"Be Smart, Be Clean, Be Responsible"

In retrospect, it was obvious where the trends of the 90's were going to lead. By the 1998 election, with the state's economy still mired in recession, the public mood in Hawaii had become decidedly grumpy. Despite Hawaii's history of tolerance, taxpayers were growing impatient with anybody who consumed more than their share of public resources, especially through welfare and use of medical services at public expense. This is what led to the Healthy Lifestyles Act of 1999.

In the mid 90's, smokers were the social outcasts, congregating outside office buildings and isolated in glass rooms at airports. By the late 90's, motorcyclists had joined the list, sped along by the cutoff of all highway funds to states which did not enforce helmet and seatbelt laws. By the turn of the century heavy drinkers and people with a "reckless" diet had become pariahs, too. None of these activities were banned outright, but the Healthy Lifestyles Act dictated that no public moneys could in any way subsidize these risky behaviors, so "sin taxes" were extended to sport cycles, fatty foods and sun tan lotion, and welfare payments dried up for people who smoked, drank, or would not maintain a healthy diet and exercise regimen.

The universal availability of preventive care under the new national health plan, combined with new social pressures to be healthy, led to record high health status indicators. What people didn't anticipate, however, was the dark side of this new phenomenon--health discrimination. People who were born with or contracted long-term illness were often met with thinly-veiled disgust. A 2004 study by the Carnegie Corporation revealed that suicide rates among the chronically ill and disabled had reached alarming rates.

After a series of environmental disasters in China and Southeast Asia, the worst being the Tianjin chemical fires in 2002, Hawaii's health industry boomed with the influx of environmental health refugees. For those with the ability to pay, Hawaii offered alternative healing, rejuvenation, and the latest in high-tech medicine. Cottage industries sprung up around hospice care and personalized "health coaching." There was, of course, a backlash to all of this: getting a tan, eating a steak, or driving without a seatbelt became gestures of cool defiance like sporting a tattoo or smoking a Camel used to be.

Individual accountability had come to dominate discussions of natural resources as well, in the form of the "polluter pays" principle. Some people, however, felt that nature had rights transcending human utility and economic value. In 2010, a well-funded and technologically sophisticated group of "eco-terrorists" began a systematic campaign of attacks on infrastructure projects, primarily the conduits which move water under mountains around the islands. Restoration of ecosystems "by any means necessary" became the rallying cry for people committed to deep ecology and malama 'aina.

Because natural resource issues were at the crux of most conflicts, the state and federal governments became much more active in environmental policing, and resource use became much more heavily regulated. At the same time, people began to identify themselves with patterns of resource use, so social cleavages occurred along the lines of windward/leeward, urban/rural, and agricultural/commercial.

Technology added a new warp to all of this. Not only were people supposed to lead clean and healthy lifestyles, but there was no excuse for ignorance any more. By the turn of the century, almost everyone

affiliated with an organization (i.e., the "have's") had a personal "info butler," an artificially intelligent agent who would act as the interface between people and the vast cloud of digital information, filtering out what might be of interest or value to an individual. Info butlers also became interpersonal agents, alleviating some of the inconveniences and vulnerabilities of face to face communications. By the year 2010, people spent an estimated 1/3 of their work day communicating with their "info butler."

Access to information flattened hierarchies of expertise. Since anyone could round up copious amounts of information, the premium in the workplace was on applied knowledge. Big picture, integrative thinkers prospered in this environment, while people more comfortable with clearly-bounded, explicit tasks found themselves in menial positions.

The down side of the information explosion was the epidemic spread of acquired attention deficit disorder (AADD). People were forever checking their messages, carrying on multiple conversations, and acting generally distracted. The rare person who could devote their entire attention to you, or at least appear to, was valued company. People sought to develop this ability, and a new self-help industry was born: "being here now."

Trends:

* individuals are increasingly held responsible for their own health (or lack thereof)
* social conflict is based on resource competition
* the advent of the info butler--artificial wisdom

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