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## checking in

Maui's tourism industry had a stellar year in 2017 with 2.7 million visitors, and the Valley Isle is keeping the momentum rolling, according to our report. So far this year, Maui paces the Islands with \$346 in RevPAR (revenue per room).

With all the hotels and resorts here, it's a frequent occurrence when new general managers arrive from points around the globe to run one of the properties. We talk with four new GMs about adapting to business—and life—in the Islands' hotelier industry.

Columnist Don Chapman tells a "good deed" story of how restaurant patrons at Henry Loui's in Mapunapuna are stepping up (and digging into their own pockets) to support military personnel.

Security experts offer advice on how hoteliers can prepare their staffs and assist guests for faster responses in the event of an active shooter.

Also in this issue we take a look at legislation ranging from banning plastic straws to enhancing family leave rules. While they are aimed at making Hawaii an overall more friendly place, some say the proposed laws might be a hindrance for businesses, especially the smaller shops.

Be sure to check our report on the ways that Hawaii's hospitality industry is embracing new technologies and using apps to better serve their guests.

Aloha!

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# Henry's Patrons Pay Up for Military Heroes

You hear all the time about “supporting the troops,” and that’s a good thing. The men and women of America’s armed services richly deserve our respect and appreciation for their service and sacrifice.

At Henry Loui’s restaurant in Mapunapuna, patrons are doing more than just talking about supporting folks in uniform—they’re buying them lunch, tip included.

Talk about Good Deed Doers.

It started in March 2012 with a couple of businessmen who prefer taking lunch at the bar, and has evolved into a program called Henry’s Heroes.

“One day Pete and I were having lunch when a bunch of military folks walked in,” says **Ted Tesman** of Agencies Pacific, an industrial supply company.

Pete is **Peter Dawson** of Sunburst Designs, a lighting company, whose office is conveniently located across the parking lot from Henry Loui’s.

They had previously run a charity fishing tournament that raised \$10,000 to \$20,000 annually.

“And we said,” says Ted, “why can’t we do this on a daily basis?”

They spoke with **Anson Kaneshiro**, co-owner of Henry Loui’s with partner **Ron Lokar**.

“And Anson said he was fine with it as long as the restaurant got paid and the staff got their tips.”

Six years later, says Peter, “we’ve raised \$32,321 and have provided more than 2,000 meals.”

Funds are raised from fellow patrons as well as from business associates and friends, with Peter in charge of accounting. Contributed funds are used to purchase debit cards that are left at the cash register for use as needed.

“Right now we have three new \$500 debit cards, four cards total in use, and there’s \$2,686 in the kitty with zero debit,” he says.

“These guys don’t have to do this,” says Anson, who makes a generous annual contribution to the fund. “They do all the work and customers contribute. It’s a great thing.”

Located as Henry Loui’s is—just down the hill from Fort Shafter and a short drive from both Pearl Harbor/Hickam and Camp Smith—there is no



**Peter Dawson, Anson Kaneshiro and Ted Tesman. (Inset right) Donna Feldman.**

shortage of men and women in uniform showing up for some good grub.

Military personnel so rewarded, instead of a bill, simply receive a card that includes the above quote from “The Wizard of Oz” (with a photo of the Wizard and the Tinman) and this message: “We salute you, honor you and thank you for all your sacrifices on our behalf. You’re the very best example of why America is the great, strong and free Nation we are. With heartfelt thanks, lunch is on us, tip included, PAID IN FULL. —The Patrons of Henry Loui’s.”

The result is always acute gratitude.

“We’ve had guys shed tears,” says Peter.

“They can’t believe people would do something like this,” says Ted.

“We try not to duplicate recipients, but it’s really not a problem,” adds bartender **Donna Feldman**. “A couple of times we’ve accidentally offered a meal to the same person twice and they always say thank you, but no thank you, please give this to someone else.”

For years I’ve referred to **Henry Loui**, who passed away in 1991 after a spirited battle with leukemia, as my “Chinese father”—he was the same age as my father and we became great golf and travel buddies. Much of what I know about the restaurant biz I learned from Henry. A Navy veteran, he would have been proud of the Henry’s Heroes program.

The irony is that neither Ted nor Peter served in the military—both are prime Vietnam age but by luck of the draft avoided that ill-conceived deathtrap.

Says Pete: “But I told my dad, who fought at Guadalcanal in WWII, that one day I would do something for our country.”

As for Henry Loui’s the restaurant, its namesake would also be proud of how Ron and Anson, who started with Henry at his Waikiki restaurant in 1975 as a dishwasher and stayed with him when he moved to Mapunapuna (and into what had formerly been Sam Sanford’s) in May 1980, and bought the restaurant from Henry’s family in 1993.

“Most of the recipes are exactly the same, nothing changed,” says Anson, though he and Ron work with the kitchen to keep it fresh. Henry’s “Best Suckin’ Ribs in Hawaii” remain a top seller—about 200 pounds a week—though many come for the prime rib, big salads and sandwiches. Some just come for the soups. Many return for the “Cheers”-like ambiance.

Meanwhile, Ted and Peter are intent on continuing Henry’s Heroes.

Says Ted: “We just carry on and keep begging.”

To end with another “Oz” reference, they’re looking for people who, like Henry Loui’s patrons before, have found their hearts.



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# Planting Fresh Roots at Island Hotels

## New GMs share fast-learned advice on transitioning to Hawaii

BY DAVID PUTNAM

**Y**ou're the "new guy" among an elite corps of hotel and resort general managers in Hawaii, but don't fret: You aren't alone. New GMs are frequently being assigned—usually from the U.S. Mainland—to head up an Island property.

Adjusting to Hawaii often results in culture shock, however, so heed these words of wisdom from your fellow GM "newbies":

• **"Take your time, observe and learn the culture,"** says Robert Friedl of The Laylow. **"It's best not to come to Hawaii and impose your great ideas because they may not work here. . . . You have to make a strong effort to learn the culture. Read, take classes, go to community events and visit places that locals do."**

• **"Do not come with a 'Change Everything Plan,'"** warns Michael Czarcinski of the Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa. **"Listen, learn and help improve processes."**

• **"Learn, preserve and perpetuate the culture and malama pono (great care) for Hawaii's natural resources,"** adds Doug Sears of the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa.

• **"I'm not sure I'm in any position to give advice,"** says Charlie Parker of the Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina. **"However, I would only encourage any new hotelier to come to Hawaii."**

Czarcinski took over the 795-room Moana Surfrider—hailed as the "First Lady of Waikiki"—in March after having served as GM of the 1,350-room

Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles. The Hawaii market is "similar" to LA, he says, and like at his last post the aim here is to "grow two-fold."



Michael Czarcinski

The Westin Bonaventure went from \$55 million to \$115 million in 10 years, even with the recession."

Attracting guests from budget to luxury, is vital to growth, he says, noting he plans to "target all markets to match the property's service level. One never wants to put all their chips in one area."

Czarcinski has spent 38 years with the Marriott International organization, starting as an assistant GM at the Oak Hill Country Club in New York. He has held leadership positions at various resorts, including Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina and The Claremont Resort in Berkeley.

He says millennials "are an important market, and the millennials are the American future. We need to embrace their needs." And, as he did at his previous job, he plans to tailor the hotel's attractions

## Goals for Your Hotel/Resort

• **Michael Czarcinski:** "Build on the history and culture, and to be a steward for the First Lady of Waikiki."

• **Robert Friedl:** "We want to continue being an integral part of the compelling renaissance of Kuhio Avenue in Waikiki, and our melding of local cultures and style into something new, unique and contemporary contributes to the vibrant, eclectic and authentic scene arising in the new heart of Waikiki."

• **Charlie Parker:** "It's a really exciting time to join the resort. I also see great opportunities to further elevate our service offering, and I look forward to working with the team ... and take our service to the next level."

• **Doug Sears:** "My goal is to strive to give our *mea kipa* all the *kokua* needed to honor our sense of place and *kuleana* to share our aloha with each other and our guests."



## Uniqueness of Hawaii's Work Culture

- **Czarcinski:** "Caring and hardworking team with an aloha spirit."

- **Friedl:** "The aloha spirit infuses the work culture in Hawaii, which is genuine and warm. You can really feel that in our hospitality industry. Compared to some other locations, you don't have to focus as much on training employees about hospitality because it seems to come naturally here."

- **Parker:** "Four Seasons has the culture of a 'Golden Rule' (do unto others as you wish to be done unto you). This seems to directly correlate with the aloha spirit of Hawaii."

