

HPD Names Ka'ū's Top Cops, First Time in 80 Yrs

Ka'ū Officer of the Year and Ka'ū Top Enforcer are the titles recently given to Rodney Kekaulua, Jr. and Jenna Kosinski-Santos by the Hawai'i Police Department. The awards are the first in the department's 80-year history to be specifically bestowed on Ka'ū police officers and are similar to Officer of the Month and Officer of the Quarter awards issued by various organizations in other parts of the island.

"On behalf of the entire department, I am proud of the work Officers Kekaulua Jr. and Kosinski-Santos are doing," said



Jenna Kosinski-Santos receives Top Enforcer award. Photo from HPD

HPD Chief Benjamin Moszkowicz. "Their joint commitment to serving and protecting the Nā'ālehu community in the spirit of aloha is a model for officers island-wide."

The Ka'ū Officer of the Year award is determined

by a vote of all officers in the district. "This provides the officers the opportunity to decide who amongst them, in their opinion, deserves the nomination," said Acting Captain Pernell Hanoa, commander of the Ka'ū District. "It really speaks volumes to not only an officer's work ethic but also to his/her character."

Kekaulua Jr., a four-year-



Rodney Kekaulua, Jr. (right) receives Ka'ū Officer of the Year award, with praise from Ka'ū District Commander Pernell Hanoa. Photo from HPD

THE KA'Ū CALENDAR

Volume 22, Number 2

The Good News of Ka'ū, Hawai'i

February 2024

Vacation Rental Legislation Bill Input Is Sought

County Council legislation on vacation rentals is "One of the most far-reaching pieces of legislation, in process at this



Michelle Galimba

time," says County Council member Michelle Galimba in her newsletter released at the end of January. Bill 121 "seeks to provide a consistent framework to regulate the Transient Accommodation Rental (TAR) business in Hawai'i County. You can learn more about this bill at <https://www.hawaiicountytar.com/>. The Planning, Land Use, and Economic Development Committee of the County Council recently heard Bill 121 and moved to pass it on to the Leeward and Windward Planning Commissions, as well as the Planning Director, for review and recommendation. Bill 121 will receive another hearing in Committee, as well as 2 hearings at the full Council, so there are numerous opportunities to provide feedback on this Bill."

Galimba writes that to "help address the lack of housing and the affordability crisis in our County, District 2, County Councilmember Jenn Kagiwada and I are currently working on Bill 107, which will create a new Long-Term Rental tax class that will provide a preferential real property tax rate for property owners to rent their houses long-term (more than 180 days)."



Punalu'u Village accommodations would be set back about a quarter mile from the coast. Some commercial areas would be just mauka of Black Sand Beach pond and across the street from Black Sand Beach. The proposal is before the Windward Planning Commission for a Special Management Area permit. Illustration from Black Sand Beach, LLC

SMA Permit Sought for Punalu'u Accommodations, Commerce

Development plans for lands near Punalu'u Black Sand Beach are submitted to the county Planning Department and will go before the Windward Planning Commission to consider approval of a Special Management Area permit. The major SMA permit would be required for the Black Sand Beach, LLC

applicants to take the next steps. A public hearing is expected sometime in March. A sign has been placed along Hwy 11 at the Nīnole Loop intersection.

Called Punalu'u Village, the project would include far fewer accommodations than proposed by earlier developers who planned for more than 1,500 units at

Punalu'u. This project is set back about a quarter mile from the coast, with most of the 223 units near the existing Colony One condominiums. A line of 63 Colony Two condos would be mauka of Colony One. Another concentration of accommodations would be around the old ten-

Punalu'u Village, pg. 2

Kanaka'ole Named First Deputy of Dept. of Land & Natural Resources

Ryan Kanaka'ole who has deep roots in Ka'ū has been named first deputy of state Department of Land & Natural Resources. Kanaka'ole has family in Wai'ōhinu, connected with the Wong Yuen Store, and has been involved in the stewardship of the lands at Kāwā that were pur-



Ryan Kanaka'ole Photo from DLNR

chased for preservation - owned by the county, and managed locally. He was director and interim chair for Nā Mamo o Kāwā.

Gov. Josh Green, M.D. nominated the veteran government attorney to take the post of Department of Land & Natural Resources first

deputy, effective Tuesday, Jan. 16. The appointment was subject to confirmation by the Hawai'i State Senate.

Kanaka'ole was a Deputy Attorney General with the Dept. of the Attorney General, most recently serving as an attorney for Hawai'i Housing Finance & Development Corp. (HHFDC) and Mauna Kea

Stewardship Oversight Authority. From 2017-2023, he served as deputy AG for Department of Hawaiian Homelands. He was appointed to the Public Land Trust Working Group due to his expertise on issues related to public land trust.

"We are so fortunate to have someone Kanaka'ole, pg. 10

Mitch Roth Launches Campaign for Reelection

Mayor Mitch Roth will run for reelection. He declared his candidacy during an event at Nani Mau Gardens in Hilo in January. He asked the community "to continue dreaming together" and talked about his vision for a Sustainable Hawai'i Island that builds on the achievements he made during his first term in office.



Mayor Mitch Roth Photo by Tim Wright

ing and permitting achievements, investments made in infrastructure and parks, environmental stewardship initiatives, clean energy transition and transportation, and health and safety commitments as the focus of his administration.

Roth said he is committed to ensuring that "the next generation can call Hawai'i home without facing the need to leave." He talked about taking care of people, the'aina and "our vibrant

Hawaiian culture." He noted that there are more Hawaiians living out of the state than in the state. "As we lose our Hawaiians, we lose our culture. As we lose our culture, we lose our identity of who we are. As we lose our identity, we become Honolulu or Los Angeles. Ooh, hopefully not!"

The mayor said that in its first three years, the Roth administration has been successful in making Hawai'i County a better place for housing. In 2020, there were about 1,200 houses in the pipeline to

Roth Mayor Campaign, pg. 15

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KA'Ū BUSINESS, REAL ESTATE

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The old museum and restaurant area would have a Tour Bus Drop-Off/Pick Up Area, Lū'au and Wedding venues.

Old Aspen Institute area would have 30 cabins and restored meeting and event spaces.

Illustrations from Black Sand Beach, LLC

Punalu'u Village, from pg. 1

nis courts. That section would include a Wellness Center with 80 rooms and another associated 50 condos, all surrounding shallow ponds that would be created there. The units would be 2.5 stories high. Another 30 cabins would be built around the old Aspen Center with its meeting and performance spaces that are being restored.

During a Zoom call meeting with *The Ka'ū Calendar* newspaper, landowner owner Eva Liu, architect Norman Quon, and planning consultant Daryn Arai noted that these units would be set well back from the coast behind the golf fairway and stone church on the bluff above Punalu'u Beach Park.

Development closest to the coast would be across from the Pond by the Black Sand Beach. It would be on the mauka side, near the place where Punalu'u Road and Nīnole Loop join along the curve. Plans for that area include a Fish

Market Seafood Restaurant & Information Center, public restrooms and open Market, with parking access from both Nīnole Loop and Punalu'u Road.

The recently reopened parking lot near the beach and former museum and restaurant area are shown on the plan with a Main Entry & Tour Bus Drop-Off/Pick-Up Area, Visitor Welcome Center in renovated former restaurant hale, Artisan Garden Hale for Art Displays and/or relaxation, a renovated Art &

Cultural Museum, a Multi-Purpose Event, Lawn/Lua'u area for special private and community events and a Wedding Ceremony Area. The owner, planner, and architect also noted that many of the lands in the project area that are zoned commercial, multifamily, and retail have been left open in the plan. An earlier proposal called

for glamping (high-end camping) near the ponds at Nīnole but those plans have been abandoned. The development team said that land along the coast at Nīnole will remain in its natural state. It is zoned conservation, and they said that a past developer had planned to extend the golf course to the coast at Nīnole with an oceanside green - golf courses are allowed on conservation land.

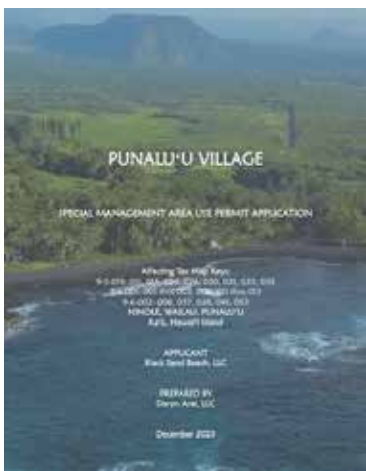
The new plan leaves areas along Nīnole coast for wildlife, cultural practices, and open space. There has been some consideration of selling it to the county through its PONC Public Access, Open Space & Natural Resources Preservation Fund, but any transfer of land or conservation easement has yet to be fi-

nalized, said the Black Sand Beach, LLC planning team.

They also said that the nearby Golf Clubhouse would be restored.

A summary of the proposal submitted to the Planning Department reviews the history of the place: "The original Sea Mountain at Punalu'u Resort was developed by C. Brewer in the early 1970's on 434 acres of land both below and above

Punalu'u Village, pg. 3



Read the blog

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KA PEPA PĀHALA

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Punalu'u Village, from pg. 2

the Hawai'i Belt Road. Since that time, the resort was sold to various owners and has fallen into disrepair. In early 2020, Black Sand Beach LLC acquired the property and is focusing on establishing a recreational and wellness community on 325 acres of makai (oceanside) portion of the property." It also describes the proposed Punalu'u Village "as a residential and commercial community."

More details on the seven sites in the proposal include:

SITE ONE is for Old Punalu'u Village Restoration on the old restaurant and museum site by the Black Sand Beach pond. Plans include restoration of former Punalu'u Restaurant complex covering about 3.5 acres. The proposal summary says it will "accommodate more passive, but educational and recreational types of uses," such as a Garden cultivating various types of native plants. A Welcome Center with possible restoration of portions of former restaurant buildings would "allow for a space where information about the project and the protocols of being proper stewards of these lands can be shared with visitors."

Ka'ū Center of History & Culture, with possible restoration of portions of former restaurant buildings, would "create a space where the history and culture of Punalu'u can be shared with both visitors and residents through exhibits, information pamphlets, presentations and simple 'talk-story.'"

Lawn areas would be "for private and community open-air events, sharing of wedding vows, open-air dining." The renovations would "Clean-up and maintain a 62-stall parking lot, which includes bus parking and visitor drop-off area."

SITE TWO, across the road from Black Sand Beach and around the curve where Nīnole Loop and Punalu'u Road adjoin, would include an Open Market,



New entities closest to the beach would include a Fish Market & Seafood Restaurant, along with an Open Market on the mauka side of the street where Nīnole Loop and Punalu'u Road meet. Illustration from Black Sand Beach, LLC

Fish Market, Restaurant, and Information Center. The Open Market would be on approximately 0.5 acre, "currently under development." The Fish Market and Seafood Restaurant, along with other retail would be within a 2.5-story complex about 8,000 square feet in gross floor area on approximately 0.5 acre. The restaurant would be on the second level "due to base flood elevation of about 22 feet." There would be on-site parking for about 28 vehicles.

