

**ROTARY CLUB OF HONOLULU
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES
DATE: September 15, 2020
PRESIDING: PRESIDENT RICH PROCTOR**

President Rich Proctor called to order the September 15, 2020, ZOOM meeting of the Rotary Club of Honolulu to order at 12:00 PM. He announced our Rotary participants and visitors, along with club Birthdays, and Anniversaries.

Our Virtual Meeting Maestro, **Brian Dunkel** lends his skills to muting everyone as a group so each speaker may be heard more clearly, taking care of technical issues, as well as making sure all questions are queued up for our guest speaker to answer.

INSPIRATION, PLEDGE, AND SONG

Inspiration was given by **Andy Starn** who shared that one of the great things about lockdown is not being stuck on the road to and from work for hours, and getting to take the kids to and from the beach. His inspiration for us is to “take a moment and appreciate the blessings in life.” Then **Bob Sumpf** led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and *America the Beautiful* was led by **Al Linton**.

VISITORS

WELCOME **Paddy Griggs** from CA., **Jim Reed, Scott Wishart, Wes Brooks, Jason Alexander** from Japan to HI, and from the Japan Kiyoto club, **Hideo Yamanaka and his wife**.

THE VOCATIONAL MINUTE

Today's Vocational Minute is by RCOH member **Michael Marsh**, President and CEO of *Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii*.

Mahalo for the opportunity to tell you about the organization where I serve as President & CEO — Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii. Before I tell you about RCH, I wanted to share some exciting news. During this lockdown many people are planning to emerge with a side hustle. Mine will be as a real estate agent. After having my license inactive for 2.5 years, I'm planning to sign with a real estate brokerage this week. So in the very near future I will be an active licensed real estate agent.

But I originally came to Hawaii in 2018 after a national search to become the President & CEO at Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii after working in fair housing on the mainland for over two decades. [Michael was chosen over 110 other applicants!] RCH is a 501 C 3 nonprofit charitable organization founded in 1975 to provide vital community services including care for disabled and medically fragile adults.

At RCH, we understand the joys and challenges of having a loved one with disabilities. Our mission is to increase independence, productivity, and integration

of persons with developmental disabilities and other special needs in Hawaii. We were instrumental in dismantling the Waimano Homes institution and integrating folks into the community.

Services provided by RCH are:

- Day Care
- Community Outings
- Transportation to and from the above as well as grocery shopping trips

There are over 100 participants in the program, which runs six hours a day and has been able to incorporate the following activities:

- Learning Activity Stations
- Music & Dance
- Cooking
- Technology
- Arts & Crafts
- Physical Exercise

RCH operates two Residential facilities/Group Homes, one in Kapalama and the other in Aiea. They are open and run 24/7/365! Sadly, many of the operations were suspended as of March 23, due to the COVID-19.

We are funded primarily through the State of Hawaii DDD via the Medicaid Waiver. Closed day care on 3/23; currently providing 1:1 in-home and community services and some telehealth; Thus far, we've maintained 100% of our staffing of 56 employees with full wages and benefits. Sadly, the organization is vulnerable financially. Help has been received by PPP, CARES Act Provider Relief Fund, EIDL, and state retainer payments, but we are facing workforce reduction by half on 11/1 unless other federal and/or state relief funds are made available.

I want to shout out to **Sam Haas**, fellow Rotarian, who is one of our Board members and her help has been much appreciated.

In closing, I leave you with the RCH vision, which is to ensure that all of Hawaii's citizens with developmental disabilities and other special needs will be integrated into the community and have meaningful relationships with families and friends.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birthdays: **Erin Auerbach** (9/15), **Andy Starn** (9/21), and **Gwen Yamamoto Lau** (9/21).
Club Anniversaries: **JP Cercillieux**, 22 years, sponsored by **Yoshi Sakata**; **Kitty Yannone**, 29 years, sponsored by **Andi Simpson**; and **Al Linton**, 16 years, sponsored by **Jack Dwyer**.

