

Souvenir Program

30th Annual Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival

History
and Culture
Demonstrations
Entertainment
Arts & Crafts

*Cover art
"Mejiro And Cherry
Blossoms"
by Laurel Oglesby
(See inside
back cover)*

**Saturday, February 4, 2023
9:00am - 3:00pm**





Souvenir Booklet Design by Kathy Sprinkle
Words by Fern Gavelek
Photos Courtesy Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival
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Aloha and Konichiwa,

As Mayor of the County of Hawai'i, it is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the 30th Annual Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival, as we celebrate in person for the first time since 2020.

The Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival commemorates the blooming of the original 20 cherry trees planted in 1972 by the Waimea Lions Club at Church Row Park and observes the traditional Japanese practice of hanami, or "cherry blossom viewing party."

Much like the bud of the Sakura, our time is short and gently fleeting. Let us embrace our challenges and not squander the beauty of our life's blossom. Let's cherish our time spent with loved ones, uplift those around us, help who we can, when we can, and most importantly, be grateful for every day. If we can do that, our community will bloom, and we will enjoy its beauty.

I am honored to serve as your mayor, and I look forward to many more Cherry Blossom Festivals to come, celebrating the promise of spring, the generous hospitality of our residents, and the blending of cultural heritage that continues to make the County of Hawai'i a truly beautiful place to live.

With aloha.

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor
County of Hawai'i

2023 Festival Planning Committee
Morty Carter, Jr.-Chairman

Margo Mau Bunnell
Rochelle delaCruz
Capt. Jeremie Evangelista
Fern Gavelek
Margie Kaiser
Lori Lei Katahara
Leolani Kini
Bert Mukai
Nancy Male
Colin Miura
Jim McDonough
Amy Nishiura
Duane Puh
Annu Shionoya
Kathy Sprinkle
Clarence Yee



Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival Marks 30th Anniversary

After a hiatus due to COVID, the free festival returns to Waimea for in-person activities hosted by numerous community organizations at multiple venues 9 a.m.3 pm. February 4. Marking its 30th year in 2023, the festival appeared as a virtual event in 2021 and as a special newspaper section in both *West Hawaii Today* and the *Hawaii Tribune Herald* after the 29th festival was cancelled due to a January 2022 surge in COVID.

Delicate pink blossoms, often backdropped by a crown of snow atop Mauna Kea, attract thousands each year to the annual festival. Presented the first Saturday in February under the direction of the Culture and Education Division of the County of Hawai'i Parks and Recreation Department, the community event is a favorite with both visitors and residents alike.

At the core of the festival is the blooming of cherry trees at Church Row Park and the age-old Japanese tradition of hanami, which literally translates to hana (flower) and mi (look) or “cherry blossom viewing party.” Harking from the 7th century, hanami celebrates the fleeting beauty of nature while heralding the arrival of spring.

History of Waimea's Cherry Trees at Church Row Park

Cherry trees first came to Waimea in 1953 as a living memorial to Fred Makino, founder of Hawai'i's Japanese language newspaper, *Hawaii Hochi*. The late Isamil Shihara, a noted Waimea gardener, bonsai master and festival volunteer, propagated more trees. He donated the seedlings to the Waimea Lions Club for community beautification and the club received permission from the county to plant the trees in 1972 at Church Row Park.

Through the years, the Waimea Lions Club nurtured the trees—which aren't native to Hawai'i—replacing those that died. The late Hisao Kimura, who was a professional agronomist, was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the partnership between the county and the club in caring for the trees. Church Row Park is currently home to 75-some trees. During the festival, the Lions Club offers an informative photo display chronicling the club's planting efforts through the years.

Festival Information at Your Fingertips

This Souvenir Booklet shares information on the many community organizations and volunteers who collaborate to present the Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival.

For the full lineup of things to do, pick up the free, one-page handout titled “2023 Festival Activity Lineup” at festival venues. It is also available online; use the QR code to access that link. Mahalo!





Festival Begins in 1994

Under the direction of former county Parks and Recreation Director George Yoshida, the festival originated in 1994 in Church Row Park and has evolved over the years to involve numerous community organizations providing fun activities throughout town.

While activities and locations vary each year, the festival offers plenty of hands-on fun: mochi pounding, bonsai demonstrations, origami making, traditional Japanese tea ceremonies, bon dancing and more. While many venues are within walking distance of each other, Roberts Hawaii graciously provides free shuttle service among select locations.