SITE THREE would be Colony 2 with 63 condominiums, consisting of 1- and 2-bedroom units on about 4.9 acres. Buildings would be in duplex and 4-plex configurations. Gross floor area of units would range from approximately 760 to 1,500 square feet. The maximum heights of the condos would be 2.5 stories, "due to topography and proximity of Colony I." There would be a 95-stall vehicle parking area.

SITE FOUR would be a Village & Wellness Center on about 37.35 acres. Punalu'u Village, pg. 4

Sewers Meeting Set for Feb. 29

A meeting on wastewater projects for Pāhala and Nā'ālehu will be held on Thursday, Feb. 29 at 6 p.m. at Pāhala Community Center, 96-1149 Kamani Street.

The County of Hawai'i Department of Environmental Management will hold its semi-annual community informational meeting to give its update regarding the closures of the large capacity cesspools in Pāhala and Nā'ālehu. The meeting is also available on zoom at <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/16031058165>.

At this meeting, Department of Environmental Management will:

Discuss the County's tentative identification of the preferred option of a wastewater treatment for Pāhala and new collection system (Option 1) and will encourage public input.

Provide an update for the large capacity cesspool closure project in Nā'ālehu;

Present the contents of its Semiannual Report to EPA covering activities completed in the second half of 2023; and

Discuss next steps and deadlines.

An updated website to track progress of this project is at <https://www.dem.hawaiicounty.gov/projects>.

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Risky Visitor Adventures Lead to Drowning & Mauna Loa Rescue

Risky visitor adventures in January led to a drowning at South Point and a rescue from freezing weather on Mauna Loa.

A 24-year-old man from North Carolina died on Jan. 13 after jumping off the cliff at South Point at the hoist January. Ka'ū District patrol officers responded at approximately 11:23 a.m. to the South Point area after receiving information that several swimmers were in distress. Police determined that three adult males and one female jumped into the ocean at the "hoist" area and experienced difficulties due to rough ocean conditions.

With the assistance of local bystanders, three of the four distressed swimmers were able to make it safely back to shore. However, one of the swimmers was swept further out to sea. A witness reported seeing the swimmer approximately 75 yards offshore before going under.

Through the search efforts of local fishermen and the Hawai'i Fire Department, fire personnel were able to locate the body of the swimmer, who was later pronounced

dead after being transported to Hilo Medical Center.

He is identified as Carson Philbin of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Hawai'i Police Department is asking anyone with any information regarding this incident to please contact Ka'ū Patrol Officer Paul Wright III at (808) 939-2520.

Two hikers were rescued, airlifted off Mauna Loa on Jan. 15, after running out of food and water and getting lost during severe winter weather that closed the mountain above 10,000 feet.

The hikers, a male and female, were not injured. They first called 911 Sunday morning, Jan. 14, to report that they were out of food and water in the windy, freezing weather and that their phones were running out of power.

A search-and-rescue ranger from Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and a helicopter pilot deployed and quickly located the uninjured couple around 11,000 feet on the remote slopes of Mauna Loa. The pilot landed and the ranger checked on the hikers.

He gave them food, water and a satellite communication device, along with instructions to return to the nearest shelter and continue to hike out on their own. Their elevation and dangerous gusting winds made it too risky to transport the pair by air.

Shortly after sunset on Sunday, the hikers texted the park ranger that they had lost the trail near 10,300 feet in the foul weather. The pilot, unable to operate safely in darkness and hazardous conditions, flew the ranger up again Monday morning. The couple was safely extracted one at a time.

"The search-and-rescue mission could have been prevented if the hikers had followed explicit directions to check in and pick up their permit from the park's backcountry office," said Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Chief Ranger Jack Corrao. "The park closed the summit of Mauna Loa and canceled all high-elevation backcountry permits on Jan. 9 due to severe winter weather, and we immediately posted a closure alert on our website and social media outlets. Their actions put themselves, the pilot and our ranger at great and unneces-



A 24-year old visitor drowned after being swept away from the shore after jumping off the South Point cliff in the hoist area last month. His three companions made it back to shore. See more below. Photo by Peter Anderson

sary risk."

The couple were with two other hikers from O'ahu but the pairs separated on the arduous hike to the closed summit area. The other couple hiked out on their own without incident. All four hikers were cited for engaging in activities without a permit.

All areas on Mauna Loa in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park remain closed above Red Hill Cabin. Information on acquiring a backcountry permit and preparing for a safe backcountry trip in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is available at https://www.nps.gov/havo/planyourvisit/hike_bc.htm.

Walkstars Walking for Fitness Begins March 1

Walkstars Walking for Fitness begins in March with Herkes Ka'ū District Gym and Pāhala Senior Center in partnership with Hawai'i island-based health promotion nonprofit organization Vivawell.org.

Vivawell.org
WALKSTARS
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Learn how to get the most health benefits from a regular walking habit!

helps participants gain the most health benefits from a regular walking habit. Walkers will learn how to add time, frequency and intensity to their walks as well as set goals, monitor progress, and have fun with different walking tools and equipment. The program consists of ten, one-hour sessions with a warm up, walking workout, and weekly health education topics led by a board certified health coach and personal trainer.

Each session will build on previous information and skills. A statement from Vivawell encourages participants to attend as many classes as possible. Walking for Fitness is a free program open to adults with donations accepted. Participants can register for the program at Ka'ū District Gym, Pāhala Community Center or online at vivawell.org.

Vivawell launched the Walkstars Program in 2023 in partnership with the Kamana Senior Center in Hilo and Hawai'i County Elderly Recreation Services. With grant funding from the Hawai'i Community Foundation, the program is expanding to Ka'ū and Puna in 2024. Vivawell is a 501c3 nonprofit organization offering community based programs to prevent chronic health conditions through diet, exercise, stress reduction, social connection, and health-supporting environments.

Vivawell will hold an information session on the Walkstars program Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 10 a.m. at Pāhala Community Center.

Walkstars Walking for Fitness Program will be held Fridays 9:15-10:15 a.m. at Herkes Ka'ū District Gym beginning March 1.

According to Vivawell, the program

Ka'ū Top Cops, from pg. 1

a veteran of the department was nominated by his peers as the district's inaugural Officer of the Year. He has worked in the Ka'ū district since graduating the police academy in 2020. "Officer Kekaulua is a humble person with a positive attitude and outstanding dedication," said Hanoa.

The Ka'ū Top Enforcer award is presented to the officer who has shown the greatest initiative in enforcing traffic and criminal laws throughout the year based on statistical data. Kosinski-Santos was recognized as the district's first Top Enforcer. A five-year veteran of the department, she has served the Ka'ū community since 2021.

"She's a pro-active officer who has a gift of motivating those around her," said the Acting Captain, noting that this is not Kosinski-Santos' first time being recognized. She received the Kona Crime Prevention Committee Officer of the Month award in December 2020 for responding to a fatal traffic collision while off duty, and the Hawai'i County Council Haweo award in May 2022 for rescuing an elderly man trapped in a vehicle.

"In addition to recognizing our officers, I'd like to convey our appreciation to the Ka'ū community," said Hanoa. "The support we've received and continue to be blessed with from our residents and local businesses is incredible."



Colony Two would be mauka of Colony One and would have 63 condominiums.

Illustration from Black Sand Beach, LLC

Punalu'u Village, from pg. 3

Its Village Center would have a bakery/restaurant, marine eco-center, Ka'ū coffee showroom within a complex of one-story structures with a combined gross indoor floor area of about 30,000 square feet with an additional 11,000 square feet of covered outdoor space.

SITE FOUR: THE VILLAGE & WELLNESS CENTER WITH 130 UNITS The Wellness Center itself would be about 15,000 square-feet with a 2.5 story spa and fitness facility, including 130 rental units for overnight stay. These would consist of 80 cottages containing 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms ranging in size from approximately 650 to 1,400 square feet. It would also include 50 bungalows containing 3, 4 or 5 bedrooms ranging in size from approximately 2,500 to 3,500 square feet. There would be 250 parking stalls for all units.

The Sports Center project would restore existing 4 tennis courts and develop 4 pickleball courts, 2 sand volleyball courts, pro-shop facilities, gym and swimming pool. There would be an Amphitheater for outdoor performances and movies, about 1,000 square feet in size.

SITE FIVE: THE ASPEN CENTER WITH 30 RETREAT UNITS The project would include restoration of the former 4,650 square-foot Aspen Institute building to its previous use as a conference and educational center, "to be referred to as

Aspen Center." It would include 30 retreat units constructed as individual cabins for Aspen Center attendees. Each unit would be approximately 1,500 square feet in size. The 2.5-story structures would cover about 2.73 acres.

SITE SIX would be the 18-hole Golf Course and related facilities. The project would include restoration and minor realignment of existing course, restoration of existing 2,200 square-foot golf clubhouse complex and driving range, restoration of 6,400 square-foot pro shop, office and cart barn facility, and restoration of existing 50-stall parking area.

SITE SEVEN would be the Punalu'u Punalu'u Village, pg. 15

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KA'Ū SPORTS REPORT

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The Good News of Ka'ū, Hawai'i

February 2024

Three Seniors Star in Lady Trojans Basketball Season

Lady Trojans Basketball celebrated Senior Day on Jan. 20 and played a nail-biter against Hilo Vikings. Tyra Wong Yuen, Alexis Bivings, and recently coronated Homecoming queen Lilyana Haina were front and center for this game.



Tyra Wong Yuen brings the ball up the court with Alexis Bivings running the floor with her.

Photo by Mark Peters

With gymnasium decorated with photos and posters of each of them, the three were named co-captains for the game and all were members of the starting five for their final home game. Following the final game of the day, a ceremony to recognize all men's and women's basketball seniors was held.

In her final home game, Tyra Wong Yuen led the way for the Lady Trojans in

a 38-36 heartbreaking loss to the D1 Hilo Vikings. She led the scoring with 17 points, and was supported by freshman Caliyah Silva-Kamei's 15 points and sophomore Shaylie Martinez adding 4 points.

Coach Mark Peters stated, "I was so proud of our girls. They played their hearts out on and almost pulled off the comeback. Tyra had another great game. During the 3rd quarter the defense tightened on Tyra and we needed another scorer. Caliyah really stepped up with 11 of her 15 points in the second half. She hit 3 of her 4 3-point shots in the second half. We had great play on defense from Shaylie, Alexis, Lily, and Angelica. Lacy gave us very strong minutes off the bench as well. This was an impressive team effort."

