

Ka'ū Students to Become Resource Ambassadors with \$1.5M Grant

Ka'ū students will receive training in recycling education and outreach to the community over the next three years to become Student Resource Ambassadors. Three cohorts of 20 students each are offered training for Hawai'i Youth Clean Stream Campaign & Waste-to-Wealth Initiative, with support of \$1.5 million from an EPA Recycling Education & Outreach grant. Some training sessions offer stipends. The program is for students in ninth through 12th grades, with preference given to sophomores and juniors.

Partners are Recycle Hawai'i and Ka'ū Global Learning Lab Academy and its Principal 'Āina Akamu at Ka'ū High & Elementary School. The Recycle Hawai'i Director for this program is Justin Canelas.

Student Resource Ambassadors in the first cohort are set to begin their journey on June 1. The application deadline for students to enroll for Fall is July 31. To sign up with the Program Coordinator, contact Jennifer.Makuakane@k12.hi.us or 808-313-4141.

A kick-off event featuring students

enrolled in the program is planned for Saturday, April 27, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Pāhala Plantation House. Community members will have an opportunity to discuss the program with grant partners, elected leaders, and participants.

"The three-year project will focus on fostering the development of leadership skills among Ka'ū youth through community-based education campaigns that promote composting, raise awareness about plastic pollution, and inform the public about ongoing recycling opportunities cre-

ated by the students in the program," says a statement from the partners.

"This initiative aims to embed environmental justice principles into programs designed to reduce landfill waste on Hawai'i Island while empowering youth-led community action." It features the addition of community coordinators proficient in Marshallese and Hawaiian languages, facilitating outreach and engagement in Ka'ū and on the Big Island. Hiring for these positions begins this Summer.

Ka'ū Grant, pg. 6

THE KA'Ū CALENDAR

Volume 22, Number 4

The Good News of Ka'ū, Hawai'i

April 2024

Ka'ū Community Embroiled in Punalu'u Options

The proposal to develop 125 accommodation units and commercial enterprise on Punalu'u lands makai of Highway 11 drew a protest at Punalu'u on March 2 and an overflowing group of testifiers during the public hearing at the County Building on March 7. During the hearing, 80 speakers opposed the request for a Special Management Area permit, and eight spoke for it. When the hearing was stopped at 5 p.m., some 50 people were waiting to talk. According to County Deputy Planning Director Jeff Darrow, the Punalu'u hearing will continue most likely in May at a place and date to be determined.

Also in March, the Center for Biological Diversity filed for a contested case with the Planning Commission. The international non-profit stated that the project would be at "one of Hawai'i's most renowned black sand beaches" and "would harm local residents and jeopardize threatened and endangered species, including green sea turtles and Hawaiian monk seals." With a separate filing for a contested case, condominium owners at Punalu'u focused on the developer's repairing the sewer system in order to protect the homeowners and the environment.

In addition, local groups pro and con have been organizing and strategizing, the developers taking their plans to the public at the Prince Kuhio Ho'olaule'a in Nā'ālehu on March 30, and opponents suggesting that the land be purchased by the community for a public park, a wildlife preservation area, and possibly operating the golf course locally. Candidates for office have either opposed or asked for extensive consideration of the project and called for public input.

See Planning Director Zendo Kern recommendation to approve the project at <https://tinyurl.com/5yv7w99k>

See all live testimony from the hearing at <https://tinyurl.com/266twe9m>

Read more on the hearing, public opinion, photos and background at www.kaunewsbriefs.blogspot.com and Ka'ū Calendar facebook.

See the Black Sands LLC SMA application at <https://tinyurl.com/3zaaeem5>.



Macadamia Growers: Truth in Labeling Could Save Industry

Legislation to protect the macadamia nut industry through truth in labeling is moving forward during the 2024 Hawai'i Legislature. The macadamia nut industry

is one of the largest employers in Ka'ū. House Bill 2278 would require the country of origin to be included on the principal display panel of a consumer package

of raw and processed macadamia nuts. Testimony from local supporters of the measure came from Macadamia Nut

Macadamia Growers, pg. 3



Michelle Galimba seeks second term on the County Council.
Photo from votegalimba.com

Galimba Announces Council Re-Election Bid

County Councilmember Michelle Galimba has announced her bid for re-election. She issued the following statement:

"I would like to announce that I will be seeking re-election for the Hawai'i County District 6 County Council seat for the 2024-2026 term. It has been a privilege and honor to serve as the County Councilmember for our district for the past year.

"I love the unspoiled natural and

cultural beauty of our district: its wide-open spaces; its farms and ranches; its rocky coastline and pristine waters; its tight-knit, deep-rooted communities; and the richness of place - both in present time and in the traces of the past - that makes living in our district so unique and profound an experience. To serve this place and its people by advocating for our interests at the County government and by ensuring that our perspective is represented at the County Council is the reason I sought election two years ago and is the reason I seek re-election for the next two year term.

"I have learned a lot about the specific needs of the many

Galimba, pg. 4

Kailiawa-Smith Seeks Ka'ū County Council Seat

Ikaika Kailiawa-Smith is running for the District 6 County Council seat, to represent all of Ka'ū and adjacent parts of Kona and Puna. The 32-year old Nā'ālehu resident is a rancher and full-time county welder and mechanic. He said he would like to see working people, like those in the trades, "who know how to get things done," take jobs in public office. He said a lot of money can be saved and red tape cut by putting the right people with his kind of background in public office and county administration.

He gave the example of a ramp at the Wai'ōhinu Transfer station. He said he was able to save thousands of dollars for the county and much time for the public by building it himself. He promised to fix the lights in the ballfields in Pāhala and Nā'ālehu and put in lighting in the Ocean View county park.

Kailiawa-Smith joined the military right after high school and

came home to Ka'ū in recent years with his wife, who also grew up on this island, and their four children. He said he and his family would like to fight to keep young local families in Ka'ū from having to leave the island, by creating economic opportunity and affordable housing. He said his platform aligns with community concerns about sustainable agriculture and food production.

The candidate said he is dedicated to addressing food security is-

Kailiawa-Smith, pg. 4



Ikaika Kailiawa-Smith seeks a first term on the County Council.
Photo from Kailiawa-Smith campaign

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Also in this issue:

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Ka'ū Coffee Farmers Head to Specialty Coffee Expo

Ka'ū Coffee and its local growers are headed to Chicago for the Specialty Coffee Association Expo from April 12-14. Ka'ū Coffee has been represented at Hawai'i Coffee Association's Expo for many years and has taken top awards in the past.



In preparation for the event, Ka'ū Coffee grower Ralph Gaston, who chairs Hawai'i Coffee Association's SCA Planning Committee, sent out this message: "HCA team is attending the 2024 SCA Expo in Chicago next month where

we will be promoting Hawai'i coffee. If you produce green 100% Hawai'i coffee and have any of it available for sale, please fill out this survey so we can give out your contact info to any interested buyers. Please submit this survey no later than April 5." The survey link is https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024_SCA_Expo.

Among coffee local representatives attending the Expo are two from Ka'ū Coffee Mill, Andrea Johnson and Tyler Hess, and Jeff Clark of Olson Trust.

Ag Chair Asks Farmers to Weigh in on Ag Hurdles

Generational economic profitability for Hawai'i agriculture is the subject of a survey by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture. Its leader and Chair of Hawai'i Board of Agriculture Sharon Hurd is "requesting your input to identify the underlying issues impacting your achieving success as an agriculturist in Hawai'i. HDOA needs to understand the obstacles you are confronting and develop strategies, investments, and legislative priorities to support a vibrant agriculture industry in Hawai'i. Your input on these issues is necessary for HDOA to put together programs and provide the resources you identify as important to achieve Generational Economic Profitability."



The survey can be taken at https://qualtricsxmntvc3cpf3.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgPkAFacWR7bfts.

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Grants Available to Help Build or Buy on DHHL Properties

Matching grants for Hawaiian Home Lands beneficiaries of up to \$5,000 each to help them build or buy homes have been announced by Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. DHHL has partnered with homestead nonprofit, Hawaiian Lending & Investments, to provide direct assistance to beneficiaries looking to construct, or purchase, a home on Hawaiian Home Lands.



KipuKai Kualii, Chair of the Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations

Director Kali Watson. "Through our collaboration with HLI, we are able to make a direct and immediate difference for our beneficiaries by providing financial support and eliminating obstacles to home ownership."

DHHL's memorandum of agreement with HLI dedicates \$250,000 of the department's general revenues appropriated by Act 279 to

fund the program.

"Our HLI team, and our board members from every island region, appreciate the purposes of this MOA," said Rolina Faagai, HLI executive director. "HLI will facilitate a matching grant from DHHL to

DHHL Grants, pg. 10

DHHL Act 279 Down Payment Assistance Program will match Hawai'i Lending & Investments grants of up to \$5,000 that are awarded to eligible DHHL beneficiaries on any of DHHL's Application Waiting Lists and those holding undivided interest homestead leases.

"Getting our families into homes is at the forefront of our mission," said DHHL

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THE KA'Ū CALENDAR

The Good News of Ka'ū
 April 2024, Vol. 22, No. 4
 The Ka'ū Calendar
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 Associate Editor: Nālani Parlin
 Design/Production: Tanya Masaniai Ibarra
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For advertising, contact:
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KA PEPA PĀHALA

Volume 22, Number 4

The Good News of Ka'ū, Hawai'i

April 2024

Macadamia Growers, from pg. 1

Services, LLC, Edmund C. Olson Trust II, OK Farms, Hamakua Macadamia Nut Co., Ka'ū Farms Management, LLC; Kapāpala Ranch; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Farmers Union United, Macadamia Growers of Hawai'i and more organizations, farms and individuals.

Opposition came from Hawaiian Host Group, which purchased Mauna Loa and MacFarms and is known to import nuts to use in its Hawai'i-labeled macadamia products. Submitting testimony against the bill were numerous workers at its Kapua

Orchards and Hawaiian Host's management team, claiming they could lose their jobs if their company was not allowed to use foreign nuts, when needed.

Reggie Souza, Orchard Manager for Macadamia Nut Services, LLC, which farms thousands of acres in Ka'ū, wrote, "I am a farmer of Hawai'i-grown macadamia nuts in the districts of Kea'au and Ka'ū on the Big Island. I am pleading with you to strongly support HB2278 HD2, Relating to Labeling of Macadamia Nuts. I have farmed macadamia nuts for 36 years. Throughout all of these years, I have witnessed so many challenges that our macadamia nut industry has had to endure, especially after the COVID pandemic.

"Today, the Hawai'i macadamia nut farmers like me are facing the greater challenge of having to compete with low-cost foreign kernels. Well-known local brands have replaced our nuts with foreign macadamia nuts in their products but have continued to market their products as Hawai'i-grown nuts. This is deceptive to Hawai'i's people and visitors.

"Growers are just asking that companies be required to label the origin of their nuts. HB2278 HD2 will give Hawai'i growers a chance to keep our jobs and save Hawai'i's macadamia nut industry. Like many of our employees, I too have family members working for our company.

