

# Imua Polenisia

A Newsletter of the  
Polynesian Cultural Center

## President Orgill: 'Can I believe Nephi?'

In going through a file of Christmas messages I keep, I came across a letter that embodies the essence of the spirit we're trying to radiate to all who visit here. A Jewish immigrant from New York who operates a large cheese and bread factory with his sons, and speaks English as a foreign language, wrote to a bishop in Hauula in 1995.

"Every year we come to Hawaii [and]... we always end our visit on Oahu island. Last year...we stay at Christmas time in a beautiful hotel past a big sugar mill. On a Sunday my wife say she must go to church because is Christmas time, so we drive along and she see a church by the sea...

"When we enter inside a Christmas play is happening. I watch a man represent Nephi speak and I think what kind of people have other men besides shepherds and the American idea of wise men.

"However, the play is very moving and even with my Jewish beliefs I am very touched deep in my heart. I wanted the Christmas play never to end yet. When we leave I think very much of what Nephi said in the play, [and] my wife she feels she must join this religion.

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## First Presidency appoints Alfred Grace as the next President & CEO of PCC

The First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has appointed P. Alfred Grace as the next president and chief executive officer of the Polynesian Cultural Center, to succeed current President & CEO Von D. Orgill, "effective some time after January 31, 2013."

Grace — a Maori originally from Turangi, New Zealand, who now lives in Laie — has served as the PCC's Chief Operating Officer since January 2009. He will be the first Polynesian president of the Cultural Center to come up through the ranks: He started at the PCC as a BYU-Hawaii student night show dancer, and spent much of his career in sales and marketing, holding increasingly responsible positions over the years.

President Orgill said he'd been authorized to relay the First Presidency's announcement during a special Team Meeting in the Gate-



P. Alfred Grace

way Restaurant on December 14, 2012.

"The Cultural Center has had an amazing relationship with the prophets of God ever since President David O. McKay, and that remains true today," President Orgill said after receiving the news. He added that the Center also benefits from the assistance, resources, encouragement and gratitude of the Church.

Responding to the announcement, Grace told PCC team members he had been asked to go to Salt Lake City earlier in the week "to meet with the Brethren. I had done that many times in the past, but I had always been at the right shoulder of this man [pointing to President Orgill]."

"They asked me about my feelings for the Polynesian Cultural Center, and I felt the responsibility to represent the heart of the PCC, that whatever the future held the

## President Orgill called as mission president

After serving as President & CEO of the Polynesian Cultural Center for almost 13 years, President Von D. Orgill will step down at the end of February 2013 to prepare to serve as a mission president, but he and his wife, Sherri, do not know yet where they will be assigned.

He recounted that President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted a videoconference interview with them right after the October 2012 General Conference. "He extended the

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## Grace named next PCC President & CEO...

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Brethren might know the feelings of management here.”

Grace told them PCC management had been grateful to be part of the Envision Laie planning process and recognized the importance the PCC, BYU–Hawaii and the Laie Hawaii Temple play in the community. He said Center management also recognizes the importance of working with BYUH students, not just to give them jobs but also to provide them with meaningful work experiences that build their résumés.

“I expressed a desire that we not depart from our core competencies. We’re the best at what we do,” Grace said. “I also told them that I personally felt when President McKay spoke of ‘millions of people’ coming to Laie [during his 1955 groundbreaking speech for the university], he was not just speaking of the Cultural Center; he was speaking of this community, and that the PCC is a ‘doorway,’ not the end result. We have to be more a part of the community and allow our guests to understand its special nature.”

“I was amazed that the First Presidency were totally attentive and concerned about the Polynesian Cultural Center,” Grace said of his interview in Utah. He also noted that he received a phone call from the First Presidency by the time he arrived back at the Honolulu International Airport informing

him of his selection.

“I love you, and I love this place. It’s been very good to me, my family, and all of our families,” Grace said, adding that he likes the analogy of chain links: “The Center has been



Seamus Fitzgerald (right) congratulates Grace

a strong ‘chain,’ and, going forward, our collective responsibility is to make sure the link we leave in this chain is also strong.”

“We’re preparing for the next 50 years, and it’s important that we are committed to fulfilling what our Heavenly Father would like us to do.”

In closing, Grace expressed “a deep sense of gratitude for everything Von and Sherri [Orgill] have done for the PCC... They leave a truly meaningful legacy.”

lowing three years.

