

HAWAII

FILIPINO CHRONICLE

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◆ JANUARY 18, 2020 ◆

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EDITORIAL

Much Success to OMM on their Upcoming Medical Mission to the Philippines

Mainstream news is saturated with conflict, habitual antagonism, that it's refreshing at times to disperse the heavy, dark clouds with news that inspires and captures the best in humanity. One Hawaii-based organization doing exemplary work uplifting indigent communities and deserving of media attention is the Ohana Medical Mission, Inc. (OMM). The OMM makes at least one medical mission trip a year to provide underserved communities with free medical care, dental care and surgical services in the Philippines.

Besides their labor of love, OMM donates hundreds of thousands worth of medicines, medical equipment, even essentials like food to mostly rural communities in need. OMM is the missionary arm of the Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii. In the past, some of their well-known humanitarian missions included site visits to areas devastated by typhoon Yolanda and a mission to Payatas, the dumpsite district of Metro Manila.

Once again OMM volunteers will embark on another medical mission to the Philippines this February. Their last mission trip was as recent as August of last year when volunteers served communities in Cebu and Davao Philippines. The Feb. 2020 mission will include visits to Ilocos Norte (Pasuquin, Dadaeman, Sarrat, Banna) and Ilocos Sur (Cabugao, Cuantacla, Sinait, San Esteban). They will also visit Bagong Silang in Manila.

Volunteers express various reasons for going on OMM missions. Some doctors and nurses find it fulfilling to offer their valuable talents to the poor, outside of traditional medical insurance-based settings, to people who would not be able to afford or receive medical care if not for their efforts. Lay volunteers talk about giving back to communities and the country they left. Many lay volunteers with OMM are originally from the Philippines; some of them from the depressed communities OMM serves and are very familiar with the medical demands not being met.

Dr. Russell Angelo Nogot, who will be a volunteer on this upcoming mission, said "I was inspired by the first mission I had with OMM in 2019. I vividly remember feeling exhaustion but also had a sense of deep fulfillment for being able to share who I am as a physician and being able to extend my years of learning and training to help my fellow countrymen. I am one of the many volunteers, who despite our differences, were able to work together to bring unparalleled service to those who need it."

Herminia Iloreta Gaspar, RN,BSN, will be volunteering with OMM for a first time. She said "I am so grateful that the opportunity is open for me and husband to help and support the mission group now that I am retired. This will be good to make use of our time and expertise to make a difference in the lives of people in need. I am also joining because OMM visits and does mission work to other places of Ilocos Norte and Sur like our home town of Sinait." Gaspar has done other missions to the Philippines with the Aloha Medical Mission and Simata Medical Mission in Greater Kansas City.

Serving Indigent and Rural Communities

The Philippines has a universal health coverage system called PhilHealth in which the government provides health insurance for all Philippine nationals. There are both private the public hospitals and clinics. Most of them are mostly located in major population hubs. The further out from these hubs, the quality of care becomes increasingly downgraded to where medical facilities in rural areas resemble less like clinics and more like medical stations that simply do intakes and referrals to larger medical facilities miles away

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Ot was only several months ago late last year that the Ohana Medical Mission, Inc. (OMM) went on a medical mission trip to Cebu and Davao Philippines. We are pleased to say that the Hawaii-based charitable organization will embark on another medical mission to the Philippines this February. This time they'll offer their much needed free medical services to Bagong Silang in Manila, and to the country's twin northern provinces of Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur, specifically to the towns of Pasuquin, Dadaeman, Sarrat, Banna in Ilocos Norte and Cabugao, Cuantacla, Sinait, San Esteban in Ilocos Sur.

OMM executive director JP Orias shares with associate editor Edwin Quinabo some of the details of the trip in our cover story. Also, several OMM volunteers share their personal experiences of past missions -- the overwhelming sense of fulfillment they have, and the valuable work they do. Touching someone's life by providing medical services he or she would otherwise not be able to get is something most volunteers say they will never forget. OMM is all about hope, service, and charity. Most people are unaware of the arduous work it takes to prepare for a mission, starting with hours upon hours of planning logistics and coordinating with both local Hawaii organizations and the local communities they visit. Then it culminates with the doctor-patient care. We wish OMM and their volunteers another successful trip.

Also in this issue, we have an article from HFC contributor Renelaine Bontol Pfister who shares her experience of becoming a recent U.S. citizen. As many immigrants will tell you, becoming a U.S. citizen -- having met all the requirements finally -- is one of the most satisfying and treasured moments in their lifetime. Least to say, Renelaine is thrilled and optimistic for 2020 and beyond. Congratulations Renelaine.

Speaking of the new year, HFC columnist Seneca Moraleda-Puguan submits a thoughtful article on some negative thinking we can let go of and what we can welcome in 2020, like leaving behind apathy for compassion, discontentment for gratitude. Sometimes burdening weight is best left in the past so that we can live more fully in the present.

HFC columnist Elpidio Estioko writes about what to expect in the U.S. Senate impeachment trial of President Donald Trump, the process and possible arguments to be presented. It's truly a historic moment, even as the country wades through the current crisis with Iran -- the topic of one of this issue's editorial. HFC columnist Emil Guillermo presents his take on Trump's latest move that is escalating a possible full-conflict with Iran, in a provocative way that's signature Emil.

In Hawaii news, the Hawaii State Legislature opened on Jan. 15. We've provided some important tips for the session. We hope our community will actively participate in advocating for issues important to them. That's the way a healthy democracy works. Be sure to read other news in our mainland and Philippine news sections.

Lastly, thinking of expanding your customer base this new year? One of the best ways to reach Hawaii's Filipino community is by advertising in the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle. Remember HFC is available at outlets and online so your advertisements will have maximum exposure. Call our office and let an account executive assist you with your marketing needs.

Thank you all for your support. Until next issue, warmest *Aloha* and *Mabuhay!*

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

that the poor cannot afford. Rural medical facilities are basic, rudimentary, and understaffed.

This is where OMM comes in to provide temporary free medical care. It's a windfall and blessing as thousands of people line up for hours at public high school gymnasiums or other public facilities to see OMM's medical team.



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EDITORIALS

A Full-blown War With Iran Must Be Avoided

The U.S. airstrike that killed Qassem Soleimani, head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Quds Force was a sharp departure from President Donald Trump's campaign promise to get the U.S. out of the Middle East. Instead, the airstrike escalated tensions with Iran to what could be an even more costly and devastating war than the decades old Iraq-Syrian military campaigns – and a possible war that Americans want to avoid.

The latest news is that the U.S. military will send about 3,500 additional soldiers to the Middle East following the killing of Iranian Gen. Soleimani. This is in addition to 14,000 US personnel who have been deployed to the region since last May. And who knows how many more U.S. soldiers will be sent should Iran retaliate Soleimani's assassination.

The President's attack was a gamble, reckless, even illegal foreign policy. Increased tensions reignited between the two countries when Trump decided to abandoned what President Obama built by pulling out of the Iran nuclear deal. Severe economic sanctions resumed on Iran; and the entire international community (European allies, Russia, and China) strongly discouraged it. Now the world sees why it was a bad move.

Re-imposed sanctions pressured Iran to launch a low-intensity war and ultimately resulted in the U.S. embassy in Baghdad to be breached. That in turn, led to the U.S. airstrike that killed Soleimani.

U.S. General Robert Walsh said in a report "Our sanctions are driving Iran to lash out however they can. Our sanctions are driving Iran to lash out however they can."

General Spider Marks said "U.S. led sanctions against the Tehran regime are suffocating the Iranian economy. The Iranian leadership is feeling the heat, big time. They need to demonstrate that they can still act and exert their influence."

Now experts believe Soleimani's assassination could fuel Islamic Republic radicals to commit acts of martyrdom throughout the Middle East. This could prove extremely problematic because Iran's influence is not confined to its borders but throughout all of the Middle East, including Iraq. Is the U.S. really prepared to send troops by the tens of thousands to the entire theater of influence Iran wields in multiple countries?

Trump should know that escalation begets escalation. The world awaits to see if and how Iran will counter. Realizing this basic theory of escalation in war, President George W. Bush refrained from targeting top Iranian officials

such as Soleimani to contain conflict. Trump, either by reason of sheer ignorance or arrogance, clearly ignored this by ordering Soleimani's death, someone who is so revered in Iran and only second to the country's leader. Like Bush, President Obama also understood restraint and avoided the mistake of targeting top Iranian generals to become martyrs.

