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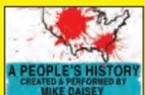
# FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ JULY 20, 2019 ◆

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## OHANA MEDICAL MISSION HEADS FOR THE PHILIPPINES



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## EDITORIALS

## Much Success to Ohana Medical Missions, Inc. on Their Upcoming Mission to the Philippines

**T**he World Health Organization described health care in the Philippines as “fragmented,” pointing out that there is a huge difference in the quality and access of health services between the rich and poor.

The Philippines has a universal health coverage system called PhilHealth in which the government provides health insurance for all Philippine nationals. But the government spends only 4.7 percent of their GDP to support its national health program, (compare that with most industrialized nations of over 10 percent) so it is underfunded and inadequate to meet millions of Filipinos’ health needs.

There are public hospitals and clinics throughout the country. As an alternative, there are also private hospitals and private insurers that wealthier Filipinos and expat Filipinos (U.S. citizens who retire there) utilize for better quality, but the higher cost is usually out of reach for the average Filipino.

The general standard is the quality of health care is better in Manila and most major cities then it declines as you go further out to rural areas. To Western observers the downgrade in quality is dramatic and stark.

Another problem is a shortage of physicians in the Philippines. The ratio is one physician per 1,000 Filipinos. The shortage is due in part to Filipino doctors being underpaid.

Leo Olarte, president of the Philippine Medical Association, said the Philippines has only 70,000 active PMA member-physicians to serve more than 100 million Filipinos. He noted one problem is that licensed doctors are moving away to work in other countries where the pay is better. Sometimes licensed doctors would even accept nursing positions outside of the Philippines.

But arguably the biggest health care problem is the lack of infrastructure and investment in hospitals and clinics in many rural areas throughout the country. Rural medical facilities are basic, rudimentary, and understaffed. Most of them are inadequately equipped to treat serious health conditions and the next hospital that could, might be hundreds of miles away. In life and death emergency situations when every second counts, it’s clear how this is a critical problem.

Health experts say it’s also difficult to study how healthy or unhealthy Filipinos actually are because getting reliable national health statistics can be hard to get. Many rural clinics, or more like health stations, do not adequately maintain health records.

If rural Filipinos cannot afford to travel to the big city hubs for medical care, often they just do without treatment entirely, even when a serious health ailment is present. How do experts know this?

Government officials say medically unattended deaths (deaths that do not occur in a medical facility attended by a physician) are estimated to be as high as 59.2 percent. In other words, in many rural communities, six out of 10 people are still dying in their homes and possibly with little to no palliative or hospice care.

### Kudos to Ohana Medical Mission

One Hawaii-based organization doing exceptional work helping indigent communities with medical needs in the Philippines is the Ohana Medical Missions, Inc. (OMM).

OMM usually makes at least one medical mission trip per year in which they provide underserved communities with free medical, dental and surgical services. OMM’s most recent mission was to Cabugao, Ilocos Sur and Dumaguete, Philippines in 2018.

From August 1 through 13 this year, OMM will make its 14th medical mission; this time to serve communities in Cebu and Davao, Philippines.

(continue on page 3)

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**O**t’s always a pleasure when we get to share the lighter side of news, one that inspires and exemplifies the best in humanity. One organization doing commendable humanitarian work is the Hawaii-based Ohana Medical Missions, Inc. (OMM). It has been providing free healthcare and health education to underserved communities in the Philippines, Hawaii, and other foreign countries.

For our cover story this issue, associate editor Edwin Quinabo reports on OMM’s upcoming 14th Medical Mission to Cebu and Davao, Philippines in August 2019. President of OMM Dr. Russell Kelly said that a total of 70 volunteers will be working at various sites performing a range of medical services from minor surgeries to dental extractions and prescribing medicine. Thousands of Filipinos, many who cannot afford medical treatment, are expected to travel miles just to receive much needed care. The logistical planning, coordinating, and fundraising for a medical mission like this takes two years. In addition to sharing their time and medical expertise, volunteers will be bringing with them for donation more than \$100,000 in medicines and vitamins, 10,000 pairs of free optical glasses, and other medical supplies. We are grateful to OMM for helping our communities in need. We wish volunteers much success on this Cebu-Davao mission; and we encourage our readers to consider donating to this highly worthy charitable organization.

Also in this issue, we have an article in our Ask A Doctor column written by Steven Rhee, D.O., Medical Director and Cornea Specialist at the Hawaiian Eye Center. He writes about “Dry Eye Disease,” an uncomfortable and often damaging condition to our eyes. He says dry eye disease is often underdiagnosed and if not treated could lead to ulcers, scarring of the cornea, and even vision loss.

HFC columnist Atty. Reuben Seguritan writes an important article on the closure of all U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) international field offices. What this will do is create a backlog and delay immigrant petitions and applications. USCIS already closed the Manila Field Office in the Philippines last July 5. This new plan is yet another way the Trump administration is making it more difficult for immigrants to come into this country.

HFC’s Seneca Moraleda-Puguan contributes “A New Breed of Leaders” for her Personal Reflections column. Originally from the Philippines but now living in South Korea, Seneca writes about why she sees a glimmer of hope, a silver lining that one day, big and good things can happen for the Philippines.

HFC columnist Melissa Martin, Ph.D. writes about comforting family and friends who’ve suffered a loss by suicide. Death by suicide carries a stigma and often the grief is intensified. Martin provides tips on coping and resources for suicide-loss survivors.

Be sure to read our news sections, including an article on a Real Property Tax Credit that you might be able to qualify for. Find out about income and eligibility requirements and how to apply for the credit that could save you considerable money.

Lastly, we are pleased to announce that Cesar Fronda is the winner of our 25th Anniversary Essay Writing Contest. He will receive a \$250 grand prize; and his essay is published in this issue. He has been reading the HFC for many years. He works for the Hawaii Department of Education and is a court interpreter. Thank you Cesar for your participation.

And thank you to all our readers and advertisers for your continued support. Until next time, warmest *Aloha* and *Mabuhay!*



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*Chona A. Montesines-Sonido*

EDITORIALS

# The U.S. Strategy of Never-ending Wars Cannot Be Sustained

**W**here is a startling statistic most Americans don't know about. Every hour, taxpayers in the U.S. are still paying \$32.08 million for the total cost of wars since 2001, according to Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs.

Americans are not only paying millions for these wars at this very moment by the minute, but most Americans are unaware that the U.S. is still engaged in military intervention in Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, and Yemen.

And just recently, the Trump administration sent another 1,000 troops to the Middle East.

The total cost of U.S. involvement in wars since 2001 is \$5.9 trillion, which includes direct Congressional war appropriations, war-related increases to the Pentagon base budget, interest payments on direct war borrowing. (For perspective of what \$6 trillion is, it is one-third of the entire U.S. national debt of \$18.15 trillion.)

Remember that this figure keeps growing.

The total lives lost of U.S. military, U.S. contractors, U.S. civilians, NGO workers and media personnel in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq alone since 2001 is 507,000.

Remember that this figure also keeps growing.

### Potential for peace ignored

A few Democratic presidential candidates have talked about a more non-interventionist approach to foreign policy; but for the most part, (with only one exception Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, and maybe Marianne Williamson is another) prioritizing for peace has been largely overshadowed

by other issues.

There is little to no leadership when it comes to peace as a policy in the Democratic Party; and certainly none from Republicans.

This despite that the threat for nuclear war remains arguably the greatest threat to humanity; and the overlooked fact that if less money were spent on U.S. military incursions abroad, billions, even trillions, could be spent on other issues Democrats are focusing on like infrastructure, healthcare, and the preservation of the environment.

Since the Vietnam war up until the 1980s, there was a strong grassroots movement advocating for peace. Students, artists, civil rights leaders, even unions took part in the peace movement. The women's movement went hand-in-hand with the peace movement.

Politicians back then recognized Americans value for peace and spoke about it as one among the most urgent issues. Peace had been for generations up until the late 1980s a selling point for politicians to get elected into national office.

