BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES: THE PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

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Hawaii Landscape September/October No. 56 is published bi-monthly by Landscape Industry Council-Foundation, 73-1110 Ahikawa Street, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

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Our Hawaiian Islands are a unique place of cultural diversity. Hawaii’s population is a blend of many cultures, being that we are located at the ‘Crossroads of the Pacific’. Hawaii is often referred to as a ‘melting pot’, with our wide variety of races and ethnicities. According to the most recent census of Hawaii’s residents 39% described themselves as Asian, 25% Caucasian, 10% Pacific Islander, 9% Hispanic and 2% African. The vast majority of multiracial residents describe themselves as a combination of Asian, Caucasian and Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander, nearly 70%. Our cultural diversity in Hawaii is mostly a result of our history of immigration due to the growth of the sugar cane industry. Many of those sugar cane worker’s children and Grandchildren now work in our landscape industry.

In Hawaii, we hear the term ‘Ohana’ used often. The word Ohana means family in the Hawaiian language, but in a larger sense. Ohana includes not only relatives, but also in-laws, friends and neighbors. Many Hawaiians believe it’s important to create close, familial relationships with people of different ethnicities. Ohana is one of many gifts the native culture of Hawaii has given to our people.

During my time in the Landscape Industry here in Hawaii I have learned and grown in skill and knowledge considerably from my many experiences with our diverse workforce which is grounded in our agricultural background. I believe that business thrives on our diversity in Hawaii, and on the unique perspective and experience of the diverse knowledge of many individuals. Diversity is definitely a positive in respect to sharing landscape knowledge.

Diversity in the workplace is defined as a company’s workforce that includes employees of varying gender, ethnicity, cultural background, age, religion, race, sexual orientation, languages, education and abilities. The best employee is able to develop productive professional and personal relationships with their co-workers. They respect and appreciate the diversity of experiences employees from different backgrounds bring to their workplace. Diversity stimulates creativity and innovation, as well as productivity.

Bringing diversity into the workplace creates a wide variety of different experiences and perspectives. Creating diversity in the workplace will ensure that employees have different characteristics and backgrounds. These diverse employees often have a variety of different skills and experiences. Employees in a company with higher workplace diversity will have a variety of different perspectives for their employees to experience and learn from.

Let’s continue to grow and celebrate our diversity here in Hawaii. An old proverb states, ‘a variety of flowers creates a beautiful bouquet.’ We certainly are blessed to have a beautiful variety of flowers here in our multicultural Hawaii!

Chris McCullough, LICH President
You may have seen a flyer or poster while shopping for landscape supplies (see page 30). People looking for a landscape professional can use the QR (or remember the web site address) and go directly to the LICH website, www.hawaiiscape.com and easily look for a company with a Landscape Industry Certified person on their staff; either a LICT-Exterior, or a LIC Manager. For your company to be included on this prodigious list, you have to be certified and currently maintain your certification with NALP (National Association of Landscape Professionals). If you have any questions about how to stay on the list, read about Re-Certification below. If your NALP re-certification has lapsed, you will need to re-test! Details on how to enroll (register) for the new computer test, see How to Enroll and Register for the LICT-Exterior Test below.

Need CEUs (Continuing Education Units)? Landscape Industry Certified landscapers need to re-certify every two years by submitting 24 CEUs due on the good-through date on your wallet card. Since we are in the midst of COVID-19, CEUs are harder to get at a regular class or conference, most of which have been postponed.

Here are some ways to keep your list of CEUs growing (note: Service Categories like Educ1 listed):

- Serving on the LICH Board of Directors: Serv2 / .5 CEUs per hour
- Webinars, green industry related: Educ1 / 1 CEU per hour
- Successful completion of additional NALP certification or specialty (new term for module: Educ4 / 8 CEUs new certification (including LIC Manager) 4 CEUs new specialty (module)

For a complete list, go to the Re-Certification Requirement sheet on the LICH web site: https://www.hawaiiscape.com/certificationcenter/

### Webinars

Webinars are regularly posted on the LICH web site Events column. Many webinars are posted there for Certified Arborist CEUs, but they also count as Landscape Industry Certified CEUs.

Here are three important webinars being presented in September to prepare landscapers for the LICT Test:

1. **Irrigation Test Webinar**
   - Cost for all three classes in the Webinar: $45 (LICH Member) and $60 (Non-LICH Member)
   - Three 2-hour zoom classes
     1. Landscape Plans and Hydraulics: Saturday, September 12, 2020, 10:00 AM to Noon
     2. Irrigation System Components and Maintenance: Saturday, September 19, 2020, 10:00 AM to Noon
     3. Diagnostics, Wiring and Electrical Troubleshooting: Saturday, September 26, 2020, 10:00 AM to Noon

2. **Common Core Test Webinar**
   - Cost: $ 20 (LICH Member), $30 (Non-LICH Member)
   - One 2 Hour Webinar / Friday, September 18, 2020 at 4:30P PM to 6:30 PM

### Re-Certification

Re-Certification Application and the Requirement Sheet are both posted on the Certification: Keeping your Certification Current Page at www.hawaiiscape.com. It is a somewhat complex process to fill out and mail in the application, but a much easier and better way to recertify is to do it online. Take the time now to follow the instructions we have given you on the Page for online re-certification and you will be able to save a lot of time in the long run keeping track of your CEUs and paying for your re-certification online.

### How to Enroll and Register for the LICT-Exterior Test

Those of you who remember how simple test registration was in the past will find that the new computer-only test is very different. The lengthy enrollment and LICT-Exterior registration process is fully explained on the web site, on the LICT Test Registration and Information Page, https://www.hawaiiscape.com/lict/ The good news is that if a registrant qualifies for the Employment Training Fund discount, THEN Test Registration can be very simple. Call Margo Rash at 703 456-4209, and Margo will complete the enrollment and registration for you. Remember that the date and time of the Test is of your choosing. If you are already certified but you are adding a new Specialty Component, you do not have to take the Common Core exam. If you are taking the LICT-Exterior test for the first time, you will take an Exam for Common Core and then a separate test for your Specialty Component.

Good luck, and Get Certified! Questions or want to chat? Call Garrett at 808 960-3650 or send me an email at getcertifiedhawaii@gmail.com
As the world has become more interconnected, working with people of varying backgrounds has followed naturally. To meet this growing demand many companies have developed programs to foster more diversity in the workplace. Leading companies large and small also understand that people from different backgrounds must be able to work well together. Yet, we are sometimes challenged by our biases and stereotyping related to race, culture, age, gender, or capabilities, as well as HR responsibilities. Even amid these challenges, many employers find the benefits are well worth the effort. Here is a look at some of the key benefits and ways to overcome the challenges.

Benefits of a diverse workforce

Cultivating a diverse workforce at your organization can bring many positive benefits. First, having a broader range of skills and experience can boost creativity and exchange of ideas. This also gives you access to a bigger talent pool which makes for better problem solving and easier recruitment. In the end you can attract a broader customer base which can boost your bottom line.

- Broader base of knowledge, skills, and creativity – Employers that prioritize development of a more diverse workforce gain access to a much broader base of knowledge, skills, and creativity. In Hawaii for example, indigenous peoples can often provide knowledge of traditional practices and native plants. Women can strengthen team dynamics as women frequently have the skill to unite people and increase participation in the understanding of ideas. The number of women working in landscaping has grown significantly in recent years, even in jobs that were more traditionally filled by men. As people learn to listen to each other and ask questions, it becomes a good place to cross train and educate yourself.

- Better problem solving – Working with people from varying backgrounds gives you access to a broader understanding of issues. A diverse workforce brings a variety of viewpoints and stimulates fresh ideas. For example, a person who has been in the workforce for many years can bring a wealth of knowledge and

BENEFITS OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE FOR LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS, ARCHITECTS, AND NURSERY OWNERS

by Mark Watson - HawaiiWorkplace.com
recruit and encourage individuals from a wide range of backgrounds generally gain a reputation for being a good employer. This boosts brand reputation and engenders goodwill which fuels growth. A diverse pool of skills and experiences allows a company to provide service to more customers because the company is able to relate and understand their clients better. Potential clients often feel more valued and thus give more business to these organizations where the profits can follow.

