



ON BOARD WITH OJO

The Fourth Night: A Hanukkah Poem

In Hawaii's winter season, the rains appear
We bid adieu to fair skies; Kislev is here.

Dust off the menorah that was hidden away.
Proudly, it stands out on display.

Light each candle from left to right
Quiet, reaching, glowing bright

Prayers softly uttered,
songs joyfully sung
From the lips of the old and the young

Grated, blended, 'ono fried
Creamy, sour, and sweet on the side

Games and gifts to liven the night
A celebration of Freedom and Light

Gather together in community,
Dedicated to doing Jewish differently.



L to R: Michal Cohen & Steve Klein



Flo Pell



L to R: Melanie Rabirotff, Pat Lafleur Dr. Veronica Abney

Mahalo to our Executive board members/Vice-Presidents Melanie Rabirotff and Dr. Veronica Abney for organizing the OJO's Annual Hanukkah party, "Freedom and Light", on Saturday, December 26th at the Mo'ili'ili Hongwanji.



AT HOME IN OUR COMMUNITY

Paepae o He'eia (He'eia Fishpond)



“A shady spot”: Members of OJO, Jewy Hui and friends take a break from work and listen to our host, Keahi Pi'iohi'a share about the history, architecture, and significance of He'eia Fishpond.



“Weeding out”: Members of OJO and Jewy Hui carefully remove an invasive species called pickle weed.

Aloha e O'ahu
E Keahiakahoe e, aloha
E He'eia e, aloha
Eia mākou nā pulapula o
‘Aberahama
Nā keiki hiwahiwa a Lahela a Leah
Nā mamo o Israela
Ke hea nei mākou iā ‘oe, e kumu e
Mai pa'a ka leo
He 'ole kāhea mai e

An entrance chant as part of
the protocol introducing
ourselves to this place.



Paepae o He'eia cont'd



Keahi Pi'iohi'a (L) speaks with volunteers

On the Windward side of O'ahu, there is a hidden gem tucked away in a Kane'ohe neighborhood that you wouldn't realize existed unless you ventured in from the main road. Loko'i'a o He'eia, is a walled fishpond. Built 600-800 years ago, the 7,000-foot stone wall extends outward from the shoreline, encircling the fishpond which spans an impressive 1.3 miles. Water flows bidirectionally, from the mountain and the ocean creating a "semi-salty" or brackish water environment, ideal for baby fish entering from the sea through one of the seven sluice gates in the wall. The combination of fresh and salt water causes seaweed to bloom. The hungry fry feast on the green plants and are eventually too large to leave. Loko i'a kuapā, walled coastal fishponds are impressive examples of aquaculture, and are particularly unique to Hawaii.

On a sunny Veteran's Day afternoon, members of OJO, Jewy Hui, and their friends donned gloves and began removing invasive mangrove and pickle weed species that have taken over the fishpond, choking out native vegetation and weakening the structural integrity of the wall. This kind of work is physically demanding, the body is forced into different angles and positions in order to hack and stack branches and pull and pile weeds. Some worked quietly alongside others, while others happily chatted, making new friends. It was good, honest work, with visible results.

Deeper parallels to the work may be drawn, like removing the negative thoughts, unhealthy habits, unnecessary items that take up valuable space in our minds, days or homes in order to make room for positive, healthy and important things.

To find meaning in the work, one can see connections to Jewish and Hawaiian culture with concepts such as mālama hōnua, caring for the earth, and tikkun olam, repairing the world.

Whether you felt accomplished and invigorated or exhausted and famished at the end of the morning, it was important to show up not to complete the work, but to make sure that the work wasn't left for someone else.

Judaism teaches us that it is not our responsibility to complete the work, nor are we allowed to desist from it.

We accomplish more together
rather than alone.
An ancient wall rebuilt by hand,
stone by stone.

Water flows freely from
mountain to the sea.
Raising seafood that
nourishes a growing community.

