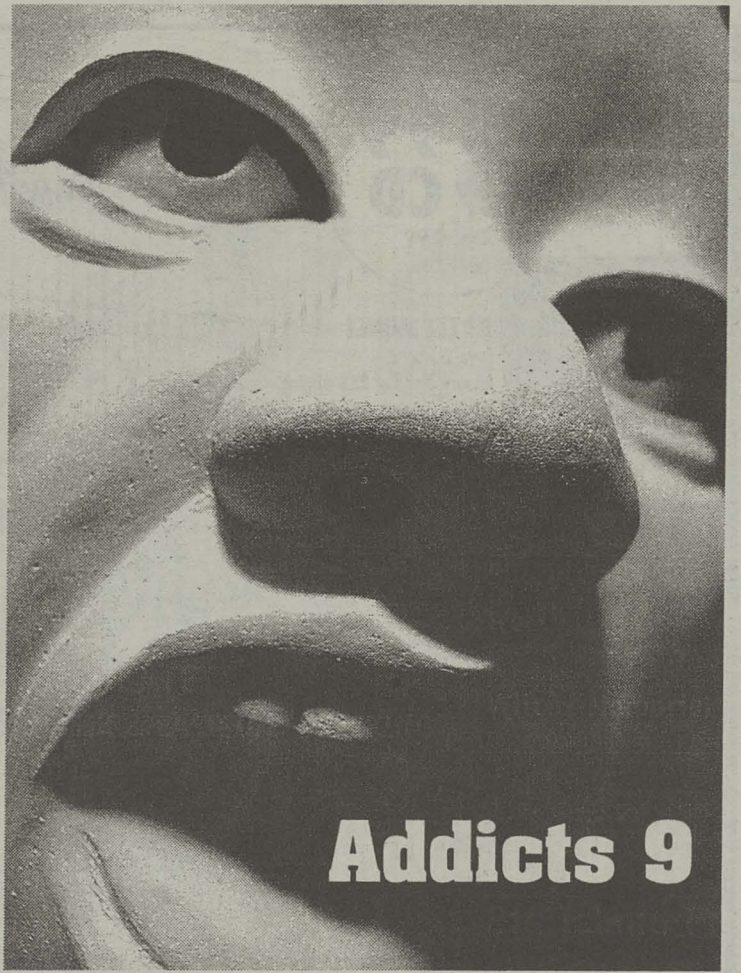


Maharani 22



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Addicts 9

What Will It Take To Fix Hawai'i's Schools?

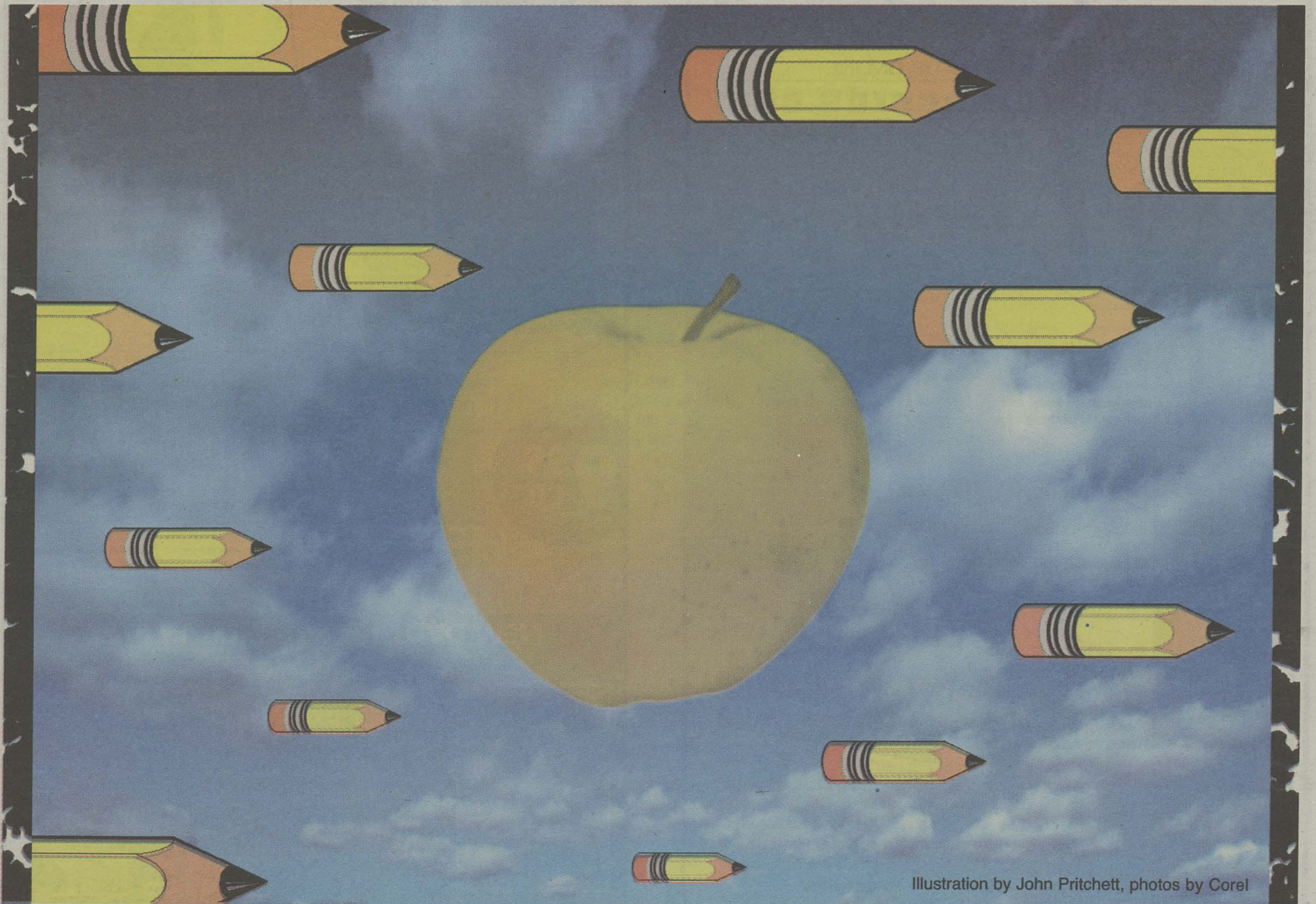


Illustration by John Pritchett, photos by Corel

A comprehensive solution by Mary Anne Raywid

Page 5

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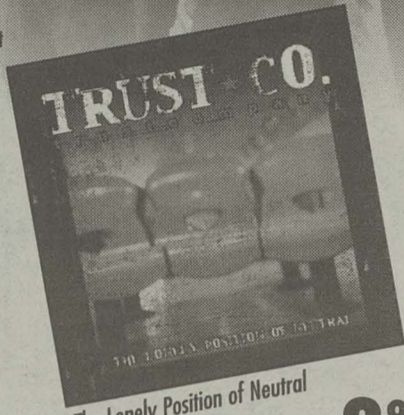


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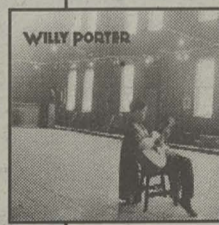
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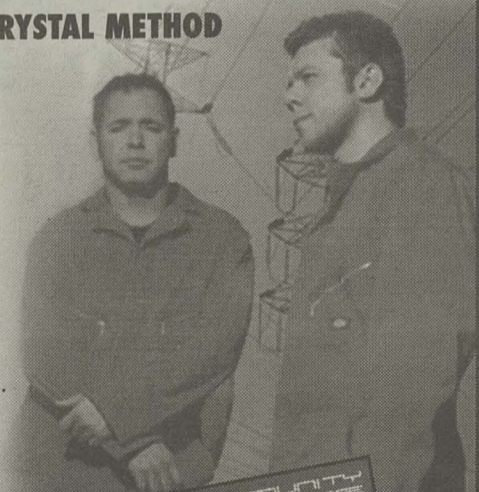
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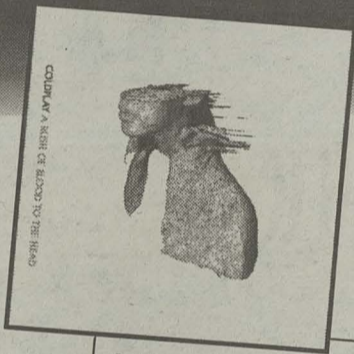
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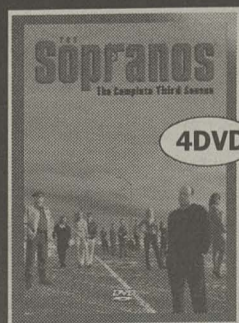
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The queen's land

On Sept. 25 the Honolulu City Council will consider passing Bill 53 through its third and final reading. This bill would force the Lili'uokalani Trust, which ministers to thousands of families statewide and employs over 200 staff members and social workers, to liquidate one of its most profitable properties at the behest of eight individual leaseholders (Honolulu Diary, "Taking the queen's lands," HW, 8/7).

Mandatory conversion of leasehold properties has been part of state law since the 1960s. Even when the Land Reform Act of 1967 was passed, however, there were sufficient concerns about the government condemning private property that the law contained certain safeguards: that either 25 leaseholders or half of all of the leaseholders of that property had to petition for the condemnation and they had to demonstrate that a clear public purpose would be served. Bill 53 will allow eight owner-occupant petitioners to circumvent that law and to purchase their leaseholds without meeting any of the thresholds set in place by the state.

The existence of the Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center serves perhaps the clearest public service of any agency in the state of Hawai'i. The legacy of our last queen who bequeathed what was left of her lands after the theft of the crown lands by the republic and the United States, this trust provides financial, educational and counseling assistance to over 9,000 Native Hawaiian orphan and destitute children statewide.

What is frightening about Bill 53 in the midst of all the challenges to Native Hawaiian trusts this year, is that this time there is no attempt to disguise this action as a challenge to racial preferences, or a boost to the state's economy. It is a pretty open-eyed and cynical confiscation that will threaten, perhaps even end the operation of a hard-working and valuable agency for no perceivable public good. The councilmembers (Duke Bainum, John Henry Felix, Steve Holmes, Gary Okino and Jon Yoshimura) who support this have not responded to calls for a defense of their position, although Steve Holmes, in a letter to our Center for Hawaiian Studies Web site did say that he had "always supported" the bill and had no time to listen to our "racist and derogatory remarks."

So maybe it's about race after all. Perhaps those councilmembers who support this bill simply believe that Hawaiians aren't even entitled to the same kinds of property safeguards that most Americans take for granted. Still, don't they feel some responsibility to the rest of their constituents? Each one of their districts is served by a QLCC agency spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on hundreds of children and their families. What will it cost the government to replace those services? What will be the net social cost of not replacing those services?

What are these people thinking?

Jonathan K. Osorio,
Associate Professor
Center for Hawaiian Studies

The title of Anne Keala Kelly's "Taking the queen's lands" is a bit misleading. A better title would have been "Buying the queen's lands." Her scenario, where two out of four owner-occupant's in a 100 unit building could force the land to be condemned for leasehold conversion, implies that all 100 units would be purchased by the owners leaving the land owners with nothing.

First of all, if only two out of 100 owners petition for leasehold conversion, it is highly unlikely that the other 98 owners would follow suit. The landowners would still retain the majority of the land and continue to receive lease rent on the remaining units.

Second, lessees purchasing the fee interest would not be "taking" the land — they would be "purchasing" it at a price negotiated between themselves and the landowners. The landowners would then have the option of reinvesting their income into other real estate or anything else, perhaps realizing a far greater return on their investment.

If the intent of a land owner is to retain ownership of a specific property, nothing can stop them from purchasing the units from their lessees right now at a fair market price without having to result in forced condemnation.

Not long ago the *Weekly* was joining the media chorus accusing Bishop Estate and other landowners of gouging their lessees with outrageous conversion prices. It seems a little disingenuous that the condominium owners are now portrayed as bad guys just because they want to avoid surrendering their homes in the event they cannot afford future lease rent increases. The truth is that neither side is evil here and leasehold conversion is not a plot to steal land from Hawaiians.

Leasehold property development

is an ill-conceived deal with the devil which almost always ends with parties on both sides feeling cheated. Leasehold conversion is an imperfect solution, but it is the best solution anyone has come up with so far. If Ms. Kelly or anyone else can come up with a more equitable solution, there are a lot of us who would like to hear it.

Tom Campbell

Frank reporting

Had I known that Curt Sanburn would take my words out of context for his article on Frank Hewett, I would not have consented to be interviewed (Cover Story, "Kumu," HW, 8/7). Sanburn telephoned me and asked me to clarify what I meant when Gary Chun from the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* had quoted me saying, "I think the younger generation is confusing traditional Hawaiian music with popular island music from people like Keali'i Reichel and Frank Kawaikapuokalani Hewett." Sanburn called this "a nasty remark" of which this is not.

