TRUMP PLANS DEEP CUTS TO SAFETY NET PROGRAMS

AS I SEE IT
Hawaii’s Hula Spreading in the Bay Area in California

CANDID PERSPECTIVES
Figuring Tiger’s Trespasses? Take A Cue From His Mom

LEGAL NOTES
Immigration Processing Now At Crisis Level
A Big “No” to Cuts on Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security

ive corporations and billions in tax breaks to help make up for lost revenues to the U.S. treasury, let’s take away from safety net programs that benefit the middle class, seniors, poor and disabled.

This is the twisted modus operandi President Donald Trump and the GOP are employing; and voters should be well aware of what’s happening.

It was bound to happen – proposed cuts to safety nets as the nation’s debt hit unprecedented highs largely spiked by the Republican-pushed corporate tax cuts.

The nation’s debt is at over $22 trillion; and the CBO estimates Trump’s tax cuts would add $2.9 trillion to the national debt over ten years.

To give some sense of responsible money management, Trump wants to cut $1.5 trillion from Medicare, cut $845 billion from Medicaid, and cut $25 billion from Social Security.

But even then, the “debt King’s” proposed 2020 Budget is still coming in as the highest ever at $4.75 trillion with billions in additional military spending that the Pentagon hasn’t asked for.

Trump insists on keeping a campaign promise of building a southern border wall (included in the budget) but wants to break another campaign promise that he made as the Republican candidate not cut Medicare.

He said during his presidential campaign, “I’m not going to cut Social Security like every other Republican and I’m not going to cut Medicare or Medicaid.”

But now he wants to cut all three.

The president is underestimating just how popular Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security are to Americans. Just this year, a joint Politico and Harvard School of Public Health poll found 88 percent of Americans believe it is “extremely important” for Congress to make sure that “Medicare benefits are not cut back.”

Democrats do want to refocus their power in their campaign this a cause for the 2020 election. It is a winnable issue that to most Americans – Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and healthcare are far more important than some southern border wall that would be, at best, just marginally effective in curbing illegal immigration (which efficacy is debatable).

What isn’t debatable is that seniors need all the help they can get with their health bills via Medicare; and seniors and middle-class Americans also rely on Social Security to make ends meet. This is bread and butter for seniors. It’s not even about handouts. Americans have paid into this government program over many years in tax contributions and deserve that money owed to them.

Supporting budget experts who actually realize the potential political fallout because of this proposal say Congress will decide the outcome. But imagine if the midterm didn’t end the way it did with Democrats retaking the House. The already decided House budget director Russell Vought. “What we are doing is putting every program in their power to make this a campaign issue for 2020. It is a winning issue to most Americans – Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and healthcare are far more important than some southern border wall that would be, at best, just marginally effective in curbing illegal immigration (which efficacy is debatable).

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For our feature this issue, HFC contributor Melissa Martin, PhD, submits “Spring and Summer Safety for Kids.” As warmer weather approaches, kids and teens are spending more time outdoors. Parents should be aware that there are potential dangers that are often overlooked. For example, more than 17,000 children and teens are treated for lawn mower injuries (75 die) each year, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Or that 1,000 children die each year from drowning. Martin gives some helpful tips we can all be mindful of to protect our families.

Lastly, in our news sections, Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for its 2019 Gintong Pamanahon Leadership Awards. The Maui Chamber’s Foundation is also accepting applications for its scholarship programs. There is a Legislative Update on some of the bills that survived the State Legislature’s second crossover. We are at the tail-end of this session. Be sure to contact your state representative on any surviving bills you are passionate about.

One final reminder: be sure to attend the Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls and Hawaii Filipino Healthcare’s Molokai Community Health Fair on May 4-5, 2019 at the Mitchell Pauole Community Center in Kaunakakai. There will be free health screenings and consultations.

Thank you to the Filipino community for your continued support. We encourage Filipino clubs, professional associations, civic groups and cultural organizations to send us news of your upcoming events. We are online and maintain a community calendar so that your events can receive maximum exposure. Until next time, warmest Aloha and Maluhia!
Kudos to Sen Schatz on Introducing Constitutional Amendment to Abolish the Electoral College

Two large encouraging leaps toward implementing a direct popular vote system occurred in the last month. The first one involves Hawaii’s own Sen. Brian Schatz, who along with Sens. Dick Durbin, Dianne Feinstein, and Kirsten Gillibrand introduced a bold constitutional amendment that would abolish the Electoral College. The second is New Mexico’s move to join the National Popular Vote Compact which is an agreement among states who sign onto the compact to cast all their electoral votes for the popular winner (candidate with most votes) in presidential elections.

Both events aim to transition the nation to popular voting by utilizing the only two available mechanisms to achieve this: 1) by way of abolishment of the electoral system entirely (the more difficult path that Schatz is attempting); or 2) by states joining the National Popular Vote Compact that works within the existing Electoral College (the easier path). But under this system, it only works if enough states join the compact to combine for a total of 270 electoral votes that would make up a majority.

The inclusion of New Mexico to the compact this March (Colorado committed to the pact in February this year) shows there is growing momentum. To date, a total of 15 states, including the District of Columbia have adopted the measure for a combined 189 electoral votes. Hawaii joined the Compact in 2008.

Why switch to a Popular Vote System

Simply put: a popular vote system makes sense and is the fairest way to elect a president because every vote is valued equally.

The current Electoral College system places weighted value that favors swing states having a larger role in deciding presidential elections. For example, in a large Democrat state like California, it doesn’t matter if a presidential candidate receives 60 or 80 percent of votes, the same amount of designated electoral votes will be cast for California. Now, in a swing state (where the election is too close to predict an outcome for a political party like Florida, losing by only 1 percent and dedicating the state’s entire designated electoral votes to the winner by such a narrow margin denies millions of votes cast for a losing candidate from being counted in a national tally.

It’s no wonder that almost all presidential campaigning is done in swing states – because of the weighted value of each person’s vote in these states.

Basically, the system is a winner-takes-all by state to state, a regional contest; not a true national election in which every vote counts equally in one national tally.

