



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Please join us for lunch

MONDAY, MAY 22, 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 Lunch; Mixed Subway Sandwiches, Salad and Dessert by Eloise, \$5.00 donation
- 11:45 Welcome, Introductions and Remarks, Larry Geller, President
- 11: 50 Legislative Report
- 12:00 Program: Scott Spallina, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, specializing in domestic violence cases and Senior Deputy, Domestic Violence Felony Unit**
- 12:45 Announcements
- 1:00 Adjourn

Luncheon Host: John Cannell

Board Meeting: 10:00 am preceding lunch

COMING UP:

The Weapons of Fraud, A free workshop, Friday, May 19, 2006, Ala Moana Hotel, Garden Lanai Room. 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Register (toll free) at 1-877-926-8300. Presented by author/expert Doug Shadel. Refreshments will be provided.

Caring for Family, Caring for Yourself: An Oahu Caregiver's Conference *In conjunction with Tools for Life Expo* June 10, 2006, Hawaii Convention Center, 8:30 a.m.- 4 p.m. (Check-in starts at 7:30 a.m.) Featuring keynote speaker: Clarence Liu, M.A., Cost: \$30, lunch included for those who pre-register by June 5. For more information or additional programs, call 523-4545 on Oahu or download a registration form at www.HMSA.com/community/events/caregivers. Pre-registration deadline is June 5. On site registration is available but will not include lunch.

Including **T.J. Davies**, members **Eloise Monsarrat** and **Beatrice Terumoto** were recognized as **Outstanding Volunteers by the City and County of Honolulu** at their celebration on April 24th.

Notes from our April Meeting

Barbara Stanton, State Director AARP: AARP is undertaking a survey to cost out home improvements that will enable people to stay home longer. The information will be useful for the legislature as well as advocacy groups. AARP supported legislation to provide a refundable tax credit for caregivers and to extend income eligibility to 150% of poverty for the Hawaii Rx assistance program. Also important are aging in place and proper placement at the proper time.

Deborah Jackson, Director of Eldercare Hawaii. Her organization (www.eldercarehawaii.com) is a resource for eldercare information, resources, support, training and providers for family caregivers and seniors. The staff assists with planning, counseling, mediation, information and referrals.

Nanette Geller, a geriatric mental health consultant is concerned about how to make long term care institutions more home-like. It is possible to have a good quality of life in spite of impairments. Having loving care providers, whether unpaid or professional is most important.

While not a panelist, Kokua Council member **Florence Lau** shared her experience in organizing her condo to assist the growing number of aging tenants “age in place”. Her experience taught her to

1. Get support and approval from the board of directors and the building manager.
2. Start out with a socializing activity so tenants get to know each other.
3. Find out from them what their needs are.
4. Include all ages. For example, don't call it a senior group or caregivers' group; call it a singles' group or a better living group.
5. Her condo now has a buddy system on each floor.

NEW WATCH DOG ORGANIZATION FORMED

Below is a letter sent to Speaker of the House Calvin Say in April as the first action of CITIZEN VOICE.

“After the demise of Common Cause there was a lapse in citizen oversight of the legislature. This lack of oversight has led to blatant disregard for ethical behavior by the legislature, especially the House which is under your purview.

Now comes Citizen Voice, organized to step up and fill the gap left by Common Cause as the watchdog organization reporting on ethical lapses of the legislature. We do not intend to simply report, we fully intend to shout long and loud when your House ignores ethical standards and/or the law.

A case in point is Representative Herkes who according to the *Pacific Business News* article of April 14, 2006, allowed an industry representative to draft amendments to a bill regulating that industry's activities. **‘Kaiser Permanente Hawaii lobbyist Chris Pablo acknowledged that he drafted the amendments to the bill and circulated them among other health plans, like the Hawaii Medical Service Association, to enlist their support’**. The resulting amendment, which was no longer a simple bill to cancel the sunset

provision of the rate regulation law—was all new language highly favorable to the health insurers. One section in particular practically assures that any attempt at rate regulation would be tied up in litigation virtually forever.

Citizen Voice expects you, as speaker, to remove the healthcare insurance industry representatives from Chairman Herkes office and put Bill SB2917 back to its original wording and pass it in order to reinstate rate regulation of the healthcare insurance industry. Moreover, if you wanted to be seen as a true leader of an ethical organization you would remove Rep. Herkes of his Chairmanship of the CPC Committee as a warning to all Chairs that unethical conduct will not be tolerated. As my mother once told me ‘it's not what they say, but how they act that tells you who they are.’ *George Fox, Executive Director, Board; Peter Bower, President, Jackie Parnel, V.P, Beverly Keever, Althea Rebman*

(Ed. Note: The bill did die. However, the existing law stands, sun setting the oversight by the Insurance Commissioner)

2006 LEGISLATURE ENDS, HOW WE FARED

(*Silver Legislature Bill **Kokua Council Top Priority issues)

PASSED, Going to Governor for Signature:

****CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS:** SB2343—Requires criminal history checks on persons providing care or having access to frail elderly, mentally retarded and rehab clients.*

****UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE:** SB2133—Establishes a Hawaii Health Commission to continue the work of the Healthcare Task Force to study universal coverage). HB3116—Provides for a 3-year pilot program that provides health coverage for children ineligible for any state or federal health care coverage. A family earning up to \$60,000 for a family of four would qualify.

****LONG TERM CARE:** HB 1900—Appropriates \$206,000 to Kapiolani Community College to establish a Long-term Care Training Initiative.* SB 3252 —Appropriates \$500,000 to EOA for the Kupuna Care program* and \$80,000 for caregiver support services and policies. Kupuna Care provides services for those above poverty level paid for by client donations. SB 3253—Establishes a Joint Legislative Committee on Family Caregiving.

****AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** SB2958—Provides funds for repair and maintenance of public housing*, support services for homeless and rental income supplements; and bond issuance for construction of affordable housing. Also provides that minor children may reside in state housing for elders where a grandparent is the primary caregiver,* with a five per cent set-aside of units for that purpose.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS: SB3003—State Pharmacy Assistance Program extends income eligibility requirement to 150% of federal poverty level; covers all ages, and will cover extra costs incurred for Medicaid aged, blind and disabled who were shifted to Medicare Part D.

DEAD:

VOTER OWNED ELECTIONS, REFUNDABLE TAX FOR CAREGIVERS, DEATH WITH DIGNITY/COMPASSION, and GAS CAPS (now requires more information about pricing formulas and can be reinstated by the Governor.)

OTHER ACTIONS TAKEN BY KOKUA COUNCIL

We helped defeat: Bill to remove cap on corporate donations for legislative campaigns (see letter below) and HB3128, tax credit for purchase of long term care insurance.

We supported Kukui Garden tenants in their efforts to stop the sale to profit-making private company.

LETTER to the EDITOR

Yesterday, there was in fact a push to pass SB 2992, but because the reaction from the grassroots community was so strong, the bill was defeated instead.

The significance of this shouldn't be underestimated. Can you imagine if the \$1,000 limit was done away with, and special interests could give as much money as they pleased to candidates and committees?

For all of you who wrote, called, emailed, hosted and attended house parties, sign-waved and

canvassed, you should really pat yourself on the back. We are so appreciative of your volunteer efforts. Mahalo. We are now more determined than ever before to pass "The reform that makes all reforms possible," Voter Owned Elections (Clean Elections). We will be launching an ambitious one-year plan to get our bill passed next year. We hope you'll join us in our massive public education effort, which will begin soon. Stay tuned for more.

Kory Payne, Field Director and the VOE Team

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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 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. “

Website: www.kokuacouncil.org

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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