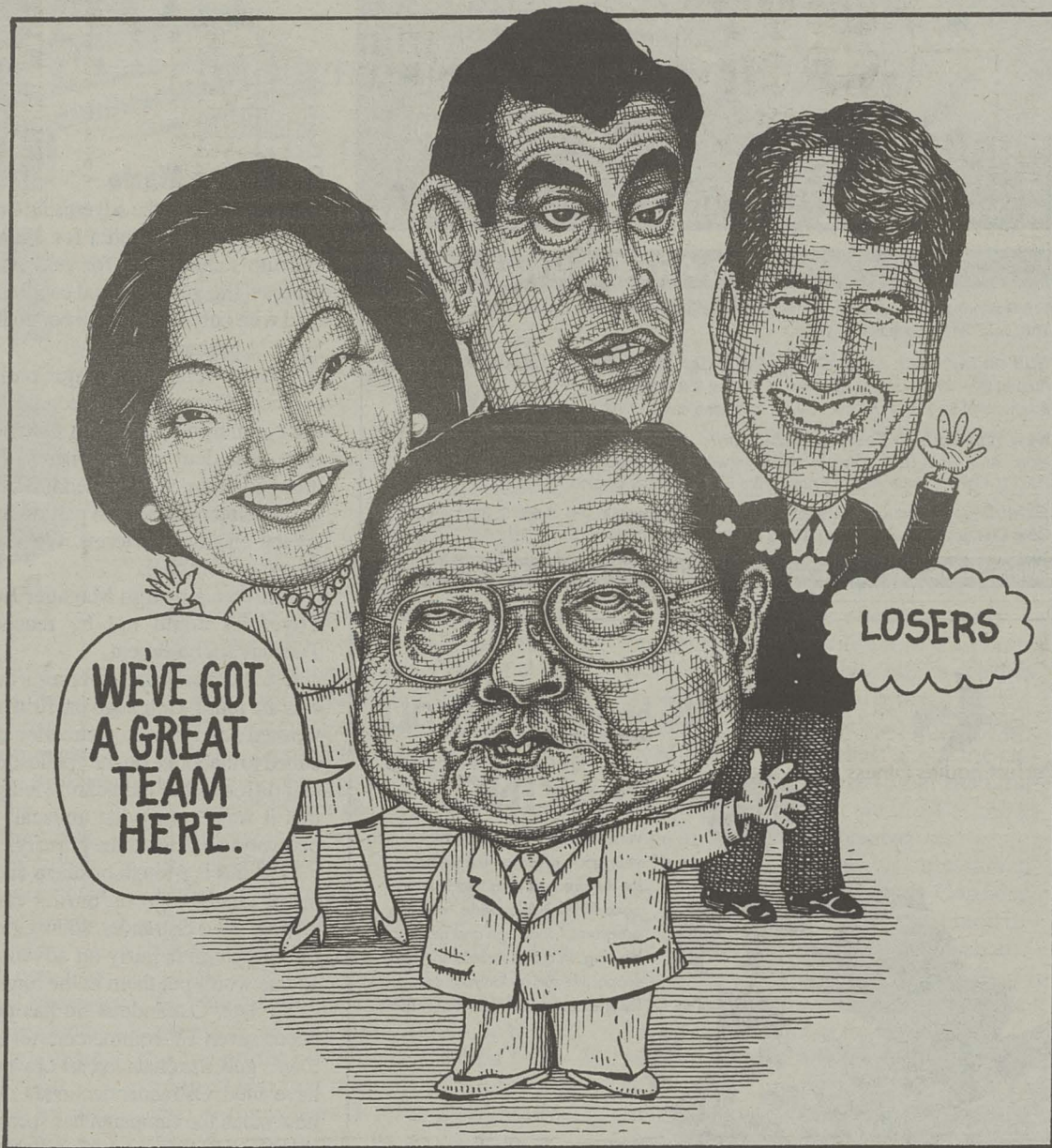
Traditional Hawaiian music, rarely heard today, is songs composed by native speakers of Hawaiian and performed using the same methodology of performance style that had been done by Hawaiian music performers a generation or more ago. Today's younger audiences do not readily identify themselves with this traditional approach in Hawaiian music. They prefer their music done in a more progressive style, and it has become very popular among island audiences and, to a certain extent, beyond Hawai'i. Keali'i Reichel and Frank Hewett are prime examples of this brand of music. Frank even taunted himself in the article as "progressive." What is so nasty about that?

As I have told Sanburn, Frank's life and my life were filled with different experiences. Obviously, our outlooks will be colored differently. Frank advocates a creativity and says, "I'm an enigma — that's the word I use." I said, "I am not a Hawaiian renaissance person, that's just the way I was raised. These songwriters (Alice Namakelua, Mary Pukui, Lena Machado and Johnny Almeida) are a part of my life. ... They are my sense of orientation." Frank stated that "Culture must create or it dies." What I told Sanburn was, "Everything has a life span and it's best that the old Hawaiian songs die in dignity rather than live in dishonor."

I have known Frank for many years and first met his mother, Auntie Alice, when she was a student of my hula instructor, the late Adeline Maunupau Lee, some 30 years ago. I also knew Frank's mentor, Auntie Emma DeFries, quite well. Several years ago I even performed at one of his hō'ike with Kawai Cockett. It is difficult for me to believe that he "spat" upon mentioning my name. I would think that someone who was taught and mentored spiritually and who says "because I see God" would be above that sort of behavior. Auntie Emma used to always say, "Rise above it," and this is still good advice.

I trust that this time, my words will not be edited and taken out of context. Our island community is and should be a close one. A Mainland mentality in journalism or anything else does not do much to foster the reciprocal spirit of aloha here in Hawai'i. I hope that future issues of the *Honolulu Weekly* will reflect more responsibility in reporting.

J. Kimo Alama Keaulana



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Hot Peppers

Whoa to Keala Kelly and her rousing, colorful and spot-on review of the Chili Peppers and concert life in Honolulu as we know it (Clubbed to Death, "Them Peppers is red-hot," HW, 8/14). She captured the moment and the spirit of summer 'n' rock and roll in the city with that li'l space usually given over to those — umm — professional clubbies who are way more concerned about everyone except the music, especially if said music-makers are not quite stylish enough like them.

Ryan Senaga, Soulstice may not be your idea of beauty, but you're so caught up in your bosses' choice of shirting (yea, we know already, its white and its button-down), you forget, eh, shut your eyes and listen and feel, it's not about you, it's about us and its about the music (Clubbed to Death, "You are so beautiful," HW, 7/31).

Thanks, Keala, for bringing us there and reminding us why we do the things we do for our music.

Jay Farr

Dept. of Corrections

• Flip McDiarmid's name was misspelled (Best of Honolulu, "Happiness is Hawaiian music on the car radio," HW, 8/14).

Write to: Letters to the Editor, Honolulu Weekly, 1200 College Walk, Suite 214, Honolulu, HI, 96817, or fax to 528-3144. E-mail to editorial@honoluluweekly.com. Letter writers must print and sign their name, and include a phone contact for confirmation purposes; e-mailers must include a phone contact. Letters may be edited for length and clarity; please be succinct.

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Still on my Back Innovative mask & dance theater by **Monkey Waterfall** August 22 - 31. Thurs. at 8pm, Fri. & Sat. at 8 & 10pm tickets: \$18 or \$12 advanced, for reservations call 521-9699

New Waves Film Festival: Whipped! Mon., Aug. 26 & Tues., Aug. 27 Two shows: 7:00 & 9:00 pm 2001 X-Games Tube Action Sports Film Fest Viewer's Choice Award winner! (58 min.)

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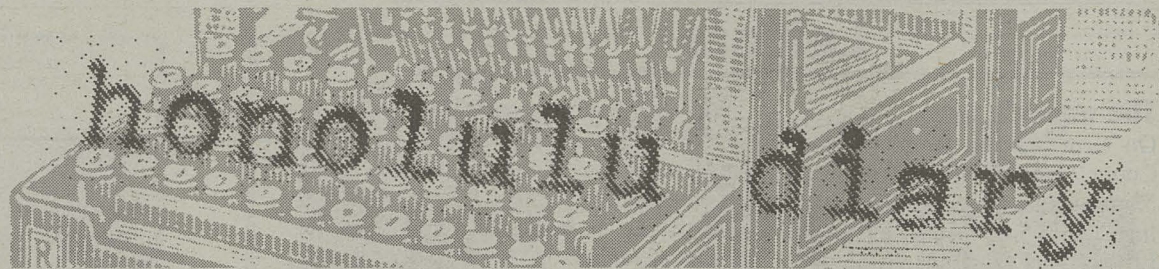


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Bailing on Mazie

Ostrander-Chu, the advertising firm that has handled media for Mazie Hirono's campaigns for years, has dropped the gubernatorial candidate cold with only weeks to go before the Sept. 21 primary.

"There were some major philosophical differences between us and the campaign," said Ron Ostrander, president of the firm. "We dropped them. We decided it was in the best interests of both parties, and we left on amicable terms. We wish Mazie a lot of luck."

Hirono Campaign Manager Bob Toyofuku could not be reached Tuesday for comment.

Ostrander said the governor's race was the fourth campaign the firm has worked for Hirono. Ostrander declined to elaborate on the "philosophical differences" but acknowledged that it was "somewhat unusual" to part ways so close to the primary.

"Politics is a tough business and a lot of changes go on during campaigns," said Ostrander, adding, "but the campaign is fairly far advanced so this won't put them in the lurch." To date, Ostrander-Chu has produced seven TV commercials for Hirono's gubernatorial race, six of which have aired. Ostrander declined to say how much the campaign has spent or owes on ads. Previously, the firm had produced three TV ads for her mayoral race, none of which aired.

Ostrander-Chu began this political season handling some of the print ads for Democrat Ed Case's gubernatorial campaign. But the firm dropped Case when Mayor Jeremy Harris stepped out of the governor's race and Hirono jumped back in.

Ostrander said that they had told Case at the outset that if "for some strange reason" Hirono ran for governor they would drop him and back Hirono, whom they considered a "long-term client."

—Sally Appgar

License to kill

Despite compelling evidence that the U.S. Navy's powerful new sonar technology is a serious threat to whales, dolphins and seals, the Bush administration decided on July 16 to grant it a permit anyway. The administration says the sonar poses no threat to marine mammals and is needed to detect super-secret "enemy submarines." Germany, Russia and China are developing such vessels.

On Aug. 7, a coalition of environmental and oceanography groups sued the Navy and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in San Francisco federal court to block implementation of the Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low Frequency Active sonar (aka LFAS).

"We are hopeful that the court will find what is plainly obvious, that the Navy and the NMFS, in rushing to deployment, have violated fundamental federal environmental laws," said Michael Jasny, senior policy analysts at the Natural Resources Defense Council's (NRDC) Los Angeles offices. "This is not a matter of national security, but rather a matter of the government complying with its own laws."

Jean-Michael Cousteau of Oceans Future, one of several co-

plaintiffs in the NRDC suit, has said that the NMFS has essentially given the navy "a license to kill." According to the Navy's own studies, said NRDC, the LFAS generates noise levels far greater than those known to disturb the migration and communication of large whales. If deployed, LFAS would extend to over three-fourths of Earth's oceans.

—Chad Blair

Bay watch

"We can reduce the impact of the 1 million visitors we get each year by educating them," said Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve Director Alan Hong. He was referring to the city's \$13-million, fake-rock Hanauma Bay Marine Education Center, which opened topside at the bay Aug. 16.

Hong's office desk displays some 20-year-old pictures of the overcrowded bay. "They think it's Ala Moana Shopping Center," he said, pointing to a picture of dozens of wet visitors parading pink inner tubes across the reef.

The stone-floored, Flintstone-like facility is open-air and contains Hong's office, information kiosks, a classroom for visiting students, the video screening area — and a great view of the bay.

Costly city-sponsored improvements at the overly popular bay continue to be a tornado of controversy.

A seven-minute instructive video is required viewing for everyone who wants to go to the beach below. This angers some local residents, and park officials are deciding how to best handle beachgoers who aren't willing to watch it — and repeat visitors who have already seen it.

"I already know the rules!" complained Henry Wong, a repeat visitor from California. But many first-time visitors appreciate the information. "I didn't know anything about coral reef," said Greta Swanson, a visitor from Minnesota. "Plus, it's more effective to see it than to read it."

Depending on the size of the crowds, the wait to see the video is about 10 minutes. On Saturday there were waits up to an hour.

—Catharine Lo

Condo politics

A large island property management company has taken aim at Rep. Willie Espero for his role in passage of three bills by the state Legislature this year that reinforced the rights of individual condominium owners.

Certified Management blasted Espero last month for supporting what it called "some very damaging anti-condo legislation." Company vice-president Al Denys wrote that, as a result of these bills, condominium associations "will now be forced to spend thousands of dollars to absorb the costs of frivolous legal challenges by dissident owners. ..."

The comments appeared in a newsletter distributed to the 200 condominium and other housing projects the company services, and in the newsletter of a trade group of condominium management professionals.

Espero, now a candidate for the state Senate from the redrawn 20th District ('Ewa, 'Ewa Beach), says the attack is unfair and timed to impact on the election.

"For them to say it's 'anti-condo' is ridiculous," Espero said. "It's really pro-homeowner. My focus is to make sure homeowners get a good deal, plain and simple."

"They [Certified] see power and control being taken away. The company is trying to get in their digs, but I don't think the community is buying it."