- **Sears:** "In my previous post and others, our Hyatt family was committed to providing authentic hospitality and genuine care. This has been my experience with Hyatt in my 14 assignments spanning 38 years. In Hawaii, we have the great fortune of aligning that purpose with aloha."

to continue drawing an international clientele. "We worked with international partners in Japan, China, Australia, India, Europe, etc. All were welcomed and keys to our success," he says.

As for transferring to Hawaii, "anything new has its opportunities," Czarcinski says. "We have visited here numerous times and have friends in Hawaii who are helping with the transition."

Parker, originally from Edinburgh, Scotland, oversaw the opening of Ten Trinity Square, a Four Seasons property in London, as general manager. He joined Four Seasons as an intern at London Park Lane and in the past 22 years has worked in hotels in California, the



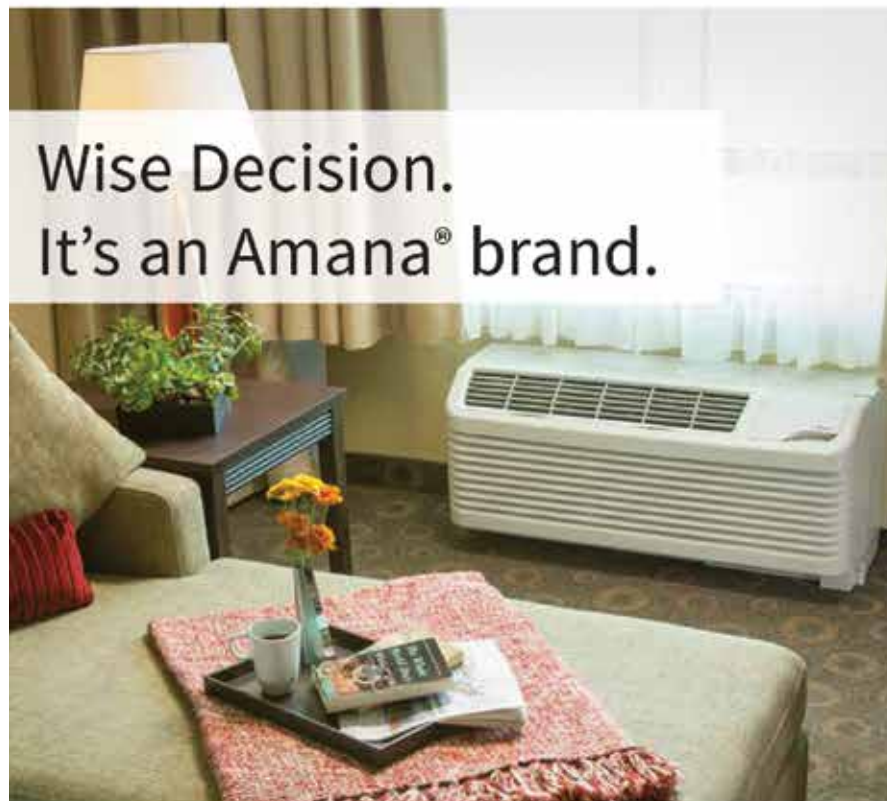
**Charlie Parker**

Maldives, Doha, Egypt and the U.K.

"I have been fortunate to work in some wonderful resort locations, and the opportunity to come to Hawaii was very exciting," Parker says. "It was the combination of a beautiful property



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coupled with a passionate team and our setting on the Leeward Coast: The incredible beauty and diversity of the island and a rich local culture really made this a unique opportunity.”

Parker says the rapid expansion of Hawaii’s travel market is impressive.

“It is incredible to see the growth in Hawaii’s tourism industry. My previous destination (London) was a very established and mature market, but also has been enjoying recent growth,” he says.

Parker also views millennials as a “vibrant and growing demographic. We do try to tailor our service around their needs. For instance, Four Seasons just launched our Chat application, which allows our guests to chat and communicate with us all around the world in over 100 different languages.

“Today, millennials comprise 20 percent of our guests but they are the demographic with the greatest growth potential.”

Parker also talks about the need to provide “intelligent luxury” to guests. This, he explains, “is about the ability to customize and personalize a guest’s experience. It is not just about recognizing different nationalities or cultures, but also attending to the specific needs of our guests. For example, the needs of a family traveling with an infant differ from those of a regular business traveler staying with us every week.”

The 251-room Laylow is the result of a \$60 million transformation of the Aqua Wave Waikiki into Oahu’s first

Marriott Auto-graph Collection Hotel. Friedl, who grew up in Nuremberg, Germany, came to The Laylow after three years as GM at The Sebastian-Vail in Colorado. Previously, he was



**Robert Friedl**

director of operations at Ritz-Carlton Kapalua Bay from 2010-2013 following stints at The Delano in South Beach Miami, L’Auberge de Sedona in Arizona and The Hard Rock Hotel in San Diego.

“Hawaii is growing a bit quicker than other markets I’ve worked in,” he says. “Visitors are realizing that there is more to Hawaii than our beautiful beaches and climate. There’s an incredible variety of rich cultures to experience, unparalleled natural beauty, unbelievable hiking and world-class ocean sports, a unique, contemporary culinary scene and a fascinating history.



**MOANA SURFRIDER, A WESTIN RESORT & SPA**



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## Isles’ Diverse Labor Force

- **Czarcinski:** “Take care of your team and they will take care of the guests.”
- **Friedl:** “There are only benefits to our multicultural labor force—really because the world and our visitors are multicultural. Having a multicultural workforce in Hawaii allows us to be sensitive to and empathize with diverse needs so that we can provide the best guest experience possible.”
- **Parker:** “Part of the appeal of working in our industry has to do with multiculturalism, as we are able to learn from each others’ backgrounds. Perhaps one of the challenges that may exist in having so many different languages spoken in our resort is ensuring that we communicate in a manner that is understood by all.”
- **Sears:** “The benefits are in having this great platform of celebrating our diversity through the lens of *ohana* and *aloha*.”

“With such diversity here, there really is something for everyone, and visitors are catching on.”

Friedl points to the “purchasing power” of millennials. “They are traveling more than previous generations, and we should continue to appeal to their unique preference for experiential travel,” he says. “We can offer so much to millennials with our unmatched outdoor experiences, our burgeoning culinary scene and the rich cultures and history of Hawaii.”

According to Friedl, the Islands’ hospitality industry—especially lodging establishments—must target the budget, mid-range and luxury visitor markets. “We should absolutely target all markets,” he says. “Everyone is looking for a different guest experience, and we want them all to be able to visit and enjoy Hawaii.”

The Laylow, he says, offers such personal touches as “custom slippers with our monstera print on them, included as a keepsake in our welcome basket.”

Friedl also notes that “we see lots of comments on social media that we are the most ‘Instagrammable’ hotel, and guests

*Continued on Page 18*



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# VALLEY ISLE

A recent Kapalua Wine & Food Festival  
Grand Tasting gala.

PHOTO COURTESY TONY NOVAK





Sunrise at Haleakala,  
Maui's most popular scenic attraction.

PHOTO COURTESY HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY/TOR JOHNSON

## Celebrated events give Maui the lead in visitor spending

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

**R**emember the prettiest girl in your high school class? The one who couldn't get any prettier? That's Maui this year. According to a recent Hawaii Tourism Authority report, in the first quarter of 2018, Maui hotels lead the state with \$346 total revenue per room (RevPAR), a gain of 4.2 percent over the first quarter last year.

This is not unexpected. "2017 was a banner year for tourism on Maui," says Sherry Duong, executive director of the Maui Visitors & Convention Bureau, citing 2017 gains in Maui visitor spending (to \$4.67 billion) and arrivals (to 2,742,108 visitors).



Sherry Duong

Duong says Maui's attractions have sparked a rise in 2018 airlift, too. "United increased its service substantially from Denver, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, while Hawaiian Airlines launched daily service from Portland and San Diego," she says.

This means more visitors can attend Maui's celebrated summer parties. "Historically, the summer months in Maui have high visitor counts," says Duong. "Year after year, we're seeing our visitors who come during these summer months do attend some of our annual events such as the popular Maui Film Festival and the Kapalua Wine & Food Festival."

### Maui Film Festival June 13-17

Barry Rivers, the Maui Film Festival's founder, says the top Festival attraction this summer is the outdoor Celestial Cinema in Wailea, "an under-the-stars, lit-by-the-moon, and powered-by-the-sun venue for up to 3,000 people ... with a 50-foot-wide screen."



Barry Rivers

"To my knowledge, it's the biggest film festival venue in the world, including festivals like Cannes and others that have these big indoor halls. Nothing quite matches its outdoor setting."

"We also have some very highly regarded 'taste' series—we call them the 'Tastes of Maui,'" Rivers says. "There's the opening night 'Taste of Summer' reception at the Grand Wailea, there's a Friday night 'Taste of Chocolate' reception at the Four Seasons, and there's a Saturday afternoon, pre-sunset 'Taste of Wailea.'"

