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FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ FEBRUARY 3, 2018 ◆

GIVE A GIFT OF LIFE: ADOPT IN THE PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIALS

Fathers and Mothers Wanted: Consider Adopting a Child in the Philippines

The United Nations' Children's Rights and Emergency Relief Organization estimates there are 1.8 million abandoned-orphaned children living in the Philippines. That is a startling figure, more than 1 percent of its estimated 100 plus million population. These children roam urban streets in clusters, live in makeshift homes, and must endure starvation daily. Some are more fortunate and placed into orphanages awaiting to be adopted or taken in by foster parents. They became orphans for different reasons: born into extreme poverty, victims of natural disasters and armed conflict. Or many are given up in the hope that their child might be able to be raised in homes by parents who can provide better opportunities. Some of these children end up living with relatives.

The Philippines Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the government agency tasked with finding homes for orphans, can't keep pace with the number of homeless, orphan children coming in; many of whom end up on a waiting list until their legal eligibility age for adoption passes. The legal age for adoption in the Philippines is age 16 and under. Those who are fortunate, end up overseas. But that number is scant proportionate to need.

The U.S. State Department shows that only 1,350 Filipino children were adopted by American families between 2009 and 2015. That low figure is due to adoption bureaucracy in both countries, the U.S. and the Philippines, low interest for adoption, stigma and myths associated with adoption. In the Philippines, common complaints are understaffing and requirements of papers that often cannot be procured such as a birth certificate and parents' death certificate. Orphanages are scarce; and simple procedures can drag on for months. While the age limit to qualify for adoption is 16, because of the potentially long processing, it's recommended that paperwork for adoption be initiated when the child is 14. Many children waiting for adoption processing have their time limit expire and are denied adoption after the age limit. The woefully slow process is in dire need of changes.

The DSWD allows three types of adoption in the Philippines: agency adoption, relative adoption, and independent adoption. Then there is intercountry adoption. They have different sets of requirements. The Philippines do not have a minimum income requirement but adopted parents must prove financial stability and must never have been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude. Philippine laws of adoption follow the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Child and must meet requirements set by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

In Hawaii, relative adoption in the Philippines is more common, and is viewed as the easiest way for adoption. History of the adoptee and family connection are known. This makes adopted parents more comfortable and passionate about adopting.

Adoption has proven to be a blessing for millions of families for both parents and children. In many situations, it is a gift of life, a gift of opportunity, a second chance for a child dealt with adverse circumstances. The misconception that adopting a child could lead to problems is quickly fading as more people realize that providing a safe, secure and loving home can turn any life transition into a successful one. A study by the Search Institute that examined adopted adolescents have found that adopted children score higher than their middle-class peers on a number of

FROM THE PUBLISHER

On the west, when people talk about inter-country adoptions, we commonly hear about Americans adopting children in China and Africa. What's under the radar is the dire need for adopting in the Philippines where close to 2 million children are abandoned or orphaned. It's a crisis underreported.

For our cover story this issue, HFC associate editor Edwin Quinabo writes about adopting in the Philippines, the requirements, projected cost, and process. He interviewed both the CEO and Philippines Program Director of Hawaii International Child (HIC), the only Philippines-accredited adoption agency in the state of Hawaii. What's common now is relative adoptions and adoptions of older children. He also interviewed Philippine-born Elizette Mae Pinter who was adopted at the age of 13 by her grandparents Melinda and Lawrence Pinter of Aiea; and parents Jeff and Florida Chow of Ewa Beach who adopted their daughter Samantha at the age of 3 from the Philippines. Their families are truly a blessing and their stories touching. We hope this cover story can serve as inspiration and a guide for Hawaii parents who are seriously thinking about adopting in the Philippines. And for those who haven't thought about adopting, consider how wonderful it could be by giving a child in need a loving, stable home and to be a part of your ohana.

Also in this issue, HFC columnist Emil Guillermo writes about the recent government shutdown that resulted in an impasse over the fate of DACA immigrants, border security, and other fiscal matters. A core of Democrats, including Sen. Mazie Hirono, wanted Republicans to act on the DACA program, reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, fund Community Health Centers, and provide a parity between funding for defense and domestic priorities. Republicans failed to agree on a compromise that resulted in a temporary shutdown. Emil writes about the case of Cheska Perez, a Filipina DACA immigrant who was brought into the country at the age of 6, whose parents overstayed on their VISAs. Like many DACA immigrants, Perez's time is running out. If Congress and the President do not reach a permanent solution for the program, she could be forced to leave the country by the end of this year.

In our news section, read about Hawaii's historic low unemployment; free tax preparation assistance through AARP's Tax-Aide program; the recent installation of Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce's newly elected officers and board of directors, and other news from the U.S. Mainland and Philippines.

Lastly, be sure to read our regular columns, several open forum contributions, and a feature on the Seafarers Ministry that provides food, clothes, and fellowship to crew members of fishing vessels that stop by Oahu's shores, many of whom are Filipinos. Also, contributing editor Dr. Belinda Aquino submits a feature on Hawaii's celebrated entertainer Melveen Leed.

Thank you for supporting your community newspaper. Until next issue, warmest *aloha* and *mabuhay!*

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido


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The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle is published semi-monthly (twice a month) by The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle Inc. and is located at 94-356 Waipahu Depot, Waipahu, HI 96797. Telephone (808) 678-8930 Facsimile (808) 678-1829. E-mail filipinochronicle@gmail.com. Website: www.thefilipinochronicle.com. Opinions expressed by the columnists and contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle management. Reproduction of the contents in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission from the management. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

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EDITORIALS

Opening Nearly All U.S. Coastal Waters for Drilling Oil Is a Mistake

On 1969, Santa Barbara, California, Union oil's inadequate safety precautions led to a massive oil spill that dumped 3 million gallons of crude oil into the Pacific Ocean. This catastrophic disaster spawned the creation of Earth Day, and a more environmentally conscious nation.

In 2010, the Deepwater Horizon disaster which became the largest marine oil spill in history, killed 11 workers and released 4 million barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, causing \$17 billion in damages to natural resources.

Both of these events, and a string of other accidental oil spills have led to a ban on offshore drilling for gas and oil along the U.S. coastal waters.

Until now.

President Donald Trump continues his unraveling of environmental restrictions in his latest proposal to allow new offshore oil and gas drilling in practically all United States coastal waters. Energy companies will be able to lease coastal waters that span thousands upon thousands of acres for the first time in decades to drill for oil.

The Interior Department said it would open 25 of 26 regions of the outer continental shelf for drilling. It intends to

grant 47 leases between 2019 and 2024, including 19 off the coast of Alaska and 12 in the Gulf of Mexico, and several areas in the Pacific.

Trump said the ban "deprives our country of potentially thousands and thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in wealth."

Supporters of the proposal also say it could help reduce fuel costs and the U.S.'s dependency on imported oil.

Just recently as part of the 2017 Tax bill, Republicans' included a roll back restriction that opened up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, or ANWR, to oil and gas drilling.

The Interior Department also rescinded an Obama-era rule that would have added regulations for fracking.

What is happening is a complete disregard for environmental protection in favor of boosting energy that could have permanent repercussions.

Opponents to lifting the ban say

Environmentalists criticize Trump's lift on the ban as a step backwards in protecting the environment. They cite the risks of offshore drilling: oil spills from oil tankers or pipelines transporting oil from the platform to onshore facilities, and from leaks. Offshore

drilling also contaminates water, creating what they call "produced water" that is unusually high saline water and unseparated hydrocarbons brought to the surface along with oil and gas.

Over 60 environmental groups called the plan a "shameful giveaway" to oil companies.

Many coastal states also rely on tourism, fishing, and clean energy. Massive oil drilling off their shores hurt these states economically. Both Republicans and Democrats are opposed to the lifting of the ban.

The governors of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, California, Oregon and Washington have all opposed offshore drilling plans. Virginia's governor-elect, Ralph S. Northam, a Democrat, said that expanding drilling would jeopardize his state's tourism and fishing industries, as well as military installations. Gov. Roy Cooper of North Carolina, also a Democrat, called drilling a "critical threat" to his state's economy.

Challenges in the courts are certain to follow.

Senator Edward Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts, vowed to use the Congressional Review Act, which al-

lows agency actions to be undone by Congress, to block Trump's drilling plan.

Frank Knapp, president of the Business Alliance for Protecting the Atlantic Coast, said thousands of small businesses, from restaurants to hotels to commercial fishing operations, oppose drilling off their states' waters. "It's not consistent with our vibrant tourism, fishing and recreation," Knapp said. "Their concern is their livelihood, the local economies. We all saw what happened to the Gulf Coast with Deepwater Horizon."

