Cherry Blossom Festival Begins

On Saturday, January 31st, the 12 queen contestants in this year's Cherry Blossom Festival made their first public appearance at Kahala Mall.

Digging Up New Niches to Survive Economic Downturn

Proving that only the strong survive, Pacific Paws Doggy Resort & Spa owners are already on their way to cultivating innovative niches that will hopefully ensure the resort's endurance during economic hardships.

The Middleton and McCullough families recently marked their first anniversary of ownership at the beginning of the year, after the spa's original owners sold the Hawaii Kai-based business to the families after only two months.

"It was basically a startup even though the infrastructure was there, so we've come a long way in a year," explained Ken Middleton, Pacific Paws co-owner/partner. "We're obviously a lot busier than we were a year ago when we purchased the business."

State DOE Considers Wailupe School Closure

After fifty years, Wailupe Elementary School is under consideration as one to be eliminated through a three-phase evaluation process by the state Department of Education (DOE). Although the closure process can take over a year, signs indicate that it may be moved forward quickly.

Hit by budget cuts, the DOE may have to take significant action to consolidate schools in areas across the state. Schools with declining enrollment, and with empty classrooms, would be closed and absorbed by facilities that can accommodate more students.

SAVING KA IWI SCENIC SHORELINE: But is the fight not quite over?
Let the Counties Regulate Fireworks

by CHARLES DJOU
Sun Special Contributor

Like many Hawaii residents, I enjoyed this past New Year’s festivities and the more recent Chinese New Year celebrations. Fireworks, however, have become a dangerous part of our community and time has come for tighter regulation, by the counties, on fireworks.

As any resident on Oahu can tell you, even though the law clearly places strict limits on when fireworks can be used around New Year’s Day and the 4th of July — far too many people openly ignore the law. All around Honolulu, fireworks were regularly being set off days before the New Year.

Furthermore, in addition to flouting the time limits on fireworks, the use of illegal aerial fireworks has grown significantly. Because of the improvement in technology, fancy explosive aerial fireworks that were once only used by licensed professionals are now finding their way into the hands of the average consumer — typically, teenage boys. Improperly handled, these illegal aerial fireworks are a fire hazard to neighboring properties and the explosive nature of these items is a real danger to any user or bystander.

Adding to these problems, New Year’s Eve is always a dangerous situation on our public roads with numerous late night parties. This risky situation on our roadways is made even more hazardous with the mixture of consumer fireworks explosions, creating foggy driving conditions, and children playing on the streets late at night.

Perhaps all of these issues with fireworks could be ignored if it didn’t cost city taxpayers so much money. The city taxpayers bear the cost of law enforcement trying, often unsuccessfully, to enforce the time limit and device restrictions on fireworks. Taxpayers also underwrite the cost of fire and ambulance response for damages caused by fireworks to property and individuals. Finally, city taxpayers pay for the cost of cleaning up the city streets after fireworks are used.

I believe the time has come for the state government to return the power to regulate fireworks to the counties. I recognize that a more rural county such as the Big Island may not have the same problems with fireworks as the more urbanized Oahu. Further, I want to make it clear that any regulation of fireworks should not ban cultural or religious use of fireworks.

We need to do something about fireworks, now. We were lucky that this past New Year’s holiday it rained on Oahu right after midnight, mitigating some of the hazards with consumer fireworks. Next time, our community and the taxpayers might not be so lucky.

Councilmember Djou represents the 4th Council District (Waikiki to Hawaii Kai). Outside of the City Council, Charles serves as a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve, and is an adjunct professor of law at Hawaii Pacific University.

Coqui Frog Task Force Meeting

by LORI ARIZUMI
Sun Correspondent

The Hawaii Kai Coqui Frog Task Force was created last month by Representative Gene Ward’s office to stave off a possible infestation of the frogs in the Hawaii Kai area. Coquis have appeared in Kailua, Waimanalo and other areas of Oahu.

An educational outreach will be launched titled, “Are you smarter than a Coqui?” A training session is scheduled for Monday, February 9, from 7-8 PM at the Hahaione Elementary School Cafeteria. The Department of Agriculture’s Coqui specialist, Domingo Carvalho and Chelsea Arnott, of the Oahu Invasive Species Committee, will be speaking. The session will help educate the public on identifying, monitoring and eradicating the Coqui.

