

Q1 2022—Issues and Programs Report—HPR News

Hawai'i Public Radio does daily reporting on issues important to its community of listeners. Coverage is guided in part by a list of issues put together with input from the station's Community Advisory Board and HPR's Broadcast Committee and approved by HPR's Board of Directors. Issues include Education, Healthcare, Native Hawaiian Culture, Economic Issues, Homelessness, Housing, Environment, Community Planning, Immigration and Assimilation, Local Food and Agriculture and Arts and Culture.

The station airs a locally produced and hosted public affairs talk program, "The Conversation," which airs from 11am to noon each weekday. That program features guests and listener call-in segments. Each Monday from 6:30pm to 7:00pm HPR airs a half-hour locally-produced program on medical developments and trends called "The Body Show," and each Thursday from 6:30pm to 7:00pm HPR airs a half-hour locally-produced program on technology called "Bytemarks Café."

In addition, local news reporters cover these topics of interest and importance to the state-wide listening community, typically filing reports of 2-3 minutes airing each day on Morning Edition from 5am to 9am and on All Things Considered from noon to 1pm and 4pm to 6pm.

For the purposes of this report, we will focus on stories and coverage in the areas of Environment, Education, Healthcare, and Native Hawaiian Culture.

HEALTHCARE:

Counties are now solely in charge of COVID-19 isolation and quarantine facilities, Casey Harlow, 1/3/22

As the pandemic stretched on, the state Department of Health worked with counties to provide isolation and quarantine facilities for residents. But that changed with the new year—a significant development not only in terms of health care, but also in county financial obligations. The state argued that one reason was declining case counts, but many counties faced funding uncertainties—planning to use federal funds when they were available, but the situation remained unclear about what it meant for the availability of facilities and services for those in need.

Psilocybin therapy options could expand in Hawai'i, Noe Tanigawa, 1-6-22

Treatment of anxiety and depression has increased over the time of the pandemic, and groups from the World Health Organization to the United Nations have chronicled the impacts of such disorders on individuals and society. The New England Journal of Medicine and others have cited research about the benefits of treating depression with psilocybin, and there are growing calls to expand the legal use of psychedelic therapies in Hawai'i. This piece includes the stories of several patients who have undergone such treatments, from a cancer survivor to military veterans.

FDA approves emergency use for first rapid COVID-19 test developed in Hawai'i, 3-1-22, The Conversation

A locally-based company went through a number of changes in approach as it developed a rapid test for COVID-19. The company's president and CEO explained how the research team moved from a "spit test" to a shallow nasal swab in its testing—because it was easier to use. The company also made other shifts as its studies developed—and plans to use its approach to explore uses in fighting other diseases. The test itself was developed using artificial intelligence and is manufactured in South Korea.

This local nonprofit offers postpartum support through surfing and community, 1/11/22, Russell Subiono

This group is called "Surfing Moms"—and that captures its essence. It's a support group where mothers and their families gather on a beach, share childcare duties, and then take turns going out on the waves to surf. It provides a way for mothers with young children to find time to focus on their physical, mental and spiritual well-being. It's modeled after an organization that started in Australia, but also has spread to the California coast. It also helps new mothers who are dealing with postpartum experiences which can be helped with some time spent on the waves.

ENVIRONMENT

Cesspools across the state, The Conversation, 2/3/22, 2/10/22

The Environmental Protection Agency has flagged cesspools in Hawaii as an environmental issue that must be dealt with in coming years—and the state Department of Health has set a deadline that cesspools of any size must be "upgraded, converted or closed by 2050." Other studies have found that cesspools are threatening surface drinking water on Maui and other health risks across the state. Over the course of two weeks, the news/talk program The Conversation looked at the condition of cesspools in various communities, and the efforts to move ahead in dealing with them. Experts included Stuart Coleman, the Executive Director of Wastewater Alternatives and Innovations and Roger Babcock, now facilities director for the city and county of Honolulu. Coleman also serves on the Cesspool Conversion Working Group, which warns that the state has fallen behind in the pace of conversion that will be needed to meet the state's deadline.

Concerns over axed eco-resort at Hilo beach spark community engagement discussions, Kuuwehi Hiraishi, 2/16/22, 2/17/22

Developers wanted to build a 36-unit luxury eco-resort in front of a popular Hilo beach on Hawaiʻi Island. A local resident discovered plans for the resort that were posted online—as part of a filing that said the California-based owner who planned to sell the land had engaged the community in discussions. But community leaders said they were unaware of such efforts. Further investigation found that a preliminary application had been made, but was sent back by the county with a request for further information. The experience led to a broader community discussion about zoning laws that may be outdated—local lawmakers are reviewing the case to see if reclassification may be needed for several other parcels. Meanwhile, upon further review, the county wound up rejecting the plan for the original eco-resort.

Native marine algae thrives with healthy groundwater, Zoe Dym, 2/22/22

The botany and earth science departments at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa have been researching the relationship between native limu, or marine algae and groundwater quality. The study found that native algae thrives when freshwater contains a steady level of nitrogen and when the salinity levels move with the tides. When groundwater is contaminated by cesspools and sewage links, the result is an increase in invasive algae species. Climate change also plays a role in this relationship, especially with sea level rise, which adds salt to the freshwater.

