Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

As a teenager, I had recurring dreams for years about a purple door. The purple door would appear in any dream, in any number of places, and I could go through the door or not, but if, in the dream world, I went through the door, I went to happy-fun-love-wonderful, from good dreams and from nightmares. When I moved to Meriden in 2006, my next-door neighbor, Patricia, had the purple door. Long story short, after my dog killed her cat, we became good friends (that's the sort of person she is), and when I needed to leave a marriage and not flake out on professional commitments to do so, she took me in for a couple of months until I finished my obligations (that's the sort of person she is). The purple door went to happy-fun-love-wonderful in real life, too (that's the sort of person she is).

The door of our beach tentalow (a more-less permanent tent) in Anahola, at Kumu Camp

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Since I've known Patricia, Hawai'i, and specifically Kaua'i, has been at the top of her list of places to go. So when we both had the opportunity simultaneously, we hopped on planes to Lihue.

Camping on the beach had advantages and disadvantages. We could hear the ocean all of the time, and the saltwater spray made our hair weird. It was affordable for two people on tight budgets (we both stayed for an entire week on less than some individuals pay for a single night at other places), and the hot water wasn't all that hot (and it took us most of the week to figure out where the hot water was). The camp was in a quiet, rural area, and we had to do more driving than we would have had we stayed in a more urban, central location. We had beautiful sunrises for breakfast, and the chickens tried to join us for breakfast (Kaua'i is covered in chickens: red jungle fowl, but they're chickens; if I were running a restaurant, I wouldn't pay for meat). Garrett the proprietor is a native of Kaua'i and provided warm hospitality and lots of accurate and relevant information, and it was hard to decide what to do among the many options.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Clive, the rooster who owned the section of the campground where our tentalow was located. A couple of his chicks came into the tentalow one morning.

Our first order of business was to do some shopping for groceries, another measure to keep costs reasonable in a place that can eat up an entire annual salary in a week, if one isn't careful. We had both arrived at the airport late at night; I was later than Patricia, so she had time to pick up printed travel information, which was helpful in that we had the information and unhelpful in that we had more information than we could possibly use. We hadn't seen anything on our drive to the campground on the night we arrived, so when we hopped in the car the next day, Sunday, we nearly crashed having a look at all of the scenery on the way to Walmart. The road to Walmart is not usually scenic, but in Kaua'i, it's spectacular.

The African tulip trees (*Spathodea campanulate*) are invasive (if only all such invasive species had orange flowers—take that, zebra mussels), and we saw an orange bird visiting the orange flowers, an 'apapane (*Himatione sanguinea*). It was an orange day.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

'Ōpaeka'a Falls was just off the main route on our way back to the campground after shopping. We visited two spectacular waterfalls with only a four-mile detour.

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The gorge into which the water falls is an ideal nesting site for some red-billed tropicbirds (*Phaethon aethereus*). They don't walk well, so they need to take off in flight, which is why they nest on cliffs. The waterfall, as is everything on a small island, is close to the ocean, where they eat fish and squid; the preferred fish are flying fish, so that the tropicbirds can keep flying while eating.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

We visited a home, fortification, naval yard, and community center called Wailua. The location overlooks the Wailua River, which flows into the ocean; it is also a high point surrounded by other high points, both easy to defend and an easy place from which to signal other groups. When the resident chiefs (ali'i) wanted to go to war, the naval personnel would gather in the river before sailing in their groups to the ocean and to the opponents. It is considered a sacred site (wahi pana); Patricia and I discussed the extensive misuse of that term. Depending on context, it means 'mine', 'holy', 'culturally important', or, in this case, 'strategically important.'

