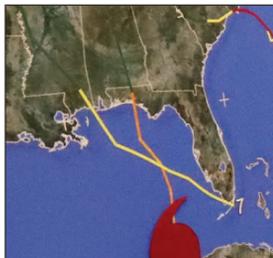




## Haley resigns

Set to leave U.N. post by year's end

See below



## Michael advances

Florida residents rush to prepare

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## Red Sox advance

Will face Astros in ALCS

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# The Maui News

Winner of 16 SPJ-Hawaii 2017 Excellence in Journalism Awards

Maui's Newspaper Since 1900

WEDNESDAY, October 10, 2018

75 CENTS

## Median housing prices for Maui are on the rise

Homes, condos soaring with double-digit hikes

By BRIAN PERRY  
City Editor

Median sales prices for single-family homes and condominiums jumped in double-digit increases in September — up 16 percent to \$754,248 for homes and up 18.2 percent to \$501,000 for condos — both compared with the same month last year, according to statistics released last week by the Realtors Association of Maui.

September marked the fourth straight month of double-digit increases for condos: up 19.8 percent to \$515,000 in June, up 15.6 percent to \$508,825 in July and up 26.2 percent to \$504,998 in August. Over 12 months ending in September, median sales prices have increased 10.6 percent to \$485,000, the association reported.

There's been more variability in single-family home median prices, ranging from a decrease of 10.1 percent to \$680,000 in March to the 16 percent increase in September. Overall, home prices have grown 0.9 percent for the year through September.

The association's report contained a cautionary note. It said: "Although residential real estate should continue along a mostly positive line for the rest of the year, rising prices and interest rates coupled with salary stagnation and a generational trend toward home purchase delay or even disinterest could create an environment for declining sales."

Maui Realtors Association President Gina Duncan said that even with Maui's tight inventory market, "there is still a demand for housing locally and from the Mainland United States. We see some international interest and expect more during high season, however not as strong as on Oahu.

"Even though one would think this would make a strong sellers market, buyers are savvy and are still cautious," Duncan said. "Homes that are overpriced tend not to get shown even if seller is flexible, so I would caution against overpricing by a seller to 'test the market,' and as much as possible to have the home 'show

See HOUSING on Page A4

## Gecko butt-dials a 'bazillion' times from Hawaii seal hospital

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER  
The Associated Press

HONOLULU — If you got incessant phone calls last week from a hospital that cares for Hawaiian monk seals, you were butt-dialed.

Or, more specifically, foot-dialed. By a gecko. Marine mammal veterinarian Claire Simeone was at lunch when she got a call from Ke Kai Ola, the Big Island hospital where she's director. There was silence on the other end. Nine more silent calls followed. Fearing a seal emergency, she rushed back.

She wasn't the only one getting calls, and people started asking why the hospital was calling non-stop.

Trying to figure out why a "bazillion" calls were made from one line, she called the phone company and a rep tried to talk her through finding a possible line on the Fritz. She walked into a lab and found the culprit. The gecko was perched on a phone, making calls to everyone in the recent call history with "HIS TINY GECKO FEET," she wrote in a Twitter thread the next day, detailing the saga.

Social media delighted in the tale, and some people offered jokes about a certain company's gecko calling to save you money on your car insurance.

After discovering the mystery caller, Simeone caught the gecko and put it outside on a plant, she said Tuesday.

"If there's a little gecko that helps us share the story of conservation, then that's a win," she said of the work she does caring for the endangered seals. "I think people needed a little pick me up with the news cycle."

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The Maui News can be found online at [maui.news](http://maui.news)



Pacific Whale Foundation photos

Passengers take photos of what could be the first reported whale sighting of the season on Monday aboard the Pacific Whale Foundation's Ocean Explorer.

## First humpback whale of the season makes its appearance

Pacific Whale Foundation tour boat spots whale north of Molokini

By MELISSA TANJI  
Staff Writer

Almost like clockwork, the Pacific Whale Foundation spotted its first whale of the season on Monday, which is approximately the same time as last year's first sighting.