Topics to be covered include:
• How to know a Coqui when you see one, or hear one
• How to control Coquis and prevent them from spreading
• What community resources are available and who to call
• Video on “Coqui Frog Invasion in Hawaii”

Hahaione Elementary School is located at 595 Pepeekeo Street. For more information call Francisco Figueiredo at 586-6375.
January 21:
Kaimuki — Man arrested for terroristic threatening: A 33-year-old man with no local address was arrested near the corner of Saint Louis Drive and Waialae Avenue around 11 p.m. on an alleged terroristic threatening charge. The man was also taken in for criminal contempt of court (an outstanding warrant).

Kaimuki — Suspect arrested for promoting drugs: According to police reports, a man, 21, was arrested at the corner of Saint Louis Drive and Waialae Avenue around 2 a.m. for operating a vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant and promoting a detrimental drug.

Kahala — Young suspect caught: Police arrested a man, 18, along Kahala Avenue around 4 p.m. for an outstanding warrant, as well as alleged theft and criminal trespassing charges on Prince Edward Street in Waikiki, where the suspect currently resides.

Palolo — Woman charged with two counts of DUI: A 38-year-old woman was arrested on Palolo Avenue in the early morning for two alleged counts of operating a vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant.

January 18:
Kapahulu — Man and woman found with outstanding warrants: During the early morning, a 40-year-old man and a 43-year-old woman were both arrested along Kapahulu Avenue for outstanding warrants.

January 17:
Kapahulu — Suspect charged with promoting drugs: Police arrested a man, 31, on Monsarrat Avenue around 7 p.m. for allegedly promoting a detrimental drug and possessing a deadly weapon.

Your Letters

Paradise for Sale: $1
At 75 years old, I would have preferred not to have to fight any battles. But when I learned the State plans to commercialize the Pali Lookout and Ka Iwi Park to accommodate visitors in order to collect a fee, I told my grandson that it is time to put on the war paint. Shame on the Department of Land and Natural Resources for peddling paradise for $1 and further weakening Hawaii’s gracious aloha spirit. But more importantly: this action promotes segregation between “us,” local people and “them,” the visitors. We need to strike Ka Iwi and the Pali Lookout from the DLNR’s hit list, buried well within the glossy title of the state’s “Recreational Renaissance.” The overall plan had merit, but got sloppy towards the end when it took the “status quo” route to commercialize two important landmarks. Today’s Diamond Park, complete with information center, T-shirt sales, nonstop huge buses of tourists and two fluorescent-lit soda vending machines represents changes we should not be proud of. This is not proper care of special places and it’s very inconsiderate to future generations. I can only hope our Legislators see the writing on the wall. “Paradise for Sale for $1,” “Visitors Keep Right, Locals Stay Left.” Please join me in the protest to stop this madness. Email DLNR at: Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov or get involved with an area grassroots group like Ka Iwi Coalition at www.hawaiikaihi.com.

Sara Yacuk, Hawaii Kai

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Hawaii Kai
Tuesday, February 24, 7:00 pm, Hahaione Elementary School Cafeteria. Call K. Russell Ho of the Neighborhood Commission Office at 768-3715 for more information.

Top administrators of the Kaiser Complex gave a presentation on candidate schools for the International Baccalaureate Programme. The principals of Niu Valley Middle (Justin Mew), Kaiser High (John Sosa) and Hahaione Elementary (Cindy Giorgis) discussed their schools’ plans to implement the IB curriculum. The concepts of the IBO programme are (1) International Mindedness: thinking beyond local and national, and requiring a second language; (2) Holistic Education, including the four traditional core subjects: PE, World Language, Arts and Technology; (3) Communication: non-verbal, verbal, written, mathematics. The programme at all levels emphasizes PE year-round, and maintaining sound health practices. Development of who, why and how the children are learning, not just the content, is stressed. Areas of Interaction, which are the contexts for learning, are Approaches to Learning, Community and Service, Health and Social Education, Environments and Human Ingenuity. Community service is required and involvement in worldwide programs, encouraged. At the high school level, students apply to receive an IB diploma, which enables them to enter college or enter college.

Kulihou-Kalani Iki
Thursday, February 5, 7:00 pm, Ala Haina Public Library. Call K. Russell Ho of the Neighborhood Commission Office at 768-3715 for more information.

