

FREE

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January 23, 2026

## Hawai'i Wildlife Center Reports Record Seabird Fallout, Treats More Than 1,000 Birds in Three Months

The Hawai'i Wildlife Center (HWC) is reporting record rescue numbers for this year's seabird fallout season, with more than 1,000 native seabirds treated between September and December alone.

The surge pushed HWC's total patient count for 2025 to 1,441—exceeding the 1,028 birds treated in 2024. Earlier this season, the center also reached a major milestone, treating its 6,000th bird since opening in 2011.

In November alone, during the height of fallout season, 983 'ua'u kani (wedge-tailed shearwaters) were admitted, including 102 in a single day. The vast majority of these birds are expected to be released back into the wild.

State Senator Tim Richards and State Representative David Tarnas visited the Kohala headquarters of the Hawai'i Wildlife Center to mark the achievement and discuss ongoing efforts to protect native bird



Photo courtesy of Hawai'i Wildlife Center  
Hawaii State Senator Tim Richards (left) with Hawaii Wildlife Center Executive Director Linda Elliott (second from left) and additional HWC staff mark the milestone of 6,000 birds having been treated since 2011.

species. Governor Josh Green proclaimed December 15 as "Bird and Bat Day in Hawai'i."

HWC enjoys a longstanding partnership with Feather & Fur Animal Hospital on O'ahu, which serves as a critical intake location. HWC's O'ahu-based staff are on site to assess each bird and administer care.

HWC is one of only two organizations permitted by state and federal wildlife agencies to provide medical treatment and rehabilitative care to native winged wildlife. The nonprofit encourages residents and visitors to remain vigilant for grounded native birds and bats year-round, and to visit the science and discovery center at its headquarters in Kapa'au. The center welcomes volunteers who wish to support its mission. To get involved, support the center or to learn more, visit [hawaiiwildlifecenter.org](http://hawaiiwildlifecenter.org).

## Kohala Real Estate Market – 2025 Review

By Beth Thoma Robinson R(B)  
Kohala Residential Real Estate  
– High Demand and High Prices Continue

The real estate market continues to show the effects of the postpandemic relocation boom that brought more buyers and home sales to Kohala, resulting in a rapid increase in prices. Prices for residential Kohala real estate in 2025 did not increase further, but were stable at the new high water mark.

Despite that reality, moderating interest rates and the availability of homes at what is now the "lower" end of the market (under \$700,000) allowed a few local families and individuals to purchase a first home. Some of these are homes purchased by local investors from banks after foreclosure, renovated, and sold again.

In 2023 and 2024 fewer homes were left for sale after the post-pandemic buying spree. There was a bit more inventory (homes for sale) in 2025, and 55 homes sold, just about the same as the 54 homes in 2022.

The median home price rose again, from \$850,000 in 2024 to \$970,000 mostly because of the number of sales over \$1 million.

Twenty-six properties – almost one half of all sales – were \$1 million and over (counting two at \$999,999). These are mostly homes

on small acreage, like in Maliu Ridge.

The highest price sale was \$5,750,000 for a home on 21 acres in the gated subdivision Ranch at Puakea.

Half the homes sold in under two months, but the average "days on market" rose.

The rental market continues to be tight and rents high.

There are currently only 16 homes for sale in Kohala, about the same as this time last year. The least expensive is asking \$524,999 for home in Ainakea. The most expensive listing is for a home on 20 acres in Puuepa Ranch (Lincoln Avenue Makai) asking \$3,995,000.

### Few Vacant Land Sales in 2025

There were only six reported sales of vacant land in Kohala in 2025, compared with nineteen reported sales in 2024. All were sales of acreage. Smaller acreage parcels are rare and sell at premium prices. A Maliu Ridge lot just under 3 acres sold for \$450,000 to a local family who bought with a construction loan to build their home.

Lots in Puakea Bay Ranch

continue to be priced in the mid-\$400,000s. An almost-oceanfront 20-acre lot in Puuepa Ranch sold for \$1,030,000, and a 23-acre parcel in the gated subdivision near Kapa-

See Real Estate, Page 2

## Christmas Cheer Spread by Kohala Seniors



Photo by Debbie Davis  
Kapa'au Seniors sing Christmas carols at Takata Store on December 13, 2025.

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## NKCDP Advisory Group Agenda

**Date:** Monday, February 2, 2026,  
**Time:** 4:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Senior Center (behind the statue)

### AGENDA

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Kohala residents are encouraged to attend and voice their opinion on issues. They may even recommend actions and suggest subjects not presently addressed.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS** (Please see adjacent NKCDP Meeting Notes for information on issues currently being addressed.)

**Affordable Housing** - Housing needs for families in Kohala.

**Agriculture** - The future of agriculture in our area.

**Community Access** - Ways for Kohala residents to have more mauka and makai access.

**Growth Management** - Zoning, permits, and variance requests and how they affect us.

**Health and Wellness** - Kohala health care infrastructure and emergency response.

**Parks, Roads, View Planes and Erosion Control** - Infrastructure problems and projects.

**Utilities** - Utility and waste stream issues.

**Investigatory Subcommittee** on Re-zoning and Agricultural Property Tax Rates - Kohala input to the ongoing County reassessment of zoning and agricultural tax rate reduction criteria.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### PUBLIC INPUT AND AGENDA SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Real Estate, from Page 1

naia sold for \$1,980,000.

There are 22 vacant land listings in Kohala, ranging from 10,000-square-foot lots in the Hanaua Village subdivision to the 437-acre listing of 10 parcels of ag-zoned land (including three ocean-front lots) asking \$27 million. This large agricultural acreage has been on the market for about eight years.

#### One Commercial Property Sold in 2025

The colorful Kohala Town Center in Kapa'au changed hands again, selling for \$2,325,000. It includes the retail and restaurant spaces like L&L Hawaiian Barbecue, and four apartments. The buyer was

an investor resident in Kohala who also bought a rental property to add to his portfolio.

Many have fond memories of the Kahei Theater property on Akoni Pule Highway, which also sold in 2025. Many thought it was a commercial property, however, the zoning for the two-acre parcel is residential and restoring any commercial use would be challenging. It sold for vacant land value although the home is habitable.

#### Continued Need for Affordable Housing

Only three bank-owned properties sold in Kohala in 2025, two of them for cash as they needed renovation. One went to a local family.

By Lynda Wallach

The January 5, 2026 meeting of the North Kohala Community Plan (NKCDP) Advisory Group began with a report from the **Affordable Housing Group**.

After the Hawi Nani project was halted because of opposition from some members of the community, the group has decided to work with the community to develop a set of planning standards for North Kohala. They hope to start a community dialogue to build relationships between those in need of housing and those who oppose new development that will result in a working document of standards, with examples like narrow paved roads, grass drainage swales, limited street lighting, and smaller projects (10-20 units). The developer of Hawi Nani has hired a consultant to work with the County Planning and Housing departments to restart the stalled project. A link to the Homes for Kohala Survey is available on the North Kohala CDP website at [kohalacommunityplan.org/housing](http://kohalacommunityplan.org/housing).

The group has submitted several suggestions to the County Council as it revises Chapter 11 of the County Code (Affordable Housing).

Infrastructure for the Hawaii Island Community Development Corporation (HICDC) Self-Help Kohala Phase 3 Kumakua is set to begin in mid-2026. Interested buyers are encouraged to join the HICDC waiting list and explore the

requirements on their website at [www.hicdcorp.org/home/home-ownership-program](http://www.hicdcorp.org/home/home-ownership-program).

Affordable Housing has created a simplified two-page summary of the requirements, copies of which will be available at the North Kohala Community Resource Center.

The County Office of Housing and Urban Development (OHCD) Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP) offers low-interest loans for repairs and upgrades to low- and moderate-income homeowners, with potential principal forgiveness for eligible seniors and those with disabilities. In 2025, the OHCD distributed \$11.8 million to six projects island-wide, including Ho'omaluhia at Waikoloa (\$3M for 229 rental units) and Ua Hale A'ela (\$4.1M for 28 rent-to-own units). The County also purchased the Dolphin Bay Hotel in Hilo for \$2.68 million using federal ERA 2 funds which will be converted into 18 affordable rentals for residents earning up to 50% of the Area Median Income, with units ready in early 2026.