CELEBRATION OF ROTARY CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Special News from **Don Anderson** and **Carolann Biederman** informing RCOH that we made our \$100K goal! 75% of members were able to give. Many were knocked for a loop and unable to give due to the current C19, while many were very generous! We are grateful for all the help and support. Further, as of Aug 31, Maile Hale stands at \$2million plus! We crossed our \$2million mark!

RAT PACK CENTENNIAL PARK UPDATE

Reese Liggett shared that the grass is now in at the park, and help is needed to put in loads of shrubs and ground plants, which is planned for Friday and Saturday of this week. Those who are concerned about the C19, it is understood about your concerns, so don't feel bad if you can't help. For those who are itching to participate, please reserve and sign up as only so many can be in the park at one time, at 6 feet apart, to make sure all C19 rules are followed. **CALL REESE AT 222-2088 to reserve your slot. YOU MUST RESERVE FOR A SPECIFIC TIME AND SHOW UP ON TIME. YOU MUST BRING YOUR OWN TOOLS, AS WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SHARE.** A hand spade and gloves, and water are must haves to bring. HECO will provide lunches! Everyone study up from email and use discipline. The Courtyard Marriott is providing parking for free! The shifts are 4-hours each, morning and afternoon, and are on Friday, September 18 and Saturday, September 19; also on Saturday September 26th if still needed.

BREAKOUT ROOMS SOCIAL TIME

President **Rich**, along with **Martha**, broke us up into groups of 5-6 per room. This section of our meetings allows us to engage more personally with other group members. Today's Breakout topic was: "What was the best meal you've ever eaten in your life and why".

GUEST SPEAKER – A. KAM NAPIER “Lockdown Blues”

Nancy Pace introduced our guest speaker with the following:

Kam Napier has been editor in chief of *Pacific Business News* since April 2014. Prior to that he was with *Honolulu Magazine* for 19 years, 8 as editor. His articles on subjects ranging from architecture to zoology have won awards from the *Hawaii Publishers Association* and the *Society of Professional Journalists-Hawaii Chapter*.

He was born and raised in Hawaii; he understands the nuances of business and of doing business in Hawaii. He has a bachelor's degree from the *University of Hawaii at Manoa* and completed an executive training course at the *Southern Methodist University Cox School of Business*.

Here are some interesting tidbits about **Kam's** name, taken from the *Honolulu Magazine*, 9-25-2009.

Then there's Kam. Three little letters, and a lifetime of trouble. Here's a common exchange, especially as service has become more personalized at, say,

Starbucks or Jamba Juice. I place my order and then:

Can I have your name?

Kam.

Ken?

Kam.

Kim?

Kam. Like Sam, but with a K.

Kam is short for Kamuela. I was named after my dad's stepdad, Samuel, a Philadelphia firefighter. But, since I was born here, my parents gave me the Hawaiian equivalent. Shortening that to Kam was fine, too, in 1968. Remember when everything named after Kamehameha was shortened to "Kam?" Kam Schools, Kam Drive-In, Kam Shopping Center. Then, by the 1990s, even Kam Schools grads had stopped using Kam. Around that time, a Hawaiian guy in one of my classes at UH told me my name was wrong. "Hawaiian syllables don't end on consonants," he explained. "You'd have to shorten it to Kamu."

He's right. But I can't. I'd been answering to Kam for 20-plus years by then and another 20 to this day. Kamu? No, it's culturally insensitive Kam. Insensitive, or at least ambiguous—people never seem to know what "kind" of name it is. Things people have actually said upon meeting me:

"I was expecting a Korean."

"You're not Chinese!"

"I always thought you were a woman."

The expression "first-name basis" means some degree of social intimacy between you and another person. The opposite is true for me. Kam is my middle name, and I use an initial for my first. My family never used my first name either, to avoid confusion, I guess, since it was also my dad's first name and maybe because it's also a bit old fashioned.

People often ask What does the A. stand for? "I never tell," I've always said, as a way of cultivating an entirely bogus air of mystery.

But that's not true. I'll tell my first name to any bureaucracy that demands a "first name, middle initial, last name" on its forms. I have an official secret identity known only to the DMV, doctors, lawyers and banks, which I like. It keeps these folks at a decent, professional distance from the "real" me.

