

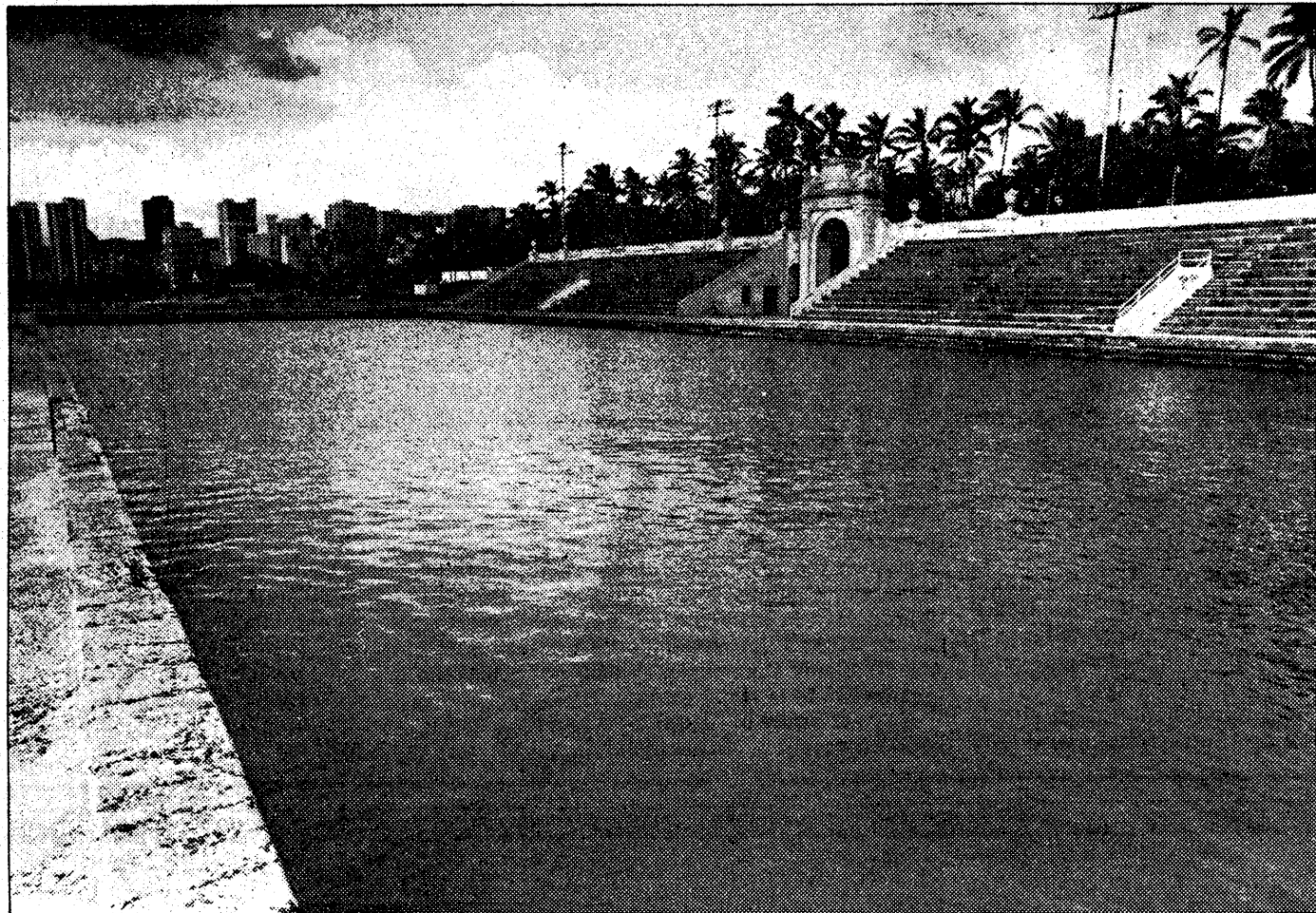
Natatorium provides a faint echo of bygone glories

The crowds are gone from the Honolulu War Memorial Natatorium. The bleachers on the beach at Waikiki are empty and the specially designed salt-water 50 meter pool is full of floating garbage and green muck.

It has been 57 years since 6,000 people gathered there and watched Johnny Weissmuller break the world's record in the 100-meter freestyle. But Weissmuller died several years ago and there are few who remember the pool as it once was and fewer still who care.

