



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Please Join Us for Lunch!

Monday, August 22, 2005

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Miyama Main Hall, Harris United Methodist Church

Nuuanu Ave. and South Vineyard Blvd.

Ample parking - driveway off Nuuanu Ave.

AGENDA:

11:30 Luncheon – Pizza, Salad, Drinks, Dessert by Eloise \$5.00 donation

11:45 Welcome, Introductions and remarks, Larry Geller, President

11: 50 **Program: Financial Exploitation of Seniors, Lei Shimizu, Adult Protective Services.**

12:45 Announcements

1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Hosts: John Cannell

BOARD MEETING: 10:00 A.M. PRECEDING LUNCH

Letter from the President, Larry Geller

Once upon a time there was a certain island in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean on which all the inhabitants were blind. Gradually, their island was invaded by developers and architects who had clear vision. The developers developed, covering much of the island with concrete and asphalt. You would hardly know it was a tropical island; there were so many dwellings and office buildings.

One day, an army of developers and architects were passing through the city, but it took them a long time due to traffic congestion. And lo, they had an idea, which would bring them much profit, and which they knew the people would accept, since they could not see. They proposed that an expensive transportation system be established, to be paid for through the levy of many taxes upon the people.

The system would consist of a fixed passageway along which would move a line of elephants. The people of the city had heard of elephants, but had no experience of them. Some believed that the elephants would relieve congestion on the roads and byways; others believed the opposite. A committee of five was organized to debate the merits of the proposed transportation system. Unlike the similar Sufi tale, there was no elephant to inspect, so they were working with completely made-up evidence.

The first young man held that "For going from point A to point B, nothing surpasses an elephant. It will always get you from A to B." He left for later discussion where A or B would be located.

The second young blind man was fixated by the beast's long trunk. "Why, each elephant could hold on to the tail of the elephant just ahead of it, and many people will be moved from A to B simultaneously!" The third young blind man considered the elephants' vast hungry mouths, and proposed new taxes to pay their upkeep, which was met with much objection by the others. The fourth young blind man reminded the others that the elephants were uncomfortable to ride and slow, and so persons of means

(for example, the developers and architects) would not use them, confining the ridership to the lowest classes of commoners. Accordingly, the elephants would with but not relieve the congestion on the roads and byways.

The fifth committee person was a wise old blind woman. She listened to the uproar the young men were creating and laughed as she remembered her own foolishness as a young woman. Like these young men, she once thought she understood the whole of something when she had been presented with only a part of it, and she willingly depended on the teachings of others who were, in truth, as blind as she. She laughed also because she was about to move back to Colorado before the new taxes kicked in.

Notes From July Meeting...

Kat Brady and Henry Curtis, representing Na Maka o Hawai`i Nei - The Eyes of Our Hawaii - spoke at our last meeting about the Board of Agriculture's approval of the importation of seven strains of genetically engineered algae to be grown in an unpatented system called 'photobioreactors' at the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority on the Kona Coast of Hawaii Island.

On July 8, 2005 Na Maka o Hawai`i Nei filed a request for a contested case hearing to challenge the Board's vote. This fledgling hui of organizations, churches, and caring citizens came together when the Board ignored the concerns of the community and those of many scientists, including Dr. Malcolm Brown who has studied algae in Hawaii over forty years.

Some of the concerns expressed by Na Maka o Hawai`i Nei are

- these biopharm algae strains have never been introduced outside of a laboratory,
- the lack of information given to the Board to help them make an informed vote
- the lack of information provided to the scientists reviewing the application
- Na Maka o Hawai`i Nei is still waiting to hear if their petition for a contested case hearing has been granted.

Questions from the audience: Why grow this outside, shouldn't it be done in a lab? *Yes, they must.* Mera Pharmaceuticals said they could grow the algae on a rooftop in San Diego without a permit, why don't they? *It appears the company was invited here. The state wants to make Hawaii a center for biomedical industry.*

Postscript: Article in the Star Bulletin, August 3, 2005: GROUPS SUE OVER ALGAE IMPORT PERMIT. "The suit claims the state board granted the permit without conducting an environmental assessment as required for activities on state or county land."

NATION'S FIRST GAS CAP LAW ACTIVATES ON SEPTEMBER 1, 2005

The nation's first Gas Cap law is set for implementation in Hawai`i on September 1, 2005. Scott Foster, Communications Director for Hawaii's *Advocates For Consumer Rights* (AFCR) said, "The entire country is watching to see what happens here because we are the first state in the nation to pass gasoline price regulation. In only two other places, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland in Canada, have advocates managed to pass consumer-friendly gas regulation and it's working well; has a proven track record." AFCR was one of two Hawai`i consumer organizations working to pass the controversial law. AFCR coordinated the project's communications, and Citizens Against

Gasoline Price Gouging (CAGPG) and their distinguished members conducted the research and delivered much of the key supporting testimony.