Why this matters to Democrats who are pushing for change? The political geography under the current system favors the GOP and have resulted in two losses in 2016 and 2000 when Hillary Clinton and Al Gore received the popular vote majority but lost the Electoral College.

Even though changing the system would result in fairer elections, no Republican state has chosen to join the National Popular Vote Compact to date.

Republicans believe changing the system would disadvantage rural America. But in reality, the current Electoral College gives rural America overwhelming influence. Candidates must cater to rural Americans disproportionately. In the 2016 campaign, leading candidates spent 87 percent of campaign visits to 12 battleground states with large rural populations.

Schatz said “The status quo is quite undemocratic and radical. This change, in my view, is an unassailably logical evolution of our Constitution.” He said, “I believe that if and when we make this change, it will seem ridiculous that we did it any other way.”

Schatz is well-aware of the momentum. To date, a total of 189 electoral votes have come from the Democratic states of California, New Jersey, and New York and a handful of Republican states also joined.

A Majority Favors Popular Vote

The fact that changing to direct popular vote is a steep uphill battle shouldn’t be a deterrence to avoid making changes to a grossly outdated system. A recent Pew 2018 poll showed 55 percent of respondents support a new popular vote system; while 41 percent favored the current electoral process.

Compact vs Abolishment

While the National Popular Vote Compact makes for an easier challenge to achieving popular voting sooner than later, the better long-term solution (continue on page 6)
Trump Wants to Make Cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security

By Edwin Quinabco

“It’s a gut punch to the American middle class,” said New York Senator Chuck Schumer of President Donald Trump’s requested cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

As a candidate in 2016, Trump promised he wouldn’t make cuts to the programs, saying he “was the first and only” possible GOP presidential candidate to “state there will be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.”

Now the president wants cuts to all three. Trump’s 2020 budget proposes to cut $1.5 trillion from Medicaid, cut $845 billion from Medicare, cut $25 billion from Social Security.

Trump doesn’t aim to cut spending across the board. His budget proposal is a record-breaking high $4.75 trillion plan that targets sharp cuts to domestic programs but increases military spending by an additional $8.6 billion (that the Pentagon had not asked for) and funds for a southern border wall.

The president’s budget is a blueprint headed to Congress where it likely faces contentious opposition from the Democrat-controlled House.

But advocates for Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security want Americans to know where this president’s priority lie and what could happen if the GOP regains control of both chambers of Congress and if Trump gets re-elected in 2020.

Elvie Cachola, a Kapolei resident, turned 60 years old last month. She stopped working two years ago to help take care of her granddaughter. She lives with her daughter’s family and looks forward to receiving Medicare and Social Security when she becomes eligible.

“If I live to 90, I’ve worked many years as an accounting clerk and put into the system with my taxes and payroll contributions. I look at Medicare and Social Security as not entitlements as they are sometimes called. I worked for that money over many years.

“When politicians talk about taking away from Medicare and Social Security, I feel like they are personally taking away from my retirement funds. If the government acts like they don’t have enough money to pay people, then why is it taking money from us each year in SS contributions and taxes.

“We could have been saving more putting aside money all those years to prepare for our old age instead of paying into the system.

“As a someone who is close to eligibility for Medicare and Social Security, I will vote for politicians who will protect Medicare and Social Security,” said Cachola. “Protecting those two is a top priority for me.”

Another senior, who we’ll call Renee because she doesn’t want to be identified due to the sensitivity of the topic in relation to her workplace as a government federal worker in Human Resources, echoes Cachola’s sentiments.

“People shouldn’t be thinking of Social Security and Medicare like some handout. That is our money. The government is paying us back for what we’ve contributed in payroll,” said Renee.

Renee has three years of work left before retiring. She says, “I’m sick of politicians playing games with Social Security and Medicare. Why can’t they budget the money all us taxpayers put into the programs?

“It’s fair that government makes adjustments to ensure how much we pay into the system is close to how much is paid out to us, adjusted for inflation. That is fair and a given. What I know because of my job is that the Social Security benefits most of us receive will actually, on average, be slightly less than what we’ve put in.

“But what we receive in Medicare will be higher from what we’ve put in through payroll, adjusted for inflation. This is because the cost of healthcare is out of control.

“Another thing to consider is that, they say people are living longer, but there are also lots of people who pass on before they can even start to collect their money back from SS. They keep raising the age to receive SS benefits. Their survivor can only collect a lower percentage of what was put in. So SS makes out there.

“I worry for the younger generations, my family, for their retirement. How they gonna pay for their healthcare when they get old if Medicare or Social Security are not there for them?”

“I’ve voted both Republican and Democrat in the past. But if Trump is going this route, he won’t have my vote. That I know for sure,” said Renee.

UH-Manoa Professor Emeritus Belinda Aquino, PhD, who taught in the Department of Political Science, said she’s against Trump’s proposed cuts to these programs.

“These programs provide assistance to the people who need it most to make both ends meet. They (recipients) are on fixed incomes and have no other recourse to ask for assistance from sources like Medicare and Medicaid programs. Inflation keeps rising every year and prices of goods, commodities and other resources they need to survive also keep rising, so they are caught in the proverbial trap between a rock and a hard place. It’s always these low-income (Medicaid) residents who bear the brunt of the various restrictions imposed by the government from time to time. Meanwhile, the administration keeps giving tax cuts or exemptions for big corporations and institutions.

Dr. Aquino receives both Social Security and Medicare since reaching age eligibility.

“But these are really minimal when taken in the context of income and rising taxes. Since I am single, I just receive benefits which may be adequate for myself. I can imagine those with large families and dependents barely receive enough to tide them over. The proposed cuts proposed by Trump will surely negatively impact the lower-income families who have big obligations to meet the burdens for their health, education, and other basic needs of their families.”

A Closer Look at Trump’s Plan

MEDICARE - $845 billion in cuts over 10 years

Charles N. Kahn III, president of the Federation of American Hospitals, which represents more than 1,000 for-profit hospitals and health systems, said the budget “im-
poses arbitrary and blunt Medicare cuts. The impact on care for seniors would be devastating," he said. "Hospitals are less and less able to cover the cost of care for Medicare patients; it is no time to gut Medicare."