The doors leading into the stadium have been broken down by vandals. There is garbage in the decoratively cast concrete entryways to the old locker rooms and the pervading atmosphere is not of athletic competition, but of salt water and human waste.

Two generations have grown up in Honolulu since the



Advertiser photos by Carl Vili



from
the sea
mike markrich

The water in the pool at the natatorium is still except for the gentle ripples created by the winds. And the bleachers, which once held crowds of thousands, are dilapidated and empty.

She remembers going to the Natatorium with her husband to see the trained puffer fish that swam in the pool alongside competitive swimmers. (The puffer was known as "Dynamite" in recognition of its ability to blow smoke rings). Kahanamoku recalls the puffer fish, too, but his most vivid memory of the natatorium occurred in 1927 when he was 17 years old. His brother, Duke Kahanamoku, then one of the world's most famous athletes,

returned to Honolulu to open what many considered the finest swimming structure of its kind in the world.

"It is like the Statue of Liberty," Sarge said of the natatorium. "They should fix it up."

But maintenance has always been a difficulty. In 1929, only two years after it was built, an Advertiser editorial complained that the paint was already peeling and that it looked "like the back end of a South Sea farm." The problem, said sportsman-

author Tommy Holmes, was not only the cost of maintenance but design flaws in the original construction that left the drains clogged and the structure difficult to keep up.

Lillie Mackenzie, 78, who swam competitively in the pool for 10 years for Outrigger Canoe Club, said "she never cared for it in the first place. She said it was poorly lit and,

during swim meets, the water in the pool would surge against the sides and create a backwash that would interfere with her swimming. Mackenzie said the place is now so run down that Hemmings' bill is probably the best solution.

"I hate to see old things go," she said, "but sometimes they have to give way for other things."

stadium was last used during the 1950s. For many it is no more than a familiar ruin — an old place with a ripped fence that some see as beautiful and others as a potential problem.

"It's (the natatorium) a huge liability and huge waste of space" said state Rep. Fred Hemmings. "It is old, dilapidated and unsafe."

Hemmings has introduced a bill that would authorize the state to tear the natatorium down except for the center archway and build a small beach in its place. It is being heard this week by the Water Land Use Development and Hawaiian Affairs Committee.

"I think it's part of a bygone era. Fond memories of the old days are great but the reality is that no one holds swim meets in salt-water pools anymore. Real competition is done in freshwater pools, of which we have an abundance."

Hemmings' plan is based on a 1984 state-funded study by CJS Group Architects which detailed three possible plans for the future of the natatorium. The three alternatives were:

- Destroy the natatorium completely and turn it into a park at a cost of \$6,705,000

with an annual maintenance cost of \$66,000;

- Beach restoration (Hemmings' favorite), which would cost \$4,654,000 with an annual maintenance cost of \$66,000; and

- Restoration, which would cost \$10,985,000 with an estimated annual maintenance cost of \$167,000.

The second alternative was endorsed by city Managing Director Andy Anderson last week as a means of saving a part of the original structure while at the same time increasing the beach area.

But others such as Sarge Kahanamoku, 75, and Mrs. Edric Cook, 80, disagree. They remember when the natatorium was dedicated as a World War I memorial and believe it should be preserved.

"I think it would be a shame to tear it down, we're destroying our history," Cook said. "All we're getting is freeways for our money. Why can't we keep a little history? We tear down everything and cover our memories because we don't want them. Then we go to Europe to see old things. It's nonsense."

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Victoria Custer Elaine Stroup
HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN
AND ADVERTISER
MAR 3 1985

BEN WOOD'S Hawaii

WANNA know why Magaly D'Rovencourt, Kathie Heller, Karen Roche, Dutch Dickenson, Denise Marie Luko, Kelly Ann Hu, Gay Zuercher, Moku Kabana, and Telana Mezurashi were perfectly groomed, coiffed and wearing their Sunday best last Sunday? It's because they managed to get into Tom Selleck's press conference at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, prior to the Variety Club luncheon honoring the "Magnum" star. Pua McGuire, Selleck's new secretary, was also dressed up and looking great. So was Mary Bain, an HHV assistant manager, who stole away from her post to get a close-up look at Selleck. HHV General Manager Serge D'Rovencourt, who was among those to greet Selleck as he entered the conference room, does not plan to court-martial Mary... Selleck's appearance made it possible for the Variety Club to take in about \$45,000 at the luncheon. After expenses, about \$30,000 will go to support Variety Club charities.



