

PUBLIC ACCESS ROOM
A division of the Legislative Reference Bureau

NEWSLETTER

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2011 Legislative Timetable

This is usually the spot in our newsletters where you can view the session calendar and upcoming deadlines, jointly established by the Senate President and House Speaker. As we 'go to press,' this information is not yet available.

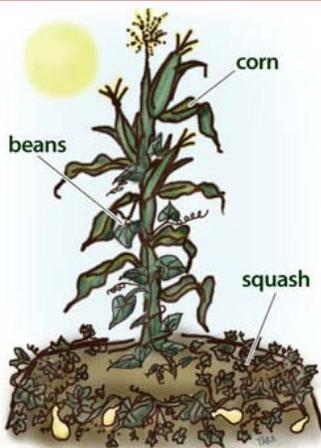
As soon as it is becomes available, you will be able to find an annotated timetable on the PAR website's "Information Sheets" page. We'll also send out an email to alert you when it is published.

A Gardener's Abbreviated Guide to Legislative Process

Suzanne Marinelli, Public Access Coordinator

Here in the Public Access Room we recently spent time reading through the 'notes' version of our main PowerPoint presentation called "We the Powerful." It's the primary component of our ongoing 'legislative process' workshops. (You can see the workshop material in its entirety at http://hawaii.gov/lrb/par/workshp.html.) We were going through the material in order to update information that has changed since last session, check it for accuracy, and also just to remind ourselves of its many details.

As I was reading through those pages, I found myself lingering over the details of slide #38, the 'Three Sisters' page. Here's the image from that page, and some of the text that accompanies it:



Direct-Sow, Easy-to-Grow: The Ancient Three Sisters Method

The Native Americans of the American southwest had a reverential relationship with the 'Three Sisters,' corn, beans, and squash. They knew that:

- Corn provides the bean pole.
• Beans fix the nitrogen in the earth.
• Squash mulches the soil to improve fertility, and shades it as well.
• Bean vines stabilize the corn.
• The spines on the squash protect them all from predators.
• And their inter-relationships go on and on.

The whole process of collaboration is based on the fact that we share common ground with people who agree with us (and those who don't as well).

So work closely with people who share your hopes and needs. Many hands really do make lighter work. There is real power in numbers.

PAR Staff – Here to help!

The 2011 Session is off to a good start – we're happy to have Larry Kamakawiwoole and Jim Manke working in the Public Access Room (PAR) to help folks who call or walk in.

Jim Manke joins the session staff this year – returning to the Capitol where he worked on Governor Waihee's staff in the 'Office of Information.' Jim witnessed the birth of the Public Access Room in the '90s, and is back to see how it has matured into a full-fledged, well-oiled – *and essential!* – public service operation.



Jim Manke, Virginia Beck (PAR year-round staff), Larry Kamakawiwoole

Larry Kamakawiwoole is a familiar face to those who've been visiting the PAR during session. He says he has nothing new to report – still enjoys helping the public as they participate in the process, and seeing how things unfold.

PAR and its patrons are lucky to have these two stellar employees, with their wide breadth of experience.

Coming up... Confirmation Hearings

There's a new Governor up on the 5th floor, and he's named his cabinet. As a result, in addition to the legislation that will be debated and discussed at the Legislature, we'll soon be seeing Senate confirmation hearings for the Governor's appointments.

The Hawaii State Constitution ([Article V, Section 6](#)) specifies that each executive department is headed by a single executive who "shall be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, appointed by the governor." Governor Abercrombie has nominated his department heads and attorney general, and they are now serving in their new positions in an interim capacity. Their time in office expires at the end of Session unless their appointment is confirmed by the Senate.

This 'advice and consent' role is a unique power of the Senate – the House of Representatives does not participate directly in this function. In the current Senate Rules (which may or may not change under the new Senate leadership), Rule 37 specifies how the Senate will handle the Governor's nominations. It states that the nominations will be referred to the standing committee that has jurisdiction over the department. For example, under this rule, the Governor's Message – GM – that presents his nominee for Director of the Department of Health would be referred to the Senate Health Committee. Rule 37 also specifies that there will be public hearings held for all nominees and appointees prior to confirmation or consent by the Senate. The public will be able to offer their testimony at these hearings. The standing committee will then report to the Senate President with its recommendation regarding whether or not to "advise and consent" to the nomination.

Let PAR know if you need help in signing up for hearing notices by email, submitting testimony or finding the GM you're interested in.

Vacancies

There's currently a vacancy in the House of Representatives – the House District 45 seat became vacant when its prior occupant, Maile Shimabukuro, was appointed by the Governor to the Senate District 21 seat, which became vacant when *its* prior occupant, Colleen Hanabusa, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Wonder who will be appointed to the House District 45 seat? Or how the other vacancies (there have been several the last few months) were filled? The process for filling vacancies in the House and the Senate is spelled out in the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) – [Section 17-3](#) for the Senate, and [Section 17-4](#) for the House.

In the case of the currently vacant House seat, the Governor will be presented with three candidates from the Democratic Party, and has a timeline by which he needs to name his appointee. Stay tuned!

A Gardener's Abbreviated Guide to Legislative Process (continued from Page 1)

Suzanne Marinelli, Public Access Coordinator



And be mindful of the fact that, no matter how small it is, you still share common ground with those who oppose your position on any issue. Look for the things you can agree upon, and you'll have the basis for a shared solution.

I had to smile at myself when I noticed how long I'd lingered on that page – that particular image inevitably takes me back to my childhood years.

