Let's Win One For The “Duke.”
Historically, doctors have steered clear of running for political office. The push, shove, compromise, double-dealing, broken promises and abiding frustration of politics are so far removed from medical science, that few physicians seek that milieu. It is much better suited to lawyers, educators and salespeople. Two active members of the Hawaii Medical Association, Fred Holscluh, a councilman on the big island, and Duke Bainum, who has served for years on the Honolulu Council, are the exceptions. Now, Duke Bainum is running for Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu. The job comes with large powers of appointments to city and county boards and department managers, and also awards millions in vendor contracts. You merely have to read the newspapers to know about the outright corruption in some areas of Honolulu government. Duke is experienced; he is one of us; he is spending a lot of his own money, and running on a campaign of “honesty and integrity.” He wants to clean up government, and he deserves our support. Get out the vote!

Ants, Savages and Viruses Put Strangers To Death.
A research team at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, under very careful laboratory controls, is trying to recreate a deadly virus with scrap material from an 85 year old hospital lab sample, and genetic material from a body buried in Alaska permafrost in 1918. The virus is the one that caused the great influenza pandemic of 1918-1919. In November 1918, almost the entire population of Brevig Mission, Alaska, where the corpse of the Inuit woman was buried, was wiped out. That disease claimed approximately 40 million lives worldwide, with deaths in the United States alone estimated at 675,000, about 3/4 of one percent of the entire population. Mortality rate was highest in 20 to 40 year-olds. Why try to recreate this? Specifically, to determine why the virus was so deadly, and how it killed so easily in just a matter of hours. This could solve a mystery and direct viral research. With the current mobility of people and disease (e.g.SARS), the issue is much more than academic.

Noise Is A Stench In The Ear. The Chief Product Of Civilization.
A study done at the Mayo Clinic affiliate St Mary’s Hospital, published in the American Journal of Nursing, described a noise level well above that recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency. The chatter of nurses, rolling of portable x-ray machines, ringing telephones, rumble of generators, and the clutter of nighttime garbage pickup all serve to disturb sleep. A decibel level rivaling the sound of jack hammers, was highest at the seven A.M. shift change. Previous studies done by the Veterans Administration demonstrated that sleep deprived patients recovered more slowly than those who slept well. It ought to be obvious, but few hospitals give any attention to the noise level during sleeping hours. At Mayo’s a training program stressed quiet speaking, reducing volume on the intercom system, keeping certain doors closed, turning down cardiac monitors and other simple common sense measures, which were found to make a marked difference.

It’s Natural! It’s Organic. The Wonder Drug — Coffee!
At last, a study that brings joy and comfort to the hearts of all us coffee-holics. Previously reported in Lancet and Annals of Internal Medicine, now a new study from Finland (Finns are world champs in per capita coffee consumption) published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, has confirmed that imbibing coffee on a regular basis reduces the possibility of developing type II diabetes by 25 to 30%. For years studies have been conducted to implicate caffeine in heart disease, cancer, kidney disease, Alzheimer’s, gall stones, hormonal changes, Parkinson’s Disease, high blood pressure, erectile dysfunction, and even birth defects, all to no avail.
The NCA even has a rule limiting caffeine level for athletic competition, although no one really knows why. So, have a second cup, or even a third or fourth, and listen to the gastric growling of borbygmi. No benefit accrues to deaf wimps.

The Reality Check Bounced.
Four and 1/2 years ago Bristol-Myers announced a study to prove their drug Provachol was equal to Pfizer’s Lipitor in preventing deaths and heart attacks. Arrogance? Hubris? Overconfidence? Whatever wild cilia churning in the minds of leaders at Bristol-Myers Squibb that caused them to challenge Pfizer, it was a large mistake. Lipitor not only was found to be more effective in reducing serum cholesterol, the study showed that it was significantly better at reducing the risk of death, heart attack or other serious complications in patients with known heart disease. Bristol-Myers now has a serious marketing problem for Provachol while Pfizer was gifted a nice ad package. In addition, the study appears to indicate that the lower the cholesterol level, the better prognosis for heart disease patients. So, how low should it go? The consequence of a better cardiac outlook with a lower cholesterol due to stepped up drugs, will add more dollars to the already bulging wallets of pharmaceutical manufacturers. I am so happy for them. No!

She’s Selling What She Used To Give Away.
Geze! You can still get it free, but many are willing to buy bottled water at costs of 89 cents a pint and up. Not only are we supposed to buy Perrier and others, but each bottle has an expiration date!!! New Jersey alone has a law that water vendors must stamp dates on every bottle, but the reason is unknown. Coke’s water, Dasani, has a one year shelf life before it should be pulled. Poland Spring and Aquafina are labeled to be consumed within two years. The Red Cross has even gotten into the loop, advising people to replace stored bottled water within six months. Crazy! There is no rationale and the practice is not health based, nor is there any evidence that drinking the water after expiration date has any impact at all. This year, Americans will buy more bottled water than beer and coffee. Evian spelled backwards is an appropriate adjective for the multitudes carrying a jug around as they stroll by drinking fountains. In the words of P.T. Barnum....... 

Mr. Solomon, What The — Were You Thinking?!!
Only a lawyer could examine the law and decide that the F word was not in violation of broadcast decency standards. “Bono” the lead singer for the band U2, accepted a Golden Globe award for best original song for the movie Gangs of New York. Being a rock singer with a rudimentary vocabulary, Bono said, “This is really really f — ing brilliant.” Now, most of us might find that vulgar, crude, offensive, and unfit for prime time television, but David Solomon, counsel for the Federal Communications Commission, decided that the smutty speech was an “exclamative” adjective, and protected under principles of free speech. The public was somewhat angry with Bono and sent 234 complaints to the FCC, but they were really, really angry with Mr. Solomon and sent 237,215 letters protesting his ruling. One more log on the fire for Congress to consider in their hearings on media violence, vulgar language, and Janet Jackson’s malfunctioning bra.

Another Thing That Ain’t What Is Used To Be — The Older Generation.
Possibly nothing frightens Democrats and Republicans alike more about the November election than the age of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. Chief Justice Rehnquist will be 80 years old in October, Justice John Stevens will be 84 in April. Justice Sandra Day O’Connor is 74, and all three have mentioned retirement, but made no commitment. The present court is nearly balanced between a liberal/conservative interpretation of the Constitution of the United States, and the man elected this fall will very likely have an opportunity to appoint from one to three judges, including a chief justice, during his term in office. Think of it — the new justice could be Ralph Nader, John Ashcroft, or Johnny Cochran, or maybe all three.

ADENDA
❖ A surgeon-safari trip combines an African safari with your choice of a tummy-tuck, lipo-suction, or laser face resurfacing. One week packages start at $3800.
❖ On June 26, 1974, Wrigley’s Juicy Fruit gum was the first commercial product bar code scanned at a supermarket check out counter.
❖ Interval ownership is the upscale phrase for time share.
❖ We need corporal punishment in our schools. Let’s use it on the teachers.

Aloha and keep the faith — rts■