In fact, I started using the "A." when I started writing—in part to signal to officialdom that Kam Napier was indeed the same person as "A____ K. Napier," especially if there were checks to be cashed. I thought it looked authorial, too.

Still curious? Really?

Albert. The “A.” stands for Albert, which, as I mentioned, was my dad’s name. But come to think of it, he never really went by Albert, either. To his friends, he was always “Smokey,” a nickname he got after joining a volunteer fire effort. Otherwise, he went by Al.

Al is not a bad name. Technically, I could use it too. But Betty, when you call me, you can call me Kam.

Honolulu Magazine. 9-25-2009

A. Kam Napier, chimed in after that great introduction and confirmed that “A.” does stand for Albert, which his family and he never used, and commented that these are strange times we live in where someone can find personal information from the Internet. Before he jumped into his topic he extended his heartfelt thanks to **Alice Tucker**, **Rich Proctor**, and **Brian Dunkel** for inviting him to speak with us.

Regarding our *Lockdown Blues*, **Kam** stated that “the current lockdowns weren’t even announced yet, so, it can be difficult to prepare for things like this, because every day the news changes. This latest lockdown was going to be two weeks, then it was extended to another two to four, and as of yesterday (Monday, Sept. 14, 2020), we just found out, something that we all suspected, that Governor David Ige is contemplating extending the restrictions on travel to Hawaii past October 1st. He has not yet said when they will have the pretesting program that they think will be the answer we need before we can reopen tourism.”

Kam further stated “it is hard to guess how long the government is thinking about having a particular policy response” and “if it is any indication the City’s website mentions the City Lights thing for Christmas is going to be greatly reduced to discourage crowds. So the City is planning on having some kind of response all the way through the end of the year at a minimum.”

“I think a lot of you are familiar with some of the impacts we are seeing from all this. **Michael Marsh** and his story with his nonprofit is just one example of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the CARES Act, which really bought a lot of businesses some time, but those are fast running out. And as the lockdown proceeds, the protection those programs have offered, we will see more reductions and more layoffs. One of the things we report on at PBN ... are the Warn Notices, where large employers are required by law to file if they are going to furlough people. There have been some major ones adding up to thousands and thousands of people in the visitor industry, citing economic condition, citing the rules surrounding travel and they seem to have a consensus that they don’t expect to be employing all those people into January and February for many reason - the restrictions, general anxiety of people around the world getting on a plane for 5 hours at a time or more, with something in the air that one could catch.”

“Information can be hard to come by and we reported recently on dueling websites in the state of Hawaii. Working with *UHERO* has one official dashboard and *House Special Committee on COVID*, working with the private sector, has launched their own dashboard called *COVID Pau* with a number of health metrics that people are watching. These are useful to a certain extent but maybe have a little ways to go. There is data without context, for example, so when they tell you that the ICU beds are at 60+% full - Well is that high? I don't know, the websites don't really say from a historical prospective.” We need more information and context. “If 60% is astronomically high, then we have one kind of problem, but if 60% turns out to be fairly ordinary, we have a very different situation.”

“*UHERO* (University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization) has a website now, which is devoted specifically to economic measures. ... Between their website, and things we reported on that they've said, there are just some grim statistics out there: total unemployment claims as of September 5th are 126 thousand almost 127 thousand, up 919%; [not a typo, this is what **Kam** said] small business revenue declined 70% by April and remains down by nearly 50% above historic norms. An *UHERO* survey found that some 17% of business owners felt they would not survive this situation, but that was a survey, the results were released August 14th, before the latest shutdown.” **Kam** expects these numbers will go up.

“Back in June, *UHERO* predicted that in the coming years we may see as many as 30 thousand people move out of Hawaii to seek economic opportunity elsewhere. Another number I would expect to see go up. Though at the moment they say Hawaii has been losing population steadily, due to the cost of living and cost of housing for about five or six years, so more people have been moving out than moving in. This year is the first year, this isn't true - it has been holding steady, because of an economy, which is global, and it is a terrible time to move anywhere. Because a lot of the ways in which government responded to the pandemic, a fairly universal response, and certainly the anxiety that inhibits economic activity is a universal response. Right now, people are not leaving Hawaii, but in the long term we may see that.”