The three measures require that a condominium owner requesting information from the association must be informed in advance of any charges for the info; give condo owners the same time as association managers to organize support for proposed changes to a condo association's by-laws; and clarify that each side in mediated disputes will be responsible for their own expenses.

Denys was reluctant to answer specific questions about the company's criticisms. "Don't quote me on this," he asked.

Espero, who introduced all three bills, pointed to the broad support each of the bills received during several rounds of committee hearings from condominium owners and another large property management firm, Hawaiiana Management.

"It wasn't Willie Espero who passed these bills. It was the state Legislature."

—Ian Lind

The Weekly in Waikiki

The recent decision by a 9th U.S. Circuit appellate panel against the *Honolulu Weekly* in its news-rack suit against the City & County has been appealed back to the same court. The petition for a re-hearing before the full court was filed Aug. 16.

Overtaken by the 9th Circuit was a December 1999 ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Susan Mollway, who had declared that the city cannot treat paid and free periodicals differently, as it was doing in the Waikiki Special Design District.

Mollway's ruling led the city into mediation with publishers to implement a new ordinance, now in place, that dispenses (via lottery) slots in the city's integrated news racks to all applicant publications, including the paid daily newspapers. The lottery was held in June; the next lottery will be in the year 2005.

"From everything I've heard from the publications involved and from the city, the new lottery system is working fairly and smoothly," said *Weekly* publisher Laurie Carlson. The *Weekly* secured 16 slots in Waikiki via the lottery. Asked if, given the most recent ruling, the city intended to change the ordinance, City spokesperson Carol Costa had no comment.

The 9th Circuit three-judge panel ruled that its Waikiki news rack program "is not content-based" and that its distinction between free and paid periodicals is justified by the urban-neatness goals of the city.

But *Weekly* attorney Jim Bickerton said that the panel "completely ignored our main argument; that the city had increased the number of paid racks versus free racks and therefore discriminated and limited my client's opportunities for access to the public while guaranteeing the paid dailies' opportunities."

—Curt Sanburn

RADICAL COMMON SENSE

In February of this year, education policy specialist Mary Anne Raywid wrote a legislative bill called the "Education Reform Act of 2003." She wrote the bill in response to an open invitation issued by the state House Education Committee. Her bill went nowhere.

Last month, on July 17, Raywid gave the prestigious, annual Shiro Amioka memorial lecture at the UH-Mānoa College of Education. Her speech, "What would it take to fix Hawai'i's schools?" echoed her legislative proposals and was warmly received by the SRO crowd of administrators, faculty and students packed into the Krauss Hall lecture room. The clear-eyed speech has since resonated as a "call to action" among Hawai'i educators and others concerned about the state's future.

Raywid, professor emeritus at Hofstra University in New York, has been an adjunct professor at UH-Mānoa for the past six years. Author of numerous books and articles pertaining to education reform, she has also, over the years, served as president of such national organizations as the Philosophy of Education Society, the Society of Professors of Education and the John Dewey Society for the Study of Education and Culture.

The version of Raywid's speech printed here has been edited for length with scholarly citations removed. Citations will be restored to the article when it is posted on Honolulu Weekly's Web site on Aug. 28.

I believe that three kinds of very fundamental changes are necessary if our public school system is ever to work right: changes in commitments and convictions, changes in school governance and one big change in school organization.

The changes in commitment and conviction need to be dealt with first, because they are most fundamental, with the most pervasive effect. Commitment and conviction pertain to the way we think and feel about things, and the kind

of values we place on them.

Perhaps the most urgent of these sorts of changes needed in Hawai'i is the development of something like a civic equivalent of *ohana* — not the intimate one that the word *ohana* usually implies, but a public one.

In his book *Bowling Alone* (Simon & Schuster, 2000), Robert Putnam talks a great deal about the decline of social capital in the United States. What he means by social capital is the "connections among individuals — the social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them." He identifies two kinds of social capital, or connections, linking people: "bonding" and "bridging." Bonding connections are personal ties that hold tightly knit groups together. This is the kind that links family members, fraternity brothers, old friends. We can see quite vividly the strong bonding social capital in Hawai'i. The Islands are known for it.

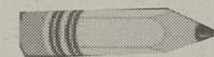
"Bridging" connections, on the other hand, establish positive links with those with whom we do not share "bonding social capital." It is the kind that links one group to another. This is the sort of social capital that is declining here (and elsewhere). It is clear in Hawai'i's voter-turnout rate, which ranks 50th among the 50 states. It is also clear in the public schools and the weak support they get from the public. When I say weak support, I'm not talking about criticism. I'm talking about how relatively few people really try to do something about the faults they find — that's what real support would require. The dominance of bonding social capital is apparent within Hawai'i's ethnic groups. It is also apparent in gangs among our youth — and among the youngsters and families who disdain as "haole imitators" their fellows who seek to succeed in school.

Our support for multiculturalism supports the bonding variety of social capital, sometimes creating out-group antagonisms that require bridging, yet undermining the bridging variety of social capital we so badly need. The tolerance we claim is not enough. If we are to operate as a society together, we need bridges from one group to another, not just a willingness to live and let live. The absence of such bridges is evident in multiple ways — in the behavior some exhibit on our highways, in the ways some people break into lines where others have been waiting their turn, in the corruption that is sending an astounding number of our officials to jail. You can't have a multicultural, aloha-based society without bridging. Building that bridging may be one of the most important things the schools can do by way of citizenship education.

Two things that are especially important for building bridging social capital in

Enough tinkering at the margins.

In this election season, UH educator Mary Anne Raywid argues for top-to-bottom reform of the state's deplorable public school system.



the schools are that they be genuinely user-friendly, and, second, that they be truly open. User-friendly means, for instance, that no one is left standing waiting in the school office while staff chat among themselves; that no parent is given short shrift when he or she comes to see the principal about a concern; that no child is ridiculed or ostracized by a teacher — ever, for anything.

"Open" means that it should be easy to get information about the schools. The school system certainly should operate under sunshine laws. It should be easy to find out where and when Board of Education meetings are, and exactly what is on the agenda. It should be easy to testify. The information collected by the Department of Education should be treated as the public property it is. When I remind you that it is only within the past two or three years that the DOE has released to the public the actual dropout rates from the schools these citizens pay for — crucial figures in judging a school's success — perhaps you will understand the changes needed to make information about public schools open and accessible to all.

Within schools, one of the more promising ways to generate bridging social capital is through service learning programs.

Youngsters should grow up with the feeling they've got some obligation to the larger community, to making it a better place. I've seen kids in such programs operate crucial emergency services, work at renovating homes and ably represent those unable to make their own

cases in dealing with predatory businesses and officials. Learning programs not only provide instruction in civic engagement but also inculcate a sense of its basic importance.

Unless we do these things — and whatever else it takes to build bridging social capital between the schools, their constituents and bill-payers — I fear for public education in Hawai'i. The growing gap between the haves and the have-nots, and the fact that Hawai'i's public schools are increasingly populated by the children of the have-nots, make those who are able to do so less and less willing to pay for public education. Unless we can build some bridging connections to them — through user-friendly schools, openness, service learning and whatever else occurs to us — the pressure on the Legislature to use scarce funds for schools will become less and less. Our public schools have few real champions today. We need to think about how to cultivate them.

The other part of our culture — our beliefs and norms and values — that we

must change to fix our schools is our obsession with control. I've never seen large numbers of people so committed to controlling the behavior of others as in Hawai'i. Some attribute it to the plantation-era oligarchy, while others see it as the legacy of an absolute monarchy. Whatever the cause, it's an impulse derived from a set of beliefs about the capacity of human beings (other than ourselves, of course) that we must acknowledge and try to rid ourselves of.

The pervasiveness of this obsession with control is evident everywhere. Consider, for instance, a 25-page bill presented in the Legislature this year to establish an educational accountability system. It specified exactly who was to be accountable for what, how they were to be held accountable, the rewards for successful students, the interventions for unsuccessful ones, how collective professional accountability should be set up and administered, how student achievement should be calculated and how the superintendent should set up the process for designing the system. (I'm not sure what there was left to design, but those who would be involved, and how, were specified.)

The same kind of tendency can be found in the state Board of Education, in the state and district offices of the Department of Education, and in the offices of many principals.

This is most unfortunate, because not only does it sometimes lead to structures of unbelievable complexity to make sure that nobody can goof up or cheat,

but it also leads to a docile, compliant and relatively uninvolved work force. The way to get the most effective performance from teachers and principals is to allow them some input about the programs and procedures we want them to be carrying out.

It's as simple as this: People will work to create a world they want and which they have been invited to envision and develop; they're a lot less willing to work to create a world that's been forced upon them, like it or not. It is like the difference between romantic love and a shotgun wedding.

Our preoccupation with control is producing failure. Over the long run, teachers can work on changing it by modeling trust in their judgment of students, and by providing less and less structure as youngsters mature, encouraging them to exercise their minds and their own judgment. Teachers know that you can't learn to swim without getting in the water. And that you can't get in the water as long as

"The growing gap between the haves and the have-nots, and the fact that Hawai'i's public schools are increasingly populated by the children of the have-nots, make those who are able to do so less and less willing to pay for public education."


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DocFest: YELLOW ASPHALT
Dir: Danny Verete. Israel, 2000, 87m, In Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles
The director spent years in Israel's Judean desert living among its reclusive Bedouin population in order to gain their trust and accurately depict their culture and traditions. This film explores the effects of an encroaching Western ideology on the customs of this often-overlooked society. **August 21 at 1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.**


DocFest: SPLIT DECISION
Dir: Marcy Garriott US, 2000, 75m
A talented boxer, Jesus "El Matador" Chavez, finds his rise to the world championship cut short when he is deported to Mexico for a youthful crime in his past. Jesus now faces two new battles — the fight for the right to return to his family and career in the U.S., and the struggle to find acceptance in the country of his birth.
August 22 at 1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.; August 23 at 7:30 p.m.

Performance: BLUE RAIN: SOUTH ASIAN MUSIC
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DocFest: LAST DANCE
Dir: Mirra Bank. US, 2002, 84m
A behind the scenes view of a stormy collaboration between the iconoclastic dance company, Pilobolus, and legendary author-illustrator Maurice Sendak as they transform a haunting Holocaust legacy into a critically acclaimed dance-theater piece.
August 25 at 4:00 p.m.; August 26 & 27 at 7:30 p.m.


DocFest: THE COCKETTES
Dir: Bill Weber/David Weissman. US, 2002, 100m
Nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival, this vibrant documentary draws on a remarkable archive of photos and film footage of the flamboyant, gender-bending song-and-dance troupe from the Haight-Ashbury hippie scene of 1969.
August 28 & 29 at 1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.; Aug. 30 & 31 at 7:30 p.m.

Islamic Film: A SUMMER AT LA GOULETTE
Dir: Férid Boughédir, Tunisia, 1996, 100m. In French and Arabic with English subtitles
A comedy set in 1967 — a Muslim, a Jew, and a Catholic are best friends until each of their daughters sets her sights on a boy of a different religion. As the families resolve their differences, the Six Day War breaks out in the Middle East, dividing Jews and Arabs the world over. **September 3 at 7:30 p.m.**

RADICAL common sense

those in authority keep blocking you from doing so.

It may take some time for us to modify these fundamental convictions and commitments embedded in the local culture — the control orientation, and the absence of bridging social capital. But there are things we can fix more immediately in schools, largely through governance changes.

Governance changes needed

We have things in schools put together in the wrong way. You can design an organization so as to make it effective and efficient, or you can design it in such fashion that it is just about guaranteed not to work well. I'm afraid our school system is saddled with this latter guarantee.

First, we in Hawai'i have organized our public education system to make absolutely sure it can't have too much

power — enough power, that is, to err or become corrupt. We've established a Board of Education, but what power it has seems scant and quite unclear. The BOE can't disperse funds, or collect them. Whatever policies and priorities it seeks to establish can be overturned or replaced or re-

ordered by the Legislature. And then we've made sure that the DOE, which the board supposedly runs, won't go astray by having *eight* different executive departments intervene daily in its operation.

The state Department of Human Resources announces vacancies and processes the hiring of school secretaries, custodians and cafeteria workers. The Department of Budget and Finance determines when and how much of the DOE's budget can be released to it. The Department of Accounting and General Services controls school facility construction and maintenance. The Office of Collective Bargaining handles the contract negotiations with teachers, school administrators and other school workers. The Office of State Planning is involved in planning locations for new school facilities. The Department of Health is responsible for school health services, including counseling services. The Department of Land and Natural Resources manages the acquisition and disposition of public school lands, and reviews leases for DOE offices. The Department of the Attorney General provides legal review for the public schools, reviewing DOE rules and regulations, as well as proposed waivers submitted by individual schools.

Several things are worth noting about this arrangement. One is that since all of these are executive offices whose heads are appointed by and responsible to the governor, the setup makes the governor something of a supra-superintendent of schools. Another is the paralyzing complexity, the maze-like intricacy and the delays that are bound to result from such a setup. And, finally, there are the overlapping jurisdictions, which, as 9/11 so vividly showed, don't work when you need them most.

