

HOME IN SANDY, UTAH by Dave and Darleen Freitas

Life has twists and turns we never expect. From Hawaii to Texas to California to Oregon and back to Dallas, Texas, where I lived for 18 years designing roller coasters, to a year in O'Fallon, Missouri, to a move entailing two cars, a moving van, and two young daughters (ages 2 and 4) to Sandy, Utah. We've lived here for 21 years and didn't think at the start that this would be home for so long. What started out as a hope and a prayer, building a new construction business, living on savings, wondering if maybe I shouldn't market my resume while I waited for things to take off, to that first successful, profitable job building a public restroom (yes, toilets) at a national park in Southern Utah. These were uncertain, humble beginnings for sure. What's kept us here?



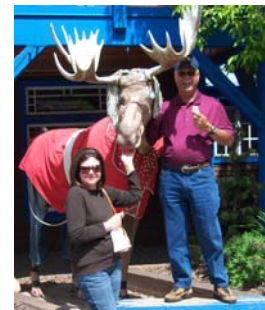
The natural beauty of the mountains meant driving up the canyons every weekend the first two years we were here. Simple pleasures of fishing the streams for trout, camping near hiking trails, marshmallows over the campfire at night, high altitudes with cool temperatures and starlit nights. I guess we traded the lack of an ocean for high mountains and streams. These days we trade a tent for an RV near a golf course with a stream nearby for fishing. Age and old bones have their needs. Being Hawaiian and needing water nearby, we found it necessary to build a pool and plant whatever flowers would survive our winters in our backyard. Though the pool cover is loaded with a foot of snow during winter, our hot summers mean snow will melt and there will be swimming.



During winter there was the "greatest snow on earth," as our tourist industry here advertises to all. Skiing was fun and our daughters now snowboard when home or in Colorado and Oregon. We've fallen into the rhythm of the seasons. Just about the time we're tired of shoveling snow, the tulips bloom and spring reminds us of new beginnings. Southern Utah with very little snow lures us during January and February to its many golf courses. Just beyond Southern Utah is the excitement of Las Vegas and many relocated high school classmates and friends. Like the swallows, we head south when tired of the cold of winter.

When friends visit we do all the touristy things; a trip to Park City is a favorite. The Olympic Village with its zip line and skiers doing acrobatic feats down ramps into the pool during summer is always fun. A beer and lunch at the Wasatch Pub is a must, as is a walk down Main Street where all the celebrities are photographed during Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival. We prefer photos next to the city's mascot, The Moose.

A trip downtown to Salt Lake City is another must. The International Headquarters of the Mormon religion and its beautiful gardens and lights at Christmas amaze many. The Cathedral of the Madeline, completed in 1909, is another beautiful landmark and has



a renowned Children's Choir. The State Capitol takes you high above the city with views encompassing the Great Salt Lake and the vastness of the desert we live in. So often we



hear remarks from visitors about how clean our city is. People here are industrious, caring and friendly. The basketball arena with statues of Karl Malone and John Stockton remind us of how exciting those games are. The University of Utah, as well as Brigham Young University, offer many exciting football games, especially when they vie against each other. Many of the players on these teams come from Honolulu high schools, as well as some past college coaches, i.e. Norm Chow, BYU. Now if we only had a national league football team, sports would be complete!

Diversity in Salt Lake County is increasing. Initially, besides the Mormon pioneers, we had an influx of Italians who worked the mines. Everything Italian has been popular for sometime now, and we enjoyed our trip to Italy in 2008. Connecting to our local Italians has been great fun, from their foods to their language. We understand "talking with your hands." The Greeks arrived early on to work the mines as well. Every fall we enjoy the Greek Festival in downtown Salt Lake City, their dances and food. Asians and their restaurants and markets are available. The Latino populations grow here and also influence the food and culture of our State. The Tongans provide music and dance and familiar Polynesian food.

Beyond Salt Lake County are many small, rural towns. For several years, Dave has gone pheasant hunting with our chocolate Lab, Kona, in Tremont, just a couple of hours north of Sandy. Breakfast in Tremont at the local café means meeting local Japanese farmers who are about to start their day's work. These farmers are relatives of Japanese citizens who were relocated from San Francisco and elsewhere, and interred during World War II at Topaz Relocation Camp near Delta, Utah. They, too, decided to stay and make their lives here. Southern Utah boasts some of our country's most beautiful national parks: Zion, Escalante, and Bryce Canyon. There are two wineries in Moab, Utah, we enjoy visiting.



It's the variety of beauty and weather and activities that keep us here. If you enjoy the outdoors, "this is the place." The spirit of Aloha follows us. Our daughters want us to keep the family home, though they live in Philadelphia and Portland, Oregon. They bring friends home, it's comfortable, has skiing twenty minutes away, and we all enjoy the beauty of the views of mountains and desert. The Welcome mat is out. Come and explore the beauty that is Utah.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dave (Kawika) and Darleen Freitas (Star of the Sea '63) retired from their business in 2001 and enjoy traveling, golfing, RV'ing, fishing and hunting. They are the parents of Ian Beckman, Dain Freitas, Jessica (Freitas) Asherin and Malia Freitas