"The chefs at Wailea are the participating 'culinary artists,' if you will," he says. "And they really go the distance to show how good they can be."

Attendance at each "Taste of Maui" event runs between 250 and 650 people, Rivers says, adding that Maui's spectacular "sense of place" infuses the fun.

"So much of it is outside. Our food and wine events are outside. The Celestial Cinema is outside. We do a venue on the



beach called 'Toes In The Sand Cinema' ... This has really resonated with people, and made it stand out in their memories. We hear it over and over again."

## Kapalua Wine & Food Festival June 7-10

Karin Sagar, KWFF event director, says Kapalua's annual celebration "just keeps getting bigger and better!"

Sagar says Petrossian Caviar, a KWFF partner, has expanded its participation this year to include a champagne- and caviar-tasting seminar on June 10. Other gala events include a Grand Tasting that features 1000 pounds of gourmet cheeses, "White Party" décor and live DJ entertainment.

The June 10 KWFF Seafood Festival, Sagar says, will be held on the oceanfront Beach House Lawn at The Ritz-Carlton Kapalua "for a lovely evening under the stars." Sagar says 30-plus renowned winemakers are presenting their most coveted vintages, and "this year Banks Rum will sponsor a 'Kapalua's Best Banks Cocktail' competition for Kapalua Resort restaurant partners.

"A major goal of the Festival is to nationally promote Hawaii's unique regional cuisine and superb variety of produce, fish and meats, as well as to present Kapalua, Maui and Hawaii as a world-class vacation destination," Sagar says. "Through targeted marketing, attention is drawn not only to island cuisine, but also to Maui's outstanding resort properties."

## Luxury Linchpins

In January, Blackstone Group LP purchased Maui's Grand Wailea Resort for about \$1.1 billion—reportedly the second-highest price ever paid for a hospitality property in the United States. The hotel's anticipated redevelopment will add even more luster to the reputation of Wailea, Maui's leading resort community.

"Over the years, Wailea properties have continued to update in order to respond to the desires of visitors," says

## Calendar of Maui's Showstoppers

Maui's 2018 headliners run the gamut from Hollywood glamor to scenic splendor.

### 2018 Kapalua Wine & Food Festival | June 7-10

The 37th annual Festival presents wine and food at The Kapalua Resort, The Ritz-Carlton Kapalua and other settings. Events include tastings, seminars, demonstrations, a golf tournament and evening galas. For more information, go to [kapaluawineandfoodfestival.com](http://kapaluawineandfoodfestival.com). For tickets, go to [kiosk.eztix.co/kiosk-optimised/622320](http://kiosk.eztix.co/kiosk-optimised/622320).

### 2018 Maui Film Festival | June 13-17

The 19th annual Festival celebrates films and filmmakers from around the world. Festival culinary events include "Taste of Summer," "Taste of Chocolate" and "Taste of Wailea." To save on Celestial Cinema and other Festival events, go to [mauifilmfestival.com/fest-tickets-passes](http://mauifilmfestival.com/fest-tickets-passes).

### Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival "Maui Style" | June 24

The 27th annual Festival features some of Hawaii's top slack key guitarists performing for six hours in the Maui Arts & Cultural Center amphitheater. Festival will also feature local arts and crafts and local foods. Contact Milton Lau via [kihoalufoundationinc9@gmail.com](mailto:kihoalufoundationinc9@gmail.com) or at (808) 226-2697.

### 63rd Annual Makawao Rodeo | July 6-8

The Maui Roping Club presents Valley Isle *paniolas* at their best. Includes the Makawao Parade on July 7. Go to [www.makawao rodeo.net/](http://www.makawao rodeo.net/) for more information.

### Other Popular Maui Attractions

Other Maui visitor magnets, says Sherry Duong, executive director of the Maui Visitors & Convention Bureau, are in Upcountry Maui and include Alii Kula Lavender Farm, Surfing Goat Dairy, Maui Wine/Upulakua Vinyards and Ocean Organic Vodka Farm and Distillery.

These venues, as well as ziplining, "are experiencing greater traffic from visitors whom we categorize as 'Avid Explorers,'" Duong says. "Paia continues to be a popular destination with our visitors, along with the journey on the road to Hana.

"Haleakala remains the No. 1 attraction for visitors on Maui."

Bud Pikrone, general manager of the Wailea Resort Association, which manages the 1,500-acre enclave. "We look forward to Blackstone and the Grand Wailea Resort building on that foundation of luxury that Wailea is known for."



Bud Pikrone

Wailea's role as Maui's RevPAR linchpin was confirmed in February, when the HTA reported that Wailea hotel properties earned \$592 in RevPAR, the highest in all Hawaii resort regions.

In 2018, top-tier resort areas like Wailea are also top MCI Maui destinations. "Being an island that offers diversity for all types and sizes of groups, we are experiencing it all here on Maui in our resort areas of Wailea, Kaanapali

and Kapalua," says Duong. "We are fortunate to attract group business from all markets, including incentives, associations, auto, health and financial, just to name a few. Our group sizes range anywhere from as small as 30 pax (people/persons/occupants) to 700-plus."

## An Open Invitation

"While we have our luxury resorts that many rich and famous often visit, we embrace visitors from all walks of life and encourage them to find and explore all that Maui has to offer," says Duong.

"Maui is appealing to all travel consumers," she emphasizes. "It is a fascinating destination that appeals to all audiences, from families to weddings and honeymooners to health-and-wellness, and even adventure and outdoor 'soft' thrill-seekers.

"Currently, Maui is on track for another strong year, with continued growth in spending and arrivals."



An aerial photograph of a resort complex. On the left is a multi-story building with balconies. In the center and right is a large, winding swimming pool with several islands of tropical plants and palm trees. A paved walkway with lounge chairs and umbrellas runs alongside the pool. In the background, a green golf course is visible under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

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seem to love taking photos of the vintage hula dolls behind the check-in desk, our signature monstera wallpaper and our mid-century modern lounge furnishings.”

For Sears, taking the reins of the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa in November was a chance to come home.

Sears has had 14 assignments in more than 38 years with Hyatt—including 19



Doug Sears

years honing his hotelier skills in Hawaii. For the past five years, he was the GM at the Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa in California. His career includes stops at Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa, Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa, Hyatt Regency Maui Resort and Spa and the former Hyatt Regency Waikoloa.

“I looked forward to returning to my Hawaii *ohana*,” he says, adding he was “anxious to return to what I consider my home, and to rededicate myself to my Hawaiian roots.”

His role at the Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa in California offered exposure to diverse markets.

“We put greater focus on our core markets which were not international, and having said that, we also committed ourselves to deploying a dedicated person assigned to an emerging Asian

market,” Sears says. “We were one of the first ‘China-ready’ resorts in Palm Springs from an amenity, product, language and service standpoint.”

The Seattle native began his hospitality career with Hyatt as a corporate management trainee at Hyatt Regency San Francisco. In addition to the Hyatt Regency Indian Wells and the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa, he’s been the GM at Hyatt Palo Alto, Hyatt Regency Coral Gables, Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman Resort and Spa and Grand Hyatt Seattle.

Now back in Hawaii, he says his “goal is to strive to give our *mea kipa* all the *kokua* needed to honor our sense of place and *kuleana* to share our aloha with each other and our guests.

## That ‘I’m living in Hawaii!’ Moment

- Czarinski: “On Thursday, the day we arrived, we immediately met our realtor. My wife Darlene and I were in the back of the car going to look at properties. A smile came to my face as I realized this is our new home.”
- Friedl: “I was fortunate to live and work in the most beautiful places throughout my career. When I stepped foot in Hawaii, I knew I was home. It was the beauty of the island, people and culture, but I also felt at peace. That’s truly what it was.”
- Parker: “Yes, that was the morning after I arrived. After a long journey here, I arrived late in the evening, exhausted but excited. The following morning, I went with my family to Lanikuhonua and met with Auntie Nettie, our Kahu. We had a blessing on the sands of Lanikuhonua and that was a really incredible way to spend our first morning.”
- Sears: “I took my first Leahi (Diamond Head) hike since returning, and suddenly found a sensation of being reconnected. The *mana* of the *aina* within me resounded there and I knew immediately that I returned home.”

“In my previous post and others, our Hyatt family was committed to providing authentic hospitality and genuine care; this has been my experience with Hyatt in my 14 assignments spanning 38 years. In Hawaii, we have the great fortune of aligning that purpose with aloha.”