Challenges
The path to a diverse workforce is not without its hills and valleys. Organizations that want to benefit from this deeper talent pool will need to plan for a few bumps in the road. However, this can be an exciting time of expanding your base of talent, knowledge, and skills. Here are a few of the challenges of developing a diverse workforce and some ways to overcome them:

• Communication and style differences – One of the first challenges often encountered as the workforce becomes more diverse is communication. This is not just about workers who may speak different languages, but it requires getting used to the way others do things and contribute to the team. The main benefit here is it allows workers to draw upon experiences that are unfamiliar to them.

How to Handle:
Continually encourage openness and inclusion at your company or organization. Have a defined process to capture diverse thinking and ideas from employees. The goal is to encourage input and the expression of ideas such that new ideas are welcomed whether they are utilized or not. If conflicts arise be sure a manager steps in as necessary to mediate, ideally without taking sides.

• Bias (yours & theirs) – All of us tend to lean toward our own natural preferences and ideas. Yet bias toward a particular type of group or individual is often learned based on what we were taught growing up or through firsthand experiences. This often carries over into adulthood and can impact our choices about people and those with whom we associate. In the workplace it can affect everything from our hiring decisions to the tasks we ask or don’t ask of certain employees, to how well we work with another team member. Overcoming a long-held bias can seem daunting at first, and we may rather tend to avoid doing so. But the effort of working with your own mindset can be very freeing. On a personal level you simply feel better, and professionally it will broaden your choices and opportunities.

How to Handle:
Start by learning to recognize misinformation that people have learned about different groups. You can do this by first looking at your own biases (all of us have them) and identify what type of person or group you tend to avoid and any feelings that may arise. Then look to identify any beliefs (whether actually true or not) that you may carry about that type of person and where you first developed the belief(s). Perhaps you heard negative comments from a parent or teacher about certain types of people or you had an unpleasant experience. Next ask yourself if the belief you formed applies to a specific person or group, or to ALL persons or groups of that “type”. In other words is what you came believe about a particular type of person actually true or is it just a bias? While a bias may not go away completely, this type of inquiry brings awareness and you can begin go choose whether to act upon it or not. In the workplace it helps when people understand the personal impact of discrimination. You can implement diversity training, initiate ongoing discussions, and foster a workplace culture that makes people from all walks of life feel welcome. The end result is that employees can learn new cultural insight, which in turn reduces negative emotions such as racism, homophobia, sexism, and the like.

• HR concerns – Increasing diversity in the workplace can raise questions about a variety of human resource situations and how to properly handle them. For example, you hire someone experience. A person newly working can express the current mindset of the times. If all of your employees are from the same type of background and offer the same perspective, it is likely there will be some blind spots making it harder to identify and solve problems. A diverse team can more easily recognize pitfalls and help head off problems before they become too costly.

• Easier recruitment – Working with a wider base of talent connects you to the community around you, reduces racism, and expands your talent pool. With a reputation of inclusion, more candidates will apply and often results in lower turnover.

• Increased profits – Organizations that
who becomes romantically interested in a manager. Or you hire a worker that another team member begins teasing. Or you need to fire an employee for inadequate performance, but they are part of a “protected classification” and you’re afraid of legal backlash. How do you deal with these types of situations without discriminating?

How to Handle:
To begin, work with a human resource specialist (whether in-house or outsourced) trained to navigate the plethora of rules and laws (some 2,500 of them) that employers must follow. They are also your first line of defense in helping to deescalate a tricky situation. In addition to risk management, HR functions can include everything from “best practice” hiring protocols and onboarding to workplace policies and handbooks, as well as the paperwork required for basic compliance. The fact is that HR and non-discrimination rules apply to companies of all sizes whether you know about them or not.
If you don’t yet have an HR resource in place you may want to consider making it a higher priority. Whether you choose to diversify your workforce or not, it is always wise to obtain more knowledge about the HR landscape.

Summary
Embracing diversity in the workplace is a skill that leads to increased (team and individual) productivity, as well as enhanced cooperation and harmony. Whether you want to broaden your company’s reach in terms of knowledge and skills, better problem solving, easier recruitment, or increased profits, the benefits are clear. To successfully intervene in situations and bring out the best in people, we need to increase awareness and work on our own personal biases and leadership. Work with an HR professional to advance your knowledge and implement more robust protections. Whether you have one (1) employee or 500, all of these practices can boost workplace morale and increase your bottom line.

Mark Watson is Director of Operations at Hawaii Workplace providing HR and Payroll services to employers in landscaping, construction, and other industries. https://hawaiiworkplace.com/
According to the 2012 Survey of Business Owners by the U.S. Census Bureau, minority business enterprises (MBEs) constituted 29% of all U.S. firms that produced 12% of gross receipts while employing 13% of the domestic population. Furthermore, the Minority Business Development Agency reported that while minority groups represented 34% of the total population, projections were expected to increase to 50% by 2050. As the growth of the minority population continues, the future of America's economy rests on the contribution of all businesses but will rely significantly on the success of MBEs in America's ability to compete in the global marketplace.

The Hawai'i marketplace is unique to the extent of the majority-minority population across the state in multiple industries. While the national landscaping industry reports racial disparity related to economic metrics like the number of firms and annual gross receipts, the Hawaii landscaping industry is above the national average. Hawai'i based landscaping MBEs constitute 78% of the companies, which is in economic parity with the state's minority population. However, when disaggregating the data further, the data reveals landscaping MBEs in Hawai'i report disparate ratios in terms of the size of the firm and the presence of employees. The question becomes whether this is intentional on the part of the business owner, barriers to growth, or the consequences of a sluggish labor market?

A recent survey of business owners reports MBEs experience challenges in the lack of human, financial, and social capital, which negatively influences entrepreneurship growth. These challenges can leave MBEs struggling to maintain operations, particular exacerbated during the burden of a global pandemic due to COVID-19 that is crippling the Hawai'i economy.

The research emphasized that the primary cause for MBE's limited entrepreneurial success, compared to non-minority business owners, is the historical and institutionalized exclusion of access. The resulting gap limits success for minorities in the entrepreneurial process as the systemic shortage of access over the generations limits financial and social wealth for minorities, leading to constraints in needed investment and resources to start, sustain, and grow successful MBEs. In short, there's still work to be done.

The MBDA Business Center Honolulu, operated by the University of Hawaii and located at the Shidler College of Business, fosters the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses by working with minority business enterprises to generate increased financing and contract opportunities and to create and retain jobs. We are part of a national network of funded centers located in major cities throughout the country whose mission is to cultivate and support the entrepreneurial spirit in the Hawaii minority community: its individuals, businesses, and organizations. Our Center's role is to assist MBEs via workshops and one on one consulting to bridge the gap to create more opportunities for business success. Center staff provides a three-pronged effort to provide MBEs with access to contracts, capital, and a network of resources for sustainable economic growth. Give us a call at 808.956.0850 or email at info@honolulumbdacenter.com to schedule an appointment with our Center.

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Sisters Under the Skin: Diversity of Women & Labor in Hawai‘i

by Leslie Lopez, PhD

Given this age of temperature checks, one of the most important indicators of the health of Hawai'i’s workers and economy can be found on the “union density” webpage at the Center for Labor Education and Research website. The table on this site provides longitudinal data on union density in Hawai'i over the past 20 years. Hawai'i has remained in the top three. How does the public benefit from high union density? Civil service employees represent the largest number of unionized workers in the state and provide key services to public schools, parks, hospitals and roads. In addition, unions reduce wage inequality, set pay standards for non-union employers, and provide important benefits like sick leave and health insurance; which is a public health issue in a pandemic.

The correlation between unions and the health and safety of the community is well established. Employers do not willingly offer increased wages, pensions, or health care to their workers. In low union density states, or what are known as Right To Work (RTW) states, wages are lower and workers are less likely to have employer-sponsored health insurance, pensions or sick leave. All workplace benefits have been hard-won by working people. Thanks to their bravery, we have benefits we might take for granted, like time off, sick leave, pensions, seniority, OSHA regulations, and even more timely now, PPE face masks for essential workers.