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

There are ruins of a temple, Poliahu Heiau, at the Wailua site; the temple existed to honor Kū, one of the four uncreated gods of Hawai'ian religion (the Hobongan and the Sumerians (with a little editing, the Sumerian oral histories became the Old Testament oral histories, so Christianity started out with four gods) and possibly the Chinese had four original gods); with only four gods, each of the gods had multiple jobs, and Kū has at least eighteen names to reflect those jobs (with only one deity, Islam has at least ninety-nine names for the deity). Kū became most renowned for his role in warfare. If the military importance of the location had been missed, the temple for the god of war should make the point. Kū's priests, however, had far more than religious duties. The priests (kahuna) conducted all ceremonies, both civil and religious, delivered babies, and managed the economic and political aspects of the community. People still visit Wailua to leave leis at the site, as a sign of affection or devotion; the target of that devotion (the people who used to live there, the history and culture generally, a specific ancestor, Kū, warfare, etc) is known only to the lei-giver.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

On a small island, we also had easy access to the beach; this was the beach by the hotel, once we were past the trees. I went snorkeling at the closest beach while Patricia took a walk; there were some reefs near the tentalow, but the best snorkeling was elsewhere.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Kaua'i is known as the garden island because of its lush tropical rainforests (the rainiest place on the planet is on Kaua'i, but not all of the island is the rainiest place in the world). It also has some gorgeous gardens in the more tended sense of the term, and we visited a couple of them, starting with the Allerton Garden. The garden is located on land in the nook between two slopes and was the estate of a family of sugar magnates, the McBrydes, for a while. The Allertons, Robert and John Gregg, were an artist and architect, respectively, and they set to work on the gardens as soon as they acquired the property in the early 1900s. We saw the spout of a humpback whale on the way to the garden.

Reconnecting in Kaua’i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

The garden was beautiful, but my favorites were the animals; the orchids came in a close second, though. When we first arrived in the garden, which can only be seen by guided tour, unfortunately; we would have spent more time in some places than in others, and our preferences often lined up with each other’s but not often with the guide’s. While we were still on the shuttle, we saw this endangered Hawai’ian gallinule (‘alae ’ula (burnt forehead, for the red frontal shield), *Gallinula galeata sandvicensis*), and I would have stopped and watched, but, no, there was no time for that.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

When we were let off the shuttle, we had a bathroom break near a mill in the garden, and the mill pond was full of American bull frogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus* or *Rana catesbeiana*, depending on the taxonomist: I prefer *Rana catesbeiana*), and lots of bugs to eat and lots of vegetation to lounge on. They were singing and eating and lounging, and we had plenty of time to watch them while the rest of the group bathroomed.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

This flowering tree was not officially on the tour, but I like the idea of flowers grown straight out of twigs; I have been unable to identify what this is.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

The green anoles (*Anolis carolinensis*) were disputing territorial boundaries while we were there. They were quick and cranky, and I didn't manage to fit both in the same picture. The plant is also not part of the official tour, but with some significant poking around, I've found that it's probably a Madagascar ocotillo (*Alluaudia procera*).

The garden featured a walkway lined on both sides with shell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*); the tour guide treated the walkway like a hallway and proceeded directly through without a stop. Patricia and I stopped.

As would be expected for a garden in the Garden Isle, there were also areas of lush vegetation of many kinds.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

This orchid was growing the crotch of a tree. Orchids readily hybridize themselves, which provides job security for taxonomists; this one looks like a kind of cattleya, and I'm not even going to try for anything more specific.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

The Allerton Garden is a popular set location for movies that need a tropical scene or two or many, including Jurassic Park. In the movie, a dinosaur laid eggs among the roots of these Moreton Bay fig trees (*Ficus macrophylla*). The trees are not so old as might be expected from their size. These are less than seventy years old. And they look nice, but these are vicious plants. As seedlings, they start as epiphytes, non-parasitic air plants, that grow on other trees, but once they get a root to the ground, they accelerate their growth and strangle the tree on which they were initially growing. The next Jurassic Park movie should have the Moreton Bay fig trees as the bad guys.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Having been designed by an architect and an artist, the Allerton Garden includes some interesting sculptures and designed spaces. Our favorite sculpture was the outflow from the mermaid sculpture. The wave structure controls the flow of the water so that the water blurps out the end of the channel at a rate of 58 blurps per minute. This is the centerpiece of the tour, and we spent about twenty minutes exploring the fountain and listening to the blurps. Supposedly, if one listens long enough, one's heartbeat comes to agree with the rate of blurping from the fountain.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

The spider lilies (genus *Crinum*, with nearly two hundred species) were out in force everywhere during our excursion; I liked the white ones the best, but they also come in various shades and combinations of pink. For a garden tour, little attention was actually devoted to the plants; we had to stop and pay attention to these while the tour moved more quickly past them.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