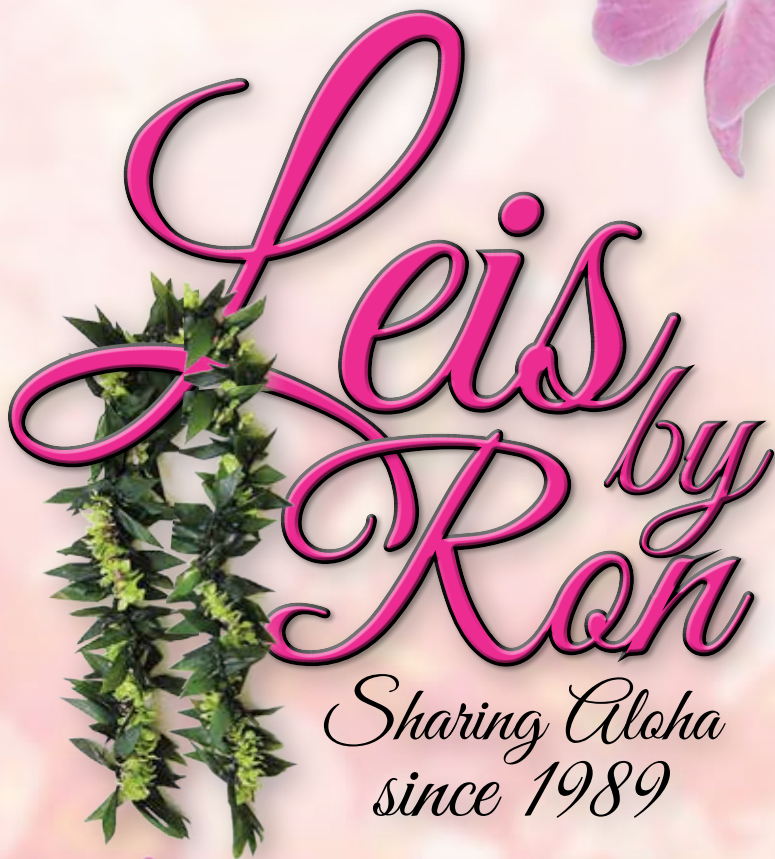
## Surprises & Challenges

- Czarinski: “The local aloha spirit is amazing. Tourism and hospitality are key drivers to the economy and livelihood of Hawaii. While there are some who believe too much is spent to promote tourism, it is key to continue to invest in tourism.”
- Friedl: “I think because it’s such a nice place to vacation and kick back, there’s a misconception that Hawaii is slower and things can’t get completed in a timely manner. However, we can do things just as quickly and professionally—with the aloha spirit. Visitors can relax and take things slowly and they can also receive quick, attentive service whenever they need.”
- Parker: “I felt an overwhelming sense of welcome on arrival to Oahu and the resort. As for challenges, perhaps there is more traffic on the roads than I was expecting.”
- Sears: “With my lengthy history in Hawaii, there were no real surprises, just the realization that much more needs to be done to perpetuate the Hawaiian culture. Shouldn’t all resorts have a dedicated Hawaiian cultural advisor?”



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# Apps Lead to Better Guest Service

## Hotels can craft an improved visitor experience via technology

BY BRANDON BOSWORTH

Embracing new technologies is helping Hawaii's hotels and resorts serve guests better and faster.

One example is Four Seasons Chat. Launched by Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts in late 2017, the app enables guests to send and receive instant



Oweita Gundaker

Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina. "Anything they can do through the phone or email they can do through

messages with property teams before, throughout and after their stay.

"The app gives guests an easier way to communicate with us," says Oweita Gundaker, a manager at

the app. Guests can check in, check out, or order food and drinks from the pool. Service is quicker and more efficient. We aim for a response time of 90 seconds." The industry average response time is 12 minutes.

Four Seasons Chat can translate more than 100 languages in real time. "One thing we struggle with is that our guests speak so many different languages," Gundaker says. "The Chat app automatically recognizes and translates text messages. It has broken many language barriers and become very useful."

Gundaker says Four Seasons Chat can help hotel staff create the best possible experience for guests. "We can start to up-sell before guests even get here," she says. "It's a great tool to further personalize guests' stay."

At Sheraton Waikiki, Deputy General Manager Tomo Kuriyama says "the two

major guest-impacting technical projects at Sheraton Waikiki would be the GPON or Gigabit-capable Passive Optical

Networks and Guest Room Entertainment initiatives."

According to Kuriyama, Sheraton Waikiki is spending nearly \$3 million on a GPON, a fiber optic system and infrastructure



Tomo Kuriyama

which will allow them to control and distribute data services to each guest room. "This will replace our legacy copper wiring and allow for extremely fast speeds that are required to deliver premium internet speeds and high definition television services."

Sheraton parent company Marriott also has its own apps, such as Marriott Mobile App. This is part of Marriott's Mobile Guest Services bundle along with Mobile Check-In/Check-Out, Mobile Key, Mobile Places and

## Five Tech Trends to Watch

Industry website [hoteltechnologynews.com](http://hoteltechnologynews.com) recently highlighted the five technology trends most impacting the travel industry in 2018:

### 1. Drone Photography

By showing their audience a bird's-eye-view, travel industry leaders are showing them a viewpoint they could not possibly see themselves, and that is the selling point. Travelers are inherently looking for an experience beyond the accommodations, and drone footage entices them, ushering them through the booking process and bringing them one step closer to finalizing their stay.

### 2. Alternative Payments

Blockchain, a decentralized ledger and public record keeping device, has the ability to transform the travel industry. In the near future, travel industry leaders will begin building their own blockchain to group into their current offerings, tackling current shortcomings within the tradi-

tional infrastructure. Through blockchain technology, travel industry leaders can help travelers avoid international exchange rates, instrumenting a singular currency that allows them to purchase their services from anywhere on the globe. Adopters will escape transaction fees and the crippling costs associated with physical coinage.

### 3. The Internet of Things (IoT)

Travel industry leaders are likely to see the IoT take off in the hotel landscape in particular, offering hotels the data required to completely personalize guest experience. Hotels are tapping into IoT through in-room tablets that connect to various elements within the hotel room and the surrounding facilities. In connecting smart devices to a network of controls, guests can manipulate their experience according to their specific needs.

### 4. Mobile Engagement

In conjunction with the IoT, the industry

is also witnessing an adoption of mobile keycards and boarding passes, passes delivered directly to the guest's phone and stored in the phone's wallet. From the mobile wallet travelers unlock hotel rooms and board flights by scanning their devices to a NFC (Near Field Communication) reader, making physical keycards and the tedious task of printing boarding passes obsolete.

### 5. Artificial Intelligence

This is by far one of the most promising technologies to hit the travel industry, reducing overhead for all sectors by cutting out human capital and replacing these resources with artificial intelligence. Chatbots, offshoots of artificial intelligence, have infiltrated customer service, programmed to resolve simple issues that previously required a real-life agent to mitigate.

These AI bots are capable of organizing travel plans and troubleshooting, transferring customers to actual agents when the conversation supersedes their capabilities.





**Four Seasons Chat allows guests to send and receive instant messages with hotel staff.**

COURTESY FOUR SEASONS HOTELS AND RESORTS

Mobile Requests and SPG (Starwood Preferred Guest) Keyless. Kuriyama says “the Marriott Mobile App makes managing Marriott Rewards accounts and reservations, stays and booking with Marriott easier than ever.”

By activating Mobile Check-In/Check-Out, eligible guests will be able to check in to their room, receive a notification when their room is ready and check out using the SPG App.



**Dennis Maher**

“This enables a consistent check-in and check-out experience for all brands across our portfolio (excluding SPG Keyless Hotels and Design Hotels),” Kuriyama says, “and increases guest satisfaction, especially among millennials, business travelers and frequent mobile-device users.”

Tools such as Four Seasons Chat,

***“Mobile-responsive websites are designed to deliver a simplified shopping experience.”***

— Matt Bailey

SPG App and Marriott Mobile App are available for download on the company websites. Guests are also informed about the apps at check-in.

Technology is helping to keep guests safer in ways besides upgraded surveillance systems.

“RFID (radio-frequency identification) locks have been a good tech advance for us,” says Dennis Maher, CHFE, director of facilities and security at Trump International Hotel Waikiki. “They are harder to duplicate than a magnetic strip. We can deactivate a lost key from the front desk and ensure someone can’t get into the room.”

Websites continue to play a big part in the hospitality industry. “Mobile-re-

sponsive websites are designed to deliver a simplified shopping experience, and a parametric search option provides even easier navigation through a site,” says Matt Bailey, president and CEO of Aqua-Aston Hospitality.



**Matt Bailey**

“Thanks to the many price-comparison sites, shoppers booking travel are able to lock in the best rates for their trip relatively easily. But,” Bailey adds, “knowing whether you’ve selected a hotel that matches the type of travel experience you seek can be more time-consuming and complicated.

