



# HUI LIMA KOKUA NEWSLETTER - `Apelila 2023

## Hawaii Club of Ventura County Newsletter - April 2023

### Calendar & Upcoming Events

`APELILA | April

- 1 - April Fool's Day
- 5 - Passover
- 8 - Hui Lima Club Meeting - Please RSVP!**
- 9 - Easter Sunday
- 9 thru 15 - Merrie Monarch Week!
- 18 - Tax Day
- 22 - Earth Day 🌍

### Hui Lima Meeting Location

Club House of the Bonaventure  
 10949 Telegraph Road  
 Ventura, CA 93004

[Next Meeting: Saturday, April 8, 11a-1p. Please RSVP!](#)

Aloha kākou (all)! Our April Meeting will be potluck.

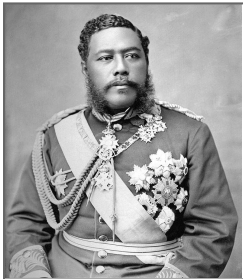
We have another special activity on the agenda, this time led by yours truly. We will be making an eyelash yarn lei, similar to the ones pictured.

**Please RSVP to Leah by Friday 12p, April 7** to ensure we have enough supplies for everyone. You can text/call (805) 469-9230, or email [LKammeyer@gmail.com](mailto:LKammeyer@gmail.com).



Also - a big MAHALO NUI LOA e **Max Hannum** for the hot pot food demo and sample last month! 🍲👏 Sooo ono; we all had very happy bellies!

### 60 Years of The Merrie Monarch Festival



It is the 60th year of the Merrie Monarch Festival, the most prestigious hula competition - it's often referred to as the 'Olympics' or even 'Super Bowl' of hula. Traditionally, it occurs the week after Easter, this year running from April 9th through the 15th. The main events are held at Edith Kanaka'ole stadium in Hilo, but festivities go all week long throughout the town, including live music shows and entertainment, parades, and let's not forget the shopping! The Merrie Monarch Arts & Crafts fair hosts Hawai'i's best local vendors, with clothing, crafts, decor, jewelry, fresh lei, accessories of all kinds, and of course, food!

The festival itself is a dedication to the last king of Hawai'i, King David La'amea Kalākaua, who reigned from 1874 until his death in 1891. Known as the "Merrie Monarch", he enthusiastically promoted Hawaiian culture and arts in a time when the foreigners/colonizers tried to suppress it. Hula had been banned in 1820, but for his 50th birthday in 1886, he hosted a two-week long Silver Jubilee featuring a celebration of Hawaiian culture at 'Iolani Palace. This included hula and oli (Hawaiian chanting) - the first time in years

that it was performed in public. He held a parade through downtown Honolulu. His advocacy for indigenous Hawaiians and their culture sparked the first Hawaiian Renaissance.

Fast forward about 70 years: Hawai'i was experiencing an economic slump due to the declining sugar plantations and the devastating 1960 tsunami that had wreaked havoc in the Hilo area. The Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce created the Merrie Monarch Festival in 1963, hoping to take advantage of the upswing in tourism. Festival events in the initial years included a King Kalākaua beard look-alike contest, relay races, barbershop quartets, a re-creation of King Kalākaua's coronation, and a Holokū Ball. Several years later though, interest waned.

It was in 1971 that the Merrie Monarch Festival began to assume a format similar to what we know today. They restructured the festival to feature the best hula dancers from around the islands, the finest in Hawaiian art and craft, and create a celebration of the Hawaiian people, much like King Kalākaua's vision and ideals. In 1976, the festival opened up the hula competition to include kāne (men), which skyrocketed interest. Around this time, Hawai'i in general was experiencing their second Renaissance, and the Merrie Monarch Festival steadily grew in popularity. Throughout the years, the Ho'ike Night (exhibition) was added, as well as a separate night for the Miss Aloha Hula competition, and also the week-long festivities around Hilo.