This spider (*Argiope appensa*) sits with legs paired to that it looks like an X, and the very most coolest thing about the spider is that it makes zig-zags in its webs. We saw quite a few of these out and about during the trip. Having three zig-zags is above-average. Many such spiders have only one.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Writing of spiders, I spent nearly half of an hour trying to get a good picture of a star spider (Gasteracantha cancriformis); Patricia thought I had finally lost it. I never did get the good picture, but here's someone else's picture of a star spider, from the Strange Animals blog.

Photo credit: Jason Hollinger

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

One of the three species of goby (o'opu nopili, *Sicydium stimpsoni*) in Hawai'i have made it up the irrigation system into the garden; they climb waterfalls hundreds of feet high, if necessary; the climb into the garden was not so strenuous. They weren't moving much in the pool where we saw them; after the climb that they did do to get into the garden, a break seems like a good idea.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

A dendrobium orchid on the way out of the garden, and again, I'm not even going to try. This is probably a hybridized orchid, as so many of them are. A plausible second career for the linguist: taxonomy. Taxonomy probably doesn't pay any better.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

While we were as far west as the garden (it was early in the trip, and we hadn't realized the scale of the island yet—it's plenty small enough to drive as far as possible in one day), we decided to continue out to the end of the road at Polihale. On the way, we drove through a huge stand of lemon-scented gum trees (*Eucalyptus citriodora*, or *Corymbia citriodora)*. They are invasive, as most plants on the island are. It is estimated that less than 5% of Kaua'i's forested areas are still predominated by native plants.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

In violation of the rental car contract, which we found out after the fact from a map (nobody told us when we rented the car, we didn't tell anyone when we returned the car, and all's well that ends well), we drove down the few miles of dirt (sand) road to the beach at Polihale. It was hot and sunny, and we appreciated the location and then meandered on our way.

We also learned later that when the Dalai Lama visited Kaua’i, he said that Polihale, this beach, is where souls leave for the inner realm, the highest realization of an enlightened being, and that Anahola, where we were staying, specifically the volcanic formations off the beach, are where the souls come into the world. I suggested that we go for a hike in the formation and perhaps stomp on a few souls, just to let them know what they’re in for on this planet while they’re still within easy reach of an exit, but Patricia decided we should not go soul-stomping. She’s farther along toward enlightenment than I am.

Then we made a mistake. We found out after we were not within reach of an easy exit that Patricia's sea-sickness was not as far in the past as we had hoped. I love being on boats and had a wonderful time, especially with the rough seas, but Patricia did not have so much fun. I saw a green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*); she saw the turtle and the bottom of a barf bag.

I went snorkeling in water that was 30-50 feet deep (9.14-15.24 meters) and saw different kinds of fish from the kinds I typically see around reefs closer to shore and in shallower water, and bigger fish. She stayed on the boat.

I saw spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*), who earn their English name by spinning in all directions, up, down, sideways, both in and out of the water. She saw some of the dolphins and the bottom of several more barf bags.

I saw common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) surfing and racing along the boat. Patricia puked.

I watched a cow and calf humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) breaching. She watched the back of the cabin where the crew had put her because it's the least mobile part of the boat; I'm sure it didn't help that it was also the place where she could breathe the most diesel fumes, but she went for stability over fresh air.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

I took pictures of the Nā Pali Coast, as much of it as we saw before the captain decided to turn around because of the wind and waves. The waves were over ten feet high (3+ meters) before we turned around. I enjoyed bouncing on the trampolines of the catamaran in the waves until the crew told me to sit on one of the benches, for my safety. Patricia vomited.

The good news was that the excursion was free because the tour ended before it usually does. I thought it was a very successful outing, even before it was free; Patricia suffered. The crew sent her off with a barf-bag-to-go, and I scampered into the nearest convenience store to stock up on coconut water and V-8 and started plying her with electrolyte replacement tablets, which she resisted.

