

Friday...S-B is late, warranty telemarketers, Friday's felines

(iLind.net)

Submitted at 2/21/2008 11:05:41 PM

5:40 a.m. and the Star-Bulletin's web site is still displaying yesterday's edition. It's very unusual for the Bulletin to be this far behind the rival Advertiser.

Another check at 6 a.m. and the Bulletin had Friday's edition ready to read, with a few obvious glitches like this one.

So it goes in the land of news.

Yesterday's mention of the rash of calls from a supposed auto warranty telemarketing firm brought several replies. One reader says:

I have been getting those same calls on my cell phone for over 4 months now. The calls from different numbers all over the country and change all the time. I don't know exactly what can be done because like you said it's difficult to find out what company it's coming from.

I have a few suggestions: check with the "do not call" registry. I found that my cell phone number isn't on there and promptly registered my number. It takes 30 days to take effect, but after those 30 days you can report the calls to them and supposedly each call is a \$500 fine.

Another person identifying himself as "a long time reader, first time writer" who works at a local car dealership shared an adventure playing along to try to get more information on what's going on with this company. He found a shady, high-pressure sales pitch trying to pry lots of money and making dubious claims. I'm going to quote him at length because it is very informative and these calls have hit a lot of people.

The initial call (as identified by my caller id) came from (623) 238-6232. After listening to the prerecorded message I pressed the number to talk to an agent. He took my name and vehicle information (year, make, and

model). I was then transferred to a "senior warranty specialist" who, I was told, would answer my questions about the company behind the "warranty", the coverage and the cost. The specialist confirmed my vehicle and contact information and then transferred me to the Authorization department, allegedly due to the age and mileage on my vehicle (1998 Pontiac with 97,000 miles).

The authorization department advised that because of my vehicle's age and mileage, my vehicle file had closed but that he was going to make an exception for me because, based on my answers to his questions, my vehicle was approvable. He told me that he would open the file again (but only for today and if I didn't buy the contract today it would no longer be available) and transferred me back to my specialist. She was very pleased with the Authorization department and surprised that they offered me the best contract available, the "bumper to bumper" coverage.

I was told the contract was a Warrantech Deluxe and that a 48 month/60,000 mile \$100 deductible contract would cost me \$933.50 per year or \$3,734.00 for the term of the contract. I was offered a \$200 discount if I paid it in full today or I could use their payment plan (first year up front followed by 12 monthly payments of \$233.38 - interest free!).

I asked for a copy of the contract disclosures and she agreed to fax them to me but insisted that she stay on the line with me so she could help answer any questions I might have. After two failed fax attempts I gave her my e-mail address and received the disclosures. We spoke while waiting for the document to come through. I asked how they got my telephone number and was told that she didn't know how they got my work number, but that in general, they received the names and vehicle information from dealerships (!).

In response to my inquiry about redemption locations in Hawaii, I was told that I could take it to my dealer or to the chain repair shops. I asked for specifics and was told Firestone would accept it and that I could take my Pontiac to Cutter PBG in Waipahu (she looked up Pontiac dealers near my zip code on-line while we spoke). I repeatedly asked her if I could call her back after reviewing the contract disclosures and was told they could not take call backs. She would not provide me with her phone number. I was told I could cancel the policy and would be refunded my purchase price less a \$100 administrative fee, then read on the disclosures that the cancellation administrative fee for Warrantech was \$25. When questioned about the inconsistency, they advised the Warrantech policy would apply. I asked about door to door refund applicability and was told I would be able to cancel it less the administrative fee. When I finally told her I was not interested, I was told my file would close after today and that the contract would no longer be available to me. She even went so far to tell me that my vehicle could be red-flagged because the warranty companies "might think I was trying to put something over on them". I did not point out that they would be hard pressed to red-flag my vehicle since I hadn't ever provided them with the VIN, the license number or even my real name. These are some of the tactics the high pressure sales centers employ to take advantage of the unsuspecting and the uneducated. To summarize the misstatements and the red-flags customers should be aware of:

- No service contract is truly "Bumper to Bumper".
- Artificial sense of urgency, must buy today.
- Refusal to provide contact information - if you bought a service contract but never received the paperwork, how would a customer file

a complaint, or even try to get a refund?

· They allege the dealer provided the customer contact information, yet they do not even know the make/model of your vehicle.

I tried to look up business information for the company listed on the e-mail I received in the state of California, the Better Business Bureau and on the web (Pacific Guard Warranty). Nothing came back under that name. I also tried to look up the number I got from caller ID. The number is out of Arizona, but it was not listed in directory assistance. I called it to see who would answer and got a recorded message from a mortgage company thanking me for calling back on the solicitation message they left. When I tried to speak with an attendant it said all operators are busy, but leave your name and number and they will call back (I didn't).