Foster credits the law to Democrats in the Hawai`i State Legislature, but gives special praise to former Democratic Governor Ben Cayetano," who had the guts to stand up to the rapacious oil industry." Cayetano took the oil industry to court over Hawaii's unexplainably-high gas prices and introduced the Gas Cap legislation in 2002 when it first passed. In 2004, Republican Governor Linda Lingle introduced repeal legislation, but the Democrats made only technical corrections to the law and the oil

industry's expensive lobbying effort and the Governor's repeal bill failed - and failed again during the 2005 legislative. The Hawai'i Gas Cap regulates the price at wholesale, with savings expected to come from the free-market forces of the retail arena once retailers are able to become more competitive because of a larger profit margin.

During one recent local TV news story, Charles Langley, the Gasoline Analyst for San Diego's *Utility Consumer's Action Network*

(ucan.org) referred to Hawai'i being in the notorious "Gouge Zone" which consists of several locales whose hapless consumers have historically been, for whatever reasons, gouged at the pump by the rapacious international oil industry. Meanwhile, the oil industry has stepped up their frantic effort to persuade the Governor to somehow delay the Gas Cap's implementation. Will they succeed? Foster says, "I guess we'll know in a few weeks."

Medicare Part D Public Information Forum

It takes more than a new law to save you money on prescription drugs. It takes learning how it works. The first step has been taken. The second step is up to you. Attend a free public forum to learn more about the new Medicare prescription drug program and how to enroll. Find out about extra help for those who meet the income guidelines. If you qualify, you can enroll now and there will be help for you to fill out the paperwork at the event! Coffee and donuts provided.

Date: Tuesday August 30, 2005, Time: 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.,

Place: Pacific Beach Hotel, Mahi Mahi Room, 2490 Kalakaua Ave.

Join U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka, AARP Hawaii, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Social Security, and the Executive Office on Aging and find out about the new Medicare Prescription Drug Program.

Please pre-register, by calling the AARP volunteer information center at 843-1907.

Diabetic Retinopathy Dr. Timothy Fern

If you look to either side of you in your pew you are likely looking at a diabetic or else a person at risk of becoming one. Diabetes affects 14 million Americans. Diabetics run a 23X risk of blindness and there are 8000 new blind diabetics annually. That is why diabetic retinopathy or eye damage in diabetics needs to be taken so seriously.

Just having diabetes does not doom one to diabetic retinopathy and blindness. Highly fluctuating blood sugars and/or blood sugars hovering highly above a normal range (measured at 70 – 110) does put a diabetic at risk. Duration of diagnosis >10 years is also a risk.

All diabetics should visit an ophthalmologist yearly for an eye exam. This is very important and may prevent future blindness. The eye professional will dilate each eye to better view each retina for diabetic changes and make changes when needed.

What can a diabetic experience in visual changes? At first there might be a mild distortion in straight lines and blurriness, called the *non-proliferative* stage, where fragile retinal cells tear, spilling blood cells and fats on to the retina or into the jelly-like substance of the eye. The second stage is when retinal vessels *proliferate*, leading to eventual blindness if left untreated. In every case the advance to blindness is painless. This is why early diagnosis and laser treatment, called photocoagulation, is so important.

You're Invited To

A free conference for tutus raising keiki

Thursday, September 15, 2005, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Makaha Resort

Legal rights for grandparents, Community Resources and Support

Pre-Registration is required. Please call 696-3482. Space is limited.

Kokua Council for Senior Citizens of Hawaii
Education Fund, Inc.
20 South Vineyard Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Who Are We?

The **Kokua Council** is one of Hawaii's oldest advocacy groups. There is a \$5 annual membership to defer printing and postage costs. At each meeting, topical issues are presented for discussion and possible action. We embrace diversity and extend a special invitation to any senior or intergenerational minded individual interested in advocating for these important issues in Hawaii." All are welcome. **WHEN** 4th Monday of every month, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. **WHERE** Harris United Methodist Church @ Nuuanu and Vineyard Blvd., Ample parking and a light lunch are provided for \$5. **REACH US** c/o Harris United Methodist Church, 20 South Vineyard, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Mission: "Kokua Council seeks to empower seniors and other concerned citizens to be effective advocates in shaping the future and well-being of our community, with particular attention to those needing help in advocating for themselves. "

President Larry Geller, 540-1928, lgeller@igc.org
Vice President Tony Lenzer, 261-2095, tlenzer@hawaii.rr.com
Vice President Laura Manis, 597-8838, manis@lava.net
Website: www.kokuacouncil.org

Secretary Lyn Moku, 532-0806, lyn.moku@nmss.org
General Info Eloise Monsarrat, 839-1545
Program Lynda Johnson, 734-3648, johnsonl068hawaii.rr.com
Newsletter Jeanne Y. Ohta, 373-3186, jyohta@hawaii.rr.com

JOIN KOKUA COUNCIL!

Yes! I want to join Kokua Council. Here are my annual dues and my contact information. I understand that my phone number will be added to the Kokua Phone Tree and I will receive the monthly newsletter and occasional e-mails. Our fiscal year starts in January. Please make checks payable to Kokua Council.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

____\$5.00

LIFE MEMBER

____\$100.00

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

____\$25.00

DONATIONS _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Mail to: Treasurer, Kokua Council, Harris United Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard Blvd.,
Honolulu, HI 96813