



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani
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Restoring the Wall

Sometimes things just don't work out the way they should. A couple of years ago, I suggested to the State Department of Transportation that they try a new way to reduce graffiti on the noise-reducing walls that separate Kamehameha Highway from residences along the roadway. A coat of green anti-graffiti paint was applied to the wall, and the positive feedback I heard was a source of pride for neighboring communities.

Over subsequent months, however, taggers were persistent in defacing the wall, and while it was somewhat easier to clean up after their vandalism, work crews have learned that good intentions unfortunately don't always reap rewards. A resident brought this unhappy situation to my attention last month when he inquired about the "patchy" appearance of the wall as a result of efforts to eliminate graffiti and repair damage from taping signs to it.

Here's what I have learned from the DOT:

According to the manufacturer of the anti-graffiti paint, power washing the wall in preparation is preferred but hand scrubbing is also acceptable. Due to DOT's Best Management Practice requirements, hand scrubbing was done. However, DOT found out after the fact that the paint did not fully adhere to the wall.

The anti-graffiti paint works well if the graffiti is removed immediately, but is not as easily removable after a week or more. DOT does not always have the resources to respond to graffiti vandalism in that short time frame, and cleanups then take more intense scrubbing that pulls the paint off the wall. Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful in my efforts to find an organization who would help with removing graffiti in a more timely manner.

In an effort to make the best of the situation, a decision was made to paint over the wall, and while DOT has tried, the colors have not been a perfect match since the over-coating paint is water-based and the original green wall paint is oil-based. DOT also tried using leftover paint from the original job, but it no longer matches because the original paint on the wall has faded over time.

The DOT agrees that the wall should be repainted following a "blasting" cleaning technique which is more expensive but should help the paint better adhere to the wall surface. This project may take a few years to make its way to the top of the list again but I will do what I can to make that happen as quickly as possible. This has been quite a learning experience for all involved, and I appreciate hearing about this from a concerned resident.

Mahalo to Student Representatives on the Board of Education

How fortunate we are to have bright and capable students willing to step forward to provide a student voice at the Board of Education meetings. During the school year just ended, Mililani High School senior **Brennan Lee**, as noted above, served on the Board. We are grateful for his service, and note that his replacement will be a member of the Waipahu High School Class of 2017 – **Andrea Lyn Mateo**. She was chosen from a pool of a half-dozen applicants, all highly qualified. In his farewell memorandum to the Board, Brennan said: "There is no doubt: Andrea Lyn will be an amazing member of the BOE. Her accolades are remarkable, her personality is likable, and her drive and determination is notable." *Thank you both for your service!*



Brennan Lee and his 2016-2017 successor, Andrea Lyn Mateo