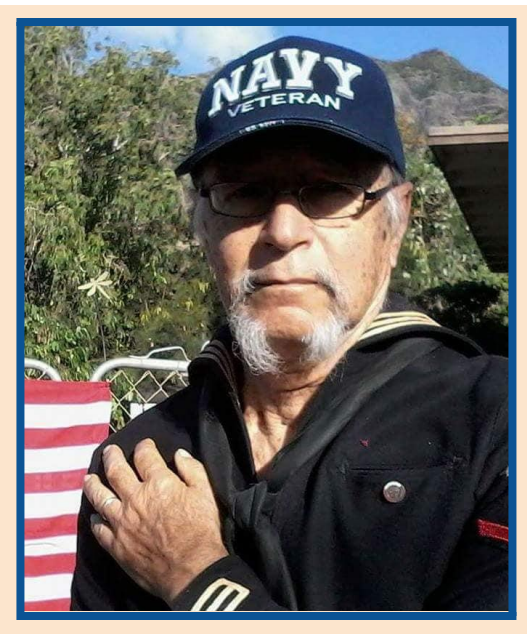




TALK STORY

with

L. STEVE ROHRMAYR
(aka Wai'anae Steve)



Joined HTMC: 2001

Favorite hike: Wai'anae Ramble or the Wai'anae Water Works

Favorite trail food: Usually musubi for lunch along with a can of Red Bull for that push home.

Favorite hiking book: Can't really think of one but Stuart's book of hikes is high on the list

How did you get the name Wai'anae Steve? When I joined HTMC there already were two Steves in the club so I became Wai'anae Steve

WHEN and WHY did you join HTMC?

Somewhere around 2001 to learn new areas. I was hiking with some friends and ran into the club on a hike. I thought it was time I learned more about other areas of O'ahu. Up till then I'd only hiked Wai'anae on the west side and hunted a few of the Ko'olau trails between Hale'iwa and Halawa. I had NEVER hiked anywhere on the Windward side except to the waterfall below the Pali. There were so many valleys and ridges on that side yet to learn.

When did you FIRST START hiking and why do you continue to hike?

I began hiking sometime in the mid 80's when I quit hunting. I had been hunting pig on O'ahu since 1964 with a few trips to Lanai for deer and sheep. Most of the areas I hunted were either in Wai'anae Valley or just about any valley/ridge between Haleiwa and Halawa. For about ten years I was president of the Pig Hunter's Association of O'ahu (PHAO). I tried to get someone to take my place but no takers... So I just quit hunting and forced them to elect a new president. I began hiking the trails I hunted and one day in Moanalua I ran into HTMC.



I'm pushing 80 now and I'm still healthy. I hike at least once a week to stay in shape. I can still go out for five hours but of course I don't cover as much ground as in the "old days". LOL. I stick pretty much to the west side now and hike in a valley I'd rather not name.

Can you think of one MEMORABLE HTMC hike experience that you would like to share?

There were a few. One I'll always remember is the trail clearing for Mauna Ka'ala in 2007. It was a nasty rainy day. I was with my buddy Bal Dasa and we reached the "ROCK". Bal said he wasn't feeling too good and would go back by himself. I continued to summit and on the way back I ran into someone who told me Bal had a heart attack and had died on the trail. HFD came and picked him up from way above 3 Poles. Sad story but at least he died doing something he loved. I'd like to go out like that and NOT in a hospital bed some place.

Is HTMC important to you? What is your extent of involvement with HTMC over the years?

HTMC is important to me as it helps introduce new hikers to the beauty of our 'aina. I was a part of the Trail Clearing Crew for about ten years and slowed down. Why? Not sure but I kept trail clearing but with a few friends here on the West Side. I have never served on any board or committee. After my decade with the PHAO I had no desire to take on something again. LOL

What is your FAVORITE hike on O'ahu?

It would have to be one of the trails I laid out in Wai'anae. Either the **Wai'anae Ramble** or the **Wai'anae Water Works** trails. Water Works is really cool if you are brave enough to enter each of the tunnels.

