

This article was first published in the November 2020 issue of the Sylvia Woods Harp Center e-Newsletter. It is part of Sylvia's ongoing series about living on Kauai, Hawaii.

## Hawaiian Moon Phases



The Hawaiians were skilled ocean navigators with extensive knowledge of currents, the stars, and the moon's movement. Their calendar had twelve lunar months of 29.5 phases, and every three to six years, they added a thirteenth month. The moon phases organized daily life: when to fish and gather seafood, plant certain crops, get married, acquire knowledge, and worship particular gods.

There is a Hawaiian name for each phase of the moon. For example, they recognize four consecutive nights of full moons: **Hua**, **Akua**, **Hoku**, and **Māhealani**. This month, it just so happens that these occur on the four nights of our long Thanksgiving weekend. All full moon nights are good for fishing. However, on **Hoku**, you should only fish at sea and not onshore. **Hoku** brings blessings of good luck and health and is an excellent time to plant anything that grows in rows.



One of our local television stations reports on the moon phase in the nightly news weather segment, telling the moon's name and its guidelines.

If you'd like to know more about the moon phase for a particular day, there is an [interactive calendar on the Kamehamehapublishing.org website](http://Kamehamehapublishing.org). A Google search for "Hawaiian moon names" will also bring up many informative websites.

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### A personal aside

The moon played a different but important role in our family's life as I was growing up. Our father, Dr. Conway Snyder, was a space scientist who worked for NASA at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena from 1956 through 1984. He was associated with 14 space missions and was instrumental in NASA's explorations of the moon, Mars, and Venus. His solar wind spectrometer experiments were taken to the moon by Apollo 12 and Apollo 15 astronauts. (This photo shows him with his 1969 Apollo 12 spectrometer.) Dr. Snyder received numerous NASA commendations and awards, including an Apollo Achievement Award for "outstanding accomplishments culminating in Apollo 11's successful achievement of man's first landing on the moon, July 20, 1969," and the NASA Medal for Exception Scientific Achievement for his work on the solar wind.



I'll bet that ours was the only family that you know of who had an earth globe, a moon globe, and a Mars globe in our living room!

P.S. I worked at JPL as a secretary on the Mariner Mars '69 project for one year after college. I didn't work with my father, but we carpooled to and from work every day.