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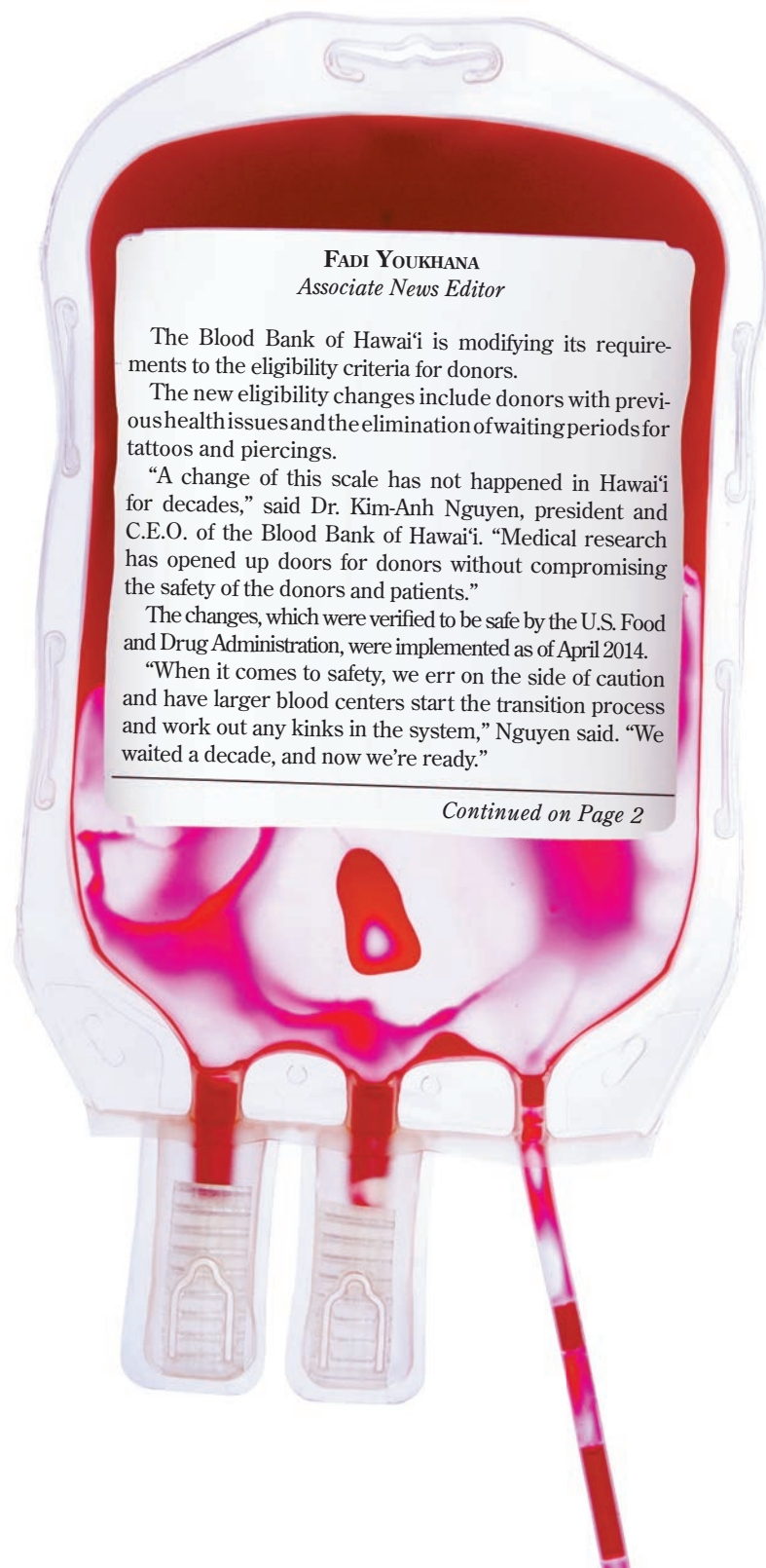
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FADI YOKHANA
Associate News Editor

The Blood Bank of Hawai'i is modifying its requirements to the eligibility criteria for donors.

