

LĀNAʻI TODAY

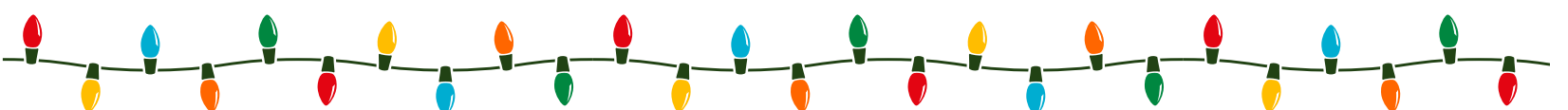
DECEMBER 2023




The
Gift Giver's
Friend
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Take a peep behind the Christmas pine into Philo Sower's seasonal role as Santa's Lānaʻi liaison.

Photo by Anthony Kaauamo



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MANAGING EDITOR: ANTHONY KAAUAMO

Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines Merger: What’s Next for Lāna‘i’s Air Connectivity?

by Anthony Kaaumo

On December 3, 2023, Alaska Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines announced their merger in an all-cash transaction valued at approximately \$1.9 billion. This strategic move, according to their joint press release, is designed to enhance competition and expand consumer choices across the Pacific region and beyond. With the merger still subject to regulatory approvals, both airlines have emphasized their enduring commitment to Hawai‘i, including “maintaining robust Neighbor Island air service.”

While this commitment to maintain air service is crucial, the pressing question is whether this merger will extend Neighbor Island service to encompass Lāna‘i and Moloka‘i, which are not currently covered by their network.

Hawaiian Airlines had been a key player in connecting the Lāna‘i community with the rest of Hawai‘i through its ‘Ohana by Hawaiian service. Starting in 2014, this service provided essential connectivity until its suspension in May 2021 due to the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel demand.

In a recent interview with Lāna‘i Today, Ben Minicucci, CEO of Alaska Airlines, expressed the need to familiarize himself with

the unique requirements of Lāna‘i and Moloka‘i. He noted Alaska Airlines’ experience in serving remote Alaskan villages, but also acknowledged that the larger aircraft used in Alaska, such as the Boeing 737, may not be suitable for Lāna‘i’s runway limitations. While no definitive commitment was made regarding future service to Lāna‘i, Peter Ingram, CEO of Hawaiian Airlines, agreed to share information with Alaska Airlines to aid in their evaluation.

...the pressing question is whether this merger will extend Neighbor Island service to encompass Lāna‘i and Moloka‘i.

IN FIRST PERSON

Fishing Trips With My Father

contributed by Wendell Kaho'ohalahala

The aged Hawaiian sampan sails into an open expanse of ocean. Its shadow sliding across deep crimson undulations. From the darkening horizon, a giant yellow skinned buoy emerges. Its surface punctuated by mysterious closed hatches.

My father, George “Keoki” Kaho'ohalahala, Sr., was an outdoorsman of hunting, horseback riding and fishing. The earliest remembrances of him I can recall date back to 1966, when I was about 4 years old, sitting on the ocean in a flat bottom skiff with my mother and sister. My mom, Geraldine Betty, would rig up a small bamboo and cloth shelter to shade us from the sun while my dad threw net and speared turtles with his heavy metal harpoon from the shore.

He would haul the big, wing-flapping, green and yellow turtles onboard and after returning from throwing net, pour the fish into the skiff, sometimes filling the deck. My mom would clean the fish, saving the glassy yellow eggs for me and Stella-Ann, my older sister, to eat with poi for lunch. Pulling the skiff onto shore where our camp was, I remember the sound of the sloshing water in his rubber boots. He always wore sunglasses, long pants, a safari hat and those washing machine boots.

It was on the weekends we would go fishing and camping, and it felt like every weekend.

The weeknights — my dad still worked in the fields for Dole Company. My mom would take late-night lunches to him, sometimes letting me go with her. He was an irrigation truck driver with what they called the “double boom.” He would take us driving in the truck too. Through the rows, the double boom was cast out like trolling rods into the depths of the dark pineapple sea; so long it could water both sides of the fields at once.

As tides flowed on, I grew up from the little boy only sitting on the skiff while my father threw net. I wanted to participate too. My first time spearfishing was at Kaunolū bay in 1974, when I was 12. The spear I used was a simple apparatus called a “Hawaiian sling” — surgical rubber with a string line, a long metal spear notched on one end and a sharpened head with a barb on the other. Missing a shot meant having to dive down to retrieve the spear — teaching me how to dive deeper, aim better.

While the 70s drew to a close, my father introduced someone new to our lives — Pua Geneva. Majestic and graceful, she was a 35-foot wooded and fiberglass, long-range sampan-designed troller with a big Evinrude outboard motor. We had a ceremony for her at Mānele Harbor. Cracked a bottle on her bow and christened her after my niece, Geneva, the second born of my mom and dad's grandchildren.

Gearing up for deep-sea trips, my father acquired all the gear necessary for trolling, crafting some of it himself like his trolling poles, fishing lines, wooded gaff and lures he made by curing fish skin and wrapping it around heavy glass tubes.

Out at sea, while my dad managed the lines and poles, I would take helm of the boat. He taught me to read the ocean for signs of fish — like patches of disturbed water or birds diving — and to



“Nohu” by Wendell Kaho'ohalahala

steer toward them. It was thrilling, fast-paced action, especially when reeling in 40 lb. aku or ahi, or even mahimahi and ono weighing over 70 lbs. More often than not, we'd return with two large Igloo coolers of fish, ready to share.

On the west side of the island, we would venture into the open ocean, sometimes trolling so far that Lāna'i vanished below the horizon. Although I never admitted it, I was scared, “how will we find our way back, for real?” But my father always knew the route home.

One time out there, I remember we came across a colossal yellow buoy, like a miniature island afloat with multiple closed hatches and crowned by a tower tipped with lights. Below, fish swarmed, drawn by the limu growing on its underside.

I have often dreamt about it, swimming up to it, opening one of its hatches. I imagined there might be steps leading into its belly, holding wonders vast and deep as the ocean.

On the beach camps, my dad's friends would come by and he would share his catch with them. I remember all kinds of fish he caught: manini, moi, mullet, 'enenui and weke — the nightmare fish (don't eat the head?). Always following, wherever my father went fishing, they like go too. Tūtū Halo Pokipala, Aunty Beatrice Burgess, Aunty Laverne Benanua and her husband, Uncle Abby... I remember how good the burning kiawe wood smelled as they would make kanikapila and drink beer while the women folks would laugh and dance hula!

My dad passed in 2007 and every day, I miss him and continue to cherish his knowledge of the ocean. Like the closed hatches of that yellow buoy, each one holds a memory of our time together.

Blessing Ceremony at Hōkūao Welcomes First Tenants

Hōkūao's first tenants moved into the housing complex on December 1st with a blessing held on December 7th. Originally scheduled for November 30th, the event was postponed due to rain.

Kahu Saul Kahihikolo led the blessing, and afterward, AJ Baldeviso, the first affordable housing applicant selected in the lottery held on November 5, 2022, participated by untying the maile lei, symbolizing the start of residency for the 28 new tenants.

The next group of tenants are anticipated to move in by late March 2024, with the estimated completion date for the rest of the development, including the community center, set for 2025.

...untying
the maile lei,
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tenants.



Commemorating the opening of Hōkūao, AJ Baldeviso performs the untying of the maile lei following Kahu Saul Kahihikolo's blessing.



The Shop at the Corner of 9th and ‘Ilima

by Anthony Kaauamo

The International Food and Clothing Store, owned and operated by the de la Cruz family since 1953, served the community for 66 years before closing in 2019. At the time of its closure, Andrew de la Cruz reflected, “We feel very fortunate. Owning this store allowed us to grow and raise our family in this community, to teach our kids a good work ethic and good values.”

In August 2023, Andrew and Joan de la Cruz quietly reentered the retail market with the soft opening of their new venture, “The Shop at the Corner of 9th and ‘Ilima.” This time, their business focuses on non-perishable items, marking a departure from their previous involvement in groceries. The store’s size is notably smaller, just a quarter of International’s. The shift allows them to enjoy a semi-retirement lifestyle, giving them the flexibility to close shop when they want to embark on two-week-long travels around the world.

