



# KoAloha Mai

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## Community



Congratulations to...**ME!** I have been elected to my first board, the **Hawai'i Arts Alliance**. As we continue to struggle with the effects of No Child Left Behind, I hope that I

can make positive contribution in the area of Arts Advocacy. This is a perfect complement to our existing plans for musical curriculum. Log onto [NAMM.org](http://NAMM.org) and follow the links to see what is happening on a national scale.

They're back! Well, soon anyways. **The Sunshine Kids** will be here in Honolulu this November. For children battling cancer, this organization helps put a little sunshine in their days with activities, trips and sharing bonds with others battling the disease. Last trip to Hawaii, we gave them ukes and free lessons by Gordon Mark at the Moana Surf rider. Let me know if you can help, too.



## Contests



The cutest contestants, Trini & Verina Yeung, pictured with Dad, Man Yueng.

Congratulations to **The Hawaiian Ukulele Company, Aloha Tower Marketplace, Aloha Festivals** and all the contestants of the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ukulele Contest**. **Braddah Wade** and the gang from **Hawaiian 105 KINE** were there and a great time was had by everyone. Hang in there Cal, we love you!



Special surprise guest appearance by **Melveen Leed**, pictured with husband, **Sifu Al Dacoscos**, Pops and Mom **KoAloha**.

## Sightings

Did you see us on **KHON's** shaka portion? That was fun, and a first for us! Our very own **Pops KoAloha** also made it on the **KHNL** broadcast the same day. **MidWeek** has been the "Oahu" (gathering place) for all our friends. I lost track this past couple weeks, but remembered seeing **Melissa Chang of the Aloha Tower Marketplace** in the "Spotted" section.

**Aloha Festivals' Waikiki Ho'olaulea** featured two super groups, **Kaukahi** (Best New Group) and **Manoa DNA**. Manoa DNA has been posting some #1 hits in Japan. Watch for their new CD coming up. Release party October 4<sup>th</sup> at Gordon Biersch.

## Kalihi Stuff

Beginning October, “**A Day in Kalihi**” members, **KoAloha Ukulele** and **Menehune Mac** will be two of a few stops in a Walking Tour, presented by the **Waikiki Trolley**. We continue to serve as a stop destination on their Red Line service and have been spreading the word about Ukulele Aloha.

Mahalo to the **Mayor’s Office** and the **Filipino Chamber of Commerce** for a terrific “**Taste of Kalihi.**” Vendors had a chance to show off their eats and businesses. We hope to see this become an annual event.

## E Komo Mai



Welcome to **DeForest Thornburgh** and the gang at **The Blue Guitar**. They have been heavies in the guitar community of Cali and have also created a niche

for themselves in ukulele as well. They are our newest dealers.

Welcome back, **Orlando Benedicto!**

Well, kind of. Thanks to Orlando, we are able to maintain our own website now and



hope to post updates regularly. Like our website? It’s his perspiration and creation.

## Coming Up



This December, mark your calendar: **KoAloha** will be performing along side of Ukulele Master **Gordon Mark**. We will join my sifu in a Christmas concert at **Hawaii Public Radio**. Gordon has written a four-piece arrangement for ukulele of “Carol of the Bells.” OMG, it’s awesome!!! **Pops** will sing

Harry Connick’s “When My Heart Finds Christmas” and a few more. Me? Secret...come and find out.

We will be at the **NAMM** show again this January. This year, we hope to learn a little more about the



school-based programs instituted by NAMM. “Wanna Play” and “Supportmusic.com” are just two ways that this international organization supports the making of music. No Child Should be Left Behind, let’s include music in that, too.

## Near & Far

Ukulele is hot. **Herb Ohta, Jr.** is currently on the East Coast promoting a tour and playing as well. This is hot on the heels of his visit to Chicago. (Chicago also has an Ukulele Festival.)

We are presently working on adding two more artists to our family of musicians. While the Netherlands, England and Germany have experienced a boom, we are currently talking stories with two talented musicians in France and Italy. Parlez-vous Francais? Fettucini Alfredo? Wait...that’s food, oh well.

## Artist Updates



Herb Ohta, Jr.

After a few collaborations, **Herb Ohta, Jr.** has released his latest, **Ukulele Journey**. (Do you miss him, Daniel?) True to its title, this CD captures Herb at this

point in his life. Those close to him can actually feel the Journey as he describes in through his music.

And in celebration of releasing his first solo CD in two years, **Herb** is also hosting a CD release party. And guess what? You're invited! **Pali** and other special artists will be making guest performances as well. So, mark your calendar for **Wednesday, October 24**, at **Ala Moana Hotel's Pakele Lounge** from **6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** Don't miss it!



