

Hawaii Reporter

Freedom to Report Real News

Heroes of Hawaii: People Who Made a Difference Here in 2008

By Hawaii Reporter, 12/31/2008 12:17:49 PM

Taking a look back in 2008, here are some people who made a positive difference in Hawaii throughout the year. We salute their bravery, creativity, intelligence and willingness to go the extra mile to make Hawaii a better place in which to live.

MEDIA

KGMB TV's News Crew was outstanding in their political coverage this year. The station management rented the Hawaii Theatre and its news crew hosted interesting, and often fiery, candidate debates for the most important political races. They can take pride in knowing that they outshined every media in Hawaii in this area – not only this year, but historically. Their debates, in many cases, were more interesting than the national debates being managed by much bigger networks.

Michael W. Perry of KSSK radio is a consistent voice of reason in local news and politics and his commentaries about local, national and international politics are fresh, interesting and factual. He and his on-air partner **Larry Price** can always be counted on to lead Hawaii through crisis, including the most recent islandwide blackout on Oahu. Catch their show, Monday through Friday, from 5 to 10 a.m. and Saturdays from 8 to 11 a.m. on KSSK (92.3 FM/590 AM).

Rick Hamada of the KHVH Radio's The Rick Hamada Show (830 AM) is intrepid in his efforts to keep Hawaii's government officials in check. His morning show, which airs from 6 to 9 a.m., provides a forum to discuss the state's most pressing issues including taxation, the economy, small business trials, current legislation on the county, state and federal levels, the military, crime and the Second Amendment. He was outstanding in his commentary on the mayor's proposed multi-billion dollar rail system.

David Shapiro, who writes a column called Volcanic Ash in *The Honolulu Advertiser*, always has interesting and witty columns, which nail our local politicians and bureaucrats for their ineptness. He is one of the few courageous members of the media who give the straight story.

ATHLETES

Bryan Clay according to Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle, "is the first American to capture a gold medal in the decathlon since 1996, Bryan Clay has earned the right to be known as the 'world's greatest athlete.' His convincing win, with a score of 8,791 – 240 points ahead of his nearest rival – solidified that distinction. His impressive throws of the discus, shot put and javelin, as well as strong showings in the track events, have secured his place in Olympic history. Winning an Olympic gold medal has put Bryan in the national spotlight, and this achievement, along with the silver medal from the 2004 games and the numerous awards he has earned throughout his career, are a testament to his athletic prowess. But none of that would matter without the honor, grace, good sportsmanship and heart he has demonstrated in pursuit of that goal. ... By showing what can be accomplished with hard work, focused training and determination, Bryan has become an exemplary role model for the next generation of athletes. His efforts to help youth through the Bryan Clay Foundation demonstrate that he is a champion off the field, as well as on. The foundation allows Hawaii students to pursue their dreams by providing scholarships to those in need. As a kamaaina and Castle High graduate, Bryan does our state proud. We wish him continued success as he sets his sights on London in 2012."

Waipio Little League and 2008 Little League World Champion Coach Timo Donahue Aside from his job as Honolulu Police Department Detective, Donahue did a tremendous job leading the Oahu team to the World Championship. Donahue demonstrated patience and positive motivation throughout. Other youngsters

are inspired by the players. However, there is a greater lesson to be learned by adults just from watching Coach Donahue manage his team during and between games. (nominated by Earl Arakaki Ewa Beach)

ACADEMICS

Panos D. Prevedouros, PhD, who put his academic career on hold this year to run for mayor of Honolulu, gave Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann and his \$3 million war chest a run for his money – even with just \$40,000 in his bank account. Prevedouros, with his razor sharp mind, vast understanding of the city's infrastructure problems and a fun debating style, put Hannemann on the spot during KGMB's live debate. Though Prevedouros, who was new on the political scene, couldn't overcome the mayor's political machine in just three short months, he educated the public on many important issues, including the mayor's multi-billion dollar rail system. See his columns in *Hawaii Reporter* and listen to him on the Rick Hamada show, Mondays at 7 a.m. on KHVH News Radio (830 AM).

Ken Schoolland, a professor at Hawaii Pacific University, is best known for authoring "The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible: A Free Market Odyssey." His book has received worldwide attention since being published by Small Business Hawaii 20 years ago; it is now distributed in various languages in 41 countries. His book has been recognized by the top economists and think tanks in the world and brought accolades from Milton Friedman, a Nobel laureate in economics.

COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS

Dale Evans, president of Charley's Taxi, founded the Hawaii Highway Users Alliance, an advocacy group for Hawaii drivers that seeks to influence public policy and opinion, promote highway safety, congestion relief, quality growth and freedom of mobility. She works tirelessly behind the scenes to promote free-market organizations and community non-profits helping the less fortunate. See more about her group at <http://www.hhua.org>

Cliff Slater, founder of <http://www.HonoluluTraffic.com>, maintains the state's most informative traffic solutions Web site. He and his wife **Bobbie** work tirelessly to ensure that city, state and federal officials are held accountable for taxpayer money being used for rail and bus subsidies. He and his coalition helped to defeat the now defunct Bus Rapid Transit System in Waikiki in 2004 and the first rail proposal for Honolulu in 1992. He co-founded <http://www.StopRailNow.com> – an islandwide group that was narrowly defeated this election in the battle over whether the city can built the rail.

Sam Slom, president and executive director of Small Business Hawaii and a Hawaii state Senator, is a tireless advocate for Hawaii's small businesses. As a former economist for the Bank of Hawaii, former director of the Tax Foundation of Hawaii and law school graduate, Slom combines his education, background and experience with humor to keep the public informed about their government and other happenings in the community. Catch his weekly radio show with Rick Hamada and Senate President Colleen Hanabusa on Thursdays from 7 to 8 a.m. on KHVH News Radio (830 AM).