The next day, she hadn't recovered from the dehydration caused by regurgitating repeatedly for hours followed by not drinking enough to recover, and we decided to have a slower day. We also had our only tiff of the trip, with she insisting that she didn't need to drink more, and me threatening her with an involuntary admission to the hospital for fluids if she didn't drink more. I attribute the crankiness on both our parts to a certain amount of dehydration and concern, so I drank more, gave her some more coconut water, V-8, and electrolyte tablets, and we were on our way, this time to the Limahuli Garden and Preserve. It is not only a garden but a leftover taro plantation from the era when Kaua'ians were in charge of Kaua'i. It's located in a valley between ridges that run down to the sea; in earlier days, each of these valleys contained a separate community and supported the extended family of a chief, all of whom lived and farmed and fished in and from the valley. Little travel occurred between such valleys, although footpaths did exist and trade could be conducted when necessary. The isolated communities in valleys reminded of Vermont. The hale (hut) is rebuilt; wood-and-thatch structures need constant maintenance to survive, and there was a significant gap between the last Hawai'ian use of the valley and the biocultural preservation undertaken by the National Park Service. The stone-enclosed growing areas were excavated and then repaired.

Limahuli ended up being a much more interesting garden than Allerton, and we had the option of walking ourselves around and appreciating what we appreciated on our own schedule. The people working at Limahuli are heavily involved in finding, cataloguing, and breeding native Kaua’i plants. Each of the plants was labeled with English, Latin, and, when available, Hawai’ian names (many of the Hawai’ian names have been lost). Limahuli is also home to some plants that are thought to be the last of their kind. One begins to wonder if taking better care of the people who know about these things, and the languages that encode the information about these things, might also be helpful in preserving the living things.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Kalo was the most important agricultural product of the Hawai'ians; the first people known to settle Hawai'I brought kalo with them across the Pacific, and eventually, over three hundred varieties of kalo were cultivated throughout the Hawai'ian islands. It was the dietary starch, and as the centerpiece of the diet, it also took on cultural, economic, and religious significance, to the people. The tadpoles, of two different species, were swimming in kalo pools.

As I write this, the Limahuli Garden is closed until further notice because of "historic flooding." It's hard to imagine what that might mean in a place that routinely receives more than 200 inches (5+ meters) of rain per year.

Because it was Hawai'ian first, Limahuli also comes with stories. In one, Pohaku-o-Kane, three stones, two brothers and a sister, rolled to Kaua'i to find a new place to live. The sister, 'O'o'a'a, stayed on the beach to bask on the sun (she was washed out to sea by a tsunami in 1946 and can only be seen by snorkeling out to her). The younger brother, Pohaku-loa liked the shady trees and decided to stay there. Pohaku continued on, trying to get to the top of a mountain but continuously falling back. The god Kane saw the rock trying and trying and failing and failing and told Pohaku that he would soon fall asleep like his siblings, but Pohaku said he'd never fall asleep and that he wanted to see all the world (I like this idea that not traveling is the equivalent of falling asleep). So Kane put Pohaku on the peak with the deal that when Kane returned, Pohaku would report on everything that he had seen happening on the island.