Kam spoke recently with Tina Yamaki, President of *Retail Merchants of Hawaii*, (website is <https://www.rmhawaii.org>) and she is also very concerned about the latest shutdown. They are already seeing businesses close and businesses with multiple locations terminate some leases. The PPP support is running out. A couple of interesting things Tina pointed out: [1] the latest lockdown from Caldwell that applies to Oahu, for some reason did not allow online retailing, whereas the previous shutdowns did allow online sales. Like **Kam**, it is also a mystery to many of us as to why that is. **Kam** will be checking back with Tina to see “if she has had any luck getting the city to back off of that.”

[2] “She [Tina] also had a response – Caldwell says the city has money available for small businesses to help cover their expenses from being closed, and Tina points out that a lot of the businesses will barely break even on these grants, because to be eligible for the grants, you have to have invested in all of these mandatory COVID-related activities, or materials, or supplies. So you'll spend enough to qualify for the grant money, but it's a wash and

really not doing anything more than reimbursing them for loss of expenses and not really for the lost revenue.”

Restaurants are extremely hard hit. *Food-A-Go-Go*, is a trade group, is trying to get the word out on who has take-out, who delivers and who is open, and who has closed permanently. You can visit their website at <https://foodagogo.org>. Some information shared by **Kam** – “...more than 50 restaurants on Oahu have closed permanently. Early this year, Greg Maples, with *Hawaii Restaurant Association*, predicted we might lose some 40% of all restaurants in the state. Those are the sorts of things we have been seeing so far.”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH KAM

Question from **Kerri Van Duyne**: “Do you know how the residential real estate market is doing? What businesses are doing well right now?”

Answer from **Kam**: “Those who are doing well right now are private security companies!” Why? Because we were ordered to work from/stay home, abandoning the workplace, and everyone is anxious about leaving their offices unattended. “Residential real estate also seems to be holding steady.” “Anything connected with the visitor industry is in the worse shape. PBN is feeling the effects, but media was considered an essential business, though we have NOT been in the office since March. Twice a day I have a staff meeting that is exactly just like this, . . . and we check in with each other on what we are covering and how we are doing on the deadline; it is very strange, but we are getting used to it. . .Writers are solitary by nature.”

“That’s all fairly grim stuff. I’ve been trying to address these issues in my column for a long time and just to bring in some outside perspective of what’s happening in other countries and other states. Also taking a look at media and how media has been involved in this situation from the outset. I thought it was fascinating, that almost immediately, and I go to a lot of the virtual press conferences, it seems like there is a conscious decision that critical reporting would take the form of asking government why it isn’t clamping down harder, as opposed to asking the government, ‘Hey, are there other ways we could be approaching this?’ So, kind of a feedback loop of panic and that we need to be seen as doing something, just going around in a circle, and it’s been exacerbating.”

Question from **Robyn McCreary**: “Are they trying to crash our economy? To make us socialist?”

Answer from **Kam**: “I don’t know what they are trying to do. I really can’t fathom it. I’ve never seen anything like it in my life! It’s not just Hawaii and it’s not just America. There was a Prime Minister in Canada who was lecturing the citizens of Montreal on their poor behavior and how they’re not following the rules. I wrote in my column this week about Melbourne Australia, where they actually sent cops to a woman’s home and arrested her in front of her kids for writing a Facebook post for trying to organize a protest about the shutdowns they are having in Victoria. While one can speculate about the utility to certain people of pursuing these policies, it’s international. For some reason everyone is having the same response regardless of their local political situation. It’s been a very top down, heavy-handed kind of approach, almost without exception.”

“The exceptions are interesting, like Sweden for example, which has had travel restrictions. So, if we had run things more like how Sweden had run things, Hawaii would still feel some tough economic situations because of the travel restrictions and people’s anxiety about traveling amidst a pandemic, tourism would still be down, but maybe not as down. And local business, with of all of us doing business with each other, may not have been hamstrung nearly as much, so maybe more of the economy could have been kept going.”

