

The Tale of the Wounded Turtle

By Jan Newhart

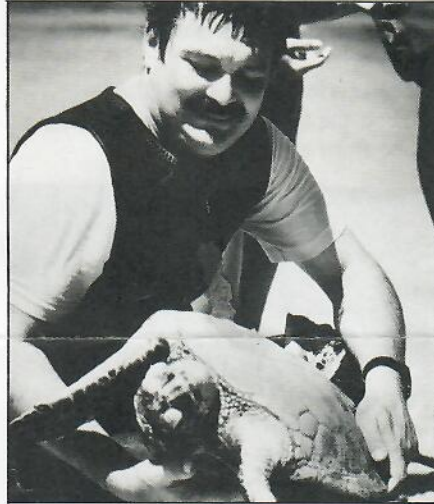
Was that a knife in Turtle's shoulder?

I peered through the slightly murky water. Yes, the left flipper was dragging. Turtle was hurt.

On each of my three-times-a-week swims at our Outrigger beach I made it a practice to say hello to Turtle and bring greetings from my children Twain and Tracy on the mainland. Today (mid-March), Turtle didn't respond, just paddled around weakly near a coral reef.

What to do? I certainly didn't want Turtle to end up on someone's dinner table. Turtles have been around for over 75 million years, long before man, but now a person has caused this existence to be threatened.

It took half a dozen telephone calls to various local, state and federal agencies before I reached the right person, George Balazs a zoologist and turtle expert with the National Marine Fisheries Service. Following his instructions, I watched Turtle for a



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George Balazs National Marine Fisheries Services, brings Turtle in for treatment.

couple of weeks and reported to him the times and locations of the sightings. George determined when we might mount a rescue effort.

On that day, I was ready in my bathing suit and goggles but George showed up dressed for hiking through the brush! He explained that wrestling a turtle underwater around coral reefs can lead to more than a few abrasions.

I could see his point; the last time I took a guest out to see Turtle, my guest got all cut up.

After a few miscues, I led George to Turtle's lair. George immediately recognized the problem. The 250-pound female Turtle had a large fishing lure imbedded in her shoulder and some of the leader was wrapped about the left flipper.

Directing me to stay back, George dived and then surfaced with his arms wrapped about Turtle. I could certainly see the necessity for George's protective clothing.

When we reached the beach, I had to explain to some angry beachgoers that George was not taking Turtle to the stew pot but to the hospital.

George surgically removed the hook and unwrapped the leader from Turtle's flipper, and Turtle was soon back in the sea.

George said that Turtle is from French Frigate Shoals and will return there to breed upon reaching maturity.

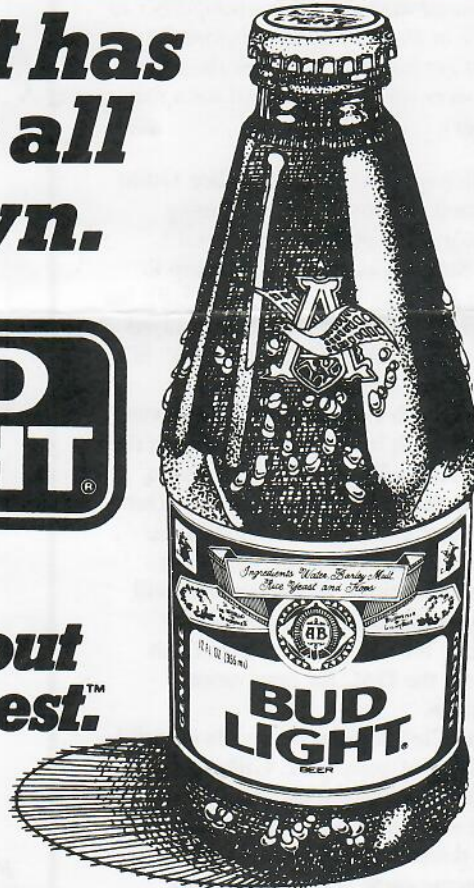
It was a thrill to see Turtle swimming off to freedom and the crowds on the beach told George he was a hero. George told me I was the hero. We weren't thinking of heroism, just a simple act of love for a hurting friend.

As Clint Eastwood says: it "made our day."