Joan elaborated on the decision to transition, “So basically, we closed International because it was too big. It was too labor-intensive for three old people to be running,” referring to herself, Andrew, and Chris Agliam. “We told the Company we were going to close and it was actually their suggestion, ‘Well, what if we gave you a smaller space?’”

Following Joan’s suggestion, renovations commenced on the building located across from the Hawaiian Electric facility and adjacent to the Ahava Lāna‘i Day Spa. This historic site had a significant role in Lāna‘i’s history, serving as the original International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Hall during the 1951 Pineapple Strike, organized by union leader and Andrew’s father, Pedro de la Cruz. Over the years, it transitioned into a storage house for International.

While much of their current inventory is reminiscent of International — fishing gear, candies, laundry supplies — it will adapt as they explore which products resonate best with customers. “We’re going to try to fill voids in what is available. We are open to hearing what people want,” Joan said.

In the years between the closure of International and the opening of the new shop, Chris relocated to Colorado to be closer to her daughter and grandchildren; Joan, also a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agent, transferred to Honolulu in early 2022 after ‘Ohana by Hawaiian stopped servicing Lāna‘i; Andrew remained on Lāna‘i, attempting retirement. “I tried to go fishing more,” Andrew said, “but I didn’t really catch much. So, I would spend time walking and exercising.”

A distinctive feature of the shop is its sense of familiarity. Joan shared a recent customer’s experience, saying, “She comes in and she’s like, ‘Wow, this is brand new. But it’s so familiar. It’s like *deja vu*.’” There are the same shelves from International since 1977 and an outside cork board is reminiscent of the wall outside International where people pinned flyers.

Notably absent is the giant karabao head (actually an African Cape buffalo). When questioned about its location, Joan clarified that it’s too large for the small shop space and currently resides at the de la Cruz home, where it serves the purpose of “scaring the children.”

And as for the shop’s name, Joan said, “We didn’t want it to be Internationals again, because it’s not. So we thought, ‘The Store at the Corner of 9th and ‘Ilima.’” Varanya, the youngest of Andrew and Joan’s four adult children, suggested an adjustment to the name, “We didn’t call Internationals ‘Internationals,’ we called it ‘the store’ growing up. Like, ‘We’re at the store, come to the store, go sweep the store.’” Their life was the store. “Well, this is smaller. So, it’s the shop.” The word “shop” also pays homage to the building’s history and connection to the labor union.

Musashi, 2nd eldest of the de la Cruz children, reflected on her family’s strong work ethic, saying, “The store was a lot of hard work growing up, and it was a family effort. We worked together, and that’s what we knew.”

The de la Cruz family’s legacy endures with the introduction of a new generation: Jamie, Musashi’s 2-year-old son. His upbringing within the de la Cruz clan offers a unique and enduring connection to the essence of shared family work. “When I think of family time, it’s sweeping, and it’s dusting, and it’s unloading boxes,” said Musashi, “Even though the shop is not as much work as the old store was, I do think that he’ll get some of that same value of a family that works together. I hope that that will be part of his experience of Lāna‘i.”

“She comes in and she’s like, ‘Wow, this is brand new. But it’s so familiar. It’s like *deja vu*.’”



John and Donna Schaumburg, Akilah, Shaleyah, August, Jurian and Deborah dela Cruz.

Lions Club’s Peace Poster Contest Highlights Middle School Dreams

by Anthony Kaaumo

On November 7, Lānaʻi City Lions Club members John Schaumburg, Donna Schaumburg and Deborah dela Cruz presented awards for the Lions International Peace Poster Contest at Lānaʻi High & Elementary School. Supported by middle school teachers Sherry Uy and Monique Bolo, the contest engaged sixth-grade students in a three-week project to interpret the theme “Dare to Dream,” joining over 600,000 children worldwide in sharing their visions of world peace.

Akilah Sproat secured first place with her vibrant portrayal of a girl on a swing set against a sunset. “I sometimes have dreams of being on a swing just thinking about life,” Akilah explained.

Shaleyah Smith earned second place for her painting of a whale’s tail at sunset, a tribute to her late aunt, Genalyn Schaefer. “It reminded me of times with my Aunty before she passed away,” Shaleyah shared.

August Pavsek claimed third place with his picture of a mountain landscape and waterfall, inspired by his dreams and visits to Canada. He used a mix of acrylic paints and postcards for texture.

Jurian Costales received an honorable mention for his stark charcoal and pencil depiction of sinister figures lurking in a dark foreboding forest. “Not all dreams are good,” Jurian stated.

Monique Bolo, one of the supporting middle school teachers, appreciated how the contest provided a creative outlet for her students, particularly valuable given their focus on coding and website development in computer science class. “After being on the computer for a while, I noticed the kids needed a little screen break, so when the poster contest was presented to us, I thought that would be a perfect opportunity for these middle schoolers,” Monique said.

With her first-place win at the local level, Akilah’s poster is set to advance to the state competition, joining other young artists in this age group for the next stage of the contest.



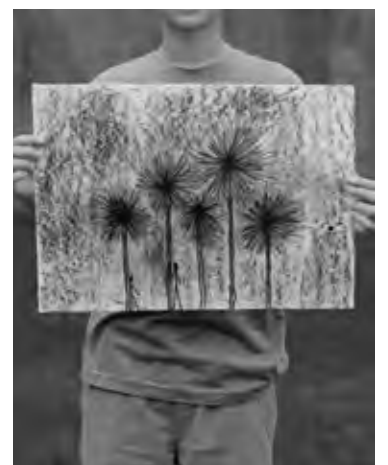
1st Place, Akilah Sproat



2nd Place, August Pavsek



3rd Place, Shaleyah Smith



Honorable Mention, Jurian Costales

Slang for Non-Slangular People: “Clutch”

contributed by Silveress

Hi again, it’s Silveress, your slangular guide from Lānaʻi High School. I’m back with a new Gen Z slang for you to add to your vocabulary. This month’s word is...

Clutch - /klŭch/

No, the word clutch isn’t what you’re thinking; it doesn’t refer to a part of a vehicle’s transmission. In the eyes of Gen-Z, the word “clutch” describes a scenario where someone saves the day or succeeds against the odds at the last possible moment, especially under intense pressure. This term can be used in multiple settings



Silveress (aka “Sharmaine Elan”)

from video games and sports to everyday challenges. “Clutch” is often used interchangeably with “clutch-up,” illustrating someone’s timely and crucial intervention or action.

Example

1. Homework Crisis

Person 1: “Were you able to turn in your homework on time?”
Person 2: “Yeah, Jomar came in clutch giving me the answers.”

2. Sports Triumph

Announcer: “In a surprise finish, Lānaʻi High wins, scoring three points in the final seconds!”
Viewer: “Yesssahhh! They clutched-up with that half-court shot!”

The term “clutch” borrows its essence from the clutch mechanism in manual cars, where timing is crucial to prevent stalling and ensure a smooth start.

Kaukau Quests with a Side of Rice

Ganotisi's Korean Chicken and Lāna'i Sunset Spritz Review

contributed by Joshua Ige

Hello, I'm Joshua Ige. I graduated from Lāna'i High & Elementary School in 2001 and went on to earn my Associate's degree in Culinary Arts from Maui Community College. My passion for cooking has been deeply influenced by my grandmother, Mary Torralba. Supported by my parents, Brad and Lisa Shin, and sisters Justine, Hope and Gabby, I've dedicated myself to giving back to our community, including preparing breakfasts for schoolchildren at the Lāna'i Baptist Church. In this series, I'll be sharing my experiences and reviews of some of my favorite meals from Lāna'i's local restaurants, events and households, starting with the celebrated Korean Chicken and Lāna'i Sunset Spritz at Ganotisi's Pacific Rim Café.



Joshua Ige 'bout fo' eat.

