

What Do The Pictures Below Have In Common?

Feb. 4, 2014



Blenny In Maui Tide Pool



Charlemagne



HIPPO



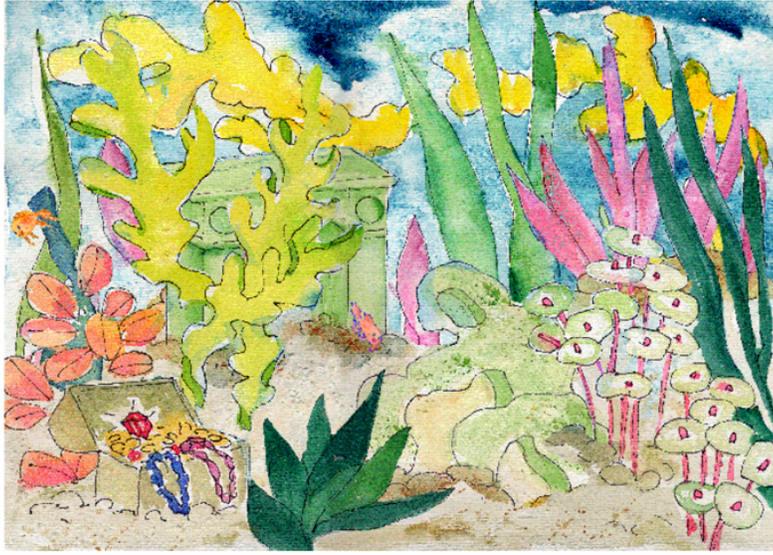
Maine

Dolphin Pooping

YouTube



GALAPAGOS LAND IGUANA



GAMES



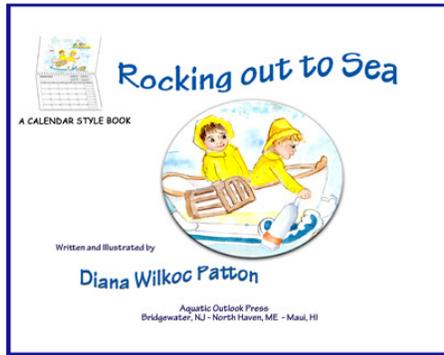
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FROGS IN MY POND



Wally The Goldfish



One of My Bookcovers



Fave the Pinto Deer



My Painting "Galapagos Fauna"



My Interests

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR MY NEWEST BLOG ENTRIES OR CLICK ON THE ABOVE PICTURES FOR MORE INFORMATION!!

The pictures above illustrate things I am interested in. Oh, okay, these are things I am pretty much obsessed by. (I apologize for ending not not one, but two sentences, in a preposition...did you really want 'These are all things in which I'm interested'?)

Some of these subjects I'll discuss at various times in this, my first blog site. But I will also discuss writing and illustrating picture books, painting, especially watercolor painting, and teaching watercolor painting. Travel also. Whenever I can save up some money I travel. Hence the handsome land iguana from the Galapagos, above, and the cute little blenny from Maui. Our oldest son and his wife live there, so I'm always saving to go travel there.

Oooooops! Not supposed to blog about family much. You probably care less about my particulars (that sounds vaguely naughty), but you might care about some of the other topics I'll discuss.

I am fascinated by life...aren't you? And I'm guilty of being fascinated with my own life. Truly. I think of my life as a rich tapestry.....the problem is as I'm creating this tapestry I drop a heck of a lot of stitches. My warf and my woof or whatever is a bit out of kilter. And sometimes I need to mend the holes in my tapestry, which is not always possible.

How's your life going? Mending any holes? Adding new colors?

Let's explore together.

Lahaina March 7, 2014

Lahaina! Lahaina is a great little town for walking around because its waterfront varies from little beaches to slips choc-a-bloc with small tour boats and exploratory zodiac rafts. The land part is user friendly with a combination of historic buildings, art galleries, shops and restaurants, and Banyan Tree Park. Once Lahaina was the whaling capital of the world as well as the former capital of the Kingdom of Hawai'i. It's all so picturesque, so charming, that you want to sit on a corner, set out your watercolors, and paint. The colorful buildings, the vibrant flowers and exuberant vines are only overshadowed by tall rustling palms. Yes, it is crowded withtourists....and rightly so, but because there are so many happy faces you don't really mind any crowds.



Telephone booths, Lahaina, Maui

Listen, even the telephone booths are charming (yes, there are still phone booths around).

