THE ELEPAIO

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For the Better Protection of Wildlife in Hawaii

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BIRDS IN MAN'S WAY - OR VICE VERSA?

By Hubert Frings
(University of Hawaii)

How do birds come to be called pests?

By competing with man for food? By occupying space that he also wants? By stealing man's goods?

Certainly these would cause us to classify most animals as pests. But there are subtle twists, particularly where birds are involved.

To use the word pests to describe birds may seem almost slanderous. Certainly most birds are usually useful and pleasant companions. The International Union of Applied Ornithology has called for a halt to the use of the word "pest" for birds; they recommend speaking of "bird depredations."

Throughout man's history, many birds have shared foods with him. As long as man merely collected his foods as the birds do, in the woods and fields, no trouble developed. But when civilized man began to grow food in bulk and demand that only he touch it, birds were in trouble.

Wherever wheat, corn, or rice are grown, blackbirds, crows, and the so-called ricebirds may eat large quantities. It is easy to call these pests, but let us not forget that the insect feeding and weed-seed eating of these birds make them, overall, useful to man. The situation, however, may be economically more involved.

Starlings, for instance, will peck at ripening bunches of grapes. They eat few. However, when a farmer removes the injured grapes, the bunches are poorly shaped and buyers will not pay as much for them as for full bunches.

In Arizona, prairie horned larks, among other usually useful birds, pluck sprouting lettuce plants from the soil. Since the lettuce is planted so that it reaches the market at the time of highest prices, the delay caused by replanting may be excessively costly.

Are birds responsible for social systems in which foods that look pretty or are obtainable out of season have extra high values?

Urban civilization also creates pests. Man must share the responsibility.

Starlings and mynahs roost during the summer in rows of trees or during the winter on warm buildings. Both of these are supplied by man. Biologically speaking, they have merely adapted to the new conditions created by man. But man does not like it.

Civilized man worships order. So he picks up scraps ordinarily used by birds to make nests. Should he, then, blame the enterprising birds in England that help themselves to rubber blades from automobile windshield wipers to hold their nests together?

What of the little birds in Europe that knock caps from milk bottles to get a drink? They don't drink much, but man doesn't appreciate their ingenuity.

Perhaps the most poignant case is that of the Albatrosses or Gooney Birds of Midway Island. These magnificent sea birds have used this island, and a few others nearby, for nesting for thousands of years. There is no fresh water on the islands, but these birds don't need it -- they drink sea water. Man, however, does need it and so has been able to live there only recently.

Now Midway is an air station, an important part of our national defense system. And now the Albatrosses, as they fly about getting food for their babies, are in the way of airplanes. When a plane strikes one of these birds, human lives are in danger.

How far can we ask birds to retreat before civilization -- and in this case, ironically, one of the seamier sides of civilization -- to avoid becoming pests?

Pileated woodpeckers in the eastern U.S. are still scarce, and once were rare. They were driven to the forested hills by man. Yet they find wooden power poles crossing the wilderness useful for drumming and damage them. Scarce as they are, they are now called pests.

Just as plants, regarded in one place or time as desirable, may in another be considered weeds, so birds shift in man's opinion.

It is certain that civilization, as it becomes more pervasive and complicated, will make more opportunities for animals to become pests. Man's future will in part depend upon how well he can manage his fellow creatures for his benefit, and theirs. The problems are many, and their solution will require man's best use of his knowledge and understanding.

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THE RED BISHOP
By Eleanor Westendorf

For the last three weeks we have been enjoying the song and brilliance of a lone Red Bishop bird* in our kukui tree. We heard his churrups for a week before we saw him and wondered what kind of a bird he was. He sounded so near we thought he must be in our tree, but were unable to see him. At last, we were rewarded by his bravery. He presented himself on an open branch very close to where we were sitting on the deck. For a few days after his introduction, he was very alert and cautious and the slightest movement sent him hiding among the thickets of the leaves. Then he began feeding with the sparrows and doves on the deck railing or on the ground. We feed the multitude of sparrows and doves three to four times a day on parakeet mix. Mr. Bishop is now so fearless that he ventures quite near to consume his share of seed. Once he picked up seed from the floor of the deck about two feet from where we were sitting. When he plummets from the tree to the ground he is as bright, by day, as a tracer-bullet is in the dead of night.