The Vietnam war lasted about 19 years with some 60,000 Americans killed. American outrage over that war was palpable and divided the nation. The U.S.'s Middle East wars -- which has been on and off since 1990 and still ongoing in parts of the region -- have gone on for almost 20 years with about half a million American casualties, but many Americans today are not even aware that American troops are still deployed there.

Where's the outrage? Why the apathy?

It could be that pacifism as an ideal died at about time the Cold War ended; and that a majority of Americans see military

conflict as a necessary social evil.

It could also be that Americans are not as fearful of war because there is no longer a draft with today's modern military completely voluntary-based. Mothers, historically the staunchest anti-war protestors, are no longer afraid that their sons will be taken off to die in combat.

It could also be that the U.S. has been at war for such a long time that Americans have become desensitized to it and are more concerned about issues that affect their everyday life, their incomes and health care.

The most dangerous explanation is that Americans just don't care if the country is at war or not, or that Americans trust that the State Department and Defense Department have the country's best interest in mind on this matter (even though most political scientists know military incursions many times are profit-driven by defense contractors with political clout).

### Have we lost our way?

Whatever might be the reasons why calls for peace have fallen to the wayside, it is clear violence is not looked upon as a moral injustice as it used to be. We even see this domestically in Americans' acceptance of liberal gun ownership rights over

halo to OMM for its charitable and much needed medical mission trips. We wish OMM physicians, medical and lay volunteers success on their upcoming 14th medical mission.

We would also like to encourage Hawaii Filipinos to help support this reputable organization so that its medical volunteers can continue their goodwill missions of helping our fellow Filipinos in the mother country and other communities around the world. Visit OMM's website ohanamedicalmissions.org for donation information or how to become a volunteer.

epidemic gun violence.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."

Perhaps it's timely that a presidential candidate like Williamson came along to spread her message of love. She most likely will not win, but her message couldn't be more needed in the shortage of love in politics, love in policy today.

Williamson wants to establish a Department of Peace Creation to work with the State Department and Department of Defense. Critics have been cynical of the idea, calling it silly.

But why shouldn't peace-building be given serious consideration? She said, "In order to have peace in the world,

we have to cultivate peace. Such things as peace-creation through development, diplomacy, mediation, and humanitarian assistance are as important to building peace as is being prepared for war, should war be necessary."

Americans have been brainwashed into thinking every military incursion is necessary. Politicians have been played by defense contractors for far too long. Remember the Defense Industry is one of the top 5 lobbies in Washington, D.C. The media have also been grossly negligent in asking the right questions and putting pressure on the military industrial complex and Pentagon on the issue of war and peace.

The state of never-ending war cannot be easily accepted as it now. The financial cost to our nation, the lives lost due to war, and the slow-death of our conscious and sense of morality with regard to violence are all taking a heavy toll.

### EDITORIALS: MUCH SUCCESS...from page 2)

An affiliate of the Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii, OMM was incorporated in 2009.

OMM has a very noble mission statement: "We are dedicated to providing healthcare and health education to indigent patients in the Philippines, Hawaii, and other countries. We are committed to providing outstanding medical, surgical and dental services so that no patient is denied treatment because of financial, social, or political circumstance."

We would like to extend a big ma-

Legal Notice

## If You Bought an Airline Ticket between the U.S. and Asia, Australia, New Zealand, or the Pacific Islands, You Could Receive Benefits from a Settlement

A \$58 million Settlement has been reached with All Nippon Airways ("ANA") in a class action lawsuit involving the price of airline tickets. Settlements were previously reached with 12 Defendants.

### What is the case about?

The lawsuit claims that ANA agreed to fix prices on tickets for transpacific air travel. As a result, ticket purchasers may have paid more than they would have in the absence of the price-fixing. ANA denies any liability, although it has pled guilty to fixing the prices of certain discounted tickets.

### Am I included?

There are three classes included in this Settlement. Generally, you may be included if: (1) Japan Class - you bought a ticket for air travel from ANA or Japan Airlines between February 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007 that included a fuel surcharge; and/or (2) Satogaeri Class - you purchased a ticket from ANA or Japan Airlines between January 1, 2000 and April 1, 2006 for a Satogaeri (i.e., "homecoming") fare and the ticket included at least one flight segment originating in the U.S. to Japan; and/or (3) Settlement Class III - you bought a ticket for air travel from one of 13 airlines, including ANA or Japan Airlines; the ticket included at least one flight segment originating in the U.S. to Asia or Oceania; and your purchase was made between January 1, 2000 and December 1, 2016.

Please review the class definitions carefully at the website below. Travel agents are only included if they bought tickets for their personal use.

### What does the Settlement provide?

ANA has agreed to pay \$58 million (the "Settlement Fund"). Money will be distributed pursuant to a Plan of Allocation approved by the Court. At this time, it is unknown how much

each eligible member of the Classes will receive. However, based on the claims that have already been filed, it is estimated that the average payment of prior settlements, which had classes similar to Settlement Class III, could be in the range of \$5 per eligible ticket claimed. Because there is no prior claims history for the Satogaeri and Japan Classes, a per ticket estimate is not possible for those classes. Claims from the earlier round of settlements have not yet been audited. As a result, the number of claimed tickets that are determined to be eligible may be reduced, and the corresponding amount of compensation to be allocated among the remaining eligible claims may increase.

### How can I get benefits?

You must submit a Claim Form online at [www.AirlineSettlement.com](http://www.AirlineSettlement.com) or by mail. The earliest deadline to submit a Claim Form is **February 15, 2020**.

### What are my rights?

If you do nothing, you will be bound by the Court's decisions and will get no money. As described above, if you want to get money from the Settlement, you must file a claim. If you want to keep your right to sue ANA and get no money from the Settlement, you must exclude yourself from the classes by **September 13, 2019**. If you stay in the classes, you may object to the Settlement by **September 13, 2019**. The detailed notice describes how to exclude yourself or object and is available on [www.AirlineSettlement.com](http://www.AirlineSettlement.com).

The Court will hold a hearing on **October 18, 2019** to consider whether to approve the Settlement and a request for attorneys' fees up to one-third of the Settlement Fund, plus reimbursement of costs and expenses. You or your own lawyer may appear at the hearing at your own expense, but you do not have to attend.

**For more information & a detailed notice:  
1-800-439-1781 [www.AirlineSettlement.com](http://www.AirlineSettlement.com)**

# Ohana Medical Mission to Provide Free Medical Services in Cebu and Davao

By Edwin Quinabo

**O**t's possible to change a life in a day.

Thousands of Filipinos are expected to travel miles upon miles to seek free medical care from the Hawaii-based Ohana Medical Mission, Inc. (OMM) when volunteers visit Cebu and Davao, Philippines, next month from August 1 through 13 (Aug 4-11, site visits).

*Children who've never received dental care for their tooth aches will finally get relief from their gnawing pain.*

*Seniors whose vision has diminished to where everyday life tasks have become a challenge -- will be able to see better and do what they love to do with ease once again. OMM will be donating 10,000 pairs of free optical glasses.*

*Some patients will get free minor surgical procedures they would never be able to afford. Some will receive free prescription medicine worth hundreds of dollars for diabetes, tuberculosis, or other ailments.*

*For the OMM team of medical and lay volunteers, the near two-weeks mission -- that required hundreds of hours of logistical planning, coordination, and fundraising over the course of two-years -- will be an opportunity of a lifetime for them to serve others with compassion and medical care.*

Dr. Russell Kelly, president of Ohana Medical Missions, Inc., said a total of 70 volunteers (26 from Honolulu and Manila) will be working on each site. He will head eight physicians; Dr. Salvador Cecilio will head three surgeons. Executive director JP Orias has coordinated with local specialists and volunteers in Cebu and Davao to assist the OMM team.

Dr. Kelly said this will be his ninth OMM mission. This upcoming August mission is the 14th for the organization.

