

# Local Top Stories

## Johns using online forum to discuss prostitution in Chinatown

By Marisa Yamane

An online forum is shedding some light on the prostitution activity in Honolulu's Chinatown.

It appears that the customers of the prostitutes, also known as johns, are using this forum to communicate with each other.

"I'm shocked there's a blog," said Rep. Karl Rhoads, (D) Chinatown, Downtown, Palama.

It's called the USA Sex Guide -- online forums through which johns compare notes on where to pick up prostitutes, and how to avoid getting caught by police.

One forum in particular discusses prostitutes on Kukui Street.

"I've lived in Chinatown for 11 years, and every time I walk to Longs I see the prostitutes, but I had no idea there was this organizing effort to figure out where to go, when to go," said Rhoads.

Rhoads is so concerned, he has drafted a letter to Honolulu Prosecuting Attorney Peter Carlisle, and is now circulating the letter among his colleagues to get their support.

"Many of the user names appear repeatedly. the activities described are often illegal and would appear to amount to admissions of guilt. Is there any way to find and prosecute these individuals based on the information contained in this blog?"

The members often use their own lingo.

They alert each other when they see police on Kukui Street, and when the media lists the names or shows pictures of the johns arrested.

"In some ways it was surprisingly was kind of encouraging because they said within the last year or so they'd had a lot harder time finding prostitutes and the police have been much more active," said Rhoads.

"There's definitely still activity out there. There's no doubt about it. Our guards notice it on a regular basis we still are calling police on occasion but compared to what it was, it really has gone down significantly," said Mike Lakey, Kukui Plaza General Manager.

Kukui Plaza residents have helped lead the fight against prostitution in their neighborhood.

Rhoads plans to introduce a bill next legislative session creating tougher penalties for those convicted of paying for sex-- a bill similar to the one he tried to pass last session.

"Third conviction, if you pay or offer to pay, it would become a felony," said Rhoads.

The johns would then face up to five years in prison.

"Having read this blog, it convinces me this is even more the way to go," said Rhoads.

The website also includes forums on massage parlors and hostess bars here in Honolulu.

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