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## Don't go to the Punahou Carnival. It's social injustice.



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Courtesy photos • Seth Ladd A merry-go-round at the 2006 **Punahou carnival**, whirls into the late hours of the night.

By **Justin Hahn**  
Ka Leo Commentary Editor  
February 01, 2007

The **Punahou Carnival** has been an island tradition every year for as long as I can remember. But this tradition isn't one of fun and games. It's a tradition of social injustice.

Every year, we stand around in the muck and the mud and the milling masses, waiting to throw away our money (well over a million dollars last year) on wasteful rides and empty calories. And all we really get back, besides a bag of malasadas and a nice bunch of orchids, is an unjust system that makes the poor poorer and the rich richer.

This carnival is a scheme to take money from the poor, and give it to the rich.



Yeah, the carnival is fun on a purely visceral level. I enjoy flirting with miscellaneous hotties, eating savory delights and riding exhilarating rides. But when I think about where the \$10, \$20, \$30, \$50 in nonrefundable scripts I buy really goes, I am sickened.

This is where the malasadas are made. Over 5,000 pounds of sugar will be used this year to make the millions of doughie pastries.

Here's where all that profit goes: to educate rich kids so they can grow up to victimize poor people. Dont' believe me?



Compare two local schools. Look at Punahou and look at Washington Intermediate. One is rich, the other is poor. One has science labs, drama studios, creative writing classes and beautiful architecture. The other ... is Washington Intermediate.

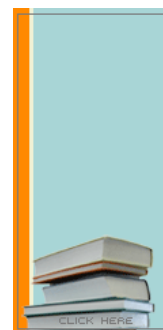
A dragon kiddie ride seen at last year's **Punahou carnival**. He wants your money to fill his cavernous gut.

Where Punahou kids drive BMWs and wear Vera Wang, Washington Intermediate kids walk to school

and shop at WalMart. And where the parents of Punahou students are lawyers, politicians, contractors and spendthrifts, the parents of Washington students work as maids, janitors, construction workers and cashiers at Longs Drugstore.

Why?

Because instead of rich people paying taxes to pay for the public good – instead of them sharing the wealth they've gotten from the exploitation of the workers – they hold onto their money. They use their accumulated wealth to improve their own little circle of influence and bulwark their positions as part of the ruling class.



Their massive wealth doesn't go to repairing the piss poor condition of roads around Punahou or funding more bus lines to transport the masses. It doesn't go to providing their workers a living wage. And it sure as heck doesn't go to educating your little brother or sisters or cousins who go to schools like Radford, Kaimuki or Wai'anae. It goes to making them richer. But apparently not rich enough. Because they need your money now, too.

When you buy crap at the carnival, your money goes to the coffers of people who don't need any more money to maintain their children's education. They're rich enough, yet they still want more.

Rich people only get rich one way: exploiting other people – the people who have no choice but to send their kids to Washington Intermediate, or the people who take out student loans to go to college, or the people who work 12-hour swing shifts at Cheesecake Factory.

When you consider going to that carnival again this year, consider this: the fun you get out of the **Punahou Carnival** is just a side effect of them making money. This carnival, no matter what the local establishment and the local news media want you to believe, is not put on just for your enjoyment. Like every other construct of the ruling class, the **Punahou Carnival** is there to take your money and keep you locked into servitude and insolvency.

**Don't go to the Punahou Carnival. It's social injustice.**

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