

# Imua Polenisia

A Newsletter from the  
Polynesian Cultural Center



## A Message From President Orgill

I'd like to start off this issue with a sincere "Thank you" to everyone who helped with the clean up during and after the March 9 closure. With everyone's assistance and can-do attitude, we were able to reopen the very next day. We are truly blessed to have such an extraordinary team. The weather may have been dreary and the floodwaters certainly created a mess, but the spirit of the Polynesian Cultural Center and the Laie community really shined that day.

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Gateway's gorgeous ambiance highlighted the live melodies of Natalie Ai Kamaau and Kapena

## Valentine's Dinner Concert Highlights Gateway's Potential

When the Polynesian Cultural Center opened its doors to the new Gateway in November, we not only unveiled a gorgeous new restaurant, but a unique events venue, as well. Gateway's versatile, open floor plan and customizable lighting can be configured to suit any needs with an ambiance unmatched by any other venue on the island. The Valentine's Dinner Concert served as the perfect platform to introduce the potential of Gateway as a premier events venue to kamaaina.

They say first impressions last and the Valentine's Dinner Concert made a resounding impression as nearly 700 guests attended the kamaaina exclusive event. For some, this was their first time setting eyes on the newly renovated Gateway and she did not disappoint. Many commented on the countless improvements in the décor as well as the substantial upgrade to the Island

Feast. The evening capped off with the always amazing live melodies of Natalie Ai Kamaau and Kapena.

"We were very pleased to show off the amazing capabilities of the venue and our staff's ability to highlight the 24,400-square-foot grand dining room, while maintaining

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## Mother's Day Dinner Event Date Set

Auwe, you missed the Valentine's Dinner Concert! No worries, we've already begun planning a Mother's Day Dinner Concert scheduled for Friday, May 11 in Gateway. Details are still being finalized and we'll be sure to let you know more once everything is in place.

## Promo Team Takes Center Stage at the Philadelphia International Flower Show



The PCC Promo Team transported guests at the Philadelphia International Flower Show to ancient Hawaii

“Hawaii, Islands of Aloha” was the theme of this year’s Philadelphia International Flower Show, the largest indoor flower show in the world, featuring over 10 acres of exhibit space. The Hawaii Visitors and Conventions Bureau as well as the Oahu Visitors Bureau helped with the coordination of the event and the Polynesian Cultural Center had the privilege of providing entertainment on the main stage in Pele’s Garden.

“We were honored to be a part of such a great event that promoted Hawaii and PCC to the east coast,” said Seth Casey, marketing manager of the PCC, who accompanied the promo team in Philadelphia. “Over half a million people were in attendance and PCC was featured in a live ABC broadcast from the show.”

Three times a day the promo team transported audiences to the time of ancient

Hawaii as they told the tale of the legendary feud between the goddess sisters Pele and Namakoakahai. Spectacular lighting effects accentuated the dancers movements while animated footage and narration brought the story to life. The stage was beautifully adorned with hala, hapu’u, palaa and palapalai integrated with native milo and thousands of orchids. A kii-o-Pele also graced the stage in honor of the goddess.

Revenues generated by the Philadelphia Flower Show help support the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s outreach program Philadelphia Green. The program provides technical support and encouragement to thousands of residents, community groups, and public and private agencies who work together to transform Philadelphia’s communities and public landscapes into vibrant green spaces.

## Spring Kamaaina Special

The Spring Kamaaina Special offers kamaaina 50% off general admission and 20% off up to four out-of-town guests for a limited time. For less than \$20 adult and \$15 keiki, kamaaina can experience a day’s worth of activities in the island villages and exhibits.

“Kamaaina are truly our greatest ambassadors and this special is a great opportunity to try out many of our new Go Native! activities here at the center,” said Raymond Maga-

lei, director of marketing for the PCC. “This special also allows those kamaaina who are entertaining out of state guests the chance to have them experience the unique cultures of Polynesia for less.”

A valid Hawaii ID must be presented at time of purchase; non-residents must be accompanied by kamaaina to be eligible for 20% off. Guests receive 20% off of regular prices (not kamaaina prices).

## President Orgill

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With 2012 well under way, I am happy to report that visitor numbers are up and we pray that this wave of momentum, which started in November of last year, continues through this year and beyond. There is so much that goes on at the Center on a daily basis and it is remarkable how outstanding the visitor experience has become. We could not have done this without each and every one of you who have helped to create unique moments and lasting memories for every guest who walks through our gates. A special thank you also needs to go out to our many donors who have supported us through thick and thin.