When I first tried Ganotisi's Korean Chicken, it was the smell, the color and the sauce that really got me. There's something about the way they blend flavors into this dish that makes it stand out. Recently, I grabbed a plate lunch of this signature dish, paired with the vibrant Lāna'i Sunset Spritz.

As soon as the dish was served, with its green onions and a sprinkle of furikake on top, I knew I was in for a treat. The chicken, golden brown and crispy, is just as juicy as it looks. They double batter it, which makes it super crispy, like the perfect fried chicken. It's a skillful balance of texture and flavor that really shows off the chef's expertise.



Ganotisi's Korean Chicken



Ganotisi's Lāna'i Sunset Spritz

The aroma of the dish is another thing altogether. It's like a homemade blend that brings to mind soy sauce and ginger, with a hint of sweetness from brown sugar. This mix of sweet and savory is a big part of what makes Korean cooking so exciting, and it fits right into our island's love for bold flavors.

The mac salad on the side, a classic in Hawaiian cuisine, is like a familiar friend on the plate. It adds a creamy contrast that complements the main dish, while the rice offers a nice balance to the flavors.

Now, let's talk about the Lāna'i Sunset Spritz. This drink features a sunset-inspired spectrum of red, orange and purple. It's got this nice soda-like fizz with a hint of citrus, making it the perfect chill-out drink, whether you're ending your day or just enjoying the view.

Thank you for your interest and support in my food adventures. As I keep exploring Lāna'i's food, I can't wait to tell you all about the other great dishes here. So, keep a lookout for more from me, Joshua Ige, sharing Lāna'i's flavors, one dish at a time.

ALOHA 'OE

Shoso Paul "Doc" Fujimoto



Shoso Paul Doc Fujimoto

Shoso Paul Fujimoto, also known to many Lāna'i friends as "Doc," left an indelible mark on the beloved island he called home for 66 years. Doc passed away on May 5, 2023, at the Maunalani Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Honolulu. He was 96.

The third child of Ryuichi and Masayo Fujimoto, he was born on a sugar plantation in Kaua'i and raised in the Kalihi neighborhood of Honolulu. His five sisters fondly remembered him as a rascally, rambunctious and stubborn kid. Being the only boy in the family, Doc was doted upon by his parents, leaving his sisters to handle most of the household chores and the laundry business. His mother always saved him the best part of the evening meals. He enjoyed fishing and playing sports with his buddies and graduated from Farrington High School in 1944.

Drafted by the US Army during World War II, Doc served as a medic for Japanese prisoners of war in Kipapa Gulch, Honolulu, and later deployed to Japan. He used GI benefits to complete his education at the University of Hawai'i and Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, adopting the name Paul during this time. In 1948, he met Natsue "Nat" Saikami, a girl from Maui, at a Hawaiian party in Chicago. They fell in love, and he relocated to Chicago to be near her and attend Loyola Dental School. They married in 1950.

In 1954, Doc completed dental school, and he and Nat returned to Hawai'i, settling in Honolulu, where they joyfully welcomed their first child, Lori. Then in 1957, Doc relocated his young family to Lāna'i.

Living on Lāna'i was a dream come true. He could not only work but fish, hunt, golf, talk story, drink beer. As the only dentist on the island, he knew practically everyone and learned from the locals the best places to fish and hunt.

Doc was a skilled fisherman who could always catch or find something to eat from the sea. He would swim and play with his kids in the waves, teaching them how to safely swim out of a current, dive under the wave break or pick 'opihi. He invited many friends and family to visit and loved playing host, sharing his knowledge about fishing and hunting on the island. Some folks remember Doc as the "flying dentist" after he bought a Cessna and opened practices on Moloka'i and Maui. He was active in the Lāna'i community, golf club and the Chamber of Commerce. He also became a Boy Scout master, taking his scouts camping and diving.

In his late 80s, he began noticing his once sharp-as-a-tack memory declining. However, whenever someone commented that he was otherwise so healthy for his age, he would say his secret was "BEER!" He still managed to make several trips to Japan and Chicago in his 90s and played golf until age 95.

He is survived by his wife, Natsue; his daughter Lori and her husband, Jim Simon of Seattle; daughter Carol of Honolulu; and son Ross and his wife, Lynn of Kula, Maui; three grandchildren, Masayo Simon, Kate Fujimoto, and Elle Fujimoto; and two sisters, Jeanette Okazaki and Alice Uemura.



Meet “Keahiakawelo,” Lāna‘i’s Ultimate Firefighting Marvel!

by Anthony Kaauamo

Buckle up, Lāna‘i! The Lāna‘i Fire Station is turning up the heat with the arrival of “Keahiakawelo,” a high-octane fire engine straight from the innovation labs of Pierce Manufacturing. This isn’t just any fire truck — it’s a rolling thunderstorm of firefighting power, following the legendary tire tracks of “Kaululā‘au” and “Haleakala.” Get ready to witness a spectacular fusion of cutting-edge technology and unyielding bravery with “Keahiakawelo!”

Fire Suppression and Water Management:

- **Mega Water Tank:** boasting a colossal 750-gallon tank, it’s like a portable lake ready to drown out fires.
- **Mighty Hose Lines:** armed with a battalion of hoses and a deck gun, “Keahiakawelo” is set to unleash a deluge on any fire that dares challenge it.
- **Futuristic Pump Panel:** sophisticated pump panel system for managing water output, ensuring optimal water pressure and volume during operations.

Storage and Equipment Accessibility:

- **Super Storage Compartments:** a treasure trove of compartments, including a dedicated compartment for spare air bottles — every firefighter’s dream.
- **Ladder Racks:** ladder racks integrated into the truck design, enhancing durability.
- **Jaws of Life/Auto Extrication Tools:** power-packed, battery-operated tools for cutting through danger like butter. These Jaws of Life are ready to bite into vehicles and free trapped occupants.

Specialized Equipment:

- **Vertical Rescue Gear:** high angle rope equipment for those “dangling in danger” moments.
- **Hazardous Material Response Capabilities:** a setup ready to tackle hazardous materials.
- **Forestry/Wildland Firefighting Gear:** backpack-stored forestry-specialized hoses.



The Jaws of Life!



Technological Advancements:

- **Smart Computer Systems:** equipped with the brains to match its brawn, making information access in emergencies a breeze.
- **High-Tech Communication:** wireless headsets for ultra-clear, enhanced team communication.
- **Eagle-Eye Cameras:** with reverse and side cameras, “Keahiakawelo” sees all, missing nothing.
- **Night Lighting:** advanced lighting system for superior visibility during night operations, because emergencies don’t wait for the sun.

Cultural and Historical Significance:

- **A Name with Power:** “Keahiakawelo” draws its name from a local mo‘olelo, where Kawelo, a Lāna‘i priest, used fire to safeguard and restore community well-being.

With the previous champion, “Kaululā‘au,” moving to a backup role after 17 years of valor, “Keahiakawelo” is revved up and ready to charge into the heart of the blaze.

As “Keahiakawelo” rumbles into its new home at the Lāna‘i Fire Station, decked out with a sizable water tank that could rival the rainwater pond of Kaumālapa‘u Highway’s “Mississippi,” varieties of hoses ready to unleash torrential downpours onto any unsuspecting flames, a pump panel so sophisticated it could be mistaken for a spaceship’s control board, technological advancements that would have gearheads nodding enthusiastically in approval, and an epic heroic name steeped in Hawaiian lore, it promises to carry on the legacy of its predecessors with the same fiery spirit and unwavering dedication to safeguarding the community!

“We are happy to have it,” said Eric Baldeviso, Lāna‘i’s own Firefighter 3.



Mayor Richard Bissen addresses the few Lānaʻi residents present.

Mayor Bissen Reaffirms Commitment to Fifth Street Extension at Budget Meeting

On Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023, during Maui County’s Fiscal Year 2025 budget meeting held at the Lānaʻi High and Elementary School (LHES) cafeteria, Mayor Richard Bissen referenced the budget adjustments the county has undertaken in response to the Lāhainā wildfire. He spoke about the 5% cut he directed department heads to implement in order to manage the anticipated revenue shortfall. In this context, Mayor Bissen also reaffirmed his commitment to extending Fifth Street. “But I have not wavered from my commitment to extend Fifth Street, despite what’s happened [in Lāhainā],” Mayor Bissen said. “That hasn’t changed.”