“Of course we’re going to miss being here,” President Orgill said. “This is a very special place. We love the special people here. They feel like family to us. It’s become our home, so it’s hard to even think of saying goodbye.”

“At the same time we’re genuinely excited for our new assignment and we continue to feel immensely grateful for the privilege the Lord has given us to serve here as long as we have. It’s been a remarkable, sweet experience in every conceivable way. We can never thank the Lord enough for allowing us to come and we will carry the memory of these amazing people and this unique place with us always... wherever we may go.”

“What a wonderful thing it is that the Lord has acknowledged your faith, hard work, devotion and all that you have done and continued to do at this special place,” President Orgill replied to Grace and all the team members. “I couldn’t be more thrilled and excited.”

“May you always remember what a special work we have been given, and may you treat it with the kind of sacredness it deserves.”

After the announcement meeting, Maori Islands Manager Seamus Fitzgerald — who comes from the same small town as Grace — jumped up and performed an impassioned chant in his honor.

Later, Fitzgerald said, “I’m overwhelmed. It’s unbelievable, really. We come from a small town of Maori people. I’m sure the family there and his ancestors are really, really proud of him.”

And while others waited in line to congratulate Grace, PCC Director of Cultural Presentations Delsa Moe — a Samoan — said she was happy for both him and the PCC. “Growing leaders is what this place is about. To me, it’s irrelevant that he’s Polynesian. That’s a nice touch, but it’s more important that he was trained and groomed here.”

Elder and Sister Aina, a senior missionary couple at the Center, said they had gotten acquainted with Grace in his capacity as Laie Hawaii Married Student Stake president, and know him as “an outstanding spiritual leader.”

Keali’i Haverly, PCC Director of In-Center Marketing, said he and his wife were also very pleased with the selection. He also said, “Words cannot express what the Orgills have done for the Center. They are amazing and wonderful people.”

Bobby Akoi, the PCC’s Protocol Officer, said he and other members of the Officer Team had been fasting and praying about the selection, and were very pleased the First Presidency has picked someone who came up through the ranks. “Alfred has really proven himself over the years and matured in his positions. We know he’ll do a wonderful job.”

Akoi also praised President Orgill as “the closest person to Christ that I know. He has lived that way throughout his 12-plus years at the PCC and he’s going to be greatly missed.”

## President, Sister Orgill called to serve a mission

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call and said the specific assignment would come later, probably in February or March. It was a very special experience for us.”

“He also said this would be a unique time, in part, because of the dramatic increase in the number of missionaries who will be serving since President Monson announced the change in ages for missionaries,” President Orgill said.

President Orgill noted that at the end of February or early March he and Sister Orgill will move back to Orem, Utah, until they report to the Missionary Training Center for their four-day Mission Presidents’ Seminar on June 23. After that, they will report directly to their assigned mission for the fol-





PCC President & CEO Von D. Orgill (left) with BYUH student carver Otis Fruean, his wife Ripeka and their five children, after winning the 2nd annual 'Spirit of Aloha' Award (photo by Mike Foley)

## PCC bestows annual 'Spirit of Aloha' Award

President & CEO Von D. Orgill presented the PCC's second annual Spirit of Aloha Award to BYUH student carver **Otis Fruean** during the Center's team meeting on December 7, 2012, for among other things demonstrating that spirit through his "radiant smile, working hard all the time, always being cheerful, productive and motivating others around him to be as productive as he is."

Fruean, a Samoan from Auckland, New Zealand, who graduated from BYU-Hawaii on December 15 with a bachelor's degree in social work, came to Laie in 2009. He and his wife, Ripeka, and their five children have moved back to New Zealand where he plans to go to graduate school. His father and her parents were also PCC student employees.

"I'm one of those students who knew from day-one that it was a privilege to work here," Fruean responded. He added he didn't have to lean on the experiences of his parents, in-laws, or cousins who have also worked at the Center. "I've had my own wonderful experiences here... and I know our Heavenly Father smiles down on this place."

President Orgill explained that the PCC established the annual Spirit of Aloha Award in 2011 with a generous donation from the Keith and Carol Jenkins Foundation to recognize a BYU-Hawaii student working at the Center "who best demonstrates the spirit of aloha personified in the service and in the

life of the late Barbara Velasco."

