

# IT'S AN INVASION

by Jay Bondesen

For those of us living here it has been a slow and subtle attack. The current problems started decades ago as really minor things that seemed insignificant at the time. Now we all can hear the change every night and see the changes out through our windows in Leilani Estates. There are many more threats to the environment in Puna but the big three for this story are the Coqui frog, the Albizia tree, and the Miconia plant. Unfortunately these are all far past stopping or eradicating using methods available today. Localized control might work but it will take a major effort and there appear to be no government agencies that are willing to step up and participate.

Here in Leilani Estates it's really too late to eliminate the Coqui frogs. There are too many of them living in the jungle on vacant land. We do still have a chance with the Albizia and Miconia infestations. Driving through the subdivision today it's hard to remember what it looked like before the Albizia arrived. Soon the Miconia plant will take over its' share of the land and we will never see the native forest again. If you haven't been down the once scenic byway to the Botanical Garden recently you haven't seen how bad the spread of Miconia can become. We think that right now we have a chance to stop it but not if we wait much longer.

If you own a lot but haven't seen it recently all of this may come as a surprise to you. An Albizia tree can grow in excess of 10' a year and in a decade can reach over 100' high and just as wide. Leilani has hundreds of these trees, 3' in diameter and larger, 150' tall and higher, with thousands of smaller ones. They grow fast because they are soft-wood trees and soft-wood trees are weak as you would expect. Consequently large diameter 30' long branches, weighing hundreds of pounds, will fall in a

strong wind. They fall in the jungle as well as on power lines, streets, and buildings. And this is progressing geometrically, meaning more trees make more seeds makes more trees and they will all have branches. The Homeowners Association really needs everyone's help with this. We have a very efficient and successful maintenance program to keep up the common areas and the roadway frontages. But often over the last year we have expended resources to clean up trees that had blown down on our private roadways. It was never envisioned that our road maintenance fund would have to deal with these giant trees. And quite frankly most of the giant trees are on vacant land with owners who may not have seen their lot for years. We are struggling to come up with the answer but for now we will do what we can. It should be said though that there is some liability associated with these trees and lawsuits are becoming more common.

Please, everyone try to keep your lot Albizia and Miconia free. Removing them when they are small is so much easier. And if you can, volunteer. As we have in the past we will be organizing work parties to go out and cut down Miconia. It is a serious enough situation that the Board of Directors is considering contracting out Miconia removal which will be a drain on our reserve funds.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2013

Nominations may be made for any member in good standing no later than December 31, 2012. A nomination form is available at the LCA office. The member who is doing the nominating must sign and date the form. The member being nominated will also sign and date the form. A brief "Bio" of the nominee will be turned in at that time.

The Board meets once a month and has two general membership meetings a year. New ideas are welcome. Help serve the best community on the island.



# Leilani Community Association

# NEWSLETTER

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Volume 110, No. 2

AUGUST 2012

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Al Dettweiler

My fellow community members and lot owners:

There has been quite a bit of activity over the past few months. All the board members have written articles for this newsletter to help me since I have been very busy with personal problems. I believe there is some very important information here and I thank the board for their great effort in completing this newsletter. The only thing I like to report is that the latest report from Verizon is that they plan to have the cell tower up by October 15th, hold your breath. Verizon has been paying rental to LCA so I believe they are committed to installing the tower as soon as possible. We have the greatest sub-division here on the island and I thank the board members for all the work and time they give to help make this the best place to live on this island.

## RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

by Mark Haunio

For those of you who are not aware of Leilani Estates recreation equipment, there are 4 workout stations located around the perimeter of the walk pathway. Also included are the indoor racquetball equipment, basketball court with 4 hoops, volleyball setup and our tetherball setup. Please contact the office or any board member if you are interested in equipment usage.

The kid's playground is equipped with a variety of play sets. This committee is presently looking into different types of equipment for our park. If you have any ideas in this matter please feel free to contact me at 960-5250.

### SAFETY ADVISOR: KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM LEILANI MAINTENANCE TRACTORS

There is a lot of interest in the new side arm tractor which has been busy cutting back the over-growth on the sides of our streets. HOWEVER, please **make sure to keep a safe 300 feet away from it** at all times. This is a very powerful cutter and debris can be thrown out over great distances. If you have children, make sure they are not in the vicinity when the tractor is in operation.