“We know that some guests prefer the ability to book a specific unit, so they know exactly what they are going to get. We consider websites like Airbnb, VRBO and HomeAway just to be another distribution channel for us.”





Hilton Waikoloa Village's compostable paper straws are FDA-approved and GMO- and BPA-free.



Hilton Waikoloa Village's environmentally conscious "Last Straw" campaign replaces plastic straws with compostable paper straws.

PHOTOS COURTESY HILTON WAIKOLOA VILLAGE

# The Last Straws

## The Hilton Waikoloa Village acts to ban plastic straws, even as proposed legislation dies

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

At first glance, 2018 couldn't be better for Hawaii's hospitality industry—visitor counts, visitor spending and revenue per room are off the charts.

Some industry leaders, however, say tourists won't keep coming unless Hawaii makes some big changes. For example, take "sustainability," a feel-good idea that in January forced a tough decision by the Hilton Waikoloa

Village resort.

"Over the years, concerned guests have notified us of the impact that plastic straws have on our environment," says Simon Amos, Waikoloa's hotel manager, of the



Simon Amos

hundreds of thousands of plastic straws used at the resort every year (approximately 800,000 plastic straws were used by more than 1 million Waikoloa guests in 2017).

"We are thrilled to be able to respond and officially say that January 31, 2018

## New Food Safety Rules

In September 2017, an amended HAR 11-50 (Hawaii's food safety rule) was signed into law. The most recent version:

- 1) Adopted the 2013 FDA Model Food Code.
- 2) Requires mandatory food handlers' education for at least one Person In Charge at a food establishment at all times during operation beginning in September 2018.
- 3) Codifies and allows certain "home-made" foods which are considered non-potentially hazardous food items, such as cookies and candies, and also requires the same food handlers education certification as well as specific labeling requirements.

was 'the last straw,' "—the last day plastic straws were allowed at the Hilton Waikoloa Village, and the first day that

all resort drinks were served without straws, Amos says.

The resort's "Last Straw" campaign includes all of its bars, restaurants, venues and vendors, now and in the future. Says Amos: "We are committed 100 percent to continuing the ban on straws at this property."

But what if a guest wants a straw? And how much does replacing plastic straws cost?

New table and bar signage post Waikoloa Village's new policy, "Straws Upon Request," and explains the resort's commitment to sustainability. Guests who ask for straws are given FDA-approved, GMO- and BPA-free compostable paper straws.

"The paper straws we currently use are about four times more expensive," Amos says. "But with the overall reduction in straw usage, the increase is not significant."

State lawmakers who, like Amos, want to preserve Hawaii's pristine environment, introduced a bill this legislative session to ban plastic straws statewide. But the bill died in committee and will not become law.

While lauding lawmakers' intent and Hilton's environmental stewardship, some industry leaders note that as a Hilton property, the Waikoloa Village has the resources to absorb the cost of change that many other businesses in



Hawaii's hospitality industry do not.

But change to the Islands' hospitality industry is coming—through emerging issues in the environment, employment and consumer safety. And in many cases, current proposals to meet these challenges take close aim at big issues, but can impose hardships on Hawaii's smaller businesses.

## On the Table

"I believe the world would be a better place without plastic and polystyrene," says Gregg Fraser, executive director of the Hawaii Restaurant Association (HRA), citing the two main non-bio-



Gregg Fraser

degradable elements in disposable food containers and utensils.

But, Fraser adds, current compostable replacement ware has many drawbacks, including the inability to hold heat and liquids, and higher cost that often can't be recouped.

A small local restaurant, for example, that switches to more expensive, biodegradable straws will probably not see an equivalent drop in use like the Hilton Waikoloa Village and the resort's resulting savings.

"We have more restaurants now than I think we've ever had here in Hawaii," Fraser says, noting that more restaurants mean more competition and smaller profit margins. "And when the costs go up, I've got to lay people off and raise the prices on my menus."

These responses, he says, are also likely if Senate Bill 2990, Hawaii's current family-leave bill, is passed. For a small restaurant with 20 employees, he says, the associated annual costs of extended family leave, such as overtime or time-and-half wages for a replacement employee, are about \$10,000 to \$20,000. For larger restaurants that employ 100 employees or have multiple locations, Fraser says, "it's going to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars a year."

Fraser says that equitable solutions that balance competing needs can be achieved when parties from all sectors—employees, industry and government—listen to each other and find common ground.

## A Listening Strategy

When Hawaii's Department of Health first began its food safety placard program in 2014, says Peter Oshiro, environmental health program manager at the DOH Sanitation/Food and Drug Branch, it started with "a massive outreach effort by visiting all 10,000-plus food facilities statewide and issuing them a packet of documents which included the new (food safety) rule, a quick facts sheet on 'How To Get A Green Placard,' along with many other educational materials designed to help industry comply with the new rules."

The DOH also raised food establishment permit fees. This allowed the placard task force to nearly triple its Oahu field staff over four years, increase the frequency of food safety inspections and purchase high-tech software that posted inspection results on the web in real time.

The DOH measured the placard program's success by how often yellow, or "conditional," placards were issued during inspections, and achieved a more than 50 percent reduction in yellow placards issued on Oahu from July 2014 to June 2017.

Says Oshiro: "Showing the food establishment owner . . . the unredacted results of their inspection on a public website produces a very strong impetus to voluntarily comply with DOH rules."

Oshiro says intensive lobbying by DOH's food safety program with the boards of directors of industry trade groups including the HRA, the Hawaii Food Manufacturers Association and the Hawaii Food Industry Association was done to fully explain the rules and what



Peter Oshiro

the DOH hoped to accomplish prior to formally introducing the draft rule to public hearings.

"Industry was allowed to comment on and critique the proposed rule changes," Oshiro says. "Overhauling governmental regulations through sweeping and paradigm-shifting changes can only be accomplished if the regulated industry and the community 'buys in' and are allowed to comment on new rules as a participant and a partner in the change."



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*"Every building is unique. Every incident is unique. The population of a hotel changes every day." – Steven Sullivan*

# *active* The Shooter Threat

Hotels advised to plan and train for fast response to help keep guests and staff safe

BY BRANDON BOSWORTH

The deadliest mass shooting committed by an individual in the United States took place at a hotel. On Oct. 1, 2017, a gunman opened fire from his room at the Mandalay Bay, killing 58 people and wounding 851. Could something similar happen in Hawaii?

"It could happen to anyone, anytime, anyplace," says Steven Sullivan, a former Marine and vice president operations of Shidler Pacific Advisors LLC.



Steven Sullivan

Shidler holds annual workshops to educate building managers and others about active shooter situations. "We invite HPD to come in and provide their presentation," Sullivan says. "There are exercises, discussions and Q&A sessions. We conduct exercises to see what works."

Different properties will need to have different plans and policies in place. "Every building is unique," he says. "Every incident is unique. The population of a hotel changes every day."

"It's important to learn from each incident. After the Mandalay Bay shooting, we now know to look for snipers."

In the aftermath of the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting in which 49 people were killed, Sullivan says survival tactics

taught to civilians in active shooter situations started to move from the old "Run Hide Fight" to "Avoid Deny Defend." At the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, he says, "too many people 'hid' in plain sight and were easily killed. 'Deny' means denying the shooter the opportunity to shoot you."

There are other reasons for adopting the "Avoid Deny Defend" model. According to the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training at Texas State University: "Many schools and businesses prefer the terminology of Avoid Deny Defend, because it is more in line with their human resources department and educational standards. They believe that 'Avoid' is a more palatable word than 'Run,' because 'Run' disenfranchises those who are unable to physically run. 'Deny,' as in denying access to your location, is a stronger word than 'Hide.' And while 'Fight' is



Jeff Owens

an action that is forbidden on most school campuses, 'Defend' is a last resort safeguard, a right and an opportunity to guard against life threatening action." To learn more about "Avoid Deny Defend" visit [avoiddenydefend.org](http://avoiddenydefend.org).

Unfortunately, it often takes news of a shooting to get people and businesses interested in seeking out training.

"My phone starts to go off when

something happens," says Jeff Owens, a retired Honolulu police officer and founder of Transcend Inc., a local training, consulting, investigating and security company. "People ask me, 'can you help us? People have this attitude of 'yeah, I know it can happen' intellectually, but 'it can't happen here' emotionally. They deny risk."

## Threat from Within

Often, the perpetrator of a mass shooting or other form of workplace violence has some connection to the business. The threat comes from within. For example, the 1999 killing of seven people at Honolulu's Xerox building was committed by an employee with a history of bad workplace behavior, such as threatening co-workers. Owens works with companies to resolve in-house disputes before they turn violent.