A membership meeting is scheduled for Kohala Community Land Trust (KCLT) on January 27, 2026, at 5 p.m. at the HUB Barn.

Toni Withington reported for **Community Access and Growth Management Groups**. The future of the Old Coast Guard Road continues to be a focus of the Community Access Group. Mayor Alameda has rejected an offer from the National Park Service to transfer control of

**See NKCDP, Page 3**

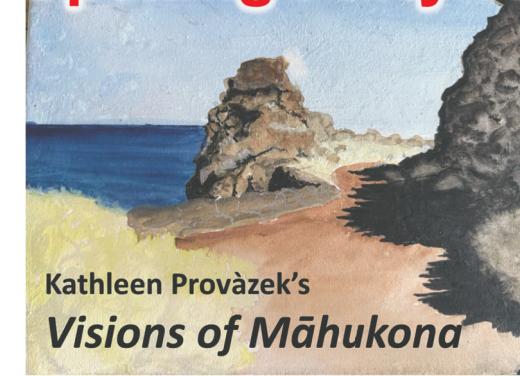
meeting and election of directors is scheduled for Tuesday, January 27, 2025 at the Hub Barn.

As far as new housing projects, the second phase of non-profit developer Hawaii Island Community Development Corporation's self-help housing is set to begin infrastructure development in 2026. The Hawi Nani project, also proposed near existing self-help projects, is working with County agencies on how best to move forward. Some version of these projects is likely to be under construction in the next two to three years. It is important for those hoping to buy one of these homes to begin getting financially ready now!

The non-profit Kohala Community Land Trust (KCLT), which formed last year, can acquire properties to permanently keep them affordable for members of the community to rent or own. It is a Kohala-grown membership organization providing one solution to the affordable housing crisis.

KCLT can also assist current local homeowners to keep their homes for themselves and their families, with deed restrictions that will keep them affordable for future generations. KCLT will be offering educational workshops for homeowners as well as first time buyers later this year. Membership is open to all for \$20/year. The 2026 annual

## Kohala Artists Coop Opening Party February 7th, 2026



Art, stories, music & pupus at the Kohala Artist's Coop, from 5-8pm, Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 2026, across from the Kapaau post office



## Kohala Hospital Expands Radiology Hours and Reopens Emergency Department Waiting Area

By Jane Clement

Kohala Hospital has expanded its Radiology outpatient hours to make care more convenient for you. Services are now available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

In addition, the Emergency Department waiting area has reopened to the public for the first time since COVID. Patients can enjoy a comfortable space while waiting for their appointment.

These updates are part of the West Hawaii Region's ongoing effort to improve access and experience at our hospitals for every patient, every day. For details, contact Kohala Hospital at (808) 889-6211.



Photo courtesy of Kohala Hospital

Kohala Hospital's emergency department waiting area has reopened.

### NKCDP, from Page 2

Old Coast Guard Road. He did not respond to an invitation to meet with members of the community to hear their concerns.

At the group's request the NKCDP Advisory Group unanimously approved a letter at the December 7 meeting and sent it to the mayor on December 8 urging the transfer and giving many reasons. The group assigned members to contact and get comments from the Fire Department, Police and the Community Emergency Response Team about the dangers faced by no entity being in charge. The mayor's office has not answered multiple

requests to comment. This is just one example of the repeated failures of the current County administration's various departments to respond to requests from the Advisory Group and other local groups, which has become a source of increasing frustration.

The Hawaii Island Land Trust (HILT) has a "Visiting Mahukona" video on their website at [www.hilt.org/mahukona](http://www.hilt.org/mahukona).

The Sugiyama's theater property in Kahei sold to an unknown buyer on December 2. It may be subdivided into four lots. The theater needs to be torn down.

The other groups did not meet

in December due to the holidays. In response to an audience question, John Winter – chair of the Parks, Roads, Erosion Control and View-planes group – mentioned two lingering issues. The high school intersection issue is being pursued with the new director of Public Works, as is the un-repaved highway gap between the hospital and Halaula. Progress on the Mahukona pavilion replacement and park renovation requires continued persistence with Parks and Recreation.

Concerns were expressed about the safety of the playground equipment at Kamehameha Park for young children. There is a small

sign stating that the equipment is only suitable for children over 5 years of age. Mothers, unaware of the age limitation, have brought their toddlers there and found it to be dangerous for them. A group of mothers is being formed to address the lack of playground equipment for toddlers at the park.

Times and places of the sub-group meetings can be found in the calendar section of this paper.

The next Advisory Group Meeting will be held on Monday, February 2, 4:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. Members of the community are encouraged to attend and provide their input.

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## North Kohala Library February 2026 News and Programs

By Leilani Silver

Did you know? The Hawaii State Public Library website offers free access to "The New York Times" and "The Wall Street Journal." Visit the homepage and follow the quicklinks for these publications to set up an account using your library card. If you have any trouble, call or visit us for help. February is African American History Month and National Library Lovers Month. Come show some love for your library and check out our African American History books on display.

Chinese Medicine Tools for Heart Health with Ila Jhaveri: February 2 at 3:00 p.m. All participants will walk away with useful and highly effective tips on using food-as-therapy, acupressure, and other lifestyle tools as well as info on acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine.

Chess Club: February 2 at 5 p.m. Both beginners and veteran players are welcome to challenge others in this classic game of strategy. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Preschool Storytime: February 4, 11, 18, 25 at 10 a.m. We gather to sing songs, read a few simple stories, then make a craft or do an activity every Wednesday. Great fun for 2-5-year-olds and their parents or caregivers.

Lego Club: February 4, 11, 18, 25 at 2 p.m. Join us every Wednesday for some imaginative fun as we



By Tom Morse

build cool creations out of Legos. Creations will be displayed at the library.

Homeschool Thursday: February 5 at 11 a.m. Join us for an informational story followed by a related activity or craft. This program is best suited for kids 6-12.

Crystal Alchemy Singing Bowl Soundbath: February 9 at 5:30 p.m. Join Leilani Silver for a unique immersive experience of being "bathed" in the vibrations of eight 432 Hz Crystal Alchemy Singing Bowls made from 99.9 percent clear quartz. The tremendously powerful

high frequencies instantly reduce stress and tension and create a relaxed and meditative state that supports healing and regeneration.

Adult Book Club: February 10 at 11 a.m. Join us for a discussion of the 2025 Pulitzer Prize winner "James" by Percival Everett. The book is a reimagining of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain. The book is available to pick up at the library.

Jewelry Making: February 23 (2 sessions) 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Attend a special jewelry making class for adults! Jewelry artist Sid

Nakamoto will lead participants in the making of a simple and beautiful wire-wrapped piece. All materials provided.

Space is limited. Please call 808-889-6655 or stop by to register.

Children's Book vs. Movie Club: February 26 from 2:30-4:30 p.m. This month's selection is "Pippi Longstocking" by Astrid Lindgren. Read the book and/or come watch the movie. Short discussion will follow. Popcorn provided! Program is for ages 7-12. The book is available to pick up at the library or for digital download from [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org).

Teen Book Club: February 27 from 2:30-4:30 p.m. This month's selection is "Paper Towns" by Josh Green. Read the book and/or come watch the movie. Short discussion will follow. Popcorn provided! Program is for ages 13 and up. The book is available to pick up at the library or for digital download from [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org).

North Kohala Public Library Hours:

Mon: 12-4 p.m., 5-7 p.m.

Tues-Thurs: 9 a.m.-12 p.m., 1-4 p.m.

Fri: 12-4 p.m.