Obligated to start the work
but not to get it done.
Take action now, not apathy
For generations to come.



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Kehillah

Jewishly, a kehillah is a community of individuals who come together for a common goal or purpose. It can be good or bad. Bad, as in and unruly or angry mob, such as in the recently read Torah story about the golden calf, where the Israelites turned away from God and Moses and created a false idol to worship. Or, as in the anti-Semitic Klan mob depicted in the upcoming play Parade, about the wrongful murder conviction and lynching of Leo Frank in 1913 -- a show that we invite to you to join in viewing and discussing together at Maona Velley Theatre on April 6 Or bad as in the pro-Hamas anti-Semitism experienced by Jewish students at UH in the aftermath of the Hamas atrocities of October 7 -- despite Governor Green's attempt to dismiss this.

But, good as in our gathering together to light Shabbat lights and study torah each week, and gathering together in celebration of Jewish holidays and events such as Hanukkah and Passover. Good as in those OJO members, along with Jewy Hui and Hillel members and friends gathered together to provide service to our community at the Hawaiian fishpond at Papae O He'eia and at Keiki O Ka Āina, honoring our Jewish tradition of Tikkum Olam -- to repair the world —all as beautifully shown in this edition of our reborn OJO newsletter.



Good especially in caring for each other in times of joy and celebration and in illness, sorrow and grief and all of the times in between.

CELEBRATIONS - SIMCHAS



Birthdays

January

Bob Snyder
Cathy Levinson
Lynne Rackmil
Melanie Rabirotff
Pat Roth
Steve Buchtal
Steve Flanter
Tracey Messer

February

Fran Margulies
Joyce Oleshansky
Katie Friedman
Patricia Kawa'a
Robert Neymad

March

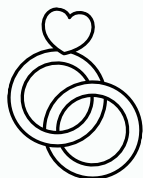
Hank Trapido-
Rosenthal
Jean Rosenfeld
Peter Hoffenburg

Milestone Birthdays

Flo Pell turned 90 in October.
Patricia Kawa'a turned 80 in February.

Anniversaries

Paul Gracie & Keo Sananikone



As was said by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory, "Happiness is the ability to say: I lived for certain values and acted on them. I was part of a family, embracing it and being embraced by it. I was part of a community...I asked what I could contribute".

*Shalom,
George*

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 4/6 Parade @ Mānoa Valley Theatre
- 4/12 Passover Seder @ The Pacific Club
- 5/4 Beach Clean up @ Sherwood, Waimānalo
- 6/1 Champagne Brunch & Annual Meeting

[More events click here...](#)



WORTH MENSCH-NING



L to R: Melanie Rabirot & Lynne Rackmil

Healing Hearts

I made this quilt for Melanie Rabirot sometime back to recognize her for the kind person that she is and to thank her for her kindness to me while I was going thru some anxious times dealing with my eye issue.

Making this quilt was very therapeutic. It took my mind off my eye issue for a while as I worked on it, and knowing that I was making it for her made the process even more meaningful.

Thank you Melanie.



OJO Pets



KIDS KORNER



Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is...

foster care!

Art contest for keiki in grades 6-12 on O'ahu now accepting submissions!

Categories:

- Traditional 2D Art
- Creative Writing
- Digital Art
- 3D Art

8 Grand Prize Winners will receive a \$100 debit gift card & a Humane Achievement Award!

Deadline:
March 24, 2025 at 11:59pm

Past winner!

For contest details and entry, head to
HawaiianHumane.org/MissionPawsible

Hawaiian Humane Society
People Get Animals. Animals Get People.

There are members we've not yet met
Our devoted and dearly cherished pets
You love their feathers, fur or scales
whiskers, beaks and fluffy tails

Here is a little request

Submit one photo that you like best
Describe in a sentence or two
The amazing or silly things they do
Can't wait to hear, please don't delay
Submissions are due in May

Submit by May 1st
yahna@hawaii.edu

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