It was unclear what Trump had hoped for by pulling out of the nuclear deal. (Forcing a regime change in Iran?) It's evident this hasn't worked. What's murkier at this stage is what is Trump's backup plan besides just sending more American troops to the region?

It's hard not to think that his calculation could only lead to a downward spiral that frankly Americans are tired of – more deaths and trillions more spent.

What should be the next path to take?

As bleak the scenario is, the alternative should be to resume international diplomacy, high quality statecraft, before it's too late. Trump must also keep Congress abreast of what his administration's policy is. He should not be operating as a lone wolf

without the U.S. Congress' approval. Ultimately, Congress has the authority and power to declare war, not the president.

If Trump meant what he promised in his presidential campaign bid to get U.S. troops out of the Middle East, it's a no-brainer that even at this point, he should be willing to open dialogue with Iran. A possible area would be renegotiating a new Iran nuclear deal. Trump's latest move of introducing even greater, new economic sanctions can only exacerbate tensions.

The Defense Department said in a statement that the "decisive defensive action" or airstrike was taken "to protect U.S. personnel abroad," claiming that Soleimani "was actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members in Iraq and throughout the region."

Perhaps this is true and some kind of strong action was justified. But targeting Soleimani, what other presidents Bush and Obama avoid-

ed as calculated containment of war, wasn't a smart tactical move for Trump. But this president is known to lead unconventionally, even recklessly in other matters that led to his impeachment.

Americans should be made aware that 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. And that 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.

Experts believe an all out war with Iran would cost even more in dollars and lives considering Iran's strength and influence throughout all of the Middle East.

The path to never-ending war must stop. But this could only happen if Americans demand it. Otherwise, there will always be excuse after excuse to keep the war machine running. And to what end, at what cost? How much is enough? ■

(Much Success...from page 2)

Lend a Helping Hand

It goes without saying that OMM's goodwill missions would not be possible without corporate and individual donations. Please call 888-674-7624 or visit OMM's webpage ohanamedicalmission.org to find out how to make donations or how to become a volunteer. Or email them at info@ohanamedicalmission.org. Ohana Medical Missions Inc. is a 501-c.3 non-profit organization with EIN 27-0865868. Any donation you make is tax deductible under the statute of law.

Kudos to OMM physicians, medical and lay volunteers for their charitable undertaking. It's worth mentioning that all volunteers donating their free services also pay for their own airfare and accommodations on these missions. We wish them tremendous success on their upcoming medical mission in the Philippines.

OMM's mission statement is "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."

The last part of their statement is particularly poignant, "so that no patient is denied treatment because of financial, social, or political circumstance."

Changing the world begins by touching one life at a time. We hope our community can lend their support so that OMM can continue with their humanitarian projects. *Mabuhay OMM!* ■

TALK STORY

with Congressman Ed Case

Please come to any of my four January Talk Story community meetings throughout our First Congressional District for a personal update from me, to let me know of your own thoughts and questions, and to ask for my office's assistance with your own needs. Light refreshments served.

Tuesday, January 21, 2020
6:30PM-8:30PM • Wai'au Elementary School
98-450 Hookanike Street • Pearl City

Thursday, January 23, 2020
6:30PM-8:30PM • Kalani High School
4680 Kalaniana'ole Highway • East Honolulu

Friday, January 24, 2020
6:30PM-8:30PM • Mililani High School
95-122 Meheula Parkway • Mililani

Saturday, January 25, 2020
9:30AM-11:30AM • Keone'ula Elementary School
91-970 Kaileolea Drive • Ewa Beach

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OMM to Help Indigent Communities in the Philippines

By Edwin Quinabo

Manila is an enormous city of contrasts. There is the posh, highly sophisticated Makati district set in the heart of Metro Manila where the well-to-do live like the privileged in other global wealth centers. Contrasting that is “another” Manila -- large pockets throughout the city of some of the poorest slums where residents congregate around garbage dumps sorting through scraps for food. An estimated 35 percent of metro Manila’s population live in poorly constructed shelters and slum-like conditions.

In 1971, President Ferdinand Marcos established the district Bagong Silang as a resettlement for Filipinos from slum areas in Tondo, Manila. Its name comes from bagong silang, a Tagalog phrase meaning newborn. Since then, the place, while still poor, is known by residents to signify a “new hope” for a better way of living.

This “hope” is what the Hawaii-based charitable organization Ohana Medical Mission, Inc. plans to bring this February to residents of Bagong Silang, a place where OMM Executive Director JP Orias, says OMM visits every other year to provide free medical care.

He said, “Monies spent for this area are solicited from donors as no community in Hawaii can be linked with this place.”

Also during the OMM February 2020 trip, medical and lay volunteers will travel to the Philippines’ northernmost region to Ilocos Norte (Pasuquin, Dadaeman, Sarrat, Banna) and Ilocos Sur (Cabugao, Cuantacla, Sinit, San Esteban) – two provinces of the Philippines where tens of thousands of Hawaii Filipinos can trace their origins.

Over 60 OMM volunteers -- comprised of physicians, nurses, a pharmacist, and lay staff support – will provide free medical and free dental care, minor surgical procedures to residents on-site; and give away tens of thousands worth of prescription medicine, medical supplies, eyeglasses, and basic necessities like food.

This upcoming February mission will be OMM’s 15th medical mission. Just last year in August, OMM visited Cebu and Davao, Philippines.

Dr. Russell Angelo Nogot, who did his first mission with OMM last August, will join this year’s group. He says it’s a privilege to be able to help his ailing countrymen. “I remember on my last mission trip feeling exhausted but also had a deep sense of fulfillment for being able to share who I am as a physician and being able to extend my years of learning and training to help my fellow countrymen. I am one of the many volunteers, who despite our differences, were able to work together to bring unparalleled service to those who need it.”

Dr. Nogot says he will be helping this year with the pharmacy group and do consultations.

The Philippines is so vast with many dialects and languages that could pose a challenge for volunteers.

Dr. Nogot recalls a time when he was assigned to help in instructing a patient how to use an inhaler. “The patient was in his 70s and was more comfortable with the Visayan language. We tried using Taga-

log terms that he seemed to understand but he still could not do a return demo since he kept on blowing on the metered dose inhaler.

“One of the locals volunteered to help seeing our dilemma. She was able to translate our instruction which allowed the patient to understand how to use the medicine. This incident shows how human solidarity and altruism transcend the barriers that language seems to impose on us. I am glad to be part of these missions and I hope I can continue to help with the people of OMM,” said Dr. Nogot.

Herminia Iloreta Gaspar, RN, BSN, a retired operating room nurse, will be volunteering with OMM for a first time on this mission. But she is well experienced in medical mission trips, having done tours with the Aloha Medical Mission and Sirmata Medical Mission Group, among others.

“This will be my first time to join this group and am sure I will be able to experience all the nice things this group does. I am so grateful that the oppor-



tunity is open for me and my husband to help and support the mission group. I am now retired so this will be good to make use of our time and expertise to make a difference in the lives of people in need. I am also joining because OMM visits and does missions to places in Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur like our home town of Sinit. Volunteering for this mission is a good way to give back to our community and other people in need of our help, our kababayans.”

Gaspar said her specific responsibilities for this mission hasn’t been assigned yet. But based on previous missions she’s done, Gaspar said she can do her best work in surgery.

“These missions are rewarding. No matter how tiring they can be, I get a sense of accomplishment knowing that I gave my best for all the patients I served, that I made a difference in their lives and that they can go back to their daily routines. I am referring to most of the surgical patients, whether minor, major or plastic surgeries,” said Gaspar.

There are several highly reputable medical missions in the U.S., a few of which Gaspar has offered her expertise.

OMM Executive Director Orias shares OMM’s mission statement: “The Ohana Medical Mission, Inc. is dedicated to providing healthcare and health education to indigent patients in the Philippines, Hawaii, and other countries.

It is committed to providing outstanding medical, surgical and dental services so that no patient is denied treatment because of financial, social, or political circumstance.”

OMM is the medical mission arm of the Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii.

OMM’s president is Dr. Russell Kelly.

Orias elaborates that OMM goes to areas in the Philippines upon the invitation of local Filipino communities in Hawaii who want to help people in their former country. “The local community in Hawaii raises funds to buy medicines and supplies to be used in missions. With OMM, the volunteers pay for their own transportation and lodging. They even share in minor expenses given to porters, bus drivers, and items like bottled water.”