Even Republican Governor Rick Scott opposed the lifting of the ban off the Florida coast, which eventually led to Trump exempting the coastal waters of Florida from drilling -- a transparent, shameful political act considering how important the electoral college is to Republicans in national presidential elections. The majority of Floridians oppose the lifting of the ban. Trump recognizes he will need to carry that state in a re-election bid. Trump stated that only Florida's coastal waters will be exempted. Never mind that California law-makers (Democrat state) is equally opposed to offshore drilling for the same reasons that Florida law-makers oppose offshore drilling.

States ought to be given equal consideration for rejecting offshore drilling. States should have the right to reject offshore drilling along their coastal waters.

This latest proposal by Trump is another radical move and follows so many other of his initiatives. First, a radical order is executed without bipartisan input or support; second, the radical proposal sends shockwaves of dissent; third, civic groups and states sue the federal government; fourth, the courts must decide; and fifth, Congress might be forced to intervene.

Most Americans do not support energy production at all cost when severe damage to the environment is a factor. In the Obama-era, clean energy has made great strides. Opening up nearly all coastal waters along the U.S. for drilling must be condemned as an economic and environmental mistake. Trump's actions clearly show that he is more interested in pleasing oil companies. If the Trump administration wants true energy independence, it should be making clean energy investments as other major economies are doing in Asia and Europe. Protecting the U.S. environment should be placed as high in importance as national defense.

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Hawaii's Unemployment is Record Low

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December was 2.0 percent, compared to the revised rate of 2.1 percent for November. Statewide, 668,600 were employed and 13,550 unemployed in December for a total seasonally adjusted labor force of 682,200, reported the Hawaii State Department of Labor & Industrial Relations (DLIR). Nationally, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.1 percent in December, the same as in November.



"The revised 2.1 percent rate in November means that the 2.0 percent unemployment rate in December is the historically lowest unemployment rate on record dating back to 1976, under current methodology" said Leonard Hoshijo, Acting DLIR Director.

Both initial claims and weeks claims decreased by 109 or 7.9 percent and by 92

or 1.2 percent respectively for unemployment benefits compared to one year ago. Over-the-month both initial claims and weeks claims increased by 8.6 percent 2.0 percent respectively in December 2017.

The unemployment rate figures for the State of Hawaii and the U.S. in this release are seasonally adjusted, in accordance with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) methodology.

The not seasonally adjusted rate for the State was 1.7 percent in December, compared to 2.0 percent in November.



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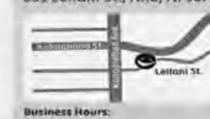
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COVER STORY

Adopting a Child in the Philippines Brings Joy to Hawaii Families

By Edwin Quinabo

Sometimes tragic moments can lead to happy endings; and heroes do live among us.

It was 2010, in the Philippines. Elizette Mae Pinter was 13 years old. Like most young teens, for Pinter, it was a time when she was still young enough to see her parents as her security and her anchor in every aspect of her life. And the same time, she was at that beginning age of self-exploration. Then one day. Everything changed. Pinter's parents got into a car accident. "My father died on the spot and my mother was injured and bed-ridden for 3 months," Pinter recalls.

"My father was the breadwinner of our family, so with my mother left, she agreed that adoption was the best for my future," said Pinter, thinking back to a time of her life's greatest uncertainty.

Melinda (the aunt of Elizette's biological father) and her husband Lawrence Pinter of Aiea decided to adopt the young Elizette. "My adopted mom (Melinda) came to the Philippines for the funeral of my biological father. Because of our family's situation, it was then that my adopted mom offered to adopt me, and bring me back to Hawaii," recalls Elizette.

After the funeral, Melinda immediately initiated the adoption process before the legal age limit (16 years old) for adoption in the Philippines passed.

On April 2012, at age 15, Elizette just made the cut-off age and she was legally adopted after two years.

In her new life in Hawaii,

she says that it took some time to make adjustments with language, school, the people and culture. "There was a language barrier and I got really self-conscious about my accent. I didn't know anyone, especially in school, so I had to come out of my comfort zone. The adoption exposed me to a new environment with new people. It definitely helped me grow as a person," said Elizette.

Elizette says her childhood was simple and happy. She fondly recalls growing up with a lot of people around her to help take care of her -- parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

Now age 21 and living in Aiea, Elizette is studying Business Administration with a major in Accounting at the University of Hawaii - West Oahu.

The Philippines' Orphan Problem

While Elizette's youth transitioned from a tragic loss to fortunate adoption, there are

countless Filipino children who are not so lucky. According to the United Nations' Children's Rights & Emergency Relief Organization, there are about 1.8 million children in the Philippines "abandoned or neglected" -- accounting for more than 1% of the country's 100+ million population. Some of these children have no parents or have distant relatives too poor to adopt them. They are orphans from extreme poverty, accidents, natural disasters or violence.

Some of them are completely on their own, living on the streets in clusters among other street children. Some of them live in make-shift homes and are not even part of the social welfare system. Then there are others living in the few orphanages scattered around the country, waiting anxiously and hoping for word from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) that a family is ready to adopt them.



Elizette Mae Pinter (back right) with her adopted family during father's day dinner in 2017.

Adoption Overseas

American families adopting children in the Philippines is not very common. Between 2009 and 2015, the U.S. State Department reports only 1,350 Filipino children were adopted by American families.

Locally, at the moment there is only one Philippines-accredited adoption agency in the state of Hawaii, the Hawaii International Child (HIC), according to Mary Jane Abe, Philippines Program Director of HIC.

Kristine Altwies, MA, is the Executive Director and CEO of HIC. "Hawaii International Child has been providing compassionate, ethical adoption services to children in need, since 1975. In that time, HIC has placed nearly 4,000 children into loving families. In 2010 HIC merged with Child & Family Service, Inc., Hawaii's oldest and largest social services agency. Child & Family Service (CFS) has been working in the Philippines since the 1950s, supporting orphanages and social services in connection with the Consuela Foundation and under the CFS Philippines umbrella," said Altwies.

The Philippines DSWD recognizes three major types of domestic adoptions: agency adoption, relative adoption, and independent adoption. Then there is inter-country adoption.

There are two types of children available via the Inter-Country Adoption Board (ICAB): children from Child Caring Agencies (more commonly known as orphanages) and qualified relative children. The ICAB is the central authority in inter-country adoption in the Philippines. They are responsible for licensing local and foreign child placement agencies, collecting fees and matching parents with children. The ICAB works with the DSWD and the Philippines' court system.

While the traditional, very young orphan, non-blood relative adoption is what most people think of when they hear about overseas adoptions, there is a greater need for adoptions of older, waiting-list children.

"Over the years, HIC has shifted its Philippine adoption work from a 'standard' younger orphan program, to a waiting child and relative adoption program. Currently HIC focuses on waiting children and relative adoptions exclusively. Waiting children are those who may need a little more care and attention to place and raise. Many are older or have medically correctable conditions. The relative program is especially important to Hawaii's large Philippine population," said Altwies.

HIC's Abe said "Being of Filipino ethnicity myself, I feel

(continued on page 5)

A POPULAR RESTAURANT IS FOR SALE

An authentic Filipino restaurant near the Kahului airport is for sale.

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COVER STORY

(from page 4, **ADOPTING...**)

a sense of relief every time a Filipino child arrives to a (new) home to be with his 'forever' family."

Abe shared one of her most memorable relative adoption cases that she had worked on involving a Hawaii couple adopting their grandchildren. The couple adopted their three grandchildren ranging in age from 9 to 15. The parents of the children were separated and left their children without a permanent caregiver to look after them. The children were left on their own at night. Relatives and neighbors would check on the children periodically, but it wasn't enough. DSWD moved quickly on the case and the grandparents were able to adopt the children and bring them to Hawaii.

"This case really touched my heart as I feared for the children's safety since they are minors living on their own. I could imagine the agony of the grandparents as they went through the adoption process. The wait must have seemed like an eternity even though it was one of the fastest cases I have completed. They were able to bring the children a little over a year after they started the case. The entire family here in Hawaii and their relatives and friends in the Philippines all worked together to facilitate the process. My heart leaped with joy when the children came home. It was truly a rewarding experience!" said Abe.

The Inter-Country Adoption Process

HIC breaks down its inter-country adoption process into four phases. There is the initial step when Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) complete applications, contracts, clearances, training and home study work. In the next stage, a dossier is submitted to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and PAPs receive a child referral. In the third stage, PAPs meet with their child in the child's country of origin and return home with them. In the last stage, PAPs must meet post-adoption/placement requirements, finalize the adoption, and obtain U.S.

citizenship for the child.

Adoptive Parents

Jeff and Florida Chow of Ewa Beach remember well when they adopted their daughter Samantha. At the time, they were married, in their 40s, and had no children. "We decided to adopt because we tried to have children of our own but was unsuccessful," said Florida.

"Our adoption process took about 4 years, but it felt like a lifetime. We were matched in December 2013 and was able to pick up Samantha from the Philippines in May 2014," she said. Florida remembers there were a lot of deadlines to meet, turning in forms, having finances in order to pay fees. "We were fortunate that we were referred to Hawaii International Child and they prompted us every time something needed to be done.