Hospital reimbursement is one area expected to be affected should Trump’s proposal passes through Congress. Tricia Neuman, director of the Kaiser Family Foundation’s Program on Medicare Policy, said it is hard to predict how these proposals would affect patient care if they become law. She predicts the money taken away would largely come from payments to hospitals and other health providers.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates that 85 percent of these cuts will come from reductions in provider payments, 5 percent would come from policies around medical malpractice, and 11 percent would come from reducing drug costs through the Medicare Part D program. Medicare Part D is the only area of these reforms that could raise out-of-pocket drug prices for some while lowering it for others.

In the short term, premiums, deductibles, and copays would largely be left unaffected. But in the long-term, the healthcare industry would need to assess if patients must carry some of the additional burden.

Medicare covers roughly 60 million people over age 65. It accounts for about 15 percent of the federal budget in 2017. The projection through 2028, Medicare will account for 18 percent of the federal budget.

Medicaid reform would include adding working requirements for working-age adults recipients of food stamps and federal housing support. Critics point to the most contentious part – Trump’s plan repeals Medicaid expansion within the Affordable Care Act, which had been responsible for reducing the number of uninsured rate by more than 6 percent in states. Experts believe cutting this Medicaid expansion would leave millions uninsured.

SOCIAL SECURITY - $25 billion in cuts over 10 years

The bulk of the change ($10 billion between 2020 and 2029) in Trump’s proposal is in the Social Security Disability Insurance program. The plan is to cut in half retroactive pay disabled persons can recover to six months from 12 months.

How it currently works is disabled Americans apply for SS Disability Insurance. It takes a while before disability assistance kicks in, but those qualified for disability could receive retroactive assistance from the time they were injured up to approval of benefits with a maximum of 12 months.

Political Fallout

It’s standard that Congress push and pull at any president’s proposed budget and ultimately decides funding. But the president’s budget usually sets the starting point and the president’s political party in Congress usually defends those priorities set by the president.

Trump denies cuts are coming. Trumping xenophobic or other campaign fears could work on some Americans; but having Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security at risk could be far more persuasive at the ballot box in 2020. "My hope is that the electorate and supporters who voted for Trump and made him president will learn their lesson and will never vote for him again in 2020," said Dr. Aquino. “Hopefully, the electorate will have the ability to see through Trump’s machinations and manipulations.”

Safety net advocates say Americans just need to stay focused and remember what’s at stake.

"After exploding the deficit with his GOP tax scam for the rich, President Trump is once again trying to ransack Medicare, Medicaid and the health care of seniors and families across America."

— House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Hawaii High School Seniors: College Choice Month

By Matthew Mettias

his month high school seniors in Hawaii (and nationwide) will unravel their college acceptances, rejections, and waitlists like Christmas presents—the crucial first step into a four-year adventure. For many students, the most difficult process is not filling out an application itself, but rather choosing what college to attend.

By April 1 (and perhaps the most ironic day to send out college decisions), most high school students will receive their three-month long anticipated college decisions; rejections from prestigious, brand name schools including Harvard, Princeton, Yale, USC, and UCLA are expected.

Veteran college counselor and expert at Punahou School, Myron Arakawa explains, “It’s [the prestige of a college’s name] important and a factor that should be considered but it shouldn’t be the overriding consideration…if students define themselves by where they were accepted, then that’s a pretty narrow value of the importance of self.”

As UH-Manoa alumna, and now UH English professor, Kaela Clapp puts it in simple terms, “bigger name does not equal better education.” If these stances remain true and the prestige of a college is not the “make it or break it” point for most students, then why—not most notably at private, college-preparatory institutions including Iolani, Kamehameha, and Punahou Schools—do Hawaii high school students, parents, and educators alike treat a college’s reputation as such?

Elise Miyahara, Kalani High School Class of ’19, attempts to answer this question and speculates that placing focused energy on an educational institution’s prestige has become a longstanding tradition that has and will continue to sustain itself. “You only hear good things about prestigious schools because people associate prestigious schools with success and the resources and opportunities that they offer…however, it’s what you make of it.”

Others argue that celebrities (ex: Emma Watson from Brown University, Malia Obama from Harvard, etc.) and other figures who have launched successful companies (ex: Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg from Harvard) have publicized the names of the prestigious universities they attended. It is also believed that most students who excel academically view a prestigious university diploma as a “prize” for their hard work,” as Mr. Arakawa words it. “Nowadays, however, the acceptance rates [alluding to selective institutions] are less than 5 or 10%, so there are no guarantees and decisions are ultimately out of their [high school students’] control.” Combined, each of these factors contribute to many Hawaii high school students’ desire to attend a “trademark” institution.

In the most basic sense, students are expected to learn in college. With that being said, the academic rigor and quality of an institution, prestigious or not, are important factors to consider when evaluating college options. Common sense implies that academic quality and rigor are superior at better-known and well-established American educational institutions as opposed to those of non-prestigious schools; however, some experts, college graduates, and prospective college students argue otherwise.

Mr. Arakawa believes that the prestige of the school doesn’t always correlate with the academic rigor and challenge. He also believes that a school’s lack of selectivity does not equate to that institution’s lack of academic quality and rigor.

For encounters with various college graduates from an assortment of backgrounds, Professor Clapp describes the “try-league equals success” stereotype as being “not necessarily true”; there are so many other factors that contribute to the equation.

As the imminent date until the notorious “View Portal” tab on student college websites arrives, few can predict the outcomes and, ultimately, the decisions are left to the students. For most students, including prospective college student Elise Miyahara, however, the big choice boils down to one simple question, “Why did you apply to that college in the first place?”

MATTHEW METTIAS is an honors graduate of Punahou school, gap year student at Stanford University, and head of several local and international projects and business ventures. When he is not learning, Matt enjoys budget traveling, playing Spanish classical guitar, and taking care of his Chihuahua puppy.

