

INSIDE: MAUI HOSPITALITY * OLD-SCHOOL CONCIERGES * ECOTOURISM

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LODGING & FOODSERVICE | MAY/JUNE 2016

Mufi's new Turf

After only 10 months at the helm of HLTA, former mayor Mufi Hanneman's savvy and connections help boost the state's 'Number 1' industry

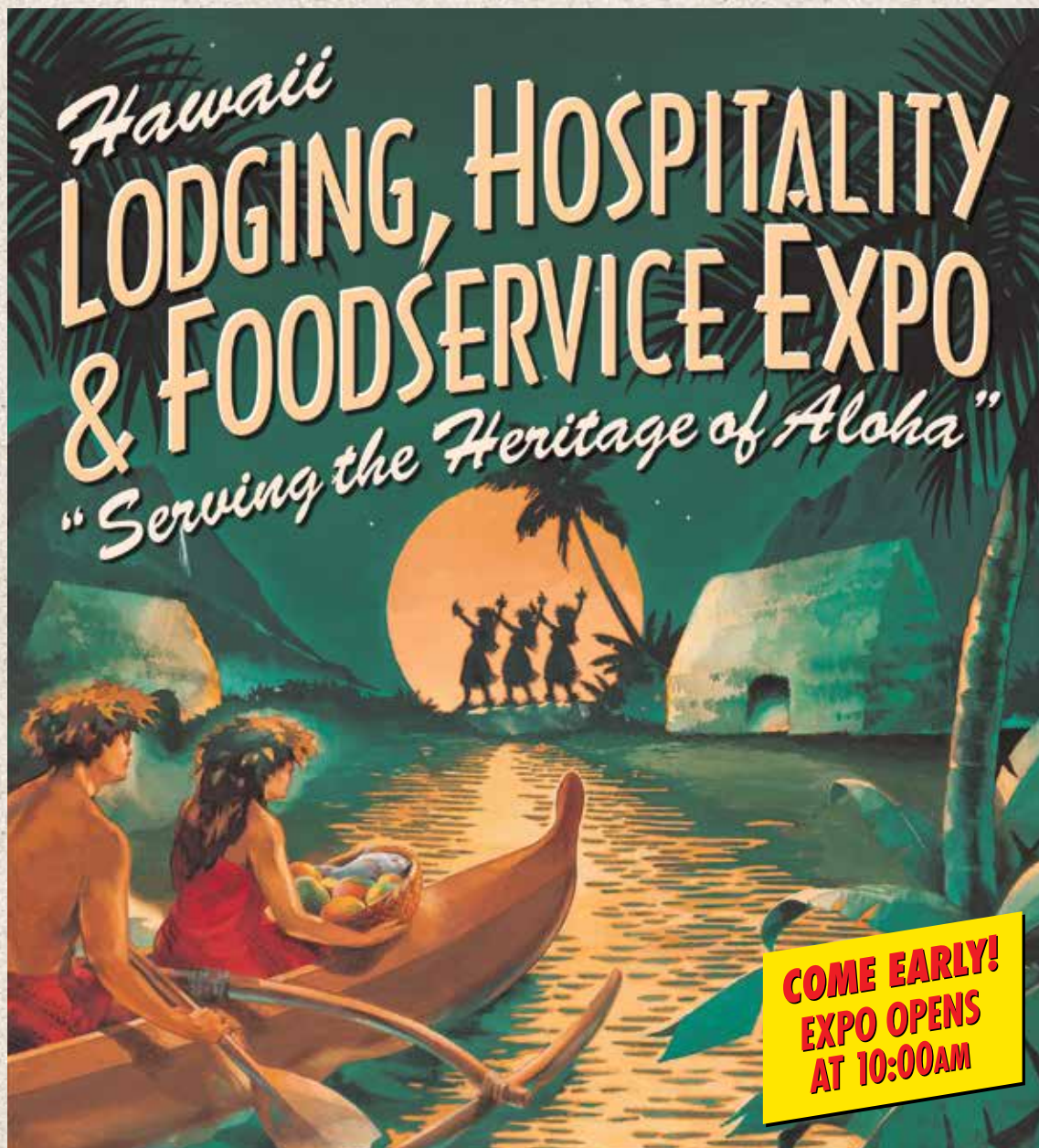
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ON THE COVER: The HLTA's Mufi Hannemann
Photo by Greg Yamamoto • Design by Davin Iyamatsu

checking in

Even without the Maui Onion Festival, which has been pushed to 2017, there's no shortage of events on the Island this year to attract residents and boost the Island's tourism industry. In this issue we highlight a trio of major events still ahead in 2016, from the Maui Brewers Festival in May to the Kapalua Wine & Food Festival in June and to the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival in October.

Hospitality leaders recognize that Hawaii's greatest attractions are the Islands' culture and natural environment. Our report takes a look at the ways that visitors are experiencing what has become known as the spiritual and emotional lure of "ecotourism."

Mufi Hannemann completes his first year as head of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association in July. The former Honolulu mayor spoke with *Hawaii Hospitality* on what the HLTA is doing to strengthen tourism, which he calls the "No. 1 industry in the state."

Hawaii's restaurants are adapting to the inspection system put in place by the state, and our report peeks into what it takes to earn a green (pass) placard, including 10 tips for passing the Department of Health's inspections.

Also check our reports on concierges, the North Shore restaurant scene, a new organization for young professionals in the hospitality field and the annual Charity Walk.

Aloha!

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HLTA Unveils HYPE

PHOTOS BY
HAWKINS BIGGINS

The Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association launched Hospitality's Young Professionals & Entrepreneurs (HYPE) in April "to educate, network and engage the young minds in Hawaii's professional field as they work their way to becoming the future leaders of Hawaii's visitor industry." See story on page 24.



Mufi Hannemann, Pricilla Lee, William Nhieu, Kelly Hoen



Koa Webster, Elle Zhang, Clayton Ham



Simone Perez, Michelle Hashimoto, Scott Sakai



Jared Higashi, Mike Uranaka, Robert Kim, Yoshihiro Takahashi, Kelly Nagata



Lauren Yamamoto, Jennifer Frias, Natalie Caceres, Reid Kobashigawa



Jack Liao, Anna Lau, Eric Chan, Pono Umuwi



Kyle Smigielski, Alex Roth, Ryan Kaleisuji



Cory Mitsui, Julia Dilts



Elena Acuna, Robert Kim, Mike Uranaka



Josh Tatofi & Dustin Park



Vianco Cao, Dwight Jr. Armbrust, Ashlee Badua



Natasha Azernitzky, Warren Kwan, Rhea Batangan, Shawn Donlin, Cameron Deluze



Karen Wataru-Nakaoka, Elton Murata, Nadine Murata



Maria Hartfield, Jose Fernandes, Sara Mayko, Ihab Kherati



Phil Leroy, Maile Clowe, Travis Okimoto, Jason Greiner



Jill Lurch, Rebecca Molzer, Terri Racine

HRA Honors Members

PHOTOS BY
HAWKINS BIGGINS

The Hawaii Restaurant Association presented its 2016 Employee Appreciation & Excellence Awards on March 8 at The Hawaii Prince Hotel. The annual awards honor exceptional performance by members and allied members in the restaurant and food service industry. For a complete list of winners, see story on page 21.



Gregg Fraser, Nicole Lueker, Dirk Koeppenkastrop, Alexander Lau



Mari Suyama, Naomi Azama, Sharon Shigemoto, Gregg Fraser, Linda Dao, Tyler Roukema, Derrick Conselva



Donna Hashiro, Ted Inter, Shaun Borges, Khara Markham, Kelly Agustin



Kehau Giles, Derrick Chock, Karen Watanabe



Diane Lum, Tisha Villanueva, Jenny Pettingill, Patricia Souza



Sara Storer, Scots Speizer, Tyler Roukema



Debbie Taijiri, Yully Yum, Margo Mun



Justin Muneoka, Nalani Naughton-Quilt, Tyler Roukema, Jason Burns



Carolyn Caballes, Lina Atis, Harris Nakamoto



Laura Quintal, Annalisa Stone, Michael Gaviola, Collin Brown



Allan Calubaquib, Mylene Elaydo, Maggie Engebretson



Julie Arigo, Meryl Suetsuga, Mira Nakamoto, Mahela Ichinose



Jetsun Dutcher, Brian Walker, David Willer



Mariano Lalica, Carlito Dela Cruz, Silvia Yu, Frank Nagamine

A vibrant nighttime photograph of an outdoor event, likely a festival. The scene is illuminated by warm white string lights strung across the area and around palm trees. In the foreground, a curved pool of water reflects the lights. The background shows a large crowd of people, some seated at tables under white umbrellas, and others standing. The overall atmosphere is festive and tropical.