As this Board was in recess in January, reports from the December meeting are included. Education was discussed regarding the Waldorf High School expansion and possible closure of Wailupe Elementary School. Although Waldorf has indicated leasing of the former TransPacific College on Kalanianaoe Highway, some comments were made that the school may still have intentions of adding more classrooms on the Niu Valley site. It was noted that if that were so, they would have to begin the process all over again. A hearing on Waldorf’s lawsuit against 21 residents has been postponed until January 2009. The complex issue of having an ARCH II facility on Limu Place was brought up, and reported that the house was up for sale but now seems to be off the market and is being rented. It was advertised as eligible for ARCH usage, but doesn’t have the permits. Public hearings are required only for major CUPs in which care facility occupancy is over eight persons; if occupancy is under eight persons, the operator must seek a DOH license.

The board took no action on an agenda item regarding Bed and Breakfast Homes, because the whole matter is under reconsideration by the City Council. There’s a Bill 6 and a proposed Bill 6 CD2, but it is not certain if either version is proceeding. One member of the audience witnessed that living next to a vacation rental is no different than living next to a regular rental. The matter will be brought back when there is something specific to act upon.

Get Involved:
Information about neighborhood boards can be found online at www.honolulu.gov/nco or at the Neighborhood Commission Office, Honolulu Hale, Room 406, Honolulu, HI 96813; call 768-3710 or fax 768-3711 to be added to the mailing list.

Residents in respective jurisdictions are encouraged to attend the meetings to hear reports from the police and fire departments, from elected state and county elected officials, the Board of Water Supply, and from area community associations. When hot-button issues are anticipated, meetings will sometimes see residents from other communities who wish to present their thoughts. All residents are invited to contribute, and are encouraged to take advantage of the 2- to 3-minute podium time limit to speak.

Neighborhood Board Watch
by Lori Arizumi, Sun Correspondent

Hawaii Kai
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Doggie Daycare (6:30am - 8:30pm Daily)
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Honorolulu Waldorf School’s Rose Ceremony on the first day of school epitomizes the beauty and wisdom of Waldorf education. Bright-eyed first graders, timidly eager in their first taste of “real” school, are welcomed warmly with rowts by the radianly confident young men and women of the twelfth grade. The little ones can look ahead with wonder to where they will be in twelve years while the seniors look back on their own exciting and joyful journey with awe. Waldorf education is grand progression filled with all kinds of growth and development—physical, intellectual, moral, artistic, spiritual, and social.

Our Next Admissions Orientation/Campus Tour:
Tuesday, February 10—Early Childhood through Grade 8
Wednesday, February 11—High School
Please call 377-5471 to make a reservation.
Neighborhood Board

Continued from page 4

regulate only as a single family use with no CUP required. The board had asked for agency support for making B&Bs illegal, and opposing Bill 6, as originally drafted. Right now there are a lot of illegal B&Bs. Bill 6 would make it legal to have a certain number operating in Hawaii. An agency has been proposed to charge fees to be used in the enforcement of regulation of the bed and breakfasts, which would involve a charter amendment.

Waialae-Kahala

Thursday, February 19, 7:00 pm. Wesley United Methodist Church. Call Orrin Kupau of the Neighborhood Commission Office at 768-3779 for more information.

This board was in recess during December. In November, queries were raised again about the citing of noisy mufflers. HPD does issue citations on a situation basis. Another noise concern raised was about low-flying helicopters, which fall under FAA and State DOT jurisdiction. Regarding the previous question on the dotted lines on Malia Street, right now the striping is only temporary. Yellow lines are markings that separate opposite directions of travel and the guiding line to turn left is colored yellow. White lines indicate the right edge of a roadway or traffic flowing in the same direction. The permanent striping is being finalized right now and there is a request that for the Koko Head-bound traffic onto Malia Street, a separate left turn and right turn lane be created to include channelization. The project has started and should be completed by December. In an update on Proposed Resolution to Japanese Consulate Concerning Property Owner Genshiro Kawamoto, boardmember Lucinda Pyles announced that she had attended a meeting with residents and councilmember Djou on November 15, 2008 regarding this issue. There was discussion on a possible civil suit, demonstrating during the Honolulu Marathon or Sony Open, and working with the city to beef up citations. Currently, Kawamoto has 33 citations of which five or six are outstanding. Usually in these cases, those that are licensed become the most aggressive in shutting down the unlicensed ones to protect their images and maintain the high standards. It was moved and approved to form a new Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) to work on these specific issues with councilmember Charles Djou. Another action also supported a resolution to show the board’s opposition to Bill 6, and supporting legislation to compel DPP to enforce laws against illegal B&Bs and TVUs.

