single person in ENCORE who has never held a Bible in his/her hand or knows which version it was, or that there are widely different versions.

The HISTORY of the BIBLE, will be held Thursday 9:30 – 11:30 am in the classroom at the Astoria Senior Center. The dates of the sessions are January 6, 13, 27 and February 3, 2022.

### **Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain**

Instructor – Nancy Carruthers  
Day/Time – Thursday 2 – 4pm  
Dates – January 13 to March 3  
Location – Clatsop Community College, Columbia Hall room 221.

This is a class for people who think they can't draw. It will be about learning to draw what we see. Therefore, the emphasis will be on learning to see – and learning to process visual information in the special way that artists do, which is different from the way we usually see the world. When we can make this mental shift, we will be able to draw. Everyone



will need a drawing pad, at least 8×10, several soft lead pencils (6B), and a kneaded eraser. (Available at the CCC bookstore).

### **Philosophical Dimensions of Education**

This course will look at central themes & theories at work within the broader endeavor of education in society, and human experience generally. The course is organized thematically & will include multiple historical & culturally comparative sources, as well as contemporary discussions & debates on issues:

Week 1: What is 'education' & what is it for?

Week 2: The cultivation of reason, creativity & theories of learning

Week 3: Moral & Civic Education

Week 4: Scientific Education

Week 5: Aesthetic Education

Week 6: Physical Education

Week 7: Practical Education

Week 8: The nature & role of the Teacher

Friday mornings - 10 to noon - Jan. 14 through Mar. 4 - 8 sessions at the Astoria Senior Center Classroom

Seth Tichenor - Instructor

Dave Zunkel - Coödinator

**Encore Learn**  
 c/o Clatsop Community College  
 1651 Lexington Ave  
 Astoria, OR 97103  
[www.encorelearn.net](http://www.encorelearn.net)

Article	Page	Article	Page
Message From the President	1	And More...	5-6
From Eric Anderson's Writing Exchange Class	1-3	Winter 2022 Class Schedule	6-9
Unexpected Travel	3-4	Letters to the Editor	None
From the Editor	5		

*ENCORE'S Class Act is published quarterly except summers - December, January, & February; March, April, & May; September, October, & November by ENCORE Learn (Exploring New Concepts Of Retirement Education). Tess Chedsey, Editor 503-861-4375 tesschedsey@gmail.com, Kinga Sanders, CCC Liaison email: CommunityED@clatsopcc.edu 503-338-2408 Next "Class Act" deadline is Friday, February 4, 2022*