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Elections Division faces audit

Council members trying to find out how much was spent on elections

By NANCY COOK LAUER
Stephens Media

What started as an attempt by Hilo Councilman Dennis Onishi to find out how much overtime was paid during the 2012 election has blossomed into an audit by an outside firm comparing election expenditures for the last three election cycles.



ONISHI

unanimously passed a resolution asking the legislative

auditor to find out the costs of overtime, training and travel, the use of electricity and printing supplies at the election warehouse, the handling of petty cash, voter registration and absentee ballot efforts and other costs associated with the 2008, 2010 and 2012 elections.

Acting Legislative Auditor Lane Shibata, saying the Clerk's Office has no certified public accountant, said he had approximately \$40,000 in his budget for the fiscal year ending June 30 that he could use for an outside auditor. The process needs to be started right away in order to use that money, he said.

Onishi, a frequent critic of how former County Clerk

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SUSTAINABLE EXPEDITION



HUNTER BISHOP/Tribune-Herald

Dario Schwoerer, second from left, and his wife, Sabine, are traveling around the world with their children, Salina, 7, Andri, 6, Noe, 3, and Alegria, 1.

Adventurous family to take on Mauna Kea



HUNTER BISHOP/Tribune-Herald

Two members of the Schwoerer family paddle a boat Wednesday in Hilo.

By HUNTER BISHOP
Tribune-Herald staff writer

A record-shattering family of world-class adventurers has stopped in Hilo to make their way up to summit of Mauna Kea on Saturday.

The Swiss couple and their four young children have navigated more than 60,000 nautical miles and climbed the highest peaks on five continents, and now they have only peaks on two more continents to conquer.

The seven-continent, seven-seas family expedition, powered only by human and naturally sustainable energy, is the first of its kind ever undertaken, said Dario Schwoerer, who shares the vessel with his wife, Sabine, and their four children.

After scaling Mauna Kea, they'll sail for Alaska where they'll climb Denali, spend the winter, then tackle the Northwest Passage to the Atlantic Ocean.

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Hammer attack victim testifies

Rare coins dealer says defendant assaulted him

By JOHN BURNETT
Tribune-Herald staff writer

A coin dealer who survived a brutal hammer attack almost two years ago said he'd have gone "on top of Mauna Kea" to buy the rare Hawaiian coins he believed the man accused of assaulting him possessed.

"That's how bad I wanted to do the deal," Donald Nigro said Wednesday on the witness stand in the trial of 70-year-old former mortician Robert Diego, who's charged with attempted murder, first-degree robbery and first-degree assault for the June 13, 2011, attack, which occurred in Nigro's downtown Hilo apartment.



NIGRO

The 67-year-old Nigro testified that he'd left his store, Antiques & Coins on Kilauea Avenue, that morning after Diego had called him and asked him to meet him in a half-hour in front of Lanky's Pastries in the Hilo Shopping Center. Nigro said he drove to the Bank of Hawaii branch next to the downtown Hilo Longs Drugs to get an \$18,000 cashier's check and \$1,000 in cash, picked up Diego in front of the bakery, and then drove back to the Hualalai Street apartment.

He said that in addition to the cash and the cashier's check, he was wearing a fanny pack that contained jewelry that Diego had shown interest in.

Asked by Deputy Prosecutor Darien Nagata why he agreed to do the business transaction in his home rather than at his store, Nigro replied: "He said he wanted to do the deal where I lived. I'd assumed he wanted privacy because it'd take quite a while to examine the coins if and when he brought them."

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Waimea school plans expansion

By ERIN MILLER
Stephens Media

Waimea Middle School now has about half the funding it needs to build a nine-classroom science and technology building.

School officials have been pursuing the funding for about 12 years, Principal Matt Horne said Monday.

Teachers and staff were "very pleasantly surprised" to learn legislators had approved the \$5 million appropriation for the project, Horne said.

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Luigi Balbo, rear, and Hiro Ueno, 11th-graders at HPA, work at monitoring stations. Their science class is participating in a long-term NASA science project, which is intended to prepare for the first human missions to the Red Planet.

HPA students take part in mock Mars mission

By CAROLYN LUCAS-ZENK
Stephens Media

In an exciting role of reversal, researchers working on a NASA-funded mission are getting pointers from top Hawaii Preparatory Academy science students as part of a new partnership.

Hawaii Space Exploration Analog and HI-SEAS is a mission designed to

explore new forms of food and culinary strategies for long-term planetary exploration. The participating researchers are tasked with considering packaging waste, energy efficiency, scheduling, menu fatigue and social cohesion in the crew. They are also examining the trade-offs between prepared meals and meals

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