The Chows mentioned some of the procedures and costs involved: application, paperwork, home study, homeland security, dossier, agency, foreign program, post placement, orphanage, postage, humanitarian, adoption consultation, child travel, pre-travel, adoption travel costs, attorney, certificate of citizenship and passport.

HIC's Abe said adoption costs typically range from \$25,000 to \$35,000. This includes third party fees like those of ICAB, the USCIS, lawyer and travel expenses. She adds that HIC has previously offered substantial grants and fee waivers to families unable to afford the cost of adoption. "In the past, no family was turned away by HIC due to inability to pay the fees."

On seeing Samantha's photo for the first time once she was matched with the Chows, Florida recounts, "Our hearts just melted. She was beautiful. When we finally went to the Philippines to pick up Samantha and meeting her for the first time, she was shy and a little hesitant coming near us. There were about 15 children at the orphanage that were very playful, but our daughter stayed away. The orphanage had an adoption ceremony as they handed her to us.



Jeff and Florida Chow of Ewa Beach with their daughter Samantha celebrating the Christmas season.

It was very emotional for us and our daughter cried.

"The first night with her was a struggle. She cried, probably missing everyone at the orphanage. I tried entertaining her with the I-pad and a stuffed rabbit as I held her through the night. By the following day she started calling us mommy and daddy. She did not speak any English. Even though I'm Filipino, I could not speak her language," said Florida.

The Chows were in the Philippines for only seven days when they picked up Samantha. "Everything went very smoothly from picking up our daughter to visiting ICAB and completing the paperwork before leaving the Philippines."

"Since Sam came into our lives she filled our home with so much love, joy and laughter. Everyone welcomed her with open arms."

Sam was 3 years old when the Chows adopted her. She is now 7. "Since I have a large family, Sam interacts with the young children as well as the older ones. We now spend our weekends taking her to dance and singing lessons. She is a great traveler and we plan to do more traveling in the future," said Florida.

Like Samantha and Elizette, adopted children from the Philippines typically experience difficulties with English upon first arriving, but they quickly learn to communicate. HIC's Abe said modern technology has made things easier

with phone apps and translation apps. She said many Filipino children already understand English but need a little more time to express their thoughts and feelings clearly. English as a Second Language classes, available in many schools, also help.

Abe mentions other adjustments adoptive children from the Philippines experience, "Some children do not meet the developmental milestones for their age group upon arrival from the Philippines. Some are underweight or have dental issues. But after several months of consistent medical and dental monitoring as well as proper nutrition, they become developmentally on track. Some children show cognitive delays. They do not perform at par with their age group and need tutoring or after class support classes. A few were placed one grade level below their age group," said Abe.

But adjustments vary case-to-case. A 1994 study conducted by the Search Institute found that adopted children score higher than their middle-class peers on indicators of school performance and social competence. That same study also found that compared with children of single parents, adopted children are less involved in alcohol abuse, fighting, police trouble; and they score higher on health measures. Parents who adopt are also more likely to stay married, according to the study.

Who Can Adopt from the Philippines

A few of the requirements that must be met by the ICAB for adoption in the Philippines include: PAP must be at least 27 years old and at least 16 years older than the child to be adopted but not have a gap of 45 years between PAP and adopted child; married couples must have been married for one year or can show they have been living together for more than two years prior to marriage; and PAP has not been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude. The country of origin of a PAP must have diplomatic relations with the Philippines, allows adoptions, and maintains a foreign adoption agency. There are numerous supporting documents that need to be submitted including a physical and psychological evaluation.

Myths Surrounding Adopting in the Philippines

Adopting a child is a serious matter and must be a carefully well-thought out plan. The goal for every adoption is to put the welfare of the child first. The belief that people have of mothers' who offer up their children for adoption, that they don't care for their child, is a myth. Many times, as in the case of Elizette's biological mom, offering up a child for adoption can be a selfless act. Another popular belief is that prospective adopted parents must reside in the Philippines for several years to adopt a child from the Philippines. The Philippine government may waive this requirement in certain situations. Another myth is that an attorney is needed for the adoption process. It is an option, but licensed agencies are well informed of the entire process. There are other myths and stigma associated with adoptions that are baseless. Prospective adoptive parents shouldn't be deterred by what they hear and do their own research to find out the facts. As the Chows can attest to, if you are serious about adopting a child from the Philippines, it can be one of the greatest joys for a family.

OPEN FORUM

Why I Voted Against Destructive CR That Lays Path to Another Shutdown, Puts Politics Over People

By Rep. Tulsi Gabbard

Today I voted against Congress's 4th short-term spending bill in 5 months that fails to include a year-long budget for our military and government agencies, funding for community health centers, and a permanent fix for our country's DREAMers. The vote to reopen the government passed the Senate earlier today with a vote of 81-18, passed the House by 266-150, and will now go to President Trump for

his signature.

I have consistently opposed destructive Continuing Resolutions that fund the government for a few weeks at a time, holding the American economy hostage, damaging military readiness, and creating uncertainty that bars any long-term planning around federal funding.

The only thing more irresponsible than this reckless government shutdown is another shutdown in three weeks—which is exactly where we are headed with

today's temporary funding bill. This bill was founded on empty promises and a record of failure to solve the problems that led to the shutdown in the first place. It prolongs uncertainty for federal workers, our troops and their families, DREAMers, and millions that rely on federal services.

This is not about politics. It is about standing up and fighting for what is right for the people of Hawai'i and this country. I will not stand by while political games in Washington

threaten the health of our keiki and struggling low-income families, the readiness of our troops, and the ability for DREAMers, who were brought here as children through no choice of their own, to come out from the shadows and live free in the only home they've ever known. Until we actually work together to solve the challenges our country is facing, people in Hawai'i and across the country will continue to suffer. We need real solutions, not the same old broken status quo.

CONGRESSWOMAN TULSI GABBARD has remained committed to a long-term, bipartisan budget. She is a cosponsor of the *Federal Employee Retroactive Pay Fairness Act (H.R.4694)* and the *Military Pay Protection Act (H.R.2220)* to ensure furloughed federal employees and military personnel are paid during any government shutdown, and also announced she will return her salary for the days the government was shutdown.

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard is a cosponsor of the bipartisan, bicameral *DREAM Act (H.R.3440)* to enact a permanent solution for millions of DREAMers across the country, and strongly opposed President Trump's decision to end DACA.

Deeply Saddened by Senate Failure to Defend Undocumented Youth

By Michelle Boykins

The Senate voted unanimously to reopen the government through February 8 without a solution for the 800,000 DACA recipients. Their refusal to resolve the DACA crisis that the Trump administration created ignores the will of the American people, 87 percent of whom are in favor of providing a pathway to citizenship for our immigrant youth.

Disheartened is the best way to describe our reaction to Democrats' reversal on the vote to extend government funding without a solution for undocumented youth. A number of Republicans have continuously promised to provide a resolution for DACA recipients within the negotiations about a government spending bill. A resolution for DACA recipients

slipped through our fingers when Senators got cold feet.

Any legislation to halt the Trump shutdown should have included the passage of a clean DREAM Act that would have protected over one million immigrants, including 130,000 Asian immigrants. Congress needs to remember it works for the American people. In refusing to resolve the DACA crisis, it has not only failed immigrant youth but also failed their constituents who overwhelmingly support DACA recipients. This is not just about protecting immigrants. It is also about passing humane and common-sense legislation. Republican leaders in the Senate, House, and White House are letting racists and extremists dictate their agenda.

The plan to bring an immigration bill to a vote as stand-alone legislation in the Senate is not guaranteed, and it does not

include a path forward for the House. The majority of Americans support a solution for DACA recipients and we have the votes in both houses to get the DREAM Act passed into law, the President and Speaker Ryan continue to obstruct a solution.

We, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, will continue to stand up to white supremacist objectives on immigration policy and press for a clean DREAM Act. Congress, it's time to stop kicking the can down the road and pretending to be working on a solution. A bipartisan solution already exists. The American people and more than one million immigrants deserve the passage of a clean DREAM Act. Do your job.

ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE is a national affiliation of five leading organizations advocating for the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and other underserved communities to promote a fair and

equitable society for all. The affiliation's members are: Advancing Justice | AAJC (Washington, DC), Advancing Justice - Asian Law

Caucus (San Francisco), Advancing Justice - Los Angeles, Advancing Justice - Atlanta, and Advancing Justice - Chicago.

Racist President Doubles Down on White Nationalist Agenda

Washington, DC — January 26, 2018 — The White House released its immigration framework, signaling that the Trump administration is not serious about providing a legislative solution to the 800,000 DACA recipients who are in limbo. The Trump administration is holding hostage the safety of these young immigrants in exchange for a xenophobic immigration policy that will eliminate the family-based immigration system and the diversity visa program while wasting taxpayer money on an unpopular border wall, ramping up a mass deportation machine, and stripping away due process from asylum seekers.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice, an affiliation of five civil rights organizations and collective vocal advocates for DACA recipients, issues the following statement:

The President has yet again chosen to back a racist agenda on immigration instead of coming to the table with a sensible solution for 800,000 immigrant youth.