Okay, it is Friday and time for a few of our favorite felines.

This is Mr. Leo on one of the somewhat rare occasions that he isn't acting up and being naughty. He's the one cat who has successfully worked around the diet by demanding payoffs. His message: Put a little food in my dish or I'll knock over everything on the table. Then I'll knock everything off the table. Try me.

So he gets special treatment. Wally seems to have lost a few ounces and is started to run the length of the house a couple of times a day. We're hoping for some measurable progress with Duke, but haven't gotten there yet. The difference we note with the rest of the cats is that they are hungry and waiting at designated meal times. No more of that "show me the food and I'll decide if it meets my high standards" attitude. I'm hoping that will eventually translate into weight loss. We'll see.

Army sued again over Makua access

(Hawaiian Independence Blog)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 12:54:01 AM

Advertiser reports:

Earthjustice has made good on its pledge to take the U.S. Army back to court over what it sees as flagrant violations of a 2001 court-ordered settlement decree to allow Native Hawaiian groups cultural access to

numerous sacred sites in the Makua Military Reservation.

The ecology-minded law firm, which represents Malama Makua among other cultural groups, filed a motion to enforce compliance yesterday in U.S. District Court. Earthjustice is asking the court to require the Army to fulfill the terms of the six-year-old settlement

it voluntarily signed.

That agreement followed a lawsuit challenging the Army's failure to complete a required environmental impact statement for training at Makua Valley.

David Henkin, an attorney for Earthjustice, said yesterday that

instead of opening up access to the valley, the Army has, since 2005, severely restricted cultural practices, citing safety concerns as the reason. Earthjustice contends the safety restrictions have been concocted to get around the settlement decree in order to eliminate nearly all cultural access.

NEW NEWSHOUD

(Got Windmills?)

Submitted at 2/24/2008 8:41:00 PM

NEW NEWSHOUD: In the aftermath of a of a strike-vote <http://starbulletin.com/2008/02/21/news/story08.html> and in the midst of a "byline strike" <http://blogs.honoluluadvertiser.com/capitolnotebook2008.php> at the Honolulu Advertiser, one byline stood out in today's paper acknowledging that yes, Kaua'i is part of the State afterall.

After almost six months of regurgitations of Kaua'i County press releases and coverage written the paper's city desk, former Big Island Star-Bulletin reporter Diana Leone has airlifted into Kaua'i from the big Island to do the first datelined piece <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080224/NEWS0102/802240350/1004/NEWS0102> in the almost six months.. 37-year Kaua'i Advertiser Bureau Chief Jan TenBruggencate was forced- or more accurately bribed- into one of those buyout/retirement deals as part of the widespread purge of veteran reporters last summer due to "cost cutting measures" instituted by noted el-cheapo owners Gannett and their Editor/hatchetman-in-Chief Mark Platte.

The piece is pretty much a regurgitation of other news-sourced coverage of the poisoning of Waimea school children by GMO-purveyors Syrgenta and is datelined Lihue and bylined by Leone. According to two sources close to the Advertiser, she has never lived on Kaua'i. and is working "part-time".

Despite her expertise and familiarity

Is Gannett planning a strike at the Advertiser?

(Disappeared News)

Submitted at 2/24/2008 6:52:00 AM

by Larry Geller

A light bulb went on above my head this morning. Something that bolsters my belief that Gannett is pushing for a strike.

On December 28, 2007, after publishing USA Today on its new state-of-the-art German presses for three years, the Advertiser announced that production will pull back to California. USA Today will now be delivered a day later in Hawaii and cost more. Hotel guests will get their news later. Why??

It didn't compute for me then, but it does now: Gannett is protecting USA Today from being cut off during a strike.

Admittedly, this is pure speculation on my part, but those presses have incredible capacity, more than can be used for local requirements. They can print up to 70,000 papers per hour, including full color. The MAN Roland

with Kaua'i, long time resident and reporter Joan Conrow lost out on the job apparently because of her blog's <http://kauaielectic.blogspot.com> investigative coverage last year of the Superferry and attempts to discredit her objectivity by forces with a direct line to Platte.

Conrow, a former Star-Bulletin and Advertiser staff writer and Reuters stringer who has lived and covered the Kaua'i beat for more than 20 years had the inside track on the permanent job until the Advertiser editors said this fall that they were just pulling her off the Hawai'i Superferry (HSF) story but the action didn't close the door on future employment they gave Leone the job, without ever interviewing Conrow for the position.

Conrow's work on her blog and in Honolulu weekly <http://honoluluweekly.com/cover/2008/01/uss-superferry/> was instrumental in uncovering State and HSF misconduct and recently exposed the military boondoggle involving the HSF and it's defense contractors Austral.

