



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Please join us for lunch
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2008

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: "Healthy Vegetarian, Salad. Desert by Eloise" \$5.00 Donation
- 11:45 Welcome, Introductions and remarks, Larry Geller, President
- 11: 50 Annual meeting, Election of officers, Treasurers Report
- 12:00 **Program: Preparing for the 2008 Legislative Session – see insert**
- 12:15 **Senator Les Ihara: Joint legislative Committee on Family Caregiving/ Kupuna Caucus 2008 Legislative Priorities**
- 1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Host: Jan Bappe

BOARD MEETING: 10:00 a.m. Preceding Lunch

BALLOT: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOUNDERS (ADVOCACY) GROUP - 2008-2010

**Larry Geller, President, Tony Lenzer, Vice President, Laura Manis, Vice President
Evelyn Shephard, Treasurer. Directors: T. J. Davies, George Fox, Betty Sugarman, Lyn Moku,
Eloise Monsarrat, Marilyn Seely, Sam Cox, Lynda Johnson.**

Harry Mattson, head of Pacific Research & Planning Assoc. Inc., former AARP Hawaii, Associate Vice President for Advocacy.

Jim Shon, was a State Legislator for 12 years, Executive Director for Hawaii's charter schools, and is currently a consultant. He teaches graduate policy courses at the UH, and his doctorate is from the UH focusing on Aging in Place issues.

Charles Carole, Retired, Office of Planning of DBEDT. Vice-Chair, Makiki Neighborhood Board. Chair, Citizens Advisory Committee, Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization, Bd. League of Women Voters.

Reminder: 2008 membership fees of \$5.00 are due in January.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER – Larry Geller

I decided to do the laundry on New Year's day. Apparently, many others had the same idea, so it was actually pretty crowded. Lots of "Happy New Year" greetings in several different languages. And "How was your holiday?" I noticed, though, that the laundry in my tub was the same as the laundry I washed just last week.

Maybe that's the message for me. 2008 looks a bit like 2007. Some challenges still remain. For example, more seniors will find themselves in the Medicare Part D "doughnut hole" this year, waiting lists for services are longer, and costs are higher. Just like doing the same old laundry once again.

Kokua Council got 2008 off to a start back in October, when you, the community, told us what your priorities would be for the 2008 legislative session. Now we must get recharged and busy. With your help and new experienced board members, 2008 will be better than 2007. January's meeting will launch the process by featuring Sen. Les Ihara, filling us in on the Joint Committee of Caregiving and Kupuna Caucus priorities. Most of which we support.

Then off we go, writing and giving testimony, and speaking with lawmakers to make 2008 better than 2007 was.

To do that, we need your subscription renewal. It's still only \$5, which barely covers newsletter postage. But it keeps us going. Please take out your checkbook and renew today.

"LOBBYING" IS NOT A DIRTY WORD

Excerpted from Common Cause

A lobbyist is not only someone who seeks to influence a public official but is also a resident seeking to convince his condo association to not raise maintenance fees, or a child trying to convince their dad to let them use the car. Most of us do some kind of lobbying every day. Lobbying is negative only when illegal or unethical means are used to try to influence the decision-maker. (An example would be giving huge amounts of money to a re-election campaign in exchange for receiving a large consulting contract.) Lobbyists play a necessary and important part in the legislative process by giving vital information on an issue to a lawmaker.

It is not necessary to be a professional to be an effective lobbyist. Too often, citizens feel that it doesn't do any good for them to let their elected officials know how they feel about an issue important to them. They underestimate their own power as citizens. Legislators are elected to represent their constituents. Lawmakers must hear from their constituents in order to know how they feel on issues to be acted on. Sadly, only a

small fraction of citizens bother to call or write their legislator on key issues

While many people believe their letter or call to an official's office is ignored, in fact, the opposite is true. Letters are read by an aide or the official and answered. Letters and calls are logged and summarized as a way to determine the strength and direction of public opinion on issues in the district or state. Just a handful of letters from constituents on a single topic will force the official to pay more attention to that issue than most of the thousands of bills filed in a single state legislative session. (As a rule of thumb, remember "The Power of Ten" which means one letter is counted as ten. Lawmakers know for every letter they receive many other people share the same opinion but do not take the initiative to write.)

All communication is important – letters, calls, e-mails, postcards, and petitions –because it shows that constituents care about the issues. However, a thoughtful personal letter will have more impact than simply communication by petition or pre-printed form letter.

THE RX FOR SAVINGS ON MEDICINES-*Consumer Reports*

Older drugs often match newer ones. Skillful marketing by the drug companies aims to convince doctors and consumers that newer medicines are almost always better. But expert evaluations have concluded that in many cases older drugs available as less expensive generics are as good or even better than newer ones. And because older drugs have been taken by millions of people for years, experts usually have a better idea of their long-term safety. For more information visit the Consumer Reports Web site at www.consumerreports.org

Letter to the Editor

I just read my Kokua Council newsletter for December and noted the article on Kokua Council receiving the 2007 Family Caregiving Award for Advocacy, awarded by the KHON2 Elderhood Project and the Hawaii Caregiver Coalition for its Y2005 Silver Legislature project and its Annual Community Issues Forum. Both were very successful activities.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of HARA, I express to you and the other leaders and members of Kokua Council our congratulations for your achievement and public recognition. The Board is very proud to have the Kokua Council, one of our affiliates receive such recognition. And I'm personally proud to be a member of the Kokua Council.

Aloha and best wishes, *AL Hamai, President, HARA*

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Linda Smith, Governor's policy advisor announced at a recent Kupuna Caucus meeting, that the administration will be introducing a new bill to protect elders from abuse. The proposed bill will be more inclusive than the present bill by changing the eligibility criteria. The current statute requires that the adult is "dependent", that abuse has occurred and that imminent abuse will occur. The proposed bill changes the definition to "vulnerable" where abuse has occurred or the adult is in danger of being abused if immediate action is not taken. Furthermore, staff will be shifted from other programs so no additional funding is required.

Kokua Council was one of many advocacy groups asking for these changes and will gladly testify "in support" this session.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Health care reform will remain on the minds of most Americans- and it will be a big part of the upcoming presidential primaries, caucuses and ultimately, on Election Day. Here are the facts according to *Working Families*:

- * Premium costs are rising three times faster than wages or inflation;
- * Exploding costs are hurting working families;
- * Rising costs are hurting our employers' ability to compete;
- * As costs rise, more people are uninsured—some 47 million people in our country have no health coverage today;
- * Retirees especially are losing employer-sponsored health care;
- * Today's health care system is wasteful and inefficient;
- * Insurance and drug companies are pocketing obscene profits; and
- * The majority of people in America want to fix our broken health care system.

Working Families suggest support for a unique American plan for health care reform that:

- Controls rising and irrational costs.
- Provides comprehensive, high-quality health care to all.
- Gives every family the opportunity and the responsibility for preventive care.
- Preserves the right to choose and use your own doctor.
- Asks our government to play a strong role in restoring balance to the system--curbing greed and incompetence and ensuring more fairness and efficiency.
- Lowers employer costs and, in return, asks them to pay their fair share, along with government and individuals.
- Builds on what's best about American health care while drawing from what works in other countries.



**Kokua Council for Senior Citizens
Education Fund, Inc.**

20 South Vineyard Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96813
<http://www.kokuacouncil.org>

Return Service requested

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

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 advocates and 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 Treasurer Ed. Fund T.J. Davies tjdavies@juno.com
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Website: www.kokuacouncil.org

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 **LIFE MEMBER** **ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS**
____\$5.00 ____\$100.00 ____\$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