“Sweden, which had a very different policy response, their cases and deaths all spiked back in April, and have steadily declined ever since, with no second wave like we are seeing now in Hawaii. One of the things that seems to go on, and I’m no epidemiologist, I’ve just become an amateur epidemiologist over the last six months like everyone else reading obsessively about all of this, is that Hawaii is one of many places that seems to be in a pattern of locking down, then reopening, and they warn us that since we are opening the case counts will go up. Then case counts go up, and these same people say, ‘oh my goodness, the case counts are going up! Maybe we better lock everything down again!’ That just seems like a cycle that I don’t know how we can interrupt if the metric for success is zero cases and zero tolerance for cases, because I’m not sure that’s a realistic goal.”

Kam went on to share with us from the PBN weekly Flu Surveillance Report, that we have had “671 fatalities from flu and pneumonia through the current flu season which began 34 weeks back, from this most recent report, so about the exact same time that we have been dealing with corona virus.” There have been nearly seven times the deaths even though “we have been taking extraordinary efforts like never before to limit the spread of infectious diseases, yet there are still flu deaths. So I don’t know what it means from a policy standpoint going forward, when you can always find a reason say, ‘we need to shut things down’.”

Question from **Rich Proctor**: “Who from the business community has the mayor or the governor’s ear?”

Answer from **Kam**: “I don’t know about ear, but the House COVID committee has people like Peter Ho on it from the Bank of Hawaii, so there are business people in that one arena of politics, but I don’t know if any of that is trickling up to Ige, or how it is. What we have seen in press conferences for the last six months is that it is the public health folks that seem to have the ear of the governor and the mayor almost exclusively and we will all have to deal with the economy part after the fact.”

Comment about goats from **Alice Tucker**: “It broke my heart to hear that the goat farm on Maui is about to go belly up. GOATS hurting for heaven’s sake!!!”

Response from **Kam**: “They were up for sale earlier this year, and I don’t know if that was entirely due to the Corona virus and the restrictions related to the Corona virus, but ‘Goats are hurting for heaven’s sake!’ Yes.”

Question from **Andrew Starn**: “What do you think about Resolution 20-208 (a program to help state or city with small businesses). [**Kam** asked **Andy** to remind him what the 20-208 was about.] And what should Hawaii government do with the unspent \$300+Million in unaccounted for CARES money?”

Andy shared he does commercial real estate and the 20-208 is “some kind of a program for having state or city money to help prop up all the small businesses who are struggling through the second shut down. I think Tommy Waters may have been championing it and they were asking for a letter writing campaign. I just watched the news last night (Monday, September 14) and there was some 300 plus Million unaccounted for CARES Act money. And I think the restaurant closure will be high . . . if they not at 50% occupancy, they are just losing less money, \$20grand a month and this is probably going on for 10 months, you are probably better off closing now and trying to save that money to pay your creditors when they all come after you. So, I’m wondering what are you seeing, and what should the money be spent on and what can happen to keep small businesses and people who live off tourism alive until tourism comes back?”

Answer from Kam: “The grant program from the city that I mentioned, I think is ultimately CARES Act money, that trickled down from the feds to the state, to the city, and the experience of retailers is they have to spend so much on COVID-related expenses to qualify for the grant, and if they get the grant, it’s a wash, and they’re still unprotected from the cost of the losses. There’s just a staggering number of programs and requirements and I don’t know how restricted these funds are. Government money is very strange, it’s not like real money, you can spend a dollar with anyone who will take the dollar, but government money always seems to have its restrictions on it, so I don’t know how much flexibility they have on that \$300 Million. One of the concerns, I do know, is that we won’t figure it out in time and we’ll end up losing it, which it’s not like that doesn’t happen in Hawaii; that’s an issue with the Rail Project, there’s federal funding tied to certain deadlines being met. I guess if I had a magic wand, it would be to make goods. . . . Philosophically, this isn’t quite welfare or relief, this is more like eminent domain, so if your house is where the State wants to build a road, they can tell you, ‘hey the community needs the road more than you need your house so you have to move,’ but they have to pay you fair market value to achieve the larger public community good of delivering a road. So, the shut downs of businesses, I think fall more under that philosophical category of like ‘here’s the thing we have decided the public needs, and need it from you, and it’s not your choice or decision, we’re making it happen and so we will pay you back after’. I think that was the philosophy behind the idea that the PPP loans would be forgivable. But one of the things we’ve had articles on, both locally and with American City Business Journals, at PBN you will find articles that come from our sister publications, Charlotte News Rooms, that forgivable loans might have more restrictions and may not be as forgivable as hoped. I’m not sure if that answered your question – I don’t know if it’s answerable.”