"The first part of the process is someone has reported a concern," he says. "When I go in I want to learn a whole lot about the company, their operations, personnel, resources in place, etc. Can I address the underlying cause or do I need to call in someone?"

If necessary, Owens forms a multi-disciplinary threat assessment team integrating representatives from human resources, management and security. "We investigate, determine the facts and try to find out how real the threat is," he says. "What is the probability of something happening? We look at things with a balanced perspective. A threat assessment doesn't determine



right or wrong. It determines the level of potential harm that might occur.”

No matter what the outcome of the assessment, Owens says, “there has to be an appropriate response to inappropriate behavior.”

Sometimes the appropriate response is to terminate an employee, though even this can be done in a manner that reduces the risk of violence.

“Compassionate termination is one option,” Owens says. “Give the terminated employee resources to avoid unnecessary hardships, such as extending their medical plan. If they are scary enough, reduce their grievance and be their ally, not their enemy. Often the person has created a situation they don’t want to be in and you are letting them get out of it while saving face.”

According to Owens, “the single-most important thing an organization can do to reduce the threat of violence in the workplace is to create a culture of respect. Never allow yourself or anyone under your authority to attack the dignity of another human being. Don’t embarrass or humiliate people.”



**Peter Tarlow**

Threats from outside are harder to prevent, especially for hotels. After the Mandalay Bay shooting, there were calls for hotels to be more proactive and invasive when it comes to securing their property.

Peter Tarlow, president of Tourism and More, a Texas-based company specializing in safety, security and associated services, says this can be difficult.

“You can’t examine every bag of every guest,” Tarlow says. “And do you really want to grant permission to housekeepers to go through guests’ drawers? When you check into a hotel, you have a contract. You essentially have an apartment. There are invasion of privacy issues.”

## Have a Plan

While the risks of an active shooter can theoretically be minimized, they can’t be eliminated, and businesses and other organizations can take steps to be better prepared.

“Have a plan for all situations and maintain situational awareness of your surroundings, people, environment, exits, potential threats,” Sullivan says. “No matter the situation, continue to develop your plan. It may not go as you hope, but you’ll be in a better place if you don’t hesitate and begin acting on a pre-planned SOP (standard operating procedure).”

“When we have tenant or staff emergency planning meetings, we try to remind everyone as an individual to always continue developing your plans.”

Fast thinking as well as fast acting is essential in an active shooter situation.

“Active shooter situations are violent and quick,” Sullivan says. “The quicker people get out of denial the faster their response will be. Recognize the situation for what it is: It’s a shooting, not a fire.”

He says there should be an off-site place for people to meet after an evacuation. “If everyone meets at the same place on-site they make easy targets,” he says.

Tarlow says that “hotel staff can drill and practice scenarios, either with computer simulations or in real life. They can create a lists of potential risks and their mitigation. Ask questions such as: Where can we go for shelter? How do we evacuate? How easy is it for police or ambulances to reach us?”

Systems should be in place, he says, so hotel staff can report if they have a sense something is wrong.

Tarlow says the hospitality industry is well-aware of the threats posed by active shooters.

“Hotels are looking at lots of issues,” he says. “Most larger hotels have security departments, and they are constantly aware we live in a world of risk and are always trying to stay ahead of the curve.”

# Avoid Deny Defend™

**During an act of violence (e.g. robbery, hostage situation, workplace violence, active shooter):**

**AVOID** starts with your state of mind.

- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Have an exit plan.
- Move away from the source of the threat as quickly as possible.
- The more distance and barriers between you and the threat, the better.

**DENY** when getting away is difficult or maybe even impossible.

- Keep distance between you and the threat.
- Create barriers to prevent or slow down a threat from getting to you.
- Turn the lights off.
- Remain out of sight and quiet by hiding behind large objects and silence your phone.

**DEFEND** because you have the right to protect yourself.

- If you cannot Avoid or Deny be prepared to defend yourself.
- Be aggressive and committed to your actions.
- Do not fight fairly—this is about survival.

Call 911 when you are in a safe area. When law enforcement arrives, show your hands and follow commands. Remember that failure to plan is planning to fail.

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***"Hawaii's hospitality industry has been proud to honor the future leaders of our state and nation. They represent the best of your youth devoting themselves to volunteerism and public service, and we're delighted to recognize them for their civic leadership and selflessness." — Mufi Hannemann***

The recipients of the 2018 HLTA Citizen-Scholar Awards

# 42 Seniors Win HLTA Scholarships

One senior from each of Hawaii's 42 public schools received a \$1,000 Citizen-Scholar Award for their post-graduate education from the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association.

The scholarships are a partnership of the HLTA, *The Star-Advertiser* and the Department of Education. Funding is provided by HLTA members. This was the 14th year the awards have been offered, and this year's presentations were made at a luncheon on April 24 at the 'Alohilani Resort Waikiki Beach.

The students were selected by the DOE for scholastic achievement and school and community service. Each achieved a minimum 3.2 grade-point average and completed extensive school and public service projects.

"Hawaii's hospitality industry has been proud to honor the future leaders of our state and nation," says Mufi Hannemann, HLTA president and CEO. "These seniors have been selected by dint of their scholastic success as well as their invaluable contributions to their schools and our community. They represent the best of your youth devoting themselves to volunteerism and public service, and we're delighted to recognize them for their civic leadership and selflessness."

In addition, a \$2,500 scholarship was presented to the top student from each of Hawaii's four counties. The students were selected by an HLTA committee. This year's recipients are:

## Hawaii Island

**Crismel Juan**, Keaau High School: Juan worked with the statewide Hawaii Public Health Institute Youth Council, which involved a student-led push at the Legislature to curb smoking. She is an officer with the National Honor Society and active with the student government senate, Health Occupations Students of America and AVID and Interact clubs. Juan plans to attend the University of Rochester.

## Kauai

**Braden K.H. Kobayashi**, Waimea High School: Kobayashi is the commander of the school's 182-member Junior ROTC battalion. He led the group in repainting the Kauai Veterans Cemetery pavilion and restoring the Hui 'o Laka Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Kokee. Kobayashi is a member of the golf and air riflery teams and is active in the National

Honor Society and Interact Club. He plans to attend Creighton University.

## Maui

**Emily N. Mitra**, Maui High School: Mitra is president of the National Honor Society at her school, and tutors children after school through Big Brothers Big Sisters. The group also raised money to buy supplies for a nearby elementary school that was badly damaged by a fire. She is active in student government, is an officer with the Maui County 4-H, and captains the Sabers golf team. Mitra will attend California Baptist University this fall.

## Oahu

**Rovi C. Porter**, Kalani High School: A science and technology whiz, Porter founded Girls in Technology, Engineering and Computing, a class to empower girls in the coding field and is treasurer and project manager for the Kalani Robotics Academy. She is a violinist in the orchestra, captain of the varsity soccer team and a member of the cross-country team. Porter will attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



## Mauna Kea Resort Makes Staff Moves

Mauna Kea Resort has named **Stephen Dowling** as director of property management and **Brad Doell** as director of sales and marketing, in addition to the promotions of **Libby Child** as associate director of leisure sales and **Maylyn Carvalho** as leisure sales manager.



**Stephen Dowling**



**Brad Doell**

Dowling will oversee Mauna Kea Resort's residential property management and rental business efforts. He joins the resort community from Utah where he was the general manager of Canyons Grand Summit Resort Hotel in Park City.

Doell will spearhead all sales initiatives for Mauna Kea Resort, including Mauna Kea Beach Hotel and Hapuna Beach Resort.



**Libby Child**



**Maylyn Carvalho**

Most recently, he was the director of sales and marketing at Turtle Bay Resort on Oahu. Child will lead the leisure sales team for Mauna Kea Resort's two properties and Prince Waikiki, which all fall under Prince Resorts Hawaii. She joined Mauna Kea Resort in 2013. With her promotion to leisure sales manager, Carvalho's sales territory has expanded to include territories within the west and east coasts of the United States, as well as Canada.

## Wagoner Named Outrigger Chief

**Jeff Wagoner** became president and CEO of Outrigger Hotels and Resorts on April 26, and KSL Resorts co-founder **Scott Dalecio**, who has been serving as Outrigger's interim CEO since early 2017, has been appointed executive chairman of the global hospitality brand.



**Jeff Wagoner**

Wagoner's previous positions include executive vice president of hotel operations for Trump Hotels as well as several senior level positions within the Wyndham Hotel Group.