An extension of Fifth Street would bolster access and enhance infrastructure connectivity for the 115 acres of Maui County-owned land below LHES and the Department of Hawaiian Homelands. This would mark a significant step towards future community development plans in the area and address Maui County’s 30 year delay in developing affordable housing on Lānaʻi.

Present from Maui County, along with Mayor Bissen, were Patrick McCall, director of parks and recreation; Shane Agawa, director of environmental management; Robbie Sanches, Lānaʻi district supervisor; and Lt. Kimberly Masse from the Lānaʻi Patrol District of the Maui Police Department.

The meeting drew a very small number of Lānaʻi residents, each sharing their concerns and priorities. The need for affordable housing emerged as a predominant theme. During her testimony, Diane Preza highlighted the necessity of extending infrastructure down Fifth Street to support affordable housing development and requested regular visits from county liaisons, particularly from housing and the Office of Economic Development.

In his letter testimony, read aloud by MaryLou Kaukeano, Cody Patterson shed light on the housing crisis’s impact on Lānaʻi’s younger generation. As a 27-year-old carpenter and lifelong island resident, he emphasized the need for affordable housing opportunities that allow for ownership, highlighting the challenges faced by young residents like himself. “If we wanted to leave, we would have long ago, right after high school, and many have!” said Cody in his letter. “While these houses that I build become available for those ranked above me and my coworkers, we go home to our childhood home, sleep in the same bed we slept in since when we were fifteen, and must live a life we do not choose for ourselves.”

Cody’s letter, underlining a deep-seated longing to remain on the island and the stark realities of limited housing, concluded with a call to action: “We need affordable housing. We need to keep Lānaʻiians on Lānaʻi. We need to preserve what we have worked so hard to create.”

Manna Negus, representing both himself and as president of the Hawaiʻi Farmers Union Lānaʻi chapter, spoke on the needs for agricultural education, affordable housing for agricultural workers, and the establishment of a regular farmers market on county property. He pointed out that currently in Maui County, farmers markets are held only on private land. By advocating for the use of county land, he shared that this would allow for more frequent markets, potentially up to twice a week, significantly aiding Lānaʻi’s agricultural community.



At the Mayor’s Budget Meeting, Roger Alconcel gives testimony.

Addressing the deteriorating condition of the Fifth Street Maui County courts, MaryLou Kaukeano called for timely repairs, given their critical role in Lānaʻi’s limited sports infrastructure. She noted the poor condition of the basketball and volleyball courts, “a lot of the rims and the backboards are all bust up.” With the county’s initiation of the repair project not expected for another two years, MaryLou stressed the importance of addressing these issues promptly to support the island’s youth. In addition to these immediate repair needs, she also encouraged continued support for youth sports programs.

Adding a critique, Butch Gima voiced disappointment over the absence of several key Maui County officials, including the planning director, Office of Economic Development and Maui Emergency Management Agency. This meeting was a missed opportunity for their direct engagement with the Lānaʻi community, a crucial aspect of effective governance and responsiveness to local needs.

Despite this, Butch reiterated support for the Fifth Street extension, aligning with the community’s call for action on this critical infrastructure project. He emphasized the importance of this development for Lānaʻi, particularly in addressing the affordable housing crisis and ensuring sustainable growth on the island.

Concerns were also raised about road maintenance and community facilities, with Winnie Basques and Stan Ruidas expressing the need for improved road conditions and a new community center.

While the meeting drew only a modest number of Lānaʻi residents, it brought to light key issues like affordable housing, infrastructure needs and support for agriculture and youth initiatives. Mayor Bissen’s commitment to the Fifth Street extension marked a crucial step, yet the limited community turnout to the meeting suggests there may be additional Lānaʻi concerns that remain unheard. Greater understanding and involvement in the Maui County budget process are essential, not only to reinforce these commitments but also to ensure a broader range of community voices is heard and their needs are addressed in the county’s fiscal strategies.

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Continued from page 8.

The Maui County Budget Process

Navigating the Maui County budget process can be complex, and it's important for residents to know how their input can shape fiscal decisions. This overview sheds light on the key stages of the budget process, highlighting opportunities for community members to make their voices heard. From initial drafting to final approval, understanding this procedure is crucial for those looking to advocate for their community's needs and priorities.

Budget Preparation: The mayor's office works with the community and county departments to draft a budget, considering expected income and expenses. Departments provide their funding requests.

Funding and Economic Considerations: The budget is funded through various sources, including real property tax, which is a significant revenue source for the county. Other sources include fees, charges for services, grants, and state and federal funding. Economic factors like tourism and property values, including impacts from events like the Lāhainā wildfire, influence income estimates and budget adjustments.

Public Participation: Before submitting the budget to the Maui County Council, the mayor's office seeks input from the community on specific funding needs and priorities. Through public hearings and community meetings, residents are encouraged to propose and discuss specific areas or projects they believe should receive funding. Additionally, the mayor's office accepts detailed budget proposals from individuals and organizations, which can be submitted using the Budget Request Form available at www.maui-county.gov/budget.

After the proposed budget is submitted to the Maui County Council, there are multiple opportunities for continued public participation. The council reviews the mayor's proposal and holds additional committee hearings and public hearings, where residents and stakeholders can provide feedback on the proposed budget.

Important Deadlines: The mayor submits the budget to the Maui County Council by March 25th. The council reviews and possibly amends the budget, typically completing this by late April or early May. The County of Maui Charter requires that the council passes the budget on or before the tenth day of June of the fiscal year currently ending.

Maui County Council Review: After reviewing, the council can either amend or approve the proposed budget as is. The Budget Finance and Economic Development Committee leads the council's review of the budget in committee meetings. This is where the majority of the review's continued public input takes place. Testimony can be received every weekday during committee review.

Mayor's Review: The mayor reviews the council's amendments within a set timeframe and decides whether to accept them.

Handling Vetoes: If the mayor vetoes any changes, the council has the ability to override this decision. To do so, a supermajority vote is required, with at least six of the nine Councilmembers voting in favor of the override.

Final Steps: Following any veto actions, the budget is finalized and signed into law by the mayor.

Implementation and Oversight: The new budget is implemented on July 1st. County departments utilize their allocated funds to carry out their functions and services. Throughout the year, the budget is monitored to ensure that expenditures align with the approved budget.



David Embrey delivers his testimony.

Rommel's Ramblings

Embracing the Art of Slacking

contributed by Rommel Rendon



Sleepy time with Tata Rommel Rendon.

Hey, it's Rommel Rendon — well, I guess I've been given the honor of being your guide through this lifestyle advice column thingy... so, let's just flow with it and see where it leads as I share why you should live the relaxed way.

The "Geev'um" State of Mind: Stress as Rocket Fuel

Growing up in this town, I've seen all my friends compete for a grip on that career ladder, sweat it out in pursuit of the "perfect bod," and bend over backward to bask in everyone's approval. Stress becomes their turbocharger, propelling them to new heights. They holler, "Geev'um!"

Hitting the powerhouse gym? Toss on extra 45lb plates and "Geev'um!" Spot a cutie? "Geev'um!" and ask her out. New supervisor gig? Apply, no hesitation, and "Geev'um!" But my response? I just shrug and say, "Nah, I good."

So, they slap the "slacker" label on me. Maybe they've got a point. They've thrown shade at my laid-back approach to life, my preference for naps and video games over packed schedules. But there's a deeper reason behind my philosophy.

The "Slacker" Stigma

They call me a slacker because I'm content being a Cook II at the Central Bakery. It's not about dodging hard work — I'm always there for my team, whether it's in the Mānele or Kō'ele hotel kitchens or doing deliveries. I don't chase promotions, because I've found happiness and balance in my current role. I've learned that titles and bigger roles don't guarantee a better quality of life.