Attendees are treated to a wide range of local entertainment including taiko drumming, hula and Chinese lion dance, plus sometimes headliners from Japan delight festival goers with authentic Japanese costume, dance, song and instrumentation.

Stages outside Parker Ranch Center and at Church Row Park present a wide range of local and ethnic performing arts. Attendees can shop among numerous craft vendors, a farmer's market, tables of Asian-themed collectibles, cherry tree blossoms and cherry-themed art. Also on tap is a quilt show where quilt patterns and sewing novelties can be purchased.

All the activities spur the appetite and festival goers enjoy free samplings at staged cooking demonstrations by local chefs. Hungry attendees make their way among numerous broke-da-mouth food booths, Asian baked goods like andagi and refreshing shave ice.

Official Festival Honorees and Art

Since 2007, the festival has often celebrated persons or organizations within the community –whether they are community volunteers, leaders, businesses or colorful characters involved with the festival– as official honorees. For 2023, the festival remembers all these honorees and lists them in this Souvenir Booklet (see page 6). In addition, the Waimea Arts Council (WAC) facilitates a contest for the festival's official annual art that appears on this booklet's cover and the event poster that can be purchased for \$10 at the Firehouse Gallery. WAC also presents the annual "Cherry Blossom Art Exhibition" at Firehouse Gallery, located at Waimea's Historic Corner.

Festival Glad to Be Back in Action!

Morty Carter, Hawai'i County Culture and Education Administrator, says the festival planning committee is eager to have this year's in-person festival after two years of having a passive presence. "The planning committee has stepped up to offer all the fun, immersive activities that make the Cherry Blossom Festival so special for people of all ages," Carter shares. "Without these community volunteers and organizations, the festival wouldn't be possible."

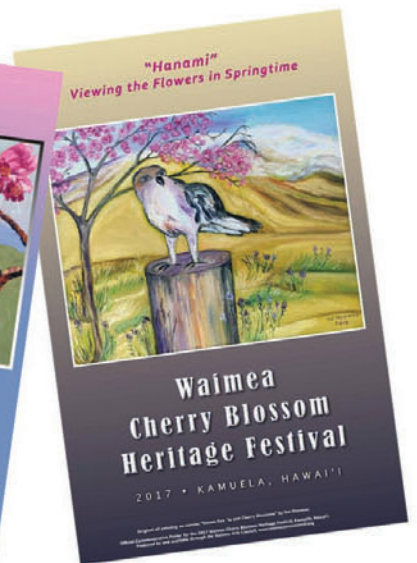
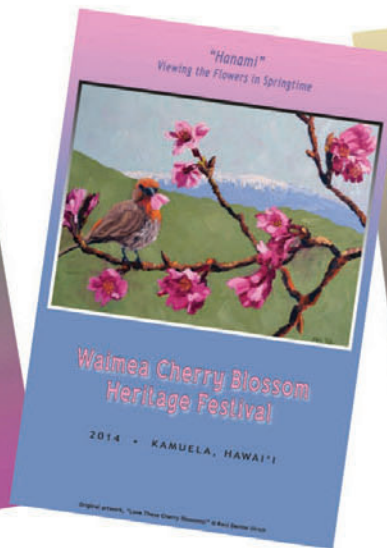
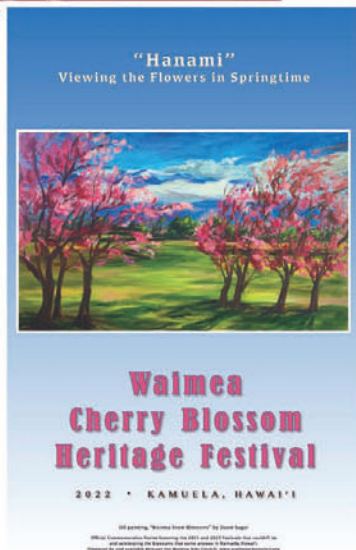
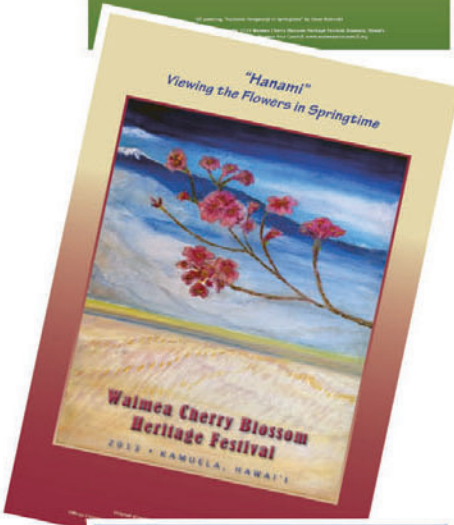
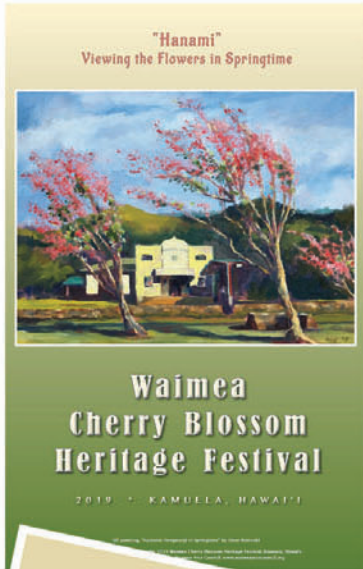


