



Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association

Photo courtesy of Karl Backus

Monthly News & Updates

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February 2023 Newsletter



*Linda Gallano leading PMKCA's
Kalopa Park team in 2021*

Talk Story with Linda Gallano

*A longtime resident
and PMKCA
member shares her
life adventures.*

Joe Clarkson
PMKCA President
Photos from Linda's collection

Every so often a board member of PMKCA will sit down with a neighbor to talk story about their life. Everyone has interesting and unusual tales to tell from their past, but some are especially intriguing.

I recently had a chance to talk to long-time neighbor and PMKCA board member Linda Gallano about her life, with a particular emphasis on her extensive sporting activities.

Linda was 20 years old in 1960 when she came to visit her father in Hawai'i and never left. Her father had often stayed in Hawai'i as part of his work in the merchant marine and had often extolled its beauty and culture to Linda. He was living in a house near Kailua Bay, O'ahu, when he finally convinced her to come visit and check it out.

Her father's next-door neighbor was Solomon (Solo) Mahoe, who was somewhat older than Linda, but who was to be an important part of her life for at least three reasons. The first was that she soon became Solo's wife. The second was that Solo was a fisherman who spent almost every day on the water of Kailua Bay, an experience that was to shape Linda's interests significantly, and the third reason was that Solo was a Native Hawaiian whose first language was Hawaiian, which meant Linda was to become very fluent in the Hawaiian language.

Linda told me, "Solo could speak English, of course, but he preferred to use Hawaiian and I spent the next ten years of my life in an intensive Hawaiian immersion program. All the time I was married to Solo, I took night classes and I eventually went on to get a PhD in Hawaiian, which was pretty unusual for a haole, at the time".

Linda joined Solo to fish the waters of Kailua Bay, mostly near Flat Island (Popoia Island). They set nets and dove for lobster and then drove a rickety old truck over the Pali every day to sell their catch at the fish market in Honolulu.

Linda loved the water and was curious about outrigger canoe paddling, which she saw every day. But, Linda said, "Solo discouraged me from getting involved with paddling because he knew that I would want to pursue it and it takes a lot of time. I finally did join the Kailua Canoe Club and we practiced every day and raced on weekends. I've paddled ever since then, right up until the pandemic shut everything down."

Canoe racing became a big part of her life and she participated in races all over the state, including the grueling Moloka'i Hoe. She has also raced with the Ka Mo'i Canoe Club in Waianae and the Kawaihae Canoe Club.

After ten years of marriage, she separated from Solo and moved to a farm in the back of Waianae Valley. She didn't do any farming, but had to look after the farm in return for rent-free housing. She got a couple of beagles as pets and soon found herself in the company of 23 beagles. When I raised my eyebrows at the number of beagles, she just said, "Well, it's not hard to have that many dogs. A female can have ten puppies in a litter and pretty soon you can be looking after a lot of dogs. I even had more than thirty at one point".



Linda with her hunting dogs.

Linda exercised her dogs by taking them up into the Waianae Mountains on trails extending for miles. She sometimes encountered pig hunters during her walks. She noted that, "All the hunters seemed to be Portuguese for some reason. Pretty soon I was joining them with a few of my dogs on their hunts." Ever since that time, Linda has been active in the sport of pig hunting, retiring from it only recently as both she, her spouse Eddie, and their dogs have all gotten a bit old for tramping through the woods and gulches. I asked her about hunting competitions. "We never participated in hunting tournaments", she said, "though I've been to lots of tournament weigh-ins and seen some pretty big pigs carried in by pretty big men. We've always just hunted for ourselves and our dogs".

While living in Waianae, Linda got a job as a teacher of Hawaiian Studies, teaching mostly ninth graders at Waianae High School. It was a little rough at first, Linda told me, "The first day, there was this one girl who refused to take her seat in class during roll call. 'Why the hell do we have a haole woman here teaching Hawaiian, she said.' I told her that if she didn't like me being here, she should buckle down, do her homework, and she could get qualified to take my place and boot me out of here." Linda told me that the girl did just that. She became a friend of Linda and eventually went on to get teaching credentials and later replaced Linda as the teacher of Hawaiian Studies.



Linda Gallano on Smoke - endurance riding in the Sierras of California.

Linda found two more sports to enjoy during her time living in Waianae: horse racing and triathlons. Linda had always been around horses as a young girl because her mother had them, so she knew how to ride. She got a horse while living at the farm and eventually started participating in trail races (she never did track racing).