Thank you for your cooperation.

## ROAD SAFETY

by Mark Haunio

The traffic division from the county department will be restriping both ends of Leilani Blvd. to let the drivers know you have to slow down. Smart boards will be set up on both ends of the entrance of Leilani Estates to also let drivers know of the speed limit.

Please abide all signs when entering the subdivision. Leilani Estates residents take pride in creating a safe environment for our community.

### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Leilani Community Association will hold the General Membership Meeting on **Saturday, September 15, 2012**, at 2:00 p.m. at the Rec Center, 13-3441 Moku Street. All members are encouraged to participate in the meeting and meet your neighbors.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Pahoa, Hawaii 96778

P.O. Box 361

Leilani Community Association



## **FROM THE DESK OF THE TREASURER**

*by Greg Armstrong*

Thanks again to those of you who have paid your yearly assessment dues.

If you are one of those that has not yet paid, we would appreciate receiving payment at your earliest convenience. The sooner you pay the less interest is accumulated.

For those that are very delinquent, you received a notice with your statement that a lien or foreclosure would be placed on your property. Those delinquent payments were due by April 1st. We allowed some extra time, but for those that still have not brought their account current that time has now passed and we are in the process of moving forward with those liens and a few foreclosures. The cost of our attorney fees to place the lien will also add an additional \$300.00 to your account. We regret having to take these steps but were left no other choice.

We wish to remind everyone that we are able to accept payments by check, cash, credit or debit cards. If you choose to drop your payment in our after hours drop box we want to remind you that NO CASH PAYMENTS should be placed there. Leilani does not accept responsibility for any cash placed in that box.

You may have noticed, by its absence, that the cell tower has not yet been erected. It is still on Verizon's TO DO list and hopefully we will see activity in the not too distant future. On the BRIGHT SIDE, Verizon has started paying its lease payments to us. We have set up a separate account for this payment and will be using the money for special projects and/or equipment for the community.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

*by Rich Willing*

While the areas of South Hilo through Paradise Park to Nanawale experience record crime rates we have NOT had any burglaries or thefts over the past 3-4 months and our Leilani Subdivision continues to be safe and secure thanks to the many Watch volunteers that drive our streets night and day. Thank you all!

With the economy still weak we have had many Watch members move from Leilani so we are constantly having to recruit new members. An hour a week (days) or an hour a month (nites) is all it takes to drive Neighborhood Watch patrol and help us to keep Leilani a great place to live. Contact us at: leilaniwatch@live.com

Our Neighborhood Watch continues to host a monthly meeting the last Tuesday of each month at 7pm, at the community center building to discuss recent issues affecting our community, current crime statistics, and just to talk story, so please come join us then.

Our Community Garage Sale continues to grow each month under our huge pavilion and remains the first Saturday morning of each month from 0700-1100, so if you have treasures to sell or stuff to buy come visit the sale.

## **ARCHITECTURAL and COVENANTS COMMITTEE**

*by Jay Bondesen & Rich Willing*

These two committees may be the first contact that some new property owners will receive from the Leilani Estates Homeowners Association. We don't really mean to be doing the 'Big Brother' thing by watching everything you do but in some cases the existence of a Homeowners Association was not brought up during the real estate transaction. So we take every opportunity to say that, yes, we have this organization with bylaws and a Board of Directors and rules about building and living in Leilani Estates. We don't actually drive around looking for violations regularly but rather respond to complaints filed in our office. Here we are again just to remind everyone that we are here and trying to use these rules to maintain and even improve the quality of life in our subdivision.

We try to make the rules easy to find both online and by printing an abbreviated version on these newsletters. Even then some people are still not aware of the policies so we are tasked with advising property owners and then enforcing the rules by notifications and legal action if required. In almost all cases everyone complies on their own or when they get a reminder from us. That shared vision of what a community is and should look like is what brought most of us to Leilani Estates. Thank you all for making Leilani Estates what it is now and helping to build what it will become.

