

# HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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*An impromptu photo at the end of Friday's playing sessions in Fort Collins this past October: (Seated) Chris Kennison, "Honored Guest" Duke Ching and Kamaka Tom; (ladies standing) Duke's daughters Kapua and Mahea and his granddaughter Kehau; (men standing) Tony Fourcroy, Mark Kahalekulu and Mahea's husband, Dale Dodd.*

## Ft. Collins 2015 – Another Step Forward

### A Hawaiian's Thoughts on the HSGA Fort Collins Festival

*By Mark Kahalekulu*

*Aloha e kākou* [greetings to all]. After attending last year's festival, I was curious to see if it would again be as memorable as the one in 2014. Last year was the first time I had ever attended an HSGA event, and I had no idea what to expect. What would a Hawaiian steel guitar event held on the mainland be like? Would there be other Hawaiians like me there? Would I be accepted, even though I am not a steel guitar player? (I have a Gibson student

model tuned to C6th, but I never play it and for many years it has just been gathering dust in my spare bedroom.)

I was humbled to find myself heartily welcomed into the fold of an enthusiastic, intelligent and dedicated group of musicians who have in common a deep and abiding love not only for the Hawaiian steel guitar but for Hawai'i as well. I had found myself a home away from home.

This year's HSGA festival was like the previous one but on steroids. In addition to the Coloradans like John Mumford, Tony Fourcroy, Joe Stewart, and Chris Kennison, we were besieged

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## HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 31, Issue 119



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### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association's primary purpose is to develop a global network of players and lovers of traditional Hawaiian music and to encourage the study, teaching, and performance of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Our primary financial goal is to provide scholarship assistance through donations to steel guitar students who demonstrate the ability and intent to become accomplished performers.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all steel guitar players and non-players around the world who support the perpetuation of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Annual dues are US\$30. The membership year begins July 1. Members receive the *HSGA Quarterly* and other group benefits. The *Quarterly* is mailed four times a year First Class to addresses in the United States and by Air Mail to foreign addresses. Members can obtain an Associate Membership for a spouse or family member at a cost of \$10, added to the annual dues; an Associate Member is entitled to discounts at certain HSGA functions and can vote in HSGA Board elections.

### SUBMIT LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waioma'o Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424 USA. Our e-mail address is [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org). Submitted items should also be e-mailed directly to the editor at [johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com).

FORT COLLINS Continued from Page 1

by visiting players like Jim Newberry, Ivan Reddington, Dave Kolars, Mark Roeder, Dr. Gil O'Gawa and Gary Vanderlinde. Of course, there was the Hawaiian contingent, which consisted of Kamaka Tom, who hails from Palolo Valley, Honolulu, on the island of O'ahu; Ed Punua and his father, Victor Punua, Sr., who are both longtime entertainers on the island of Kaua'i; and EP Davis, a much more recent resident of the Garden Isle.

A very special person was also in attendance, someone who has since changed my perspective of Hawaiian music in a profound way—Mr. Duke Kaleolani Ching. He was our Guest of Honor, featured performer, lū'au entertainment coordinator, and Professor Emeritus of Hawaiian Music in Attendance. Taught by his uncle, the incomparable Jules Keli'ikoaho'onua Ah See at the age of nine, "Uncle Duke" plays a triple-neck steel utilizing three different tunings (B11th, E13th, and C6th) to achieve his family's signature *nahe-nahe* [sweet] sound. Also coming out with him to Colorado were his two

daughters, Mahealani and Kapua-okalani-leialoha-ku'ukeiki-manawapau, and his granddaughter, Kehaulani, who amazed and graced everyone with their hula. They were all taught by Duke's wife, Laverne Wahine'ali'i Cummings Ching, and who herself was a *haumana* [student] of the legendary hula dancer 'Iolani Luahine. Uncle Duke even introduced us to his four-month old great-granddaughter, 'Ali'ikaika, as well as other members of his 'ohana, many of whom were attending an HSGA event for the very first time.

The traditional Saturday Night Lū'au and Hula Show fittingly closed out the festival. Bedecked in their finest Aloha attire, the gathered attendees mingled and shared their stories and recollections of the past days' events. A very touching and heartfelt presentation by Tony Fourcroy on behalf of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association was given to recognize the life and achievement of our Guest of Honor, Duke Ching, which was accompanied by a slide show featuring Uncle Duke playing with just about *everybody* who was important in Hawaiian music for the last 70 years! Classic! The Aloha that

*Honored Guest Duke Ching at his Saturday playing session, looking on as his granddaughter Kehaulani (left) and daughters Kapua and Mahealani provide hula.*





*Chris Kennison, who took charge of last year's inaugural festival, playing steel this year with Mark Schulz, also from "the Fort."*

was shown by the entire room was overwhelming, and the *waimaka* [tears] cascaded like the countless waterfalls after *ka ua loku kaulana a'o Hanalei* [the famous pouring rains of Hanalei].

After we all wiped back our tears, the assembled guests proceeded to "go to town" on the whole roasted pig that was the centerpiece of an awesome dinner buffet. As everyone settled back, sated by the all the *'ono kaukau* ["good eats"], they were treated to a hula show that even Waikiki would be hard-pressed to duplicate.

Uncle Duke, manning his mean triple-neck, was ably supported by Kamaka Tom, Ed Punua and Philip Swain on 'ukulele, "Mango" Stephens and Ben Doty on guitars, and myself on the bass. Dancing to this armada of music were Duke Kaleolani Ching's two daughters, Mahealani and Kapua, and his granddaughter, Kehau, as well as the hula dancers of the Hula School of Northern Colorado, led by Janna Yoshimoto, an 'Iolani and CSU graduate from Honolulu, Hawai'i, and assisted by Susie Park-Kelly, kumu hula of Halau O Keaka O Kalani of Boulder, Colorado. In addition to Uncle Duke, the appreciative audience was serenaded by his granddaughter, Kamalani, who sang "Kamehameha Waltz" in a stunning soprano. Colorado's own Kamehameha Schools alumni, Philip Kahaunale Swain and "Mango" Stephens blended beautiful three-part harmonies with Kamaka Tom, with all three taking turns singing lead. All I could do was pinch myself to make sure that this wasn't just all a dream.