Mau*i* Showcases Culinary Talent

**Food events between May and October
to sate the appetites of visitors and locals**

Kapalua Food and Wine Festival

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE

The Maui Onion Festival has been postponed until 2017 due to renovations at Whalers Village Fine Shops & Restaurants, which hosts the annual event. Typically held the first week of May, the popular event boasts fun traditions, including a raw-onion eating contest and a food-pairing dinner. Although it's the second year that the onion fest has been cancelled, no one's crying.

Perhaps that's because the foodie scene on Maui remains stronger than ever and is gearing up for three major events scheduled before the end of 2016: The Maui Brewers Festival in May, followed by the Kapalua Wine & Food Festival in June and the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival in October.

The food fests add to Maui's solid reputation as an events-based destination. Already Maui is globally recognized for programs such as the annual Maui Jim Invitational Classic, Maui Film Festival and Tournament of Champions in Kapalua, among many others.

"Maui has an incredibly strong brand known across the U.S. and other countries, so people want to come here for events," says Terry Vencl, executive director of the Maui Visitors Bureau.



Terry Vencl

Maui Brewers Festival May 14

The eighth annual Maui Brewers Festival is one of two major fundraisers for the Maui Arts & Cultural Center, the anchor venue for visual and performing arts on the Island.

The one-day beer fest, scheduled for May 14 in the center's A&B Amphitheater, is expected to draw more than 2,500 attendees. Demographics range from beer enthusiasts in their 20s to families who attend just for the food booths.

In addition to more than two dozen



Maui Brewers Festival

restaurants serving appetizers, main courses and desserts, more than 40 craft breweries—including 10 from Hawaii—will tout their products.

"It is truly a food and beer extravaganza," says Bob Burrichter, marketing director for the Maui Arts & Cultural Center. "The brewery festival

is an immensely popular event and we do market it, along with all other MACC events, to both residents and visitors," Burrichter says.

The featured musical artists this year are Erin Smith, Riddum Station and Brad Kahikina.

The amount of funds generated



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from the brew fest each year isn't made public, Burrichter says. But it's a sizeable figure that helps to pay for free events throughout the year, including the Starry Night Cinema programs, the Ki Hoalu Guitar Festival in the summer and the Ukulele Festival in the fall.

The latter features Hawaii's top artists. The center in Kahului is over 20 years old and houses the Castle Theater, Schaefer International Gallery and McCoy Studio Theater.

In addition to the brewery festival, the art center's staff and volunteers organize another major fundraiser, Maui Calls, scheduled for August.



Kapalua Wine & Food Festival June 9-12

More than 3,500 people from Hawaii and around the world are expected to attend the 35th annual Kapalua Wine & Food Festival, the nation's longest-running of its kind. The four-day event will have cooking demonstrations, wine tastings, workshops and seminars, a seafood festival, golf tournament and an industry trade show.

This year, the focus is international wines. Some high-profile guests scheduled to attend: Heidi Peterson Barrett, winemaker for La Sirena, and husband, Bo Barrett, winemaker at Chateau Montelena; father-and-son team Carlo and Tim Mondavi of RAEN Vineyards; David Long, co-founder and owner of David Arthur Vineyards; and Ted Edwards, winemaker at Freemark Abbey.





MAUI PLUMBING

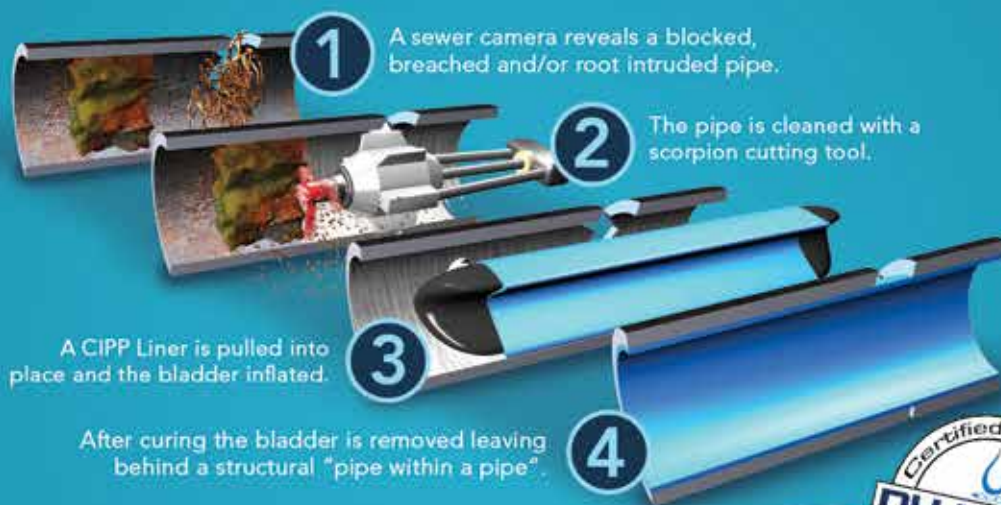
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In addition, the festival will feature two celebrity chefs: Hugh Acheson, TV personality and author of *A New Turn In The South*, and Michele Mazza of the renowned restaurant Il Mulino in New York City.

“Kapalua has long been known for its signature series of events, and this one is geared to the culinary-lifestyle niche of attendees and guests,” says Karin Sagar, event director of the Kapalua Wine & Food Festival.

“We like to say that this annual ‘migration’ brings together oenophiles, gourmands and enthusiasts of the good life to celebrate, learn and experience the finest culinary trends and viniculture,” Sagar adds.

Hawaii Food & Wine Festival October 14-16

The annual Hawaii Food & Wine Festival—scheduled over two weeks in October on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii and Maui—boasts a roster of more than a hundred master chefs, wine and spirit makers and culinary stars from across the globe.

In 2010, award-winning chefs Roy Yamaguchi and Alan Wong co-founded the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival to showcase the state’s culinary offerings.

The Maui portion of the event (previously known as the “Kaanapali Fresh”) is scheduled for Oct. 14-16 at Kaanapali Beach Resort.

Rise in Visitors

In 2015, Maui County enjoyed a record-breaking year in visitor arrivals.

- Maui welcomed more than 2.5 million visitors, up 5 percent from 2014.
- Molokai arrivals, at 64,156, climbed 7.6 percent over the previous year.
- Lanai saw a 14.5 percent drop in arrivals down to 58,105, partly due to hotel renovations and closures on the island.

As in past years, several thousand attendees are expected at the Maui event, which will include: Roy’s Golf Tournament; the Grown on Maui Farmers Market at Whalers Village; a grazing style event with oceanfront



chefs’ booths at the Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa; and a seated dinner at the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa.



Shelley Kekuna

As of press time, organizers were finalizing details for this year’s program.

The annual festival is a boost for Maui’s visitor industry, says Shelley Kekuna, executive director of the Kaanapali Beach Resort Association. She and the resort’s marketing teams are promoting the festival in Seattle, San Francisco, San Jose, San Diego, Portland and Vancouver.


“The Hawaii Food & Wine Festival allows us to position Maui among the other top culinary destinations,” Kekuna says. “We’re able to showcase its culinary offerings and its interconnectedness to other industries including agri-tourism, cultural tourism as well as our natural beauty and diverse landscapes.”

For an island that is geographically remote from major cities, Maui earns high marks from the tens of thousands of people who flock to the Island to attend each year.

Maui’s success stems from two reasons. One, the visitor industry on Maui is community-minded and known for being pleasant to work with. “Everyone plays an important role from sponsorships to on-the-ground operation,” Vencl says. “When we all work together, we create some outstanding events with a broad appeal for both residents and visitors to enjoy.”

The second reason for Maui’s success: relationships. “We have strong partnerships linking Maui county, the Hawaii Tourism Authority, the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau and stakeholders,” she says.

The numbers are proof. In 2015, Maui hosted a record-breaking 2.5 million visitors, a 5 percent increase over the previous year. In the three years prior, Maui experienced rapid growth leading up to 2015.

This year, “Maui will continue to see a small uptick, a slightly slower but steady growth,” Vencl says. 

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A fundraising bowling tournament is held each year on Kauai in conjunction with the Charity Walk.