He says OMM trips usually lasts no longer than two weeks, the average length of time that volunteers can leave their medical practices. He says, OMM also “looks around for areas that have sponsors.”

The OMM website says each trip takes about two years of planning and logistics prior to a mission.

OMM works with Hawaii’s local community and coordinates also with organizations and officials in the Philippines. They also work with medical professionals in the areas they visit and make

(continue on page 5)

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COVER STORY

(from page 4)



referrals of some patients needing additional care.

This February 2020 OMM medical mission's major sponsors are Mark Chui, CPA, Lea Liwanag, Hawaii FCU Cashier Check, Fely M. Pula, the Family of the late Rodolfo Sonido, Dr. Charlie Y. Sonido, and Mrs. Chona Montesines-Sonido, Sorbella Guillermo, MD, Hawaii Filipino Healthcare, Inc., Pasuquin Association of HI Foundation LLC, Teodora & Arnold Villafuerte, Manawa Lea Health Services Inc., Perlita B. Lampitoc MD, Inc. Michael & Margie Berueda, Residential Choices Inc., Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii, Al & Rose Sabangan, Titans USA Foundation, Kathy Adaoag, Russel Kelly, MD, Jonathan and Joanne Ramos, MD, Cesar Palana, MD, Mark Ramirez, MD, Lihue Pharmacy, Hawaii Filipino Healthcare, Hawaii Medical Association, Aurora Mariani, MD, Dartzen Wu, MD and Primary Care Clinic of Hawaii.

Margie Berueda, an RN, and president-CEO of Residential Choices, Inc., is one of this mission's sponsors. "My husband and I will sponsor the medical mission in my hometown of Sarrat, Ilocos Norte through monetary contributions to fund the purchase of needed medical supplies and medicines."

The Beruedas will be making this mission trip and has volunteered in the past with the Aloha Medical Mission and Sirmata 2001 to various towns in Ilocos Norte.

"It feels good and we take pride to be able to give free medical attention to the underprivileged members of our community. It is also a learning process being with a group of volunteers coordinating all aspects of the mission and memories are created that includes bonding with great

volunteers from all aspects of life," said Margie.

OMM February 2020 Volunteers

This year's volunteers are Dr. Danilo Ablan, Enriqueta Adaoag, Hamed Ahmadinia, Rose Mary S. Asuncion, Arlene Joan Bali, Filomina Domingo Bali, Margie Berueda, Michael Berueda, Julia Domingo Cabatu, Rochelle Cadiente, Cristobal Cayetano, Dr. Freddie Cerenia, Ben Chang, Dr. Ralph Curiano, Dr. Carolina D Davide, Nestor Dayoan, Reggie Dayoan, Wilma Dayoan, Dr. Eduardo Dela Cruz, Armi DeLa Cruz, Julita DelCarmen, Dr. Debbie Fermin, Lorna Estrada, Dr. Elysse Eusebio, Melissa Fletcher, Hermie Gaspar, Dr. Martin Garcia, William Gaspar, Dr. Dominador Genio, Dr. Sorbella Guillermo, Dr. Amelia Jacang, Imelda Joaquin, Dr. Russell Kelly, Dr. Cynthia Kelly, Dr. Rafael Malilay, Dr. Edgar Manuel, Dr. Russell Nogot, Hieuy Phung Nguyen, Elena G. Onnagan, Romulo C. Onnagan, JP Orias, Jasmine Padamada, Fely Pula, Mar Pula, Donna Leiko Quillopo, Joselin A. Rosario, Al Sabangan, Rose Sabangan, Victoria B. Sabinay, Nena S. Sarmiento, Pedro V. Sarmiento, Dr. Agnes Seranilla, Dr. Rudy Singson, Dr. Cesar Siruno, Bernadette Somera, Nellie A S. Somera, Andy S. Somera, Nelson Sonido, Dr. Charlie Y. Sonido, Chona Montesines-Sonido, Erlinda Sonido, Esperita Sumibcay, Lindlelyn Tabula, Dr. Arnold Villafuerte, Teodora Villafuerte, Cathy Wilson, Dr. Russel Young and Alex Vergara.

Each mission is usually is comprised of a mix of experienced mission veterans who have done many tours and new, often first or second-time volunteers. Many of the volunteer physicians are also members of the PMAH.

Returning to her hometown

What does it feel like returning to one's hometown for a mission? Ceres Yanong was a past OMM volunteer to Davao in 2012. She was born in Babak in the island of Samar, Davao del Norte, then came to Hawaii in 1974.

"It was my first time, to serve in a medical mission, so I didn't know what to expect. I was amazed with the enthusiasm of the volunteers and professionals from Hawaii. Our group was joined by local resident volunteers (in the Philippines), including my family members and students from Davao City High School. They were all happy and excited to lend a hand being it was also their first medical mission experience; to include, providing additional transportation to and from the medical mission sites and picking up last minute additional supplies and pediatric medication."

Yanong shared an experience while at the upper part of Mount Apo called Marilog. "The children had beautiful smiles, healthy looking teeth with no signs of cavities. Then, I found out that those children were not used to eating sweets. In fact, I observed that the children were not interested in the candies we gave them. Also,

"These missions are rewarding. No matter how tiring they can be, I get a sense of accomplishment knowing that I gave my best for all the patients I served, that I made a difference in their lives and that they can go back to their daily routines. I am referring to most of the surgical patients, whether minor, major or plastic surgeries."

— HERMINIA ILORETA GASPAR, RN, BSN, OMM 2020 Volunteer

the adults had less health issues. In fact, I overheard one of the volunteers who was assigned to take the BP and Glucose check said that they should already stop checking because, half way through the morning, they never found anybody with hypertension of high glucose."

Yanong said the part of Marilog they visited was known to be populated with insurgents, so they were escorted by several military personnel. But, she said she found the place very peaceful.

It's not uncommon for medical mission groups to be escorted by local military to the places they serve.

"The opportunity to become part of this medical mission was a challenging, a blessing and a rewarding experience. Challenging because I had to spend evenings and weekends labelling and re-packing medications and supplies. The job continued when I reached Davao City doing the same thing and whatever was needed to carry out the medical mission. It was a

blessing because I saw many people who were less fortunate who benefited from the free medical services, health counseling and receiving free nutritional supplements.

"I made friends with the volunteers and professionals from Hawaii and Davao City. It has been seven years since the Davao medical mission, but I will never forget the fun, laughter, stories shared and camaraderie, as if we had already known each other from before the medical mission. I felt the joy of giving back and serving the towns people where I was born and grew up as a child," said Yanong.

This year's overall coordinator is Dr. Charlie Y. Sonido and the honorary chairs are OMM President Dr. Russell Kelly and PMAH President Dr. Marel Ver.

Like most medical missions, OMM depends on individual, community and corporate donations. Visit OMM's website ohanamedicalmissions.org for donation information or how to become a volunteer. ■

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Public Invited to Free Real Estate Educational Event in Maui

Want to learn about foreclosures, construction contracts, condominium laws? The Real Estate Commission, together with Community Associations Institute Hawaii Chapter will hold a free "Maui Condorama" event at the J. Walter Cameron Center auditorium, Wailuku, Maui, on Friday, January 24, 2020.

The event runs from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm, with check-in starting at 10:00 am, and will feature speakers recognized in the condominium community for their expertise in the Hawaii condominium law, board meetings, construction contracts, and insurance.

Topics include: 1) Non-judicial Foreclosures – Where Are We Now?; 2) Do's &

Don'ts of Construction Contracts; 3) What Insurance Contractors Should Have Before You Hire Them; 4) Annual Meeting Blunders to Avoid

The event is open to the public and registration is available online at www.caihawaii.org. For more information, the public can call the Real Estate Branch at 808-586-2644 or toll free from the island of Maui at 984-2400 ext. 62644. ■

OPINION



By Melissa Martin, Ph.D.

No Eraser for 2019, but Redemption in 2020

What Would We Erase?

Mass shootings. In Dayton, Ohio, nine victims died and 17 were wounded. Twenty-two victims died at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, in August. In Virginia, 12 victims died and 4 were wounded. We would erase death, trauma, and tragedy. Family and friends would not fall to their knees in anguish. Americans would not mourn with despair.

FEMA lists Disaster Declarations for USA by state for 2019. We would erase typhons, cyclones, hurricanes, tropical storms, massive floods, volcano eruptions, earthquakes, blizzards, sizzling heat waves, raging wildfires—which, in turn, would erase loss of lives and property damage.

Accidents. Freak accidents. Vehicle accidents. Yes, we would erase accidents if we could.