"My wife, sons, daughter, and son-in-law all work in the industry. Employees who live and work in Ka'ū are proud of what we do and have virtually no other job options in the area because Ka'ū is an hour and a half drive from Hilo and it's also an hour and a half drive to Kona.

"Pāhala is a small rural community that is an old sugar plantation farming town that farms coffee and macadamia nuts. We currently employ multiple families in this area. What will happen to these families if we can no longer stay in business?

"As a macadamia nut farmer, my biggest fear is that we will end up just like sugar and pineapple: closed down. We have 180 employees, and the majority of them are ILWU members. This also affects the smaller local macadamia farmers. Some of them have suffered so badly that they have now begun to clear off the macadamia nut trees from their land. It's sad



This Sea Salt brand is 100 percent Hawaiian grown.

to see these trees that have taken nearly 20 years to reach maturity be cut down."

The House of Representatives Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce issued a statement saying, "Hawai'i is currently the fifth largest producer of macadamia nuts in the world, but the macadamia nut industry faces significant environmental and economic pressures, including competition from out-of-state and foreign macadamia nut growers.

"Your Committee further finds that certain businesses may be using company names with Hawaiian words or images of Hawai'i to mislead consumers into thinking that the macadamia nuts in their products were grown in Hawai'i when in fact they were not. This measure bolsters the State's existing protections on the labeling of the origin of macadamia nuts to protect the Hawai'i brand."

The Consumer Protection & Commerce Committee approved the bill and referred it to the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs. The measure went before the Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection on Wednesday and was approved for further consideration.

The Hawai'i Legislature issued a report saying: "The legislature finds that Hawai'i-grown commodities of the State are an important sector of Hawai'i's economy and the branding of these commodities is critical to protect and

safeguard consumers. The macadamia nut production industry in Hawai'i is one such example.

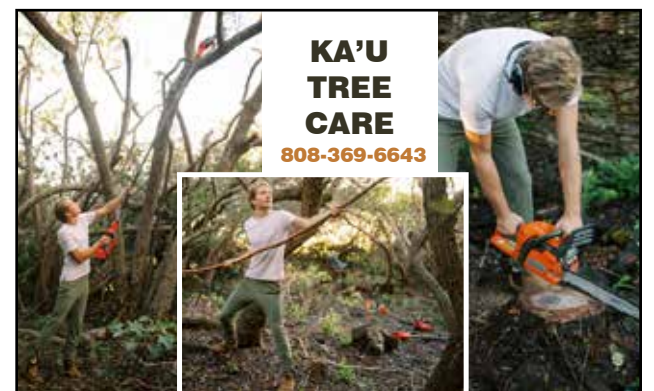
"According to statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, the value of the macadamia nut crop in Hawai'i in 2022 totaled \$33,200,000. Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to enhance, preserve, and protect the premium brand and cachet of Hawai'i-grown macadamia nuts by clarifying the labeling requirements for macadamia nuts, including requiring the country of origin to be included on the principal display panel of a consumer package of raw or processed macadamia nuts."

Follow the bill and see all the testimony at https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=HB&billnumber=2278&year=2024

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The public is invited to contribute to the creation of the Stewardship Plan for Kaunāmano on the Ka'ū Coast on Saturday, April 20 at Kahuku Ranch from 10 a.m. to noon.

Photo from Alakahakai Trail Association

Kaunāmano Stewardship Public Meeting April 20

Community members are invited to discuss stewardship plan for Kaunāmano on the Ka'ū Coast. The meeting will be Saturday, April 20 at Kahuku Ranch Cabins, Koa Building from 10 a.m. to noon. Nohopapa Hawai'i is conducting the session. Kaunāmano is the 1363 acres makai of Nā'ālehu Police Station between Pohina Pala and Maniania Pali, including Pa'ula, also known as Leipana.

Kaunāmano is preserved through County of Hawai'i's Public Access, Open Space & Natural Resources Preservation Commission program. Called PONC, it contributed \$4.31 million, and



the State Legacy Land Conservation Program contributed \$2.4 million toward the conservation purchase. The land is held by the Alakahakai Trail Association. The property is encumbered by a perpetual conservation easement owned by the County of Hawai'i restricting the land to cultural, conservation, and agricultural uses, as well as a permanent deed

Kaunāmano Stewardship, pg. 7

Kailiawa-Smith, from pg. 1

sues and lowering costs for residents by promoting local egg production and dairy farming. He said he supports construction of slaughter facilities for livestock and poultry to help lower food costs and promote local farming.

Kailiawa-Smith said he recognizes the financial struggles faced by retired individuals and is committed to removing property taxes for retirees on a fixed income. "This initiative aims to provide financial relief to those who have contributed to society for many years."

Concerning public safety, Kailiawa-Smith said he plans to address the issue of violent criminals and mentally unstable individuals on the streets "by implementing measures to remove them from communities." He said he supports the construction of sub stations for police and fire departments to improve response times and overall safety for residents.

Kailiawa-Smith took a strong stand at the recent public hearing on the development proposal at Punalu'u. His position was carried by Hawai'i Public Radio. He

Galimba, from pg. 1

communities in our far-flung district - stretching from the rain-forests of Volcano Village to the southern tip of our island at Ka Lae to the fishing villages of South Kona. Ours is a diverse district - and island - but we share many common concerns. Safe, decent housing that is affordable and accessible for working people, as well as for our young people and kupuna is one of those common and critical concerns. I am proud to say that in the past term, the County Council has authorized the allocation of over \$15 million in funding to affordable housing projects around the island.

"Another critical concern in our district is public safety. I have advocated for increased public safety resources for our district, especially for the fast-growing community of Ocean View, including an increased police presence and, in the long run, a fully staffed police station.

"Another key area of public safety is animal control. Unfortunately, our island suffered a breakdown in its animal control services in 2020. The tragic mauling death of one of our community members last year underlined the gravity of the situation. It has been and will continue to be a long road to get our animal control services back on track. Early last year, the Council established the Animal Control and Protection Agency. I have been work-

said his opposition "stems from a history of extractive developers using the land for profit. When C. Brewer developed Punalu'u as a playground for the rich, they bulldozed graves, ancient home sites and heiau. When they extracted all the wealth that they could out of Ka'ū and its people, they left a mess in their wake. They left asbestos-built huts, gravel-filled ponds, and a leaking sewage system. Now this foreign developer wants us to ignore all of this. We cannot in good conscience allow this development to continue."

He said that while the proposed 125 accommodation units have been pushed back to about a quarter mile from the coast, he could not support the Punalu'u proposal with restaurant, market and other activities near the shore.

A statement from his campaign says, "Overall, Ikaika Kailiawa-Smith is dedicated to making positive changes in Hawai'i by addressing important issues like food security, taxes, public safety, and government accountability. His commitment to these causes makes him a strong candidate for office."

ing closely with the new Administrator of the Agency to ensure that animal control officers are deployed in our district, and to establish an Animal Control and Protection Agency base of operations in our district, so that officers and facilities will be available to address our animal control needs in a timely and accessible manner.

"With the recent application by Black Sands LLC for a Special Management Area permit for Punalu'u, the future of this beloved place has again become the subject of intense discussion for our community. As for so many, Punalu'u is a place entwined with my life from early childhood onward. The importance of protecting the natural and cultural heritage of Punalu'u - and other sites in our district - is unquestionable. It is also critically important that all voices be heard in the discussion about the future of Punalu'u. This is a place with a complex history and present. Finding our way to the best possible future for Punalu'u will not be simple, and we need to hear each other with respect and aloha. Having served for many years on the Ka'ū Community Development Plan (CDP) Steering Committee, I am glad to see that the CDP is an important part of the discussion and the framework for the future of Punalu'u. I also support the work that the members of the Ka'ū CDP Action Committee are doing to create an ongoing space for bringing the ideas and aspirations of the Ka'ū CDP forward into fruition.

"Supporting our communities by advocating for the repair and maintenance of our parks and other recreational facilities has been a priority for me during the last year, as well as working with the Department of Environmental Management and the Department of Public Works to address the problem of abandoned cars and other trash issues in public areas.


"I humbly ask for your vote so that I can continue to serve our communities, district and island. If you would like to learn more about my background, values, and vision, please visit my website at <https://votegalimba.com/>."

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KA'Ū SPORTS REPORT

Volume 22, Number 4

The Good News of Ka'ū, Hawai'i

April 2024

Ka'ū Trojans Beat Kohala, Host Two April Home Games

Ka'ū Trojans Varsity Baseball will host two home games this month, on Wednesday, April 10 at 3 p.m. and Saturday, April 13 at 1 p.m.

On Tuesday, March 19th, the Trojans played Kohala Cowboys at Kohala. The game ended in the 8th after the Cowboys tied Ka'ū in the 7th and took the game to extra innings with a score of 15-10 Trojans. Caleb Crook started the game pitching, giving up 7, including a few unearned runs. He went 3 for 6, with a single, double, and triple, a home run short of the cycle. Koch, who batted first in the lineup, went 4 for 6 with a sacrifice fly and one ground out. Koch also turned a double play for the Trojans. Koch closed the game out, pitching and ending the game by striking out the Cowboys. Koch had two strikeouts while pitching. Senior starters Joe Buyuan, TJ Faafia, Ocean Sesson, Jaestin Karasuda, and Dominic Decalio all had a productive game. Karasuda got on base five times, scoring four runs and stealing multiple bases. Faafia had two base hits, a walk, and

one strikeout. Buyuan went 4 for 5 with two base hits, two walks, and a strikeout. Freshman Ian Beck of Ka'ū caught a great game against the Cowboys. He didn't allow any stolen bases.

Saturday, March 9th, Trojans played the Hilo High Vikings at home. Coming into this game, Coach Josh Crook said, "We knew this game would be tough; Hilo teams are usually really good." Offensively, the Trojans were pretty quiet. Defensively, they performed fairly well.

Sophomore Caleb Crook of Kanu o ka 'Āina took the hill and went into the 4th inning, giving up 8 runs with 3 home runs. Sophomore Riley Koch of Ka'ū closed the game, giving up three runs and one home run. Koch and Sophomore Devin Alpin of Ka'ū gave the Trojans the only hits of the game, each scoring 1 run. The game ended with a score of 11-1.

"Although it appeared to be a blowout, it was a great performance by the Trojans defensively," said the coach. "The majority of the runs came by way of long balls over



Ka'ū Trojan Baseball beat Kohala and plays two home games in April. Photo from Trojan Baseball

our short right-field fence. These would have been fly ball outs on other fields. We have a lot of work to do offensively, but overall, it was a pretty positive perfor-

mance," said the Coach. Ka'ū Trojan baseball plays home games April 10 and 13.



