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B-2 THURS., DEC. 17, 1970 HONOLULU ADVERTISER

## Sunset Beach oldtimer low-grades soul-surfers

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they've gone the way of the whole scene. They're psychedelic too.

"THEY'RE UNDER AND over-exposed, they use purple filters and, technically, they're lousy. And they play god-awful music with it. When you're in the business, you see these mistakes, but for some reason the kids like it.

"One fellow last year was selling rock music instead of a good film. But here was the original surf film maker, and as far as I'm concerned he's still the best.

"Hollywood itself is getting worse every year. They pass off a goofy, jerky scene as art, and it's not art at all. The guy behind the camera is just goofy.

"Why, it hurts to see those things. It's like a musician trying to listen to some of the music being played today.

"THAT'S WHY I CAN'T communicate with the kids. They say I'm out of my mind, but I can't listen to anything that's out of tune and I can't look at something that's out of focus.

"I'll classify it with modern art. Modern art is lousy. It's terrible. It's obviously done by people who couldn't paint a horse and make it look like a horse.

"If you challenged many of these artists to paint realistically, they couldn't do it."

MADELINE INTERRUPTED Val with a big smile. "Just an old square, Valentine is. Music is just "Tea for Two" and pictures are real-looking."

Val wiggled his salt-and-pepper eyelashes at his wife, and continued:

"Maybe these soul-surfers and their surfing parallels my thoughts about art and music. They're doing a lot of things that don't seem to mean anything.

"I think that much of the beauty of surfing is lost because of the erratic movements they're going through. In the old days it was a far more graceful thing.

"I know the kids scoff at that, but the older writers, like Jack London, wrote about the Duke and other surfers standing like kings on their surfboards.

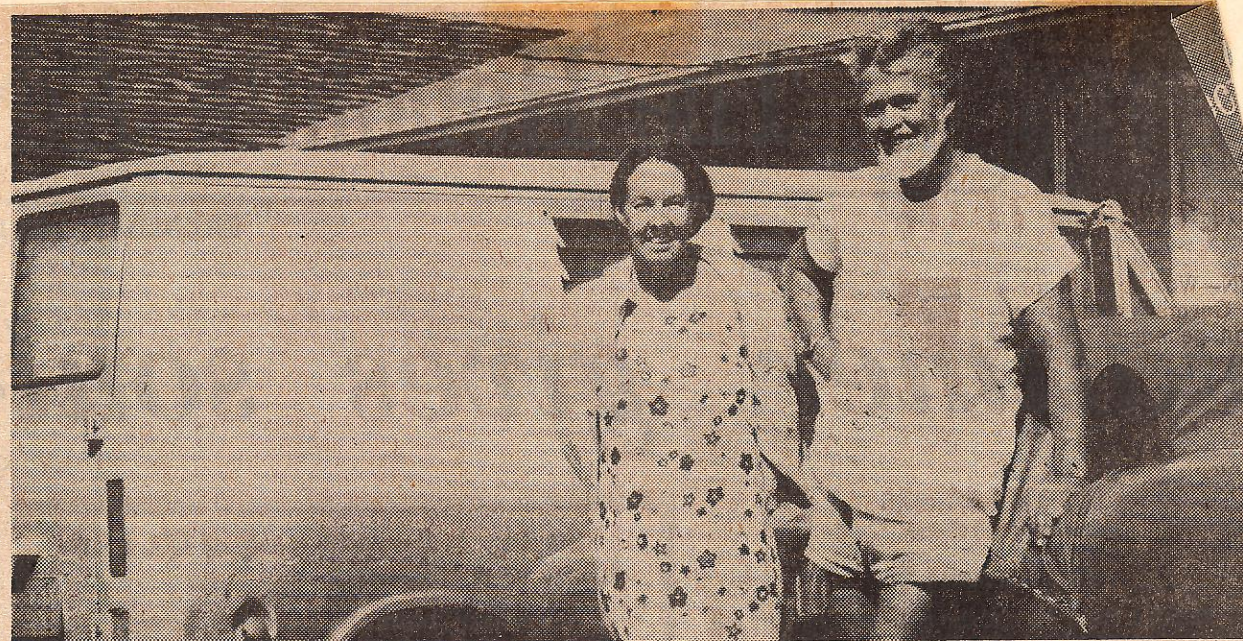
"BUT THE KIDS say they aren't doing anything.

