



## Metro Christmas Party a Great Success



Sally Wong and Jimmy Ouchi fight it out with jan-ken-po, while Lillian and Ken Kadomoto look on.

**T**he first joint Christmas Party of Metro District clubs took place on Friday, December 5, at the Kalihi YMCA building. A crowd of 50 people enjoyed the fun and fellowship, with good food from the Gyotaku restaurant, games, and singing. Those present enjoyed the evening, meeting members of other clubs, many for the first time. Attendees were assigned tables so that they could be with members of differ-

ent clubs. For those who have not attended Regional Conventions in the past, this was a great opportunity for meeting other Y's Men and Women in the district.

Party coordinator Bob Kuwahara, member of the West Oahu club, did an excellent job, and was helped by wife Jeanette, who baked the cakes. Kathy Ahlo, president of the Nuuanu club, assisted with the games, while Jimmy

*(continued on page 2)*

## Kalihi YMCA News by Tony Pfaltzgraff

**A**s the year winds down, I'm mindful of the incredible support that each of you have given to the Kalihi YMCA throughout 2008. Starting with the Annual Support Campaign, on to the Golf Tournament and the chicken sale, your work has helped make each endeavor more fun and more successful. In addition, all of the work projects that club members took on this year

really demonstrates what a dynamic group we are!

I would like to express my deep appreciation for your kindness and willingness to be part of the Kalihi YMCA family. The Kalihi YMCA has long been an important part of the community, and you help to ensure that this will continue in the years ahead. Merry Christmas to each of you! ▼

## HAPPENINGS

### December

- 5 Metro District Christmas Party** Kalihi YMCA, 6 p.m.
- 8 Membership Meeting** Kalihi YMCA, 6:00 p.m. Potluck dinner, gift wrapping, singing practice
- 14 Caroling** Liliha Health Center, 9:30 a.m. Maluhia, 11: 00 a.m.
- 10 Work Project** Dick & Bev Wong's neighbor 9:00 a.m.
- 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

### January

- 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!**
- 12 Membership Meeting** Kalihi YMCA, 6:30 p.m. Hosts: Eddie Miwa, Bev and Dick Wong, Tom Kusatsu

## CELEBRATIONS

### Happy Birthday!

#### December

- 3** Joann Takeshita
- 12** Phil Chun

## Laugh a Little, Live Longer

### KIDS IN CHURCH

**A little boy** was overheard praying: "Lord, If you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am."

**One particular four-year-old** prayed, "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."

*(continued on page 2)*



**D**an Takamatsu still enjoys his engineering work, so he still works part time at his old office with the State. He worked about 3 hours at the work project and then left for an office Christmas party...Much thanks to **Ethel Takamatsu**, who volunteered to be the team captain of the 2009 ASC Y's Men and Women's team. **Sunny** will be helping in the Camp Erdman campaign for the last time, upon his doctor's advice...**Wayne and Marjorie Kim** returned from Las Vegas without winning the million dollar jackpot... Work projects always include goodies to eat when **Ethel Takamatsu** and **Bev Wong** come along...The club approved

a donation of \$100 to the special **International Wipe Out Malaria** project at the last meeting and also increased the honorarium for **Randall Chun** for his help with the club bulletin...**Wayne Kim** breathed a sigh of relief when his 3-month term as club president came to an end at the last meeting. **Sally Wong** will assume the presidency in January and **Bev Wong** will take over during the final quarter beginning in April...The club will donate \$100 to the **YMCA of Honolulu Teen Development Fund**, with City Mill making a matching donation. The club will also donate to the **Roll Back Malaria Program**. ▼

**A Sunday School teacher** asked her children as they were on the way to church service, "and why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

**A mother** was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin 5, and Ryan 3. The boys began arguing over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here He would say, "Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait." Kevin turned to Ryan and said, "You be Jesus."