Nominations Being Accepted for 2019 Ginong Pamana Leadership Award

ow of a community leader deserving of recognition? The Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce (MFCC) is accepting nominations for the 2019 Ginong Pamana Leadership Awards to recognize members of the Maui Filipino community with outstanding achievements, demonstrations of leadership, professional excellence and service to the community.

Awareness will be honored at the Ginong Pamana Leadership & Scholarship Awards banquet on Wednesday, June 12th, 5:30 p.m. at the Maui Beach Hotel.

The nomination form is available online at www.mauifilipinochamber.com/ginongpamana or by contacting Event Chairperson Dulce Butay at (808)268-5354 or via email: dulcekearenbutay@yahoo.com. Nominations must be postmarked by May 1, 2019 mailed to Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce at P.O. Box 331033, Kahului, HI 96733. Admission and dinner costs $65 per person. Sponsorship and advertising opportunities are also available. For inquiries on this event or about the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce, please contact Event Chairperson Dulce Butay at (808)268-5354 or Sharon Zalsos Banaag at (808)359-1616.

Scholarship Program

MFCC Foundation is accepting additional applications for its scholarship programs.

“Due to the substantial success of the recently completed Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament and the generosity of our scholarship partners, the Maui Filipino Chamber Foundation has decided to reopen and accept scholarship applications,” said Jorge Tirona, president of the Maui Filipino Chamber Foundation.

Applications must be postmarked or delivered to the Foundation’s office (24 Central Avenue in Wailuku) by Monday, April 22, 2019.

Applications may be downloaded on-line at www.mauifilipinochamber.com or you may call 242.8100.
If Your Green Card Is Lost Abroad Get A Transportation Letter to Return to U.S.

By Atty. Emmanuel S. Tipon

**Permanent resident or immigrant seeking entry to the U.S. after a foreign travel must possess a valid passport with U.S.-related immigration documentation, such as a permanent resident card (aka “green card”) (Form I-551). These documents must be presented to a commercial carrier such as an airplane or ship for you to be allowed to board and to a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspector at a U.S. Port of entry for you to be admitted.

But what if you lost your green card abroad? There should be no need to panic if you had taken the necessary precautions. Before you travel, it is wise to take pictures with your mobile phone of your green card, passport, citizenship papers, driver’s license, and other valuable documents. It is also wise to make xerox copies of such documents, place them in an envelope, bring a set and place it in your carry on luggage and leave a set at home on top of your desk or a place accessible to someone you can trust. While these pictures or xerox copies will not necessarily be acceptable to an airplane or ship or to CBP, these documents will help you obtain a document, such as a transportation letter, from a U.S. Embassy abroad, which you can present to a carrier and CBP.

A transportation letter may be issued by a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office if a permanent resident has been outside the U.S. for less than one year to board a commercial carrier to return to the U.S. It is valid for 30 days for a one time entry. It does not guarantee your admission to the U.S. Only a CBP inspector at a port of entry can inspect and admit you to the U.S.

**eligibility for transportation letter**

A transportation letter may be issued where your Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551) is outdated, lost, mutilated, stolen, expired, or if you never received a card, you applied to replace it but it has not been processed, or you are a conditional resident who filed a petition to remove the condition but it has not been processed. A transportation letter may also be issued if you are a child born after your parent has been issued an immigrant visa, but before your parent has traveled to the U.S. and been admitted as a Permanent Resident, or you are a child born during the temporary visit abroad of your permanent resident mother, and your application for admission to the U.S. is made within two years of birth, and you are accompanied by a parent who is reentering the U.S. as a returning resident for the first time after your birth. A transportation letter may also be issued to a person who has been approved as a refugee.

**Documentation Requirements**

Submit these documents, as applicable, to USCIS abroad to apply for a transportation letter:

1. Form I-193, Application for Waiver of Passport and/or Visa, filled up and signed.
2. Three passport-size (2” x 2”) photos (full face with white background).
3. If your Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card, was lost, stolen, or mutilated, a notarized Affidavit of Loss.
4. Your current passport.
5. Certificate of arrival in the Philippines (or foreign country) from the airline, OR original or photocopy of used airline ticket/boarding pass for your most recent trip abroad.
6. Confirmed flight schedule for return to the U.S., that is, airline or travel agency itinerary.
7. U.S. identification cards, such as, State identification, driver’s license, employment badge, school identification, etc. (photocopies).
8. If you are a Conditional Permanent Resident, evidence that a Form I-751, Petition to Remove the Conditions on Residence, has been filed.
9. If you are a child born after your parent has been issued an immigrant visa but before your parent has traveled to the U.S. or you are a child born during the temporary visit abroad of your Permanent Resident mother, submit all of the following: (a) Valid passport for you and your parent, (b) Your birth certificate from the National Statistics Office in the Philippines or other foreign government entity; (c) Your parent’s marriage contract, if married; (d) Your three passport-size photos; (e) Your parent’s Form I-551 or newly issued immigrant visa; (f) Your Parent’s Form I-327, Permit to Re-enter (if issued); (g) Proof of your birth, including photos (before, during, and after delivery); (h) hospital records (admission/discharge records, pre-natal records, hospital bills, etc.); and (i) Your parent’s used ticket or airline certificate showing departure from U.S. and arrival date abroad.

**Processing place, time, and fee**

Check with a U.S. Embassy abroad on who specifically processes a transportation letter request. In the Philippines, the USCIS at the U.S. Embassy in Manila processes transportation letter requests.

The processing time for a transportation letter is 7 to 10 business days. There is no fee for a Transportation Letter request or issuance.
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“Why do you read the Chronicle now? Why should we continue reading the Chronicle in the future?”

As part of the year-long celebration of our 25th year in publication, the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle is sponsoring a special essay contest where readers can personally express the impact of our newspaper in their lives and on Filipinos in Hawaii.

In an era dominated by online media, traditional print publications seem to be fading. But some community newspapers like the Chronicle are surviving and thriving after 25 years because of readers like you!

