

KOKUA



COUNCIL

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Please Join Us for Lunch!

Monday, July 25, 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 – Chili, Salad, Drinks, Dessert by Eloise \$5.00 donation

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

11: 50 **Program: “Should the State Import Invasive Species When It Spends Forty Million Dollars a Year to Eradicate Them?” *Kat Brady and Henry Curtis, Hui Maka o Hawaii Nei (Eyes of Hawaii).***

12:45 Announcements

1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Hosts: Lynda Johnson, Bob Masuda

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

A DEAFENING SILENCE, President's Letter—*Larry Geller*

The little frog was thinking of moving to Hawaii. Several of her relatives had made the trip, jumping on an airplane from their little Caribbean island and hopping off in Paradise. She knew that they were having a great time, she could hear their raucous voices in the background every evening when she called.

What kept the little frog from giving up everything (which wasn't much, 'cause she was a frog) and flying off to Paradise was that she was familiar with the Boiling Frog Syndrome, which is roughly: “If you throw a frog into a pot of boiling water, it will jump out. But if you place a frog into a pot of lukewarm water and slowly turn up the heat, it will boil to death.” Actually, most every frog has heard of this, including of course her relatives living it up in Paradise. It's an old story.

She had read about the spiraling inflation in Hawaii, and how frog ponds were being paved over with asphalt and concrete. She knew that it

was already too expensive to fly to another island. She marveled at the high cost of gasoline (expected to rise further), huge tax increases planned for all islands, higher electricity rates, even higher charges for the long-distance calls that connected her to her family. Medical insurance is becoming unaffordable. She knew that the \$5 lunch joint would soon be charging \$6.50 for a smaller plate, if they hadn't raised prices already. She knew that if she flew to Hawaii, like the frog dumped into boiling water, she would quickly be on another plane back.

The interesting thing is that her relatives in Hawaii also know the story of the Boiled Frogs, but they had clearly grown accustomed to their lifestyle and were content to simply wait things out. In fact, that's what makes the Boiled Frog Syndrome a “syndrome” after all. Another of her uncles, who had spent time in a monastery in the East, called it “frog-nature.” He, too, was now

enjoying the serenity of the islands (and allegedly the loud parties at night). For he, of course, was a frog and so possessed that “frog nature.”

This tale has no moral. I seem to have my share of “frog-nature,” as most likely do you. So I would not dream of suggesting that any of us behave differently. I enjoy thrashing around in the pool as much as the next guy. I know, and you

know, that rising costs and rampant development are rapidly eating away at “Paradise” and that nothing seems to deter our leaders from taking us with them as they raise the heat under the pot we all share.

They know that we are frogs and we know we are frogs. So enjoy Paradise while you can.

SEX ABUSE TREATMENT CENTER —Christy Werner

I'd like people to realize that sexual violence is everyone's issue. Often times sexual assault is thought to be a women's issue, and a young women's issue for that matter. People need to be aware that everyone is at risk for sexual assault regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic status, education, ethnicity, etc.

At the Sex Abuse Treatment Center we see approximately one new female client coming in for services for the first time every day, and one new male client every week. In the history of our existence our youngest victim was 2 months old, while our oldest was 98 years old. We often have a couple new clients each year that are above the age of 60, and these are only the people who seek our services. Most people are not aware that elderly people are at risk too. This can create barriers to reporting or receiving services for this population because of fear of not being believed. Elderly people in general are much less likely to

report the incident or to seek help. It is important that we start to break down some of the harmful misconceptions people have about sexual violence in order to make it easier for more victims to speak out and get help.

In addition to the elderly population being at risk for sexual assault, it is also very likely that each individual knows someone who has been sexually assaulted. It is estimated that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18. Often, whether known to us or not, someone we love and care about has been a victim of sexual abuse. Not only is sexual violence and individual issue for the elderly, but also an interpersonal issue, as it may be a grandchild, son, daughter, or friend who is a victim of sexual violence.

It is important that we become aware of this issue and join in efforts to eliminate sexual violence from our communities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS SET FOR WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

Over sixty delegates from all over the state met on June 30 to decide on the 2 top issues to send to Washington for consideration at the White House Conference on Aging.

Delegates considered many issues but were required to narrow their choices to the two below.

1. Include Long Term Care in Medicare with a goal of achieving Universal Health.
2. The need for coordinated social and health services that allow seniors to age in place, to include the well and frail and maintain choice.

