

Lord Haw-Ha

Many, many thanks to Captain Chad Kalapea Baybayan for setting the record straight in this article. As an opinion, of all the articles read to date on the new Honolulu Star-Advertiser this particular article will go down as bordering on a masterpiece of goodwill. The late Pius Mau Piailug attempted to unify rather than divide, we find ourselves distanced by political and geographical ideologies, national and nationalistic boundaries which are not visible from space. Hawaiian National the late Israel Kamakawiwole said onetime some words to the effect: "There is only one race people.... the human race. "May we always remember with pride Mau's passion for building bridges instead of walls, wishing his 'ohana the fortitude to bear their sad loss, and harmony always in the knowledge Pius Mau Piailug's legacy will stand as an iconic beacon of light in Hawai'i nei. May he rest in peace.

Waimea Cowboy

When you are reminded of this your eyes open to the cruel ignorance behind the Akaka Bill, which seeks to divide us.
Imua!

Ken Conklin 2 days ago

Thanks to Chad Baybayan for an outstanding, inspirational essay. For those who might not know: Mr. Baybayan is one of the ten people (along with Nainoa Thompson) who were given the title "master navigator" by Mau Piailug in a sacred ceremony on Satawal in March 2007.

My dear friend Kumu Kawena (Professor Emerita Rubellite Kawena Johnson) once gave a speech at the Heritage Foundation in Washington D.C. in which she spoke a sentence capturing the spirit of Mau Piailug and reiterated in this essay by Chad Baybayan: a sentence I have embraced as my own expression of who we all are: I am an indigenous person of this Earth.

tom

te na koe tau korero rangatira e hoa Chad, ko nga iwi o te Moana Nui a Kiwa he kotahi whanau. engari before every man and his dog jumps into our waka, as you and every captain knows there are certain tikanga disciplines necessary for every successful voyage, i remember Eddie saying you cant fool the ocean, Mau's memory is the best preparation for the future stormy weather' facing his mokopuna. all the best, look forward to see you at Kualoa. nga Manaaki tr ngawaka

mommatried

I like this. We are one people. I am an indigenous person of the earth.

kapena16 1 day ago

Though I do not know Chad personally, we have some mutual friends and I respect his voice, his statements, and his counsel as I would any person with his knowledge and background.

Chad points out a concept that has for many years been forgotten by most people here in Hawaii and the rest of the world. The 'ancient' voyagers that sailed the pacific ocean centuries ago, never saw themselves as "Micronesian or Polynesian or Melanesian" or any other label. They sailed the waters of their home and beyond...over the horizon...and did so with a tenacity that European explorers later would be embarrassed by. Pacific navigators were well advanced beyond anything European Navigators ever imagined. Being able to navigate from one place to another (out of sight) over great distances, repeatedly, and without any modern items like a timepiece, paper for maps or written instructions, nor any other type of navigational instrument, is an incredible accomplishment even today.

Simply an amazing feat demonstrating the capacity of the human mind!

As Chad reminds us, Mau was wise even beyond most men to recognize the value and historical importance of not just "sharing" what he knows, but TEACHING what he has learned his whole life.

Finally, the most important lesson he has taught is that men like Chad and Nainoa and the handful of others...must also teach the knowledge and wisdom that Mau has given to them.

Sadly, there are too many people in the world who "keep" their knowledge to themselves as if it were a tool to be used only for them, for their benefit, to hold themselves above others.

Chad can take pride in the fact that he is among the few men in the entire world who not only has the knowledge of a skill used for centuries by a very small and elite group of navigators in the Pacific...but that he also has the wisdom of how valuable that information is and why it is so important to share it with others.

urquhart in reply to kapena16

Sadly, there are too many people in the world who 'keep' their knowledge to themselves as if it were a tool to be used only for them, for their benefit, to hold themselves above others."

In addition to Inouye's earmarks for your sailing club, justified as a way of "helping at-risk and disabled youth," how much are you guys knocking down annually from state and federal taxpayers? Please, guys; don't "keep" this information as a tool to be used only for your own benefit, to hold yourselves above others. SHARE! After all, we're just one big Ohana, right?

chad baybayan in reply to urquhart

Have you been denied access to any of the voyaging organizations? I am not aware of any voyaging group that is "knocking down" any dollars from State or Federal agencies annually. In cases where grants

were awarded, it has been through a competitive process, reviewed by a out of state reviewers. Why don't you volunteer with one of the voyaging groups as all of us do and learn as I did, through hands on involvement, and building trust, usually sharing comes after some investment of time, it might soothe your bitterness. If your intentions are to mock efforts at helping at risk youth and disabled youth of all races, our community centric movement does not need your involvement.

urquhart in reply to chad baybayan

Nice try, Chad. As you well know, Congressional earmarks are NOT subject to competitive bidding. Nor are they "reviewed." I doubt that any amount of jawboning the topic would result in any light shed upon your club's funding sources. Since watching the launching of the Hokule'a at Kualoa in early 1975, I've followed some of the events over the years --- including the anti-haole outburst in Tahiti during its maiden voyage. (Mau departed your ranks in a rather sober mood of disenchantment, as I recall.) No matter. Mau was a splendid navigator of generous spirit. And your own VOLUNTEER efforts are to be commended.