Banyan Tree Park is the place to meet up after looking at galleries, shopping, whale watching, etc. because there are not only lots of benches, the tree itself is fascinating to study and people-watching is fun. Yes, I said "tree", because this Banyan tree came as an 8' youngster from India in 1873 and has since grown itself about a dozen trunk sprouts, so that the one tree, although only about 50' high, has spread out 200' or so and spans 2/3 of the park. You think you are looking at many trees. It is fantastic! The old courthouse is also in the park, with two art galleries (one of which is in the old jailhouse), along with a souvenir shop, and a small theater which continually runs historic films (for free). One weekend a month the Lahaina Art Gallery members, artists and fine crafts workers, exhibit there. As well as a photo of the tree and park taken now, I include one from 2012 because I was there at Christmas time and just wanted to show part of the center trunks lit up for Christmas, although there are certainly white lights other times.



Banyan Tree Park February 2014



the Banyan Tree at Christmas time

Shop and gallery exteriors are often painted in bright or pastel colors; I show one with a cage holding a cotton Macaw to advertise its presence. Also there is a photo of the Baldwin Home. This is great to explore and your (relatively cheap) ticket to do this also allows you to visit the Wo Hing Temple as well. The Baldwin Home, built in 1834 and the oldest surviving building in Lahaina, was built of stone, wood, and.....CORAL. Reverend Dwight Baldwin and his family lived there. He was a minister but also had his medical office there and his implements are there as well. The children's room is cute and what's also interesting is that a lot of the cooking for the household was done outdoors behind the home. As for the Wo Hing Templ, this interesting piece of architecture includes art and artifacts; it is a colorful building which once served a the social center for the Chinese who had migrated to work in the sugar cane fields.



Macaw at store front in Lahaina



Ginger plant flowers

Art galleries abound. One of my absolute favorites (as well as the ones in the old courthouse) is the Village Art Gallery, on Dickinson Street, maybe ½ block behind the Baldwin Home. There are special exhibits up front but their stable of artists also permanently exhibit beautiful work in the really large gallery. I was wowed by George Allan's impressionist oils, Kathleen Alexander's large floral watercolors, and Lian Quan Zhen's fantastic watercolors of tropical fish and corals. They also have art jewelry and cards, as well as giclee prints. I had purchased a lovely collage card only to find after that the woman I was speaking with is Lynn, the owner and she had created it. (www.villagegalleriesmaui.com)

I also enjoyed walking along the waterfront where I embarked on the zodiac raft trips I took whale watching. Longer snorkeling trips to Molokini Crater leave from the Ma'alaea waterfront, near the Maui Ocean Center (the Aquarium).



The Baldwin Home

The Lovely Honu March 12, 2014



Warming up

The lovely Honu

Hooray for Hawaii's sea turtles! In particular, hooray for the honu, the green sea turtles I love to hang out with on Maui, or off Maui, as the case may be. I could write a lot about them, and maybe I will some day, but I really want to show you these photos I took on this trip. Three times a sea turtle came up on Hale Maui's small sandy beach while I was there....once to bask in the warm noonday sun, and twice at twilight, to rest after swimming and eating algae on the rocks just off the beach underwater. Always, everyone is glad to see a sea turtle. But you shouldn't get too near them, to bother their rest. They won't hurt you, but they might feel a bit threatened when beach walkers come close and take lots of close-ups (that's what a zoom lens is for). They are cold blooded animals and do enjoy warming up in the sun, even though Maui's waters are fairly comfortable, usually in the seventies. And they enjoy a rest. It might be tiring, that continual scraping of algae off the rocks to feed their vegetarian diet.



Sea turtle basks on Hale Maui's sandy beach

Oh, did you know green sea turtles are called that because their fat is green (from the algae), not because they are green. They are sort of gray or gray green, as you can see.

Speaking of algae, sometimes when you snorkel you can see some of the fishes cleaning algae and/or parasites off the back of the honu. In fact some cleaner fish have cleaning stations and honu and some larger fish go to be cleaned.



Incoming tide!

One of the most fascinating books having to do with animals of any kind is *The Book of Honu* by Peter Bennett and Ursula Keuper-Bennett, copyright 2008U. of Hawaii Press. They have studied Maui's honu for many years; in fact they had made over 2500 dives studying over 750 honu by the time the book was written. I so enjoyed the tales of the honu they told and their photography is magnificent. And guess what? They were living (for half of the year) and studying right in Honokawai, between Hale Maui's beach and Kapalua. In fact, I snorkeled where they snorkeled. We had to have seen some of the same turtles.