Now, I'm not complaining about checks and balances, the principle upon which our whole governmental system is based in order to prevent one branch of government from tyrannizing over the others. But if one puts the checks and balances in the wrong places, or overdoes them, it is possible

to paralyze a public institution. That is what I think we've done with the DOE. We complain endlessly (and with good cause) about its inefficiency. But a number of the problems may not originate with the DOE or be curable by it; they may be the result of our firm determination that it shall not go astray, plus our cultural emphasis on hierarchy, spelled c-o-n-t-r-o-l.

This is not ancient history I'm talking about. This year, humor columnist Charles Memminger noted that our state motto, translated, means "The Red Tape Starts Here."

Actually, the Board of Education really has very little authority. If the governor is the supra-superintendent, then the Legislature is the supra-board.

It is in the Legislature that state education policies are really written. And it's not occasional, as a corrective, or to take care of some singularly overlooked problem. It is constant. To cite just a few highlights, it was the Legislature, not the BOE, that originally adopted School/Community-Based Management (SCBM) and the Comprehensive School Support System. It was the Legislature

that adopted A-Plus. It was the Legislature that adopted charter schools — and that has tried to amend its errors in each succeeding session since.

But it's not just major bills like these, it's also decisions like there shall be a vice principal in every school, or there shall be a Hawai'i State Student Council with exactly three functions and two staff advisors, or music shall be included as an integral part of the core curriculum of all Hawai'i schools.

Such legislation not only telegraphs micromanagement at its peak, but it's also responsible for the arrangements provoking complaints about the size and clumsy operation of the bureaucracy.

When I first came to Hawai'i, I thought the Legislature was the solution for public education. I now see it as the problem. One of the reasons why boards of education were created was precisely to move educational decisions as far as possible from the political arena, and to put school policy in the hands of public officials devoting their full-time civic contribution and focus to schools. Such is not the case, of course, with members of the Legislature, even those on the education committees. And one of the things I believe must happen is that, except under truly extraordinary circumstances, education policy must be written elsewhere than in Hawai'i's Legislature.

All state legislatures sometimes step in to correct ills in the schools. Especially since The Excellence Movement was launched in 1983, there has been much more legislative action to raise school achievement levels and establish standards and accountability systems. Legislatures are also involved, sometimes by court order, with school funding. But I assure you that in no other state but Hawai'i does the Legislature function consistently as a supra-board of education for the state.

One reason it does so here is linked to our statewide, unitary system of school management and control. If we had a decentralized system with semiautonomous local districts, the Legislature might not be nearly as tempted — nor in such a good position — to keep producing school policy, rules and regulations. This is one of the features of our public schools that makes it such a bad system.

Here is another: On the Mainland, city schools everywhere are in trouble — not so much suburban schools or small town schools, just those in large urban districts. It's fairly widely agreed that the troubles stem in considerable part from size. And we've created a single, statewide school district very much like a large school district in a city,

"Some attribute our educational problems to the plantation-era oligarchy, while others see them as the legacy of an absolute monarchy. Whatever the cause, it's an impulse derived from a set of beliefs about the capacity of human beings that we must acknowledge and try to rid ourselves of."

"School budgets cannot be a brand-new question for fresh decision each year, where one year they contend with street repair for adequate funding, and the next year it's a swimming pool or a golf course."

in terms of governance. Philadelphia is the nation's eighth-largest school system and one of its most troubled. It has 257 schools — approximately the size of Hawai'i's system, which has 255 schools. By virtue of its size alone, the Hawai'i school system may be just as hard to control effectively as Philadelphia's. So here we are, gratuitously saddled with the least successful type of educational governance in the country.

It's understandable why it is hard to break up a city's school system and establish separate, autonomous districts within one city. But there's not a reason in the world why we can't do that in Hawai'i. Doing so could solve not only governance problems but also student achievement problems. The evidence is clear that the larger the school district, the lower the achievement levels of students.

Why not, then, decentralize Hawai'i's oversized single school district by establishing multiple, semiautonomous districts? I say semiautonomous, because I think all schools should be obligated to have their students meet state standards. But, as those who proposed the standards-based education idea have insisted from the start, once you have standards that all are required to meet, that's all the control you need. You can skip the rules about procedures and what and how to teach, and all the supervision and monitoring.

Let schools and local districts design

their own instructional programs, their own pedagogy, their own organizational structures. The standards provide sufficient control. All you need then is to check that those standards are being met, and to intervene in the interests of improvement if they are not.

Every school ought to receive a report card from the state. And these should be widely disseminated, not just to those who can use the Internet and somehow manage to translate the elaborate information now posted. Everybody in the state ought to be able to find out how well a school is doing — not only its test scores, but its attendance rates, dropout rates, suspension and expulsion rates, teacher retention rates and how well all of its students are progressing toward graduation.

If we're so determined to simplify things down to a single score, then we can do an index that combines all these things (test results, dropout and expulsion rates, etc.). But we don't need accountability laws and offices to detect and act on this. It ought to be the DOE's responsibility to collect the data and distribute the report cards, and the superintendent's responsibility to act on them when that's indicated. That's

all we need to specify — that's all the control we need.

Another place where we can dispense with

a lot of elaborate supervision, hierarchy and control apparatus is with principals. Principals are key figures in schools. They make or can break a

"When I first came to Hawai'i, I thought the Legislature was the solution for public education. I now see it as the problem."



Mary Anne Raywid

good school. They need to have a fair amount of authority. But we also need some sort of check and balance where they are concerned. A bad principal can drive away good teachers, kill good programs and make kids and their families miserable.

One very simple way to make sure of striking the right balance, without a com-

plicated accountability apparatus, is to place principals on four-year performance contracts with reappointment contingent on a vote of confidence from teachers and parents, as well as on student achievement and a supervisor's judgment.

(District superintendents, by the way, ought to be placed on analogous contracts, wherein one renewal factor is the

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judgment of those who are presumably being led by this individual.)

A final governance measure, which must change if Hawai'i's public schools are ever to work, is that their budgets cannot be a brand-new question for fresh decision each year, where one year they contend with street repair for adequate funding, and the next year it's a swimming pool or a golf course. This not only leads to underfunding, but the arrangement also makes it impossible to do any rational budgetary planning.

There must be a dedicated revenue stream for schools, which stands as the predictable and dependable source of at least a large percentage of what they need to operate. And a lot more money must go into schools and classrooms than we're now investing. In the words of a student at Roosevelt High School:

"I go to a school with no soap in the bathrooms, no toilet paper and no doors on the bathroom stalls. Many classes don't even have textbooks for students ... and there are books in our library that say 'someday man hopes to land on the moon.'"

We ought to be ashamed of ourselves. This is no way to treat our kids, and it is certainly no way to build the sort of future we want for Hawai'i. Why should a youngster who has been treated so shabbily, and with such disrespect (by an institution we compel him to attend, mind you) feel any obligation to the society that treats him this way?

School change

I've suggested some major cultural changes and half a dozen governance changes that I consider essential to fixing the state's schools. But even if we accomplished them all, we would not have changed classrooms. In my judgment, everything mentioned is necessary to classroom change, but even collectively they are not sufficient. Thus, to complete my list, I want to propose one more change, pertaining to school size and organization.

For years we were told that large schools are cheaper and qualitatively better than small ones. There is now a good deal of evidence

adding up to exactly the reverse: Small schools avoid a lot of what we now know to be the dis-economies of scale. Small schools do a much better job of enabling youngsters to succeed, especially youngsters who are disadvantaged or at risk. In a small school, the chances of success for such students are exactly *double* what they are in a large one. A careful study conducted in four states confirms that the

well-known negative effects of poverty on school performance are halved in small schools. Since the disadvantaged and at-risk now constitute a full half of Hawai'i's public school population, downsizing could do a lot to improve school achievement among those who need it most.

There is at least one more major advantage to small schools that we in Hawai'i — with the largest average school size in the nation — have ignored at our peril. It is that small schools are far *safer* than large ones. It

we would begin to see that downsized schools are not just something that might be nice, but an arrangement that is crucial for the safety of our children and that will enable a lot of them to pass all those standards tests we're writing.

I suggest we do what a number of places on the Mainland are doing: break down our large schools into separate, semiautonomous ones operating within the same building. Let each of these schools-within-schools be designed and chosen by the teachers who will operate them. Let each one have a theme they have selected to entice and engage students, a theme that truly interests kids enough to make them willing to study a full curriculum. (A couple of themes I think would be sure winners here are The Sea, Pacific Rim Studies, a Leadership Academy and a school featuring a "peoples history" perspective on the past and present.)

I wish Hawai'i schools would do it and do it right, because this kind of school downsizing may be the best way yet devised to transform schools and their effectiveness, as well as a move crucial to the safety of all of our children and to the prospective success of those kids at risk of nonproductive and noncontributory futures.

Some of these ideas may sound a bit far out. But I assure you that virtually everything I've proposed already exists elsewhere. And I truly believe that if we want to fix Hawai'i's schools, these are the sorts of moves we must resolve to make. ■

"Everybody in the state ought to be able to find out how well a school is doing — not only its test scores but its attendance rates, dropout rates, suspension and expulsion rates, teacher retention rates and how well all of its students are progressing toward graduation."

appears to be no coincidence that the tragedies at Columbine and Santana occurred in large high schools.

Where youngsters are not anonymous or marginalized, they are far less likely to get in trouble. In fact, student behavior in general is superior in small schools.

In Hawai'i, with the gang problems we've got, our large schools are a catastrophe just waiting to happen. I wish



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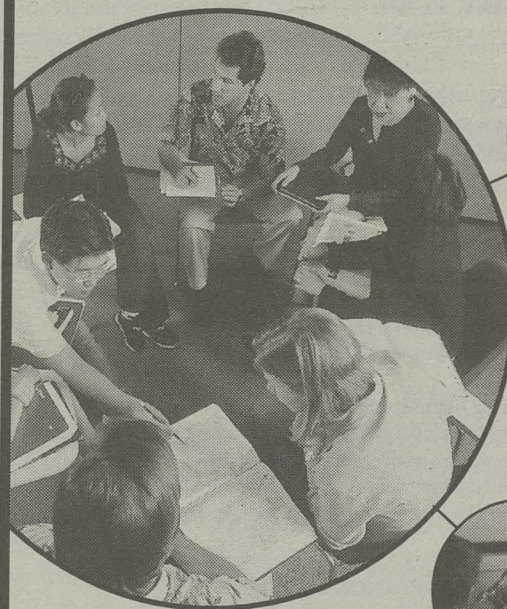
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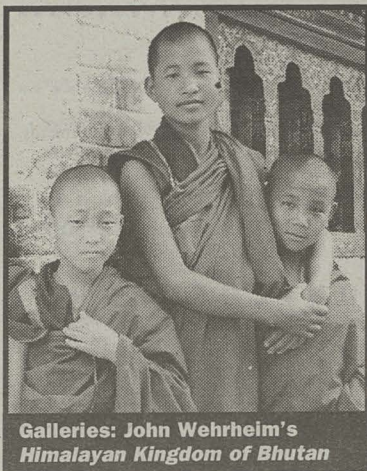
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Hot PICKS



Galleries: John Wehrheim's Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan

Galleries

The real Shangri-La

monastery clings to the vertical face of a wall of granite. Cheerful young monks play a coin-toss game against a temple wall. Gigantic snow-capped mountains rise out of densely forested valleys. A girl wearing a conical lotus-temple hat smiles warmly.

Sharp and clear, rich in detail, skillfully composed, these images of Bhutan, the tiny kingdom wedged into the Himalayas between China and India, are the work of a photographer who is deeply familiar with his subject matter — the beauty of the landscape, the spirit of the people and the tenor of daily life.

As the photographs reveal, Bhutan appears to be frozen in time; it was closed to the outside world until 1974, and it was not until 1999 that the government allowed television into the country, followed a year later by the Internet.

Photographer John Wehrheim is a civil engineer who owns and operates companies on Kauai and Oahu, and works internationally as an architect-engineer. In his college days, Wehrheim took a course in architectural photography, which led him into a parallel career as a photojournalist. Since first visiting Bhutan in 1991, he has returned several times and is now proposing a hydroelectric joint venture with the government. The venture is called "Creating Electricity ... Preserving Community."

Currently on display at the East-West Center Gallery, the *Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan* exhibit is more than a picture show — it's a social, political and spiritual journey into the country and an introduction to its people. The photographs are accompanied by detailed descriptions, excerpts from Wehrheim's travel diaries and quotations from Tibetan religious and poetic literature. Look and learn.

—John Wythe White

East-West Center Gallery, 1601 East-West Rd.: Slide-Talk by the photographer Sun 8/25, 2 - 3:30 p.m. Gallery hours Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sun, noon - 4 p.m. Free. Through 9/25. 944-7111.

Theater

Back for more

There's an interesting sight. From behind the windows of Marks Garage on Nuuanu Avenue, Ben Moffat has

set down his lunch to watch a dusty, disheveled man in a heavy olive coat climb discreetly into a dumpster full of lumber.

Moffat is one of the founders of Monkey and the Waterfall, the local dance-theater company he founded with Yukie Shiroma in 1990. This weekend at The ARTS at Marks Garage, they debut *Still on My Back*, an all-new follow-up to last year's hit, *Monkey on My Back*, which explored addiction and obsession.