Our first thought was that Mr. Bishop had escaped from a cage and that we would feed him well so that he'd stay in our tree away from harm. To our amazement, on August 10th, at 6:00 a.m., we saw THREE Red Bishops. All three were sitting near one another facing toward our bedroom window. At first, we thought we were seeing triple. We rubbed the sleep from our eyes and we hadn't been deceived. There they sat. Two were lighter in color. We figured there was one male and two females or one of the

females was a young bird; it was smaller than the other two. Later in the morning a fourth appeared. We saw two brilliant males. This morning, August 12th, we have seen two males and a female. We have not seen the three nor four together in a group since the first day.

We have identified them through the book, BIRDS OF THE WORLD, by Oliver L. Austin. After seeing so many we wonder if some group has introduced them in this area. Mr. Paul Breese, superintendent of the Honolulu Zoo, and Mr. David Woodside, Fish and Wildlife, have no knowledge of it.

I live at the foot of Diamond Head on the beach. BIRDS OF THE WORLD says the Red Bishops nest in reed beds and wet marshes. Where could they be nesting in this area? Does the small lake in the Diamond Head crater provide such an environment?

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*Editor's Notes: BIRDS OF THE WORLD by Oliver L. Austin, page 307, "Red Bishop, Pyromelana orix, South Africa, 5½ inches. The male Red Bishop is one of the brightest-colored of all the weavers and has one of the most interesting courtships.... Bishops are great termite eaters, but the large flocks often damage crops...."

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GRAY JAVA RICEBIRD
By Margaret Titcomb

On July 22nd, a Java ricebird or Java sparrow, Munia oryzivora (linnaeus), appeared on the lawn in the court of Bishop Museum, giving pleasure to those of us who could spare time to observe it.

The bird is sufficiently rare to have escaped our guide to birds of Hawaii. It may be interesting to cite E.L. Caum's description of it in case others are seen.

> Length 6 inches, the sexes alike. Head and chin black; cheeks white; neck, back, closed wing, and breast gray; abdomen gray tinged with pinkish; rump and tail black; under tail coverts white; bill short, heavy, pinkish; legs and feet pink.
>
> A native of Java and Malaysia, where it feeds upon weed and grass seeds, and to a very great extent upon green rice. It is a terrible pest to the rice growers, but a favorite with aviarists, who have developed a pure white form. A rather indefinite record that this species was introduced about 1865 by Dr. William Hillebrand exists. In the U.S. Department of Agriculture Technical Bulletin 61 there is a note to the effect that it was brought into Hawaii about 1900. It has, unfortunately, failed to survive.
>
> Family Icteridae--Orioles, Meadow larks, and Blackbirds.
>
> (Bishop Museum, Occ. Paper, X(9):46, 1933)

Not having glasses at hand, we could not see the minute details, but the white patch at the neck was very striking, a kind of elongated oval. The bird must have been a pet, escaped, for it had no alarm at the nearness of people, perhaps twenty-five feet away. It enjoyed its assiduous search for lawn seeds. Its manner was brisk and alert. As to survival, we wonder how many of these sparrows are with us now.

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Identification was made by comparison with color plate "C" in BIRD HAVEN, FINCHES, THEIR CARE AND BREEDING, 1936, where it is called "Gray Java Rice Bird."

E.H. Bryan, Jr.

A CALL FOR BAT OBSERVERS

In the past year I have made some progress in field study of the bat on the Big Island. A prominent behavioral feature is local seasonal movement. For example, bats were common in Waipio Valley last fall, scarce in late winter and spring, and practically absent until late summer.