Hatchling at Maui Ocean Center (the Aquarium)

Of course when you are snorkeling, sometimes one swims right by you, or comes up and stares at you, and then goes back to grazing for algae. What a thrill! Most of the honu I saw close-up ranged between two to four feet in circumference. The sea turtles migrate great distances—many of these females will swim to small islands, or islets, off the coast of Hawaii, far away...to nest. They'll return to mate and graze and play to Maui (or Oahu, etc). Sometimes some females will nest on Maui, but I've not yet been fortunate enough to see this (I have, in the Galapagos).



Green sea turtle rest on ocean bottom, Kapalua Bay



Coming up for a breath of air



Sea turtle basks on Hale Maui's sandy beach

Maui Tropical Plantation March 22, 2014

Maui Tropical Plantation



Maui Tropical Plantation



Kumu Farms



Pineapple Cutter

Cveta, my daughter-in-law, has her own business Cveta Designs (<http://www.cvetadesigns.com/> Fine Floral Artistry), which she started last year, but she also works part-time at Kumu Farms, which is part of Maui Tropical Plantation (<http://www.kumufarms.com/> and <http://www.mauitropicalplantation.com/>) Michael and I spent an afternoon exploring the whole set-up with Cveta's guidance. 60 acres to explore, so we only made a start, but I was so impressed—with the beauty of the set-up, the originality, and the different shops as well as the landscaping. You can see a number of photos here, but they don't do the plantation justice. I could have included the ducks and other birds, all the flowers, and more of the pond and stream. Sculptures, windmills, fountains, and more are created by using parts from the old pineapple and sugar cane production companies. It's quite amazing. And gents....if your wives or sweethearts want to shop....you can sit and relax on benches around the pond or elsewhere and just enjoy the scenery (or eat, or try the zipline, or take the tram around the plantation).



Kumu Farms bouquets



Me at Kumu Farms



Taro plants and shops, Maui Tropical Plantation



Sculpture in fountain

“When Kumu Farms first broke ground on Moloka‘i in 1981, the Ag Park was largely open grassland, with two startup farms along the road. The ‘Aina (the land) was yearning, a 4” standpipe provided the Wai (water), and a youthful vision of a productive future took root. The first great efforts involved creating windbreaks, installing irrigation systems, and believing in the ideal of the old-fashioned farm—independent, self-sustaining, and healthy. This idea was made manifest in the original mandala layout.” So much of the fresh organic veggies come directly from their huge farm on Molokai. A specialty is the Sunrise/Strawberry Papaya—yummy! But I also had to get such great products as Coconut candy, and Chocolate Chickpea candy, and more.



Vicki and Steve in their shop Moku Pua

Another fun place to shop there is Moku Pua—this Hawaiian phrase means “Island Flower” and I just had to buy some of their products—the fragrant creams, the bath bombs—you put one in your bath and it fizzes up and leaves your skin so soft . I spoke with Vicki and Steve, the couple who create the soaps, fragrances, skin cream—you can see their story by going to <http://vimeo.com/81065414> and it’s quite fascinating. All of their products are made by them, in small batches with food grade ingredients, natural and organic. The fragrances—oh, my! My favorites—pineapple coconut, plumeria, and mango-lilikoi.



West Maui Mountains beyond Maui Tropical Plantation



Gazebo & Lagoon, Maui Tropical Plantation

It's a great way to spend a relaxing day, and if you want to sit and sketch, or paint—by the lagoon or gazebo or the shops themselves, you'll be extra creative as well.

I have to mention the most fantastic flowering vine—Jade vine—it blooms in February and the flowers are an unusual shape and an unique turquoise color. They are literally like no other flower I've ever seen, tropical or otherwise. Native to the Philippines, the Jade vine was imported and thrives on Maui, where the flowers are often used in leis. A stalk of flowers can reach over five feet in length.