Levi Strauss & Co was a big sponsor of riding events and Linda started participating in "Levi's Ride & Tie" races, mostly on O'ahu but sometimes on other islands. A ride-and-tie race is a timed race where the horse is ridden on trails for several miles and then tied up to rest while the rider runs a humans-only course. The winner has the shortest combined time.

Linda did well enough in these races that a close friend suggested she might like to try endurance racing. By this time she was married to Eddie Gallano and they both headed over to California to see about trying long distance endurance horse racing.

Linda told me, "We couldn't afford to ship horses over to the mainland, but my friend knew Viril Norton, who had good endurance horses on his ranch near Fresno. We met Viril and he suggested that one of his horses, ol' Smoke, might be a good choice for my first race. Well Smoke didn't look very spirited. In fact, he looked downright lethargic, but when my foot put a little weight on the stirrup he perked right up and I knew that he would do OK. Viril told me that the secret to endurance racing was to keep the horse calm and collected, especially in the beginning stages of the race, so that they didn't waste energy and had enough for the long haul. This was hard to do because these races had a mass start, with dozens of excited horses all trying to get to the lead right from the beginning."

An endurance horse race can cover anywhere from 50 to 100 miles, all over rough trails in the high Sierras. Linda noted that riders spent a lot of time on the ground walking, or pulling, their horse up steep sections to help them save energy. Sometimes the horse returns the favor, with the rider grabbing the horse's tail to be pulled up the trail.

“Every rider has a ‘pit crew’ that tends to the horse during rest and inspection stops. They cool the horse down and give it plenty to drink. Every race has veterinarians from different states to look at the horses, so no vet can play favorites with their state's riders. The horses are well cared for, but an endurance race is exhausting for horse and rider alike.”



Linda's prize belt buckle.

As if that's not enough, Linda also started participating in triathlons while living in Waianae. She said, “I was only so-so at the swimming and the running, but still good enough. My favorite part was the bike and I was good on the bike. I did a lot of shorter triathlons but did enter and finish the Ironman after it moved to Kona and Eddie and I moved to the Big Island. That was a hard race to finish. I remember getting discouraged during the run, but then I saw a man up ahead of me when we were about at the airport. I decided I would catch that guy and slowly caught up to him. We ran together for several miles, which made the race go easier, a little, and then I passed him just as we entered the town. It had been after dark for a long time by the time I finished, so I was nowhere near the leaders, but it still felt good.”

Linda then concentrated on bicycle races, winning several in her age group. She won the chance to go to a national race in Indiana. The most notable thing about that trip, she said, was the negative reaction of the people there to her being in the company of her husband Eddie, a ‘local’ man with dark skin. “I never expected that. You want rednecks? You'll find plenty in Indiana.”

Linda and Eddie moved to the Big Island in 1990 and bought a house on Ho'okahua Road in mauka Pa'auilo. She got a job as a teacher at Honoka'a High, retiring in 2006. Linda continued her sporting life here, concentrating on pig hunting, canoe paddling and riding. She did a few endurance races around the island, but training the horses for racing is very

time consuming. "You have to do lots of interval training, with spurts of hard work to get their heart rate up, which you have to monitor by feeling their carotid artery. But eventually my horses got too old for racing and I'd just ride them around the neighborhood."

She and Eddie don't ride anymore, and at 82, Linda sometimes needs a cane for stability. She still has a horse, a retired bucking horse, a donkey and several "retired" hunting dogs. She and Eddie still paddle, but now only in their own two-person outrigger canoe. She told me she might just get back into canoe racing, but only if they have an over-80 age group.

PMKCA Meetings & Events

Mahalo to everyone who attended our **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING** on Tuesday, January 31. It was great to be back together again in person, after cancelling our meetings in 2022 and 2023. We met and welcomed some folks attending for the first time. Our current board was reelected, and we talked over some of the community's current challenges. It's beginning to feel like our communities are returning to something resembling our "old normal" - or even better!

Join PMKCA or Renew Your Membership for 2023!!

PMKCA dues are only \$20 per calendar year and help support so many great community activities. Click the "Visit our website" link below and choose Membership/Dues.

We offer a PayPal option, or mail a check made out to PMKCA, PO Box 408, Pa'auilo, HI 96776.

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