"The mission is very rewarding for me. There are so many real life vignettes that you get from the mission that make you feel you're doing a good job. You see, OMM also gives away humanitarian gifts to underserved communities in addition to medical and surgical services. Last mission, I experienced the spontaneous joy of a little boy telling his dad 'Wow, we now have spaghetti for Christmas.' Reactions like these make the mission priceless," said Dr. Kelly.

He said OMM will be providing a wide range of medical services to treat various medical conditions. Medical volunteers will do some minor lymphoma, circumcision, and other surgeries. They will do

dental extractions and dental hygiene procedures.

"We will also bring more than \$100,000 worth of medicines and vitamins. We've received donations of prescription medications and samples from charitable companies. Chair Dr. Charlie Sonido, Dr. Rafael Malilay and some of our pharmacists helped with getting donations," said Dr. Kelly.

Typically on these missions volunteers will see thousands of patients. Some doctors will see well over a hundred patients in one day. It's like a marathon. It takes stamina, concentration. It also is about making a genuine connection to patients and making them feel that volunteers really care.

Some of these patients haven't been to a doctor for years.

Since medical mission work is temporary, on cases where patients need additional care, OMM volunteers will coordinate and refer patients to local medical professionals when possible.

## Communities to serve on this mission

Like other organizations that do medical missions, OMM targets underserved communities, mostly in rural

areas where medical needs are not being met. They serve locals who are either too poor to afford medical treatment; and serve communities far away from hub hospitals or clinics. Some of these patients do not even have enough money or means to travel to the nearest hospital or clinic. This is when medical missions like OMM is considered godsend to the impoverished.

OMM makes at least one medical mission each year. The locations for this upcoming August mission will be Carcar Municipal Hall, Maharlika Gym, Sambag II, and Taptap Gym in Cebu City; and Boulevard Trading Gym and Tugbok Proper Gym in Davao City; and Babak Gym, Samal.

Large venues like gymnasiums are selected to maximize the number of patients that can be seen.

Hawaii residents Joel and Mira Navasca, owners of Tiano's Restaurant, are from Carcar, Cebu City. The Navascas helped coordinate with City and local government, civic organizations, and the Philippines Eagles Club in Carcar to work with OMM. They've also helped raise funds through their restaurant for the Carcar mission. This will be the couple's first mission with OMM.



Dr. Salvador Cecilio performing a surgery during a medical mission in Bicol last year.

"We invited the Ohana Medical Mission to Carcar because there is a great need to serve those less fortunate in our home town. The city of Carcar just recently became a city and there are a lot of residents, most especially those who live in remote areas, who cannot afford to see a doctor," said Joel.

"We believe this is a great opportunity to give back to our kababayans back home. And to let them know that the people of Hawaii want to share their blessings," he added.

Carcar is about 22 miles south of Cebu City. It has a population of 119,664.

This upcoming mission will be OMM's third trip to Cebu. The last one to Cebu was to help victims of the devastating typhoon Hyan. This mission will also be OMM's second trip to Davao.

Dr. Russell Tacata, a general practitioner with a private practice in Kalihi, will be attending the upcoming mission. He is also president of the Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls, a sister organization of the OMM -- both are under the umbrella of the Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii.

Dr. Tacata describes one of the locations OMM will visit, Samal. "The Island Garden City of Samal, IGACOS,

is beautifully isolated from Davao City. Most locals in the island self-treat themselves with herbal meds to cure their malady. Very few in the community see the few practicing doctors of the island.

"All the services that OMM offers are very much needed there. I believe the OMM team served more than 1,500 patients in Samal when we first went there in 2011. Then we also went to Panabo, Toril and Marilog. You could see how happy they were when we arrived at the site. Seeing 100 patients a day on my own was so exhausting, but it was worthwhile serving our kababayan who needed our services most," said Dr. Tacata.

Samal has a population of 104,123 residents. It's about 22 miles away from Davao City.

Melody Sasis is president of the Dabawenyos Community Foundation of Hawaii (Dabawenyos refers to someone from Davao). Meldoy, a psychiatrist technician at the Hawaii State Hospital, will accompany her husband and several members of her organization to the mission. Melody said she has been working on this project for almost two years.

"This will be our way to give back to our community

(continue on page 5)

COVER STORY



(from page 4)

back home and help to alleviate poverty and improve the health and well-being of those underserved in Davao,” said Melody.

Dr. Arnold Villafuerte, a past Board Member of OMM and supporter of OMM fundraising events, will be making this mission trip. He has been participating in medical missions for the past 20 years. He’s gone on mission trips with the Aloha Medical Mission, Ohana Medical Mission, and Ilocos Surian Medical Mission.

Why are medical missions important to him? He said, “by volunteering and opening your heart to others, you automatically have succeeded and achieved satisfaction by giving of yourself for nothing in return. Also, as the saying goes ‘actions speak louder than words’ -- this is definitely true when it comes to being compassionate towards others on these missions.

“You meet like-minded individuals who’ll become friends for life, as well as those who will inspire you by their lifetime commitment to serve others. When serving those less fortunate than yourself, issues in your own life that may have seem important to you, can take a back seat. And your problems suddenly won’t seem like the end of the world,” said Dr. Villafuerte.

People go on medical missions for varied reasons. Lay volunteers usually have some connection to the area being served, either they’re from

there or their parents, or their spouse is. Medical volunteers often see these missions as the best way to do charitable work outside the western insurance-driven health care model; and to help people who do not make enough to participate in established health care systems. In the Philippines, millions fall under this category.

What most volunteers have in common is compassion for the people and communities they serve and a deep desire to make a difference.

**Snapshot of Philippines’ health care**

The Philippines health care system is “fragmented,” described the World Health Organization (WHO). The system is a mix of both public and private health care, but it is considered fragmented because of the huge gap in quality and access to health care between the rich and poor.

This could be said of health care systems throughout the world, even in the U.S. But in the case of the Philippines, the WHO considers this gap extreme.

While the country has a universal coverage system called PhilHealth, it is underfunded and infrastructure investments in hospitals and clinics are mostly centered in Manila and large cities. Rural communities are vastly underserved and the facilities available to these residents resemble more like health stations rather than fully functioning public health facilities.

There is a major shortage

of physicians, according to Leo Olarte, president of the Philippine Medical Association, in part due to doctors being underpaid. Many seek employment abroad, even accepting nursing positions in other countries, when given the opportunity.

Statistics show many Filipinos particularly in rural areas, do without traditional medical care sometimes their entire life. In fact, 6 out of 10 people will die in medically unattended deaths (deaths that do not occur in a medical facility attended by a physician). This means many of them are dying in their homes, and more likely, with little to no palliative care.

While health care is provided to all Filipinos by law through PhilHealth, the insurance coverage is insufficient and many cannot afford out-of-pocket costs at private hospitals.

Some critics say PhilHealth is called universal health coverage only in name. It is not a true single-payer system. Many Filipinos cannot afford the premiums to enroll or stay on the program.

Heart disease and cancer are the most common major illnesses in the Philippines. Respiratory tuberculosis is very common, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Organizers of medical missions are well aware of the high rates of TB in the Philippines and will bring along a large supply of medication to treat TB patients.

**“The mission is very rewarding for me. There are so many real life vignettes that you get from the mission that make you feel you’re doing a good job. You see, OMM also gives away humanitarian gifts to underserved communities in addition to medical and surgical services. Last mission, I experienced the spontaneous joy of a little boy telling his dad ‘Wow, we now have spaghetti for Christmas.’ Reactions like these make the mission priceless.”**

**— DR. RUSSELL KELLY**  
*President of Ohana Medical Missions, Inc.*

**Volunteers and sponsors**

Dr. Kelly wanted to recognize the volunteers and sponsors of this 14th OMM mission to Cebu-Davao.