Nearly the entire run of that show was sold out.

"We were surprised at the response," says Moffat. "People responded well to the humor, and that it wasn't didactic. ... We knew as soon as we were done last year that we wanted to do another one."

Still on My Back uses masks, music, costume, puppets and movement to create darkly comic and abstract representations of human behavior. "Most people have addictions, in some form or another," says Moffat. "They're aware of that power. We present that power in a non-judgmental way that is also non-literal. ... And since our theme is about something so basic to human nature, it's perfect here."

MATW enjoys working in Marks Garage, making good use of every inch of its space and extending the playing area outdoors into the street, making every passerby an impromptu cast member.

Even now, Moffat cannot ignore the parade of people marching outside Marks Garage at any given moment. "Everyone who walks by, they're fully formed characters. Look at this guy," says Moffat, setting his chopsticks down once more.

"There's something so great about the serendipity here."

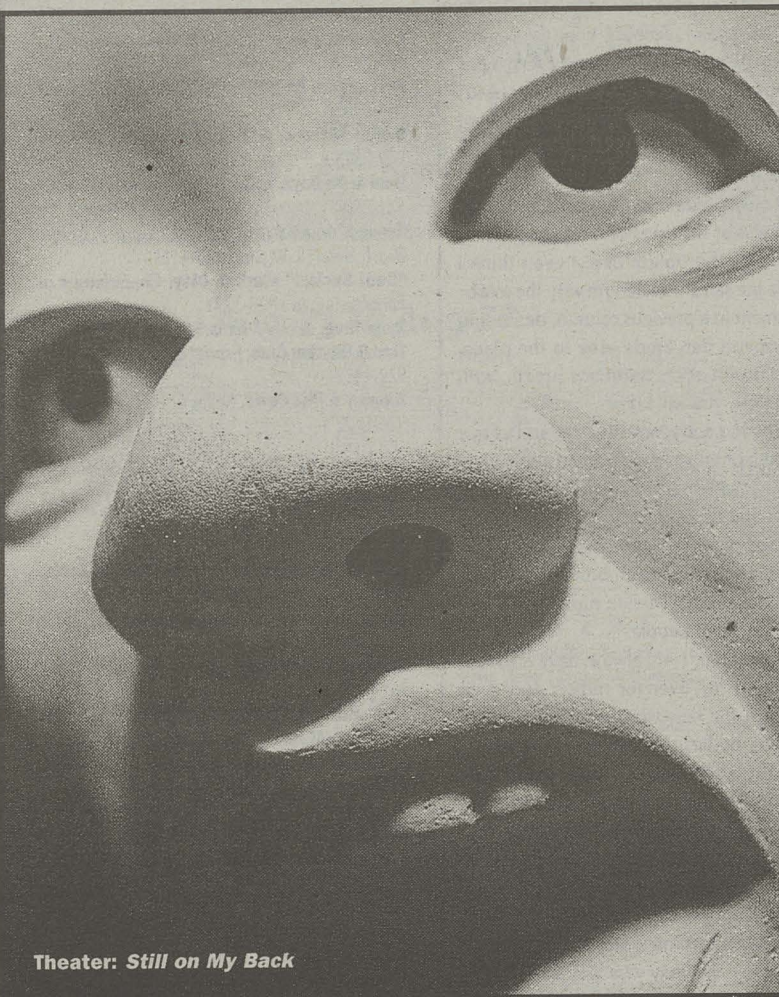
—Robb Bonnell

The ARTS at Marks Garage, 1159 Nuuanu Ave.: Thu 8/22 & 8/29, 7:30 p.m.; Fri 8/23 & 8/30 and Sat 8/24 & 8/31, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m. \$12 in advance, \$18 at the door. 528-0506.

The Scene

Kaka'ako underground

Chora Spearman, aka Ghetto Geisha, has never shied away from the club spotlight. First she brought her Chica-



Theater: *Still on My Back*

go-influenced Live Poets Society to the Wave, now she is bringing Afrodisiaacts Mondays — a mixed bag of spoken word, MC battlin', underground hip-hop, soul food, fashion, massage, games and even aromatherapy — to Grumpy's. Live and direct, Spearman says her Monday nights have been a bit slow of late, but there's no reason it should be, nor should the rest of the quality controlled weekly lineup at the refurbished Grumpy's.

Now under new management, Grumpy's, formerly the Blue Room, has packed its weekly lineup with premium talent. On Tuesday, the O.G. Movie Night is a film screening with underground hip-hop. Wednesdays, the Nocturnal Sound Krew wreck the decks, and Thursdays the Stone Groove Family presents hip-hop and R&B. The streetwise theme continues on Fridays with Bliss, and Saturdays bring out the Empire Sound Crew for dancehall and dub reggae boom. Winding down on Sundays is Groovology, as Positive Regime and Study Hall productions bring some downtime into the mix.

Monday, Sept. 26's Afrodisiaacts (\$5 cover) night presents DJ Zita (Sisters in Sound), Mr. Mention and DJ A2Z, with massage by Kimochi. The talent and variations for a steady

dope vibe are in place. Now Grumpy's needs a crowd to take things to the next level.

—Li Wang

Grumpy's Nightclub/Lounge, 327 Kiawe St. (Diamond Head of CompUSA): Lunch, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.; dinner/nightlife, 5 p.m. - 2 a.m. 528-4911.

Funk friends

Apparently, Bay Area bands have figured out that the crowds in Honolulu fit their demographic nicely. The latest band to catch the hint is Soulvine, a funk-soul seven-piece outfit that walks the fine line between 21st-century grooviness and derivative funk.

It's a precarious business, playing music in a crossover genre defined by legends like James Brown and Wes Montgomery, but Soulvine is committed to their sound, and their eponymous debut release proves them to be well-tutored groove-smiths.

Their bio lists a litany of prestigious Bay Area venues they have played, many of which are renowned for the caliber of jazz



The Scene: Afrodisiaacts

artists that graces their stages. Certainly, Soulvine's musicianship and attention to compositional detail have earned them spots on some of the most coveted stages on the West Coast.

What will interest Honolulu show-goers is the fact that there is no band in town that is doing what Soulvine is doing today. Only Frog Child, in the early '90s, approached the formidable task of playing credible funk-soul. Since then, it's been mostly ska and electronica.

And that is precisely why anyone with a hankering for something other than Jamaican cheese or submissive cover-rock should attend Soulvine's shows at Sand Island R&B, Moose McGillicuddy's and Anna Bannana's. Soulvine deserves a look and a listen, especially if you're jonesin' to dance to some funk.

—Jamie Winpenny

Anna Bannana's, 2441 S. Beretania St.: Thu 8/22 & Sat 8/24, 9 p.m. - 2 a.m. \$5. 946-5190.

Sand Island R&B, 197 Sand Island Access Rd.: Fri 8/23, 9:30 p.m. - 1:30 a.m. \$5. 847-4274.

Moose McGillicuddy's, 310 Lewers St.: Mon 8/26, 9 p.m. - 1 p.m. Free; Tue 8/27, 9 p.m. - 1 p.m. \$5. 923-0751.



The Scene: Soulvine

Visual Arts

PHOTO: HAP SAKWA

Derek Bencomo and Brian Yoshimi Isobe
at TCM's downtown gallery

Ocean harmony & celestial realism

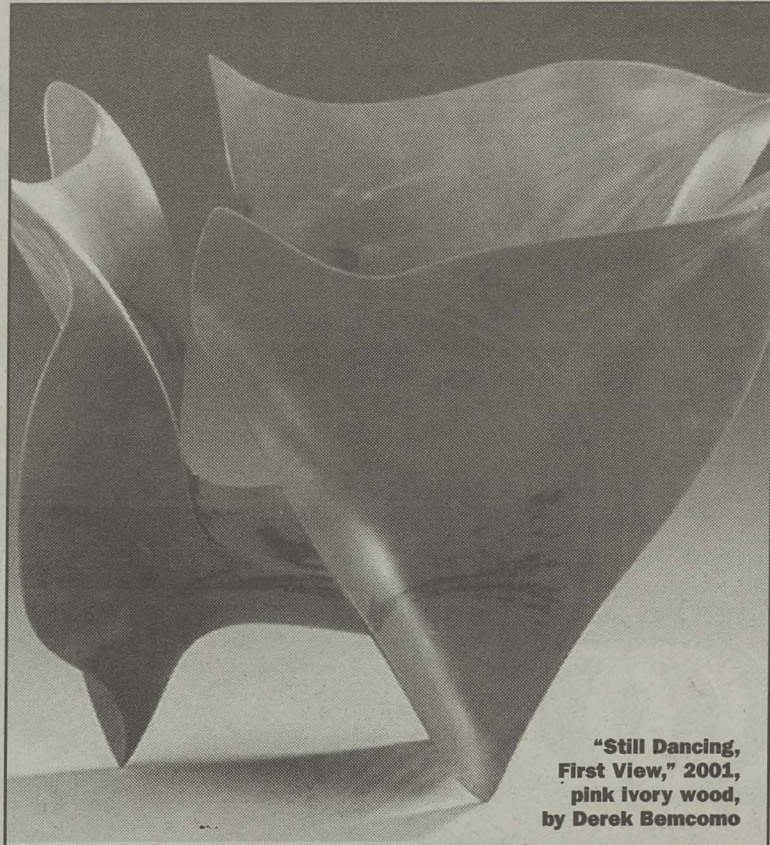
MARCIA MORSE

Artists speak about listening to their materials, about establishing a dialogue in order to understand the true nature of the stuff they work with. It's a wonderful metaphor for the respectful attention granted to substances that one wants to coax into a particular and refined shape or form. Looking at the work of Derek Bencomo, one can only surmise that this artist speaks and understands a very distinctive dialect, beginning with how to read a raw log of wood and discern its visual and structural potential.

Bencomo, who lives and works on Maui, is a transplant from Los Angeles, drawn to the islands in 1984 by a love of the ocean and surfing. Taken by the exotic woods of Hawai'i, and inspired by woodworkers Jack Straka and Ron Kent, Bencomo purchased his first lathe and began to teach himself the craft of wood turning. The artist readily admits that his work developed through making mistakes. He ultimately found his own way, which often diverged from the "right way" of classic turning. From the absolute symmetry of the lathe, Bencomo gradually came to subvert and even defy such perfection, listening instead to the inner voices of the wood. In that shift in attention rests the particular nature of Bencomo's gift as an artist in wood.

He began with a series of "peak and valley" forms, which, inspired by the terrain of Maui, he began carving into his pieces. Feet emerged at the bottom, then fins at the sides; gradually fins extended into feet to create the vocabulary for many of the forms currently on exhibit. With that combination of turning and carving, often made more complex through a combination of turning on multiple centers, Bencomo has created a wonderful puzzle: How can a material that is basically hard and resistant be made to look so soft and fluid?

In that fluidity Bencomo seems to come full circle back to what drew him to the islands. *Ocean Harmony* is the title of one of three series of ongoing works, which invokes the rhythmic energy of the waves and currents of the ocean matrix surrounding us. The other series, *Come to Me Dancing* and *Still Dancing*, invoke another metaphor — that gravity-defying grace of bodies *en pointe*. In each, Bencomo seems particularly attentive to the subtle



"Still Dancing, First View," 2001, pink ivory wood, by Derek Bencomo

variations of coloration, grain and density which create the distinctive personalities and voices of his chosen materials.

Where Bencomo listens to his materials, grounded in a kind of literal and physical reality, painter Brian Yoshimi Isobe seems more attuned to the voices of his subjects — water falling, grass growing, clouds making their passage across the sky — finding in them clues as to their nature and, by extension, the more abstract nature of nature itself.

It is a pleasure to see Isobe's work on display again — it has been too long. Isobe received his undergraduate degree from the UH-Mānoa in 1976 and attended graduate school on the Mainland. He has been a resident of San Francisco since 1979, studying with artists such as Robert Bechtle whom he cites not so much for a focus on photorealism but for the notion of finding "triggers of memories." It's those images, whether realistic or more abstract, which allow us to situate something in time and weave around it some form of meaningful narrative.

Isobe's paintings engage the specific and the momentary in a consideration of the universal and the timeless. They are deceptively simple, and subtly evocative. Several works are based on photographs, which the artist readily acknowledges as a general reference more than a literal source of imagery. "Untitled (Bush)" and "Untitled (Green)" make reference, respectively, to dense foliage and light-dappled water. In such instances, Isobe acknowledges the literal, even

banal, nature of the subject in order to push beyond it. In this, he is ultimately more concerned with what the paintings are *not* — not landscapes, not still-life studies — but what they provoke as points of meditation, or hooks for contemplation.

Other works, more stylized or abstract, may also lead in the same direction. Several cloud studies (*ten*, the title of the exhibition, means sky or heaven in Japanese), including "Cloud Looks Like a Dog," make reference to the suggestibility of our imagination and our inexorable search for identifiable meaning. Other works, like those inspired by the vertical pattern of falling water, allude to things with a specifically Japanese connotation: in one case, the waterfall series of woodblock prints by the artist Hokusai; in another, "Misogi," the ritual in which monks will stand beneath a cold waterfall to mortify the body while cleansing the soul and the senses. It is that combination of supreme sensation and austerity of spirit that perhaps best summarizes the appeal of Isobe's paintings, created with an engagement of hand and detachment of mind. ■

Ocean Harmony: Recent work by Derek Bencomo, and *ten*: Recent Paintings and Drawings by Brian Yoshimi Isobe — *The Contemporary Museum at First Hawaiian Center*, 999 Bishop St.: Mon - Thu, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Fri, 8:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Through 9/17. Free. 526-1322.