The new eligibility changes include donors with previous health issues and the elimination of waiting periods for tattoos and piercings.

"A change of this scale has not happened in Hawai'i for decades," said Dr. Kim-Anh Nguyen, president and C.E.O. of the Blood Bank of Hawai'i. "Medical research has opened up doors for donors without compromising the safety of the donors and patients."

The changes, which were verified to be safe by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, were implemented as of April 2014.

"When it comes to safety, we err on the side of caution and have larger blood centers start the transition process and work out any kinks in the system," Nguyen said. "We waited a decade, and now we're ready."

Continued on Page 2

CAN YOU DONATE NOW?

**BLOOD BANK OF HAWAI'I IMPLEMENTS MAJOR
ELIGIBILITY CHANGES**

Significant changes to a blood donor's eligibility criteria

cover story



At Campus Center, Sheri Gon, an instructor at UH's Burns School of Medicine, and senior Porawat Ruamsap (in costume) promote upcoming blood drives in Hawai'i.

FADI YOKHANA
KA LEO O HAWAII

TATTOOS AND PIERCINGS

Among the biggest modifications to become an eligible donor is the elimination of temporary deferrals, which include waiting periods for tattoos and piercings.

Previously, donors who had tattoos were deferred for one year from the date of the tattoo.

"As of April 1, 2014, there is currently no waiting period for those who have received a tattoo at a state-regulated tattoo shop," said Vanessa Sim, Blood Bank of Hawai'i's communications specialist.

According to Sim, Hawai'i's tattoo shops are licensed through the Department of Health Sanitation Branch. Students who wish to verify the tattoo shop, can check the DOH website for a list of regulated facilities.

As for piercings, previously, donors with body piercings and non-professionally done ear piercings had to go through a one year waiting period.

After the implementation of the new eligibility criteria, donors with piercings, which were done using a sterile procedure or gun method with new jewelry professionally, and with no infections don't have to wait.

HEALTH CONDITIONS

The most significant change to the eligibility criteria concern donors who have cancer. Previously, volunteers were only accepted if treatment with no recurrence has been completed and have been cancer-free for five years.

Now, potential donors can donate blood if they have been cancer-free for one year or more. The changes were supported by recent medical research, which showed cancer is not spread through blood transfusion.

Other changes include donors with health complications. Previously, potential donors who had a history of heart conditions or strokes were permanently deferred. Now, those patients can donate if they had no symptoms or activity restrictions and have been seen by a physician.

In addition, many patients with lung conditions were permanently deferred and all volunteers who had autoimmune disorders were permanently deferred.

After the changes to the criteria, potential donors will be accepted if they experience no symptoms and are in feeling well on the day of donation.

WHY DONATE?

According to Dr. Nguyen, the Blood Bank of Hawai'i needs approximately 200 donors every day to meet the blood needs of Hawai'i. Changing the requirements of is projected to increase the number of donors.

"We are always in need of donors," said Dr. Randal Covin, Blood Bank of Hawai'i's medical director. "The rarest blood type is one we don't have on our shelves. Donating is safe, simple and in just one hour you can save lives."

According to Sim, there were 1,088 donors from the University of Hawai'i's Mānoa campus from January to December 2013. Statistics from 2014 show an increase of 42 students per month compared to the number of donors last year.

"We are hopeful that the new criteria will open the door for more donors," Sim said. "Especially for those who may have gotten a tattoo or piercing and would have been previously deferred."

Students who wish to donate but are unsure of the new criteria eligibility are encouraged to call 848-4745.

Upcoming blood drives

Tuesday, May 6, 2014

Downtown Community (822 Bishop St.) - Bloodmobile
9:45 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Sheraton Waikiki (2255 Kalakaua Ave.) - Honolulu Room
8:30 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Embassy Suites Waikiki Beach Walk (201 Beachwalk St.) - Meeting Room 1
9 a.m.- 1 p.m.

