



HUI LIMA KOKUA NEWSLETTER - 'Apelila & Mei 2026

Hawaii Club of Ventura County - April & May 2026

Calendar & Upcoming Events

'Apelila | April

1 - Passover

5 - Easter

11 - Hui Lima Kokua Meeting

22 - Earth Day

Hui Lima Meeting Location

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

Next Meeting: Saturday, April 11, 11a-1p

Apologies for no newsletter for the months of February/March. I appreciate your patience as I get caught up.

Our next meeting is **potluck on Saturday, April 11** in the Club House, 11a-1p. **Ron Wong** was unable to make it for the Hui Lima Kokua history talk last month, but we look forward to Part 1 of his presentation this month, and Part 2 next month.

Our March meeting was a good talk-story session led by Jerry Matsukado. February's meeting completed our "Getting to Know You" round table, with some added "Meet-Cute" stories for Valentine's Day.



Hawai'i Nei Bombarded by Record Storms

The month of March hit Hawai'i hard with what seemed like non-stop storms, and is said to be the worst flooding in over 20 years. The first storm hit March 10th - 16th, and then another system came in from the 19th-23rd, impacting all of Hawai'i nei. Hopefully, none of your family members or friends were severely impacted.

These storms are known as Kona lows. Typically, Hawai'i experiences steady, northeast tradewinds. With a Kona low, the winds are reversed and come from the leeward side (south / southwest), bringing in moisture from the Tropics. These systems move slowly and lead to days of continuous rains. Additionally, once the moisture hits the mauna (mountains), the rainfall intensifies.

The first storm brought hurricane speed winds reaching 135.4 mph on Big Island, and 62" of rain on Maui. The second storm caused severe flooding on O'ahu, which seems to have suffered the worst overall impact with a large concentration of homes destroyed on North Shore. Still, other islands suffered their own losses. Moloka'i was also hard hit during the second storm, experiencing widespread flooding in rural communities, and heavy damage to roads and infrastructure.

It's estimated that overall, there were 2 trillion gallons of rainfall, 230+ rescues, over 100,000 customers who lost power, and over 300 farms hit, which may amount to \$17.5 million in agricultural losses. The numbers aren't clear yet as to how many have been permanently displaced due to the storms, but approximately 5,500 people were evacuated on O'ahu and hundreds of homes damaged. Maui estimates possibly hundreds of people were at least temporarily displaced. Kaua'i had some evacuations, but not as drastic. Big Island saw flooding and landslides, but reported limited evacuations.

As if that weren't enough, yet another system is predicted to be heading for the islands sometime between April 8-11th. Forecasters are predicting similarly heavy rainfalls. While locations are not yet solidified, models at this time seem to indicate that the possible heaviest rainfalls may occur over Kaua'i, O'ahu, and maybe Maui.

With such widespread damage, Hawai'i is going to need support for their communities. Below, I've listed a few reputable (from what I can tell) charities providing aid to Hawai'i. *These are only suggestions, and only if you feel so compelled.* Additionally, I do encourage you to do your own research into these or other charities as well to ensure your dollar goes where you want it.





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The first two are organizations that have general, ongoing funds donations for Hawaiians in need when disaster hits. The third has set up a Hawai'i Floods-specific donation, and the fourth is an ongoing charity, but has a Kona Low-specific fund:

- The Hawaiian Way Fund by Hawaiian Council - <https://givebutter.com/hawaiian-way-fund>
- The Stronger Hawai'i Fund by Hawai'i Community Foundation - <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/stronger-hawaii-donate>
- Greater Good Charities - [Catastrophic Hawai'i Floods: Rush Aid Now](#)
- Hawai'i Food Bank - <https://hawaiifoodbank.org/>

Let us hope and pray that these communities can brace themselves for the next storm, and that recovery is on the horizon.

Kōkua aku, kōkua mai; pēlā ihola ka nohona 'ohana - "Help others, be helped; such is the family way."

The 63rd Annual Merrie Monarch Festival is Here!



It's that time of year - the week after Easter is the Merrie Monarch Festival! The festival runs from April 5 - 11, 2026 and this year, they are celebrating the kāne (male) hula dancers. Interestingly, kāne did not dance in the first years of the festival. It seems the hula revival at the time focused mostly on the wāhine. However, this year marks the 50th year that kāne dancers have been part of the Merrie Monarch Festival. The image at left is this year's poster for the festival, created by Craig Neff.