The Center has been a beehive of activity for the last few months. In January, halau from across the state and Japan converged in the Pacific Theater for the 22nd Annual Moanikeala Hula Festival. In February, the Gateway hosted Natalie Ai Kamaau and her special guest performer Kapena for a Valentine’s Dinner Concert, the first major event held in the venue since its grand opening in November. That month, we also hosted 160 elite members of the social media site Yelp! All the while construction projects have been in full swing. The theater is expected to be complete by the start of fall. Samoa and Hawaii are getting revitalized and we will begin structural renovations on Hale Aloha later this year.

We look forward to the 20th Annual World Fireknife Championships and ongoing preparations for our 50th Anniversary. My thanks go to you all for making so many good things a reality. May the lord continue to watch over and bless all of you and this special place.

Von D. Orgill  
President & CEO

## Construction Updates

This year the Polynesian Cultural Center is planning four revitalization projects. Whether it’s a full renovation, a structural upgrade or just a quick face-lift, the end result will be an improved visitor experience.

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## Heating Up for 20th Annual World Fireknife Championships

The competition is heating up! This May the Polynesian Cultural Center celebrates the 20th anniversary of the World Fireknife Championships. At the inaugural competition in 1993 it was Tauasa Sielu Avea who was crowned World Fireknife Champion. Since then, there have been seven more champions, including: Ifi So'o, Pati Levasa, David



Last year's champion V.J. Tiumalu from Orlando Florida

Galea'i, Alex Galea'i, Mikaele Oloa, Andrew "Umi" Sexton and, last year's winner, Viavia "V.J." Tiumalu.

"The past 19 years have been a fun ride and we are currently wrapping up a video reflecting all of the good times we've enjoyed over the years and the amazing skills that were on display," said Raymond Magalei, director of marketing for the PCC.

In less than two decades, the competition has become immensely popular among kamaaina and visitors alike. In 2010, the event expanded to four days to accommodate the increasing number attendees as well as competitors. Even with the additional day, the event sells out each year. Last year, over 8,000 guests from across the world witnessed the skill and grace it takes to become a world champion.

The World Fireknife Championships is integral to the evolution of fireknife; year after year the best dancers in the world take the stage with an unbelievable repertoire of

new moves and lightning-quick skills as they strive to reach the pinnacle of fireknife. In 2007, new trails were blazed for the sport with the introduction of the duet category. The category has since grown into a group competition and continues to push the boundaries of fireknife with groups having as many as five members onstage at a time. Routines are choreographed exceptionally well and are both exhilarating to watch and require a great deal of bravery, synchronization and skill to perform. The group competition became so popular that a group fireknife section choreographed by three-time World Fireknife Champion, David Galeai was included in Ha: Breath of Life.

Transcending entertainment, the event aids in spreading the Samoan culture across the globe. This was especially evident in the story of young Preston Weber from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, who learned fireknife through YouTube and honed his skills by watching past competitions. In 2010, 11-year-old Preston decided it was time to put his skills to the test and entered the Junior Pacific Division. When he arrived on Oahu, he was thrilled to meet many of his idols that he knew only through YouTube and spent so much time in the Samoan village that he was all but adopted. His hard work and determination paid off as he left Hawaii the champion of his division.

With competitors like Preston and last year's winner, Hale Motuapuaka, the future of fireknife is bright and the competition in the two Junior Pacific Divisions, 6-11 and 12-17-year-olds, rival that of the senior division.

In addition to the World Fireknife Competition, PCC is also hosting the High School Samoan Cultural Arts Festival, in which students from high schools in Hawaii participate in creating and exhibiting an array of Samoan cultural arts, games, songs and dances. The festival will be held on Saturday, May 12, prior to the World Fireknife Championship face-off that evening.

This year's event is scheduled as follows:

May 9-12, 2012

Wednesday, May 9 – 7:45 p.m. (Hale Aloha) Senior Division Preliminary Competition

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Thursday, May 10 – 7:45 p.m. (Hale Aloha)  
Junior Pacific Divisions  
Senior Division Semi-Finals  
Open Group Competition

Friday, May 11 – 7:30 p.m. (Pacific Theater)  
Senior Division Finals Night One (during intermission of Ha: Breath of Life evening show)

Saturday, May 12 (Pacific Theater)  
9 a.m. – 2 p.m. – Samoan Cultural High School Arts Festival  
7:30 p.m. – Senior Division Finals Night Two and Crowning (competition during intermission of Ha: Breath of Life evening show, awards immediately following the conclusion of Ha: Breath of Life at 9:00 p.m.)

The call for entry has gone out so now's the time to sharpen your skills.



## Valentine's Concert

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the intimacy required for a romantic Valentine dinner," said Alfred Grace, PCC's COO. "We are excited to host many quality performers and are looking forward to making each event as successful as this one."

This is the first of many of events that PCC plans to hold in Gateway throughout 2012.

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# Meet the New Service Missionaries

## SISTER ANNA MAHAFFEYE

A St. Cloud, Florida grandmother on her first senior mission, Sister Mahaffey brings her valuable experience in teaching, real estate and food service to our Food & Beverage division.



