



YOMITAN NEWSLETTER

May 2012

2012 - Rise of the Yomitan Phoenix



The 2012 Yomitan Shinnen-Enkai was held on Feb 18. The theme for this year's shinnen-enkai was "2012 - Rise of the Yomitan Phoenix". This event celebrated the 85th Anniversary of the Yomitan Club and was attended by over 450 guests, Heavy pupus, a photo booth and children's games greeted the guests prior to the evening's program. After the invocation by Rev Gary Oyler, another scrumptious dinner was served up by "A Catered Experience". Special guests included the 2013 HUOA President-elect, Mr. George Bartels, HUOA Executive Director Ms. Jane Serikaku and HUOA Staffer Ms. Bonnie Miyashiro.

Outgoing President Ronlynn Arakaki introduced and honored the outgoing officers, Vice President Miles Nishizawa, Recording Secretary Elva Furuya and Treasurer Laverne.

Incoming officers were then introduced. The new officers for Yomitan Club are President Fred Higa, Vice President Ronlynn Arakaki, Recording Secretary Jennifer Nguyen, Asst Recording Secretary Kristen Murashige, Corresponding Secretary Elva Furuya, Asst Corresponding Secretary Laura Ajimine, Treasurer Ralph Okuhara and Asst Treasurer Roxanne Yoshida.

Yomitan Club's "Super Seniors" were introduced. Honored this year was Kenkichi Arakaki, Miyoko China, Nancy Ichikawa and Harue Kise. Also honored were the Club's "Senior Members" which included: Gwen Fujie, Melvin Horimoto, Gary Jitchaku, Wilfred Lam, Judy Muramoto, Karen H. Okuhara, Jeannette Oshiro,

Masami Oshiro, Lynne Suehiro, Howard Sugamoto, Diane Takara, Ivan Toyama and Loretta Toyama.

Entertainment was provided by "Yomitan's Parade of Stars". "Kagiyadefu" was performed by Ann Moribe and Grace (Kamimura) Carmichael, "Hatoma Bushi" was performed by Marcie and Kacie Moribe, "Kanayo" was gracefully performed by Kinuko Teruya. Richard Shimabukuro provided an outstanding rendition of "Haha Kage", and Sharon Tomasa did a great job singing "Kimagure Doochu". "E Huli Makou" was a hula number performed by Yomitan's own 'halau'. Dancers included Linda Takushi, Judy Takara, Kristen Murashige, Walter Takara, Joy Murashige, Shirley Kaneshiro, Elaine Higa, Elva Furuya, Chris Okuhara and Fred Higa. Ronlynn Arakaki did a great job dancing to "Tiare". The "Andagiettes", Tia Lewis, Kaci Takara and Dominique Hart, had the audience smiling and clapping as they andagied to "Miruku Munari". The Charlie Higa clan, Kathleen Yamashiro Chrsitine Sadoy, Marissa Yamashiro, Schae Yamashiro, Sarah Yamashiro, Lacey Yamashiro, Tenille Chibana, Portia Chibana, Shirley Kaneshiro, Keith Yamashiro, Jason Yamashiro and Nelson Sadoy had the crown tapping their feet and singing along as they performed "Asadoya Yunta". No shinnen-enkai is complete unless they have the traditional shishimai performance. Jon Itomura and Eric Nitta were joined by Yomitan members Kyle Arakaki (son of Ronlynn and Clayton Arakaki) and Jacob Higa (son of Valerie Higa). Both shiisaa did their best to welcome the "Rise of the Yomitan Phoenix".

Tom Uechi and his committee did a great job in putting together a large display board which had pictures of all 26 past presidents of the Yomitan Club. It was a very impressive display which honored those who served the Club so well the past 85 years.

Ippe Niffee Deebiru to this year's Chairperson, Thelma Lam and her committee. They did an outstanding job putting together a great dinner and program. George Bartels confirmed what he had heard, "Yomitan parties are great, fun and enjoyable". Jane Serikaku, who has attended many Yomitan parties, remarked "This was the best one yet!!" Niffee deebiru to all who attended to make this party a great success. See you all next year!!!

Yomitan Villa Work - Study Program

In late February, Linda Takushi received a letter and application forms from Mayor Denjitsu Ishimine, the Mayor of Yomitan Village, inviting Yomitan Club members to apply for an opportunity to participate in a 6-month work-study program in Yomitan Village. Unfortunately, due to the short suspense, time constraints and member notification issues, President Fred Higa sent Mayor Ishimine a letter to decline this year's participation. However, he did request permission to solicit applications from Club members for the 2013 program and is awaiting a response.

Interested members must be 18 - 35 years of age, speak some Japanese, and live with a host Yomitan Village family, preferably a family relative. Yomitan Village will pay for airfare, tuition and books for the mandatory 2-month school of the members choice, then must work in the community for 4 months. Selected members must provide their own spending money.

Contact Fred Higa or Linda Takushi if interested in participating. Yomitan Village will select between 1 to 3 individuals to participate, depending on funding availability. Fred has talked to one member of the Kin Club who participated a couple of years ago and he says it was the best experience of his young life.

Yomitan Events Planning

In an effort to keep everyone informed on which families will be responsible for planning various Yomitan events, we will insure we send out a schedule via newsletters and posted to our website. We encourage all member families to participate in the planning process. Yomitan Club normally has 3 major events every year, the Shinnen-Enkai, Picnic and Okinawan Festival. Participation in special events sponsored by HUOA are based on a rotation of HUOA member clubs. The current schedule for families to events are as follows:

2012 - Shinnen-Enkai - Ichokawa to Roxburgh

2012 - Picnic - Sadoy to Zakahi

2012 - Okinawan Festival - Abe to Howerton

The Board of Directors will be reviewing the process in how families are aligned for each event. It makes sense to "spread the wealth" so that the same families are not planning for the same events every year. We will be looking at different options/combinations to insure the process is an equitable one. All families are encouraged to "volunteer" in planning the Club's events, regardless if

it's your scheduled turn or not. More suggestions to improve the events, to make it more fun and exciting is what we encourage.