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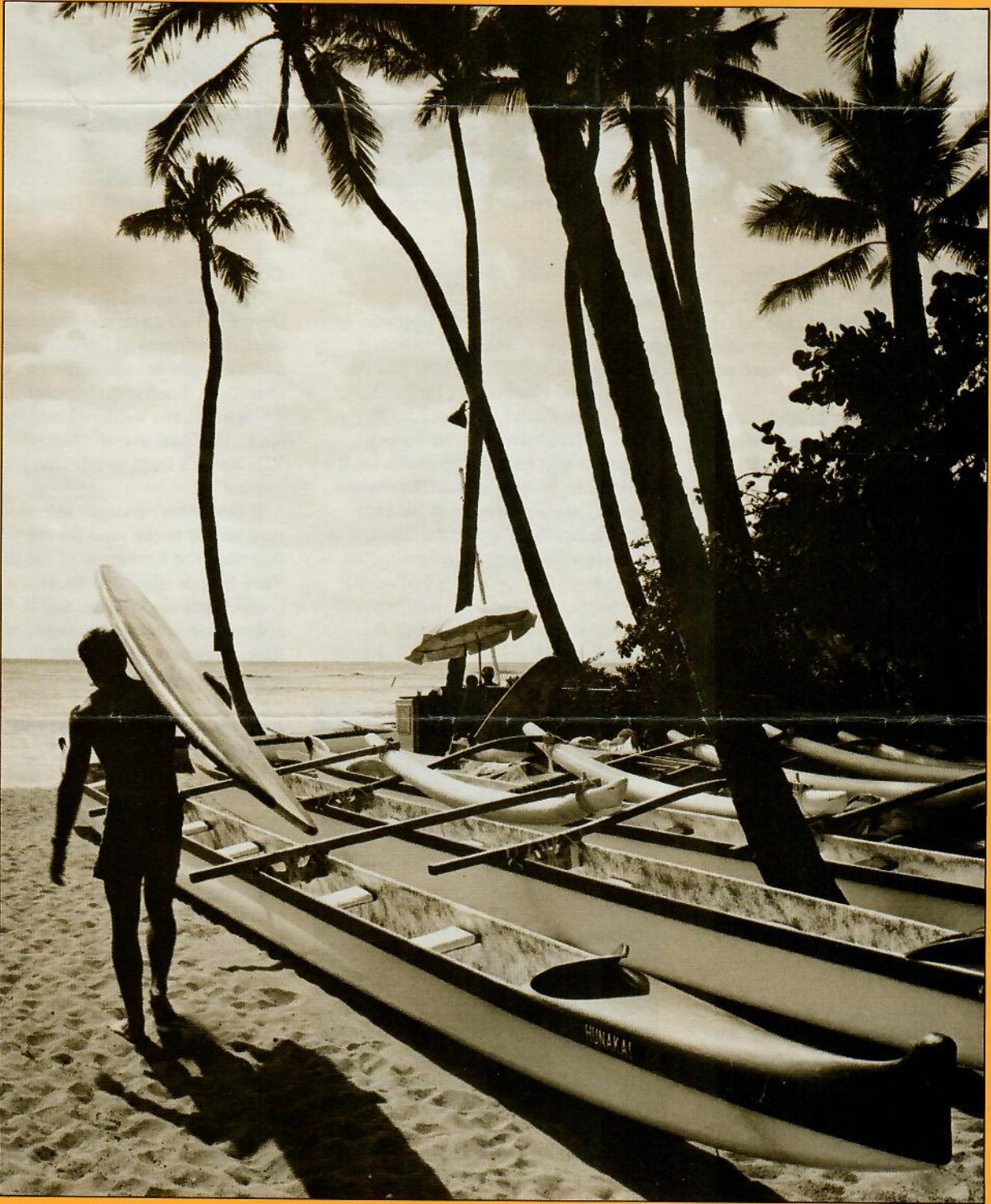
For Sale

The Club's 1974 Boston Whaler, 1982 90 HP Johnson outboard motor mounted, and 1982 115 HP Johnson spare outboard motor are for sale to the highest bidder. Also for sale are the Dilly trailer, center console, tachometer, temperature gauge, bilge pump and four 6-gallon fuel tanks. The upset price for the total package is \$3,000.

Bids should be submitted to the Club manager. Bids will be opened June 18.

the **O**utrigger

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