Triangle Park has been renamed “Operation Red Wing Medal of Honor Park.” The sign is now up in the park and a ceremony to commemorate the park will be held in June 2009. The Naval Special Warfare unit will be attending this celebration. At the request of Kamehameha Schools, Cultural Surveys Hawaii Inc. (CSH) is conducting an ethno-historical study of Kahala, Waialae, Nui and Waialae Iki. This study will gather cultural and historical information such as accounts, testimonies, legends, maps, pictures and documents that will help to document, preserve, and perpetuate the traditions associated with this ahupuaa and surrounding areas. The strategies provide new context to educational initiatives, and to build a more informed community with regards to the unique resources and traditions of this ahupuaa. Currently, CSH is soliciting interviews and talk-story sessions and would like anyone willing to share information to contact them at (808) 262-9872 or emaillkuyeoka@culturalsurveys.com or mspearing@culturalsurveys.com. The survey information is not shared unless they decide to publish these results.
Every year Hawaii Kai Computer Guy closes during the holiday season to spend valuable time with family and friends and focus on what matters most: loved ones and achieving a balance in life. The same principal we apply in building relationships with our clientele is equally essential in nurturing the relationships we hold within our personal lives.

However, this last vacation proved a little different than years past. This year I got to spend some quality time with such wonderful musicians as Sting, John Fogerty and Norah Jones.

The story goes something like this...

I've been a music aficionado and collector for nearly 30 years. I have penned several lyrics, very lightly play drums and am learning piano. Each year during my recess period I try to engage in something new to challenge myself. This year, I just felt like nurturing my inner composer. That meant finding digital audio production software to allow me to record, edit and finalize my songs. I may have also wanted to include some effects or advanced techniques.

In the past I've used Sony's SoundForge and AcidPro software suites (Windows only) and both remain excellent choices. However, I haven't gotten a lot of time with my Mac recently and was intrigued by the new release of Apple's creative suite iLife '09, which includes a significant upgrade to the GarageBand application.

The updated version now offers budding musicians an enjoyable new way to learn to play piano and guitar. Basic Lessons lets you learn the essentials at your own pace with instructors in crisp hi-definition video synchronized to animated instruments and notation. However, it's the Artist Lessons feature that incorporates original artists showing how to play their hit songs with everything from finger positions and techniques to the story behind the song, which I find brilliant.

Easily dismissed or overlooked as fluff, I think it is an exceptional way to invite and lend familiarity to beginning musicians. Lessons are taught by popular artists such as Sting, John Fogerty, Norah Jones, Sara Bareilles, Colbie Caillat, Ben Folds, Sarah McLachlan, Patrick Stump and Ryan Tedder. If you don't recognize all of the musicians, that's part of the point. Different tastes and genres are available to accommodate you, the student.

Artist Lessons are sold separately at the new GarageBand Lesson Store (similar in concept to the iTunes store, for $5 each), available inside the GarageBand application. What a wonderful and intelligent way to legitimately extend the value of the software and its purpose.

It also includes electrifying new guitar amp and stomp-box effects. This feature is a basic version of the exceptional Guitar Rig (www.native-instruments.com) software. If you play guitar at all, check out this software!

Lastly, the Magic GarageBand Jam feature lets you play along with a virtual band that you create.

So, join me in putting away Guitar Hero and Rock Band (just temporarily) to allow your own musical creativity to flow.

It's also worth noting that there are major upgrades to other included applications within the iLife '09 Suite such as iPhoto and iMovie.

iLife '09 requires Mac OS(R) X version 10.5.6 or later, a Macintosh(R) computer with an Intel processor, a PowerPC G5 or 867 MHz or faster PowerPC G4, 512MB of RAM (1GB recommended), QuickTime(R) 7.5.5 or later (included), a DVD drive for installation and 4GB of available disk space.

