

Imua Polenisia

A Bimonthly Newsletter from the
Polynesian Cultural Center



Sharing the Spirit

A message from President Orgill

How often do you stop to contemplate the blessing it is to work at the Polynesian Cultural Center?

Of course, the Center provides a living for our full-time employees as well as the financial means for hundreds of our students to secure a great education at Brigham Young University-Hawaii. Over the past 40 years, the Center has also acted as a remarkable classroom where cultural experts and kupunas have put thousands of young Polynesians in closer contact with their traditional heritage.

In this issue of the Imua, I would like to

focus on the spirit we enjoy here at the Polynesian Cultural Center, and which we also radiate to our guests from around the world. Millions of them have enjoyed the beauty and warmth of Polynesian hospitality that's so aptly called the spirit of aloha.

We are especially enriched to work in a place where that spirit abounds. We are doubly blessed to understand the eternal source of that spirit, and to be a part of spreading its influence. Sometimes when we feel the spirit strongly, as during a touching sermon or testimony, tears may begin to well up in our eyes or we may feel a special tingling sensation fill our hearts.

The impact of the spirit we are always sharing is clearly demonstrated in the miracle of the 30-millionth visitor, who recently entered our grounds — a miracle clearly foreseen in 1955 when President David O. McKay foretold, "millions would come" to Laie to learn the significance of this special place.

And yet, as often happens, we go about our daily work responsibilities somewhat unaware of the impact we have on those around us. This is why I'm always touched to receive unsolicited feedback from our guests, such as the following letter from an Italian gentleman who,

though he struggles with his English, clearly felt that same spirit the day he visited the Cultural Center:

Fantastic!! I do really enjoyed myself and I learned lots of information about Polynesian Culture. Is Great you help yong students! All people of PCC are very friendly!!

In particular I must thank very much my guide...a young student girl from Philippines...

In Hawaii I found PEACE,people are very friendly, fantastic and in my opinion Hawaiian people have Peace inside your body and soul. ...Nowadays it very difficult to find people that are working first of all with the heart and soul. Again thank you very much for the Excellent service.... I'm sorry for my not perfect English.

The impact of the spirit we are always sharing is clearly demonstrated in the miracle of the 30-millionth visitor, who recently entered our grounds — a miracle

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clearly foreseen in 1955 when President David O. McKay foretold, "millions would come" to Laie to learn the significance of this special place. It's also shown in the number of our visitors who take the Laie Tour and leave missionary referral cards at the Temple Visitors Center. In this respect, the Laie Temple Visitors Center is second only to Temple Square in Salt Lake City, which welcomes over five million visitors a year, in the number of referrals generated.

The impact is apparent every day among the dedicated service missionaries who come to Laie at their own expense to share their time and expertise. They are a great blessing to all of our guests and to the entire PCC team.

We all make a difference in the lives of others everyday. We all touch for good or ill those around us.

And so I ask you, as you go about your daily work, wherever you are in the Center, please pause from time-to-time, ponder upon the impact you are having and can have on the lives of others. Realize you are an example; and then make sure that example reflects everything that is good about the Polynesian Cultural Center, and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Bear your best silent testimony by your actions and by sharing the spirit of aloha, which is truly the spirit of God.



Von D. Orgill
President



David Galea'i is raised as World Fireknife Champion for the third time.

David Galea'i Reclaims PCC's Fireknife Title

Almost 7,000 guests came to the Polynesian Cultural Center on May 17, 2003, to enjoy the We Are Samoa Festival and watch former PCC knife dancer David Galea'i use three flaming nifo oti to reclaim his third World Fireknife Championship title.

For his spectacular efforts and skill, David won the \$4,000 first-place cash prize donated by the Mataalii family who lived in Laie for many years, and an elaborate five-foot-long trophy in the shape of the hooked dancing knife.

PCC dancers Tamaru Colombel of Tahiti took second in the competition, claiming a \$2,000 prize; and David's brother, Alex Galea'i of Laie, came in third, winning the \$1,000 cash prize. They also won special trophy knives.

Over 20 senior division dancers participated in the Center's 11th annual World Fireknife Championship, including entrants from Oahu, Maui, Florida, Illinois, Tahiti and the Cook Islands, where David, who is originally from Laie, now lives. They all competed in the Hale Aloha, after the Ali'i Luau was finished, on Thursday evening, May 15.