Some interisland migration may occur because bats are reported quite frequently on Hawaii and Kauai, but seldom seen on the islands between. Evidence about migration could be obtained if enough bird enthusiasts turned into bat watchers for the 30-minute period before dark--wherever they happened to be in the state but particularly on Oahu, Molokai, Lanai and Maui. Any records of bats seen, with location, time, and date, would be useful.

Fall is an excellent time to start a bat observation program because of the high rate of bat activity at this season. Year around watching would be most valuable if negative records were kept in addition to those of bats seen. There have been recent reports of bats on windward Oahu and on the Manoa Campus. On Hawaii last fall bats tended to forage just offshore over coves and bays, apparently finding insects adrift from the land. At this same time many were seen also at elevation of 1,000 to 3,000 feet.

Correspondence on results of searching for bats would be most welcome.

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WAIPIO VALLEY
By Margaret Titcomb

In Waipio Valley, on the island of Hawaii, there is appropriate habitat for shorebirds and some are there, taking advantage of the opportunity. Like all other areas, the area invites "surveys," plans for improvement, so-called, of one sort or another; some such plans are merely the forerunners of plans to exploit.

The Hamakua District Development Council, Inc. is trying to channel some of the interest in Waipio toward a conservative plan which will save the valley from violent change, save its natural beauty. They advise:

"1. Channeling of water, removal of vegetation, and construction of roads and buildings should be planned and implemented in harmony with the natural features of the land.

2. The lower, marshy portion of the valley should not be totally developed for agricultural use, but would be more wisely used largely as a wildlife refuge. This is one of the few sites on the island where shorebirds and waterfowl can be found.

3. Some of this same lower section should also be reserved as a public park. Although not safe for swimming, the beach front has a large recreational value. It should be accessible over its entire length for surf fishing and other public enjoyment. As envisioned in the Kohala Hamakua General Plan (Bush and Gerakis, 1963, p.57) the park facility is to be centered about a pond behind the dunes supporting a public sports fishery."

Waipio Valley is now one of the most valuable areas for taro culture, other areas fast disappearing. The old, sacred valley of the high chiefs of ancient Hawaii should have the most enlightened care. Hotels that dominate should not be allowed. There are plenty elsewhere! Let Waipio remain for taro, for waterfowl, for park and fishing, a recreational area for everyone, and not another beauty spot of Hawaii currycombed for tourists, and lost to the rest of us. 6/24/64

WHAT IS CONSERVATION?

The March, 1964, issue of the AMERICAN FORESTS on page 22 has an interesting article, "Should We Change the Name of Conservation?", by E.S. Hurd, a well-known midwestern industrial forester, who, in order to satisfy his curiosity as to what others thought about conservation, made an informal survey by asking 600 Wisconsin high school students to write for five minutes on "what they believed conservation to be." The results were as he suspected--varied!

From this survey he concluded that conservation can and does mean many things to many people, and attempts to educate and inform the public are futile until standardization or an exacting definition of conservation becomes established. He advocated the use of "resource management"instead of the ambiguous word, conservation.

He suggested that conservation become a function of resource management (1) by producing a maximum yield of products on a forever basis for renewable resources, such as forests, wildlife, water, and scenery and (2) by conserving, preserving, and protecting the non-renewable resources, such as soil, minerals, historic sites, and unique physical features.

The author asked, "What is conservation--its purpose, its influence, its control, and its need?"

He listed the following definitions from different sources:

1. The use of earth for the good of man. (Gifford Pinchot)
2. A state of harmony between man and the land. (Aldo Leopold)
3. The official care and protection of natural resources, such as forests and the conserving, preserving and protecting from loss and waste. (Dictionary)
4. A reduction of the rate of disappearance or consumption and acorresponding increase in the used surplus left at the end of a given period. (College professor)
5. The care of natural resources by improving the forest lands and by stopping polluting streams. To keep a quantity of wild animals around. All about the birds, bees and trees. (High school boys)

The editor of the magazine pointed out that Gifford Pinchot coined the name "conservation," and it meant "wise use," but today millions of people contend it means "preservation" rather than "wise use" of resources.