M-iLife with Sting, John Fogerty and Norah Jones

by DANIEL ALLEN
Sun Columnist

Daniel Allen is the Lead Support Specialist for Hawaii Kai Computer Guy. The company provides “LIVE” Technical Support for Any Operating System/Application, FREE On-Site Service and EXCEPTIONAL Customized Computer Education. For more information visit www.HawaiiKaiComputerGuy.com or call (808) 356-0672. For article suggestions, please email eos@hawaiikaicomputerguy.com.
Grandpa-san, You're Under Arrest

Weak economics and aging demographics trigger a surge in elderly crime.

TOKYO — There's been a bit of good news in Japan. Sort of. The annual report on crime statistics, released earlier this month by the National Police Agency, showed a sixth-straight annual fall in recorded crimes. According to the figures, incidents of crime fell 4.7 percent to just over 1.8 million cases, all in a country with traditionally low rates of most forms of crime.

But beneath that drop lies a troubling surprise: a sharp increase in crime by Japan's growing elderly population.

"I couldn't believe it the first time I saw a really old person stealing stuff from the shop," said the manager at a 7-Eleven store outside Tokyo. "This little old guy was putting food in his pockets — I guess he thought we couldn't see him. I didn't know what to do with him," laughed the manager, who asked to be identified just as Masa.

In 1998, fewer than 14,000 people over the age of 65 were arrested for non-traffic-related offenses. By 2007, the figures had nearly tripled to more than 48,500. By comparison, juvenile crime over the same period fell from just over 160,000 to just over 100,000. Street robberies and purse-snatching by juveniles actually halved between 2002 and 2007. While Japan's demographics — a falling birthrate and the fastest-aging population on the planet — account for some of this, they certainly don't tell the whole story.

Around 80 percent of this gray crime wave is petty theft, made up mostly of shoplifting and a little pick-pocketing. Low incomes and poor health are the most commonly cited reasons, and the truth is this may be just the tip of the iceberg, as most cases probably still go unreported.

While Japan has long prided itself on its egalitarianism and its own less cutthroat take on capitalism, inequality has risen in recent decades. In a 2008 report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Japan ranked fourth — just behind the U.S. — in terms of poverty in developed nations. The number of households depending on Japan's less-than-generous welfare system now exceeds 1 million. Half of them are elderly.

Even before the current economic downturn, now hitting Japan with a vengeance, the government had been planning to trim the social welfare budget by 220 billion yen ($2.5 billion) each year to help reduce the enormous public debt. This will do little to ease the problems of those relying on a public pension system beset with errors and missing records. Meanwhile, public coffers are being strained in other ways, as the government is currently spending billions of yen on new prison wards designed to cater to the needs of a growing population of pensioner prisoners.

A Ministry of Justice report concluded, "Elderly crime is a serious problem that our society must shoulder in the years to come. With baby boomers becoming elderly within five years, we have reached a state where we must make a fundamental review of anti-crime measures in a fast-aging society."

Lack of money is not the only reason the elderly commit crimes: social isolation also plays a part. Last summer two people were attacked with knives in Shibuya, the center of Tokyo's youth culture. The assailant, a 79-year-old woman, told the police she had nowhere to go and thought that if she got arrested, they would take care of her.

Prison officials have heard from elderly recidivist inmates that they deliberately re-offend after being released, so they can go back inside where they will at least be warm, fed, and have the companionship of people their own age.

Back at the 7-Eleven, Masa's patience with light-fingered seniors is beginning to wear a little thin. "It's happening a little more often recently, and one old boy, instead of apologizing, started shouting at one of the staff when he got caught. I told all the staff: if we catch any of them again, to call the staff when he got caught. I told all the staff: if we catch any of them again, to call the police."

Which may be just what some of them are hoping for.
Plan Announced to Save Ka Iwi from Development

by LORI ARIZUMI
Star Correspondent

Governor Linda Lingle has announced that the Office of Planning will be filing a petition with the State Land Use Commission to reclassify 235 acres of state-owned land on the Ka Iwi Scenic Shoreline on Oahu’s southeast coast from urban use to conservation use. The area encompasses the land between Queen’s Beach and the Makapu’u Lighthouse.

Abbey Seth Mayer, Director of the State Office of Planning, presented details of the petition process to the Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board on Tuesday, January 27, 2009.

In the 1960s, the land was zoned for a resort until 1964, when the state land districts were reclassified as urban use land. In 1965, opposition grew among the Hawaii Kai and Waimanalo communities who fought to save the last open space lands on the southern coast of Oahu from development. Community and nonprofit groups, for decades, persisted as landowners have changed and brought forth new development proposals.