With assistance from another boat, the Maui Diamond, the foundation's Ocean Explorer Capt. Aaron Bement spotted the whale at 8:08 a.m., about 2.4 miles north of Molokini, heading toward Maalaea Harbor. The 2017 sighting was on Oct. 9, at 4:44 p.m., near Honolua Bay.

Typically, whale season in Hawaiian waters runs from November to May, with the peak season from January to March, according to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

The timing of the sightings this year and last was consistent with historical trends, said Marc Lammers, the sanctuary's research coordinator.

"The sanctuary has been keeping track of early and out-of-season whale sightings since 1988 and, on average over that time



Pacific Whale Foundation spotted its first whale of the season on Monday from its Ocean Explorer vessel about 2.4 miles north of Molokini heading toward Maalaea Harbor.

period, we would expect the first sighting to occur during either the first or second week of October," Lammers said in an email.

He was unaware of any boaters or operators reporting a whale sighting yet this fall, other than the sighting on Monday.

Ed Lyman, the sanctuary's natural re-

sources management specialist, added that because of the whale's location outside the Kihei Boat Ramp and near Molokini, plenty of tour boats "got a great early-season sighting" on Monday.

See WHALE on Page A4

## U.N.'s Nikki Haley to leave in latest Trump shake-up

By ZEKE MILLER, DEB RIECHMANN and JONATHAN LEMIRE  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the latest shake-up for President Donald Trump's turbulent administration, U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley abruptly announced Tuesday she is resigning at the end of the year, raising fresh questions about the Trump team and about the outspoken diplomat's own political ambitions.

The news blindsided some key U.S. allies and many congressional Republicans involved in foreign policy matters. And it came less than a month before congressional elections, thwarting White House efforts to project an image of stability, with the loss of one of the highest-profile women in the administration at a time when women's votes are being vigorously pursued.

But Haley, the former South Carolina governor, has often been an unpredictable and independent force in the Trump administration. At times she has offered strik-

ingly different perspectives on world events from her more isolationist-minded boss.

A smiling Haley announced her decision at an Oval Office meeting alongside the president, bringing up her own political prospects even as she underscored her continued support for Trump. Without prompting from reporters, she said she had no plans to run for president "in 2020" and would campaign for Trump.

Haley, who is 46 and not personally wealthy, hinted in her resignation letter to Trump that she is headed to the private sector.

"I have given everything I've got these last eight years," she said, referring to her six years as governor as well as her time at the U.N. "And I do think it's good to rotate in other people who can put that same energy and power into it."

Trump was asked why the announcement was made now since Haley is staying until the end of the year.

Instead of answering directly, he re-

counted how she has had to work on tough issues, such as Iran and North Korea.

White House officials had sought to put a hold on Trump's record-setting turnover in the run-up to the Nov. 6 elections, with aides being asked months ago to step down or commit to stay through Election Day to avoid adding to a sense of turmoil.

Still, the prospect of post-midterm changes continues to hang over the West Wing, and Haley's exit was one that has been discussed, according to a senior administration official not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations.

A number of officials speculated that the timing was meant to preserve the ambassador's own political future. A post in the Trump administration has proven to be a rickety stepping-stone to either lucrative private sector work or hopes for higher office, and the risk to those ambitions might only increase after the elections if Democrats make significant gains in Congress.

See HALEY on the next page

# Fire destroys residence in Waiehu Heights

## The Maui News

No injuries were reported in an early-morning fire that destroyed a Waiehu Heights residence Tuesday, fire officials reported.

People who had been in the home at 857 W. Kaena Place made it out safely after the fire was discovered and reported to emergency 911 dispatchers at 12:42 a.m., officials said.

Firefighters from Wailuku,

Kahului and Kula responded to the blaze, along with a battalion chief. Engine 1 from Wailuku arrived first at 12:53 a.m., and firefighters saw a half of a single-story, single-family home ablaze with fire extending out from its roof, officials said.