"We in the islands know that when you're talking about the spirit of aloha, you're really talking about the Spirit of the Savior," he added. "We share that spirit with everyone who comes here."

He went on to say the Jenkins worked closely with Velasco in their role as key members of the BYUH/PCC Presidents' Leadership Council. She was an LDS Philanthropies donor liaison who passed away in December 2010 after sharing her aloha spirit with many who made financial contributions to BYU-Hawaii and the Center.

"To us, she became an example of Christ-like concern and commitment," Jenkins wrote in a special booklet about Velasco. "We are grateful for her vision that touched our lives."

"Everybody in Hawaii talks about the aloha spirit, but it's here that people feel the strength of that spirit in such degree that they know it comes from a divine source," President Orgill said.

"Barbara had this magic inside of her that came from the spirit of aloha, that lived so strongly in her heart and radiated from her in everything she did. I can remember the first time I met her, I was just swallowed up in her glorious joy of life and love. She was marvelous and wonderful in special ways, and was known as Mrs. Aloha."

"There were many students who were nominated, and there was much pondering and deliberation that went into the selecting the awardees," President Orgill continued. "It's incredible that we have so many here that have that special gift. In a way we could give this award to almost any one of the BYU-Hawaii students who work at the Center."

### Ben Howells, the first recipient

The first annual PCC Spirit of Aloha Award went to Ben Howells, a Guest Services guide from Sheffield, England, a senior ICS major who graduated in April 2012.

At the time of the first award in December 2011, President Orgill said, "So far this year we've received 26 letters from guests that Ben served as a guide, who acknowledged and recognized the difference that he made in their visit."

President Orgill also pointed out that when Howells started training the guides in August, the number of all guest letters of recognition jumped from an average of about 30 per month to more than 100.

One guest, who had previously been to the Center at least eight times since 1989, wrote that he brought a friend who had survived pancreatic cancer on a first-time visit in May 2011. "This was a special time for us, and the Center performers never let us down. On a very wet and rainy day Ben never quit smiling...and made sure that we were well taken care of. His attitude, despite the weather, made our visit a memory we will not soon forget."

Another guest wrote that Ben "was the perfect guide," who "became a friend and made the whole PCC experience even better."

"Thank you so much for letting me into your lives," Howells remarked with emotion after receiving the award. "Before I came to Hawaii I had never met a Polynesian. My life has been completely changed by the PCC."

## Hawaii Islands village gets make-over

The Hawaiian Village has undergone a complete makeover in the past nine months, and will reopen in January 2013. Construction began last March, and while it was underway, the Hawaiians put on their activities near the Marquesan *tohua* and in the adjoining Hospitality Hut.

Raymond Mokiao, Hawaii Islands Manager, noted that most of the major *hale* or buildings are still in their same places, but all have been expanded and upgraded. “The whole village, which was built in 1976, needed to be redone,” he said, explaining that the PCC’s original Hawaiian Village was located approximately where the Mission House Complex now stands.

“There had been deterioration due to our climate and other conditions, There was also other structural damage over that time,” Mokiao continued. “We determined it was better to demolish everything and rebuild rather than try to repair them.”

He explained that the Hawaiian Islands staff was involved in planning the makeover, coming up with developing a “micro-*ahupua’a*” — the traditional Hawaiian land division usually stretching from the mountains to the sea that provided the people with all the natural resources they needed.



Hawaii Islands Manager Raymond Mokiao shows off the newly renovated village, which features more covered and open space, more taro patches, and even a traditional fish pond. The “new” village will open in January.

“We used the waterfall feature as the ‘center of the island,’ and the stream that flows into the lagoon. Then we moved the *lo’i* or taro patches [from near the lagoon] along the stream so the water can flow through them and back into the stream, and we added a *loko i’a* or traditional Hawaiian fish pond that connects to the lagoon. These characterize the long-term sustainability that was part of our earlier culture.”

Mokiao pointed out they also moved all of the previously lagoon-side *hale* to the *makai* [seaward] side, “so it opens up the view of our activities to visitors on the lagoon and

in the Tahitian Village and better showcases the village.”

The Hawaiian game of *ulu maika* or bowls will be played in the area previously occupied by the *lo’i*, while hula instruction will still take place underneath the spreading monkeypod tree. “Meanwhile, if it rains we now have a lot more room under cover of our new *hale*,” Mokiao said.

He added that an appropriate Hawaiian celebration for the “new” village will probably take place in February.



