End of an era; HMC-West closes its doors for good

Sad ending for proud Laborers

Local 368 Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer Peter Ganaban explains what help is available through the union and unemployment filing questions at a special meeting for members of the former Hawaii Medical Center-West. About 150 brothers and sisters are affected by the medical facility’s closing in December of last year. Former HMC-West members collecting unemployment benefits are reminded to check-in the first five working days of each month or risk losing their benefits. HMC-West first opened its doors as Saint Francis Medical Center-West in 1990. It was sold to Hawaii Medical Center in 2007 by Saint Francis Healthcare System.

Hungarian artist’s love of Hawaii, unions inspiration for mural

One of the first things you will notice, walking up the steps of Local 368’s Oahu office, is a striking wall mural constructed of hundreds of ceramic tiles, depicting a construction worksite, with Diamond Head in the background.

That mural was commissioned to a then little-known Hungarian-born artist named Balazs Szabo. Prior to creating Local 368’s mural in 1980, Szabo was commissioned by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts in 1971, to create a 36 foot mural for the Kaimuki Regional Library - his first attempt at large-scale painting. *Bon Odori Hawaii* consists of nine separate panels, steel-bolted together to form ‘seams’ reminiscent of a traditional Japanese screen.

Szabo called the mural “a major success,” recalling that even Gov. George Ariyoshi’s mother (who was over 80-years-old at the time) danced the *bon* dance under the mural at its unveiling.

Artist Balazs Szabo (far right in white) examines the first fired tiles of Local 368’s mural along with representatives of the Franciscan Tile Company in this undated photo. (See ‘Mural’ on Page 3)

In a blow to the state’s healthcare industry and a grim reminder of Hawaii’s fragile economy, about 150 brothers and sisters of Local 368 lost their jobs with the closing of the Hawaii Medical Center West on Dec. 19, 2011.

“It’s very disappointing and sad that this happened, especially during the holidays,” said Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer Peter Ganaban. “Our brothers and sisters at Hawaii Medical Center West deserve better than this.”

Collectively, about 1,000 employees lost their jobs at both the Hawaii Medical Center West and East facilities. The closing comes after HMC filed a second Chapter 11 bankruptcy within three years. With the closing a total of 340 hospital beds were lost as well as a dialysis center and the only organ transplant facility in the Pacific. It also leaves the entire Oahu Westside without a major medical facility.

For employees like Starlyn Joseph, a pharmacy technician at HMC for four years, the closing came as a complete surprise. “I was shocked, shocked, totally shocked, because I thought that it was pretty much impossible for them to shut us down, given that we were once the biggest tile mural 23 feet by 13 feet for the entry of the lobby by Dennis Kimuma of the architectural firm Kimura and Yab of Hawaii, Szabo decided to use another medium besides paint and canvas. For Local 368’s mural, he chose to use ceramic tiles, even though he admitted he had “never even fired a single ceramic tile in my career.”

Szabo said he chose ceramic tiles to “symbolize the strength and durability of the union.” Through his personal research, he chose a Los Angeles company, Franciscan Tile Company, which had a tradition of over 100 years of American ceramic tile creating and table ware.

After meeting with technicians at the tile company and revealing his design and idea, they expressed
Aloha my brothers and sisters!
It is said that politics is a double-edged sword. In the hands of our enemies, it can be a dangerous weapon. One only has to look at the state of Wisconsin, where Republican Governor Scott Walker is trying to overturn all the gains made by unions over the past 50 years, such as the right to collectively bargain.

Closer to home, it’s unfortunate that certain building trades are trying to use political leverage to gain jurisdiction over work that is traditionally and rightfully ours. This is being done through attempts to change state law or administrative rules.

Let me be clear to all: Local 368 will do whatever it takes to protect and preserve what is traditional Laborers’ work. Rest assured, your leadership is in your corner, fighting for what is rightfully ours.