The volunteers are Koda Balana, Roger Balla, Salvador Cecilio, MD, Ben Chang, Kala Chang, Ralph Curiano, MD, Anna Davide, Edgardo Dela Cruz, MD, Armi DeLa Cruz, RN, Paolo Garcia, Jerard Garcia, MD, Alicia Jimenez, RN, Russell Jr Kelly, Jr. MD, Russell Kelly, MD, Cynthia Kelly, MD, Rafael Malilay, MD, Melinda Montgomery, Joel Navasca, Mira Navasca, JP B. Orias, Pinky Que, Christopher Regala, MD, Maximilian Regala, Gabby Rosario, MD, Michelle Swengel, Russell Tacata, MD, Rev. Alex Vergara, Teodora Villafuerte, and Arnold Villafuerte, MD.

The delegates: Romeo S Sasis, Melody Sasis, Sherryl Butuyan, Alrey Carlos, Yuro Ang, Perla Sensontic Yumang, Raul Bautista, Glads Bernadette Bautista, Francisco M. Apilado, Maria Nelia R Apilado, Corazon S Nelson, Marilyn D Sieh, Marivic Villejo, Ruben Villejo, Anabel Andrea Abad, Teodora Rubillar, and Ellen Lantaya.

The sponsors are Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii, Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls, Dabawenyos Community Foundation of Hawaii, West Oahu Nephrology, James Ireland, MD, FMS Hawaii, Anesthesia Innovations/Hawaii Pain, Jerry Garcia, MD, Tiano’s Restaurant, Pure Water Technology Hawaii Inc., Hawaii Medical

Association, Russell S. Kelly, MD Inc., Russell G. Tacata, MD, Inc., Elizabeth Abinsay, MD, Primary Care Center of Honolulu/Charlie Y. Sonido MD Inc., Jar donors from the different communities of Honolulu and Hawaii, Carolina Davide, MD, and Linda Ngoc Ho, MD.

The OMM was incorporated in 2009. It’s mission statement says: “We are dedicated to providing healthcare and health education to indigent patients in the Philippines, Hawaii, and other countries. We are committed to providing outstanding medical, surgical and dental services so that no patient is denied treatment because of financial, social, or political circumstance.”

Fundraising is central to OMM’s ability to serve, Dr. Kelly said.

On the OMM website, Dr. Kelly appeals to the public for assistance. “The challenges of fundraising and organizing for these missions are always hard but the need is great. Our calling is to help our fellow men and women, and this is a great way to answer the call. So let us all pitch-in for the people we left behind. May I say God bless us all and our fellow men.”

Mabuhay to OMM and the volunteers on this Cebu-Davao mission. Hawaii’s Filipino community applauds your charitable work.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Visit OMM’s website [ohanamedicalmissions.org](http://ohanamedicalmissions.org) for donation information or how to become a volunteer.



By Melissa Martin, Ph.D.

## Comforting Loss Survivors

suicide is a tragic end to lives that once had great potential. Most of all, however, we hope to plant seeds of compassion in the hearts of those who read the names: seeds that may develop into a commitment to understanding suicide and finding solutions.” The marquee on the website includes the names of 16982 people whose lives are acknowledged. Their names scroll on the screen 24 hours a day 7 days a week 52 weeks a year.” [www.suicidememorialwall.com](http://www.suicidememorialwall.com).

Photos of loved ones who died by suicide are included on the website in remembrance. [www.facesofsuicide.com](http://www.facesofsuicide.com).

“Since my soulmate of 33 years, Steve, took his own life in March, 2015, I have observed that there are some common ties that bind suicide survivors. Yes, some of these ties are shared by anyone who

grieves the loss of a loved one and I am by no means trivializing their pain. We all grieve differently and in different ways for different relationships. However, in the case of suicide survivors, I believe our grief is intensified due to the stigmas associated with suicide and society’s inability to comprehend how someone can take their own life.” This is a story featured on the National Alliance of Mental Health website at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

“Now that I work at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, I realize more and more to what extent my mom died of a very real disease. That if we treated mental health more like physical health, so many suicides could be averted. That I should be able to matter-of-factly say that my mom died of suicide in the same way that another friend might say her mom

died of cancer, without worrying about making people feel uncomfortable...and not in the hushed tone that people just a few decades ago used to use for cancer, too.” [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org).

“Without a doubt, suicide survivors suffer in a variety of ways: one, because they need to mourn the loss of someone who has died; two, because they have experienced a sudden, typically unexpected traumatic death; and three, because they are often shunned by a society unwilling to enter into the pain of their grief.” [www.survivorsofsuicide.com](http://www.survivorsofsuicide.com).

### Resources

“After a Suicide” is a portal linking people who are grieving after a death by suicide to an online directory of resources and information to help them cope with their loss. The American Associa-

tion of Suicidology (AAS) offers a variety of resources and programs to survivors in an attempt to lessen pain as they travel their special path of grief. [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org).

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Suicide Prevention and Postvention Program has cared for thousands of survivors of military suicide loss. [www.taps.org/suicideloss](http://www.taps.org/suicideloss).

The suicide of a child of any age presents unique circumstances that can intensify and prolong the mourning process for parents, family members and friends. [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).

“If you have lost a loved one to suicide, you are not alone.” Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Loss survivors, please reach out for help.

**MELISSA MARTIN, Ph.D.**, is an author, columnist, educator, and therapist. She lives in Ohio. [www.melissamartinchildreauthor.com](http://www.melissamartinchildreauthor.com).

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

### New Stadium Bill Approved by Governor

Governor David Ige signed into law a bill that will dramatically revitalize Aloha Stadium by rethinking its use, management and the experience being provided for residents and visitors.

The stadium has been in

dire need of significant repair and maintenance for many years and the stadium parcel has been dramatically underutilized for decades. Replacing the existing facility and developing around it will provide recreational, educational and commercial areas where

the public can meet, shop and enjoy great entertainment, according to Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson (Moanalua, Red Hill, Foster Village, ‘Aiea, Fort Shafter, Moanalua Gardens, Āliamanu, Lower Pearlridge).

HB1586 HD1 SD2 CD1, now Act 268, establishes the Stadium Development District comprising all state land under the Stadium Authority’s jurisdiction. The bill authorizes the Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) to facilitate the development of all

state property within the District. The bill appropriates \$20 million in general funds to develop the district for public use and authorizes the issuance of up to \$180 million in revenue bonds and \$150 million in general obligation bonds to build a new stadium.

“This is a momentous day for our community and the State. The creation of the Stadium Development District will showcase an innovative model for more cost-effective public infrastructure through

public-private partnerships, will create economic growth, and will literally help to build additional community in a region that has long borne the cost of hosting much of Hawaii’s public infrastructure,” said Rep. Johanson. “The development of additional community on the stadium parcel will help to link existing neighborhoods and communities, the Pearl Harbor Historic sites, and the rail in a more seamless and natural way. This day is about a renaissance of our Aiea-Stadium community.”

### Public Invited to Meeting on Bacteria Study of Kauai Watersheds

The Hawai‘i Department of Health (DOH) is inviting the public to a community meeting to discuss its recent quality study showing that high bacteria counts historically observed in the Māhā‘ulepū and Waikomo watersheds on Kaua‘i are not associated with human waste.

The community meeting is on Wednesday, July 24, from

4 – 6 p.m. at the Kaua‘i District Health Office (3040 Umi Street, Lihue, HI 96766).

Representatives from DOH’s Clean Water Branch will be available in person to explain how they conclusively determined that human waste is not the cause of bacterial contamination in the water tested.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to hear from

and ask questions of one of the study’s principal investigators, Dr. Eric Dubinsky, from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab), who will be joining DOH by video teleconference. The Berkeley Lab was contracted by DOH to lead the survey effort in the Māhā‘ulepū and Waikomo watersheds and implement the use of PhyloChip, an innovative microbial source tracking tool.

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CANDID PERSPECTIVES

# Our Filipino Stories from the Heart



By Emil Guillermo

I'm in Washington, DC for the Capital Fringe where the main draw is the monologist Mike Daisey's 18-show "A People's History," derived from bits of Howard Zinn's book, plus Daisey's personal analysis. I am here performing at the festival too, July 20-28th. More about my show in a bit.