But large projects such as those undertaken by your groups are viewed by some as little more than the continued search for "connection" with a past that is forever romanticized and only rarely scrutinized. Case in point: While undoubtedly some navigators wonderfully succeeded in discovering new islands, no records reveal to us how many hundreds, perhaps thousands, were lost at sea in the attempt. And I hardly think the old European societies celebrating the accomplishments of Ferdinand Magellan and James Cook would suffer any "embarrassment" by any comparison. They weren't exactly slouches. Without, I might add, being trailed over the horizon by a modern, steel-hulled chase ship equipped with modern communications and navigational devices, Just In Case

chad baybayan in reply to urquhart

What you refer to is a single earmark provided the voyaging society last year, what I refer to are the other competitive grants that we have competed for, and I am not just referring to the Polynesian Voyaging Society as there are many other productive voyaging groups in the state serving their communities. In your assertion of more hidden "ear marks", I encourage you to investigate what you assert, it is clearly obvious that you do not possess the investigative energies to do so. Yes, Mau was disenchanted with our first attempt but you fail to mention that we found ways to resolve those issues and become better people, Mau's return to help us is an example of his ability to rise above, forgive, and make better, a lesson you have yet to learn. Your hint at our choice of sailing with an escort boat as being something less than dishonorable, we do so conscientiously learning from a mistake that cost us one of our crew members, something we are not committed to doing so again irregardless of ignorant banter. Your estimation of how much natives were lost in the search for new islands may be correct as know one knows that and I would assume that there were a few that did not succeed, similar to the many instances of those that met their demise upon the oceans even with access to navigational instruments. I certainly applaud the efforts of European explorers, they were hardy individuals, I do not applause their abuses of native peoples.

I challenge you to write a letter to the editor with your true feelings about this and to also highlight your personal efforts to make the community a better place for all, it would require some bravery and honesty on your part as you would need to sign your name, do you have that in you?

urquhart in reply to chad baybayan

To respond to some of your points:

"Competitive grants?" Chad, why not simply publish a financial statement on appropriate websites, CLEARLY showing the sources of your funding and the amounts --- for instance, any "grants" coming from so-called "stimulus funds?" What other grants? For how much?

"Lessons learned ..." Chad, I'm not a touchy-feely guy, and having learned early on that dissenting voices are not suffered gladly by most islanders I've known, I'll pass on commenting about Mau's motives or rumored 'spirituality.' Yours, too, for that matter.

"Escort boat." Would this resemble a "steel-hulled, modern vessel, equipped with modern navigational and communications devices, as well as on-board medical personnel?" Canoeing for recreation is a wonderful, healthy activity. But the record books are becoming heavier with the number of American and foreign youngsters who have completely circumnavigated the globe in SOLO performance as teenager, WITHOUT the aid of these "escort boats," as you refer to them. Now THAT'S seamanship!

"I do not applaud their abuses of native peoples." Me, neither. Neither do I applaud the abuses of native peoples by native rulers. Ah, but were it not for such abuses and atrocities as, for one example, the investiture of the Marae Teaputa Tairi, in which hundreds of slaves (there's that word!) were slaughtered, and their bodies lined up on the beach so that the feet of the High Chief would not have to touch the earth --- then many of those ancestral navigators would not have been forced to flee into The Darkness, there to discover such navigational symbols as Arcturus and Sirius or ... others which ultimately took them to undiscovered islands where they would eventually lose in their isolation what you and others are seeking to reclaim, for whatever reason ---and for whatever value.

"Write a letter to the editor. Sign your name. Do you have that in you?" Chat lines exist essentially for readers to respond candidly without the vilification that often follows such open exchange. Participant anonymity usually produces a lively exchange. This is a Chat line. Even so, most writers I've read on these forums have shown civility. Sarcasm and satirical comments to be sure. But isn't that to be expected?

