



# Prevailing Winds

Representative Isaac W. Choy

District 23 - Mānoa, Punahou, University, Moili'ili



ST. PETERSBURG

I am writing this issue of *Prevailing Winds* from the bow of the Queen Victoria on the Volga River. I am on my annual trip with my wife Laurie to Europe, and this year, we chose to follow the travels of the Russian Czars from St. Petersburg to Russia. The weather was quite cold (or should I say freezing.) Russia is much like Alaska, in fact, the resemblance is quite surprising. The joke on this cruise is in Russia, all you see is churches and Kremlins built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, destroyed by the Czars and then rebuilt by the new regimes.



Comrade Choy

It seems that our relations with this country is currently not that great. The glaring evidence of this is that the wine list in Russian restaurants does not offer any American wines. Pretty deep huh? But who drinks wine in Russia, vodka is the drink of choice and I can see why. You are required to drink vodka in one gulp and not sip it. They told me a Russian man would hit me on the side of the head if they saw me sipping vodka. I did my very best on this entire trip not to cause an international incident by sipping vodka. I also learned how to properly drink vodka, it has to be in large quantities.

Being a CPA, I am always interested in how the government gets its revenues and how people support the government. I had a fascinating conversation with one of the managers of the cruise. I noticed that people in shops in Russia accept all kinds of currencies; dollars, euros, pounds, rubles. I inquired how people got paid, how taxes are collected and administered. Well, I got this funny look when I asked, "*how much taxes are collected from people's income?*" The answer was "*everything is black.*" Only registered people paid taxes, but the common working man doesn't register, and if they had to register, the companies that employ them would pay them a small amount in their official paycheck and the rest would come in an envelope. People have no need to declare their income and they don't have to establish credit. People don't buy homes, they rent. They don't trust banks or want land ownership because history has taught them the rules can be changed at any time and everything and anything can be taken away from them. Companies that do business in Russia make arrangement with the government to pay whatever is negotiated.

I also asked, "*what happens to them when they are audited?*" They said, "*it is cheaper to bribe the auditor and tell them to go away.*" They predicted 10% of their GDP are bribes. But I was told that Russians do not trust their government, government statistics and the weather report.

It seems that their economy is basically a barter system facilitated by currencies of all types. There is a learned distrust of the government and they are not that demanding about government infrastructure i.e. roads, utilities, water, sewers, etc. The interesting service provided by the government is heat, when the temperature goes below 0c.

But all in all, the people are extremely nice, the country is beautiful and there is a lot to see and learn. I wonder if our country is heading in their direction or if they are heading in ours. Through these trips, I know that we do not have the ultimate answer of how to govern people. Most governments which have significant histories seem to just sway with the *Prevailing Winds*.

Aloha,

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The Be Ready Mānoa (BRM) team consists of a group of dedicated Mānoa residents, with representatives from the Mānoa Neighborhood Board, Mālama Mānoa, the Mānoa Neighborhood Security Watch network, local businesses, faith-based and community organizations.

“Together, we prepare, survive and thrive” is the motto, which was chosen to rally community members in developing a strategic preparedness framework for Mānoa. As the *first urban community* in Honolulu to develop a disaster preparedness plan, Mānoa strives to serve as a model to help immediate neighbors and others beyond. In the chaos and uncertainty, which can accompany disaster, the best chance of surviving and thriving will only happen when the community works together.

After the Katrina and Sandy experiences, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) realized that Federal, State and Local agencies could not do it all so has focused its efforts on building skills at the local level to enable communities to respond to disasters. We were told at our first FEMA course for Community Leaders on November 21, 2013 not to expect emergency agencies to be able to respond within a week of a disaster. Hawai‘i is the most remote archipelago in the world; there is less money, fewer personnel and a very long supply line. We must rely on our own resources.

— The PLAN —

- ▶ Organize and strengthen our existing Neighborhood Security Watches with more training, more operations strategy and recruitment of more members.
- ▶ Develop an overall communications strategy, using telephone trees, HAM radio, e-mail, texting, social media, couriers, etc.
- ▶ Develop a general operational plan with a command center and line of command.
- ▶ Increase the number of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trained volunteers and organize CERT teams.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON: ♦Be Ready Mānoa ♦ Meeting Dates/Times ♦ Trainings ♦ How to Get Involved  
**Web: [www.bereadymanoa.org](http://www.bereadymanoa.org) Email: [info@bereadymanoa.org](mailto:info@bereadymanoa.org)**



# In The Community

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

Manoa Valley District Park

## FALL FUN FAIR

Friday, November 7, 2014  
 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., New Gym  
 Carnival type games  
 for the children to enjoy.



Assisted by the Manoa Lions and various community service/sports organizations of Manoa Valley.

Paid in part by the taxpayers of the City & County of Honolulu

We All Quality in Life



CITY & COUNTY OF HONOLULU  
 Kirk Caldwell, Mayor  
 DEPT. OF PARKS & RECREATION  
 Michele K. Nekota, Director

The Department of Parks and Recreation, City and County of Honolulu, is committed to making all of its programs and leisure services accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. If you have need for reasonable modifications, please call your local park. TTY users call 768-8027.



11th Annual Community Clean-Up  
 for Kaimuki HS-Moiliili Comm. Ctr.-Kapahulu Ctr.

Saturday, November 22, 2014

9:00 AM-1:00 PM KAIMUKI HS - 2705 KAIMUKI AVE.

Please save your recyclable waste for this date and help turn trash into cash for community programs. Please bring canned goods to support the Hawaii Food Bank.

Acceptable Items:

- Scrap metal, bicycles, appliances
- 3 propane tanks, 3 fire extinguishers
- Computers, printers, scanners, no limit
- 1 TV per car
- HI-5 beverage containers
- Used household cooking oil
- Cell phones, printer cartridges, PDAs, etc.
- Batteries, all kinds
- Canned goods for Hawaii Food Bank
- Usable clothing and household items
- Used eye glasses and hearing aids
- Incandescent light bulbs exchange for CFLs
  - Maximum of 4 free CFLs per car
- Prom dresses, accessories
- Women business suits, accessories
- Pet food, towels, blankets
- Free towing of unwanted cars, call 291-6151



**SORRY, WE CANNOT ACCEPT: TIRES, PAINT, MICROWAVE OVENS, MOTOR OIL, HAZARDOUS FLUIDS, CARDBOARD, PAPER, PLASTICS, WOOD, AND BULKY ITEMS.**

For CURBSIDE PICK-UP contact:  
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MAHALO to:  
 Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa, Gov. Neil Abercrombie, Sen. Brian Taniguchi, Speaker Emeritus Calvin Say, Rep. Scott Nishimoto, Rep. Isaac Choy, Rep. Scott Saiki, Rep. Mark Hashem, Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Councilmember Ann Kobayashi, Councilmember Stanley Chang