Due to our high union density, Hawai'i also ranks #1 nationally in health care. There is no single politician responsible for this accomplishment. For this, we owe a great debt to the following people and events: the crowd of 500 laundry workers, ladies auxiliary, teamsters, and ILWU clerks and longshoremen who faced tear gas, high-powered pressure hoses and gunfire during the August 1, 1938 Hilo Massacre; the 75,000 sugar workers and their families who risked everything in 1946 and went on strike for 79 days to win an increase wages, rights,
and dignity at work; the pivotal six month dock of strike in 1949 challenging wage parity; and more recently, the 51 day hotel workers’ strike winning sexual harassment protections, increases in child/elder care fund, medical leave, and wages. Lana‘i pineapple workers impacted workers globally. In 1951, 800 pineapple workers went on a 201-day strike. They won a 15 cent raise for themselves, as well as a seven cent an hour increase across seven companies owned by Dole for 9,000 workers. What is most important about all of these strikes is that workers organized regardless of race, religion, color, or gender.

The momentum generated by these strike waves led to the Democratic Revolution of 1954, marks the turning point when Hawai‘i workers took power away from the Republican dominated legislature controlled by the Big 5 Oligopoly and put it back into the hands of working people. This change also marked the occupational shift in Hawai‘i’s economy from dependence on plantations to tourism, which increased occupational opportunities for women in Hawai‘i.

Hawai‘i would not have been able to accomplish any of these gains without the labor and contributions of women; women who as Mother Jones described were, “the slaves of slaves”, precariously navigating plantation work, family caretaking, and organizing. The intention of this essay is to provide snapshot glimpses of women’s organizing, and recognize the core work they do for the people of Hawai‘i. The snapshots will be presented in the form of vignettes, in the past and present, across various roles, and address how their labor specifically contributes to our quality of life on a daily basis. The purpose of each snapshot, or vignette, is to provide the reader with a sense of the complexities of women’s experiences in organized labor, the diverse perspectives they bring, and how the commonality behind their intent to contribute to the greater good for the future of Hawai‘i.

Past Women Leaders in Hawai‘i: the legacy of their work lives on

“We work that if you have a problem in your unit and you want this problem to be solved, we solve it not only for the sake of the membership; we solve it for the non-union members. If it’s a good union, it’s good for all.” - Helen Lake Kanahele

Helen Lake Kanahele (1916-1976) lost both of her parents at a young age. Orphaned at the age of six, she was adopted by a Scotch-Irish woman named Irene West. West enrolled Kanahele in a dance troupe, and by the age of 6, she had traveled the world. By 1948, Helen was a single mother of two daughters, living in a Hawai‘ian Homestead home in Papalolea, and her brother worked for the ILWU. She became angered by anti-union pickets of the wealthy wives of employers, known as the “Broom Brigade”, so she picked up her own picket sign and supported the picket every day. She joined the ILWU Women’s Auxiliary, eventually becoming its president. During the sugar and stevedore strikes, Helen collected donations and food for striking families, cooked and served food in strike kitchens. She was then hired as a laundry worker at Maluhia Hospital in 1948, an extraordinary organizer, she began to organize the predominantly women workers into a unit of the United Public Workers (UPW). In retaliation, the head of the hospital tried to transfer her to the morgue. She filed a grievance and was transferred to work as a custodian at Kalakaua Intermediate School. At Kalakaua, she played a key role in separating grounds work from custodial work – ensuring representation for both. She went on to serve on grievance committees, work as a lobbyist during legislative sessions, and held multiple offices in UPW. Fearless (and famous for her luau) she was not afraid of McCarthyism and visited the Hawaii’s seven when they were in jail. She appeared before the Territorial Committee on Subversive Activities and responded to the committee’s questions designed to elicit admission that she had been influenced by others – in her testimony, she took full responsibility which was an incredibly brave act in the face of political hostility. When she started at the Kalakaua, there were 12 “miscellaneous” civil service workers in the Department of Education. By the time she left, she had organized over 300 with clear job descriptions.

“It was always meant that working people had the brains and stamina together they could change the system which exploited them. We have been so touched by the feeling that individually we count for something, that we have forgotten we live in a family of individuals.” - Ah Quon McElrath

Born in Iwilei in 1915, Ah Quon McElrath (1915-2008) also lost a parent at a young age; at the age of five, she lost her father who left behind seven children. At the age of 12, she and her siblings began working twelve-hour days in the pineapple canneries. She attended the University of Hawai‘i and edited “Social Process in Hawai‘i” in 1939 for the sociology club and began volunteering for the ILWU. Her background, education, and experience as a social worker was useful in her organizing and legislative work. Her eloquence, charisma, and powerful presence is why “AQ” is lovingly recognized as the moral compass of the labor community in Hawai‘i. She worked tirelessly, volunteering during the 1946 strikes counseling families and connecting them to aid and services. In 1954 she was hired as the ILWU social worker where for thirty-five years she provided educational programs and “just transition” programs moving from plantation to hotel work. As an ILWU 142 Social Worker, she successfully lobbied for increases in public assistance and improved human services for all people in Hawai‘i. Her monumental influence in improving the lives of working people in Hawai‘i are far too many to describe here, just a sampling of key programs and legislation she was involved in are: Hawai‘i’s landmark “Little Wagner Act”, one of the few acts in the U.S. granting agricultural workers the right to unionize; the TDI Act, which requires employers to provide partial “wage replacement” insurance coverage to their eligible employees for nonwork-related injury or sickness, including pregnancy; an increase in
low-income housing in Ewa and Waipahu, and Hawai‘i’s landmark Pre-Paid healthcare act – the first in the nation to require employers to provide health care coverage for all workers working over 20 hours per week. Finally, the act establishing the Hawai‘i Health Authority is dedicated to her. AQ also served on the Board of Regents, her intellectual and thoughtful political presence is deeply missed, especially during this time. For more on Ah Quon McElrath, including a movie being produced recognizing her contributions, please visit: labohistory-hawaii.org.

Snapshots of Labor Women in the Present: Strengths, Challenges in the Pandemic, and the Future of Labor

United Public Workers (UPW)

“When the city or the state privatizes public sector work, it means that more vulnerable people in Hawai‘i are relegated to jobs with lower wages, fewer benefits, and less protections.”

-Rachel Gibson

For the past four years, Rachel Gibson has been a business agent at UPW. Her current jurisdiction is representing civil service workers at the University of Hawai‘i, the City & County of Honolulu, and Hawai‘i State Hospital. Her introduction to the labor movement in Hawai‘i came during her experiences as an intake worker for Child Protective Services in the State of Utah, which is a RTW state. As a result, Rachel is able to explain the contrast between a state with high union density and a RTW state for public workers. For example, in Hawai‘i, public workers accrue vacation leave and sick leave. In Utah, Rachel had 14 days of leave for the entire year; vacation and sick leave combined. In Hawai‘i, UPW contracts provide 21 days of sick leave and 21 days of vacation leave annually. At UPW, her work involves contract enforcement, assisting with representation in disciplinary proceedings, FMLA and worker safety violations. When I asked her what she perceived was the biggest threat to organize labor, she didn’t hesi-tate: privatization. Her concerns are validated. According to the Department of Human Resources Development, in the past five years there has been a steady decline of 1,609 civil service positions in the DOE, and 1,535 positions in public hospitals.

These aren’t high paying jobs, many averaging $3000/month, but they do include important benefits like sick leave; and the majority of civil service workers (63%) are women. These workers are the aunties in the kitchen in public schools, the food service workers trained in food-handling; the custodians trained in safety procedures who know our kids’ names at schools; the neighbor who opens and maintains the community pool or works as a nurses aid; the grounds workers who trim trees, improve the aesthetics of public spaces, and design sustainable landscaping.

Civil service workers are the heart of the community, and most often, the lowest paid are women of color. The hardest hit have been public hospital jobs. As an interesting side note, in 1970 the population in Hawai‘i was 770,000 and Hawai‘i boasted 31 Hospitals and 5,021 beds. Today, Hawai‘i has 3,069 beds and 28 hospitals and the population has doubled in size to 1.4 million.

Rachel is worried that Hawai‘i is losing a central workforce of people who maintain the health of the economy and quality of life for the citizens of Hawai‘i. She states that the primary complaint from the people she represents is that the state is not filling civil service worker vacancies, so when workers fall behind in their work, the unions are blamed, which is then used to justify outsourcing to private contractors. In other words, it’s a setup. She states that although she knows public workers could face retrenchment, she finds it offensive that the poorest workers should pick up the bill.