Now you have a chance to tell us and everyone why you read our newspaper and why people should continue reading it for the next 25 years and into the future. You could win $250 or other prizes for your essay.

Download the official entry form and template from our website at www.thefilipinochronicle.com and enter now to win! Or you can call our office at 808-330-8891 or 808-678-8930 to send you an official entry form.

SUBMISSIONS INFORMATION

• The essay must be between 400-700 words, typed and double-spaced, using the official entry form and template from our website.
• Judging is based on originality, creativity and composition. Chronicle staff members will choose their favorites with the publisher/editor selecting the final winning entry. The full winning essay and excerpts of runner-up essays will be published in a summer edition of the newspaper with their accompanying photo.
• Only one essay entry per person is accepted. All ethnic and age groups are welcome to enter. Relatives of the Chronicle staff are ineligible to participate in this essay contest.
• All entries become the rights of the Chronicle for use in publication and promotions. They may be edited for clarity and space.

PRIZES AND PUBLICATION

Three grand prize winner of $250 will be awarded to the reader who has submitted an essay that best answers the above questions. There will be one winner from High School (ages 15-18), one from College (ages 19-26) and one from Adult (ages 27-70) entry submissions. Winning entries will be published in full in a summer edition of the Chronicle. Runner-up essays will be excerpted as well.

All those who submit essays are eligible to win additional prizes, such as gift cards (restaurants, gas, stores, discount services, etc.) or merchandise from the Chronicle, community and essay contest sponsors. Winners will be notified and may pick up their prizes at the Chronicle office in Waipahu.

DEADLINE: JUNE 1, 2019

Please snail mail a hard copy of your essay on or before June 1. It must be postmarked by May 27 in order to qualify for the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted. Hawaii Filipino Chronicle 94-356 Waipahu Depot Rd., Flr. 2, Waipahu, Hawaii 96797. In addition, please send an email copy of your essay at the same time to: filipinochronicle@gmail.com.

There are several opportunities to win just for your thoughts about the Chronicle’s 25 years and beyond. So don’t delay. Enter your essay today!
By Elpidio R. Estioko

Hula, the dance developed in the Hawaiian Islands by original Polynesian settlers, has been attracting Filipino-Americans in the Bay Area and other cities in Northern California for the past five years! It’s becoming a crazy pastime, not only for small children but people of all ages.

What’s in hula that is attracting many Filipino-Americans?

About 85% of the membership or enrollment in five hula groups known as halau in Northern California is of Filipino-American descent. It is becoming a craze among many Filip-Am parents all eager to enroll their children.

Last weekend, I talked to a family friend who always brags on driving her grand-children to school and to hula classes on weekends. “I love watching my 5-year old and 7-year old apos dance the hula,” she said. She is a very proud Lolita! It seems that attending to her apos’ activities, especially on weekends is serving as her apostolic work. They are enrolled in a halau in San Jose.

The recent show involving the five halau from Santa Clara, Sacramento, Burlingame, Daly City, and Pinole held at the Event Center, St. Mary’s Cathedral in San Francisco, showed how popular hula is in these parts of California. It was organized by kumu hula instructor, kumu means source of knowledge, Mario Caramat, a Filipino-American in the Bay Area and other cities in Northern California.

The show flowed with native and contemporary hula and Tahitian dances coupled with newer songs acompañado and ukuleles. hula Kahiko (ancient hula), comprising older chant-accompanied dances, and hula ‘auana (modern hula), comprising newer songs acompañado.

The one-hour-and-a-half show started with group competitions. By the way, they make their own costumes out of native materials and patiently braid their hair till wee hours in the morning. I remember my children coming home late days before the competition because they have to make their costumes and braid the girls’ hair.

“It’s a family,” he added. “With the groups are my mother, my sister, my wife, and three children,” Caramat said. “I have dancers from Santa Clara halau who are relatives – the Estiokos - Mary Rose, Tweeti, Paul, Jane, and Jane’s daughter Mikayla,” he added.

Caramat told this reporter, was developed in the Hawaiian Islands by original Polynesian settlers, who migrated there by outrigger canoes from Southeastern Pacific Islands beginning in the first century.

He further explained that the term hula refers to movements and gestures. Hula, however, cannot be performed without mele (poetry), the most important component. Mele, according to Caramat, are records of cultural information ranging from sacred mele pule (prayers) and mele inoa (name chants), many for chiefs) to picul mele ho’oi-poipo (love songs) and mele aina (songs praising the land).

Caramat schools teach “It’s a family,” he added. “With the groups are my mother, my sister, my wife, and three children,” Caramat said. “I have dancers from Santa Clara halau who are relatives – the Estiokos - Mary Rose, Tweeti, Paul, Jane, and Jane’s daughter Mikayla,” he added.

Hula is often performed as a form of prayer at official state functions in Hawaii.
Forgiving Tiger’s Trespasses? Take a Cue from his Mom

By Emil Guillermo

Tiger, Tiger, Tiger?
No, I say, “Tida, Tida, Tida!”

Like many of you over the weekend, I was glued to my television, watching golf again and wearing red, and not just because of Palm Sunday.

There was Tiger Woods, who after enduring nearly a decade of both physical and emotional debilitation, not to mention the shroud of shame and scandal, was Sunday’s leader again.

It took me back 22 years—nearly a generation—when we first saw a 21-year-old Tiger roar through Augusta National in 1997 and leave the 18th hole a Masters champion for the first time.

All the world seemed fixated on his hug with his late father, Earl Woods.

This time, it was Tiger and his kids.

But the hug I wanted to see back then and now was that loving, cleansing victory hug from his mom.

Tida Woods, a Thai immigrant, has always been the Tiger story for me.

She’s been the reminder for all the world that Tiger Woods is one of us.

An Asian American.

When Tiger won that first Masters in 1997, I called him “Diversity’s Champ” in an “Emil Amok” column that appeared in Asian Week and in syndication nationwide. I wrote:

“Just look at him. There’s something about Tiger Woods that’s plain to see: He’s a tanned Asian! If he keeps his hat on, he looks kind of—Filipino! Normally there’s a tendency to see ourselves in the hero of the day. But in this case he really is. He’s half Asian American. Why can’t other people see the Asian in Tiger? Why is he consistently seen as the “black” golfer?”