Runners of all ages are invited to enter the Volcano 'Ohia Lehua Runs, a 5K and Half-Marathon in July, with early bird registration now open. Photo from Volcano's 'Ohia Lehua Runs

Volcano's 'Ohia Lehua Half Marathon, & 5K in July Open for Registration

Volcano's 'Ohia Lehua Half Marathon and 5 K, to be held Saturday, July 27, are open for registration. The early bird registration fees are \$90 for the Half Marathon and \$40 for the 5K through June 8; \$100 for the half marathon and \$50 for the 5K through July 20 and \$150 for the half marathon and \$60 for the 5K through 26.

Last year some 300 participants were drawn to the races in volcano Village. Billy Barnett won the men's Half-Marathon in 1 hour, 21 minutes and 28 seconds.

In the Half-marathon, Patrick Stover took second in 1:23:15 David Collier took third in 1:23:31.

In the Women's Division, Summer Corke took first in 1:42:32. Bethany Anne Pratt took second in 1:44:54. Jamie Meaden took third in 1:45:50.

In the 5K, Lyman Perry took first in 19 minutes and 35 seconds. Cody Smith took second in 20:05. Calvin Howell took third in 20:40.

In the Women's 5K, Tessa Miller took first in 23.25. Anabella Anthony took second in 23:46. Shannon Postler took third in 24.02.



Aikido Classes Open to New Students in Pāhala

Soto No Michi Aikido Martial Arts & Movement Classes are open to new students at Pāhala Hongwanji on Thursdays and Sundays from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Students are adults and keiki and must be at least eight years of age. Sensei Gabriel Cuevas leads the classes. For more information and answers to questions call him at 206-291-8832.

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KA'Ū SCHOOL & YOUTH

June 12-July 1 Summer Fun, Opens for Registration in Ka'ū

Summer Fun 2024 is open for registration in Ka'ū. The program will run weekdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Venues will be Nā'ālehu Community Center and Robert N. Herkes Gymnasium in Pāhala. For more on the Pāhala program, call Nona Makuakane at 808-928-3102. For Nā'ālehu, call Elijah Navarro at 808-939-2510. The cost is \$140 per student for a program that includes arts and crafts, indoor and outdoor games, sports, music, dance, special events and activities. The limit at each venue is 40 participants.

County of Hawai'i Department of Parks & Recreation announces its 2024 Summer Fun Programs will provide recreational opportunities for teens and youth at locations island-wide during summer break.

"We take pride in offering our keiki a

Ka'ū Grant, from pg. 1

"This initiative represents a significant step forward in promoting environmental justice and empowering youth voices in our community," said Akamu. "By incorporating indigenous knowledge and reaching out to underserved populations, we are ensuring that all members of our community have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from these environmental initiatives."

Canelas said, "We aim to empower the youth of Hawai'i Island to become environmental stewards and champions of waste reduction. By engaging students in hands-on learning experiences and providing them with the tools and resources to effect change in their communities, we are fostering a generation of local leaders committed to environmental sustainability."

Here is more from the program announcement:

Each cohort of Student Resource Ambassadors will embark on a multi-year journey immersed in educational programming focused on waste reduction themes. Year one will concentrate on composting, year two on marine debris and plastic pollution, and year three on clean stream recycling and waste-to-wealth circularity. These themes will culminate in the launching of local educational campaigns aimed at increasing awareness and participation in community-based recycling and composting programs.

A sub-cohort of Student Resource Ambassadors will participate in the Creative Content Summer Fellowship, where

safe and enjoyable environment for play and learning during their summer break," said Mayor Mitch Roth. "These programs are a lifeline for many working parents who would otherwise face challenges in finding appropriate care for their children. By providing these opportunities, we are not only enhancing the lives of our young ones but also bolstering the overall health of our families and communities."

The offerings include 16 Summer Fun Programs for elementary-aged children who have completed Kindergarten to 6th grade, five teen enrichment programs, and two specialized enrichment programs. All summer programs will be in operation from June 12 to July 19.

"It is so important for keiki and teens to engage in healthy, safe, and fun activities during the summer months," said Maurice

they will undergo intensive training to develop marketing skills and further the program's goals during the summer break. This fellowship will equip participants with professional-level skills in data analysis, audio-visual production, conference organization and program impact tracking. The SRAs also receive high school credits and paid stipends by participating in the program.

During the first year, Student Resource Ambassadors will travel to Cooperstown, NY, Nov. 19-24, for the National Recycling Congress to engage with leaders in the sustainability field and present the educational campaigns they've developed. In spring of 2025, the SRAs will travel to San Francisco to attend the Zero Waste Youth Convergence to network with other youth in the national zero waste program, and develop the skills to host their own Zero Waste Youth Convergences in Ka'ū in 2026 and 2027. In the spring of 2026, the student cohort from Ka'ū High will host a local Zero Waste Youth Convergence conference for local Hawai'i youth.

Student Resource Ambassadors will also prepare to host the National Zero Waste Youth Convergence in 2027, featuring speakers and youth participants nationwide.

For more information about the Hawai'i Youth Clean Stream Campaign and Waste-to-Wealth Initiative, contact Justin Canelas - the EPA Recycle Education Outreach Program Director at Recycle Hawai'i - via email: program@recyclehawaii.org.

Messina, Director of Parks & Recreation. "With our 2024 Summer Fun Programs, we are proud to offer a range of affordable recreational opportunities to support Hawai'i County youth and their families."

Detailed information about program hours, registration dates, cost, and age

groups can be found online at <https://www.parks.hawaii.gov/facilities-parks/recreation>. For more information, please contact the respective Hawai'i County Recreation Division facilities listed in the program flyers.



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Dancers from Hālau Hula 'O Leionalani perform Wednesday and Saturday during Merrie Monarch week. Photo by Tim Wright

Hālau Hula 'O Leionalani Opens 2024 Merrie Monarch Week

Hālau Hula 'O Leionalani performed at the opening of the Merrie Monarch on Sunday at the Ah Fook Chin Hilo Civic Auditorium. The halau from Pāhala, under the leadership of Kumu Debbie Ryder, will perform on Wednesday, April 3, at Hilo Hawaiian Hotel at 1 p.m. and on Saturday, April 6, at noon at Hilo Hawaiian.

Hālau Hula 'O Leionalani is fundrais-

ing for a visit to Mexico and leaves April 23, flying to Honolulu to Houston and Cancún for a six day stay. The hālau will perform at Riviera Maya Splash resort and also participate in workshops with the kumu's students from Mexico and Japan. The Mexican and Japanese hālau will compete in Cancun. Hawaiian musician Lorna Lim will teach in the workshops with Ryder.



Hālau Hula 'O Leionalani, under Kumu Debbie Ryder, opened Merrie Monarch week on last Sunday of March. Photo by Tim Wright

Kaunāmano Stewardship, from pg. 4 restriction required by the Legacy Land Program. See more on Alakahakai Trail Association at alakahakaitrail.org.

Nohopapa Hawai'i is a Native Hawaiian owned and operated cultural resource management firm founded in 2013. It has been contracted to help gather community input and help to design the stewardship plan for Kaunāmano, which is held in

trust for the public by the Alaka'i Kai Trail Association.

The purpose of the Talk Story, according to a statement from Nohopapa Hawai'i, is to share background information on the process and schedule for the Stewardship Plan. "Gather your mana'o on the cultural and natural resources to preserve and protect Kaunāmano. Share areas of potential concern relating to the resources. Share your mana'o on opportunities for future stewardship."

Huge Rock Named Kānepō to Ka'ū

A huge rock taken from Ka'ū to Washington, D.C. will be returned by the National Museum of the American Indian this summer. Named Kānepō, the boulder was leant to the museum through the Kūpuna Advisory Council of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park 20 years ago. Halena Kapuni-Reynolds, curator of the museum, released the following statement in Hawaiian and English:

Aloha mai kākou! 'O Halena kēia, ke kahu o ka mo'aukala a me ka mo'omeheu Hawai'i ma ka hale hō'ike'ike aupuni o ka po'e 'Ōiwi o 'Amelika. Ma ka 'ao'ao komohana o kā mākou hale hō'ike'ike ma Wakinekona D.C., ua ho'onohonoho 'ia he pōhaku nui mai Hawai'i mai no ka hō'ike 'ana aku i kā mākou kuleana i ka po'e 'Ōiwi o Hawai'i. 'O Kānepō ka inoa o kēia pōhaku,

a no ka moku o Ka'ū ma ka mokupuni 'o Hawai'i mai 'o ia. I ka makahiki 2004, ua hā'awi 'ia 'o Kānepō e ka 'Aha Kūpuna o ka Pāka Aupuni 'o Kīlauea no nā makahiki he iwakālua.

I loko o ia manawa, ua kipa nui 'ia 'o Kānepō e ka lehulehu, a waiho pinepine 'ia nā ho'okupu nona. I kēia kauwela, e ho'ohanohano 'ia ana kēia pōhaku kaulana ma ka Ho'olaule'a Mo'omeheu, a laila, e ho'ihō'ia ana 'o ia i kona 'āina kamaha'o. Ke 'ike 'oe iā Kānepō, e aloha aku 'oe iā ia e like me kekahi kūpuna i aloha nui 'ia.

Greetings everyone! This is Halena,

"Nohopapa Hawai'i's experience, passion, commitment, and motivation to document and honor Hawai'i's wahi kūpuna extends over 20 years. Our platform is to increase awareness of our collective responsibility to document, preserve, and protect knowledge concerning historic properties and cultural resources. We research and gather this knowledge through integrated approaches rooted in historical land research and cultural understanding of place." says its message at www.nohopapa.com.



Kānepō, a huge boulder from Ka'ū, will be returned this summer from National Museum of the Native American Indian in Washington, D.C.

Photo from The Smithsonian Museum

the curator of Native Hawaiian history and culture at the National Museum of the American Indian. On the western side of our museum in Washington D.C., a boulder from Hawai'i was placed in order to demonstrate our responsibility to represent Native Hawaiians. Kānepō is the name of this rock, and they are from the Ka'ū District on Hawai'i Island. In 2004, Kānepō was given by the Kūpuna (Elders) Advisory Council of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park for 20 years. In that time, they have been greeted by many people, and numerous offerings were left for them. This summer, this celebrated rock will be honored at the Folklife Festival and then sent home to its wonderful land. When you see Kānepō, greet him like you would an esteemed elder.

'Ōlelo Pāku'i: Mahalo a nui loa iā 'oukou pākahi a pau no kou mau mana'o e pili ana iā Kānepō. 'O ka mana'o nui o nā 'ōlelo kāko'o a me nā 'ōlelo ho'ohalahala, 'o ia ho'i ke aloha o ka po'e Hawai'i no kā lākou 'āina a me nā pōhaku. 'O kēia aloha ke kumu i hā'awi 'ia 'o Kānepō no ka manawa i hiki iā ia ke



Kānepō from Ka'ū, outside Museum of the Native American Indian, in Washington, D.C. Photo by Julia Neal

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR KA'Ū LITTLE LEAGUE is Tuesday April 2. Children ages 8-14 can register for either Ocean View or Nā'ālehu teams. Practices for both locations are on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Practice for the Minors team (ages 8-10) is from 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Practice for the 50/70 team (ages 11-14) is from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. Ka'ū Little League is also looking for coaches and umpires. Information can be found for parents and players on the Ka'ū Little League Facebook page. Information about games for the community can be found on the Ka'ū Little League Hawai'i Facebook page. Registration is \$100, but scholarships for registration are also available. For more information on scholarships or Ka'ū Little League contact Elizabeth Crook at (808) 345-0511.