Recently, I was able to have a one-on-one meeting with Gov. Abercrombie, where I was able explain our position in this matter. The governor has assured me that there will be no changes to the building codes or administrative rules that would take away work from our hard-working members. For this, I am grateful for Governor Abercrombie’s kokua in this important issue. It is situations such as these that truly reflect the value of your union to be a politically active one. Like it or not, politics have a very direct effect on our families and livelihood.

Another political hot potato is the issue of killing the rail system. Despite the fact that a majority of Oahu residents voted for the rail, he is trying to undo years of work and lobbying to make rail a reality on Oahu. Many of you know first-hand how rough the construction industry has been for the past three to four years.

Now, Mr. Cayetano wants to drive a stake through the heart of this project at the eleventh hour, just as it is going through the final process of becoming a reality. This is the first major public works project since the construction of the H-3 Freeway during the early 90’s. The build-out will take some 20 years to complete. If allowed to proceed, some of you may even start and end your construction careers with this project. Additionally, development around the rail stations (called Transit-Oriented Development) will give even more Laborers work opportunities.

Let’s send a strong message to Mr. Cayetano this September at the polls that he should stay retired at his Hawaii Loa Ridge mansion.

Finally, I hope everyone takes the time to say a quiet prayer for our brothers and sisters of the now closed Hawaii Medical Center-West facility.

The bankruptcy and closing of both HMC East and West is a harsh reminder of how fragile our economy is. Despite signs that the economy is moving in the right direction, it couldn’t come fast enough for our 150 members at HMC-West.

To our displaced brothers and sisters, rest assured that Local 368 will do everything in our power to help you out in anyway possible during this difficult transitional period.

Laborer’s unique method nets nice grab of a crab

Laborer Robert Coe, Jr. uses an unusual method of catching Samoan Crabs from shore - a popular island delicacy.

Instead of using a circular crab net, which most crabbers use, Coe uses a heavy-duty spinning rod and reel to reach areas not usually accessible to other crabbers.

Using a piece of lead and a single hook to hold the bait, Coe also ties a series of slipknot loops on the fishing line, surrounding the hook, to snare unsuspecting crabs.

Coe said he has perfected his set-up through the years to enable him to catch Samoan crabs of all sizes. After casting his setup into a possible crab spot, he waits to see the ‘twitching’ of his rod tip, signalling a crab is trying to take the bait back to its lair. He then takes up the slack in the line and gives a quick jerk on his pole.

Hopefully, the loops do its job and snare the crab’s legs and pincers. From there, it’s just a matter of being able to reel it into shore and into his bucket and eventually to his dinner table.

Coe said his favorite crabbing spots are ‘secret’ locations on Oahu’s North Shore area. Coe has been a member of Local 368 since 1993.

2012 MCAH scholarship application available

The Mason Contractors Association of Hawaii is once again taking applications for its annual scholarships. A total of four $1,500 scholarships are available to graduates of Hawaii high schools entering or currently at Oahu, Maui and Big Island public schools.

Applications are available at the Oahu, Maui and Big Island offices and on Local 368’s website: www.local368.org

Member Robert Coe, Jr. stopped by the Union Hall to show-off this huge Samoan crab from his secret crabbing spot. Coe uses a rod and reel with a single hook and a series of loops to snag the crabs. This one was reeled-in after a 20-minute tug-of-war contest, which saw it lose one of its massive pincers during the battle.

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News/Photo Editor: Rich Nishie
Construction jobs focus legislative session

For the first time in many years, the governor, the Hawaii State Sen-ate and the Hawaii House of Repre-sentatives are speaking as one on job, jobs, and more jobs and they are doing something about it legislatively and administratively.

Gov. Neil Abercrombie said as he spoke to a joint Senate and House ses-sion that, “After my initial discussion with the House and Senate, I know that we are all committed to looking at an aggressive budget schedule for these jobs and maintenance con-struction projects. I am committed as well to working with you (the Leg-islature) to make sure that we have a healthy and strong construction budget and a solid plan to continue our investment in our economy.”