**A wife** invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to her six year old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say", the girl replied. "Just say what you hear mommy say," the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?" ▼

## Metro Christmas Party *(continued from page 1)*



**Tony Pfaltzgraff and Maile Kanemaru enjoy the tag along game.**

Kanehira of the Windward club led a fun singing session. Rick Lau, Regional Director, and member of the Central club, gave the invocation.

Much thanks to Tony Pfaltzgraff for providing the facility and arranging for the additional parking at the Library next door. Mahalo to Kalihi club members for helping to set up the room. Phil Chun donated the poinsettias for the table decorations and prizes.

Kalihi club members and guests participating in the event were Tony Pfaltzgraff and wife Charlene Young, Dan and Ethel Takamatsu, Wayne and Marjorie Kim, Dan and Ethel Takamatsu, Willie and Sally Wong, Bev and Dick Wong, Phil, Mei-Chih and Randall Chun and Eddie Miwa. ▼

### Regional/Metro District News

Assignments for the Regional Convention in May, 2009 were made at the recent Mid Year Regional Cabinet meeting. The Kalihi club will be in charge of the Convention Booklet, Nuuanu, program; Kaimuki, Program; and Windward, Hospitality. Delegates will stay at the Ilima Hotel, and business meetings will be held there. Banquets will be held at the Mirimar Hotel.

### International News

Y's Men International has become a partner with The World Health Organization and others in a program called Roll Back Malaria, which hopes to reduce the burden of malaria by half by 2010. The Y's Men's goal is to raise \$150,000 to purchase 20,000 mosquito nets costing \$7.50 each. The Y's Men will assist in the implementation of this program in one of the countries in Africa.

## Members and Family Go Caroling



**Eddie Miwa leads the enthusiastic singing with Wayne Kim, Gary Ogata, Sunny Young and Bev Wong.**

**C**lub members gave enthusiastic performances at the Liliha Health Center and the Maluhia Senior Home this year. The group was well received by the 45 patients at Liliha and 10 residents at Maluhia. Several of the patients at Liliha were quite enthusiastic and sang along with the Y's Men and Women, while others were very appreciative even though they were not able to express it in song. One could see it in their eyes and feel it when holding their hands. While their were only 10 residents at Maluhia, one of the ladies there had expected children in our group like we had two years ago and brought candies for them. Another resident brought vanda leis for leaders of our group, so Phil Chun and Jeff Lau, our guitarist accepted them on behalf of the group. The residents also brought pastries for us to enjoy after the program.

Much thanks to everyone who came out to help make the Christmas Season a little happier and meaningful for residents: Mei-Chih Chun, Eddie and Liane Miwa, Sunny Young, Wayne and Marjorie Kim, Greg Lee, Gary Ogata, Sally and Will Wong and

granddaughter Christian, Dan and Ethel Takamatsu, Tony Pfaltzgraff and Charlene Young, Bev and Dick Wong. Also joining the Y's men and women were: Greg's sister-in-law, Carla, and his nephew, Chad; Ray Takeshita's sister, Lynn and her children, Zack, and Wesley.

Much thanks again to Eddie Miwa, who coordinated the event, and for securing the Kleenex for gifts and for Jeff Lau for helping with his guitar. ▼



**Residents at Maluhia enjoy singing carols with Y's Men & Women.**

## Work Project Completed

**I**t was a beautiful overcast day, the day before the huge rain storm that hit the islands. And it was fortunate that this was the day the Kalihi Y's Men and Women went to the home of Dick and Bev Wong's neighbor, Naomi, to clean her backyard.

The work crew put in 5 hours of work and earned \$400 for the club and a free lunch.

The hardest project was the digging up of a large "money" tree wedged between the fence and a shed, with a working space of about 2 ft square. Dan Takamatsu and Dick Wong worked digging and cutting with a small chain saw. Dan had to leave at noon, so Phil Chun stepped in to help. After another half hour the huge trunk was finally out.