Let me stress that, while I think canoeing is a very worthwhile activity, I don't think large scale devotion to canoeing as a means of

transportation ---- or as a means for individual social glorification ---- is worthy of public support by scarce taxpayer funds.

chadkbaybayan in reply to urquhart

I commend your consistency, I wish you and your articulate bitterness well, in our culture and most others, introducing and identifying yourself is more than a human courtesy, more than a prerequisite for any serious discourse, it demonstrates that you are proud of yourself and the people and family you represent. I understand the fear of vilification, best for you to hide in anonymity. I wish you a better end than your two hero's Cook and Magellan. The challenge still stands, but I am confident you don't have it in you.

urquhart 4 hours ago in reply to chadkbaybayan

Chad, I'm not in desperate need either of your approval or your commendation. What you characterize as "bitterness" is, in the grandest Western tradition, merely an exercise in legitimate inquiry. I've asked for the public disclosure of your canoe club's finances; whether and how much is provided by taxpayer revenues. You have refused to do so. I have indeed questioned any comparison of your own canoe trips --- ACCOMPANIED BY MODERN CHASE VESSELS --- to the voyages made, UNACCOMPANIED, into the unknown by SOME of your Polynesian antecedents. (And, of course, the teenage sailors who have circumnavigated the globe without the kind of support you require.) While Magellan and Cook are no particular "heroes" of mine; neither, for that matter are those seeking warm succor and cultural validation in calling themselves "Master Navigators." Whence this title, Chad? Apart from your Canoe Club, which duly constituted maritime society accredits such a term? Apart from your Canoe Club, can you cite certifications from the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy or even the Merchant Marine as the source for your titles? Another thing: I am neither PROUD nor ASHAMED of my racial and ethnic origins. I had absolutely NOTHING to do with them. I happen to be an American by birth, and often by choice.

Finally, I extend to you the same well wishes with precisely the same

sincerity you have extended them to me, and to precisely the same extent.

ProtoT

Nainoa Thompson spoke to me a bit about how the knowledge of navigation was lost and how through the people of other island nations like Hawaii came together to keep the tradition of seafaring alive. He stated that it would have been impossible to make the voyages without the help of individuals like Mau Piailug because the cultural knowledge was lost here in Hawaii. This story speaks of the togetherness and the unity of culture that many people of the islands share: Hawaiian, Tahitian, Maori, Samoan, Micronesian, and so on.

This story also demonstrates how far many have moved forward, away from their cultural practices, their way of life. Hawaiians are finding ways to reconnect with their past, their culture; a group of peaceful people forced to accept a way of life that was never theirs. However, we can see from this story that there is a reclamation of cultural practices with help from other indigenous people of the Pacific.

Let us celebrate the togetherness of one people by honoring our own cultural identities and the culture of these islands, the Hawaiian culture.

Reader808

Thank you, Master Navigator Baybayan

davetakaki

Ma luna a□e o nā lāhui a pau ke ola ke kanaka
Above all nations is humanity

alice18

We are all oine in God. We need leaders like this blessed man. We

have way too many spinning lies to divide people by, race, history and culture.

alice18

Nainoa is one of the few I, as a UH undergraduate, can look up to. I heard him speak and he really understands the power of all of us to work together. He is mainly haole and a descendant of Sanford Dole. He stands for the best of our islands.

teikiheepo

Our ohana had the great privilege of knowing this humble man. One of the best times we had was in 1992 to 1993 when my husband Tava was Mau's apprentice building the koa canoe Mau loa. Mau was not a politician. He was a teacher of an almost lost art of navigation that he chose to share with us so that those like me who was not raised in our Hawaiian culture could start to learn and be proud of who I am. Not only did he share his gift of navigation, but this man shared everything he had. He had so many gifts. Mau was caring, loving, funny and a complete joy to be with.

Chad capture the essence of what Mau is and will always be

teikiheepo

Mahalo Chad for your lovely tribute to Mau. I think you spoke for most of us who were fortunate to have know and loved Mau.

My ohana was blessed in 1992 to 1993 to be involved in a project where Mau was the master canoe maker and my husband Tava was his apprentice. For almost 2 years Mau and sometimes his family, lived with us as part of our family. I didn't learn about navigating but was lucky enough to be in the pressence of a very humble man who thought me without paper, pencils or books, what culture is and acceptance of all peoples.

Mau was not a politician. So for those who chose to interject politics into Chad's tribute it is certainly your right, but that was not Mau. What he was to us was a gentle, quiet, highly intelligent, generous man who helped us regain the parts of our culture that we lost and enabled us to move forward. His numerous contribution to Hawaii will not truly be know because his gifts to us are still being counted as we continue to define who we are as a people and our connections with our international ohana.

A hui ho our frien