

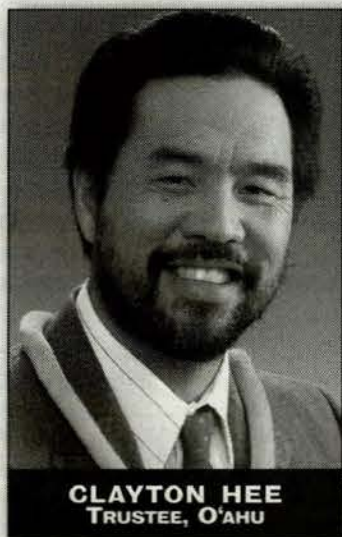
T R U S T E E M E S S A G E S
CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Voting changes for OHA trustees

OVER THE years, people have commented to me about the OHA trustees and their service to Hawaiians. Recently, many have asked me my thoughts now that *Rice vs. Cayetano* is law, allowing all eligible voters to select OHA trustees. My answer is that I'm not sure there will be substantial changes and here are the two primary reasons:

- OHA remains a statewide election, which means all registered voters can vote for every OHA position regardless of residency. In other words, everyone, regardless of residence on another island, votes for the O'ahu trustee; and
- there's no primary election to whittle down the number of candidates.

The purpose of a primary election is to eliminate candi-



dates so that voters have a more meaningful impact in November. To me, this means incumbents will continue to have an advantage over most others. All OHA candidates run "at large." New candidates may not be "well known" and must financially be able to spend money to get their

name and message out to the entire state. A candidate from Ni'ihau must get her name and message out to everyone, as she can be voted on by all voters.

That means the campaign will cost her lots of money, as unlike those seeking a seat as a state representative, she must spend money on every island and not in a single representative district.

In "at large" races, primary elections are used so that the voters in November cast their ballots for the top qualifiers. For example, if three incumbents are running for the "at large" seats, primary elections decide on the top six candidates who will be on the ballot in November. This way, the voters are given a "greater say" in for whom they cast their ballots.

In the OHA elections, there may be as many as 10 candidates seeking only one seat, as many as 25 candidates seeking three

open "at large" seats. If you think about it, the chances for a well-known incumbent are exponentially improved as name recognition counts for a lot in politics.

'Will the fact that Rice has now made it possible for everyone to vote change the results? Not in my opinion, so long as the election laws do not change.'

Many times voters may cast their ballots "against" an incumbent. If there are only two candidates, the voter's ballot cast "against" an incumbent will mean much more than if there are, say, 10 candidates.

The "negative" vote is watered down among the nine alternatives to the incumbent who thus still enjoys a distinct advantage.

Unless the election laws are changed, the incumbent holds a distinct advantage. Moreover, unless there is a mechanism for a "process of elimination," much like a primary election works to limit a Senate seat to one Democrat and one Republican contender, the incumbent will likely

continue to enjoy a distinct advantage.

Will the fact that *Rice* has now made it possible for everyone to vote change the results? Not in my opinion, so long as the election laws do not change. Voting blocks such as ethnic groups or organized associations would have a greater influence on the election were there only two choices instead of 15.

Because of the so-called "power of incumbency," most House and Senate incumbents rarely get defeated. Even fewer incumbent trustees have failed to be reelected.

Some have called this system unfair. However, it really does not matter what one calls the system because just as many people disagree with the United States Supreme Court decision which allows all voters to select OHA trustees. But this is the law.

So will OHA change because of the *Rice* decision? Will *Rice* be in the interest of the people? Only you can be the judge of that.

VICE CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Lessons from our ancestral past

Editor's note: The following column, co-authored by Trustees Colette Machado and Frenchy DeSoto, is continued on page 8, in the space allotted to Trustee DeSoto.

THE RAIDING of ali'i burial caves is nothing new to the kanaka 'oiwi. On Oct. 6, 1870, Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau wrote in *Ke Au 'Ōko'a* about a story (translated by Mary Kawena Pūku'i in "*Ka Po'e Kahiko*") conveyed to him by a haole doctor, Dr. John Pelham, known also as "Dr. Pili." This doctor claimed one of his patients was an elder chief from Waimea, Hawai'i, who had been injured in battle and that this chief had agreed to allow Dr. Pili to take possession of his body following his death. When the ali'i passed away, his daughter refused to turn her father's body over. Being thus denied, Dr. Pili spied on the family when they secretly took the deceased chief to a hidden burial cave. The doctor returned the next day, entered the cave and saw iwi kanaka (human bones) as well as 'ahu'ula (long feather



COLETTE MACHADO
TRUSTEE, MOLOKA'I & LĀNA'I

capets), mahiole (helmets), 'ahu (short capes), mea kaula (weapons), kāhili, kapa and moena (mats), which were described as the treasured possessions of these chiefs.