FREE 'UKULELE CLASSES WITH WOODLEY WHITE Every Wednesday with beginners class at 12:30 p.m., Music Theory at 1:30 p.m. and Kani-kapila Sing Along at 2:30 p.m. at Nā'ālehu Methodist Church, 95-5664 Hawai'i Belt Rd, Nā'ālehu. Led by luthier and music theory teacher Woodley White. Classes are free and 'ukulele are available. All ages are welcome.

HĀLAU HULA 'O LEIONALANI AT MERRIE MONARCH on Wednesday April 3 from 1 p.m. and Saturday April 6 from noon at Hilo Hawaiian Hotel. For more information and full events schedule <https://www.merriemonarch.com/>.

COMMUNITY CRUSADE: WORSHIP, PRAISE, PRAYER AND HOPE on Thursday April 4 from 7 p.m. at Nā'ālehu County Park. With special guest speaker and Evangelist, Henry Matarrita and world mission outreach and host Sr. Pastor Kevin Brown. Presented by Nā'ālehu Assembly of God.

SPECIALTY COFFEE ASSOCIATION EXPO SUBMISSION DEADLINE is Friday April 5. Hawai'i Coffee Association will be promoting Ka'ū coffee at the Specialty Coffee Association Expo in Chicago. Submissions of 100% Hawai'i coffee accepted at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024_SCA_Expo.

ALOHA FRIDAYS AT VAC GALLERY: Lei making with Kaipo Ah Chong. Friday April 5 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. on porch of Volcano Art Center Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. With tropical Agriculture farmer Kaipo Ah Chong, a member of Halau Na Kamalei, marries the science of agriculture with Hawaiian lei and hula traditions. Free cultural event part of VAC's Cultural Connections Initiative supported in part by Hawai'i State Grant In Aid (GIA) Wai Wai Program. Park fees apply.

NA'OHULELUA HISTORICAL GARDEN IS OPEN Sundays April 7 & 21 and Saturdays April 13 & 27 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at 94-6488 Kama'ōa Road, Nā'ālehu. Offering rare & endangered native Hawaiian plants, several varieties of organic Moringa "The Miracle Tree" & more, ready to plant. A Mission of Alanui 'O Ka'ū a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization. Private appointments, special orders, volunteer opportunities and other inquiries text (808) 256-3193.

DIETRICH VAREZ PANEL DISCUSSION AND FILM is Sunday April 7 from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. at Volcano Art Center Niaulani Campus in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. The Varez Legacy program is an engaging, public program that will honor Varez's life, art, and legacy through a free public exhibit, a talk-story event, a movie screening, and an online exhibition. Free event. Park fees may apply. For more information Contact Emily C. Weiss at (808) 967-8222 or gallery@volcanoartcenter.org.

2024 SUMMER FUN REGISTRATION IS OPEN from Monday April 8 until enrollment is met. County of Hawai'i Department of Parks & Recreation announces its 2024 Summer Fun Programs will provide recreational opportunities for teens and youth at locations island-wide during summer break. 16 programs are offered from June 12 - July 19. Venues will be Nā'ālehu Community Center and Robert N. Herkes Gymnasium in Pāhala. For more on the Pāhala program, call Nona Makuakane at (808) 928-3102. For Nā'ālehu, call Elijah Navarro at (808) 939-2510. Detailed information about program hours, registration dates, cost, and age groups can be found online at <https://www.parks.hawaii.gov/facilities-parks/recreation>.

FREE SEMINARS: FIND RELIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION. Three session: Tuesday April 9 from 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. at Nā'ālehu Public Library, 95-5669 Mamālahoa Hwy., Nā'ālehu. Details at (808) 928-2015. Tuesday April 9 from 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. at Pāhala Public Library, 96-3150 Pikake St., Pāhala. Details at (808) 928-2015. Thursday April 18 from 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. at Keaau Public School Library, 16-571 Keaau Pahoa Rd. Details at (808) 982-4281. Learn about where to find health information and which resources are reliable. Hosted by Information Literacy Committee and University of Hawai'i System Libraries.

SPRING PAINT 'N SIP is Tuesday April 9 from 3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. at Nā'ālehu Public Library, 95-5669 Mamālahoa Hwy., Nā'ālehu. Paint-by-number canvas, acrylic paints, brushes and

beverages (non-alcoholic) provided. Sign-up at (808) 939-2442 to participate, event limited to ten persons. Suitable for ages 8 and up. Hosted by Hawai'i State Public Library.

KA'Ū TROJAN VARSITY BASEBALL plays Kamehameha Wednesday April 10 from 3 p.m. and Saturday April 13 from 1 p.m. at Pāhala Baseball Field.

NEW PĀHALA SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT OPTION COMMENT SESSION is Wednesday April 10 from 6 p.m. at Pāhala Community Center. The plan is described by the county as "package wastewater treatment plant with new collection system." Plan document will be available for viewing and comments are welcome. The link to join the meeting by Zoom on April 10 is: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/16031058165>. View county monthly status update at <https://www.dem.hawaii.gov/projects/pahala-naalehu-large-capacity-cesspool-closures> and for direct download at <https://www.dem.hawaii.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/307481/638459178461591134>.

KEIKI STORYTIME WITH BUNNIES is Thursday April 11 from 11 a.m. at Nā'ālehu Public Library, 95-5669 Mamālahoa Hwy., Nā'ālehu. Storytime about bunnies including stories, songs, and craft making. Suitable for toddlers and preschoolers. Children under 5 years old must be accompanied by an adult caregiver. Program hosted by Hawai'i State Public Library System.

ALOHA FRIDAYS AT VAC GALLERY: with Desiree Moana Cruz. Friday April 12 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. on porch of Volcano Art Center Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Desiree Moana Cruz shares traditional and contemporary dye processes and the use of repetitive symbolism featured in hula garments. She is an advocate for Hawaiian practitioners and a member of Halau Na Kipu'upu'u of Waimea. Free cultural events are part of VAC's Cultural Connections Initiative supported in part by Hawai'i State Grant In Aid (GIA) Wai Wai Program. Park fees apply.

CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION SUBMISSION DEADLINE is Monday April 15 for Ka'ū's high school students. The winning artwork of will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol in the Cannon tunnel, on House.gov's Congressional Art Competition page and Tokuda's website and social media pages. Submit photo of completed art and student release form to Shaun Kim at Shaun.Kim@mail.house.gov. Mail or deliver physical artwork by Friday April 19 at 5 p.m. to office of Rep. Jill Tokuda at Topa Financial Center, 700 Bishop St. Suite 1902, Honolulu, HI 96813. For more information (808) 746-6220.

MEET ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE RICK SAN NICOLAS on Tuesday April 16 from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Kīlauea Visitor Center auditorium in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Rick San Nicolas is a kumu hulu nui, a master of ancient Hawaiian featherwork. Part of Hawai'i Volcanoes' ongoing After Dark in the Park programs and co-sponsored by the National Parks Arts Foundation and Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Free event. Park entrance fees apply.

ALOHA FRIDAYS AT VAC GALLERY: Ukulele with Wes Awana. Friday April 19 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. on porch of Volcano Art Center Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Wes Awana offers family-friendly lessons on the iconic and inviting 'ukulele. Free cultural events are part of VAC's Cultural Connections Initiative supported in part by Hawai'i State GIA Wai Wai Programs. Park fees apply.

NATIONAL PARK WEEK - COFFEE TALK AT KAHUKU: THE PIT CRATER AND ITS ANCIENT RAIN-FOREST on Saturday April 20 from 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. at Kahuku Visitor Contact Station, just south of the 70.5 mile marker on the mauka side of Highway 11 in Ka'ū. Hear how former park ecologist David Benitez, along with multi-agency teams, rappelled into the crater and how collections are being used to

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Lā'au Letters: Native Plants of Ka'ū

Welcome to *Lā'au Letters: Native Plants of Ka'ū*. Read about Ka'ū's native plants and their mo'olelo (stories), uses, preferred habitats, and opportunities to adopt them for stewardship. This column seeks to encourage making new plant friends and to reunite with others.



Naupaka kahakai (*Scaevola taccada*)

Art by Joan Yoshioka

Naupaka kahakai (*Scaevola taccada*)

Description: I realize that some of the plants you read about here are a little more elusive and more difficult to spot (with confidence) in the wild, but here is one we all know and love, naupaka! Naupaka is an indigenous shrub in the Goodeniaceae family. Naupaka are most commonly seen growing in tight groups about 2-6' tall, but if you trace a single plant down to its primary stem, you may realize that a single plant can spread 15-20' wide. The leaves are unmistakable and somewhat succulent. They are an array of gorgeous light green ovals, covered with silky hairs on the axil (the area between the leaf stem and petiole or branch), and can range anywhere from 2 to about 8" long. The fruits are white, round, and pulpy. Naupaka kahakai bloom year-round, with beautiful half-flowers that are shades of white with purple accents. Here is a homework assignment: learn the mo'olelo of naupaka kahakai (beach naupaka) and naupaka kuahiwi (forest naupaka).

Of the ten native species of *Scaevola*, this featured species is the only one to produce white fruits and is not primarily bird-dispersed; the others produce more purple fruits and are a favorite forest bird snack. The fruits of this naupaka readily float and remain viable for long periods of time, hitching rides on ocean currents before settling along a shoreline, which speaks to its large distribution across the tropics. In fact, studies have shown that naupaka seeds are the most viable after spending an average of 250 days on the ocean!

Uses: Naupaka can be used medicinally and in lei. The fruit and/or bark of naupaka can be crushed and used on cuts and abrasions, and is especially effective when mixed with pa'akai (sea salt). The flowers, leaves, and fruits can be used in lei-making, and when the right plant is chosen for harvesting, the lei has a fresh floral fragrance. Naupaka fruits, flowers, and leaves can yield a light-to-dark green dye. For all of you divers/snorkelers out there, the fresh fruits contain a natural sunscreen and the broken leaves can be rubbed on the inside of your mask to keep it from fogging (no need for hā'ae, or spit!).

Habitat: Naupaka is a common coastal adornment throughout the archipelago and across the pantropics. It thrives in areas that seem to be extreme and harsh - enduring hot, dry conditions, wind, and heavy salt spray. In Ka'ū, naupaka can be seen along all of our coastlines, providing erosion control, habitat for honu'ea (Hawaiian hawksbill sea turtles) and sea bird nests, and a food source for the nalo meli maoli (Hawaiian yellow-faced bee).