I cherish the flexibility I have now, which lets me be there for my family and myself. It's a choice to prioritize these aspects of my life over climbing the corporate ladder.

They label me a slacker, because I pick family nights over after-work socials. Even though my two kids can drive me nuts, I spend my evenings taking care of them and helping look after my dad. Rare moments of solitude recharge me, helping me appreciate my responsibilities better. Take my 20th Lāna'i High School reunion last summer, for instance. They wanted me to fly across the ocean for it. But here's my brilliant idea: Facebook, my friends! I saw them all online, looking just the same, except for a little less hair and a few more wrinkles. Why bother with airports and luggage? (Plus, only 10 of you showed up, so who's the real slacker here?) Balancing family commitments and personal well-being is crucial to me.

Slacker's Words of Wisdom

1. Z's Please: Life's not a sprint; it's more like a leisurely stroll. Rest, rejuvenate and let the world wait. Sometimes, a nap is all you need to turn the day around.

2. You First, If You Feel Like It: It's easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of responsibilities and forget the most important person: you. It's not about being selfish; it's about understanding that to give your best, you need to feel your best.

3. Ride the Cosmic Wave: Not every situation requires a reaction. Not every problem needs an immediate solution. There's beauty in just letting things be, in taking a step back and giving things time to settle. Glide along with what comes, trusting that you're moving in the right direction, even if it feels like you're just drifting.

Because here on Lāna'i, where everybody knows your name and the kind of toothpaste you brush your teeth with — with their ears and eyes always on you — social pressure can be intense. The instinct is to keep up with expectations. Somewhere along the way, I realized it's perfectly okay to slow down and just be yourself. Learning to take time for yourself and your needs is crucial — balance the stress with some good old vegging out.

Finally, are you wondering why I penned this, despite my "slacker" rep? Blame it on my "buddy," Anthony Kaauamo, the new managing editor at Lāna'i Today. This gig wasn't exactly voluntary. Until next time, remember to savor life's pleasures.

The Gift Giver's Friend

by Anthony Kaauamo



“I am not Santa, but I do believe in him.”

We are at the back of the Lānaʻi Art Center gallery, in a space that resembles a toy workshop, where I am speaking with Philo Sowers as he meticulously fine-tunes a digital rendering of a Rancor (the giant, flesh-devouring creature from “Return of the Jedi”) on his laptop. There is a 3D printing machine next to him, ready to bring the virtual creature to life.

Amidst a galaxy of handmade art and crafts by Lānaʻi-based artists, his workspace is a collection of trinket-sized Star Wars figures, including 3D-printed renditions of Luke Skywalker’s iconic X-Wing and landspeeder as well as a lotus-posed Darth Vader, resplendent in his Sith Lord attire.

Philo is known to many here as both a freelance photographer and Lānaʻi’s official liaison for Santa Claus — a position he has garnered 23 years worth of experience. The role of Santa’s liaison is as baked into Lānaʻi’s festive history as chocolate chips are baked into his favorite cookies.

“Well, even though he likes chocolate chip the most, there is no wrong cookie for Santa. Even gluten-free ones are okay,” Philo clarified. “But if you want to get real specific,” he continued, eyes twinkling like Christmas lights, “chocolate chip cookies sprinkled with candy cane powder or a dot of peppermint are what he actually likes best.”

The path Philo treads is paved by the boots of two Santa liaisons before him: the steadfast Uncle Marco Eskaran, renowned for guiding Santa’s door-to-door visits around town and hosting Santa at his Mahana Street residence, and the stormy Uncle Ron McOmber, who directed Santa’s visits at the Christmas Tree Lighting Festivals through the 1990’s and aughts. Uncle Marco passed away in 2018 at the age of 83, while Uncle Ron passed in 2020 at 80. Both men gave Philo their blessings to carry on the legacy of working with Santa to foster the spirit of Christmas on Lānaʻi.

As liaison, some of Philo’s responsibilities include the following key tasks:

Coordinating Santa’s Itinerary

Philo works with Mrs. Claus to schedule Santa’s visit to Lānaʻi, ensuring his attendance at key events like the Christmas Tree Lighting Festival and the Four Seasons Lānaʻi Employee Keiki Festive Gathering Party.

Safeguarding the Reindeer

An important aspect of Philo’s role involves safeguarding Santa’s nine reindeer from hunters or those who might mistake them as invasives. He arranges a secure, undisclosed location on the island for their lodging during Santa’s visit.

Santa’s Conduit for Wishes

Philo acts as Santa’s conduit, channeling the Christmas wishes of both children and adults. He gathers heartfelt messages well before Santa’s arrival. “Lots of kids are shy, but they open up when they know Santa is safe and kind,” said Philo.

Festive Photography

During the Four Seasons Lānaʻi Employee Keiki Festive Gathering Party, as photographer, Philo captures families as they interact with Santa. He often encourages adults to partake in the age-old tradition of sitting on Santa’s lap, reminding them of their own childhood. “Santa doesn’t mind crying babies or shy adults,” said Philo. He often tell parents, “Come on, you were a kid once. You’re on the good list.”

Collaborating with Santa’s Lānaʻi Elves

Philo extended his heartfelt gratitude to Susu and Ron Woolsey, affectionately known as “Santa’s favorite Lānaʻi elves,” who had managed the logistics and artistic design for previous Christmas Tree Lighting Festivals. They contributed to designing Santa’s photo area, setting up the Nativity scene at the Old Dole Admin Building, constructing Santa’s sleigh, and operating foam machines to create a winter-like setting.

Determining the “Good List”

Getting on Santa’s good list is straightforward. “Just be kind,” Philo advises. It’s common to see Lānaʻi’s children prioritizing others’ needs before themselves. “They ask for stuff for other people, like, ‘Oh, I want my friend to get a bike so we can ride together.’ Or, ‘I want my nana to be around a few more years,’ and it really gets to Santa,” he said.

Embracing Non-Believers

Philo appreciates that belief in Santa is not universal. He acknowledges that while he was fortunate to grow up with the belief in Santa, it’s not the case for everyone. “You don’t have to believe in Santa, but believe in yourself no matter what,” he said, “Santa is there for those that need him; anybody that needs a Santa, whether you believe or not.”

With over two decades as liaison under his belt, Philo has become a living chronicle of Lānaʻi’s families. “Kids who sat on Santa’s lap before are now parents, bringing their own kids. It’s a cycle that’s kinda cool to see — grandmothers, mothers and babies, all in one photo.”

Over this long tenure, the line between himself and Santa has faded, sometimes making it difficult for people to distinguish one from the other. Recognizing this confusion, Philo reassures, “I am not Santa, but I do believe in him.”

Though Philo might not don the red suit himself, it’s his firm belief that brings Santa to life in the eyes of those around him.

“Santa is there for those that need him; anybody that needs a Santa, whether you believe or not.”

Photos by Anthony Kaauamo and the Lānaʻi Community Association



Charlotte Menze, Jimson Joe, Maximus Menze Joe & Elmiter Jim



Daniel, Callan, Elias, Trinity, Liam & Noellani Bullington



Pili, Grazel & Rhiley-Ann Gella



Kali, Kyrie Lei & Kristine de Brum



Kamaka, Kalena, Aliana & Jasmine Primicio



Sandra Dee & Yom Xavier Enfield



Shra, Ryker, Kolton & RJ Sanches



Santa plays throw shaka with Philo in the Lānaʻi woodlands

Happy holidays to all!



24 replacement trees arrive on Lānaʻi.

Dilemma of the 24 Missing Trees at the Fifth Grade Christmas Tree & Wreath Fundraiser

by Anthony Kaauamo with contributions from Sharmaine “Silveress” Elan

Wednesday, November 22, 2023 — the overcast sky hinted at the arrival of the Makahiki season, ushering in a period of rainy days, saturated grounds and the promise of harvest.

The grassy corner of Fifth Street and Fraser Avenue, just outside the Lānaʻi High & Elementary School (LHES) campus, was bustling with activity among rows of freshly cut Douglas and Noble fir trees, tightly bound in twine, and a display of wreaths adorned with velvet red ribbons. Fifth graders, their parents, school staff and high school volunteers dotted the area. Safety cones were placed throughout, guiding the flow of foot traffic and outlining the pickup zones.