Dr. Pili removed the iwi of the deceased Waimea ali'i to Lahainaluna School. He

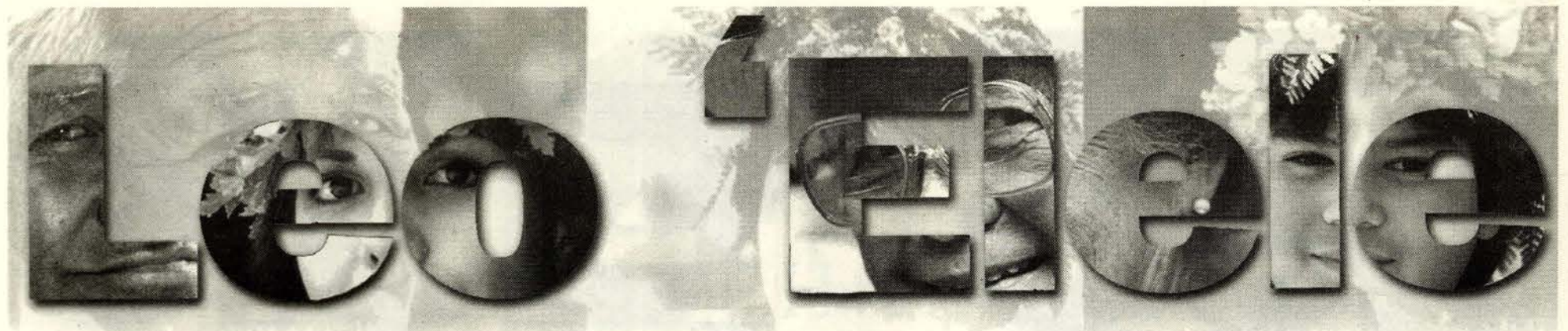
also stole a complete skeleton to satisfy a request by a Dr. Andrews. Moreover, Dr. Pili began to plan the removal of the objects. However, soon after the theft of these iwi kanaka took place (c. 1835-1837), the ali'i burial cave in Waimea was consumed by fire, destroying all of the iwi and the valuables hidden therein

Kamakau states there was no natural cause for the fire and speculates perhaps the cause was that "[the items] would be taken and subject to humiliation and disgrace, and perhaps the fact that a malihini had already seen these hidden things." Kamakau attributes the same cause to the 1862 fire at Lahainaluna School that resulted in the destruction of the school and the iwi of the deceased Waimea chief. The main lesson from Kamakau is that only pilikia comes from the desecration of burials.

Approximately 70 years later, a similar scenario took place at an ali'i burial cave located in nearby Kawaihae. In 1905, David Forbes, William Wagner and Friedrich Haensch discovered a burial cave containing the mummified iwi of

ali'i as well as numerous possessions of these ancestral chiefs. Noticing loose stones on the floor of the cave, the men took apart a fortified stone wall after "considerable exertion." The stone wall served to seal and conceal a small opening to a chamber in which chiefly remains and their treasured possessions were secreted. The thieves entered the chamber and stole iwi kanaka and moepū (burial objects) belonging to these chiefs. The items stolen included an ipu 'aina or wood bowl inlaid with human teeth, two female ki'i 'aumakua images, two Kū style male images, a papamu or konane board, a polished bowl, boar tusk necklaces, a helmet made of human hair and other moepū. The thieves drew straws in order to determine the method by which to divide up the loot. Most of the stolen moepū were sold, traded, or donated to Bishop Museum and to the Volcanoes National Park.

In the *Hawaiian Dictionary*, moepū is defined "to place artifacts with the dead." "Mai lawe wale i nā mea i ho'omoepū 'ia"



T R U S T E E M E S S A G E S

A worst case scenario

A LOCAL newspaper has surveyed 401 Hawaiians regarding their opinions on some issues impacting upon our future. We note 72 percent support Hawaiians' deciding their own future self-governance, and 78 percent prefer to wait until they are more comfortable about what form of government to choose. As the newspaper observed, this is the same response made more than 20 years ago in a similar survey. The "we need more time" response may be understandable during normal times, however, these are not normal times for Hawaiians.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs and its Hawaiian constituency are facing turbulent times. OHA has to be constantly alert to ensure Hawaiians have meaningful input in environmental impact statements in light of increasing development of lands

in this state. OHA has not yet assembled the brightest and best people on staff to implement the OHA Board of Trustees' policies and mission priorities. OHA may be losing, or may have already lost, some of the expertise it did have. OHA has not yet, in collaboration with other Native Hawaiian organizations, developed a comprehensive master plan for Native Hawaiians, to address collectively the identified needs in the community.

OHA's attempts to reorganize the agency with limited preliminary preparation and evolving guidelines to meet a 12-month, self-imposed timeline, is causing this quasi-state organization to flounder in white-water rapids and head toward more turbulent waters. Our little wooden canoe may be destroyed, dashed to pieces upon four large pōhaku (rocks). OHA will be no more in the year 2001.

Why do I think about this



DONALD CATALUNA
TRUSTEE, KAUA'I, NI'IIHAU

"worst case scenario"?