Growing and Purchasing: Naupaka grows easily from seeds and quickly from cuttings. Take 5-6" cuttings that are less woody than the main stem, and pop them into a jar of water on your windowsill for a couple of weeks (changing the water daily) or directly into a pot with a lot of perlite and good drainage. Sow seeds (after removing them from the fruits) in flats or germination trays in a similar media to that for cuttings, and place them in filtered sunlight, keeping them slightly damp. Seeds will only germinate in freshwater, but once the plant is established, it doesn't mind (and actually likes) salt spray. Naupaka make a great, low-maintenance, pollinator-friendly accent to your home or property/landscape. They thrive in heat and full sun, and few pests bother the thick, waxy leaves. I encourage you to make some naupaka friends of your own, and see if any of them want to come home with you. Happy planting!

About the artist: Joan Yoshioka says she is a conservationist at heart and has dedicated her life to preserving the native plants and animals of Hawai'i through her work with federal, state, and private organizations over the past 30+ years. She describes herself as an outdoor-lovin' optimist, biologist/botanist, and habitual creator of art-stuff. She says the key to our most fundamental and truest part of ourselves is found in nature and she constantly draws on it for inspiration.



Joan Yoshioka

About the author: Jodie Rosam says she has a deep love for native plants and a passion for exploration, with over 15 years of experience in working in the restoration of Hawai'i's forests. As a mother and an educator, she says the next generation has the power to lead the world to a sustainable future, and is committed to teaching her children (and others) from a place-based perspective.



Jodie Rosam



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day to restore rare and endangered native plants. Free event.

NATIONAL PARK WEEK- JOURNEY AT THE SUMMIT on Saturday April 20 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. starting at Kīlauea Visitor Center lānai in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Family event. Includes adventurous role-playing quest and activity stations with challenges and prizes. Free event.

NATIONAL PARK WEEK- HOKU: BENEATH THE HAWAIIAN MOON on Tuesday April 23 from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Kīlauea Visitor Center auditorium in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Celebrate Hoku moon phase with astronomer Emily Peavy. Event includes telescopes, presentations, hot cocoa, and weather permitting, spectacular closeup views of the full moon. Dress warmly. Part of Hawai'i Volcanoes' ongoing After Dark in the Park programs and co-sponsored by the Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Free event. Park entrance fees apply.

VOLCANO ART CENTER'S HERITAGE AND ARCHIVE PROGRAM presents the Archive Film Series. Thursday April 25 from 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. at VAC Nīaulani Campus in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Digitized and restored footage of VAC's 50 year history highlights the people and events that shaped the arts and community at the Kīlauea summit. Monthly event. Funded by Hawai'i's State Grant In Aid Program. Free event. Donations are greatly appreciated.

KEIKI WATER CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST DEADLINE is Friday April 26. Prizes awarded for 1st and 2nd place of each grade level, kindergarten through sixth grade. Mail entries to DWS in Hilo or drop off by Friday April 26. For drop off locations and entry form contact DWS at (808) 961-8050 or dws@hawaiidws.org.

ALOHA FRIDAYS AT VAC GALLERY: Lauhala Weaving with Kuuipo Kalahiki-Morales. Friday April 26 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. on porch of Volcano Art Center Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Visitors and kama'aina alike are invited to experience a free, hands-on workshop. Free cultural events are part of VAC's Cultural Connections Initiative supported in part by Hawai'i State Grant In Aid (GIA) Wai Wai Program. Park fees apply.

COOKING WITH CANOE PLANTS 2 WORKSHOP is Saturday April 27 from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. at Volcano Art Center Nīaulani Campus in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Learn about the uses of the first edible plants brought to Hawai'i by Polynesians and how to prepare them. Class fee is \$60/\$55 for VAC members plus a \$20 supply fee. Register online at <https://volcanoartcenter.org/classes-and-workshops/registration-workshops-classes/>.

KA'Ū STUDENT RESOURCE AMBASSADOR KICK-OFF EVENT is Saturday April 27 from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.

at Pāhala Plantation House. Community members will have an opportunity to discuss the program with grant partners, elected leaders, and participants.

KA'Ū COMMUNITY EASY ACCESS PRENATAL CLINIC on Sunday April 28 from 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. at 94-2166 South Point. All insurance plans accepted. No one turned away for lack of funds. Schedule an appointment at: 808.450.0498, <https://shinesisterhoodinitiative.com/collective>. Contact shinesisterhoodinitiative@gmail.com for more information.

DIETRICH VAREZ EXHIBITION through Sunday May 26 at VAC Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY

PICKLEBALL on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. at Kahuku Park in Ocean View. Beginner classes periodically available on Tuesdays. For more information contact Jaquie Woodmansee at (808) 929-7092.

TALK TO A PARK RANGER: UNVEILING THE WONDERS OF NATURE AND CULTURE AT UEKAHUNA occurs daily. At Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. 30-to-45-minute short guided walk from the table at Uēkahuna at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. Explore cultural history of Kīlauea volcano eruptions. Meet at the Uēkahuna parking area. Free event.

SOTO NO MICHI AIKIDO MARTIAL ART & MOVEMENT CLASSES are open to new students on Thursdays and Sundays from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Pāhala Hongwanji. Open to keiki and adults ages 8 and older. Led by Sensei Gabriel Cuevas. New students, call Gabriel ahead at (206) 291-8832.

YOGA is Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. at Kahuku Park in Ocean View. To learn more and register, contact Trisha Meyer at (208) 353-3594.

KUPUNA YOGA is Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. - 2:17 p.m. at Nā'ālehu Hongwongji Mission's Garden. Gather for a 77-minute group class. Engage mana'o, kino & akua for stress relief, increased breath/blood flow & regenerative energy. Limited mats. Money donation or heart-based trade for teacher & temple appreciated. Sign up 11 minutes before start time.

WAI'ŌHINU YOGA is Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m. at Wai'ōhinu Park. Weather permitting. Laurie Boyle offers the practice of yoga for all levels. Donations appreciated. No reservations needed. For more information, contact Boyle at ezmerelda5@gmail.com.

NIAULANI NATURE WALK is Mondays from 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. starting at Nīaulani Gallery in Volcano Village in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Free guided walks introduce individuals, families and groups to diverse, intact, and accessible, old-growth koa'ohi'a rain forest. No reservations are required for

COMMUNITY TALK STORY Stewardship Planning for KAUNĀMANO, KA'Ū

Saturday, April 20, 2024 - Kahuku Ranch Cabins

10:00am - 12:00pm

Talk Story Purpose

- Nohopapa Hawai'i to share background information on the process and schedule for the Stewardship Plan
- Gather your mana'o on the cultural and natural resources to preserve and protect Kaunāmano
- Share areas of potential concern relating to the resources
- Share your mana'o on opportunities for future stewardship



Kaunāmano is the 1363-acre property below (makai) of Naalehu Police Station between Pohina Pali and the Maniania Pali including Pa'ula also known as Leipana.

This meeting will be held at the Kahuku Ranch Cabins in the Koa building. Light pupus and drinks will be provided!

Scan Here

If you would like to read the Kaunāmano Fact Sheet and Map



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K'S RECYCLE & REDEMPTION ELECTRONICS RECYCLING COLLECTION is Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at 73-5631 Kauhola St., Kona. Free. Open to the public. Businesses, government agencies and organizations must make an appointment at (808) 969-1222. For more information on accepted devices visit <https://www.mrksrecyclehawaii.com/westhawaii.html>.

JUDE'S COMPUTER LAB is open Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at 96-8606 Paradise Circle Drive in Ocean View. Work-Station Laptops provided. Printing and shredding available. Training sessions on Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint and assistance with setting up email accounts, Facebook, Zoom, and more are provided. Game playing limited. No streaming allowed. Privileges can be suspended by Administrator or Lab Coordinator.

JUDE'S SHOWER MINISTRY is open Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at 92-8606 Paradise Circle Drive in Ocean View. Service includes hot water, soap, shampoo, conditioner and clean towels. All shower clients must sign up for a time slot, beginning at 9 a.m., last sign-up by 11:30 a.m. Supported by Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i's Commission on Mission Beyond Church and St. Jude's own outreach fund. Members of the congregation built the facility.

FREE HELP WITH FAMILY HISTORY is Wednesdays from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. at Family History Center, 95-5682 Hawai'i Belt Road in Nā'ālehu. All are welcome. The aim is to "Come Discover Your Past," says the statement from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The drop-in assistance includes free Ancestry.com, Familysearch.org, and other online resources.

FREE 'UKELELE CLASSES WITH WOODLEY WHITE are Wednesdays for eight weeks from March 20

April Calendar, pg. 14

MICHELLE GALIMBA

Council District 6

NŪPEPA NĀ'ĀLEHU

Volume 22, Number 4

The Good News of Ka'ū, Hawai'i

April 2024

Nā'ālehu Elementary Friend-Raiser Nets Funds, Brings Joy

A sense of joy and community are words from Vice-Principal Kuulei Pablo, staff members and attendees at Nā'ālehu Elementary School during their annual Friend-Raiser event in March, sponsored by the Student Council.

School staff members said they are grateful for the participants' support and for having a place to promote a sense of joy and community for the students and the families. They also pointed to the school campus on this day as being a place for small businesses and individuals to promote and share their hard work with their products and community programs.



Hats and Lei presented and for sale at the Friend-Raiser. Photo by Ophir Danenberg

public. It is focuses on keiki under age 18, expecting and first-time mothers, supporting 'ohana, young families, and women considering pregnancy from across the island.

There will be free food, partnering agencies, health screenings, Makahiki games, make and take crafts, smoothie

bikes, and more.

Retired Principal Darlene Javar said, "It's fun to come back and learn of the great things happening

at Nā'ālehu Elementary, like this Friend-Raiser. It's awesome to see familiar faces, and new faces, still supporting one another. I'm optimistic for NES."



Friend-Raiser Coordinator Amber Keohulua and retired principal Darlene Javar at the Friend-Raiser event at Nā'ālehu School. Photo by Ophir Danenberg

munity together.

Leadership in Disabilities and Achievement of Hawai'i provided information regarding their services in collaboration with the Department of Education. Their offerings include small group sessions open to parents and older children to get support with the Individualized Education program.

Child & Family Services discussed ongoing 'ohana support through its virtual nurturing families parent support groups. See childandfamilyservices.org.

Hui Mālama Ola Nā 'Ōiwi discussed the Sixth Annual Mālama Nā Keiki Festival scheduled for Saturday, May 18 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Pāhala Community Center.

The 31-year-old organization offers community outreach online and in person, with education, discussion, and clinical services.

The Mālama Nā Keiki Festival event aims to improve prenatal care, improve health outcomes, and enrich parenting skills for Hawai'i island 'ohana. This event is completely free and open to the



State Department of Education partnered with Leadership in Disabilities Services at the Friend-Raiser. Photo by Ophir Danenberg



Child & Family Service, operating since 1899, took its mission to Nā'ālehu School. Photo by Ophir Danenberg



Leadership & Achievement of Hawai'i, helps those with disabilities receive education and training, even beyond the age for high school graduation. Photo by Ophir Danenberg

Funds raised during the Friend-Raiser go toward student activities and supplies.