But the high point of the festival for me wasn't the Lū'au. Or playing on the concert stage. Or mixing it up with all the great people and players. No, it was something totally unexpected and unscripted. In a word, it was magical. On the second day of the festival, still feeling a little fuzzy

from the night before (I'm getting too old for this), when everyone else took off for lunch, my wife Dawn and I ended up just hanging out alone in the concert room. In walks Uncle Duke and Kamaka Tom. Uncle says he's not in the mood to eat, and picks up my guitar and sits down next to me. He starts strumming and singing the old, classic Hawaiian melodies and tells me to harmonize with him. In the meantime, Kamaka gets out my steel guitar (which I never play) and starts accompanying Duke and me. For an hour or so, nobody interrupted us, just the three of us, with Uncle showing me the old-school way of playing that he learned from the greats of the past: "Hula O Makee," "E Huli Makou," "Kamakani Ka'ili Aloha," "Uhe'uhene," "No Huhu," "Na Lei O Hawai'i." One after another, he strung the classic Hawaiian songs together into a beautiful lei, a gift of Aloha for Dawn and me.

People started filing back into the concert room. Lunch was over. Somehow, I had been transported to another place, to another time. But now, we were back in the present. It was a shock, and, I must admit, a bit of a disappointment. But as I looked up, there was Uncle Duke, smiling that smile of his, looking deeply inside of me. It was as if he was reading my heart and knew what I had just experienced. I sheepishly returned his infectious smile, relishing the delicious, chicken skin feeling as it tingled throughout my body.

### **From Gil O'Gawa**

From my perspective it was the best of any HSGA festivals I've attended over the last several years! I believe the Hilton did an outstanding job of putting on the lū'au menu, including the full pig laid out for "plucking." The floorshow that Duke put together was outstanding. The three days of morn-

*Continued on Page 4*

*Joe Stewart playing steel at Ft. Collins with Gil O'Gawa on uke.*



ing and afternoon performances gave everyone a chance to show their playing style. Fortunately, I was able to video many of those performances as well as the Saturday Night Lū'au and Floorshow. Our plan is to post the video on a restricted web page of some sort (stay tuned, members).

The only regret I have is that Mark [Kahalekulu] didn't interrupt me (from staring at my computer screen) when he wanted me to play bass uke with him on his Saturday performance. They played Hawaiian songs with a country and western flavor and I'd gladly make the seven-hour drive from Albuquerque to Aurora, Colorado to catch him doing those songs again.

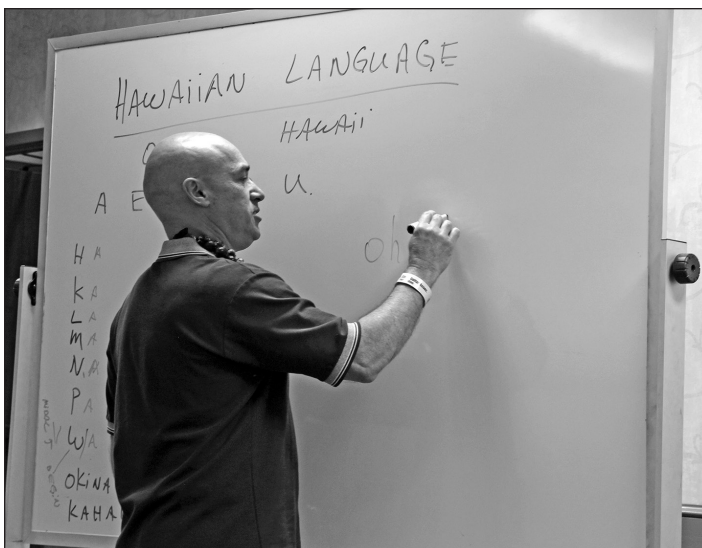
### From Chuck Lettes

I enjoyed the HSGA festival. Lots of good music and fellowship, and I had a good crowd at my C6th steel guitar seminar. Thanks for providing the PA to play the rhythm tracks and thanks also to Dave Dale and Kit Simon who backed me during my set. Those guys can really play! Thanks again for putting together the show, an obvious labor of love, and thanks for letting me be a part of it. Hope to do it again next year.

### Mahalos to our Colorado-based dancers

In addition to Duke's family of talented dancers, our festival featured dancers from the Fort Collins-based Northern Colorado Hula Studio featuring Maile Bergknut, Liza Hunn and Veronica Brush, and dancers from the Boulder-based hula 'ohana Keaka O Kalani featuring Susie "Kalani Ki'e Ki'e" Park-Kelly and Renee Beri. Mahalo nui loa! ■

*Philip Swain at his well-attended Hawaiian Language seminar at this year's festival. He is president of the Pi'ilani Hawaiian Civic Club's Denver chapter and an exceptional singer and musician.*



*After his set at Ft. Collins, steel guitarist Chuck Lettes (center) with his backing group—bassist Dave Dale and guitarist Kit Simon.*

## HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGA members, for your donations the past quarter! **Bill Rhyme** of Sebastopol, California came through for us again with a generous \$170 donation to our Scholarship Fund! Longtime member **Bernie Endaya** from Glendale, California once again gave a generous \$100 to our General Fund. **Julie "Haunani" Waters** of Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i—who, together with departed husband **Bob "Pulevai" Waters**, gave us unforgettable moments at so many Joliet conventions—followed suit with another nice \$100 donation. **Mark Roeder** of Madison, Wisconsin also donated a generous \$100 to our General Fund. *Mahalo nui loa*, all!

The following members donated at least \$10:

Warren and Anita Barnes, Sacramento, CA  
Rick Collins, Claremont, CA  
Wade H. Hargrove, Raleigh, NC  
Doug Hazelberg, Kenosha, WI  
Beat Iseli, Winterthur, Switzerland  
Janet King, Watsonville, CA  
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Rusty Strange, N. Falmouth, MA  
Donald and Donna Weber, New Lenox, IL

# Kudos, Duke Ching!

By John Ely

As our readers can tell from the reviews of our second annual festival in Fort Collins, Honored Guest Duke Kaleolani Ching made a big splash with our attendees. Duke is well known to our longtime members, but we thought we'd better fill everyone in on Duke's long history as a performer.

Duke Kaleolani Ching, a native son of Hawai'i and of Chinese-Hawaiian ancestry, began his musical career at an early age when he was given an accordion for his tenth birthday. He soon moved on to 'ukulele, standard guitar and eventually the Hawaiian steel guitar, becoming quite proficient by age fifteen. Duke was self-taught, learning by watching his uncles and aunts play music. Before long he was per-



*A great shot of Honored Guest Duke Ching and family. (Right to left) Duke's daughter Kapua, his granddaughter Kehaulani, Duke Ching holding his special HSGA award, Duke's granddaughter Kamalani holding her baby 'Ali'ikaika, Kamalani's husband Jason MacMaster, Duke's daughter Mahealani and her husband, Dale Dodd.*



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forming at school events and casuals with other musical groups.

