



Advertiser photo by Deborah Booker

Shelly Nakamoto (center) and other members of Hula Hui O Kapunahala practice for the Queen Lili'uokalani Keiki Hula Competition.

Winning isn't everything

YMCA hula club emphasizes fun

By Wanda A. Adams
Advertiser Living Section Editor

Carolee Nishi may be the only hula teacher at the Queen Lili'uokalani Keiki Hula Competition tonight who isn't thinking about winning.

"I don't ever expect us to win a title," says Nishi, who for 25 years has taught hula as a volunteer at the Nuuanu YMCA, part of the Y's Hawaiiana youth program. "You have to learn to do your best, and you have to learn to accept your place, too. And if you do win, you have to learn to share that."

That's her message to the children of the Y's Hula Hui O Kapunahala.

The Hui is purposely called a club, not a *halau* (hula school), and Nishi does not take the revered title *kumu hula*. In keeping with Y philosophy, the club accepts all comers, regardless of previous hula experience or dance skill.

Unlike many halau, which send only select dancers to competition, they encourage any Hui youngster to perform in the Keiki Hula festival if the child has a modicum of skill and the commitment to make it to practice.

"The kids are learning, the kids are having fun and I don't have to worry about whether they're becoming professional-

WHAT: The 19th annual Queen Lili'uokalani Keiki Hula Competition, featuring 25 hula halau from around the state.

WHEN/WHERE: 6 p.m. tonight (hula kahiko); and noon Sunday (hula 'auana).

TICKETS: \$7.50 and \$6.50, Blaisdell box office.

ON TV: Live coverage of hula kahiko, 6:30 p.m. tonight; live coverage of hula 'auana, noon-4 p.m. tomorrow and tape-delay of the solo competition, 6:30 p.m. tomorrow, KHON-Channel 2.

quality hula dancers," says Nishi. "The difference for me is, this isn't a business. I don't have to worry that, if they don't look good, I won't have any students, I won't have a job."

Not that the Hui has never scored a win — they've had a Miss Keiki Hula title-holder, and their boys took first once, Nishi recalled. But the idea is to let everyone take part, even if dance isn't their best thing.

The result is increased confidence and a sense of camaraderie. "Some of these kids are good enough to go to another halau and win, but there's so much aloha, they stay," she said.

Nishi is assisted by eight members of a "kumu kokua" team, volunteers like herself, former students who can sing and play ukulele, chant and dance, but who do so as a hobby rather than a profession.

The other members of the Hui ohana are the children's parents, who have spent every spare moment working on costumes, threading lei and making other preparations for this weekend's competition.

The chant for the hula kahiko portion of the competition — "Ka'iulani" — is assigned by the festival planners and everyone performs it. But schools get to choose their 'auana entries and the Hui has chosen a Haleakala Medley for the girls — who'll wear pink Mamo muus with Maui's flower, *lokelani* (pink roses) — and another Maui song, "Aloha Ia No Maui," for the boys.

Explained kumu kokua member Calvena Hose, "The kids have been to Maui to do another competition and they really liked it there, so we chose Maui songs."

So how does Nishi handle the kids' reaction to the judging process? "I tell my kids (the judges are) not criticizing, they're helping us learn what's right," she said. That extends not just to hand and foot movements but to appropriate choice of colors and flowers, costuming and use of the language.

The main thing, Nishi said, is that the children don't get stressed about the competition.

"It's is not about judgment," she said, "The hula is supposed to come from within."

In that respect, she'll put her Hui up against anyone's.



Opening
The Waikiki Galle
today at 2139-F Kulioukou Street featuring the following artists: Rick Kealoha Pa, An McCarren, Bob Freitag, Barbara Engle, Helen Pasqua, Roy Venturini, Dung, Judith Matthew Imaikalani Kalahale, Ruth Laird Pistor, Tor Daddario and Judith Grand opening celebration p.m. today. Info.: 922-

James Coleman - Show, opening today at the galleries statewide. C Wyland Kalakaua Center today; Haleiwa Galleries tomorrow and noon-4 p.m. Sunday. Continuu Island, Aug. 12-14 19-21; and Kauai, Aug. 678-7498.

"Marlene Tatsuno Glass," opening today at Street Gallery. On view Opening reception at 7:15 p.m. 591-1126.

"Chamber Works" by Lickson and Michael opening tomorrow at Botanical Garden. On view 31.

"Turning Back the Ka Lani Mahope" a Mistic interpretation, and traditional elements, navigation and design tomorrow at Museum Kahili Room Dec. 14.

Call to A Hawaii Watercolor
32nd Annual Open House Oct. 5-21 at Amery. Slides due August 14. Call Helen Russo, 486-6001.

Ongon Academy Art Center
People's Summer Show on view to Wednesday 532-8700.

Arts of Paradise, Inc.
ketplace: "Tomo's creations by Leslie" on view to Aug. 31. Info.

Commons Gallery
Hawaii Art Building: "Memorial Exhibition," by Today is the last 956-6888.

The Contemporary
Recent works by Yvonne on view to Aug. 17. at rare Museum Galleries kiki Hotel; "Between Recent Works by Judith" on view to Oct. 9, at rare Museum Cafe Ming: Cone of Vision Aug. 28, in all five The Printer's Art — Shark's Print Works Sept. 14, at the Commons's Honolulu Art Info.: 529-1322.

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