Question/Comment from Reese Liggett: “**Kam**, you didn’t mention that when Mayor says expect cases to rise – that statement comes after he has cautioned all to abide by the mask, six feet and group-size limits ... or else cases will rise.”

Answer/Reply from Kam: “I don’t know the rhetoric here, but we were chatting earlier in the social time [before the meeting] about the Hawaiian Rent-All sign, making fun of it, that says, ‘you can go to the beach if you go alone’ policy, and I was making fun of it too in my column that there seems to be NO particular medical reason for the policies. Tina Yamaki, with *Retail Merchants of Hawaii*, her members are exceedingly frustrated because they don’t see a meaningful difference between the kinds of stores that are allowed to be open

and the kinds of stores that are NOT allowed to be open; just in terms of how many people are getting how close to each other for how much time; so, that suggested there isn't really an epidemiological insight guiding these policies. Then Mayor Caldwell finally explained that the reason he said to go alone is to make it easy for the cops, because they don't know who already lives together and would be safe to hang out together in public, so to make it easy for them, you must be by yourself. So, if you are in business, like you guys are, you know the difference between customer-centered marketing and organizational centered marketing. So when you're doing something that's for the convenience of your staff, instead of the best interest of your customers, are you going to succeed as a company? I don't know - you might get by depending on how much people like your product, but in the long run you might end up alienating your customers."

Question from **Al Linton**: "What are your comments on federal judges' ruling on the unconstitutional closing of businesses from the govt.?"

Answer from **Kam**: "So this is in Pennsylvania, where a judge ruled the executive order there were unconstitutional; that there is nothing that should allow endless executive orders to come before just ordinary constitutional freedoms. There were at least two lawsuits in Hawaii that were going in that direction here. One was withdrawn, and the other, a judge declined to hear it, trusting that Ige and the administration knew what they were doing and it was very important to let them do their thing. But that was three or four months ago so maybe the climate has changed, depending on whether or not these things are going on too long. What prompted a judge to intervene in Pennsylvania was a lawsuit, so maybe we will see additional lawsuits in Hawaii that take another shot at challenging the constitutionality of the executive orders.

"I have wondered if we wouldn't see class action lawsuits challenging the arbitrary nature of which industries are closed and which ones are not. In fact, as another example from the outside of what is going on in the world, restaurants in New York City just filed a class action lawsuit for \$2 billion in damages they are seeking from city and state officials from lockdown rules and the impact, filed this week. When you're in this situation, where the executive branch people, city, state, and everywhere around the world are using emergency declaration, where are the checks and balances? The legislature seems very quiet and content to continue as things are. City Council on Oahu seems fairly passive as well. So the legislative branch isn't operating in its role in the balance of powers, then, you are left with legal challenges through the judicial branch."

CLOSING

Brian informs **Kam** we are at the end of our time, but there are still questions queued up if he wouldn't mind hanging around after the meeting to speak further with our Rotary members [which he graciously did].

President Rich thanked our guest **A. Kam Napier**, on all of our behalves for his time and information, and invited members who wished to continue speaking to hang out after we close. **Rich** announced that next week's guest speaker will be Dr. Kevin Kuich, *Chief Medical Officer at Kahi Mohala*, to discuss children's and teens' mental health issues, which

sometimes you would think are exacerbated by our current conditions. Everyone have a fantastic week!

Brian played our *Hawaii Aloha* video for all of us to sing along with.

President Rich gonged his bell at 1:00pm to adjourn our meeting.

Mahalos,

Lee LaBrash

Your Humble Scribe