

Hui o Laka

The Koke'e Natural History Museum

President's Report

A Report to the Annual Meeting, 30. November 2013

I am proud to serve as President of Hui o Laka and to have such a committed and hard-working Board of Directors. We've had a challenging year, which we will detail for you in the financial and committee reports. We have met those challenges with hard work, innovation, and bottom-up planning - by answering basic questions, including who we are, what is our mission, what services we should provide to the Parks, and how we can grow to better serve our public and the Parks.

We celebrate also today the 60th anniversary of the Hui o Laka, founded by three far-sighted pioneers: Ruth Knudsen Hanner, Isabel P. Faye, and Joseph M. Souza. Their vision was to provide an interpretive center for the natural history and history of the uplands of Kauai. They succeeded: we have served as the major interpretive and visitor center for the Territorial and State Parks all those years.

The last several years have been challenging, especially financially. Your Board has taken some important steps towards a better understanding of where our funds are coming from and how they are expended. For the first time, we know what our costs are for staff support of each program. With this essential information, we can better judge the effectiveness and efficiency of our support. Our Treasurer's Report will outline the steps taken and the way forward.

We will continue to support both the Banana Polka Festival and Eo e Emalani i Koke'e. Both are likely to change somewhat, to get "back to the roots", as it were, of the spirit of the original festivals. We are carefully examining the costs and our commitment to both the Kokua Koke'e resource conservation program and the historic Civilian Conservation Corps Camp. The State of Hawaii, through its Division of State Parks, wants us to succeed in both these important programs and recognize their value. Parks has committed to an innovative solution to provide us with legal occupancy of the Camp, the Museum proper, and the Ruth Knudsen Hanner Cabin at Pu'u Ka Pele. I'll explain more later in the course of this meeting.

Over the next several months, there are two major challenges. The first will be to select a worthy successor to our Executive Director, who has retired after twenty-six years of service. Our Search Committee will report separately on their efforts.

The second will be to get the Museum "back on its feet", so to speak. We're behind in our finances and for years have seen a steady draw-down of our cash reserves. The challenge is to become current with our expenses and to ensure that we have a sufficient cash cushion to weather the storm.