Growing up in a coal camp in a tiny, very isolated village in the southern Appalachian mountains, we had few material things, but we led rich and satisfying lives. As a kid, I wasn't thrilled with all the work, but I knew that if we wanted to eat, we had to prepare our soil in the fallow times, plant in the spring, garden in the summer, and harvest in the fall. And when the autumn winds began to blow again, we'd plow under the stalks and shriveled vines that remained, feeding the soil that had fed us. We'd plant again the following spring, and ready ourselves to work our crops as the seasons advanced, following one another through time.

When those crops matured, the work days would extend far into the evenings. I'd sit with my grandparents and aunties and cousins, trimming and breaking beans, slicing peppers, shucking corn, peeling peaches...all the while listening to the tales of family and friends, as people have done forever. We were strengthening the community, while we worked together.

Rich memories came to my mind as I lingered over that slide... I was reminded once again how apt a metaphor it is for the work our citizens do. When people take on the responsibilities of shaping the issues that matter to them, they are surely engaging in planting, tending, harvesting, and nurturing our representative democracy in ways that are vital to its life and continuity.

Isn't it true? When a legislative session is about to begin, you can stand in our doorway and watch all manner of people combing the hallways. They're getting to know legislators and staff members, planting the seeds of the ideas that are important to them. It's a beautiful thing to see.

During the sessions, through those endless hours of hearings and briefings, folks are writing and presenting testimony, working hard to persuade decision-makers to see situations the way *they* do. They tend their crops passionately, hopefully, and with great determination.

Not all the seeds they plant are going to sprout – every farmer knows that. They also know that of the ones that do, not all will grow to maturity. But if the soil has been nourished and the crops tended well, if there has been enough sunshine and rain, the harvest *can* be rich and bountiful.

So it is with legislation – many bills will be introduced. Some lie fallow and others get heard. Of the ones that proceed, many will be changed as they move through committees, mostly because of the vitally-important input that citizens contribute through the hearings process.

Some bills will pass into law. The legislative session will end, and the next 'interim' will begin. That will be the time to start thinking ahead to the next session, 'readying the soil' for another season of planting those good ideas and greater plans and highest hopes.

So keep at it. Share the work. Laugh a little every day. Rest when you can. Know there will be setbacks – rain doesn't always fall when we want it, nor will the sun always shine as we wish. But we keep on planting, working, harvesting, sharing our labors, and our stories, with our treasured neighbors and friends.

And never forget that when we find even the *smallest* agreements with those with whom we disagree, we have planted priceless seeds in common soil, ones that can grow into shared understandings. Those understandings, in turn, can lead to better laws and, we hope, to better lives.

Thus we are nourished by one another, even as we nourish Hawaii Nei.

Tidbits

Workshops

Wondering how to make sense of what happens at the Capitol? Need a refresher course on how to find and track bills? Call or email to sign up for one of the Public Access Room's (PAR's) ongoing legislative process [workshops](#) – from now through March, they're held in our office (Room 401):

- Tuesdays at 12 noon,
- Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. and
- Saturdays at 11:00 a.m.

Can't make those times? Visit the Workshops page on our website (<http://hawaii.gov/lrb/par>) and take a look at the PowerPoint near the bottom of the page. Have questions or need more specific assistance? Call or email, and we'll get you pointed in the right direction. Have a group you'd like to have go through the workshop? Let us know and we'll see what we can set up – either here at the Capitol, or out in the community.

Up-to-date Info on the Legislature

Updated [Information Sheets](#) can be found on PAR's website, or you can stop by and pick them up in Room 401. There are new legislators, some others have moved offices, and we'll keep you updated on leadership and committee assignments. Revised floor maps are posted, too – very helpful as you make the rounds!

Need a primer on how things unfold during session? Check out the "[Walk through Session](#)" document available on our home page or the Documents page. It's rich with detailed information that is particularly useful to people who want to develop a deeper understanding of the legislative process.

Broadcast Information

To find out which committee hearings, informational briefings or floor sessions are being broadcast, check out Capitol TV's website: www.capitoltv.org. They'll list everything that's being broadcast, its Oahu channels and whether the coverage is being broadcast live or tape-delayed to the Neighbor Islands.

- If you're on a Neighbor Island, and want to find out if your PEG (Public, Education and Government) access channel is going to carry the feed, contact your PEG directly: **Hawaii Island** (Na Leo 'O Hawai'i) Oceanic Time Warner Cable Channel 52 (www.naleo.tv), phone (808) 935-8874 (Hilo) or (808) 329-9617 (Kailua-Kona); **Kauai** (Ho'ike) Oceanic Time Warner Cable Channel 53 (www.hoike.org), phone (808) 246-1556; **Maui, Molokai and Lanai** (Akaku) Oceanic Time Warner Cable Channel 54 (www.akaku.org), phone (808) 871-5554.
- Prefer to watch on your computer? For anything being broadcast, you can watch it stream live on Olelo's website: www.olelo.org.
- Miss something that's been broadcast?
 - If it was a Senate proceeding, you can watch it "on demand" on your computer – go to the Senate page on the Legislature's website (www.capitol.hawaii.gov) and select "[Senate Webcasts – Pilot Project](#)."
 - If it was a House or Joint Senate/House proceeding, or you want a 'hard copy' of the proceeding, your best option is to check the Capitol TV website for *re*-broadcast times – you can then set your recording device to capture whatever it was you missed.
 - Want to order a DVD? Contact our office and we'll get you started on the request. Please note that there is a cost involved for DVDs.

Quotes from the File . . .

"Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple." - *Dr. Seuss*

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler." - *Albert Einstein*

"Time is that quality of nature which keeps events from happening all at once.
Lately it doesn't seem to be working." - *Anonymous*