## Third annual ‘Christmas in Polynesia’

“This is the third year for our *Christmas in Polynesia* program, and it improves every year,” said PCC imagineer William Mahoni. “We have a lot more lights and props, and the quality of the dance components has gotten stronger.”

Mahoni explained that this year’s *Christmas* story featured *The Littlest Star*, which was written by his wife, Tania Mahoni, who also wrote the story-lines for the other PCC Christmas programs. “The little star not only becomes the whitest but the biggest star,” he said. “It’s not only about the stars, but it’s a comparison to our own lives and what we might accomplish. The children really enjoy it. People know the quality of our productions, and they’re excited to see them.”

“A big difference between this event and *Haunted Lagoon*,” he continued, “is that *The Littlest Star* only uses about 30–40 adult volunteers, and about 40 children.”

“*Christmas in Polynesia* finishes the year off with a great family activity. We appreciate everybody who came out.”



## Deseret Book publishes 'Miracle in the Pacific'

*Miracle in the Pacific: the Polynesian Cultural Center*, a new 184-page richly illustrated book published through Deseret Book of Salt Lake City, Utah, captures the essence of the PCC in time for its 50th anniversary celebration throughout 2013.

*Miracle* tells the story of the PCC's villages, shows and programs. It also provides insights into the role that the Church and its leaders have played in the Pacific islands since 1843 — especially in the small community of Laie, where the PCC forms a unique cultural-educational-spiritual triad with BYU-Hawaii and the Laie Temple.

Laura F. Willes, the author of this and three other books, is the wife of Mark H. Willes, who served on the PCC Board of Directors for 13 years, the last three as Chairman. She also lived in Hawaii while her husband served as President of the Hawaii Honolulu Mission and has visited the PCC hundreds of times.

She spent approximately one year sifting through the work of hundreds of contributors and several earlier manuscripts, and also conducted her own research and interviews for the project in writing the book.

"It was such a privilege to document the faith, hard work and sacrifices of so many that have made the Polynesian Cultural Center blossom over the past five decades," Willes responded. "It is a great success story against improbable odds."

"We're grateful *Miracle in the Pacific* came together in the beautiful way that it did, and we're exceptionally pleased with it," said PCC President & CEO Von D. Orgill. "Laura has captured the spirit of the Center and the unique ways the people have been accomplishing the purposes of this special place."

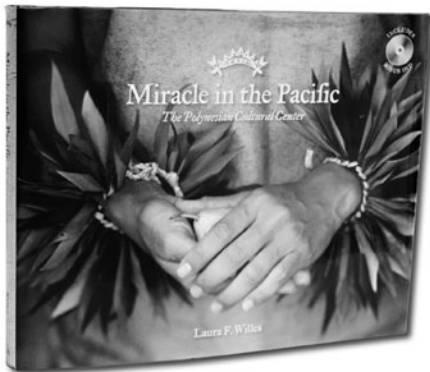
President Orgill also said Willes and her husband are BYU-Hawaii/PCC Presidents' Leadership Council members who have been very generous in helping the Center and BYUH students for many years. "This book is just the latest example: She donated all of her time and efforts in pulling this project together, and did a wonderful job."

"We're excited to get this book out to the

public," said Keali'i Haverly, PCC Director of In-Center Marketing. "It's a wonderful review of the Center's legacy, and it encompasses much of the richness of our origins as well as people — many of whom dedicated their lives to this special place — and events that have brought us to our golden anniversary."

"Laura Willes has been a part of our PCC legacy for many years," he added. "She has grasped the *mana* or creative spirit of the Center and rendered it in eloquent words."

Haverly also praised the contributions of Tausilinu'u David Hannemann, one of the PCC's first employees and its unofficial archivist ever since. "He can talk of things that occurred 50 years ago as if it were yesterday,"



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he said. "He's been a tremendous asset to Sister Willes and *Miracle in the Pacific*."

Haverly said the book will be on sale in the PCC gift shops and BYUH Bookstore, and it is currently available online at <http://deseretbook.com>. The book includes a bonus DVD of *Rainbows of Paradise*.

"This makes the perfect gift for friends and alumni of the Polynesian Cultural Center," Haverly said.



Laura Willes

## Meet the New Service Missionaries

The following new senior missionaries have recently started serving at the PCC:

### ELDER GARY & SISTER LAURA CARDNO

From Langley, BC, Canada: Elder Cardno has extensive air conditioning technical experience and is assigned to Physical Facilities, while Sister Cardno was a hairdresser and is assigned to Seamstresses.