After the games, the girls were celebrated with recognition from the school leadership, coaches, family, and friends.

The coach said, "It has been such a



Shaylie Martinez lines up for the opening tip with Lilyana Haina ready to recover the ball.

Photo by Mark Peters



The three seniors, Alexis Bivings, Tyra Wong Yuen and Lilyana Haina share a moment before the Senior Day game.

Photo by Mark Peters

pleasure to work with these three. They all three have a bright future with their amazing traits. Alexis is so driven to succeed. She always gives maximum effort on that court. She sometimes is one of the smallest players size-wise, but never with effort and heart.

"Tyra has just been a rock for this team. We ask her to do so much on the court and she always does so without any complaints. She is a very skilled player, but an ever better leader and teammate. She was given the title as team captain for a reason, and lived up to every bit of that title.

"Lily is a special young lady who

worked so hard and improved at basketball this year. During breaks in practice while others got water or sat around, Lily was out on the court shooting and working on her skills. By mid-season, she became a starter for many games and played some exceptional defense. She is that player that would help pick up her teammates when they were down or were having a tough practice.

"I can't say enough good things about these three young ladies and their character. I look forward to supporting the great things they will accomplish in life."

The final game was Jan. 25.

Punalu'u Sea Mountain Golf Course Hosts 25th Big Island Open

Punalu'u Sea Mountain Golf Course hosted the 25th Big Island Open over the weekend of Jan. 20, this one for Disc Golf, an emerging sport with much online and some ESPN television coverage across the country. The ProAm C-Tier tournament at Sea Mountain Golf Course at Punalu'u was endorsed by the Professional Disc Golf Association and presented by Innova Disc Golf. It drew 102 competitors. The Pro Purse was \$2,895.



A third place wooden disc trophy from Big Island Open at Punalu'u.

Photo by Julia Neal

The tournament info described the layout at Punalu'u for 27 holes - actually, baskets to catch the discs - as a "Unique course with some long holes and lots of challenges set up on Sea Mountain Golf Course, which has been closed for years." It noted that the players would have the course to themselves the entire weekend and that camping places and other accommodations were available in the area. Cost to compete was \$20 per entry with \$15 going to green fees. Men and women competed.

Disc Golf features nets as holes and frisbee-like discs thrown along links into baskets to receive a score, with pars for each hole, just like golf. Specialized discs are thrown for different distances and heights.

Player Jacee Lucero from Kaua'i said he and competitors from afar are in awe of the beauty of the Sea Mountain course at Punalu'u and hoped that more tournaments would be held there, even the state Disc Golf tournament in coming years.

Tournament Director was Robert Nasworthy, of Hilo. Assistant Tournament

Director was Alan Koons. Tournament staff members were Diego Alvarado and Jim Toews.

The winner of the Male Pro Tournament was Kacy Schend of Makawao on O'ahu, with a par minus 25. He was followed by Eric Reppun of Honolulu with a par minus 23 and Jason Kozlik of Hale'iwa

on O'ahu with a par minus 21 and Nicolas Chaudron of Honolulu who also came in with a par minus 21.

The winner of the Female Pro Tournament was five-time Professional Disc Association world champion Juliana Korver of Orange City, Iowa, with par minus 5.

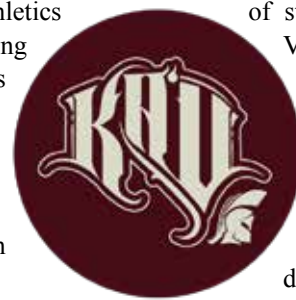
Big Island Open, pg. 10

Head & Assistant Coaches Sought for Trojan Football

Ka'ū High School Athletics has opened applications seeking for Head & Assistant Coaches for the 2024 football season.

Athletic Director Jaime Guerro said that anyone who is interested can pick up applications at Ka'ū High School main office.

The football team is comprised



of students from Ka'ū High and Volcano School of the Arts & Sciences.

Any candidates with questions, call (808) 313-4161. Deadline for completed applications is Feb. 29 at noon. Applications can be dropped off at the main office.



Janet Nishiki with her first hole in one. She achieved it at Volcano Golf Course.

Photo from VGC

Hole In One at Volcano

Volcano Golf Course has announced a hole in one as a start to the New Year. Alyss Tsukayama, of Volcano Golf Course, reports that on Jan. 17, Janet Nishiki accomplished her first hole in one on Volcano's 125-yard Hole No. 3. See more on activities at Volcano Golf Course at www.volcanogc.com.

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KA'Ū SCHOOL & YOUTH

Parks & Rec Opens up Summer Fun Jobs in Ka'ū & Volcano

Jobs are available to work at Summer Fun this year in Ka'ū and the Volcano area. Hawai'i County Department of Parks & Recreation is seeking applicants for temporary summer jobs working with keiki during the 2024 Summer Fun Program.

The Summer Fun Program is a day camp offered at recreation sites islandwide that provides healthy, safe and fun activities for keiki for several weeks during summer break.

To be considered for employment, applicants must possess a current First Aid certification, submit a completed Summer Fun application, and be available to work June 5 through July 19. The Summer Fun program begins June 12, following a mandatory four-day training period for all temporary employees.

Summer Fun job applications are

available online at <https://www.parks.hawaii.gov/facilities-parks/recreation>, the Recreation Division Office at 799 Pi'ilani Street in Hilo, and various Hawai'i County gymnasiums located around the island.

Completed applications must be filed

with the Recreation Division or post-marked by Wednesday, Feb. 28.

For more information about the Department of Parks & Recreation's 2024 Summer Fun Program job opportunities, please contact the Recreation Division at 808-961-8740.



Summer Fun is a longtime program in Ka'ū and these keiki are growing up, some of them eligible for employment this year with Summer Fun. Photo by Julia Neal



At Shoots Summit last weekend are Josh Ortega, Vladimir Fedoruk, Kamamalu Kauwe, Nyori Soriano and Chayanee Brooks representing Ka'ū High with a film that took second in the Broadcast Feature category. Photo from Ka'ū High Journalism Class

Ka'ū High Broadcast Feature Shines at Shoots Summit

Ka'ū High students took second for their Broadcast Feature story during the Shoots Summit event at Moanalua High School in January on O'ahu. Nyori Soriano wrote, produced and edited the Good Vibes film. Kamamalu Kauwe filmed it and Vladimir Fedoruk reported. Mentoring the filmmakers was Ka'ū High journalism and English teacher Chayanee Brooks.

The 1:13 min. film focuses on positive attitudes to overcome challenges. It can be seen at <https://youtu.be/H9z0wH7nFEA>.

Shoots Summit is a digital media storytelling event that is filled with workshops and competitions that focus on photography, graphic design, film, and broadcast media. Moanalua High School took first in the Broadcast Feature category.

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Trojans JV Baseball is Back with Ka'ū High & Kanu o ka 'Āina

During its first season in many years, JV Trojans Baseball, representing Ka'ū High and Kanu o ka 'Āina schools, played three games in January and wraps up the season on Feb. 3.

During the opener, on Jan 23, the Trojans led Hilo Vikings at start of the game by more than four points. Final score saw the Vikings win 13-5.



Coaches Jeremy VanArkel, Rolland Alcoran, Josh Crook and Terry Cox.

Photo from Trojans JV Baseball

This is the first time in perhaps a decade or more for Trojans to sponsor a JV

team. Varsity Trojans baseball begins its season in February.

During the home game at Ka'ū High Jan. 27, the JV Trojans played Pāhoa, followed by a game in Hilo against Waiākea Jan. 30. Their last game is at home on Feb. 3 at 1:30 p.m. against Hawai'i Preparatory Academy. For the home games there are food concessions to raise money for the sport.

During the JV game against Hilo, Trojans added to their early lead after Sophomore Riley Koch of Ka'ū High, Sophomore Caleb Crook of Kanu o ka 'Āina, and freshman Eli Crook of Kanu o ka 'Āina together scored four runs by the end of the second inning. Both Koch and Caleb Crook each hit a double. In the third inning Caleb Crook scored another run giving the Trojans five total. Hilo Vikings took the lead in the bottom of the fourth inning.

Caleb Crook began the game for the Trojans as starting pitcher giving up three hits, and four unearned runs over three innings, striking out five and walking three. Hilo's starting pitcher Shayden Sipinga allowed five hits and five runs (four earned) over four innings, striking out three and walking five.

Leadoff hitter Koch led the Trojans with two hits in three at bat. Caleb Crook, Eli Crook, freshman Ian Beck of Ka'ū High, and sophomore Devin Alpin of Ka'ū High each drove in one run for the Trojans. Koch, Caleb Crook, and Eli Crook each stole multiple bases. The Trojans ran wild on the base paths, piling up seven stolen bases for the game. Center fielder Samthen Ainos and Second baseman Eli Crook turned a double play. Shortstop Caleb Crook and first baseman Alpin also turned a double play. Other notable highlights of



The first JV Trojans Baseball Team in many years. Front row: Samthen Ainos, Joner Labin and Erwin Ralling. Back row: Coaches Terry Cox and Jeremy VanArkel, with players Caleb Crook, Eli Crook, Riley Koch, Devin Alpin, Bobti Carlend, Bobbi Carlend, Obten Boaz, Ian Beck and Coaches Rolland Alcoran and Josh Crook.

Photo from Trojans JV Baseball

the game featured Beck who played as catcher the entire game, as well as Sophomore Bobgi Carlend and Sophomore Erwin Rilang, both of Ka'ū High, making great catches in the outfield.

Koch was named Trojan's Player of the Game with batting 2 for 3 and hitting a double. Trojan's Head Coach Josh Crook said, "I am proud of all the boys and their

hard work in athletics and school. I look forward to see how their skills will improve the rest of the season and the upcoming Varsity season. It's been a blessing to get to know these boys and be an influence in their life." Assistant coaches are Rolland Alcoran, Jeremy VanArkel and Terry Cox. Ka'ū High has three more games to finish the JV season.

Mentors to Help Ka'ū Seniors to Apply for Scholarships

"Millions of dollars of scholarship money go unclaimed each year - mostly due to a lack of applications from qualified college students. Scholarships are free money, tax free, and don't have to be repaid, according to the non-profit 'O Ka'ū Kākou which is offering free mentoring in cooperation with schools here.

Many scholarships cover educational expenses beyond tuition such as books, housing and meals.

A committee has been created this year to assist students in successfully locating, researching and applying for college scholarships. A team of adult volunteer mentors in



the Ka'ū District are available to work with students who need help, encouragement and support in receiving scholarship money.

Mentors will assist students with online research of available scholarships, help students keep organized, review applications for completeness and grammar, not miss deadlines and proof read applications, essays and other submissions.