But apparently Conrow's earlier investigative expertise in uncovering State and Superferry evasion and misconduct was unacceptable to the Platte, whose dual role as head of news and opinion sections violates most journalism ethics guidelines.

Platte seemingly has so much to do that his regular Sunday horn-tooting "After Deadline" column http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=COLUMNISTS#Mark_Platte_archive takes credit for scooping other news sources' originally reporting. Today's c o l u m n

offset presses are the equal of anything else in their system. Sure, I could be off base on this, but I'm happy with my theory for the moment. If it turns out that USA Today still has distribution here during a strike, that will be telling.

I suggest we change the linguistic frame around labor/management disputes. The commercial media, and what has come to be popular usage, has it that unions (framed as the bad guys) plan strikes against poor innocent management.

The frame includes the prejudice that the problem is caused by the unions. Management suffers, often ordinary people suffer, and if the unions win or lose, they deserve the loss of pay because it's their fault. It's all part of the same frame. You see, it's the union action that is the cause of the problem, in this frame. It's only occasionally reported that CEOs often continue to draw exorbitant salaries, and paradoxically, if they successfully squeeze labor, they may earn even

<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080224/NEWS0102/802240350/1004/NEWS0102> takes credit for "breaking the news of Obama's TV ads" despite PNN's 2/12 <http://parxnewsdaily.blogspot.com/2008/02/mad-mutt-money-obama-campaign-has-made.html> scooping the Advertiser three days before their Feb 15 article. <http://search.honoluluadvertiser.com/s?aff=117&keywords=Obama+launches+push+in+Isles+&pubDate=14&author=DePledge&submit=search> (see #4).

PNN corrected Platte although in ridiculing sneakiness, <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080224/OPINION05/802240326/1114/OPINION05#Anchor-StoryChat> but has not as yet seen or heard a correction.

Welcome to the fray Diana... do us proud. Battle for your stories with the Advertiser's "Kaua'i?... where's that?... did somebody die?" city desk attitude....

... not that the S-B and the TV news' aren't even worse when it come to not knowing we're here unless someone kills someone or some kids are getting poisoned by GMO companies.

But isn't that why they said they had to do these Frankenfood experiments out here in the middle of the Ocean in the first place...

Diana Leone can be reached at dleone@honoluluadvertiser.com

A prolonged visit

(Painography!)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 12:20:20 PM

Okay, I'm slacking again this Friday. I've got a busy Saturday schedule tomorrow with the Swamp Romp and a sailing regatta. I'm looking forward to all of that!

Anyway, another non-political cetaceous wonder from Maui. I've been around when a whale blew within a boat length, but this is nuts! I'm so jealous of those people...

Barf-o-Meter on Radio New Zealand today

(Disappeared News)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 8:54:00 AM

by Larry Geller

Maui researcher Brad Parsons was interviewed this afternoon as part of a Radio New Zealand feature on sea sickness. The program isn't on-line yet, but you can hear the short interview with Brad here.

Saturday...iLind.net gets a new look and hopefully a fix, bill pushed ahead that would

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(iLind.net)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 11:24:17 PM

You may have noticed the new look. After struggling for months to find a solution to a problem displaying daily entries properly for those of you using certain PC versions of Internet Explorer, I decided to abandon the previous Wordpress "theme" and select another that avoids the problem. For those affected viewers, the old

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higher bonuses.

The media will say a company is having "labor problems" but you never hear or read about their "management problems."

Never mind that it takes two to make a contract, and quite often these days, management is squeezing labor as hard as it can.

In this Star-Bulletin article, we see that the unions have said they want to bargain:

While the possibility of a strike is not immediate, union officials hope the vote will send a message to management that employees want to continue bargaining.

"The idea isn't to get a strike; the idea is to get a settlement that can be fair and that we can live with," said Wayne Cahill, administrative officer of the Hawaii Newspaper Guild.

Speaking of squeezing, the article goes on:

Union leaders say the company has not bargained with the unions. The company did not meet with the union

from June to November, then on Jan. 25 presented a final offer that could be implemented if not ratified within 30 days.

The proposed contract would be retroactive from June 10, 2007, and run to March 1, 2009. The employee's last contract expired June 9 but continues because of an extension agreement.

The company's offer includes a 1 percent pay increase effective Oct. 27, 2008, a 1.5 percent bonus and higher medical premiums and drug costs for both HMSA and Kaiser members. Costs for medical office visits would increase for Kaiser members.

So reading the first paragraph, is it the unions who are pushing for this strike, or is it the Advertiser/Gannett? Is management planning to dig in and impose their will on the unions?

The pullout of USA Today makes me think that's exactly what they have in mind. I hope I'm wrong.