Closed Saturday, Sunday and State Holidays

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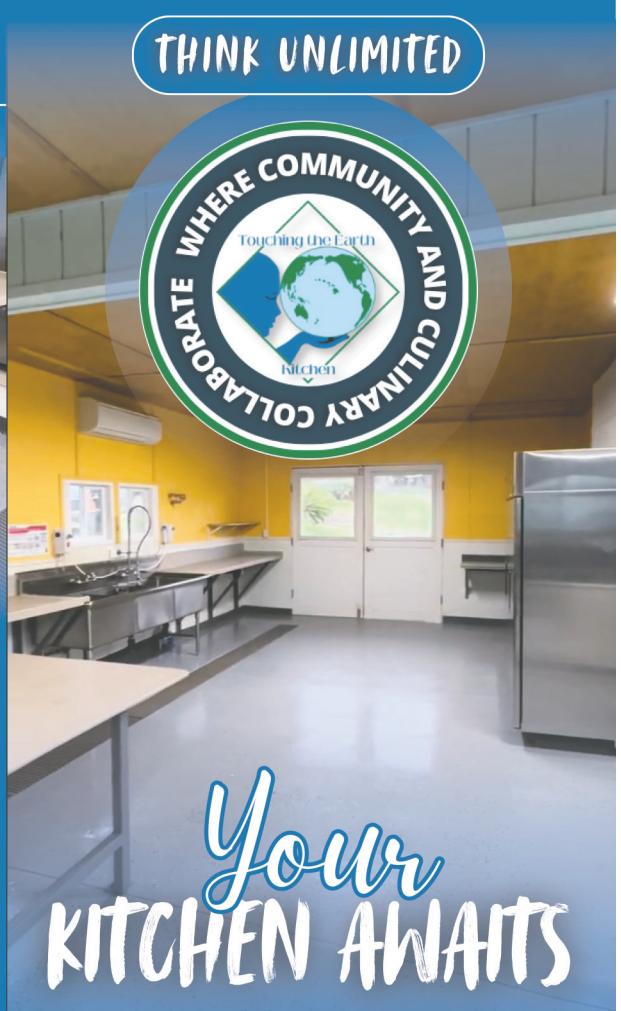
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## Letters

Mr. Duncan Anderson teaches seventh grade at Kohala Middle School. Every year he asks his students to choose a problem on Hawai'i Island they would like to help solve. Students spend the earlier part of the school year researching and doing projects related to their chosen topic. Toward the end of the year, the students are charged with bringing their message out to the community in whatever way they see fit. Part of that goal can be accomplished by writing a Letter the Editor for publication in the Kohala Mountain News. The following are some of those letters.

### Microplastic Pollution

Aloha, my name is Jaynalyne DeCosta, and I am a 7th grader in the class of 2031. Today, I want to talk about a serious problem in our world: microplastic pollution. Microplastics are tiny pieces of plastic that are very hard to see, but they can do a lot of damage to the environment and to living things, including humans. Even though they are small, they create big problems.

Microplastic pollution mostly comes from things people do, like throwing away plastic bottles and bags or using products with plastic caps. When plastics break down, they turn into these tiny pieces. Some people do not realize that when they throw plastic into the

ocean or on the ground, it can end up hurting animals and plants. In fact, millions of tons of plastic waste enter our environment every year, and about five percent of it ends up in the ocean.

Once microplastics are in the ocean, they become a big danger to sea life. Fish, turtles, and even birds can mistake these small plastics for food. When animals eat microplastics, they can get sick or even die. This is sad because it can cause fewer animals to survive, and it hurts the balance of nature. Also, if you have ever saved an injured animal, you know how important it is to protect them from harm.

Microplastics not only harm the ocean and animals but can also hurt

us. These tiny pieces of plastic can contaminate our air, food and soil. When people eat seafood that has swallowed microplastics, they can end up eating plastic too. This can lead to health problems for humans, including diseases.

In conclusion, microplastic pollution is a big problem, even though the pieces are very small. We all need to be more careful about how we use and throw away plastic. By doing ourselves a favor and helping to clean up our environment, we can protect animals, plants, and ourselves from the dangers of microplastics. Every little action can help make our world a safer and cleaner place.

Mahalo, Jaynalyne DeCosta

### Sportsmanship in Kohala

Howzit, fellow citizens of the Kohala community. My name is Joey Giltner, Jr. I go to KMS, I am 12 years old, and I play sports. I'm here to make a point about sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is when you're nice and play by the rules, usually in a sports game. Many rude comments directed at young athletes, including high schoolers, can come from coaches, parents, or other spectators and can have a really discouraging impact on their performance. It's very simple what I'm asking. I just want the coaches to coach and players to play. Kids are human too,

and they have feelings.

As a 12-year-old boy who plays multiple sports, I have experienced being hated by spectators and even coaches! Sometimes after games I cry, I lose confidence, and I've even had thoughts of quitting. Over time, I have been able to block out rude comments, but it took almost three years! Not all athletes have learned this skill.

At my sister's games, I have noticed great sportsmanship from the Kohala audience and environment, and even at other Kohala activities. Before the games, the Kohala team would shake hands

with the coaches, which is something I've only seen from them! Even playing intramurals with Mr. Anderson, you would get scolded and penalized for bragging, which is such a great learning lesson.

These are such great examples of sportsmanship, and it's all I'm asking for, once again! SO PLEASE, take what I'm saying into consideration whenever supporting, coaching, or even playing during a sports game.

Peace out, Kohala community.  
Sincerely,  
Joey Giltner, Jr.

### Dangers of Social Media

Aloha, my name is Makamae Sauta, and I am 12 years old. I am a student at Kohala Middle School and in 7th grade. In this small town, I am concerned about the little kids going on the dark side of social media, and I am present to tell you what social media can prevent and how we can protect the little kids.

Social media has plenty of negative impacts. Till today, we have a lot of child predators, and I always fear for the kids out there on social media 24/7. Did you know that there are over 5.2 billion active social media users worldwide right now? Well, that isn't good for little brains.

Social media can cause depression, anxiety and insecurities because of all the lifestyles and standards people post.

The media is so bad for society, and I hope the kids can be more aware of what is actually in the media.

I appreciate your time, thank you for listening to my letter about what could happen if you are an addict to social media and how it affects the keiki.

Sincerely,  
Makamae Sauta

Dear Editor,

Hello, my name is Owen, and I am in the 7th grade at Kohala Middle. My topic is about saving the honu from pollution. Currently, there are around 35,000 grown honu left and 250,000 juveniles in the world. This is better than in 1973, as there were only about 67 honu left in the world at that time.

One of the worst types of pollution is plastic. Plastic kills about 1,000 green sea turtles every year, which is a lot considering the population. Fibropapillomatosis (FP), a tumor-forming disease driven by nutrient pollution from urban and agricultural runoff, is another thing that is killing the honu.

If you don't know what pollution is, it is when you or someone else throws trash in the ocean or just lets it fly away. If you do pollute, then it can cost you anywhere from \$1,000 all the way up to \$25,000 for a class C felony.

In conclusion, I think that honu are really cool, and we need to save them by picking up trash and other harmful things.

SAVE THE TURTLES!  
Mahalo,  
Owen Tucker

### Future KMN Deadlines

It's important for the Kohala Mountain News to receive ads and news submissions by the following deadlines. Otherwise, submissions may not be accommodated.

**February Deadlines**  
Ads and News: 2/9/26  
Calendar: 2/16/26  
Distribution: 2/23/26

**March Deadlines**  
Ads and News: 3/13/26  
Calendar: 3/20/26  
Distribution: 3/27/26

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**Letters to the Editor and Viewpoint articles must address issues affecting North Kohala and be accompanied by the author's name, address and telephone number. Letters and Viewpoints are subject to editing, and shorter submissions will receive preference for publication.**

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**Kohala Mountain News**  
P.O. Box 639,  
Kapa'au, Hawai'i 96755

## Effects of Vaping

Dear Editor,

Aloha, my name is Ka'iulani Marquez, class of 2031. I am a Kohala Middle School student who chose to write about the effects of vaping. Did you know that approximately 1.6 million middle and high school students worldwide vape and use e-cigarettes? In Kohala, sadly, you will start to see a lot more people vaping. Some common places people vape are at parties, restaurants, bathrooms and empty parking lots. Vaping can cause lung damage, headaches, coughing, shortness of breath and a high risk of cancer. Vapes have nicotine in them, which is a highly addictive chemical that raises the risk of seizures. This can cause irreversible damage to your lungs, heart and brain. It increases your heart rate and blood pressure.