This service is free to any high school senior living in the Ka'ū District. For more information and to sign up with a scholarship mentor, contact the committee at okaukakou.org.scholarship@gmail.com or contact Ka'ū High School Counselor, Regina Blanchard-Walker.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

CHHSUAN YANG, FORMER PARK ARTIST IN RESIDENCE at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, will perform at the Kahuku Unit on Feb. 8 at 2 p.m. "Her connection with the Hawaiian landscape is profound, having drawn inspiration for her last composition from Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. This event carries special significance, as it marks her return to the stage against all odds. Despite a recent tragic vehicle accident that tested her resilience, Chihhsuan is set to captivate the audience once again with her remarkable musical prowess," says a Park statement. Yang's instruments include violin, urhu and piano.



Free 'Ukulele Classes

Free 'ukulele classes for beginners and intermediate are open to the public at United Methodist Church in Nā'ālehu Wednesdays at 2:30 p.m., taught by guitar maker and musician Woodley White.

HULA KAHIKO WITH HĀLAU NĀWEHIO-KAIPOALOHA under the direction of Kumu Ipolei Lindsey-Asing will be at the kahua hula (hula platform) on Saturday, Feb. 10 at 10:30 a.m. in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park on the grassy area fronting Volcano Art Center Gallery. National Park entrance fees apply. In case of inclement weather the performance may be moved indoors to the Kīlauea Visitor Center Auditorium. Call (808) 967-7565. These free events are supported by State Foundation on Culture & the Arts, through appropriations from the Legislature of the State of Hawai'i or grants from National Endowment for the Arts.

WOODTURNING IN HAWAII: A RICH HAWAIIAN TRADITION will be the presentation at After Dark in the Park on Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 7 p.m. in Kīlauea Visitor Center auditorium at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. The tradition of making native Hawaiian wooden bowls, called 'umeke lā'au will be shown and explained by Mark Stebbins of Big Island Woodturners, with tools, skills, and examples. Co-sponsored by Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

HE 'IO AU (I AM AN 'IO) will be the subject of Coffee Talk at Kahuku Unit of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park on Saturday, Feb. 17 at 9:30 a.m. 'Io (Hawaiian hawks) are the only native hawk living in the Hawaiian islands. Join Kate Maley, a research technician with UH Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit, and Ande Buskirk, Information and Outreach Specialist for the state's Hawai'i Island Division of Forestry & Wildlife, to learn about these birds of prey. The pre-

senters are working to better understand 'io's seasonal use of the landscape, particularly in Ka'ū.

DIETRICH VAREZ EXHIBITION from Feb. 17 - Apr. 7 at VAC Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. See Page 14.

ART IN THE PARK: PAINTING DEMONSTRATION AND TALK STORY with Artist in Residence Diana Miller on Saturday, Feb. 17 from noon to 3 p.m. Learn from a master artist and park ranger in this free painting demonstration at Kahuku unit of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Miller will share her insights into painting the dynamic landscapes of Kahuku. No registration required. Free. Co-sponsored by National Park Foundation and Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

MEET ARTIST IN RESIDENCE DIANA MILLER at After Dark in the Park on Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. at Kīlauea Visitor Center auditorium. Born in France, she grew up traveling the world, served as a National Park Service Ranger, and retired as Lieutenant Colonel in the US Air Force. Her artwork embraces native landscapes of her Hawai'i home and provides a hopeful vision for their continued protection. Artist in Residence program is co-sponsored by Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and the National Parks Arts Foundation.

NĀ LEO MANU with Christy Lassiter & Friends, who specialize in traditional Hawaiian music, having collaborated for numerous years. Committed to preserving the timeless Hawaiian songs from their upbringing, they blend guitar, 'ukulele, bass, and three-part harmonies. Co-sponsored by Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association. Performance is Wednesday, Feb. 19 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Kīlauea Visitor Center auditorium at Kīlauea Visitor Center auditorium.

VAC'S HERITAGE AND ARCHIVE PROGRAM on Thursday, Feb. 22, at 5:30 p.m. Volcano Art Center presents the first of the Archive Film Series. This project shares a glimpse of VAC's unique 50-year history. This program will run monthly at VAC Nīaualani Campus (19-4074 Old Volcano Road).

DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY

EXPLORE THE SUMMIT DAILY at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park for an easy one-hour, ranger-led walk from Kīlauea Visitor Center through the rainforest out to Kūpina'i Pali on the crater's edge. Walks are 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Meet at Kīlauea Visitor Center lānai. Visit Kīlauea Visitor Center for other ranger-led programs.

PICKLEBALL at Kahuku Park in Ocean View on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. To learn more and register, contact Jaquie Woodmansee at (808) 929-7092.

YOGA at Kahuku Park in Ocean View on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 - 10 a.m. To learn more and register, contact Tri-

February Calendar, pg. 9



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Wednesday Family Bible Adventure at 5:30pm



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NET RECOVERY PATROL on Mondays with Hawai'i Wildlife Fund. The team and core volunteers conduct marine debris recovery efforts targeting large debris items, including derelict fishing net and line bundles, that are especially hazardous to marine wildlife. Contact kahakai.cleanup@gmail.com for more info. Check <https://www.wildhawaii.org/> with its HWF calendar for more opportunities to get involved with its bi-weekly net recovery patrols.

KEIKI DRAWING CLASSES with Ken Charon, Tuesdays through Feb. 20, at 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. A series of 6 drawing classes for children ages 8 to 14 at Volcano Art Cen-

ter's Nīaualani Campus. Ken's lessons focus on drawing things from life. Portraits, landscapes, and still-lives will be encouraged as a way to prepare for more personal imaginary works. Field trips into the Nīaualani Rainforest will also be included, weather permitting. Fee: \$120/\$110 VAC Members plus a \$17 supply fee. Financial scholarships are available for those in need. For more information, visit <https://volcanoartcenter.org/events/>.

KUPUNA YOGA: Gather for 77-minute group class 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Nā'ālehu Hongwongji Mission's garden. Engage your mana'o, kino & akua for stress relief, increased breath/blood flow & regenerative energy. Limited mats. Money dona-

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.



'Ākala (*Rubus hawaiiensis*.)

Art by Joan Yoshioka

'Ākala (*Rubus hawaiiensis*)

Description: Did you know Hawai'i has an endemic (and adorable) raspberry? Meet 'ākala, a member of the Rose family (*Rosaceae*), a scrambling and hardy vine that produces delicious trail snacks! Joseph Rock (a renowned botanist) called 'ākala "giant raspberry," and for good reason! When compared to other members of the *Rubus* genus, they really are remarkably large, reaching up to 2 inches wide. This shrub is referred to as deciduous, though not as obviously as its continental counterparts, because it drops leaves in the winter time. 'Ākala have arching canes or vine-like stems that can become quite thick and long, and are covered on the upper portions (sometimes, but not always) with sharp spine-like hairs. 'Ākala flowers resemble those of strawberries (but a bit larger), blooming light pink from April through July, and have a mildly sweet smell to them. Flowers give way to berries, which appear in gorgeous colors of orange or yellow, turning deep red and purple when ripe (and if you ever want to taste test, the redder berries are definitely sweeter).

Uses: Among the most important "uses" of 'ākala is one that should always be mentioned: 'ākala flowers provide nectar to native birds! 'I'iwi especially love the 'ākala flower nectar and use it as a food source. I highlight this because our environment is always our greatest teacher, and it is important to start there. Early Kanaka Maoli used 'ākala fibers to make kapa occasionally, though more commonly 'ākala berries were used to create a dye for kapa. (Fun fact: 'ākala means pink and the fruits give way to a lovely pink dye). I have heard that the ashes of burnt 'ākala stems can also be used to treat dandruff, so please let me know if you try it! Of course, the fruits can be eaten and used in jams, preserves, and even make a tart and tasty wine.

Habitat: 'Ākala can be found in mesic to wet forests and even into the subalpine environment at elevations of about 2,000-10,000 feet elevation on Kaua'i, Moloka'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island. As is the story of all of our endemic plant species, 'ākala are being threatened by competition by invasive plants and destroyed by feral ungulates. Ka'ū is still home to 'ākala, and you can find it hiking in upper elevation wet forests (particularly those that are fences to exclude ungulates). Next time you are hiking, hunting, or exploring, keep your eyes peeled for our raspberry friend.

Growing and Purchasing: Unfortunately, most raspberries (or many plants in the Rose family) you find to purchase are non-native, and oftentimes invasive species. However, there are some specialty nurseries that may have a supply, so please reach out if you have a desire to find an 'ākala source. 'Ākala are able to grow in full sun, but can handle a semi-shaded understory as well. If you are planting at its lower elevational range, please try to give it some shade and plenty of water, as 'ākala prefers cooler, moist upper elevations. Remember, it is always a good idea to plant native species, so before buying an invasive or potentially invasive raspberry at the big box stores, consider planting pono. Once you meet and befriend 'ākala, you will never want a non-native raspberry again!

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

FEBRUARY '23

February Calendar, from pg. 8

tion or heart-based trade for teacher & temple appreciated. Sign up 11 minutes before start time.

ST. JUDE'S SHOWER MINISTRY open to the public on Saturdays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to noon with last Check-in at 11:30 a.m. Offered are hot water, soap, shampoo, conditioner, and clean towels. Masks and social distancing are required before and after showering. The public shower service is supported by the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i's Commission on Mission Beyond Church and St. Jude's own outreach fund. Location is 92-8606 Paradise Circle Drive in Ocean View. Members of the congregation built the facility.

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

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

STEWARDSHIP OF KĪPUKAPUAULU on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. Help remove troublesome plants at Kīpukapuauulu, home to diverse native forest and understory plants. Bring clippers or pruners, sturdy gloves, a hat, and water. Wear closed-toe shoes and clothing that you don't mind getting permanently stained from morning glory sap. Be prepared for cool and wet or hot and sunny weather. New volunteer? Contact Marilyn Nicholson for more info: nickem@hawaii.rr.com. Meet at the Kīpukapuauulu parking lot, Mauna Loa Road, off Highway 11 in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

ST. JUDE'S COMPUTER LAB open Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Work-Station Laptops will be provided. Printing and shredding is available. Training sessions on Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint and assistance with setting up email accounts, Facebook, Zoom, and more are provided. Assigned times are available for individual help. Game playing is limited and no streaming is allowed. Privileges can be suspended by Administrator or Lab Coordinator.

OUTDOOR MARKETS

VOLCANO FARMERS MARKET, Cooper Center, Volcano Village on Sundays, 6 a.m. to 10 a.m., with local produce, baked goods, food to go, island beef and Ka'ū Coffee. EBT is used for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly Food Stamps. Call 808-967-7800.

'O KA'Ū KĀKOU MARKET, in Nā'ālehu, Wednesdays, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Contact Nadine Ebert at 808-938-5124 or June Dmondon 808-938-4875. See facebook.com/OKauKakouMarket.