- The state legislative auditor is preparing a critical report on OHA for the 2001 Legislature, which may incline the Legislators to insist on imposing more controls over OHA's priorities.
- A new paradigm for use of

general fund dollars, if proposed by OHA for approximately \$2.5 million, may be rejected by the newly elected state Legislature as not responsive to beneficiary needs nor Act 147 appropriations.

• The bill, introduced by United States Senator Akaka, which recognizes the special status of Native Hawaiians and establishes a federal Office of Native Hawaiian Affairs, may result in the perception of OHA as unnecessary and its replacement by another non-state form of Hawaiian self-governance. (The newspaper survey indicated that 51 percent of the respondents felt that the governance not be created out of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.)

• Private citizen suits, supported by corporations which have been waiting in the wings for many years, will multiply their efforts and resources to obtain control of Hawaiian lands by challeng-

ing and, if necessary, destroying the Hawaiian trusts, particularly the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Bob Krauss in a newspaper article some 40 years ago said, "Hawai'i is a place the Chinese own, the Japanese run, the tourists enjoy and the Hawaiians – they remember how it was." The last observation about Hawaiians may be interpreted in this worst case scenario as, "People in Hawai'i will remember how OHA was" after it is gone.

My point is this: if we plan for the worst case scenario now and get the creative ideas and human resources flowing, we can transform that scenario into a far brighter one for our collective future well-being.

E hele kākou i mua me ka no'ono'o nui i ka hopena. (Let us proceed and consider well the consequences.)

LESSONS

From page 6

means "Don't wantonly take things placed with the dead." Kamakau knew all too well of the dangers that came with the ho'omā'ino'ino 'ana (desecration) of iwi kanaka and moepū that were hidden in the burial caves. He stated that "the mana kupua (supernatural powers) were also placed in there by the people of old, with kia'i kupua (supernatural guardians) to care" for the sacred places and the ali'i who were laid to rest there with their possessions. The burial caves were "molia i ke akua (set apart for the gods)."

Kamakau's writings offer a helpful insight into the recent controversy over the ki'i 'aumākua (ancestral guardian images) and other moepū returned to the burial caves in Kawaihae from which they were stolen. A number of Hawaiians have stepped forth and demanded these 'aumākua be removed once again from the burial caves to be made available for viewing by a whole new host of foreign eyes. Some have claimed that these 'aumākua were only placed in the burial caves for temporary safekeeping during a time when all such images were being



FRENCHY DESOTO
TRUSTEE-AT-LARGE

destroyed and therefore are in fact not burial items. Some argue that as family members, they have the right to separate the treasured chiefly possessions and utilize them for the future education of our people and society as exemplary works of art.

The Kawaihae situation involves certain fundamental values of our culture. Foremost is that the ali'i already determined the purpose of these objects is to accompany them in their afterlife. This is evidenced by where the objects were placed and why they were placed there, and not

when placement occurred. As with the burial cave in Waimea, the items taken from Honokoa were placed directly with the iwi kanaka because they were treasured possessions. Moreover, the four 'aumākua images were placed directly in front of the iwi kupuna in a position of protection. This is consistent with Kamakau's assertion that kia'i kupua were left by the people of old to protect these caves. Our kuleana today is to respect the burial wishes of the ancestors. Remember Kamakau's lesson that only pilikia comes from the desecration of burials. The current controversy is living proof.

For the record, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs stated in a letter dated March 21, 1994, to Dr. Donald Duckworth of the Bishop Museum regarding the iwi kanaka and moepū removed from Honokoa Gulch that, "the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) – with the concurrence of Hui Mālama i nā Kūpuna o Hawai'i Nei – is requesting the repatriation of human remains and burial goods associated with Forbes and Mummy Caves at Kawaihae, on Hawai'i. Our office is coordinating with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands in seeking this repatriation so that the remains and other items can be returned and these caves sealed. Although not easily accessible, the caves have been entered and desecrated –

and it is imperative that dignity be restored and the entrances walled to prevent future intrusion. We are, therefore, requesting your assistance in expediting this request for the protection of nā iwi."

Therefore, the action taken by Hui Mālama and the position taken by OHA are most consistent with the lessons left to us by such cultural resources as the writings of Kamakau and 'ōlelo no'eau.

When faced with what appear to be difficult cultural decisions today, we have a wealth of historical knowledge to look to for proper guidance. Efforts by fellow OHA trustees to recall the Kawaihae moepū from their original place of burial would once again desecrate the iwi kanaka, result in the separation from their treasured possessions and amount to the commission of the crime of grave robbery.

Furthermore, it would not only condone the original theft of these moepu by Forbes, et al., but it would treat that transgression as a blessing in disguise. Such a result would clearly contradict the teachings of our kūpuna, as articulated by Kamakau. This is a critical juncture for Hawaiians and a golden opportunity to express our cultural identity in a positive manner based on the cultural values left to us by our ancestors. Let us look to them for proper guidance. "Mai lawe wale i nā mea i ho'omoepū 'ia – don't wantonly take things placed with the dead."