The Cardnos

### ELDER STUART & SISTER CHARLOTTE MIKITS

From near Nashville, Tennessee: Elder Mikits was a repair machinist at GM and Saturn for 32 years and is assigned to Physical



The Mikits

Facilities. Sister Mikits has worked as a cake decorator, pharmacy technician and graphic artist. She is assigned to Uniform Supply.

### SISTER HALINA RADZIK

Born in France and raised in Switzerland, Sister Radzik has been a pharmacist assistant, flight attendant and hospital receptionist. She works on special projects at PCC.



Sister Radzik

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## Maori *whare nui* to get new carvings

The last remaining member of the eight-man carving team who created the original Aotearoa Village *whare nui* or meeting house carvings

50 years ago worked at his shop in Havelock North, New Zealand, over approximately the past year to carve several new replacement pieces that will tentatively be put up in January or February 2013.

PCC Aotearoa Islands manager Seamus Fitzgerald noted that after the replacement carvings are in place, the village and Maori community will perform a special seldom-seen ceremony to retire the old carvings.



The current tekoteko stands atop the koruru.

Fitzgerald also explained that Taka Walker was the youngest and the late PCC master carver Uncle Barney Christy the oldest labor missionar-

ies at the time to work on the original carvings.

“Over the last 10 years there’s been deterioration on the whole front of the house due to borer bees, termites, and weather,” Fitzgerald said. “We’re replacing the *tekoteko*, which is the figure on top or guardian of the *marae*. He’s standing on the *koruru*, representing the head of our ancestor; in our case that’s Hawaiiloa, or Hagoth. There’s also the *maihi* or the barge boards, which are the arms, the two *raparapa* on the ends and the two *paepae* on the front of the porch.”

“Normally these would be made from *totara* wood,” Fitzgerald said, pointing out that similar to *koa* trees in Hawaii, New Zealand no longer allows its endemic *totara* that would be big enough to complete the project to be cut down. He said his search for the wood went to government offices, various Maori trusts and “all over the country.”

“Finally in 2010 it ended up at Titiraupenga Trust [Te Arawa] in Tokoroa who accepted it. They had 50-year-old *totara* that had been lying on the ground. They released it ours is a cultural project.”

“In June 2011 we gave Taka Walker the contract to carve the replacements. He came up to inspect the current carvings, and to take measurements and pictures,” Fitzgerald continued. “He was a labor missionary under the direction of Hone [John] Taiapa when he worked on the first ones, and now he’s a master carver in his late 70s who still very much works on everything.

“However, this is the first time he has had to do an exact replica of one of John Taiapa’s carvings.”

“Taka is an incredibly humble man who has carved many Maori houses in New Zealand. He just felt to honor John and the other original carvers, he had to go for this project.”

“Actually, he added a little bit more detail that was left out of the original carvings because they were simply rushed to get the project done in time for the Center’s opening in 1963,” Fitzgerald said. “Taka’s whole goal this time was to faithfully duplicate John Taiapa’s original carvings.”

He added that Walker also invited PCC head carver Doug Christy — who was trained by his father, Uncle Barney — to go to New Zealand to work on the project over two separate month-long stints.

“When I first went down, I started shaping out the carving on the top of the right *maihi* and I worked my way down,” Christy said. “When I went the second time I worked on the bottom portion of that *maihi* and the *raparapa* — the fingers at the end.”

“As I got to know Taka, in a lot of ways it was like having my dad back again. My dad was ‘one of the boys.’ You worked with him, and Taka was the same way. It was a very rewarding experience for me. He taught me a few things, and also helped me tweak-up a few things that I didn’t quite get down from my dad. It was also awesome for me to carve on *totara*. I’d never carved on more than a little block of it before.”

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## PCC team members share Christmas *mana’o*

Four PCC employees expressed their gratitude about the Cultural Center and the meaning of Christmas during the Team Meeting on December 7, 2012:

**Jasmine Kiwa**, a BYUH student worker in the Maori Village, expressed appreciation for “furthering her education and building friendships with people from all over the world, that will last forever.”

She also admitted that her job was a challenge for her. “Before I came you would never catch



Kiwa

me on stage performing. I always tried to hide, but being in the Aotearoa Village I’ve really come out of my comfort zone. It has also helped me embrace my culture. I didn’t know much about it before I came.”

