

HUI LIMA KOKUA HAWAII CLUB NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2008

Website: huilimakoua.com.

Next Meeting. (a) Our next potluck meeting will be held on Saturday, October 11, starting at 1 PM at Our Lady of Assumption Church (Parish Center) located at 3175 Telegraph, Ventura. Please note the **new time and place**. Parish Center is located about 200 yards west of Hurley Hall where we normally meet (look for big "Parish Center" sign). The newly elected officers will furnish stew and rice for the main dish while the rest of the membership can bring side dishes – salad, dessert, etc. We will be holding rehearsal and last minute preparation for our mini-luau to be held on October 25. Bring your ukuleles and ipus so that we can practice singing/playing "I Ola Kakou Na Hawaii," "Hiilawe" and "Hawaii Aloha" (all in key of C). Wear your club shirt to the meeting and to the luau. (b) Our annual mini-luau will be held on October 25, starting at noon. This luau will be held at Assumption Hall, Our Lady of Assumption Church. We need volunteers to help with luau preparation on the Friday morning through mid afternoon, October 24. We also need help in decorating and tables/chairs setup before the luau on the 25th. Call **Juanita** for more info. Tickets (100) have been distributed to the membership so please bring back any unsold tickets and money to the next meeting on October 11 so we can get a count. Tickets are being sold on a first-come-first serve basis and the absolute deadline to buy tickets is October 18 or until we sell out. Tickets are \$10 for members, \$15 for nonmembers (friends of members), and \$5 for children under 12. We will be having drawings for gift baskets at the luau so if you have any donations (crack seed, macadamia nuts, restaurant/store certificates, etc.) please bring them at the next meeting so that we can make the baskets for the drawings. We will have a display table for items we made at the Hui so bring whatever you made – leis, ipus, poi balls, necklaces, etc. For ticket information call **Ron Wong** (or **Juanita** after September 30).

Past Meeting. (a) At the last meeting we held election and installation of new officers. The new officers whose one year term starts October 1: President: **Darrin Ching**; 1VP: **Juanita Pendergrass**; 2VP **Dirk Boone**; Recording Secretary: **Lita Eckhart**; Corresponding Secretary: **Mike Nakamura**; Treasurer: **Ron Wong**; Advisor: **Mario Castroni**; and Aloha Chair: **Leandra Castroni**. Congratulations to the incoming officers and mahalo for a job well done to the outgoing officers. The outgoing officers are pretty much the same individuals except **Juanita** and **Mario** swapped positions. **Dirk** volunteered to serve as 2VP until we can find a volunteer to replace him. **Dirk** is pretty much tied up with his duties as a scout master so if there is anyone interested in relieving **Dirk**, please call **Darrin**. Here is your chance to join the board and help direct the Hui in its program this year.

Membership News. (a) **Juanita** became a proud great grandmother again last month. **Kehau**, former member of the Hui now living in Stockton, gave birth to a baby girl (**Mahealani**) in August. Congratulations to **Kehau** (mother), **Linda** (grandmother), and **Juanita** (great grandmother). Oh, and **Bill** is the great grandfather. (b) **Ollie and Loesje Akau** will be moving to Bend, Oregon, at the end of September. Good luck to you and I hope you get the chance to visit us often. Keep in touch, we will miss you. (c) We have the good fortune to pick up a special new member – **Betty Day** from Ventura. **Betty** has been instrumental in getting many of us interested in playing the ukulele. From September 1994 to September 2002 we gathered at her house every Monday evening to kanikapila (jam). Off the top of my head, Hui members and ex members who played ukulele at **Betty's** were: **Juanita Pendergrass, Leandra Castroni, Celeste Lowe, Travis Harrelson, Barbara Watson, Darrin Ching, Ted Wakai, Stan & Annette Takahashi, Gwen & Gerry Wong, Paulette Peterson, Sylvia and Nani Edgar, Pricilla & Kathy Magallenas and Mike Nakamura**. Those were the good ole days. Welcome to the Hui **Betty!** (d) Now that we have started the new fiscal year, **Ron Wong** is collecting dues - \$15/\$20 for single/couple. Past officers and chairpersons of major events pay half price. Send dues to **Ron** at 392 Tulane Avenue, Ventura, CA, 93003, or give money to **Darrin** at next meeting.

