



## ***Summer in mauka Pa'auilo and Kalōpā***

*What makes our mauka summers so wonderful?*

Ruth Bennett  
VP PMKCA

There are many reasons why those of us who live in mauka Pa'auilo and Kalōpā love being here. Whether our families have lived on these slopes of Mauna Kea for generations, or we arrived just a few years ago, we all sense how fortunate we are. Without slighting any other community along the Hāmākua Coast, there is something special about this elevation, this microclimate, this mix of cultures, occupations and pursuits, and contented retirement.

The summer months seem to bring out the best in our landscape and in all of us. The summer days are longer and typically drier than other months of the year. The Hilo-side rain clouds seem to get hung up on the ridge that separates Pa'auilo from O'okala giving us afternoon rainbows instead of rain. The mists that are drawn up the Waipio valley into Ahualoa and Waimea evaporate before reaching Kalōpā mauka. Sure, the clouds may move in on some afternoons, but that is pleasant relief when working outside. Our nights are cool and quiet (well... coquis..) and the skies are thick with bright stars.

Yes, there are summertime risks – hurricanes and strong storms can brush our island from almost any direction, and wildfires are a threat during periods of drought – but a reasonable amount of vigilance and preparation will help us stay safe.

School is out and we hear children playing in backyards and open spaces. We don't hear as many voices as in past years, since many young families have moved away, and it seems that children don't play outside as much as they used to. It's unusual to see children playing along our roadsides, but there is even more reason to *drive carefully on our narrow winding roads*.

Our gardens flourish during the summer. If we are inclined towards growing our own food, or decorating our yards with tropical plants, we'd better get busy! Weeding, pruning, whacking and mowing become a battle against nature's rule: *"GROW, if you can!"* Trees that bloom

during the summer – like the purple-flowering jacaranda and yellow-flowering silk oak – can stop us in our tracks, even when they are also not native to our island. Our pastures always are drifting towards chaos, and ranchers fight against invasive plants and destructive pests. *It's important for us all to stay vigilant for invasive species, especially in summer.*

Summer is also a time for youngsters of the animal variety. Birds are nesting everywhere, and our higher elevations are overrun with worried turkey hens and their chicks, blithely unaware of how dangerous life can be. The 'io hawks are feeding their families as well. There are lambs, calves, foals, and piglets everywhere, along with their patient, wary moms.

It's also a time for human projects to get underway so that they are completed before what passes for winter in the tropics. The county agencies that maintain our roads and water lines or deal with our waste and recycling are examining their priority lists and their funding to see what can be shored up or improved – and there are always too many projects and too little funding.

We residents are doing the same, evaluating our own project lists and limited funding. With increased concern about the risk of wildfire in our communities, efforts to make our homes more fire resistant and our families safer have moved up on our priority lists.

Our association, PMKCA, has its own priority list of activities which we hope will make a positive difference for our communities and residents this summer. To get an idea of what our summer activities might be, join us at our annual summer picnic!

***PMKCA Summer Potluck Membership Meeting***  
**Saturday, 20 July 2024, 11am to 3pm**  
**Pa'auilo Hongwanji, 43-1477 Hauola Rd. (the old Main Rd.)**

We are holding our summer potluck membership meeting on a SPECIAL DATE, and at a SPECIAL LOCATION this year. All residents in the mauka Pa'auilo and Kālōpa communities are invited. Bring a dish to share and stay to find out what we do – *and what we're planning to do*. Our potluck lunch is legendary, guest speakers are informative, and our bingo game is loaded with donated prizes.

Please excuse us if we are so partial to our mauka Pa'auilo and Kalōpā communities. Most of us at our elevation are not likely to see a mango or papaya ripen in our gardens, and we'll have to drive a long way downhill to get to shopping. Still, we love our views, our air, the wild coffee in the gulches, the joyful antics of young calves and lambs. All these things make "living mauka" so wonderful.