Right now, Daisey is the king of the monologue/solo performance form, and to see Daisey is to experience quite a tour-de-force combination of story-telling and truth-telling.

Daisey also exposes the

white-ish nature of the American theater crowd. (For the show I was attending, it was perhaps 80 percent white, and older, ages 50 plus). So much for diversity.

But because of that, when Daisey chides the audience for its white orientation, and the role they've all played in America's racist/sexist past, or when he mocks his own white privilege, it's not as discomfiting nor as shocking as it should be.

It's actually a bit comfoting, like liberals entertaining each other with the latest "Trump as Cheeto" jokes. At the show I saw, it was like people coming in for their medicine as they countdown to 2020.

Daisey's a great performer, but it's a different show from mine -- a person of color telling a story about racism and marginalization

in America from the highest levels of society

I talk about my experiences at Harvard and at NPR.

The show is called "Emil Amok: All Pucked Up."

It's not about hockey.

These day's people like to talk about the affect of the movie "Crazy Rich Asians" and how we're seeing more Asians cast in show biz roles.

But my show isn't a rom-com.

There's comedy, sure, but only because the pain has been great.

It's mostly about the American history in my own life that no one knows about. The real Filipinos in loin cloths and spears brought to America in human zoos to sell colonization; My colonized father coming among 30,000 in the 1920s from the Philippines to the U.S. only to find what I call "Fil-

ipinophobia," the irrational fear of Filipinos taking jobs and white women; The anti-intermarriage and self-deportation laws invoked to prevent the "peaceful penetration of another race."

Was being the son of that colonized immigrant the reason I received a full scholarship to Harvard? Was it ultimately a kind of reparation?

I explore my life in a way you don't really see too often. Most wouldn't want to make one vulnerable in public about the truth of your race experiences. For art? To make the race conversation real? Why bother? You lived it and have scars to prove it. Why not just shut up and heal?

Or is that "heel"?

This is the reason why I've been inspired by the likes of Daisey, and before him Spalding Gray.

It's time for people of col-

or to tell our unique diversity stories. Old and young. We can learn from them all. And everyone else can learn from us about our little known American history.

I remember asking the admissions officer about whether I was an affirmative action admit. I didn't care about any stigma or mismatch. But I didn't have the best grades or the highest test scores.

The admissions officer told me affirmative action wasn't an issue. And that I had overcome a lot. My father's experience defined me.

In my show, the story of my Ilocano father is my own.

I hope to bring it to Hawaii soon!

EMIL GUILLERMO is a veteran journalist and commentator. He was a member of the Honolulu Advertiser editorial board. Listen to him on Apple Podcasts. Twitter @emilamok.

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

## Real Property Tax Credit Available to Qualified Income Homeowners for 2020

A real property tax credit is available to property owners who meet certain income and other eligibility requirements, announced Honolulu's City Treasury Division. This tax credit will be applied to next year's taxes. An annual filing is required to obtain this credit.

Applicants who qualify are entitled to a tax credit equal to the amount of taxes owed for the current tax year that exceed three percent of the titleholders' combined gross income.

The eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Homeowner must have a home exemption in effect at the time of application and for the subsequent tax year.
- Titleholders do not own any other property, including outside of O'ahu.
- The combined income of all titleholders cannot exceed \$60,000.

Applications have been available starting on July 1 at the following locations:

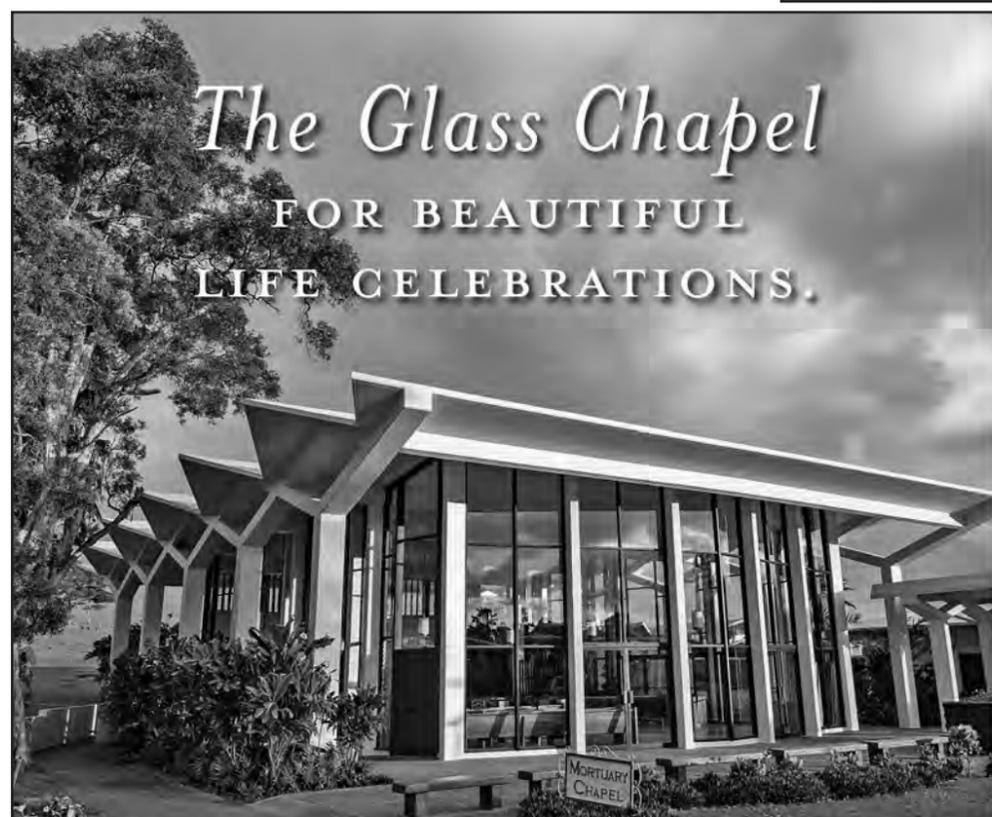
- All Satellite City Halls on O'ahu.
  - Treasury Division at 530 South King St., Room 115, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813.
  - Tax Relief Section at 715 South King St., Room 505, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813.
- An informational brochure

about the tax credit is available online: [http://www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/bfs/treasury\\_docs/2020\\_Tax\\_Credit\\_Information\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/bfs/treasury_docs/2020_Tax_Credit_Information_Brochure.pdf)

The application for the tax credit is also available online: [http://www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/bfs/treasury\\_docs/2020\\_Tax\\_credit\\_application\\_Fillable.pdf](http://www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/bfs/treasury_docs/2020_Tax_credit_application_Fillable.pdf)

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AS I SEE IT



By Elpidio R. Estioko

# New Law Covers OFWs, Ensures Their Welfare Upon Retirement - Duque

based OFWs: provided that they are not over 60 years of age.” The new law was signed by President Duterte on February 7, 2019.



there is sadness, joy.”

He said that his brother can very well defend himself, but in a similar case against his brother in the plunder complaint filed against the Health Chief by parents of children suspected to have been victims of the Dengvaxia vaccine, he was himself implicated and charged for commenting on the conflict of interest case against his brother. Just like his brother, he is in paper, listed as a member of the Board of the University their parents/family founded and that’s what makes them liable allegedly of the conflict of interest issue.

**S**ocial Security System (SSS) Commissioner Dr. Gonzalo Duque, during his official visit here in the Bay Area, said the new law, RA 11199, will ensure the welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) upon their retirement and balances loopholes on retirement issues.

So, under the new law, sea-based OFWs will be considered as regular employed members of SSS. Their contributions will be collected and remitted to SSS by their manning agencies, which are agents of their principals and are considered as the employers of the sea-based OFWs. This will enable the government to extend better social security protection to Filipinos abroad.

