



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

**Please join us for lunch  
MONDAY, September 22, 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: Various Sandwiches, Salad, Drinks, Dessert by Eloise—\$5.00 Donation
- 11:45 Welcome, Introductions and Remarks, Larry Geller, President
- 12:00 Program: Panel Discussion: **“Con-Con—How YOU Can Make a Difference,”** Jim Shon, former legislator and delegate to 1978 Con-Con; Peter Kay, Blog Hawaiiiconcon.org, Waikiki Neighborhood Board #2 member; Ira Rohter, Political Science Professor, UH Manoa
- 12:45 Questions and Answers
- 1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Host: Grace Furukawa

Board meeting: 10:00 a.m. Preceding Lunch

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**Kokua Council Sponsors Its 5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM  
BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION**

Monday, October 27, 2008, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Round table discussion by key government administrators, legislators, community advocates followed by  
Questions and Answers

**CAMPAIGN REFORM, CAREGIVER SUPPORT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, UNIVERSAL HEALTH, KUPUNA CARE, LONG TERM CARE**

Representatives from nonprofit and other organizations involved with seniors as well as advocacy groups who have needs/concerns that can be helped legislatively or by other means will present their issues. To reserve a lunch, ask for time on the agenda or for more information call Laura Manis, 597-8838 or email manis@lava.net.

The Hawaii Primary Election is scheduled for Saturday September 20, 2008, and the General Election scheduled for Tuesday, November 4, 2008.

IRS will be at the Seniors Fair Sept 19 - 21 joined by the AARP Taxpayer Advocate Office to staff a booth. They will be distributing various flyers especially help for the Economic Stimulus Payment.

## NOTES FROM AUGUST LUNCHEON—JIM DATOR

“For years, I have been asking people in Hawaii to consider one of four "alternative futures" that I have constructed for them. Interestingly, the one that most people here tell me they like... Hawaii as a community frozen in time when things were about as good as they could be for most people living here—the late 1950s and early '60s.

How is it possible since all dominant forces are pushing for endlessly more of everything—tourists, hotels, big box stores, McMansions, and economic "growth" in general?

The answer may lie in what I call "The unholy trinity, plus one." I use the phrase to capture the combined influence of three processes that are often considered separately. Someone focusing on one is unlikely to pay attention to the other two. Indeed, solutions to the one are often expected from the other two. But, all three are in crisis together and must be viewed together—along with something else: the "plus one" in my title.

The unholy three are:

- "Peak Oil"—that we may in essence "run out" of oil before equally abundant and cheap energy sources come on line. And Hawaii is almost totally dependent on cheap oil for everything it does now.
- "Climate change" and all the other many environmental problems we have been

neglecting, and making worse, for so long.

- And "global economic collapse" of the debt-driven Ponzi scheme we call an "economy."

Many of us expect the federal government to help solve these problems—by sending everyone \$300 so we will go shopping and keep the economy going, or by investing in energy R&D. Yet, our Government can't help because of 20 years of bad-mouthing (neo-conservatism has convinced us that all government is bad), downsizing, privatizing, outsourcing, and debt, each of which were intended to drive nails into the coffin of effective government. Massive debt is the final nail. Our huge national debt was incurred on purpose. It is not an unfortunate consequence of policies. It is the intent of those policies to destroy effective government so as to leave everything up to private and not public forces—of such profiteers as Blackwater, Battelle, Halliburton, et al.

Conclusion: It is far too late to prevent the consequences of the Unholy Trinity, Plus One. We can only deal with them, and thus look forward eagerly to Hawaii being the best little backwater on the planet. Many people say they want such a Hawaii. Now is our chance. We all must learn how to live with grace and purpose with far less energy and consumer goods.”

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### CBO SAYS SOCIAL SECURITY HEALTHY AND VIABLE FOR DECADES TO COME

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released a report stating that Social Security is in good financial shape and will continue to be so for decades to come. The report, which forecasts out 75 years, finds that while the accumulating surpluses in the Social Security trust fund will be exhausted in 2049, ongoing revenues will still be sufficient to fund about 81% of promised benefits at the end of the 75-year period (in 2082). The reason given is that wages and Social Security revenues will continue to grow as the economy grows. The trust fund will cushion the large baby boom retirement, as it was designed to do, but most benefits will continue to be funded by direct transfers from workers to retirees, as they are now.

In a policy memo outlining the CBO's findings, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) think tank noted the report's finding that “future Social

Security beneficiaries will receive larger benefits in retirement...than current beneficiaries do, even after adjustments have been made for inflation.” According to the CBO projections, Social Security is in decent shape, because without any changes at all, the projected long-term Social Security shortfall equals a mere 1% of taxable payroll. EPI further states that the biggest problem facing Social Security is not the boomer retirement, but growing income inequality, which increases the share of untaxed earnings above the taxable earnings cap (currently set at \$102,000). “Social Security has been a great success for 73 years, and it will be a great success for the next seventy-five,” said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance of Retired Americans. “Of course, that is provided no one alters the core principles on which it is based by privatizing it.”

