



October 2007 – Volume 13

## SENATOR WILL ESPERO & YOUR LEGISLATURE WORKING FOR YOU

### **SUPERFERRY**

If everything Hawaii imported was held to the stringent standards some have proposed for the Superferry, we'd have to ban Christmas trees, food, cars, and other items that we depend on every day. Environmental concerns are important, but they are not insurmountable, and they are not exclusive to the Superferry. Many have pointed out that the coqui frog, the brown tree snake, and other invasive species have made it over to Hawaii on existing forms of transportation, and no action has been suggested to ban those means of travel. Another supporter pointed out that the same whales that migrate to Hawaii have already encountered the Alaska and Washington state ferries on their long journey southward, and should be familiar with ferries by the time they reach Hawaii.

The economic benefits are plentiful. Local businesses can use the Superferry to bring their products inter-island faster and more efficiently using their own delivery trucks and staff. Food items can be delivered and sold in the stores fresher. Parents whose children are still in car seats and strollers, handicapped individuals, and school and sport groups have expressed their advance appreciation for the convenience the ferry can offer over an airplane.

The Senate president sent several senators to all the neighbor islands to make sure that these communities had the chance to express their opinions. An Oahu hearing was also held, which lasted over eight hours. After listening to and reading thousands of testimonies, three Senate committees -- Judiciary; Transportation & International Affairs; and Energy & Environment -- passed a bill that will allow the Superferry to operate while an EIS is done. Both the Senate and House will vote on the bill by next Wednesday.

### **PRISON OVERSIGHT CONTINUES**

The Legislative Public Safety Oversight Committee continues its inspections of prison facilities next month in Arizona. I will visit the Red Rock and Saguaro prisons which house Hawaii inmates. The Committee has already toured the facilities on the neighbor islands and Oahu.

### **L.A. LAKERS OPEN EWA READING ROOM**

Ewa Beach thanks the L.A. Lakers for sponsoring a new reading room at the Boys & Girls Club on Fort Weaver Road. The Lakers, Lady Lakers, author Shelly Mecum, and artist Peggy Chun were all guests at this exciting event earlier this month.

### **WASURENAI YO NI (Do not forget)**

*The slashing rain stings my face. / Each breath turns white, / This cold morning in military camp.  
The sound of footsteps / In the wet sand signals / The approaching sentry / And his shining bayonet.  
Food has become / Our only pleasure. / There is nothing / To look forward to / Except our three meals.  
The bitterness in my heart / Will not melt.  
When will the day / Come that I may see / My home in the middle / Of the green leaves of the sugar cane?  
-- Otokichi Ozaki, known as "Muin," age 19*

The shame of the Japanese internment camps during World War II has been a disgrace to our country, known among nations as the great protector of freedom. In the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor, American authorities rounded up several hundred local Japanese. Detainees on Oahu were transported to a camp on Sand Island. Neighbor island detainees were initially housed in camps on each island, then in the spring of 1942, moved in small groups to Sand Island. When Sand Island closed on March 1, 1943, the vast majority of internees were transferred to camps in the continental U.S.. The 300 or so remaining were then transferred to the newly built camp at Honouliuli. Most were imprisoned for the duration of the war. None were charged with a crime, and they received only token hearings.

This is the historical context behind S.B. 1228, which will create a memorial to those Japanese interned at Honouliuli during World War II, to tell the stories of the tragedy of these internment camps and its impact on the internees and their families. I introduced the bill, which became law (Act 163) on June 8, 2007. Preserving the history of Honouliuli and the injustice bred by fear and racism is something our younger generations must protect against. I hope this memorial will motivate visitors to guard citizen's civil rights.

Senator Mike Gabbard and I recently visited the site of the former Honouliuli camp. Known as POW Compound Number 6 and previously as the Alien Internment Camp, the isolated area is set in a gulch, beautiful with wild, natural foliage. Concrete remnants of the internment buildings remain as proof of the site's former purpose: drainage catchment and pipes, floors, foundations, and walls. Honouliuli internees were housed in wooden barracks and tents. Armed guards patrolled the camp, which was ringed with double barbed-wire fences and guard towers. Mahalo to the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, for its work on preserving the memory of Honouliuli, and Monsanto of Hawaii, the new owners of Honouliuli, for making the site available for the memorial.

## **TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

A crowd of about 100 people listened to Mayor Mufi Hannemann's message of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) on September 25 at Waipahu Intermediate School. Based on the principle that convenience enhances lifestyle and satisfaction with life, TOD is an urban planning concept borrowed from Europe and now gaining support among U.S. cities. In TOD, businesses and homes are situated with ease of transport in mind. People can walk from home to schools, shopping centers and services, and can walk to bus or rail stations to go elsewhere. For individuals, this maximizes quality of life time by minimizing driving time, and for communities, translates to less congestion on the highways and cleaner air.

TOD is the first step that will affect communities along the future rail line routes. The tenor of the room was optimistic as Mayor Hannemann shared many ideas about the forms this planning design could take on Oahu. Residents left the meeting concerned yet excited about the future opportunities that rail and TOD will bring.