Telana

THE NAME Telana Mezurashi is intriguing. She's the HHV catering manager and says,

"My first name is Tahitian and the last is Japanese. I'm Portuguese, French, Spanish, Filipino, English and American Indian and I plan international menus very well." We believe, we believe... The Hilton Village security guards, who will be pushing the Hilton bed in Carole Kai's Bed Race Saturday at Kapiolani Park, better be in good shape. Their opponents in the first race will be the team from Fiji. And the Fijians are training by scampering up and down coconut trees. Barbara Brady of Kai's staff swears it's true. Wendy Watanabe, a hostess in Hilton's Golden Dragon Chinese restaurant, will be in the HHV bed...

TONI LEIMOMI COSTA, Miss Hawaii USA, has a special dance number in the Moana Hotel's Polynesian Revue. The many Japanese tourists in the audience start snapping photos when Tina walks out, slowly and majestically, between two rows of dancers and does the Dance of Tiare very carefully. Her chest is covered by thick white carnation leis and that is all. That's why she's so careful... Another number that can truly be called spectacular is Falaniko Vitale's fire-knife dance. His performance, with two flam-

ing knives, is mesmerizing. Singing host Joe Recca does well in introducing the songs and dances in both English and Japanese and keeps the hour-long show moving swiftly. The authentic and colorful South Pacific costumes worn by the 35-member cast are a plus and the smiling, curvaceous women and muscular, macho male dancers look as if they are enjoying what they are doing. The 25 dancers are backed competently by 10 singer-musicians. Show is produced by Jack and Cha Thompson

THERE'S A YARN in the Feb. 25 *Sports Illustrated* written by Michael Baughman. The author says he was a junior at Punahou in the early 1950s and that during summer vacations he would go to the beach early in the morning at the Outrigger Canoe Club, where he was a member. One day, he said another club member, "a tall, handsome, silver-haired Hawaiian," asked him for a swimming race of about 200 yards. Baughman, a good swimmer, accepted and wrote that he nearly died of exhaustion trying to keep up with the smooth-stroking, 60ish Hawaiian. "Just about even," said the older man at the finish. The story goes on to say that Baughman asked his friend, "Sammy Kauua," who the Hawaiian was. Sammy told him it was Duke Kahanamoku, the former Olympic swimming great... At least that's the way the magazine's story goes.

But in those days Duke was the best-known Hawaiian in the Territory of Hawaii, if not the best-known person in the Territory. Sounds incredible for an Outrigger member and a Punahou student in the '50s not to recognize Kahanamoku. We Roosevelt guys and grads and members of the Makiki Lobsters Poker and Sporting Club (Tim Smythe, Pres.) would have recognized the great Duke...

JOAN KAAUA of the Punahou Alumni office says Baughman is a 1955 Pun grad and former athlete now living in Oregon. She said that the "Kauua" mentioned in the story must be Sammy Kauua Jr., her cousin-in-law and one of Honolulu's finest firefighters, as there is no such name as Kauua. Sammy, reached at the Pawaa Fire Station, said he remembers Baughman but it was so long ago he does not recall the Kahanamoku incident... Kealoha Kalama's Halau, Hula O Pohai Kealoha will hold its annual benefit spring bash Saturday at Bishop Museum's Atherton Hall, 5 to 9:30 p.m. Plenty of food, beer, wine and entertainment will be provided for the \$12.50 ticket price. Call 841-3132 or 847-5206 for tickets...

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David Peterson

David R. Peterson, 79, of Kailua died Sunday in Castle Hospital.

Services will be at 10 a.m. tomorrow at St. Andrew's Cathedral. Friends may call after 9:30 a.m.

Burial will follow at sea off the Outrigger Canoe Club. The family asks that aloha attire be worn.

Mr. Peterson was born in Honolulu.

He is survived by his wife, Louise; a son, David E.K.; a hanai daughter, Peggy D. Templeton; a brother, King Peterson; a sister, Mrs. Harriet Pierce; and a grandson.

Borthwick Mortuary is handling arrangements.