

ROTARY CLUB OF HONOLULU
MINUTES
JANUARY 11, 2022 HYBRID MEETING

President Gwen Yamamoto Lau called the January 11, 2022, meeting to order at twelve noon. Club members attended in person at Cafe Julia Fuller Hall and by Zoom. **President Gwen** welcomed all attendees and named the meeting participants. **PP Rick Towill** gave an inspiration centered on the thought "In life follow one's passions and make one's dream come true." He gave a personal family example that resulted in the production of water on the island of Lanai, apropos the topic of the meeting's speaker. **Julia Allen** led the Pledge of Allegiance and **Al Linton** the singing of "God Bless America". Visitors were introduced at Fuller Hall: Chris Edwards, Paul Jackson, John Linden and Ute Regan. Visitors on Zoom were Rotarians Kevin Parle, Ted Faigle, Alan Okinaka, and Hideo Yamanaka. **PP Rich Proctor** introduced his wife, **Nancy Youngren**, for induction into the club with information about her career path and what she has meant to him. **President Gwen** inducted **Nancy** and welcomed her to the club.

Rick Tabor announced and described the February 1 Marketplace event to be held at Fuller Hall. Twelve member businesses have already signed up to participate with room for more. There will be lunch, but no meeting. The vendor fee is \$50. Lunch cost is \$35.

Rick also announced the upcoming RYLA events open to freshman, sophomores, and juniors. The events include presentations by Nainoa Thompson, Patty Lau, **PE Lyla Berg**, Herb Lee, and Henry Kaponono. There will be room for 100 students. Rick asked members to help in informing young people about the program.

Fellowship time tackled the issue of fireworks. Should enforcement of illegal fireworks be increased, or should they be allowed and collect the taxes?

PP Rick Towill introduced Ernie Lau, Chief Engineer and Manager of the Oahu Board of Water Supply, to talk about the Red Hill contamination situation. **Rick** described him as a "voice in the wilderness" for so long, that is now being heard. Mr. Lau became Chief of the BWS on Oahu in 2012, after serving in the same capacity on Kauai. During his tenure, he has created watershed partnerships all over the island. Mr. Lau gave an exceptionally detailed and clear presentation, that included informative slides. He began with the historical view of Hawaiians regarding water, waiwai is equivalent to wealth. From the early days it was recognized as essential for life. Beginning with a diagram of the Oahu water system, he described how the water accumulates and that 145 million gallons are pumped each day for the one million Oahu residents. Diagrams demonstrated how Oahu's fresh water is accumulated under caprock that is higher than sea level. Around Red Hill that height is 16-19 feet. Red Hill has 20 tanks located only 100 feet over the aquifer. The tanks have single layer walls of a quarter inch and are 80 years old. Mr. Lau described the damaged tank areas and various leaks that have occurred. The May 6 damage allowed fuel to rush out, 20,000 gallons in 50 seconds. He compared this to the 2,000 gallons of water per minute that occurs when a fire hydrant is broken. Five of the Board of Water Supply wells are tested for contamination weekly. Two are shut down, Halawa and Aiea. The Navy has shut down two of their wells. Both the Navy and BWS wells tap into the same aquifer. There is disagreement between the two how water flows across the island and how it connects. Mr. Lau reported that a Congress Subcommittee was recently asked how much has been spent to date by the Navy for remediation of the Red Hill leak. It reported \$250,000,000, a sum greater than the BWS's resources and, by comparison, annual budget. Slides of the Navy remediation plan and vulnerability assessments were shown. The latter does not

include other possible causes of leaks than the fuel system, e.g., earthquakes and the like. The tanks were built quickly (3 years) with WWII materials and technology. The BWS says it is time for the fuel to be relocated.

President Gwen thanked Mr. Lau and asked him to sign a book that will be given to an elementary school. She announced that next week's meeting (Zoom) will feature Neal Milner, a political analyst, and Civil Beat Reporter. After the singing of "Hawaii Aloha", she adjourned the meeting. Mr. Lau stayed a while longer at Fuller Hall and answered questions.

Nancy White
Scribe