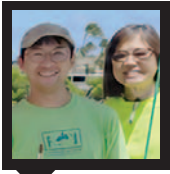


FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 5, 2026



BIRDS OF PARADISE

Traffic signal boxes get an artistic update thanks to Lions Club volunteers.
SEE PAGE 2

VOICE

♦ EAST O'AHU COMMUNITY NEWS ♦

A PUBLICATION OF **MidWeek** AN EDITION OF **Star Advertiser**



A 'JAW'-SOME EVENT

Manō Month concludes with special day for keiki at Sea Life Park.
SEE PAGE 8



Local poets Sue Cowing (left) and Wendi White encourage the public to go outdoors to visit their Poetry From Ridge to Reef poetry box at Keawāwa Wetland. **ALLYSON PANG PHOTO**

Read A Poem In Keawāwa Wetland

BY ALLYSON PANG

In the middle of the woods, near creeks or overlooking large bodies of water, are poems engraved on glass or simply printed on paper. Each resides in a birdhouse-like box, awaiting visitors to read its contents.

These Poetry of the Wild boxes — created by Rhode Island ecological artist Ana Flores — are intended to draw people into nature to read and reflect on the landscape around them.

Inspired by Flores, local poets Sue Cowing and Wendi White launched their own poetry box on May 30 at Keawāwa Wetland: Poetry From Ridge to Reef. Poetry From Ridge to Reef is not affiliated with the Ridge to Reef Project, which is a multi-organization restoration initiative of the Wailupe, Niu and Kuli'ou'ou watersheds, but it does draw on the same belief —that the land and the ocean are connected.

"You can't care for one without caring for the whole," White says. "These poems should be celebrating that whole web of connections in the ecosystem here, from ridge to reef."

SEE PAGE 6

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Poets Inspire Appreciation For Nature

FROM PAGE 1

The overall hope is to encourage people to visit the natural and cultural sites in the Maunalua Bay area, says Cowing, who has maintained her own poetry box outside her home since the COVID-19 pandemic to brighten her neighbors' day.

White noticed the poetry box when she moved into Cowing's Hawai'i Kai neighborhood, and the two bonded over a love for the art form.

They came up with Poetry From Ridge to Reef about a year ago and worked with Ann Marie Kirk, cultural adviser for nonprofit Livable Maunalua Hui, to set

up a box. Livable Maunalua Hui helps manage Keawāwa Wetland.

The poetry box emphasizes local voices, but also features work by non-local poets. Each poem conveys the appreciation, hope and importance of nature.

The poetry box's first poem was fittingly about the 'ālae 'ula, an endangered native common moorhen, that resides in the wetland.

"We're trying to add to the experience of looking out, so that we can help people appreciate where they are," Cowing says.

White describes their poetry box as a small piece that amplifies the larger picture of conservation and restoration.

Cowing and White hope to set up more boxes at other sites around Maunalua. Eventually, they want to have students contribute poems.

"If you don't write the poems you have, then that poetry is lost," Cowing says of the art form. "So the more people who write poetry, the better."

Community members are welcome to submit their poetry to poetryridge2reef@gmail.com. General nature poetry is welcome, and works about the areas around Maunalua are highly encouraged.

Poems about places outside of Maunalua are currently not being accepted.

Submissions must be size

14 font, a maximum of 20 lines and contained to one page.

The poems are changed out every other week. Cowing and White say they don't plan to post the lineup anywhere, people will have to visit the site to see it for themselves.

White explains that art does what scientific data might not be able to do: make people feel.

"Poetry makes you feel that reality," White says. "And when you feel something and you feel connected to it, then you want to do something to care for it."

For more info, email poetryridge2reef@gmail.com.



(Left) The Poetry From Ridge to Reef poetry box is located at Keawāwa Wetland and can be viewed 8:30-10 a.m. Tuesdays and 4-6 p.m. Thursdays. **ALLYSON PANG**

PHOTO (Right) Community members gather for the unveiling of the poetry box in May. **PHOTO COURTESY ANN MARIE KIRK**



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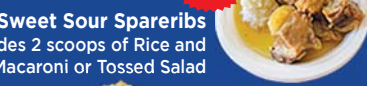
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