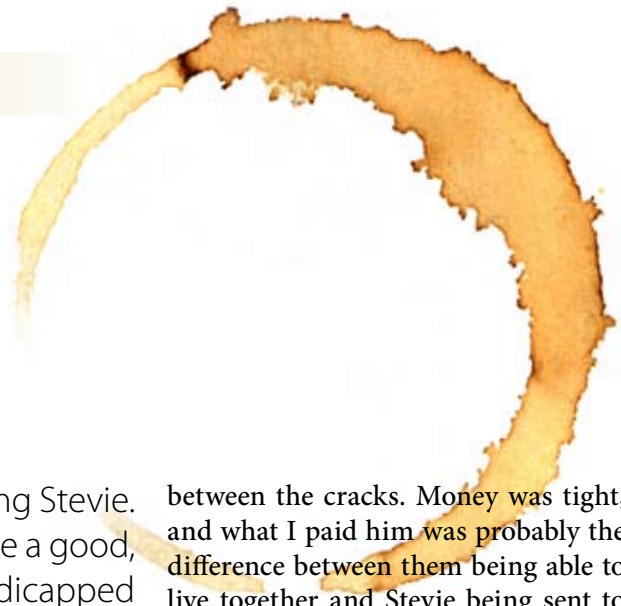
This took about 3 and a half hours of labor. Phil cut the trunk and roots off, leaving a ball which was still too heavy for refuse men to carry, so Wayne borrowed Naomi's large chain saw to cut the ball in half.

Meanwhile Wayne Kim had been laboriously trying to remove part of a 3 inch thick vine that was wedged in the fence. Because he couldn't use a saw, he had to drill a series of holes in the vine in order to remove it. Wayne also had to dig up another smaller "money" tree. Willie Wong spent much time trying to dig several banyan tree roots that were imbedded in the stone wall. Bev and Ethel did much of the weeding and clearing of weeds under the trees and bushes. Mei-Chih Chun came to give moral support.

After the completion of the work around 2:00 p.m., the tired crew went to eat delicious ramen at the nearby shopping center. ▼



# The Folded Napkin



**try not to be biased**, but I had my doubts about hiring Stevie. His placement counselor assured me that he would be a good, reliable busboy. But I had never had a mentally handicapped employee and wasn't sure I wanted one. I wasn't sure how my customers would react to Stevie. He was short, a little dumpy, with the smooth facial features and thick-tongued speech of Downs Syndrome. I wasn't worried about most of my trucker customers because truckers don't generally care who buses tables as long as the meatloaf platter is good and the pies are homemade.

The four-wheeler drivers were the ones who concerned me; the mouthy college kids traveling to school; the yuppie snobs who secretly polish their silverware with their napkins for fear of catching some dreaded 'truck stop germ;' the white-shirted business men on expense accounts who think every truckstop waitress wants to be flirted with. I knew those people would be uncomfortable around Stevie so I closely watched him for the first few weeks. I shouldn't have worried. After the first week, Stevie had my staff wrapped around his stubby little finger, and within a month my truck regulars had adopted him as their official truck stop mascot. After that, I really didn't care what the rest of the customers thought of him.

He was like any 21-year-old in blue jeans and Nikes, quick to laugh and eager to please, but fierce in his attention to his duties. Every salt and pepper shaker was exactly in place, not a bread crumb or coffee spill was visible when Stevie got done with the table. Our only problem was persuading him to wait to clean a table until after the customers were finished. He would hover in the

...he would scurry to the empty table and carefully bus dishes and glasses onto his cart and meticulously wipe the table up with a practiced flourish of his rag.

background, shifting his weight from one foot to the other, scanning the dining room until a table was empty. Then he would scurry to the empty table and carefully bus dishes and glasses onto his cart and meticulously wipe the table up with a practiced flourish of his rag. If he thought a customer was watching, his brow would pucker with added concentration. He took pride in doing his job exactly right, and you had to love how hard he tried to please each and every person he met.

