

# Kela Miller: Connecting Through Culture

hri pride

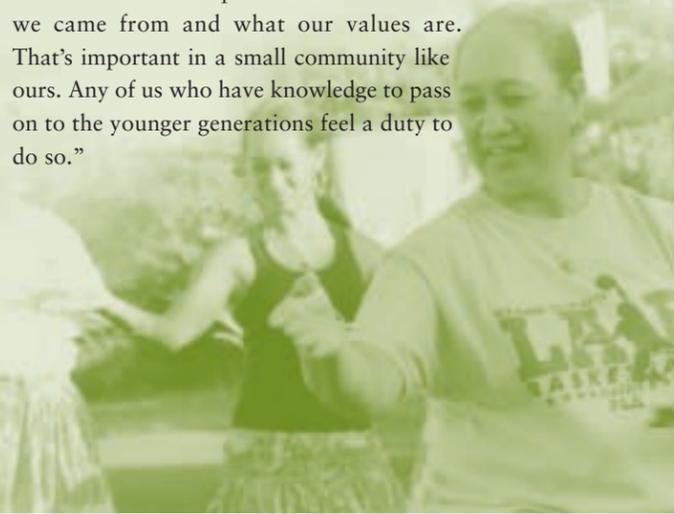
Kela Miller has been dancing hula all her life, but it wasn't until 2003 that she saw the need to open her own *halau*. The HRI customer service representative kept receiving requests from local girls who needed a crash course in hula for talent competitions and special events. "One girl was going to college on the Mainland and her Hawaiian club asked her to dance for an event they were putting on," Miller remembers. "She was desperate. She called her mother and her mother called me. I ended up talking her through the steps on the phone. I had no idea if she was doing it correctly. That's about the time I decided to open a *halau*."

Miller began with 10 students and now has almost 50, ranging from keiki ages five and up to *kūpuna*. Classes are in the evenings twice a week at the Kahuku Community Center. She teaches both *kabiko* (traditional) and *'auana* (modern) hula with a focus on basic steps and a gracefulness of movement she learned from her mother and aunties growing up in Lā'ie. *Kumu hula* and Hawaiian cultural expert Cy Bridges named Miller's halau in honor of her ("Kela" is short for "Kekela").

Miller has always been interested in connecting generations through culture. She served on the Lā'ie Community Association and still works with the LCA on special projects like planning this year's Lā'ie Days celebration. She also helped form the Lā'ie Kūpuna

Council, a network of *kūpuna* living in the Ko'olauloa area that hold informal get-togethers to talk story and keep up connections. Through the network, Miller is hoping to organize a two-day *kūpuna* conference to deal with issues like living wills, affordable senior housing, and social security benefits.

"Our *kūpuna* are the keepers of our culture and our culture keeps us connected to the past. We need those ties to remind us where we came from and what our values are. That's important in a small community like ours. Any of us who have knowledge to pass on to the younger generations feel a duty to do so."



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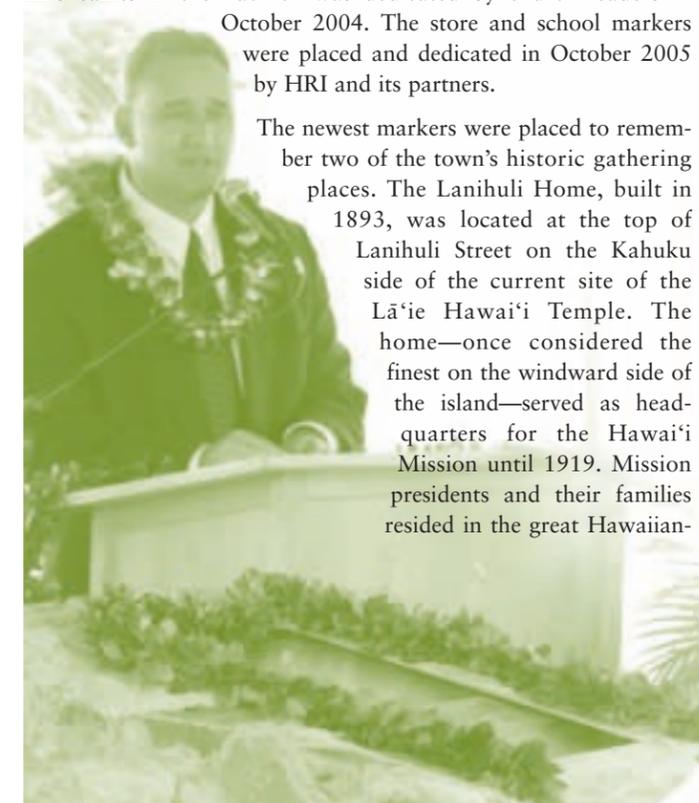