Economic Recovery and Jobs

Abercrombie submitted a capital improvement plan in 2011 for $2.7 billion through 2013. In his State-of-the-State speech on Monday, Jan. 23, 2012, the governor said economic recov-ery is a top priority. “All the signs show that private investment and construction appears hesitant and tentative,” said Abercrombie in his speech. “Therefore, it is the public sector (government) that must step up to invest in repairs and main-tenance, construction projects and infrastructure improvements. By ag-gressively putting these projects into action, we will ensure that job cre-a
tion continues.”

Speeding Up Procurement

There are about two dozen bills that aim to speed up the procurement and bidding process, to the award phase and then, to the notice to proceed phase with construction projects. One important theme is to limit or waive the protest phase, which often takes months to resolve and usually ends up in court. These bills, if en-acted, will save time and money and more importantly, will put people to work faster than the current system.

Public Land Development Corp.

One of the most innovative ideas to speed up the development and construction of homes and com-mercial facilities is the Public Land De
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development Corporation (PLDC).

HMC-West: Sad ending for many

(Continued from Page 1)

E.R. on the island. I was shocked and saddened at the same time knowing I was losing my job along with every body else. It was a very sad day for me.”

Since the closure, Joseph said she has put in applications to other hos-pital facilities and has gone back to college to further her education, but admits that there is “not much op-tions out here.”

As a Local 368 member, Joseph said she is appreciative that she does not have to look for three jobs on a weekly basis to collect her unem-ployment benefits. “That takes some stress off of our shoulders. It does help out a lot.”

For a few fortunate employees like Rusel Souza, a member of the facili-ties management department, they are actually still employed to keep the facility running, as it also serv-es a nearby clinical service building.

Souza said he helps maintain the air conditioning units and exhaust fans.

“We work day-to-day,” said Souza. “There is a plan to let us go. From there we’re not really sure, we’ll see what they want to do.”

Souza hopes to hold on to his job as long as possible, but is realistic.

“We have to put our applications out there as well, to see if anybody will pick us up. You always got to have a ‘Plan B,’” he said. “It’s kind of like having blindfolds. You’re not sure what direction you’re going, but you just try to do your best.”

In 2007, St. Francis Healthcare Sys-tem divested its two medical centers (St. Francis Medical Center in Lililha and St. Francis Medical Center-West).

The two hospitals were sold for $46.5 million to Hawaii Medical Center LLC, a joint venture between the Hawaii Physician Group, com-prising of local doctors, and Wichita, Kansas-based Cardiovascular Hos-pitals of America.

Mural: Ceramic tiles chosen to symbolize Local 368’s strength and durability

(Continued from Page 1)

After delivery of the tiles by Mat-
son, Szabo insisted that the tiles be installed by union workers to make it more meaningful. “Local 368 was at that time, protecting the basic labor force in Hawaii, so my theme was the representation of such labor,” Szabo explained. “The upper left (corner) is Diamond Head. Below, are many geometric forms indicating the fur-ther development of the island with the sweat and hard work of cement pouring, wheeling heavy loads and carrying sewage pipes, surrounded by the symbolic elements of Hawaii, with palm trees, rainbows and rain. The two center figures were the two founders (Eino Samson and Nor-man Janicki, Sr.), whose portra into the center as they are laying out and studying the future of the union.”

Not long after Szabo completed the mural, the financially-ailing Fran-ciscan Tile Company was purchased by the world-famous British Wedge
doors porcelain company for a few million dollars. When Wedgewood realized how valuable the land was that they had purchased, they turned around and sold it for 15 times the original price, effectively closing the factory.

“As an American tradition of over 100 years was destroyed and 400 loyal workers most of them experts in their field were out on the street, unprotected by a union” said Szabo. “A very sad ending. I felt fortunate to have the last big and quality project created there making the Laborers’ Union mural a historic piece of art and an example of what can happen without proper protection of work-ers in such a case.”

