



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Please join us for lunch  
MONDAY, June 26, 2006

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 Pizzas, Salad, Drinks, and Dessert by Eloise. \$5.00 Donation

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

11:50 Legislative Report

12:00 **Program: Sarah Robinson: Pre-paid Funeral Trusts, Good Buy or Financial trap?**

12:45 Announcements

1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Host: Grace Furukawa

*"If there is anything we are serious about, it is neither religion nor learning, but food". Lin Yuntang*

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

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**ABOUT THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM: PRE-PAID FUNERAL TRUSTS, GOOD BUY OR FINANCIAL TRAP?**

What are the advantages and disadvantages of paying for final arrangements in advance? What are the laws governing funeral trusts in Hawaii. How can you set up and pre-pay your own funeral plan, and what you can do to insure your plan is fulfilled in the event you have already purchased a plan.

**Sarah Robinson** is the president of Funeral Consumers Alliance Hawaii, a non-profit educational and consumer advocacy organization. She has served on a State task force reviewing the death care industry, and has testified extensively in front of the Hawaii legislature on pre-paid funeral trusts.

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**Kokua Council members and Board contributed \$801 in April to help the homeless.  
Rev. Bob Nakata, of the Interfaith Alliance is managing the funds.**

## President's Letter- Larry Geller

Apparently the governor blasted "embedded lobbyists" (remember: you heard that term first right here!) at a news conference, which gave me my six seconds of fame on KITV last month. Reporter Denby Fawcett interviewed me.

I learned from her that a resolution, SR168, was introduced by Sen. Bunda to change Senate rules so that embedded corporate lobbyists would no longer be allowed. Unfortunately, the resolution wasn't adopted.

Elsewhere in the story, KITV credited responsibility for the language that killed health insurance rate regulation for all of us (and we'll pay dearly for that) to HMSA's registered lobbyist, Jennifer Diesman. Pacific Business news credits the poison pill to Kaiser. The bill died because House and Senate lawmakers couldn't agree on amendments drafted by Kaiser Permanente Hawaii that would have made it harder for the state to deny insurers' rate proposals, according to state insurance commissioner J.P. Schmidt.

Whichever, it appears that Rep. Herkes was bent on changing the law to favor the insurance industry.

Maybe he was just thanking them for loaning him

their corporate executive.

And so insurance rate regulation died, because the Senate was having none of Herke's language and didn't agree to the loaded bill. Senator Menor, who introduced one of the bills to simply remove the sunset provision of the existing law (and thus make rate regulation permanent) valiantly tried to save the day by recommitting the poisoned bill to conference committee where it could be sanitized. But House leadership didn't agree, and so the bill died.

Employers will certainly pay for this if insurance premiums climb like uncapped gas prices. So will individuals who pay premiums to cover their families.

Herkes comes to us from the Big Island, so all I can hope for is that they remember whom to thank as their pockets are being picked by already fat monopolistic health insurers. Neighbor Island residents get inferior service too, there are shortages in key medical specialties. Perhaps they will show their appreciation at the voting booth.

Let's keep the pressure on, and perhaps a rule to prevent corporate lobbyists can be put into effect in the next session.

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Mabel McConnell, a founding member of Kokua Council, celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday last month. She now resides at Pohai Nani Assisted Living, 45-090 Namoku Street, Kaneohe HI 96744 in sound mind and good health. HAPPY BIRTHDAY MABEL. May you live to be 120.

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## Notes from May Meeting- Scott Spallina, Deputy District Attorney, Elder Abuse

**Marilyn Seely**, former director of the Executive Office on Aging, Kokua Council Board member and now consultant on Aging issues introduced the speaker with these statements: Hawaii has one of the poorest records for elder abuse and fraud because of restrictive laws, definition of "dependency", different agencies not talking to each other, elders ashamed to complain.

**Scott Spallina:** Don't trust anybody. Family members, caregivers, helpful neighbors are worst offenders with those addicted to drugs, alcohol, gambling accounting for over 50% of elder abuse

Elders are the perfect victims; they own older homes that they are unable to keep up with repairs, often live alone, have assets, are lonely and trusting, have predictable habits (leave home same time each day) and less likely to take action.

Typically it takes 8 incidents of abuse, financial or physical before a victim or neighbor will complain. Usually this is because of embarrassment, fear of being declared incompetent, ashamed to turn in a family member, will have no one to look after him or her if they do. 75% of cases are dropped because of this.

Attempts to change laws have failed in the past because other state priorities have taken precedence, administrators say they are handling all complaints, public hasn't coalesced around the issue. (!!!)

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## POST OFFICE SERVICE

People living alone may register with the post office and give the name of someone they may call if your mail is not retrieved from your mailbox. They may also offer to deliver mail to your door if you are disabled or ill, or recuperating from surgery and cannot make the trip to your mailbox. This service is not available in all areas, so check with your post office for more information.