# Remembering Where Lā'ie Gathered

Two pieces of Lā'ie's colorful past were commemorated on July 28 when Hawai'i Reserves Inc., in partnership with the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation, the Mormon Pacific Historical Society, and the Lā'ie Community Association, placed historical markers at the former sites of the Lanihuli Home and the Lā'ie Social Hall. Dozens of community residents, many of them beloved *kūpuna*, came to remember, sing, laugh, and honor the great memory of places, people, and times past.

The two sites were selected because they were important gathering places for the town's first families. "Although the structures are gone, these places live on in the memory of so many of the old *kama'āina*," says local historian Riley Moffat. "These two buildings were really the center of the community for a long time."

The markers added to a church historical trail in Hawai'i that includes the LDS Mission School and old Plantation Store (both also in Lā'ie), as well as the valley of Palawai on Lana'i. The Palawai marker—placed to remember the first official gathering place for LDS saints in the Pacific—was dedicated by church leaders in October 2004. The store and school markers were placed and dedicated in October 2005 by HRI and its partners.



The newest markers were placed to remember two of the town's historic gathering places. The Lanihuli Home, built in 1893, was located at the top of Lanihuli Street on the Kahuku side of the current site of the Lā'ie Hawai'i Temple. The home—once considered the finest on the windward side of the island—served as headquarters for the Hawai'i Mission until 1919. Mission presidents and their families resided in the great Hawaiian-

Victorian mansion with its octagonal turret, cupola, and second-story lanai facing the sea. In fact, the house was used as a symbol on the personal stationary of one mission president and became a popular symbol of the church in Hawai'i. Spiritual meetings, as well as much of the temporal business of the church, was conducted there. The Lanihuli Home was razed in 1958 to make room for the Church College of Hawai'i (now Brigham Young University-Hawai'i).

"It was such a beautiful building," says lifelong resident Gladys Pualoa-Ahuna. "I remember temple visitors from out of town staying there in the 1930s, and every year at Halloween it was our spook house."



Lanihuli Home

The Lā'ie Social Hall, located on Loala Street, was built in 1913 as a gathering place for balls, talent shows, plays, movies, funerals and weddings. Even during the war years, it hosted community dances every weekend. After painters accidentally set Lā'ie's first chapel, *I Hemolele*, on fire in 1940, the hall also served as a Sunday meeting place for church members. The hall was also razed in 1958 to make way for the expansion of the church college.



Lā'ie Social Hall

"For a long time, the Social Hall was the most lively place in town," says Lā'ie-born Larry Au. "On weekends there was always something

going on but even during the week I remember walking over from the elementary school to the Social Hall and paying a dime to watch cowboy movies—Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, that kind of stuff."

"Supporting the placement of these markers is important to us, not only as a company with deep roots in Lā'ie but as the relatives and descendents of the people who made these places live," says HRI CEO Eric Beaver. "We are committed to honoring the past and building on our community's great heritage."



## Mahalo For Your Mana‘o

from the president

One of the great aspects of working in a small community is that our customers are also our family, friends, and neighbors. Big-city companies might rely solely on surveys and focus groups to get feedback. Our HRI team—all of whom are local residents—hear from our customers every day at

Temple, and HRI, as well as the general public. We also presented our preliminary plans to the boards of the Lā‘ie and Kahuku community associations, the Ko‘olauloa Neighborhood Board, and the general community at a 2005 community meeting where we received input from more than 200 participants.

This formal and informal feedback has given us important guidance while preparing a revision of the master plan, which is near completion and will soon be presented for further community input. We’re excited about this plan because it represents a new community for local homebuyers created around the needs, goals, and values of our existing community.

Mahalo to all of you who have shared your *mana‘o* with us over the years. Please let us know your comments via the contact information on this newsletter. Or feel free to come in and “talk story”.