## NEW STUDY EXAMINES IMPACT OF DOUGHNUT HOLE IN 2007

A new report by the Kaiser Family Foundation stated the number of Medicare Part D plan enrollees who reached the “doughnut hole,” the gap in their prescription drug coverage, in 2007. The study of Part D prescription drug use found that 26% of Part D enrollees who filled any prescriptions in 2007 reached the gap. This includes 22% who stayed in the gap for the remainder of the year, and 4% who ultimately received catastrophic coverage. Applying this estimate to the entire population of Part D enrollees, the analysis suggests that about 3.4 million beneficiaries, or 14% of all Part D enrollees, reached the coverage gap and faced the full cost of their prescriptions in 2007.

Conducted by researchers at Georgetown University, the University of Chicago and Kaiser, the study found evidence of patients changing their use of prescription drugs when they were in the coverage gap. Across eight classes of drugs examined, 15% of Part D enrollees who reached the gap stopped their drug therapy for that

condition, 5% switched to another medication in the class, and 1% reduced the number of drugs they were taking in the class. The standard Part D benefit in 2008 has a \$275 deductible and 25% coinsurance, up to an initial coverage limit of \$2,510 in total drug costs, followed by a coverage gap where enrollees pay all of the next \$3,216 in drug costs. After reaching that limit, beneficiaries pay 5% of any additional drug costs.

For 2007, these amounts were slightly lower. The study also found that people who reached the gap paid the full cost of their medications, for an average of just over four months, and received catastrophic coverage for less than one month. The study analyzed retail pharmacy claims data, based on 4.5 million Medicare beneficiaries in Part D plans in 2007, the first year that most people were enrolled in a Part D plan for a full calendar year. The report, “The Medicare Part D Coverage Gap: Costs and Consequences in 2007,” is available online at <http://www.retiredamericans.org>.

**From Sen. Daniel Akaka:** “The Medicare bill scheduled to be heard by Congress includes increased Medicare reimbursements for physicians, and protects access to health care for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and members of our armed services and their families. I am pleased that the bill also contains a provision to provide \$15 million in Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) resources to Hawaii hospitals. Medicaid DSH payments are designed to provide additional support to hospitals that treat large numbers of Medicaid and uninsured patients. **To utilize the federal funding, the Hawaii State Legislature must provide required matching funds.** The provision would provide \$2.5 million in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008, \$10 million in 2009, and \$2.5 million for the 1st quarter of 2010.”

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

- September 19, 20, 21, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. each day, Free, Seniors’ Fair, The Good Life Expo, Blaisdell Exhibition Hall, 300 exhibit booths, flu shots, travel, health, nutrition, contests and much more.
- October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, November 5; 6-8pm, \$30, KCC, Kopiko, Room 127-128, Family Caregiver Training Series. Skills that are needed for caregiving and decision making, including dementia. Call 734-9211.
- October 4, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Free, KHON’s Elderhood Project 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Aging in Place Workshop, Ala Moana Hotel, Hibiscus Room. Learn more about elder care options.
- November 1, 8:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., \$45 for family & volunteer caregivers, \$60 professionals. Hawaii Caregiver’s Conference, “Caring for Family, Caring for Yourself.” Breakout sessions, resource fair, self-care. Register by October 21, 768-7700. Sponsored by Elderly Affairs Division. Keynoters, Dr. Bill Thomas of the Eden Alternative, Jennie Chin Hansen, AARP National President.

## KOKUA COUNCIL NEEDS TO UP-DATE EMAIL LIST

We use our email list for those who wish to receive this Newsletter by email, to notify members of action alerts in advocacy, for important meetings or briefings. Please send your email address to [Samcox@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:Samcox@hawaii.rr.com).



Kokua Council for Senior Citizens  
of Hawaii Education Fund, Inc.  
20 South Vineyard Blvd.  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
<http://www.kokuacouncil.org>

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### Who Are We?

The **Kokua Council** is one of Hawaii's oldest advocacy groups. There is a \$5 annual membership to defray 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
Vice President	Tony Lenzer, 261-2095, tlenzer@hawaii.rr.com	Treasurer Advocacy	Evelyn Shepard, 595-4025
Vice President	Laura Manis, 597-8838, manis@lava.net	General Info	Eloise Monsarrat, 839-1545
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	<b>Website</b> <a href="http://www.kokuacouncil.org">www.kokuacouncil.org</a>		

### 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.

<b>INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>LIFE MEMBER</b>	<b>ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>DONATIONS</b>
___\$5.00	___\$100.00	___\$25.00	_____

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