A big influence on Duke were his uncles Sam Ka'i Ching and David Kaa'i who performed with the Nautical Hawaiians live on Honolulu radio station KGMB every Sunday with Sam on steel guitar. Sam used the C6th tuning like David Keli'i and had a *nahenahe* [sweet] playing style. And, of course, Duke soaked in the "Hawai'i Calls" steel guitar sound made famous by David Keli'i, Duke's uncle Jules Ah See (known to his family as "Uncle Sonny") and Barney Isaacs.

During the '50s, Duke played with Don Ho at Honey's Cafe for four years at Waikiki's legendary Barefoot Bar where he played with master slack key guitarist Gabby Pahinui. During the course of his career in the U.S. Air Force, he played with a variety of country, rock and jazz groups and toured military bases in Korea, Japan, Midway Island and Germany.

Duke completed his secondary education in Kapa'a, Kaua'i and received his college degree on the mainland at Cal State University, majoring in business administration. Following retire-

ment from the Air Force after 22 years of service, he settled in Southern California and was soon playing a full calendar with the best musicians around.

In 2009, Duke won the award for Best Steel Guitar Album at Johnny Kai's Hawaiian Music Awards. The album, titled "Hawaiian Steel, Volume 5" was recorded at Greg Sardinha's Sma'Kine studios for Greg's Keala Records label. In 1970 when Duke left the military, he was honored by the Emperor and people of Japan for his service there.

Over his long career Duke has appeared with many "greats" of Hawaiian music, including Benny Kalama, Sonny Kamahale, Walter Mookini, Barney Isaacs, Genoa Keawe, George and Keoki Kahumoku and Dennis Kamakahi, to name just a few. He has also appeared in a few Hollywood movies, including "50 First Dates" and "Bedtime Stories" with Adam Sandler, "His Mistress" with Robert Urich and "House Arrest" with Jamie Lee Curtis.

Duke has been married for over sixty years to LaVerne Wahine'ali'i

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## KAUA'I NEWS

By Jess Montgomery

All's well here. I'm hanging in there with my attempted retirement and have been fortunate to keep pretty busy with steel. In addition to a few lū'aus a month for Princess Cruise Line passengers with **Larry Rivera**—he's 85 now and still sometimes does two or three shows a day—for the past year, I've been playing with **Dennis Chun** on Thursday nights (6-9 PM) in the lounge at the Hukilau Lanai Restaurant behind the Coconut Marketplace in Kapa'a. Dennis teaches Hawaiian Studies at the local Community College, is fluent in Hawaiian, and plays excellent slack key guitar. He is also active with the Polynesian Voyaging Society and has sailed on the Hōkūle'a half a dozen times since it was built in the '70s. We might say we have a Sons of Hawaii sound, but I'll stop short of that and just say, "We try."

The only other steady gig with a steel player on Kaua'i is also on Thursday nights—**Eddie Punua and the Kama'ainas** are still going out in Waimea at Kalapaki Joe's. Sadly, their uke player, **Ambrose Smith**, passed away recently, but he was well into his ninety and played all the way to the finish line.

I've also gotten to jam somewhat regularly lately with **Ernie Palmeira** at a friend's house. He does casuals and plays at the airport, but doesn't do any regular gigs. He's 85 as well, but still won't let anybody help him carry his double-neck Fender out to the car. He spends his days chasing cows around his pasture, too.

I also do some weddings and casuals with **Troy Waialeale, Mike Keale, and "Zabby" Zablan**—from the Princeville St. Regis to Tahiti Nui—from the Hyatt in Po'ipū to the Kekaha Neighborhood Center—always exciting. One of the best last month was at the lū'au for the 150th Anniversary of

*At Fort Collins this year, Mark Kahalekulu, "Mango" Stevens, Victor Punua, Phil Swain and Ed Punua. Mango is a real paniolo and just moved from Loveland, Colorado back to Maui.*



*A rare, vintage shot of a young Larry Rivera (left) together with Kaua'i steel guitar ace, Ernie Palmeira, and unknown dancer.*

the Anahola Hawaiian Church. One of the dancers who got up from the audience and shared her "stuff" was a former Miss Aloha Hula from the Merry Monarch Fest some years back. How good can it get?

Got to have a little jam session with Chicago area pedal steel player, **TC Furlong**, a couple of weeks ago. He was vacationing and got in touch with a friend. Still playing the blues too, and whatever else I can get away with. ■

### 2015-2016 Dues Alert

*This is your FINAL issue if your newsletter mailing label still shows "X 6/15" next to your address. Annual dues are \$30, which includes First Class delivery. Renew today!*

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## FROM THE EDITOR

I'm sure it hasn't gone unnoticed how late the newsletter was this time. Just a few words by way of explanation and apology. The summer issue is always challenging due to my busy summer performance schedule—really there is no other performance season to speak of up here in Northern Minnesota! So it all gets crammed into a few months. Unfortunately, this year flu season struck about a month early, really before the shots were generally available, and I picked up a vicious virus that I still haven't fully recovered from some eight weeks later. Not the best! At any rate, the Fall issue will follow quickly in order to get back to a more reasonable schedule. Ditto for the Winter issue.

Another problem that we're dealing with is a reduction in correspondence from members. We encourage you to share with us what's going on with you, including items that would be of interest to other members: local news in your area pertaining to steel guitar, Hawaiian music or Hawaiiana in general. Hawai'i members, you are in a unique position to be our "ears on the ground" in all things Hawai'i. For example, you can help us keep our 'Who's Playing Where' regular feature current. Traveling members are always wanting to know where to go for Hawaiian steel guitar. Email me anytime at <johnely@hawaiiansteel.com>.

Again, I apologize to everyone in the club for the delays getting the newsletter out over the past few months. Thanks in advance for understanding. One good thing, when the snow flies, there's not much to do but button up and tend to things on the home front! Mahalo, all, and I look forward to hearing from you. -Your editor, John Ely. ■

*Wisconsin member Mark Roeder playing a fine set for the Fort Collins audience with his gorgeous Clinesmith steel guitar.*



*A super shot of DeKalb, Illinois member Dave Kolars at Fort Collins playing a Weissenborn-style steel he built himself. And he's got another one in the "production line." Taking orders, Dave?*

## Hawaiian Jingle

It's getting to be that time of year, so here's a little gem that club founder, Lorene Ruymar, sent us years ago (it never pays to throw stuff away). So, clear your pipes:

### "Jingle Bells" Hawaiian Style

*(Verse)*

Dashing past the moon, slipping through the stars  
Santa guides his sleigh, to the sound of steel guitars.  
Kanes and wahines, and keikis in the throng  
Strum their 'ukuleles while they sing this Christmas  
song. Oh!