Jack Schneider, owner of JS Services Inc., works tirelessly in the community for several non-profits along with his wife **Michelle**. He has provided quiet and continuous support and leadership in Hawaii's key conservative and free market organizations.

Dick Rowland, co-founder of the Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, retired this year as president of the non-profit organization. He is commended for his unrelenting advocacy for individual freedom and liberty.

Bill and Sandra Burgess co-founded Aloha for All, an organization that seeks to educate the public about special native Hawaiian programs and benefits they believe should be afforded to people of all races in Hawaii.

Linda Rasmussen, MD, who serves as president of the Hawaii Medical Association, has spent countless hours at the Legislature and on the campaign trail to improve working conditions for doctors. Right now,

doctors are retiring or leaving Hawaii in large numbers because there is a hostile business climate and no much needed tort reform.

Tammy Kubo is well known in the Hawaii community for her extensive charity work. She holds birthday parties for children at the state's transitional shelters. (For more information on how to get involved with the Keiki birthday parties for the homeless, log onto <http://www.keikibirthday.com>) She also launched a campaign this December to deliver Christmas presents to Hawaii National Guard soldiers serving in the Middle East.

Dr. Max Cooper, spokesperson for the Hawaii Rifle Association, continues to work for better firearms laws in Hawaii, which allow people to defend themselves, their families and their property.

Robert Thomas is the designated attorney for the Pacific Legal Foundation in Hawaii and he has worked diligently to protect private property rights here.

Tom Berg Battle lines were drawn in 2008 over support and opposition to the Honolulu rail, and the war for a people's right to decide claimed real casualties, among them Berg, office manager to Rep. Rida Cabanilla (D-District 42) who fired him after receiving an anonymous phone call that he had publicly supported mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros. Despite the shame of being sacked for his personal beliefs, Berg distinguished himself by running for office against Rep. Cabanilla and ran so successful a campaign that it invigorated his district, stirred up more voter participation than ever before and despite losing by less than 200 votes, showed that a Republican candidate could be a strong contender in a historically Democrat controlled district. The gallantry and resolve shown by Berg in such a short time against such great odds reflect great credit upon himself and upon the values of his family. *(submitted by Daniel de Gracia, II)*

NEIGHBOR ISLAND HEROES

Kauai

Teresa Tico is a fearless environmental attorney on Kauai who works for the betterment of the island community. Named Best Lawyer on Kauai by the *Garden Island News* and Trial Lawyer of the Year Finalists by Public Justice, she is currently representing the victims of the Ka Loko Dam tragedy.

David Whatmore, a farmer on Kauai who has grown citrus, mangoes, and other exotic fruits on his 10-acre Hula Daze Farm since 1985, continues his fight on Kauai and at the Legislature and land board to help the farmers on the island.

Maui

Jan Shields, L.V.T., B.S.N., R.N.C., a nurse heading up the Coconut Wireless newswire and the Association for Improved Healthcare on Maui, continues the fight for a second private hospital. She put her nursing career on hold to run for Senate against powerful Senate incumbent Roz Baker. Though she didn't win, Shields brought important issues to light about medical care and public education through her campaign. See more about her organization at <http://www.aihm-maui.org/>

Hawaii Island

Ted Hong, attorney on the Big Island, put his law practice on hold to run for Hawaii State Senate this year. With few resources, he challenged one of the state's most powerful politicians, Dwight Takamine. He didn't win, but he brought out many important issues, including the need to help charter schools and reform public education.

Josh Green, M.D., a state Senator representing Kona and an emergency room doctor, was ostracized by his own party members after working diligently to better Hawaii's tort reform laws. He continues to persevere in this fight.

Law Enforcement

Ed Kubo, U.S. attorney in Hawaii, (and Tammy's husband) has put his focus on reducing illegal drug trafficking in Hawaii. He emphasizes collaborative partnerships between law enforcement, the community and the private sector in fighting crime and helps establish and support the "Weed and Seed" programs to help local communities reclaim, restore and rebuild neighborhoods. His efforts, in partnership with other agencies, have yielded record drug busts and indictments of major drug lords whose illegal activities sometimes stretch from Hawaii to Mexico, the Philippines and the U.S. mainland.

Mark Bennett, state attorney general, has worked extensively to strengthen the right of the victims and enforce the law rather than legislate from the bench. He and his staff also have focused on catching and prosecuting Internet predators.

Peter Carlisle, city prosecutor, works with Bennett and Kubo and other law enforcement, to fight for victims on Oahu and to make Hawaii's criminal justice laws stronger.

GOVERNMENT

Lillian Koller, Hawaii Human Services Director, was awarded as "Public Official of the Year" by Governing Magazine for her leadership in bringing about widespread improvements at the State Department of Human Services (DHS) over the past five years, including an overhaul of the child welfare system.

Rep. Blake Oshiro, Rep. Gene Ward, Sen. Brian Taniguchi and **Sen. Sam Slom** for their work on the journalism shield bill, which is one of the best in the nation and includes protection for online journalists. First Amendment Attorney **Jeff Portnoy** also has to be acknowledged for his work to get the legislation past.

Hawaii National Guard and other military soldiers serving here and overseas to protect our country.

To nominate someone for the Heroes of Hawaii, write to Malia Zimmerman, editor of Hawaii Reporter, at <mailto:Malia@hawaiireporter.com>

[Heroes & Scoundrels...](#)

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