What Would We Erase in Our Personal Lives?

Sometimes we desperately want to erase a day, a week, a month, or an entire year. Acts done to us without our permission. Choices made that we regret. We cannot suck back in the words

said in anger. Or unsay words we should have said. The tongue cannot undo a lie. The lips cannot un-tell a secret.

A spouse may want to erase a divorce and begin the marriage again. “There’s silence at the table/He wants to talk but he’s not able/For all the shame that’s locked him deep inside/Oh, but her words are the medicine/When she says they can begin again/And forgiveness will set him free tonight/As heaven touches earth.” Lyrics by Jason Gray to his song called “Every Act of Love.”

If only we could have a do-over day in 2019 and go back in time to make a change. What would we do differently? Would we erase or overcome? Would we become stronger in the broken places or erase what caused the broken places?

Change, Grace and Redemption

“That is what life is about. We do not get redos, but we do get second chances.”—Jeffrey Fry

According to a 2019 article in the Columbus Dispatch, Harley Blakeman, a former felon, graduated from Ohio State University with a business degree, and recently stated a website that helps companies connect with former criminals seeking employment.

“God answers the mess of life with one word: Grace.”—Max Lucado

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. That’s the 8th step in the 12 Steps of AA. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

That’s the 10th step.

“Redemption isn’t giving a bank robber a job as a teller.”—Jane Velez-Mitchell

In this fallen world, sometimes we need to seek justice before we give mercy. And perpetrators deserve prosecution. Consequences are a reality when one chooses to harm another.

Alas, we cannot erase situations, happenings, or events in 2019. We cannot erase tragedy or trauma. We cannot erase mistakes.

But we can reflect on 2019 and become more aware, focus on change, give and accept forgiveness, renew hope, and make 2020 a better year. ■

MELISSA MARTIN, Ph.D., is an author, columnist, educator, and therapist. She lives in Ohio. www.melissamartinchildreauthor.com.

Will we be the same human beings in the new year? Will this year be different? Will humanity change? Along with 2020 comes the hope and yearning for a more peaceful human race. How do we do try to heal from the tragedies of 2019, but not forget?

Old Year

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And never brought to mind? Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And days o’ lang syne!” Why do people belt out this tradition song on December 31 at midnight? “Auld Lang Syne” is a Scottish limerick about past relationships. My take—we are to consider and contemplate on whether we want to remember ruptures of past friendships and to repair or not to repair.

The year of 2019 is gone forever. Those 365 days cannot be undone or changed. No rewind button on mistakes. No magic wand to make the past disappear.

COMMENTARY

When You’ve Dug A Hole, Stop Digging

By Keli’i Akina, Ph.D.,
President/CEO
Grassroots Institute of Hawaii

When you’ve dug an \$88 billion hole, you need to stop digging.

That is the amount of unfunded liabilities that our state and county governments are projected to accrue in the next 30 years.

But are Hawaii policymakers willing to do what it takes to control spending and reduce debt?

A substantial portion of that \$88 billion reflects unfunded pension and health-care liabilities. Yes, the state government is following a plan that should gradually pay them off, but we should also be looking at ways to make the system sustainable in the long term.

In our 2019 Grassroot Institute report “How to resolve

Hawaii’s public pension debt crisis,” we offered a wide array of policy options for Hawaii legislators to consider, including defined-contribution plans, hybrid plans, choice plans and changes to age, service and contribution requirements. For a long time, our leaders have balked at reforming the public employee pension system, but Hawaii residents and workers deserve a plan that will survive for decades without bankrupting the state.

In a Hawaii Business article, I pointed out that we also need to lower state taxes. Hawaii has the second-highest marginal income tax and highest estate taxes in the country, and our legislators continue to pile on tax hikes and surcharges.

Why would I suggest reducing taxes in order to reduce state debt? Because our high level of taxation contributes to our high cost of living, chasing more residents to the mainland and reducing the overall tax base. A lower tax environment

tells businesses and residents that this is a place to invest in and thrive. Making the state more attractive to businesses would expand economic opportunities in Hawaii and put more money in the local government tax coffers.

Of course, it’s impossible to talk about state debt without talking about government spending. And that’s where we may need the strongest dose of corrective medicine.

Technically, the state has legal barriers that should prevent overspending. The state Constitution limits general fund expenditures based on the estimated growth of the state economy. This is calculated using average real personal income growth over the previous three fiscal years. That means that for fiscal 2020, the spending cap is \$8.1 billion and for 2021, it’s \$8.5 billion.

However, if the cap is supposed to be a spending stop sign, then it’s sitting at an intersection with no police

(continue on page 10)



Michael A. McMann, M.D.

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WHAT'S UP, ATTORNEY?



By Atty. Emmanuel S. Tipon

Court Says Trump Can Build Wall; Will Challengers Bang Heads Against Wall?

On January 8, 2020 the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals based in New Orleans, by a 2-1 vote, allowed the Trump administration to proceed with building a wall on the Southern border. Case 19-51144, Doc: 00515264406. The court reversed a Texas federal district court which had issued an injunction against building the wall. El Paso County, Texas and Border Network for Human Rights vs. Donald Trump, et al. See El Paso County v. Trump, No. EP-19-CV-66-DB (W.D. Tex. Dec. 10, 2019). The decision paves the way for the use of billions of dollars of defense department funds to

build the wall.

President Trump hailed the decision. He was quoted as saying that “The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals just reversed a lower court decision and gave us the go ahead to build one of the largest sections of the desperately needed Southern Border Wall, Four Billion Dollars. Entire Wall is under construction or getting ready to start.”

The Fifth Circuit cited a U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Trump v. Sierra Club*, 140 S. Ct. 1 (2019) (mem.) which stayed a similar injunction by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In *Sierra Club and the Southern Border Communities v. Donald Trump* filed in the Northern District of California at Oakland, the court granted an injunction permanently enjoining spending funds un-

der 10 USC Section 2808 for eleven specified border barrier construction projects, but the district court stayed the injunction pending appeal. *Sierra Club* moved to lift the district court’s stay of its injunction pending appeal. The Ninth Circuit denied the plaintiffs’ request to not stay the injunction pending appeal, saying: “As the district court concluded, ‘the Supreme Court’s stay of this Court’s prior injunction order appears to reflect the conclusion of a majority of that Court that the challenged construction should be permitted to proceed pending resolution of the merits.’ *Sierra Club v. Trump*, No. 4:19-cv-00892-HSG (N.D. Cal. Dec. 11, 2019.”

The Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit reasoned that Trump and the government is entitled to the same relief here,

for, among other reasons, the substantial likelihood that the complainants lack Article III standing.

COMMENT: What will the challengers against building the wall do in the face of various decisions allowing its construction? Will they bang their heads against the wall?

ANSWERS TO 2019 YEAR-END IMMIGRATION QUIZ

Here are the answers.

1. The issue of whether a marriage is in good faith (bona fide) usually arises in: (a) Adjustment of status proceedings.
2. The test of the bona fides of a marriage is: (b) Whether the couple intended to establish a life together at the time of the marriage.
3. President Trump was “impeached” (charged) by the House of Representatives

for “abuse of power” because during a telephone conversation with President Zelensky of Ukraine, Trump asked the latter: (b) To find out if Joe Biden, when he was Vice President under Obama, stopped the prosecution of Biden’s son in Ukraine.

4. Under the U.S. Constitution, a President shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of: (a) Treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

5. The billionaire principal owner of a football team who was being prosecuted for soliciting another to commit prostitution filed a motion to suppress video surveillance tapes showing him in a massage parlor allegedly engaging in illegal sexual activity on the ground that: (c) The

(continue on page 15)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

State Legislature Opens, Gets Quick Start on Minimum Wage Deal

The Hawaii State Legislature opened session on Jan. 15 and already a major deal has been reached to increase the state’s minimum wage, a proposal that nearly passed last session. Gov. David Ige and leaders from both chambers support the agreement that would raise Hawaii’s minimum wage from \$10.10, the current amount, to \$11 by 2021, \$12 by 2022, \$12.50 by 2023 and \$13 by 2024.

The minimum wage agreement is one item among others in a legislative package put forth by the governor and leaders on both the House and Senate. This is the first joint House and Senate legislative bill package since 2004, and it has the backing of the governor.