Charity Walk Targets \$2M

11,000 participants on six islands taking to the streets and parks for good causes

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE

The 38th annual Visitor Industry Charity Walk Hawaii is in full stride this year, as more than 11,000 participants gear up for one-day events scheduled on six islands (Oahu, Molokai, Lanai, Maui, Big Island and Kauai) between May 7 and May 14.

Dubbed “The Only Walk In Hawaii Where You Gain Weight,” hotels and restaurants traditionally serve gourmet breakfasts at the finish line.

But that’s not why people return year after year. The walk directly impacts the less fortunate. In 2015, the walk statewide generated a record-breaking \$1.8 million for nearly 300 charities. (A related fundraiser, Hawaii for Hawaii Concert, added another \$300,000 to that number.) In 2014, the walk raised \$1.74 million.

Organizers are optimistic this year will top previous records. Money collected on each island

is distributed to nonprofits on the respective island.

George Thronas, an organizer for the Kauai walk, couldn’t be more excited. “The best part about this charity walk is that all the money we raise on Kauai, stays on Kauai,”

Since 1978, the Charity Walk Hawaii has raised more than \$27 million for local nonprofit groups.

says Thronas, Hawaiian Culture and Community Relations for the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa.

Thronas anticipates that the 2,300 participants on Kauai this year will reach their goal of \$250,000. The Kauai event is scheduled for May 14.

As a tie-in to the charity walk, the Kauai visitor industry on April 16 hosted a bowling tournament fundraiser that sold out all 26 lanes in early March. Each team paid a \$400 entry fee per lane and competed in themed costumes.

On the Big Island, Charity Walk participants have been competing against one another to raise the most donations. The friendly rivalry spanned hotels, restaurants and various departments at some of the larger properties.

In 2015, the charity walk on the Big Island raised \$300,000.

The Big Island event is scheduled for May 14 and is expected to draw

2,200 participants to Queen’s Bowl at the Waikoloa Beach Resort, which last hosted the walk in 2013.

“We’ll be in a nice, beautiful amphitheater area, with 20-plus food booths and 12 aid stations around the route,” says Leanne Pletcher, director of public relations for the Hilton Waikoloa Village.



2016 CHARITY WALK SCHEDULE

MOLOKAI

When: Saturday, May 7
Where: 1.24-mile walk that starts at Paddlers Inn and ends at Hotel Molokai
This Year’s Participants: 300
Last Year Raised: \$17,029

LANAI

When: Saturday, May 7
Where: 1-mile walk that begins at the Four Seasons Resort Lanai Lodge at Koele and ends at the Lanai Senior Center
This Year’s Participants: 200
Last Year Raised: \$24,719

MAUI

When: Saturday, May 14
Where: 3.1-mile walk starting and ending at the War Memorial Park Soccer Field
This Year’s Participants: 3,000
Last Year Raised: \$821,520

BIG ISLAND

When: Saturday, May 14
Where: 3.1-mile walk that begins and ends at Queen’s Marketplace
This Year’s Participants: 2,200
Last Year Raised: \$300,000

KAUAI

When: Saturday, May 14
Where: 2.9-mile walk that begins and ends at the Historic County Building
This Year’s Participants: 2,300
Last Year Raised: \$245,000

OAHU

When: Saturday, May 21
Where: 5.25-mile walk that begins and ends at the McCoy Pavilion at Ala Moana Beach Park.
Last Year’s Participants: 3,000
Last Year Raised: \$440,000



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Turning the Pages of Tourism

MUFI HANNEMANN'S NEXT CHAPTER

PHOTO BY GREG YAMAMOTO

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE

In his aloha shirt and green-laced Nikes, former Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann fit right in with tourists strolling Kalakaua Avenue on a weekday morning in April. Except that at 6 feet 7 inches, he towered way above the crowds.

Waikiki is Hannemann's newest turf. It's been about a year since he became president and chief executive officer of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association, the same roles he held for 18 months from 2011-2012, between bids for the U.S. Senate and Hawaii governor.

For now, Hannemann has swapped his political hats for his new office attire—bright sneakers and matching aloha shirts. He has quite an array. And as head of the HLTA, he's using his charisma and connections to strengthen what he calls "the No. 1 industry in the state"—tourism in Hawaii.

He admits he's in a great position. "At this point in my life, I'm able to bring together the experiences of a lifetime—all the things that I've done in the private and public sector and the nonprofit world—for the benefit of the state and Pacific region."

Hemming and hawing isn't his style. In the 10 months since Hannemann returned to the HLTA, the association:

- Hosted the inaugural "Tourism Day at the Capitol," featuring a hospitality expo, educational seminars and meetings with lawmakers. The successful event will become an annual tradition.
- Appointed three allied members to the 45-member executive board, with plans to tap three more allied representatives in the next year.
- Created three new categories in the visitor industry's Na Poe Paahana Awards: Hospitality Educator of the Year (Todd Nakayama of Waipahu High School's tourism academy); Leader in Sustainability (Turtle Bay Resort); and Legacy of the Year (Don Ho).
- Launched a new group, Hospitality's Young Professionals & Entrepreneurs (HYPE), to mentor leaders ages 40 and under. It's similar to the Pacific Century Fellows program, founded by Hannemann in 1996.
- Moved to a bigger space on the 17th floor of the Waikiki Business Plaza

after nearly four decades on the 15th floor. The new office allows for growth and is open to HLTA members needing a meeting venue in Waikiki.

Hannemann isn't hogging all the credit for what's happened so far. He applauds his hard-working staff at the HLTA. He also gives kudos to the HLTA's executive board. "Especially Chair Ben Rafter (of Jororo LLC), for their strong support of our new initiatives," he says. "I can only be effective if I have a strong and active board."

Besides, he's busy juggling other roles. Mufi the radio show host. Mufi the leader of an all-star girls' basketball program. Mufi the racquetball player and newspaper columnist. And that was as of press time.

Titles don't seem to matter to him these days. The name plaque on his office desk reads, "WHATEVER."

Hawaii Hospitality caught up with Hannemann recently to discuss this new chapter in his life and his goals for the HLTA. Here are snippets from the conversation:

Q: What is the top priority of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association?

Uncollected taxes. We're making progress with the legislative measure that has the Airbnbs (transient vacation units that compete with traditional hotels and lodging) working with the state Department of Taxation to collect the taxes (currently not paid by these alternative lodging units). We said from the very beginning to please don't broach the subject of raising the Transient Accommodations Tax. There are millions of dollars out there uncollected. That's where the focus should be.

Q: What are the HLTA's other priorities this year?

We want to see more focus on sports and entertainment opportunities. We strongly support Lt. Gov. Shan Tsutsui's initiative to create a sports development initiative, a laser-light focus, attracting and executing sports events.

We want to see additional funding for the World Conservation Congress, which is coming up in September. It's interesting that at this late stage, they're still looking for money. We've been pushing for that \$4 million.

We want to see an airport authority. There are stories and anecdotes about frustrations at the airport. Satisfaction is very low, according to studies. It's not just Honolulu International Airport, it's the Neighbor Islands. We think an authority will allow the Department of Transportation to focus on the roads, highways and harbors and let this body be the driving force for airports.

We want to see an interisland ferry come back. There's an attempt to do a study as a first step. We appreciate that and applaud that. You know life is all about choices and options. Yes, we have interisland airplanes. But we've got to be one of the few archipelagos in the world that doesn't have a ferry service. Samoa has one. Tahiti has one. And we don't have one. So we'd like to see that come back.

Q: If an inter-island ferry were to return, how can we not repeat the Superferry's mistakes?

The environmental study is the first thing that needs to be done. It will identify the concerns that halted it in the first place. The reason why the interisland ferry was halted was because the environmental concerns were not addressed. Secondly, we have to do something about the perceived anti-business sentiment. It's always difficult to do business here. Rail is going through that now.

Q: Can the tax collection be enforced?

We obviously want to see stronger language in enforcement and transparency. It's all about compromise. The industry is estimating that it can collect about \$12 million, a drop in the bucket of what we should get, but it's a start in that direction. I give legislators high marks for finally moving on this because for years, we've been clamoring for this, from the time I was mayor to my first go-around at the HLTA, what have you, and the answer was always, "The tax department doesn't have the resources, the technology, manpower to do it." Now you don't hear that. They are really part of this effort to collect the taxes.

The second part of the battle is also at the county level.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



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CONCIERGES: Delivering the Human Touch

Old-school approach favored by many hotel guests over apps and digital gratification



Susan Koki, concierge,
Kahala Hotel & Resort

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE

As a growing number of visitors to Hawaii seek tips from their mobile phones, applications such as OpenTable, Google Maps and TripAdvisor certainly come in handy. Even brand-specific hotel apps (think Ritz-Carlton and Hilton) tailor the experience for each guest.