Some reasons people vape are because of peer pressure, curios-

ity, social media, stress and anxiety. Since vapes are colorful and have fruity flavors, it is very tempting to want to try one. But after trying a vape for just one time, you're most likely going to want more. This is because of the nicotine, which makes it so addictive.

Vaping can have irreversible effects on your body that will change you. It will cause harm and damage to organs in your body needed to survive, like your brain, heart and lungs. I would like to prevent kids of younger ages from vaping. For example, I wouldn't want to see sixth or seventh graders vaping without knowing the consequences that come with it. I would also like to spread awareness to others about the negative effects vaping can have on you and your body!

Mahalo for your time!  
Sincerely,  
Ka'iulani Marquez

## Risk of Drowning for Residents

Aloha People of Kohala, My name is Jonas McDonough, and I am a resident of Kohala just like you. I am here to tell you that you might not be as safe as you think in our beautiful Hawaiian waters. You probably know that Hawaii has one of the highest drowning rates in the nation, but that's just the tourists, right? Well, that's not as true as you think.

Although tourists make up 53 percent of the drownings in Hawaii. Nearly 40 residents drown a year. In

the last decade, the drowning rate for Hawaii residents has increased by four times what it was in 2005.

Most residents are very good swimmers since they were raised on an island, but this can lead to overestimating their abilities and causing them to either dive too deep or not pay attention to the riptide.

So, know your limits, watch for riptides, and try not to be the only one on the beach. These three simple things could save your life.

Mahalo, Jonas



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## Viewpoint

*Information and opinions expressed in viewpoint articles are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Kohala Mountain News or its staff.*

## Housing Poses Struggle for Many in Kohala

By Psalms Lutz

I want to shed light on the struggle of local families trying to find housing and maintain stability in our community. These past five years have brought many changes to Kohala. With the rise of housing transition, homes are renovated and put into new hands yet are out of reach and thus unavailable to many in the community. Although this change brings new interests and ideas to Kohala, it also pushes back generations of families trying to preserve tradition and to raise their keiki in the way of their ancestors and kūpuna. Too often, the housing situation leads to sending families away, keiki breaking away from family, leaving behind empty stories – rarely with happy endings.

If we, the community, want to

addressed. When their interests are put first, the lack of available homes and continual pushback on renters continues to force us out of homes and drive the keiki away.

Many tenants and landlords don't know their legal rights. It is important that we fight discrimination and support fair housing ethics. We must bring awareness to the situation to keep families together. We cannot be replaced or displaced. Let there be belonging and understanding to stop this exodus which is happening one family at a time. Resources:

Residential Landlord Tenant Code information at [cca.hawaii.gov/ocp/landlord-tenant](http://cca.hawaii.gov/ocp/landlord-tenant). Hotline: 808-933-0910.

Free legal help at Legal Aide Society of Hawaii: 1-800-499-4302, [www.legalaide.org](http://www.legalaide.org).

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## Hawai'i State House of Representatives Update

From the Desk of District 8 Representative David Tarnas



Photo courtesy of David Tarnas  
Representative David Tarnas  
speaks for North Kohala as a  
member of the Hawai'i State House  
of Representatives.

Aloha!

The Hawaii State Legislature convened its 2026 session on January 21 and will continue working until session ends on May 8. The legislative calendar can be accessed on the state legislature website [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov) under the "Events" tab. Information on the State House is available on the "House" link under the "Legislature" tab on the website's front page. This includes reports from all the House Special Committees, the Administrative and Financial Manual, Leadership and Committee Assignments, Rules, Webcasts, and more.

The House Speaker has asked me to continue as Chair of the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs (JHA) Committee. The JHA Committee is responsible for programs relating to the courts, crime prevention and control, penal code, criminal enforcement, police and law enforcement, prosecution, sentencing, disposition, and punishment, probation, parole, furlough, and other alternatives to incarceration, indigent legal representation and defense matters, civil law, firearms, weapons, judicial and legal questions, constitutional matters, the Attorney General, the Judiciary, individual rights, civil rights and liberties, the Civil Rights Commission, the Ethics Code, campaign spending, and elections; and per-

sons of Hawaiian ancestry, including programs administered by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; and other pertinent matters referred to it by the House.

Legislative committees have begun to have hearings on bills and the budget. All hearings will be livestreamed, and you can submit written testimony online and oral testimony via Zoom. Please sign up for an account on the legislature's website [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov) so that you can track bills and submit testimony. There is even a website function to notify you by email when a selected bill is being scheduled for a hearing or if any action has been taken on the bill. You can also be notified if a particular committee is having hearings or information briefings. Upcoming hearings are shown under the "Events" tab on the legislature's website.

Information on bills carried over from the 2025 session and new bills introduced in the 2026 session is available at the "Reports and Lists" tab on the legislature's website. You can search by different categories, including "Appropriations," "Committee Referrals," "Measures by Introducer," "Measures by Package," "Subject Search," and more.

The legislature has begun to accept applications for its Grant-in-Aid program, which must be submitted through the Capitol website at [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov) by January 23, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. Please follow these steps to submit your proposal:

1. Create an account through the Capitol website at [www.capitol.hawaii.gov](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov).
2. Utilize the submission portal, which is found under the "Laws & Research" tab under "Grant-In-Aid."
3. Complete the Grant-In-Aid request form.
4. Include all forms as a single attachment before submitting the request form.

Should you have any questions, please contact the House Finance Office at 586-6200. For more information, see the Grant-In-Aid webpage on the Capitol website.

On December 22, 2025, Governor Josh Green submitted the Supplemental Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) to the Legislature,

outlining a plan that will provide support to residents in core areas such as affordable housing, climate, infrastructure, healthcare, and education. The Executive Supplemental Budget proposes appropriations for FY27 that build on last year's commitments, with a proposed total general fund appropriation of \$10.58 billion in general funds for FY27, an increase from \$10.48 billion proposed for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26). Some highlights from the FY27 Supplemental Budget include mental health and social services, allocating \$8 million to expand psychiatric beds and staffing at Hawaii State Hospital, \$13.4 million to administer SNAP for food security, and \$8 million to expand kauhale homeless housing programs statewide. Significant investments are directed toward healthcare, including \$50 million in bond funds for a new West Hawai'i Medical Office facility, \$60 million for Medicaid technology upgrades, and an additional \$110 million to maintain Medicaid access to care. Emergency medical needs are addressed with \$8.1 million for aeromedical transport services. The budget also launches the first year of the Green Fee to fund climate resiliency, environmental stewardship, and sustainable tourism, with details to be finalized during the legislative session.

To examine the proposed State Budget in more detail, please visit the Department of Budget and Finance budget webpage at [www.budget.hawaii.gov/budget](http://www.budget.hawaii.gov/budget). Over the next two months, the House Finance Committee will revise the bill to produce a House Draft of the budget that will be voted on by the House and cross over to the Senate by March 18.

If this is the first time you are tracking legislation or submitting testimony, the legislative process can seem complex and intimidating. To make the legislative process more understandable, the Public Access Room offers great training videos about how the legislature operates and how people can participate in the legislative process. The Public Access Room also offers training on all the new functions available on the updated legislative website. Please visit their website at [www.lrb.hawaii.gov/par](http://www.lrb.hawaii.gov/par) to learn

more about upcoming and recorded workshops and training.

As always, my office is ready to assist you with anything related to the legislature. Please email me at [reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov) or call my office at 808-585-8510. I look forward to working with you this next session and invite you to give me your advice and suggestions on any bills we are considering. I am very grateful for this opportunity to serve as the State Representative for Kohala. Mahalo!

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## County Council Update

From the Desk of District 9 Councilmember James Hustace



Photo courtesy of James Hustace  
Councilmember James Hustace represents North Kohala as part of Hawai'i County Council District 9.

Aloha Kohala!