*(Chorus)*

Santa Claus, Santa Claus, come to Waikīkī  
You will find our fishing nets hanging on a palm tree  
Santa Claus, Santa Claus, come to Kona, too  
We will leave some pineapple and cokee-nut for you.

*(Verse)*

Red and green poinsettias make an island Christmas tree  
Fro-osty the Sandman does a hula by the sea  
Haoles and Hawaiians at the yuletide lū'au say,  
"Mele Kalikimaka" in the old Hawaiian way. Oh!

*(Chorus)*

## COCO WIRE

This past September, member Erich Sylvester and his group performed at the Wine Country Ukulele Festival in St. Helena, California just north of Napa. The trio, which included Sean Allen on steel guitar and Mike Billo on 'ukulele, did sweet Hawaiian swing tunes from the band's CD *Hapa Haole Hit Parade*. The CD features Ken Emerson, Sean Allen, Don McClellan, and Brad Bechtel on steel guitar and the group goes by the name Hot Steel & Cool Ukulele. Catch them if you're in or around the Bay Area. Just google the band's name to find their Facebook page.

Those of you who attended the HSGA Festival in Fort Collins this past October, may remember **Phil "Mango" Nahono'opi'ilani Stephens**, who was a performer on the concert stage as well as Duke Ching's rhythm guitar player at the Saturday night Lū'au. Mango was a *paniolo* [Hawaiian cowboy] for almost twenty years, working at the Parker Ranch on the Big Island, Kaupo Ranch on Maui and the Moloka'i Ranch on Moloka'i. Most recently, he was the ranch manager at the Sylvan Dale Ranch in Loveland, Colorado. He is a fourth generation member of the musically renowned Farden family of Maui and has been playing Hawaiian music professionally from his school days as a student at Kamehameha in Honolulu.

Mango Stephens's first recording, *The Nahenahe Voice of Nahono'opi'ilani, Live at the Moloka'i Ranch Lodge*, is now available for purchase for \$15 plus \$2.50 for shipping and handling. To preview Mango's CD, please visit his website at [www.wix.com/pstephens/Traditional-Hawaiian](http://www.wix.com/pstephens/Traditional-Hawaiian).

*Steve Marinak and family posing at the Old Lahaina Lū'au: (top row) Ryan Dietrich, lū'au steel guitarist Ross Ka'a'a, Steve Marinak, Stevie Marinak; (bottom row) Jenn Hua (Ryan's Fiancé), Ingrid Marinak and Melissa Marinak. Good lookin' grinds, too!*



*At the Old Lahaina Lū'au, Ross Ka'a'a playing his Remington steel guitar. (If memory serves, looks like Eddie Liliko'i on guitar.)*

Selections include, "The Queen's Prayer," "Kou'ula," "Baby Kalae," and "I Fell In Love In Honolulu." To order, please email Mark Kahalekulu at [markkahalekulu@gmail.com](mailto:markkahalekulu@gmail.com) or phone him at (720) 333-4409. Orders are presently restricted to residents of the USA.

This from one of John Ely's steel guitar students, **Steve Marinak** of Delray Beach, Florida, who just got back from a whirlwind trip to the Islands: "We're on Maui for our last few days, then heading back. We did it all 'Brady Bunch' style, six of us in the family, three boys and three girls. Earlier in the trip, we caught the **Hiram Olsen Trio** in Waikīkī at the Halekulani Hotel's House Without a Key seaside patio; good band, but you could not hear the steel guitar in the mix, unfortunately.

"While on Maui we did the Old Lahaina Lū'au. *Great* band. Sounded like a record. **Ross Ka'a'a** was the steel guitar player. Super nice guy. I don't think anyone every talks steel guitar or music with him, as he came over between breaks to hang with us. He plays an 8-string Remington. He downplayed his skills and the band's, stating that 'it's the same songs for the last twenty years every night'. It was all in sync for the dancers. The mix was fantastic, too. Our kids all refer to Ross as "Uncle Ross" now with a chuckle. His photo with us will surely be included in this year's Marinak Christmas video (go to [marinakchristmas.com](http://marinakchristmas.com)).

"While in Maui, we drove the road to Hana with some very nice views. The temperature here, they say, is hot. We consider this a wonderful winter's day in Florida, and overall a much nicer climate.

"We missed seeing **Bobby Ingano** by one night here on Maui. Ross says there are very few places to see live steel guitar here."

We got the scoop from **Aunty Kapua Hollands** on the Twenty-First Annual E Hula Mau Hula Competition held

*Continued on Page 20*



## Events Calendar

### **December 19, 2015—Kāne‘ohe Winter Concert**

Enjoy the music of Ke Kula Mele School of Hawaiian music under the direction of Kumu Alan Akaka. Students will perform songs about Hawai‘i’s mountains and waterfalls on steel guitar, ‘ukulele, guitar and Hawaiian-style bass. The concert will be held at Windward Mall in Kāne‘ohe, 11 AM, free to the public. For more information call (808) 375-9379 or visit [kekulamele.com](http://kekulamele.com).

### **February 5-6, 2016—Kaua‘i Steel Guitar Festival**

This inaugural event will be held at the Courtyard Kaua‘i at Coconut Beach in Kapa‘a, Kaua‘i. Check out the event website at [www.kauaisteelguitarfestival.com](http://www.kauaisteelguitarfestival.com) for details as they become available. More to follow.

### **April 15-17, 2016—Maui Steel Guitar Festival**

Maui Fest will again be held at the Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel with the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Camp immediately preceding the festival. Details to follow next issue.