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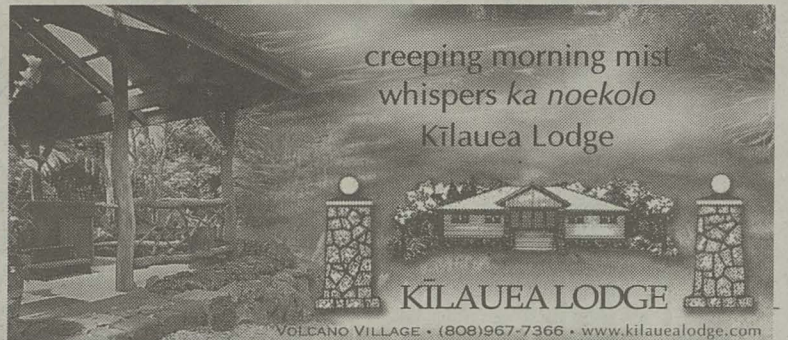


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One-hundred eighty feet down — the treacherous dive for black coral.

'Au'au's gold

CASEY TWANOW

“One-hundred seventy-eight feet,” the digital depth finder on the *Aulani* reads.

Boatmen Nathan Rosa and Phillip “Snooky” Pai call out, “165 ... 154 ... 147 ...” as the sea floor rises up under the boat. Robin Lee, 54, wearing a wetsuit, scuba gear and carpenter’s jeans, and carrying an ax and a sledgehammer, pitches over the side. An instant later, 60-year-old Henry Ah Sam, with his own cumbersome gear, tattered wetsuit and faded denims, splashes in.

On the boat *Pai*, Rosa and Haruo check their watches. Pai, 57, has a boyish perpetual squint and short, sun-reddened braid. He tells me that at this depth the divers can spend only 27 minutes on the bottom. I start my stopwatch.

Lee and Ah Sam are currently the only regular black coral divers in Hawai‘i, although a few other men, including Lee’s younger son, dive for coral part-time.

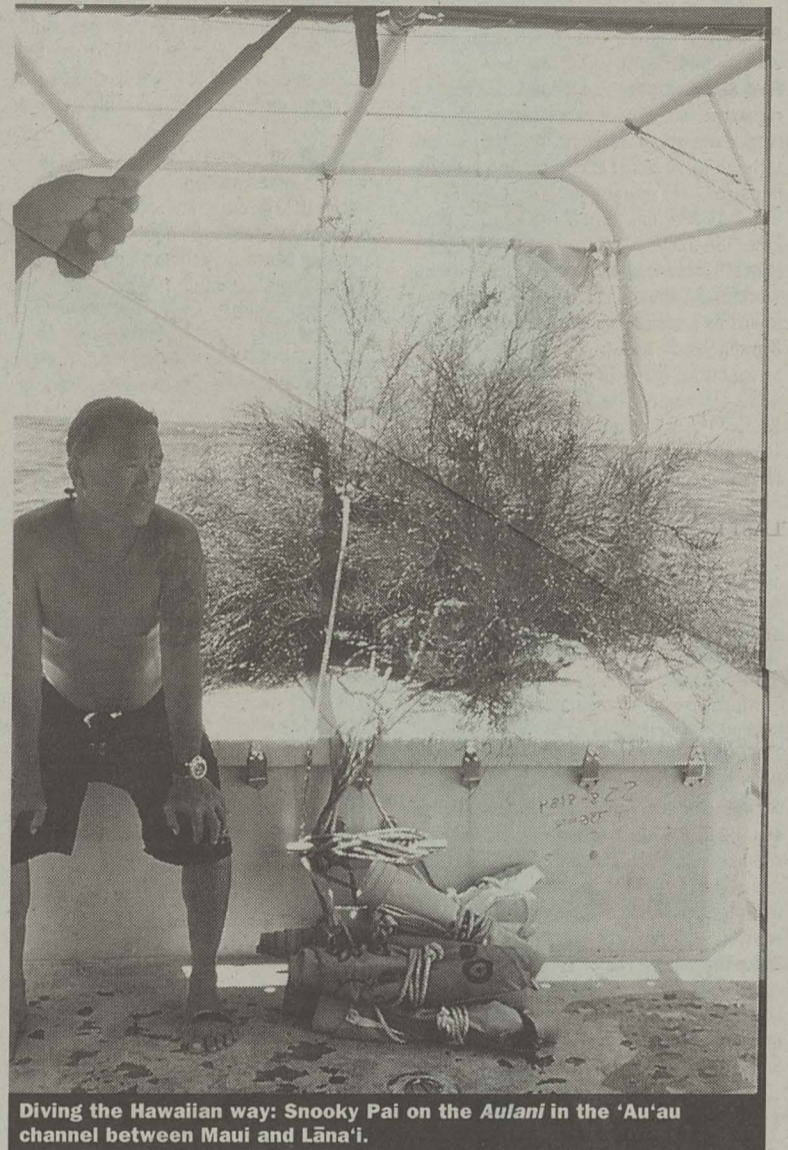
The men selectively harvest deepwater black coral trees from the ‘Au’au channel between Maui and Lāna‘i. The trees, which have skeletons that can be carved into valuable gemstones, grow in fields across the ‘Au’au’s shadowy limestone basins and ancient drowned reefs. Today the men will work their way down the ridge the *Aulani* just passed over.

Coral harvesting is typically an ecological nightmare, but not in this case. The coral species these divers harvest are not endangered, and grow far below delicate reef ecosystems. In state waters (within three miles of shore) the divers can only cut coral with a base wider than three-quarters of an inch. Coral trees with this base diameter are about 36 inches tall.

Even before the state regulations, Lee says Hawai‘i’s black coral divers left the small trees to replenish the coral beds for the next generation. He tells me this tradition of conservation is rooted in “the Hawaiian way — respect for the ocean.”

Oceanographer Ricky Grigg at the University of Hawai‘i has monitored Hawai‘i’s black coral since the early 1970s. His research, funded by the Sea Grant college program, has shown that the Maui black coral bed can sustain an annual harvest of over four times the average 2,232 pounds Hawai‘i’s coral divers take each year.

Motoring out from Lahaina Harbor toward the green slope of Lāna‘i, the men on the 34-foot *Aulani* were in quiet communion with the sea; all eyes fixed on the horizon. Lee’s “black coral dog,” a Labrador retriever named Negrita, panted happily on the windy bow. Haruo, a 72-year-old fisherman with deep smile lines around his eyes, points to Moloka‘i stretching in the northwest and Kaho‘olawe



Diving the Hawaiian way: Snooky Pai on the *Aulani* in the ‘Au’au channel between Maui and Lāna‘i.

rising to the southeast.

Five and a half nautical miles from Lahaina, Lee and Ah Sam have jumped. Now we are waiting, rolling with the 2-foot swells.

Beneath us, the two divers are dropping like stones. They must carefully budget their time on the seafloor, and Ah Sam says the trick is to “make out the biggest black coral clump below you and fall right into it.” It takes two to five minutes to chop through the tough, pliable base of a tree, clip the tree to a bungee cord and inflate the attached lift bag to float the tree up from the depths.

The divers are so heavily weighted (they carry around 185 extra pounds) they have to drag themselves between trees. They have six lift bags each to load with coral, and they must float themselves up with the last lift bag and coral tree.

Lee jokes about “Martini’s law: Every 33 feet down feels like another martini on an empty stomach.” But the dangers of reaching distant coral fields are very real to him. In 28 years of diving, three men have been lost from his boat, and Lee walks with a limp from a severe case of the bends. He estimates 20 coral divers have died at sea, not to mention those crippled by the bends, since the 1958 discovery of Hawai‘i’s black coral bed. This is a sobering toll, considering only a handful of men even attempt coral diving.

Lee and Ah Sam are only diving to 180 feet today (they often dive past 200 feet, and Lee remembers passing 325 feet in his youth), but there is always a risk of accidents, nitrogen narcosis, hyperventilation or the bends.

Ah Sam, a strong, quiet, former police officer born on Maui, began harvesting coral four years ago. Now he dives four days a week and golfs the other three. The other men chide him about being a closet millionaire, so Ah Sam tells me he dives for “cigarette money.”

“It’s pretty hard to beat [Lee] picking coral,” Ah Sam says. “He’s been doing it so long.” Lee, an O‘ahu native whose long hair is just beginning to show gray, says since he is “old as dirt,” he does not want to dive much longer. He claims he only goes “to keep [Ah Sam] company,” but cannot hide his excitement when speaking of winter dives when the divers hear “whale song so loud it vibrates right through your body.”

The first orange lift bag surfaces, triggering a buzz of adrenaline. Pai guides the boat over the waves, and while Haruo rolls up the lift bag, Rosa, the muscular 28-year-old boatman-in-training, hauls up a wispy, dark-red sea fan nearly 4 feet tall. Its base is embedded in a heavy chunk of rock; its branches are clumped with oysters and pink, softball-sized lace corals.

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Ocean

PHOTOS: CASEY TWANOW

As orange, punching bag-sized lifts pop up every minute or two, we are caught in an organized flurry, chasing them down so Rosa can pull in the trees and pile them on the platform near the stern. The corals' slightly sweet, fishy scent drifts over us.

Wearing workman's gloves, I clip samples from each tree for Grigg's ongoing research. Wherever the coral branches brush my skin, they leave a lipstick-red smear that has to be washed off to prevent stinging.

Under the red slick, the goo-like living layer of tiny coral animals, the coral skeletons shine darkly. The divers cure the coral for two months in a friend's pasture until the protein and chitin skeletons are hard as ivory or pearl. On one dive, each man harvests about 50 pounds, or \$1,500 of black coral. They sell the raw coral mainly to Maui Divers of Hawaii.

I check my watch — the divers have been down there for 26 minutes. Within yards of each other, two bags surface that read in faded marker, "LAST BAG — I'M UNDER THIS BAG." Pai gestures to Rosa, who heaves fresh air tanks, bang sticks and spears into the water, all moored on rubber buoys. The divers must decompress for one hour at 30 or 40 feet to avoid the bends. Lee explained the bang sticks: "Outside of Lahaina is the home of the tiger shark."

Lee tells me the tigers they see while decompressing "usually just stare at us — they don't want to eat

us because we're so ugly."

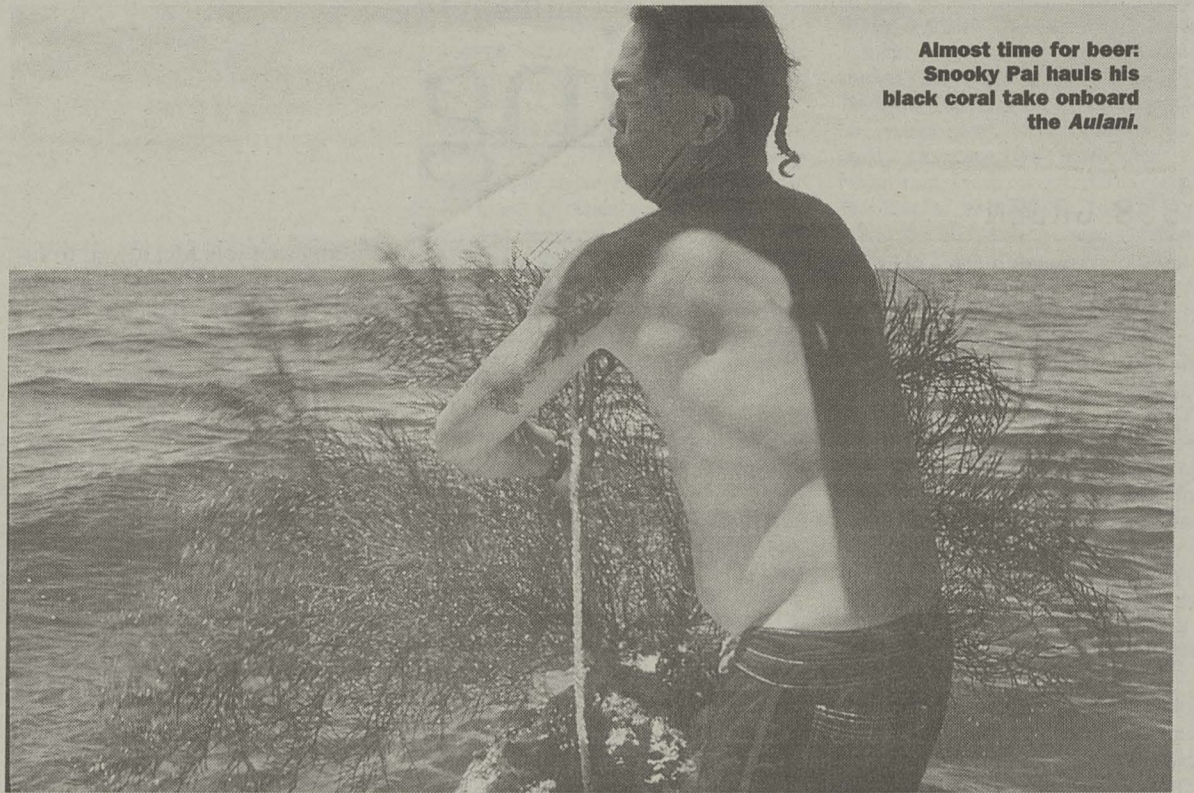
Midway through decompression, Lee pops up and motions to Pai that it is safe for us to snorkel. Another guest on the coral boat today, Amber Coontz, and I hop in. Coontz, 23, has just moved to Maui from the Mainland. Her father and Lee fought together in Vietnam.