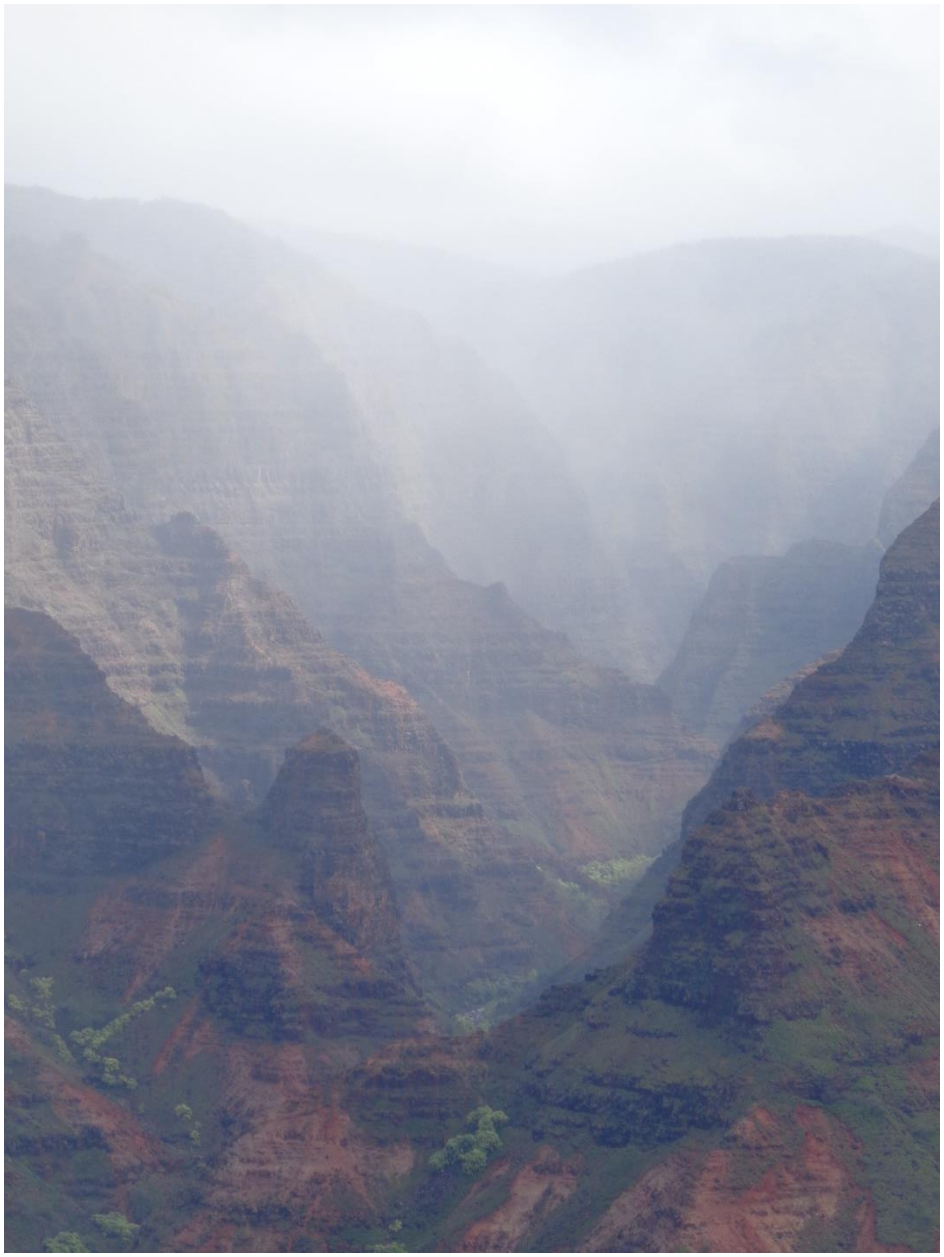
Day two after the boat flu, Patricia was feeling much better, and she took me out to breakfast at a place that had the best hibiscus tea I've ever had. It was so good that I was inspired, upon returning, to find better hibiscus tea; I have found better, but not as good as that at the Art Café Hemingway in Kapa'a.

The drive up to Kōke'e and Waimea State Park is said to be one of the most scenic in North America. We thought we might never reach the park because we stopped for so many pictures.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

The Waimea Canyon is a bit different from the canyons I'm familiar with thanks to Arizona. About a third of the island's volcanic mass collapsed toward the ocean, and the canyon was eroded down to the fallen plain because of heavy rainfall, so there's a cliff with several valleys eroded into it. The canyon is shaped like a deformed E, with the long side toward the ocean and the legs connecting the plain to the higher volcanic ground. There are exceptionally tall waterfalls on the legs of the E; this is Waipo'o Falls, and it has over 800 feet (243.84) of vertical drop in two tiers (in my mind, that's not 800 feet of vertical drop, but whatever).

The area receives over 100 inches (2.54 meters) of rain per year, mostly between October and May. We were there in March for some of the rain.



Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Despite threatening signs (I've never been threatened with death so frequently and so specifically as on trails in Kaua'i), we started on the Canyon Trail, which is an out-and-back trail to near the top of Waipo'o Falls. The ground was slippery—the soil was mostly clay, and the small amount of rain that was falling made the trail slick like grease. Patricia went part of the way and decided not to go all of the way. She had a nice walk in the woods.