Nothing, however, beats personalized attention from a hotel lobby concierge. Unlike mobile apps, concierges are not motivated by advertisements and hits. They genuinely want to help. They delight in earning the trust of hotel guests. And they're always ready to field tough questions and requests.

"We're committed to service excellence, which comes from a genuine passion to share our knowledge, embrace our guests and create long-lasting memorable experiences," says Susan Koki, concierge at the Kahala Hotel & Resort. "Apps are out there, but people still want the human element of conversation and personal interaction."



Jennifer Asato

such as secret parking spots or best times to beat the crowds," she says. "We have to be masters at our craft." A concierge for eight years, Asato has been with Trump since its 2009 opening.

Jennifer Asato, concierge at the Trump International Hotel Waikiki, agrees. "Concierges are there to provide you the insider details that may not be known,

TripAdvisor," Asato says.

Lately, Asato says her guests are curious about Chinatown restaurants and the food-truck scene in Kakaako. "Where do locals go?" is a common query.

Koki often hears the question, "Is there anyone famous staying here?" Or, guests will ask her to secure a private-tour plane—that they can pilot themselves.

On her lapel, Koki wears the "crossed keys of gold," a symbol of the global concierge group, Les Clefs d'Or. To achieve the elite status, a

Concierges have to be as quick as the next upload on Yelp or TripAdvisor.

Mobile apps certainly have changed the way concierges do business. If anything, the apps keep concierges on their toes, as guests research topics online first before approaching a lobby desk with more questions. "Concierges have to be as quick as the next upload on Yelp or

concierge must work many years as a lobby concierge, get recommendations from higher-ups and pass oral and written tests comprising essays and multiple-choice questions.

There are 14 concierges on Oahu with the Les Clefs d'Or designation, and about two dozen in the state.

Bartender, Clerk, Server, Steward Win Gold

HRA honors the winners of the 2016 Employee Appreciation & Excellence Awards

Antonio Espinosa, bartender at Cholo's Homestyle Mexican on the North Shore, offers sage advice to his 13-year-old son: "Be nice."



Antonio Espinosa

Espinosa is among the four winners of the 2016 Employee Appreciation & Excellence Awards presented by the Hawaii Restaurant Association. The winners, honored on March 8 at the Hawaii Prince Hotel, were chosen from among 24 finalists, both members and allied members, who were nominated for their exceptional performances by their employers in the restaurant and food service industry.

"I was very surprised, and grateful," Espinosa says of being selected the 2016 Front of House-Restaurant winner.

His success, he says, goes back to heeding the very words he passed along to his son. "I tell my son to treat people the way you want to be treated," says the Texas transplant, who adds that he came to Hawaii 28 years ago to surf—and stayed to make the Islands his home.



Allan Calubaquib

Hearing his name announced as the Back of the House-Restaurant winner was a

"wonderful experience in life," says **Allan Calubaquib** of Marriott's Maui Ocean Club.

Calubaquib, a storeroom clerk at the Maui Ocean Club where he has worked for 14 years, says he regards the award as a way of "letting me know I'm doing a great job and someone notices."

Selected as the 2016 EAEA Front of House-Allied winner was **Mira Nakamoto**, a



Mira Nakamoto

server at Waikiki PARC Hotel. "I am deeply honored to have been selected," Nakamoto says. "Winning this award would not have been possible without the inspiration I have received from my colleagues, for whom I have the deepest respect, and whom I credit for 'molding' me into the person I am today. Their guidance, mentorship and, most of all, friendship over these 17 years have been immeasurable."

The Back of House-Allied award went to **Carlito Dela Cruz**, a steward at Pacific Beach Hotel where he has worked for the past 26 years.



Carlito Dela Cruz

"Inside, I said 'Yay!' Everybody said congratulations and I feel so happy," Dela Cruz says of hearing his name announced as the winner and the celebration that followed.



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How to Get a Green Placard (Every Time)

10 ground rules for passing DOH inspections

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

Now that the state Department of Health posts the results of its food safety inspections online, Hawaii's hotels and restaurants have an added incentive to get a green placard when an inspector comes calling.

At hi.healthinspections.us, the public can see a Hawaii restaurant's current placard status—as well as the records of its current and past violations. These include unsavory details like “cutting board pitted with black dirt in crevices,” “meat and fish products stored in reach-in refrigerator next to grill” and “a consumer advisory is not provided for serving raw or undercooked foods.”

Most Hawaii residents are familiar with the DOH's green (Pass), yellow (Conditional) and red (Closed) placard ratings launched in July 2014. But they may not know that a yellow

placard—posted when a major food safety violation remains uncorrected during a routine inspection or when two or more critical violations are observed—usually cause “a Hawaii establishment to lose up to 70 percent of its daily business,” says Peter Oshiro, who directs the DOH food inspection program.

When a restaurant gets slapped with a yellow placard, it has two business days to make the required changes. If the too-small refrigerator is not replaced or lukewarm food is still left standing when the inspector returns, then the yellow placard is re-issued and the correction process is repeated.

Hawaii Hospitality recently accompanied Oshiro and Denise Reiko Otsuka, DOH sanitarian (inspector) on a teaching inspection of the kitchen at Kapiolani Community College's 220 Grille, and learned some ground rules and equipment protocols for earning a green placard.

The 10 Ground Rules

1. Make sure hand-washing sinks are accessible, functional and stocked with soap and paper towels. An employee hand-washing sign must be posted at the sink.

2. Heated food must be cooked to a minimum temperature of 135-degrees Fahrenheit, and held at that temperature or higher.

3. If a hot food is to be chilled, the chilling process should begin when the food is 135 degrees, and the food chilled rapidly.

4. Cold food that is refrigerated or held at a cool temperature for service must be 41-degrees Fahrenheit or less. Previously, a temperature of 45 degrees was acceptable.

5. Final cooking temperatures for particular foods must be met. Example: 165-degrees Fahrenheit for cooked poultry.

6. Rules for effective sanitation equipment, supplies and procedures must be followed. Examples: three sinks must be available for chemical cleaning of service and cooking utensils; hot rinse water in heat sanitizers must be at least 180-degrees Fahrenheit.

7. Refrigerators: Adequate space for different foods (e.g., meat, sauces, produce, dairy) stored only in designated sections at 41-degrees Fahrenheit or less. Meat should be stored near the top of the refrigerator so as to be as close as possible to incoming cold air.

“In Hawaii, a refrigerator is often the most critical part of a restaurant's operations,” says Oshiro.

“As a restaurant, your biggest expense and your ultimate business determinant is space. If you only have space for a refrigerator that can safely support the preparation of 200 excellent meals that you sell for \$30 apiece and make \$6,000 a day, then that's what you do. If you have space for 600 quick meals that you sell for \$10 apiece, then you do that.



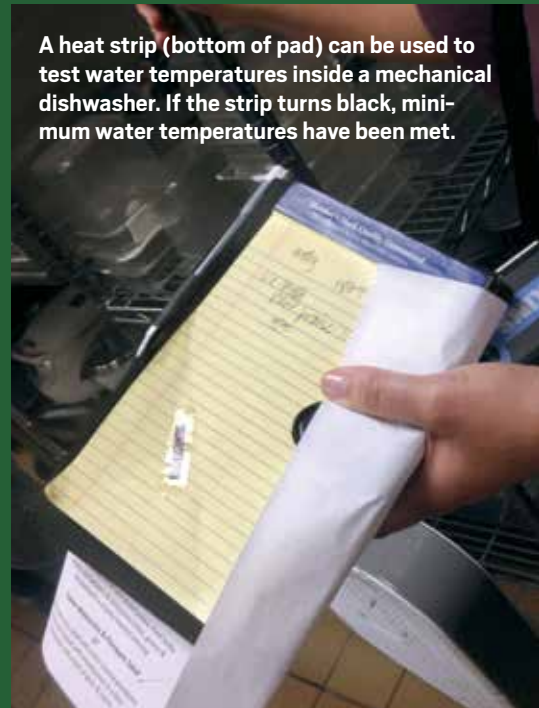
Ice bath being used as a proper cooling method. Food must go from 135-degrees Fahrenheit to 41-degrees Fahrenheit in six hours.

“What you don’t want is a refrigerator that is too small for your business, that is crammed with food that doesn’t chill and that is constantly compromised by staff running in and out.”