Friend-raiser Coordinator Amber Keohulua shared the importance of bringing family, students, school staff and com-

Public Input for Nā'ālehu Sewage System Sought

Public input on the proposed sewage treatment plant for Nā'ālehu is sought by the consulting planning and engineering company Wilson Okamoto Corp. An announcement says, "On behalf of the County of Hawai'i - Department of Environmental Management, Wilson Okamoto Corporation is currently preparing a Draft Environmental Information Document (EID) and Environmental Assessment (ES) for the proposed Nā'ālehu Large Capacity Cesspool (LCC) Closure project (Proposed Project) located in the Ka'ū District on the island of Hawai'i.

"The Proposed Project involves the construction of facilities which would allow the County to close the three LCCs in Nā'ālehu and thereby meet the compliance requirements of the Amended AOC and the applicable portions of the Clean Water Act. The Proposed Action would be achieved



by any of the four alternatives set forth in the Amended AOC. The proposed Project Area includes approximately 204 discrete tax parcels (in whole or in part) and portions of multiple County of Hawai'i roadways in Nā'ālehu."

See the proposed project summary at <https://www.kaunews.com/naalehu-environmental-assessment-consultation-packet>

Submit comments via email to publiccomment@wilsonokamoto.com, or written comments via mail to: Keola Cheng, Director-Planning, Wilson Okamoto Corporation, 1907 South Beretania Street, Suite 400, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826.

DHHL Grants, from pg. 2

waitlist families that receive funding support from any number of agencies that specialize in down payment assistance."

Founded by the Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations, HLI will be responsible for determining a beneficiary's eligibility and administering the match awards. Sovereign Council chair

KipuKai Kualii said, "This initial investment is a great start; it won't resolve 29,000 on the Waitlist, but it supports those DHHL has or will be awarding lots to. As a coalition of Homestead Beneficiary Associations across the state this partnership is exactly the kind of work we want HLI to be doing with the DHHL." For more information contact HLI@hawaiianhomesteads.org.

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Across Playground Area
of Nā'ālehu Elementary School
Top of Long Driveway

Critically Endangered Monk Seal Hangs at Green Sands Beach

Papakolea, Mahana Green Sands Beach, with online promotions for the many visitors that trek there each day, is the recent resting place of a critically endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal, 'Ilio holo i ka uaua, who was documented by photographer Summer Fisher in March.



Monk seal at Green Sand Beach, photo taken at distance with telescopic lens. Photo by Summer Fisher

Fisher said she remained more than 50 feet from the seal and captured its photo along with a photo showing nearby tourists on the Green Sand Beach at a good distance from the seal.

The Hawaiian Monk Seal, *Neomonachus schauinslandi*, is one of the most endangered seal species on the planet. According to NOAA, the population declined for six decades and current numbers, though increasing, are only about one-third of historic population levels.



Visitors below the cliff at a distance from the critically endangered Hawaiian monk seal.

Photo by Summer Fisher

bers, though increasing, are only about one-third of historic population levels.

NOAA reports that the current upward trend is due in part to federal NOAA Fish-

eries recovery efforts.

NOAA reports: "Hawaiian monk seals are found in the Hawaiian archipelago which includes both the main and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and rarely at Johnston Atoll which lies nearly 1,000 miles southwest of Hawai'i. These monk seals are endemic to these islands, occurring nowhere else in the world. Hawaiian monk seals are protected under the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and State of Hawai'i law."

The popular tourist trail to Green Sands Beach is owned by the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The beach itself belongs to the public and is stewarded by the state Department of Land & Natural Resources. There is no lifeguard nor steward to protect the beach and educate visitors about the place, the culture and the wildlife.

Hawksbill Project Reports Record Season for Nesting

The Hawai'i Island Hawksbill Project reported in March a record season for nesting by critically endangered hawksbill turtles on the coast of this island. The report says, "The 2023 nesting season was a busy one for the Hawai'i Island Hawksbill Project team and the hawksbill mamas!" The season ended in December with 82 confirmed nests—a new record for Hawai'i Island. "This number far surpasses the previous record of 70 set all the way back in 1995!"

During the latest nesting season, the Hawksbill Project encountered 18 female hawksbills, six of them returnees from previous seasons. Their nests produced almost 9,000 hatchlings.

"Mahalo to our partners at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, NOAA, Friends of HAVO, and Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association for helping make this season so successful," says the report.

The 2024 hawksbill nesting season starts in May. "In the meantime, please continue to be respectful and take care of our beaches so they will be ready for the mamas to return," says the statement from the Hawksbill Project. It notes that all sea turtle work was completed under U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Permit TE72088A-3 by authorized individuals.

Hawai'i Island Hawksbill Turtle Project lead Kelleigh Downs brought the organization's mission to the Friend-Raiser

at Nā'ālehu Elementary School on Saturday and shared that volunteer positions will soon be available for the 2024 nesting season that begins in May. The org's website says: "By promoting public stewardship of rare ecosystems, mainly through education and outreach, we can ensure that future generations are taught their importance."

To volunteer, call 808-985-6090 or email info@hawaiiislandhawksbillturtleproject.org. See more at www.hawaiiislandhawksbillturtle.org.

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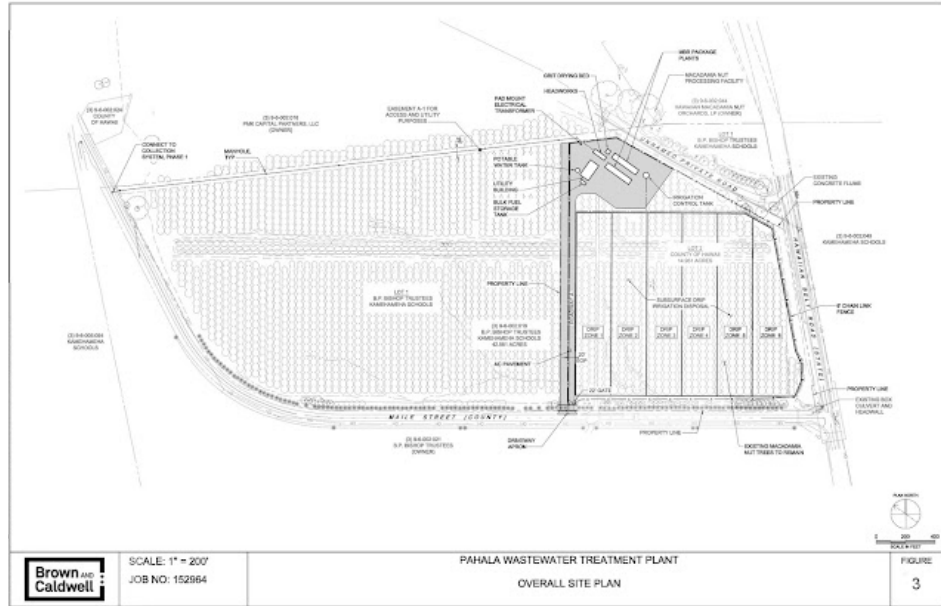
Pāhala Sewer Treatment Plant Meeting Set for April 10

The new sewage treatment plant option for Pāhala is tentatively identified by the County as a “package wastewater treatment plant with new collection system.” It is set back from the corner of Hwy 11 and Maile Street that comes into town along the pine tree road. It is described in the Amended Draft Pāhala Environmen-

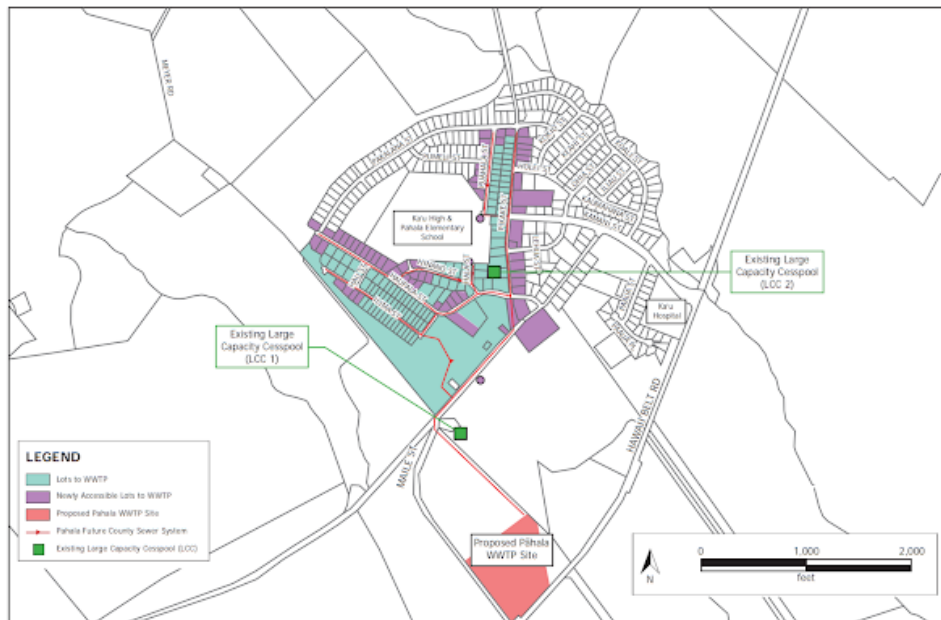
tal Information Document, which became available through the County's monthly status updates at <https://www.dem.hawaii.gov/projects/pahala-naalehu-large-capacity-cesspool-closures> and for direct download at <https://www.dem.hawaii.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/307481/638459178461591134>.

The document will also be available at the Pāhala Public and School Library. The community is invited to the Pāhala Community Center at 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 10, to provide comments on the Revised Draft EID and the County's preferred option. The link to join the meeting by Zoom on April 10 is: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/16031058165>.

Ka'ū District is relatively isolated from the major infrastructure systems found in those communities, including wastewater treatment and disposal facilities.”



This illustration shows the sewage treatment plant set back from the scenic pine tree entry to Pāhala village. See <https://www.dem.hawaii.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/307481/638459178461591134>



This map shows the streets where the sewage lines and private property easements will be installed for the transport to the wastewater treatment plant. Image from Hawai'i County

Under the 2024 Revised AOC, the Final EID is due to EPA on July 30, 2024. The final deadline for the County to close the large-capacity cesspools is Jan. 22, 2027.

The document not only presents the analysis of plans for dealing with the closure of old polluting gang cesspool left over by the sugar plantation when it shut down, it offers an overview of the geography of the area, including:

“Even though Ka'ū was one of the originally settled areas in the Hawaiian Islands, it remains a vast remote area. Only a fraction of a percent of the Ka'ū District has been developed with residential properties, and the remainder is largely used for agricultural purposes or remains undeveloped. The Ka'ū District covers about 922 square miles (approximately 590,000 acres), with over 80 miles of virtually undeveloped coastline. Nearly two-thirds of its total land area is in the Conservation District. The Ka'ū District consists of several communities, including the Pāhala community, which had a population of approximately 2,210 persons according to the US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2021. The distance to the communities of Hilo and Kailua-Kona means that the



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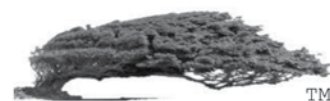
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Benioff Donates \$50 Million to Help Hilo, Ka'ū Hospitals

A \$50 million fund will go to Ka'ū Hospital's sister facility, Hilo Medical Center from Lynne Benioff and Marc Benioff, CEO and Chair of Salesforce. Benioff ranks 224th among the richest billionaires in the world, with \$10.5B, as reported by Bloomberg.