R. Eric Beaver  
Hawai‘i Reserves Inc. President

our kids’ ball games, at backyard get-togethers, at the beach, and in the aisles of the grocery store. Generally, these “talk story” sessions are positive, such as the great reception we received for the first issue of *Ho‘omua*. Sometimes they are mixed—with suggestions and criticisms that we consider in making future plans.

When we began the process of revising the master plan for our holdings—such as the Affordable Workforce Housing Project at Mālaekahana—we sought extensive input from local residents in a variety of ways. Our efforts started with a written survey of more than 800 residents who work at Brigham Young University-Hawai‘i, the Polynesian Cultural Center, the Lā‘ie

## Fighting for Native Plants

preserving paradise

The U.S. Army is beginning to fight a quiet battle in the mountains above Lā‘ie. Working in partnership with Hawai‘i Reserves Inc., biologists from the Army’s Natural Resources Staff will soon be slogging up the steep ridges of the Ko‘olau range in an effort to protect endangered endemic plants from invasive alien species. The initiative is part of an islandwide Army campaign to help preserve 32 Hawai‘i plant species, five indigenous snails, and one endangered bird (the O‘ahu ‘*elepaio*).

“We recently hiked along the summit to view the proposed protection zone,” explains Steve Hoag, HRI’s director of human resources and government relations. “The beauty of the area is amazing and truly unique. We’re excited to work with the Army to help preserve our native plant and animal life.”

The area is home to a rare species of Oahu tree snail that survives on the leaves of native trees and bushes. It’s also frequented by the O‘ahu ‘*elepaio*, a little forest bird with a melodic repertoire of songs, calls, and alarm whistles. ‘*Elepaio* is the only indigenous flycatcher in the Islands and was an omen bird for Native Hawaiian canoe makers, who observed that koa trees that attracted the bird were insect-ridden and thus unsuitable for use.

The biologists, working on approximately 160 acres of conservation lands managed by HRI, will build fences to keep out feral pigs and dogs, uproot pernicious alien plants, and set traps to bait rats. The area borders the Army’s Kawailoa Training Area and is one of 25 management units across O‘ahu where the Army is laboring to protect natural resources on either Army, state, or private lands. Kapua Kawelo, biologist with the U.S. Army’s Hawai‘i garrison, remarks, “We’re grateful that HRI is partnering with us because we couldn’t carry out this mission without their help. The conservation of high-quality native Hawaiian forest ecosystems like this one is a high priority.”

Army staff will also get a rare look at the endemic plants they’re working to preserve. These include a *loulou*, a short fan palm with dangling strings of flowers; a slender, feathery species of *laukahi* fern; the lavender-fruited *akoko*, once thought to be extinct; and a nodding clubmoss called *wāwae‘iole*, of which only four known plants remain in the world.



*loulou*



*akoko*



*wāwae‘iole*

*laukahi*

## Bash of the Decade

lucky you live Lā‘ie

For 10 years running the annual HRI Summer Bash has brought the Ko‘olauloa community together for a midsummer’s evening of local grinds, rides, and top-name entertainment. This year’s bash, being a milestone anniversary, was by all accounts the biggest and best ever. On July 7, Lā‘ie Shopping Center was transformed into a fair-ground with rides, games, and giant bouncy inflatables—all free for keiki. Tables were set up so families could buy food at the shopping center or bring their own eats from home. Hundreds of families turned out, bumping into old friends and listening to contemporary