*At Fort Collins, dancers from Janna Yoshimoto’s Northern Colorado Hula Studio: Maile Bergknut, Liza Hunn and Renee Beri putting on a great show on Saturday evening with our able floor-show musicians: Mark Kahalekulu (bass), Phil Swain (‘ukulele), Kamaka Tom (‘ukulele), Guest Artist Duke Kaloelani Ching on steel guitar, Mango Stevens (guitar) and Ed Punua (‘ukulele).*



# Deluxe 34

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# Beyond the Reef

(Jack Pitman)

Arrangement by Chuck Lettes

Ballad

Vs

Gm7 C7 F Am7 Abm7

Be - yond the reef, \_\_\_\_\_ where the sea is dark and cold, \_\_\_\_\_ my love is

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

5

Gm7 C7 F

gone, \_\_\_\_\_ and our dreams grow old. There'll be no

9

Gm7 C7 F Am7 Abm7

tears, \_\_\_\_\_ there'll be no re - gret - ting, \_\_\_\_\_ will he re -

13

Gm7 C7 F F7

mem - ber me? \_\_\_\_\_ Will he for - get? I'll send a



# Beautiful is Hawaii: Jerry Byrd's *Nani Hawaii* Album of 1950, Part IV

By Anthony Lis

In this series we have been discussing Jerry Byrd's first album, *Nani Hawaii*, recorded for Mercury Records in January 1950 and released in the 78 rpm and 45 rpm format that fall. On the album, Byrd's steel guitar playing was backed by the Islanders, a quartet of native Hawaiian musicians led by ukulele player/falsetto vocalist Danny Kuaana. Joining Kuaana were George Ku on guitar and vocals, Mel Peterson on rhythm guitar and vocals, and Al McIntire on upright string bass and vocals.

Part One (in the Fall 2014 issue) supplied background on the album. As Byrd recalled in his 2003 autobiography *It Was a Trip: On the Wings of Music*, in late 1949 Mercury Records exec Murray Nash floated the idea of him recording an album. Byrd asked to record a Hawaiian album with Hawaiian musicians and Nash agreed. Having met Danny Kuaana in Detroit likely back in 1944, Byrd asked him to lead his backing group. Plans were made to

*A studio shot of Danny Kuaana taken sometime between 1945 and 1947.*

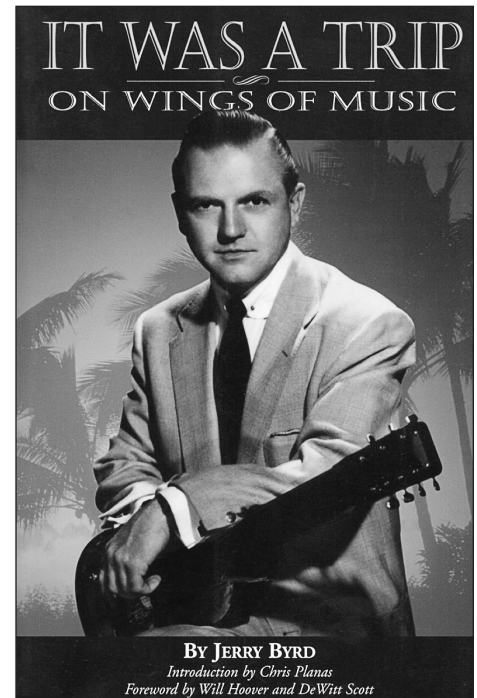


convene in Chicago, where *Nani Hawaii* was recorded at RCA's studio on Lake Shore Drive, probably between January 5 and January 17, 1950.

Conventional wisdom has it that on *Nani Hawaii*, Byrd played a Rickenbacher Electro lap steel he obtained from steel teacher/performer Ronald Dearth (active in Byrd's hometown of Lima, Ohio), with Byrd plugging into a Volu-Tone amplifier also obtained from Dearth. However, Byrd's brother Jack, in his unpublished 2005 compilation "Jerry Byrd and His Music," states that Byrd obtained a white-paneled post-World War II Rickenbacher Bakelite in 1949 (the year before the *Nani* sessions), which he consistently played before acquiring a seven-string Rickenbacher sometime in the 1950s.

Part Two (in the Winter 2014-15 issue) discussed the first three numbers Byrd and the Islanders recorded: "I Regret to Say Aloha," a waltz written by Kuaana on which Byrd played a four-bar introduction and an eight-bar break; "Maui Chimes," Byrd's take on the traditional "show off" vehicle for harmonics playing, dedicated to Al McIntire's younger brother, Hawaiian steel guitarist Dick McIntire, who was a seminal influence upon Byrd in his teenage years; and "Little Lani Jo," a tribute to Jerry and Thelma Byrd's then-sixth-month-old daughter, composed by Kuaana and Byrd, on which Byrd provided a four-bar introduction and eight-bar break.

Part Three (in the Spring 2015 issue) included a discussion of the next three songs recorded: "Makalapua," a "name song" for Queen Lili'uokalani from the turn of the last century, on which Byrd played an eight-bar break; "Kaulana O Hilo Hanakahi," Lena Machado's World War II-era tribute to the scenic wonders surrounding Hilo, on the Island of Hawaii, on which Byrd



*Jerry Byrd's autobiography, "It Was a Trip: On Wings of Music" issued by Centerstream Publications in May 2003.*

supplied twenty-four bars of soloing; and "Be Mine Sweetheart Be Mine," an attractive Kuaana tune on which Byrd played a four-bar intro, four-bar outro and eight-bar break.

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Byrd and the Islanders next recorded "Kaimana Hila." The title is one of the two Hawaiian names for Diamond Head, the famous volcanic cone southeast of central Honolulu. The original name *Lehai* [place of fire] gave way to *Kaimana Hila*, a Hawaiian rendering of Diamond Head, the phrase used by Nineteenth Century British sailors to describe the cone.

"Kaimana Hila" was composed by Charles E. King, a conductor/composer/arranger who was one-quarter Hawaiian and brought up amid members of the Hawaiian Royal Family. King's original song was a 2/4 number in "hula tempo" consisting of a repeated ten-bar melody. However, as steel guitarist Basil Henriques recently noted in his series "Hawaiian Sheet Music 1879-1949," in the March 2014 issue of his *Aloha Dream* Hawaiian

music publication, “the melody and lyrics [of ‘Kaimana Hila’] ... as it is sung today [were] popularized by [Honolulu-born vocalist/guitarist] Andy Kealoha Cummings [in the late 1940s] and [are] ... different from [King’s] ... original tune and lyrics.” (Cummings’s version, in a moderate 4/4 tempo, consists of a twelve-bar verse and a twelve-bar chorus.)

Harry B. Soria, Jr., in his liner notes to *Andy Cummings & His Hawaiian Serenaders* (Hana Ola HOCD-6500) relates that when, in their early days, the Serenaders would play their new version of “Kaimana Hila” at a night-spot near Ala Moana Beach Park in southeast Honolulu, “the audience would always request to hear [it] . . . several times a night, and the group’s fame began to spread. Soon the group was turning away crowds, which prompted hundreds of fans to gather in the park to listen in the darkness.”