“If the land remains classified as urban, there will always be the threat of development to this unique scenic beach and open space treasure,” said Governor Lingle. “The community has worked to protect this area for future generations and the action my administration is taking will support their efforts by helping to prevent any further development proposals.”

But even as applause sounded for the makai success, concerns were raised over the mauka section of two large parcels of about 184 acres. These parcels have been purchased within the last year, and Mayer said there haven’t been any proposals submitted yet. But as they are now designated P-2 general conservation, another drive must be made to petition for the same protection as the makai portion.

Neighborhood board member Elizabeth Reilly was one of the committee members to push this action through, and cautioned that the fight is not quite over.

Asked how the community can help, Mayer responded that resolutions in support of the action, by the neighborhood boards to the state and city council, and citizens appearing at the public hearings or submitting testimony are important avenues.

For more, log onto www.eastoahusun.com
School Closure
Continued from page 1

student population. The potential expense of administration, staff, maintenance and other services can be offset or reduced by leasing or selling the closed schools.

Such measures are often quite unpopular with residents — both losing a school, and having existing schools increase in size, increasing traffic and noise levels. Parents of Wailupe Valley Elementary School have voiced opposition, citing their children are best served with smaller class sizes and personalized attention. Recognizing the fiftieth anniversary just last year, pride in the school was evident by parents, students and administrators. Wailupe boasts close relationships among teachers and students.

On the flip side, being in a larger school allows more opportunities for students to pursue arts, music and other specialty courses. The balance between running all the schools, and maintaining quality programs is controversial. Schools asking to reduce athletics, especially, were highly contested by parents, staff, coaches and the students.

As Senator Sam Slom reported in the Kulioou/Kalani Iki neighborhood board meeting, Wailupe and Aina Haina may both be at risk. Elementary public school student enrollments have dropped and classrooms are empty. The three-level plan to study schools on all islands is beginning, and the DOE is mandated, by administrative rule, to make such evaluations in light of closing or merging schools.

Representative Barbara Marumoto was alarmed by the number of East Oahu schools under consideration for closure. “I don’t think any elementary school in the district escaped mention,” she commented. “Enrollment is full in some, even overcrowded, but the smaller schools will come under closer scrutiny. Eliminating the sixth grade helped give more breathing space, but also could have affected others.”

Wailupe is more likely to be closed than Aina Haina. It’s operating at a little over 50 percent capacity, with potential population trends downward among school-age families in the area. Maintenance, utilities and staff expenses continue to rise, and closing a single school can save $500,000 a year on average. But as reports indicated, even though Wailupe Elementary could possibly close, the facility would be used in other ways. Even now, empty spaces are leased to a charter school and a preschool.

Representative Lyla Berg also asked for considerations other than simple financial calculations, when making decisions regarding the future of the school and to recognize that Kaiser Complex is advancing toward becoming a Type International Baccalaureate system, providing a whole-world concept of learning skills and attitudes.

Even Board of Education members resist closings schools. That action affects the teaching quality available in smaller classrooms, which allow for more individual attention in arts and music courses, and in some cases, greater creativity options. Conversely, being in a larger facility can give those same opportunities, at a much lower cost per student. In a comparison, it costs $12,000 per student at Wailupe and $4,500 at Aina Haina. Schools throughout Hawaii are being considered for closure and consolidation from Kauai to the Big Island. Ultimately, the decision rests with the Board of Education, after public hearings, and as a last resort. The last school closure in Honolulu was in 1987.
Digging Up New Niches

Continued from page 1

“We just finished our busiest two weeks of the year over Christmas and New Year’s,” he continued. “It was very busy, which I think it is at every kennel business around the country and probably around the world.”

While the families did reach the point where they could begin paying themselves back over the prosperous holidays, when many patrons took advantage of the resort’s boarding service, Middleton says he predicts a decline in boarding reservations this year due to the far-reaching recession.

“People, I think, are going to take fewer family vacations just because of the economy, so Spring Break may not be as busy as it was last year,” Middleton stated. “If the economy continues like this, sales down even more, we may see a decline in next Christmas’ bookings, but we can live with that.”

In preparation for the tough year ahead, Middleton says the spa, located in Koko Marina Center, is expanding on its offerings and discovering groundbreaking ways to serve clients.

“We’ve got one year of experience under our belts, but there’s a lot of other little niches out there that are either underserved or haven’t even been developed,” Middleton noted.