Center manager Pulefano Galea'i, David's uncle and a famed knife dancer in his day who helped originate the PCC competition, praised all of the dancers for their skill and daring. "Those knives are hot. They deserve all the applause you can give," he said. Pule also singled out competitor Ah Chew Tafiti of Laie at one point for competing every year since the annual championships began in 1993.

The Hale Aloha was packed both nights, and everybody agreed it's a great venue. They also had a great time. "We're so grateful for your interest in the Polynesian Cultural Center, and the performances by many of the finest fire knife dancers in the world," said PCC Vice President of Cultural Presentations Logo Apelu as he greeted the crowd. Emcee Delsa Moe asked the question, "Do you know what Samoans call 'The Fear Factor'?" She replied, "Comedy."

Nine semi-finalists also competed on Friday evening. The three finalists were judged Saturday on the combined scores of their respective dances during the two evening shows.

Eleven junior competitors ages 12-17 also lit up the stage in the Hale Aloha on Friday, May 16. Last year's champion, 15-year-old Melenie Lesoa from Apia, Samoa, showed SHE had the right stuff again to repeat her victory as the only female Junior World Fireknife Champion dancer. Second place went to Mikaele Oloa from Orlando, Florida, while Anelu Lakopo of Samoa claimed third.

In addition, seven dancers ages 6-11 competed in the children's division, with top honors going to Jacko Pupualii from Samoa. Melenie's brother, Barry Lesoa, also of Samoa, took second; and Laie's own Julius Tafiti came in third.

"I think the competition improved this year," Delsa said, "especially among the little kids. There were a couple of them who could have competed in the junior division. Everyone was very creative. I think the judge's decisions came down to speed and the number of drops."

Three-time champion David Galea'i agreed that "new blood" added to the "very

high level of competition this year. It's good to come back home," he said, recalling that his mom, the late Vai Fa'amaligi – the night show instructor for the Samoan section for many years – and his uncle Pulefano first started to teach him knife dancing when he was five years old.

"These guys are all real champions," added Pulefano, who designed the trophy knives. "This was the toughest year ever."

The Samoan Festival

As usual, a large crowd overflowed the Pacific Theater on Saturday morning for the annual Samoan Festival, which for the first time this year also included groups from several Oahu universities in addition to Kahuku, Farrington and Waipahu high school performers.

Also as usual, the younger generation competed in traditional Samoan arts and crafts, including oratory, green banana peeling, coconut husking, coconut-leaf basket weaving, fire making and various dance styles, including the taualuga.

"The purpose of this event, which is also in its 11th year, is to bring Samoan students together to portray the aspects of our culture that we love," said Apelu in greeting the large crowd. "As the students participate, they have already won, because they have learned their culture. This is a beautiful occasion."

Farrington took top honors among the high school groups. Chaminade won among the university groups.



Students from Farrington High School perform as part of The Samoan Festival.



People line up to receive their lei greeting at the All-new Ali'i Luau.

New Ali'i Luau a Huge Hit

The Polynesian Cultural Center's Ali'i Luau is better than ever in its new Hale Aloha venue.

In fact, PCC Vice President of Sales & Marketing Al Grace confirms the Ali'i Luau "is now the Center's most popular ticket package," and anticipates "we'll be doing more double luaus as we approach our summer peak and the number of guests who want to enjoy the experience climbs past 700."

Grace explained that overflow luau guests will dine at the same time in the former Ali'i Luau area next to the IMAX™ Theater. "It's a wonderful management challenge for us to face," Grace said, adding that otherwise the former venue is available for private groups and functions.

PCC emcee and musician Benny Kai, who was recently named the Center's "Ambassador of Aloha," said guest response to the new Ali'i Luau has been "fantastic. I tell the guests the volume of

their response with 'aloha' indicates how hungry they are. Of course, I also tell them they have to eat until they're dizzy before they've really experienced a Hawaiian luau, where everybody is ohana."

Supervisor Ray Mokiao agrees that our Ali'i Luau "is far superior to the others, because none of them are covered. They're not prepared for bad weather." He pointed out the Ali'i Luau also features all-Hawaiian entertainment, including the royal court; hence the name Ali'i Luau, or a feast fit for a king.

Mokiao added that our luau also features seating in chairs at tables for every guest, except the growing number who prefer the low tables and cushions right in front of the stage. "Those are available on a first-come basis," he said.