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

VOLCANO EVENING MARKET, Cooper Center, Volcano Village, Thursdays, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., with live music, artisan crafts, ono grinds, and fresh produce. See facebook.com/Volcano-Evening-Market-105888795330870.

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

OCEAN VIEW COMMUNITY MARKET, Saturdays 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Kona St. and Mamālahoa Highway, \$10 booth fees, no reservations needed. Contact HOVEMarket@gmail.com with any questions.

VOLCANO SWAP MEET, 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Large variety of vendors with numerous products. Tools, clothes, books, toys, local-made healing extract and creams, antiques, jewelry, gemstones, crystals, food, music, plants, fruits, and vegetables. Also offered are cakes, coffee, and shave ice.

OCEAN VIEW SWAP MEET at Ocean View makai shopping center, near Mālama Market. Hours for patrons are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. Vendor set-up time is 5 a.m. Masks required.

FOOD

FREE MEALS IN NĀ'ĀLEHU are served Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Nā'ālehu Hongwanji. Volunteers prepare the food provided by 'O Ka'ū Kākou with fresh produce from its gardens on the farm of Eva Liu. Other community members also make donations and approximately 150 meals are served each day. A donation of \$1 is suggested per meal.

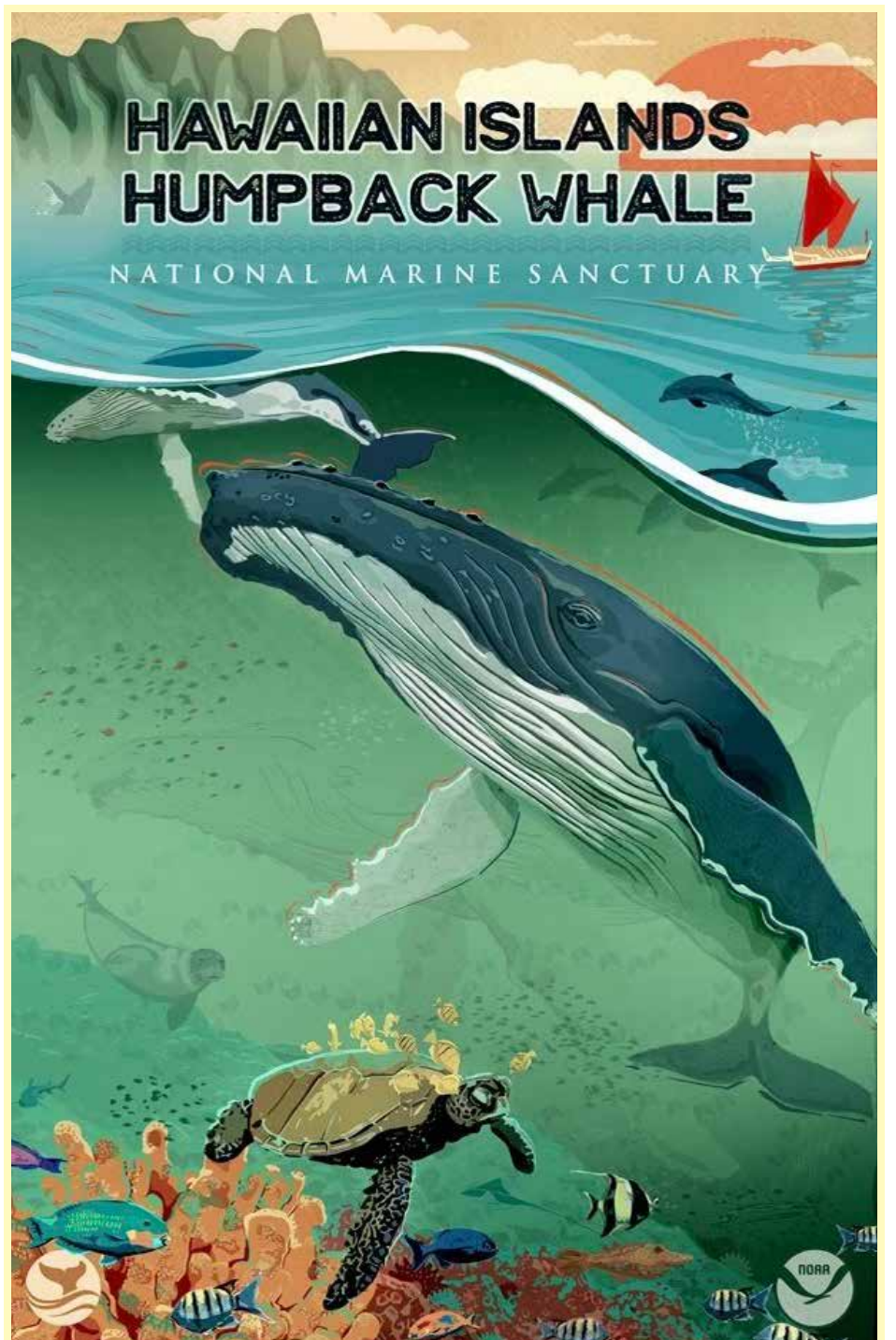
KA'Ū FOOD PANTRY FOOD DISTRIBUTION, Tuesday, Feb. 27, 9:30 a.m. - Pau. St. Jude's Episcopal Church above Kahuku Park in Ocean View. Sponsored by Hawai'i Island Food Basket.

'O KA'Ū KĀKOU PANTRY FOOD DISTRIBUTION, Tuesday, Feb. 27, 10 a.m. - Pau. Ka'ū District Gym in Pāhala. Sponsored by Hawai'i Island Food Basket.

COOPER CENTER COMMUNITY PANTRY FOOD DISTRIBUTION, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. Located at 19- 4030 Wright Road in Volcano. Sponsored by Hawai'i Island Food Basket.

SACRED HEARTS - LOAVES AND FISHES Thursday, Feb. 29, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. Located at 95-5558 Mamālahoa Hwy., Nā'ālehu.

ST JUDE'S HOT MEALS are free to those in need on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until food runs out, no later than noon. Volunteers from the community are welcome to help and can contact Karen at pooch53@gmail.com. Location is 96-8606 Paradise Circle Drive in Ocean View.



National Marine Sanctuary and NOAA recently released this poster honoring Hawaiian Humpback Whale Marine Sanctuary. Art by Matt McIntosh of NOAA

Next Humpback Whale Count Feb. 24

The next Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale Count will be Saturday, Feb. 24, followed by the final one for 2024 on Saturday, Mar. 30. On the last Saturday in January, more than 400 volunteers on the shores of the Hawaiian Islands took part in the National Marine Sanctuary Count from 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Locations on this island were Punalu'u Black Sand Beach on the Ka'ū Coast; Ho'okena Beach Park, Hōnaunau, Keāhole Point and Hualālai on the Kona Coast; Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Park and Mile Marker 7, Kapa'a Beach Park and Old Coast Guard Road on the Kohala Coast; Onekahakaha Beach Park in Hilo and Hawaiian Paradise Park in Puna.

Total count for Hawai'i Island was 324; statewide it was 2,124. Register for the next count and learn more at <https://oceancount.org/>.

The Hawaiian word for humpback whales is koholā. The whales come to Hawai'i to give birth, nurse their young and breed before heading north to summer waters.

During the first count for 2024, volunteers also gathered data on Kaua'i, O'ahu and Moloka'i. They also searched shores of Maui and Lāna'i during the Great Whale Count by Pacific Whale Foundation. This is the sixth year that both counts are coordinated on the same days, ensuring data from all the main Hawaiian Islands are collected simultaneously.

The time when most whales were observed at all sites was from 9 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

On Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i and Hawai'i Island, Ocean Count volunteers collected data from 32 sites. A total of 174 whales were observed from 9 a.m. to 9:15

a.m. On Maui and Lāna'i, Great Whale Count volunteers collected data from 12 sites during 15-minute intervals between 8:30 a.m. and 11:50 a.m. A total of 141 whales were observed from 9 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. Total number for the Great Whale Count on Maui was 821 and on Lāna'i it was 53.

"Data collected during the Sanctuary Ocean Count and Great Whale Count combined with other research efforts can help reveal trends in humpback whale occurrence within and amongst whale seasons," says the announcement from the organizers.

Across the main Hawaiian Islands, weather conditions were primarily mostly sunny with winds varying from light to moderate throughout the day. Several sites experienced rain and gusty winds, which were not ideal for observing whales. A variety of other species were also spotted during the count including honu (green sea turtles), 'ilioholoikauaua (Hawaiian monk seals), nai'a (spinner dolphins), mālolo (Hawaiian flying fish) and multiple bird species such as ae'o (Hawaiian stilts), 'iwa (great frigatebird), mōlī (Laysan albatross), kōlea (Pacific golden plover), Nēnē (Hawaiian goose), and more.

Ocean Count promotes public awareness about humpback whales, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, and shore-based whale watching opportunities. Site leaders tally humpback whale sightings and document the animals' surface behavior during the survey, which provides a snapshot of humpback whales' activity from the shorelines of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i and Hawai'i

Humpback Whale, pg. 15

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kaunewsbriefs.blogspot.com

NŪPEPA NĀ'ĀLEHU

Volume 22, Number 2

The Good News of Ka'ū, Hawai'i

February 2024

Big Island Open, from pg. 5

She has 249 career wins. Korver was followed by Haley Reese of Hilo with par plus 28; Sadie Shattuck of Kennewick, WA with par plus 37; and Audrey Lopez of Beamsville, Ontario, Canada with par plus 90.

There were numerous men, women pro and amateur age group events. See the full results and more on the sport at



A commemorative disc from the Big Island Open tournament at Sea Mountain Golf Course.

Photo by Julia Neal

<https://www.pdga.com/tour/event/75553>.

The rise in Disc Golf is in concert with the increase in sand volleyball competition at colleges, universities and clubs. Several sand volleyball courts are planned in the makeover of Punalu'u property, as reported in the recent proposal to the County Windward Planning Commission. Eva Liu, owner of the Sea Mountain Golf Course at Punalu'u, said she also supports Disc Golf tournaments there.



The golf carts at the Big Island Open at Punalu'u Sea Mountain Golf Course in January held frisbee-like discs instead of golf clubs. The 25th Big Island Open tournament drew more than 100 competitors.