Firefighters worked to prevent the blaze from spreading to neighboring homes, but two adjacent structures sustained minor exterior damage, officials

reported. The fire was declared under control at 1:22 a.m.

A Maui Fire Department investigator, assisted by a Maui Police Department detective, investigated the origin and cause of the fire, which remained undetermined.

An electric meter had been removed from the residence, which had no electricity. Officials said the yard was in “an unkept condition,” and “sever-

al derelict cars were in the driveway and on the road frontage of the house.”

The exact number of people who had been in the home at the time of the fire was not confirmed, officials said.

Damage to the residence was estimated at \$260,000.

Red Cross officials helped two of the home occupants who remained at the scene, officials said.

## Solar

Continued from Page A3

view by the end of the year.

The seven projects are expected to produce about 260 MW of solar energy on Oahu, Maui and Hawaii islands and displace 1.2 million barrels of oil, HECO said. Each solar project will be connected to a storage system that will capture up to four hours of electricity that can further reduce fossil fuel use in the evening or other times when the sun isn't shining.

“These large-scale solar and battery projects will accelerate our renewable energy drive at some of the lowest prices

we've seen to date,” said Shelee Kimura, Hawaiian Electric senior vice president of business development and strategic planning. “With support from our communities, these projects will reduce our reliance on fossil fuel and cut greenhouse gas emissions while benefiting all with low-cost renewable energy.”

Hawaiian Electric, Maui Electric and Hawai'i Electric Light already have more than 500 MW of renewable energy under contract in addition to nearly 80,000 private rooftop systems in operation.

The announcement comes on the heels of Maui's second utility-scale solar project,

Ku'ia Solar in West Maui near Lahainaluna High, going online Thursday. Ku'ia Solar's sister project, South Maui Renewable Resources near the Maui Research & Technology Park, was the first utility-scale solar project to feed MECO's grid in May.

The projects, owned and operated by Kenyon Energy, can supply up to 2.87 MW of solar power each to the grid.

The addition of Ku'ia Solar power increased MECO's renewable energy portfolio to 34 percent, which is ahead of the state's target of 30 percent renewable energy by 2020, the utility said.

On Molokai, a power pur-

chase agreement for a 2.64 MW project, which includes a 3 MW battery energy storage system, was approved by the PUC in late July. The project is owned and operated by Molo-ka'i New Energy Partners, a Chicago-based Half Moon Ventures company that will sell power to MECO.

The project is expected to be in service by the end of 2019.

The seven projects were the result of an expedited procurement effort that began in February, HECO said. The cost of renewable energy continues to drop, aided by tax credits available to developers.

## Whale

Continued from Page A1

In 2016, the foundation spotted its first whale on Oct. 20 and in 2015, its first humpback was seen on Oct. 24.

Most of the foundation's first sightings from 1998 to the present have been in early to mid-October.

But there have been some exceptions.

In 2005, the foundation's first whale sighting was on Nov. 11, and, in 2000, it spotted its first whale on Sept. 16.

Of this year's whale sight-

ing, Bement said: “This is why we do this. You never know what you'll see on any given day. One day, it's the endangered false killer whales that our research team is studying, the next spinner dolphins, and (Monday) our first humpback whale sighting.”

At least 12,000 humpback whales are believed to migrate to Hawaii each winter, with the species' numbers increasing at 7 percent per year, the foundation said. The whales travel from their northern summer feeding area that extends from Northern

California to the Bering Sea, arriving in Hawaii to mate, give birth and care for their young calves.

According to the National Marine Sanctuary, Hawaii is the only state in the United States where humpback whales mate, calve and nurse their young. Humpbacks may find Hawaii suitable because of its warm waters, underwater visibility, the variety of ocean depths and the lack of natural predators.

Humpback whales are protected by federal and state regulations, which prohibit

vessels and other water-users from approaching a humpback whale within 100 yards.