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Remembering Our Festival Honorees

Through the years, the Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival Committee has sometimes recognized individuals who have contributed to the festival or to the Waimea community. On the festival's 30th anniversary, we remember these standout community members and list them here in the 2023 Souvenir Program.

- 2007 Cherry Trees at Church Row Park and their caretakers, Waimea Lions Club
- 2008 Japanese Paniolo
- 2009 Nelson Doi, Lt. Governor & State Senator
- 2010 Dolly Loo of Waimea Arts Council
- 2011 Milton Yamasaki of UH Mealani's Research Station
Marie McDonald, Lei and Kapa Kupuna
- 2012 Paniolos Jamie Dowsett, Charles T. Kimura, Charles T. Onaka
- 2013 Anne Field-Gomes, Festival and Community Volunteer
- 2014 Emiko Wakayama, Festival Tea Ceremony Coordinator
Fumi Bonk, Teacher and Artist
- 2015 Waimea Lions Club
Dorothy (Ocompo) Badua of Ka Hui Kapa o Waimea Quilt Club
- 2016 Waimea Arts Council
- 2017 Roberts Hawaii
Betty Webster, Sunglasses Fashionista
- 2018 George Yoshida, Retired County Parks & Recreation Director
and How Festival Started
- 2022 Kikuko Kibe, Festival Origami Instructor
J. Jay West, Festival Graphic Artist



Pictured: Festival Commemorative Posters through the years. Some of these limited edition collectors items are still available for sale at the Firehouse Gallery. Read all about this year's winning artwork by Laurel Oglesby inside the back cover of this program.



Parker Ranch Center

Parker Ranch Center is thrilled to once again be a major participant with the annual Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival for 2023. Visitors to this year's festival can enjoy shopping, dining and entertainment while experiencing the stunning aromas, views and colors of the 30th Cherry Blossom Festival. Located in the heart of Waimea, the center offers plenty of parking.

Parker Ranch Center is part of the 250,000-acre Parker Ranch, one of the nation's oldest and largest cattle ranches. The center was built to serve the needs of the ranchers and their families who made their livelihood on the ranch.

Originally opened in 1968, Parker Ranch Center was reconfigured and designed to an award-winning architectural standard in 2002. It is

anchored by local island grocer Foodland and local ocal health food store Healthway's. Signature tenants include Starbucks, Patisserie Nanako, Mahina, Village Burger and Waimea's only food court.

Located in the heart of Hawai'i's paniolo country, Parker Ranch Center invites festival goers to visit the nine-ton "Ikua Purdy Rides Again" statue, courtesy of the Paniolo Preservation Society and located near the Center's Mamalahoa Highway 19 entrance. Purdy was the 1908 World Champion Roper who was inducted into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. Inside the center's Fireside Food Court, 32 paniolo murals, painted by local artist Marcia Ray, colorfully adorn the walls. The history of Parker Ranch and Waimea is rich and captivating. It's a story of the land, of the melding of cultures, of cowboys and of community spirit.





The Urasenke Hilo Association

participates at the festival by offering Chanoyu, the Japanese Tea Ceremony. Chado, The Way of Tea, is based “on the simple act of boiling water, making tea, offering it to others and drinking of it ourselves.” Powdered matcha tea is used, which is whipped into hot water and served “with a respectful heart while received with gratitude.”

The Urasenke Hilo Chapter was established in 1971 and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. It meets and teaches regularly at the landmark Shoroan Tea House on the beautiful grounds of Lili'uokalani Gardens in Hilo. Urasenke, which has a head office in Kyoto, Japan, has branches around the world.