**O**ver time, we learned that he lived with his mother, a widow who was disabled after repeated surgeries for cancer. They lived on their Social Security benefits in public housing two miles from the truck stop. Their social worker, who stopped to check on him every so often, admitted they had fallen

between the cracks. Money was tight, and what I paid him was probably the difference between them being able to live together and Stevie being sent to a group home. That's why the restaurant was a gloomy place that morning last August, the first morning in three years that Stevie missed work.

He was at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester getting a new valve or something put in his heart. His social worker said that people with Downs Syndrome often have heart problems at an early age so this wasn't unexpected, and there was a good chance he would come through the surgery in good shape and be back at work in a few months. A ripple of excitement ran through the staff later that morning when word came that he was out of surgery, in recovery and doing fine.

Frannie, the head waitress, let out a war hoop and did a little dance in the aisle when she heard the good news. Belle Ringer, one of our regular trucker customers, stared at the sight of this 50-year-old grandmother of four doing a victory shimmy beside his table. Frannie blushed, smoothed her apron and shot Belle Ringer a withering look. He grinned. "OK, Frannie, what was that all about?" he asked. "We just got word that Stevie is out of surgery and going to be OK."

"I was wondering where he was. I had a new joke to tell him. What was the surgery about?"

Frannie quickly told Belle Ringer and the other two drivers sitting at his booth about Stevie's surgery, then sighed: "Yeah, I'm glad he is going to be OK," she said. "But I don't know how he and his mom are going to handle



**Michael W. Lacuesta**

July 17, 1953–December 16, 2008

**M**ike was a charter member of the Kalihi Y’s Men’s Club, as it was known back then in 1991, and served as club president some time in 1993–94. After succeeding Ray Takeshita, our inaugural president, who served the first two consecutive years, Mike took the helm as club prexy, an important move for a young club with a lot of

uncertainty still trying to find its own identity. Mike, a natural born leader, provided the continuity in leadership that Ray had laid down in heading the club in the right direction to where it is today, and today the club has never been stronger.

In 1995 Mike and Anna got married and about a year later they had Meagen Nicole, who along with Dana, his first daughter from a previous marriage, were the most important in his

*(continued on page 6)*

The Folded Napkin *(continued from page 4)*

all the bills. From what I hear, they’re barely getting by as it is.’ Belle Ringer nodded thoughtfully, and Frannie hurried off to wait on the rest of her tables. Since I hadn’t had to round up a busboy to replace Stevie and really didn’t want to replace him, the girls were busing their own tables that day until we decided what to do.

After the morning rush, Frannie walked into my office. She had a couple of paper napkins in her hand and funny look on her face. “What’s up?” I asked.

“I didn’t get that table where Belle Ringer and his friends were sitting cleared off after they left, and Pony Pete and Tony Tipper were sitting there when I got back to clean it off,” she said. “This was folded and tucked under a coffee cup.” She handed the napkin to me, and three \$20 bills fell onto my desk when I opened it. On the outside, in big, bold letters, was printed ‘Something For Stevie’. “Pony Pete asked me what that was all about, so I told him about Stevie and his mom and everything, and they ended up giving me this.” She handed me another paper napkin that had ‘Something for Stevie’ scrawled on its outside. Two \$50 bills were tucked within its folds.

Frannie looked at me with wet, shiny eyes, shook her head and said simply, “Truckers”.

**T**hat was three months ago. Today is Thanksgiving, the first day Stevie is supposed to be back to work. His placement worker said he’s been counting the days until the doctor said he could work, and it didn’t matter at all that it was a holiday. He called 10 times in the past week, making sure we knew he was coming, fearful that we had forgotten him or that his job was in jeopardy. I arranged to have his mother bring him to work. I then met them in the parking lot and invited them both to come in and celebrate his day back. Stevie was thinner and paler, but couldn’t stop grinning as he pushed through the doors and headed for the back room where his apron and busing cart were waiting.