I walked out to the top of the falls, but falls of such a height are better seen from a distance. There were interesting trees and smaller waterfalls to be seen on the way, though. While on the way back, I encountered a woman who had crampons on her shoes; great idea, and next time she does this, she’s going to bring fifty pairs and sell them at the trailhead.

We drove to an overlook to see the Kalalau Valley. On a clear day, one can see the highest point on the island, and the wettest. We were not there on a clear day.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

The weather was intermittent, and during a break in the fog, we did see the Kalalau Valley.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

On the way back from the state park, we stopped at a scenic pull-out that we had repeatedly missed on other outings. Finally. It wasn't that hard to find, but there we were, driving past it twice per day on several days, and we finally caught it. The railing around the pullout had a number of stickers on it. The English ones had been scratched away, but several other languages, including Russian, Thai, French, and German, were still intact. We can both read a bit of German, so between the two of us, we figured it out; the stickers were messages arguing against US possession of the Hawai'ian islands. Kaua'i had been the last island brought under the control of Kamehameha I, who united all of the islands, and in part because the islands were under central control when Queen Lili'uokalani was betrayed, Kaua'i was shifted into possession of the US with all of the other islands. It remains the geographic center of resistance to the colonization. While I do agree that the Hawai'ians had the right idea when they killed Captain Cook for getting uppity with them, I also think that an independent Hawai'i probably isn't realistic. If it weren't the US, it would be China, or Japan, or Russia, or…

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

The next day was our beach day. I'm not good at beach days, but I slathered on the sunscreen, brought the hat, long-sleeved shirt, and snorkel mask, and had a good time. There were a couple of green sea turtles on the beach when we arrived, and while we were there, they both shoved themselves back out to sea.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

An endangered Hawai'ian monk seal (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*) came in from the depths while we were at the beach. This species of monk seal is one of two left; the other is endemic to the Mediterranean Sea. A third, the Caribbean, didn't make it. This one decided to haul up on a busy beach, to great fanfare and lots of verbal instruction from the lifeguard, mostly about standing back and giving the seal room, most of which was ignored.

The hullabaloo didn't seem to bother the seal, who was sound asleep within ten minutes of claiming a sunny spot on the sand. Volunteers walk the beaches and put up signs and ropes to keep people away from the seals. I'm convinced that the seals know about this program, so they flop wherever they like and let the people keep the other people away from them. They never have to fight for a sunny spot, with this program. When we were out walking along, we saw a couple more seals, both napping, each with signs and ropes and at least one volunteer.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

As we were leaving the beach, we stopped to look at this excavation. The goal is to excavate and eventually display the ruins of a Hawai'ian village, this one at least as old as the Pre-Colombian era. It will be the only such excavation/display/village on any island anywhere in the archipelago. We found it surprising that this kind of anthropological site hadn't been treated like this previously, but here we are.

The pools of water are a uniquely Polynesian way to farm fish and are still holding water at least 600 years after they were built.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Some of the site is being reconstructed. The pillar people (Polohiwa a Kāne (east), Polohiwa a Kanaloa (west), Lonohiwa (north), Kūkulu o Kahiki (south))were wood originally, so they didn't do well in the salty humidity peeling off the beach.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

We hiked into the rainforest toward Mount Wai'ale'ale. It averages over 452 inches (11.5 m) of rain each year. We didn't see the mountain. A place that gets that much rain per year is clouded over most of the time. Still, it is not the wettest place on earth. An area in India gets more rain, but not by much, and we couldn't see the place in India, either.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Patricia and I were a day out of synchronization on the return trip because I could save hundreds of dollars by traveling a day later, and she could save hundreds of dollars by traveling on the day she did. We gave up the tentalow on the beach, and I moved to a hostel by the beach, and a more stereotypically Hawai'ian beach, with the palm trees.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

Patricia and I had both intended to hike about eight miles of the Kalalau Trail, which is an out-and-back trail on the Nā Pali coast of Kaua'i. That's the distance that is allowed without a permit. I object in principle to having to get permission to take a walk, but It's also a heavily traveled, well-maintained trail, so I would like to think that the cost and hassle help keep the traffic under control and fund some of the maintenance, but I actually think that it's another form of highway robbery. The initial work on the trail, including the paving stones on the steep first half of a mile or so, was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