Through the practice and experience of Chanoyu, each person seeks to attain the four essential virtues. They are “wa,” which is harmony; “kei” is respect, “sei” is purity and “jaku” is tranquility or the peace of mind that comes with the realization of the first three principles of the philosophy of wabi, meaning quiet or sober refinement.

To many people, the Japanese tea ceremony seems like a maze of complicated and seemingly meaningless gestures that make a fuss over the

common place activity of enjoying tea. However, it is thought if time is taken to personally experience the Japanese tea ceremony, one will find all elements of the ceremony combine to focus all five senses on the immediate experience. The ceremony, in turn, can briefly draw the participant’s mind and spirit away from the rush of everyday life.

The Urasenke Hilo Association invites festival goers to be a guest at traditional chanoyu and enjoy the serenity of a bowl of tea. This year’s ceremony will be at the Kamuela Hongwanji and scheduled times will be listed on the 2023 Festival Activity Lineup distributed at venues during the festival.





Roberts Hawaii

Roberts Hawaii has provided complimentary shuttle services to venues of the Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival for years. Though the festival has not been able to recently take place due to COVID, the company and team members have been waiting for it to come back. Roberts Hawaii's Big Island team has a sense of "kuleana" (responsibility) to the community they live in.

"We are happy to watch the success of this festival and its growth over the years," says Margo Bunnell, Roberts GM of Hawai'i Island. "Our commitment to these types of events is to always be good partners to help preserve the mixed cultures found in the Hawaiian Islands."

Bunnell adds, "When this festival started for just the pure enjoyment of 'hanami,' the viewing of the beautiful flowers of the cherry blossom trees, we were so fortunate the community wanted to expand this event throughout the town," adds Bunnell. "We will always be here for the community and to be part of this major event that has brought a small town like Waimea to be the host of this Japanese tradition. Where else in the world can one see the magnificent Mauna Kea as the backdrop for these wonderful 'hot pink' cherry blossoms in full bloom in February?"

North Hawai'i Bon Dancers

Accompanied by Kona Hongwanji Taiko Drummers

Bon Odori (Bon Dance) originates from the story of a Buddhist disciple who envisioned his deceased mother in the Realm of Hungry Ghosts where she was indulging in her own selfishness. Greatly disturbed, the disciple went to Buddha and asked how he could release his mother from this realm.

Buddha advised his disciple to perform a charitable act in memory of his mother. The disciple did this and thus saw his mother's release. He also began to see the true nature of her past unselfishness and the many sacrifices she had made for him. The disciple, happy for his mother's release and grateful for his mother's kindness, danced with joy.

This dance of joy is Bon Odori, a time when ancestors and their sacrifices are remembered and appreciated. During the festival, the North Hawai'i Bon Dancers will perform traditional Bon Odori movements in lines fronting the entertainment stage in the back parking lot at Parker Ranch Center. They will be accompanied by the Kona Hongwanji Taiko Group. The public is welcome to join in.



Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival

9:00am-3:00pm Saturday, February 4, 2023



Full Activity Lineup

To Kawaihae & North Kohala

Waimea Center

- Japanese Koto Music
- Majestic Culture and the Arts Association.
 - Lion Dance
 - KTA -Store Food Demos
- Historic Spencer House
 - Vintage Kimono
 - Kokeshi Doll Displays

Waimea's Historic Corner

- Firehouse Gallery
 - Cherry Blossom Art Show
 - All ages Cherry Blossom Art
- Waimea Preservation Association
 - Open House
 - Chess Fair on giant 20ft chess board!

To Kona via "Upper Road"

Thelma Parker Library

- All Ages Cherry Blossom "Tiny Art"



Mana Christian Ohana Hall

- Hawaiian Quilt Exhibit
- Craft Booths



Pukalani Stables

- Kamuela Farmers Market



Parker Ranch Center

- Entertainment
 - Mochi Pounding & Tasting
 - Bon Odori, Island Music & Dance
- Crafts and Community Info Booths
- Food Court

Pukalani Stables

- Kamuela Farmers Market



Historic Church Row Park

- Cherry Blossom Trees & Entertainment
- Waimea Lions Club
 - Festival History, Lost & Found
- Kamuela Hongwanji Open House
 - Traditional Tea Ceremonies
 - Chef Demos & Tasting
- Waimea Bon-yu Kai Bonsai Club
 - Display, Demonstrations, Sales

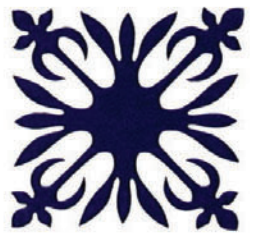
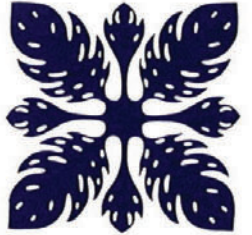


To Honokaa & Hilo



To Kona via "Upper Road"





Kamuela Farmers Market

The Kamuela Farmers Market was founded December 2015 by a group of vendors who had been working together in Waimea for many years. The goal was to establish a place for the community to gather and support small and local family owned businesses. The market is held at the idyllic historic Pukalani Stables, which was part of the original Pukalani Village in the 19th century and is located at 67-139 Pukalani Road in Waimea.