Maybe it’s because some people refuse to stop looking in yesterday’s mirror and choose to ignore the changing reflection of our society.

With Tiger’s emergence, the unbelievable truth for some is that he’s not just changing the way we look at golf. He’s changing the way we understand the issue of race. Not only is he breaking golf records—he’s breaking old race paradigms. Through him, we’re all beginning to understand that the world isn’t just black and white anymore.

That fact alone gave the media fits over the weekend.

After he won, reporters and editors seemed incapable of capturing the essential part of Tiger: Great golfer, sure. But what is he? What do you call him?

The first Associated Press story I saw on Woods’ Masters triumph contained the basic faux pas. Its lead sentence read: “A black man in a green jacket.”

Wrong.

Monday morning, a Bay Area daily contained a similar error when it bellowed “Tiger Woods has reached a new level. Young, gifted, a black man in a white man’s game.”

The green jacket and his red mock turtleneck were the only colors I heard mentioned.

Woods is just ethnically Tiger.

There wasn’t even a tongue-in-cheek mention of Tiger’s self-describing phrase encapsulating his multienhnicity: “Cablanassian.”

Nor was there a reference to the National Enquirer stories back in 2009 that gave us a different picture of Tiger, the human, venal side, prone to infidelity.

There was talk of his physical pain from golf, and how it was thought he would never walk again, let alone strike a golf ball.

“Never give up, that’s a given,” Tiger said at the news conference, who seemed humbled by what had transpired.

He said luck played a role as the tourney could have gone any way in the final holes.

“You just hang in there and persevere,” he said.

So maybe that’s the lesson, or lessons, for 2019.

It’s a fallen hero piece himself back to do the thing that made him unique and the best in all the world once again.

It’s how the promise he showed in 1997 is not lost.

America may not have fully embraced diversity quite like we expected. And a backlash has emerged, led by a man Tiger’s played golf with a few times, the Mar-a-Lago resident who lives in the White House.

But America is slowly coming around.

The last graph I wrote in 1997 about Tiger as the future of race in America can still come true.

There’s something karma about the Woods story occurring on the anniversary of Jackie Robinson’s breakthrough presence in baseball.

... Robinson fit the simplicity of innocence for the ‘50s. Then it was just a matter of inclusion. With Tiger, the issues go beyond mere inclusion. They involve acceptance, respect, and certainly in Tiger’s case, acknowledgment of our excellence. He’s the perfect symbol for the racial complexities of the next millennium. It’s the era of Tiger Woods. The old golf game won’t work. And neither will the old labels. As the first person of color to win the Masters, he’s diversity’s champion.

As far as the new race reality goes, we’re getting there. Slowly.

And like Tiger’s come-back from scandal and pain, he’s proof one can transcend it all.

Of course, there will be detractors.

In the middle of the final round, a female friend of mine showed her disdain—an unwillingness to forgive Tiger for his sordid past behavior.

But I told her why judge Tiger? He’s not Louis C.K. Or Donald Trump even.

Let us all take a cue from Tida.

Tiger’s mom is no Tiger mom.

On the 18th hole of the final round of the Masters, she showed her approval with what only a mother can provide—a cleansing, loving victory hug.

Is there a better message for Holy Week?

EMIL GUILLERMO is a veteran journalist and commentator. He was on the editorial board of the Honolulu Advertiser and a columnist for the Star-Bulletin. Twitter @emilamo

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Bills Pass Second Crossover at the Hawaii Legislature

By HFC Staff

Supporters of the Kupuna Caregivers Program rallied at the Hawaii State Capitol to push for two measures (HB 467, HD1, SD1 and SB 1025, SD1, HD1) that would provide continued funding for the program.

After the second crossover, the Hawaii House of Representatives passed 236 Senate bills which will go back to the Senate for further consideration and review of amendments made by the House.

Some of the bills that passed the House include: homelessness services, emergency highway appropriations, election reforms, kupuna caregivers funding, ambulance services changes, community college Promise Program support, bail reform, and gun violence prevention.

Legislative Update

Some of the bills that would provide continued funding for the Kupuna Caregivers Program participants and submit a copy of the plan to the 2020 Legislature. Changes the Program fund to pay the eviction of information among county council seats.

SB417 SD2 HD2 Authorizes the Department of Health to establish fees for ambulance services changing, community college Promise Program support, bail reform, and gun violence prevention.

Support: SB1422 HD2 Specifies that police officers have the discretion to issue citations, in lieu of making a lawful arrest without warrant, for nonviolent class C felonies, misdemeanors, petty misdemeanors, and violations, subject to certain findings by the officers.

Education: SB316 SD2 HD2 Appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii for additional funding for the Hawaii Community College Promise Program. Requires a report to the Legislature.

SB50 SD2 HD1 Appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii for the Hawaii Nutrition Employment and Training Program to include materials and supplies and the hiring of seven full-time equivalent instructional and student support positions.

SB78 HD2 HD2 Establishes the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) as the administrative authority for state-funded prekindergarten programs, and private partnership-funded prekindergarten programs in the public schools, except for special education and Title I-funded prekindergarten programs. Transfers prekindergarten programs in DOE and charter schools, except for special education and Title I-funded prekindergarten programs, to EOEL.

Election Reform: SB427 HD1 HD1 Establishes ranked choice voting for special federal elections and special elections of vacant county council seats.

SB412 HD1 HD1 Makes an application for voter registration, including an affidavit, part of all driver’s license and identification card applications. Automatically registers each applicant who elects to register for voting unless the applicant affirmatively declines to be registered to vote.

Election: SB366 HD2 HD2 Appropriates funds to the Executive Office on Aging to fund the existing position of Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia Services Coordinator.

Judiciary: SB187 SD2 HD1 Establishes additional district court judgeships in the First Circuit and in the Second Circuit.