“Originally from Hungary, Szabo fled his country in 1956, at the age of 13, when the revolution against communist rule failed. He managed to escape and an example of what can happen without proper protection of work-ers in such a case.”

Originaly from Hungary, Szabo fled his country in 1956, at the age of 13, when the revolution against communist rule failed. He managed to escape and come to this once sleepy sugar plantation town, depicting decades of change in the passing of a single day.

The 69-year-old Szabo currently resides in Hilo, where he has been raising funds for The Balzis Artist Discovery Museum, which will also be located in Hilho, North Carolina. This museum will launch young North Carolinian artists’ careers as well as teach them how to success-fully manage their livelihood.
HILTP celebrates 2011 Apprenticeship graduates

Maui Apprenticeship graduates were flown to Hilo for their graduation ceremony. Pictured from left to right are: Director of Training Francis Tau’a, Big Island Apprenticeship Coordinator Lamar DeRego, Wayne Sonan, Phillip Pelekane, Patrick Ramos, Training Trustee Joby North, II and Pete Lindsey and Dean Kimura, Pacific Administrators representative.

Guest speakers...

Pacific Southwest Regional Manager and LIUNA Vice President Rocco Davis.

LIUNA Training & Education Fund Executive Director John LeConche.

Local 368 Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer and Training Fund co-chair Peter Ganaban.

Training Fund co-chair, Leonard Leong.

Big Island’s class speaker, Edward Santos.

Maui’s class speaker, Patrick Ramos.

Oahu’s class speaker, Malachi Atoia.

HILTP’s 2011 statewide Apprenticeship Program graduates

Oahu graduates
Aana, Charles
Acasio, Kalani
Agno, Edwin
Atoia, Malachi
Aupito, Joseph
Baptista, Teddy
Bonilla, James
Cardon, Roderick
Clark, William
Corpus Jr, Valeriano
Cristostomo, Shawn
Custino Jr, Edward
Demello-Key, Guy
Duncan, Kainoa
Enos Jr, Norman
Eperiam, Quinlen
Faia, Iefata

Flamar, James
Freitas, Kenneth
Gomes, Rupert
Huyhn, Thomas
Ireland, Christopher
Jose, Virgilio
Kaaauwai, Garrett
Lapuna, Ariel
Leaia, Matthew
Lee, Anthony
Mabanag, Steve
Mayola, Evianniell
Mekoh, Michael
Mundon, Garrett
Murga, Carlos
Nakai, Adrian
Onzuka, Travis
Paia, Josiah
Papali, Milton
Pasi, Conrad
Perkins, Charles
Perreira Jr, Paul
Phillips, Cliff
Pule, Jeremiah
Quinata, Travis
Ramseyer-Ho, Kamakako
Robinson, Robert
Sanchez, Josue
Simon, Criston
Smith, Darin
Spears, Michael
Tabilanga, Jesse-Paul
Tumayo Jr., Donato
Tenoso, Guillermo
Tollnui, Jerry
Tominiko, Robert
Tugaonen Jr, Ernesto
Tuileomotu, Aoniutea

Big Island graduates
Alves, Triva
Cordero Sr., Wayne
Davis, Shannon
Jones, David
Kepoo-Sabate, Storm
Quaglietta, Nicholas
Sanitos, Edward
Vaka’uta, Moesene

Maui graduates
Asuncion, Michael
Pelekane, Phillip
Ramos, Patrick
Sonan, Wayne

The Big Island’s first graduating apprenticeship class is all smiles at their graduation ceremony. Pictured from left to right are: Big Island Apprenticeship Coordinator Lamar DeRego, Director of Training Francis Tau’a, Edward Santos, Mosene Vaka’uta, David Jones, Shannon Davis, Triva Alves, Nicholas Quaglietta, Wayne Cordero, Storm Kepoo-Sabate, Training Trustees Joby North, II and Pete Lindsey and Pacific Administrators representative, Dean Kimura.
Local 368’s Retiree Corner...