Sunday...UH Manoa proposes animal ban that could prohibit feeding campus cats

(iLind.net)

Submitted at 2/23/2008 11:00:55 PM

Students, faculty, and staff would be barred from bringing their pets onto campus or "feeding animals near outside dining facilities or other areas on campus where feeding may result in a potential health hazard, a public nuisance or property damage," under a revised campus policy being proposed by Kathleen Cutshaw, Vice-Chancellor for Administration, Finance and Operations.

The proposed policy was distributed to campus administrators in a Valentine's Day email.

The policy doesn't pass the "truth in labeling" test. It is referred to as the "Animals on campus" policy, but is really a "No animals on campus" policy.

Exceptions to the proposed ban are animals kept as research subjects, service animals, and animals in residences on UH property, a likely reference to faculty housing.

The policy appears to be another attempt to restrict or prohibit the feeding and servicing of several feral cat colonies on campus which has been done as part of a "trap-neuter-return" approach to humanely controlling the population of feral cats supported by the Hawaiian Humane Society. Similar anti-animal policies have been proposed several times in the past but have been withdrawn following intense opposition from animal rights activists and those who devote their time and money to caring for the

campus cats.

The current proposal would also eliminate those occasional campus scenes of students or faculty playing with their dogs in the late afternoon or on weekends.

A story last year in Ka Leo, the Manoa campus newspaper, described the cat colonies as "a UH community mainstay".

David Karl, an oceanography professor, feeds the cats regularly on campus.

"If nobody fed them, they would be in the garbage cans, they would be over at Paradise Palms. ... They would be a huge problem," Karl said. "And if UH could exterminate all these cats, there would be rats all over the place."

A 2005 Ka Leo editorial provided more information about the feral cat program.

The Hawai'i Cat Foundation, in conjunction with the Humane Society, provided the answer. Its Trap-Neuter-Return feral cat management program works to reduce numbers without harming the cats. The program depends on volunteers to trap any stray cats that they find take them to the Humane Society, where the cats are examined and spayed or neutered, and a microchip is implanted under the skin to provide permanent identification. The volunteers then agree to release the cats and provide food and care for them. Since the program began, over 90 percent of the cat population living at UHM has the characteristic notch on one ear that shows they are sterilized. Thanks to

the efforts of volunteers all over campus, the cats are being fed and sick cats are being treated.

The benefit of this program to UHM is enormous. Well-fed cats are less likely to dig through trash and become a problem. The other benefit of feeding the cats is that it allows the volunteer looking after the cats to identify and capture any that look sick or hurt so they can receive treatment. This keeps the cat population healthy and lowers the risk of disease.

Volunteers here on campus come as early as five in the morning to feed and care for the cats. These are people who love their animals, know their names and ages, and give a large part of their lives to them.

At minimum, the proposed policy needs to be amended to specifically incorporate and support the "trap-release-return" program. Students may also object to such a sweeping ban on bringing pets onto UH property.

The proposed "policy" appears to constitute a rule subject to the provisions of Chapter 91 HRS, the Hawaii Administrative Procedures Act, which has specific requirements for public notice and public comment before any rule can go into effect.

An email accompanying the proposed "No animal" policy asks for comments and suggestions to be addressed to Roy Takekawa, Director of the Environmental Health and Safety Office, the Responsible Office for this policy. He can be reached at Takekawa@hawaii.edu or by phone at 956-3200.

Musings: Wrong Call

(KauaiEclectic)

Submitted at 2/24/2008 11:19:00 AM

The wind shifted late yesterday afternoon and started blowing hard out of the southwest while I was washing my very grimy car. The rain arrived in the night, and I welcomed it. Already some of the brush on the eastside had started to go brown after this recent spell of dry, sunny weather.

Awoke to cloudy skies, imminent rain and bird song, most notably the intricate melodies of a shama thrush. I was reading the other day that some people keep them precisely for their beautiful music, although I've never been fond of seeing birds in cages.

Rats are another story, and while I can't say I was exactly pleased to see numbah tree in the cage today — despite what I've heard, killing doesn't get easier, at least not for me — it's one less rodent in my roof. Guess he figured he'd get out of the rain, went to grab a midnight snack on his way to the penthouse suite and oops, wrong call. He's now with his buddies under the camphor tree.

Speaking of trees, noticed in The Garden Island this morning that Ted Erum has filed a motion for a preliminary injunction against the Eric A. Knudsen Trust and its trustee, shopping center developer Stacey Wong, in an attempt to save the Koloa monkeypod trees. Meanwhile, weekly vigils for the trees continue.

