

Senator Michelle Kidani

(D) Senate District 18 – Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Aloha friends and neighbors,

In this edition of our newsletter, you will find quick summaries of some of the District 18 community events and happenings over the last two months since the Neighborhood Boards last met in July. I think we can all agree that it was a busy summer, and now that the school year is well underway the routine for many families is even busier.

These newsletters are not the only means by which I can report on matters of interest to our residents. I contribute columns regularly to *MidWeek*, which is widely circulated in Central and West Oahu, and recently I have been offered the opportunity to contribute to the *Gentry Waipio* and *Waikele Ohana* community association newsletters that are sent to households in those neighborhoods.

Nothing replaces face-to-face contacts, however, and I make an effort to attend as many community meetings and events as I can to keep in touch with my neighbors. I appreciate the opportunities to trade ideas and information. They are an invaluable part of my work as your Senator.

Each Senator, in addition to responsibilities for district residents, must also keep up with statewide concerns. One of my major assignments as Vice Chair of the Ways and Means Committee is compiling the Senate's construction budget. It's useful to see first-hand what the needs are for state-funded construction and how previously appropriated funds are being spent. This summer we had the opportunity to travel to the Big Island on a site visit where we checked in at health centers, libraries, parks and several other state facilities. One major issue there is the future of the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (COP) at UH Hilo. The COP is seeking major funding for a new permanent building, and while our tour clarified some of the proposed COP funding request, we are still awaiting updated plans and information. And, yes, there are students enrolled in the COP from Senate District 18, and so I appreciated hearing their perspective on this matter.

As a member of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs, I was also invited by the Aha Moku Advisory Council to spend some time at three less-familiar locations in our state. I just returned this past weekend from an overnight stay at Kalaupapa. Earlier, I had a similar overnight trip to Kahoolawe, and then a few weeks ago, I was one of several Legislators who helicoptered to Niihau for a day trip. The state has interests in all three of these locations, and the on-site presence will be valuable as we debate budget priorities in the coming Legislative session.

As noted earlier, the face-to-face connections are more important than any written reports we might receive or distribute. A great example of this is the touching letter I received just last week from students and teachers at Niihau School after our visit and talk with them. They expressed their thanks for state support of their school, but they also noted their concerns about preserving their way of life on the isolated island, pointing out shoreline protection as a priority.

"The beach is important to us because it's part of our culture, tradition and way of life," they wrote. "It is one of our main resources where family gathers food for our daily meals, because we are solely dependent on our beaches.

"We live a very blessed and fortunate life with peace and humility and would like to keep it that way."

What a great way of expressing the hopes of all of us.

Me ke Aloha,

Governor Calls for Special Session to Convene Next Month

Governor Abercrombie has issued a call for the Legislature to convene a Special Session beginning Monday, October 28, to consider a bill drafted by the administration regarding the issue of marriage equity.

The Governor's statement says he wants the Legislature to focus totally on this issue in a Special Session without having to divert attention to the hundreds of other bills introduced during a regular session.

The administration's draft bill is posted on the Web at this address:

http://governor.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Marriage_Equity_Bill_AG_9_9_13.pdf

Once hearings on the bill have been scheduled, testimony may be submitted in writing, in person before Legislative committees, or by email at: <http://capitol.hawaii.gov>.



Our community's loss . . .



Keiji Amemiya



Farouk Wang

The Mililani community is mourning the loss of two prominent citizens – both of them longtime residents, and both of them past presidents of the Mililani Town Association (MTA) that guided our neighborhood through years of tremendous growth. It is with sorrow that we note the passing of **Keiji Amemiya** and **Farouk Wang**.

Keiji's professional career spanned more than four decades, beginning as a laborer at age 16 with the Hawaiian Pineapple Company – later Dole Corporation. He and his colleagues developed strategies and procedures that helped Dole Wahiawa thrive in the face of stiff international competition.

He served as the very first president of MTA and was active in the Wahiawa Lions and a founding member of the Mililani Lions Club. Keiji and his loving wife Setsuko raised a family of five sons and daughters.

