

This is the Disability Rights Hawaii Newsletter for March 2012. It is available by email, print, or Large Print. Please contact ronald@hawaii.edu, or call 961-5601, to add or remove your name from the mailing list, or to change the format of your Newsletter.

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..... March 27, 2012, Meeting Announcement

Disability Rights Hawaii will meet on Tuesday, March 27, from 1:00 PM until 2:30 PM. NOTE THE NEW TIME: beginning at 1:00 PM. The meeting will take place at the ADRC building at 1555 Kinoole Street in Hilo.

Our President, Danny Grant-Johnson, has finally had his wheelchair repaired, and he will be with us again. Welcome back Danny!

The guest speaker for the meeting will be Bill Leek, the Landscape Architect for Volcanoes National Park. DRH Vice President Chris Cholas organized a walk-through with Bill of some areas of the Park, and reported the results at the January DRH meeting. This time Bill will come to DRH and report on several improvements that the Park is planning in the near future. These will include improved accessible parking, and some shuttle bus tour arrangements that will include accessibility for two wheelchairs per bus. The meeting is free and open to the public.

..... January 31, 2012 DRH Meeting Notes

Present:

Laura Tobosa, Donald Haumea, Martin Hodapp, Marianne Hodapp, Chris Cholas, Sam Nagasawa, Pauline Aughe, Arcelita Imasa, Hannah Hedrick, Ron Amundson, Teri Spinola Campbell, County ADA Coordinator

Because of problems in procuring repairs on his wheelchair, President Danny Grant-Johnson was unable to attend this meeting. The meeting began with a discussion of the extremely poor state of *durable medical equipment* support on Hawaii Island, and the low level of support offered by the organizations that do receive payment for our repairs. But anyhow ...

Vice President Chris Cholas called the meeting to order. Introductions went around the table. Laura gave the Treasurer's report: our account contains \$677.50.

In the Secretary's report, Ron described his contacts with businesses that were criticized at our last meeting for shortcomings in their accessible parking facilities. One was the Hilo Shopping Center, whose ADA parking spaces are outside Island Naturals. Hilo Shopping Center had formerly located two of their accessible stalls under the roof overhand, adjacent to their

sidewalk. In that position, people who needed accessible stalls were protected from the rain when they got out of their cars. But when the stalls were restriped, all of the accessible stalls were relocated into the aisles away from the sidewalk. Because of this, the users of the stalls had to unload in the rain, and were soaked by the time they got under the walkways. Ron was worried that the Shopping Center might be exploiting the ADA rules that require level parking spaces, but do not require rain protection -- because of this there are accessible routes on the UHH campus that run alongside inaccessible routes, with rain covers over the inaccessible routes but not rain cover over the accessible routes that parallel them. It's all legal, but unjust. When he got in touch with the realtors who handled the property, however, they were very agreeable to rearranging the spaces. Kathy Cole, of Day-Lum, said that she had discussed the problem with Russell, the manager of Island Naturals, and they agreed that the configuration should be changed. They have been in contact with Qualified Painting about restriping the stalls near the sidewalk to make the Center more accessible. She said that she would get back to DRH about the plans.

Following the November DRH meeting discussion, Ron also contacted management at Walmart. They were less accommodating in terms of personal contact (they didn't give out any last names or email addresses) but they were also aware of the problem -- their number of shortage of ADA parking spaces was too few to handle the demand. We were not challenging their legal compliance (except possibly on the grounds that they should count as a medical facility, given the size of their pharmacy business). The assistant manager we talked with said that they were 2 spaces over the legal requirement. (Yippee.) But he also said that Walmart was planning for six more stalls to be striped in. They passed along the responsibility to the people who manage the property (just as McDonalds did a few months ago). We informed them that both the lessors and lessees are responsible for compliance. (This was a bluff -- they're not really out of compliance anyhow.) But we did get the name of the property managers, and we may be able to confirm the plans to expand the accessible parking from them.

We also discussed, with Walmart Assistant Manager "Mark," our plan to check the legality of the usage of parking placards in automobiles in their lots. He said that it was fine with them -- they had no responsibility in the matter. He was only concerned that we should not mistakenly complain about someone who simply looked as if they were a strong walker, because certain disabilities leave the person looking as if they are not disabled. Yes, yes, yes. But our plans are ok with them.

Just before today's DRH meeting, we received an email from Adrienne Dey reporting on bicycles and skateboards that continued to violate the rules by traveling on Liliuokalani walkways. The complaint was addressed to Teri Spinola Campbell, who conveyed it to the Police Department. Teri's reply from the Police Department will be reported at our next meeting.

Chris Cholas reported on the walk-through and accessibility inspection of Volcano National Park. This was a very well attended event. Thirteen people (including attendants) conducted the inspection.

Pauline described the Earthquake Trail. There are problems with the slope (for people with mobility impairments), and several other problems for people with other kinds of impairment. Pauline was concerned that Bill Leek might be leaving in May, so the Park may have to go through the entire thing again with his replacement.

Martin reported that some of the trails were so steep that they forced him to bend uncomfortably in his chair. In addition, the Park lacks an attendant restroom (in which people of different sexes might enter the same room). When one restroom was found to be inaccessible, they were directed to go to the Art Center. But the Art Center restrooms were also inaccessible. The people who directed them there were unaware of the inaccessibility of those restrooms. There seems to be a lack of awareness of accessibility even within the staff of the Park.

Donald reported that this was his first time on the trail. The hike was good. But he felt that he might tip over with his walker if he leaned a bit to the side. Chris said that some of the trail is an old roadway that has a curve and a cross slope. This needs to be improved, but it wouldn't be too expensive to repair. There is also a problem for people with visual impairments along the roadway portion -- they might get lost because there is no marking of the trail along the roadway. In addition, the website has poor accessibility, unlike other national parks (like Denali, in Alaska). It was reported that the Steam Vent trail is being improved.

On non-accessibility issues, Martin reported on an exciting astronomical event. Venus will transit the sun in June, and will be visible from the Big Island. Martin's father is planning to set up a viewing station to allow accessible viewing of the transit. This is an important event that only happens about once a century. Ron said that he had a print depicting an astronomical observation of a transit of Venus in 1874 -- the last time it was visible from Hawaii. There was interest in seeing Ron's print (a Christmas present from his wife). He will scan it and post it on the DRH web site.

Teri reported on the current status of the Coconut Island issue. She and the police believe that it is primarily an educational issue, to inform the public that it is illegal (and expensive) to park on striped stalls.

Sam Nagasawa gave a brief report on the assistance she provided to a person who called for help from DRH. Even though Sam's help was valuable, we need to make sure that our callers do not think that we have the same staff as HDRC.

Hannah Hendricks gave a presentation on the Tobacco-free Coalition that she works with. She offered to give presentations to any other groups who have an interest.

..... NewsNotes

Ron recently returned from an adventurous trip to New York City, where he spoke at a conference on the "Social Model" of disability and impairment. He will describe his adventures in the Big Apple at the meeting on 3/27 (1:00 PM). (Some good, some bad.)