Friday, May 9, 2014

Straub Clinic and Hospital (888 South King St.) - Bloodmobile
7 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Sunday, May 11, 2014

Kahala Mall (4211 Wai'aleae Ave.) - Bloodmobile
7-11:30 a.m.

Monday, May 12, 2014

Waterfront Plaza (500 Ala Moana Blvd.) - Bloodmobile - South Street Loading Zone
7:15 a.m.- 1:45 p.m.

Tuesday, May 13, 2014

Heald College (1500 Kapiolani Blvd.) - Bloodmobile
7:30 a.m.- 2 p.m.

UH Mānoa School of Law (2515 Dole St.) - Bloodmobile
8 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

FHB First Hawaiian Center (999 Bishop St. 6th Floor) - Po'okela Meeting Room
6:30 a.m.- 1:15 p.m.

Heald College (1500 Kapiolani Blvd.) - Bloodmobile
7:30 a.m.- 2 p.m.

State of Hawai'i DCCA (335 Merchant Street) King Kalākaua Building - Bloodmobile
8 a.m.- 1 p.m.

Criteria to donate

- Be in good health
- 18 years of age (if less, then volunteers can donate with parental consent)
- Weigh 110 pounds or more
- Not traveled to a country with malaria within the past 12 months
- If donor has not been South or Central America in the past 12 months (because of the prevalence of Chagas disease)



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Aloha students!

Finals Week is right around the corner! I hope you are all ready to finish off the semester strong as we get even closer to an exciting summer for many. I would like to congratulate all those newly elected to serve in the 102nd Senate for the 2014-2015 academic year. It was an exciting race

and I am excited to see the good work that will get done with your new Senate. To see the results and find out who will be serving you next year, please go on to your MyUH account and click on the ASUH Elections tab.

Beyond elections, we have successfully approved and allocated funds through legislation over the past month. We have passed resolutions of support for campus, state, and federal level initiatives, including supporting in-state tuition for veterans and Senator Mazie Hirono's Pell Grant Protection Act. For a listing of the legislation we have passed and approved, you can access this by coming into our office.

As always, let us know how we can better serve you. Best of luck as you close off the semester strong, fellow UH Rainbow Warriors!

Sincerely,

Richard Mizusawa
President, ASUH 101st Senate



Photos

CAPTURE:

Makapu'u to Mariner's Ridge

All photos by
Shane Grace



@kaleoohawaii



@kaleophotos



On a Wednesday afternoon, I drove to Makapu'u lookout and set off down the Tom-Tom Trail to see how far I could make it before dark. I made it to Mariner's ridge (above Waimanalo area) and turned around to make it back before dark. Not a single person was in sight during the hike.





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Event Details are Subject to Change

Student poet explores heritage in 'Tui Bird'

NICOLYN CHARLOT
Associate Features Editor

Serena Ngaio Simmons is a poet who expresses her exploration of her Māori heritage through her writing and recitation. One of her poems, "Tui Bird," has made Simmons, a sophomore majoring in English, April's Student of the Month at Hawai'i Review.

THE POEM

"Tui Bird" is one of several pieces that Simmons has written about her Māori heritage. She wrote the poem for the 2014 Center for Pacific Islands Studies Student Conference, "Expressing Oceania."

The tui is a bird from New Zealand, and Simmons decided to use it in her poem because she didn't simply want to write from a human perspective.

"Because of the fact that the tui bird sings, and when I feel like I talk about my culture, (it is) like I'm just singing about it all the time," Simmons said.

In the past, Simmons has felt uncomfortable speaking so much about her heritage, because she was worried about being obnoxious. However, writing "Tui Bird" made her more comfortable about her pride. According to Simmons, this poem is "a step in the really long journey towards figuring myself out."

Elizabeth Soto, a Ph.D. student in English, has known Simmons for many years.