Duque just came from New York where he inaugurated the new SSS branch office in the region to ensure the smooth implementation of the new law affecting OFWs. SSS is strengthening their offices abroad in order to implement smoothly the new law. From the Bay Area, he will proceed to Southern California.

Under the new law, it also empowers the commission to raise benefits, condone penalties, and rationalize investments, among others. When asked when the second P1, 000.00 additional pension be released, he said that the next P1, 000 additional pension will still be determined as soon as the new law stabilizes. In fact, Duque said there was a little flaw in the first P1, 000 increase but was already addressed when their automation program of services took effect.

The new SSS law will ensure that the millions of OFWs will have a decent nest egg when they retire,” said Sen. Richard J. Gordon, chairman of the Committee on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises.

When asked, Duque said the P2, 000 pension increase did not affect the fund life because these were all con-

RA 11199 provides that “coverage in the SSS shall be compulsory upon all sea-

sidered when they announced the increase. It’s just a matter of time and the fund will not be depleted and will not affect members who are retiring anytime. They have enough funds to cover their retirements.

As to other issues, Duque thought we need to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. He brought this out when the issue of conflict of interest case with his brother Dr. Salvador Duque, Secretary of Health, was touched as leveled by Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Following the words of St. Francis of Assisi sowing love in times of distrust, SSS Commissioner Duque, in his closing statement said, “Let’s not be part of the problem, let’s be part of the solution!”

I think he used St. Francis’ practice of a life of peace and love in his closing statement during the mini-press conference held last Friday at the house of former Milpitas Mayor Jose Esteves, because he would like to emulate his life practices during this time of distrust and hate in our society. St. Francis was a man of peace, a man of poverty, and a man who loved and protected

creation, which to him, would be good example in running our affairs in society as we look at ourselves to “walk our talk” in whatever we do, especially in running the affairs of the government.

“If we take a moment to look at our life and ask our self if we are truly practicing our spirituality, many of us will find that we fall short. When in doubt however, it might help to look at the life of one who has succeeded in walking the talk. From the life of Saint Francis, we can learn where to make a few adjustments to truly become more spiritual, particularly in the forms of love (kindness) and humility (simplicity)—two of the primary manifestations of really walking the talk,” according to an article about the life of St. Francis.

Duque is with the idea that the Prayer of Saint Francis should prevail in our lives, and also in our society: “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where

Gonzalo was implicated and was likewise charged with plunder at the Office of the Ombudsman due to his reactions/comments invoking the “Arias doctrine”, a response against Dr. Persida V. Rueda-Acosta, Chief, Public Attorney’s Office (PAO) allegations filed by parents of victims of Dengvaxia vaccine.

“Sorry I have to react to that... but that is already water under the bridge,” said Duque addressing his comments to Lacson and all concerned. “I am willing to reconcile with Sen. Lacson and be part of the solution, not the problem and work with him with extra mile,” Duque said.

So, can we be part of the solution, not the problem?

ELPIDIO R. ESTIOKO was a veteran journalist in the Philippines and an award-winning journalist here in the US. For feedbacks, comments... please email the author at [estiokoelpidio@gmail.com](mailto:estiokoelpidio@gmail.com).

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NEWS FEATURE

# HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY ESSAY CONTEST A SUCCESS

By Mark Lester Sanchez

**A**

rthur Miller was no jester when he said that “a good newspaper is a nation talking to itself.” It is no secret then that the Filipino Chronicle, an ethnic newspaper in Hawaii, is an imperative institution in the deliberation of news to its readers. For 25 years, the HFC has been keeping Filipino-Americans front and center on important events unfolding around them.

Cesar Fronda, the winner of our 25th Anniversary Essay Writing Contest, highlights the newspaper’s importance and influence in the Hawaii islands. He will receive a \$250 grand prize,

Frona has lived on the island for 15 years, working for Hawaii’s Department of Education as a staff at Farrington High School. He also serves as a court interpreter and is the director and president in the board of the Association of Apartment Owners SU CASA. Retiring this year, he hopes to spend more time with family and travel to beautiful places in the Philippines and Asia.

Frona says “[the newspaper’s] existence in the past

25 years, from its initial publication, has proven the importance of its role as a medium to record, educate, discuss, and disseminate advocacies and concerns common and critical to the Fil-Am community.”

He cites instances where the paper made consequential contributions: its lead role in the promotion of the very first Fil-Am governor, Ben Cayetano; and its untiring support and publicity of Fil-Am events on the island, such as the annual Filipino Fiesta.

But it is not all political and cultural, as Armi Gail Camilon relates.

Camilon is another entrant in the HFC essay contest who is the consolation prize winner. Her essay will be published in the next issue.

An Oahu small business owner, she tells about the paper’s influence in the social and entrepreneurial realms on the islands.

She says that the paper “helps me seek out information on local events or other services offered by other small businesses, as I also enjoy being able to patronize the same.” Not only that, she says, “this also allows others to support Filipino-based organizations through their attendance, monetary offerings

and community service.”

When asked why should the paper continue to be read in the future, both Fronda

and Camilon agree that not only it will keep the spirit of print media alive, as more and more prints are digitalized, it

will also enhance and enrich the Fil-Am experience and build more connections all throughout the islands.

WINNING ESSAY

## Filipino Chronicle’s Twenty Five Years of Service to the Fil-Am Community *By Cesar Fronda*

In my almost two decades of residency in the Aloha State, since I arrived from the Philippines, I have experienced and witnessed the impact and relevance of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle to almost 300,000 Fil-Ams in Hawaii.

Its existence in the past 25 years, from its initial publication, has proven the importance of its role as a medium to record, educate, discuss, and disseminate advocacies and concerns common and critical to the Fil-Am community.

For 25 years, it has fulfilled its mission to reach out, unify and empower Fil-Ams in Hawaii. Today, the Filipino Chronicle has gained and fortified its place as an institution collaborating with others in pursuit of the enhancement of the lives of the Fil-Am community in the state.

Looking back, the Filipino Chronicle has indeed made its marks to the history and lives of the Fil-Am community in Hawaii. It’s publisher, editors, columnists, and writers covered arrays of topics and issues addressing the concerns of the community. Legal issues, including those related to immigration, are well discussed by luminary lawyer columnists.

Political issues both local and national are tackled by respected leaders and politicians, especially those with access to the halls of US Congress and the White House. Social and educational advocacies and concerns are well taken up by social scientists and educators of high caliber.

Its staff writers have efficiently recorded and written significant events in the community for posterity, to pass on to the next generation of Fil-Ams.

Culture, tradition, values, and arts are narrated, discussed, and documented, to educate and inculcate among Fil-Ams both local and immigrants the rich indigenous history of their forefathers who came way ahead of them to Hawaii; significant people and events that impact and influence the Fil-Am community are featured; and past and current important events in the home country (the Philippines is also covered to keep Fil-Ams in Hawaii in constant link with the rest of Filipinos thousands of miles away).

The Filipino Chronicle has done and gone far in performing excellently what it has envisioned and expected to accomplish. To emphasize along this dimension, let me mention three important events where the newspaper played a substantial role to make a difference in the islands: 1) Nobody will contest its contribution in the promotion of the first Fil-Am governor in the nation. When Ben Cayetano launched his jour-

ney for governorship in Hawaii, the Filipino Chronicle was busy reaching out to Fil-Am voters; 2) From the day of planning to the realization of the

Filipino Community Center, the newspaper did not waver in its support. It promoted and participated in raising funds for groups and institutions to meet their financial goal and commitment. It motivated and encouraged all Fil-Ams to contribute whatever they can afford into building the Center; and 3) the Filipino Chronicle’s continued promotion of the Annual Filipino Fiesta—this is a yearly event that capsulizes the totality of Fil-Am cultures, traditions and arts. Various regions and ethnic groups in the Philippines are well represented by Fil-Am residents, and is considered the most fruitful and biggest Fil-Am event in Hawaii, well attended by the community. The Filipino Chronicle disseminates information of this annual event to ensure its success.