Kupuna Care: SB1025 SD1 HD1 Requires the Executive Office on Aging (EOA) to develop and implement a plan to maximize the number of Kupuna Caregivers Program participants and submit a copy of the plan to the 2020 Legislature. Changes the Program funding allocation cap and includes coordination or case management under the scope of services qualified caregivers can receive program funding.

Minimum Wage: SB789 SD2 HD2 Increases the minimum wage rates by $1 per hour annually from January 1, 2020, to January 1, 2024. Provides lower minimum wage rates for employees who receive employer-sponsored health benefits under the Hawaii Prepaid Health Care Act.


Sexual Misconduct NonDisclosure Agreements: SB1041 SD2 HD2 Prohibits written nondisclosure agreements involving sexual assault and sexual harassment as part of an employee’s conditions of employment. Prohibits employers from retaliating against an employee for disclosing or discussing sexual harassment or sexual assault.

Transient Accommodations: SB1292 SD2 HD3 Requires hosting platforms that collect fees for booking services to register as tax collection agents and collect GET and TAT for transient accommodation bookings from operators and plan managers. Converts penalties for violation of TAT requirements from misdemeanor to civil fines. Specifies that “transient accommodations” includes accommodations subject to county regulations as such.

To see all Senate bills that the House has amended and returned to the Senate go to https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/advreports/advreport.aspx?year=2019&report=deadl ine&rpt_type=second%20Crossover.
Immigration Processing Now at Crisis Levels

By Atty. Reuben S. Seguritan

The USCIS has been plagued with delays in processing petitions and applications since President Trump took office in 2017. The USCIS admits that there is a net backlog in all of their cases. Net backlog means that the active cases are past their targeted time completion goal. Millions of cases are delayed and the USCIS had its highest delays on record in the year 2017 with more than 2.3 million delayed cases.

The delays in processing times has affected the jobs, ability to travel abroad and status of families and persons seeking relief and benefits through the USCIS. For example, the delay in approving I-765 Application for Employment Authorization has led to applicants being unable to work and provide for their families. The employment authorization processing time is supposed to be 90 days or less. However, currently the average processing time is 5 to 8 months.

As for Advance Parole (Travel) Cards, the delay has meant that applicants who might need to travel abroad for a short period of time, cannot travel abroad because if they do, they could risk their pending adjustment application being classified as abandoned. If their application is classified as abandoned, then their application will be denied and they will not be able to return to the United States with their pending adjustment status.

The delays in processing times has also forced applicants to have to submit new I-693 Medical Examination report even after submitting it during the initial application/petition. This is because the completed I-693 is only valid for 2 years. What is happening now is that the interview date is set more than 2 years after the original application/petition was submitted. This means that the applicant must submit another I-693 at the interview. This is an additional cost for the applicant which could have been avoided had the USCIS processed the application/petition within the processing time. A suggestion that lawyers have for their clients is to not submit the I-693 with the application/petition. Rather, submit the I-693 at the interview. However, this tactic might not be effective and could result in more delays. This is because instead of scheduling the applicant for the interview, the USCIS could send a request for further evidence (RFE) and state that the I-693 must be submitted before the case can be reviewed fully and eventually scheduled for an interview.

The Trump administration’s “extreme vetting” security protocols has led to additional delays in processing. The USCIS was created by Congress as a service-oriented benefits agency. However, the current administration has transformed the USCIS into an immigration enforcement component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). There are now more interviews conducted, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests, fraud investigations and a new Notice to Appear (NTA) issued for petitions and applications that have been denied. The NTA forces the applicant to appear before an immigration judge which is the start of their removal proceedings.

The delay in processing applications has also affected US businesses when they file employment-based petitions. US companies are unable to hire and retain the employees that they need. Their petitions used to take 2.9 months in 2014. Now these petitions take at least 7.8 months to process. This has led to US companies having gaps in their workforce and forcing talented and skilled workers to apply for jobs outside the United States.

The humanitarian-based applications have also suffered extensive delays. The processing time for these cases was 4.8 months in 2016. Now these cases take at least 13.5 months to be resolved. This has led to the vulnerable applicants such as domestic abuse survivors and abandoned children being held in limbo, traumatized and threatened without any clear efforts by the USCIS to give them relief.

The USCIS’s overall case volume actually decreased by 17% from 2017 to 2018. However, the overall processing time in 2018 increased by 19% from 2017. There have been no reports of a decrease in the number of USCIS personnel that would rationally explain the delays. If news reports are to be believed, the USCIS appears to be hiring more personnel. More personnel should mean faster processing of cases. Sadly, that is not what is happening.

It seems that the overall delays are caused by the Trump administration’s policies. For example, in 2017, USCIS rescinded the directive which allowed their personnel to give deference to prior determinations when adjudicating nonimmigrant employment-based extension petitions involving the same position and the same employer. This policy change has led to unnecessary interviews and submission of additional evidence. The USCIS personnel are made to re-adjudicate cases that have already been extensively assessed during the first application. Another example is the requirement of in-person interviews for all employment-based green card applications and applications for Refugee/Asylee Relative petitions. Furthermore, it is widely reported that ICE agents are arresting illegal immigrants, even those married to US citizens, when they appear in court or at the USCIS office for their interview. The USCIS has also phased out the self-scheduling of meetings that attorneys and applicants could make through InfoPass. The USCIS has decreased its transparency to the public in its operations. Congress has also failed to effective exercise its oversight over the USCIS. Until the USCIS changes its current operations and policies, delays will continue and this will lead to the detriment of all applicants and their families and to US companies.

REUBEN S. SEGURITAN has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695 3281 or log on to his website at www.seguritan.com

Hawaii to Host Pacific Arts and Culture Festival in June

The State of Hawai’i will host the monumental 13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture (FESTPAC) for the first time in the event’s nearly 50-year history. It is the world’s largest celebration of indigenous Pacific Island and Pacific Rim peoples.

FESTPAC, which is held once every four years, is scheduled for June 10 – 21, 2020. Three-thousand artists, cultural practitioners, scholars and leaders from 28 Pacific Island nations will gather on O'ahu. Participants will share their knowledge and artistry with each other and thousands of spectators from Hawai’i and around the world.