"Serena's 'Tui Bird' is a beautiful and poignant poem that explores the difficult journey of her reconnecting with her Māori cultural heritage. ... Serena's telling of this story, through the lens of an endemic honeyeater bird of Aotearoa, makes it unexpected and that much more powerful, because the depth of emotion catches the reader/listener off guard," she said in an email interview.

THE POET

Simmons has been writing poetry since she was 16, and it is a form of communication that truly helps her express herself.

"I can do whatever I want with images and metaphors and line breaks. Poetry allows me pretty much to do whatever I want, which is why I chose it ... for most things," Simmons said.

While Simmons writes poetry for herself first, she also does it to share with other people. She frequently performs slam



poetry at Second Saturdays at the Arts at Mark's Garage and First Thursdays at Fresh Café. Soto, who is familiar with Simmons' work in slam poetry, said "She's willing not only to deal with (difficult issues) in her poetry, but also perform it so she's sharing it with other people, which... brings that out into a conversation that I think can be really helpful to people."

Craig Santos Perez, the director of the Creative Writing Program in the English

Department, said in an email interview that "Serena writes powerfully about her identities and genealogies, including her Māori heritage. ... Her powerful performances often leave audience members in tears."

For Simmons, poetry is much more than a hobby. Though she would enjoy being a professional poet, it's more important that poetry remains a part of her life.

"It's cheesy, it's cliché, but I need (poetry), it's like breath. ... As long as it's in my life, (that) is all that matters," she said.

"Serena's 'Tui Bird' is a beautiful and poignant poem that explores the difficult journey of her reconnecting with her Māori cultural heritage."

— ELIZABETH SOTO

Island Studies to learn more.

"The Pacific community here has been extremely supportive... there's a lot of mixed people, and they're like, 'It doesn't matter, you are still that,'" Simmons said. "Just being it, and being a part of Oceania and knowing that I have roots in such a beautiful place really helps."

Soto noted that many people don't go through the process of changing their relationship with their heritage because it can be a difficult and painful process, but "Serena's willing to do that hard work, that I think in the end can be really, really rewarding."

Ultimately, Simmons is a poet who is working hard to figure out who she is and where she comes from. "Tui Bird" is just one of many poems that are a part of that greater process of understanding and learning.

You can read Simmons' poem at tinyurl.com/n9cxpzb.

Tui Bird

How fortunate I am
to know such a gutsy tui
throat full of salt and knowledge,
she is one part Great Plains,
all parts ocean
and she tells everyone.

Of all the kids of love
I have buried in me
she is the loudest.

Sometimes her mother is embarrassed,
afraid the other birds will start talking
light up their beaks with gossip
about the tui
who gets too excited about her ocean,
her heritage,
mother is proud of her daughter
but wishes she would talk about
more than home

The other birds know who they are
so does my tui
I suppose
our song goes on
longer than theirs
in the morning,
most of them don't understand,
growing up with wholesome
growing up with language
growing up with culture,
forgive me,
not all of us are that fortunate.

Some of us must dig straight to the nickel,
and swallow every book available,
because we
don't have childhood to fall back on.

So when you hear my tui sing,
red lungs and hear pounding
in time with the trades
know we are beginners.





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Cross border trade treaty comes under fire

HUI-KUB KEE
Contributing Writer

"ANTI-UNDERTABLE TRADING TREATMENT!" the signboard said. Last month, on April 2, a small crowd of Taiwanese students protested in front of Sinclair Library to voice their supports for the "Sunflower Movement." The movement, similar to Occupy Wall Street, used occupation to protest against political and economic inequality in Taiwan.

WHAT HAPPENED AND IS HAPPENING IN TAIWAN?

The under-reported event at the Mānoa campus mirrors what is happening across the west side of the Pacific. On March 17, 2014, Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang Party asserted a new Cross-Strait Service Trade Treaty with China. If passed, this treaty could open Taiwan's service industries to the neighboring country.

On March 18, the follow day, hundreds of angry and discontent students organized a protest through social networking sites, and occupied the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan's Parliament Building. These student activists argued that the current treaty poses a threat to Taiwan's service industry. They urged that the legislatures and President Ma Ying-Jeou should withdraw and renegotiate the treaty.