Though, the Filipino Chronicle has existed for 25 years, a huge question and challenge is hanging: Will the Filipino Chronicle able to continue serving in the next 25 years? Can it sustain to serve the Fil-Am community for another quarter of a century? Despite the advance of technology in digital media that greatly affects and negates publication of newspapers and other print media, without any reservation and doubt, I am optimistic the Filipino Chronicle will exist and continue to serve with renewed vigor and energy the Fil-Am community in Hawaii.

There are two factors, however, that will make its continuous existence for another 25 years to happen. First and foremost is the all-out support and patronage of Fil-Am community and its benefactors. Equally important also is the sacrifice and unconditional commitment of its publisher to continue publishing despite the burden and difficulty of sustaining the publication.

Personally, this I would state as a manifestation of my support: Move further on Filipino Chronicle! Count me in for the next 25 years. The Fil-Am community needs you. And I would also like to encourage other Fil-Ams to do the same.



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## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

## A NEW BREED OF LEADERS

By Seneca Moraleda-Puguan

**M**etro Manila has gained a reputation of being a filthy and polluted city where traffic is just inconceivably terrible and pickpockets and thieves abound. But despite this, I love this metropolitan city. It's where I spent my college years. It's where I met my husband. It's where I had my first job. It's where I gained covenant relationships that I keep until today and most probably forever.

Living in South Korea, I have seen a huge contrast between Seoul and Metro Manila. The gap is incredibly huge that wishing Manila could be like Seoul will likely remain a wishful thinking. But there's no harm in wishing and hoping that someday, Metro Manila will have clean streets where cars are moving fast (Seoul experiences terrible but tolerable traffic) and where it's safe to use your phone and bring valuable belongings without the fear of being a hold-up or theft victim, right?

Despite this seeming-

ly impossible dream, I find myself many times speaking blessings and prayers upon the Philippines, upon its cities, upon its leaders, upon Metro Manila where the seat of government lies. Even if so many people have already resigned to the fact that Manila is one of the worst places to live in, I try not to give in.

Yes, the Philippines can be disappointing at times, in fact many times, but we can have hope and hope does not disappoint.

With the election of a new breed of leaders, I see a glimmer of hope, a silver lining that one day, big and good things can happen to my beloved country. In the past few days, social media is being bombarded by news of areas in Manila that used to be cluttered now being transformed, some streets that used to be a headache for motorists now passable, garbage problem being addressed, and illegal activities being cracked down. So many amazing reports are brightening our day. Finally, we now have leaders who are standing against corruption,



Newly-elected Metro Manila Mayors (L-R): San Juan City Mayor Francis Zamora, Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno and Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto.

saying no to greed and overcoming selfish ambitions. We now have government officials who have the best intentions for the Filipino people. The best thing about is it that they are young and passionate, decisive and righteous. Though few, they can make a difference—seemingly small but has great impact on the whole nation and the next generation.

I am no fan of politicians. I really abhor traditional leaders who use power for self-gain. We have lots of them. We tolerated them, we still do. We chose to turn a blind eye to popular political giants just because they had power and we can do nothing. And we just accept corruption as a norm.

Now is the time for change. It's time to topple down walls of unrighteousness and corruption in our country.

I am not expecting change to happen overnight but with the small breakthroughs happening, we will get there. One city at a time. One municipality at a time. One region at a time. One wise decision at a time. One prayer at a time. One day at a time.

But we must remember that change is not dependent on our leaders alone. As citizens, we must do our part. We must support these rising new breed of leaders. A simple obedience to the rules and laws being implemented by the government makes a lot of difference. Having the discipline to obey traffic rules and throwing litter in garbage bins and not just anywhere or not smoking in non-smoking areas will contribute to change. And for those of us who are overseas, let's continue to have a quiet

confidence and hope especially in the midst of disheartening things happening in our country. Unceasingly praying for our country definitely has the power to move the heaven. In fact, our prayers are already being answered.

I am looking forward to that day when we bring our children home to the Philippines and we can boast to them how beautiful our country is. I am hopeful that one day, we can roam around Manila without having to fear for their safety, where they can play freely and they can breathe fresh air. With optimism, I declare that Filipinos will no longer want to leave and find greener pastures somewhere else because there will be countless opportunities to provide for their families in our nation. I am expectant that the Philippines, a byword for poverty and corruption, will become an economic power in Asia. I believe that we can have a chance to redeem our reputation and have a shot as one of the best places in the world to live in. Impossible as it may seem, but you see, we can put our hope in a God who does not disappoint. We can get there. We will get there. With a fresh breed of leaders rising, the future is bright.

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

## Two-year Certification Renewal of Medical Cannabis Is Now Available

**T**he Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) announced that qualifying patients can now renew their medical cannabis certification cards for up to two years.

Through the online electronic registration system, current medical cannabis cardholders can submit their two-year renewal applications if they have a qualifying debilitating med-

ical condition that is chronic in nature and verified by their physician or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN).

Registered patients can submit their renewal application online as early as 60 days before their registration cards

must state the patient's condition is chronic in nature, and the certifying physician or APRN agrees that a two-year renewal is in the patient's best interest.

"We strongly advise all of Hawai'i's medical cannabis patients who may be eligible for and would like to request a two-year renewal to consult with their certifying medical provider to ensure they support a two-year term before submitting an application. The registration fees are non-refundable regardless of the renewal outcome," said Tami Whitney of the department's Medical Cannabis Registry Program. "All patients that choose to see a new certifying medical provider will be eligible for a one-year registration and the following year may be eligible



for a two-year renewal."

Types of registration options for medical cannabis certification and associated costs in Hawai'i are as follows:

\*One-year registration or renewal for in-state patients: \$38.50; Two-year renewal for in-state patients: \$77.00; Sixty-day registration for out-of-state patients: \$49.50 per registration (allowed twice per calendar year)

Hawai'i residents with medical cannabis cards that submit renewal applications after July 18, 2019 will have the two-year renewal option.



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LEGAL NOTES



By Atty. Reuben S. Seguritan

# Closing of USCIS International Offices Could Create Backlog

**U**.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will close all of its international field offices by March 10, 2020. It has not given a definite timeline as to which offices will close on which date. But it has closed the USCIS Ciudad Juarez Field Office in Mexico last June 30 and the Manila Field Office in the Philippines last July 5. It was not clear why the Manila and Ciudad Juarez offices were the first to go.

US officials have stated that the closure of the USCIS international field offices will save the government millions of dollars. But critics are concerned that the move will create backlog of cases.

Ciudad Juarez stopped accepting applications and petitions on May 30, 2019. The USCIS Manila field office stopped accepting petitions and applications on May 31, 2019. Examples of these applications and petitions are Form I-130 Peti-

tion for Alien Relative, Form I-131 Application for Travel Document, and Form N-400, Application for Naturalization (for military personnel and staff abroad).

For I-130 Petitions, the USCIS international offices were important because they processed two types of I-130 petitions. The first are the petitions filed by US citizens who were residents of a country in which a USCIS international office was located. The US citizen could file the I-130 petition with the USCIS international office in the country where he resides and not have to submit the application in the United States. Second, if there were no USCIS international offices where the US citizen resided, the US citizen may file the I-130 petition directly with a US Embassy or Consulate if there is evidence of exceptional circumstances and provided that the USCIS international field office determined that the US Embassy or consulate may accept and adjudicate the case. These services were greatly utilized by US citizens who adopted orphans and needed to bring them to America and American military members

and their families to enter the US.

The international offices were also important because they played a vital role in processing refugee status applications and reuniting families in the US. However, due to the closure of the USCIS international field offices, the refugee status applications have been greatly curtailed and families are finding it very difficult to be reunited in America. Furthermore, it is now very difficult to keep families together. The US citizens residing in the Philippines and Mexico must now submit their applications and petitions to the USCIS Chicago Lockbox, or under exceptional circumstances with a US Embassy or consulate because of the closures of the international offices.

