

When we planned this trip with our 3 daughters and their families, we were very excited. We would be returning to one of our favorite places on earth, Hawaii. We had not been there since 1999, the year we moved into our new home at Holly Lake Ranch. This soon would have been a nine year absence from The Islands that we used to visit at least once or twice a year.

During my wife's 20 year career with American Express Travel, she specialized in "selling Hawaii", and bragged that everyone returned happy and seldom did she hear a complaint about the wonderful welcome received there or the overall experience. The problem was that after her retirement, we no longer had the personal discounts and "deals" that we had received as American Express Travel employees, so we just enjoyed the resort like experience of the Ranch, and started a newspaper.

Meanwhile, 911 occurred and we had the constantly rising price of oil, both of which completely changed the cost of travel to far away places, so we put off our "return to paradise". Our children, however, were quite persuasive about wanting to do a return "family style" and, we started planning a trip in early 2007, at least a year before it would happen. Naturally it would have to be a Spring Break trip because of our grandkids involvement in three different school districts, Royse City, Frisco and Highland Village, Texas.

All three daughters had a love of the islands from their younger years when they would travel there with us. In fact, our oldest daughter, Holly, had her wedding on the island of Kauai in the 1980's. The middle daughter, Elizabeth went conventional with hers, which was in Rockwall, our home, and the younger. Christy was married in Key West in 2001.

Back to the story; we got home to the Ranch shortly after 2 AM Monday morning, (yesterday) and I am still "jet lagged" as I prepare the new Gazette. As we all have heard, "we must pay for play" and I am paying.

The only thing about the trip that was unpleasant was the travel itself. We had not traveled by air since before 911 in 2001. As you know, much has changed with the new security requirements and since we had agreed to a "lowest fare deal", we had to change planes and airlines in Las Vegas, both going and coming back.

It was quite traumatic, with multiple security experiences (taking off shoes, belts, etc.) and long runs through a crowded Las Vegas airport trying to make the connections. We made them and it was more than worth the effort for the Hawaiian experience, which has not changed, and of course, the joy of being with our family. W.C.