The activists were angry because the Ma government signed and passed the treaty without public supervision and proper legislature procedure. They claimed Ma government's illegal procedure violated Taiwan's democracy.

COUNTER-WAVES AGAINST NEOLIBERALISM

The Sunflower Movement reflects concerns about current economic policy. On one hand, this treaty could be a major blow to Taiwan's society, as it has encountered an economic depression since the early 2000s, during the presidency of former President Chen Shui-Bian.

And since the election of current Taiwanese president Ma Ying-Jeou in 2008, the Gross Domestic Product value and employment rates, as well as personal income, did not rise,



HUI-KUB KEE / KA LEO O HAWAII

causing the Ma government to accelerate the path to apply neoliberal policies, such as, free trade and accumulation of capital.

However, in the eyes of Sunflower supporters, this Service Trading Treaty only benefits few entrepreneurs, who can hire cheap labor forces in China after the treaty is implemented.

“The Service Trading Treaty will open Taiwan's transportation, telecommunication and publishing industries, which will threaten national security and the freedom of speech once the Chinese state-owned enterprises come into Taiwan.”

- SUNFLOWER SUPPORTERS

This will lead to the bankruptcy of the island's small and medium businesses.

Many Taiwanese are also resistant to neoliberalism. The Taiwanese economy has a significant portion of small and medium businesses that relies less on giant enterprises and maintains a relatively smaller gap between the rich and poor.

The Sunflower Movement, in fact, is one of the continuous efforts to resist neoliberal economy. For example, in 2012, worldwide Taiwanese students, including those at the University of Hawai'i, autonomously posted Facebook pictures of them holding signboards, protesting the media monopoly of Want Want, a Taiwanese enterprise closely affiliated with China.

THE INEVITABLE POLITICAL WORRIES

The Sunflower, as well as the anti-Want Want movements, has inevitably touched on Taiwan's sensitive political status. Resistance to economic integration also reflects the deeply held fear of being politically united by China.

“The Service Trading Treaty will open Taiwan's transportation, telecommunication and publishing industries, which will threaten national security and the freedom of speech once the Chinese state-owned enterprises come into Taiwan,” according to Sunflower supporters at UH.

However, rejecting the Treaty will certainly produce political impacts on both China and Taiwan. Xinhua, China's official news agency, has viewed the Sunflower supporters as separatists and the movements as stirred up by the Democratic Progressive Party, the Kuomintang's opposition party. Many Chinese see the Sunflower Movement as related to Taiwan's independence

movement, as discussed in Tianya, China's biggest Internet forum.

In Taiwan, diplomats warned that withdrawing the service treaty would make future economic cooperation more difficult. The Sunflower Movement has not only challenged President Ma's power in the party, but also influenced the party's odds of success in the coming Legislative Election. If the Ma government does not respond carefully to the Sunflower calls, the disappointed young activists may be further radicalized, and hinder any political and economic cohesions across the strait.

THE EMERGENCE OF CIVIL CONSCIOUSNESS

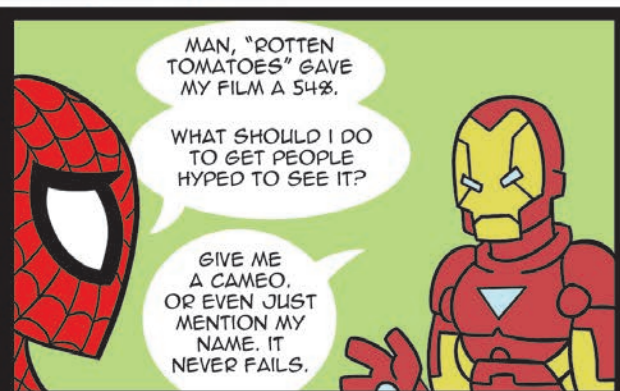
Will the Sunflower Movement succeed? Of course not. The student activists have withdrawn from the Legislative Yuan, and passing the treaty is still a must for Ma to boost the economy. Most importantly, modern histories of the United States, Korea, China, etc., have taught us that the trend toward neoliberalism is usually irrevocable.