"Like I said, the kids on the surfing scene now are going way out, just like they are with their music and art. It's all part of this stuff about total involvement and psychedelic involvement.

"They're trying to improve on nature and make something mysterious out of it. Why they'd be happier if the waves were purple, magenta or shocking pink.

"They'd like that a lot better than beautiful greens and blues. 'Nature's not with it,' they'd say. Or, 'I'd dig these waves, but the colors are all wrong.'"

(Next North Shore Bulletin Board)



Valentine and his wife, Madeline, outside their beach-side house.

Advertiser Photo

## oldtimer gives soul-surfers low grade.

By LEONARD LUERAS

Advertiser Staff Writer

First in a Series

Sunset Beach's "Old Man of the Sea" was looking out his front room window through a frame of coconut palms at some beautiful Sunset Beach waves.

On the 8 to 10-foot waves, surfer specks climbed and dropped, carving white tracks across emerald walls.

The "Old Man," Val Valentine, 55, was leaning on a dining table, smoking cigarets, sipping coffee and talking surf. He said in spurts following questions:

"I started surfing in Vancouver, Canada, in 1928. I was a lifeguard there for the City. The surf wasn't very good, but it was enough to ride.

"There we were using the old Tom Blake hollow paddleboards, and I think the best waves we got were when the steamer was going to Victoria."

FOLLOWING THOSE lifeguard days, Val explained (with supporting comments from his wife, Madeline) that he became a professional wrestler.

He wrestled his way across Canada, the United States and Europe until one night in London a Swedish wrestler named Billy Kahnke broke his jaw.

"As a result of that accident, I lost weight. I went from 210 to 160 pounds and that knocked me out of wrestling.

"It was interesting work, but it was a lot of work. You had to keep in top shape because we wrestled nine times a week, seven nights and two matinees."

VAL CONTINUED:

"So I went into vaudeville and played theaters and night clubs all over the United States, Canada and the Orient. I was a juggler, juggling balls, Indian clubs and tennis rackets.

"On my last trip back from the Orient, though, I got off in Honolulu and stayed. Madeline and I have been on the point (Sunset Beach Point) more than eight years, and in the Islands 26 years."

"We met on the beach at Waikiki," said Madeline, grinning and repeating a familiar romantic line. "I was a widow (from Massachusetts) spending time on Waikiki Beach, and Val was working at the Outrigger Club as a photographer."

"YOU SEE, WHEN I first got here," Val continued, "I opened up a sports equipment shop — for water sports — in the old Steiner Building in Waikiki, about where the Waikiki Beach Center is now.

"I'd originally been here with the first ice show that came to Honolulu. I was juggling on ice skates then.

"It was in the Forties sometime, and E. K. Fernandez put it on in a tent near what is probably Ala Moana Center. It was swampland then."

Val eventually went to work as a photographer with the Old Outrigger Canoe Club's beach services.

Surfing. Is it a sport, a way of life, a sub-culture or a religion?

Advertiser reporter Leonard Lueras, no stranger to a surfboard, spent a few days on Oahu's prime surfing grounds — the North Shore — trying to find out. He surfed, talked story and looked around. "I wanted to see what kind of surfing changes are coming down in the country," he said.

This is his report on the Oahu surfing scene.

"Yeah, I took pictures of tourists standing next to surfboards and in the water while they were riding surfboards in the lumber pile in the beginners' surf.

"Yeah, I used to charge \$2.50 for a slide, and it was a pretty good living for three or four years."

WITH THE ARRIVAL OF budget tourists, he quit the beach photography scene, worked in the marine equipment business for a while and, eventually, moved to Sunset Beach.