"It's a tremendous time of reinvestment and growth for Outrigger Hotels and Resorts and I am honored for the opportunity to be a part of this new chapter," Wagoner says. "Building on Outrigger's 70 years of hospitality, I look forward to enhancing and growing our portfolio while upholding the authenticity and integrity of this iconic brand."

Outrigger's portfolio currently includes nine beachfront resorts in Hawaii, Fiji, Thailand, Guam, Mauritius and the Maldives, along with 27 owned and/or managed hotels, resorts and vacation condominiums.

## Pye Joins Fairmont's Maui Team

**Michael Pye** has been named area general manager for Hawaii and general manager of Fairmont Kea Lani where he will oversee the luxury 450-key, all-suite and villa luxury resort on Maui.



**Michael Pye**

As the area GM, Pye also will oversee the 540-room Fairmont Orchid on the Kohala Coast. He has served as GM at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver since 2014. Previously, he worked at multiple Fairmont properties including Fairmont Hotel Macdonald, Fairmont Waterfront and Fairmont Southampton. In 2010, he returned to Canada as GM at Fairmont Winnipeg.

## Hale Koa Announces Four Changes

Hale Koa Hotel, an Armed Forces Recreation Center at Ft. DeRussy, has announced four staff changes.

As the hotel's new director, **Derek Bacigal** will oversee all facilities and project management of the 818-room beachside resort which occupies 72 acres designated for American military service members and their families.



**Derek Bacigal**



**Limarie Perry**



**Kelley Hupp**



**Will Mann**

Most recently, Bacigal was chief engineer at the hotel and, prior to that, was with Hyatt Hotels in San Francisco and Chicago. **Limarie Perry** has been appointed as the chief financial officer and will lead strategic financial planning, management and execution. She brings 20 years of financial management to her new position and was most recently with Roy's Restaurants and The Modern Honolulu. **Kelley Hupp** is the new assistant to the general manager. She was resort operations director and has been with the hotel since 1995. **Will Mann** is the new director of contracting and will oversee contract awards and administration, purchasing and acquisition. Previously, Mann was a contract specialist with the U.S. Air Force in Okinawa, Japan.





Front row, from left: Leiah Nataea, Brilie Kovaloff, Kalina Obrey, Kamalu Kamakawiwoole and Caiyle Kaupu. Second row: tournament director Chris Hansen, assistant coach Rodney Cavaco, Sisilia Kaufusi, Paige Fahrni, assistant coach Sherice Ajifu, Alayna Akiona, Teves Suan, Tanniya Uchida, Jalen Tanuvasa and Kelsie Ima. Third row: Mufi Hannemann and assistant coach Rodney Veary.

## Hoopster Ambassadors of Aloha

Coached by Mufi Hannemann, the president and CEO of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association, Team Aloha—Hawaii's girls' basketball squad and champions of good will—went undefeated to win the title in a 72-team, NCAA-

sanctioned Mainland tournament in April.

The championship in the *Elite Is Earned Spring Invitational*, one of the top Spring AAU tournaments, was Team Aloha's second in four years, and third overall.

Participants in the tournament in

Walnut Creek, Calif., are all-star athletes representing girls' prep programs throughout the Western United States. Founder Hannemann, a former Iolani High School star who also played at Harvard, has led the team for the past 12 years.

## Scholarships for Travel Industry Students of HLTA Members

College students pursuing degrees in hotel and lodging management can avail themselves of scholarships offered by the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association.

HLTA is now accepting applications for the Clem Judd and Bob Holden scholarships for incoming college juniors

and seniors. The goal of the awards program is to educate hospitality students and showcase the many career opportunities right here at home.

Eligible students must be enrolled at an accredited university or college majoring in hospitality management and have a

cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Clem Judd applicants must provide proof of Hawaiian ancestry. Applications are due by close of business on June 29.

HLTA also provides exclusive members-only scholarships. Every year, one scholarship is awarded to the child of an Allied member and another to the child of an Active member. A student must be a graduating high school senior and be admitted to a university.

Information on the HLTA's scholarships is available at [hawaiilodging.org](http://hawaiilodging.org).



## Aqua-Aston Names Port CDO

Aqua-Aston Hospitality has appointed **Chris Port** to chief development officer.



**Chris Port**

He is responsible for the expansion of Aqua-Aston Hospitality by optimizing the potential of its existing portfolio of hotels and resorts, and identifying new markets. He reports to **Kelvin Bloom**, chief executive officer, Aqua-Aston Hospitality.

Most recently, Port served as a development leader for Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, where he headed up expansion efforts across the western United States, Canada and Mexico.



**Alexander Dale**

**Alexander Dale** is the new executive chef at Aqua

Kauai Beach Resort on Kauai.

The resort introduced Dale during a commemorative Chefs' Collaborative Dinner Event on April 20 in partnership with Chef Ed Kenney.

Dale recently was at Turtle Bay Resort. He is a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Los Angeles.

## Williams to Oversee Highgate Properties

**Cheryl Williams** has been named regional vice president of sales and marketing in Hawaii for Highgate, a real estate investment and hospitality management company.



**Cheryl Williams**

Williams recently was general manager of The Royal Hawaiian. Previously she was vice president of sales and marketing for Starwood Hotels & Resorts in Hawaii and French Polynesia.

## Nasser Promoted at DoubleTree

**Cheryl Lynn Nasser** has been promoted to director of sales, marketing and revenue at DoubleTree by Hilton Alana Waikiki Beach. Previously she was director of revenue management.

In addition to achieving budgeted room revenue, RevPAR and RevPAR index goals, she will oversee sales activities for the hotel, including leisure, business and group room bookings, special events and catering. She will oversee all marketing initiatives,



**Cheryl Nasser**

including advertising, promotions and public relations. Nasser served as assistant director of revenue management at Hilton Hawaiian Village and Grand Wailea, A Waldorf Astoria Resort, both DoubleTree by Hilton Alana sister properties. She also held executive and management positions at Hyatt properties in California.



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The HLTA Charity Walk is held throughout the state to raise funds for local nonprofits.

PHOTO COURTESY HAWAII LODGING & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

# Charity Walk

## 40 Years of Giving

**HLTA event has raised over \$32 million for local charities**

BY BRANDON BOSWORTH

Bake sales, swap meets, selling bento plates, even cookbooks—supporters of the Visitor Industry Charity Walk have been busily raising funds for the annual statewide event that last year attracted 14,000 walkers.

Throughout May, the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association will be staging its 40th Charity Walk on Hawaii Island, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Molokai and Oahu. This year's theme: "A Tradition of Giving."



Glenn Vergara

"I've been a strong supporter for the longest time," says Glenn Vergara, 2018

In 2017, the Walk raised more than \$2.27 million to help local charities, a record amount. Since its inception in 1978, the event has raised over \$32 million for Hawaii nonprofits.

## Charity Walk Schedule

The Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association's 40th annual Visitor Industry Charity Walk is held in May on different dates and locations throughout the state.

**May 5: Lanai, Dole Park**

**May 5: Molokai, Hotel Molokai**

**May 12: Island of Hawaii, Queens' Marketplace**

**May 12: Kauai, Vidinha Soccer Field**

**May 12: Maui, Maui War Memorial Park Soccer Field**

**May 19: Oahu, Ala Moana Beach Park**

For more information, visit [charitywalkhawaii.org](http://charitywalkhawaii.org).

Charity Walk statewide chairperson and general manager of the Waikiki Resort Hotel. "Last year HLTA wrote a record 128 checks to charities. Maui alone raised \$1.1 million. Oahu raised \$480,000, so there's lots of upside opportunity. We could raise so much

more, at least half a million."

Kevin Donnelly has participated in every Charity Walk, including the first one back in 1978. "I was working at The Royal Hawaiian at the time," he says. "The course was longer back then—18 miles instead of 4.5. I walked



Kevin Donnelly

with people from work. It got me so interested in being outdoors I started running."

In 1980, Donnelly ran the Charity Walk in preparation for his first marathon, which he participated in later that year. More recently Donnelly, now an instructor for Kapiolani Community College's Hospitality and Tourism Education department, has become involved with other aspects of the Walk.

"Sometimes I drive the van to pick up people who can't make it to the finish line," he says. "Over the years I've gone from walking the course to running it to driving it."

Donnelly says one of the things he likes best about the Charity Walk is the involvement of charities. "Charities that benefit from the event also participate. They do volunteer work and recruit their own walkers," he says.

To support the Charity Walk, those in the hospitality industry do more than just sign up for the actual Walk.

"There was a time when fundraising for the Charity Walk was mostly done by the HLTA," Vergara says. "Now, different hotel properties support the Walk in crazy, beautiful ways."

