

HUI LIMA KOKUA HAWAII CLUB NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER (KEPAKEMAPA) 2004

Aloha,

Next Meeting. (a) Our next monthly potluck dinner-meeting will be held on September 11 starting at 6:30 pm at the American Legion Hall located at 2639 Wagon Wheel Road. We will have elections for next year's officers and have bingo games. The nominations committee will present a slate of officers and further nominations will be taken from the floor. (b) On Saturday, September 25th we will have the installation of officers at Super Buffet King starting at 1:30 pm. Super Buffet King is located 1301 W. Channel Island Boulevard in Oxnard. The menu there is quite extensive with over 75 dishes to choose from – Chinese, Japanese, Italian, American, Seafood, etc. Cost will be \$3 per member (or \$2 if you bring the coupon from the Penny Saver). The Club will pay the difference.

Past Meeting. (a) The Paniolo Day dinner meeting was really fun and a change from our regular dinner-meetings. Mahalo to **Gerry & Gwen** for suggesting and planning the concept, **Darrin and Ling Gee** for cooking, **Len** for making the authentic Ferdinand the Bull used in the roping contest. We also had fishing in the Lokoi's for our white elephant game. The winner of the **Johnny Del Gado** Papale Award was **Paulette**, with **Leandra** as runner up. Time ran out before awarding the Honorable mention awards to **Betty and Ken**, so if **Betty and Ken** can wear your Paniolo Papales to the next meeting so you can accept your prizes. The Papale award was difficult to judge because of all the impressive entries. Thanks to all. It was also nice to see **Robert and Ling Gee Wong** at this meeting. Welcome back, hope to see more of you two in the future!

Membership News. **Leandra, Mario, Celeste, Travis, Kay** and I attended **Johnny Delgado's** Celebration of Life festivities on August 29 at Culver City. It was a wonderful event with speeches, lots of ono food, music, and dancing. This was a fitting tribute to **Johnny** who loved to party.

Hawaii Sports. (a) **Bryan Clay** wins the silver medal in the grueling decathlon at the Olympics. **Bryan** is a 1998 Castle High School (Kaneohe) graduate. (b) The UH Football team opens its season at home against Florida Atlantic on September 4th. Who the heck is Florida Atlantic?

Hawaiian/Local Tidbits. (a) E Hula Mau (Southern California's Tenth-Annual Hula & Chant Competition) will be held on Labor Day Weekend (September 3, 4, & 5) at the Long Beach Performing Arts Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach. Box Office: (562) 436-3661. Cost \$59 for the Weekend Ticket Package (daily fees available). (b) Las Vegas Hoolaulea and Pacific Island Festival at Lorenza Park, 3333 West Washington Ave, Las Vegas, Nevada on September 18 and 19. (c) The 3rd Annual Southern California Ukulele Festival in Cerritos will be held on October 2 at Cerritos Park – 13234 East 166th Street, Cerritos, CA., 90703. Hours: 9 am to 10 pm. Continuous entertainment and workshops during the day with luau and concert at night. See website for information: www.ukulelefestival.org. I attended the Ukulele Festival last year and it was wonderful. I highly recommend it. (d) When I heard there was a new Hawaiian restaurant in town, I just had to try it so I could let y'all know about it. "L & Q Hawaiian BBQ" Restaurant is located at 1780 S. Victoria Avenue., Unit F, Ventura. It is across the street from K-Mart, next to Ralph's Supermarket. Their plate lunch/dinner includes macaroni salad, two scoops of steamed rice, cabbage plus the entrée. The menus include things like "Hawaiian BBQ Mix" for \$6.29; "Mahi & BBQ Chicken Combo" for \$5.99; "Loco Moco" for \$5.99; "Hawaiian BBQ Pork Chop" for \$5.99; "Spam Musubi (2 pcs) for \$2.59; etc. The plate lunches were plentiful. Even the mini plates were generous at \$3.99 (one scoop rice, macaroni salad, and entree). Just like L&L's back home. Two thumbs up for this new restaurant. (e) Hawaii State Representative **Glenn Wakai (D)**, nephew of **Ted Wakai**, is

running for re-election in November. **Glenn** is a former television reporter for KHON and KHNL in Hawaii. The **Wakai** Family tree sure contains a lot of high profile people, including **Ted** who is an accomplished ballroom dancer, magician, and uke player. By the way, happy 80th birthday, **Ted**. **(f)** I got a chance to attend the opening of the Polynesian Cultural Center at Hacienda Casa de Oro, Ablas, on Wagon Wheel Road (about a block from the American Legion Hall where we meet) in Oxnard during the weekend of August 21. **Tina Vainuku**, founder and dance instructor for Tina's Ports of Paradise and the Lotogatasi Polynesian Institute of Learning are spearheading the creation of this Center which will soon showcase Polynesian lunch and dinner performances Tuesdays through Thursdays. Performers will dance for patrons and provide educational Polynesian demonstrations such as palm leaf basket weaving, coconut cracking, poi-making demonstration, etc. Look in the newspapers for details and let's support this endeavor. **(g)** The Point Mugu Airshow will be held on Sept 18-19. Free admittance. **(h)** Now that the Olympics is over, get ready to view "Hawaii." This weekly series will be shown Wednesdays on NBC and was filmed entirely in Hawaii.