The current estimate on the population of humpbacks in the North Pacific is 22,000 individuals.

In the foundation's annual whale count in February, sightings were down by double-digit percentages when compared to 2017. But it wasn't clear if the number of marine mammals was peaking at the same time each year, foundation researchers said.

The lower numbers could

## COUNTY/IN BRIEF

### Habitual DUI driver in trouble again

WAILUKU — A Waihee man with a prior conviction for habitually driving under the influence of alcohol is again facing the felony charge after being arrested for drunken driving this month.

Stephen Clubb, 58, has pleaded not guilty to habitual DUI, reckless driving and having an open container in a vehicle in connection with his arrest Oct. 1.

At a court hearing Tuesday, Clubb asked that his bail be reduced from \$12,000.

Deputy Prosecutor Ryan Teshima opposed the request. “His record indicates that he's an extreme danger to the community,” Teshima said.

Second Circuit Judge Peter Cahill noted that Clubb was sentenced to prison for his prior habitual DUI conviction in 2009. Clubb also has convictions for DUI in 2002, 2001 and twice in 1999, Cahill said.

“He does present a danger to the community,” Cahill said. “I can't think of any cir-

cumstance where we can prevent you from driving.”

Clubb asked whether the judge could “pull my license.”

“The license doesn't drive a car,” Cahill said. “A driver's license is a piece of paper that authorizes you to exercise a privilege, but it doesn't prevent you from getting behind the wheel unless you can come up with a plan to do that.”

Cahill kept Clubb's bail at \$12,000.

A Dec. 10 trial is scheduled for Clubb.

### Missed trash route to be picked up today

A refuse route in Kula was missed Tuesday due to mechanical problems and will be picked up today, the county Department of Environmental Management said.

Areas affected included the Kulamanu and Kula Kai subdivisions; Upper and Lower Kimo Drive; Kulalani Circle; Omaopio, Holopuni, Ainakula and Lower Kula roads and all surrounding streets and roads.

fewer pod sightings, down 38.4 percent from 2017's 544, according to foundation totals.

The 2018 total for calves spotted was 62, which is 29.5 percent less than last year's 88 calves.

The foundation reported that the number of whale sightings has dropped since 2015, but the overall trend over a longer period of time showed increasing numbers of whales, pods and calves.

■ *Melissa Tanji can be reached at mtanji@mauinews.com.*

## Housing

Continued from Page A1

ready' with detailed cleaning, repairs and staging done prior to listing.”

Duncan said Maui's high single-family home prices tend to impact condo sales because people turn to condo living as less-expensive option.

An overview of key metrics for Maui's condominium market shows the high-demand, low-supply drivers fueling the higher prices that owners can demand and receive from buyers. In September, sellers were getting 98.1 percent of their list price, up 1.7 percentage points; for the year through September, that metric was up 0.7 percentage point to 97.3 percent.

The housing affordability index for condominiums dropped 21.2 percent to 67 in

September, and it fell 16.3 percent to 67 for the first nine months. (The index shows the amount a Maui County household earning median income would have toward what would be needed to qualify for a median-priced unit under prevailing interest rates. A higher number means greater affordability.)

The inventory of condos for sale decreased 22.4 percent to 523 in September. The month's supply of condos was down 27.8 percent to 3.9. New condo listings decreased 25.2 percent to 113 for the month and down 6.5 percent to 1,405 for the year's first nine months.

The volume of condos sales in September was down nearly 4 percent to 121. Most of the sales were in Kihei (46, or 38 percent of total condo sales in September), Napili-Kahana-

Honokowai (18, or 14.9 percent), Wailuku (15, or 12.4 percent), Kaanapali (14, or 11.6 percent) and Wailea-Makena (13, or 10.7 percent).

The volume of condo sales for the year's first nine months was up 21.6 percent to 1,277; and January-through-September median prices for condos were up 11.4 percent to \$499,000.