Hawai'i Gov. Josh Green, who started his Hawai'i medical career in Ka'ū, said, "Before becoming governor, I worked as an ER doctor in these hospitals, so I know what it means to have a true benefactor step up and rescue services. This huge donation will support the care for thousands of critically ill people in Hawai'i. This generosity is a game-changer for our state."

One of the Benioffs' major focuses in philanthropy is health. Marc Benioff said, "If you want to have impact, it is important to have focus — and the biggest focus in our philanthropy has been public health because it's where we feel we can have the biggest impact. But we've always been committed to supporting a strong safety net in Hawai'i in many areas and have invested heavily in schools, public parks, affordable housing, health care and first responders."

Hilo Medical Center will be renamed The Benioff Hilo Medical Center. Also renamed will be Straub in Honolulu. It will become the Straub Benioff Medical Center. Straub will receive improvements through a Benioff gift of \$100 million to Hawai'i Pacific Health, one of Hawai'i's largest healthcare nonprofits, to create a "healthcare campus of the future" at Straub.

The Benioff donations will help Ka'ū through improving the physician recruitment program. Ka'ū residents will also



Additional physician recruitment through new funding could help PA Benjamin Lawlor and Medical Director Dr. Jennifer Shrestha at Ka'ū Hospital and its Rural Health Clinic. Photo from Ka'ū Hospital

benefit from improvements to Hilo Hospital, where Ka'ū patients are often admitted to receive specialized care. The \$50 million donation will help construct a new intensive care unit with a wing containing 19 more ICU beds and 36 more patient beds. The funding will also go toward a 12-bed state-of-the-art family birthing center, neurosurgical program and behavioral health services.

Funding from the Benioffs will also connect hospitals here with San Francisco-

based UCSF Health, which runs University of California San Francisco Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals to expand its efforts to support Hawai'i patients in need of specialist care. UCSF will extend its clinical expertise across the Pacific and bring specialized care in oncology and neurology to more resi-

dents across the state. Hilo Medical Center CEO Dan Brinkman said its groundbreaking will be held in April. The project has received another \$50 million from the State of Hawai'i. "We're very excited about this," said Brinkman. "We're really counting our blessings here, and we have a whole lot of work to do."

The gifts bring the Benioffs' total philanthropy in Hawai'i to more than \$250 million.




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Dietrich Varez Day Proclaimed, Legacy Program Shares His Life

Every March 28 will be Dietrich Varez Day. In honor of the late artist's birthday, Mayor Mitch Roth signed a proclamation, and Volcano Art Center extends an invitation to a free program in April to share the life, art and legacy of the renowned printmaker, painter and author. The Varez Legacy program will be a movie screening and talk-story event on Sunday, April 7, at Volcano Art Center's

Niaulani Campus at 19-4074 Old Volcano Rd. in Volcano Village.

The free event highlighting Varez's connections to Hawai'i's people, stories, and places will begin with a Spectrum Documentary filmed in 1983 that focuses on the Volcano Art Center and features Varez's 1801 eruption with Pele and Kamehameha.

The 25-minute film looks back in time when Dietrich was prolifically producing new prints year after year, signing each image by hand. The film is available through VAC's Heritage and Archive Program which catalogues an extensive collection of archive material including photographs, imagery, audio and films.

After the film screening, a panel discussion will reveal the man behind the iconic images. It will include leader Desiree Moana Cruz and participants who



'Ahi, giclée by Dietrich Varez, the artist honored with March 28 declared as Dietrich Varez Day and a special presentation at Volcano Art Center on April 7.

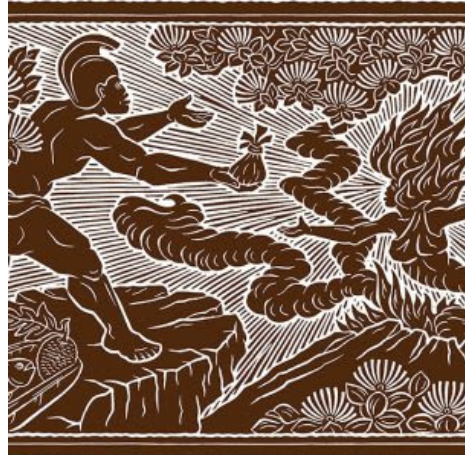
worked closely with artist. Volcano Art Center encourages all those who have been touched by his story to attend the event which will be held in Dietrich Varez Hall at VAC's Niaulani Campus.

The Varez Legacy Program also invites participants to visit the free exhibition titled *Dietrich Varez Legacy: The*

Expanded Collection, at VAC Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Featuring unpublished works recently made available through the Varez Family Estate, the exhibit runs through May 26, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., daily. For more information call (808) 967-7565 or visit the exhibition online at <https://volcanoartcenter.org/product-category/featured-exhibit/the-dietrich-varez-legacy-expanded-collection/>

A statement from VAC says, "A true artist for the people, Varez carved a deep understanding and appreciation

of Hawaiian values and lifestyle that can be learned and perpetuated through his art. The event is funded by a grant from the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, through support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Visit www.volcanoartcenter.org."



Art by Dietrich Varez and his wife Linda and Volcano artist Chiu Leong

Buildings Damaged by Summit Collapse Are Coming Down

Three buildings will be dismantled at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park starting Monday, April 8. They sustained damage during the 2018 summit collapse and eruption of Kīlauea volcano.

What: The removal of the former Jaggar Museum, and two buildings used by the U.S. Geological Survey Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (USGS HVO), the Okamura Building and the Geochemistry Annex.

The restrooms at Uēkahuna will temporarily close for the duration of the deconstruction project. Portable lua (restrooms) will be

available and ranger programs will continue.

When: Dismantling of the exterior walls and roofs begins Monday, April 8, and will continue for the next several months. The buildings will be deconstructed one section at a time. Work will likely begin on the north side of the Okamura Building and Observation Tower then proceed to Jaggar Museum and the Geochemistry Annex.

Where: Uēkahuna Bluff, at the summit of Kīlauea volcano in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

Why: Work continues on Phase One of the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Disaster Recovery Project. The buildings were irreparably damaged during the 2018 eruption and summit collapse of Kīlauea volcano, the most destructive eruptive event in Hawai'i in more than 200 years. Construction has begun on the new USGS HVO field station near the historic ballfield at Kīlauea Military Camp.


How to stay informed: Construction closures and delays are updated on the park's new construction



The former Jaggar Museum, and two buildings operated by the U.S. Geological Survey Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, the Okamura Building and the Geochemistry Annex, are slated for removal starting Monday, April 8. Restrooms at Uēkahuna will temporarily close for the duration of the deconstruction project. Portable lua (restrooms) will be available. Ranger programs will continue.

Photo by Janice Wei/ National Park Service

webpage: <https://www.nps.gov/havo/planyourvisit/construction-closures.htm>.



APRIL EVENTS

Exhibition: The Dietrich Varez Legacy: Expanded Collection continues through May 26 at VAC gallery in HVNP

4/2 - 5/6 - Keiki Drawing Class

4/7 - Dietrich Varez Panel Discussion & Film

4/11 - Thursday Night at VAC with Marc Hughes

4/13 - Pen Sketching & Watercolors

4/6 - Hula Kahiko in the Park

4/20 - Keiki Plus One Workshop

4/22 - 4/23 - Quilt Workshop

4/25 - VAC Archival Film

4/27 - Cooking with Canoe Plants 2

Aloha Fridays Cultural Demonstration at VAC gallery in HVNP Fridays 11am - 1pm

Niaulani Gallery in Volcano Village & VAC Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park are OPEN! Visit our website for current hours

Office in Volcano Village: (808) 967-8222

Gallery in HVNP: (808) 967-7565

volcanoartcenter.org/shop

April Calendar, from pg. 9

with beginners class at 12:30 p.m., Music Theory at 1:30 p.m. and Kanikapila Sing Along at 2:30 p.m. at Nā'ālehu Methodist Church. Led by luthier and music theory teacher Woodley White. Classes are free and 'ukulele are available. All ages welcome.

BOOK SHACK is open Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the Kauaha'ao Congregational Church grounds, located at 95-1642 Pinao St. in Wai'ōhinu.

OUTDOOR MARKETS

COOPER CENTER'S FARMERS MARKET is Sundays from 6 a.m. - 10 a.m. at 19-4030 Wright Rd. Volcano. Breakfast & coffee, local produce and artisan crafts. Local produce, baked goods, food to go, island beef and Ka'ū Coffee. EBT is used for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly Food Stamps. More information at (808) 967-7800.

'O KA'Ū KĀKOU MARKET is Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. in Nā'ālehu. Contact Nadine Ebert at (808) 938-5124 or June Domondon (808) 938-4875.

OCEAN VIEW EVENING MARKET is Thursdays from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. at Cooper Center, Volcano Village. Live music, artisan crafts, ono grindz, and fresh produce. For more information visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/656338372906619/>.

OCEAN VIEW COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET is Saturdays from 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Kona St. and Mamālahoa Highway. With fresh produce, community crafts and local vendors.

FIRST FRIDAY OCEAN VIEW MARKET & DANCE PARTY is Friday April 5 from 3 p.m. at Kona St. and Mamālahoa Highway. Ka'ū Radio from 3 p.m. until pau. \$10 booth fees, no reservations required. Contact HOVEMarket@gmail.com.

OCEAN VIEW SWAP & MEET is Saturdays and Sundays from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Ocean View Makai Shopping Center, near Mālama Market. Local vendors, fresh-cooked food and eclectic goods.



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Felonies Proposed for All Aspects of Chicken Fighting Activities

Raising fighting chickens and also fighting them would be elevated from misdemeanors to felonies with up to five years in prison or a \$10,000 fine, under proposed legislation making its way through the 2024 Hawai'i Legislature. The measure would also make it a felony to allow minors to attend chicken fights. The state Office of the Public Defender opposes the bill, while the state Attorney General, state Department of Law Enforcement, animal rights groups and Hawai'i Humane Society support it.

State House member Jeanne Kapela, who represents all of Ka'u, and Rep. Richard Onishi, who represents Volcano into Hilo, were both introducers of a version of the measure back in 2022.

The latest House Bill 1980 separates chicken fighting from other animal cruelty law. It would also create separate second-degree felonies for gambling on chicken fights, paying to go to the fights, and possessing chicken fighting paraphernalia, with a \$1,000 fine per first violation or up to 30 days in jail, or both. A second violation would net a \$2,000 fine or up to a year in prison, or both.

The legislation defines a fight as "a bird or birds pitted against another bird or birds, with the intent that the encounter will result in injury to one or more of the birds." The legislation would mean "Each violation of this section, including each bird and each device used in violation of this section, shall constitute a separate offense."