WHCOA meets every ten years to set public policy regarding programs important to older adults, their families, caregivers and communities. Many important pieces of legislation and programs have resulted from previous conferences including the Older Americans Act, Nutrition Programs, and National Family Caregiver Support Program. This first WHCOA for the new millennium will be held December 11-14, 2005 in Washington D.C.

NOTES, JUNE MEETING – PETER ROSEGG, Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.

Oahu is facing a Power Crunch. Electricity use by residents and businesses is growing at record rates, fueled by a strong economy and use of air conditioners and other electronic equipment. But no new generating capacity has been added since 1992. Existing generators are working longer and harder. Generating reserves are getting thinner, threatening blackouts. That is the picture of Hawaii's Energy Future as painted by HECO spokesman Peter Rosegg.

HECO sees the solution in four parts. All are important; it is not a question of either one or the other. They are, 1) energy conservation and efficiency; 2) renewable energy, including more solar and wind

power; 3) distributed generation in the form of combined heat and power for big customers; and 4) a new power plant at Campbell Industrial Park by 2009.

“For most of us, conservation and efficiency are the best thing,” Rosegg said. “It is something we can all do, we can start right now and it doesn’t cost much. In fact, we can save money and save the environment without any major sacrifice or inconvenience if we all use electricity wisely.”

Letter to the Editor: SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...by Henry Curtis, Life of the Land

- Did you know that Hawai`i is the most oil dependent state in the nation at 89.90% dependence?
- Did you know that Hawai`i ratepayers consistently pay the highest utility rates in the nation?
- Did you know that the entire U.S. demand for energy could be met by covering 8% of Nevada with photovoltaic cells?
- Shell Oil has said that 50% of the energy produced in the year 2050 will be from renewable sources.
- In Hawai`i we are blessed with every resource known to man to become energy self-sufficient... almost constant sunshine, prevailing tradewinds, a deep cold ocean surrounding our beautiful islands, and plenty of wave action.

So what's up with Hawai`i? Sadly, Hawai`i lacks the political will to change this paradigm. And, of course, having HECO hidden away in the back rooms of the Legislature rewriting bills to suit their agenda has not helped us move into the new energy millennium.

But WE are the government and WE must demand that Hawai`i kick the oil habit before we are all in the dark. Make energy self-sufficiency an issue at the Silver Legislature.

Medical Malpractice Lawsuits are Not Cause of Doctors' Insurance Spikes

“Insurance companies may be padding their bottom lines by jacking up their rates on doctors, but it is not because of patients seeking relief for bad medical care through our courts,” said Joan Claybrook, president of Public Citizen in the May/June 2005 *Public Citizen News*. In analyzing records compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Citizen found that:

- The annual number of malpractice payments is down.
- The total value of malpractice payments has been flat since 1991.
- Jury verdicts are not out of control. Adjusted for inflation from, 1991 to 2004 there has been an annual average increase of only 1.2 percent.
- There has been a 56% decline in million-dollar payouts.
- Cases of serious injury to patients dominate. “Failure to diagnose” and “improper performance cases” comprise from 16% to 20% of payouts. Minor injuries receive little compensation.

More information through Public Citizen’s Web site, www.citizen.org; click on “Press Room.”

SILVER LEGISLATURE “From Grumble to Rumble” Report to the Membership

Kokua Council Project Director Laura Manis and Project Coordinator Carolyn Golojuch with the help of co-sponsors have to date distributed thousands of leaflets publicizing the Silver Legislature at Senior and Health Fairs, have scheduled 28 Issues Workshops and 3 Training Workshops. So far, they have completed 23 of the Issues workshops with attendance ranging from 4 to 152 people. What are the issues proving to be most popular: affordable long term care, caregivers, universal health, the homeless, affordable housing, public funding for elections, transportation, privatizing Social Security; and longer “walk” lights at pedestrian crossings.

Those issues proving most popular and that have people willing to advocate for them at the Silver Legislature will be written up as bills and heard at model legislature committee hearings. We have already had people volunteer to be legislators and lobbyists and even bill writers. Community support has been wonderful. Our next step is to organize Training workshops on the Neighbor Islands.”

Kupuna Connections: The Only TV Series dedicated to Hawaii Seniors and their Families!

Co-hosted by Dr. Cullen Hayashida & Percy Ihara, CSA

Every Wednesday night, 7:30pm on channel 52 Olelo Community TV

Call to suggest topics or issues that you would like to see on Kupuna Connections, 368-6747

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 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 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."

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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