Changing Hawaii

By Diane Yukihiro Chang

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Women lawyers, law students to go at it

FOR everything and everybody, there are always two sides, good and bad. Rainstorms nurture plants and replenish water supplies. Long waits in concession lines at Aloha Stadium are gone, now that the UH football team is 0-9. And if your candidate loses the election, you win griping rights for years! See how it works?

The same goes for being a woman in Hawaii this week. From a feminist's point of view, there were definite highlights and lowlights.

One of the downers -- especially for seekers of equality and the de-objectification of females -- was the nationwide search for the "Playboy 2000 Playmate," which visited Oahu's shores. About 20 hopefuls turned out in bikinis and high heels to be photographed for a possible spread (if you'll pardon the expression) in the notorious men's magazine.

According to Kevin Kuster, associate photography editor for Playboy, "We're looking for someone attractive and physically fit -- someone who is going to become the next media darling, the next Jenny McCarthy or Pam Anderson."

Wow, the next Jenny McCarthy or Pamela Anderson Lee. That's aiming high, all right.

Meanwhile, at the William S. Richardson School of Law, there were tryouts of a different nature. About 50 UH law students were in training for Sunday's 21st annual Ete Bowl, an aggressive, raucous flag football game with all women players.

That's right -- in this event, the gals take the field while the guys serve as coaches, cheerleaders and reign as Ete queen.
The intense pigskin rivalry dates back to September 1978, when third-year law students Diane Ho (now a Maui attorney) and Riki Amano (now a Big Island judge) wondered how to break the monotony of the Paper Chase.

They came up with the concept of the "Etes," made up of current UH female law students, playing against the "Bruzers," an all-star alumnae team of established women attorneys and judges.

The Bruzers (also known as "The Ones Who Do The Hiring After Graduation") have dominated for 20 years, winning 18 games. This time, however, an upset may be looming.

The Etes have rounded up 50 players (double the size of the Bruzer squad), who practice regularly twice a week. Returning to the fray will be Elise Tsugawa, who scored five of six Ete touchdowns in 1997. Joining the roster are a number of high school and college jockettes, including Tonya Penbacker, the daughter of a former Fabulous Five basketball star.

Meanwhile, the Bruzer team -- which won by only one touchdown in the last go-round -- reportedly has been devastated by past injuries, pregnancy, busy court calendars and general out-of-shappedness.

Both sides are boldly predicting victory in the 2-4 p.m. Sunday game at the UH upper grass field, on the diamond head end of the university parking structure. Spectators and moral support are welcome.

TALK about good and bad. The downside of the annual Ete Bowl is the debilitation that follows. It's likely that a handful of players will visit the emergency room with broken bones, sprains or concussions after the final whistle.

An unequivocal highlight, though, is the camaraderie, strategizing and competitive spirit pervading this annual fanaticism, featuring some pretty impressive women of the '90s. And they're not wearing bikinis or high heels.

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