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Kapi‘olani
nurses plan
protest before
talks resume
Unionized nurses, who
have been barred from
work for over a week, plan
to hold a demonstration
today outside Kapi‘olani
Medical Center for Women
& Children after contract
negotiations ended Sun-day with no resolution.
Talks between manage-ment of the nonprofit
hospital and the Hawaii
Nurses’ Association,
which represents about
600 nurses there, were ex-pected to resume today
for the fifth straight day.
HNA President Rosalee
Agas-Yuu said nurses will
demonstrate from 6 a.m.
to 9 a.m. The Rev. Rona
Dumagos Mangayayam is
slated to open the demon-stration with an ecumeni-cal prayer and then a call
to end the lockout.
“We are inviting every-one to come down and
join — just to let every-body know we are still
locked out,” Agas-Yuu said.
Unionized nurses have
been barred from working
at the hospital since the
morning of Sept. 14 at the
end of a one-day strike,
which was HNA’s second
walkout this year after a
weeklong strike in January.
Management has refused
to allow them to come back
to work until they approve
a new contract. The parties
returned to the bargaining
table Thursday. They also
met Friday, Saturday and
again Sunday.
Agas-Yuu said, “We
came up with a proposal
that the nurses were
happy with, and we gave
it back to the employer
(Sunday) but they said
they needed more time.”
She said the locked-out
nurses are without pay-checks. They also will lose
their health care benefits
if an agreement is not
reached before Oct. 1.
After Sunday’s talks
concluded, Kapi‘olani
Chief Operating Officer
Gidget Ruscetta said in

I
magine if the farms and backyards of Hawaii
once again flourished with awa plants — and
if the beverage made from their roots were ac-cessible pretty much everywhere in the state.
That’s how Edward Johnston, one of the
founders of the nonprofit Association for Hawaiian
Awa, envisions it after having spent decades culti-vating and advocating for the plant’s benefits. It
would be a renaissance of sorts, he said, of the
 medicinal plant that has been part of Hawaii
culture for centuries and a boost for the state’s
agricultural industry.
The replanting of awa — a canoe plant named
Piper methysticum and known elsewhere as kava
— would make the beverage more accessible to
residents and, at the same time, give growers in
the isles a culturally relevant crop to cultivate.
The state Department of Agriculture is award-ing a grant of nearly $70,000 to Malama Sanctuary,
which is partnering with AHA to improve sustain-able awa production in Hawaii.
The grant specifically funds tissue culture
propagation of plants, along with an education
campaign via videos and social media to promote
awa growing and awa’s benefits in Hawaii. The
project also seeks to eliminate the need to import
awa to Hawaii.
AHA is providing Hawaiian awa cultivar cut-tings and plants to Malama Sanctuary for the
project, with an initial batch already under devel-opment. There are 13 Hawaiian cultivars invented
in the state, according to Johnston.
Johnston said the nonprofit has researched the
historic use of awa through Hawaiian literature,
and found it was used in ceremonies as well as in
many other ways.
Based on the writings of Henry Kekahuna, Mary
Kawena Pukui and Samuel Kamakau, awa was a
relaxing beverage at the end of a workday to get a
restful night’s sleep.
“I’d like to see more families and people drinking
it at the end of the day,” said Johnston, a Pepeekeo
resident who grows awa in his backyard. “It’s a re-markable plant.”
The awa
renaissance
Please see AWA, A14
The state awards a $70K specialty crop
grant to the nonprofit Malama Sanctuary

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