

THE
PRICE
OF
PARADISE

Volume II

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*Communities that engage in lively, informed dialogue
will deal with their challenges more effectively.*

INTRODUCTION

Every community has its challenges. Some are big, others small. Some are solvable, others will never be resolved—at least not completely. Some are easily recognized, others require careful research.

Occasionally, there will be clear consensus within a community as to the best way to deal with a particular challenge, but usually not. In fact, disagreement and contention are to be expected, especially when the stakes are high.

The seventy-nine people who contributed to one or both volumes of *The Price of Paradise* share a love of Hawai'i. To us, this requires that we not only appreciate and celebrate this home we call paradise but also do what we can to preserve and enhance it for future generations.

Guiding principles. Because seventy-nine individuals are unlikely to agree on any one issue, and certain not to agree on every issue, we had to begin by defining our common bond—the “glue” that would hold us together. The following guiding principles were the result of that process:

1. Communities must take an honest look at the problems they face if they hope to do anything about them.
2. Communities that engage in lively, informed dialogue will deal with their challenges more effectively.
3. Communities have a moral obligation to keep the interests of future generations in mind when dealing with current challenges.

The title. Thomas Jefferson once wrote, “The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.” His point, I think, was that something as precious as freedom should not be taken for granted. In somewhat the same vein, the price of paradise is eternal vigilance.

A friend who was kind enough to read a first draft of this volume called it depressing and wanted to know why these books weren't more uplifting. Specifically, he said, “Everybody knows things are screwed up. . . . we want you to tell us what to do about it.”

To me, it just doesn't work that way. As painful as it may be to focus on problems, that's a first step that simply can't be skipped. The next,

equally essential steps are for the community to discuss these problems, and then focus on possible solutions.

Elected officials can only do so much. It's *our* community and *we* have to be a part of any lasting solution. It would be tragic if the first step represented by the *Price of Paradise* books were not followed by additional steps toward specific solutions.

Struck a nerve. If book sales, media coverage, and speaking invitations from community groups are accurate indicators, our first volume struck a nerve in the community: readers purchased 20,000 copies in less than a year; 20 of its 38 chapters were reprinted in a wide variety of local and national publications; the book received generous coverage in the newspapers and on TV and radio; the authors made more than two hundred presentations to numerous community groups; and Hawai'i Public Radio started a weekly "Price of Paradise" talk show.

Perhaps even more exciting is that over a hundred community-minded individuals and businesses paid for a special printing of an additional 10,000 copies for classroom use by high school seniors. That increased the total number of books in circulation to 30,000 and put many of them into the hands of Hawai'i's future leaders. This is the intellectual equivalent of planting trees.

Diverse group. Most of the chapters in Volume I were written by economists and, naturally enough, focused on economic analysis. The contributors to Volume II are a more diverse group, and so the range of perspectives is noticeably wider. For example, readers will find more than a few chapters in this volume that focus on sociological and political analysis. *Vive la différence!*

The Democratic party in Hawai'i takes a few hits in this volume, some of them pretty hard. For what it's worth, that's not necessarily because we think other political parties have more to offer. If Republican officeholders weren't so rare in Hawai'i, I'm sure they would take a few shots, too. Anyone who thinks Hawai'i's challenges will go away if only we oust the Democrats had better think again. What this book is all about transcends party lines.

Each chapter is short and was written for nonexperts. As a result, the explanations are less technical and less complete than the authors would prefer. One of my jobs, as editor, was to convince them that you, the reader, would take that into account.

We have taken this step toward lively, informed dialogue as a service to the community. No author, cartoonist, graphic artist, advisor, or editor will receive monetary compensation. As with Volume I, all royalties will go to local charities.

The price. I believe all of us are lucky to be living in Hawai'i. But without effort on our part, future generations will not be so lucky. Paradise has its price, and in our case it's measured as much in vigilance as in dollars.

Randall W. Roth, Editor
September 1993



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