It is deeply disturbing how this administration continues to play with people's lives while

having no regard for the will of the people. 82 percent of American voters want undocumented youth to be able to stay in the United States and have the ability to become U.S. citizens. However, this administration chose to derail any sensible solution by providing an immigration framework that is fueled by a white supremacist agenda. President Trump manufactured this problem when he ordered the shutdown of the DACA program. Now it is past time for him to listen to the American people and not to his anti-immigrant staff like Stephen Miller and John Kelly.

Our immigration policy should be guided by our morals and values around family unity and diversity, not by xenophobia and anti-family sentiments. We call on all of our elected officials to reject this hateful proposal and to follow the leadership of undocumented youth at the frontlines of this struggle. The only acceptable outcome is to swiftly pass a Clean DREAM Act. Asian Americans Advancing Justice will continue to fight against xenophobic policies and advocate for policies that treat all people with the dignity and respect they deserve. (www.advancingjustice-aaajc.org)

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WHAT'S UP, ATTORNEY?

"Four Pillars" of Trump's Immigration Plan



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

The following, in President Trump's own words, without any addition or deletion by anybody, are the "Four Pillars" of his immigration plan which he discussed in his State of the Union address delivered today, January 30, 2018.

"Over the next few weeks, the House and Senate will be voting on an immigration reform package.

In recent months, my Administration has met extensively with both Democrats and Republicans to craft a bipartisan approach to immigration reform. Based on these discussions, we presented the Congress with a detailed proposal that should be supported by both parties as a fair compromise—one where nobody gets everything they want, but where our country gets the critical reforms it needs and must have.

Here are the four pillars of our plan:

The first pillar of our framework generously offers a path to citizenship for 1.8 million illegal immigrants who were brought here by their parents at a young age—that covers almost three times more people than the previous administration. Under our plan, those who meet education and work requirements, and show good moral character, will be able to become full citizens of the United States over a 12-year period.

The second pillar fully secures the border. That means building a great wall on the Southern border, and it means hiring more heroes like CJ to keep our communities safe. Crucially, our plan closes the terrible loopholes exploited by criminals and terrorists to enter our country—and it finally ends the horrible and

dangerous practice of "catch and release."

The third pillar ends the visa lottery—a program that randomly hands out green cards without any regard for skill, merit, or the safety of American people. It is time to begin moving towards a merit-based immigration system—one that admits people who are skilled, who want to work, who will contribute to our society and who will love and respect our country.

The fourth and final pillar protects the nuclear family by ending chain migration. Under the current broken system, a single immigrant can bring in virtually unlimited numbers of distant relatives. Under our plan, we focus on the immediate family by limiting sponsorships to spouses and minor children. This vital reform is necessary, not just for our economy, but for our security, and our future.

In recent weeks, two terrorist attacks in New York were made possible by the visa lottery and chain migration. In the age of terrorism, these programs present risks we can no longer afford.

It is time to reform these outdated immigration rules, and finally bring our immigration system into the 21st century.

These four pillars represent a down-the-middle compromise, and one that will create a safe, modern, and lawful immigration system.

For over 30 years, Washington has tried and failed to solve this problem. This Congress can be the one that finally makes it happen.

Most importantly, these four pillars will produce legislation that fulfills my ironclad pledge to only sign a bill that puts America first. So let's come together, set politics aside, and finally get the job done."

<http://www.newsweek.com/state-union-full-text-795748>

Analysis and Comment:

Are these four pillars like



the legs of a chair? If so, then they must all be enacted into law otherwise the chair cannot stand.

Many in the Republican Party, especially the conservatives, are strongly opposed to a "path to citizenship" for 1.8 million illegal aliens.

The Democrats will not vote for the plan if there is no "path to citizenship" for 1.8 million illegal aliens. These illegal aliens will become a bountiful harvest of new Democrat voters.

Building a wall at the Southern border is the centerpiece of the plan. The Democrats will not vote for a wall.

Visa lottery is a "Las Vegas style" policy that does not serve the national interest and should be discarded. Merit-based immigration serves the national interest and should be adopted in full. Most would agree to enact these proposals into law.

Protecting the "nuclear family" by allowing sponsorship of only a spouse and minor child so as to end "chain migration" is like a nuclear bomb. Many will oppose it because it would bar adult children from being petitioned by their parents and brothers and sisters from being petitioned by their siblings. Family immigration has been at the center of American immigration policy for decades. Family-oriented Filipinos, Mexicans, Chinese, and other nationalities will oppose any limitation of current family immigration policy. They have many sympathizers in Congress.

Steny Hoyer (D-MD), the Democratic Party whip, who sat stone faced during the

U.S. citizens who have alien adult children and siblings should petition for them now because if the fourth pillar is enacted into law, they will never be able to petition for such relatives. Even if the fourth pillar is enacted into law, it is likely that there will be a "grandfather" clause protecting those already petitioned.

ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. He specializes in immigration law and criminal defense. Office: American Savings Bank Tower, 1001 Bishop Street, Suite 2305, Honolulu, HI 96813. Tel. 808 225 2645 E-Mail: filamlaw@yahoo.com. Websites: www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com. He is from Laoag City and Magsingal, Ilocos Sur. He served as an Immigration Officer. He is co-author of "Immigration Law Service, 1st ed.," an 8-volume practice guide for immigration officers and lawyers. This article is a general overview of the subject matter discussed and is not inized United States citizen

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Melveen Leed: Artist Extraordinaire

By Belinda A. Aquino, Ph.D.

Mention the name Melveen Leed and it will ring a bell in most Hawaii households.

It's not often that you hear a name with such resonance and popularity as Melveen's.

Just about everyone knows Melveen Leed or have heard of her as a great artist in the entertainment world, particularly in the field of music. But how many have heard someone on stage who can sing fluently in 18 languages?

Not very often. But Melveen is known to do it.

Melveen's multi-language fluency is partly due to her mixed ethnicity. She can trace her bloodlines through 12 ethnic roots. Truly international. It's hard to pin down exactly who she is because she looks pretty cosmopolitan: a mix of cultural ethnicities that's difficult to characterize.

In Hawaii, it's typical for people to come from mixed backgrounds - most often coming from Asian, Pacific, Caucasian, European and other origins. Melveen Leed embodies this fascinating mixture, although some would guess that she has at least some Hawaiian blood.

Some years ago, she was performing nightly at the top of the Ala Moana Hotel, which was a popular hang-out in those days, especially after dinner.

I used to go there with

some friends just to listen to her hauntingly beautiful voice and you come away remembering that voice for a long time.

Little did I know that many years later, I would have the good fortune of meeting her in person. She was a guest at a party hosted by Tori Keegan, president of the Pan Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Association, or PPSEAWAH. This is an organization that aims to promote interest in Asia and the Pacific and organizes programs of mutual interest.

Knowing Melveen

At this party of Tori's in Hawaii Kai, I happened to sit on the same table as Melveen, with her husband Mike Reyes, who is of Filipino ancestry. The dinner was quite sumptuous with ethnic foods which required struggling with huge crab legs on top of all the other stuff that filled a whole table. It turned out that Tori had invited Melveen to the occasion to meet with members of PPSEAWAH and to sing a few songs when she was through struggling with the crab legs.

Before she began to sing for us, I had a moment to talk with her and ask some personal and professional questions about her career. What she said was a revelation. In addition to her main interest in music, she paints. She showed me plenty of her sketches and paintings in her I-phone which

were quite colorful and reflective of beautiful scenery in Hawaii. I was impressed because not many singers or entertainers also have a talent in the visual arts.

Even more impressive was the fact she did not go to art school to learn how to paint, which she does intuitively. And neither did she go to a conservatory of music nor undergo formal training as a singer. I guess the best word to describe this talent is "organic." There are organic artists just as there are organic intellectuals and writers. Their art is in their DNA. Melveen is one of these few "unique" individuals whose entire life is immersed in engaging in the arts.

I was further impressed when she added that she prays when she is painting. In her 70s, it is likely that she will be spending the rest of her life in artistic pursuit of the arts - be it music and painting. Such an enormous well of talent.

In addition, Melveen plays the ukulele, guitar, piano, conga, mandolin, accordion, marimba, and other ethnic music instruments. Her talents are simply astounding.

According to a recent issue of BIG Island Now, Melveen has been crowned Miss Molokai and has performed in the biggest entertainment arenas in the U.S., Pacific, Asia, Russia and Europe. Her musical performances have earned her the honor of being the "ultimate quintessential ambassador of aloha."

Her repertoire in her various performances includes a cross of Hawaiian and Polynesian music, jazz, country, gospel, Latin, pop, reggae and blues. This is nothing short of remarkable and astounding. You simply run out of adjectives to describe the substance



Melveen Leed

and impact of her performances on various audiences around the world. And to repeat, she can sing in 18 different languages.