Nonetheless, this movement tells the power of civic engagement. In less than one month, more than 500,000 people participated in the Sunflower Movement, including students at UHMānoa who protested in front of Sinclair Library. Recognizing the limitations of traditional newspapers and televisions, the young generations use Facebook and Internet forums, quickly spread information, effectively organize people holding the same views and take actions.

A strong civil consciousness has emerged and effectively supervised the government. By writing posters, walking on streets, sharing information on Facebook and occupying the Legislative Yuan, these Taiwanese students have provided a new example of how young generations struggle with economic and political inequalities.

These student activists have also shown the capability of today's youth in challenging the inequalities they see. They are a great example and inspiration for the youth of America to realize the importance of their voice, and to know that they are able, and have the resources, to take action and make a change in society.

MARVELOUS CRITICISM



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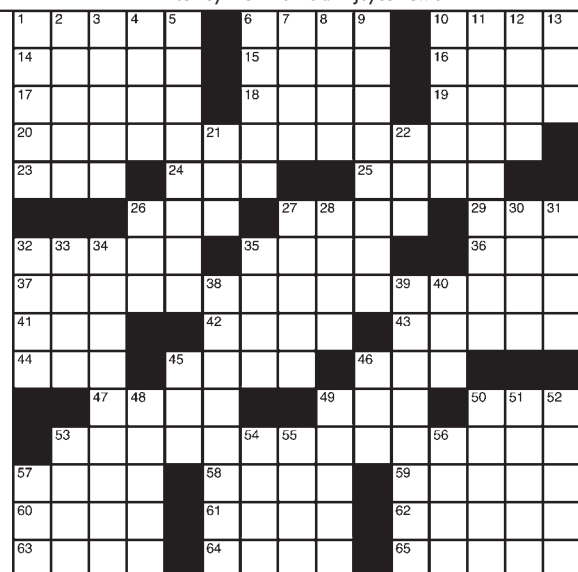
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Games

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis



ACROSS

- 1 Mar. 17th honoree
- 6 Amazed
- 10 Gray timber wolf
- 14 Pasta sauce brand
- 15 Sonny's partner
- 16 Et ___; and others
- 17 Word before PG or PG-13
- 18 Sacred
- 19 Bismarck is its cap.
- 20 Where to see stars in school
- 23 "___ will be done ...": Lord's Prayer
- 24 Summer zodiac sign
- 25 Of the flock
- 26 Actress Taylor, familiarly
- 27 Hearty dish
- 29 Concealed
- 32 Knives' sharp sides
- 35 "Gone With the Wind" plantation
- 36 Yoko from Tokyo
- 37 Where to see stars in the service
- 41 Chinese chairman
- 42 Get beaten
- 43 "Honest!"
- 44 Capone and Capp
- 45 Voice below soprano
- 46 Pres. between HST and JFK
- 47 ___ gin fizz
- 49 Regret
- 50 Unit of work
- 53 Where to see stars in theaters
- 57 Coffee, in slang
- 58 ___ Crunch: cereal brand
- 59 Tolerate
- 60 "Um, excuse me ..."
- 61 Fired
- 62 Memoranda
- 63 ___ avis
- 64 One lacking experience
- 65 John of tractors

DOWN

- 1 Jack who ate no fat
- 2 Garbage
- 3 Trivial, as a complaint
- 4 New ___: modern spiritualist
- 5 Slate of errands and chores
- 6 Sound evoking "Gesundheit!"
- 7 Hemingway's "For ___ the Bell Tolls"
- 8 Slippery
- 9 Laundry, as a suit
- 10 Polynesian porch
- 11 Like some conservative teaching methods
- 12 Prejudice
- 13 Mighty tree
- 21 Pince-___ glasses
- 22 Attorney's field
- 26 Floral necklace
- 27 Authority
- 28 "That's a good point"
- 30 Crucifix letters
- 31 Bowl-shaped roof
- 32 Actress Thompson
- 33 Rotary phone part
- 34 Handle superficially
- 35 Home run jog
- 38 Prowling feline
- 39 Extremely popular
- 40 Enemy
- 45 "You've got mail" company
- 46 Firecracker that doesn't crack
- 48 Andean animal
- 49 Sonata movement
- 50 Online party request
- 51 One on horseback
- 52 Canada honkers
- 53 "That's funny!"
- 54 Like crayons
- 55 Abbr. on a phone's "0" button
- 56 Double-reed instrument
- 57 Cookie container