Farouk Wang retired from the University of Hawaii just two years ago after a long career with UH student housing and the buildings and grounds maintenance department. He was extremely active in Mililani and other neighborhood youth soccer leagues as a nationally certified referee instructor. He was also a leader in state and national Credit Union organizations.

Farouk came to Hawaii as a teen ager from his native Egypt, and remained true to his Muslim faith, serving for many years on the Board of the Muslim Association of Hawaii. He and his wife Norene were parents to a son and two daughters and had three grandchildren.

On a personal note, Farouk was a very dear friend and we served together on the MTA board for many years.

Our sincere condolences and warmest aloha go out to the families of Keiji Amemiya and Farouk Wang. We remember them for everything they did to make Mililani Town such a great place to live.



Mililani is proud to be a place that nurtures families through strong schools and a healthy mix of family events. *At left*, my grandson Keaolana and his friend Chris and I were among the hundreds of residents who turned out for the recent MTA-sponsored **Eat the Street** food tent and truck event. ~ ~ A few weeks earlier, another great annual event also attracted a wonderful turnout. *At left*, my daughter Sunny and granddaughter Kamalani were dressed for the occasion—the **Obon Festival** observed at Mililani Hongwanji Mission.



I was honored to be among the many guests who attended a fundraising event last month for the Senator Dan Inouye Legacy Foundation that is working toward appropriate ways to honor the memory of our late senior U.S. Senator.

Our ever-present photographer, **George Waialeale** was busy recording the event. I joined **Irene Hirano Inouye** and former Hawaii first lady **Jean Ariyoshi** for the photo above.

News items . . .

◆ The State has now awarded a contract and issued a notice to proceed for construction of the covered play court at **Mililani Middle School**. The Legislature had earlier approved **\$1.824 million** for this project, but challenges in obtaining permits had delayed the start of construction. Work is expected to begin in early December, with a required completion time of six months. *This will be a welcome addition to the MMS campus!*

◆ The Army has over the last several weeks issued **noise and traffic advisories** for helicopter flights between Pearl Harbor and Wheeler Army Airfield and large military vehicle convoys along areas of H-2. Many residents have complained that they never got the word about these noisy and sometimes disruptive-to-traffic activities. The Army Public Affairs Office says it is possible to sign up to receive advisories when these events are scheduled. **Call the base Noise Concern Line directly at 656-3487 to be added to the notification distribution list.**

Waipahu High School continues to shine!

We are always happy to brag about the accomplishments of students and teachers at our area high schools. Earlier this year I attended a luncheon meeting at the Bankers Club at First Hawaiian Bank in downtown Honolulu.

I was surprised and delighted to learn that the Club's kitchen and dining room was staffed in part by five students from the **Waipahu High School Culinary Arts Academy**.



Congratulations to Waipahu High School Culinary Arts Academy Students Charie Agonoy, Loida Gorgonio, Lacie Omura, Ricca Palero and Charmaine Viernes for great work this summer at First Hawaiian Bank!

This exciting internship program with grant support from First Hawaiian began in 2006, allowing WHS students to gain real life experience in a wide variety of settings. They staff the Bank's employee cafeteria facility to learn food prep and bulk cooking, and then move on to the Bankers Club fine dining setting where they train as hosts and wait help, and in baking, hot food station and pantry jobs. The Culinary Arts Academy is one of half a dozen smaller learning communities at WHS that teach students life skills to supplement their classroom studies.

Congratulations to teacher Elaine Matsuo for encouraging and mentoring these outstanding Academy students!

Waipahu High School has also received a major gift from the **McInerney Foundation** that will help with the WHS **Early College Program** in the coming years.

Representatives of the Foundation (pictured at right with students and Principal Keith Hayashi) presented a check for \$256,000 that will be used to pay the tuition for students who take courses at partner institutions – Leeward Community College and UH West Oahu.

This is the only program of its kind available to high school students in Hawaii. In the past two years, dozens of students have enrolled in introductory college courses in English, psychology, speech, sociology, astronomy and calculus.



DOE photo

In late July, **Maria Etrata** was installed as the new President of the **Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii**. I joined President Etrata and colleague **Senator David Ige** for the photo below at the FCCH Installation Dinner at the Hawaiian Village Tapa Ballroom.