Lawmakers say the goal in raising the minimum wage is to make it more affordable for middle class families to live in Hawaii without being forced



Gov. David Ige and leaders of the Hawaii State Legislature holding a 2020 Joint Legislative Package press conference a day before the opening of the 2020 legislative session.

to move out-of-state for financial reasons. The House and Senate will introduce identical bills later this month and expect amendments based on feedback from the public hearings.

“It will help our struggling working families,” said state Sen. Brian Taniguchi.

House Speaker Scott Saiki revealed in his speech on opening day a few of his priorities – tax relief and a minimum wage increase, child care and early learning, and funding for affordable housing.

“Our working class families and individuals deserve

tax relief. They are barely struggling to get by. We will make the Hawaii Earned Income Tax credit refundable and permanent and increase the food/excise tax credit,” said Saiki.

On affordable housing, Saiki said he would like the legislature to spend \$200 million for infrastructure at UH West Oahu for affordable housing development along the rail line.

Besides raising the minimum wage, other items in the economic package include:

- Targeting tax relief for working class families

- and individuals,
- Increasing the minimum wage,
- Developing leasehold housing for the working class,
- Providing tax exemptions for developers to build market priced homes,
- Providing infrastructure for developments at or near rail stations,
- Expanding childcare options for parents near their work places,
- Creating a new Schools Facilities Agency and allow DOE to focus on education.

Governor David Y. Ige said this comprehensive package of bills provides a blueprint for changes for generations to come. Ige said these bills will better the lives of Hawai’i’s people and make the islands a place that future generations will be able afford to call home.

“Many of our families are living paycheck to paycheck, and this proposed package of bills is designed to ease the burden on those struggling to

stay afloat and provide a more stable future for the next generation,” said Gov. Ige.

“I like the idea of a joint Senate-House-Governor proposal for a package that addresses income inequality by providing relief for the working poor. Although the increases to the minimum wage may seem modest, the proposal must be seen in its overall positive impact and in its embrace of the ‘aloha spirit’ toward those that are struggling in our society,” said Senate Labor, Culture and the Arts Chair Brian T. Taniguchi.

“The ALICE Report showed us that 47% of our households are barely able to provide for the five basic essentials of housing, child-care, food, transportation, and healthcare. These families are left vulnerable as their budget – \$28,296 for a single adult and \$77,052 for a family of four – does not allow for savings and unexpected expenses. It could take just one incident for these households to fall into a crisis. We have to do better

(continue on page 11)



Pinoy ang census.

**'Pag kasali tayong lahat,
mas malakas at tumpak ang 2020 Census.**

Importante ang pagka-Pinoy ko sa 2020 Census.

Kada sampung taon, ang gawain ng census ay bilangin lahat ng naninirahan sa Amerika. Ang mga numerong ito ay napupunta sa paglalaan ng daan-daang bilyong dolyar kada taon para sa pondong pampubliko para sa mga schools, health clinic at roads.

Pwede akong sumagot sa Tagalog. Importanteng 'di lang ako ang sasagot, kaya makilahok tayong lahat! Mas malakas tayo kapag nagkakaisa!

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AS I SEE IT



By Elpidio R. Estioko

The Senate Impeachment: How Long Do We Have to Wait?

While House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is holding on to the two impeachment articles duly approved by the House, the GOP-dominated Senate is mulling a strategy to proceed with the quick Senate “trial” without the articles of impeachment.

This is a strategy being done by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to counter House Speaker Pelosi’s strategy of not sending them unless assured of witnesses and new documents in the trial. This move from McConnell came after seeing that Pelosi is not keen in forwarding the impeachment articles to the Senate unless assured of fair trial and in the light of the emergence of new documents showing President Donald Trump’s direct instruction to freeze the military aid to Ukraine in exchange of the Biden’s trial of corruption in Ukraine.

GOP is avoiding a real

Senate trial to be presided by US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts with the senators acting as jurors. In the real trial being advocated by the Democrats led by Pelosi, witnesses will be allowed to testify and new documents to be presented.

Based on the latest news, Speaker Pelosi said she plans to submit the articles of impeachment against President Trump to the Senate “soon”. But still... there is no definite time frame for that pronouncement.

This is sad because the real losers are the American people! I’m sure that a majority of the citizens want a trial as shown by statistics growing from 42% to 56% in favor of impeachment... and going! Surely, while the citizens’ responses are slow, the 10-month gap up to the November Presidential elections will be enough time for people to weigh in and decide their next move, regardless as to whether Trump will be removed from office or not.

The Senate reconvened Friday, January 3, 2020 but the impeachment trial is still uncertain when to start al-

though I think there are signs of having one. At the start of the year, there were two important events that took place which suggests there might be a trial in the Senate... after all!

Firstly, US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts in his public report stated that the American people are taking impeachment for granted. He also noted that their perceptions are being clouded by lies, misinformation and misrepresentations being circulated in the social media.

The Roberts’ statement, I think, indicates some fairness in the trial and signals a trial is forthcoming. Apparently, Roberts is saying that we need to be informed as citizens of the United States. He is defending democratic principles in the Trump era and envisioning to uphold the US Constitution as a presiding officer.

This also suggests that as jurors, the senators need to be impartial judges and must be true to their vows as legislators in upholding the Constitution. Unless they assume this role, there will never be a fair trial, but a political circus.

This was recognized by at least three GOP senators, saying they are open to trial and the presentation of witnesses and documents. A fourth GOP senator is also weighing his options and may likely go for trial too.

(COMMENTARY: When You’ve...from page 6)

cars or cameras. All it takes to plow right past it is an explanation from the governor as to why he wants the additional money being requested, along with a two-thirds vote by both houses of the Legislature. That’s not much of a hurdle in a one-party state. It’s barely a speed bump.

That’s why, just weeks after this report about our looming \$88 billion debt was

All we need is four GOP senators to side with the Democrats in order to approve having witnesses and provide new documents for the trial to proceed.

Secondly, the latest statement of former National Security Adviser John Bolton who said that he is willing to testify regarding the Ukraine issue if subpoenaed by the Senate. Bolton refused to testify or was barred from testifying during the House impeachment proceedings but this time he is saying that he will testify.

These are happening with more important information coming out indicating that Trump personally and directly ordered the freezing of the Ukraine military aid in exchange for an investigation of his presidential opponent former Vice President Joe Biden and Biden’s son Hunter for alleged corruption in Ukraine.

What’s disturbing to note is that the person being impeached is dictating the terms of the trial through his party (GOP/Trump Party). Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell publicly acknowledged that he is getting directions and signals from Trump and the White House Legal Counsel. This is very disturbing because it breaks the separation of powers, with Congress (the Senate included) as co-equal with the Executive Branch.

Well, even if the four

senators side with the Democrats in coming up with a trial, this number is not enough to remove Trump from the presidency. It’s just a number for a simple majority that will pave the way for a trial as envisioned by Pelosi. We need two-thirds vote or 20 GOP senators siding with the Democrats to remove Trump, which is unlikely to happen... although this will definitely affect the outcome of the November Presidential elections.

Whatever happens, Trump claims he is ready and doesn’t care because he believes he will be re-elected with the economy at its highest with 76% performance indicating the economy is very strong and... with a strong economy, and as an incumbent candidate, there’s no reason he will lose.

That is a very strong argument for Trump, but we don’t know yet what will happen between now and November. Should the new information collaborating impeachment and trial to go on as fair as possible, slowly... by the time the election comes, the President’s chances of re-election can be impacted.

So, how long do we have to wait? Or, will there be a trial in the Senate with witnesses and new documents?

The waiting is still on... maybe, “soon”, as per Pelosi! ■

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.

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VILMA D. FUENTES, Doctor of Physical Therapy

released, Gov. David Ige was able to submit a budget update that goes \$67.4 million over the spending limit for fiscal years 2020-21.

Sure, the money requested is for worthy causes such as education, paying down the unfunded public pension and health plan liabilities, and pay raises for government workers. But that’s why it’s even more important

to budget properly, instead of putting forth proposals that will further dip into the state’s dwindling surplus.

It’s time for our leaders to get serious about state spending. Let’s start practicing fiscal accountability now so we don’t saddle our children and grandchildren with our liabilities in the future.

E hana kakou! (Let’s work together!) ■

CANDID PERSPECTIVES



By Emil Guillermo

Trump's Jingo Bell Rock Leaves America in The Dark



A friend of mine was happy over the holidays when I wished him well.

On Facetime, he was sitting gleefully pool side, crowing about the booming stock market and proud to declare, "Now all we need is another four years of Trump!"

Was that you during the holidays?

And how are you now that life has gone from "Jingle Bells" to "Jingo Bells?"

