

Hustle Every ~~day~~ Day

It is 6:00am, and officially the start to a typical Aina Haina girl's morning. She wakes up, and gets herself ready for a new day of school. The smell of freshly toasted bread and perfectly cooked bacon fills the dining room. With 15 minutes of expected driving time, she is off to school at 7:00am. Her ponytail flaps in the air as she walked to her car, parked right next to her house, and she thinks, "What a gorgeous beginning to my day!" as she pulls out of the driveway. To her surprise, there are a thousand other cars crawling on Kalaniana'ole Highway. She stares at the street with wild eyes, her heart jumps at the fact that she is going to be late to school. Yet again, what a great start to a beautiful day in Hawaii Nei.

As a teenager, resisting the freedom of driving is as impossible as rejecting a plate of scrumptious food placed right before me. Any person, at any age, craves to have the power to control where they are going, and when they will go. This authority, however, is completely destroyed by one of the worst problems on the island: traffic. According to KHON2 news, there are more than 900 thousand vehicles registered on O'ahu alone. Although it is a sign of a "vibrant economy," according to Civil engineer Panos Prevedouros, it is also a contributing factor to pedestrian fatalities, environmental degradation, and traffic congestion. Due to the distribution of O'ahu's affordable housing, people usually drive far, from Ewa Beach or Kaneohe, to get downtown, causing a morning rush "hour" from 5am to 8am. According to *Honolulu Magazine*: "Honolulu routinely lands on the annual top three "worst traffic in the USA" lists. Traffic information aggregator INRIX reports that Hawaiians spend an extra 60.8 hours a year in traffic in relation to other places, the worst in the nation. More than 50 percent of the workers living in the area stretching from Moanalua to Hau'ula leave home before 7 a.m.,

compared to 25 percent nationally. Many people arrive at work an hour early simply to escape the busy roads. From personal experiences, I know that a route that usually takes a maximum of 10 minutes will take 30 minutes, if it is within the rush hour period. People have to go to bed earlier, wake up earlier, eat earlier, and leave the house earlier to make it to their destinations in time. If that is the case, what is the point of getting a car and learning how to drive? It will take the same amount of time if one takes the bus.

Being a victim of such severe traffic congestion, I have composed some suggestions to ameliorate this problem: Limit the number of inflows and outflows from downtown, increase the number of parking spaces along the outskirts of downtown, and build bike stations around town for easy access. People who live close to the downtown area can help ease the traffic flow if they choose other means of transportation, such as bikes or walking. This will not remove the privilege of driving, but will ease the tension of those who live further from downtown. People can still drive if not during rush hour. Additionally, cars that park along the sides of main streets cause major congestion because they block off one or two lanes of five-lane roads. The state government, or private organizations, should therefore consider adding more parking spaces in downtown areas that are free during rush hours. This would open up more lanes for cars to drive along, and make traffic run smoother. Lastly, with the increase of technology, we tend to forget the “primitive” mode of travel: the bike. The multiple BIKI stations located around town are great options for a morning workout as one goes to or from work or school. There should be an option to buy a monthly pass to use them, just like TheBus system.

Clarence T.C. Ching’s legacy feeds into improving Hawaii, and make it a better place to live. If our car registration fee keeps increasing, yet we do not do anything about controlling the

cars on the roads, in 50 years, our island will be infused with car exhaust fumes instead of refreshing, virgin, sweet air; the sight of red brake lights will assault our eyes, instead of soothing them with visions of calm, empty streets. We should refuse to let man-made products ruin our beautiful island. Mr. Ching would be glad to see our efforts to remove pollution from our beloved island, and would be more than happy to contribute to the cause.

Driving is a privilege, but we cannot abuse it. Everyone needs to be mindful of others, instead of only opting for convenience for themselves. If we act today, in the future, there will be fewer pedestrian fatalities, less accumulation of poisonous gases, and one will not have to wake up so early to get to important places.

Works Cited

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