Sister Mahaffey

## ELDER DON & SISTER ROWENA AINA



The Ainas

From Forest Grove, Oregon, Elder Aina taught mathematics and had a quality painting business; his expertise in this area is hugely beneficial with the amount of construction we are having. Sister Aina is serving as a seamstress at the Mission Settlement. This is their first senior mission.

## SISTER LINDA DAVIS



Sister Davis

senior mission.

Sister Davis has been in banking for many years – serving as bank manager for 11 of those years. The grandmother from Draper, Utah is currently assigned to work in Human Resources and assists in the mailroom. This is her first

## ELDER BOB & SISTER EMMA HARRIS



Elder and Sister Harris

A former CPA and owner of Business Management Service, Elder Harris is serving in the Accounting Department. Sister Harris, a secretary and office manager, is assigned to the Protocol Office. This is the Salt Lake City couple's fourth full-time senior mission.

## ELDER CARLTON & SISTER JAN WHELCHER



The Whelchers

Elder Whelcher is a former professional musician and bookkeeper. Sister Whelcher retired as an elementary school teacher after 21 years. The Palmdale, California couple will both serve as hosts at the Mission Settlement.

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## Employee Recognition



Fasi Tovo

On March 14 the Polynesian Cultural Center held our employee recognition banquet in Gateway. Delsa Moe did a fabulous job as the emcee for this annual event, which recognizes part and full-time employees with continuous employment of three years or more as of December 31, 2011. Although there are too many to list, the PCC surely would not be as successful as it is today without each and every one of them.

The event capped off with the honoring of two very special men, Fasakiieiki Tovo and Jay Warren Akoi, who have played vital



Jay Akoi

roles at the center for 40 years. Both men recounted their memories of the earlier years at PCC as they gave inspirational, heartfelt and, at times, humorous speeches.

A special mahalo goes out to conceptions, our Seamstress Shop and corporate offices, Hawaii Mission Settlement, Laie Palms Theater, Kahuku Grill, Meadow Gold Dairy, Wet 'N Wild, Event Network and Photo Polynesia for sponsoring this event and providing us with numerous door prizes.

# Construction Updates

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Construction of the new theater is well underway and expected to be complete before fall

## HIDDEN HAWAII

Most volcanoes take hundreds, if not thousands, of years to form; we're hoping to create ours in one. The transformation of the Hukilau Theater into Hawaii's newest volcano began earlier this year and is expected to be complete by late summer.

The same design consultants and construction teams that created Gateway are being utilized in this project. Their crews have been busy demolishing the unwanted portions of the structure and investigating, evaluating and locating the underground utilities. The new structural steel framing that supports the volcano is ready for fabrication as is the post-tensioning system, which is slated for installation the second week in May. The roof is also being reinforced to support the new catwalks, special effects and theatrical lighting systems.

Once complete, the upgraded venue will feature state-of-the-art sound, reactive seating and an engrossing, interactive experience unlike any other in Hawaii.

## HALE ALOHA

Hale Aloha has been an iconic venue over the years hosting millions of guests at Hawaii's Most Authentic Luau. As with many things, time and the elements have taken their toll and she's due for a little freshening

up. The renovations are scheduled to start at the end of summer and, with the exception of a new sound system, theatrical lighting and a renovated control booth, the construction will be purely structural so none of the old Hawaii charm will be lost. Once completed, Hale Aloha will be able to provide a little piece of paradise for many years to come.

While under renovation the Alii Luau will be temporarily relocated.

## HAWAII

Caution, menehune at work! The Hawaiian Village is temporarily closed through three phases of renovation. The first phase is nearing completion and included the installation of the barricade and the demolition of most structures with the exception of Hale Alii, Halau Waa, and a re-thatched Halau Hula. The second phase recently went to bid and consists of all the site work and side-walks. Bidding on the third phase will start in early May and focuses on construction of the new buildings.

Work is expected to last through August and the new renovations will give the guest the experience of an ahupuaa and enhanced canoe pageant seating.

## SAMOA

Like Hawaii, the renovation of Samoa will

be divided into three phases. The village will not be closed during the first phase, which is primarily a structural upgrade to maintain the integrity of the huts. This includes the replacement of all perimeter columns.

The second phase will create a new entrance to the village, located at the north end of the bridge adjacent to Hale Aloha. This work is scheduled to start at the end of the summer, after the completion of the theater. The third and final phase is the construction of a new Chief's Hut and is scheduled for the fall.

## Meet the Missionaries

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ELDER MEL & SISTER ADELINE PALMER



The Palmers

A 35-year veteran of Church Education, Elder Palmer is serving in Human Resources. Sister Palmer works as a seamstress and helps at the Mission Settlement. This is the Thatcher, Arizona couple's first senior mission.



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