Donald Trump sure knows disruptive dissonance.

The impeached president was in Mar-a-Lago with his chums, playing the world, essentially by remote control with his tweets. And all while his military kills the Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, Iran's second in command.

Sounds like a declaration of war, doesn't it? Hey, don't we need Congressional input for that?

Of course we do.

But this is just a war to evade finalizing one man's impeachment.

This doesn't sound good for anyone—except for Donald J. Trump, TIP (as in "the impeached president.")

And maybe not even for him.

If you read his tweets trying to justify the killing of Soleimani, Trump can be pretty convincing saying that Soleimani "has killed or badly

wounded thousands of Americans over an extended period of time, and was plotting to kill more...but got caught."

We know Soleimani's past as the leader of Iran's elite Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and how the Shiites have used proxies to destabilize throughout the region.

But where is the proof that such an action was needed? Where was the discussion?

And why would we blindly trust an impeached president who has lied or has made more than 15,000 false or misleading statements to date?

Too many questions and yet here we are. Allies were in the dark, except for Israel, whose leader, the indicted Netanyahu, must be something of a role model for Trump. You too can be on the edge of the law and do whatever you want in a "democracy."

Strong men with bombs are all the rage these days.

Bomb first, talk later is the game. Just bomb.

Trump now says he wasn't starting a war and isn't interested in regime change. So why take such a brazen move?

Israel has survived a Netanyahu, maybe Trump figures the U.S. can do the same.

But wait the U.S. is not Israel. We are above the fray. We use diplomacy when we can. What took us to the point where we're killing Iran's No. 2?

And where is that isolationism of Trump he likes to boast about? Was it all fake isolationist talk, not wanting

to drag us into another endless war. Because that's where this is all leading. Thousands of troops are now ready to be deployed because our fearless leader has struck and doesn't exactly know what the next move will be.

Days after the killing, we've even seen the Iranian response with the bombings of U.S. targets in Iraq. But information is still sketchy.

And we're still waiting for Trump's proof of the Soleimani killing. This isn't like the tax return dodge.

Americans need to see why our country took such drastic action, especially now that it puts us in a desert fog.

This is not the way you play this deadly chess match.

Once we took out Soleimani, there should have been a plan, a strategy, something in place.

And Americans should all be united.

But the president didn't go to Congress. He didn't seek approval. He acted alone.

(HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS: State Legislature...from page 7)

for our families," said Norm Baker, chief operating officer at Aloha United Way. "We are grateful that our lawmakers are working on a legislative package and partnering with nonprofits and the private sector to create solutions that will help lift our ALICE households."

Building Educational Results

In order to allow the De-

partment of Education to closely focus on its primary purpose of teaching our children, the legislature proposes to create a new Schools Facilities Agency to oversee major construction and repair projects in our schools.

The Governor will appoint an executive director for the new agency which will be responsible for all public school construction except for repair and main-

tenance projects that cost \$100,000 or less.

"This new agency will focus on the construction of major building projects at existing and new schools," said Rep. Luke. "This proposal will ensure that school construction is done in a timely manner with public input and strong oversight. This will enhance the learning experience and give all students a better chance for success." ■

Trump is like a lone golfer lost in the woods, hacking desperately hoping to get out of the trees.

It's a move that left all our top allies in the dark.

Senator Mazie Hirono, our key Asian American who is the Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower took note of that.

"Soleimani's death in a U.S. airstrike further escalates hostilities and increase the potential for widespread violence in a part of the world already fraught with peril," she said. "In normal times, we could have confidence that the president—fully cognizant of the potential ramifications of this strike—was mobilizing a whole of government response and coordinating with our allies to see a diplomatic outcome. But these are not normal times. Congress must reassert its Constitutional responsibility and demand the president seek authorization prior to any military conflict with Iran."

Trump is skirting the Constitution yet again. He may see this as a way to circumvent impeachment efforts, but it only shows how unfit this president is to lead.

Ukraine was a small matter compared to this new involvement the president, once the isolationist, now seems so

willing to expose the nation and sacrifice our sons and daughters.

An endless world war is not a good outcome.

With more at stake now, Trump may have provided the best reason for a thorough impeachment trial with all the witnesses to expose him as a threat to our democracy and hasten his removal.

As I write, Republican Senators are beginning to show cracks in their Trump wall, as some were angry that Trump sent out his generals to give Congress a confidential briefing on Iran and essentially told them nothing.

When what is given as confidential is a big "nothing," in the administration of a lying impeached president who has brought us to the brink of war, America has reached a low-point in our Orwellian 1984-ish journey.

Pay attention. It's getting strange. Trump only gets away with this if you leave the driving to him.

That may be too risky. That's how 2020 has started. You want four more years of this? ■

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.

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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

LEAVING 2019, LIVING 2020

By Seneca Moraleda-Puguan

My family is busy preparing for our first US and Canada trip this January. My husband is attending a conference in Seattle and my two little children and I are tagging along. This is something we have been praying for and been preparing a lot for. To say we are very excited is an understatement. We have been looking forward to this trip since last year and it's finally happening.

But despite the anticipation, excitement and joy that I am feeling because we know that great and fun things await us in North America, news of the Australian bushfires and the crash of the Ukrainian Airlines in Tehran, Iran bring anxiety, fear and deep grief into my heart. A whirlwind of emotions causes me to lose sleep.

Here I am in my own little world with my small family, joyful and looking forward to enjoy and have fun but so many people out there are mourning

not just for the loss of properties, friends and loved ones, but loss of hope, of justice, of joy, of a bright future.

The year 2019 has been a great year for many, but a difficult one for some. The beginning of 2020 may be a blast for many, but it is bleak for some. With everything that has happened and is happening in the world today that reminds us about the futility of life, there are lessons that I'm bringing with me as I face the year ahead.

LEAVE UNFORGIVENESS, LIVE WITH LOVE. Our days are numbered. We do not know what tomorrow brings. In just one snap of a finger, we can lose everything. It is my prayer that we would leave behind the grudges and hurts that the past year has caused us. It is my hope that we would decide to forgive those who have caused us pain and choose to love. Unforgiveness can be a very heavy baggage to bring along. May we learn to let go and walk each

day of 2020 with a light heart, one that is full of love.

LEAVE APATHY, LIVE WITH COMPASSION. A pastor once preached that one of the greatest crimes we can commit is the crime of apathy. Many are suffering. Depression is senselessly and rampantly taking lives every single day and we just don't care. We are so consumed living our lives comfortably that our eyes become blinded and our hearts become calloused to the needs of the people around us. At the start of the year, I made a declaration that 2020 will be a year that I will be more sensitive to the people around me, that I will offer myself to be of service to anyone who is in need, to live each day with kindness and hopefully make a difference in someone's life.

LEAVE SELF-ENTITLEMENT, LIVE SELFLESSLY. We live in a self-entitled world. Just look at social media. Rants and complaints flood Facebook. We think

highly of ourselves. We think we are special and we are better than everyone else. We prioritize ourselves before others. But we are called to live the other way around. We ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. May we learn to let go of our selfish ambitions and stop leading self-consumed lives. It's not about me anymore but you, us and we.

LEAVE DISCONTENT, LIVE WITH GRATITUDE. This is one of the hardest things for me to do. I love hoarding. I love collecting things and I just want more. But thinking about how short life is, having everything; even the best things can be meaningless. The tragedies that have happened in the past and will happen in the future are teaching me to be content and be grateful for what I have, little as they may seem. I am learning to be grateful for the simplest of things, even for the air that I breathe. Being thankful makes me appreciate the life I have been blessed with. Truly, just as the Bible says,

godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it.

LEAVE THE PAST BEHIND, LIVE IN THE PRESENT. Lastly, just as 2019 has been a good year for my family, especially with the coming of my second born, my son Yohan, I am leaving behind the joys and the pains, the victories and the battles, the triumphs and the trials of the past year. I am now looking forward to a greater year ahead but in a posture to live in the present as if it's the last. I know that God has great things in store for me and my family this 2020 but I am also aware that tomorrow is uncertain so I will live my life each day filled with love, with compassion, with selflessness and with gratitude.

I pray that 2020 will be a year of promises fulfilled, of blessings abundant, of divine health and favor overflowing upon you and your family! Cheers! ■

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Guide for Public on Participating in Hawaii's State Legislative Process

The Hawaii State Legislature opened on Jan. 15. Every bill currently up for consideration is available online for review. The public should be reminded that legislators are available to receive your letters, emails, or calls of support or opposition

to any bill. Democracy works best with an informed and active citizenry.