"At the Waikiki Resort Hotel, we have multiple departments competing with one another to see who can raise the most money. The front office is selling Molokai bread. The maintenance department is selling Chinese-style bento plates. The housekeeping department is selling halo-halo (Filipino shave ice dessert) to employees, guests and vendors. They are doing this during their lunch times, breaks and after work."

Vergara says other hotels are holding bake sales, swap meets and other creative fundraising activities.

"One property is selling its own cookbook featuring recipes from employees for \$15," he says. The Charity Walk is "a great way for employees and hotels to get together as a team to try to raise more money than last year."



# Housekeeping: The Heart of a Hotel

## Hao Dang Tanacsos, a master of training and motivating, heads up HLTA Council

Our many visitors come to Hawaii to enjoy the sun, sand, sea and surf. But the best beaches, the finest restaurants and all the aloha spirit we have to share will be for naught if their accommodations don't meet their expectations.

Whether guests stay at a luxury resort, a modest inn or something in-between, it's the responsibility of the housekeeping department staff—the heart of a hotel—to provide for their guests and make a lasting impression. While housekeepers are rarely seen and usually unappreciated, their importance to the hospitality industry is immeasurable.

*“While housekeepers are rarely seen and usually unappreciated, their importance to the hospitality industry is immeasurable.”*

— MUFI HANNEMANN

As the state's largest private sector visitor industry organization, the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association is keenly aware of the importance of well-trained housekeeping professionals and the essential role they play in the reputation of a hotel and our entire hospitality industry.

That spirit of professional dedication was what led Hao Dang Tanacsos, owner of HAOsekeeping Inc., to seek our collaboration in establishing the HLTA Hospitality Housekeeping Council, one of several of our standing committees that promote industry standards, career development, and the exchange of the latest ideas in the field. She was tireless in seeking me out to discuss such an arrangement and I was so impressed with her passion and professionalism.

Hao is the chairperson of the Council. With more than 20 years of experience

and a wealth of knowledge in housekeeping operations, Hao has earned an exceptional reputation in the industry. Born and raised in South Vietnam, Hao moved to Hawaii and worked in the housekeeping departments of several properties over more than two decades before starting her consulting firm. She has managed and trained housekeeping staff at luxury resorts, including The Fairmont Kea Lani Maui, Mauna Kea Resort, Ritz-Carlton Mauna Lani and Hyatt Waikoloa Resort.

She's well-known for motivating and uniting her colleagues to work together for the greater good. She says her greatest career achievement has been watching those she's trained go on to become executive housekeepers or general managers.

Through the HLTA Hospitality Housekeeping Council, we're looking

to Hao and her Council members to strengthen the industry from within by ensuring current and future housekeepers receive proper training; providing opportunities for education, networking and mentoring; and fostering long-term careers in the industry.

The Council holds meetings on Oahu and the Neighbor Islands. The next meeting on Oahu will be held at the Waikiki Resort Hotel in June. The guest speaker will be Alan Yamamoto, a Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health adviser who will discuss workplace safety and compliance. If you are interested in learning more or would like to join the Council, contact the HLTA office at 923-0407.

People like Hao and the extraordinary members of the Housekeeping Council provide the leadership and inspiration that will ensure the continued success of



**Mufi Hannemann, president and CEO of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association, and Hao Dang Tanacsos, owner of HAOsekeeping Inc.**



tourism and serve as the heart of the profession and the hotel industry.

*Mufi Hannemann is president and CEO of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association.*



# 2018 HAPALUA Half- Marathon



Betzaida Santana, Sgt. John Chinen Jr., Leanne Ducharme, Brita Howlett, Sean Ebb

PHOTOS BY ANJJ LEE

Shave ice, fresh malasadas and medals welcomed the 7,315 runners who finished the 2018 Hapalua Half-Marathon on April 8. The 13.1-mile course started in Waikiki, went up and around Diamond Head and concluded at Kapiolani Park.



Stephon Byrd, Cody Lister, Mac Hamblen, Nathan Weir, Nathaniel Blight



Alli Sims, Mallory Gresham, Katelyn Devarences



Sonia Evoy, Kelly Yano, Miuki Miura



Julio Brito, Aisha Connors



Eric Chiang, Travis Long, Thomas Acox





Paul Cruz, Peter Blas, Abbie Fuller, Ivana Almand, Dan Arcentales



Zennea Muniz, Julia Takahashi, Shima Kagita, Naomi Aoyama



Eldridge Kuiee, Thomasine Catcho, Chezlin Grilho, Chevelle Grilho, Rita Grilho



John Foster, Keolani Crissman, Glenn Crissman



Amy Chang, Julie Lee, Chantillie Cruz



Craig Freshour, Bonnie Freshour



Lindsey Wilbur , Bree Wee, Rani Henderson, Cindy Anderson, Jill Thompson



Hiroko Iijima, Jiwon Kang, Anna Matsuzaki



# HTA Supports Kauai Community

Kauai's northernmost communities from Wainiha to Haena are cut off—literally—from the rest of the world as recovery efforts continue to repair the massive damage caused by the record-setting rainfall and flooding on April 14-15.

As May begins, it will be weeks before Kuhio Highway reopens to all traffic and months before daily life becomes normal again.

State and county emergency work crews are making tremendous progress each day. Donations of food, water and supplies have poured in from residents and businesses statewide. And bravo to our state lawmakers for appropriating \$100 million in emergency funding for Kauai's recovery.

HTA staff members recently did an assessment of the community's needs. Based on feedback, we are funding a free shuttle service to help families from Wainiha to Haena gather food rations, fresh water and supplies, receive medical care and have keiki attend a make-shift school at Hanalei Colony Resort.

Keep Kauai's north shore in your prayers and remind visitors that the

rest of the island is open for business, including Hanalei.

## Competitors Team Up

An inspiring business collaboration has brought competitors together to do what's best for tourism on the Island of Hawaii. Supported by seven Japan travel agencies—JTB, H.I.S., JALPAK, KNT, ANA Sales, NTA and TTA—the Kohala Coast Evening Shuttle was launched on April 1.

The shuttle runs daily and makes nine stops along the Kohala Coast. We appreciate how these competitors came together to support this shuttle service and make the Kohala Coast experience more exciting, rewarding and worthwhile for visitors to enjoy their stay.

## LEI Program Supports Workforce Development

Tourism supports more than 200,000 jobs statewide and its economic impact is felt by every person, business and community. Maintaining the future success of Hawaii's tourism industry depends on workforce development and

increasing interest among our young kamaaina to pursue a career in tourism.

To this end, HTA sponsors the LEI program (Leadership, Exploration and Inspiration), Hawaii's largest workforce development program, in partnership with ClimbHI. In April, more than 1,000 high school students in all the counties saw up-close what makes tourism such an outstanding career opportunity.

The teens participated in hotel site inspections and heard from industry executives about how they can make a career in tourism.

Hawaii has the world's best, most highly skilled hospitality professionals. Guided by the aloha spirit, in the years to come our industry will be looking for the next generation of hospitality professionals to steer tourism forward.



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

# Are We Prepared for What Could Happen?

Insurance, financial planning, extra inventory, dedicated staff . . . how can we ever be prepared for what might happen? Let me give you an example: I opened a restaurant in August 2017 on the beautiful North Shore of Kauai, right on the beach and near the world-famous Hanalei Bay and the "End of the Road."

So we go about our business day-by-day and, all of a sudden, record rainfall in a 24-hour period. Homes washed away, cars gone, personal belongings destroyed or missing—and 15 landslides that blocked the only way in or out of this part of Kauai. Local residents were stranded, visitors were being airlifted out, a community was completely cut off from the world.

How can you prepare for this? How do you survive it? Do you have enough

insurance for all the what-ifs? How long can you stay open with the inventory on hand? And will anyone help? These are all things that could be very real for all of us living on a chain of islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

So here is some advice: Make sure you have a proper plan with insurance and staff, but most of all, if you decide to stay open through the disaster, will you be able to get reimbursed or paid for the service that you are doing for the community? This is something that needs to be set up before the emergency, not after. If you operate in a remote area, contact the government and supporting agencies now and see if you can be a designated center for emergencies.

None of this will be easy to handle after you already start assisting people, unless you have a set agreement of how it will go

down. There are many things in place for infrastructure and personal loss, but little or nothing in place for businesses that support the community in the disaster area, unless you have a previous agreement. Get it in writing.

The Hawaii Restaurant Association is here to support the foodservice industry in all aspects—this is one that you don't hear much about.

Be prepared.



*Gregg Fraser, executive director of the Hawaii Restaurant Association, can be reached at [gregg.fraser@hawaii-restaurant.org](mailto:gregg.fraser@hawaii-restaurant.org) or 944-9105. For information, visit [hawaii-restaurant.org](http://hawaii-restaurant.org).*



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