The USCIS and Department of State have not given rules or announced a new procedure on how immigration-related applications, petitions, and forms will be

submitted, handled and processed with a US Embassy or consulate under exceptional circumstances because of the closure of the USCIS international field office in a particular country. USCIS and the Department of State have announced that they will ensure that the closures of the international field offices would not negatively impact services for applicants and that the work will be conducted electronically or done by consular staff. As for the exceptional circumstances cases, they will determine whether a case involves exceptional circumstances and, if so, will permit overseas adjudication.

It is important to note that the USCIS and the Department of State have not explained or given a set of rules for current filing procedures or timeframes for all countries in the future because of the closure of all USCIS international field offices.

Critics of the closures

of all of the USCIS international field offices have been vocal of their opposition to the plan. Sarah Pierce, a policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, argued the plan will likely exacerbate a processing bottleneck of refugee applications that has led to fewer opportunities for people to seek asylum in the US. She noted the Trump administration slashed the ceiling on the number of allowable refugees from 45,000 in fiscal year 2018 to 30,000 in 2019 due to “a massive backlog of outstanding asylum cases.” Furthermore, petitioners and applicants may experience delays due to the closure of the USCIS international field offices. Clearly, the closure of the international offices will greatly harm US citizens, immigrants and those seeking refuge in the United States.

.....  
**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](http://www.seguritan.com)





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ASK A DOCTOR

# DRY EYE DISEASE

By Steven Rhee, D.O.



**W**hat can be done to treat dry eyes?

**A:** Ocular dryness, or dry eye, can be uncomfortable and even damage your eyes. One of the most common reasons people visit their eye care professional is because of dry eyes. Dry eye disease is often under-diagnosed and common dry eye symptoms can be similar to

symptoms of eye allergies. Dry eye disease can complicate daily activities and lead to ulcers, scarring of the cornea, and even vision loss if left untreated.

There are two common forms of dry eye disease: aqueous deficiency and evaporation-related dry eye disease problems including damage to the cornea and sight-related issues.

Symptoms of dry eye disease include itchiness, burning, dryness, soreness, irrita-

tion, redness, grittiness, and eye fatigue. These symptoms may be accompanied by difficulty performing visual tasks such as reading; watching TV and driving; inability to wear contact lenses; constant use of

eye drops; trouble being out in the sun; and symptoms that worsen late in the day.

There are a variety of treatment options for dry eye disease. The first important step is diagnosis. A comprehensive eye exam is needed with tests to measure the volume of your tears and the quality of your tears. If you suffer from occasional or mild dry eye symptoms, regular use of over-the-counter lubricating eyedrops should be sufficient treatment.

Treatments for more serious cases of dry eye can range from medications taken orally or through eyedrops to treat

the underlying issues causing your dry eye, which can be inflammation of the eyelids or cornea. There are also treatment options that utilize thermal pulsation with localized heat therapy and gentle pressure that's applied to the eyelids to help unclog meibomian oil glands and improve tear quality.

If you're experiencing symptoms of dry eye disease, schedule an appointment with your eye care professional to learn about your options.

**STEVEN RHEE, D.O.,** is a board-certified ophthalmologist and Medical Director at Hawaiian Eye Center.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

## Roach Says Pacquiao Will Fight Smart

By Joaquin Henson  
Wednesday, July 17, 2019

**M**ANILA, Philippines — Freddie Roach isn't worried about Manny Pacquiao losing focus because of Keith Thurman's trash talking, assuring that the Filipino fighting senator will fight smart and stick with the game plan to win their WBA welterweight unification title duel at the MGM Grand Garden

Arena in Las Vegas on Saturday night (Sunday morning, Manila time).

"Manny's not happy about it," said Roach, referring to Thurman's boast of crucifying Pacquiao and sending him into retirement. "But Manny's not like one of those guys who carry their anger over to a fight. He'll fight a smart fight and stick with the game plan we set out to win this fight."

Roach said Thurman is a dangerous opponent but Pacquiao has the speed and style to take care of business. "Thurman has power in his left hand and overhand right," he said. "I just don't think he is as much as he was at one time." The undefeated American boasts a record of 29-0, with 22 KOs, but five of his last six outings went the distance. Thurman, 30, was pushed to the limit in his last



three fights since 2016, beating split decision and Josesito Lopez by a majority decision in that order. (www.philstar.com)

(Solution to Crossword No. 7 | July 6, 2019)

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**OHANA MEDICAL MISSION** | August 1 - 13, 2019 | Medical mission to 6 major areas of Cebu and Davao | For more information, contact JP Orias at 888-674-7624, Fax:888-391-7624 or email: [info@ohanamedicalmissions.org](mailto:info@ohanamedicalmissions.org)

**FILIPINO NURSES ORGANIZATION OF HAWAII (FNOH) EXCELLENCE IN NURSING AWARDS** | August 10, 2019; 6:00 PM | Hilton Hawaiian Village Resorts Coral

Ballroom I For more details call: Lolita Echaz Ching at 387-7635, Luanne Long at 754-0594

**PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN HAWAII (PWAH) PRESENTS FILIPINIANA BALL 2019** | August 30, 2019; 6:00 PM | Hibiscus Ballroom, Ala Moana Hotel | Call details call: Letty Saban: 255-9429, Lina Mercado: 382-7751, Carlota Ader: 797 4381, Mimi Gozar: 312-0778

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**MAINLAND NEWS**

**House Approves Case Amendments in Passage of Defense Bill**

WASHINGTON, D.C.- The full U.S. House has approved three floor amendments by U.S. Congressman Ed Case (Hawaii – District 1) in its passage of H.R. 2500, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020.



The NDAA is the federal government's annual approval of overall defense spending. This year's NDAA as approved by the House authorizes a total of \$733 billion for the upcoming fiscal year and reflects priorities in defending our country, protecting our interests abroad and supporting our troops and their families.

Case's first amendment calls on the U.S. Defense Department to review civilian aircraft flights over military installations and report on any regulatory changes required to ensure optimal operations and security.

"Like many others, I have personally witnessed various aircraft, especially tour helicopters, overfly our military installations regularly. Most acute has been Pearl Harbor, which tour helicopters regularly cross, around fifty-plus times a day, at low altitude over or near very sensitive areas such as the SEALs and submarine bases, compromising operations and security and risking lives on the ground.

The NDAA includes two addi-

tional amendments authored by Case.

- A report from the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State to Congress on the status of security cooperation and assistance with Pacific Island countries and the feasibility of expanding such cooperation and assistance to help combat transnational crime, fight illegal fishing, and counter Chinese military actions in the Indo-Pacific.
- A classified report from the Defense Intelligence Agency on foreign militaries operating or expressing military interest in Pacific Island countries. The Pacific Island countries, most of which have long histories with the United States dating back to World War II and earlier, are under increasing pressures from China.

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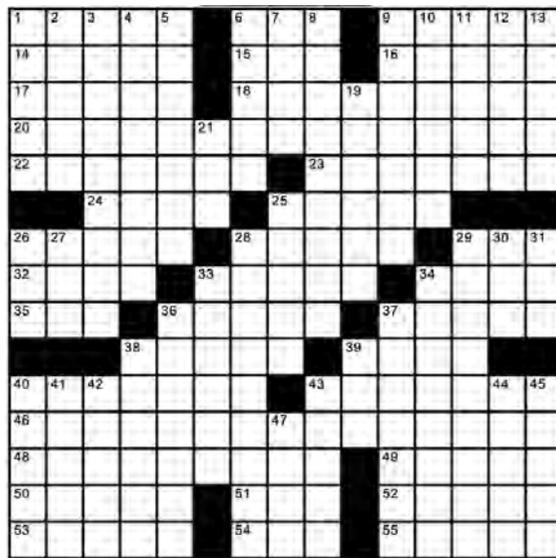
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- Isang uri ng halamang gumagapang
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- Impormahan
- Bayaan
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- Alambike
- Mumo
- Banoy
- Pitik o palis ng mga daliri
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