“Hold up there, Stevie, not so fast,” I said. I took him and his mother by their arms. “Work can wait for a minute. To celebrate your coming back, breakfast for you and your mother is on me!” I led them toward a large corner booth at the rear of the room. I could feel and hear the rest of the staff following behind as we marched through

# Stevie

the dining room. Glancing over my shoulder, I saw booth after booth of grinning truckers join the procession. We stopped in front of the big table. Its surface was covered with coffee cups, saucers and dinner plates, all sitting slightly crooked on dozens of folded paper napkins.

“First thing you have to do, Stevie, is clean up this mess,” I said, trying to sound stern. Stevie looked at me, and then his mother, then pulled out one of the napkins. It had “Something for Stevie” printed on the outside. As he picked it up, two \$10 bills fell onto the table. Stevie stared at the money, then at all the napkins peeking from beneath the tableware, each with his name printed or scrawled on it. I turned to his mother. “There’s more than \$10,000 in cash and checks on that table, all from truckers and trucking companies that heard about your problems. “Happy Thanksgiving”

Well, it got real noisy about that time, with everybody hollering and shouting, and there were a few tears, as well. But you know what’s funny? While everybody else was busy shaking hands and hugging each other, Stevie, with a big, big smile on his face, was busy clearing all the cups and dishes from the table. Best worker I ever hired. ▼

Something

For

life, and soon there after they moved to Ewa Beach. As geography and life's priorities changed, we began to see less and less of Mike, but his heart was always with us. With the advent of the internet and our newsletter going on-line, Mike kept up with all the happenings of the club and its members. He would ask me about this and that with the club and I'd say, "how do you know about that?" He would say, "I read it in the newsletter!"

In November of last year, Mike was diagnosed with a not-so-common form of cancer called multiple myeloma after experiencing chronic back pains. Because he had missed our previous Christmas party and caroling in 2006, Mike promised to make the 2007 party, but had to cancel at the very last moment because of his fast deteriorating condition, he later called me to apologize for bowing out and that's when he told me of his health situation. Just

previous to that his father, Macario, had began his battle with liver cancer and later a heart valve condition. The elder Mr. Lacuesta passed away this past October at age 83. Despite the pain, Mike was able to stand while delivering the eulogy at his father's funeral. Mike knew there was no cure for his cancer, only remission, and number one on his bucket list was to be around in five years to see daughter Meagen graduate high school; a couple of weeks ago he revised that list to hanging on to be around in March to see the birth of his second grandchild, David (from daughter Dana).

As members of the Kalihi Y's Men's & Women's Club, we saw less of Mike in recent years, yet he had always been a member in good standing. He made sure he mailed in his membership dues in a timely manner, selling his share of chicken sale tickets and submitted his ASC pledges and contributions at

Kalihi Y as recently as this year's 2008 campaign.

Mike we will miss you and your memory will always be a part of us. ▼

—Written by Eddie Miwa

**OBITUARY**

**MICHAEL WAYNE LACUESTA**, 55, of 'Ewa Beach, Honolulu, died Dec. 16, 2008. Born in Honolulu. Pictures Plus production manager. Survived by wife, Anna; daughters, Dayna Townsend, and Meigan; one granddaughter; mother, Margaret; brothers, Roger and David; sisters, Sandra Javar and Joan Lacuesta Domingil. Visitation 9:30 a.m. Jan. 3 at Borthwick Mortuary; service 11:30 a.m. Private inurnment pending. No flowers. Aloha attire.

[Online data: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/20081228/OBITS/812280346/1163/localnewsfront>. Posted Sunday, Dec. 28, 2008]

*More Metro Party Pics!*

Photos by Phil Chun



◀ "Go-to man"—  
Bob Kuwahara

I'm stuck on you! ▶

◀ Jimmy "The Entertainer"  
Kanehira

Lady Luck! ▶

▼ "...an' one mynah bird in one papaya tree!"



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