As many in our community are aware, Hawai'i Fire Department Chief Kazuo Todd passed away suddenly last month. After more than two decades of dedicated service with the Hawai'i Fire Department,

Chief Todd leaves behind a lasting legacy of leadership, professionalism, and commitment to public safety. He was widely respected for guiding the department through important modernization efforts while mentoring the next generation of leaders. His life and service were honored during funeral and public memorial services held in Hilo earlier this month. Mahalo nui loa, Chief Todd, for your leadership, service, and enduring aloha spirit.

In the months ahead, I will continue my Community Conversations across the district. I am grateful for the strong attendance and thoughtful participation last year, and I hope residents found the discussions informative and meaningful. For our next Kohala discussion, I look forward to addressing concerns related to Parks and Recreation, including dialogue about Kamehameha Park, Māhukona, and other community facilities. These conversations are critical—not only for progress, but to ensure Parks and Recreation hears directly from the community about what is working well, what is not, and what requires timely attention.

I am pleased to share that Bill

103 passed earlier this month. Introduced by Council Member Heather Kimball and myself, this measure supports our kūpuna farmers by allowing senior agricultural landowners to age in place as they transition away from active farming through the extension of a three percent annual property assessment cap. Our kūpuna farmers have spent decades caring for the 'āina, feeding our communities, and passing on traditional knowledge and stewardship practices that benefit us all.

This year, I will be introducing several measures focused on long-term community resilience and protection. These efforts include providing clearer guidance for building code updates, protecting generational homes, improving aspects of the Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resource acquisition process, and advancing wildfire mitigation strategies. At the same time, the Council will resume work on

the Hawai'i County General Plan, which aims to guide policy decisions for the next twenty years, and begin deliberations on the upcoming County budget—both

critical initiatives that will help shape the future of our island.

Finally, I want to emphasize how important your feedback is to me. Whether shared at meetings, through email, or by contacting my office directly, your input helps guide my work at the County Council. I look forward to continuing these conversations and encourage you to reach out with questions about legislative actions, community projects, or how to participate in the public testimony process. Mahalo for your continued engagement.

I am honored to serve as your Council Member. Please reach out if you have any questions. You are welcome to email me at [james.hustace@hawaiicounty.gov](mailto:james.hustace@hawaiicounty.gov), call our Waimea office at (808) 887-6077, or our Hilo office at (808) 961-8564.

Wishing you good health and aloha in 2026!

## Changes in the Toyama Building Over Time



From the June 1998 issue of the Kohala Mountain News, the merchants from the Toyama Building pose for a group photo. Interestingly, none of the same people are still there (but most still live in Kohala), but all three businesses are: Kohala Pacific Realty, As Hawi Turns, and Kohala Coffee Mill.

Top row (left to right): Chris O'Connor, Elaine Christianson, Beth Thoma Robinson, Jon Adams, Karen Rosen and Bob Martin.

Front row (left to right): JoJo, Lisa Ebrahimi and Sharon Hayden.

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*Mahalo ka mālama 'ana i ko kākou one hānau*  
(Thank you for caring for our beloved home)

## The Stalking Manō

Story and photo by Wendy Noritake

On a February morning in 2025, my swim from Māhukona began as usual. My freediving friend Matt Belcher and I swam to the southern point at Lapakahi in hopes of swimming with whales. We ventured out deep and watched these beautiful mammals do fin slaps and spy hops. But they were too far away to join.

After a few minutes of observing, Matt said that a shark, a manō, was swimming below us. I looked down at the reef and spotted a large shark, about an eight-footer. It didn't have a white or black tip, so I figured it was a Galapagos shark. We both took photos and video and were about to head back to Māhukona. That's when Matt said that the shark was behind us. I immediately turned around and looked at the reef where I had last seen it. The shark was nowhere to be seen. But as my eyes looked up to the surface, I saw it swimming directly at us. Oh \$%\*!

We both turned to face it, making ourselves look as big as possible. The shark came by us then swam off. I said to Matt, "We need to keep our eyes open for that shark," pointing in all directions. We proceeded to Māhukona. A minute or less went by, and the shark appeared on our left, swimming about ten feet away, then disappearing into the deep



Oceanic blacktip shark

blue. Another minute passed, and it appeared on our right, swimming on Matt's side. Again, we stopped to face the shark, and it passed by, this time swimming ahead of us.

We kept swimming to Māhukona, looking all around us, and it kept reappearing. At one point the shark came toward us again, and this time Matt charged it, placing his not-long-enough-GoPro-stick in front of him. It swam off. Shortly after, we were nearing the reef at Big Rock and swam into the shallower water in hopes of ditching the shark. It followed us. Matt expected the shark to charge us at any moment. I did, too. We were prepared to help each other if

anything happened. We both carry touriques in our mesh bags and wear Sharkbanz around the ankles, just in case.

As a PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Dive Master, I had been scuba diving with sharks for nearly thirty years. I've been around hundreds of them—hammerheads, tigers, Galapagos, reef and oceanic whitetips, and nurses – even diving with them at night. I never feared them but thought they were magnificent creatures, all muscle and grace. However, swimming at the surface is a totally different experience. A person looks more like an injured animal with all the splash-

ing of arms and legs, and I had heard many stories of people being attacked from behind.

My advice to my diving and swimming friends is: When you're swimming in open water, never let your guard down. Always be aware of your surroundings, and every few minutes look directly behind you. Sharks use the element of surprise to attack.

Fellow freediver Scott Sternhagen sent me a video he had taken at Māhukona while on an outing. He turned the camera behind him to find a large shark at the surface quickly approaching. He said he faced the shark and made himself look huge – 6-feet-plus with freediving fins. I watched the video as the shark came closer, my body cringing. It then abruptly turned and swam away. I saw the vertical stripes on its side. I hope never to encounter a tiger shark in that way.

Over the years, I had also seen many videos of Ocean Ramsey, a marine biologist specializing in the study of sharks. She developed a technique called redirecting, where you lock your elbow straight, and as the shark approaches, you place your hand on its head, and at the same time, push down to move it past you, like a tai chi or judo maneuver. Just make sure you don't put your hand in the shark's

See Manō, on Page 10

### COLIFORM TIER 1 VIOLATION PUBLIC NOTICE

#### DRINKING WATER NOTICE

##### NEW MOON FOUNDATION WATER SYSTEM VIOLATES GROUND WATER RULE REQUIREMENTS

The New Moon Foundation water system has been notified by the State Department of Health that it has violated drinking water regulations for the presence of E. coli bacteria.

##### What should I do?

There is nothing you need to do. This notice is a public announcement required under the drinking water regulations.

##### What happened?

The E. coli bacteria was detected on November 7, 2025, in a sample collected the previous day from the Bond Tunnel. Five samples will be collected from the same tunnel on November 12, 2025.

Bond Tunnel is a spring that is fed by ground water. Due to extreme drought in Kohala for the last several months, the tunnel has effectively stopped flowing. Due to lack of water, the facilities are not in use and only have minimal caretaking staff on site. There is a two-foot-thick wall isolating the tunnel and source. A pest, personnel inspecting or some other vector contaminated the residual water. The sample was taken as scheduled showing the contamination.

##### What is being done?

The water purveyor is keeping the system off line until adequate flow returns to spring and system may be sanitized. John A. Richards said he would notify customers when the source is free of E. coli bacteria.

E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems. E. coli can also exist in tropical, subtropical and temperate soils and may persist in soil over multiple years.

The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

For more information, please contact John A. Richards at (808) 936-7553 or 65-1206 Mamalahoa Hwy., Ste. 1-206, Kamuela, HI 96743.

General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791. Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses.) You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

State water system ID: 170

Date Distributed: 11/07/2025

As of 12/30/2025 the system is back in compliance



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**Manō, from Page 9**

mouth. I had a whitetip encounter at Kamano (Nishimura) Bay and thought I would need to use this technique when the shark came extremely close twice. Thankfully, I didn't have to.