Photo by Nico Reese

Prince Kūhiō Ho'olaule'a March 30, Vendor Deadline Nears

Organizers of the 8th Annual Prince Kūhiō Ho'olaule'a are putting out the call this month for vendors interested in being a part of this event held at Nā'ālehu Ball Park. The Ho'olaule'a, set for Saturday,

PRINCE KUHIO DAY HO'OLAULE'A



March 30, drew hundreds of spectators in 2023. Limited vendor spots are available and all forms will be due by February 27. First come, first served. To participate, potential food vendors can contact Trini Marques at (808) 936-0015 or trini-

marques@yahoo.com. Food vendors will need access to a certified kitchen, food handler certification and Department of Health permit completed by the deadline. Arts & Crafts vendors may contact Terry Shibuya at (808) 938-3681 or masazosr@yahoo.com. All vendors will also need GE tax license and county P&R vendor permits completed by the Feb. 27 deadline.

Hana Laulima Lāhui O Ka'ū, the non-profit hosting the alcohol- and drug-free event, will be showcasing a mini model of their planned Ka'ū Hawaiian Cultural Center. The day will include entertainment from Green Sands Trio, Na 'A'alii, Backyahd Bruddahs, Braddah Ben Mejia & Braddah Dane Season, Hālau Nā Iwi Ola and Gene Akamu & Friends.

Makahiki games, hula, wa'a (canoe), lei making, ku'i kalo (poi pounding), weaving and 'ukulele are among the highlighted Hawaiian cultural prac-

tinues that will be demonstrated or taught. DLNR and more.

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Kanaka'ole, from pg. 1

with Ryan's deep understanding of state government operations, including those of the DLNR," Chair Dawn Chang said. "He will be instrumental in continuing to build relationships with stakeholders, lawmakers, and communities and fostering DLNR's conservation mission."

He also was involved in audits of DLNR, University of Hawai'i, State Foundation of Culture & the Arts, Department of Transportation, Department of the Attorney General, Hawai'i Energy Office, and Department of Human Services.

Kanaka'ole commented, "I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity from Governor Green and Chair Chang to con-

tinues that will be demonstrated or taught. DLNR and more. See <https://hanalaulimalahuiokau.org> for updates on the March event.

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COUNTY OF HAWAII
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC NOTICE
2/24

Shaping the Future of Hawai'i's Wastewater Infrastructure

The County of Hawaii Department of Environmental Management is developing an Integrated Wastewater Management Plan (Plan) to help provide a road map for cesspool conversions and sewer infrastructure projects. As a part of the Plan, the County is conducting two rounds of public engagement workshops on cesspool conversions to share information and seek public input.

Meeting dates, times, and locations for the first round of public engagement:

<p>LOCATION #1</p> <p>Kona Meeting Date: 2/13/2024 Location: Makao County Pavilion 75-5560 Kuakini Hwy, Kailua-Kona Time: 5:00 - 6:30 PM</p>	<p>LOCATION #3</p> <p>Ka'ū Meeting Date: 2/27/2024 Location: Nā'ālehu Community Center 95-5635 Hawai'i Belt Rd, Naalehu Time: 5:00 - 6:30 PM</p>
<p>LOCATION #2</p> <p>Hilo Meeting Date: 2/15/2024 Location: Auntie Sally Kaleohano's Lū'au Hale - 799 Piilani St, Hilo Time: 5:00 - 6:30 PM</p>	<p>LOCATION #4</p> <p>Kohala Meeting Date: 2/28/2024 Location: Kohala Intergenerational Center Kamehameha Park Rd, Kapaau Time: 5:00 - 6:30 PM</p>

More information on the second round of public engagement workshops will be provided in the near future.

For additional information or for special accommodation requests or inquiries, please contact:
Kelly Hartman
Department of Environmental Management,
County of Hawaii
Kelly.Hartman@hawaiicounty.gov
808-961-8512

For additional information about the Department of Environmental Management, please visit:
www.dem.hawaiicounty.gov

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Top of Long Driveway

Opponents Object to Cell Tower Approval, Contested Case Dropped

A group of Ocean View residents issued a statement in late January, promising continued opposition to the recent approval of a cell tower in the Paradise Circle neighborhood. A California company called Renegade Towers, LLC plans to build the 150-ft. tall tower among homes and near a church and the county park.

The cell tower issue was approved by the Windward Planning Commission for a contested case hearing during its Dec. 7 meeting which would have taken it into a quasi-judicial procedure, providing a mediator to work with the opponents and the cell tower company. However, the Planning Department and its attorneys were soon advised that state law can supersede county decisions on cell towers. It requires all broadband permit approval or disapproval within 60 days of submission, or the approval is automatic. For this case, automatic approval fell on Dec. 21, before any mediation occurred. State law also disallows a contested case once the approval is given.

Colleen Conifer, one of the residents who petitioned for the standing that the Windward Planning Commission approved, told *The Ka'ū Calendar* that she and her neighbors are not giving up their opposition to the tower. "We followed all their steps and rules for filing our petition, along with a \$200 filing fee, but they kept changing the rules until we were basically denied our rights to a hearing. The Planning Department sent an email on Friday, Jan. 5th informing us that the permit for building a cell phone tower on Paradise Circle was automatically approved effective Dec. 21st, two weeks after the Commission met for a public hearing on the tower," but didn't allow the opposition to make comments.

"We were all appalled by this decision. Under the State's cell tower regulations, on the sixty-first day after filing for a permit, the application is automatically approved if no action has been taken by the Planning Commission. The Commission is breaking its own rules. They took action. They promised us a mediator. That's action. While we trusted them, and waited for the mediator to be appointed, they ran out the clock and denied us any mediation, as promised."

A second petition was signed by 137 residents, all opposed to the cell phone tower in the Paradise Circle neighborhood. This was submitted to the Planning Commission. In an email to *The Ka'ū Calendar*, Conifer listed eight reasons why the Commission should have denied the permit to build a cell



Example of 150 ft. tall cell tower, this one in Round Valley, CA. Photo from Mendocino Voice phone tower on the proposed one-acre site:

"1. A tower of this size and the supporting 2,400 square feet of infrastructure does not belong in the center of a neighborhood. It can and should be located in areas zoned for commercial or industrial uses. We believe many other sites locally would be better suited to this project and meet coverage needs.

"2. The potential destruction of property from cell tower fires that could occur 150 feet above our homes and spread through the dry vegetation is a real concern after all the fire damage we've seen on the islands. We do not want additional fire hazards brought into our residential neighborhood. Cell towers have frequently collapsed due to fire or high winds and could potentially fall on an adjacent property or onto the road due to the inappropriate size of the lot.

"3. Dangerous and flammable materials

stored onsite create hazards of an industrial nature. We oppose the onsite storage of these substances.

"4. The use of high-powered generators and the other 2,400 sq ft of industrial infrastructure will cause a noise nuisance in a residential neighborhood.

"5. Potential for vandalism and debris around the site as seen at the other tower currently existing on a two-acre site in Ocean View at higher elevation.

"6. The character of the Paradise Circle neighborhood will be changed forever by this construction. The tower will be visible and loom over everyone using the Kahuku County Park's playing fields and playground and for church services all located on the Circle. These facilities get the highest use by Ocean View residents and provide a space for a variety of gatherings in the park pavilion.

"7. The monopole tower and antennas

will obstruct and uglify beyond remedy our beautiful view of the ocean and South Point.

"8. Devaluation of residential properties due to proximity to a cell phone tower is estimated at up to 20%, according to a HUD report. Renegade Towers' financial gain is at our financial expense. There have been no offers of compensation for the loss of value of our homes. Under existing zoning, no one buying property here expected to be living adjacent to a 150-foot industrial tower."

Conifer said, "We're not giving up despite the Planning Commission's actions to eliminate our voices and concerns", adding "we have too much to lose, and are looking into all of our options."

Those supporting the cell tower, including Windward Planning Commissioner Lou Daniele, said that it will help fill a gap in cell reception along Hwy 11 and in Ocean View, including at his own house there.

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Glycine Vines Threaten Iconic Pine Tree Lane in Pāhala

Glycine vines can be seen killing trees across Ka'ū and beyond. Two of the most noticeable places are the Norfolk pine tree lane coming into Pāhala from Hwy

11 and up Wood Valley Road. On the pine tree lane, many glycine vines with rope-sized bases coming out of the ground have strangled and killed the lower branches of the Norfolk Pines. Up Wood Valley Road, near the main water crossing, many Norfolk Pines have died. There are also reports of farmers fighting glycine in Ka'ū Coffee fields and of some unkept coffee orchards covered with them. Along roads and highways, palms, fruit trees, shade trees, fences and out-buildings can be seen covered with vine.



Glycine vines are killing the Norfolk pines in pine tree lane leading into the village of Pāhala, plus trees in numerous places throughout Ka'ū and beyond. Some volunteers, including Sophia Ottofaro and Traven Apiki have started to work on the project. Photo by Julia Neal



Pāhala residents join in the cleanup of deadly glycine vine killing pine trees at the entrance to Pāhala. Photo by Julia Neal
leaders, who visit Ka'ū to assist with coastal stewardship, farms and other projects, helped in January. They filled truckloads of glycine vines from the pine tree lane. Leader Traven Apiki said the volunteers dug out roots and pulled vines from the trees and matted tangles covering the ground. They were assisted by the Eder family in Pāhala and Pāhala Plantation Cottages.

teering in Ka'ū, said Apiki.

Glycine was brought to Hawai'i as animal feed after kukui grass was in decline but has become an invasive species.

GIVE volunteer college students and

GIVE plans to make it a regular practice to help get rid of glycine when volun-

Ka'ū Future Farmers Seeks Help to Attend Convention

Future Farmers at Ka'ū High is raising money to attend Future Farmers of America statewide convention on Kaua'i to be held Feb. 27 to March 1.



Jacelyn Jara, President of the Ka'ū Chapter of FFA, said, "This year, 15 of our members qualified for States, which is the first time for our chapter in nearly 20 years. To travel to States, we are looking to raise

\$14,000 to cover our necessary expenses." Almost a third has been raised. Those who have donated so far include Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation, Olson Trust, Punalu'u Bakeshop, and 4K Ranch. A donation jar is located at Shave Ice Shack in Nā'ālehu.

"FFA has been beneficial to students like us because it helps and provides for our community and gives us students more knowledge about agriculture life and how it works," said Jara. "We would like to use this National FFA Week to prove to our school how involved and generous our local community members, organizations, and alumni are. Any amount of donation is welcome."

According to FAA mentor Kaweni Ibarra, modest accommodations on Kaua'i and ground transportation are very expensive, and there are registration fees for the 15 students and four adult leaders. Food will be out of pocket for the students.



Ka'ū Future Farmers raising money to go to the state convention include Vladimir Fedoruk (Secretary), Ezekiel Kaawa-Kamimura (Treasurer), Jacelyn Jara (President), Lily Dacalio (Vice President), Alajshae Barrios (Reporter), and Triton Blanco (Sentinel). Photo by Kaweni Ibarra

The convention will be based at Kapa'a High School and Kaua'i High School in Lihu'e. It will also involve educational sessions at working farms around the island and competitions among FFA members from around the state.