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version pushed the daily content down below the sidebars. This new version hopefully solves that issue. I've checked it out from Windows XP running on my MacBook, as well as another PC, and it looks okay. So far. There are a few missing links which I have to add or correct, but otherwise it appears to be a successful transition. If you are still having display issues, please let me know (ian[at]ilind.net). It's crunch time for the House Finance and Senate Ways and Means committees, with the first decking deadline, with just one more session day before the first decking deadline next Friday, when all bills that are going to remain alive must be filed in their final form. Both committees are grinding that lawmaking sausage at top speed.

A friend called my attention to HB 2956, which would allow the Board of Land and Natural Resources to change various hunting restrictions or conditions—"size limits, bag limits, hunting days, open and closed seasons, specifications of hunting gear which may be used or possessed, and special conditions for hunting"—without

resorting to the rulemaking process. These are currently set by rule, and the adoption of new rules requires adherence the public process laid out in Chapter 91, the Hawaii Administrative Procedures Act. I'm not all that sympathetic to hunting, but hunters are certainly entitled to the same protections from arbitrary government action as others enjoy. What has my friend up set is that the bill was given a double referral, first to the House Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources, and Hawaiian Affairs, and then on to Finance. WLH did not schedule it for a hearing, but it was kept alive when it was re-referred to Finance alone. This means that the subject matter committee, the one where members have more experience with the substantive issues involved, was bypassed. Only Finance, which is concerned with the fiscal impact of legislation, held a hearing and voted that the bill be passed with amendments.

Right now, the legislative web site does not indicate any testimony on the measure.

My friend comments:

The bill circumvented your scrutiny by avoiding the Judiciary committee, where it normally would be heard. It even avoided the Water Land committee and had only a Finance committee hearing today (Friday). When an interested party asked what was happening, he was told that this bill was to get out of the House due to pressure by someone or some group. Of course, it wouldn't be the only bill moving "due to pressure by someone or some group", and it has a long way to go before becoming law. But it indicates a problem perceived by the public when the legislative process is stretched to accommodate unidentified interests.

There's been lots of interesting material about the damage to the Superferry and current repairs appearing over the past several days on the Island Breath and Hawaii Superferry Unofficial Blog. I don't normally track sports issues, but attorney and sports commentator Jeff Portnoy made a very telling point about UH mens basketball in his Advertiser blog last weekend. Jeff asks: "Where are the students?"

...its time to address the total lack of student support for this team. There are NO excuses. It was a Saturday night game on a 3 day weekend against the team leading the conference. And only 50 or so students showed up (by the way, having less than 5000 total fans is a sad joke in itself, but that's for another time).

Having just come back from a trip to North Carolina and games at UNC and Duke, I am again reminded about what college basketball at the Division I level is all about. Its about hundreds, if not thousands of students, cheering on their team. With painted faces, team shirts, and organized cheers, its what makes this game the best there is. And then there is Hawaii's pathetic student involvement. Dont give me this garbage about " its a commuter school" or " all the students work" or any of the other excuses I consistently hear about why UH Basketball is basically played in front of non students who do their best try to act like a college crowd.

It's a provocative question and drew some interesting comments.

NO ROOM AT THE DOGHOUSE:

(Got Windmills?)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 9:22:00 PM

NO ROOM AT THE DOGHOUSE: The County admitted this afternoon that they do not have the permits to do "cleaning" work at Hanama'ulu Beach Park and thereby <http://kauaielectic.blogspot.com/2008/02/musings-snookerferry-homeless-and.html> harass the often elderly, often disabled and often hard working souls recently expelled O'ahu-style by Kaua'i "from the heart" Mayor, Bryan Baptiste.

In response to PNN's questions regarding permitting, <http://parxnewsdaily.blogspot.com/2008/02/if-dogs-run-free.html> County PIO Mary Daubert e-mailed "(t)he required permits for the work being done at Hanama'ulu Beach Park are at various stages of the approval process".

It doesn't say if any permits have actually been obtained but it does say some have not.

The county announced <http://www.kauai.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=DGrXCVj4Tuw%3d&tabid>

=346&mid=1449 that the park needed "cleaning" in an attempt to rid the park of homeless by the "closing the park" It has reportedly been rousting the homeless for the last few weeks in anticipation of "Closed for Cleaning" signs going up Thursday.

The admission also indicates that the work could not have possibly started Thursday as the county asserted- either that or the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments never thought about needing a permit, a commonly claimed occurrence in the Batiste administration

A late mid-Thursday drive-by showed no tents, but no "cleaning. As a matter of fact "it looks beautiful" as our driver observed. There were quite a few families enjoying the spotless shady picnic tables. At first someone thought they saw an ice-head in the bushes but it was just an eight-year-old on the rope swing.

In addition to a Special Management Area (SMA) permit, a grubbing and grading permit could be required and if it does indeed need an SMA permit- unless it's exempted- it certainly needs

a Conservation District Use Permit (CDUP), which is even stricter than an SMA and covers all shoreline areas.