New neighbors are moving in and old ones are moving on all the time. And even in this slow economy new homes are being built here regularly. We welcome the diversity while maintaining common practices of building and living in the subdivision.

These committees, Architectural and Covenants, will do everything possible to advise property owners on compliance issues but ultimately we must insist that the rules be followed. We understand that some owners will have problems of their own that may change what they do on their lot. We are sympathetic to those situations but we will not ignore violations of Association rules. We will do everything we can to work with property owners that

make a 'good faith' effort to work with us. If you have any questions at all please email them in or contact us through Jean at our business office and we will respond just as quickly as possible.

So as you drive around Leilani Estates and if you like what you see, a Mahalo is due to those who first wrote up the bylaws and CC&R's. Mahalo is also due to those who have followed along, refining and enforcing these policies over the years.



## **THE GEOTHERMAL ISSUE**

*by Maralyn Renken*

Some time in May or early July, a group of lower Puna residents complained to Dominic Yagong regarding health issues suffered by themselves and their families. The contention was that these health issues were caused by emissions from the Puna Geothermal Venture plant.

Dominic Yagong submitted a resolution before the County Council to utilize funds in the Geothermal Relocation and Community Benefits Program. He proposed deleting the Community Benefits options and called for the funds be used to buy out property owners located within a 1 mile radius of the geothermal plant at 130% of the property values for health or nuisance issues. The properties would then be held by the county indefinitely and deemed uninhabitable. There was also a proposal for health studies to be done but not before the properties were purchased by the county.

The second resolution had to do with establishing an evacuation route out of Puna. The county civil defense agency during testimony before the County Council assured us that there is an evacuation plan in place to address for foreseeable emergencies at the plant.

A group of Leilani Estates residents, went before the County Council in order to voice their objections to the resolutions. The objections were as follows: Purchasing properties in a one mile radius of the geothermal plant would include numerous lots in lower Leilani. There is a concern as to who would then pay the annual assessment for these lots, would the county pay or would the fees go unpaid and thus negatively impact our ability to keep up improvements, such as streets and weed abatement. There is also concern that the whole of Leilani would be seen as an undesirable subdivision and the property values would plummet. Lastly, while no one thought the health complaints were false, there had been no studies to identify the source of the health issues. Plans were that a

study would be done after the properties were purchased. They also think that if an evacuation plan is already in place, it would be a waste of funds to put together another one.

The proposals passed the council and went before Mayor Billy Kenoi. Mayor Kenoi vetoed both bills.

Bills 256, Draft 2 and 267 was then reintroduced by Chairman Yagong in an effort to override the Mayor's veto. The attempt to over ride the veto failed by one vote.

The present status of the Puna Geothermal Venture health issues is as follows: A resolution has been written and introduced by Fred Blas to move forward with a health study conducted by an unbiased third party. This is something, we can all agree on. It will hopefully come up for discussion at the Sept. 5th committee meeting.

It is important that all Leilani Estates residents, both full-time and part-time understand what has been going on here in Puna and the possible ramifications to our subdivision. It is also important that we understand that Fred Blas has been working to help the people of the entire Puna district and simply wants justification before taking such action as described in these two bills.

## **MAINTENANCE REPORT**

*by Kurt Kaminski*

The new 2012 case IH model 95U 2nd wheel tractor with attachments has arrived. Our maintenance personnel has been using the side arm to cut back all the roadsides. A vast improvement from serious growth that has not been done in most areas for several years. Arm mowing will be done two to three times a year now to keep the streets in pristine order.

If you have tree growth, bush growth, or any type of plants hanging over into the roadway, maintenance will be cutting them back. To avoid this, cut back into your property line.

The Kubota M5030 diesel tractor has been put up for sale which also includes the swing arm and rear flair mower. Hopefully it will be sold quickly and the monies put back into the fund that we used to pay for the new tractor.

Roads are mowed monthly. Scraping of the road edges are done when the grass/weeds begin encroaching on the road pavement.

Residents and non-residents have always commented on how well maintained our community park grounds are. This includes the playground area for children also.

Any comments or concerns, feel free to contact our office and I will get back to you. Phone 808-965-9555 or email: lca@hawaii.rr.com.