To donate to Ka'ū FFA, email kaweni.ibarra@k12.hi.us or send donations to Ka'ū FFA, P.O. Box 100, Pāhala, HI 96777.

GOT A JUNK OR DERELICT VEHICLE YOU NEED TO GET RID OF?

OHCD encourages its housing voucher program participants and partner landlords to take advantage of a new County of Hawai'i program that allows residents to remove free-of-charge up to two junked or abandoned vehicles from private property.

For more information, program requirements and an application, visit www.hawaii.zerowaste.org/recycle/automotive/ or contact the Department of Environmental Management's Derelict/Abandoned Vehicle Section by calling (808) 961-8952 or via email to VDA@hawaii-county.gov

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Health Department Defends Use of Kava, 'Awa

'Awa is recognized as safe, but with risks, depending on how the drink from the kava root is prepared. That's the message from the state Department of Health in collaboration with the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources. They and Gov. Josh Green issued a statement in late January saying the memorandum "was developed to recognize the substantial history of consumption of the traditional 'awa beverage by Native Hawaiians." The determination by DOH aimed to respond to a 2020 memorandum published by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration titled Review of the published

literature pertaining to the safety of kava for use in conventional foods. The Hawai'i state memorandum says the "FDA concluded that 'awa is not safe for human consumption but did not clarify that the studies referenced describe the use of organic 'awa extraction and did not review the health effects from consumption of the traditional 'awa beverage."

The memorandum notes, "Extraction of kavalactones, the active ingredient in 'awa, ordinarily involves steeping the root in a liquid. Organic extraction (i.e., using acetone, ethanol, or similar solvents) results in two to 10 times the total amount of kavalactones than is extracted via aqueous extraction (i.e., using water). Per the FDA, the highly concentrated amount of kavalactones extracted via non-traditional methods may pose a significant health hazard due to liver toxicity."

After numerous scientific journals and publications were provided to DOH by UH CTAHR, the memorandum says that DOH concluded that "use of the noble variety of 'awa root, mixed with water or coconut water to make a beverage through aqueous extraction, comports with the substance and intent of the federal Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regu-



lations (CFR) §170.30(c)(1) GRAS exception, based on common use in food prior to January 1, 1958. Consequently, 'awa root of the noble variety as a food additive for use in a beverage prepared in this specific, traditional, and customary manner shall not be deemed a violation of chapter 328, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, provided that all other relevant federal and state food safety laws are satisfied."

The statement says, "Any other preparation of 'awa, or the use of any other variety of 'awa, will be considered an adulterated food and/or an unapproved food additive by DOH pursuant to §328-9, HRS, and a violation of chapter 11-29, Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR), and/or chapter 11-50, HAR, unless the elements of 21 CFR §170.30 can be satisfied."

Protection from Flu RSV, COVID Urged

With the first pediatric death from the flu this season in January, the state Department of Health is encouraging families to receive the flu shot and to practice basic prevention. According to DOH, practices to reduce spread of flu, COVID-19 and RSV include hand washing, staying home when sick, and covering when coughing and sneezing to help stop the spread of germs. "While not required, masking is also still an effective prevention measure for respiratory illnesses. Consider wearing a well-fitted mask in crowded indoor settings or when traveling."

More information about influenza and other respiratory diseases is available at <https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease-types/respiratory-viruses/>.

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Captive 'Alalā in Volcano to be Released in Maui Forest

Some of the endangered Hawaiian crows, raised in captivity in Volcano, will be flown to Maui for release by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service onto forest reserve lands. The 'Alalā - native Hawaiian crows - are extinct in the wild. An earlier species re-introduction project on Hawai'i Island was halted, largely because the native Hawaiian hawk ('io), their natural predator, was preying on the birds.

While 'alalā were last known to exist on Hawai'i Island there is subfossil evidence of a Corvid (crow family) species on both Maui and Moloka'i.

For Maui releases, the state Department of Land & Natural Resources and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service identified the project area through a collaborative process that evaluated eight sites on Maui and Moloka'i. Since Maui Nui does not have a breeding population of 'Io, researchers are hopeful releasing 'alalā on Maui will be successful.

The agencies prepared a joint Environmental Assessment to address any impacts of pilot releases of 'alalā. The



'Alalā, endangered Hawaiian crows, raised in captivity in Volcano and on Maui, will be released into the wild, this time on Maui, following an earlier release on this island when they were attacked, some killed by another native bird, the Hawaiian hawk.

Photo from DLNR

assessment focused on the two highest-ranking sites, Kīpahulu Forest Reserve and Ko'olau Forest Reserve. Project areas include a radius of 2.4 miles surrounding release sites, which is the maximum distance 'alalā are expected to travel based on the previous Hawai'i Island releases.

In its submittal to the Board of Land & Natural Resources, the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife indicated the preferred alternative is to release 'alalā in the Kīpahulu Forest Reserve for the first release effort to minimize potential impacts to rare snails and other native species. The environmental analysis also addressed potential impacts to other threatened and endangered plants and animals, to cultural, recreational and wilderness resources, and to public health and safety, air quality, climate change, and environmental justice.

The interdisciplinary team consulted with scientific experts and environmental partners from DLNR, USFWS, the National Park Service, and the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance. Released birds will come from the captive



'Alalā chick being fed by a look-alike, substitute 'Alalā mom in a captive breeding facility. Photo from San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance

population of 120 birds. The birds are housed at the two conservation breeding facilities managed by SDZWA on Maui and Hawai'i Islands.

DOFAW representatives told Board of Land & Natural Resources members that after reviewing the final EA, they agree that a "Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)" justifies the pilot release of 'alalā in east Maui. BLNR voted unanimously to approve the plan. No date for releases has been set.

Hawai'i Pacific Parks Surpasses 90 For 90 Challenge

Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association, in its 90th year, raised more than 90K for Volcanoes and other parks and historic sites through donations in its Hawai'i Island and Maui stores in 2023. Stores in Ka'ū are located at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park at Kīlauea Visitors Center in Volcano and at the Kahuku Unit.

Since its founding in 1933, HPPA



Mel Boehl, Executive Director of Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association.

has been a dedicated National Park Service Partner with a mission to support the preservation, interpretation, and educational

programs of national parks and historic sites in Hawai'i and American Samoa. Over the past 90 years, Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association has raised tens of millions of dollars to support projects and programs. All donations raised at the park stay with that park. The fundraiser in 2023 was called *90 for 90 Challenge*. The goal was reached on Dec. 1 but donations continued to flow in through Dec. 31, reaching \$106,125.

Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association Executive Director Mel Boehl said, "We reflect on the incredible impact that HPPA



A pair of nēnē and gosling are Hawaiian State Birds, their protection supported by Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association, which recently raised more than \$90K through its stores at parks and historic sites.

NPS photo

has made over the past nine decades. We are grateful to our partners, supporters, and the dedicated staff who have helped us achieve our mission and ensure that our na-

tional parks are supported for generations to come."

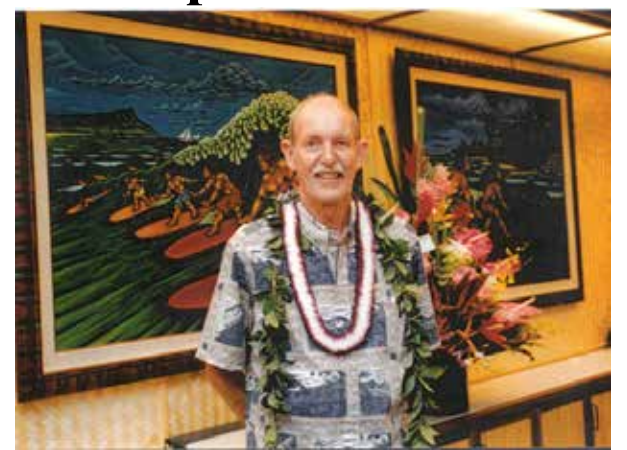
See more at hawaiiipacificparks.org.

VAC Dietrich Varez Exhibit to Show Unpublished Works

The Volcano Art Center announces an exhibit opening on Saturday, Feb. 17 honoring life, art and legacy of the artist and author Dietrich Varez. The print-maker painter created scenes of Hawaiian mythology and traditional Hawaiian life and stylized designs from nature. Of Polish-Swed-

ish and Lithuanian parents, he was born in Germany in 1939 and came to Hawai'i with his mom, brother and stepfather, Army Sgt. Manuel Varez. After receiving a Masters Degree in English, Dietrich Varez and his wife moved to Volcano in 1968. He took up woodcarving and making woodblock prints that led to printmaking. His works became popular and have been shown in Volcano Art Center since its opening. He died in 2018.

The exhibition titled *Dietrich Varez Legacy: The Expanded Collection* features unpublished works of the artist which have recently been made avail-



Dietrich Varez, 1939-2018

able through the Varez Family Estate and a donation from Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, through support from National Endowment for the Humanities.

The exhibit opens daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Volcano Art Center Gallery in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and will be on display through May 26.

For more information call (808) 967-7565 or visit www.volcanoartcenter.org.



VOLCANO ART CENTER
WHERE PEOPLE, ART AND NATURE MEET

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Exhibition: Dietrich Varez
February 17 - April 7
at VAC gallery in HVNP

Exhibit: Gathering Bowls: Celebrating Aloha continues through 2/11

2/1 - Heritage & Archival Film Series
2/3- Indigo Dyeing Workshop with Wai'ala & Justin
2/3 - Reiki 1 with Heather Penfield
2/3- The Sounds of Niaulani Forest Tour with Dina Kageler
2/8 - Thursday Night at the Center: Connecting with Native Birds & Local Artist with Jay Robinson
2/10- Silk Scarf Painting with Patti Pearce Johnson
2/10- Hula Kahiko: in HVNP near VAC gallery

February 17 - Love The Arts Fundraiser: 50th Anniversary Golden Jubilee

2/22 - Heritage & Archival Film Series

Aloha Fridays Cultural Demonstration at VAC gallery in HVNP

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

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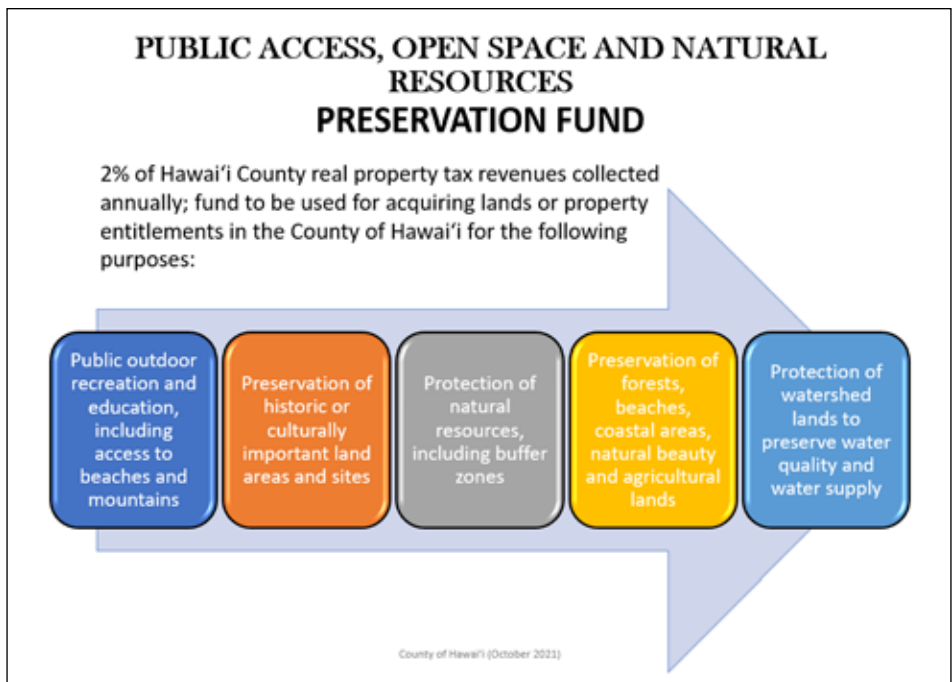
Roth Mayor Campaign, from pg. 1

be built. At the end of last year there were just under 7,000 in the pipeline to help the housing crunch. In the last year, he said, county legislation was passed and signed to ensure local families have first choice in affordable housing.