## COMING UP

### • Carole Kai Charities, Inc. BASIC COMPUTER CLASS for SENIOR CITIZENS "4TH ANNUAL FREE GREAT ALOHA RUN COMPUTER CLASS"

Senior Citizens are invited to sign up for a free 2-hour computer class to learn basic computer concepts that include: e-mail, use of the Internet, composing documents, and just having fun being comfortable with computers. Instructors are students volunteering their services to help our Kupuna, and Ms. Rene Mansho is the volunteer coordinator who is returning for the 4th year of "Seniors Helping Seniors Basic Computer Class."

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. YOU MUST CALL RENE @ 306-1876 E-mail: [rmansho@schh.com](mailto:rmansho@schh.com)**

**DATES: June 17, 20, 21, July 6, 7, 14, 15, 21, 22, 26, 28, August 4, 5, 10, 11, 18, 19**

**TIME: Various Times – 9:00 AM, 1:00 & 3:30 PM**

**PLACE: Weinberg Computer Center, Carole Kai Charities, Inc., 418 Kuwili St., Suite 102, Honolulu.**

• **KUPUNA CAUCUS**, Please mark on your calendars -- Wed-June 28, 11am to 1:30pm, as the next meeting of the Kupuna Caucus in conf. room 225 in the Capitol Building. Lunch provided by Hawaii Long Term Care Association and AARP. Don't forget to RSVP because we need a head count to plan for lunch. Agenda includes Adult Protective Services Law, Jim Pietsch, U.H. Elder Law, any vetoed legislation, Medicare Part D. Pamela Cunningham, and Role of the Kupuna Caucus. Please call Sen. Chun Oakland at 586-6130. While you're at it, mark the July 28 and August 30 meeting dates, too.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### **FROM KORY PAYNE, Voter Owned Elections**

\* Resolutions in support of Clean Elections were just passed at both the O'ahu County and the State Democratic Conventions.

\* A new nation-wide coalition has been formed and a campaign launched to get Clean Elections passed at the federal level. We will be taking part in actions in support of that effort. Stay tuned for more.

\* We've launched our summer public education effort and we are looking for volunteers who are willing to host house parties, participate in sign-waving efforts, and canvass with us to distribute donor lists for candidates. We will also be holding Regional Action Meetings starting in July.

Please contact us to get involved! Call Kory or John at 599-1600 or [www.voterownedhawaii.org](http://www.voterownedhawaii.org) or Kory Payne <[kory@voterownedhawaii.org](mailto:kory@voterownedhawaii.org)>

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### **FROM SEN. LES IHARA, JR.** Co-Convener, Kupuna Caucus, State Senator, 9th District

About 20 people attended the last meeting on May 16, when we reviewed aging legislation adopted this session. The general feeling was that the aging network had a relatively successful session, due in part to increased coordination among players in the aging network. There appears to be much work ahead and a range of issues were identified for consideration in an interim work program.

There was consensus that development of a 2007 legislative program was a good idea, and the caucus seems headed in that direction. Besides the adult protective services law and Medicare Part D agenda items on June 28, we will discuss the role of the Kupuna Caucus.

Please feel free to invite others who might be interested in attending Kupuna Caucus meetings.

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**FROM NATIONAL AARP.** S.1955 that could have made health insurance less accessible and affordable for 50+ workers, individuals with preexisting conditions or chronic illnesses, and women of childbearing age was **defeated** on Thursday, May 11. AARP activists sent approximately 12,000 e-mails to the U.S. Senate, as well as making about 13,000 phone calls. The supporters of S.1955 needed 60 votes to invoke "cloture"—thus limiting debate on the bill. Fortunately, their cloture proposal failed by a vote of 55-43. Hawaii Senators voted against the bill.

Do you know anyone who might like to receive a Newsletter? Send their name and address to Lyn Moku, <a href="mailto:lyn.moku@nmss.org">lyn.moku@nmss.org</a> or mail to Lyn Moku, C/O National MS Society, 418 Kuwili St. #105, Honolulu HI 96817
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**Two antennas met on a roof, fell in love and got married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.**



c/o Harris United Methodist Church  
 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, <a href="mailto:lgeller@igc.org">lgeller@igc.org</a>	Treasurer Ed. Fund T.J. Davies <tjdavies@juno.com>
Vice President	Tony Lenzer, 261-2095, <a href="mailto:tlenzer@hawaii.rr.com">tlenzer@hawaii.rr.com</a>	Treasurer Advocacy Evelyn Shepard, 595-4025
Vice President	Laura Manis, 597-8838, <a href="mailto:manis@lava.net">manis@lava.net</a>	General Info, Eloise Monsarrat, 839-1545, Remons1@hawaiiintel.net
Secretary	Betty Sugarman, 261-8936, <a href="mailto:betty333@lava.net">betty333@lava.net</a>	
Newsletter	Jeanne Y. Ohta, 373-3186, <a href="mailto:jyohta@hawaii.rr.com">jyohta@hawaii.rr.com</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>	
___\$5.00	___\$100.00	___\$25.00	<b>DONATIONS</b> _____

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