At Hanford, Washington, on September 26, 1963, at the dedication of the new atomic energy facility President Kennedy said, "There are two points on conservation that have come home to me in the last two days. One is the necessity for us to protect what we already have, what nature gave us, and use it well, not to waste water or land, to set aside land and water, recreation, wilderness, and all the rest now, so that it will be available to those who come in the future. That is the traditional concept of conservation, and it still has a major part in the national life of the United States. But the other part of conservation is the newer part, and that is to use science and technology to achieve significant break throughs as we are doing today and in that way to conserve the resourceswhich 10 or 20 or 30 years ago may have been wholly unknown."

What is your definition? Are you satisfied with the name conservation?

Let us hear from you--your definition, comments, and experiences concerning conservation.

Unoyo Kojima

READERS' NOTES

THE HONOLULU ADVERTISER, June 13, 1964, A Tragic End for a Brave Pigeon
(Janet Bell's contribution)

Despite Waikiki firemen's efforts to save a white pigeon that had been impaled on the thorn of a date palm near the Honolulu Natatorium for at least five days, the ordeal was too much for the bird, for it died after the men took it to the station to recuperate. The bird was apparently surviving on food brought by other pigeons.

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, June 23, 1964, page 16, Church Group Acquires Campsite; Sugar Cane Loses

The Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ plans to divide 47 acres of the 131 acres acquired on July 1 in the Makao Valley close to Sacred Falls, near Hauula, Oahu into one-acre lots for home sites. Remaining 84 acres will be used for denominational campsite. The land is now mostly used by Kahuku Plantation for sugar cane cultivation. The spokesman for the plantation indicated that the loss of land poses a financial problem, because although the plantation has a large mill capable of producing some 30,000 tons a year, it is only producing about 20,000, because it does not have enough land.

Does this mean more ponds and mud flats to be filled in for cane field? Where will the stilts, gallinules, coots, plovers, turnstones, sanderlings, tattlers, ducks, and curlews feed?

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, June 29, 1964, page 1, Conservation Use for Isle Scenic Areas

Under the Land Use Law the scenic area viewed from the Nuuanu Pali lookout is designated as a conservation district for aesthetic reasons. It had been zoned for agriculture.

"Although agriculture and construction is possible in a conservation zone, permission must first be granted by the State Department of Land and Natural Resources. Conservation districts under the Land Use Law are supposed to preserve scenic areas, park lands, wildernesses and beaches, and conserve endemic plants, fish and wildlife.

"Among other scenic areas zoned as conservation are the following:

"Oahu--Upper Nuuanu Valley, Kawainui Swamp, Kahana Valley, Waimea Valley, hills and ridges near Kaneohe, Kailua, Lanikai, and Kahaluu Valley.

"Maui--Seven Sacred Pools, Wailua Valley, Waianapanapa, Kapalua Beach, Wailua-Kipahulu shore, Olowalu, Maalaea - Lahaina shore.

"Kauai--Haena-Ke'e shore, Kalalau Valley, Waimea Canyon, Lumahai Beach, Wailua River Valley, Allerton Gardens.

"Hawaii--Kealakekua-Milolii shore, Pohoiki-Kaimu shore, Kailua-Puako shore, Boiling Pots-Rainbow Falls rim, Honuapo-Punaluu shore.

"Molokai--Upper Halawa Valley.

"Among areas zoned for agriculture were the Waipio and Pololu Valleys on the Big Island and Keanae and Wailua on Maui."

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, June 30, 1964, page 7, Sea Bird Migration Study Under Way

To trace the migration routes of sea birds across the Pacific, both Japan and the United States will release birds with identification bands and orange streamers. This joint study is conducted by the Japan Society for Promotion of Science and the U.S. Wildlife Service. The survey is expected to help prevent infectious diseases caused by viruses carried by sea birds, and also to aid in detecting fish movements.