As Matt and I headed over the sand approaching Little Rock, at least 30 great barracudas appeared, surrounding us and the shark. I'd never seen so many at one time. Some of them chased after the shark's tail, and I thought that this might be a good distraction to have them buffer us from the beast. Eventually they disappeared, but not the predator. The shark continued to dog us, stalking, never letting up. I have to say that even though it was intimidating, the shark was also mesmerizing, graceful, powerful, streamlined with distinct horizontal stripes along its sides.

As we passed the Māhukona lighthouse, the shark was still there. I saw a group of women friends swimming toward us, and I yelled to them, saying a large shark was following us and to be very careful. They decided to turn around and head back to the wharf. It was then that I realized how exhausted I was. My adrenaline was drained. I wondered if I'd make it back to the ladder. Maybe it was the numbers of swimmers or maybe it was boredom, but the shark finally and suddenly swam off into the deep.

Matt would later say that the barracuda had appeared in hopes of having a leftover meal. Yuck! I wasn't thinking about becoming

breakfast. Through the time stamps on his GoPro, we were stalked for 35 minutes! After sharing photos with the reef fish author John Hoover and his colleagues, it was determined that the shark was an oceanic blacktip. One that rarely comes to the shoreline, maybe curious, but not known to be a man-eater, although I would not want to be the first victim. It may have been because we were so deep, the shark sensed our movements and approached to check us out.

Hawaii is the first state in the country to outlaw killing sharks. There are about 30 shark species in Hawaii. At least 100 million sharks are killed each year, mostly for their fins. When I lived in Hong Kong, it sickened me to see aerial views of thousands of drying fins on rooftops. The fins cut off for soup. The rest of the body dumped in the sea.

It's been nearly a year since the encounter, and I've seen the oceanic blacktip four more times in the shallows. Once it swam beneath me a few times; in the other instances I saw it in passing. I wasn't about to dive to take photos. I'm certain it was the same shark because of its size and the markings. John Hoover had warned me to be very careful around this shark.

When swimming or diving, we share the ocean with these incredible creatures. We're in their backyard, so it's good to remember never to panic, but give them respect and space. And it wouldn't hurt to know how to do the redirecting maneuver!



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## Kohala Girls School, 1874–1956

*This story was originally printed in the July 26, 2014 issue of the Kohala Mountain News.*



*All photos courtesy of the collection of James Hind, Jr. The Kohala Girls School, as seen from the mauka side in 1874.*

### Kakau e Boyd D. Bond

Although it closed as a school in 1956 and today sits quietly at the end of 'Iole Road, the Kohala Girls Seminary was once a thriving part of the Kohala community. The seminary had been Ellen Bond's dream since her arrival in Kohala in 1841, though it would be many years before her dream became reality.

Both the Rev. Elias Bond and his wife, Ellen Mariner Bond, trained as teachers and came to the islands as missionaries. They intended to teach Hawaiians to become the future teachers and preachers of their own people. While Rev. Bond was able to begin his school for boys almost immediately after their arrival, "Mother Bond," as she came to be known, was only able to teach 10 girls for one semester in 1842. Then the demands of her own growing family and the expanding needs of the mission put her dream of a school for girls on hold.

The couple struggled in their first two decades, raising nine of their own children, while Father Bond built more than 40 small churches and schools in scattered communities across the North Kohala district. Epidemic diseases and economic changes caused some of these small, isolated communities to disappear entirely, as

Hawaiians gravitated to economic opportunities in the villages forming around Halaula and Kapa'au, or left Kohala to find work on the neighbor islands and the West Coast.

Recognizing the need for employment in the district, Father Bond embarked on the creation of the Kohala Sugar Plantation in the early 1860s, which would consume much of his attention over the next decade. While the fledgling plantation lost money through most of its first 10 years, it eventually turned a profit, and the usually austere missionary couple found themselves in the unusual position of shepherding an unexpected surplus of funds! Finally, after more than 30 years of missionary work, Mother Bond's dream would come true!

Father Bond began a determined effort to raise all the funds needed for a girls school in Kohala, committing his profits from the Kohala plantation in 1873 to the purchase of building materials. With the help of his boys school students, he cleared the land for the buildings. Government funds were requested for two teachers, and the large three-story dormitory building that would become the center of the school was con-

**See School, on Page 11**

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50 Years, from Page 10



*The rear entrance of the Kohala Girls School, as seen from the school yard.*

structed in 1874. With a half-dozen volunteers from the congregation of Kalahikiola Church, Father Bond, then 60, personally provided a great deal of labor — and no small amount of supervision — in the completion of the project.

On December 3, 1874, the Kohala Girls Seminary opened. While Mother Bond had hoped to serve perhaps 20 to 30 students in that first year, more than 70 girls applied. Mother Bond was able to adjust her resources to accommodate 45 dormitory students and another 20 girls who lived nearby and could attend as day students.

Now aged 56 and physically worn from her many years of service, Mother Bond was no longer up to the task of running the school. Miss Lyons from Waimea, recently returned to the islands from college on the East Coast, moved over the mountain to become the first headmistress. Mother Bond remained as one of the teachers, along with Rev. Luhiau of Kalahikiola Church and the other hired teacher, Miss Thompson.

The girls paid a modest tuition for supplies — about \$5 in the early days — and could work off their tuition by providing the labor that kept the school operating. Chores ranged from laundry and cooking to gardening and tending farm animals, with the older girls supervising the younger ones. Because housing

for single women was not available at that time, Miss Thompson boarded with the Bond family, sleeping in a bedroom in the attic once occupied by the Bond children.

Water pipes were added in 1875, and an addition to the dormitory and a separate classroom building were added in 1878. Other buildings would be added in the coming years as the school continued to grow; however, there would be challenges ahead. Due to an outbreak of typhoid in 1879, Miss Lyons was forced to return to Waimea, and the school was temporarily closed that year. Mother Bond died in 1881, Miss Lyons retired in 1882, and when no other headmistress could be found the school closed again, this time for seven years.

During this interim, Father Bond continued to maintain the property at his own expense, although the property was deeded to the Hawaiian Evangelical Association and a board of governors was appointed to oversee operations. Finally, Miss Whittier was recruited, and the school reopened in 1889 with the addition of two new teachers, Miss Turner and Miss Manross.

Tuition had gone up to about \$12 by the 1890s. Col. Samuel Parker offered to pay the tuition for the daughters of the paniolo working on Parker Ranch in Waimea to attend either Kohala



*The Kohala Girls School 1910–1911 Seminary Staff is shown in this archived photo.*

Girls School and Kohala or Kamehameha School on O'ahu. This was a generous offer that most of the girls gladly accepted, and it was a practice the ranch continued for some decades afterward.

By the 1920s public schools had been completed in Kohala, and girls and boys together attended these schools. However, some girls continued to board at Kohala Seminary, sometimes referred to as "Mauna Oliva," for extended education in foreign language, music and voice. A refitted truck acted as a school bus to shuttle the girls between the two sites each day, a ride many of the girls remembered as a scary ride! By the 1950s, the church association managing the school could no longer

bear the financial burden of operations, and the Kohala girls school closed in 1956.

Although the curriculum may have changed over the years, the generations of young women who were educated at the girls school were always under the guiding influence of a long tradition of love and an expectation of excellence. Their many accomplishments and contributions to their own communities are too numerous to list here. Even in her golden years, one can tell a graduate of "Mauna Oliva" by her bearing, her wit and her general quality.

Although it sits quietly today, the influence of the old Kohala Girls Seminary can still be felt in our community.

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## Rare Blooming Event of the Ponytail Plant



A rare blooming event of a ponytail plant.

Story and photos by Tom Morse

Often called a ponytail palm because of its palm-like trunk and cascading leaves, this plant is not a true palm, but a member of the agave family (think cactus).

It is very slow-growing and can take decades to bloom. Its base is bulbous, and stores the water it needs, so it is drought tolerant. The base is sometimes called "Elephant's Foot".



The base of the ponytail plant stores water.