**Maxat Imangazinov**, another student worker, introduced fellow employees to his home country of Kazakhstan, where the majority of the people are Moslems. He recounted how one day a friend saw the small picture of Jesus he always carried in his wallet. “None of my friends or classmates knew that I was a Christian, but in front of the whole class he asked, ‘Is that a picture of



Imangazinov

Jesus?’ I wanted to bury myself. I was 16, and I said, no, it’s not a picture of Jesus and it’s not mine.”

“I felt like Peter after he denied Jesus,” he said. “After that I made a commitment that from that day I’ll never deny him again, and I’ve kept my promise so far.”

**Isa Moea’i** shared a missionary experience she had on Christmas Day in Oakland, California. She and her companion had baked cookies for several sisters, but one of them wasn’t home. “Driving down the road, I saw a homeless man. Immediately I said, stop the car.”



Moea'i

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Folk artist Eric Dowdle (right) unveils and presents his original 16X20-inch painting of the the PCC to President & CEO Von D. Orgill. Dowdle's company has turned the unique picture into a 500-piece puzzle.

## Unique art piece becomes a PCC puzzle

Eric Dowdle, head of Dowdle Folk Art in Lindon, Utah, presented his original, stylized acrylic painting of the Polynesian Cultural Center to President & CEO Von D. Orgill during a luncheon in the PCC Boardroom on December 13.

Dowdle's company has turned the colorful 16X20-inch painting into a 500-piece puzzle that is now sold at PCC gift shops, Costco, Walmart and other outlets. "We've done really well so far with it," he said.

He also pointed out that "people really study the painting as they put the puzzle together, staring at it for three-to-five hours.

I also put things in the picture to make it engaging enough so they won't forget, and if they've been here already, that they want to go back."

"I really love what I do," Dowdle continued. "I like to paint things with a purpose. For example, this [PCC] is the first company we've done this with; you've been the prototype."

"I also love to tell a story, and that's what folk art allows you to do. I really wanted to tell the Polynesian Cultural Center story; I want that story to get out there."

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Though her companion was reluctant, "I persisted. As we approached, he obviously had some mental health issues, but my companion and I started to sing, *We wish you a Merry Christmas, we wish you a Merry Christmas...* I offered him the plate of cookies, and for the first time we made eye-contact. He had the most beautiful eyes."

At that point, she said, "I felt like I was looking into the eyes of the Savior. I was filled with the compassion and love that the Savior has for me. I felt grateful for the gift that was given that day, and I felt first-hand the true meaning of Christmas."

**Jimmy Mapu**, a Guides supervisor, expressed his love for President Orgill, who often says, "How lucky and blessed we are to be a part of the miracles that happen at this special place."

Mapu shared part of a letter from a woman who recently experienced "one of the best days of my life" at the Center. "There's something special here at this place, and although I cannot tell you exactly what it is," she wrote, "I know it is something that this world could use a lot more of."



Mapu

"She felt the miracle of the PCC," Mapu said. "Such things happen here all the time. I love this place, not because of the nice buildings, the beautiful flowers and the fun shows, but because of the Spirit that is so special here."

Dowdle said he has extended the marketing concept of the puzzles by returning with a film crew to do travel shows. "Down the road we're going to return to the Polynesian Cultural Center to do a show. It will either be on PBS or The Travel Channel, and BYU-TV. Those go out to the world, and now I get to tell the story twice."

As another marketing angle, Dowdle's company will replace missing puzzle pieces for free. "That one little piece matters to us," he said.

Dowdle came to the luncheon with his wife as well as their daughter, a BYUH student who previously worked in the PCC gift shops, and her fiancé, who is also a BYUH student.

## New sales manager

**Lara Leimana Fonoimoana** has succeeded **Larie Langi Manutai** as Hawaii Sales Manager. Larie has joined the PCC's Waikiki Sales team as Sales Manager for groups, events, meetings, conventions and incentives.



Fonoimoana

Leimana — who is of Hawaiian, Caucasian, Asian and Native American extraction — joined the PCC in 2005 after working as a flight attendant and in real estate. She was previously a member of the Promo Team and a lead in *Ha: Breath of Life*.

"I love being a part of a company that's unique and very special," Leimana says, "and I'm very grateful to work with a team of wonderful employees."