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, July 7, 1964, page 26, 16 Species Have Already Vanished; Intensive Effort Launched to Save Near-Extinct Isle Birds

In order to halt the extinction of wildlife, the Secretary of Interior announced the appointment of a study team to preserve near extinct wildlife in the U.S. The team is composed of specialists in the biology of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish--all from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

The Interior Department reported that of the 23 species of extinct birds in the U.S. in the last 150 years, 16 are from Hawaii, and of the 35 endangered species, 16

are native Hawaiian birds, but none of the fish, reptile nor mammals from Hawaii was listed as extinct or endangered.

The list of birds in danger of extinction includes the nene, Laysan duck, Hawaiian duck, Hawaiian gallinule, Hawaiian stilt, Hawaiian crow, puaiohi (small Kauai thrush), Nihoa miller-bird, Kauai oo, Kauai Nukupuu, Maui parrotbill, ou, palila, Nihoa finch and crested honey-creeper. Those already extinct are the Laysan Island rail, spotted Hawaiian rail, Oahu thrush, Laysan miller-bird, kioea, Oahu oo, Laysan honey-eater, Hawaii mamo, Perkin's mamo, Oahu akialoa, Lanai akialoa, Oahu nukupuu, Oahu akepa, ula-ai-hawane, Palmer's hopue, and yellow-head hopue.

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, July 23, 1964, page 1, Senate Sends Botanical Garden Bill to House

The U.S. Senate passed and sent to the House a bill to charter a non-profit, non-political National Tropical Botanical Garden Corporation. The bill sponsored by Senators Fong and Inouye provides for the development of the botanical garden as an educational and scientific center. It would be a controlled andstaffed institution which would maintain a growing collection of trees and other plants, under scientific management and control. It would not only be a place of beautiful flowers and trees for tourists but also a major area for scientific study and research which might even revolutionize certain areas of industry, health and food production. Although it does not specify the location of the garden, Kahana State Park, to be developed half way between Kaneohe and Kahuku, has been considered an ideal spot by the leaders of the movement. The bill merely authorizes the granting of a Federal charter for the corporation, and it does not establish the park.

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, August 7, 1964, page 17, Major Tropical Garden is Likely for Islands

Final legislative action was taken late yesterday, so the bill granting a national charter for the establishment of a Pacific Tropical Botanical Garden is waiting for President Johnson's approval. As provided in the Senate bill the name was changed from National to Pacific. Hawaii Congressmen who have worked hard for the passage of the legislation say that they have been virtually assured the garden will operate in Hawaii.

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, July 24, 1964, page 1-A, U.S. Decision Awaited on Bug Killer

A Department of Agriculture decision is expected soon on a request to use malathion to fight the attack of the green stink bug on Hawaii's macadamia nuts crop. The specialists are still working on the tests to determine if any residue would remain on the nut meats.

We hope the specialists are also testing the effects it has on the birds and animals in that area, and the State Board of Agriculture will be cautious in its use.

What became of the biological control that is so effectively being used on Oahu? Why not use the same control for the macadamia nut crops?

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Reply from Dr. Otagaki, Chairman, Board of Agriculture, State Department of Agriculture

"This will acknowledge your letter of August 18 concerning the use of Malathion to control the Southern green stink bug on macadamia crops.

"I appreciate your concern about the use of this chemical by farmers in the Kona District and hope that I can enlighten you as to why it was recommended.

"It is true that Hawaii has been eminently successful in the biological control of some pests, and it appears that we are getting excellent results on Oahu and Kauai by this means with the Southern green stink bug. However, on Hawaii, the Southern green stink bug became established much later (August, 1963), and the parasites have not had ample time to reduce the stink bug below economic pest levels. Consequently, a few months ago, damage in excess of $40,000 was sustained by one grower in the Kona District and present information indicates that the bugs are building up at the 2,300' level and may inflict serious damage to the macadamia crops soon.

Until the parasites are well established in the Kona District, it is necessary to supplement biological control with chemical control in order to protect the macadamia

nut industry.

With reference to the effect of Malathion on wildlife, especially birds, we believe this will be negligible under Kona conditions as most birds abhor stink bugs and the insect fauna of macadamia trees is very limited. It must be realized, however, that this is merely an educated guess as Malathion has not been used on this crop to date and, therefore, no observations or studies under our conditions have been made."

