

Resolving conflicts and disputes through Mediation

Contributed by Tricia Morris

Even in the Land of Aloha and Rainbows, conflicts and disputes arise in our daily lives. Hawaii has a long and beautiful tradition of resolution and facilitation of disputes. In each community, there was an elder or wise-one who was respected by others. They were neutral witnesses who helped the disputing parties resolve their conflicts in a peaceful way. This tradition has inspired the current facilitators/peacemakers such as Dr. Peter Adler, who was the Founder and Executive Director of The Neighborhood Justice Center in Honolulu in 1979. This later became the Mediation Center of the Pacific. More recently, I became similarly inspired.

The courtroom is a relatively modern method of settling conflict. Mediation and facilitation of resolutions compares very favorably with similar matters that have been taken through the Courts. Courtrooms often exacerbate the hostility between people, while mediation restores harmony. Courts have limited time and the "arguments" are directed to the legal advantage and intellectual perspective. Relationships are usually damaged further in court proceedings where in mediation they are generally preserved or enhanced.

Mediation allows parties a chance to be heard, to express their grievances or defenses at an emotional level and be heard within a safe environment. The meetings are facilitated by an impartial trained mediator, often called a Neutral. This leads to a productive dialogue and negotiation with intent toward a mutual solution that is acceptable to both parties.

Life happens. Conflicts are valuable in that they allow people to express the hurts, upsets, and differences that occur with living and relating. Too often "sweeping under the rug" leads to unexpressed feelings and resentments that lead to more of the same, since nothing is resolved.

A particular area in which mediation has been proven to be effective is divorce and child custody. Most importantly, Mediation can lead to a deeply improved relationship between parents and children, as well as between divorced parents. The lessened conflict and greater accord lead to lasting positive effects for everyone, long after the original Media-

tion. Research substantiates that lessened conflict has dramatic long-term positive impact on children including through their adult years. The goodwill resulting from mediation also allows the parents to move into their futures with a greater sense of well being and self esteem.

An emerging area for Mediation is relationship or marriage. Agreements between people in close relationships can help prevent break-ups of long-term relationships and divorce in marriages. Mediation is generally found to be helpful in family disputes. Family mediation regarding the long-term care of an elder and other areas of disagreement can reduce stress and facilitate more peaceful future interactions.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution are effectively used in many civil disputes including employment issues, when legal action is being considered. Areas of conflict that have lent themselves well to Mediation are real estate, business, medical error and malpractice, trusts and estates, neighborhood and employment.

Things have changed with culture and time. Mediators aren't usually members of the ohana today and Mediations are often conducted in offices. The Spirit is still with us. Let's find resolution to our problems, peace in ourselves and our communities and emanate it to the world.

Alberta's note: Tricia Morris loves her work! She combines her business and financial background with compassion and empathy to create a safe environment for honest communication. "I want to help find common ground to transform a stressful life experience," she said. She works throughout the Hawaiian Islands, the Mainland U.S. and Asia and is also available for Teleconferencing. Contact her at (808)283-7811 or go to: Tricia@TriciaMorris.com.



Tricia Morris

RON GINGERICH capturing unique images of Lana'i since 1998

808-559-0003 Ron@LanaiPhotography.com

Keo Konstruction, LLC
Locally owned and operated.
Rob Sanches
General Engineering Contractor
AC-25860
559-5365

Back issues of *Lanai Today* can be found on our website at:
<http://albertadejetleylanaitoday.com/>
The site also contains helpful local Lanai/Hawaii links, visit us today!

Lana'i Limu Restoration Project Community Day

The Lana'i Limu Restoration Project (LLRP) is a project started by Uncle Allen Kaiakamalie in an effort to restore limu to the waters near the Maunalei area. Leasing the land from Pulama Lana'i, and supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), KUA, the Limu Hui, Coalition for a Drug Free Lanai (CDFL) and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), LLRP has been part of the Lana'i community for the past eight years.

Help us clean-up the Limu Farm, and if you're able, to plant limu in the nearshore waters. Bring strong (anti-kiawe-thorns!) sandals or sneakers, sunscreen and your lunch. We'll have clean-up tools and water for everyone. LLRP is also asking Lanai residents for donations of snorkel gear and tabis. Throw nets would be appreciated for the Limu Farm's educational programs, and old surf and boogie boards are helpful for ocean work. If you have any of these that you'd like to donate, please call Cheryl Kaiakamalie at (808) 214-4839, or drop them off at 230 Fraser Avenue.

The Lana'i Limu Restoration Project has benefitted from amazing community participation. 60 Lanaians came out for the April workday! LLRP and the Kaiakamalie family says a big mahalo to Lana'i; special thanks to Maui Disposal.

KUA is one of the organizations who support the farm. Their mission statement says in part: "KUA empowers communities to improve their quality of life through caring for their biocultural (natural and cultural) heritage. Our vision is aina Momona; abundant and healthy ecological systems in Hawaii that contribute to community well-being."

On Molokai, KUA bought together native Hawaiian practitioners to build relationships and to share their mana'o on community-based resource management practices. Mahalo, KUA, for helping Lanai's Limu Project.



"Come On Down" for the next Community Day

Saturday, May 18 10 a.m. to 2 p.m

MANELE
GENERAL STORE
LANAI HAWAII

NEW in-store! Environmentally friendly & reusable, these food wraps are made from Hawaiian beeswax, organic cotton & tree resin.

BEE AKAMAI ECO WRAPS

- antibacterial
- non-toxic
- compostable
- reusable
- locally-made
- organic

OPEN 7AM - 7PM 808-649-8849