T. Malcolm Rockwell, in his *Hawaiian and Hawaiian Guitar Records 1891-1960* discography, lists two recordings of “Kaimana Hila” by Cummings and his group, one in 1947

and another in c. 1948, with David Malo likely the steel guitarist on both recordings. Cummings’s 1948 Bell recording (re-issued in 2004 on HOCD-6500) features Cummings’s clear falsetto voice, backed by his steel guitarist’s fourteen-bar introduction and later high obbligato lines.

Earlier this year, the website of Hawaiian musician Kapono Beamer (kapono.com) provided the following concise summation of “Kaimana Hila”’s lyrics: “[The] song relates the adventures of a group of friends on a Hawaiian holiday [taking in early Twentieth Century tourist sites in Waikiki, all within view of Diamond Head].” The friends start at Ka’alawai Beach, immediately southeast of Diamond Head, gazing up at the grandeur of the volcanic cone. “They [then head northwest] ... to Kapi’olani Park [Hawaii’s oldest and largest public park], dedicated in 1877 by King [David] Kalākaua, and renowned for the beautiful oval horse race track [in the middle of the green]. They bet and watch the races, then meander thru Makee ‘Ailana, an island in [an artifi-



*Andy Kealoha Cummings (1913-1995)*

cial lake in] the park. They marvel at the big hotels and stop for refreshments at the Seaside Inn, a favorite of *kama’aina* [local residents] and *malihini* [visitors] in the early 1900s. This hotel, situated on ten acres of Waikiki beachfront property, was demolished in 1920 to make way for the new Royal Hawaiian Hotel. They end their holiday with a leisurely stroll thru ‘Āinahau, the [home and] lush estate of Princess Victoria Ka’iulani [1875-1899] [heir-ess to the throne before the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii].” (The Sheraton Princess Kaiulani Hotel now stands on the ‘Āinahau site.)

Byrd and the Islanders recorded two takes of “Kaimana Hila”; the released version is an abbreviated rendition of the song clocking in at just under three minutes. The recording begins with a thirteen-bar solo by Byrd, leading into Mel Peterson’s falsetto singing of the first eleven bars (mentioning the grandeur of “old Diamond Head”). Byrd then plays a two-bar steel fill leading into the next eleven-bar section, in which Kuaana, Ku, and McIntire join Peterson on the vocals (mentioning the Kapi’olani Park horse racetrack and an

*‘Āinahau, the home and estate of Princess Victoria Ka’iulani (1875-1899), referenced in the song “Kaimana Hila” (“We ... gazed at the splendor and strolled in the tranquility”).*



*Continued on Page 14*

exhausted jockey). Byrd then plays a different two-bar fill, followed by a thirteen-bar break, which leads to Peterson alone singing the next eleven bars (mentioning the ‘Āinahau estate as well as beautiful shining surfboards). After another two-bar fill from Byrd, Kuaana, Ku, McIntire and Peterson sing the next eleven bars. A final two-bar fill from Byrd, ending with a short glissando, closes the recording.

The “Advance Record Releases” column in the August 5, 1950 *Billboard* announced the release of “Kaimana Hila” as the “B” side to “Makalapua,” recorded earlier in the sessions as Mercury 6265.

Byrd and the Islanders closed the *Nani Hawaii* sessions with a rendering of “Hilo March.” As Harry B. Soria and Alan L. Akaka note in their liner notes to *History of the Steel Guitar* (Cord/Hana Ola HOCD3400), “‘Hilo March’ is one of the most often performed Hawaiian steel guitar pieces.” Like “Maui Chimes,” the piece has a confusing history. John Marsden’s liner notes to *Tickling the Strings, 1929-1952* (Harlequin HQ CD 28) and John Berger’s “Hilo March” entry in his recently revised edition of George S.



A postcard from the early 1900s apparently showing Makee ‘Ailana, an island in an artificial lake in Kapi‘olani Park, referenced in the song “Kaimana Hila.”

Kanahele’s *Hawaiian Music and Musicians: An Encyclopedic History* help clarify the composition’s evolution. “Hilo March”—known in Hawaiian as “Ka Nani O Hilo” [The Beauty of Hilo]—was composed in 1886 by Joseph K. Ae‘a [c. 1858-1911], a member of the Royal Hawaiian Band. Ae‘a titled his composition “Ke ‘Ala Tuberose,” which can be translated as “fragrance of tuberose” (the tuberose is a waxy flower used in years gone by to add flavor in chocolate).

In 1886, the Royal Hawaiian Band was engaged to accompany then-princess Liliu‘okalani on her second state visit to the Big Island of Hawaii, and conductor Henry Berger thought Ae‘a’s composition would work well on the tour if it were played at a march tempo (even though, as Marsden notes, this was not Ae‘a’s original intent). Marsden adds that the new “Hilo March,” as re-scored for band and re-titled by Berger, “was a great success, and played at every port during the ten-day tour ...”

The Mercury label for the 45 rpm issue of “Kaimana Hila,” released in early August 1950, b/w “Makalapua,” recorded earlier in the *Nani Hawaii* sessions (Mercury 6245).



The Mercury label for the 78 rpm issue of “Hilo March,” b/w “Little Lani Jo” (issue date unknown), recorded earlier in the *Nani Hawaii* sessions (Mercury 6267).



In his discography, T. Malcolm Rockwell lists forty-six recordings of “Hilo March” preceding Byrd and the Islanders’ cover, with the earliest made by Irene West’s Royal Hawaiians for Victor in New York City on December 19, 1914 with Pale K. Lua on steel guitar. West’s Royal Hawaiians made two more recordings of the march in July 1915 for Columbia, with Pale K. Lua again on steel. Portuguese-Hawaiian steel guitarist Frank Ferera made eleven recordings of the march between 1916 and 1922, with six of these involving his guitar-and-ukulele-playing wife, Helen Louise, before she was lost at sea in December 1919.

Byrd learned “Hilo March” from the June 3, 1939 recording made by

Irish-Hawaiian steel guitarist Dick McIntire for Decca in Los Angeles. McIntire's accompanying Harmony Hawaiians probably included Danny Kuaana on ukulele and Al McIntire on steel. (Immediately after recording "Hilo March," McIntire waxed "Maui Chimes," another recording that greatly influenced Byrd. Byrd recorded the latter tune earlier at the *Nani* sessions, as relayed in Part Two.)