Throughout the week in Hilo, the town will be immersed in Merrie Monarch festivities, with parades, scheduled performances, and impromptu performances. The big Merrie Monarch Hawaiian Arts Fair is also a favorite shopping venue.

With all the excitement and anticipation in the air, there is also another variable making hālau a bit nervous. With the devastating storms, the available tī leaf supply diminished severely, making hālau scramble last minute to gather enough for their Merrie Monarch performances. Tī leaf is the most common and essential plant used in the leis adorning the dancers, particularly for the kahiko (ancient) performances. Typically, hālau just place orders and receive their tī leaf with ease, but the storms shredded and damaged so many of the plants, or damaged the roads to reach them. Hālau are instead having to forage for the tī leaves themselves, going to family farms or forests to find ones presentable enough for competition. But, we know that Hawaiians are resilient, and the community is coming together to kōkua (help) gather enough for everyone. When you see the tī leaf leis this year, you can truly appreciate the effort that went into them!

For more information about the festival itself, you can visit <https://www.merriemonarch.com/about/>.

For information on how to livestream the competitions for Miss Aloha Hula (Thurs night, 4/9), Group Kahiko (Fri night, 4/10), and Group 'Auana (Sat night, 4/11), you can visit: <https://www.merriemonarch.com/2026-festival-live-stream-eng/>

Please note that the competitions start at 6pm Hawai'i time, so 9pm PDT - and runs very late into the evening. It is worth it to see some amazing performances, though. Just make sure you have a flexible schedule the following days!

A Penny for your Thoughts

It's been about five months since the U.S. Mint officially ceased production of new pennies for circulation. An historic ceremony was held in Philadelphia, the original birthplace of the penny, on November 12, 2025. U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach minted the last penny for circulation, ending a 232-year run.

The Evolution of the Penny

The official copper cent was one of the first coins made just after the establishment of the U.S. Mint in 1792. The first designs on the penny included various representations of Lady Liberty, from 1793-1857, and the pennies were originally



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larger in size. The "Flying Eagle Cent" was produced from 1856-1858. It was this iteration of the penny that the coin was reduced to the size it is today. From 1859-1909, the design changed to what was known as the "Indian Head Cent", featuring a Native American princess. It was in 1909 that Abraham Lincoln made his debut on the penny, in honor of his 100th birthday. From 1909-1958, the penny was known as the Lincoln Wheat Cent or the "Wheat Penny" since the reverse or back side of the penny featured two stalks of wheat. This was the first penny design to feature an actual historical figure and to say, "In God We Trust."



WWII briefly turned our copper pennies to steel as copper was in high demand for munitions. Prior to the change, the penny at this point was composed of 95% copper, 5% zinc and tin. Copper was completely removed from the penny in 1943 and replaced with zinc-coated steel pennies, nicknamed "steelies." In 1944, copper was allowed back into penny production. In 1959, the image of the Lincoln Memorial replaced the wheat stalk design to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birthday and ran until 2008. The Lincoln Bicentennial pennies came out in 2009 and featured four designs commemorating different eras in Lincoln's life. Finally, in 2010, the Lincoln Shield Cent was issued and was the final design when penny production stopped in 2025.

The decision to cease production was due to cost factors; at the time of its last production, it cost \$3.69 to produce a one cent coin. Existing pennies of course are still in circulation and continue to remain legal tender, although you might have seen signs at some businesses warning about a shortage of pennies. Some states are in the process of passing legislative guidelines for "symmetrical rounding", which would allow retailers the option to round to the nearest nickel if need be when dealing with cash transactions. This penny shortage creates an increased demand for nickels, which could create another conundrum. The cost of creating a penny at \$3.69 is estimated to save between \$56 - \$85 million annually. However, the cost of creating a nickel is \$13.78. Then what? One idea floated is to change the composition of the nickel, which is currently 75% copper and 25% nickel. We shall see what the future holds for the nickel!

For more information about the evolution of the penny, visit [Finest Known's History of the Penny](#), which contains a very detailed history and visuals of the penny through the years. Much of the information from this article was obtained through this site.

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.



We have lots of birthdays to catch up on!

February:

LINGGEE WONG
AL BERIDON
ADELE KAMMEYER

March:

MIKE NAKAMURA LIANNE FRAME
RAY LOUIE AMY CHEROT
LEANDRA CASTRONI

April:

BRUCE TABOR
HIROKO YOSHIMOTO
MAX HANNUM

May:

MARIO CASTRONI
LEN PETERSON

Hope everyone has / had a beautiful day and enjoy/ed your celebrations!

Hope to see you at our April meeting on Saturday, 4/11 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