Hawai‘i State Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (HI AFL-CIO)

The national AFL-CIO is a federation of unions representing more than 12

THE VOICE OF HAWAII'S GREEN INDUSTRY
million working people. It is by far, the largest organization fighting for workers’ rights in the United States. In 1966, 160 representatives from 44 unions form the Hawai‘i State AFL-CIO. Two women provide key services at the Hawai‘i State Federation of Labor: Dion Dizon (HI AFL-CIO, Committee on Political Education) and Cathy Lederer (HI AFL-CIO, Labor Community Services Program). The following highlights the sense of community they share:

“I wanted to respond immediately, because I haven’t forgotten what it feels like to be afraid of the unknown and to operate from that fear-based space. When the pandemic hit, I went to my board; the first thing we did was step up food distributions for the islands, increase the Utilities Program, and offer virtual Learning Sessions.”

-Cathy Lederer

Cathy Lederer’s family roots are from the plantations on Maui. She says her parent’s generation had a penchant toward believing in doing things for the “greater good” and it takes a village to make things work. She is the youngest of 7 children and believes she was raised with a sense of collective action because of her parents. All the children had to pitch in at their home from making and cleaning up at meals to food distributions; everyone has to pitch in to make things work. Her response to the pandemic was to immediately coordinate food distributions, increase their Utilities Program, and continue with outreach education through virtual Learning Session. Topics covered emergency housing assistance, financial help, communicating during difficult times, and tools for online organizing. The Learning Session goal is to offer information that is responsive to current issues so people can make informed decisions. She is especially proud of the many union volunteers at the food distributions that have been taking place since March and are still operating on Oahu and Maui. Some volunteers come out every week. There are unions like IATSE, where all of its members are out of work due to COVID who volunteer gladly, wanting to do something to help our community. They are an example of how we need to come together to emerge out of this crisis. Cathy also coordinates large scale, union driven community service events such as the “Labor of Love” which is a collaboration of unions, organizations, and businesses that partner together to improve Hawai‘i Public Schools. She feels when we unite, we build healthier and stronger communities.

Cathy believes the key to the future lies in education and welcoming new energy to the labor community. She also believes during this unprecedented time, it is of great importance to be flexible and patient with each other and to not deal with obstacles alone, but together, as a community.

“I’ve tried to involve my family when I could, I brought them to the food distribution to support during the pandemic - I’ve brought them to involve them in community service. It’s called “forced family fun” but that’s what we do. It’s a family value that we share.” -Dion Dizon

Dion Dizon’s orientation to workers’ rights and social justice came from her mother and grandfather. Her grandfa-
UNITE HERE, Local 5

In 1938, the year Local 5 was chartered, it was common for women in the hotel industry to work 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Paid sick leave, medical plans, pensions, free uniforms were unheard of. The best positions were kept for White males and Filipinos were confined to room boys or kitchen helpers. The average monthly earnings: Caucasian men $102.90/mo; Japanese $56.30; Filipinos $50.10. By 1954, Local 5 was one of the first unions to secure maternity leave. In addition, protections against sexual harassment were one of the demands of the 2018 strike. The next snapshot will focus on two women at Local 5, Morgan Evans (Lead Organizer) and Paola Rodelas (Communications) and the perspectives they bring to labor in Hawai‘i.

As someone who worked for years in the lowest paid jobs in a RTW state, I’m hypersensitive about protecting the rights and standards we have in Hawai‘i. When we see employers not paying breaks or holiday pay, we have to be careful to not get complacent as to how much we give away and who runs and owns our state.

–Morgan Evans

Morgan Evans (UNITE HERE, Local 5 Organizing Director) was born and raised in a small town in Georgia where the average annual earnings for women is $26,800. Growing up in Georgia (a RTW state) she adds, “I was accustomed to not having any rights on the job. I was working for minimum wage in the service industry and I had managers take my tips. I was conditioned that that was ok.” Her experiences seeing the vulnerability of hardworking people motivated her to want to do something about it, and then a neighbor mentioned labor unions, so she applied. At the interview, the anger and realization of the injustice she faced as a low paid service worker in a RTW state became the impetus of her work. After she accepted the organizer position, she added that it was the only time she was ever a “no call, no show” for a shift. As a graduate of Richardson Law School, Morgan states that she learned what little the law does to protect workers. Her law degree helps her in understanding strike laws and the risk/assessment process. She has worked as a boycott organizer, a customer organizer, and an organizer of non-union workers at Local 5. In terms of the future, Morgan warns that in the hotel industry in Hawai‘i, local hotel ownership has been replaced by private equity. She brilliantly suggests site-based coalition building in order to protect workers, similar to the way businesses and employers build coalitions representing their interests in the energy, construction, travel industry, on the docks, and in the Chamber of Commerce. She says, while it’s great that Hawai‘i is 25% unionized, that still leaves 75% workers “at-will”. She empathizes with restaurant workers and grocery clerks who didn’t sign up to enforce regulations as an additional responsibility. In terms of the future, she sees millennials working multiple jobs, with incredible burdens like not being able to afford a home or facing a future of parents with no pension, but she also sees them as tremendously giving and involved in the union. She strongly believes the way out of this crisis is electing working people to positions of leadership.

“You are told your whole life to work hard, go to college, and get a job. But my parents lost their home during the recession, and I was in the workforce feeling like everything was a lie.” –Paola Rodelas

Paola Rodelas (Communications) grew up in San Diego and had a natural interest in Ethnic Studies and Immigrant Rights. As an immigrant from the Philippines, she saw her parents working multiple jobs, as did she after she graduated from college during the height of the recession. She had heard about unions in Ethnic Studies but noted that unions were discussed more as something of the past, with no modern context. While working multiple jobs an acquaintance mentioned that a PR firm was hiring. What she didn’t know was the PR firm was hired by anti-union right-wing interests intent on going after the teachers union at her alma-mater. She describes it as “soul-sucking work”, but she was
inspired to see how the teachers’ union fought back and exposed the corruption of the school board, which was taking bribes from the construction industry funding the attacks on the teachers’ union. She states that it gave her a unique opportunity to see how far companies would go to discredit unions, and she learned about how powerful unions can be in fighting corruption. In her work in communications at Local 5, she does everything from graphics design to media campaigns, but she also enjoys directly working with the community through educational outreach to local high schools. Paola is also seen gently encouraging members to speak publicly at events and rallies and leading chants during direct actions and strikes—all while photographing the events as well. In addition, UNITE HERE has been at the forefront of immigration reform and immigrant education, and Paola’s played a key role in organizing them. In terms of the occupational shifts during the pandemic, during our interview Paola rightly observed that Hawai‘i has been here before, and that workers previously transitioned from plantation to tourism. She wonders what the next transition will be? However she also noted that in her work in communications, general questions on the website are forwarded to her. One of the most common questions she deals with are from workers across all aspects of the workforce wanting to unionize. There’s a hunger for it, she says.

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW)

“We have to work more in cooperation with each other as unions, and I think we generally do that in Hawai‘i. There is plenty of organizing potential. We have to be attentive to our members, transparent, and accountable to our members. Just build accountability and transparency into the fabric of your organization.”

-Maria Santiago Lillis

Maria Santiago Lillis has been organizing for IAM since 1996, and was appointed as Grand Lodge Representative with the International in 1997. Under her leadership, Local 1998 has grown to represent approximately 3600 federal and private sector bargaining unit members and doubled the number of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) from 14 to now over 30. Because these CBAs are held with employers in both private and federal sector areas, Maria deals with federal law, national labor law and state regulations. She jokes that she represents workers from “womb to tomb” including the Tripler Army Medical Center and the Punchbowl Cemetery. Similar to Ah Quon McElrath, Maria’s background in sociology and counseling has proven useful in her work from responding to the needs of members to understanding intimidation tactics at the bargaining table. She has successfully run multiple campaigns, and credits her success to being nurtured by Local 1998’s Executive Board, her General Vice Presidents, and several Grand Lodge Representatives on the West Coast. She especially prides herself on winning back-pay or lost wages for her members. She explained how these gains not only restore economic loss, but dignity in one’s work. She has developed authentic relationships with member ohana by paying close attention to everything, from the beer they like, to knowing and asking about their families. She built multiple relationships and connections to the community in her previous experiences working in Waianae, Pearl Harbor, Castle Medical Center, and Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate. Maria has a reputation for fairness, creating a welcoming and empowering space for members. Her first priority is the safety of the members, which comes across clearly when she’s talking about her work, especially to employers. By placing safety as central in bargaining, her work influences the safety of the community. She is strong, focused, and refuses to “take the bait” intended to shake her as a woman during contract negotiations. The biggest challenge she sees to labor at present are subcontracts or service contracts intentionally designed to confuse who the actual employer is, he political landscape, and the non-competition clauses in contracts non-represented workers are now expected to sign. Her advice is to know the law, nurture seeds, and build the resilience necessary to find the clarity in spite of misinformation and confusion.