**Tech. Sgt. Daniel Baduria** was a featured guest in the **Tops In Blue** production. They are the select group of performers from the U.S. Air Force that tours the country.

This latest at the Waikiki Shell was a tribute to Daniel's late father, Donald. Donald toured with Tops and once performed on the *Ed Sullivan Show*.

Congratulations to my kumu, **Tony Conjugacion** and his **Halau Na Wainohia** as they celebrated their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Hawaii Theatre! It was a starstudded celebration that included the likes of **Raiatea Helm, Jimmy Borges, Guy Cruz, Brother Noland** and many more.



Can't get enough? We sure can't, so are we glad that **Victoria Vox** is planning a return trip to Hawaii this October. Look for the dates, you'll fall in love with her. Watch out though, chances are you'll meet Beau. He's the one my favorite song is written for.

Look who dropped in this past month:

- **Raiatea Helm** treated our tour guests to Pua Tube-rose, the song that inspired her musical career.
- **Jeff Peterson** wowed the crowd we had that day with his classical ukulele renditions. Catch him weekly at Michels.
- **Scott Agena of Kawaihae** surprised us late one day. He and the guys are playing another sold out tour in Japan this fall.



A couple weeks ago, I had the opportunity to watch the **United States Air Force Thunderbirds** in action. At first, I wasn't thrilled when I heard about it, until we saw and HEARD them above us at work. Talk about chicken skin! (Goose bumps for our mainland readers.) Thank you to our men and women in the armed services. Thanks for the show and thank you for all the sacrifices you make. Come home safe.

# KOALOHA

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*KoAloha Ukulele is regarded as one of the premier ukulele builders in Hawaii. Founded in 1995 by Alvin "Papa KoAloha" Okami, the company's solid reputation for sound and quality is the result of its continuous pursuit for perfection. Each ukulele is meticulously and lovingly crafted by hand.*

*KoAloha features several lines of premium ukuleles: KoAlana, Soprano, Concert, Tenor, and D-VI 6-String. Its exclusive Signature Series will showcase seven models from Papa KoAloha's Masterpiece Collection.*

*The company also sponsors some of the music industry's leading artists including Herb Ohta, Jr. and Daniel Ho.*

*For more information about KoAloha, contact Alan Okami at 808.847.4911.*

## Stu Stew: Shop Life (Part 1 of 5), Milling

My job, in addition to running the physical shop, is to mill lumber. I grade and select raw lumber and turn them into billets to be further milled. In part one, I will cover my section and my daily routine.

All KoAlohas start as a plain old plank of koa. Most of our stock comes from our buddy Kimo, in Kona. He contracts with various land owners to mill logs, then cuts them up and sends them to people like us. When the koa arrives, it's green, which means that the freshly milled trees have too much moisture content to use. Upon arrival at our shop, we hand carry and stack them ever so nicely in our kiln, then let them dry for about six weeks. We dry our own lumber to maintain control over this process, which can greatly affect the stability of the lumber. I should mention that instrument builders are the pickiest of customers and usually order only quarter sawn lumber. Quarter sawn is a milling term for straight grain. In relation to the widest face of the board, the growth rings of the tree



should be perpendicular in a quarter sawn cut. The opposite is plain, or flat sawn. Between the two cuts, quarter sawn is stronger and more stable in changing weather conditions.

Okay, so six weeks have gone by and now it's time to start grading. The basic process is to inspect each board and determine what area can be used for a certain part. Say I'm looking for a set of sides. The board need not be too wide, but it should be relatively straight, with even grain. This makes it easier to bend, with less breakage. Tops and backs need wider boards, especially if we are milling one piece sets. Like the sides, the straighter the better, figuring is a bonus. I judge a plank in order of structural integrity, sound, then aesthetics. I often relate

the grading process to sushi. Like a sushi chef grades a fish for quality, I do the same for lumber. Rather than use the whole board indiscriminately, I often cut here and there, taking only the best portions. This leaves us with some extra (See previous KoAloha Mai - Like Scrap?)

Once the rough billets are milled, they go through a veneering process on a big bandsaw, also known as a resaw. They are then thickness sanded to a tolerance of +/- .001". To give you an idea of the accuracy, a human hair is about .003". (If you have bushy hair, maybe .005".)

From there, the parts split up into two sections, the body and assembly section. You can probably guess from the names, that we build the bodies in the body section and assemble the ukulele in the assembly section. I will cover the body section in the next KoAloha Mai.