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1												7
	2										1	
	4		2		5					9		
9	5		6	8	1					2	3	
	1		9		3					7		
	7									8		
2												6
			4	3		7	9					

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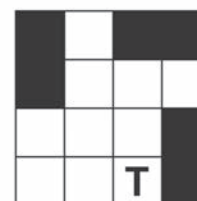
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KRISTEN PAUL BONIFACIO
Associate Opinions Editor

With its sandy white beaches, beautiful landscapes and its perfect weather, Hawai'i is known as the rainbow state. And each year, almost 8 million people visit our state to have a taste of the island lifestyle. But living in the 47th smallest state in the United States comes with inconveniences, and it's not the paradise that many think it is.

TRAFFIC, TRAFFIC, TRAFFIC

A tiny island and thousands of people commuting every day to work means horrible traffic. And with a population of more than 337,000, Honolulu is one of the most dense metro areas in the country. A report from INRIX, a traffic information company, ranked the capital of Hawai'i as the city with the second worst traffic in the nation last year, right behind Los Angeles.

According to the study, commuter travel time has also increased by 30 percent since 2012 because of the traffic. WKITV also stated in an article published in March that drivers spend about 60 hours a year stuck in traffic. Furthermore, many of Hawai'i's roads and streets are in bad condition and in desperate need of repair. They increase the chances for accidents and even the smallest accident can cause a huge traffic jam.

ALWAYS FORGOTTEN

Staying up to date with current events can be a hard while living in Hawai'i. You often feel left out with the rest of the world, because you reside in the most isolated population center on earth. There are hardly any major artists or musicians that include Hawai'i in their tour dates. And if there are, tickets are expensive and obtaining them becomes a game of luck. Live shows and events are also hardly aired on time with the rest of the nation.

THE PARADISE

Despite all this, there are some reason why Hawai'i is called paradise. Compared to other states, our island ranks 45 in having the lowest sales tax in the country



at 4.35 percent, compared to Tennessee, ranked first, at 9.45 percent, according to taxfoundation.org. Hawai'i also has some of the best weather in the world. While other people are experiencing extreme heat during the summer, and frigid cold during the winter, Hawai'i's weather is pretty constant throughout the year.

Our state is also a melting pot for many ethnicities. The blend of various traditions, customs and beliefs brought by the diverse people living in Hawai'i, mixed with the traditional Hawaiian culture, has created one of the most unique culture in the world. There are many things that we are proud of for being strictly from Hawai'i.

THE COST OF LIVING

However these benefits come at a price, and living in the middle of the Pacific Ocean is costly because products are imported, Hawai'i has a history of being more expensive than the rest of the country. A Civil Beat article published in 2013 compared Hawai'i's price for a gallon of gas to the national average in 1992 and, the difference was 14 cents. Today, the national average is \$3.68, while local gas is \$4.37 — the highest in the nation.

Compared to other cities in the United States, Hawai'i is overpriced. Called "paradise tax," these are the extra costs that those living in the islands have to pay. CNBC has ranked Hawai'i as the most expensive state to live in for the past three years with an average home price in Honolulu of more than half a million. Monthly rent for apartments is also rarely under \$1,000, and living off of minimum wage is nearly impossible. And undoubtedly, this is a major factor to the growing homeless problem facing our state.