This year more than 1,500 affordable units will be in planning and construction. He pointed to the unions and the number of jobs that will be created. To make it easier for individuals and companies to build housing, he said, the building permit system has been streamlined. It used to take about 200 days to get a permit. Now it's about 34 days, if no mistakes, said the Mayor. He said his administration has issued more single family home permits than any other county in the state during his tenure.

Regarding infrastructure, in first three years of his administration, Roth said, the county has more than doubled the previous administration's Capital Improvement Projects budget, to over \$247 million to address long overdue maintenance issues and "ensure that our county is resilient and ready to meet the growing needs of our community." He said the improvements will help "protect our environment through wastewater upgrades and repairs, improve public safety through various road and bridge upgrades, encourage fitness and comradery through gyms and park facility upgrades." He noted that the amount of roads paved has doubled.

There are 302 county park facilities around the island and the budget for them



In his announcement for reelection, Mayor Mitch Roth said his administration closed on more Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources preservation purchases of land than during any other administration.

has risen from \$450,000, "not a lot of money," to over \$4 million for parks maintenance and repairs. Another \$30 million has gone for park repairs. He pointed to the future Ocean View Skatepark.

In his announcement for reelection, Mayor Mitch Roth said his administration closed on more Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources preservation purchases of land than during any other administration. - "over 4,102 acres of pristine 'āina." He said these areas "will stay in perpetuity open for our kids and for our families to enjoy. These acres not just purchases that become filled with overgrowth

but rather in partnership with incredible community steward organizations who are committed to caring for land and using them for kipuka for culture, resource, mo'olelo and cultural practices. These are living lands."

He pointed to fixing wastewater facilities as another way to protect the environment, to keep raw sewage from going into the ocean.

Roth said he also wants to forge more partnerships to restore native flora and fauna, and for growing canoe crops and "ultimately feeding our villages."

He also pointed to the county Climate

Action Plan, expanded abandoned and derelict vehicle program, a sunscreen ban to protect the reefs and implementation of a foodware reprocessing plant.

He said reliance on fossil fuel will decrease by adding the development of hydrogen power to the alternative energy mix. Lancaster, California and Namie, Japan will be partners with Hawai'i County in this endeavor, he said.

Electric vehicles and electric hydrogen buses are being introduced, with 18 new electric buses being added to the Hele On fleet this year. He also noted that the buses are free to passengers.

Regarding internet, the Mayor mentioned a partnership with Hawaiian Tel that paid \$1.5 million to connect Pāhala and Volcano with high speed fiber digital access, allowing people to go to school, work and communicate with physicians remotely.

The County also replaced ten county ambulances at 16 stations around the island. In cooperation with the Sayer foundation, the county replaced air ambulance, Chopper 2, which was 30 years old. The mayor said that Sayer Foundation also has funds to purchase a \$10 million twin-engine helicopter for ambulance service to O'ahu and Maui. The Sayer Foundation has also provided brush trucks for the fire department to reach wildlands.

See the entire event at <https://www.facebook.com/mitchroth1/videos/330126143181879>

See more on the campaign at www.mayormitchroth.com

Humpback Whales, from pg. 9

islands. Ocean Count is supported by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation.

The Great Whale Count by Pacific Whale Foundation



Results are in for the first of three volunteer humpback whale counts in 2024. Photo by Ed Lyman

had site leaders count whales from shore as part of a long-term survey of humpback whales in Hawai'i, with 12 survey sites along the shoreline of Maui and a new site on the shoreline of Lāna'i. This event provides a snapshot of trends in the relative abundance of whales and is one of the world's

longest-running community science projects.

Both counts take place three times during peak whale season annually on the last Saturday in January, February, and March.

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries recently released the latest sanctuary poster featuring the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. The artwork by Matthew Mcintosh features the iconic Humpback Whale (koholā) for which the sanctuary is named.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1992 to protect humpback whales (koholā) and their habitat in Hawai'i. The sanctuary safeguards koholā breeding, calving and nursing grounds in waters around the main Hawaiian Islands.

Encompassing 1,370 square miles (3,548 square kilometers) of federal and state waters, the sanctuary extends from the shoreline to the 600-foot/183-meter depth contour and is composed of five separate marine protected areas, accessible from six of the main Hawaiian Islands.

Punalu'u Village, from pg. 4

Coastline Management Area of approximately 29.52 acres "to be dedicated towards conservation and coastal management activities, and set aside in public trust for coastal recreational opportunities, protection of historic resources and cultural practices, protection of sensitive natural resources and coastal processes. This proposed management area will be established upon the coastal lands situated

to the west of the County-operated Punalu'u Black Sand Beach Park complex. The Applicant has not yet determine the best method towards committing these lands towards preservation, but at the very least, it could be accomplished as a conservation easement, with proper resource management that also takes into account coastal recreational and cultural practices," says the summary of the application for the Special Management Area permit.

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State of Hawai'i Electronic Device Recycling & Recovery Law
<https://health.hawaii.gov/ewaste/>

Kula Kai Ownership Transitions to New Cave Enthusiasts

Kula Kai Caverns ownership has transitioned from Ric Elhard and Rose Herrera, who first created their Ocean View show cave tours in 2002 and further developed their program throughout the years.

The history of Kula Kai Caverns has been shaped by Elhard and Herrera. In 1990, the couple left California. Upon learning that Ocean View is rich in lava tubes, they decided to make it their new home. It was the sight of a large and inviting cave entrance that was the deciding factor in choosing the three-acres in the Kula Kai community of Ocean View. Today the entrance is artfully adorned with trees, shrubs and signage.

When they first arrived there were only a few homes in the Kula Kai community. For the first three years their own home was a large army tent that flapped incessantly in the prevailing tradewinds. There was no power and no phone service. They had to drive over unpaved roads to the single store to use a payphone.

Elhard is an accomplished woodworker, home builder and craftsman, while Herrera is a sought-after house painter and color consultant. By combining their crafts and design sense, they built their home in stages – first a studio, then an ‘Ohana, and finally the main house which included a circular bedroom made from a salvaged redwood water tank. In 2014, their beautiful home was featured in the At Home supplement of *West Hawai‘i Today*.

Developing the huge cave for tours was

a massive undertaking. With no prior experience it was a case of learning on the job. Stairs were needed to get down into the cave.

They built trails and brought in countless buckets of cinder in to smooth over the gaps in the rocky floor. They built a seating area in the cave. A thatched hut for visitors to congregate prior to the tours was erected. Ocean View residents were hired and trained as cave guides, and over time the tours became more informative.



When not growing their show cave business, Ric Elhard and Rose Herrera explore caves on the Big Island, such as this one on Hualalāi near Kona. Photo by Peter and Annie Bosted

In response to demand, they introduced a Wild Tour. It allows visitors to don helmets and lights, leave the trails and go spelunking to experience the cave in its wild state, including belly crawling through a low section of passage. The rave reviews attest to the cave’s huge popularity. Tripadvisor gives the cave 5 stars, and Yelp gives it a rating of 4.9 out of five.

Elhard and Herrera have welcomed cavers, filmmakers, and cave scientists from all over the country – and the world – to their home and cave property.

In the early 2000’s enthusiastic cave surveyors came in large groups – particularly in the winter months – and surveyed what was found to be one of the largest cave systems on the island – the Kanohina system. The 750-year-old lava flow hosts a cave system with about 66 miles of known passages underlying the community, from high in HOVE to well below the Kula Kai subdivision. Many of these explorers built or bought homes in Ocean View, while others return year after year for caving vacations.

With Elhard and Herrera’s encourage-



Ric Elhard and Rose Herrera who recently sold Kula Kai Caverns, a show cave in Ocean View.

Photo by Peter and Annie Bosted



Reservations to explore Kula Kai Caverns can be made at www.kulakaicaverns.com

ment, scientists have made pilgrimages to Kula Kai Caverns to further their studies of mineralogy, microbiology, etymology, geology, archeology, and wind flow patterns, to name a few of the topics.

In 2016, Kula Kai was the hub for the International Symposium of Volcanospeleology. Eighty lava tube cave enthusiasts from all over the world converged on Ocean View for a week-long event that included talks and presentations, field trips, an After Dark in the Park presentation and social gatherings. The army tent that was once Elhard’s and Herrera’s home was erected outside the cave so that the visitors would have a place to congregate.

Elhard and Herrera see their role as the owners of a show cave business as an entrée into a world of opportunities that they may never have known, but for being stewards of Kula Kai Caverns. They have traveled to

caves as far afield as Iceland and the Galapagos in Ecuador and met a variety of interesting people from all walks of life. Elhard has taken leadership roles as varied as drafting legislation to conserve caves to heading a local caving club, editing a caving newsletter and co-founding the Cave Conservancy of Hawai‘i.

“It’s been a wild ride.” Elhard told *The Ka‘ū Calendar*, “and a terrific journey. We’ve been committed to looking after this amazing cave for over 30 years. Now it’s somebody else’s turn. We’ve done our bit. We’ll be moving on with our heads full of cherished memories and our hearts content with our accomplishments.”

Many of the cave guides whom Elhard has trained have guided visitors for close to a decade and will stay in their jobs for a seamless transition to the next generation of stewards of Kula Kai Caverns.

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