For instance, Pacific Paws introduced a puppy training session, which takes place every Tuesday night.

“It’s a great place to introduce dogs to other dogs, and then get the basic commands down as far as sit, heel and come,” Middleton said. “We’re also developing a curriculum for private training – more intensive training as follow-up and also for problem areas, whether it be chewing or aggressiveness.”

In addition, launching sometime this quarter, will be outcall services, which will accommodate patrons who are traveling but don’t wish to pull their dogs out of the house. According to Middleton, the outcall services include household visits, in which staff members attend to pets a couple of times a day, walking the dog(s) and feeding the fish; and they’ll even pick up the mail and newspaper and water the plants.

“We’d rather have the dogs at our shop, but when there’s a variety of species involved…we can’t accommodate the other animals at this time,” Middleton explained. “So we need to go to them because we recognize and want to help families in those situations as well.

“Typically, we’re interested in 15- to 20-minute types of visits once or twice a day,” he added. Already, Pacific Paws’ employees are providing dog-walking services for some of their elderly clients, who have large dogs that they no longer can handle.

Recently, the resort even picked up a new vitamin line that provides a variety of vitamin supplements for dogs.

“It’s terrific nutritional supplements for dogs, particularly for older dogs who have arthritis or other conditions,” Middleton said. “And this vitamin supplement comes with a 60-day warranty, so it’ll guarantee that you’ll get some results as far as the dog’s health improving, or you get your money back.”

Besides the new additions to the doggy spa business, Middleton says the grooming venture has been steady and growing each month.

“Over in East Oahu, people treat their dogs like they’re family members, so I don’t see dogs being neglected because of the recession,” he added. “On the contrary, we may see a decline in next Christmas’ bookings, but we can live with that.”

Middleton said the business, which employs seven staff members, may quite possibly suffer some losses, but will continue to thrive out of the recession.

“We had a good first year, and I think we’ll continue to grow the business,” shared Middleton, who also owns a yacht charter business as well as a wedding planning company. “(Pacific Paws) seems to be a pretty recession-proof industry, and I think we’re better situated than my tourism-related businesses. We’ll develop some of these niches and help continue to provide jobs for folks here in the community,” he added.

Celebrate Chinese New Year

On Saturday, February 7, starting at noon, Koko Marina Center merchants will ring in the Chinese New Year. Celebrating the Year of the Ox, a traditional lion dance blessing will start at the Marina Courtyard and make its way around the Center. Visit www.kokomarinacenter.com for information.
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN EAST OAHU: february 5-18, 2009

Ongoing:

Sundays 8:30 – 10 am
Kundalini Yoga: All levels, Kapilolani Park, off Pali Street, on hill under Banyan tree. $8 donation, Maria 393-3085.

Sundays 10:30 am
Children’s Storytime: Kaimuki Public Library. Ages 3 to 5 and their caregivers, 733-8422.

Sundays 6 – 8 pm
Live Music (2/6: Simone Cole & Live Nene; 2/13: Ledward Kaapana; 2/20: Kona Brewing Co.’s)

 Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays
The Bike School Bus: Two adults on bikes escorting students on bikes to school from Kamaloli Valley to Nu’u Valley, Natalie Iwasa, 396-7721.

Mondays (except Holidays) 11 am – 2 pm

Mondays, Wednesdays 7:30 – 9 pm
Aikido Classes by Hawaii Kai Kai Park-N-Ride, 300 Keahole St. Space is limited; RSVP to Kevin Nitta, 3536 Harding Ave.; 845-9966.

Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays 6:00 – 6:45 pm
BodyWorks! Hawaii: Aerobics, Kickboxing, Pilates, etc. Kuhio School Cafeteria, 2759 Kamehameha Avenue.

Tuesdays 8:45 – 10 am
Stroller Strides: Kahaluu Park. 75-minute fitness program for moms and babies. See www.strollerstrides.com or call 371-6904. Fee.

Tuesdays 7:30 – 8:30 pm

Wednesdays 9:30 am
Hui Hauoli O Aina Haina: Senior Club Program. Seniors conduct weekly meetings that include speakers, community service, excursions, luncheons, etc. Meet at Holy Nativity Church, Call 396-3096.

Saturdays 6:30 – 9:30 pm

Submit your events to calendar@eastoahusun.com