Here are a few tips for participating in the legislative process: 1) Testimonies for legislative bills scheduled for hearing by the House or Senate must be delivered at least

24 hours prior to the hearing and may be submitted in person or fax. The easiest way is to submit testimonies through the Hawaii State Legislature's website at www.capitol.hawaii.gov by clicking on the button marked "submit testimony" and following the on-screen instructions. 2) Mark important legislative

deadlines to track the bills important to you – Jan. 23, last day to introduce bills; Feb. 28, first decking of bills; March 5, first crossover of bills; March

11, budget crossover; April 2, second crossover; April 29-30, final decking; and May 7 adjournment.

To get the status on any bills, visit www.capitol.hawaii.gov ■

SBA Small Business Events

2020 HiSTEP Scaling Up Operations for Exporting - January 24, 2020, Friday, Hawaii Foreign-Trade Zone No.9 - Homer Maxey International Trade Center, ITC Conference Room, 2nd Floor, 521 Ala Moana Boulevard, Pier 2 Honolulu, HI 96813.

MCBL Small Business Group Counseling (Business Maturity) - January 24, 2020, Friday, to make an appointment call (808) 695-2635.

MCBL Social Media for Your Business - January 28, 2020, Tuesday, Patsy T. Mink Center for Business & Leadership (MCBL), YWCA Laniakea, 1040 Richards St, Honolulu, HI 96813.

MCBL Small Business Group Counseling (General Business Forum) - January 31, 2020, Friday, to make an appointment call (808) 695-2635.

VBOC Boots to Business (Oahu) - January 30-31, 2020, Thursday & Friday, Joint Base Pearl Harbor.

Some events require registration. Go to www.sba.gov/hi and click on Small Business Events to register or find out more information. ■

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LEGAL NOTES



By Atty. Reuben S. Seguritan

Meeting the Good Moral Character Requirement for Naturalization

the basis of qualifying US military service. These years (5 years, 3 years and 1 year) are known as the statutory period.

In applying for naturalization, an applicant is required to establish his good moral character during the application and processing period for naturalization, and until the day that he takes the Oath of Allegiance as a US citizen.

The USCIS has recently issued policy guidance regarding unlawful acts that may affect the good moral character requirement. The commission, or conviction or imprisonment for unlawful acts may render an applicant ineligible for naturalization. Two or more convictions for driving under the influence or post-sentencing charges to criminal sentencing may affect good moral character determinations.

Examples of the unlawful acts are: bail jumping; bank fraud; conspiracy to distribute

a controlled substance; failure to file or pay taxes; forgery uttering; insurance fraud; obstruction of justice; sexual assault; Social Security fraud; unlawful harassment; unlawful registration to vote; unlawful voting; and violation of a US embargo.

In the Policy Manual, examples of certain acts that may bar the finding of good moral character are: one or more crimes involving moral turpitude; aggregate sentence of 5 years or more; controlled substance violation; incarceration for 180 days; false testimony under oath; prostitution offenses; smuggling of a person; polygamy; gambling offenses; habitual drunkard; two or more convictions for driving under the influence (DUI); failure to support dependents; adultery; and other unlawful acts that adversely affect good moral character.

Examples of crimes in-

volving moral turpitude which would prevent the finding of good moral character are: aggravated battery; petty theft, grand theft, forgery, robbery; spousal or child abuse; any intentional sexual contact with a child; and offering a bribe to a government official and offenses relating to counterfeiting.

Other examples of acts which would prevent the finding of good moral character are: violation of any controlled substance-related federal or state law or regulation of the United States or law or regulation of any foreign country; conviction or admission that the applicant has been a trafficker in a controlled substance, or benefited financially from a spouse or parent's trafficking; giving false testimony to obtain any immigration benefit; failure to disclose a criminal or other adverse record; applicant has engaged in prostitution; involving in the smuggling of a person or persons by encouraging, inducing, assisting, abetting or aiding any alien to enter or try to enter the United States in violation of law; and conviction for committing two or more gambling offenses.

The USCIS officers will assess the naturalization applications on a case-by-case basis and will determine whether an

act committed during the statutory period and during the application period is one that adversely reflects on the moral character of the applicant. The officer may make a finding that an applicant did not have good moral character due to the commission of an unlawful act evidenced through admission, conviction, or other relevant, reliable evidence in the record.

They must also determine whether there are extenuating circumstances. An extenuating circumstance must pertain to the unlawful act and must precede or be contemporaneous with the commission of the unlawful act. Extenuating circumstances could excuse the act or make the act not reflective of the lack of good moral character of the applicant. An example is if the applicant failed to pay the support to his dependents, and the officer finds evidence that he lost his job, or he was in an accident or very sick which meant he had to pay for his medical bills. With these circumstances, the failure to pay support to the dependents would not be a ground to deny the application because of lack of good moral character. ■

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

PERSONAL OUTLOOK

WHAT I'M ANTICIPATING IN 2020

By Renelaine Bontol Pfister

2020 is here, the start of a new decade. I'm amazed at how time flies: it seems like not just the past year, but the whole decade went by in a blur. I think about Joni Mitchell's song, "The Circle Game:"

*And the seasons they go round and round
And the painted ponies go up and down
We're captive on the carousel of time
We can't return we can only look behind
From where we came
And go round and round and round
In the circle game*

Sometimes it feels like I'm riding a carousel and I'm doing the same things over and over, year after year. But there are events that make a mark and

break up this circle game.

Last year, I became a U.S. citizen. I was happy about it, considering what I had gone through with Immigration here in the U.S. I started working in New Jersey in 2005 on a working visa. Five years passed, and my green card application was still pending in the EB3 category. I moved to California with a new employer, who filed for my petition under the faster EB2 category. I won't bore you with the details, but there were a lot of bumps on the road, including my husband having to exit the country, endless emails and calls to USCIS, and many sleepless nights.

I finally received my green card in 2013, eight years after I started working in the U.S. In 2018, I was eligible to apply for my citizenship, and this was the easiest application I ever had to do with U.S. Immigration. I applied online myself and after about six months, my applica-

tion was approved. On May 17, 2019 I attended my oath taking here in Honolulu.

When I returned to work after my oath taking, my awesome co-worker gave me a hug and a pint of ice cream from Ben and Jerry's called "Americone Dream." He said, "Sometimes, the best Americans are not born here."

Yes, I'm happy to become a U.S. citizen. A lot of doors have opened for me, such as easier access to different countries and the right to vote.

However, I want dual citizenship, and my Filipino passport back. I've already applied for my Filipino citizenship. This was also easy: I looked up the requirements online for dual citizenship ([https:// honorlupcg.dfa.gov.ph](https://honorlupcg.dfa.gov.ph)), made an appointment at the embassy, and paid the fee. My oath taking is scheduled for February this year.

(continue on page 15)



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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Civil Rights Advocates Call on City to End Night “Sweeps” of Houseless Families

For the second year in a row, a growing list of officials, groups and individuals—representing a broad range of interests and constituencies—released a statement expressing disappointment in the continued and cruel “sweeps” of the houseless community, many of whom are families, by the City and County of Honolulu.

The statement is as follows: “Here we go again. The City and County of Honolulu is conducting sweeps of our houseless neighbors over the holidays—again. This despite

the fact that it doesn’t work (the unsheltered population grew 12% since last year). This despite the fact that the City has admitted ‘of course we know there aren’t enough shelter beds for all 2,400 unsheltered persons at one time.’ This despite the fact that the 9th Circuit Court of appeals has said sweeps like these are unconstitutional, and the United States Supreme Court refused an invitation to disagree.”

The statement goes on to list reasons in opposition to sweeps of the houseless. The

following officials, groups, and individuals joined in this statement: Lieutenant Governor Josh Green, African American Lawyers Association (AALA) of Hawai‘I, Aloha Immigration, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Hawai‘I, Church and Society, Harris United Methodist Church, Drug Policy Forum of Hawai‘I, Filipinx Advocacy Network (FAN), Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network, Hawai‘i Friends of Civil Rights, Hawai‘i Health and Harm Reduction Center (HHRC),

Daphne Barbee-Wooten, Attorney-at-Law, Prof. Gaye Chan, Department of Art and Art History, UH Manoa, Rev. T. J. FitzGerald, First Unitarian Church of Honolulu, Cecilia H. Fordham, Clare Hanusz, Attorney-at-Law, Faye Kennedy, former Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commissioner and Martin Luther King Jr. Commissioner, Prof. Mari Matsuda, William S. Richardson School of Law, Nathalie Rita, PhD Candidate at UH Manoa, Prof. Nandita Sharma, Department of Sociology, UH Manoa, Prof. Eric Yamamoto, Fred T. Korematsu Professor of Law and Social Justice at the William S. Richardson School of Law. ■

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US Citizens Remain Visa-Free Visits to PH Despite Duterte’s Visa Threat

By Jim Bea Sampaga

Despite Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte’s recent threat of requiring U.S. citizens to have a visa to visit the Philippines, the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu reassures the public that “the Guidelines on the Entry of Temporary Visitors to the Philippines... remain unchanged.”