8. Clean prep surfaces thoroughly between each job. These days, raw and undercooked foods are popular menu items, and can easily contaminate the ready-to-eat meals that follow them on a prep surface that isn’t thoroughly sanitized.

9. Pantry items must be free of mold, cockroach and rodent infestation. Example: an open box of baking soda must be sealed in a plastic bag.

10. A written communication warning of the potential hazards of raw and undercooked foods—such as Caesar salad and sushi—must be included in a restaurant’s menu. “This item—No. 23 on a DOH Food Establishment Inspector Report—is one of the most common violations today,” says Oshiro.



A heat strip (bottom of pad) can be used to test water temperatures inside a mechanical dishwasher. If the strip turns black, minimum water temperatures have been met.



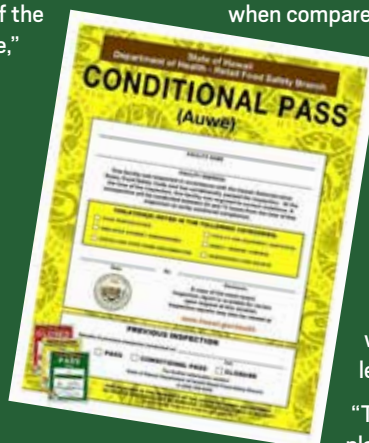
Separate different foods (produce, raw meats, etc.) to prevent possible cross-contamination.

DOH Keeps Its Guard Up

As of December 2015, the DOH has completed inspections of “virtually all of Hawaii’s more than 10,000 food establishments statewide to ensure they are in compliance with the rules of the state’s food safety code,” says Gov. Ige’s office.

Oshiro says that of the 2,105 restaurants that were issued yellow placards in 2015, 99.8 percent corrected their violations in a timely manner. The average time for corrections is two or three days, he says.

So far, only three cases of noncompliance have resulted in civil actions, a vast improvement over Hawaii’s previous food safety inspection system that inadvertently encouraged litigation by suspending licenses and issuing fines.



“The Department of Health has long recognized that litigating solutions through permit suspensions and the levying of fines is counter-productive and time consuming when compared with voluntary compliance,

which is truly a win-win-win outcome for the regulatory agency, the food facilities, and most importantly public health, by reducing the public’s exposure to food illness risk factors,” Oshiro says.

Voluntary compliance notwithstanding, the DOH isn’t letting down its guard.

“The Green/Yellow/Red placards may also be embedded with a quick response code

so any potential customer can wave their smart device or phone over the placard and immediately see the results of the last inspection,” Oshiro says.

HYPE Boosts Hawaii's Rising Stars

New networking group for the younger professionals forms under the HLTA's watchful eye

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE

Last month, more than 150 up-and-coming professionals in the visitor industry met for drinks and pupus at SKY Waikiki, the “in” place at the moment for nightlife in Honolulu. The gathering—exclusively for the 40-and-under crowd—kicked off a new club, Hospitality's Young Professionals and Young Entrepreneurs, or HYPE.

HYPE is the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association's effort to mentor and provide networks for younger professionals—typically overlooked by the industry.

“We found we needed to start engaging young professionals because



Jared S. Higashi



Michelle Calanog

Higashi credits HYPE's launch to “the boss man,” Mufi Hannemann, chief executive officer and president of the HLTA. “Mufi is big on mentoring young professionals,” he says.

One of those professionals is

our demographics have always been older,” says Jared S. Higashi, director of government and community affairs for the association. HYPE will host a slew of programs, from mixers and service projects to career-enhancing workshops. “As an organization, we have venues and the access to speakers,” he says.

About HYPE

Hospitality's Young Professionals and Young Entrepreneurs, by the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association

Phone: 808-923-0407

Web: hawaiilodging.org

Michelle Calanog, account manager for Booking.com, operated by the Priceline Group. “As soon as I heard about HYPE, I was excited,” she says. Younger executives in the visitor industry want to be involved in community service and advocate for issues relevant to their generation, such as technology and the environment, Calanog says.

HYPE is one of three subgroups under the umbrella of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association. The others are the Women In Lodging and Tourism Association and the Engineers Council.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

The state's responsibility is to collect the taxes at the county, which also has skin in the game because there needs to be stronger zoning regulations and enforcement at that level to ensure that illegal issues don't occur.

My message is, “Look, we've got to be satisfied that we're getting something that at least we can live with.” We could go on the county level with issues we feel are not being addressed at the state, and put a little more pressure on counties to help us, in that regard.

Q: Do you see yourself running for office again?

Right now I'm in a good place. I believe it's not where you serve, but how you serve. This job allows me to get involved with the No. 1 industry in the state that creates a good life for everyone. I have the flexibility in this job to do nonprofit and for-profit

work. I write a *MidWeek* column and host radio shows. I'm doing things I want to do as opposed to what I have to do. For now, I'm in a good place.

Q: Tell us about your radio shows.


I love music and singing. I do a show on KOOL GOLD 107.9 where I spin music from the '60s, '70s and '80s, with a little chatter in between. I also do “Moments With Mufi” on the Filipino radio show—KNDI 1270 AM on Friday afternoons, which allows me to expand my genre of music. The station manager had asked me to do a show for the longest time, and I couldn't fit it in. (He regularly plays racquetball and mentors an all-star girls' basketball team).

Q: You're busy as usual.

I like to keep myself busy. I find

that idleness is not good and also feel you can help make a difference and improve things. I like where I'm at in the tourism industry because we're making a difference every day in this organization. We've been blessed for four straight years, with an increase in tourism in Hawaii. The hotel and lodging community is very much responsible for that success, but we want to keep it going.

I've seen that the industry gets complacent with the competition. If we're not able to rise to the challenge, then we're going to fall back. I've always said this: Tourism is our No. 1 industry. That's what we do best.

We talk about diversification. We have to diversify from within and create opportunities where Hawaii is a great place for vacation, to do business and to invest. That way, you can do environmental tourism, education tourism, health tourism, sports or what have you. I see that as our mainstay for years to come. 



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(From top) Hawaiian Paddle Sports' SUP lessons off Makena; A snorkeler with Maui Kayak Adventures off Olowalu

Sharing the Spirit of Aloha

Hawaii's allure high among guests seeking luaus as well as close-to-nature thrills

BY PRISCILLA PÉREZ BILLIG

The Islands are one of the world's most envied ecotourism destinations. Tourists can partake in an endless array of outdoor activities while also being treated to the Islands' rich tradition of cultural and environmental resources.

Beyond the sun, sand and surf, Hawaii beckons active visitors who yearn to re-discover its myriad hiking trails or ride a zipline over and through the trees in their search for an authentic Hawaiian experience..

"Hawaii is an ecotourism leader and our tourism industry recognizes its value to the travel experience,"

says George Szigeti, Hawaii Tourism Authority president and CEO. "Appreciation of ecotourism is far greater than in past years and I see that trend continuing, especially as younger, more ecologically conscious travelers increase the demand for activities showcasing Hawaii's environment."

Last year HTA supported 33 Hawaiian culture and heritage programs, 32 events focused on natural



George Szigeti

resources and 21 Native Hawaiian festivals, major festivals and sports events across the Islands.

"HTA annually supports Hawaii's ecotourism appeal by funding environment-based programs to help protect and perpetuate our Islands' natural beauty," Szigeti says. "This year we are sponsoring 33 programs statewide that are vital to everyone's interest."

In a record-setting year for tourism in 2015, Hawaii hosted an average of 214,469 visitors a day who daily spent \$41 million. The year's total of 8.65 million arrivals spent \$15.2 billion. Overall, Hawaii tourism supported 170,000 jobs in 2015—the highest



of any industry. For this year the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism projects 8.8 million visitor arrivals and \$15.9 billion in expenditures.

Uniting Communities

Large hotel chains, such as Starwood, recognize the importance of emphasizing Hawaiian culture and values in hotel operations and guest services. In 2004 Starwood hired its first cultural advisor.

"In our resorts we give our guests an opportunity to learn about, participate in and contribute to the



Kehaulani Kam

Hawaiian 'experience,' " says Thelma "Kehaulani" Kam, director of cultural services, Starwood Hotels & Resorts. "Everyone is encouraged to participate,

learn and listen to the stories of our culture and have fun. It is truly a spiritual and emotional experience for our guests as we share with them who we are as Hawaiians and invite them to be part of our future as we share what faces us and invite them to help us with their knowledge of where they are from and their cultures."