Melveen to receive Lifetime Achievement Award

On March 24 at the Hawaii Convention Center, starting 6:30 p.m., Melveen will be given a Lifetime Achievement Award by PPSEAWAH. She is only the second awardee of this prestigious award in the organization's several decades of service in Hawaii, Asia and the Pacific. The awardee is chosen from a prestigious list of distinguished iconic figures in the world of art and entertainment. The award will be presented by PPSEAWAH president Mary Tori Keegan.

When notified of the award, Melveen said, "I'm very humbled to receive such an honor." She is really Hawaii's pride and joy in her profession.

The Association President Tori Keegan has described Melveen as epitomizing "the spirit of aloha" and considers the awardee as the ultimate ambassador of Hawaii to the

world. PPSEAWAH has retained the services of Daniel Kalahari to direct the ceremony and the various entertainment numbers for the program honoring Melveen Leed. Several foreign dignitaries, friends and colleagues will be attending the ceremony honoring Melveen.

We will never run out of accolades for Melveen, a truly gifted artist in various realms and dimensions of her art. Adding to her main gift in the arts is her charismatic personality and dynamic presence. She is the type of human being that you like immediately when you meet her. Truly extraordinary, indeed!

It will be a sell-out night in Honolulu on the 24th of March. The first award ceremony last year attracted an impressive crowd of more than 400 guests.

DR. BELINDA A. AQUINO is currently a Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she served as Professor of Political Science and Founding Director of the Center for Philippine Studies at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies. She is also a freelance journalist and a Contributing Editor of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle.

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NEWS FEATURE

SHORE LEAVE WITH GOD: THE SEAFARERS MINISTRY

By Sheryll Bonilla, Esq.

If you have long sleeved shirts, long pants, or jackets you no longer need, consider donating them to the Seafarers Ministry, led by Pastor Jerry Saludez of Waipio Baptist Church. The covering affords a bit of protection against stings from sea creatures that come up with the fishing nets being pulled on board a fishing boat. It also helps keep the sailors warm since life on the sea can be chilly. Drop off donations for the Seafarers Ministry at Waipio Baptist Church below Costco or at Olivet Baptist Church on Beretania Street across Central Union Church. Food donations are also welcome.

The Seafarers Ministry provides companionship to the lonely crew members whose



professional lives are spent on board the fishing vessels that catch the seafood we all love to eat. We don't think about them

because we don't see them. Life on a ship lacks the comforts most of us know. They don't get to go home at the end



of the day; they sleep on board the boat. They can't get away from co-workers they don't like or get along with – those people live on the same ship. They have very little space for their belongings, and have to keep it neat to not annoy shipmates. They can't just buy

whatever they want to eat and stuff their refrigerators because they aren't allowed to go far from the ship when in port. They can't shop online, either, because the ships sail or are in port. Loved ones are hundreds or thousands of miles away, *(continued on page 12)*

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By Emil Guillermo

Who Should DACA Dreamers Trust in Shutdown Politics?

Of course, what courage did it really take?

Hirono is in a safe state and could hang in tough, while other Democrats in red states had to vote with Republicans, vote yes and act "politically".

Meanwhile, the people who are most affected by all the posturing are the nearly 800,000 or so Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals program recipients, the DREAMERS.

They're wondering if and when they're going to be kicked out of the country.

Take Cheska Perez.

She's 20, an Asian American Filipino who immigrated to the U.S. with her parents when she was six. They all entered legally under the father's work visa.

But as Filipinos know, things happen.

Her father lost his job and his visa. Perez and her family became what Filipinos love to call TNTs, a term of endearment for visa overstays.

She's not afraid to talk about it either

"There's nothing to hide," Perez told me when I met her last year. "There's nothing to be guilty about. It was not my fault. It was no one's fault. We were stuck in a situation that became our reality. And that's a lot of people's reality as well."

Perez is still fighting to

save DACA. And her example makes you see the program's importance.

As a DACA recipient, Perez has been on her own since age 18. She's worked, paid taxes, and has even developed an app to help young people find college scholarships. Does it work? She's her own best example. She found a scholarship program that gave her a full-ride scholarship to a school on the east coast that cost more than \$50,000 a year to attend and is ranked among the Top 40 national liberal arts colleges in America by U.S. News and World Report.

Why do Trump and other hardline Republicans want to kick her out of the country?

She's one American Filipino making America great again.

But all the hubbub over DACA is happening because of Trump's inability to be clear about Perez and the rest of the DACA Dreamers.

I was on the phone with Perez the night of the first senate vote. She was calm considering that she and the other DACA recipients had become Washington's new political football.

True to her dream, she was hopeful.

"There's a lot of momentum," Perez said. "It's really up to Congress now to ensure that there is protection for Dreamers. Everyone is doing all they can to ensure that happens tonight."

Well, now we know they didn't.

And if you've been following the negotiating process, we already know why.

Donald Trump may know the art of the deal, but not when it comes to running the government, or building a political coalition. Trump loves his base--those rabid pro-white nationalists he placates at every turn.

Uniting the rest of America seems to be of little interest to Trump.

Trump is so outside of his "expertise" it's no longer funny that he is taking down the office of the presidency and our country with him.

Hyperbole? Just look at

how this DACA embarrassment unfolded.

You'll recall the meeting a few weeks ago when Trump brought that bipartisan group of Congressional lawmakers into the Oval Office. Trump actually sounded reasonable.

"You folks are going to have to come up with a solution. And if you do, I'm going to sign that solution," Trump said.

Trump was practically gushing while the media cameras were allowed to roll over-time. Why not? To counteract that tell-all book by Michael Wolff, "Fire and Fury," Trump seemed to decide it was time to make us all veritable flies on the wall, so we can see for ourselves.

For the first time, he was saying things that made him sound vaguely presidential, especially on DACA.

"I feel having the Democrats in with us is absolutely vital, as it should be a bipartisan bill, it should be a bill of love, truly it has to be a bill of love," Trump said.

Trump even said he'd agree to a "clean DACA" separate from other issues that make up comprehensive immigration reform, such as "chain migration," the ugly rhetorical phrase conservatives use to condemn what humane folks would call "family reunification."

But Trump still wants that border wall and bragged that as a builder, he can get it done for less than \$18 billion.

Trump was remaining the optimist.

"If we do the right bill... you're not so far away from comprehensive immigration reform," Trump said. "And if you want to take it that further step, I'll take the heat. I don't care. I'll take all the heat you want to give me. And I'll take the heat off both the Democrats and the Republicans."

Those were the words by "Mr. I'll Take The Heat" that began the negotiation that lawmakers on both sides trusted.

Was it real or just a set-up?

Now we know it was the latter; and realize that the president is not a man of his word.

How can you negotiate with someone whose words can't be trusted?

We saw that days after the lovefest, when Trump referred to Haiti, El Salvador and African countries as "s---tholes."

And then he denied it, despite what others said they heard.

And now we see his DACA rhetoric turn to s---t mid-negotiation.

What about Trump's love for the Dreamers? Maybe it was like the love he felt for the porn star Stormy Daniels, because now the word thrown around in negotiations is "amnesty," as in "No Amnesty," for the DACA DREAMERS.

So back we go into the political darkness, waiting for Trump to signal the Republican-led government how to get out of this.

In the meantime, Cheska Perez waits for sanity, for someone to stand up to the bully Trump. Or for the bully to come to his senses.

She's at the max of her DACA term and can't reapply for any more extensions. Her documents are good through the mid-term elections.

Will she be forced back to a Philippines she left 14 years ago when she was six?

"The administration is targeting any and all undocumented individuals," Perez told me. "That's frightening when you're counting down the days you have left on DACA."

Hirono seems to think she can trust Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to be true to his word to consider and get DACA approved by Feb. 8. But that's the Senate.

Getting Trump on board is another matter.

Trump's on-again, off-again concern for the Dreamers is maddening. A clean DACA bill without conditions is needed now.

Cheska's reality, her future, shouldn't be based on Trump's whim.

EMIL GUILLERMO is an award-winning journalist and commentator who writes from Northern California. He recently won the 2015 Dr. Suzanne Ahn Award for Civil Rights and Social Justice from the Asian American Journalists Association California. Listen to his podcast: *Emil Amok's Takeout* <http://emilamokstakeout.libsyn.com/website>

After a vacation-style shutdown, the government has reopened but not with Hawaii Senator Mazie Hirono's vote.

Hirono stuck to her guns and was a principled no to the end.

In these Trump Times when truth is fluid and trust non-existent, you have to tip your hat to Hirono and the No voters.

"Protecting DREAMers, reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, funding Community Health Centers, and providing parity between funding for defense and domestic priorities -- without pitting one against the other -- were battles worth fighting," Hirono said in a statement. "I'm confident that we can reach bipartisan agreement on these issues and it was completely unnecessary for the President and Congressional Republicans to force a shutdown on them. My consistent position has been to oppose any continuing resolution that did not include these priorities. I voted against this continuing resolution for this reason."