This cross-section of and snapshot of women in labor in Hawai‘i in no way represents the contributions of women as a whole. Just to name a few, Joanne Kealoha, Eadie Omanaka, and President Donna Domingo at ILWU; Irish Barber, President of IATSE continue carrying forward the work of AQ and Helen, and so many others. The perspectives and experiences these women bring are direct and unmediated by books or the cushion of a trust fund. Given that the majority of nurses, teachers, hotel cleaners, secretaries and food servers are women, the health of the State of Hawaii depends on listening to their suggestions and heeding their warnings.

Leslie Lopez, Ph. D. specializes in labor education curriculum development at the Center for Labor Education and Research (CLEAR) at the University of Hawai‘i at West O‘ahu. She is currently developing and teaching courses in Labor Studies. A licensed teacher, Leslie has worked in teacher education and faculty development, and at a college preparatory school for Native American students where she won Teacher of the Year. Leslie is also the co-founder, board member and organizer for LaborFest Hawai‘i.
Hawaii is famous for its beautiful beaches, swaying palm trees, and gorgeous tropical landscaping. But Hawaii also lays claim to being one of the places in the world most at threat from invasive species. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature identified the 100 worst invasives in the world, and Hawaii, it turns out, is already home to 50 of those. And it’s not only the worst of the worst who have found a way to exploit our welcoming landscapes. Some organisms are pests nowhere else in the world except Hawaii!

Whether a pest is well-known elsewhere or a mysterious new unknown, effective control is dependent on a deeper understanding of the pest. Researchers study things like movement patterns, reproductive characteristics, and seasonality in order to develop control tactics. Researchers can also determine which habitats are most vulnerable to damage.

Even when a known becomes established in Hawaii, control methods that are employed elsewhere may not be available on island. For instance, a pesticide commonly used in one part of the world, may not be labeled for sale in Hawaii. In fact, most pesticide products sold in the United States have not been studied with Hawaii in mind. Exotic fruits, coffee, and other tropical species are often left off the label. The process to get a pesticide labeled for new pests or areas could take months or even years, and requires research and documentation before approval.

Little fire ants, two-lined spittlebug, and Queensland Longhorn Beetle are all relative newcomers to Hawaii, but their residency here has already caused great disruption. This month, as LICH celebrates diversity, we want to introduce you to some of the accomplished women who are hard at work responding to these pests: learning their moves, testing new methods of control, coordinating affected property owners and dedicating themselves to protecting the environment, economy, and health of our islands.

Michelle Montgomery

Michelle Montgomery has a love-hate relationship with insects.

As a child, she says, “I always loved insects, arachnids, and other ‘creepy crawlies.’” And coming from an agricultural family, she understood the benefits of identifying and overcoming pest problems. Still, when she moved to Hawaii in the early 2000’s, Michelle didn’t know that her calling would be in entomology. But her part-time position at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park processing a backlog of insect samples from various projects lit a spark - and showcased a skill. As it turned out, she had a knack for insect identification, and thus began her career working on economically important insect pests.
and prevention efforts are implemented, landscapers can also play a crucial role in finding infestations early and helping to mitigate spread.

“Awareness is the first line of defense. Landscapers should be aware of the risks associated with spreading ants via moving equipment between infested and non-infested properties, moving mulch, and from potted plants/nursery stock. Ignorance is not bliss!”

Michelle Montgomery can be reached at michelle.montgomery@littlefireants.com. For more information on LFA, visit the http://www.littlefireants.com/

Shannon Wilson

For nearly three years, Shannon Wilson has spent her summers tromping through pastures on Hawaii Island in search of her research subject. She kneels in the grass and digs through the dirt, stopping when she spots an off-white mass of bubbles that resembles a clump of spit. “That’s one there,” she says, pulling out her tweezers and extracting a squirming, yellowish bug, so tiny that it fits easily on the tip of a fingernail. The diminutive creature looks harmless, but this is the larva of the two-lined spittlebug, and millions of its kind have destroyed more than 100,000 acres of pasture on Hawaii Island in just four years.

When ranchers and HDOA staff first found two-lined spittlebug (TLSB) in 2016, there was immediate cause for alarm. Although it is native to the southeastern United States and known as a pest there, there was a “paucity of information on the basic biology and ecology,” she explains. Shannon’s previous work on coffee-berry borer and fruit flies had already put her in the mix fighting some of Hawaii’s most notorious pests, and so she was well familiar with Hawaii’s invasive species challenges when she joined the TLSB research team. She lists off the myriad of aspects she’s been investigating about TLSB: “I’ve conducted research on the biology, ecology, and management...seasonal and geographic distribution and abundance, collecting data on plant species composition and host choice...population dynamics, evaluating host plant resistance, and assessing plant response to varying levels of insect infestation.”
It seems daunting, but Shannon is determined. Growing up in the Black Hills of South Dakota, she witnessed green ponderosa pines turn brown in the forests around her home when the mountain pine beetle invaded the area. She was fascinated by insects as a child, admiring their diversity, and being very willing to, as she puts it, “disregard the social bias that girls are supposed to be disgusted with creepy-crawly things!” However, watching thousands of acres of beautiful forest devastated had a major impact. Seeing how a small insect could cause substantial effects on an ecosystem sparked her desire to study entomology and led her to the frontlines of the TLSB battle.

Shannon notes that because the insect completely kills the kikuyu and pangola grasses which make up 70% of Hawaii’s cattle fodder, this tiny bug represents an existential threat to Hawaii’s iconic cattle industry. However, they aren’t the only ones who should be worried. “It should be extremely alarming to the landscaping industry in Hawaii that TLSB is known to attack all turfgrass species in the southeast US...there have been major economic impacts on the landscape trade for decades,” she warns. The list of grasses vulnerable to attack is long, including centipede grass, seashore paspalum, St. Augustine, coastal Bermuda, Pangola, kikuyu, and American and Burford hollies. And with introduction to a new and unique environment, we may see new adaptations. Although currently the bug is dormant during winter months, environmental conditions in Hawaii could allow it to persist year-round. “Hawaii’s landscaping industry should become familiar with this insect and its damage symptoms in order to detect it early on and prevent significant economic impacts.”

Right now, the TLSB research team is focused on “developing a deeper understanding of the biology and ecology...specifically in Hawaii.” They are working to build an IPM program that may include resistant grasses, chemical control, grazing tactics, and natural enemies. With that goal in mind, Shannon packs up her vial of tiny bugs and begins digging in a new patch of soil.

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For more information on CTAHR, visit www.ctahr.hawaii.edu.
Carolyn Wong

“Growing up I never even heard of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS),” says Carolyn Wong, now the State Grazing Land Management Specialist at the agency. Carolyn was exposed to agriculture in Hawaii through the Lahainaluna high school program, but she didn’t encounter NRCS until at UH-Hilo, when a professor shared a flyer for a summer internship and encouraged her to apply. The NRCS motto, Helping people help the land, called to Carolyn, offering an opportunity for her to pursue her developing passion for farming and ranching. Eventually, she became a Soil Conservationist for NRCS, working full-time while acquiring her master’s degree in Range Science from Utah State.

I don’t really love pests,” Carolyn laughs, when asked about her years of work on pests like the yellow sugarcane aphid, “take all” fungus, army worm, web worm, and now the two-lined spittlebug (TLSB), along with countless varieties of pasture weeds. But, she says, “invasive species have a huge impact on agriculture in Hawaii so they come with the territory.”

“We work with producers to support resilient islands with clean and abundant water, healthy soils and thriving ag communities,” she explains. “Healthy rangelands produce not just livestock but also provide invaluable ecosystem services such as watershed function that helps replenish our aquifers and manage runoff, habitat for game animals, healthy and productive soils, aesthetic value of our agrarian landscape, and wildfire fuel suppression.”