Since the festival's inception, 2020 was the only year the festival was canceled, due to the Covid pandemic. In 2021, the hula competition returned, but only the active participants were allowed in the stadium and the event was televised in July of that year. 2022 cautiously eased the public back to the event, but limited the number of ticket sales. Everyone is excited that this year, the Merrie Monarch Festival is finally back in full swing!

(Cont'd on next page)



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*Merrie Monarch Festival, cont'd.*

For those of us that can't be there in person, a livestream is available online of the Hula Performances: <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/merriemonarch/>

Schedule is to the right, but remember - it will be *live* and on *Hawai'i time*, so it makes for very late evenings here on the mainland! It's exciting, but make sure you have time for a nap the next day.

Having attended the Merrie Monarch Festival in person, I can say it is a truly moving and inspiring event. The energy of the people and the power of the performers is captivating. Lots of "chicken skin" moments!

One of the favorite quotes and themes of the festival is from King Kalākaua himself: "Hula is the language of the heart, and therefore the heartbeat of the Hawaiian people." The heartbeat is definitely strong and resounding the week of Merrie Monarch! Enjoy if can!

Merrie Monarch Performances:

**Wednesday, April 12, 6:00pm HST - *Ho`ike Performances***

**Thursday, April 13, 6:00pm HST - *Miss Aloha Hula***- Individual competition for the title of Miss Aloha Hula with contestants performing hula kahiko, hula 'auana, and oli (chant).

**Friday, April 14, 6:00pm HST - *Hula Kahiko*** - Hālau hula perform ancient style dances.

**Saturday, April 15, 6:00pm HST - *Hula `Auana and Awards*** - Hālau hula perform modern style dances, followed by an awards presentation for all group winners.

### Edith Kanaka`ole on the U.S. Quarter!



Renowned kumu hula, composer, and Hawaiian chanter, Edith Kanaka`ole has been minted on the U.S. quarter. Circulation just started in the last week of March.

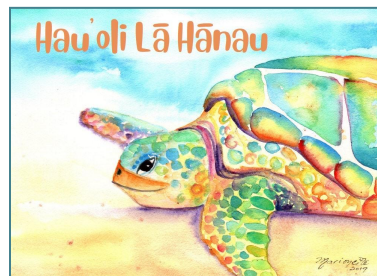
The quarter features Kanaka`ole adorned with lei po`o ('head lei') and her hair flowing, then transforming into the landscape.

In life and death, Edith Kanaka`ole is considered a custodian and authority on Hawaiian language and culture. She was a composer of traditional Hawaiian music, oli (chants), a choreographer and kumu hula, a teacher at Hawai'i Community College and then University of Hawai'i at Hilo, developed the first Hawaiian language programs for public school, created a mentorship program for the kūpuna (elders), and so much more. She left behind an incredible legacy, and is a fitting representative of Hawai'i on the U.S. Quarter.

### HAU`OLI LĀ HĀNAU to our `Apelila birthdays:

**Bruce Tabor**  
**Max Hannum**

Have a wonderful birthday and enjoy your celebrations!



### A Note About May's Program:

Our May program includes a performance for the residents of the Bonaventure and the Hui.

We are excited for special guests from Hālau Hula O Pualanina`auali`ioha as our featured performers!

Please note, our schedule will run a little differently, hence the heads-up:

- **12p** Potluck with short board meeting to follow, & clean-up
- **2p-2:45p** Hula Performance

It is a little later than usual, but we think it will be worth it!

Again, this is just for the May program, which is on Saturday, 5/13.

More details to come in next month's newsletter.

***Hope to see you at our next meeting, Saturday, April 8th, 11a-1p!***

**Comments, Corrections, Questions, Suggestions?** Feel free to reach out and let me know if you have suggestions for future newsletters, or corrections / comments on previous ones. Leah Kammeyer, [LKammeyer@gmail.com](mailto:LKammeyer@gmail.com), (805) 469-9230