“The Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture will be an opportunity for us to share our aloha spirit, our cultural traditions and contemporary arts with the world,” stated Governor David Ige. “It is also an opportunity to discuss important issues facing cultures in our region.”

In 2012, Hawai’i was the selected host by the Pacific Community (SPC), an international organization dedicated to empowering Pacific Islands, Countries and Territories nations and their people. SPC ensures that these Pacific Islanders have the knowledge, technical ability and resources to thrive and sustain their livelihood, arts and cultural practices.

For more information on FESTPAC Hawai’i 2020, including a list of participating nations, visit www.festpac-hawaii2020.org.
Spring and Summer Safety for Kids

By Melissa Martin

Spring and Summer are seasons for running in the yard, swimming, and playing in a tree house. But for some children, these seasons can be dangerous or deadly.

Lawn Mower Safety

Data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission shows that when visits to doctors’ offices and clinics are included, more than 17,000 children and teens are treated for lawn mower injuries each year, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Usually the victims are older children or teens, but one in four injuries occurs to children younger than 6 years.

And 75 children die each year due to lawnmower injuries. Boys are injured more frequently than girls. Injuries are seen most often in young children (1-3 years) and teenagers. Lawnmowers are the leading cause of traumatic amputations (loss of all or part of a limb) in children. When these injuries happen, nearly 90% of children are injured in their own yard. Nearly 80% are injured by the usual user of the mower. About 50% happen while the mower is in reverse. “The energy of the rotating blade is more powerful than a 0.357 Magnum gun.” www.orthokids.org.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, lawnmowers cause more than 600 amputations in children each year. According to Nationwide Children’s Hospital website in Columbus, Ohio, the following are common lawn mower-related injuries: deep cuts, loss of fingers, hands, toes or feet, broken and dislocated bones, burns, eye injuries, and soft tissue damage. www.nationwidechildrens.org.

Limb’s Matter is an organization composed of families that came together to spread a message about lawnmower safety. Watch their Public Service Announcement on YouTube. Warnings: If you don’t want to experience a gamut of emotions and tears, then don’t watch—because the video shows several children amputees. “Lawn Mowers are loud and dangerous, kids are quick and little. The safest operators, are at risk for this can tragedy, because if the kids are out while the mower is operating, the danger exists.” www.limbsmatter.com.

The Amputee Coalition offers these safety guidelines:

1. Keep your children indoors and do not allow other children to play nearby while you are mowing.
2. Never allow children to play on a lawn mower, even if it is turned off.
3. Never allow a child to ride on a riding lawn mower with you.

The Amputee Coalition and Limbs Matter remind parents that “in one split second, a preventable lawn mower accident can change a child and his or her family’s life forever.”

Pool Safety

More than 1,000 children die each year from drowning, and many others suffer life-changing injuries, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Among children ages 1 to 4, most drowning accidents occur in home swimming pools. www.cdc.gov.

Studies have found that half of all swimming pool drownings among children could be prevented by putting up a fence; at least 4 feet tall. The gate should close and latch automatically by itself and be out of children’s reach. www.poolsafely.gov for the Swim Season Partner Toolkit.

Tree House Safety

Around 2,800 children are treated in emergency departments for tree house-related injuries every year, according to Nationwide Children’s Hospital website. The most common injuries are fractures, followed by bumps, bruises and cuts. Most injuries occur when children fall or jump from a tree house. Other dangers include strangulation by ropes or chains, and cuts from broken glass or exposed nails.

Children younger than the age of 5 years are more likely to suffer a head injury compared to older children.

Tips: Build the tree house low to the ground. A tree house greater than 10 feet in the air is too high. Solid barrier walls, not guardrails, should be used.

Keeping kids safe is vital for the summer season.

MELISSA MARTIN, PHD, is an author, columnist, educator, and therapist. She lives in Southern Ohio.

(Solution to Crossword No. 4 | April 6, 2019)
Suppression of Scientific Data
Senator Hirono Asks for Investigation into willingness to completely disregard tion DOI has repeatedly shown a suppress scientific data.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Senator Mazie Hirono and Senate Democrats sent a letter to Deputy Inspector General Mary L. Kendall to request she investigate “the suppression of a Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion that was due to be completed and released in December 2017.”

The letter specifically calls into question actions taken by David Bernhardt, the current nominee to become Secretary of the Interior, to suppress scientific data.

“Under the current administration DOI has repeatedly shown a willingness to completely disregard the work of career scientists and allow political appointees who are not subject matter experts to influence the decision-making process,” Hirono and other senators wrote.

“In our previous letter, we said we had no reason to believe that the attacks on science and pressure by political appointees to alter science in order to advance the administration’s narrative would cease, and this report reinforces that conclusion. As such we request an investigation into the delayed release of the Fish and Wildlife Biological Opinion that was due for release over a year ago.”

The Senators requested the investigation after the New York Times published an article last week that detailed a series of documents from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientists who completed a comprehensive analysis showing several widely-used pesticides were so toxic they “jeopardize the continued existence” of more than 1,200 endangered birds, fish, and other animals. The documents also indicated top political appointees, led by Bernhardt, blocked the release of the opinion and “set in motion a new process intended to apply a much narrower standard to determine the risks from pesticides.”

Senators asked for an investigation into the delayed release of the Fish and Wildlife Biological Opinion that was due for release over a year ago.
Hawaii Senior Medical Group

APRIL 20, 2019

Hawaii Senior Medical Group Primary Care Physicians

Kung mayroon kayong Medicare at Medicaid, pilin po ninyo ang Hawaii Senior Medical Group para sa inyong kalusukan at madaling pagsangguni sa mga espesyalista.

Ang Hawaii Senior Medical Group ay may kontrata sa Medicare at Medicaid. Ito ay binubuo ng mga doctor, hospital at espesyalista upang magbigay ng mahusay at matatap na serbisyo ng kalusukan sa lahat.