Over her years of working with agricultural producers on the Big Island, Carolyn has developed deep connections to the families and the land. Having such a close perspective on the lives and livelihoods that depend on a healthy environment made Carolyn all the more alarmed when she witnessed the spreading devastation as TLSB has marched forward. She puts a great deal of energy these days into communicating with Big Island landowners and ranchers around the state, urging prevention and biosecurity practices for TLSB. Especially during the peak months of the summer, TLSB adults are very active, and could be accidentally moved through human transport. She recommends “not moving sod or potted plants out of the Kona area, cleaning equipment, gear, shoes and vehicles especially when moving between infested areas and non-infested areas...when adult bugs could hitch a ride into a non-infested area.” She shares stories of workers discovering adult bugs hopping into the cabs of trucks, looking for a ride.

She is currently at work on producing a video to help raise awareness and share best management practices about TLSB. However, she is also focused on the bigger picture. “While everyone can and should do their part to help prevent the further spread of TLSB, more importantly, we need to prevent the NEXT TLSB!” she insists. She points out that although HDOA and DLNR have laid out a 10-year biosecurity plan for Hawaii, limited funding has constrained the full implementation of the plan. “We spend 0.4% of the state’s annual budget on biosecurity. It would take an additional 0.3% of the budget to fully implement the plan,” she says.

Although it is always difficult to know exactly how a pest arrived in Hawaii, experts believe that the most likely pathway was a simple potted plant. The tiny young TLSB hide just under the soil surface, making them hard to detect. For such a devastating pest to have arrived so easily, “is a real shame,” she says. “Hawaii needs to reconsider imported plants policies and stop importing potted plants. We could have an even more vibrant nursery industry and be so much more biologically secure if we would close some of these doors through which so many invasive pests come in by.”

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Dr. Sheina Sim

Sheina Sim moved to California from the Philippines at the age of four. Her parents strongly believed in language immersion. Like being tossed into deep water to learn how to swim, Sheina began kindergarten not speaking or understanding English. She could repeat the pledge of allegiance, but had no idea what the words meant. By the time she graduated from high school and headed to UC Irvine for her bachelor’s degree, however, Sheina was fluently bilingual.

As an undergrad, Sheina became hooked on population genetics and how the genetics of an organism could provide clues to its past behavior - as well as predict potential behavior in the future. She earned her PhD at Notre Dame investigating how apple maggots shifted hosts in response to environmental changes. She loved the research questions, the process of evolution, and the lab work that came with it.

Sheina came to Hawaii as a Research Biologist for the USDA-PBARC in Hilo researching tephritid fruit flies, one of Hawaii’s most notorious agricultural pests. But then a much, much larger maggot landed on her desk, and Sheina quickly became the lead researcher for something that wasn’t on anyone’s radar: Acaloplepta aesthetica, now known as the Queensland Longhorn Beetle. The startlingly large
adults hiss and can even nip flesh, so they are easily noticed. But the real damage is caused by the larvae, which grow quietly from eggs underneath the bark of trees, slowly eating the vascular tissue until the tree can no longer function.

Like so many species that become invasive in Hawaii, the Australian native is not a problem anywhere else in the world, and no one is sure why. Perhaps it hasn’t been discovered in other places because it isn’t damaging economically significant trees, or it has a predator to keep populations low. In Hawaii, though, the QLB damages and kills tropical fruit trees like cacao, avocado, mulberry, and citrus, as well as beloved and well known landscaping trees like moringa and Norfolk pine. The state tree, kukui, is one of its most preferred snacks. And as the insect’s population grows, so, it seems, does the list of trees attacked.

Although first reported in 2009, it is unknown exactly how the QLB arrived in Hawaii (untreated wood crates are suspected). Through genetic sequencing techniques, Sheina was able to determine that all of the offspring most likely came from one single mother beetle.

This is important for our understanding about the spread of invasives in Hawaii, because it demonstrates that a single accidental introduction can spark an entire population and have far-reaching consequences.

Sheina notes one piece of good news: QLB does not seem to be expanding its range very quickly. The beetles remain concentrated in Puna, with a few having strayed into Hilo. Those specimens were found close to the green waste site, suggesting that an unsuspecting resident brought the wood from a deceased tree to dump and unknowingly released the beetle into a new area.

In the last couple of years, dozens of captured beetles have been provided to the researchers to support them in the effort to learn more about QLB - and hopefully, how to control it. To make reporting easier, Sheina developed an online tool to track QLB sightings. “It’s a community effort,” she says. “Research is much easier when the public is aware and helpful.”

Although there are currently no known treatments for QLB, she assures us that there are some promising options on the horizon. “Beauveria bassiana is a naturally occurring fungus. When applied to the tree, it acts as a parasite killing the grubs.” Unfortunately, it is yet not labeled for common fruit trees like avocado and cacao, so she and her team at PBARC are looking toward gathering enough evidence to show that this could be a safe and effective tool in Hawaii. Enteropathic nematodes that devour the grub from the inside out are also being investigated.

Sheina is sympathetic to the farmers working so hard to provide food for Hawaii. “Cultivating the land is hard!” she tells us, relating a story about a cucumber farmer who lost his crop so often, he decided pursuing a PhD would be a better option. She is committed to improving our understanding of invasive pests, so that we are better armed to respond.

Early detection from those on the ground goes a long way in protecting Hawaii’s farms, landscapes, and natural areas. Landscapers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the signs of QLB in trees, and to report any potential infestation.

Dr. Shiena Sim can be reached at sheina.sim@usda.gov. For more information on her work, visit http://sheinasimlab.org/.

Molly Murphy is the Plant Pono Specialist for the Big Island Invasive Species Committee

Franny Brewer to the Communications Director at the Big Island Invasive Species Committee. Visit www.biisc.org for more information.
Chilli thrips
(Scirtothrips dorsalis)

Plumbago auriculata showing symptoms of chilli thrip feeding damage.
Have you ever noticed brown curled leaves and flowers on a Plumbago plant? Perhaps this could be chilli thrip damage. Chilli thrips (Scirtothrips dorsalis) are tiny insects that prefer to feed on tender leaves, buds, flowers, and young fruits. Spotting thrips with the naked eye is difficult because they are so small and easily hide. Typically, a microscope is needed to identify the insect. However, people have learned to detect the insects based on the damage. Thrips insert their mouthparts into plant tissues and suck out sap from plant cells (Kumar et al, 2014). As they feed, tissues become scarred, turn brown or black and often curl upwards. Other symptoms include discolored spots and patches on leaves, silver or bronzed leaves and/or flowers and deformed fruit (Hara & Niino-DuPonte, 2015). Heavy infestations may cause plant stunting and the loss of leaves (University of Florida, 2019).

Thrips prefer to breed during hot and humid periods (Hara & Niino-DuPonte, 2015), so landscapers in Hawaii may notice outbreaks in spring and summer or during periods of rapid growth. Chilli thrips attack over one hundred different edible and ornamental plants including roses, African daisies, naio, and false heather (Hara & Niino-DuPonte, 2015). Recently, experts at the Agricultural Diagnostic Service Center (ADSC) confirmed sightings of chilli thrips attacking Plumbago, a popular landscaping plant, in Maui County. See images for symptoms.

A good way to identify thrips without a microscope is to cut a diseased branch, fruit, or flower and shake it over a colored piece of paper or cardboard (University of Florida, 2019). Look for tiny white-yellow flecks. Other people have tried using a magnifying glass or binocular magnifier to look for the thrips. Chilli thrips are small, only one-sixteenth to one-twenty fifth inch in length (Hara and Niino-DuPonte, 2015) and are typically yellow or light colored. Adult thrips lay their eggs inside plant tissues which makes it extremely hard to detect. Thrips move fast and spread easily from plant to plant in search of new above ground growth.

Once you confirm chilli thrips on your plant, there are four methods that can be utilized to suppress or control them. First, contact your local cooperative extension office with questions or help with diagnostics. Second, remove all above ground plant material and replace with a non-susceptible host to break the pest cycle. Third, encourage natural predators such as minute pirate bugs (Oris species), which also kill aphids and mites (Hara & Niino-DuPonte, 2015). Lastly, contact your local agricultural supplier for questions about chemical control options. Please, always read and follow the label.