The narrative for the bill says: "The leg-

islature finds that illegal animal fighting is directly associated with other criminal activities such as illegal gambling, illegal firearms possession, illegal drug distribution, endangerment of minors, and human violence, as evidenced by a double homicide that occurred at

an illegal bird fighting operation in Maili, O'ahu, in April of 2023, and this was but one of a number of cases of human violence occurring at an illegal animal fight over the years. Further, Hawai'i is one of only eight states that lacks a felony penalty for animal fights between birds and has no existing penalty for attending a fight or allowing a minor to attend a fight.

"Psychologists and criminologists have long determined that children exposed to human or animal violence, or who engage in animal cruelty, are more likely to escalate to violence against humans, threatening the overall community and public safety. In addition, birds used for fighting purposes are mutilated in preparation for a fight by having various body parts cut off and their natural spurs either removed or sharpened, in prepa-



Equipping a fighting chicken with spurs would be a felony under proposed state law. Devices include slashers, gaffs, knives, and muffs designed to be attached to or in place of the birds' natural spurs.

Photo from Humane Society of the U.S.

ration for a fight, in which even the winner of the fight often dies. Birds subject to such mutilations suffer unnecessary pain and are more prone to illness and disease, including zoonotic diseases that can be spread to humans and to other avian species including native birds and birds at agricultural

facilities."

Opposition to the legislation includes testimony from state Public Defender Jon N. Kenaga writes: "Cockfighting in Hawai'i is a deeply ingrained part of the community that traces its roots to immigrants who came to work on sugar and pineapple plantations more than a century ago. What to do about it has been a recurring discussion among generations of local lawmakers. This bill is a reaction to the terrible violence that erupted from a cockfight on O'ahu last spring. The violence is indeed abhorrent and troubling, but it was made possible because the event itself was driven underground by making the cockfight a crime in the first place.

"Criminalizing cockfighting—like possessing fireworks, using drugs, gambling, or even riding in the back of a

pickup truck—does little to stop the activity itself. Making it against the law removes the activity from the normal regulations and protections of the law. That attracts more unlawful activity.

"If it was tolerated and lawfully permitted, the presence of police officers could ensure safety at these events. Making it a more severe criminal offense will only drive it further underground, make the events even more clandestine, and will only make it more conducive to unwanted criminal activity.

"Parts of the bill are also unconstitutional. Long ago, the City and County of Honolulu criminalized going to cockfights and the Hawai'i Supreme Court held that unconstitutional because "[a]n ordinance or statute proscribing presence, whether at a cockfight, a gambling game, or a house of prostitution, is too vague to satisfy the requirements of due process." *State v. Abellano*, 50 Haw. 384, 386, 441 P.2d 333, 334 (1968). While the Legislature should be and remain committed to ending violence, disrupting organized crime, and ensuring safety in the community, criminalizing a deeply engrained part of local culture has not worked in the past and is not likely to work in the future. This is not an ideal way to reduce crime."

See more testimonies, which are mostly in support of making chicken fighting a felony, at https://data.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2024/Testimony/HB1980_TESTIMONY_JHA_02-21-24_.PDF

State Legislation Could Lead to Ban Vacation Rentals on Ag & Rez Lands

A bill that could lead to a ban on vacation rentals in all but resorts and some commercial-zoned places is gaining momentum in the state House of Representatives. Attorney Sherry Broder, known for working on causes that support local initiatives, submitted testimony "strongly opposing" SB2919, which would allow counties to phase out vacation rentals, with the aim of the units becoming long-term housing.

Her testimony contends that instead of vacation rentals, building more hotels is one of the problems of affordable housing. Broder writes that "The counties keep approving more hotel rooms, more tourists keep coming, and then many tourists want to have a home in Hawai'i." She points to the Punalu'u development proposal here, the proposed Coco Palms and Koloa/Po'ipu units on Kaua'i, and a new hotel planned in Wailea on Maui. On O'ahu, she notes plans for several large hotel projects and numerous smaller ones. She objects to the argument that a vacation rental ban will solve the affordable housing problem.

Broder claims that the bill to ban vacation rentals "is great for the lucrative hotel industry and bad for local people who have the opportunity to access a very small portion of the tourism dollars through short-term rentals (STRs)." She notes that Planning Directors around the state are recommending "approvals or more hotel rooms, more expensive housing for non-locals and more golf courses." She writes that "The super wealthy and international corporations receive the tourism dollars in Hawai'i. Private equity companies own almost 30% of Hawai'i's hotel rooms." She says Hawai'i continues to be attractive for private equity buyers because it's one of the highest-performing hotel markets in the country. "Local people do not share in the real tourism dollars because of the high barrier to entry," says Broder. "All local people bear the burden of tourism. It is unfair that only hotels can make money from tourism. Today the hotels are mostly owned by hedge funds and multinational corporations. For the most part, local people earn low wages at the hotels."

Broder contends that short-term rentals bring positive economic benefits to local people and to county governments.

"Many STRs are owned by local people who do not have access to the capital needed to build a hotel and local people should be supported in their efforts to engage in making money from the tourists. The STR market provides

new income channels for State and county governments. Prohibiting STRs will contribute to the continuing decline of economic opportunities for local people.

"Many local people seek to stay at STRs as most often they are a more affordable option.

"Short-term rentals bring tax dollars to the state and local governments," writes Broder.

She writes that building affordable housing is difficult because: land ownership is concentrated in a very few landowners in Hawai'i which drives up the price of land. The cost of materials is very high because of the shipping costs and the competition for materials.

"Hawai'i is like the national trend of the rise in economic inequality, making it harder for lower-income households to buy secure housing. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, Economic Development, Tourism & Public Safety reported "short-term rentals can be disruptive, not only to Hawai'i's traditional and economically essential lodging industries but to the character and fabric of local residential neighborhoods. Further, while short-term rentals may not be legally inconsistent with the land uses that they are intended for, they must be regulated properly so that users of short-term rentals and communities alike can mutually benefit from these transactions.

Therefore, this measure establishes a comprehensive regulatory scheme for short-term rentals of dwelling units and expands the zoning powers of counties to phase out future nonconforming uses over time, in order to promote the orderly development of each county and ensure the greatest benefit for the State as a whole."

Testimony supporting the bill to allow the phase out of vacation rentals came from such organizations as Hawai'i Hotel Alliance, The American Hotel & Lodging Association, Hawai'i State Association of Counties, Sierra Club of Hawai'i, Lahaina Strong, Housing Hawai'i's Future, UNITE HERE Local 5, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 142, one member of the Honolulu City Council, two members of the Maui County Council, and more than 290 individuals. Testimony opposing the bill came from Hawai'i Association of REALTORS, Airbnb, Rental By Owner Awareness Association, Expedia Group, and more than 120 individuals.

See all the testimony and follow the progress of the bill at https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/measure_index.asp?billtype=SB&billnumber=2919&year=2024.

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Ka'u Coffee Festival

Events run June 1 - June 8, 2024

Ka'u Coffee Recipe Contest: Saturday, June 1

Those with a passion for cooking and coffee can bring their your entries to the no-entry-fee recipe competition at 11 a.m. at Ka'u Coffee Mill. Show off culinary skills using Ka'u Coffee as an ingredient. Enter in one of the three categories: pupu (appetizer), entrée, or dessert, and compete for cash prizes in the adult or student division. All entries will be judged by a panel of experts; winners will be announced at the end of the event. All attendees will enjoy free coffee tastings and entertainment. Entry deadline is May 27, 2024. Register at www.kaucoffeemill.com or contact (808) 928-0550.

Launch Party @ Pāhala Plantation House: Saturday, June 1

Learn the history of the plantation and the rise of Ka'u Coffee. Enjoy the charm of the historic home with music, hula, food and tours. Mingle with local coffee growers and their families. Co-hosted by Ka'u Coffee Growers Cooperative, Pāhala Plantation Cottages and The Ka'u Calendar newspaper. The event is from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Admission is free.

Tour Ka'u Coffee Farms: Wednesday, June 5

Take a self-guided tour of the Ka'u Coffee farms and see how the world-class coffee is grown, harvested and processed. Meet the farmers and learn about their stories, challenges and successes. Sample and purchase coffee products, as well as other local delicacies. A list of participating coffee farms will be made available in the festival brochure and at kaucoffeefestival.com.

Ka'u Mountain Hike & Lunch: Thursday, June 6

Join Ka'u Mountain Hike & Lunch in the Wood Valley rainforest, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hike along the historic flume systems of the sugar cane era and learn about the development of hydroelectric power in Ka'u by the Ka'u Coffee industry. Enjoy stunning views of mountains, the valley, waterways and native plants and animals. The hike will be followed by a delicious lunch prepared with local ingredients. Limited to 30 participants; costs \$60 per person, which includes lunch. Reserve at www.kaucoffeemill.com or contact (808) 928-0550.

Coffee & Cattle Day: Friday, June 7

Those who love coffee and beef will love Coffee & Cattle Day at scenic Aikane Plantation Coffee Company, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Discover how descendants of Ka'u's first coffee farmer integrate coffee with pasture-raised beef, and how they manage their land sustainably. See cattle and coffee trees up close, and learn about the varieties and processing methods of Ka'u Coffee. The event will end with a sprawling, all-you-can-eat outdoor buffet featuring Ka'u Coffee and beef dishes, as well as other local specialties. Enjoy a hayride around the plantation and live entertainment. The event costs \$35 per person and requires a reservation at (808) 927-2252.

Stargazing Night: Friday, June 7

If fascinated by the stars, don't miss Stargazing Night on the hills around Ka'u Coffee Mill, from 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Observe the heavens from one of the best locations on the island, with the help of professional astronomers and telescopes. Learn the importance of stars in Hawaiian culture, and how navigation by stars led to the first landings of Polynesians in Hawai'i right here in Ka'u. The event costs \$60 per person and includes a barbecue dinner. Parking is available at Ka'u Coffee Mill for boarding a shuttle to the viewing site. Reservations are required at www.kaucoffeemill.com or contact (808) 928-0550.

Ka'u Coffee Festival Ho'olaule'a: Saturday, June 8

The grand finale of the Ka'u Coffee Festival is the Ho'olaule'a, a full day of fun and celebration, coffee tasting and interaction with Ka'u Coffee farmers on the spacious grounds of Pāhala Community Center. From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., enjoy live music, hula, local food and crafts, keiki activities, educational displays, guided coffee tastings and farm and mill tours. It's a great place to talk story with Ka'u Coffee growers and learn more about their passion and dedication. Within Pāhala Community Center, The Ka'u Coffee Experience will offer Ka'u Coffees prepared with a variety of brewing methods by professional baristas from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Taste the difference and discover your favorite Ka'u Coffee.

Apply for a Ho'olaule'a Booth at www.kaucoffeefest.com



For more information, see
www.kaucoffeefest.com

Sponsors include: Ka'u Coffee Growers Cooperative, County of Hawai'i, County Councilmember Michelle Galimba, Edmund C. Olson Trust II