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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce Installs Officers and Directors

KAHULUI, HAWAII-- The Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce installed its officers and board of directors at its annual installation banquet recently at the Kahili Restaurant. Four newly elected officers and eight directors were installed.

Officers

Jeana Gamboa, President, was born and raised in Olon-gapo City, Zambales. She is a 4th generation plantation worker (Sakada), educated in the Philippines and in the United States. Gamboa is a graduate of the University of Phoenix, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. She is also a licensed real estate agent.

Jorge Tirona, Vice-President, was born in Washington, D.C. and grew up in New York, Hong Kong, and Manila. He attended high school at Ateneo de Manila University and graduated from De La Salle University, Manila (BS-Business Management.) For over 10 years, Tirona has been a Sr. Commercial Underwriter for Central Pacific Bank.

Melen Agcolicol, Secretary, is one of the founding members of the Chamber and has previously served on the Board in

different capacities including president, secretary and director. Agcolicol is the owner of Copy Services in Wailuku.

Dulce Butay, Treasurer, came to Hawaii in 1995 and graduated from Maui High School. She attended Maui Community College (Associate in Arts) and then the University of Hawaii, West Oahu (Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration, major in Accounting). Butay is the Administrative Officer of the Department of Finance and has been working for the County of Maui for over 15 years.

Directors

Ben Acob has been an attorney for over 30 years. He has been in private practice in Wailuku since 2011. Acob is married to Nenita Acob and has two sons.

Virgilio Agcolicol is a founding member and former president of the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce. He is a retired banker from Central Pacific Bank and a radio host on Sunday at KNUI.

Aris Banaag is an alumnus of Lahainaluna High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at UH Manoa and a master's degree in marriage and family therapy from

Argosy University. Banaag is a member of the Hawaii Army National Guard and has been serving for over 24 years.

Kauanoë Batangan is a 3rd generation Filipino American who was born and raised in Hawaii. He is an alumnus of Kamehameha Schools Maui, Stanford, Columbia, and the University of Tokyo. Batangan is a public servant with experience working for the federal government and State of Hawaii.

Clayton Fuchigami is the current President and CEO of Maui Federal Credit Union. Fuchigami was raised in Honolulu and Tokyo, and has lived on Maui for over 30 years.

Jeanice Paa is a business owner and independent agent for Pyramid Insurance. Born and raised in Hawaii, her ancestors are from Magsingal, Ilocos Sur, Philippines, and immigrated as Sakadas with HC&S. Paa is grateful and takes honor to continue the family legacy by serving and being a blessing to the community.

Lawrence Pascua is the owner and principal consultant of Studio Creative Associates, a graphic visual company. Pascua is also an instructor and choreographer of La Galeria: Compania Baile Filipino, a not for profit



Officers, Board of Directors and members of the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce: 1st Row (L-R) Melen Agcolicol, Jeana Gamboa, Dulce Butay, Jeanice Paa, Elsa Agdinaoy Segal, Sharon Zalsos (Immediate Past President); 2nd Row Standing (L-R) Clayton Fuchigami, Richard Minatoya (Chamber's Legal Counsel), Jorge Tirona, Virgilio Agcolicol, Judge Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Kauanoë Batangan & Aris Banaag. Not in photo: Ben Acob and Lawrence Pascua.

Filipino folk dance group.

Elsa Agdinaoy-Segal graduated from Hawaii Pacific University where she received a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis on Human Resource Management. In 2009, she earned the Chartered Retirement Plan SpecialistSM (CRPS[®]). She is an active member of organizations that promote cultural heritage, child welfare, and mental health.

The Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit Hawaii corporation established in 1994, whose mission is to promote, represent, and advocate the interests of the business community in the County of Maui. The Chamber and its Foundation hold yearly events such as a Golf Tournament in April, Gintong Pamana Leadership & Scholarship Awards in June, and a Fil-Am Heritage Festival in October.

Free Tax Preparation Assistance for People with Fixed Income

The AARP Foundation, through the Tax-Aide program, is providing free tax assistance and preparation through its Tax-Aide program beginning February and continuing through April 17. AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, celebrating 50 years of service, is the nation's largest free tax assistance and preparation service. Since its inception, the program has served more than 50 million taxpayers.

In Hawai'i, 217 AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers helped 12,871 people file their federal and state tax returns in 2017. The program is offered at 28 sites, including senior centers, libraries and

other convenient locations.

Nearly 35,000 volunteers serve low- to moderate-income taxpayers at 5,000 locations in neighborhood libraries, malls, banks, community centers and senior centers nationwide. There's no fee, and AARP membership is not required. "Tax-Aide is aimed at people who can't afford to pay someone else to do their taxes. For someone on a fixed income, saving money on taxes can make a big difference," said Barbara Kim Stanton, the AARP Hawai'i state director. "In 2017, we helped people claim \$820,888 in Earned Income Tax Credits in Hawai'i, a deduction that about a quarter

of eligible taxpayers miss. In total, our volunteers helped Hawai'i taxpayers get \$4,632,536 in refunds

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers are trained and IRS-certified each year to ensure they know about and understand the latest changes to the U.S. Tax Code.

To find an AARP Foundation Tax-Aide site or more information, including which documents to bring to the tax site, visit aarpfoundation.org/taxhelp or call 1-888-AARPNOW (1-888-227-7669). AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is offered in conjunction with the IRS.

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Dr. Jon Avery Go is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery and underwent training at the Roger Williams Medical Center in Providence, Rhode Island which is affiliated with Boston University School of Medicine.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Duterte Pledges P50 Million for Families Affected by Mayon Volcano

by Alexis Romero
Tuesday, January 30, 2018

MANILA, Philippines — President Duterte yesterday provided P25 million to communities affected by the explosion of Mayon Volcano and ordered agencies to ensure that all the needs of displaced residents are addressed.

Duterte said the assistance could be used to provide the food and sanitation needs of

the evacuees.

"I'll give you initially today P20 million and I will augment it tomorrow by sending you about P50 (million). For the operation, everything, for pagkain (food), and I'm interested in the hygiene or sanitation of the place," the President said during a meeting with local officials in Albay.

The remaining P5 million came from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), the agency that pro-

vides financial assistance to the poor.

The President said he wanted the PCSO assistance to be increased to P30 million.

Duterte promised to send portable toilets as he expressed concern over the conditions of people staying in evacuation centers.

"In the meantime, if there is none constructed, we have to deliver a sanitary way of disposing human waste. If there are available portable toilets in Manila, we can always send them," the President said.

Duterte also ordered agencies to conduct "intense surveillance" to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

He asked Department of Science and Technology undersecretary and Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology director Renato Solidum about the worst-case scenario.

Solidum said the worst-case scenario is a strong violent eruption which could trigger pyroclastic flows, so the danger zone had been extended to eight kilometers to ensure no

human activity in that area.

Solidum showed a video of the 1984 eruption, which affected only up to seven kilometers.

Social Welfare and Development officer-in-charge Emmanuel Leyco said the department has suspended the conditions for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program in Albay.

Meanwhile, Duterte ordered his political adviser lawyer Francis Tolentino to implement all short-term relief efforts by the end of the week.

(www.philstar.com)

NEWS FEATURE (from page 9, SHORE....)

back in their home countries.

International immigration laws recognize this special category of workers as non-immigrants. They don't intend to become citizens elsewhere, and they travel not as visitors or businessmen, but as laborers. Sadly, for the fishermen, most of these laws don't allow the crewmembers to go on the land, at least not far from the ship. Shore leave, as any merchant crewman or Navy sailor knows, is so vital for the mental health of people confined for long periods of time in a confined space.

For many of these men, fishing is one of the few career options available in their home country. Most of the fishermen are from the Philippines, with a sprinkling from Indonesia, Vietnam, Kiribati, and Micronesia, but about 90% of the

captains of these fishing vessels are Americans. The wages for the crew members, as you can imagine, are not even U.S. minimum wage.

At Pier 38 on Tuesday and Friday evenings at 6 p.m., the Seafarers Ministry brings a nice, hot meal to the men on these fishing boats, giving them a chance to get some very needed shore time. Ministry volunteers share food, conversation, and their faith. Pastor Saludez leads a church service for the spiritual needs of crewmembers. All join in praising God, singing worship songs, and hearing the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because the sailors cannot legally leave the port, access to medical care can be a problem. Healthcare volunteers with the Seafarers Ministry can perform

basic check-ups, take blood tests, and give vitamins. Sometimes volunteers share their bicycles so the seamen can stretch their legs and feel the breeze. Donated gifts are distributed, when available.

The social comfort of being able to talk to others, get out in the fresh air on solid

land, and eat a home-cooked meal, all help to give balance to the sailors' mental health. More importantly, the spiritual void in every human being that God designed to be filled by Him and Him alone, is gently filled by the preaching of the Bible and glorifying Jesus Christ.

