

SCHOOLS | IN THIS SECTION

ISLAND

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4, 2007 | WEST HAWAII TODAY



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LIVING

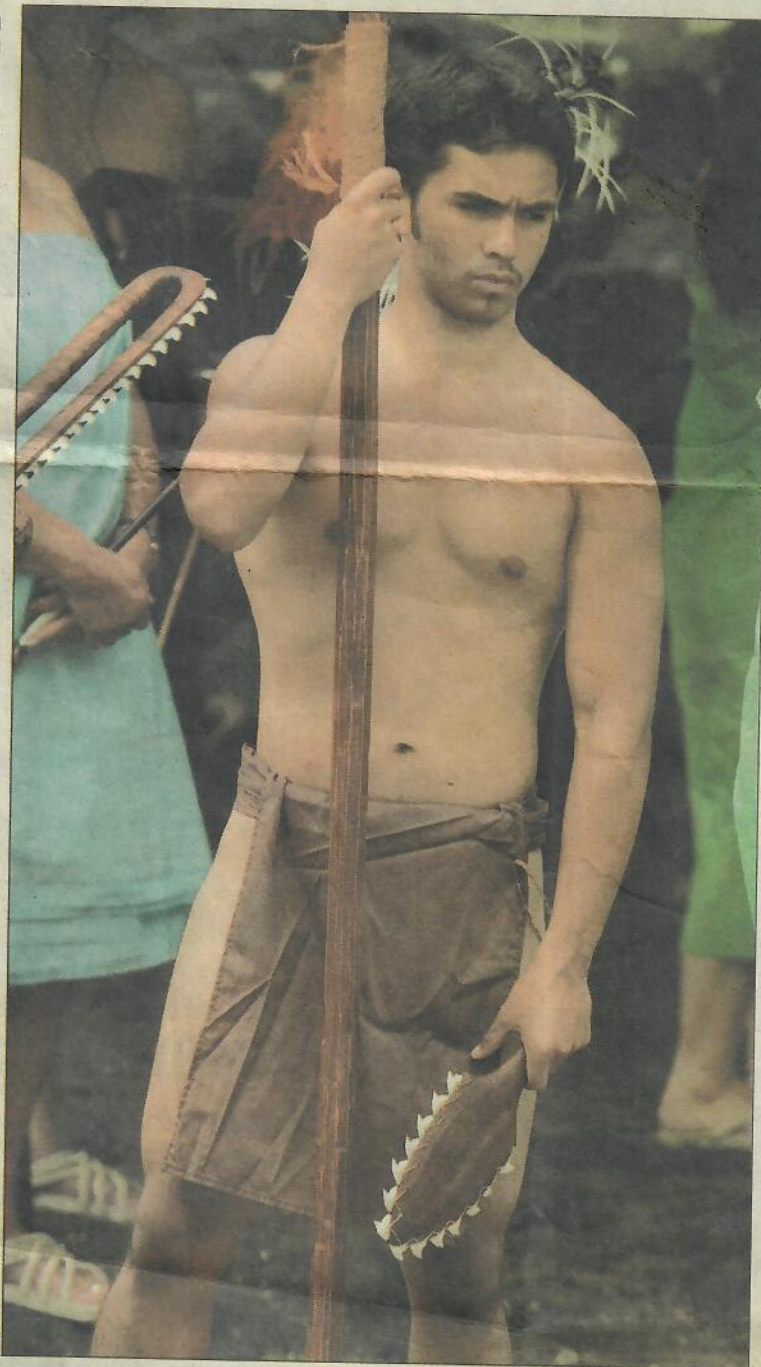
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Crossword
puzzles





Dustin Taka holds a pololu (long spear) and a lei o mano (shark's teeth weapon) during the Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park 46th-annual Hawaiian Cultural Festival on Saturday. Taka was one of the guards for the royal court representing a Hawaiian king and queen.



PHOTOS BY
BARON SEKIYA
WEST HAWAII TODAY

Living Hawaii

BY CAROLYN LUCAS
WEST HAWAII TODAY
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Iowa resident Jana Vastine sat silently on a lauhala mat, battling her so-called "lack of patience" and stringing delicate blooms of fragrant flowers, ferns and berries. With love, her fingers carefully wove the plant material tightly together, forming the beginnings of her first haku lei.

Nearby Nana Cabatbat, a kupuna from the Hawaii Natural History Association and Haleakala National Park, examined the progress of a young girl's lei. A leaf pointed in the wrong direction, causing some minor disappointment.

But Cabatbat showed no worry. "Everything in life is a slight adjustment," she said, breaking the leaf off.

A small smile appeared on Vastine's face. "You know, she's right," Vastine told the girl, who simply nodded in approval.