Others might recognize Leimana from her 2011 reign as Mrs. Hawaii. She went on to win the national Mrs. America title for 2011-12.

## President Orgill's Christmas message

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"When we return to New York, every so often I think of this man Nephi I think who is he? What did he have to do with Christ? Then one day, two young man come into my factory to buy bread and cheese. They love my cheese so they want to leave me a gift. They give me a book called Book of Mormon and I just put it on the shelf.

"Two days it sit there then one night I leave to go home and I turn off the lights. This book falls on the floor, so I look at it and decide to take it home. Seven days passed by, and on the eve of my Sabbath, which begins Friday night, I see this book on the table. As I opened it I read the words, I, Nephi.

"My heart beat really fast as I continue reading and I cannot stop. This is the first time in all my life as a Jew my home is not darkened. You see on the eve of our Sabbath all light are turned off and we light candles [but] this night I sit on my bed my lamp light on. My wife and sons think I am ill but something happen to me and I did feel very sick. I think, did I kill my God? Can I believe this man, Nephi?

"Many days past, I look out for these two men. One day I look up and they are across the street eating my competitor's cheese and bread. I call to them when they come I ask them, how will I know this man Nephi is speaking truth? When they tell me to read the last page and pray about it, I tell them I want to be in this church. I do not wait for classes of study. Baptize me, I say to them.

"I am now baptized member with my wife and sons... I write to you to say thank-you for that Christmas play that I, a Jew whose parents left our homeland to come to America and I live in New York, must come to an unknown chapel by the sea and find the gift of Christmas in Hawaii. I will never forget that pagent [and] the Spirit I felt...

"I know that many people are touched by the message your play gives to all. I and my wife, 3 sons 2 daughters, in-laws and my 8 grandchildren all now member because of your Christmas play. I will never forget my beginnings in this great church and I have told it to many of my

Jew neighbors and now church member family. Thank you, thank you so very, very much."

What a beautiful testimony to the power of the Spirit of the Lord. That's what this season is all about, and that's why we're all together at the Polynesian Cultural Center. Let us express our love and devotion to our Father in Heaven, and rededicate ourselves to His service.

It is my prayer during this special time of the year and all of the days ahead that we keep His Spirit with us, that we radiate it in all we do and say, to everyone we meet, that we might invite all to come to Christ, our Lord and Savior.



Von D. Orgill  
President & CEO

## 2013 special events

2013 is going to be a very busy year for special events at the PCC, given our golden anniversary celebration during the first week of September. But before then, mark your calendars for:

- The 23rd annual Moanikeala Hula Festival, January 19, in the Pacific Theater.
- The 21st annual World Fireknife Championships and Samoan Arts Festival, May 8-11.
- And much more, including the opening of the "new" Hawaiian Village, and our new large-format movie experience, and...and...

## New missionaries...

*Continued from page 3*

### ELDER GARY & SISTER KATHY REYNOLDS

From Idaho Falls, Idaho: Elder Reynolds ran a small engine shop for 40 years, and



The Reynolds

now serves in the Motor Pool. Sister Reynolds, who worked in retail and as a corporate secretary, is helping with the student "Give and Take" program.



The Robinsons

### ELDER PHIL & SISTER SUSAN ROBINSON

From St. George, Utah: Elder Robinson spent most of his working years as a general contractor in Salt Lake City. He is assigned to Physical Facilities. Sister Robinson has helped with floral design, catering, crocheting and interior decorating. She serves in Human Resources.

### SISTER

### DARLENE SMITH

From Anchorage, Alaska: Sister Smith worked for years as an elementary school secretary. She has been assigned to Human Resources.



Sister Smith

## Maori carvings...

*Continued from page 6*

With Christy's participation in the new carving, Fitzgerald explained that "Walker is basically giving him guardianship of the work in our house. That was a wonderful gesture," he said.

"Traditionally when Maori pulled down carvings, they were buried. It was a funeral: They were like people. We mourned them, and they went away; but now the New Zealand Antiquities Act doesn't allow that; they go into museums."

"Our old carvings are going to be refurbished and put in Beesinger Hall," on the former CCNZ campus. "Before that," Fitzgerald said, "we'll hold a *poroporoaki* or farewell ceremony for the carvings on the *marae*. For millions of visitors to the PCC, the old carvings have been the first face of Maoritanga they've seen."



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