Starwood cultural activities include hula lessons, lei making, boat making, coconut games, cliff-diving

ceremonies, basket weaving, Hawaiian arts and crafts, stargazing, nature walks, guided historical tours and "talk story" gatherings. Today, there are cultural specialists for all 11 Starwood properties. Starwood recently launched a partnership with the Maui Ocean Center at Sheraton Maui and presents manta ray programs at Sheraton Kona.

"Our cultural programming is a celebration of who we are," Starwood's Kam says, "showcasing our pride and bringing to mind for each of us an understanding of our kupuna, our ancestors, all that they have accomplished and the life that they have given to us and to have a better understanding of our *kuleana* as we look to building a better tomorrow for future generations."

Principles of Ecotourism

- Minimize physical, social, behavioral and psychological impacts.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Generate financial benefits for both local people and private industry.
- Deliver memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental and social climates.
- Design, construct and operate low-impact facilities.
- Recognize the rights and spiritual beliefs of the indigenous people in your community and work in partnership with them to create empowerment.

SOURCE: The International Ecotourism Society

Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa this year welcomed Jack Stone as cultural advisor for the resort. Stone has created new offerings to teach guests about ancient Hawaii through traditions that include coconut husking, taro pounding, bamboo stamping, lei making, hula dancing and ukulele lessons.



Jack Stone

"We created the role of cultural advisor as another way to celebrate our resort's rich history and iconic

location at Puu Kekaa (Black Rock)," says Tetsuji Yamazaki, general manager for the resort. "We are thrilled to have Jack as part of our *ohana* to share the spirit of Aloha



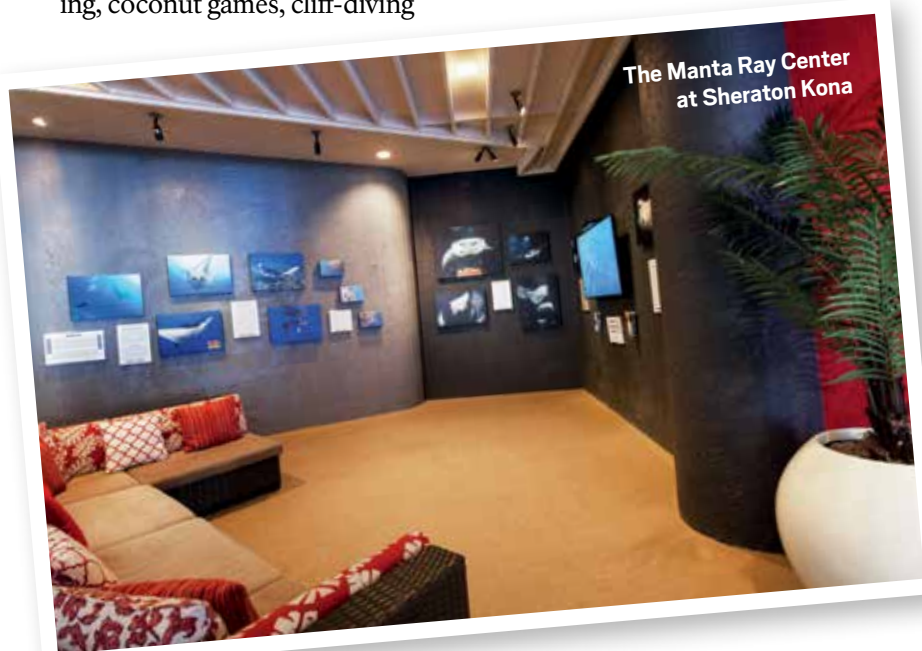
Tetsuji Yamazaki

and teach guests about all things Hawaiian."

Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa recently named Kuuipo Kumukahi its new manager of Hawaiian culture and community rela-



Kuuipo Kumukahi



tions. A professional Hawaiian music entertainer and winner of several Na Hoku Hanohano Awards, Kumukahi helps preserve and promote the Hawaiian language through Hawaiian music, poetry and *mele*, and enhances programming at the hotel's learning center.



A Holokai Kayak and Snorkel Adventures tour kayaking past Heeia guard house

“The hospitality industry in Hawaii makes a big effort to share the Hawaiian culture with guests from across the globe,” says Kumukahi. “Sometimes this is the only source of information visitors get about our ancestry so we need to make sure that the stories and practices are authentic.”

Striving for Sustainability

For those looking for outdoor activities—from bird watching to the thrill of riding a zipline—the Hawaii Ecotourism Association (HEA) supports visitors who not only engage with the Hawaiian culture but also enjoy natural areas with tour operators who can best share the Islands' natural resources with preservation in mind.



Chris Barzman

“Hawaii is home to eight national parks and over 50 state parks which highlight Hawaii's unique beauty and native culture,” says Chris

Kipuka: Hawaii's New Eco Resort

The Big Island offers a sustainable getaway on a patch of forest

Secluded in Kapoho, between orchid farms and old lava flows on the eastern tip of the Big Island, Kipuka is Hawaii's newest eco resort. Its six acres offer four off-grid Polynesian-style bamboo houses, a saline swimming pool surrounded by three-shade palapas (open-sided structures thatched with palm leaves), gazebos and a traditional Hawaiian longhouse among a collection of more than 5,000 rare and endangered palms that represent over 350 species, some no longer found in the wild.



A bamboo home at Kipuka



Kipuka's Hawaiian-style longhouse

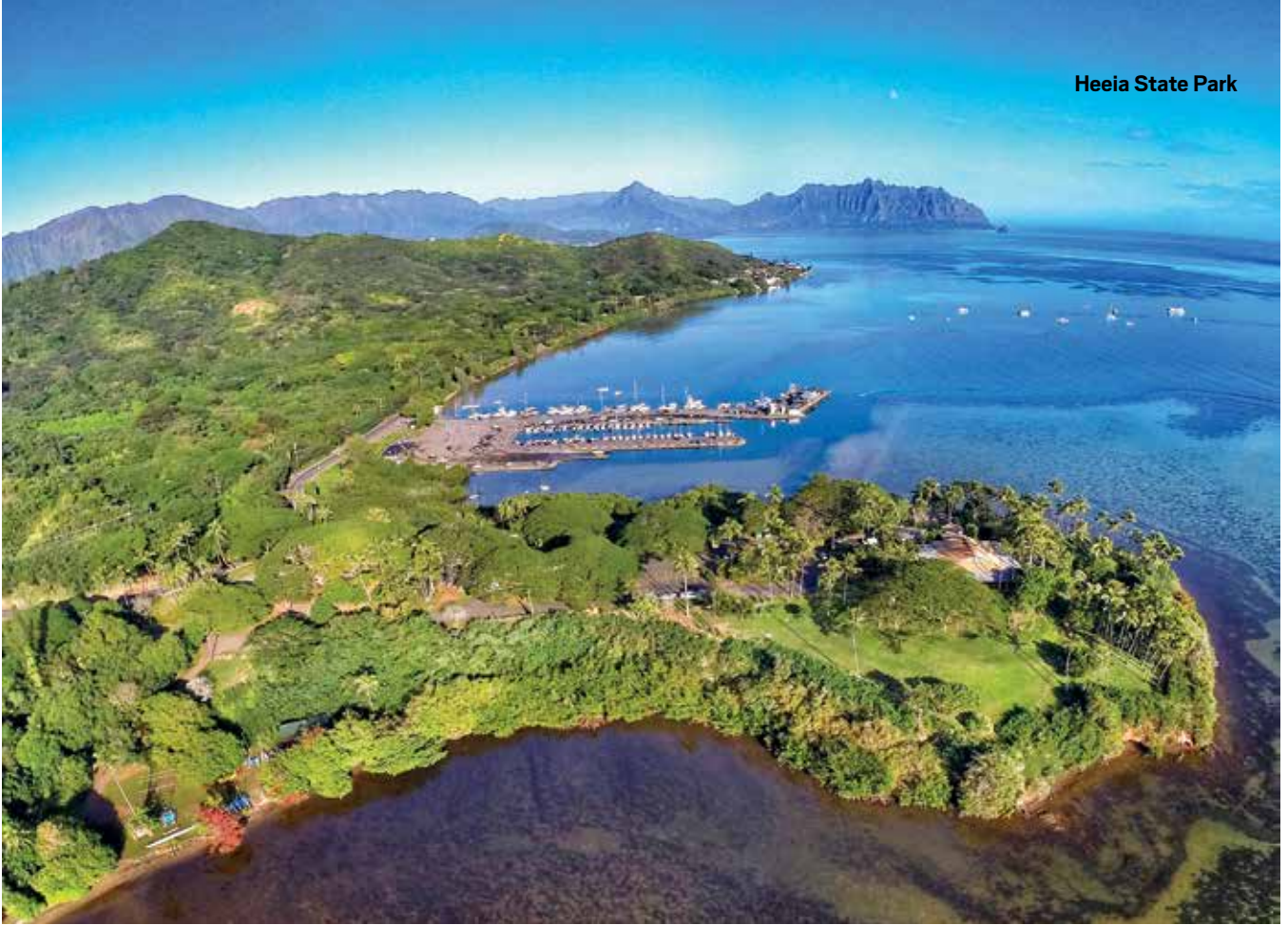
The property includes two 600-square-foot, one-bedroom bamboo homes and two 1,000-square-foot, three-bedroom bamboo homes. Each has a wrap-around lanai with outdoor furniture for relaxing and a kitchenette, barbecue, manual washer for small loads of laundry, solar-powered ovens and Wi-Fi.