Creating lei was more than stringing together beautiful flowers. It was appreciation, respect, an offering, commonality, a history lesson and a connection, something that resonated with all who visited Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park on Saturday.

Forty-six years into its annual summer run, the cultural festival and establishment day celebration has become a vital showcase of Hawaiian crafts, exhibits, music, dance, sports and games.

"This is a wonderful experience, mostly because of the fantastic volunteers, who have lots of patience and are so knowledgeable," Vastine said. "Visitors should

attend this event because they will end up taking away a stronger appreciation for Hawaiian history and culture. The place of refuge comes to life. You see people doing traditional works, such as carving tiki or making lei, just like it was done when their ancestors lived here."

Hundreds of people attended this free event, which lasted two days. They were lured by the caliber of the skilled practitioners, who volunteered to demonstrate the traditional works of the Native Hawaiians.

"The best part is meeting new faces and watching them come together with the volunteers in unity to perpetuate the culture," said Blossom Sapp, park ranger at Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park.

Throughout the event, the kupuna coaxed kamaaina and malihini to get a lomilomi massage, decorate gourds, take a canoe ride, play palaie (a ball and loop game), watch hula dancers, hear undulating-hum chants, participate in a hukilau or learn simple lauhala weaving techniques.

"The finished product is not what's important," Cabatbat said. "It's the direction and the journey that makes my culture more alive and stronger."

Volunteers assist with the festival's planning and implementation. Hula halau and community members donate the craft supplies and spread aloha.

► SEE TRADITION PAGE 2C

bove: Keiki from Ulalia Berman's halau sound the pu ohe (bamboo horns) during a performance of the royal court at the Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park 46th-annual Hawaii Cultural Festival Saturday. **Left:** The royal court is portrayed by Tessie Urilopa as queen and Danford Kahele as king. The court opened the festival with a processional, accepting of hookupu (gifts) and presiding over chant and hula.

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► TRADITION: Event perpetuates Hawaiiian

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C

Park visitors watched Terry Reveira, University of Hawaii at Hilo education department adviser, scrape bark off a piece of paper mulberry with a rock. They were surprised that the material would eventually become kapa cloth, which was used to swath newborns as well as fashioned into malo for men and pa'u skirts for women.

Hilo resident Leilehua Yuen always has been fascinated with the Hawaiian culture, mostly because of the nationality of her Hawaiian-Chinese grandfather and her English-Irish grandmother's great love of everything Hawaiian. She insisted cultural practice was just something the family did.

Yuen taught attendees about the kahili, the feathered standards used by Hawaiian royalty. The kahili were between 15 to 30 feet tall.

"Similar to how the nobility of Europe use banners with coats of arms, Hawaiian nobility use kahili to show status, lineage and family ties," she said.

Yuen and Aunty Carla Freitas crafted the kahili owned by Puuhonua o Honaunau. When one set was tattered and torn, they disassembled the feathers. Malama ke Aloha consists of red and yellow dyed goose feathers while the white kahili paalima is made of goose biots and rooster tail.

Carla was a major influence for Yuen and taught her a variety of traditional works, including lauhala weaving. One time when Yuen was "dilly-dallying around" during a lesson, Carla explained that she was not weaving for exercise. She taught with hopes that Yuen would teach others. Yuen is fulfilling Carla's wishes today.

Kehau Freitas showed her 2-year-old sons, Keawe and Umialiloa, where she grew up in the early 1970s. Kehau lived in house located inside the park, something she loved and misses dearly. Carla was her mother and worked for the National Park Service for more than 30 years.

As a child, Kehau would gather sea urchins, swam daily



PHOTOS BY BARON SEKIYA | WEST HAWAII TODAY

Above: Mahiehie Arakaki, front, and Shruti Miki Greenwood, of Halau Hula Ka Makani Hali Ala o Puna, dance for the royal court during the Puuhonua o Honaunau 46th-annual Hawaiian Cultural Festival on Saturday. **Below:** Lauren Prudholm works on a miniature kahili (feathered standards used by Hawaiian monarchy) in one of the workshops at the festival.



in Honaunau Bay, played hide and seek behind the giant carved wood statue tiki and took canoe rides with her granduncle.

During the festival, Kehau shared the intimate stories of her life and childhood games with her sons. She wanted them to know and feel connected to this place.

For more information, call Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park at 328-2288 or 328-2326. Also visit www.nps.gov/puho.



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n culture and skills to younger generations



Richard Halprin, left, challenges Alex Heyison to a game of Konane during the Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park 46th-annual Hawaiian Cultural Festival. The game is akin to checkers, with the winner being the person who completes the last move.



Visitors take a canoe ride in Honaunau Bay during the Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park 46th-annual Hawaiian Cultural Festival on Saturday.

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