In a fall 1982 interview with Harry Soria, Jr. (on Soria's long-running "Territorial Airwaves" radio program on Honolulu's KCCN), Byrd confessed that "I never cared for 'Hilo March' until I heard [Dick McIntire's] ... version ... Dick makes it live ..." Byrd explained that he learned McIntire's June 1939 cover when he was ill in bed for about four months with pneumonia in 1941. Byrd recalled that he had an old "crank Victrola" in the basement of his parents' Lima, Ohio home where he was recuperating, and that he "would let [the Victrola] ... go down real slow so I could figure out what strings [McIntire] ... was picking on ... and how he did all this stuff. That's the way I learned to play [his cover]."

Regarding McIntire's style of steel guitar playing, Byrd proclaimed that "Dick will rock you back and forth—he will play very legato for a while, and then he'll play staccato where he snaps the chords off ... his change of pace was just perfect, and he *stayed Hawaiian*—he never sounded anything but Hawaiian."

McIntire's "Hilo March" rendition, recorded at the rather brisk tempo of 132 beats per minute, consists of five sections, each sixteen bars long. The march begins in the key of E, the second and fourth sections modulate to A major, while the final section is entirely in D major, effecting a surprising "non-tonic" ending.

Concerning McIntire's recording, Byrd related in his interview with Soria that McIntire played the last chorus "in three-string harmonics," explaining that "you have to do that by strums, and you have no margin for error there." Byrd also noted that McIntire utilized "a lot of bar-bouncing, [which] takes precision work to do," adding that McIntire "was the best at it."

Byrd recorded two takes of "Hilo March." The released recording matches McIntire's rendition rather closely, although Byrd plays the march just a tad faster than McIntire, sometimes veering towards 138 beats per minute. Byrd renders the treacherous "three-string harmonics" section at the end very cleanly and clearly.

The author could find no *Billboard* listing detailing the date-of-issue of "Little Lani Jo" b/w "Hilo March," which Michel Ruppli and Ed Novitsky list as Mercury 6267 in *The Mercury Labels: The 1945-1956 era*.

*Next, in the concluding segment, Nani Hawaii's release, Byrd's possible later-1950 recordings with Danny Kuaana,*



*A classic view of Diamond Head looking southeast from Kapi'olani Park (the former referenced in the song "Kaimana Hila").*

*and Byrd's re-recordings of "Maui Chimes" and "Hilo March." Thanks to John Marsden for providing the author with a recording of Harry B. Soria's fall 1982 "Territorial Airwaves" interview with Jerry Byrd. Some additional information on "Hilo March" was taken from Samuel Hoyt Elbert's Na Mele O Hawai'i Nei: 101 Hawaiian Songs. ■*

## **Mahalo, Members!**

*Mahalo for the great articles and photographs. Keep them coming! Send news, comments, and photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at [hsga@hsga.org](mailto:hsga@hsga.org) and [johnely@hawaiiansteel.com](mailto:johnely@hawaiiansteel.com).*

## **Where They Are Playing**

**Jeff Au Hoy**—appearing with Cyril Pahinui Wednesday evenings at the Kanikapila Grill in the Outrigger Hotel on Lewers Street. Jeff also appears with Cyril at Don's Mai Tai Bar, part of Don's Royal Kona Resort on the Big Island, fourth Thursday of each month, 5-7 PM.

**Alan Akaka**—appearing with the Keawe 'Ohana, Thursday evenings, 6:30-8:30 PM at the Kulana Terrace of the Marriott Hotel, on the second floor beachside part of the hotel on Kalākaua Avenue.

Every other Friday evening there is a public concert at the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center stage, 6:00-7:30 PM, on the lawn stage area next to Kalākaua Avenue. Contact the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center for scheduled dates.



## Fort Collins Pix

*(Clockwise from upper left) Fort Collins member Tony Fourcroy, who did a bang-up job as this year's HSGA Festival coordinator; builder and restoration wizard Rick Aiello playing one of his gorgeous fry-pans with Ross Landry on bass uke; Jerry and Karen Wagner from Santa Ros, California in their HSGA debut performance on Saturday morning; Duke Kaleolani Ching posing with his special HSGA award for his many years of service to the club; and Boulder member, Bob Backlund, playing Hawaiian style on a dobro he built himself.*







## More Fort Collins Pix

*(Clockwise from upper left) Mark Kahalekulu backing Kamaka Tom during his Fort Collins set; Duke Ching “telling it like it is” during one of his sets; Duke posing with participating members of his family, including granddaughter Kehaulani (left), daughter Kapua who is fluent in Hawaiian language, daughter Mahealani and her daughter Kama-lani who also sang and danced during the floorshow; a nice look at our new performance hall during Mark Roeder’s set; and another shot of Duke Ching playing steel with Kamaka Tom on backup.*



## CLOSING NOTES

### Helen Coker

This from Aldyth Fletcher: "It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that Helen Coker has died, having lost her battle with cancer. Norman and I have lost a very good and special friend. We will miss her, as will her many musician friends worldwide.

"I first met the Cokers at the Hawaiian Music Convention in Brecon 1995. They were very colourful characters and very supportive of all the Hawaiian Conventions in Brecon, Droitwich, Shustoke, France and the States. The Conventions were quite a journey for us but, even longer for Helen and Ernie as they had a ranch in Texas. Helen was a very kind and generous person and would help anybody.

"She had many famous friends, most notably Sol Ho'opi'i, who later gave lessons to Ernie. She was also a good friend of Bill Sevesi another steeler from New Zealand. Six years ago Helen invited us for a holiday at the Coker's ranch. We were made very welcome, and, as Norman had his guitar with him, there were many kanikapilas. Helen also arranged for us to go to the Winchester convention. We had three more wonderful holidays with them.

"Helen and Ernie have two daughters Linda and Paula—our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time."

R.I.P. Helen "Ke Akua Ho'omaika'i 'Oe." -Aldyth Leilani Fletcher

From Wally and Peg Pfeifer: "Helen was a good friend of ours and would call us every couple months and talk for an hour. The last time we saw her was at the Winchester Convention last July. She was still in good spirits then. We will miss her very much."

*The Williams Twins, Joanne Parker (left) and Janis Crum, with Jack Fowler and wife Janet at the 1998 Winchester convention.*



*A sweet photo of the world-traveling Cokers. We lost Ernie in 2012, and now his wife, Helen. They were married for 63 years.*

### Jack Fowler (1935-2015)

This sad news from Richard and Joyce Briggs of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club: Jack Fowler, former mayor of Winchester, Indiana, and longtime promoter of the Winchester convention passed away on June 15, 2015 at age 80.