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By Vicki Viotti, Advertiser Staff Writer

The story of the 'ukulele, as Leslie Nunes heard it, starts like this:

Thousands of miles from their homes in Madeira, 419 Portuguese immigrants disembarked from the Ravenscrag 125 years ago at Honolulu Harbor - and celebrated with music.

"After a four-month journey from Portugal, they were so happy to stand on land, they pulled out instruments and began to play and sing," said the 68-year-old Kailua resident, whose great-grandfather, Manuel Nunes, was among those revelers.

Of course, the instrument was the braguinha. That miniature four-stringed guitar almost immediately became the model for the first 'ukulele, destined to become inextricably linked with Island culture.

The anniversary - the Ravenscrag arrived Aug. 23, 1879 - was celebrated on its anniversary this year in a free 'ukulele concert. It was produced by Leslie Nunes, who is a lifelong collector and scholar specializing in the instrument.

"I just wanted to honor the 'ukulele," Nunes said. "I couldn't let this anniversary go by."

His forebear was one of three aboard ship whose names turn up in 'ukulele chronicles: Augusto Dias and Jose do Espirito Santo were also craftsmen who helped to develop and manufacture the first true 'ukuleles. Nunes said his great-grandfather was a cabinetmaker in Madeira as well as a luthier, a craftsman who specialized in stringed instruments. So when he immigrated to Hawai'i, it wasn't long before he went back into business, recognizing the potential of the native woods, especially the radiant qualities of koa. Kou was also used in the early days, Nunes said, although it was harder to work and therefore receded in popularity behind koa. Nunes lovingly unpacked an 'ukulele that his great-grandfather had made in 1910. The wavy figuring of the wood, known as "curly koa," gleamed. Back in 1910, he said, such an instrument sold for \$5 - at the time, nearly a month's wages.

This is just one of about 200 vintage instruments that Nunes keeps "in storage" (he won't say where), in the hopes that someday they could be displayed in a permanent museum.

The oldest instrument in the collection: a braguinha handed down by his great-grandfather, circa 1820. All of them, he said, are carefully insulated from the elements, their strings protectively slacked to reduce stress on the instruments' joints.

Nunes learned what he knows partly from his grandfather, who passed on childhood memories of romping on the 'Iolani Palace grounds while Manuel Nunes sold instruments inside to Queen Lili'uokalani.

He also did a lot of research, making several trips to Portugal, in the process of publishing a book for the 'ukulele centennial. He co-wrote "The Ukulele: A Portuguese Gift to Hawai'i" with John Henry Felix and Peter F. Senecal, and now is planning a new volume to commemorate the 125th anniversary.

Stories abound about how the 'ukulele got its Hawaiian name - which translates into "jumping flea." In schoolroom visits, Nunes would suggest to children that the Hawaiians named it that because the Portuguese musicians, viewed from the back, seemed to be scratching themselves.

Nunes has heard stories about a musician with the moniker 'Ukulele being the origin of the instrument's name, but he shook his head. He knows the real story, he said, but he's not talking - yet. "It'll be in my next book," Nunes said with a grin.

However it was named, he said, the 'ukulele quickly captivated the Hawaiians. The familiar tuning, a tradition imported from Portugal, seemed to give the instrument a tonality that worked well with Hawaiian melodies, Nunes said.

"That's what made the 'ukulele popular: the tuning," he added. "It spoke to Hawaiians. It matched their meles and matched their hula."

For the past several years, the 'ukulele has enjoyed one of its periodic surges in popularity, he said, fueled in part by musicians with particular gifts - the warmth of the late Israel Kamakawiwo'ole and the flash of virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro.

Enrollments in classes continue at a healthy pace, Nunes said.

Some of the young who've caught the bug - Roy Sakuma's Super Keikis and Murata's Keiki Palaka Band - were featured in the August 23, 2004 free concert.

Shimabukuro, 27, remembers his own love affair with the 'ukulele, starting at age 4.

"My mom played," he said. "For me, it always kept me out of trouble."

"I think the most wonderful thing is it's such a humble instrument. It's not intimidating to pick up."

Known for his machine-gun virtuosity, he said: "It's not about technique. The most important thing is you enjoy it. ... It kind of grabs you and brings a smile to your face."