Weaving their way through the line were LHES student journalist, Sharmaine “Silveress” Elan, and LHES middle school counselor, Yvonne Urbas-Leboeuf. “The scent is so amazing. Like, you know, the evergreen’s really nice.”

Yvonne’s mention of the scent, a recurring theme in the day’s interviews, prompted Sharmaine to probe further into the event’s emotional resonance. “How do you feel about picking up your tree order?” she asked.

“I think it’s a tradition. I love it. It makes me happy.” Just then, a young girl dashed toward Yvonne, wrapping her in an enthusiastic embrace. “Like this right here, it’s just connecting with people. I love it.” She conversed with the girl, sharing the joy of her tree pickup and wreath she was about to collect. “Alright, my dear, thanks for the hug. You made my day.”

For the second consecutive year, Jennifer Montgomery, LHES’ fifth-grade teacher, has led the fundraiser, a role she inherited from Kerri Glickstein, LHES’ former band teacher. This event supports the fifth graders’ end-of-year celebration, marking the conclusion of their elementary school years and fostering a sense of accomplishment as they prepare to embark on their journey to middle school. Last year’s celebration included a day of fun and activities at the Lānaʻi Adventure Park, a catered lunch and an awards ceremony.

Under the instruction of Jennifer and Giovanna Apostol, the fifth grade’s 36 students sold a total of 176 tree and 346 wreath tickets throughout September. However, the fundraiser faced a challenge

Continued on page 13.

This event supports the fifth graders’ end-of-year celebration, marking the conclusion of their elementary school years and fostering a sense of accomplishment as they prepare to embark on their journey to middle school.



Kamaka Air team and community volunteers load trees arrived from Honolulu.

Continued from page 12.

when its vendor, Holiday Tree Farms in Corvallis, Oregon, failed to deliver 24 of the ordered trees. They notified Jennifer only after their cargo truck carrying the rest of the order had departed, leaving no time for immediate rectification. This issue was particularly distressing as it was not the first occurrence of such a problem.

“This is the second year in a row that they’ve done this,” Jennifer said. “We used them last year, and the same unfortunate thing happened.” Last year, Holiday Tree Farms miscalculated their container’s capacity, resulting in about 20 trees being left unshipped. Given that tree sales this year were at least 50 trees fewer than the previous year, Jennifer reasonably expected the order to comfortably fit into the container, which the vendor, after conducting an additional measurement, confirmed.

“When they let me know that 24 trees didn’t fit and would not make it, I was nervous because they’re presold, and we can’t have 24 people just not get a Christmas tree,” Jennifer said.

With limited alternative options available, the event’s role as the primary source of fresh Christmas trees for island residents was pronounced. Jennifer Kaiakala, assisting at the fundraiser, highlighted this unique aspect, “If we didn’t have this event then I think there would be less fresh trees in the homes. This is the only way that fresh trees come to Lāna‘i. There are no other trees for sale.”

Shirley Samonte, volunteering at the event to support her fifth grade grandson, said, “We don’t have the means to go and buy Christmas trees here, so we would have to go off-island. I think it would be difficult, and many would be left without trees.”

Gabby Ozoa, while picking up wreaths she ordered, echoed this sentiment, “I don’t think people would have trees without this event. And so I think if this ever stopped, I don’t know. I don’t know what people would do.”

Yvonne said, “I did know of somebody once going in the woods and chopping a tree down. I was like, is that legal?”

Upon informing those who had pre-ordered trees about the potential delay due to the vendor’s shortfall, a wave of understanding and support was expressed to Jennifer and the fifth grade class over social media.

“Please keep the money as a donation, don’t need the tree. Thank you for all your hard work.”

“Thank you for your tireless work for our community! We appreciate it so much! We can also wait for our tree, and are willing to help pay the extra.”

“We can wait too, or whatever the outcome is we are fine, but the funds should stay with the fifth grade class. Thanks for all your hard work, we appreciate all your efforts.”

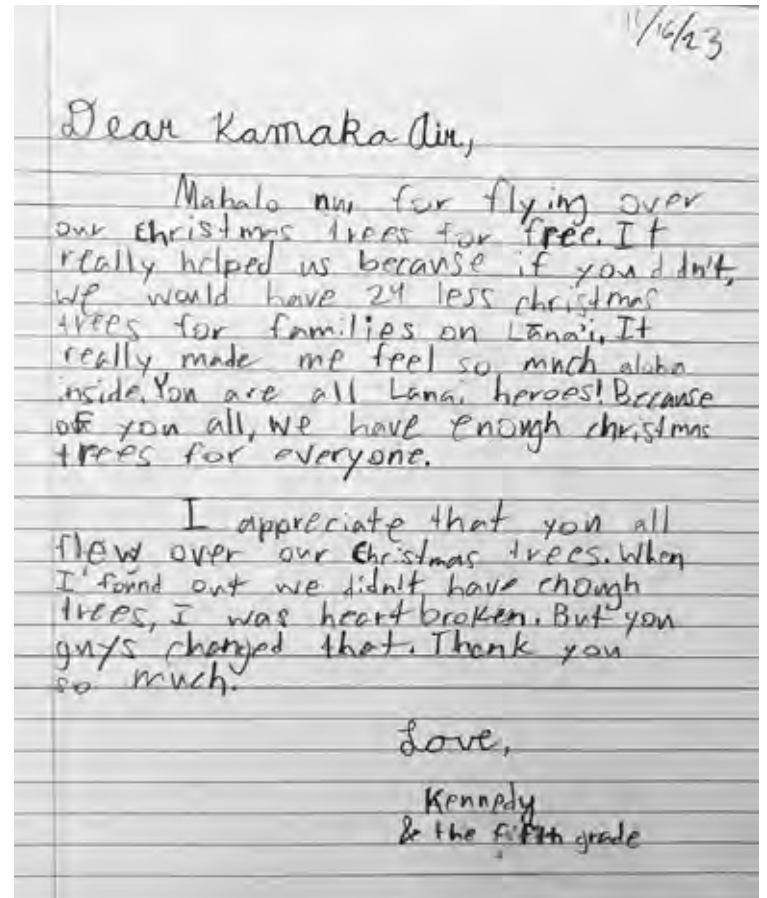
To redress the shortfall in the tree shipment, Jennifer reached out to Joelle Aoki, the government affairs officer and Lāna‘i station manager at Kamaka Air, the inter-island cargo carrier, for help. Joelle facilitated an arrangement with Kamaka Air to fly the required trees from O‘ahu to Lāna‘i at no cost. During the same time, Susu Woolsey, who is also affectionately known as “Mama Susu,” located and secured the necessary 24 trees from Home Depot on O‘ahu. Displaying a “clutch” performance, the collaborative efforts of Joelle, Kamaka Air and Mama Susu ensured that all customers received their pre-sold trees on Lāna‘i.

“We were super thankful to not only Kamaka Air, Joelle and Susu, but also for the community’s support and understanding throughout the whole process,” Jennifer said.

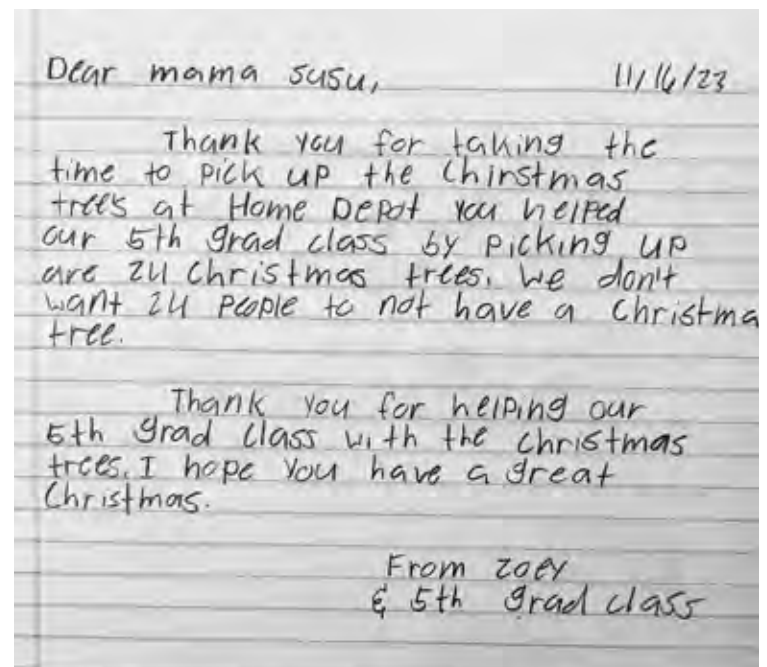
“I don’t think people would have trees without this event. And so I think if this ever stopped, I don’t know. I don’t know what people would do.”