Pentagon to permanently shut down leaking Red Hill fuel tank facility, Sophia McCullough, HPR Staff, 3/7/22

In a surprise announcement, the Defense Department announced it would permanently shut down the Navy's massive Red Hill fuel tank facility that leaked petroleum into Pearl Harbor's tap water, and will remove all the fuel. This has been an ongoing story of environmental concern for the community, and Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said the decision by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is based on a new Pentagon assessment, but also is in line with an order from Hawaiʻi's Department of Health to drain fuel from the tanks at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. Nearly 6,000 people, mostly those living in military housing at or near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam were sickened, seeking treatment for nausea, headaches, rashes and other ailments. And 4,000 military families were forced out of their homes and are in hotels. HPR has done interviews with families impacted by the water contamination, including those who asked not to be identified for fear their spouse's military careers might be negatively impacted.

NATIVE HAWAIIAN CULTURE

Billabong Pro Pipeline winner Moana Jones Wong on being in lōkahi, in harmony, through surfing, 2/10/22, Russell Subiono

North Shore native Moana Jones Wong, 22, won the first-ever women's [Billabong Pro Pipeline](#) on Sunday, Feb. 6. It was the first time a women's Championship Tour event, or CT event, was held at the legendary surf spot. Jones Wong was a relative unknown prior to the contest. She hadn't surfed in a contest in six years and was invited to compete as a wild card entry. But making history is nothing new for her. Last year she earned her bachelor's degree when she became the first graduate of the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu's [Hawaiian and Indigenous Health and Healing program](#). She spoke with HPR about the cultural significance of surfing.

Henry Kaponō made it big during the Hawaiian Renaissance. He's been pumping ever since, 2/11/22, Noe Tanigawa

When one looks back at the 1970s in Hawai'i, the beginning of the Hawaiian Renaissance — 1978 is remembered as the year of a pivotal State Constitutional Convention. It was also the year Rap Reiplinger released his comedy album classic "Poi Dog." At the same time, the musical duo C and K opened doors for a new generation of musicians. "I grew up in Kapahulu. I'm full-blooded Hawaiian." This profile of [Henry Kaponō Ka'āhūe](#) includes stories about how he got started in the music business—and then rose to fame as part of the music group C and K, which got its big break opening for Frank Zappa at the Civic Auditorium. C and K was the first contemporary local group to go national, signing with Columbia Records in 1974. They released nine collections over two decades as a duo.

A 10,000-piece Hawaiian music collection from Canada has a new home at the Hawai'i State Archives, 2/18/22, The Conversation

The largest known collection of Hawaiian music just ended up in the lap of the [Hawai'i State Archives](#). Scores of boxes arrived in the building safe and sound in early December from a trip across the Canadian border. Archivist Adam Jansen said it will take one to two years for staff and volunteers to clean, index and start digitizing the 10,000-piece collection donated by the Scott family in Canada.

Jansen traveled to Canada himself to pack up the records and shepherd their safe transit back to Hawai'i. The Paul and Linda Kahn Foundation paid to move the collection to the archives, he said. Jansen said the most interesting thing about the collection is how much early period music it contains.

"I'm going through and digitizing some of the versions of Aloha 'Oe, and to find these recordings from the 19-aughts, the 1910s, 1920s, you know, we're getting to the earliest recordings of Hawaiian music so that we can understand some of the genesis of what we appreciate today," Jansen said.

EDUCATION

The story of Seagull Schools was told over the developments of several weeks—starting with this story from Casey Harlow on 2/21/22—

Honolulu preschool closure will worsen early education shortage, advocates say

For nearly four decades, Seagull Schools' Early Education Center has sat on the corner of Beretania and Alapai Streets in downtown Honolulu. The preschool opened its doors in 1986, originally created to care for children of City and County of Honolulu employees. It eventually expanded its enrollment qualifications to the general public, providing an essential service to those working for the State of Hawai'i, The Queen's Medical Center and the Honolulu Board of Water Supply.

Unlike other preschools, the center has enough room to care for more than 220 students — making it one of the largest preschools on O'ahu. It is also one of the most affordable at \$1,000 a month.

"We know we're about \$200-\$300 cheaper a month than our counterparts in early education," said Megan McCorrison, CEO of Seagull Schools.

Earlier this month, the city notified McCorrison the lease at their downtown location would not be renewed, and they would have to vacate the area in August. The city plans to repair the municipal parking lot underneath the school. When that preschool closes, there may not be enough schools to take in displaced students.

By March 22, the story had shifted—following a series of questions raised by our reporter, Honolulu's mayor extended the school's lease.

Blangiardi extends Downtown Honolulu preschool lease for another 6-months

Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi announced Tuesday Seagull Schools' early education center, next to the Frank Fasi Municipal Building, will have another six months at the location. Earlier this year, the city notified the school that it was [not going to renew its lease](#) in order to make repairs to the parking structure below.

At the time, the school had until the end of August to vacate the premises — leaving just six months for the school to find a new location, and parents scrambling to find other daycare options, which can usually take years to pin down. Seagull Schools CEO Megan McCorrison says she met last week with Mayor Rick Blangiardi and Managing Director Michael Formby. Prior to this meeting, she says the school wasn't able to meet with anyone in the administration to discuss next steps causing concern and frustration.

Student journalists don't want to be censored by their school, 2/24/22, Zoe Dym

The House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs will hear a bill Thursday that establishes freedom of the press to aspiring journalists. [HB1848](#) extends media protections against censorship to student journalists. If passed, Hawai'i public schools and the University of Hawai'i cannot censor school-sponsored media. This will not apply to any material that is an invasion of privacy, promotes dangerous ideas, or is obscene. HB1848 passed a joint education committee hearing earlier this month. It received two dozen testimonies in support from various publication and education groups such as the Hawai'i Publishers Association and Hawai'i State Teachers Association.