“We have hosted young men and women cycling around the island, retired couples and every life stage in between,” Frost says. “What they have in common is wanting to have a genuine Hawaiian experience, and to minimize their impact upon the environment. The highest goal of tourism ought to be that when visitors return home, they are forever changed. This is our goal.”



Interior of a bamboo house

“We use sustainable materials in our work here,” says Mark Frost, spokesman for Kipuka. “We are completely off-grid, generating electricity from the sun, harvesting rain for our water, and heating our domestic water with the energy of the sun. We compost our leaf mulch to feed the trees and our kitchen gardens. We even use the sun for our cooking.”



Barzman, board member and chair of the certification committee for HEA. “By exploring our islands with a guide, guests will reduce their impact as guides can provide valuable information specific to the area they are visiting.”

HEA provides the state’s only third-party Sustainable Tourism Certification. HEA has certified over 20 tour operators throughout the state and more are applying for certification.

Hawaiian Paddle Sports, an HEA member, offers cultural outrigger canoe tours to Honolua Bay, a marine sanctuary on the upper west side of Maui. Tours stop at Mokuleia Beach to explore ancient Hawaiian celestial navigation and voyaging.

Maui Kayak Adventures, also an HEA member, offers kayak tours to Honolua Bay from the Ritz Carlton in Kapalua.

“It’s our hope that with our nature-based excursions we will help people

develop a deeper connection with and appreciation for our natural resources,” says Tim Lara, owner of Hawaiian Paddle Sports and Maui Kayak Adventures, canoe and kayak guide, surf and stand-up paddle instructor and HEA board member. “We send all of our guides through cultural trainings twice annually and they also become certified marine naturalists.”

Lara, who says his tour guests range in age from 3 to 86, adds that Hawaiian Paddle Sports and Maui Kayak Adventures both follow sustainability practices. All ocean crafts are self-powered and tour operators maintain a strict “no touch” policy.

“You can visit many tropical destinations in the world and participate in some of the same ocean activities we offer in Hawaii,” Lara says. “However, the Hawaiian culture is what makes Hawaii special and sets us apart from other places. We want to make sure the host culture is being represented and shared by our guides to those who are visiting Hawaii for their first or tenth time.”

Holokai Kayak and Snorkel Adventures offers educational eco-ac-

tivities in Kaneohe Bay—home to Ahu o Laka (the Sandbar), Moku o Loe (Coconut Island), the 800-year-old Heeiea Fishpond and close to 70 beautiful and unique patch reefs that boast some of the healthiest coral on Oahu.

“We want both the natural ecosystems and the culture to be preserved for future generations,” says Andy Carre, park

manager and waterfront director at Heeiea State Park in Kaneohe and general manager of Holokai Kayak and Snorkel Adventures.

Carre adds that he believes people care about what they know and understand. “Culture and natural environment are the same way,” he says. “As long as we do it in ways that are sustainable for the natural world and the community, then these experiences are the best way to encourage preservation and awareness.” ^H



Andy Carre



Tim Lara



A guest room of the Hilton Garden Inn Kauai at Wailua Bay

Hilton Garden Inn Opens 1st Hawaii Property

The Hilton Garden Inn Kauai at Wailua Bay has opened. The property, owned by Aloha Beach Hotel Partners and managed by Aqua-Aston Hospitality, brings 216 new rooms to the Hilton Garden Inn brand.

The new property offers more than 7,460 square feet of flexible meeting space and an on-site gazebo. Each room offers a work desk with an ergonomic desk chair and an in-room “hospitality center” with a mini fridge, microwave oven as well as a Keurig coffee maker. At 685 square feet, the property’s newly remodeled

two-room cottages have separate sleeping and living areas, plus a lanai.

Amenities include complimentary Wi-Fi, a 24-hour business center with remote printing, a state-of-the-art fitness center, two outdoor pools, a whirlpool and a playground. The hotel provides bicycle rentals, fishing excursions, sailing, sightseeing tours and snorkeling.

Bishop Museum Hires Calibraro as Sales Director

Bishop Museum has hired **Dean Calibraro** as director of sales. Calibraro leads the museum’s sales efforts, with a focus on non-resident visitor



Dean Calibraro

admissions, serves as a point of contact and liaison with the visitor industry and the development and marketing of new programs that will leverage the museum’s as-

sets and appeal to visitor sectors in the eastbound and westbound markets.

Previously, Calibraro was the vice president of sales and marketing for Discover Hawaii Tours where he managed sales and marketing annual budgets, analyzed market trends to attract customers, and developed and implemented media plans for domestic, international and online market segments.

Cowell Named Kauai Coffee GM

The Kauai Coffee Co. has named **Frederick L. Cowell** general manager. Cowell has been active in the Kona Coffee Council board, the Kona Soil and Water Conservation District, the Specialty Coffee Association and the Hawaii Coffee Association. He currently serves on the Kauai Economic Development Board and is co-chair of the Kauai Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee.



Frederick L. Cowell

Cowell was previously employed by Oceanit Laboratories Inc. as a program manager leading a multi-disciplined team of engineers conducting research and development on Kauai. Prior to that, he was the agribusiness director for the vertically integrated Kona Coffee and Tea Co. and Kealahou Coffee Co. on Hawaii Island.

Kuriyama Named GM at Sheraton Waikiki

Sheraton Waikiki has named **Tomo Kuriyama** as its deputy general manager. He spent the past five years in Thailand, serving first as the executive assistant manager at the Sheraton Grand Sukhumvit and recently as general manager at the Sheraton Pattaya Resort.



Tomo Kuriyama

Kuriyama joined Starwood in 2003 as a guest service agent at the Sheraton Maui. He holds a bachelor's degree in international business administration from Hawaii Pacific University.

Maui Restaurant Winners Honored

The Monkeypod Kitchen and Chef **Mike Lofaro** landed top honors in the 2016 Aipono Maui Restaurant Awards.

The Monkey Pod Kitchen was named Restaurant of the Year and Lofaro, of Humuhumunukunuku-apuaa Restaurant in Wailea, was chosen Chef of the Year in the awards presented by *Maui No Ka Oi* magazine.

Other top winners included Chef **Perry Bateman** of Mama's Fish House for the Maui County Farm Bureau's Friend of Agriculture award; The Westin Maui Resort & Spa for Excellence in Sustainability; and the Lifetime Achievement Award went to **Aaron Placourakis**, president and CEO of Tri-Star Restaurant Group. For the complete list of winners, go to <http://mauimagazine.net>.

Hilton Hires Keri Brown

Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort welcomes **Keri Brown**



Keri Brown

as the resort's director of revenue management—transient market. Brown has extensive experience in the Hawaii travel and hospitality industry.

Previously, Brown worked with Orbitz Worldwide as its Hawaii area manager of hotel services. Brown was also a director of revenue management for Highgate Hotels at the Courtyard by Marriott Waikiki Beach and has held numerous positions with Starwood Properties in Waikiki including: complex revenue manager, revenue manager—OTA and revenue management analyst.



The Universal ShowQueen Pageant

The Universal ShowQueen Pageant at the Convention Center showcases some of the world's top transgender/female impersonators, including last year's winner, Jerrica Benton. The 2016 edition on May 7 was expected to draw more than 2,000 persons, according to organizers.

Roy's Beach House Excites North Shore Neighbors

Competitors up the ante in anticipation of celebrated chef's new restaurant

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE

Foodies on Oahu's North Shore are not the only ones anticipating the arrival of Chef Roy Yamaguchi's new restaurant—Roy's Beach House—scheduled to open at Turtle Bay Resort this summer.