“We were super thankful to not only Kamaka Air, Joelle and Susu, but also for the community’s support and understanding throughout the whole process.”

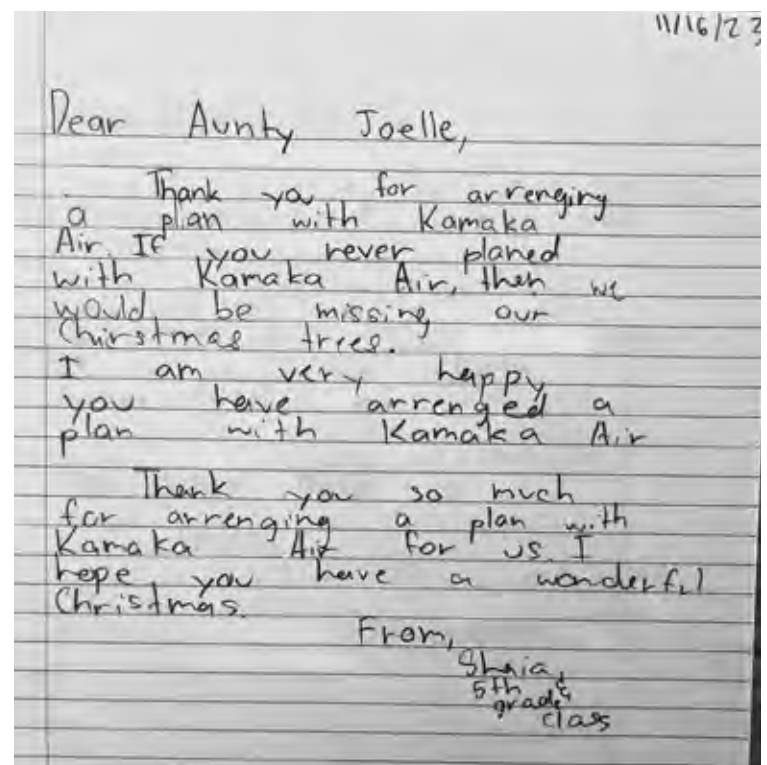
With the last Christmas tree and wreath orders collected, like the end of a harvest, the grassy corner of Fifth Street and Fraser Avenue lay fallow, leaving behind only the large white Matson shipping container on its trailer, door ajar, dark and empty of its contents.



Fifth grader Kennedy’s thank you letter to Kamaka Air.



Thank you to Mama Susu from fifth grader Zoey.



Fifth grader Shaia’s thank you to Joelle Aoki.



Lāna'i Community Health Center



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WOMEN, INFANT, AND CHILDREN PROGRAM

WIC is a program that provides supplemental nutrition to pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under five who meet income requirements and have a nutritional risk that could be improved with proper nutrition. Apply now!

FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM

Birth control is not one size fits all. Let us help you find a method that works for you. We also offer pregnancy testing, STI testing, and treatment. Schedule your next appointment with us, either in person or through telehealth.

TOBACCO CESSATION PROGRAM

At LCHC, we are committed to empowering individuals in our community to enhance their well-being by quitting all forms of tobacco. Don't hesitate to contact us today to schedule an appointment with one of our tobacco treatment specialists or learn more about our Tobacco Cessation Program. #EHanuLāna'i (Breathe Lāna'i)

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We value your opinion and aim to provide top-notch services that meet your needs. Please complete our surveys using the QR code provided to share your feedback!



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Needs Assessment Survey

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In case of non-emergency medical needs after clinic hours, call our after-hours provider line at 808-563-9630.

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Monday- Thursday
8:00 AM-7:00 PM

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8:00 AM-5:00 PM

Saturday
8:00 AM-3:00PM

Open during lunch
12:00 PM-1:00 PM

Sunday CLOSED

Holidays CLOSED

LĀNA'I FITNESS CHALLENGE 2023 UPDATE:

We want to thank each participant, community partner, and donor who joined us at our event on October 28th, 2023. We had over 150 participants walking around Dole Park in a sea of red event shirts as we did our 5k walk for Lahaina. Mahalo to our local fire dept. members for leading our first lap. We are happy to announce that LCHC has sent over a check for \$2722.38 to Hawaii Community Foundation's "Maui Strong Fund."

Mele Kalikimaka & Happy New Year!

May your days be Merry and Bright, filled with Holiday Joy and Blessings!



MODIFIED SCHEDULE FOR THE HOLIDAYS:

LCHC will be closed on **Monday, December 25th, 2023**, and **Monday, January 1st, 2024**, as we observe Christmas and the New Year. Our regular business hours will resume during the rest of the week. Mahalo!

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS AVAILABLE:

Did you know we have Covid vaccines available? If you are a uninsured /underinsured adult, we offer Moderna and Pfizer vaccine. For anyone 5 years old and older with insurance we have Pfizer vaccine available. Please call our office to get on the Covid-19 Vaccine Waitlist.

NUTRITION TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON:

In Lāna'i, despite being isolated as an island, we have great food! With the Holidays coming up, here are some reminders on how to eat healthily. Eat regular, small meals throughout the day. This way, you won't get too hungry and overeat at the event. When you are the one making the food, reduce bad cholesterol and calories in your dishes without cutting down on the flavor. Use egg whites and applesauce in baked items instead of margarine or butter. Pick the fat-free or low-fat ingredients such as sour cream or whipped topping of cheeses. Use fruits and veggies for appetizers. Don't use glazes or heavy sauces. For side dishes, instead of fried foods, toss fresh green salads. Choose a small plate at the party! Fill your plate with veggies, green salads, fruits, and lean meats. Eat only a small piece of a dish that's high in calories. Savor each bite of your food and focus on the flavor to enjoy what you're eating. After eating that small plate, take a break before taking a second. Limit alcohol (beer or hard liquor). Try drinking sparkling water or a diet soda first. This will help quench your thirst.

MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON:

The holiday season, while wonderful for some, can also be a lonely time for others. While we wish everyone a happy holiday season, we also want to provide a few tips if you find yourself struggling at some point this season. Start by adding something that you will look forward to on your calendar. This can be something as small as a book you've wanted to read, cooking a meal you've wanted to try, a movie you've wanted to watch, whatever it is make time for it and circle it on your calendar. Loneliness is a good reason to go out and talk to some people. Even making those small connections to people you walk past on the street can boost your mood. Lastly, you could start a new solo tradition such as volunteering, visiting a special place, or doing something that just makes you happy. Whatever you plan to do this season, we hope your holidays are full of self-love and kindness.



PEOPLE 

Developed opportunities for our staff and other Maui residents to build their careers in healthcare, including a paid certified nurse aide training program and a partnership with UH Maui College of Nursing that has trained and recruited nearly 200 new local nurses to date.

A BIG MAHALO

TO OUR MAUI HEALTH 'OHANA

Maui Health is honored to care for the health and well-being of our communities on Maui and Lāna'i. We are grateful for our team and their dedication to our mission of providing exceptional health care for the people we serve with compassion, dignity, and respect. Their tireless commitment is evidenced by many notable achievements including national awards and recognition.

As we close out 2023, using our values, *People, Community, and Excellence* as our guideposts, we want to share some of our most recent accomplishments and recognize some of this year's outstanding employees.