But the grubbing and grading permit could be major concern. Tons of dirty sand, apparently cleared the from unpaved shoreline road, sits mauka in artificial dunes all along the way leading to the River where it was apparently piled as the road was cleared of ocean debris and graded.

(Official PNN "opinion"- Almost everyone who goes there agrees those pavilion/bathrooms at the north end need to be torn down and new ones built- even those who have lived and loved there over the years.... hey, I like this blogging stuff)

Since the County is still getting its permits together it is unknown tonight whether they will stop the police harassment of people who are down there, down on their luck and down to having to live on the beach in our insane island minimum-wage, maximum-rent economy... even if it is the place tourists see first when they go to the "closest beach"..

additional links, which can also be viewed here.

In another post on his own blog on the repairs, Brad notes: "BTW, I don't believe Kauila Clark's blessing worked on the Alakai. If they try to operate again commercially here in Hawaii, I might recommend they seek another blessing."

As Andy pointed out, the ferry has only been operational a fraction of the time since it began service.

"Why is it still here?" he asked. Good question. How much longer will this charade of it providing the Islands with an alternative source of transportation continue?

Apparently some homeless are still at Hanamaulu Beach Park even though the county has prohibited camping there for a month during a major clean up. In her story, Garden Island reporter Amanda Gregg leads with the observation that those who remained "didn't typify what some envision when thinking of the homeless."

MUSINGS:

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Also noticed my neighbor Andy has added a Stokes 4 KIUC bumper sticker to his truck. I ran into my buddy Ken Stokes at the Laundromat the other day, where he gave an enthusiastic account of his new electric assist bike, which helps him get up the hills. He's even outfitted it with a little trailer so he can transport his laundry, although he had his car the day I saw him.

Ken, who founded the Kauaia Institute and authors the SusHi sustainability in Hawaii blog is certainly well qualified for the KIUC board and akamai about ways to wean us from imported oil.

The "energy adjustment" charge — which allows KIUC to pass on the rising cost of oil — was actually higher than the kilowatt hour charge — the actual amount of electricity I used — on my last bill. It's pretty nuts for a single person with a small hot water heater, no washer, dryer or TV and conservative electrical use to pay \$140 per month. Especially when a friend staying with a friend near San Francisco reported he was grumbling whenever she left a light on because his monthly electric bill was a whopping \$35.

Yes, I know the oil has to be transported over thousands of miles and we don't have the same economy of scale as big American utilities, but come on! Maybe they could start cutting expenses by eliminating their "Currents" magazine, which costs them tens of thousands of dollars to produce and mail. It's an awful lotta hype for a little utility.

Finally, got a nice email from Jonathan Scheuer of OHA who told me he didn't think there were any federal agents at the "ceded lands" meeting held on Kauai Wednesday night. Two people in the crowd told me there were, but since I didn't verify it myself, I shouldn't have printed it.

Still, it didn't seem necessary to have state DOCARE officers there. I'm not sure whose call it was, but in my opinion, it was the wrong one, because it set a negative tone of fear and mistrust. And that's not a message you want to send to people who are supposed to be your beneficiaries.

Musings: Snookerferry, Homeless and Settlements

(KauaiEclectic)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 11:11:00 AM

Exquisite is the only word to describe this morning on Kauai.

The sun was rising when Koko and I went walking, and Wailaleale — so clear that every crack and crevice was revealed — was tinted a rosy pink and crowned by a still-bright moon just slightly less than full. Ahhhh.

Ran into my neighbor Andy, whom I hadn't seen for a while, and Koko was ecstatic to see his dog Momi. During the short time our walks converged, we managed to cover the Kauai caucus — he said Sen. Gary Hooser helped save the day at the Lihue precinct by making suggestions for processing voters more quickly — and early sentiment toward Annexation and Statehood, before moving on to the Superferry, which he has now nicknamed Snookerferry.

Since I posted two pieces yesterday, he (and perhaps others) missed the one about the ferry's extended stay in dry dock, and Brad's comments with

It's good to see the message getting out that with Kauai's high housing costs and outrageous rents, the homeless no longer fit the stereotype of drunken, drugged derelicts. Instead, they're regular people who can't scrape up the big money for security deposits and ongoing rent.

Got an email with a link to the House's proposed bill (HB 266) on the OHA "ceded lands" revenue settlement issue. It still gives OHA \$13 million cash and land, but instead of \$15 million per year, it proposes a method for doing a yearly assessment of the revenues collected from ceded lands income, and giving OHA a share of that.

There's a hearing on the bill on Saturday by the committees on Water, Land, Ocean Resources & Hawaiian Affairs, Judiciary, and Finance.