REALITY CHECK

Hawai'i is just like any other place in the world. It has its advantages, but it still has inconveniences. Hawai'i is often heavily glamorized to the point that those not living in the islands are blinded by the superficial atmosphere that is being presented. Many think that Hawai'i is the ultimate paradise, when it's really not.

Giving it a twirl: Kelly Simek and her path to Miss Hawai'i

JEREMY NITTA
Senior Staff Writer

Hawai'i sports fans recognize her as the twirler at UH sporting events. But the story of Kelly Simek goes far deeper than what she does on the field.

The soon-to-be UH graduate currently juggles a heavy course load in school with extracurricular activities, work and perhaps most impressively, running for the title of Miss Hawai'i.

THE PATH TO MISS HAWAI'I

Simek was named Miss East O'ahu in November, winning in only her second pageant competition of this kind. Unlike some who model and compete in these types of competitions throughout their lives, Simek almost fell into it accidentally.

"The person who got me into it was actually the girl who was the baton twirler at UH before me," Simek said. "She did pageants too and had been the runner-up for Miss Hawai'i. But also, I got into it because it was an opportunity to win a lot of scholarship money. That was one of the main reasons because it would help pay for schooling."

For Simek, training for the pageant required a bit of a change from her normal lifestyle.

"I guess I had to work out more because I am not the type of girl who can diet," Simek said with a laugh. "I think I love food too much. But I would skip a burger here and there the week before the pageant."

In the actual competition for Miss East O'ahu, Simek described the experience as "nerve-wracking," competing with people who had placed high in recent years.

In fact, Simek said she went into the competition just hoping to have a good time and do well, but not expecting to win. Simek credited her experience as the UH twirler for her ability to perform well, despite the pressure.

"Luckily from twirling, I've become really comfortable performing in front of people," Simek said. "Really for me, whenever you're on any stage, it's all the same: It's a performance. Because of my experience twirling for UH, I've grown more accustomed to performing in front of people."



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL HAYASHI

UH student Kelly Simek was crowned Miss East O'ahu and will compete in the Miss Hawai'i pageant in June.

THE REAL KELLY SIMEK

Having the title has not changed Simek, who remains highly focused and dedicated on the commitments she had before the pageant.

Simek carries a 3.73 GPA at UH while taking 17 credits as part of her plan to

graduate early. Simek is also a part of three clubs: the Society of Professional Journalists, the Public Relations Student Society of America and Colleges Against Cancer. Additionally, Simek works at KITV as a weather intern.

"It's actually been a little hard to pre-

pare for the Miss Hawai'i pageant," she said. "People will come up to me and ask me how my preparation is going. But it's hard because I'm taking extra classes to graduate on time, I'm a part of three clubs, I have an internship and a job.

"Then on top of that, I've been twirling for the school. So it's really been a struggle to find time to prepare for the contest."

But Simek has still been able to find time for the responsibilities that come with being Miss East O'ahu, which includes visiting schools and participating in events. For Simek, holding the new title has given her an opportunity to turn her attention to something that holds deep value to her.

"The reason I wanted to do it was because everyone in the pageant that runs has to have a personal platform, and it's something that you are able to promote," she said. "My personal platform is cancer awareness and prevention, which is something close to my heart because a lot of my family members have been diagnosed with cancer, and recently my aunt passed away from skin cancer."

With the newfound influence that comes with her title, Simek has seized the opportunity to bring more awareness to cancer.

"This is what makes the Miss America organization so awesome because it gives us a stage to share our platform from," Simek said. "Having that crown and banner, it gives you a voice because now people will want to listen to you."

"I've had the chance to go to schools and talk to kids and teens about just being aware of cancer and what they should do if family members have a history of cancer."

Lastly, Simek has used her position to raise money to help fight cancer.

"I also get to raise money for the American Cancer Society," she said. "They do research there that is helping to find a cure for cancer one day so no one has to have it anymore. Having seen the pain and suffering that my family went through because of cancer, I want to help make it so no one has to go through that anymore."

Simek will compete in the Miss Hawai'i pageant on June 7 at the Hawai'i Convention Center.