WEEKLY EVENTS IN FEBRUARY 2026					
DAY	START	END	EVENT	VENUE	CONTACT (808)
M-S	8:30AM		NARCOTICS TALK STORY	RAINBOW CAFE	
MON	9AM		SENIOR CLUB @ CIVIC CENTER	KOHALASENIORS@GMAIL.COM	
	12:00PM		SENIOR BALANCE, STRENGTH & FITNESS	KIC	238-6111
	4PM	6PM	TOOL LIBRARY	54-3842 AKONI PULE HWY	213-7779
	4:30PM		RMD TAIKO CLASSES	HUB HALE	895-2025
	5:30PM		DEFIANT BRATS (WOMENS' AA)	AINAKEA HOME	747-9627
TUE	8AM	9AM	NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS	NEAR SKATE PARK	805-452-9501
	8AM	9AM	TAI CHI WITH PETER BEEMER	OUTSIDE HISAOKA GYM	895-0737
	8AM		YOGA/PILATES BEGINNER CLASS	OUTSIDE HISAOKA GYM	333-8275
	4PM	6PM	TOOL LIBRARY	54-3842 AKONI PULE HWY	213-7779
	4:30PM	6PM	LOVE YOUR BELLY DANCE CLASSES	CALL FOR LOCATION	238-6111
	4:00PM		FOOD DRIVE	ST AUGUSTINE'S	889-5390
	6PM	8PM	PICKLE BALL	HISAOKA GYM	333-8712
	6PM	8PM	TABLE TENNIS/PING PONG	OLD COURT HOUSE	889-1099
WED	10AM	11AM	STORY TIME	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	889-6655
	12PM	6PM	THRIFT SHOP	ST AUGUSTINE'S	889-5390
	2PM	4PM	OPEN GUIDED ART STUDIO	ARTISTS' CO-OP	960-3597
	2PM	3PM	LEGO CLUB	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	889-6655
	3:30 PM	4:30PM	RMD TAIKO CLASSES (NOT 1ST WED)	JODO MISSION	895-2025
	5PM	6PM	CHOIR PRACTICE	ST AUGUSTINE'S	889-5390
	6PM	8PM	FREE MEAL AND BIBLE STUDY	KALAHIKIOLA CHURCH	218-4872
	6PM	7:30PM	SEIBUKAN KARATE ACADEMY	HISAOKA GYM	889-1828
	7PM		SPIRITUAL HEALING SERVICE	ZOOM	989-5995
	7PM	8PM	ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS	KALAHIKIOLA CHURCH	747 9627
THU	8:30AM	1PM	TOOL LIBRARY	54-3842 AKONI PULE HWY	213-7779
	9:30AM	10:45PM	HEALING CIRCLE FOR ADDICTS	NANI'S GARDEN	805-452-9501
	5PM		OPEN CIRCLE MEDITATION (NOT 2ND)	KEOKEA BEACH PARK	889-5390
	6PM	8PM	PICKLE BALL	HISAOKA GYM	333-8712
	6PM	8PM	TABLE TENNIS/PING PONG	OLD COURT HOUSE	889-1099
FRI	8AM		NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING	WILEY HALL ON IOLE	805-452-9501
	8AM	9AM	TAI CHI WITH PETER BEEMER	OUTSIDE HISAOKA GYM	895-0737
SAT	8AM	12PM	HAWI FARMERS MARKET	KOHALA VILLAGE INN	895-7870
	8AM	5PM	TOOL LIBRARY	54-3842 AKONI PULE HWY	213-7779
SUN	10AM	12PM	ECSTATIC DANCE	HUB BARN	
	6PM	7PM	SEIBUKAN KARATE ACADEMY	HISAOKA GYM	889-1828
	7PM	8PM	RECOVERY DHARMA MEETING	RED COTTAGE VILLAGE HUB	(907) 888-8166

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Prayer Meeting: Friday 7 PM  
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## MONTHLY CALENDAR FEBRUARY 2026

DATE	DAY	START	END	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	VENUE	PHONE
2/2	MON	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	HEART HEALTH W/ILA JHAVERI	TIPS ON USING FOOD-AS-THERAPY, ACUPRESSURE, AND OTHER LIFESTYLE TOOLS.	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/2	MON	4:30 PM		ADVISORY GROUP MEETING	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
2/2	MON	5:00 PM	6:30 PM	CHESS CLUB	ALL AGES WELCOME!	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/4	WED	4:00 PM	7:00PM	KOHALA NIGHT MARKET	FOOD TRUCKS AND LOCAL VENDORS	HUB MURAL	808-889-5523
2/4	WED	4:30 PM		KOHALA COMMUNITY ACCESS GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
2/4	WED	7:00 PM		TEMPLE OF SPIRITUAL HEALING	GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP - CALL FOR ZOOM LINK	ZOOM	808-989-5995
2/5	THU	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	HOMESCHOOL GROUP	LEARN AND SOCIALIZE AT THE LIBRARY WITH A STORY AND ACTIVITY.	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/7	SAT	8:00 AM	11:00AM	THRIFT SHOP		ST AUGUSTINE'S	808-889-5390
2/7	SAT	5:30 PM	8:00PM	ARTIST RECEPTION	KATHLEEN POVAZEK - VISIONS OF MAHUKONA	ARTISTS' COOPERATIVE	808-854-1058
2/9	MON	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	SOUND BATH	CRYSTAL ALCHEMY SINGING BOWL SOUND BATH WITH LEILANI SILVER	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/10	TUE	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	BOOK CLUB	DISCUSS JAMES BY PERCIVAL EVERETT WITH US!	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/11	WED	9:00 AM		AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROUP	NKCDP	POMAIKA`I CAFE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
2/11	WED	5:00 PM		GROWTH MANAGEMENT GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
2/14	SAT	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	FEATURED ARTIST RECEPTION	GARY LEVEQUE	OLENA GALERY	808 345 1779
2/18	WED	3:30 PM		UTILITIES GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
2/18	WED	5:00 PM		PARKS, ROADS VIEW PLANES GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
2/19	THU	9:00 AM	11:00AM	SACRED HEART FOOD BASKET		SACRED HEART CHURCH	808-889-6436
2/20	FRI	4:00 PM		HEALTH & WELLNESS GROUP	NKCDP	NKRC	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
2/21	SAT	11:00 AM	1:00PM	TOOL LIBRARY WORKSHOPS	USEFUL AND BEGINNER-FRIENDLY TOPICS	TOOL LIBRARY	(808) 213-7779
2/23	MON	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	JEWELRY CLASS	ALL MATERIALS PROVIDED, RSVP REQUIRED	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/23	MON	5:30 PM	6:45 PM	JEWELRY CLASS	ALL MATERIALS PROVIDED, RSVP REQUIRED	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/24	TUE	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	WRITER'S WORKSHOP	WITH LOCAL AUTHOR VIRGINIA FORTNER. SESSION TOPIC: "WRITING DIALOG"	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/25	WED	4:00 PM		RESTORATIVE YOGA THERAPY CLASS	WITH CARLA ORELLANA - BY REQUEST	CALL FOR LOCATION	808-238-6111
2/26	THU	2:30 PM	4:30 PM	CHILDREN'S BOOK VS. MOVIE CLUB	READ THE BOOK, THEN COME WATCH THE MOVIE! PIPPI LONGSTOCKING BY ASTRID LINDGREN.	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
2/26	THU	5:00 PM		AGRICULTURE GROUP	NKCDP	NKRC	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
2/27	FRI	2:30 PM	4:30 PM	TEEN BOOK VS. MOVIE CLUB	READ THE BOOK, THEN COME WATCH THE MOVIE! PAPER TOWNS BY JOHN GREEN	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655

## Manual for the Awakening Warrior: The Special Forces Secret Mind-Body-Spirit Training Program

By Anne Fojtasek

What if you were offered a chance to influence the policies of the United States military, to make the training for our Special Forces kinder, more open-minded and humanitarian? Would you take on the job?

Joel and Michelle Levey once found themselves in just this position. Currently, they have lived in Kohala for over 30 years, but in 1982, Joel and Michelle were in Seattle, Washington. Joel was working for the Group Health Cooperative Medical Center, when a friend called him to ask if he would like to "design the ultimate warrior training program for the Green Berets." The friend, Bud Cook, a former graduate student of Joel's from Hilo, explained that he was working with Lieutenant Colonel Jim Channon of the United States Army to develop a type of advanced training for "the new warrior in the 21st century."

