

HUI LIMA KOKUA HAWAII CLUB NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2020

Website: www.huilimakoua.com.

What Next?. (a) No surprise to anyone - September's potluck is canceled. The Board decided not to risk the health and well being of members. (b) Future Potlucks:

October: Canceled.

November & December: Most likely to be canceled but the Board will decide.

Membership News: (a) For this month **Ron Wong** wrote an article summarizing the history of the Hawaii Club since he joined the Club 46 years ago. He has graciously and tirelessly written the two page article which is attached. It is an interesting article and **Ron** must have done a lot of time-consuming research to complete. Please retain for future reference. Mahalo **Ron** for a job well done. Incidentally, **Ron** has been the Club's Treasurer for over 40 years. (b) **Mike Nakamura** will be transferring his duties as Corresponding Secretary to **Lynette Inouye** effective October 2020. **Mike** has been the Corresponding Secretary for the past 30 years. The next Hawaii Club newsletter will be published by **Lynette**. She is a relatively new member with a lot of Aloha spirit and "gung ho" attitude. She and her husband **Alan** are originally from Hawaii and currently live in Ventura. Mahalo **Lynette** for volunteering to assume this position.

COVID-19 has and will probably cause us to miss the following Club events:

1. Our free annual election/installation luncheon at a local restaurant in September.
2. Our annual mini-luau or Hawaiian Cultural Get-together that normally take place in October.
3. Our annual Thanksgiving Potluck featuring roasted turkey with all the trimmings plus lots of ono desserts in November.
4. Our annual Christmas Potluck with baked ham, sing-a-long Christmas carols and gift exchanges in December.
5. Our annual New Years Potluck in January.

Aloha! I just want to say that I enjoyed being the Corresponding Secretary for all these past years. I will still be an active member of the Club and looking forward to the day when we can actually meet in person and enjoy each others' company like the good old days. Until then – take care and **ALOHA!**

Mike Nakamura, Out-going Corresponding Secretary, 805-482-1740, monakamura@aol.com

Hui Lima Kokua History

I understand that the Hui Lima Kokua (The Club of Helping Hands) was organized in 1963 by a group of military veterans from Hawaii who were living in the Oxnard area at that time. They used the club to provide support for each other in this new environment they had chosen to settle in. The organization was formally incorporated on October 1, 1964. Ben Wright was its first President.

I joined the club about ten years after its start. I responded to a notice in the local newspaper that reported that the local Hawaiian Club was scheduled to have a meeting at the Oxnard Community Center. I recall that at the first meeting I attended, there were just a half dozen old members (who were essentially the existing officers) and three couples who were interested in joining the organization. Besides Tesi and me, the others were Gerry and Gwen Wong and Carl and Keala Namahoe. After attending a few meetings, it was obvious to me that the organization was not on firm ground, with obvious dissention existing within its leadership. The club's condition was such that after my attending just a handful of meetings, I was offered the organization's Presidency.

At the meeting that was to select the officers for the following year, I suggested that Ben Wright, who was present just observing the proceedings, lead the club once again instead of me. If he would, I offered to accept the position of Vice President and would work with him to try to improve the club's existing condition. I volunteered to rewrite the club's Bylaws to address some of the issues that had caused the dissention among the past leadership. With Ben's agreement to serve and my completing of the Bylaws rewrite, it was decided that we were ready to work on increasing our membership. An open invitation was proffered to all from Hawaii who lived in the area to attend a no-cost luau at the Port Hueneme Community Center. The result of the function was that the number of member families in the club doubled. The organization's operations thereafter stabilized with numerous active members leading the way. At that point I assumed the office of Club Treasurer, a position I hold to this day.

The Hui grew and developed during the next few years, having enough civic pride and manpower in 1974 to sponsor a float for the Port Hueneme Harbor Days Parade. The float, which consisted of a large farm flatbed festooned with ti leaves from Hawaii and carnations from a farm owned by a friend of the club, carried a number of Hawaiian musicians who entertained the viewing crowd. The float won the Theme Award. During the two weeks prior to the parade, club members had decorated the float in the driveway of my Port Hueneme Navy Base home.