And now it's time to get to work so I can go outside and play on this absolutely gorgeous day.

Panel picks steel wheels on steel rails for Honolulu transit system

(Poinography!)

Submitted at 2/23/2008 1:02:19 PM

As expected, a panel of experts has recommended that the City use steel wheels on steel rails as the technology behind its transit system. Stories in the Advertiser and Star-Bulletin cover much of the same ground. The decision was based on factors such as reliability, safety, ride quality and cost, according to the four city-appointed panel members who voted in favor of steel rail technology for the 20-mile route between Kapolei and Ala Moana Center. Rubber tires on concrete technology came in a distant second, garnering only one of five votes. Both magnetic levitation and monorail technologies were ruled out because of cost and capacity concerns. Steel wheels on steel rails generate less friction than rubber on concrete and last longer, but they typically have lower acceleration and braking performance than rubber on concrete. Steel also is noisier than other rail technology.

The lone dissenter, University of

Hawaii-Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedourous, proposed a bus system on managed lanes, meaning the elevated system would have its own lanes and connect to current roads. However, this was not a part of the city's four technology options and was ruled out. Prevedourous favored his second choice, the rubber-tired bus system, because it would cut down on electricity use and be quieter than rail. This was also rejected by the other panel members. Wait a second, Prevedourous apparently decided to use completely different criteria (i.e. noise level and conservation of electricity) than the other 4 members. No wonder he cast the dissenting vote! For an unintentionally hilarious take on his dissent, see this Hawaii Reporter post by a, ahem, political scientist: On February 22, when Hawaii's own Dr. Panos Prevedourous chose to be the lone dissenting vote on the Honolulu Fixed Guideway Technology Selection Panel's 4-1 vote for steel wheel rail, he taught us an unexpected lesson in individual courage: never give up,

always believe, and most of all, be loyal to your cause. For that, Dr. Prevedourous is a hero. Across America's history, from sea to shining sea, there have been many outrageous lapses in judgment and seasons of prolonged injustice perpetuated by either an ignorant, deceived majority or an arrogant set of leaders bent on establishing a self-serving agenda. Separate but Equal. Grandfather Clause. Three-Fifths Compromise. The list of historic intolerables roll off the tongue easily. But what makes America such a great nation is the fact that always, no matter what the injustice has been, there has stood men and women who were willing to break ranks and stand on their conscience. History shows that time and truth are on the side of those willing to be the courageous minority, and that America, though often flawed, always corrects herself in time. Steel-wheeled trains, as "historically intolerable" for Honolulu as segregated schools? I don't have a dog in this fight, but, come on, let's tone down the hyperbole.

Office of Planning nominee potentially a lightning rod

(Poinography!)

Submitted at 2/24/2008 2:56:02 AM

It seems that nearly every year at least one of Governor Lingle's appointees faces a tough nomination fight, and this year it may be her nominee to lead the Office of Planning, Abby Mayer. Mayer is relatively new to the State, but he is well-known (some would say notorious) on Molokai for his leadership role in the planning for how to develop and/or preserve Molokai Ranch property at Laau Point. (see previous posts about some of that pilikia here, here, and here) The Molokai Dispatch reports that at a recent meeting of the Governor's Molokai Community Advisory Council there was testimony against Mayer's nomination, but so far all of the testimony on the Lege website (here, here, and here) is in support of Mr. Mayer (and there is a significant amount of boilerplate testimony from people on the East Coast, too). [The Governor's Molokai Community Advisory] Council member Kammy Purdy said testimonies against Mayer's appointment do not have weight with the governor. Her and other council members said the best thing to do is to testify during Mayer's hearing confirmation, because the governor has already made a decision. The advisory council advises the governor on undecided issues. Ritte acknowledged this, but he said that Lingle must get the message that the Molokai community does not support Mayer's nomination. "I want to make sure she knows this appointment is not popular on Molokai." This week there will be hearing on the nomination held on Molokai, where it is very likely the opposition will testify. Senator Hee, Chair of the Water and Land Committee, has not been shy about intensively grilling Lingle's nominees and has even sunk a few altogether. This could get interesting...