Please feel free to join the Seafarers Ministry at Pier 38 to have fellowship and attend the church services on Tuesday and Friday evenings, starting at 6 p.m. If you'd like to bring food to share, plan on about thirty people. Pastor Jerry Saludez of Waipio Baptist leads the ministry.

CROSSWORD by Carlito Lalicon

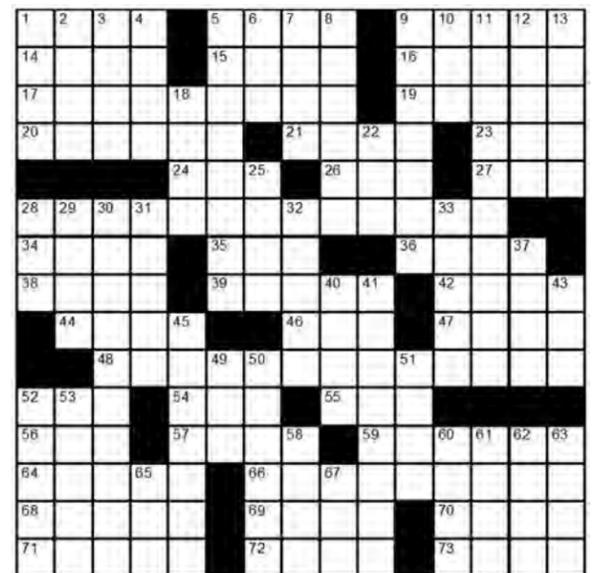
No. 5

ACROSS

1. Sort
5. Chuck
9. Flavorful
14. Auction cry
15. Brawl
16. Construction site sight
17. President, Emilio F. _____
19. Play again, as of a film
20. Disheveled
21. Add to the pot
23. Beast of burden
24. Energy
26. Farm animal
27. Urinate
28. Not answering
34. Cousin of a bassoon
35. Big deal
36. Hightailed it
38. Proctor's call
39. Light purple
42. Arch type
44. Good source of protein
46. "I" problem
47. In person
48. Error in typing
52. "___-di-dah!"
54. Stewed legumes, onion and spices (Indian dish)
55. Bar order
56. Bard's "before"
57. "Mi chiamato Mimi," e.g.

DOWN

1. Boris Godunov, for one
2. Eastern discipline
3. Promote
4. Blue-pencil
5. Very sad
6. Black gold
7. Soft drink
8. One who pelts the victim with stones
9. Sharp piercing cry
10. 100 square meters
11. Handicapped person
12. Lavatory sign
13. Crowded
18. Church part
22. Couple
25. Calf-length skirt
28. Excluding
29. Final notice
30. Relating to the search for abstract universal principles



59. ___ F. Aguinaldo
64. Influence by corruption
66. Brand
68. Like a feeble old woman
69. Basic unit of money in Ghana
70. Gulf V.I.P.
71. Tied
72. "And ___ thou slain the Jabberwock?"
73. Santa ____, Manila

31. Shoaly
32. Draft horse
33. Garlicky mayonnaise
37. Hindu deity
40. Food thickener
41. Subedit
43. Moray, e.g.
45. Modified
49. Propel, in a way
50. Defect in a computer program
51. Blood pigment
52. OK, in a way
53. "Gladiator" setting
58. Length x width, for a rectangle
60. Mosque V.I.P.
61. Flimsy, as an excuse
62. Camera diaphragm
63. Gumbo
65. Amber, e.g.
67. Infomercials, e.g.

(Solution will be on Chronicle's next issue)

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VILMA D. FUENTES, Doctor of Physical Therapy

LEGAL NOTES

Bringing Adopted Child to the US



By Atty. Reuben S. Seguritan

People who cannot have children have the option of adoption to fulfill their dream of becoming parents. United States citizens or legal permanent residents may choose to adopt a child from within the US or from a different country. If they choose the latter, the law and certain procedures must be followed in order to bring the legally adopted child to the US.

The number of overseas adoptions has decreased over the years from 22,884 in 2004 to 5372 in 2016 with China as the leading source. Russia stopped American adoption three years ago for political reasons.

There are three ways to

bring the internationally adopted child to the US. The first is by following the Hague Adoption Convention, an international agreement which the US has assented to. This method will only be used if the adopted child is also from a country that has implemented the Hague Adoption Convention. Under this method, the US citizen or LPR will file Forms I-800A and/or I-800. If the adoption was finalized in the US, then the child will enter the US with an IH-4 immigrant visa. If the adoption was finalized in the country of the adopted child, then the child will enter with an IH-3 immigrant visa.

This method of adoption begins with a home study by an accredited agency whereby the prospective adoptive parents, their family and home environment are studied to determine their suitability to adopt a child.

The adopting parents must

submit the approved Form I-800A application with the home study and other supporting documents to the Central Authority (CA) of the country from which the parents are planning to adopt.

The CA then refers a child to the adopting parents. Under the Hague process, adopting parents are “matched” to a child and they generally may not identify a child for adoption.

The parents are provided with the child’s medical background along with the necessary consents and the CA’s determination that the child is eligible for adoption, that the intercountry adoption is in the child’s best interest, that the child has freely consented to the adoption in writing, and that no payment has been given to obtain the necessary consents.

The adopting parents are then given some time to decide whether to accept the CA’s re-

ferral. If they accept, they must file Form I-800 with the USCIS to qualify the child as a Convention adoptee eligible to immigrate to the US on the basis of the proposed adoption. The I-800A must be filed before the child’s 16th birthday.

After provisional approval by the USCIS, the petition will be forwarded to the proper consular post where the adopting parents will file a visa application for the child. If the consular post finds that the child is not ineligible for an immigrant visa and that no inadmissibility grounds apply, it will notify the CA that the prospective adopting parents may proceed with the adoption.

It is only at this point that the prospective adopting parents can adopt the child or obtain legal custody of the child. After the adoption, the adoptive parents will then bring the adoption decree, the child’s new birth certificate and passport, and medical examination results to the consular post which will certify the case as “Hague compliant” and finally issue an immigrant visa for the child to go to the US.

The second method is followed if the adoptive child is from a country that has not implemented the Hague Adoption Convention. The US citizen or LPR will file the Forms I-600A

and/or I-600. If the adoption was finalized in the US, then the child will enter with an IR-4 immigrant visa. If the adoption was finalized in the country of the adopted child, then the child will enter the US with an IR-3 immigrant visa.

The last method is by filing the Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative. An adopted child would be considered a “child” for immigration purposes if the adoption took place before the child turned 16 and the adopting parent had legal and physical custody of the child for at least two years. The adopting parent must show that he had legal and physical custody of the child for at least two (2) years while the child was a minor. This custody requirement must be completed before the Form I-130 is filed.

Legal custody means that there was a final adoption decree or a custody award by a court or government entity. Sworn statements attesting to custody are not sufficient to prove legal custody. The adopted child will enter the US with an IR-2 immigrant visa under this method.

REUBEN S. SEGURITAN has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695 5281 or log on to his website at www.seguritan.com

PHILIPPINE NEWS

DOLE to Put Up More Offices to Protect Overseas Filipino Workers

by Mayen Jaymalin
Tuesday, January 30, 2018

MANILA, Philippines — The government is putting up additional Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLOs) to better serve and monitor overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III said the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is planning to establish this year new POLOs in Germany, Japan, New Zealand and the United States.

“We will set up a new POLO in Florida so we could address the concerns of our Filipino seafarers there and another in Frankfurt, Germany,” Bello said.

He said there is a POLO in Tokyo, but the DOLE intends to set up another in Osaka.

“We do not have a POLO in New Zealand and our workers there are under our POLO

in Australia,” Bello said.

He said POLOs would be established in countries with large concentration of OFWs.

The DOLE chief said President Duterte wanted the government to provide better services for OFWs and would not hesitate to stop deployment in countries that do not treat Filipino migrants right.

The DOLE suspended the deployment of newly hired workers to Kuwait following the suspicious deaths of seven Filipino workers in the Arab country.

Meanwhile, Bello said the agency sent a team to Saudi Arabia to monitor the conditions of OFWs.

He said Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) chief Hans Cacdac visited Riyadh, Jeddah and Al Khobar.

“DOLE sent teams to various countries to conduct periodic inspections and see the

actual condition of our OFWs,” he said.

Bello said he earlier sent a three-man team to Hong Kong.

He said they have not monitored high incidence of abuses among OFWs in other countries except in Kuwait.

Visa status

Philippine embassy officials in Moscow and the Russian Labor Ministry met to discuss possible solutions to the visa status of a majority of OFWs in Russia, who are not properly documented.

The embassy said efforts to address the problems of OFWs resumed when Ambassador Carlos Sorreta met recently with Mikhael Kirsanov, chief of the Russian employment department.