Over the past seven years, the Kamuela Farmers Market has grown to more than 50 vendors offering some of the island's best locally grown produce, "grindz" and goods. Known as "The Heartbeat and Gathering Place of Waimea," the Kamuela Farmers Market has hosted many outstanding musicians and performances at special events and is honored to be an official participant of the 30th annual Waimea Cherry Blossom Festival, kamuelifarmersmarket.com

Ka Hui Kapa Apana O Waimea

Ka Hui Kapa Apana O Waimea is a club of Hawaiian quilting enthusiasts. The club offers a Hawaiian Quilt Show and Craft Fair at Mana Christian 'Ohana (formerly known as the Old Kahilu Town Hall). View a display of colorful quilts by club members and browse among an array of arts and crafts. Also available for sale will be quilting and sewing novelties, including quilt patterns.

Founded in 1972, the non-profit Ka Hui Kapa Apana O Waimea meets 10 a.m.-noon on the last Saturday of each month at St. James Episcopal Church on Kawaihae Road. The Waimea organization was founded to gather members of mutual interest in friendly fellowship and to preserve, perpetuate and encourage the art and culture of Hawai'i in the field of Hawaiian quilting.



The Historic Spencer House

The Historic Spencer house has been a Waimea landmark for over 180 years.

Still owned by the Spencer family, the original home was built in 1840 and boasts being the first western-style house in the area. A kitchen, bathroom and additional rooms were added later. While most of the family furniture has been dispersed, there are some portraits on the walls, as well as ghost stories that typically accompany all old houses.



Over the years, the Spencer House has been a family home, a hotel, a law office and a restaurant. It has also accommodated various offices and businesses. Some parts of the house are currently under repair, but visitors are welcome to walk through most of the building's ground floor to appreciate its historical significance and vintage craftsmanship. E komo mai!



Waimea KTA Super Stores

KTA Super Stores started in 1916 as a modest, 500-square-foot grocery and dry goods store by Koichi and Taniyo Taniguchi. Since then, KTA has grown to a seven-store chain, serving the residents of Hawai'i island. For over 100 years, KTA Super Stores has been "committed to our founder's philosophy, which is a commitment to humbly serve the people of our community."

KTA Waimea opened in 1989 to serve the community of Kamuela, later expanding and renovating in 2002. KTA is proud to be a regular venue participant in the festival, often doing food demonstrations and other activities.

Asian Dance and Music

The performing arts of Japan returns to the Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival during a presentation of dance and music entitled "Sakura Beauty and Spirit." The sakura, or cherry blossom, is the national flower of Japan and represents a springtime sense of renewal and optimism. Dances and choreography are by Shizuno Nasu while Annu Shoko Shinoya, who teaches and performs piano on the Big Island, coordinates participating local musicians and artists.

Shizuno Nasu Dance Institute of Japan is composed of eight dancers, featuring special Buddhist guest Chief Priest Koshin Nagamune. A solo vocalist, he is from Tendai Shomyo Honjoin Tendai-Shu Temple and has performed in many European countries and throughout Japan.

On lyre, is Miyuki Ikesue, who has appeared in concert in Japan, Europe and the US. On the stage from Hawai'i Island is Okinawa Kobudo Taiko with Troy Sakihara; vocalist Lisa Katherine Taylor, bamboo flutist Manuel Roberto and pianist Annu Shoko Shinoya. Featured painting is by Susumu Sakaguchi.



Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

The Kona Hongwanji Temple annually provides a "hands-on" demonstration of mochi tsuki (mochi pounding) during the festival and offers attendees complimentary mochi treats made from the freshly pounded mochi. The treats are flavored with either red bean paste (anko), peanut butter or a soybean powder with sugar (kinako).

Mochi making is a multi-day process. Rice must be washed and rinsed, all wooden equipment soaked, the rice cooked and then pounded. Mochi is believed to symbolize unity and strength because of its sticky consistency. Since mochi rice is pounded, it lasts much longer than ordinary cooked rice and is therefore associated with longevity.

The Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple is located in Kealahou and celebrated 125 years in 2022. The Temple aspires to be the leading Buddhist center for West Hawai'i by providing:

- spiritual guidance and support for living in the 21st century
- propagation programs and activities appealing to people of all ages and ethnicities
- a resource center for Pure Land/Jodo Shin Buddhism.

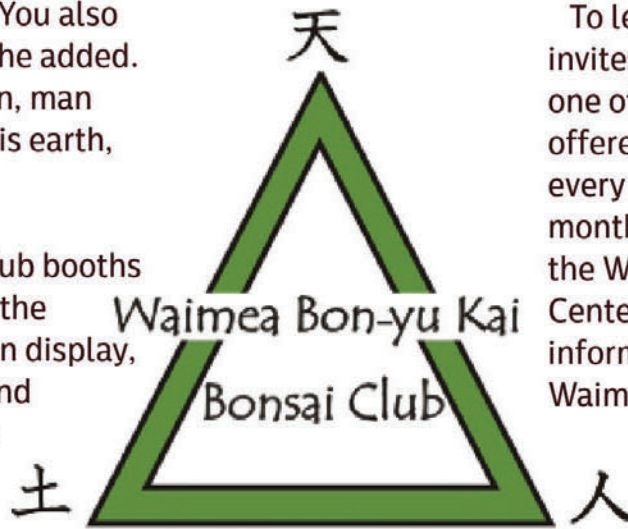


Waimea Bon-yu Kai Bonsai Club

In 2023 the Waimea Bon-yu Kai Bonsai Club will be entering its 67th year as an active bonsai club. Waimea Bon-yu Kai continues to be an active group in the community and has participated in every Cherry Blossom Festival held in Waimea. The late Isami Ishihara of Waimea was a founding club member as well as the planter of the original cherry trees in Church Row Park.

“In bonsai, the main thing is the Three Point Rule,” Mr. Ishihara once shared. He described it as the bonsai having a triangular shape with the top apex, or point, actually at the top. “You also see this in Japanese flower arranging,” he added. The triangle’s points are called “heaven, man and earth,” he continued. “The bottom is earth, the foundation; it is strong.”

During the festival, visit the Bonsai Club booths in Church Row Park and talk story with the members. There will be bonsai plants on display, bonsai for sale, and an ongoing clinic and demonstrations to discuss and work on any bonsai you may have.



To learn more, the club invites the public to attend one of its monthly meetings offered 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. every fourth Sunday of the month, except December, at the Waimea Community Center. For more information, email WaimeaBonsai@gmail.com



Kamuela Hongwanji Mission

Kamuela Hongwanji Mission is located at 65-1110 Mamalahoa Highway fronting Waimea's Historic Church Row Park. Established in 1954, the temple was originally called Waimea Hongwanji. The name was changed to Kamuela Hongwanji Mission in 1969, so as not to confuse it with Waimea Hongwanji on Kaua'i.

The temple is a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temple and is one of 33 temples in Hawai'i associated with Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i in Honolulu. It also maintains close ties with the Nishi Hongwanji head temple in Kyoto, Japan. Rev. Masanari Yamagishi is the resident minister of Kamuela Hongwanji and also serves as the minister for Honoka'a, Kohala and Pa'auilo Hongwanji.



For this year's festival, Kamuela Hongwanji will host its temple open house with Rev. Masanari Yamagishi. He will explain Shin Buddhism rituals and chanting to visitors. Guests are invited to sign the guest book. Kamuela Hongwanji will offer a concession stand with Asian foods such as nishime bento, chichi mochi, Okinawan andagi and more. Plus, the temple's social hall will be hosting several cooking demonstrations by guest chefs from island restaurants, along with fruit/vegetable carving demonstrations and more activities.



Waimea Lions Club

The motto of the Lions Club is "We Serve" and the men and women of the Waimea Lions have been honoring that ideal since 1955. Caring for the 75-some cherry trees at the county's Church Row Park is the club's largest service project according to Lions Club President James McDonough. In fact, the non-profit was involved with the planting of the park's first trees in 1972 as a community beautification project. During the festival, the Waimea Lions offers a large photo display of past festivals at Church Row Park and serves as the official Lost and Found station.