I dive down to breathe out of Lee's extra regulator. Shifting beams of bright sunlight shoot through the water around us. Every direction is the same turquoise emptiness; there is no sign of the distant seafloor. Rosa swims over and points to his mask, miming, "Look around you — be careful," but today all I see is one small fish.

At exactly one hour, Lee and Ah Sam swim up and climb onto the boat. The mood is light. Ah Sam ruffles Negrita's salty coat and Lee drives us to a calmer spot where he saw some uhu recently. Rosa, in a wetsuit and scuba gear, and Pai, with one pink and one blue fin, and his scuba air tank on bare skin, dive in to spearfish.

Rosa is out of air after 15 minutes and comes up with two fish on his spear, swearing about two uhu that got away. After 10 more minutes Pai hands up his three-prong spear, and Rosa whoops, "Yeah baby Snookums!" The spear is crowded with 'ala'ihī and 'ū'ū (squirrelfish), and kūmū (goatfish).

With the fish on ice, we head



Almost time for beer: Snooky Pai hauls his black coral take onboard the Aulani.

back to Lahaina Harbor. Rosa washes down the boat, lays the coral out in the sun and binds it together with thick rope. The older men have a beer with the group waiting under the milo tree near slip 39.

Kitty, a darkly tanned, tattooed friend, balances a board on the rails of the boat dock and slices sashimi from fresh yellowfin 'ahi. Tony, a tall Samoan-Irish man,

brings a bowl of shoyu and wasabi. Ah Sam turns shish kebabs and barbeque chicken on a small grill beside the fresh-caught kūmū that another friend, Leo, has prepared. Generous plates of sticky rice are passed around, and Lee pulls off pieces of steaming kūmū for us with his chopsticks.

With characteristic laughter in his eyes, Lee tells me, "It's not so much

the coral, it's the drinking under the tree that we like." The men agree they spend more time talking story under the tree than out on the water.

Just half a city block away along the harbor, we can see tourists forming lines at white wooden booths for the Reef Dancer, the Windjammer and "Finest Kind Sport Fishing," eager to pay for just one day of adventure at sea.

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Art House

The Acid House (UK, 1998) Combining humor and hard-talking drama, hapless Bob Coyle has a chance encounter with a vengeful God; soft-centered Johnny is forced to contend with a psychotic neighbor and a wayward wife; and Coco Bryce takes an acid trip that literally takes him back to the womb. *UH-Krauss Hall*
The Cockettes The gender-fuck song-and-dance troupe from the heyday of the San Francisco Hippies scene is documented here, via found footage, new interviews with surviving members, and a re-creation or two. A fun look at a culture now as dead as

ancient Rome. *Doris Duke at the Academy*
The Fast Runner (Atanarjurt) Much of this highly textured content has never been filmed before, and the story even dares to show us, in detail, the patterns of everyday arctic life. This is not a movie to be scanned TV-style, but to be absorbed. It's basic human nature in the raw, about the fire of passion and the ice of the a stunning landscape. —B.G. *Restaurant Row*
Gangster No. 1 See Review on Page 18. *Restaurant Row*
Home Movie Eccentric doc about domiciles off the beaten track, and out of the architectural loop in "rural" American. A sleeper of sorts that treats, among other topics, a Big Island woman and her treehouse adventure. *Restaurant Row*
In the Bedroom (2001) Todd Field's indie production about a family torn asunder was cheated in this year's Oscars, but no matter: It's a beautifully acted drama (with



Net 'scape: Stephen Dorff stars in *feardotcom*, a police thriller opening nationwide Aug. 30.

a premise some people disbelieved until a recent news event) starring Oscar nom Sissy Spacek (never better), UK's Tom Wilkinson, Nick Stahl and Marisa Tomei. No miss. *Movie Museum*—B.G.
Last Dance A one-of-a-kind of collabo-

ration (dramatic and tension-filled) between author Maurice Sendak and the Pilobolus dance company yielded up an amazing theatre piece. We watch it from inception to near-bloodshed to triumph. *Doris Duke at the Academy*

Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India If you're willing to log in the hours, you'll find in Bollywood epic that shamelessly tries to please its audience at nearly every turn. This picture has everything but the kitchen sink, but there is a certain joyousness to it that is infectious. (Reviewed 8/14) —Rose Kahele *Restaurant Row*

Late Marriage About a man born in the former Soviet state of Georgia and raised in Israel. His parents are upset he's not married yet, and they don't approve of his older, divorced lover. It's one man's late journey of self-discovery. *Restaurant Row*
Lovely & Amazing This film explores the neuroses and insecurities of contemporary women in comfortable society, using characters who are often painfully annoying and accurate. There are no half-baked endings. Instead there is truth in the relationships of these women that works its way out at its own pace. (Reviewed 8/7) —A.C. *Restaurant Row, Koko Marina, Varsity Theater*

Mulholland Drive (2001) David Lynch at the top of his game, which is murderously frustrating to some, and delightful to others. It's Lynch up to his tricks about shifting identities, the tyranny of patriarchal Hollywood and the terrifying randomness of the universe. With Naomi Watts, Justin Theroux and Ann Miller (of 1940s MGM musicals). Terrific. *Movie Museum* —B.G.
My Big Fat Greek Wedding Will the foreign, vegetarian fiancé meet the big Greek family's approval? *Kāhala 8, Restaurant Row, Pearl Highlands*

Open Your Eyes (Abre Los Ojos) (Spain/France/Italy, 1998) It's ba-a-ck, due to pop demand, this burrow-under-your-skin thriller (by the multitalented Alejandro Amenabar of *The Others*) whose Hollywood remake (*Vanilla Sky*) was royally botched. This one, about a successful bon vivant whose face is disfigured in a girlfriend-induced auto wreck, stars hunky Eduardo Noriega (*The Devil's Backbone*) and Penelope Cruz, who also starred in the Hollywood remake. A haunting film. *Movie Museum* —B.G.

Split Decision (2000) A doc about boxer Jesus Chavez, who, as you'll recall, was deported to Mexico mid-career to face charges on a crime from his checkered youth. *Doris Duke at the Academy*

Thirteen Conversations About One Thing The world of *Thirteen Conversations* offers no relief from shadowy human impulses and karmic repercussions. Definitely worth a go. (Reviewed 7/17) —A.C. *Varsity Theater*

Tadpole A way-too-sophisticated 15-year-old goes for an older love. *Restaurant Row, Varsity Theater*

Whipped! (2001) Big Wave surfing video (winner of the 2001 X-Games film fest) featuring names such as Kelly Slater, Occy, Grant Washburn, Jeff Clark, the late Jay Moriarity and Peter Mey. *The ARTS at Marks Garage*

Who is Cletis Tout? Christian Slater tries for a comeback. He plays a prison escapee who takes on the identity of a man named Cletis Tout. However, the real Cletis Tout has a contract out on his life, so now Slater must deal with police and a mob hit man played by Tim Allen. *Restaurant Row*



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- Murderous Maids (NR)**
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- My Big Fat Greek Wedding (PG)**
Daily: 11:30 12:00 2:00 3:00 4:15 5:15 6:45 7:30 9:00 9:40
- Fast Runner (NR)**
Daily: 11:35 3:15 7:15
- Lovely and Amazing (R)**
Daily: 11:45 2:00 4:15 7:00 9:15
- Who is Cletis Tout? (R)**
Daily: 11:55 2:15 4:30 7:20 9:35
- Home Movie (NR)**
Daily: 2:35 7:40
- Gangster Number 1 (R)**
Daily: 11:30 4:25 9:30
- Notorious Cho (R)**
Daily: 11:50 2:20 4:40 7:10 9:20
- Lagaan (PG-13)**
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Last chance to see *Late Marriage* and *Tadpole*, leaving Thursday.

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The Straight Dope

I'm always hearing it tossed around as fact that women are paid less than men for the same work. Most folks seem to treat this as common knowledge. Seems, then, that the smart thing for businesses to do would be to hire women exclusively. So, is it a bunch of hooley?

—RevMarTye, Houston, TX

If you want to be literal about it, yes, it's a bunch of hooley. Paying women less than men for the same work violates U.S. law. The federal government being the model of efficiency that it is, we can be sure this type of discrimination has been totally stamped out. One may object: But everybody knows women get paid less than men! Of course, but the question was about pay for the same work. The thing is, women, in some people's eyes, don't do the same work as men. They stay home having babies and knitting dirndls while the men are out hunting bear and fending off the Visigoths, so naturally they get paid less. You may detect a note of sarcasm here, but dressed up in slightly more refined terms this is largely

the argument used to explain wage differentials today.

Fifty years ago it was common for women to make less than men for the same job. Among the rationales: women required "extra services" (tampon dispensers in the johns?), didn't want to work overtime, needed help with heavy physical labor, etc. But the real reason, as a 1939 pay-policy manual noted, was "general sociological factors" — testosterone-speak for "That's just the way it is, honey." This sort of discrimination was outlawed by the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and similar statutes passed by the states. Some employers subsequently attempted to weasel out of them along the lines suggested above, arguing that wage differentials for similar jobs were justified by the fact that the guys occasionally had to lift heavy items and so on. Never mind the incidentals, said the Supreme Court. If the jobs are substantially equal (not identical), the law requires equal pay.

Usually, anyway. Four "affirmative defenses" permit unequal pay for the same work: seniority, merit, performance-based incentive systems, or other nondiscriminatory

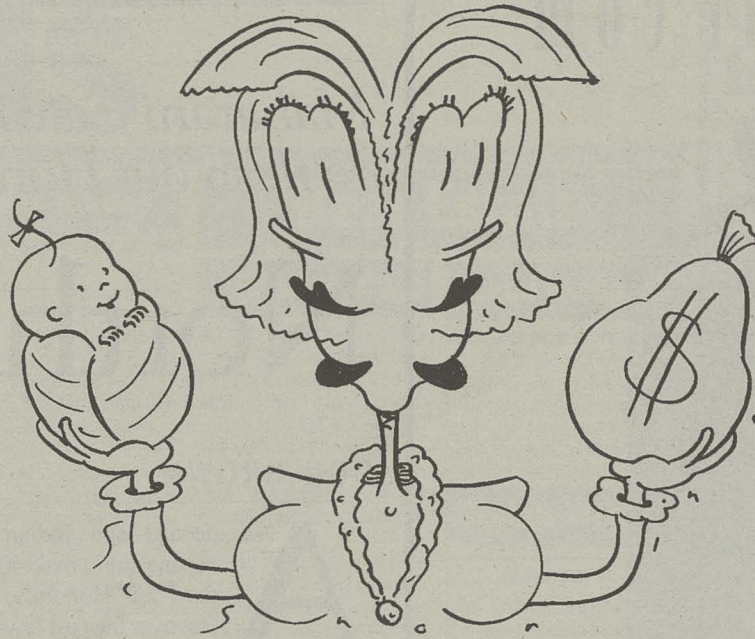


ILLUSTRATION: SLUG SIGNORINO

this notion has not caught on with U.S. courts or legislators.

Despite progress, women on average still get paid much less than men. In 1979 women working full-time earned about 60 percent as much as men; by 1998 that figure had climbed to 76 percent. Does that reflect an injustice? Many say no, arguing that women earn less because they take time off to care for children or elderly parents (and thus have less seniority) or accept lower pay in return for more flexible working arrangements. Women also tend to go into lower-paying lines of work, shunning higher-paying technical fields. It's easy to caricature this view (dirndls versus Visigoths, etc), but there may be some truth in it. Some research suggests that when women behave as men do — not having babies, mainly — the income gap largely disappears. If so (I won't claim the matter has been definitively settled), the question facing women is a stark one: What do you want, kids or cash?

—Cecil Adams

Comments, questions? Take it up with Cecil on the Straight Dope Message Board, www.straight-dope.com, or write him at the Chicago Reader, 11 E. Illinois, Chicago 60611. Cecil's latest compendium of knowledge, *Triumph of the Straight Dope*, is available at bookstores everywhere.

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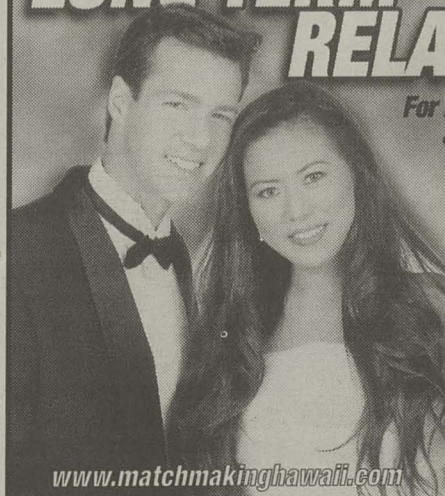
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Restaurant Review

PHOTO: JOHN LUTFEY

Maharani Café is a mixed bag, but its good enough to flesh out Honolulu's Indian cuisine scene.

