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Please consider the following as an Op Ed piece, or as a letter to the editor.

While it is understandable that we all desperately want to hear good news about our economic futures, the good news we need to know is not the kind Paul Brewbaker offered in the "Focus" section of the *Advertiser* of April 19, 2009. "Spring may have sprung for the stock market", he says. "There may actually be a bottom approaching in this downturn." The current economic situation of the state? "It's not as bad as you might think." Finally, "Consumers are starting to come out of their cave and investors are out hunting and gathering. Spring is in the air."

As becomes an economist (or a futurist) Brewbaker is cautious in his statements: he writes "may" and not "will". But the headlines and subheadlines, for which I assume Brewbaker is not responsible, but are probably all most people will read, tell another story: "Slowly but surely...recovery in sight...." A Flag-clad tortoise is depicted approaching a "finish" line.

I do not doubt that the economic situation of Hawaii is not currently as bad as some people think, and that consumers will do their best to consume and investors to invest. That is the pathology of the current economic system: it is based on forcing people to buy things they don't want with money they don't have and so must borrow. It is an economic system driven only by growth for growth's sake with no concern for the long run environmental and human consequences, and no awareness of its ultimate unsustainability. Yet we are offered no alternative by our political or economic leaders and thus continue to rush like lemmings over a series of economic cliffs to our ultimate demise.

There may indeed be several bounces up as the local and global economy continues on down towards a finish line that does indeed signify the end of a way of life many have enjoyed and many more endured for the past thirty years.

I personally enjoyed many parts of it, and deeply regret it did not transform into the high tech society of abundance for all that once was possible. That transformation is now impossible because voters and investors over the last thirty years have been seduced into

supporting an economy of greed, waste, and endless growth instead of developing the energy and materials bases and distribution modes that could have guaranteed a good life for all in a sustainable economy and environment.

We all now face a future of downwardly spiraling living standards, energy insufficiency, and environmental degradation, with occasional upticks of optimism and relief. But if one looks more carefully at the situation, there still is reason for optimism in the long run. It lies in the creation of a new political economy in Hawaii of significant self-sufficiency in energy, food, and other goods and services. It is a way of life that many in Hawaii have told me over the years they prefer to the current endless and unfair rat race. It has become my preference too, simply because the alternative is too gruesome to contemplate.