

A person in traditional Hawaiian attire, including a white shirt and a lei, is performing on stage. They are holding a microphone and appear to be singing or speaking. The background is a dark stage setting.

On March 19, 2004 more than 150 people gathered at the Waimea Brewing Company restaurant in Kirkland, Wash., to experience a live broadcast of the 82nd Annual Kamehameha Schools Song Contest.

The pilot test broadcast used VOIP technology, or video over Internet protocol, which allowed the televised image from KHON-2 in Honolulu to ride in real time across the Internet through a Verizon DSL line and into a computer which projected a digital image onto a screen.

The project offered a glimpse at how Kamehameha Schools can use technology to offer Hawaiian educational and cultural video programming worldwide via the Internet.

By all accounts, the evening was a smashing success, with kudos extended to web development manager **Bruce Lum '65** and community relations manager **Dawn Farm Ramsey '71** of Kamehameha's Community Relations and Communications Group; Henry Meyer, director of the KS Distance Learning Department; data communications professional **Wayne Wong '69** of Seattle; and Kamehameha Schools Alumni Association Northwest Region president **Stan Dahlin '61** and treasurer **Dan Kaopuiki '50**.

*"The important thing is we were all there as one Kamehameha family who, as graduates, parents of graduates, or as extended 'ohana, we reached back in time and remembered past performances when we or our children took center stage and sang our traditional Hawaiian songs," said KS Alumni Relations director **Gerry Vinta Johansen '60**, who coordinated the event and helped bring a special Hawai'i flavor to Kirkland.*

Also in attendance that evening was **Renee Mailer McDonald '96**, who shares her thoughts on the event for the benefit of the Kamehameha Schools 'ohana.

Broadcasting more than just Song Contest



A live Kamehameha Schools Song Contest broadcast to Northwest Region alumni reminds viewers of the beauty of the Hawaiian culture

by Renee Mailer McDonald '96

When I walked into the Waimea Brewing Company, I wasn't sure what to expect – or how moved I would be – by sitting with my fellow Kamehameha Schools alumni and re-living Song Contest thousands of miles away on a Friday night in Kirkland, Wash.

I sat there with my husband Matt – who has never been to Hawai'i – and my aunty Cherie Mailer, who is a Punahou graduate, and we all had a great time regardless of our connection to Song Contest or Kamehameha Schools.

My aunty said she was reminded of just how special Hawaiian music is, how beautiful the Hawaiian culture is and how much it meant to her to be included in the night even though she was a Punahou graduate.

(She also was thankful that the event was held at WBC, where they served real Hawaiian food. Me too!)

At the end of the night, my husband told me that he finally understood why I had such a strong feeling for my school and my home of Hawai'i.

Matt said that watching these Kamehameha kids sing made him feel like he too wanted our future kids to go to a school that was so rich in culture and so committed to instilling a sense of honor, pride and respect in the student body, their families and in essence an entire community.

It meant a lot to me that he was touched by our culture even though he's never been able to witness it firsthand.

I had a similar reaction as my aunt and husband, but I felt something more – it was a longing and a thirst for more Hawaiian culture. I've been away from the islands for so long that I've forgotten how good it feels to be in a room full of Hawaiians – whether or not it's in your blood.

The music, the food, the storytelling, the smell of plumeria and tuberose and the feeling of

hundreds of hugs was overwhelming and reminded me of just how important it was for me to stay connected to my people.

The night was more than Song Contest – it was a rebirth of my connection to my home, and a call to all Hawaiians to join together to keep our culture alive and well.

I truly appreciate the efforts of the alumni who gave their time and effort to make this night a reality for so many of us Hawaiians away from home. More importantly, I thank them for opening up the night to people who aren't necessarily "Hawaiian" – like my husband and aunty.

I was born into the culture, and thanks to Kamehameha I was able to embrace and learn more about my culture than I'd ever dreamed. But to see the joy and understanding on someone's face – someone who has never been to Hawai'i – watching Song Contest and genuinely becoming interested in the Hawaiian culture really overwhelmed me.

To see WBC patrons who snuck in to see the show just by chance and hear them comment on how beautiful the children sang made my own heart sing.

My teacher back at Kamehameha, kumu **Jay Kauka '76**, used to say that the most effective way to keep our culture alive was to share it, and he was exactly right.

On this Friday night, through the efforts of the current Kamehameha students, the Kamehameha alumni 'ohana and participants new to the Kamehameha "experience," we did just that – and I can't wait to see where we go from here.

For more information and to see additional photos on the Kirkland webcast, please visit <http://www.imua69.com/telecast/index.htm>.

"The night was more than Song Contest – it was a rebirth of my connection to my home, and a call to all Hawaiians to join together to keep our culture alive and well."

– RENEE MAILER McDONALD



*Top – Viewers take in Song Contest at the Waimea Brewing Company. Above – Northwest Region alumni, from left, **Peter Daniels '85**, **Michael Sturrock '64** and **Stan Dahlin '61** with **Dawn Farm Ramsey '71** of Kamehameha's Community Relations and Communications Group.*