Abstract:
Bernie Kilonsky will discuss a voyage he made, as part of an experimental archeology project, on the Polynesian canoe Hokule'a. The project was to demonstrate what skeptics had steadfastly denied: that the ancestral Polynesians sailing in canoes and navigating solely by reading the stars, ocean swells, and other natural signs, could have intentionally sail across the vast oceanic realm of Polynesia, discovering and settling all the inhabitable islands there.

In this lecture, we will explore one of the legs of this voyage, the sail between Samoa, the Cook Islands and Tahiti. This passage was especially interesting as it was the first attempt to duplicate one of the upwind ancestral voyages, and presented some unique challenges.

By sailing in the wake of their ancestors, the Hawaiians and others who captained, navigated, and crewed Hokule'a made its Voyage of Rediscovery a cultural as well as a scientific odyssey of exploration.