



HUI LIMA KOKUA NEWSLETTER - Kekemapa & Ianuali 2026

Hawaii Club of Ventura County - December & January 2026

Calendar & Upcoming Events

Pepeluuli | February

2 - Groundhog's Day

14 - Hui Lima Kokua Meeting /

Valentine's Day ❤️

17 - Lunar New Year 🐎

[Hui Lima Meeting Location](#)

The Club House at The Orchard
10949 Telegraph Road
Ventura, CA 93004

[Next Meeting: Saturday, February 14, 11a-1p](#)

Hau'oli Makahiki Hou! Happy New Year! Hope everyone had a nice holiday season. Our next meeting is potluck at the Club House. We will continue our "Getting to Know You" session, and perhaps add some "meet-cute" stories for Valentine's Day. A "meet-cute" is the story of how someone first meets their significant other. If anyone would like to share, we welcome it! ❤️

Our January program was the start of the "Getting to Know You" session in which each person shared a piece about themselves. We are continuing this in February since we ran out of time. Big mahalo to **Jerry Matsukado** for facilitating and sending us lots of prompts/topics from which to choose! Many of us also wore mu'umu'us or Aloha wear in observation of Mu'umu'u Month (more below).

December's program was a fun holiday celebration with kanikapila!

January is Mu'umu'u Month

Mu'umu'u Month is a modern celebration of a 19th century garment whose origins came from the Christian missionaries, but the Hawaiians made all their own.

In January 2015, Kaua'i fashion designer Shannon Hiramoto received a package of vintage mu'umu'us from a friend's mom (I misspoke in our January meeting today and said it was her own mom). Hiramoto's company, Machinemachine, typically created garments, bags, totes, etc. out of repurposed materials.

While she did use a few to make tote bags, she could not bear to tear apart the rest of the mu'umu'us she'd received. Instead, she took up a challenge to wear a different one each day that January, and posted it to social media with the hashtag #muumuumonth. She wore them in her daily life, from errands to shopping, veterinary visits, and even hiking! Hiramoto commented that she would get looks from people, but she was happy to bring a smile to their faces.

Her posts and hashtag gained so much traction, inspiring others to join her in wearing mu'umu'us in their everyday lives as well. It was another type of cultural revival, appreciation, and expression. The movement was so popular that local officials and then Governor David Ige recognized its significance and declared January as Mu'umu'u Month. Mu'umu'u Month continues to be an enthusiastic celebration of Hawaiians and this uniquely cultural symbol.



Shannon Hiramoto also created a digital archive of mu'umu'us from people's personal collections all over the world. None are for sale, but endeavour to share these treasures with all. You can even submit pictures and descriptions of your own mu'umu'u! <https://themumuarchive.omeka.net/>

To check out Shannon Hiramoto's own work at Machinemachine designs, you can visit her website <https://machinemachineapparel.com/>.



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History of the Mu'umu'u

Now that we know how the mu'umu'u is celebrated, let's look into the history of this garment!

Prior to Western contact, the indigenous Hawaiians wore clothing made from kapa, or barkcloth. Kāne typically wore a malo (like a loincloth) and wāhine wore pā'ū, similar to a skirt. Common kānaka (Hawaiian people) wore plain kapa. If you were an ali'i (chief / high-ranking), your kapa would be more finely made, possibly dyed and with patterns. Higher ranking kāne were also adorned with featherwork in their 'ahu 'ula (feathered cloaks and capes) and mahiole (crested feathered helmets). Red and yellow were most commonly used colored feathers as it symbolized the sacred mana of the ali'i and warriors.

In the 1820s, when Calvinist missionaries arrived on the islands, they of course imposed their Western ideals on the indigenous people. Part of their oppression included clothing intended to cover their bodies to fit with their "modest" practices.

The first iteration was often called a "Mother Hubbard" dress, which had a high neck and long sleeves and a long, loose fit designed for maximum body coverage. They featured a yoke, commonly a square shaped panel (providing structure) and the rest of the fabric gathered at the yoke and hung loosely as a shapeless garment. This style of dress was popular with the missionary / colonial influence across the Pacific.



photo by Renée Robinson

The next iteration was the holokū dress. This was a Hawaiian adaptation of the Mother Hubbard dress; they began to shape it into something of their own. It was floor-length, long-sleeved, had a fitted yoke, and also had a train. It was a more formal, elegant dress adapted by the ali'i and often used as a way to distinguish status. Holokū is still popular today and worn for formal and special occasions.

Finally, the mu'umu'u dress came about around the 1870s-1890s. This was yet another adaptation to these dresses. Unlike the holokū, the mu'umu'u was a more casual, everyday garment. The mu'umu'u had a looser yoke, came to ankle or calf-length, and was made from lighter, breathable fabrics, vs. the heavier and more elegant material of the holokū. "Mu'umu'u" means "cut off", referring to the shorter dress length and the loosening of the yoke from the more restrictive holokū style. The sleeves were also short or elbow-length.



Three women wearing vintage mu'umu'u at a lei workshop by The Kaimuki Lei Stand on O'ahu. Photo: Sean Marrs

As we learned from the origins of Mu'umu'u Month, this distinctly Hawaiian garment became a cultural symbol of resilience and survival against colonial and foreign influence. It's a community identifier and brings people together in their pride and expression of their culture.

Asato Family Shop in Waikīkī

One of the fun things that came from our January "Getting to Know You" session is we learned that **Arlene Fraser's** family has a delicious dessert shop on Kalākaua Avenue in Waikīkī, right across from the famous Duke Kahanamoku statue. Her younger sister, Colene Asato and her family work the shop, with the son (Arlene's nephew) Neale Asato as the creative flavor master.

The major theme of our January program was "community", and the Asatos definitely have that in mind: serving the local community with Hawaiian kine flavors and treats reminiscent of childhood. They endeavor to carry on the history of Hawai'i through food and culture for the next generations.



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Arlene's family was big into the restaurant & hospitality industries, but as the generations progressed, the interest had waned some. She is happy that her sister, Colene Asato's family has continued this part of the family legacy and proud that her nephew Neale Asato is the creative flavor master of the shop. He even collaborates with other local chefs to come up with uniquely Hawaiian flavors for their sherberts and other treats.



Here is their Waikīkī location info. Stop in and say aloha the next time you're in Waikīkī!

Asato Family Shop, Waikiki

Open daily 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.,
Hyatt Regency Waikīkī Beach,
2424 Kalākaua Ave., Suite 113, Waikīkī
asatofamilyshop.com, @asatoswaikiki

If no can visit, they do sell their products in select Foodland locations in Pearl City &

Honolulu. For a complete list of locations, visit their website <https://www.asatofamilyshop.com/keiki-art-dept>.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Reminder if you have not yet paid your Membership dues:

\$20 per person, or
\$30 per family

Dues are half price to members of the Board.

If you have any questions about your dues, please reach out to Treasurer **Amy Cherot**, atcherot@aol.com.



A big **E Komo Mai** -

Welcome to our newest members,

Jim & Tina Stowe!

After attending two consecutive meetings, we welcome you as formal members of Hui Lima Kokua.



We look forward to getting to know you and are so happy you joined us!



HAU'OLI LĀ HĀNAU

to our Kekemapa birthday:

Tina Stowe



Hope you had a beautiful day and enjoyed your celebrations!

Hope to see you at our February meeting on Saturday, 2/14 from 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, (805) 469-9230