References and further reading:


We are truly blessed to live in our beautiful Hawai‘i! There are not enough adjectives to describe our treasured green environment. And we can all be part of preserving and protecting our precious ʻāina.
In 1986, Dr. Fred Rauch, emeritus professor in Ornamental Horticulture at the University of Hawai‘i, was instrumental in leading meetings early to organize, communicate, and coordinate the landscape industry. This was the real start of the Landscape Industry Council of Hawai‘i, when a few dedicated green industry professionals including, Landscape Contractors, Landscape Nursery people, Landscape Architects, and Green Industry Partners got together and met every month to start up the LICH organization. I remember attending some of these early meetings when LICH was formed with the purpose for the Green Industry to work together.

I have always been proud to be part of our green industry in Hawai‘i, whose mission is to “Improve the quality of the landscape environment and to promote the growth of the landscape industry.”

It all started in 1985, with a letter to Dr. Noel P. Kefford, the Dean of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). The letter from three organizations; the American Society of Landscape Architects Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Landscape & Irrigation Contractors Association of Hawai‘i, and Hawai‘i Association of Nurserymen, requested that the College undertake an analysis of the industry to help identify problem areas and possible solutions.
In the early 2000’s, Chris Dacus led us to updating our beautiful, informative Landscape Hawai’i Magazine. Garrett Webb followed Chris’ lead and did a great job as the Editor of our very top-notch magazine, that I am happy to be a part of. Russell Galanti has now taken the reign as our current editor. It was a big success complete with puka lava stepping stone pathways, sod grass, and black cinder berms. And they were filled with beautiful trees, shrubs, and ground covers, from many nurseries on O‘ahu. Some of the many volunteers were Dennis Kim, Andrew Dedrick from Geobunga, David Fell and Lori Heu from Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery, Rick Barboza and Kelvin McKeague from Hui Kū Maoli Ola, Kathleen Canta, Nancy Miller, ONGA, Marge Chikamoto from Pacific Agricultural, Judy and Richard Nii from R&S Nursery, Sharon and Robin Petersen from Sharon’s Plants, Ltd., Danny Green from Southern Turf Hawai‘i, David Yearian from Ti’s Unlimited, Alvin Tsuruda from Waihale Products, Mark A. Fukui from Contemporary Landscaping LLC, Matt Lyum and his great happy crew from Performance Landscapes, and most of all Randy Lui our leader and chair for this grand LICH Conference and Trade Show.

It is easy to be a part of this wonderful group of volunteers. They welcome you open heartedly.

https://www.hawaiiscape.com/history-of-lich/

VOLUNTEERING (OK, THIS IS WHAT THIS ISSUE IS ABOUT)
You can all be a part of keeping our Hawai‘i the special place that it is and to think of all the wonderful people that you can meet.

The following are non-profit and volunteer organizations that I am currently part of and have been a part of for many years. This is just a sampling of what all of you can volunteer for:

FRIENDS OF HONOLULU BOTANICAL GARDENS, 501(c)(3)
I have been a part of this non-profit organization for over 20 years, serving as president and helping to watching over our five Botanical Gardens. Volunteering in the beautiful setting of the gardens is a nice way to share your time.

The Friends of Foster Gardens and later, in 1993, named The Friends of Honolulu Botanical Gardens started in 1961. The goals are to support the programs of the Honolulu Botanical Gardens and spread the knowledge and the enjoyment of plants. In the past the Friends provided classes and workshops, exhibitions such as the Living Lanai’s and Flora Pacific Shows, plant collection safaris, organized hikes, and they continue to hold many classes and plant sales through the years.

The City and County of Honolulu, under the current outstanding guidance of Director Michele Nekota, overseas all 5 of the Honolulu Botanical Gardens including, Foster Garden, which is 14 acres, Wahiawa Botanical Garden, which is 27 acres, Koko Crater Botanical Garden, which is 200 acres, Ho‘omaluhia Botanical Garden, which is 400 acres, and Lili‘uokalani Botanical Garden, which is 7.5 acres. The City acres. The Friends started the Midsummer Night’s Gleam (I served as the chairperson many times). I recall fondly how early on just a handful of us, including Carol Kim and Jenny Tam, would light the white paper bags filled with little candles along all the pathways at Foster Botanical Gardens.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 virus has postponed our annual plant sales and classes. Hopefully our yearly plant sales and classes will resume soon. Up until the virus, did you know that the Botanical Gardens were closed only twice a year, Christmas and New Year’s?

SCENIC HAWAII, INC., 501(c)(3)

Protecting the scenic and visual beauty of Hawai‘i is the ultimate goal of this 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. I am currently serving as vice-president. In 2013, Scenic Hawai‘i, Inc. led the way with attorney John Hoshibata, in a landmark court case to protect our Irwin Memorial Park located Mauka of Aloha Tower (which was originally set aside as a public park) from becoming a parking lot.
In 1930, Helen Irwin Fagan donated about half an acre to the Territory of Hawai‘i in memory of her father, William Irwin, with the requirement that the land either be used as a park or be returned to her family.

Scenic Hawai‘i, Inc. helped set precedence for enforcing governmental adherence to the dedication of private lands for public parks, as historic sites, and for the enforcement of the government’s commitments to the preservation of such parks and historic sites. [https://www.courts.state.hi.us/docs/opin_ord/sct/2013/August/SCWC-30484.pdf](https://www.courts.state.hi.us/docs/opin_ord/sct/2013/August/SCWC-30484.pdf)

To think a small group of volunteers could do all this. Including, 100 year old, Jacque Law who volunteered as Board of Director Membership Chair from the start of organization. You never know where life can take you, witnessing the Supreme Court’s wise judges in action was quite memorable and eye opening for me.

**HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE (HPC)**

I have been a part of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) representing Dana Anne Yee, Landscape Architect, LLC and ASLA Hawai‘i since 2011. The HPC provides funding for historical properties along the future rail transit line for improvements to the properties. The City and County of Honolulu allocates $2,000,000 of the rail project’s budget for exterior improvements to both project-related and other eligible or listed historic properties within the project’s Area of Potential Effect (APE) which is consistent with The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The HPC is in charge of establishing the goals, criteria, program guidelines, administrative procedures, and distribution for these funds.

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM**

The Master Gardeners Program was started in Washington State in 1972. The University of Hawai‘i Master Gardener public service program started in 1982 to provide training to volunteers. There are more than 94,000 master gardeners nationwide. After 14 weeks of training and 40 to 50 hours a year of volunteering, I am happy that I can call myself a University of Hawai‘i Master Gardener. Our 2017 class was lucky to be able to study at the Waimanalo Research Station location where we heard experts in their fields, in the company of chickens, a beautiful field to grow our plants, and Scooby the dog. We were happy to be part of Kalani Matsumura’s first class with Jayme Grzebik overseeing the program. We were trained in horticultural education and sustainable processes helping the University of Hawai‘i Cooperative Extension as a resource for expanded outreach to the community for horticultural and gardening information to the public. Master Gardener, Jeff Bailey, would ask me at every 2nd Saturday at the Pearl City Urban Garden Center event to become a Master Gardener. And years later I did. Now I enjoy every moment of learning and sharing our knowledge with the community at our many Got a Plant Question Booth events such as at KCC, The Hawai‘i State Farm Fair, 2nd Saturday events at the Urban Garden Center, the Annual Halawa Xeriscape Garden Unthirsty Plant Sale, and many other events around the islands.

**SOCIETY OF ASIAN ART IN HAWAI‘I, INC. (SAAH), 501(c)(3)**

In 1974, the Oriental Art Society (OAC) began when a group of Asian art enthusiasts would meet in their homes to appreciate and discuss each other’s art collections. In 1999, the Society was named The Society of Asian Art in Hawai‘i, Inc. The most noteworthy event was held in 2003 at the Academy of Arts. It showcased the Society members’ collections. In 2007, SAAH became a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and in 2008 the Society began a Scholarship Program for graduates studying Asian art. I am happy to be a part of this very kind and interesting group of art enthusiasts and I continue to meet interesting people as the board member, co-chair for the monthly meeting venues.

**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, 501(c)(3)**

I have served as president and I have been an active part of ASLA. I have the honor of becoming a Fellow for ASLA in 2012.
The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) was founded in New York City in 1899. ASLA is the professional association for landscape architects in the United States, representing more than 18,000 members in the world with 80 members in Hawai‘i of which 9 are Fellows. The Society’s mission is to advance landscape architecture through advocacy, communication, education, and fellowship.