"We came out here to make a surfing film, just for the heck of it. We thought we'd stay for the winter and film the surf, and we've been here ever since."

In those early days, Valentine made five Oahu surf films and one in Australia.

The Australian film, called "Surfing Aussie," was made five years ago, and his local films were titled "Northside Story," "Wet, Wet World of Surfing," "The Call of the Surf," "Outside," and "Wet and Wild."

HE'S BEEN OUT of the surfing scene recently, though, because Val doesn't understand where young surfers' heads are at these days.

He looked out his window at a goofy-foot zigzagging across a Sunset wall and said:

"Surfing is too dangerous now, because of the way those guys whip those boards around. They could chop your head off out there. There's no more courtesy in the water the way there used to be.

"Before, if you were on a wave nobody got on your wave. It has gone from a real beautiful sport to a highly competitive one. And now the kids are too uptight.

"THEY DON'T SURF for pleasure. They just try to outdo each other, even if they're not formally competing.

"I think it's all because of these small boards they're using now. In the old days boards were pretty heavy and you had to be in pretty good physical shape just to get one down to the water.

"Especially in the Duke's (Duke Kahanamoku's) day

when the boards weighed 160 pounds. Now, the kids can pick a board up with one hand and go into the water."

Valentine, who now shoots an occasional television commercial and manufactures Paipo Nui bellyboards — a round, finless waveriding craft — explained that he prefers bodysurfing and paipo-boarding to long-board surfing anyway.

"I've always liked those sports better. I think it's more of a workout, and I like the feeling of being closer to the water," he said.

HE CHANGED THE subject a bit to air one of his pet gripes.

"One thing I'd like to make clear," he said, "is that this (Sunset Beach) is not the North Shore. People keep calling this the North Shore, but, technically, it's not the North Shore.

"The North Shore is from Kaena Point to Haleiwa. Here, we face West. And on a rare day — we can even see Kauai out here." (Kauai is 85 to 90 miles from Sunset Beach.)

Then he got back to modern surfing.

"The only surfers I really respect," he said, "are the pioneers in surfing out here — Peter Cole, Fred Van Dyke, Buzzy Trent, Bob Shepherd, Jose Angel and Bill Coleman. Bill Coleman, in fact, was one of the greatest bodysurfers we've ever had out here.

"THERE'RE SOME GOOD fellows out here now, but these soul-surfer, hippie types are pretty sad.

"They're out of touch with everything, and they're certainly not popular with the people that live out here. Sure, there's good and bad in everything, but I certainly object to their dope and the phony religion things they're into.

"I guess they're trying to escape reality with the dope thing. They're looking for something, but they don't know what.

"Just last week we had a fellow over here sitting on our front lawn cross-legged, staring at the ocean. I asked him what he was doing, but got nothing but a vacant stare.

"Sure, the older surfers had their hangups too, on beer and things like that, but it was a form of relaxation for them, because they were riding waves that had never been ridden before.

"But you rarely heard about them getting out of line."

WHILE VAL WAS SAYING that, another North Shore oldtimer, Bud Browne, the pioneer of surf moviemaking, walked in. Browne referred to Val as "the North Shore's Santa Claus" and sat down.

"Good waves out there," said Browne as he scanned the reef with a pair of binoculars.



Val pats his companion, Gremmie.

Then Browne, who's been making "Hawaiian Surfing Movies" since 1953, got Val started talking about surf film-making.

"Surfing's too crowded now," Browne said. "But the movie market is good as ever, because there are as many or more surfers than ever."

"YEAH, BUD, BUT don't you think the fad surfing is over with?" Val asked Browne.

"I hear," he continued, "that most of the surfboard shops are in trouble financially. Flippy Hoffman tells me its really tapered off in California.

"Hobie (Alter) has gone into making catamarans, and I heard that Greg Noll is out of business. Don't you think it's hard to predict what's going to happen?"

Browne just shook his head, and then Val waxed philosophically about surf flicks.

"Now," Val said, "I don't go to surf movies because

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