Both the Wai'anae Ramble and the Wai'anae Water Works trails I laid out using old hunters trails, old plantation trails and pig trails. The "Ramble" goes from the Lualualei side of the valley to the paved road going to Mauna Ka'ala. The views are only good looking into Lualualei but the real beauty of the trail is the many different vegetation zones you wander through.



The Water Works is cool because you get to—if you are brave enough—to enter two water tunnels. Both are at least 200 feet long. You may bang your head if you are as tall as me, and you will get your feet wet. The tunnels were probably dug/blasted back in the 1920's to supply water to the Wai'anae Sugar fields. They still flow today 24/7 although not as strong as last century when first dug.

[Note from the Newsletter editor: Check out Steve's [website](#) for a treasure trove of hike reports, maps, photos and interesting links. One of my favorites is the 2009 [Lualualei Loop TM](#) which features photos of the Ramble trail, Wai'anae Steve's famous bottle cap trail markers, an unusual bird nest, and a geocache. Very cool.]

Where have you hiked OUTSIDE of Hawaii? Can you share a memorable experience hiking overseas?

Not really. Once I discovered **PARADISE** back in 1963 I have rarely left the islands. I have family back east and have visited maybe 20 times in the past 59 years.

What do you BRING ALONG when you go on a hike?

I carry about 2 liters of Gatorade and freeze about 2/3 of it. That way I have something cool to drink all day. I carry a few crunchy granola bars deep in my pack for emergencies. I also carry a first aid kit, fire starting "stuffs", a space blanket, 100 feet of paracord for emergencies. Sometimes a raincoat. Always a small spray bottle of bug spray, a pruning saw and a pair of 31" loppers.

Also according to GIBB'S Rule #9 I always carry a sharp KNIFE. I have a map of the island on my cell phone app called BackCountry Navigator and have the trails I've hike marked on it. I don't like poles. If I feel I need one for a short stretch there is always some guava I can cut, make a pole and toss when not needed. I usually have a Musubi for lunch along with a can of Red Bull for that push home. I used to wear trail runners but because of a broken ankle about 40 years ago (that's a story I may add at the end) I now use high top boots. I wear short pants, above the knee so as I climb my legs do not have to "fight" the material over the knee. Old man problem I guess. LOL



Do you have concerns about the FUTURE OF HIKING in Hawai'i? Any advice as to how to balance the increased popularity of hiking with problems of overuse?

As more and more homes are built access to the mountains gets harder. I remember hunting above what is now Pearl Ridge back in the 60's... We could drive all the way beyond that gated community that is now at the end of the road. The same can be said for what is now Mililani Mauka. I hiked/hunted there when it was only pineapple. We've seen trails on the south end of the Ko'olau blocked by new homes. Not sure how to "balance" the problem of overuse/erosion other than ending commercial hikes. Those clowns taking people to the Ha'iku Stairs from Moanalua Valley have totally destroyed the middle ridge trail.

What do you think is the key to staying fit as you age?

STAYING ACTIVE and WATCH what you eat. I weigh about the same as I did 60+ years ago. I'm 160 soakin' wet. I bowl twice a week in Senior leagues and I hike at least once a week for at least five hours with at least 1000 feet of elevation gain. My pack is about 15 lbs if I carry all my clearing tools and

liquid. I have one beer a day and one "mixed" drink each evening. I don't do drugs, or smoke cigarettes, but I do smoke one cigar a day. I can still go all day, just not as far. LOL

Is there anything else that you would like to share with HTMC members?

I like to share my "Dumb Haole" story. Back around 1980 something I was deer hunting on Lanai. My buddy and I were on the side of a ridge when he spotted one on the other side. He's a good shot and dropped the deer with one shot. We climbed down the ridge and at the bottom he said, he'd go up the other side and bring the deer down. We were not far from the coast so we'd meet there. On my way I passed a raised platform of stone. Its surface was covered with hundreds of Opihi shells. I picked one and put it in my shirt pocket and headed for the beach.

At the beach, something caught my eye. It looked to be glass and I thought maybe one of those floating glass balls. I had to climb up a few feet, up some piled up lava rock on the shore. NOPE turned out just to be a junk bottle. So I headed back to the sandy beach. As I climbed down the beach rocks the bottom one rolled and I fell onto the sand.