Kihei led the way with 472 condo sales through September, a 16.8 percent increase in sales volume. Median condo prices in Kihei were up 7.4 percent to \$407,000 for the year's first three quarters.

The runner-up region for condo sales volume was Napili-Kahana-Honokowai with 193 sales, up 17 percent; median prices for the West Maui region increased 4.9 percent to \$430,000.

The luxury resort area of Wailea-Makena had the county's third most condo sales — 179, a 70.5 percent increase in sales volume. However, the median price remained unchanged at \$1.15 million.

Kaanapali reported 133 condo sales over nine months, a 49.4 percent jump in sales volume. The area's median price for condos rose 4.5 percent to \$815,000.

Wailuku recorded 118 condo sales, up 25.5 percent, and its median price increased 8.3 percent to \$410,000.

The key metrics for September single-family home real estate activity also showed the high demand and short supply of housing, but the percentages for changes were not as high as those for condos.

The inventory of homes for sale fell 16.7 percent to 473

for the month, and the month's supply of inventory was down 13.3 percent to 5.2.

The affordability index for single-family homes dropped 20 percent to 44 for the month and was off 5.9 percent to 48 for the first nine months of the year.

Home sellers were getting 96.6 percent of their list price, up 0.2 percentage point for the month; and 96.8 percent, up 0.2 percentage point for the year.

The volume of home sales in September was down 1.2 percent to 80 in September, with most properties exchanging hands in Wailuku (24, 30 percent), Haiku (nine, 11.3 percent), Kihei (nine, 11.3 percent),

Makawao-Olinda-Haliimaile (seven, 8.8 percent), Kahului (six, 7.5 percent) and Kula-Ulupalakua-Kanaio (five, 6.3 percent).

The volume of home sales

for the year's first three quarters was 879 sales countywide, up 6.4 percent. The median sales price remained unchanged at \$700,000.

Wailuku recorded the most homes exchanging hands, 198, a 29.4 percent increase in sales volume for the year to September. The median price for a home in Wailuku rose 5.7 percent to \$650,000. Kihei had 134 sales, a 2.9 percent decline compared with a year ago. Kihei's median home price slid down 2.8 percent to \$687,013.

Kahului reported 111 sales, down 0.9 percent. Its median price grew 13.9 percent to \$680,000. Haiku had 68 home sales through September, a 6.3 percent increase. Its mid-way price increased 10.5 percent to \$822,500.

The county's most expensive homes were in Kapalua, where eight residences exchanged hands for a median price of \$2.84 million, an increase of 14.2 percent. One property sold in Maalaea for \$2 million. Kaanapali had the most sales among luxury areas with 29, a 61.1 percent increase in sales volume for the year's first nine months. Kaanapali's median home price rose 4.4 percent to \$1.77 million.

Wailea-Makena reported 27 homes sold for a median price of \$1.8 million, a drop of 36.2 percent from the \$2.82 million figure set in region last year.

Kula-Ulupalakua-Kanaio, Makawao-Olinda-Haliimaile and Pukalani recorded year-to-date home sales of 53, 43 and 31, respectively. Their sales volumes were down 17.2 percent, up 7.5 percent and down 16.2 percent, respectively, compared with last year.

The median sales price of a home was \$975,000 (up 14.8 percent) in Kula-Ulupalakua-Kanaio, \$610,000 (down 3.9 percent) in Makawao-Olinda-Haliimaile and \$725,000 (up 7.4 percent) in Pukalani.

The county's least expensive homes were found on Lanai and Molokai, where the median prices were \$475,000 (up 25 percent) and \$350,000 (down 0.6 percent), respectively. On Lanai, 15 homes were sold, down 16.7 percent; and on Molokai, 25 homes exchanged hands, up 31.6 percent.

For the full report, go to [www.ramau.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/RAM-Stats-September-2018.pdf](http://www.ramau.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/RAM-Stats-September-2018.pdf).

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