Northern fire

DON BROWN

A decade ago Indian cuisine didn't make a dent in Honolulu. But over the past few years several family-run restaurants have appeared, offering a sampling of both Northern and Southern Indian cooking.

Southern Indian fare tends to be almost completely vegetarian. Northern Indian cuisine, on the other hand, tends to be hotter and is more dependent on meat dishes. The famous tandoori cooking of this region, baked in ovens of special clay from North India, began with the nomadic tribes in the steppes of Central Asia.

This primer on the cooking of this vast country helps partially explain the subtle differences in the various Indian restaurants across town, depending on the region and tastes of the owners.

Maharani Café, started two and a half years ago by three brothers (Francis Tulu, Christian Rahman and chef Prince Arafat, pictured) from Calcutta, had a rocky start from all advance reports, but benefits greatly by its location near the University of Hawai'i. In the shadow of vegetarian haven Down to Earth, it has become a welcome respite for health-conscious diners.

Maximizing the small space, the interior is nicely laid out with comfortable black tables and chairs, though rather incongruous chandeliers dangle like stalactites from one end of the dining area. We were impressed by the fairly comprehensive menu, with an even mix of vegetarian and meat dishes. Scouting the dishes under the label "exotic appetizers" (secretly hoping they weren't too exotic to be appetizing), we came up with the assorted vegetarian appetizer platter, consisting of four *pakor*s, two *padum* and two *samos*s (\$7.95).

*Pakor*s are vegetables dipped in a chickpea batter and deep fried. Those I've had elsewhere were more vegetable than batter, but these seemed more akin to falafel, heavily battered with only bits of onion and cilantro in evidence, and slightly overcooked — not a golden brown. The *samos*s, a combination of vegetables, potatoes, carrots and peas baked in a pastry crust, were also a bit of a disappointment, with a mushy consistency that lacked the spicy taste that can make the dish a special treat.

The *padum*, crisp lentil wafers, had an oily sheen and didn't pack the spicy punch of those I've sampled elsewhere. However the appetizers were accompanied by two sauces — a yoghurt/mint combination and a tart tamarind sauce with coriander — that added a tasty kick.

For entrees, we chose one chicken, lamb and seafood dish. Tandoori Chicken (\$8.95), which takes an extra 20 minutes to prepare here, is probably the dish most closely asso-



ciated with Indian cuisine, at least in the American mind. Real tandoori clay ovens burn at upwards of 1,000 to 1,200 degrees — the searing heat trapping the spices and natural juices within the food. Sometimes mesquite is used in the fire, lending a subtle aroma to the delicately spiced meat, which comes out crisp on the outside and moist on the inside.

Lacking space and an authentic clay oven, the tandoori chicken here is an approximation of the real thing, baked in an electric oven without the benefit of the high temperature or wood aroma that makes the dish "fit for kings." The coating made of a marinade of yoghurt, herbs and spices sits on the surface rather than flavoring the meat. Like most of life's hidden pleasures, it's okay, so long as you don't know what you're missing.

On the other hand, the Lamb Saag (\$10.95), which was billed as a house specialty, was quite good — cubes of lamb cooked with a delicious creamy spinach mixture. The meat was tender and slightly pink and its flavor was nicely balanced with the texture and subtle spiciness of the spinach, an odd combination that nevertheless worked. The Indian word *maharani* means "queen" and was picked by the brothers to honor their mother, many of whose recipes grace the menu. This dish and another house specialty, Shrimp DoPiazza (also \$10.95) are among them.

The shrimp dish was the standout, a combination of stir-fried onions, ginger, garlic, spices and tomato that

was well-balanced and had a deliciously sweet, pungent taste that complemented the seafood beautifully. The sauce was good enough to stand on its own with the generous helping of basmati rice, gently flavored with saffron, that accompanied the meal, as well as the *naan*, a leavened baked bread.

Other "specialties of the house" that looked terrific were the Shrimp Biryani (\$13.95), accompanied by saffron-flavored rice cooked with herbs, spices, raisins and nuts; the Vegetable Jalfresi Masala (\$7.95), mixed vegetables cooked with tomato, onion, ginger, garlic and spices; and the Balti Beef (\$9.95), which is slow-cooked with fresh vegetables, tomato and spices. For the curious and economy-minded there are four combination dinner specials that give a generous sampling of favorite Indian dishes. A variety of daily specials are also offered.

Some like it hot ... and those of you who do will not be disappointed. You can specify whether you prefer your food mild, medium, hot or spicy. But don't make the mistake I did at one Mainland restaurant years ago: confronted with Mild, Medium, Hot and Vishnu. I went all the way with Vishnu — and nearly obliterated my esophagus. Only afterwards did I discover Vishnu is the Hindu God of Wrath. Consider yourself warned. ■

Maharani Café, 2509 South King St. Nightly, 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. 951-7447.

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preferred experience includes event management, fund raising experience, and familiarity with the Kaula Community and the health care environment.

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Personals

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Big Wave Guns

Surfology alphabetized

Amazing assortment — Abellira and Aipa, bitchin' beautiful balsa, beaucoup Brewers, Big Wave, Chuck-Yeager Buzzy Trent. Bradshaw. Curren (father, not son). Cabell the Gazelle. Cole's battered beast. Diffenderfer: Can you say Stradivarius? Downing, Edwards, Eaton. Fins. Singles. Huge, wave-cleaving fins, some with pukas where leashes had an early home.

Sixty boards, only six thrusters. Guns, guns, guns. (Go see 'em.) Huge Hawaiian wave tools. Hamilton (father and son). Hot Curling. Iggy.

James Jones (Booby, you baboose). Kanaiaupuni model. Lightning bolts & LSD. Made for men who ride mountains. Nolls, no duh! Nellis. No sissies.

Outside! Outtasight! Oh my god! Pintails, Pinstripes. What? No Parrish? Quality: the real deal steering wheel. Been there, done that.

A few collector-driven reissued wall hangers that will never feel the Pacific Ocean. Redwood/ Red Fins/lots of reds and yellows/ really big boards for really big waves.

Stringers: Thick, strong and plentiful. Sculpture? Tow-in boards. Unadorned, sticker-less, logo-less and sponsor-less. Vee in the nose, vee in the tail. (Check out John Kelly's Hydro). Waimea, Waimea stance. World Champ M.R. X4/X-15. Yellow & yel-



PHOTO: LI WANG

lowed. Zee question remains: Why is there no surf/canoe/Duke museum in Hawai'i?

—Mark Cunningham

Nalu: 40 Years of Big Wave Boards
1132 Bishop St., lobby level gallery:
Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.;
Sat, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Free.
Through Sept. 6. 263-9545.

Mr. X-large

A local inventor takes out the lumps

It's just something guys never talk about," says Richard Takaba. "But when I asked my friends about it, they all knew what I was talking about."

Takaba is talking about the shoulder lumps that form on large and extra-large shirts because standard hangers aren't long enough to hold up the sleeves of bigger shirts. His simple, but effective solution: create a hanger that extends to fit larger-sized shirts.

Seems trivial, right? Well, it is, but just within Takaba's circle of

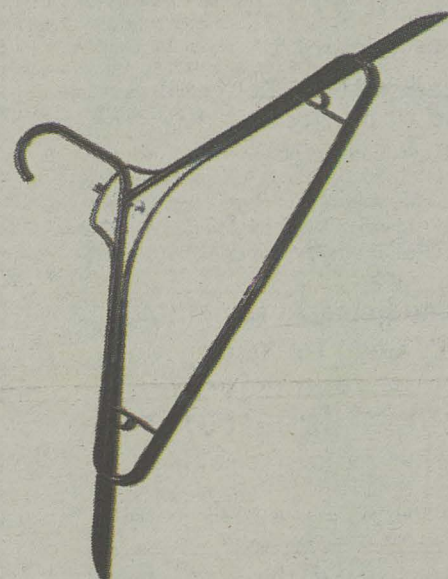


PHOTO: COURTESY

Made in HAWAI'I highlights

Here, only

The *Weekly* made the rounds at the 2002 Made in Hawai'i festival and discovered several artists and businesses of note in between tastings of Kaua'i coffee, pineapple mustards and spirulina popcorn.

Bob Hackney, 55, the Hilo man behind Out of Hand, flies to O'ahu a couple of times a month to peddle his bold, brightly hued shirts (pictured). He's been at it for 15 years, hustling at craft fairs, living a subsistence/existence lifestyle. Originally a ceramics man, he's developed enough of a following for his tribal screenprints that he hasn't had to

touch clay in over a decade. Hackney can be reached at (808) 968-8475 to find out when/where he'll be on O'ahu.

We also discovered wood-turner and drum-maker Aaron Hammer's line of knobby wine bottle re-corkers made of recycled Hawaiian hardwoods (\$16) — a unique, ecologically positive gift idea. Call Hammer at 293-8284.

Wondering how the 'awa industry is doing since the recent well-publicized health warnings about the Polynesian



PHOTO: LI WANG

potion, Alofataua Kuma says, "Actually, we've tripled our business since the reports, because people are looking for the purest forms. People who know are seeking us out." Kuma's Tongan-grown 'awa business, Royal Kava Hawaii, is based in Kailua (256-KAVA).

—Li Wang

friends, he heard stories of ironing out the lumps each morning, or even tossing a shirt in the dryer to get rid of them. "I even knew a guy who would put water on his shirts, and he'd walk around with wet spots on his shirts for a couple hours at work," says Takaba, a Department of Health inspector.

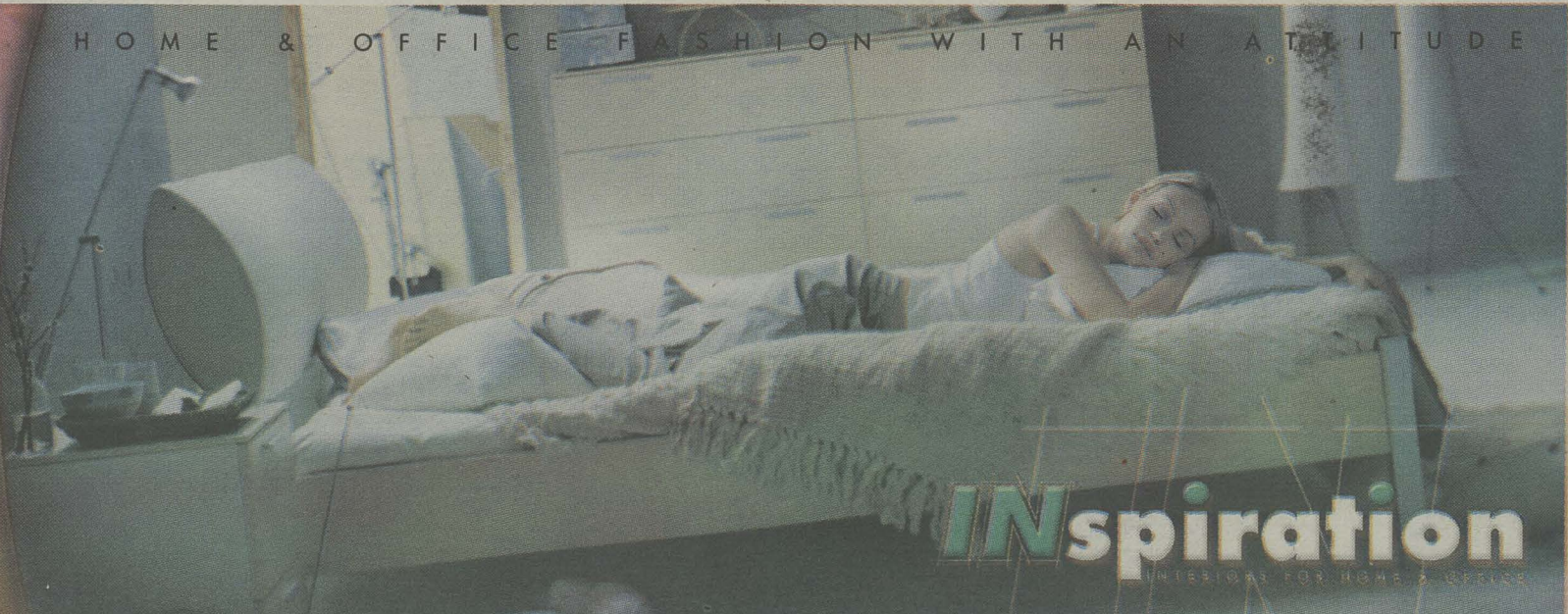
Takaba took some standard wood hangers and added foam extensions until he found the magic length — 22 inches. He found a manufacturer in China and now sells his MrBigXL hangers for \$1.49 each through his Web site, www.MrBigXL.com.

"I know it seems kinda silly, but lots of people have tried a sample of the product, and now they want more," he says.

—Li Wang

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

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