Mike Nakamura, Corresponding Secretary, 482-1740, monakamura@aol.com

Member Profile Leandra Castroni

Folks, as we start a new fiscal year, I would like to try something different in the newsletter by writing about a member so that we may all get to know a little more about that person. This month I have selected **Leandra Castroni**, our conscientious Aloha Chairperson for many years. She is such a caring, cheerful and fun-loving person, always with a smile on her face. The **Castronis** have been members of the Hui, off and on, since the mid 1960's, always returning after **Mario** was being deployed around the world serving in the U.S. Navy. **Mario** currently serves as our advisor on the Hui board.

Leandra was born and raised on Oahu and moved a few times during her youth. She lived in Kalihi Valley, Kam IV Road, Waipahu, and Nanakuli. She went to Dole Intermediate School and graduated from Waianae High School in 1961. She is the fifth of 7 children in her family. She met her husband, **Mario**, when she was 17. **Mario** was serving in the Navy at that time. They were friends at first, before **Leandra** asked **Mario**, the young haole from Bremerton, Washington, to be her date in a group get-together. After their first date in a group setting the two of them would be chaperoned by two of **Leandra's** sisters on subsequent dates. In 1962 they got married after knowing each other for 2 years. That union brought four daughters into the family: **Lori** (husband **Ken MacDonald** and children **Aaron & Joseph**), **Michelle** (husband **Mike Vivenzio** and children **Shane & Kiana**), **Maria** (husband **Todd Workman** and children **Meg & Brett**), and **LeAnn** (husband **Mark Cobb** and children **Christopher & Zachary**). The last two of **Leandra's** daughters are twins. **Ken MacDonald**, who is in the reserves, is presently serving in Iraq – God bless him and the whole family.

Mario served in the Navy for 24 years before retiring in 1977 as a Chief Petty Officer. As a military family, the **Castronis** had to move many times. **Leandra** had her hands full trying to raise four daughters while following **Mario** to different bases. **Mario** would leave for his new station first and **Leandra** and the girls would follow after he found suitable housing. Life was tough. As a fulltime mother, **Leandra** could not work on a permanent basis. While living in Adak, Alaska, **Leandra** formed a hula troupe and was quite active in promoting the Aloha spirit in this cold Alaska frontier. Occasionally she was mistaken for an Eskimo. She has held many part time and temporary jobs throughout her career – working at the Pleasant Valley School District, Sears, May Company, on the base, 3M, etc. In 2006, she earned her Associate Degree from Oxnard College after many years of taking one class at a time. **Mario** always encouraged her to continue her education. She especially enjoyed the Marine Biology classes.

Now that her daughters are all grown up and married, **Leandra** has time to devote to her hobbies and interests. She enjoys gardening, fishing, clamming, sewing, singing, playing the ukulele and wash tub bass, and baking cookies. She is a very devoted family person and enjoys spending time with her grandchildren. **Leandra** also enjoys the solitude of walking on the beach where she can meditate, enjoy peace and quiet while doing some exercise. While at the beach she would look for dolphins swimming close by and enjoy collecting shells. The **Castronis** have lived in Port Hueneme for the past 3 years with their cat and turtles. Prior to that, they have lived in Oxnard for 30 years.

The **Castronis** bought a condo on Oahu in case they should decide to move there permanently, which is unlikely, says **Leandra**, but **Mario** has his fingers crossed. **Leandra** still has family living on Oahu where they visit often. **Mario** loves the laid back style of Hawaii. **Leandra** enjoys vacationing in Hawaii and anywhere there is a beach close by.