"We promise people who come to our luau a unique experience they will not forget," said Kai. "We make them feel a part of our PCC ohana."

PCC Welcomes Back Sister 'Queen'

Many PCC team members know Sister Loraine Price as the "scone lady" from her first service mission, but most probably didn't know she is the reigning Ms. Idaho Senior America.

This fact came to light when her counterpart from Alaska, Jimmie Grace Van Vater recently visited Sister Price at the Cultural Center. The two ladies explained earning their state titles required them to be at least 60 years old, share their philosophies of life in an interview, demonstrate a talent, and model in evening gowns. "I've danced all my life. That's how I won the Senior Ms. Idaho title," she said.

Sister Loraine and Elder LaMar Price, who now call Downey, Idaho, home, are currently serving their second mission at the Cultural Center. She works in Museum Stores and the Circle Island Luncheon, while he assists in the Motor Pool.

"We left in February 2002 and were back in October that year," Sister Price said. "Before we left, several people here had asked if there's any way we could come back, because they had a big need for my husband's skills." Elder Price is a skilled mechanic who works on everything from carts to heavy equipment, and has been teaching some of the other workers how to rebuild various electrical parts.

"It's all been good," he said. "I get a lot of satisfaction out of getting the work done. I've also been able to help some of the mechanics work on some of the things they hadn't done before."

Sister Price explained she and her husband sold their home and cars to settle all their debts before they began their missionary service. She added the ability to serve here again came somewhat as a "miracle," when they were asked to be caretakers for a Hukilau Beach estate. "President Orgill and Les Steward were a little concerned whether we could do both, but so far it's been okay."



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In other missionary news, several couples and an individual have recently started their Polynesian Cultural Center service, including:

- Elder Jerry and Sister Ivy Lawrence are from Farmington, Utah and will serve their 18 month mission in the Mission Complex.
- Elder Boyd and Sister Louise Nash from Corvallis, Oregon, 18 months. He's assigned to work in Human Resources, and she's assisting Elder Lanny Britsch and T. David Hannemann with the PCC History project.
- Elder Bruce and Sister Jackie Challman from Parowan, Utah, 18 months. He's assigned to Maintenance, and she works in the Mission Complex.
- Elder Norman and Sister Carolyn Faldmo from Orem, Utah, 18 months. He's assigned to Operations and she's in Guest Services.
- Elder Lynn and Sister Hilda Widdison from Moses Lake, Washington, 18 months. He works in Food Services and she's in the Mission Complex.
- Sister Matilda Andrade from Laie has recently joined her husband, Elder John Andrade, as a missionary at PCC. She helps with the Ali'i Luau and he works in Human Resources and Maintenance.

Also, several missionary couples have recently completed their 18-month service at the PCC, including:

- Elder Carlton and Sister Sharon Judkins from Rexburg, Idaho. He was assigned to Food Services and she worked in the Islands and Mission Complex.
- Elder Ben and Sister Renee Blackburn from Price, Utah. He was in the Maintenance area, and she was in the Food Services.
- Elder Edward and Sister Noatia Soliai from Hauula served in the Samoan Village.
- Elder Gary and Sister Margaret Carver from Pleasant Hill, California. He was assigned to Human Resources, and she was working with the PCC History.
- Elder Darrell and Sister Arlene Waite from Logandale, Nevada, served in the Mission Complex.
- Elder Bernard and Sister Idella Starkey from Troy, Michigan. He was assigned to Food Services, and she was in Guest Services.

MAHALO NUI to all.



PCC Teen Scores a Page in National Magazine

PCC dancer Tiffany Ieremia, the daughter of alumni Filipino and Dawn Ieremia of Laie, can be seen sharing her full-page smile and mana'o on page 95 of the June 2003 issue of Seventeen Magazine.

PCC Director of Marketing Ray Magalei reported he and a promo team were recently in New York where they visited the publishers of Seventeen who told the Laie group they only covered 17-year-old teens. "Wait a minute," Magalei said. "We have a very interesting 17-year-old for you."

And the rest is now in national print: "Hula has always been a part of my life. My mom taught me and my sisters to dance," Tiffany told the editor. "For me, dancing the hula is really special — more than just an after-school job. It's something that I love to do and a part of my culture that I want to continue."

"One of my favorite songs is Waikoloa — it's about a town where my grandmother lives. I think of her every time I dance it," she added.