U.S. citizens who spend 30 or fewer days in the Philippines do not need a visa. They should have a valid passport and flight tickets returning to the U.S. or their next port of destination.

For those who wish to stay in the Philippines for more than 30 days, visitors can apply for a Long-Stay Visitor Visa Extension (LSVVE) at the Philippine Bureau Immigration Main Office in Manila.

Duterte’s threat to require U.S. citizens a visa to visit the Philippines was a response to a bill introduced by U.S. senators and signed by U.S. President Donald Trump. The bill prohibits U.S. entry for individuals involved in the jailing Philippine Sen. Leila de Lima, a famous critic of Duterte.

To learn more about temporary visas to the Philippines, please visit dfa.gov.ph and immigration.gov.ph. ■

(Sagot sa Krosword Blg. 12 | January 4, 2020)

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

PMAH 42ND INAUGURAL GALA AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS | Saturday, January 18, 2020; 5:00 PM | Alohilani Resort Waikiki Beach, Honolulu | Contact JP Orias at jporias808@aol.com for more details

OHANA MEDICAL MISSION | February 6-15, 2020 | Pasuquin, Dadaeman, Sarrat, Cabugao, Sinait, San Esteban and Bagong Silang, Caloocan | For details, contact JP Orias at jporias808@aol.com

(WHAT'S UP, ATTORNEY: Court Says...from page 7)

Fourth Amendment provides that the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated.

6. What are some of the ways to minimize immigration processing delays? (a) Ask God to help you. (b) Ask your Congressman or Senator to follow up your application. (c) Tell USCIS you will file a mandamus petition if it does not act. (d) All of the above.

7. An alien refugee can win asylum and remain in the U.S. if the refugee can show that he/she is unable or unwilling to return to the country of such person's nationality because of past persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of: (a) Race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

8. Immigration and Customs Enforcement cannot be defeated because it has plenty of resources to deport aliens

who have violated immigration and criminal laws. (b) False.

9. President Trump's Executive Order on January 25, 2017, directing federal agencies to deploy all lawful means to secure the Nation's southern border, and for the immediate construction of a physical wall was upheld by the Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, reputed to be a liberal court. (a) True.

10. Can a naturalized US. Citizen be stripped of such citizenship in a criminal proceeding based on an immaterial false statement previously made to immigration authorities? (b) No.

WHO WON? Nobody, unfortunately. ■

ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. His current practice focuses on immigration law and appellate criminal defense. He writes law books for the world's largest

law book publishing company and writes legal articles for newspapers. Listen to *The Tipon Report* which he co-hosts with son Noel, the senior partner of the Bilecki & Tipon Law Firm. It is the most witty, interesting, and useful radio program in Hawaii. KNDI 1270 AM band every Thursday at 7:30 a.m. Atty. Tipon served as a U.S. Immigration Officer. He co-authored the best-seller "Immigration Law Service, 1st ed.," an 8-volume practice guide for immigration officers and lawyers. Atty. Tipon has personally experienced the entire immigration process. He first came to the United States on a student/exchange visitor visa to study at Yale. He returned to the Philippines to resume practicing law. He came again to the United States on a non-immigrant work visa to write law books, adjusted his status to that of a lawful permanent resident, and became a naturalized citizen. Atty. Tipon was born in Laoag City, Philippines. Tel. (808) 800-7856. Cell Phone (808) 225-2645. E-Mail: filamlaw@yahoo.com. Websites: <https://www.tiponlaw.com>, <https://www.hawaiianimmigrationattorney.com>, <https://www.bileckilawgroup.com>. This article is a general overview of the subject matter discussed and is not intended as legal advice. No attorney-client relationship is established between the writer and readers relying upon the contents of this article.)

(PERSONAL OUTLOOK: What I'm...from page 13)

I'm so excited to regain my Filipino citizenship that when the clerk at the embassy told me to wear either Filipiniana or Business attire for the ceremony, I immediately asked my cousins if any of them had Filipiniana outfits I could borrow. They didn't, but one told me her husband had a Barong that might fit me.

"Why would I wear a Barong?" I asked her.

She's my fashion-forward cousin, and she quickly sent me photos of beautiful Filipinas wearing feminine Barong Tagalog tops paired with flowing skirts in bright colors. I had no idea this was a thing.

Luckily, my boss, who is from

Manila, went home just around this time, and she bought a Barong for me. I'll be proudly wearing it to my oath taking.

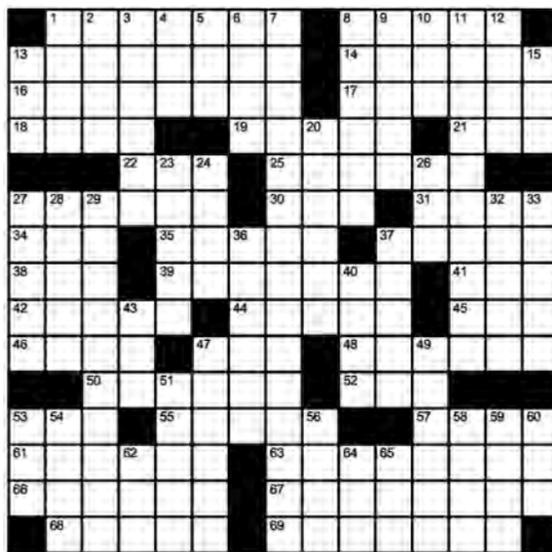
I'm happy to live in the U.S., and especially in Hawaii where it feels more like the Philippines. But the Philippines will always be my home, sweet home! ■

CROSSWORD No. 13 by Carlito Lalicon

ACROSS

- 1. Wandering
- 8. Star in Orion
- 13. Sushi bar offering
- 14. Breakfast choice
- 16. Utterly lost
- 17. Regained consciousness
- 18. Noodle
- 19. Overthrow, e.g.
- 21. May honoree
- 22. Nigerian native
- 25. See-through sheet
- 27. Hosted
- 30. Spanish bear
- 31. Enough, for some
- 34. Amigo
- 35. Circumference

- 37. Aged
- 38. Mouths, anatomically
- 39. Film material
- 41. Altar in the sky
- 42. Underground chamber
- 44. Attack
- 45. Backstabber
- 46. Ballyhoo
- 47. German article
- 48. Like some socks
- 50. Taking the place (of)
- 52. Golf bag item
- 53. Dowel
- 55. Verb with thou
- 57. Excursion
- 61. Domelike cover of ice over an area



- 63. Seconds
- 66. Excite
- 67. Gave off
- 68. Open, in a way
- 69. Pulled out

DOWN

- 1. Cairo's river
- 2. Cantina cooker
- 3. Bully
- 4. Astern
- 5. Criticize harshly
- 6. "Aha!"
- 7. Creamy desserts with ladyfingers
- 8. Like Chippendale furniture
- 9. Fine porcelain

- 10. Beauty
- 11. Kind of school
- 12. Mother of Apollo
- 13. Bar bill
- 15. Male turkey
- 20. Charge
- 23. Sired, biblically
- 24. Lyrical
- 26. Also
- 27. Age
- 28. Get a wife

- 29. Shooter's target
- 32. Reef material
- 33. Related maternally
- 36. Tend to, as a bad lawn
- 37. Category
- 40. Exactly
- 43. Ballpoint, e.g.
- 47. It's a wrap
- 49. Blow up
- 51. Asian capital
- 53. Airline to Karachi
- 54. Almond
- 56. Heavy reading
- 58. Automatic
- 59. Angry
- 60. Walker, briefly
- 62. Apprentice
- 64. Bit of raingear
- 65. Compass point

(Solution will be on the next issue of the Chronicle)

Have your organization's events listed in our community calendar. It's recommended to submit press releases a month in advance of your organization's event. Send information to filipinochronicle@gmail.com.

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