

## **Laulima West Maui**

**By: Cord Munoz**

It is my firm belief that one's future and past are symbiotically linked and the fates of both are intertwined. Preservation of our past as well as the planning of our future are equally as important. Meanwhile, maintaining our cultural identity and sense of place in these times of rapid development and urbanization is crucial to the continuation of Maui as an island, as a people, and as a community.

It has been said that without knowing where one has been, one cannot know where one is going. This is especially true in the case of West Maui. Lahaina was a place where everyone knew everyone else, help and comfort could be found anywhere, and the spirit of aloha was always present. Great care and respect was taken and often observed on a day to day basis. Lahaina was once and still is like this. We as neighbors, as friends, and as family have managed to preserve our culture, roots, and legacy. We need to continue to organize ourselves and be heard by our leaders so our concerns about our community will be addressed. It is necessary that our past be considered as much an important part of our lives as our future.

The future of the island of Maui is in peril and the obstacles we face are numerous and daunting in scale. Rapid urbanization is occurring at a rate never seen on Maui before and the disappearance of once rural areas is being expedited by development, immigration, and loss of agricultural production. The stresses placed on the utilities and infrastructure of our island are mounting but most importantly, we are struggling to maintain our cultural identity as a people and community. The General Planning and Action Committee or GPAC for Maui was meant as a way for concerned citizens and active members of our community to have their opinions make a difference in the future by utilizing our position in the present. Thus far, the response from the community has been enthusiastic and fervent.

The present is our chance to learn from our past to do something beneficial for our future. It is imperative, in the cause of the preservation and advancement of our people, our island, and our community, that we strive everyday to make a difference. Whether it's volunteering for the elderly or tutoring our young, working alongside one another in restoring the landmarks, parks, and natural beauty of our island or doing your part in your own neighborhood. Whether it is speaking out against something wrong or standing up for something that is righteous, no matter how big or how small, we can all make an impact in some way.

Preserving and remembering what in essence gives us our identity, the past, showing a concern and active interest in what will become of us, the future, and making a crucial difference where we can for the betterment of what matters, the present, we can walk towards a brighter and better Maui together.