Landscape Architects lead in planning, design, and stewardship of healthy, safe, sustainable, and resilient environments. Before the 1800’s landscape architecture was known as landscape gardening. Back then, master planting and gardening was for manor house palaces, royal properties, religious complexes, and governmental properties. I have witnessed this past grandeur of gardens with a once in a life time visit to the Palace of Versailles in the Town of Arras, France and the Villa Lante in Bagnaia, Viterbo, Italy. They were breathtaking. To think I could study and read about these places and then actually take a trip to see them in person.

In 1712, Joseph Addison was the first person to mention about the making of a landscape. In 1828, Gilbert Laing Meason was the first to coin the term landscape architecture. In 1840, Clausdis Loudon wrote a book on Landscape Gardens and Landscape Architecture of the late Humphry Repton. From 1846 to 1852 Andrew Jackson Downing was the editor of Horticulturalist Magazine. From 1899 Fredrick Law Olmstead Jr. and Beatrix James Fonten were part of the 11 members that started ASLA. 1900’s Harvard University was the first University to offer a degree in Landscape Architecture. 1948 Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe was the first president of ASLA.

I remember my studies at the University of California at Davis studying about Thomas Church from the mid-century and I was enthralled by his amoeba shaped pools, Roberto Burle Marx from Brazil’s colorful and organic style, and Ian McHarg’s environmental ways.

To have spent time in Manhattan, New York’s Central Park designed by the great and father of American Landscape Architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted was overwhelming. In 1857, Olmsted created these 843 acres of a green open space treasure. Olmsted “set a standard of excellence that continues to influence landscape architecture in the United States. He was an early and important activist in the conservation movement.” Wikipedia. New York landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing introduced Olmsted to Calvert Vaux, an English Architect and together Olmsted and Calvert entered the Central Park design competition in 1858. Their Greensward Plan was selected as the winning design. They transformed a garbage dump into a magnificent landscaped park for the public to enjoy! I also spent many happy times rollerblading and bicycling at San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, that urban parks designer William Hammond Hall whose initial survey and plans, started it in 1871. I have only experienced a portion of the 1,017-acre park but they were magical memories.

I am happy that I chose landscape architecture as a profession. It is wonderful that I can be a part of our dedicated ASLA Hawai‘i professionals that often lend a hand in important environmental issues around the islands.

As Desmond Tutu said, “Do your little bit of good where you are. It’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

So, the message is to get out there and share your talents and skills and have fun with kind like-minded volunteers who share the gifts of giving. As you see there are many volunteer organizations that have been around for many years. Let us all help to keep them active and exciting by participating and volunteering. I hope to see you there.

I am thrilled that Our Stories of the History of Landscape Architecture in Hawai‘i received a 2018 treasured Design Award of Honor in the Research and Communications category from the American Society of Landscape Architects Hawai‘i.

I will be compiling stories and information on our recognized Landscape Architects and our treasured open green spaces. I have contacted many of you and if you have any stories, photographs, or want to share your experiences of Landscape Architecture in Hawai‘i, please email them to me or give me a call. Thank you for your continued support of Landscape Architecture in Hawai‘i.

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By Dana Anne Yee, FASLA, LEED AP, ISA CA, RA, UH MG, from the firm of Dana Anne Yee, Landscape Architect, LLC. (www.danaannyee.com), and recently a City and County of Honolulu Planner. Dana has been a presence in the Landscape Architectural profession and has a long-standing pattern of service to her profession and the community. Dana was honored as a Fellow with the American Society of Landscape Architecture in 2012. The Dana Anne Yee Foundation, (www.dayfoundation.org). (dayfoundation.wixsite.com/blog) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The board of directors and members will continue in their commitment to serve to protect Hawai‘i’s delicate ecosystem and natural environment in their pursuit to preserve Hawai‘i’s beauty and to keep our Hawai‘i green.
New Friends: Hannah Lutgen, New CTAHR Extension Agent on Maui County

Interview by Russell Galanti, CTAHR Extension Agent, Oahu

The extension scene in Hawaii is becoming more diverse! We have two new extension positions and I took some time to interview them to see how their diverse backgrounds and interests will shape the ornamental industry moving forward. In this interview I was asking Hannah Lutgen, the recently hired ornamental extension agent for Maui County to talk with me. And away we go!

Q: Hi Hannah, thanks for meeting with me. What is your area of responsibility? How long have you been in this position?
A: As a junior extension agent for the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) I assist professionals and laborers in the landscape, ornamental (including plant nurseries) and floriculture industries of Maui County and the state of Hawaii. The University of Hawaii Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Extension strives to address problems in the community by providing science-based information through an educational process. Therefore, my role is to provide consultations, educational programs and applied research to help the landscape, ornamental and floriculture industries flourish. I’ve been in this position for 9 months now. Working for the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture (CTAHR) has been an exhilarating experience. Listening and interacting with the people in the landscaping community is the most rewarding part of my day. I look forward to a long career of learning and growing.

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself.
A: My background is in horticulture and conservation. For the past thirteen years, I worked as a greenhouse/plant nursery technician, landscape laborer, vegetable and cut flower farmer, florist, and conservationist. Out of curiosity to learn more about plants and soil, I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in sustainable horticulture. Then, I practiced this knowledge in the field. I worked on several farms and managed my own cut flower community supported agriculture (CSA) share, where I planted, maintained, and designed weekly floral arrangements. In Maui, I designed floral arrangements for a major hotel. I also have three years of conservation experience. I provided technical and financial assistance through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to help landowners best manage their natural resources in Hawaii. Some people say I’m a plant nerd.

Q: So you have an interest in conservation, how can you incorporate that into your job duties?
A: Conserving Hawaii’s precious natural resources is critical to maintaining the health of this fragile archipelago. Understanding the unique microclimates and soils of Hawaii helps when it comes to selecting the right plants for your location. Although artificially altering the landscape is necessary at times, incorporating a wide diversity of plants may help reduce pest outbreaks and improve crop health. Irrigation troubleshooting and/or upgrades may help conserve water and soil moisture. Proper fertilization and pesticide application methods may help reduce nutrient leaching and degradation of water quality. Incorporating native plants in clusters or zones along coastal areas may help reduce soil erosion, stabilize stream banks/shorelines, reduce sedimentation to water bodies and protect coral reefs. I look forward to assisting the landscape and ornamental industries malama ‘aina.

Q: What do you think some of the biggest issues facing the landscaping and nursery industries in Hawaii is?
A: There is a lack of educational opportunities available to the landscaping and nursery industries in Hawaii. Invasive pest and disease outbreaks continue to be problematic. Furthermore, there is a deficit of information or resources about pest and disease management, irrigation system trouble-shooting and maintenance and proper tree pruning techniques. My goal is to partially remediate these issues by providing extension programs such as webinars, workshops or field days that align with the needs of the landscaping and nursery industries.

Q: What areas are you focusing on? What future areas will you focus on?
A: Currently, I strive to provide more educational opportunities for the landscaping and ornamental industries so that people can learn and receive continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain their licenses. Future areas that I will focus on include but are not limited to pest and disease identification, integrated pest management, soil health and plant nutrition, water conservation, weed management, nutrient management, and landscape and ornamental plant variety trials.

Q: What is your favorite landscape plant?
A: Tough question, it depends on the location and climate. However, these are a few of my favorites. My favorite groundcover plants are laau iki (Microsorum scolopendrum), aae (Bacopa monnieri). Favorite shrubs are kokio keokeo (Hibiscus waimeae), akia (Wikstroemia uva-ursi). Favorite shrubs for color and texture- ti leaf or ki (Coryline fruitcosa), croton (Codiaeum variegatum), aalii (Dodonaea viscosa) red or pink ginger (Alpinia purpurata). Favorite trees-monkeypod (Samanea saman), ohia (Metrosideros polymorpha), loulu palms (Pritchardia sp.), bismark palms (Bismarkia nobilis), royal palms (Roystonea regia). Favorite turf grass-Zoysia grass (Zoysia sp.).

Q: Thanks so much Hannah. How can people get in touch with you?
A: If you are a commercial landscape, plant nursery professional, laborer and/or cut flower grower, please email me at hannahc@hawaii.edu or call 808-244-3242, ext 233.
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