On the boat, we visited the western side of the Nā Pali Coast, and on this hike, I visited the eastern end of that coast. Had I hiked the entire trail, I would have seen most of the northern coast of the island—maybe someday, if I get over being in a snit about getting permission to walk.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

I wasn't the only one out for a walk. This Erckel's francolin (*Pternistis erckelii*) was scratching about in the underbrush along the trail. The Erckel's francolin is native to north Africa, but was introduced into Hawai'i in 1957—why, we don't know, but the population is stable, and this individual seemed to be doing well.

Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

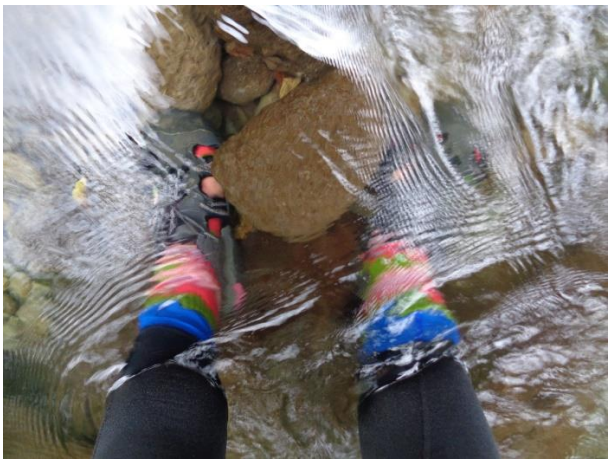
After the state park, I was left wondering why there were so many signs threatening hikers with various specific forms of death. Hiking on the Kalalau Trail answered that question: the many threatening signs are perches for the birds. This one is a white-rumped shama (Copsychus malabaricus); they are popular pet birds in southern and southeast Asia and were introduced to Kaua'i in 1931 by Alexander Isenberger (invasive species are rarely so thoroughly historied). We had a little chat while I was having a snack-and-rehydration break, but then some loud, clunky hikers came down the trail, and the shama flew away.

Reconnecting in Kaua’i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

I took the side trail to the Hanakāpïʻai Falls. It’s about 300 feet (91 m) high.

Reconnecting in Kaua’i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

The trail to the falls is unmaintained, meaning that it’s a path that has been trampled down by many hikers over many years. Unmaintained also means that there are no helpful accoutrements, like ropes on steep, slippery places, or bridges across the creek, which needs to be crossed several times. I don’t mind wading across creeks; my feet are usually hot when I’m hiking, and the cold water helps everything from the toes up feel and work better. I didn’t take a picture of the part where I was in water up to my hips because I was doing my best to keep the camera and my upper body out of the water on slippery rocks in a rapids.



Reconnecting in Kaua'i, 2018: Marla Perkins, Ph.D.

One more orchid: a Coelogyne, usually native to southeast Asia and Borneo.

In the Ha'ena State Park, which is where the Kalalau trailhead is located, there are also wet and dry caves. I started the hike early and visited the caves on my way back to the airport. I didn't go into the wet caves; the threatening signs about those seem a bit more serious than a perch would suggest. But the dry one, Maniniholo, is fun to explore. As with many places, there are at least two explanations. The geological explanation is that sea-level used to be higher, and the waves eroded into the cliffs and formed the caves. Another explanation is that it was dug out by the Menehune, small people who lived on Kaua'i before the Polynesians arrived. The Menehune are often referred to as 'mythical,' but in reading some of the folktales and oral histories of the island, I have come to think that the Menehune were probably real and that the Polynesians wiped them out through a combination of intermarriage and slaughter. In any case, the cave is named for Maniniholo, the head fisherman of the Menehune. The Menehune were great fishers, and great engineers, and the fishers caught many fish and carried some of the fish inland to the rest of the group, leaving what they couldn't carry near the beach. While they were gone, an akua (evil spirit) came and took their remaining fish. Maniniholo ordered the construction of the cave to trap the akua and prevent future theft of fish. The cave did not prevent the theft of the island from the Menehune.