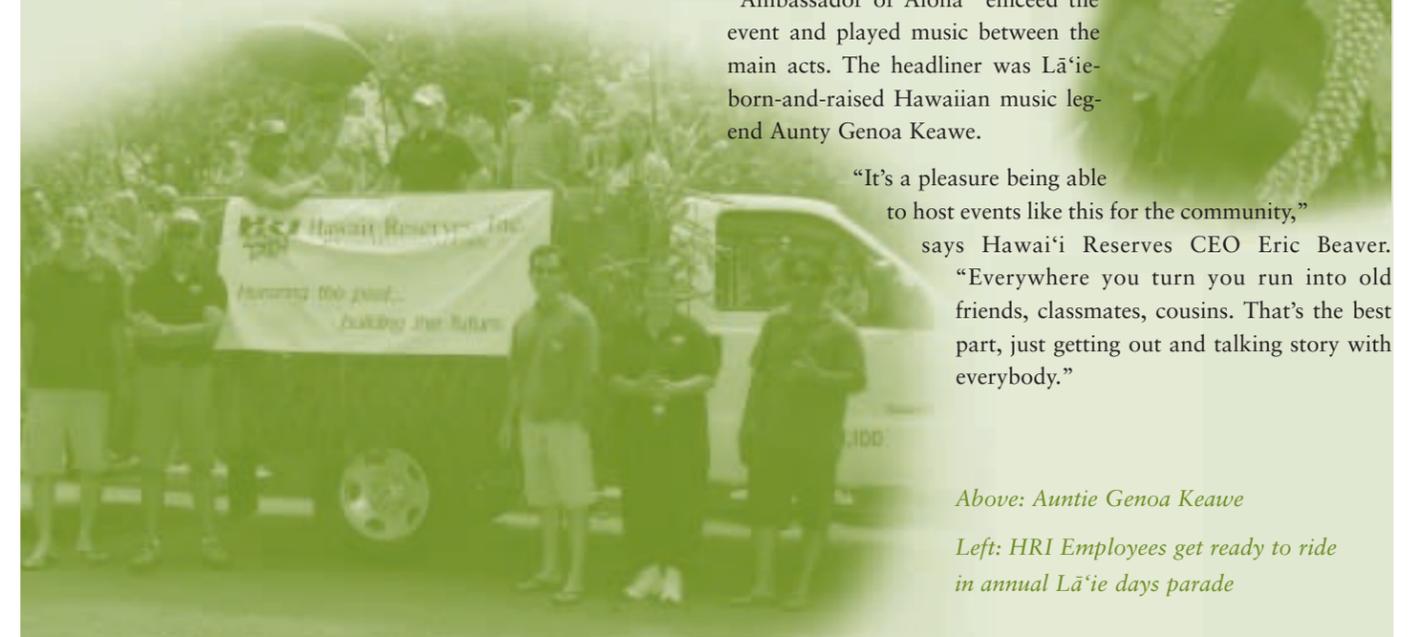
Hawaiian music as the sun set behind the Ko‘olau.

The evening’s entertainment included Nani Laie Serenaders from Na Kupuna O Laie, Nonosina O Laie, Pilioha, Touch of Gold, and Vaihi. “Cousin” Benny Kai, the Polynesian Cultural Center’s longtime “Ambassador of Aloha” emceed the event and played music between the main acts. The headliner was Lā‘ie-born-and-raised Hawaiian music legend Aunty Genoa Keawe.

“It’s a pleasure being able to host events like this for the community,”

says Hawai‘i Reserves CEO Eric Beaver.

“Everywhere you turn you run into old friends, classmates, cousins. That’s the best part, just getting out and talking story with everybody.”



Above: Aunty Genoa Keawe

Left: HRI Employees get ready to ride in annual Lā‘ie days parade

## New Choices for Eating Out

building for the future

Taco Bell opened its doors at the Lā‘ie Shopping Center this spring to a reception any downtown restaurant would envy. Customers lined up outside to get in and tables were packed for days after the grand opening. The eatery even created a bit of a café society in town for a short while by placing tables out on the sidewalk for a few weeks. “The place was packed,” says Taco Bell store manager Ronnie Foo. “It was the best opening we could have hoped for.”

improve upon the old one in several ways: it will have air conditioning, state-of-the-art washers and dryers, a waiting area, and dry-cleaning services. “We’re excited about the new facility and are pleased to offer our customers a very comfortable, full-service venue,” says Laura Adolpho, owner of Lā‘ie Washerette.

Taco Bell was one of two new restaurant tenants to move into Lā‘ie Shopping Center earlier this year. The other, Pizza Hut, opened next door with an expanded take-out menu including pastas and salads. The two restaurants were part of a new direction for the center. “We wanted to give the center more of a food-court atmosphere,” says Richard Vierra, director of property management for Hawaii Reserves Inc., which manages the center. “Adding these two big-name restaurants accomplishes that and enables us to give a greater range of dining options to center patrons.”

“All in all, the new tenant lineup has been a winner for our local merchants as well as the community,” says

Vierra, who added that the center has been running at full occupancy for several years. “With the remodeled washerette and these new restaurants, Lā‘ie Shopping Center is bringing people together now more than ever.”

Taco Bell moved into the space previously occupied by tenant Lā‘ie Washerette. The washerette will be relocated to a custom-remodeled space next to Ace Hardware. The new facility will