Once again this year, Waipahu High School science teacher Michael Sana (center in the photo above) participated in the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Teacher Research Academy in California. With him were two students from the WHS Health Academy as well as teacher Michelle Amorin. This year's program focused on biotechnology and other science skills that are invaluable for the classroom.



As the new school year began, **Waikele Elementary School** students invited me to participate in their Community Traffic Awareness Program (CTAP). We were at the corner of Lumiaina and Kukula Streets to promote safe driving and pedestrian awareness. HPD officers and state traffic safety officials were also on hand.

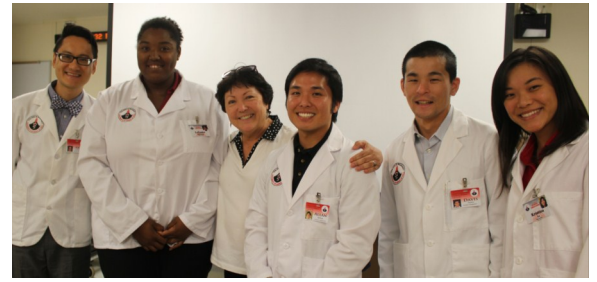
Senate Ways and Means Committee Visits State Facilities on the Big Island



Photo courtesy Damon Tucker

Between legislative sessions, Senators have the opportunity to review priorities for the use of State funds through site visits. At left, we hear a presentation at **Pahoia Library** on the Big Island.

At right, a visit with students at the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy at UH Hilo—including, at center, **Allan Higa of Mililani**.



Late in the summer I was privileged to attend a leadership conference of the **Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs (BHCC)** in New York City along with my colleague, Senator Donovan Dela Cruz. The BHCC is a national organization made up of elected officials of Hispanic ethnic background who are chairs or vice chairs of their respective state legislative caucuses.

I am pleased to announce that the BHCC will convene its **8th Annual Conference** in Hawaii in December, and that Senator Dela Cruz and I will serve as conference Co-Chairs. This is an exceptional opportunity to showcase the work of the Hawaii State Legislature and to educate lawmakers from across the US about the fiftieth state's unique history and culture.

Hispanic Heritage Month continues through October 15. A new report on a growing segment of the Hispanic population in Hawaii is available at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/MexicansinHawaii.pdf>



I joined Senator Dela Cruz in a presentation to preview the coming national conference of the BHCC in Hawaii.



The State Senate met in special session in August to confirm the appointment of Honolulu Attorney **James Ashford** to a six-year term as a district judge on Oahu. Judge Ashford was nominated to the bench by Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald to fill a vacancy in the First Judicial Circuit.

From a story in the Wall Street Journal . . .

Hawaii's eGovernment web portal <http://hawaii.gov> and state department Web sites were recognized among the top ten best government Web sites by The Center for Digital Government in its annual Best of the Web competition.

The competition, which recognizes significant achievement in the overall Web presence of state and local governments, evaluated Hawaii's site in a wide range of categories, including overall innovation, Web-based delivery of public services, accessibility, efficiency and functionality.

State CIO Sony Bhagowalia said, "This is the first time the state is serving up a web portal made for the people of Hawaii. Our team has made the site accessible, beautiful, clean, useful and everything in between." ***Try it! You'll like it!***



Sunday, October 6
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol & Capitol District
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## *You are invited . . .*

One of the year's most popular and "funnest" FREE events for families is just about ten days away. I hope you will take time to participate in the **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Children and Youth Day on Sunday, October 6** at the State Capitol, Honolulu Hale and several other sites in the downtown civic center. Activities range from 1K and 3K fun runs for youngsters, to a Robotics Olympics in the Capitol Auditorium, a Brown Bags to Stardom All Star Show at City Hall, to fascinating educational tours at 'Iolani Palace and the State Judiciary History Center.

Join us for a full day of family activities, games and rides, nonstop entertainment, and food booths, of course. You'll find information about parking, shuttles and other logistics by calling 586-6130 or on the Web at <http://hawaiiicyd.org>.

***See you there!***



**Grandson Akoni** celebrates Queen Liliuokalani's birthday with a hearty "ALOHA!" ***He makes everyday Children and Youth Day in Hawaii.***