Jack was born on April 17, 1935 in Winchester to Pete and Lucille (Hutson) Fowler. He was a 1954 graduate of Winchester High School and had served in the Indiana National Guard for more than 17 years. In 1972, he was elected to the Winchester City Council and served District 2 until 1980 when he won the mayoral election. Jack served as the mayor of Winchester for five terms (1980-2000).

From the Williams Twins: "As many of you know by now, we have truly lost a very dear member and wonderful friend, Jack Fowler. Jack, like Dirk Vogel, was very instrumental and a strong pillar in the growth and advancement of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club (AISGC).

"Being the man he was, Joanne and I were very grateful we could go and attend Jack's funeral on June 19. The service was very nice. Directly after the service, we shared a memorable and moving moment as the processional, which included the hearse, family and friends, caravanned around the Courthouse Square, Fire Department and Mayor's office. Joanne and I shared this moment as we felt we could represent the club as we paid our last respects to Jack.

"Jack had an overwhelming love of Aloha Spirit and was extremely gracious with his time and financial support. He and his wife, Janet, and whole family, spent years sponsoring our Friday 'Fun Night' at the country club during our yearly Winchester conventions with free popcorn, soft drinks and chips. He loved photography and became our well-known photographer as well.

*Continued on Page 20*



## More Fort Collins

*(Clockwise from upper left) Duke Ching's granddaughter Kehaulani (left) and daughter Kapua, performers at the Saturday Night Floorshow; Kaua'i steel guitarist Ed Punua; Ed's father Victor Punua, also from Kaua'i; Board member Ivan Reddington playing his frypan with Gil O'Gawa on backup; Colorado musician Dave Kahalekulu who has become an integral part of our Fort Collins festivals; Member Gary Vanderlinde from Garden Grove, California who played a fine set with his wife Debbie and Ross Landry; and last but not least, a nice look at our 'ono Saturday night buffet.*



## *E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members*

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

### UNITED STATES

CHARLES AGEL, 2219 McLean Park Rd, Falls Church, VA 22043-2934  
 MARTHA AND ROSS LANDRY, 4121 Casa Loma Ave., Yorba Linda, CA 92886  
 MARY NEUDORFFER, 1870 Ho'one Rd, #821, Koloa, HI 96756  
 JUDD PIPES, 100 Schwarzkopf Dr., Elizabeth City, NC 27909  
 JOHN SASSANO, 6 Ramon Ct., Danville, CA 94526  
 MICHAEL SOONG, 4926 Nunu Rd., Kapa'a, HI 96746  
 JIM TURK, 200 Idalia Court, #2-304, Aurora, CO 80011  
 JEROME AND KAREN WAGNER, 2622 Wawona Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95405  
 RICHARD WILSON, 831 NE 97th St., Seattle, WA 98115  
 MIKE WARFEL, 30 W. 221 Estes St., Naperville, IL 60563  
 MICHAEL D. WITTMER, 3601 Platte Dr., Fort Collins, CO 80526

### CANADA & OVERSEAS

JOHN AND EMMA BOOGERD, 7606 Martha's Haven Park NE, Calgary, AB T3J 3X7 Canada  
 HUGO FRITZ, Am Illergries 16, Buxheim, 87740 Germany  
 GRATTAN H. LYNNG, 41 Toru Road, Paraparaumu, 5032 New Zealand  
 TOMIO AND TAKAKO YOKOYAMA, 1-19-20 Momoi, Sugunami-ku, Tokyo, 167-0034 Japan

*COCO WIRE Continued from Page 8*

this past Labor Day weekend in the Terrace Theater in Long Beach, California. Outside of the theater were local artisans as well as those from far away places such as Hawai'i and Tahiti selling their Hawaiiana artwork, crafts, jewelry, clothing apparel and household items.

The event featured the finest 'ono grinds and delicious plate lunches around plus lots of free entertainment on the outdoor stage. And after the competition the fun continued at the Westin Long Beach Hotel Lobby on Friday, Saturday and Sunday night with famous Hawaiian musicians and singers, including steel guitar legend, "Grampa" **Duke Kaleolani Ching**.

On Sunday, Grampa Duke conducted a steel guitar workshop at the Westin Hotel and played on the outdoor stage with **Auntie Geri Kuhia** and **Mehana** on backup with the Kaikamahine Intermediate and Advance Classes providing hula for Grampa Duke.

We would like to see this event continue to flourish, so would you kindly spread the word about this event and share with your family and friends or other social network. For more information go to: [www.ehulamau.org](http://www.ehulamau.org). ■

*DUKE CHING Cont. from Page 5*

Cummings, whose uncle Andy Cummings penned the great Hawaiian standard "Waikiki."

Duke is a long-standing HSGA member, has served on the board, and has produced countless floorshows and concerts at our conventions from the earliest days of the club. At Fort Collins this year, HSGA presented Duke with a special award for his years of undying service to our club. Inscribed on the plaque are the following words: "In recognition of many years of service promoting Hawaiian Steel Guitar and Hawaiian culture throughout the world, Mahalo Nui Loa, Me Ke Aloha." Truer words were never written. Kudos to Duke Kaleolani Ching! ■

"He always had great stories to tell everyone. He would spend hours and hours preparing for the next day's events so everyone could have a great time.

"Another memorable moment with Mayor Jack was when he presented Joanne and I the 'Key to the City' our first year at Winchester. As mayor of Winchester, he could not do enough for the guests who attended this wonderful Hawaiian convention whereby many wonderful artists from Hawai'i came to share their musical talents. He loved them all. And so did we.

"We are so appreciative of crossing paths with Jack, Janet and family. Their Aloha Spirit, Fun Nights at the country club, lū'au favors and Keys to the City have all become great memories for life. Many of us who knew Jack well, we truly miss his life with us."

- Joanne Parker and Janis Crum

From Richard Briggs: "Jack was one of a kind. He loved Hawaiian music. He looked forward to having the AISGC at Winchester each year. He helped with advertising and hosted the Friday night jam at the golf course. Anything we needed, Jack was there helping. We honored him this year at convention and we all wore smiley face stickers on our name tags in his memory; he always had a smile for everyone and at the viewing they passed out smiley pins to all." ■

### **2015-2016 Dues Alert**

*This is your FINAL issue if your newsletter mailing label still shows "X 6/15" next to your address. Annual dues are \$30, which includes First Class delivery (Air Mail delivery for overseas addresses). Renew today! Don't miss out on the latest info on Hawaiian steel guitar, including news, instruction, and lots of photos. Mahalo!*