During the early years of the club's existence, it held its usual meetings at the Oxnard Community Center. It met there until March 1998 when the Center's management decided to start charging us for the use of their rooms. After some searching for an alternative place to meet, we were able to obtain permission to use as our meeting place a room in the Oxnard American Legion clubhouse that was located in the Oxnard Wagon Wheel district. We met there from July 1998 until May 2007, at which time the Legion's building was condemned to make room for the district's development. We were again faced with having to acquire a new place to meet. Meanwhile, I had developed a relationship with the pastor of the Assumption Catholic Church in Ventura. At my mentioning that our club was in need of a meeting place, he gave me permission to have the club use one of his facilities. That was in January of 2008. We were using the church's facilities until December of 2019, when we were informed that they no longer could be spared for our use. We presently are in need of a new meeting site.

Over the years, with family membership being as high as 40 and as low as 20, the club's leadership varied its activities on its regular second Saturday of each month meeting schedule. Rather than the usual gathering at the regular site of our meetings, meals at restaurants, picnics at local parks, campouts at various out of town sites, and excursions were planned in their stead. Campgrounds at El Capitan, Carpenteria, Kern River, Point Mugu Naval Base and McGrath were visited. Trips to Catalina Island, the Channel Islands, Chumash Casino, and numerous junkets to Las Vegas over the years spiced the club's calendar. With many of our members having young children, the scheduling of picnics and campouts were as much for their benefit as for the adults. Getting gifts from Santa Claus at Christmas and having an Easter egg hunt each year were other special occasions for them.

From 1981 to 1984 the club held luaus at the Ventura Fairgrounds that drew up to 900 guests. Traditional Hawaiian food was served, with pigs cooked in an authentic imu, banana leaves being used instead of ti leaves, and hot real imu rocks inserted into and around the pig for its cooking. (I understand that the lava rocks were obtained from an old volcano site somewhere in SoCal.) Out of town Hawaiian entertainment was hired to perform. Most of the proceeds from ticket sales were used to cover the costs of the facility rental, the food, entertainment, and incidentals. The approximately \$4,000 profit each year came almost exclusively from bar sales. The end of our luaus at the Fairgrounds was a result of the facility's management increasing their fees on everything they provided to the extent that any profit for our efforts would become minimal.

To replace the luau's income source, from 1985 to 1996, the club sponsored a booth at the Ventura Holiday Street Fair, initially selling plate lunches and cold drinks, and later selling barbecued chicken sticks instead of the plates. In 1988, Ventura added a 4th of July Street Fair, which the Hui also participated in. Besides making a significant profit from the food sales, the club always earned an additional sum for having either the first or second best decorated booth on the street, thanks to the decorating leadership of Kaimana Pendergrass. The club's involvement with the street fairs ended in 2001 with the establishing of sanitation requirements that were too difficult to meet.

With the ending of our participation in Ventura's Street Fairs, there were no significant money-making projects before we began having mini-luaus at the Assumption Church facilities starting in October of 2008. These mini-luaus, which were managed by Kaimana Pendergrass, offered Hawaiian fare and entertainment, and a drawing for prizes. Over the years, most of the hundred or so attendees were regular customers who always looked forward to the following year's event. The last mini-luau was held in 2018. A Hawaiian Culture Get-together was held in October of 2019 in its place.

Through the years, the organization either participated in or supported various public programs and charitable agencies. A meal was prepared by club members for the Knights of Columbus and for the Oxnard American Legion for one of their special occasions. A number of members provided support for the annual December 7th memorial program conducted at the Government Center. A contribution was made for the maintenance of the Ventura Pier. For many years, contributions to the Salvation Army were made by supporting their annual Bellringer program. A scholarship was awarded to graduating seniors of club families.

Prepared by Ron Wong
August 2020