The Waimea Lions is also involved with the local Blood Bank Canteen, and when the Boy Scout Makahiki is held locally the Lions provide a volunteer snack shop with all proceeds going to the local BSA district. In addition, the club is involved with vision screening in schools, collecting used eyeglasses and participating in the annual Project Vision Van campaign to offer free adult vision screening. Most recently, the club is involved in hearing screening for school kids.

While many of the organization's original members have lost their vim and vigor for active service, the Waimea Lions boasts newly inducted members and welcomes additional members interested in community service. For info, contact McDonough at jimbo5441@aol.com and follow WaimeaLionsClubDistrict50 on facebook.





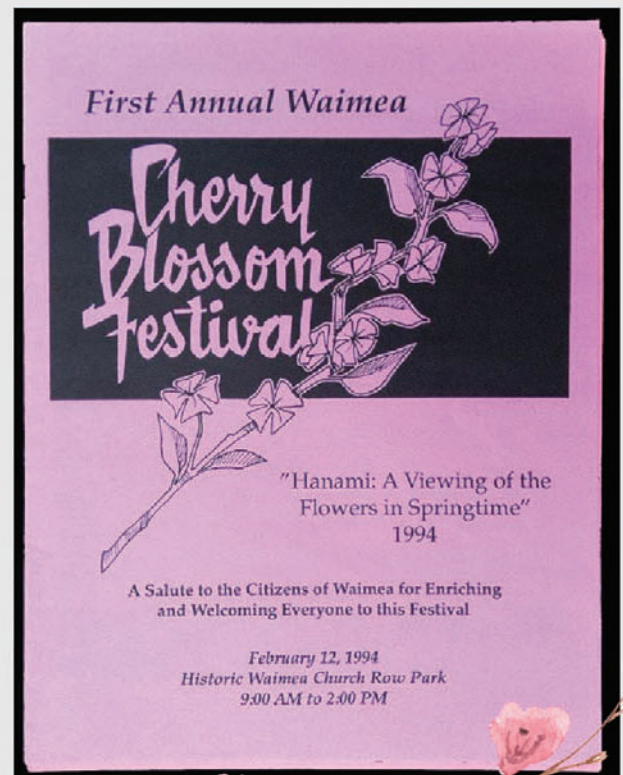
Thelma Parker Memorial Library

Join the 2023 Cherry Blossom Festival Tiny Art Show at Thelma Parker Memorial Public Library! Meet local artists and create your own tiny masterpiece, which will be displayed in the library through the end of February. All materials are provided.

Thelma Parker Memorial Library first opened its doors in Waimea in 1951 on land that was donated to the County of Hawai'i by the world-famous Parker Ranch and its owner, Richard Smart. Smart named the library after his mother. In 1978, the State of Hawai'i opened a new and larger Thelma Parker Memorial Public and School Library (TPMPSL) near its original location and the library continues to serve patrons--residents and visitors--from a wide geographic area. TPMPSL has the longest name of all 51 libraries in the Hawai'i State Public Library System, is the sole state library without a location name, and is the only library in the state of Hawai'i selected in 2017 to be part of the NASA@My Library initiative to promote STEM learning in the community. E komo mai!

Fair Flashback

A peek at the very first Souvenir Program



Waimea's Historic Corner

Waimea's Historic Corner—at the crossroads of Hwys. 19 and 190 and on the corner of Mamalahoa Hwy. and Lindsey Rd.—will have a number of activities during this year's festival. Almost 100 years ago, the Historic Corner served as the civic center of Waimea. It's hard to imagine the small buildings on the Historic Corner housed the tax assessor's office, the courthouse, the library, the gym and the firehouse. **The Waimea Senior Club** (Lily Yoshimatsu Senior Center) currently uses the former district courthouse and the fire chief's residence has been converted to the site for the **Hawaii County Elderly Activities Nutrition Program**.

The **Waimea Preservation Association (WPA)** is a local nonprofit focused on "Heritage, Community, and Prosperity." WPA acts as a community resource center and is located in the tiny, former territorial Tax Office Building. Current projects include care of historic Minuke 'Ole Park behind Parker Ranch Center, support for Waimea Chess Club and headquarters for the Friendly Fridge food distribution serving the needy. WPA also collaborates with other organizations, such as Rotary Club of North Hawai'i, with its Peace Pole project and insurance coverage for community events like Waimea's Christmas Twilight Parade. Join WPA during the Cherry Blossom Festival for an open house and a chess fair on the big 20-foot-square chess board at the corner.