The resort's food-and-beverage team, led by Executive Chef Conrad Aquino and Food and Beverage Manager Patrick Faas, are keeping tabs on their new celebrity neighbor, too.

But in a good way. After all, competition is healthy for any business.



Conrad Aquino

"Our goal is to stay competitive in the market by incorporating latest trends in preparation and presentation," Faas says. "We want to create a food selection that is so rich and clean that it is the dinner-version equivalent of a spa experience."

So far, the execs have created new dishes and a core menu that will change twice yearly, sent restaurant employees on local farm tours, retrained cooks and servers to reflect current dining trends, enhanced the room-service menu and redecorated some of the restaurants. The ideas stemmed from weekly brainstorming meetings with restaurant managers at the resort.

North Shore Kula Grille, specializing in local ingredients from the land and sea, extended its Friday late-night hours with a tapas menu and live music until midnight. The



(Clockwise from top) Kula Grille's Big Boy Burger, Beet Panzanella Salad and Country Chicken Pot Pie.

casual venue now offers a weekend Prime Rib Brunch, featuring fresh juices, wholesome smoothies and an "outrageous" Bloody Mary.

In mid-May, fine dining restaurant Paakai will introduce a new menu Chef Aquino describes as "playful, exciting and refined." At press time, he was considering ingredients such as monkfish liver, caviar and smoked trout.

Both restaurants attract an equal mix of locals and visitors.

North Shore residents, local golfers and the surf crowd typically can be found at one of three dining venues at Turtle Bay Resort: The Point by the pool; Surfer, the surf-themed bar on the lobby level; and Lei Lei's, a bar and grill overlooking the Fazio golf course. The latter is independently owned and managed by local restaurateur Ian Buscher.

Meantime, Roy's Beach House is on track to open this summer on the beachfront site previously occupied by Chef Fred De Angelo's award-winning restaurant, Ola. De Angelo and wife, Cheryl, closed Ola last December to open the Heeia Kea Pier General Store & Deli in Kaneohe.

"We're happy to be a part of Turtle Bay Resort's food and beverage team," says Chef Yamaguchi, who teamed up with an original partner Chef Gordon Hopkins for the opening. They've concocted new recipes showcasing the flavors of France, Japan, California and East Asia. The restaurant's living room-inspired interior will have teak loveseats and a natural unfinished wood bar overlooking the ocean. "Dining at Roy's will feel like you're in a charming beach house setting."

HTA Putting Focus on Digital Marketing

The Hawaii Tourism Authority's global marketing team has been working hard to promote the Hawaiian Islands using innovation and a forward-thinking approach to reach tomorrow's travelers.

On April 6, HTA hosted its Spring Marketing Update and shared how we are putting added emphasis on the power, flexibility and reach of digital marketing. The influence of digital marketing on travel-making decisions, especially by millennials, seemingly grows by the day.

Hawaii has enjoyed four straight years of record-setting visitor arrivals and expenditures. Travel marketing has also evolved during that same period and digital marketing has been key, both in how global travelers receive information and how destinations reach them.

On top of that, competition to attract

global travelers is fierce and Hawaii is being challenged by destinations worldwide.

As a taxpayer-funded state agency, HTA has to make the best and wisest use of its available resources. It's imperative that our marketing strategy be progressive and our tactics nimble to keep pace with the demands of the marketplace. As such, HTA is evolving how it promotes Hawaii by enhancing our digital marketing outreach and customizing programs to reach global travelers.

New marketing initiatives HTA will be debuting in the coming months include a state-of-the-art GoHawaii.com website, a Hawaii travel app and virtual reality.

The new GoHawaii.com website will be a more interactive experience, make greater usage of video and images, and be mobile friendly. Imagine

being able to access all of Hawaii anytime and anywhere.

The new travel app will make it easy to quickly and efficiently gather essential information about everything the Hawaiian Islands offers.

Virtual reality marketing of Hawaii will be a blast. Think of the incentive travelers will have for coming to Hawaii if they put on a headset and surf Waikiki, parasail off Maui, hike on Kauai or see lava flow on Hawaii Island.

Stay tuned for these and more digital marketing programs to come.

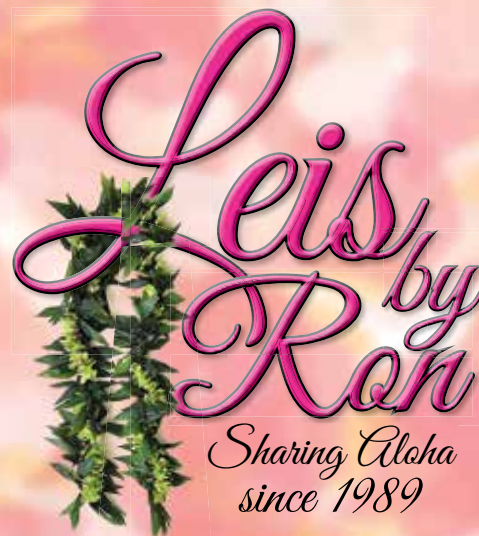


George Szigeti is president and CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), the state's tourism agency.



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See You at the Charity Walk

It's that time of year again: The Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association and our hospitality industry are in high gear preparing for the 38th annual Visitor Industry Charity Walk. The walks start on Molokai and Lanai on May 7, shift to Kauai, Maui and Hawaii Island on May 14 and then conclude on Oahu on May 21.

This annual event is the largest in the hospitality industry, where hotels and HLTA Island Chapters and members, with the support of the county governments, all come together to help our communities. This year's theme, "A Tradition of Giving," reflects the enduring contributions our visitor industry has made to local charities over these many years. That theme is illustrated in the *puolo*, a traditional Hawaiian gift or offering, that you've seen on our posters and website.

Since it began in 1978, the Charity Walk has raised more than \$28 million to benefit hundreds of local

Charity Walk on Oahu

On-site registration for the 5.25-mile walk will be from 5-7 a.m. at McCoy Pavilion at Ala Moana Beach Park, with breakfast beginning at 5:30 a.m. Pre-walk festivities include warmup exercises, entertainment and pep talks from the Charity Walk chairs. The walk begins with a rolling start from 7-7:30 a.m.

charities. Last year, an amazing 11,000 walkers helped us raise a record \$1.8 million statewide and generate funding for nearly 300 charities across the Islands. All the money raised in Hawaii stays right here. This year we anticipate a larger number of participants and donations as we've streamlined our registration process

with online registration and downloadable sign-up forms.

Not only is the VICW a great cause, but it's a whole lot of fun. Every year on Oahu, walkers enjoy a variety of "ono grinds" at the various stops sponsored by lodging properties and our allied members. And there will be an exciting lineup of entertainment and door prizes that is always very popular with our participants.

This year's Charity Walk chair and HLTA board chair-elect is Dean Nakasone, general manager of the Outrigger Reef Waikiki Beach Resort, who's providing outstanding leadership in building on the success of past events. For those interested in participating, visit charitywalkhawaii.org for information for your Island's Charity Walk.

Mufi Hannemann is president and CEO of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA).

HRA | Gregg Fraser

HRA Makes Education Top Priority

The foodservice industry in Hawaii has been struggling with recruitment and staff retention. There is a huge need for more programs that increase the number of qualified candidates for restaurant jobs and preparing current and future employees to succeed.

The National Restaurant Association, in addition to all of the state restaurant associations, has an ongoing training program, called ProStart, for future foodservice employees. ProStart is a high school-level culinary and management training program created by industry leaders to perpetuate the industry.

The Hawaii Restaurant Association is on the threshold of forming its Educational Foundation that will oversee and promote the ProStart program in Hawaii.

We will be working with a number of high schools to deliver a consistent curriculum that will allow our high school graduates to either enter the job market right out of high school or go on to continued education with local culinary and/or hospitality educational programs.

The goal is to education and grow the number of future foodservice leaders in Hawaii.

This is our opportunity to discover and retain new talent for our great state. Also, it will help to entice students from other states to come to work in Hawaii through the ProStart program.

There are many exciting opportunities for co-branded scholarships and sponsorships for the future decision makers. The HRA will be hosting annual student competitions on a

local level with finalists moving on to the National Invitational Competition. The hope is to someday host the national event in Hawaii.

The HRA is in support of the entire foodservice industry in Hawaii. Visit us at hawaiirestaurant.org and see benefits of becoming a member.

Our Educational Committee is continuing to create new benefits for our members. Contact us for more information about programs like ProStart and the Educational Foundation.



Gregg Fraser is executive director of the Hawaii Restaurant Association. He can be reached at gregg.fraser@hawaiirestaurant.org



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