My leg landed on the sand, BUT a big rock landed on my ankle and broke it. In time my buddy returned with the deer and found me. He helped me get up and sit on a rock. I got hungry and reached in my pocket to get something to eat...I found the Opihi shell. OOPS!!!! I gave it to him and said "Please put this BACK for me as I can't walk."

They came to get me in a Boston Whaler instead of a chopper and I suffered all the way back to the Lanai dock and the ride to the hospital. An X-Ray decided the break was too much for them...so with some pain pills and a well wrapped ankle I headed back to O'ahu and to the Kaiser hospital down in Waikiki. You old enough to remember it? The doctor did a great job and in a few months I was back in action. Even took a deer's jaw bone wrapped in Ti leaf back to the "heiau" to make amends with the spirits.

Another story...

Although not a Club hike a number of you have done the Wai'anae hike known as Star Trek. This is its story. My buddy Dan Harmon, also a club member, had been looking at the twin peaks at the southern end of the Wai'anai Pali. It looked too vertical to climb. Then one day on Hobb's Ridge I spotted what might be a way up.

Dan and I and a few other West siders started to find a way to the top. It took about a month to spot the path. There were cliffs to climb, narrow sections to brave without ropes. The higher we got the less we saw signs that people had been there. No junk along the path, no "cut" branches from someone trying to find their way. So on the 4th of July in 2007 we reached the top. It was just the four of us. Dan, myself, Jean T, and Mike. Mike, much younger by at least 15 years, trail blazed the last 200 feet or so. When we reached the top we needed a name for the trail. Since we saw NO sign of anyone having been there we decided on **Star Trek**, WHERE NO MAN HAD GONE BEFORE.



About

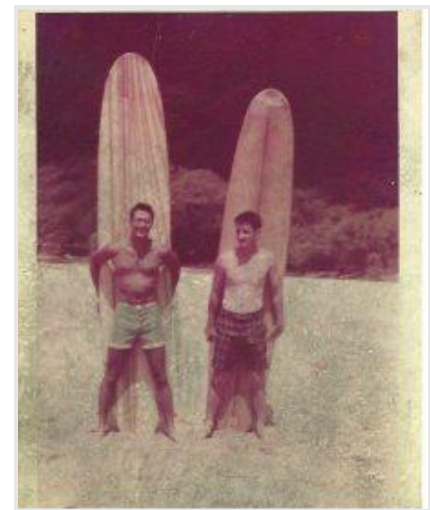
L. Steve Rohrmayr



I was born in the Bronx, but grew up in Brooklyn. I had a little outdoor experience as a kid as my uncle had four acres of wooded land a few hours north of the "city". We spent every summer there for many years. I graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School, one of the top rated schools in the nation. There I studied electronics.

In 1962 I joined the Navy and because of my high school education in electronics I was told that after boot camp I would go to the Navy's A School to become an Electronic Technician. Thanks to high school I breezed through the Navy school and upon graduation I was sent to Hawai'i to be stationed at the Pearl Harbor Communications Station. Wow, was I surprised after arriving here. The next day they loaded me and a few other guys into a bus and we took off for who knows where.

We drove out the gate, north on Kamehameha Hwy. Past Aiea, Pearl City, soon there were sugar cane fields on both sides of the road. As we gained elevation the sugar turned into fields of pineapples. Where the heck were we going? Pearl Harbor was in the other direction. Well after driving through Wahiawa and across the narrow bridge we turned right and found a Navy base WAY up there. It was the receiver site for the Navy and altitude was needed for the high frequency reception of information. This was way before satellites and micro chips. I spent one and a half years there where I learned to surf the north shore (without a leash). We did more swimming than surfing back then. LOL



That's me on the left of the surf picture

I was transferred to the transmitter site at Lualualei for another one and a half years. Yup, four years and never went on a ship. But I fell in love with Hawai'i and have been here ever since. After the Navy I worked at the ShipYard for a while and after getting married to a school teacher on the west side I began using the GI Bill and went to Leeward Community College first and later to the UH at Manoa to graduate as a Social Studies teacher. I was hired at Wai'anāe High School and did 30 years there, retiring in 2004. I guess now you know my life story. LOL