A majority of Filipino household workers in Russia are not properly documented as there is no visa category applicable for them. (www.philstar.com)



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HEALTH & FAMILY

10 Secrets to Increasing Your Brainpower

MIND YOUR BODY By Willie T. Ong, MD

How can we become smarter? Are there scientific ways to increase our brain's capacity? Let's find out.

According to Dr. Mehmet Oz and Michael Roizen, a study shows that, on the average, a person's intelligence (measured by IQ) decreases by five percent every 10 years. But this is just the average. The good news is that there were some people in the study whose IQ even increased as they aged. Here are the 10 secrets to increase your brainpower:

1. Take a 45-minute walk. The poet Robert Frost used to have long walks in the woods while creating his next poem. Walking helped him think better. This is true because walking improves the circulation in our body, including our

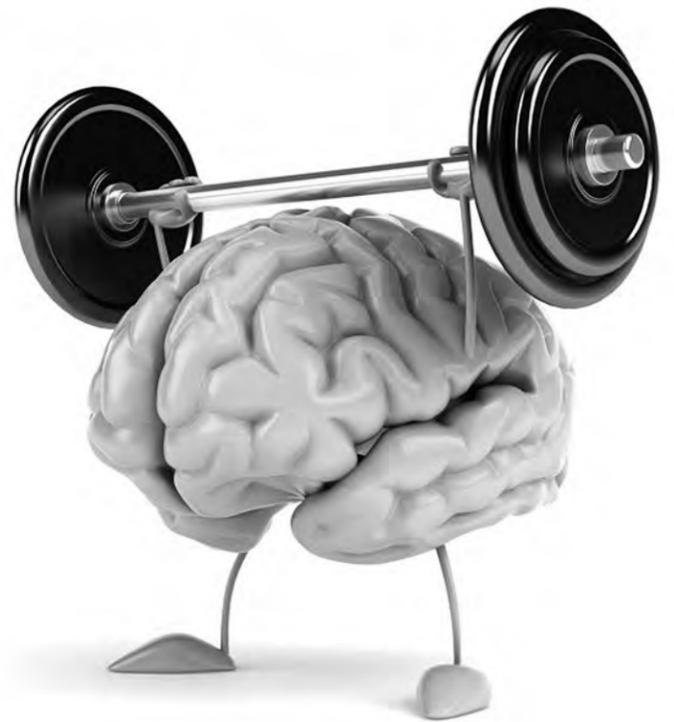
brain. This increase in blood flow to the brain will make it sharper and think more clearly.

2. Stretch your brain. Doctors found that intelligent people have more cross-circuitry in their brains. The nerve cells are more connected and have more interaction with each other. How do we stimulate the growth of these nerve cells? One way is to expose your mind constantly to new inputs, new challenges, and new projects. Don't be contented with what you can do today; strive to learn more. Enroll in an adult-learning class. Solve crossword puzzles and Sudoku. Don't retire. Another technique is to read a magazine or talk to an expert in a field totally alien to you. One time, I read my daughter's magazines and listened to her

CDs. It was a refreshing eye-opener. Keep on learning and studying.

3. Eat brain food. Yes, there is such a thing. The top foods for the brain are (1) an ounce of nuts a day, which are filled with good oils and can increase your serotonin levels; (2) oily fish like tuna, tilapia, sardines, salmon and catfish are full of omega-3, which are good for the arteries; (3) olive oil and avocados are likewise filled with omega-3s; (4) Cocoa or dark chocolate have healthy flavonoids, which keeps the arteries young; and (5) tomato-based foods, like spaghetti sauce, have folate and lycopene that fight aging.

4. Consider supplements. Omega-3 fish oil supplements have been proven to increase blood flow to the brain, heart and the whole body. It prevents strokes, heart attacks, and depres-



sion, too. Recent studies show it may be beneficial for Alzheimer's disease. Vitamin B complex tablets (with folate) can also help protect you from a stroke. Folate reduces dangerous homocysteine buildup that leads to cracks in the arteries.

5. Consider 80-mg aspirin tablets. Discovered in 1899, aspirin has been proven to help patients with heart attacks, strokes, and diabetes. Aspirin makes our blood thinner and helps reduce clots in

the blood vessels. Men over 50 and women after menopause should highly consider taking an 80-mg aspirin tablet once a day after meals. However, aspirin is not perfect because it can cause stomach ulcers in some patients. Consult your doctor first.

6. Have friends older or younger than you. According to gerontology professor Dr. David Demko, having friends older or younger than you can help stimulate your

(continued on page 15)

(Sagot sa Krosword No.4 | January 20, 2018)

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WORK SMART© WORKSHOPS | presented by AARP Hawaii and AAUW Honolulu | February 1, 2018 | 5:30 - 8:00 pm | AARP Hawai'i office, 1132 Bishop Street, Suite 1920 | For inquiries, call 545-6007 or go online to <https://aarp.cvent.com/worksmart2018> | Registration is required for the workshops.

THE TEKNIQLINGZ 10TH ANNIVERSARY KULTURA FILIPINO NIGHT GALA | Filipino Community Center Ballroom | February 10, 2018 | 5:30 - 8:00 pm | For more information, please contact Gabe at (808) 232-1466 or visit www.tekniqlingz.org.

OHANA MEDICAL MISSION-MISSION TO ILOCOS PROVINCES OF CABUGAO, SINAIT AND LIDLIDDA February 1-3, 2018 | For more information, contact 888-674-7624 or 808-391-7678 or email pmahinfo@gmail.com.

MARDI GRAS 2018 FREE BLOCK PARTY | February 13, 2018 | 6:00 - 10:00 pm | Chinatown, Hawaii | For more information, contact Nancy N. Ortiz, Event Co-Coordinator, Email: nancy.almalatina@gmail.com, cell: 808-285-072.

MAINLAND NEWS

Senators Call for Education Reform Following GAO Report

WASHINGTON, DC-- U.S. Senators Brian Schatz (D-Hawai'i), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), and U.S. Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) have renewed calls for higher education accreditation reform following a new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that found the process was in need of improvement.

According to education experts surveyed by GAO, the current accreditation system does not provide effective oversight of academic quality, which is the primary purpose of accreditation. The report identifies several weaknesses in the accreditation system, including:

- Accreditors are slow to revoke accreditations when they identify problems;
- The accreditation system creates conflicts of interest due to the fact that accreditors are funded and run by the institutions they accredit;

- Accreditors do not make use of student outcomes data in assessing a school's academic quality;
- The accreditation system does not provide students with useful information about the academic quality of accredited institutions.

"This new report confirms what we've known for years: the college accreditation system is failing our students and in need of major reform," said Senator Schatz. "Bad schools should not leave students deep in debt and without a useful degree—especially not on the federal government's watch. Our bill will put commonsense standards in place to improve the quality of higher education and hold accreditors accountable."

In response to the report, the lawmakers announced their plan to reintroduce the Accreditation Reform and Enhanced Accountability Act, legislation that would directly

address some of the issues raised in the GAO report. The legislation would rebuild the college quality assurance system with stronger accountability to ensure that the federal government's growing investment in higher education actually helps students access a quality, affordable education. The legislation would:

- Require accreditors to use student outcome data to evaluate colleges;
- Strengthen consumer protections by requiring accreditors to respond quickly to investigations related to fraud;
- Increase transparency and the information provided to students and families;
- Clean up conflicts-of-interest in college accreditation between accreditors and colleges they accredit;
- Add new tools for holding accreditors accountable when they fail to safeguard students from poor quality or predatory schools.

HEALTH & FAMILY (from page 14, 10 SECRETS....)

brain. Young people can learn from the wisdom of older people. And older people can imbibe the energy and zest of the young. It works both ways. Open yourself to new things and new perspectives.

7. **Learn to cope with stress.** Prolonged stress causes the body to release a stress hormone, called cortisol, which is detrimental to the body in the long run. Try to avoid or fix these stresses if you can. Find a better job, resolve the difficult relationship, and fix your health problem. On the other hand, short-term stresses, like projects, deadlines or making a speech, are not harmful. Laughter, meditation and deep breathing can help reduce stress. Laughing reduces anxiety and tension, and releases good endorphins, which can counter the bad effects of stress.

8. **Daydream away. Visualize.** Did you know that people who daydream often about their life's goals have a better chance of achieving them? Positive-thinking proponent Norman Vincent Peale even suggests writing your goals on a piece of paper and carrying it in your wallet. If you train your brain to reach your goal (like becoming a top businessman, sportsman or artist), then your brain will try to find ways to achieve this goal. Visualize success and you can achieve it.

9. **Protect your head.** This is just common-sense advice to protect your brain. Wear a hard hat if needed. Wear a helmet while riding a motorcycle. Avoid boxing as a sport if you can. Shout "fore" if you hit a wayward golf shot. And, don't let anybody hit your head. Also, invest in good shoes so you won't fall. For the elderly, always walk with someone you can hold on to.
10. **See a doctor.** Finally, when you need help, go the experts. Get an annual checkup. Follow these 10 tips so you can healthier and smarter. (www.philstar.com)

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