Channon moved to Hawi in the early 90s and introduced the Leveys to our district. Longtime Kohala residents will remember him for creating the Bamboo restaurant with his wife, Joan Channon, and his many innovative sustainability projects for North

Kohala, especially the Artesia gatherings that took place on his property.

But more than 40 years ago, Channon was on the mainland, still in the army and searching for ways to foster extraordinary human potential in soldiers to serve as earth stewards and protectors. He created a guide for the Army titled "Evolutionary Tactics: A Manual for the First Earth Battalion." He and other members of the U.S. Army's Task Force Delta envisioned a new kind of training based on the principles in Channon's book. Bud recommended Joel and Michelle to implement the program.

As you might imagine, the Leveys thought long and hard about whether to accept the opportunity they had been given. Framed as having the potential for preventing another world war, the program might have far-reaching effects—for better or for worse. It was clear that this training needed to develop not only the power of these warriors, but the wisdom and compassion necessary to deploy their power for the greater good. They sought guidance from many of their esteemed contemplative and scientific teach-

ers across various disciplines to inform their decision and design, and all were wholeheartedly supportive.

As a result, the Leveys accepted the invitation to develop a secret, six-month-long, immersive "Jedi Warrior" training program for 25 of the world's most elite special forces soldiers.

It included intensive physical, mental, emotional and spiritual training, utilizing mindful presence, biofeedback and neurofeedback, aikido, mission simulations, work with the soldiers' families, and a month-long silent meditation retreat called "the Encampment."

This immersive training raised many important questions for the soldiers, including, "If we are all related like cells in the larger body of life, then how could we ever kill anyone?" The men trained intensively with Michelle and Joel in the mind-lab and in retreat, and Joel trained with them in the field and on the aikido mat.

The basic principle of aikido stresses blending with the energy of an attacker to redirect it rather than opposing the energy and causing harm. An effective self-defense method, it also includes

training to deflect emotionally and mentally, not just through physical techniques.

This once-secret story has recently been published as a book by the Leveys titled, "Manual for the Awakening Warrior: The Special Forces Secret Mind-Body-Spirit Training Program." It offers training practices that are valuable for everyone seeking to "recognize and befriend our inner enemies and avoid self-sabotage and ambush by distractions."

As explained in the book, translating the Japanese term budo as "the way of the warrior" is often misinterpreted to be about making war on someone else. The way of budo is the way of ending war, "dedicating one's life in the service of peace." We can all practice being warriors in this sense, whether as part of a military force or not, by dedicating ourselves to living a pono life of kindness and service. Copies of this insightful book can be purchased at Basically Books in Hilo or on-line at [www.simonandschuster.com/books/Manual-for-the-Awakening-Warrior/Joel-Levey/9781644116074](http://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Manual-for-the-Awakening-Warrior/Joel-Levey/9781644116074). Or look for the Leveys and their books at the next Kohala Night Market in Hawi!



### NOW HIRING: COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR Kohala Middle School

Partners in Development Foundation (PIDF) is seeking a full-time Community School Coordinator to serve Kohala Middle School. This position works in partnership with school leadership, families, and community organizations to strengthen student supports, increase engagement, and build a healthier, more connected Kohala community using the Community Schools model.

#### Position Highlights:

- On-site at Kohala Middle School
- Salary: \$50,000 annually
- Monday-Friday schedule with some events on evenings or weekends at various times for school and community events
- Meaningful work serving students, families, and the Kohala community

#### Ideal Candidates Have:

- Bachelor's degree in education, social work, or related field
- Experience in community organizing, youth development, or program coordination
- Strong relationship-building and collaboration skills
- Knowledge of or connection to the Kohala community a plus

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## Kohala High School Girls Basketball Team

By Tom Morse



Picture credit: Kohala High School

The 2025-2026 Kohala High School Girls Basketball team.

Front row: 'Ilima Napoleon, Raine Cazimero, Jojo Viernez.

Back row: AJ Soriano, Loryn-Rosae Carvalho, Mele Cazimero, Mali'e Karatti, Chawai Dunhour.

Missing: Halia Bobek-Perez.

At press time the team has record of 3-3 in league play. Water bottles donated by the Hawaii Community Federal Credit Union.

## Calling In Historical Items to Display

By Randee Golden

E'o! Happy New Year from the Kohala Heritage Center. Located across from the Kamehameha Statue, the Center continues to grow, and we invite Kohala families with generational history to become a part of our efforts.

Displays that share about Kohala in times past continue to be created. We are putting out the call to families from this area to loan or donate any items that represent the unique heritage of our community. Items in one of the following categories as well as anything else that is relevant are being requested:

\*Ancient tools: Poi pounders and boards, weapon replicas, stone lamps, etc.

\*Plantation and Camp Memories: Kaukau tins, bongo ID for pay-check, food preparation utensils, household artifacts, etc.

\*Hula implements: drums, 'uli'uli, kala'au, 'ohe, old costumes, etc.

\*Musical implements

\*Special photo collections of people and places

If you have any items that you would like to donate or loan to the Kohala Heritage Center, please contact Sharon Hayden: 808 987-1918 or [Sharonhayden10@gmail.com](mailto:Sharonhayden10@gmail.com). You are asked to photograph any collections you may have and send them to her.

Please call Sharon with any questions and plan to visit the Heritage Center, current (attempted) hours are 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Sharon is usually there on Thursdays and Fridays. Mahalo for your kokua!



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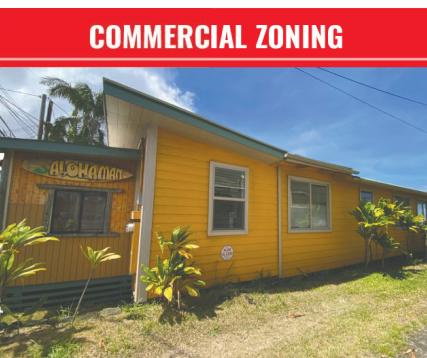
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## Hawai'i Leaders Gift HIDOE 5 Years of Workforce Development Programs



Photo courtesy of ClimbHI

HIDOE Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Coordinator Fern White is pictured at the right, next to HIDOE Superintendent Keith Hayashi at the December 16, 2025 ClimbHI awards ceremony.

By Jennifer Sudick

Hawai'i workforce development nonprofit ClimbHI announced has raised over \$500,000 from local leaders, businesses, and organizations to provide 5 more years of workforce development programs to the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE), with a goal of reaching \$1 million through additional community support. The 5-year commitment builds on ClimbHI's success in reaching more than 400,000 students in nearly

2,600 events over the past 5 years.

ClimbHI's statewide workforce development initiatives include public-private efforts such as Exposure Fairs, Exposureships, Leadership Exploration Inspiration (LEI) events, Hiring Blitzes, the ClimbHI Service Excellence Certificate, and enterprise programs, well as events through ClimbHI's Bridge portal and professional development days and externships for educators. These programs are designed to provide businesses, organiza-

tions, teachers and students with dedicated time to connect, helping students uncover opportunities and career paths that lead to economic self-sufficiency in Hawai'i.

"Mahalo for the generous support from our local leaders, businesses, organizations, as well as HIDOE for its engagement over the past 5 years," said Julie Morikawa, President of ClimbHI. "We are looking forward to the next 5 years of working together to create transformational opportunities that help

develop our robust pipeline of local talent."

In addition, ClimbHI's annual Community Engagement Leaders awards recognize business engagement in schools statewide, as well as the top-participating schools, educators and complex areas, and supporters.

The West Hawaii Complex Area, which includes Kohala schools, was awarded a 2025 Community Engagement Leader Award for Outstanding Schools & Offices.

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<b>\$2.29</b> \$3.29	AMANO KAMABOKO 5.5OZ	<b>\$1.99</b> \$2.89	RED BUTANE	<b>\$4.99</b> \$7.79	NABISCO NUTTER BUTTER PATTIES

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