Retirees celebrate Christmas around the state

Retirees across the state got into the holiday spirit with Christmas parties on the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai and the Big Island during the month of December. Parties were coordinated by Local 368 field representatives, staff and retirees on the respective islands.

At the various parties, friends and fellowship were common themes, as retirees were able to meet, ‘talk story’ and reconnect with each other. Plenty of prizes and good food also helped make the parties memorable events.

“We are honored to help our retirees enjoy their holidays. By having a party on each island, we hope all retirees are able to enjoy themselves during the holiday season,” said Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer Peter Ganaban. “Retirees truly form the backbone of Local 368 and this is just a small way to say ‘thank you’ for all that they have done through their many years of service and hardwork.”

Retirees and their guests came from across the Big Island to celebrate Christmas in Hilo.

Big Island retirees Vincente Domingo gets ready to receive his flu shot, while Generalissimo Madriaga fills out his paperwork. Flu shots were available at most of the retiree Christmas parties, thanks to Pacific Administrators and Kaiser Permanente.

On Kauai, Valentine Ako shared what it was like to work as a Laborer when the union first came to Kauai, as Joby North, II, who also served as the emcee, listens intently.

Lucky number winner Leo Kaeo of Maui looks over the prize table as Myra Carvalho of the Maui office assists him.

Pleasant weather helped bring a nice turnout for the Maui party.

Oahu retirees arrived early in anticipation to the annual Christmas Party. Oahu Retiree Club volunteers helped with the sign-in process. Lots of food and prizes were common themes at all retiree Christmas parties.

Local 368 officers and the Oahu Retiree Club also honored long-time International Representative Ron Myers (far left in hat) for his many years of service. Also in attendance were International Representative Rob Trenkle and Pacific Southwest Manager Rocco Davis (to the left of Myers).

It’s electric! Oahu retirees, guests and Local 368 officers and staff got down on the dance floor to do the ‘Electric Slide.’ A fun time was had by all who attended.
International Convention mandates implemented

Effective Jan. 1, 2012, two changes required by decisions made at the International Convention have been implemented.

$2 Monthly Dues Increase

For active members paying construction dues, the monthly rate increased from $36 per month to the current $38 per month. For active members paying non-construction dues, the monthly rate increased from $31 per month to the current $33 per month.

This increase will not affect retirees’ dues, which will remain at $20 per month.

Hiring Hall Code of Performance

The International Union has required Local Unions to implement a Code of Performance in their hiring hall procedures. Local 368 was able to get the International to agree to modifications in what we needed to include, since our hiring hall already included similar provisions.

The one big change we had to include was that members terminated for excessive absenteeism or tardiness, insubordination or theft will be suspended from the hiring hall for one month. A second termination for these reasons results in a six month suspension. A third termination for these reasons results in indefinite suspension. Members facing this suspension may appeal their suspension in writing.

The purpose of the Code is to encourage members to display responsible and productive work habits in this difficult economic period in the construction industry.

Obituaries

In memory of our brothers and sisters who now rest in peace, we extend our sincere condolences to the families of:

Sotero Aguinaldo
Pedro Augustin, Sr.
Marino Badua
Alfred Bautista
Rolando Bautista
Domingo Cabudol
Mila Castro
Calixto Corpuz
Nancy Cui
Masako Dagulo
Rodrigo Diamsay
Domingador Duguez
Mauro Gante
Marko Gjonai

Stephen Hagi
Shirley Ann Kealoha
Rudolph Kim
Felix Labenia
Charles Lopes
Remedios Mendoza
Juan Pasion
Howard Plunkett
Manuel Ponce
Bernard Sanford
Robert Sharp
Lawrence Smythe
Donato Tamayo, Sr.
Melchor Tenoso

Bienvenido Villator

To their families, we express our deepest sympathies.