



Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association

Photo courtesy of Karl Backus

Monthly News & Updates

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August 2020 Newsletter



Pa'auilo Feed Store

A Local Hub for the Farm and Ranch Folk

By Ruth Bennett, PMKCA Vice President

I'm a newcomer to Hawai'i - that's an inescapable fact. But over my prior years in California, I've spent more years living a farm and ranch life than any other. When I came to Hawai'i ten years ago and purchased 6 acres and a house in Pa'auilo Mauka, it seemed that I was falling right back into a familiar groove, except that I was considerably older – and Hawai'i was considerably greener!

One of the first connections I made as I settled in was to the feed store in Pa'auilo on the old road just above the highway. The store, with its bold "Hay & Cubes" signs and venerable old saddles, has for years been providing my animals with feed and me with advice, stories and friendships.

Curiously (and long before I knew I would be living here), I worked for decades in California with a fellow, Wil Kimura, who grew up in Pa'auilo, riding and hunting in the pastures and forests above the town! Not long ago, as he and his 'ohana were preparing the Kimura home for sale, Wil gave me this photo, taken in 1968, of old Pa'auilo town as he and his family remembered it.



Pa'auilo Town in 1968, from the corner of Pohakea Rd and Hauola Rd.

In the old days of Pa'auilo, a grocery store occupied the building at the corner of Hauola Rd. and Pohakea Rd. In the 1960s, Pa'auilo town was sidelined by the new highway and Honoka'a became the center for local commerce. The building on the corner, owned then and now by Roy Miyasaki and his family, was unoccupied for some years until Leslie Correia rented the building in the 1990s and opened his feed store, "Alfalfa Hay & Cubes." I remember talking story with Leslie, whose sharp but friendly wit constantly chided me about my tenuous toehold in an old community.

In 2014, Nancy Jones bought the business from Leslie and continued the feed store under several managers over the next few years. I enjoyed conversations with Bill Ferreira who ran the feed store, and later with Jocelyn and Wayne who continued the store's mission of providing for local agriculture.

In August, 2017, Manny Souza and his family rented the building and bought the business from Nancy, renaming it to the "Pa'auilo Feed Store." Manny had retired from the Hawai'i Air National Guard after 30 years of service and had just moved into his Kalopa home, but found himself with enough ambition and energy to tackle a new phase in his life. He said to me, laughing, "My friends told me to take up the guitar – because I'd be sitting around a lot with time on my hands, waiting for someone to show up!"

Manny's creative ideas, deep interest in ranching and commitment to the needs of his customers have propelled the feed store into a vibrant business. In addition to sales of all kinds of feed and animal health items, the feed store stocks local products, such as honey, soil amendments and the beautiful and

useful leatherwork of Bill Dias.



The team, from left, Cole, Jodi, Manny and son Kaleb

Manny was unloading a Matson container when I arrived on a sunny morning a few days ago to talk story with him. His young son, Kaleb was the “spotter,” making sure that Manny set down each forklift-load in just the right place. Manny told me that he is currently receiving at least six 40-foot containers every month from the mainland. Predicting his customers’ needs, putting together his orders (at least three weeks in advance of delivery), and then finding the space in the old storefront to store it all, add to the complexities of running his business. He told me, “Sometimes the other feed stores run out of something, so their customers come here and I find myself selling out before my next container comes in!”

Manny and his primary assistant, Jodi DeLuz, estimate the number of their customers in the hundreds. As I sat with Manny for an hour that morning, I greeted at least 15 customers who had come by for feed and other products. One fellow had driven over from Waimea when his local feed store couldn’t provide the goat feed he needed. Manny looked over at me. “See what I mean?”

The Pa’auilo Feed Store is like so many businesses on our island: constrained by the complexities of planning and scheduling deliveries of products from the mainland. The disruptions caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and the fragility of supply chains have given Manny some additional headaches. When Young Bros. recently lost 21 containers that

fell overboard from one of its barges, many of Manny's customers asked whether one of his deliveries was lying on the sea floor somewhere. He has assured them that his containers are delivered by Matson which ships to the port at Kawaihae. He also has assurances from Matson of its commitment to maintain its shipping schedules to all of its ports.

I was at the feed store a few months ago to buy a single bale of hay for my goats, and there were none to be had. Jodi explained that since tourism had almost completely ended on the island, one of their largest customers for feed, the horseback riding in Waipio Valley, was no longer ordering large quantities of hay and cubes. As a result, Manny's planning for a mixed container of hay and alfalfa cubes had become much more complicated. They wouldn't have bales of wild grass hay for several more weeks. (Luckily, I can cut guava and fire tree for my goats!)

There is no place I know quite like a feed store! No wonder folks tend to take a seat on one of the red chairs under the canopy and talk story. The smell of grain and fresh hay, the casual "jeans and boots" attire and attitude, and the enduring interest everyone has in their animals, fields and country livelihoods make for conversation and friendship. I have aspired to be a part of this kind of community all my life, and when I am greeted by name, and my wave is returned as I drive by – well, that's aloha to me.

You can follow the Pa'auilo Feed Store, Manny and the Souza family on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/KealohaSouza>. You'll find Manny, Jodi and Cole at the feed store on weekdays from 10am to 5pm, Fridays to 6pm.



Board and Officer Positions Available

PMKCA is looking for more board members! Jami Sales, our Water, Health and Utilities committee chair, has resigned from the board after many years of service. Jami has been very active in support of our community in many ways and we will miss her contributions to PMKCA board activities. Thank you, Jami, for all your hard work.

We will also soon be needing a new PMKCA officer. Diana Nui is our Secretary and has informed us that she will be resigning at the end of the year. Diana will continue working on PMKCA projects at Kalopa Park, but we will miss her participation and record keeping with the board.

If anyone is interested in volunteering for either position, please contact any of our Board members by phone or email. Contact information can be found at PMKCA.org.

Next Meetings

Here's a lineup of the next PMKCA meeting:

Thu, Oct 8, 2020 7PM PMKCA Board of Directors Meeting
(Possibly by Zoom Videoconference)

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