

Foundations built for King Kekaulike High School

by Valerie Muroki

As Principal Susan Scofield stood above the massive construction site of her soon-to-be administration office, she contemplated the task she had agreed to take on — the opening of a new high school in the Upcountry area.

Below her, pits and concrete foundations formed the foreground of the view of the island that the grounds of King Kekaulike High School command.

Scofield mused, considering her decision to enter the field of school administration: "All teachers have strong ideas about children and learning. All teachers see things and wish they could be better.

"As an administrator," she continued, "I could focus on making things better."

The Kaneohe-born Scofield came to Maui with two children to join her husband, who had finally found a good teaching job here after having searched for openings on Oahu.

She was teaching at Pukalani Elementary School when her principal, Oscar Kawakami, "planted a seed in my head" to go into administration, she said.

Scofield wanted to bring ideas from her own classroom into the broader scope of a school, where she hoped to affect the

staff and the teaching.

She trained under David Keala, then principal of Kalama Intermediate School. She returned to Pukalani as vice principal, then went on to head Lahaina's King Kamehameha III Elementary School.

She said she came to see the need for a "multi-pronged approach" to the problems young people have.

And she said she knows the community considers education important. "I really believe community involvement, home involvement are necessary."

Opening King Kekaulike is expected to be a tricky proposition, according to Scofield, because only Phase I is to be completed for the new school year in 1995. Only a freshman class can be accommodated in two classroom buildings, office, multi-purpose/cafeteria building, and locker rooms.

"The community is anxious about the new school, and curious," said Scofield. She said many parents have called her to "talk story, one-to-one. They're really interested, and they're offering to help."

Some parents even like the idea of starting small. There's "closer monitoring of the students," says the principal. And for some ninth-graders, who usually find



HIGH SCHOOL ON HIGH — Susan Scofield, the administrator selected to open King Kekaulike High School when it is ready for its first freshman class next fall, tours the Five Trees site in Kula with construction supervisor Tim Gatschet.

it difficult to go through the transition from an intermediate school to a large high school, this should ease the normal fears, she said.

Scofield set herself up in a corner of the Kalama School campus in order to be close to her future freshmen — a majority of the 415 members of the eighth grade class this year.

"I've surveyed all the eighth grade students," she said. "There's high interest."

"This is the Class of '99. I tell these students that they are the pioneers...they'll make history," she continued.

Because a high school can be a "depersonalizing experience," the new principal said she wants to use the first year or two to create "a very personal experience," which she said she hopes to maintain as the school population grows.

Some parents express worries about a sports program, she said. Some families are projecting ahead to possible athletic scholarships for their youngsters in the future. "We'll provide what we can," said Scofield.

"The MIL [Maui Interscholastic League] has never shut the door on us...[A sports program] will depend upon the community support, [such as]

fundraising," said Scofield.

The same goes for a band program.

"Pretty soon we have to organize," she continued. "That's why they put me up here, to get people together."

Scofield insisted that it's "no problem" taking calls from parents and community members. "That's why I'm here," she added, offering Kalama's phone number for people to reach her (572-7719). She also thanked Kalama Principal Dennis Hokama for accommodating her.

Some parents, she said, are asking if the school can be finished in time to open for next year's fall semester. Scofield said the contractors are pushing the job as hard as they can, even working Saturdays.

While taking Scofield on a tour of the building site, Construction Supervisor Tim Gatschet of F & H Construction said he has faced some problems — first the lack of building permits when construction started, and now the lack of water.

F & H's two water sources are a nearby residence and a fire hydrant a mile-and-a-half away, said Gatschet.

And in the meantime, conflicts over the easement that would bring a realistically-sized water line to the site are causing further worries, he said.

Water board reconsiders easement

A tug of war has developed between Maui Land and Pineapple Co. and the county's Department of Water Supply, according to sources on both sides.

The question is the easement through pineapple land that would allow the water department to supply the new King Kekaulike High School with water.

According to David Craddick, water department director, the water board voted during their Sept. 20 meeting to disallow an agreement with ML&P that would restrict use of the easement through their land. The restrictions requested would limit lines to serving the new upcountry school, a

few residences and a church in the area — and not a possible future development of a shopping center nearby.

The board took action to block restrictive easements, suggesting that the county could purchase the necessary pathway for the water line through eminent domain, said water board member Norma Piltz.

However, unusual circumstances may cause board members to change their minds in this case, she said. So she has called for the question to be reconsidered during the November water board meeting.

"We're policy makers," said Piltz, adding that decisions are based on information provided to the board.