The beautiful Jade Vine blossoms

The Plantation is open daily from 9AM – 5pm. 1670 Honoapi'ilani Hwy, Wailuku

Maui Ocean Center March 29, 2014



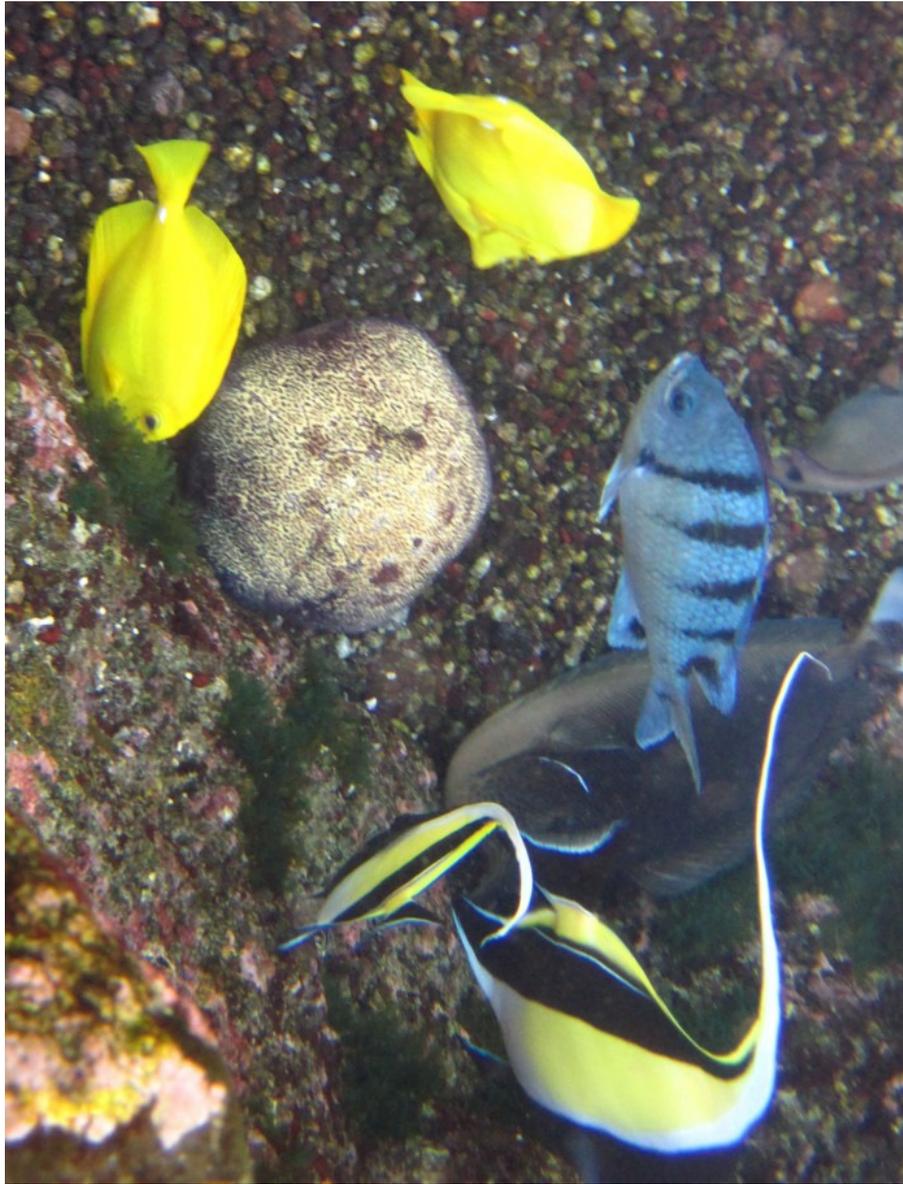
Dolphin Sculptures at Maui Ocean Center



Commersons Frogfish

Maui Ocean Center

The Maui Ocean Center is Maui's wonderful aquarium. I have long been a member of this fine aquarium, which is unique in the aquarium world, because, and I quote from their brochure "**All of the marine life you will encounter is from Hawaiian waters:** the corals, the fishes, the plant-life, everything." Although ocean naturalists are available and make presentations at the Living Reef, Turtle Lagoon, Hammerhead Harbor, Tide Pool (where you can carefully touch some of the creatures), and Open Ocean, there are no shows, no animal "performances". Everything is very natural. The animals are pretty much in their native environments, with plenty of room (for that reason there are no dolphins at the center as they require more space).



Surge Pool: yellow tang, Hawaiian major, Moorish Idols

My favorite parts are the reef surge zone pool (which is outside) and the Living Reef, which encompasses a whole building of many different tanks, and you can enjoy and study everything from gorgeous tropical fishes to moray eels, flounders, an octopus, different shrimp, different coral formations, etc. I literally spend hours there. Then when I snorkel I see many of the fishes I've just studied and they seem like old friends. The labeling system and information boards are unbelievably helpful.