Planning is already underway for the upcoming picnic. We need support in all phases of picnic planning and execution. The next scheduled picnic meeting is set for May 24 at 7:30 p.m. at the International Baptist Church at 20 Dowsett and Pali Hwy.

Ippee Nifee Deebiru for participating in past events. Your continued support is always welcome.

In Memoriam

Please take a moment to reflect and remember the following Yomitan members who passed on this year. Chris Okuhara (April), Leslie Yamashita (April) and Rose Nagahama (April). The thoughts and prayers of the Yomitan Club goes out to the families.

If member families need help and assistance with funeral arrangements and support, do not hesitate to call any Board member.

Yomitan Club Website

The Yomitan Club has had a website for several years now, thanks to the hard work put in by Ronlynn and Clayton Arakaki. We have embarked on a new and exciting technological journey, and Clayton and Ronlynn have upgraded and improved our website tremendously. The following is the link to our website:

www.yomitanclub.org

Recommend members visit the website often, browse through the various links to get current information as well as some historical information. Links include HUOA, and Yomitan Village as well as other informational links. Members can also email us at:

yomitanhawaii@gmail.com

We encourage members to use the media above, let us know if anything on the site can be improved or added to make the website a better one. The website is still a work in progress, so your suggestions and recommendations are really important to us.

We also encourage members to send us your email address so that we can start compiling a Yomitan email listing to improve the communications process, especially when short suspense announcements must

be made. Many HUOA clubs have started this new process and say it has improved communications and decreased cost for mailing.

HUOA Events

JANUARY - 61th HUOA Installation Banquet and Uchinanchu of the Year Awards (1/14)

MARCH - Hawaii Okinawa Student Exchange Program; JTB Honolulu Festival Fair (3/3 & 3/4); JTB Honolulu Festival Grand Parade (3/4)

APRIL - Taste of Marukai (4/12)

MAY - HUOA Golf Tournament (5/26 & 5/27)

JUNE - Children's Cultural Day Camp; Maui Okinawan Festival (6/16); Senior Health and Awareness Fair (6/22); Maui Okinawa Kenjin Kai Event (6/23)

AUGUST - Hui Okinawa - Haari Boat Festival (8/17-8/18)

SEPTEMBER - Okinawan Festival Preparation Activities

Okinawan Festival (9/1 & 9/2) Autumn Okinawa Dance Festival

OCTOBER - TBD

NOVEMBER - Winter Craft Fair (11/24 & 11/25)

DECEMBER - Senior Luncheon by Young Okinawans of Hawaii; Evening in Waipio Craft Fair

Yomitan President Fred Higa and his family participated in the JTB Honolulu Festival Grand Parade in March, helping to carry HUOA Club banners down Kalakaua Ave. This year the HUOA was honored to be the lead group for the parade. Kiyomi Onaga, a student from Yomitan Village participating in the Hawaii Okinawa Student Exchange Program carried the Yomitan banner for the parade as did many of her fellow exchange students from various Okinawa Villages. Members are encouraged to participate in hosting students for the exchange program as well as participate in the events listed.

We have received inquiries from some Yomitan members about participating and representing the Yomitan Club in the upcoming Haari Boat Race in Hilo in August. Team applications are currently being accepted but the number of team entries are limited. Let the Board of Directors know if interested in forming a Yomitan Haari Boat team.

The Board of Directors encourages all Yomitan Club members to participate in any and all events sponsored by the Hawaii United Okinawa Association (HUOA) and its member clubs. Events schedule are listed on the HUOA website and listed below as well.

Message from the President

Haisai everyone! During my speech at the shinnen-enkai, I mentioned resurrecting the Yomitan Newsletter. My goal was to have the first newsletter sent out in March or first week of April, right after the Board of Directors meeting. I failed in that attempt for various reasons, mainly because I tried using different software packages to come up with a newsletter format which was easy to read but informative. Future newsletters will be more timely with information and news items solicited from our Yomitan members and Board members.

Since accepting the position of Yomitan Club President, it has become increasingly apparent that our Club is a respected organization within the HUOA community of clubs. With that in mind, I would like to encourage all Club members to feel free to contact me, let me know how we're doing, what we can do to improve the Club and how we do business.

I did come up with 3 pages worth of what I call "Brainstorm Ideas for the Yomitan Club" in which I listed lots of initiatives and goals I think the Board of Directors and the Club may look at implementing in the future. I will formally present those ideas to the Board in future meetings. Special projects like scholarships, community service projects, fundraising efforts, etc, are some of the suggestions I want to put on the table for discussion. This is all in an effort to encourage our younger members to get actively involved in club affairs and activities.

As I look forward, in less than 5 years, Yomitan Club will be celebrating its 90th anniversary. I want to start the planning process now so that we can properly celebrate that milestone event. If this means we create a "Yomitan 90th Anniversary Committee", then we will do that. Of course the planning process for such an event can be a tremendous undertaking, but if we start now, we may be able to put on the best anniversary celebration ever, only to be topped by the 100th anniversary.

I am still learning my job of being your Club's President, I ask for your patience as we move forward, and help me move the Yomitan Phoenix on its upward journey.

Fred Higa, President, Yomitan Club