

This was the text to the write up on Tom Berg when members of the community had nominated him for a Kapolei Outstanding Achievement Award (KOA Award) in 2007:

Around 1998, the Ewa by Gentry Community Association had brokered a deal with Oceanic Cable to permit the association limited use of one channel to serve its community needs. This meant that if the association purchased a video camera, it could playback recorded events and post information on TV to educate and entertain the members regarding happenings all around them.

Only one thing was missing, someone to regularly attend events volunteering to operate the camera and prepare the tapes for playback. That is when Tom Berg got involved and began filming association board meetings, concerts at area parks, parades, holiday festivities, groundbreaking ceremonies and the like. From smiles at swap meets to the thicket of smoke on New Years, the association was compiling a library of tapes to document the history of things happening out and about in Ewa.



Tom and his girlfriend Edlynn Taira (Friends of Tom Berg; Treasurer) have been attending KOA Award Ceremonies for years. For two consecutive years, Tom volunteered with Edlynn and filmed them and put the entire event(s) on Olelo television for all to watch.

The association continues to show recordings from those early days in the late 90's that provides many residents with the opportunity to recapture that special moment of when their child performed the hula or sang a song in their school's choir at the annual Pride for Ewa event and also the Ewa Family Fun Fair when it was held on the historic grounds of the Ewa Manager House on Renton Road. Memories are abound for families able to watch again their son or daughter rounding the bases at a baseball game, sitting on Santa's lap for a photo op, or posing for the judge at a Halloween costume contest over the years. These videos serve as a reminder, like a history book captured on film how we have grown as a community in more ways than we ever imagined.

Simple images were intentionally recorded by Tom of Ewa's horizon before the golf courses, commercial centers, or even entire neighborhoods were built, reminding us that we are all part of a changing landscape. Tom has compiled a massive collection over the years preserved in film, these changes.

Tom continues to bring to viewers by way of the camera, the sensation of actually being present at community meetings and events that they may have otherwise missed out on. Before long, the association's video collection became quite substantial. Tom often

stated that the Ewa by Gentry Community Association residents are the most educated and informed residents in the state when it comes to knowing about things in their immediate surroundings and what the community has to offer them.

Take for example important events like the Barbers Point Redevelopment Commission meetings that oversaw the transfer of over 2000 acres from the military to the public; vision team meetings that brought Kapolei and Ewa Beach together; and recording the meetings that brought to fruition the Weed and Seed program to Ewa Beach. If there was a public meeting, or any government function that pertained to the Ewa plain, Tom was most likely there recording the event for posterity.

Eventually, Tom obtained the necessary training to produce and operate Olelo equipment as a one man production show and in 2000, launched a television series entitled “For Ewa Today.”

“For Ewa Today” has been a one hour show with new programming every month that for the last nine years has been airing on Olelo Community Public Television. Now, all of Oahu can watch the shows and not just the residents residing in the Ewa by Gentry Community.

Due to the Ewa plain burgeoning with so many groundbreaking ceremonies and community events popping up right and left to record, Tom needed more air time to share these recordings and decided to create another production. This new show in addition to “For Ewa Today,” was a half-hour weekly series that focused on government activities and often included political themes and topics featuring elected officials as guests. Since he was then working for a State Representative at the time, he called the show, “State of Affairs.” The show was usually recorded at the Leeward Community College Media Arts Studio and the set and format resembled a political talk show. Discussions covering the bills and resolutions of the day together with footage from committee hearings and briefings at the State Capitol were all of party to the show.

When his previous boss became a Senator, he changed the title of his show to “The Espero Report.” Between the two political series and specials, together with his show “For Ewa Today,” over the last nine years Tom has produced well over 300 shows for Olelo.

In addition, back in 2002, Tom’s craving to cover the political arena grew and he started yet a third series, this one for then State Representative Ed Case cleverly named, “Case in Point.” This series was played statewide on Olelo’s public television affiliates. Tom continued to cover the Congressman when the opportunity arose and has even produced specials for other politicians.

Tom’s affiliation with volunteer organizations permitted him to record and produce specials from events that transpired on neighboring islands as well as on the mainland. All his time and efforts invested in his productions are done so as a volunteer, most often paying for the tapes himself. Just three years ago, Tom was honored by the Ewa by

Gentry Community Association with the Volunteer of the Year Award for his contributions to the association.

Periodically, both Campbell and Waipahu High Schools often provide Tom with footage of their own productions seeking his time slot and credentials as an Olelo producer to air their shows for them. He also worked with the University of Hawaii's REAL program to secure grant monies that provided the Campbell Leo's Club a video camera of their own to produce anti-drug and smoking videos for public service announcements which continue to air on the Gentry TV channel to this day.

Tom often volunteers on other people's productions in the capacity as cameraman recording specials at community colleges and churches. According to Tom, his most notable and memorable show was recorded during a tour of the USS Bonhomme Richard while it docked in Pearl Harbor. As an Ewa Neighborhood Board member himself, together with members of the Kapolei Board, the Commander of the ship took the board members out to sea some 50 miles whereby the military flew the board members back to base in a helicopter. It was such a special occasion, Tom made copies of the show for all his relatives and board members that participated.

Another special event recorded by Tom that he says will forever live in his heart, was being given a private tour of Washington Place whereby he was able to film rare historic photos of the monarchy and delicate drawings of the building and nearby landscape not often seen on display. Taking video of the walls and light fixtures that the last monarch may have looked at as she rocked in her rocking chair next to her bedroom window - touching the same doorknobs that she may have herself opened, all the while to actually see the very bed that she died in, and to maybe get a glimpse of the sun's rays as she did when she peered through the window, was truly a moment worth preserving and sharing for everyone to witness.

From recording the first Sunset on the Plains, to our own Koa Awards Ceremonies in the past, be on the lookout for his camera capturing a child's first Easter egg hunt experience, patrons sifting through old books at an annual book sale, Kapolei Lions recycling Christmas trees, passengers boarding the ferry in Kalaeloa or riding the historic train in Ewa, somewhere, at some event, possibly while your walking laps to raise money for a cure for cancer, or merely waving to the crowd from a convertible at a parade, or even from the saddle of a horse at one's local community fair, the lens may be focused on you "For Ewa Today."