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President's Report - February 2025

Nolan Ahn, PAK President



FEELING THE COLD

I just got back from a trip to Hokkaido Island, Japan last Wednesday. The following day, I boarded a plane to Honolulu to attend a friend’s mother’s 100th birthday party. The trip to Japan was a bucket list adventure with a friend without our wives. The wives opted out when we told them we were planning a trip to the northernmost island in Japan in the coldest month of the year to visit the Ice and Snow Festival in Sapporo. “Too cold” they both said and sent us on our merry way as roommates on a tour. We rode snowmobiles, fished in frozen lakes, went out on an ice breaker ship in the midst of the famous drift ice, which wasn’t there. But high waves brought us back to shore as soon as we left the harbor. We had fabulous meals, and visited many places that we had seen in the summer, but were now covered in powdery snow. We love visiting Japan, and the good conversion rate from US Dollars to Yen makes it all the more fun. There is great value for Americans in Japan, but unfortunately, not so great for Japanese coming to Hawaii, their favorite vacation spot. Undoubtedly, things will turn and currency exchanges will shift, but for now, we are happy to go there as often as we can. Our last trip, just a few months ago was to the island of Shikoku. We went with a small group of friends and hoped for a very custom tour involving only 6 people. Things changed, and we ended up traveling with 3 other couples from Hawaii and the mainland which turned out great. We never found out from the tour operator what happened, but the new friends we made were truly amazing and really enhanced the experience. One thing about going to Japan, we have learned is it is essential to have a good bilingual tour guide. On that tour, our guide was charming, pretty, polite and attentive, but her English was very difficult to understand.

Our evaluation of the tour was that it aced every category except for the guide's ability to communicate with the tour participants. We will be very careful going forward with subsequent tours with this company.

Why do I mention this? I am reminded that our Pickleball Association is also subject to the evaluation and criticism of everyone we come into contact with. We developed early on the "Standards of Behavior" for conduct on the pickleball courts and try to apply those rules outside of pickleball. We try to treat all we meet with respect and decency. We maintain our humility easily because we have humble beginnings starting three years ago with a zero sum treasury to where we now have almost \$50,000 in our war chest. Once we obtain our building site through our countless inquiries, we will need much more, and we hope to have built our reputation for success where people and organizations will support us in raising the millions we need for building the facility. We know that pickleball is gaining traction by the hundreds of new people playing it, the facilities that are being built by our County, and the completion of courts by the Kauai Police Activity League next to Chiefess Kamakahahei School. Just last night, we visited a renovated warehouse where the owner wants to put up a pickleball court for night play. We are supporting the owner's efforts. Wailua Houselots court is pau, Wailua Homesteads and Hanapepe renovations will begin soon, and talks are underway for Kekaha, Waimea, and Nawiliwili Park facilities. We have been watching with interest the opening of a private pickleball indoor facility on Fort Street Honolulu, and the largest tournament to ever be held in April with 700+ registrants at the Hawaii Convention Hall.

So, whenever we don't get a call back from someone who is in a position to grant us a site, or we are scoffed at for our lofty ambitions, I think of where we have been, and where we are now, and layer up with warm clothes for Sapporo-like weather, and appreciate our 66 degree weather when we got back to Kauai. Frankly, I was colder on Kauai than in Japan. When I got back, I had to bust out the heavy blankets for the cold evening. Surely I can weather a cold shoulder here and there.

Until next month,
Nolan





Previous Month's President's Reports and Photos

Jan '25

Jan '24 Feb '24 Mar '24 Apr '24 May '24 Jun '24

Jul '24 Aug '24 Sep '24 Oct '24 Nov '24 Dec '24

Jan '23 Feb '23 Mar '23 Apr '23 May '23 Jun '23

Jul '23 Aug '23 Sep '23 Oct '23 Nov '23 Dec '23

Jan '22 Feb '22 Mar '22 Apr '22 May '22 Jun '22

Jul '22 Aug '22 Sep '22 Oct '22 Nov '22 Dec '22