COMMUNITY 

Immediately following the Maui wildfires, Maui Health stood up outreach clinics on the west side of the island, caring for over 700 individuals with burn, smoke inhalation, and other fire-related injuries.

EXCELLENCE 

Maui Memorial Medical Center (MMMC) earned AHA Gold Plus Quality Achievement Awards for heart failure and stroke care and was newly awarded the Resuscitation Silver Award for excellence in treating in-hospital cardiac arrest in 2023.

2023 EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



Keesha Magarin
MMMC, January



Christy Haskins
MMMC, January



Joana Ped
MMMC, February



Julie Ann Tacardon
MMMC, February



Stacy Fujiwara
Kula Hospital, February



Pritsana Heisler
Lanai, 1st Quarter



Melissa Mauiola
Kula Hospital, June



Lianne Kele-Ponce
Kula Hospital, June



Michael Ilustrado
Lanai, 2nd Quarter



Norleen Fernandez
Kula Hospital, August



Remedios Bala
MMMC, September



Marithel Versola
MMMC, September



Charmaigne Oliveros
MMMC, October



Candice Dela Cruz
MMMC, October




Gigi Keys
MMMC, November




Devin Doss
MMMC, November

Maui Memorial Medical Center
Maui Memorial Outpatient Clinic
Maui Wound Care and Hyperbaric Therapy
Kula Hospital and Clinic
Lāna'i Community Hospital
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Must be capable of achieving an independent living status.

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Sunday Special Dinner, Dec 17th / 4pm-10pm

Christmas Eve Dinner, Dec 24th / 4pm-10pm

Christmas Day Brunch, Dec 25th / 11am-2pm

NYE Dinner Party, Dec 31st / 4pm-10pm

New Year's Day Brunch, Jan 1st / 11am-2pm

Sunday Special Dinner, Jan 7th / 4pm-10pm

Sunday Special Dinner, Jan 14th / 4pm-10pm

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COMMUNITY NIGHTS

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Three 1-hour sessions:

**January 19th
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Reservations required - contact Love Lāna'i at (808)-565-2822 11:00am - 4:00pm

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We would like to thank those who helped make the Christmas Tree Lighting Festival a successful event:

- Pūlama Lāna'i
- Four Seasons Resorts
- The Maui Electric team - Baba, James, Nolan and Ryan
- Paradise Lua
- Maui Disposal
- Susu & Ron Woolsey
- Kamoku Ulu
- Goodfellow Bros.
- Albert Moniz
- Lāna'i High Class of 2024 & 2025
- Maui Fire Department
- Maui Police Department
- All of the performers and participants and especially Santa
- LHES Wrestling Team

 A special thank you to David Pham & David Harrison for the Keiki gift bags. 

LCA also expresses our appreciation to the businesses who have generously given to our 2023 Fund Drive:

**Diamond Sponsors
\$5,000**

- Nordic PCL Construction
- First Hawaiian Bank

**Silver Sponsors
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- Pine Isle Market
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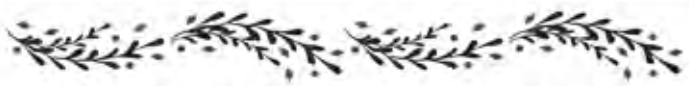
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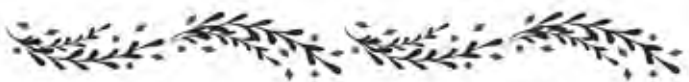
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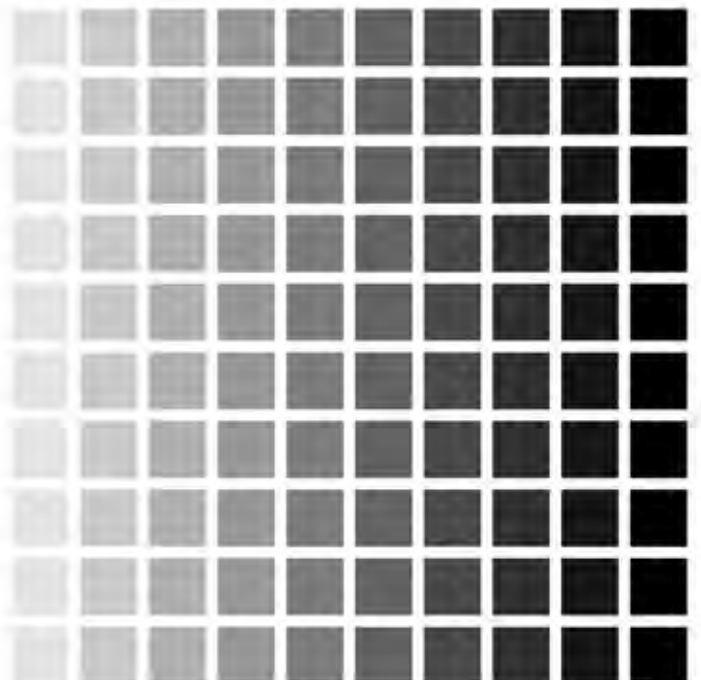


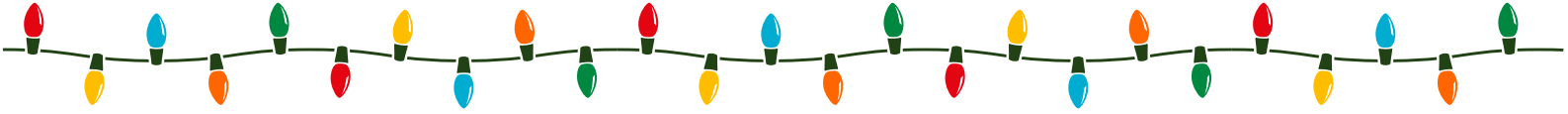
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A Brief Account of the 2023 Christmas Tree Lighting Festival

by Anthony Kaauamo

“After graduating, I’m not going to pick pineapple.”

With these words, Val Hubin left Lāna'i in 1979, fresh from Lāna'i High & Elementary School (LHES). Years later, her path led her back to the island to care for her aging mother, this time as a staff member of the Lāna'i Community Association (LCA). 2023 marked her debut at the helm of the Christmas Tree Lighting Festival. “All I knew about the festival was that they lit the tree and there was a craft fair, food booth, Santa,” she recalled.

Despite her initial limited knowledge of the festival’s intricacies, Val navigated her first year with finesse. The event unfolded on a surprisingly dry Saturday, December 2nd, a relief from the week’s constant rain, and featured hula performances and caroling, as well as 22 retail and eight food vendors, serving up a diverse array of crafts and cuisines. A standout booth was the LHES wrestling team’s booth — a fundraising effort where push-up competition losers faced a pie in the face.

Another highlight was the first-ever Christmas Car Ride Around, led by MPD Officer Erick Tabubuc, showcasing nine vehicles decorated with inflatable Santas and holiday lights. He remarked, “I’ve been trying to get this thing together for a while. It’s kind of like doing our own version of Honolulu City Lights here on Lāna'i.”

Val, alongside Kay Okamoto, LCA president, estimated the festival drew over a thousand attendees, with a consistent flow from day into night. Santa’s knees alone sat over 700 visitors.

When asked about her main takeaway from overseeing the event, Val shared, “Listening...if you take time to listen to people’s comments and feedback, it makes it much easier to plan for success.”



Push-up competition fundraiser for the Lāna'i High School's wrestling team.



Holiday patrol, MPD Officer Erik Tabubuc's leads the Christmas Car Ride Around.



Makana Cortez's Christmas cruiser.



Hālau La'ikealoha.



The Morimoto's Cherokee cheer.



Like a parade of pines, Jiders performance group.



Super long line to visit Santa.



Microphone mastermind, MC Ke'ala Kadooka!



Ho'omanawanui. At the end of Santa's march, Daniel Forsythe embarks on a festive journey.



Feeding the hungry in Santa's everlasting line, Ervina & Jayleen.



Chef Christian bested Hunter.



Kanalu Agliam-Lopez pie-faced after push-up loss to Jaidon.