Squirrelfish

The aquarium encompasses several acres, with several buildings housing huge tanks, and outside, in lushly landscaped acres, we find Turtle Lagoon, Hammerhead Harbor, and the Tide Pool, as well as a delightful food center, where the tables are set under cover from the sun and you can enjoy delicious wraps, salads, snacks, and more. As well as Turtle Lagoon, there is always a huge tank with a couple of hatchlings; the aquarium works hard to rescue and rehabilitate turtles. I've been fortunate to be present at the monthly weigh in and measurement of these darling young turtles.

The view from the aquarium is of Ma'alaea Harbor and the boats docked there (quite a few boats as most snorkeling tours to Molokini, Turtletown, and Lanai start from Ma'alaea). In one of the largest buildings there are several interesting rooms about Hawaiians and their relationship with the sea; you can see the way they originally fished, their tools, and more. Often there are tables set up with Hawaiians working at a native craft. A section on the humpback whale includes a moving facsimile of their infamous "bubble nets", demonstrating how whales come together to trap herrings and other small fishes, by cooperating and creating bubble nets. For a splendid video of this phenomenon you can go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJvfjiCTvq4> Of course there is a "theater, or small grandstands in front of the gigantic ocean tank where you can just sit and observe (or listen to a naturalist talk) and an acrylic tunnel where you can see sharks, rays, and other fishes swim around you and overhead. The guide map and brochure which comes with your ticket opens wide to show you an Identification Guide of many of the creatures; those endemic to Hawaii are starred. There is also an audio guide available.



Turtle Hatchlings and my reflection taking their photo

The gift shop is splendid. Allow lots of time if you are interested in Hawaii and its marine life. Or perhaps you want some food delicacies from Maui...or jewelry...or CDs or books on any number of subjects having to do with Hawaii. Their large children's book section is of special interest to me. And yes, there are also the usual aquarium temptations as well, stuffed animals, tee shirts, cards, glassware, sculptures, and even some musical instruments. This is a great place to purchase souvenirs for those back home!



Open Ocean Tank

A Zagat Survey for the U.S. Family Guide said that the Maui Ocean Center was “voted Hawaii’s top-rated family attraction”, and I can see why. The interesting thing is, because it is so large and spread out, it never feels crowded, and I’ve never even had to wait in line for lunch. I can always easily take photos and I’m always seeing and discovering new things there. After all, Maui Ocean Center is the largest tropical reef aquarium in the Western Hemisphere.

Sunset Pleasures

April 8, 2014



The sunset sea is crimson and lavender



Maui Sunset, looking toward Lanai from Hale Maui



Sunset



Sanderling

One of my absolute favorite things to do on Maui is watch the sunset. I sit on a lounge chair on Hale Maui’s seaside patio where you can see the sand and water just below you, Lanai off the left and Molokai to the right. I bring my journal and a fish I.D. book although mostly I just stare out to sea. I usually have a “sundowner” and macadamia nuts and maybe grape tomatoes, as well. I try to be there for each and every sunset, and find it everlastingly fascinating. No two sunsets are the same and the afterglow is usually more gorgeous than just before the actual sunset.



A salute to the sun setting—blowing the conch shells

What's fun is that the residents of the Pitake and also of Hale Kai (two condos/townhouses), always salute the sunset by blowing on conch shells. Each and every night there are always a few people to perform the ritual. Just at the moment the sun disappears below Lanai, they blow the conch shells facing the sea, then to the left, then with their backs to the sea, then to the right, and finally, again facing the sea. (I have tried blowing the conch and was unsuccessful.) I always applaud them, as do other non-blowers.



Geckos are really cute!



The gecko displays his colors

I also enjoy watching the wildlife—the tiny geckos who are indeed speedy. They perch and look around, but if you go near them, they quickly dart for cover. There are sanderlings who play tag with the wavelets. Often a green sea turtle can be seen grazing for algae on the rocks near shore. Three times there were turtles who needed a rest and came up on the beach, sprawling out to do just that. A few times we sunset watchers were entertained by Girly, a wonderful swimming dog—part German Shepherd, part Rhodesian Ridgeback, and a tiny bit pitbull. Just past twilight a well-lit boat heads out from Lahaina to the far side of Maui.



Girly surveying the scene



Girly enters the sea



Girly out at sea



Watching a resting turtle just before sunset



Twilight Turtle



Could it shine any brighter?



February sunset from Hale Maui

It's a relaxing time, a time for just appreciating the beauty on nature on Maui, and all the sunsets that God has painted. I'm truly grateful for the watching.



Hale Maui's Lamplit Night, Rosy Afterglow

So let my photos be worth more than a thousand words and please enjoy the sunset on Maui, and the sunset outside your own home.



Afterglow at dusk