Cherchez la lobbyiste

(Disappeared News)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 7:26:00 AM

by Larry Geller
Il y a une lobbyiste dans toute les affaires; aussitôt qu'on me fait un rapport, je dis: 'Cherchez la lobbyiste'. There is a lobbyist in every case; as soon as they bring me a report, I say, 'Look for the lobbyist'. (With deep, deep apologies to Alexandre Dumas (père) and other speakers of the French language, both living and dead.) Ok, McCain may have had an affair, or maybe he didn't. What has turned up in this case is that he is surrounded by lobbyists. But when McCain huddled with his closest advisers at his rustic Arizona cabin last weekend to map out his presidential campaign, virtually every

one was part of the Washington lobbying culture he has long decried. His campaign manager, Rick Davis, co-founded a lobbying firm whose clients have included Verizon and SBC Telecommunications. His chief political adviser, Charles R. Black Jr., is chairman of one of Washington's lobbying powerhouses, BKSH and Associates, which has represented AT&T, Alcoa, JPMorgan and U.S. Airways. [Washington Post, 2/21/08] McCain is clearly in bed with lobbyists, if not with Vicki Iseman specifically. But to catch up on what he did for her, check out tonight's Democracy Now (on Oahu, 10 pm channel 56) or Behind the John McCain Lobbying Scandal: A Look at How McCain Urged the Federal Communications Commission to Act on Behalf of Paxson Communications.

Corporate money corrupts. McCain is in focus now, but his scandal is just an illustration of the extent of the problem. We can do something about corporate money in Hawaii. We need to stop SB2204 and HB2455 which remove Hawaii's current caps on corporate bribes campaign donations. It's easier this session to submit testimony via email. Please do something to stop these bills. It will take people power. Stay tuned here for specific action. There's also a rally to support passage of the Big Island Public Funding Bill, HB661 on Monday, February 25 at 10:00 am on the Capitol stairs on the mauka side. And a web page by Voter Owned Elections here.

Lands settlement bill revised; hearing Saturday

(Hawaiian Independence Blog)

Submitted at 2/22/2008 12:47:16 AM

Advertiserreports on a new version of the proposed Hawaiian national lands settlement, with a House hearing 9:00 a.m. Saturday. Three committees of the state House of Representatives will collect testimony from the public Saturday on its newly released version of a proposed settlement of disputed land revenue claims by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs against the state.

House Bill 266 keeps intact the bulk of the landmark settlement reached last month between OHA officials and Attorney General Mark Bennett, specifically a package of four parcels of state land valued at \$187 million and a one-time cash payment of \$13 million. A key change is that it negates the proposed future annual payments of \$15.1 million to OHA, as called for in the OHA-Bennett version and which has been criticized by many because it makes no allowances for inflationary

factors. Instead, the House bill calls for an undefined pro rata share. Saturday's 9 a.m. hearing at the state Capitol auditorium is being held jointly by three House committees: Finance, Judiciary and the Water, Land, Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs. [...] On a related note, Native Hawaiians and the public will get two more opportunities before Saturday's hearing to learn about the bill.

OHA is holding an Internet discussion on the proposed settlement from 9 to 11 a.m. tomorrow. Go to www.oha.org/pastdue/index.php for more information. Meanwhile, a coalition of Native Hawaiian rights groups will hold a panel discussion at 6:30 p.m. tomorrow at the Kamakakuokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawaii-Manoa titled "Why the OHA settlement is a bad deal."

Help defeat bad bill that lifts cap on corporate contributions in Hawaii, help pass publicly ...

(Disappeared News)

Submitted at 2/24/2008 6:58:00 AM

Voter Owned Elections has circulated an email I'll reproduce here, on 2 quick actions that you can take to help out and a reminder about tomorrow's news conference.

1. [Click Here To Stop The Money Tsunami!](#)

BACKGROUND -- 22 states and the federal government have banned direct corporate contributions to legislators, since corporations can influence laws in many other ways and to help prevent conflict of interest corruption. In 2006, Hawaii legislators accidentally placed a \$1,000 restriction on these types of contributions. Now, legislators are considering lifting that \$1,000 limit allowing for 100 times more corporate money to flow into campaigns, creating a tsunami of corporate money. Help us move forward on issue, not backwards.

2. [Click Here To Tell Legislators To Pass The Big Island Public Funding Bill!](#)

BACKGROUND -- For nine straight years, we've been working to upgrade our outdated partial public funding

system. In the 1978 Constitution Convention, voters realized private money has a negative influence on the law making process, and created the partial public funding system. Now, the Democratic Party of the state of Hawaii, along with the Hawaii County Council and all of our supporters are calling on state legislators Senators Colleen Hanabusa, Brian Taniguchi, Clayton Hee, Russell Kokubun, and Lorraine Inouye, along with Representative Calvin Say, to "pass the bill, not the buck!"

3. [Reminder! Press Event Tomorrow, Monday, Feb 24 at 10:00 am at the Capitol steps on the mauka side!](#)

Come join us, along with TV, newspaper, and radio reporters to hear the Democratic Party of Hawaii, along with the Hawaii County Council and the League of Women Voters, as we call on state leaders to pass the Big Island Public Funding Bill -- HB 661 with amendments.

Come grab a t-shirt and join us!

Permalink posted by Larry @ 2/24/2008 01:58:00 PM