Unoyo Kojima

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FIELD NOTES

8/30/64: Hickam Harbor - Bill Carney reported sighting a lesser yellowlegs.

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9/9/64: Clay Beach, near Ft. Kam, Honolulu

Happy to report the shorebirds are back again in this area. There were 11 turnstones--some were still in their breeding plumage, and it is no wonder they are called ruddy turnstones. The reflection on the water as they stood on their pinkish-orange legs with the setting sun softly accentuating the ruddy back was a beauty to behold. Among the turnstones were 4 sanderlings, 2 tattlers, and 4 plovers.

9/16/64: The golden plovers are back at Hickam AFB. Their feeding grounds are established, and somehow each bird knows its own feeding area and will not dare trespass into its neighbor's territory. Many of the birds still have their breeding plumage, but they are quickly losing their black feathers.

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If you see a ruddy turnstone with red paint on its back, please let us know, P.O. Box 5032, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96814. These birds were painted on Pribilof Islands, Alaska.

Unoyo Kojima

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On August 17, William V. Ward gave an interesting talk on the songs of the apapane. He not only played records of the apapane's songs but also showed slides to illustrate the singing. He said that there are 16 to 18 different songs, but he does not know the reason for the differences, because the songs are different not only from one island to another but also from one location to another on the same island.

He asked the following questions and hoped that eventually we may be able to find the answers:

1. Since apapane is a versatile singer, is it changing its song to the environment?
2. Are the songs to identify the flocks?
3. Is this phenomenon one indication that the process of forming new species is still going on?

He said that because apapane will not feed on artificial nectar, it is difficult to do any laboratory study on them.

He and his wife, over 13-year period, have recorded songs of 50 bird species in Hawaii.

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On September 7, Alex Isenberg, ornithologist from Portola Valley, California, showed two films at a joint meeting of Hui Manu and the Hawaii Audubon Society. One of the films was taken by Mr. Isenberg at his aviary, Jamaica, and para-jungle in Florida, the other was the Encyclopaedia Britannica film on the life history of the hummingbirds.

Paul Breese introduced the speaker by saying that Mr. Isenberg not only has the largest collection of softbills in the U.S. but also was able to rear birds of paradise--one pair with a clutch of 3 eggs, lived for 12 days.

According to Mr. Isenberg since hummingbirds are garden birds, they will not be a threat to the native birds, so Hawaii need not fear their introduction. The streamer-tailed hummingbird thrives on the African tulip nectar, and we have plenty of this tree growing all over the island. Another bird under question for introduction is the solataire. We were treated to the tape recording of the flutelike call of this songster. This bird lives among the pines, and Hawaii lacks the suitable habitat for its survival.

Unoyo Kojima

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WANTED: (1) An editor for THE ELEPAIO
Please call Mike Ord, telephone 587-328, for details.

(2) Materials for THE ELEPAIO
(a) Field notes
(b) Scientific papers
(c) Interesting conservation or wildlife experiences
(d) Interesting publications
Please mail articles to the editor, P.O. Box 5032, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96814

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OCTOBER ACTIVITIES:

October 11 - Field trip to study shorebirds. Bring lunch, water, and if possible, your own car. Transportation cost ($1.00) to be paid to the drivers.
Meet at the Library of Hawaii at 7:00 a.m. PLEASE NOTE TIME.
Leader: Mike Ord, telephone: 587-328.

October 12 - Board meeting at the Honolulu Aquarium Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Members are always welcome.

October 19 - General meeting at the Honolulu Aquarium Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Program for the night: Eugene Kridler will show a film WINGS OVER THE BLITZEN, filmed at Malheur Refuge, Oregon. (Mr. Kridler was scheduled for September meeting, but unforseen circumstances kept him out of town, so we are scheduling him for this month.)

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MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 5032, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96814

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Junior (18 years and under) - $1.00 per annum
Life - $50.00