Since the 1980s, the **Waimea Arts Council (WAC)** occupies the former bunkhouse for the firemen and the garage that housed the fire truck. North Hawai'i's oldest arts organization was founded in 1974 to stimulate and encourage the growth of arts. Through its various programs and events, the council works to bring people together and foster a sense of community through the arts. WAC is one of the founding groups that started the Cherry Blossom Festival 30 years ago.

The Waimea Arts Council also operates the Firehouse Gallery, which serves as a venue for local artists to display and sell their work. The artists donate a percentage of their sales to support community arts programs. The Gallery is sponsoring the "30th Annual Cherry Blossom Art Exhibition" during the entire months of February and March. Artists will have originals and prints available for sale, including the 2023 festival poster. The Gallery is open 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday thru Sunday and "whenever the flags are flying!" Learn more at www.WaimeaArtsCouncil.org.



2023 Official Festival Art

“Mejiro and Cherry Blossoms,” a pastel by Laurel Oglesby, is the official art for the 2023 Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival. The painting was selected from a field of 13 entries by the festival’s community planning committee.

The winning art appears on both the cover of the festival’s souvenir booklet and 2023 poster. Purchase the poster for \$10 at Waimea’s Firehouse Gallery and the free souvenir booklet is available during the February 4th festival. The original pastel is also for sale and on display during February and March at the gallery as part of the Waimea Arts Council’s “30th Annual Cherry Blossom Art Exhibition.”

“I have always been inspired and energized by the beauty of nature with a fondness for animals, birds and flowers,” shares Oglesby. “When considering a subject for the Cherry Blossom Festival, my mind went to the Mejiro, or Warbling White Eye, a bird often seen flitting around the brightly colored blossoms of the cherry tree. I chose soft pastel as my medium for its exceptional color vibrancy. The Mejiro appears in its fluffier form, often seen after a quick dip in a birdbath or when the wind is blowing.”



Oglesby studied art, interior design and merchandising at The University of North Texas and moved to Kailua-Kona in 2013 after a varied career in retail merchandising, web design and flower farming in Oregon. In 2021, Oglesby started her “Birds of the Big Island” series featuring watercolor and charcoal depictions of the birds she encounters during Big Island hikes.

In 2022, Oglesby partnered with her photographer husband to form Oglesby Art as a way to combine their artistic pursuits. Together, they sell their work through various Big Island stores and galleries, as well as their website, <https://oglesbyart.com/>. Her original pieces can be seen at the Firehouse Gallery.

Limited Edition Only \$10

Official Collector's Poster

The 11 x 17" Poster is only available at the Firehouse Gallery. Laurel will be available to talk story and sign this year's collector posters on Festival day.



Original Pastel, "Mejiro and Cherry Blossoms" by Laurel Oglesby

Official Commemorative poster for the 2023 Waimea Heritage Festival, Kamuela, Hawai'i
Produced by and available through the Waimea Arts Council. www.waimeeartsCouncil.org

Facebook: Firehouse Gallery and Waimea Arts Council 808-887-1052 www.WaimeaArtsCouncil.org



Mahalo!

The Waimea Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival is produced by the Hawai'i County Parks and Recreation's Culture and Education Division. At the helm is event coordinator Morty Carter Jr. Presented at numerous venues throughout Waimea, the free festival is a community-wide effort staged by a dedicated team of organizations, individuals and businesses. Mahalo to those who pitched in to produce the 2023 festival!

- Annu Shionoya—Classic Japanese Music & Dance
 - CJ's Promotions
 - Fern Gavelek Communications
- Hawai'i County Fire & Police Departments
- Hawai'i County Parks & Recreation Department
 - Historic Spencer House
 - IK Dealer Group-Kamaaina Motors
 - Islandwide Canopy Tents
 - KTA Super Stores
- Ka Hui Kapa Apana O Waimea –Quilt Display
 - Kamuela Farmers Market
 - Kamuela Hongwanji Mission
 - Kathy Sprinkle - WAC President
- Kohala Mountain Express—Train Rides
- Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple—Mochi Pounding
 - Hawaii Lion Dance Association
- Majestic Culture and the Arts Assoc.—Lion Dancers
- Parker Ranch Center (M&J Wilkow Properties, LLC)
 - Roberts Hawaii-Free Shuttles
 - Thelma Parker Memorial Library
- Urasenke Hilo Association—Tea Ceremony
- Waimea Arts Council—Firehouse Gallery
 - Waimea Bon-yu Kai Bonsai Club
 - Waimea Lions Club
 - W. M. Keck Observatory

Back Cover Photo by Barbara Schaefer

Copies of this photo and others will be available for purchase at the Firehouse Gallery