COVID-19 Disrupts Lives of Graduates
Seniors voice their challenges.
Page 1

Follow Your Dream!
Our Editor gives the green light to see the bigger picture. Go for your dreams!
Page 4

Pomp and Circumstance: Walking across the stage in front of your screaming (and overjoyed) family and friends to pick up your diploma and shake the hand of your principal. A big smile for the photographers. And being led all the way to your neck and in many cases, much higher so your family needs to hold on to the extra lei. Then a graduation party—whether an intimate one at the house, a restaurant or an extravagant one at Bishi at Ani or one of the community centers.

But for us, the Class of 2020, sadly it will not happen. The COVID-19 pandemic saw to that. Spring break was extended; athletic activities and other extra-curricular activities were canceled. Online classes were instituted and a decision was made that the grades through the 3rd quarter would be the final grades.

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Our Disrupted Year
Maui’s graduating high school seniors share how COVID-19 has affected their final year of high school
Ghensius Jhay Balaan and Romelyn Joy Tabangcura

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And the traditional graduation ceremonies were canceled—not even postponed. Instead the Department of Education announced virtual graduation ceremonies, with the graduate riding in a car with family to accept their gradua-
tion certificate cover.

But it’s not the same.

The following first-person statements from our fellow graduating high school seniors from Maui share their thoughts and possible lethal changes during the stay at home period.

"Since I was young, I knew I wanted to attend a university after high school but I never knew what I would major in. Through out high school, I have tak-
en numerous health educa-
tion classes which helped me towards my choice of major. After high school, I will be university at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. I will be studying to earn a Bachelor’s in Science in Nursing. With my ed-
tor in Elementary Education and become an Elementary School Teacher and create a meaning-
ful difference in Hawaii’s future through the youth. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of change and uncertainty to the world but one thing I know for sure is that there is always an after. And this is where my career will shine through. After graduation, I plan on appreciating each other with acts of kindness. After this dark-
time, we need to see the good in all the small things. After we recover, we will not be the same but we will be stronger. Together, we will heal as one country and one humanity."

"Tourism is a major aspect of what makes Hawaii’s home to me. Having been born and raised in the islands, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in the travel industry. In the fall of 2020, I will be attending the University of Hawaii at Mānoa and majoring in Travel In-
dustry. At first when news broke out about COVID-19, I wasn’t too worried. But because living in Hawai‘i, I didn’t expect this pandemic to reach our island home. But when the Hawai‘i DOE officially declared the stay at home statewide was closed for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year, I was devastated. As president of two clubs at Maui High School, I saddened me that we couldn’t conduct the school year without having our annual end of the school year banquets and socials. But what sadd-
dened me the most was the fact that my class had our last day in school with our friends and teachers without knowing it would be the last time we would see each other."

"COVID-19 has affected everyone in different ways. Personally, it’s affected all the ac-
tivities in my life as well as make for it's an in-
teresting senior year to say the least. It's really bummed me out to say the least. I actually miss going to school and seeing my friends and family. I hope to be able to celebrate our graduation ceremony cut short has been severely disappointing and emotional. Coming in terms of this the 13 years of schooling, that of all would with a virtual goodbye, has been difficult. Having reality sink that I will not be able to take part in traditions like Senior Breakfast, Senior Lū‘au or even walking the line, has been complicated. Though I understand, I am grateful for the ex-
perience I have been gifted to have experience. I take courage from parents, friends, and others, who know the importance of this milestone and boldly look towards what the future holds, even if the present is highly uncertain."

"I THINK COVID-19 is something to be dealt with seriously. The fact that this virus has forced many schools and businesses to close its doors. It also led to the cancellation of many important activities and events such as graduation. Graduation was one of the most important events to take place at the end of our high school journeys. To have graduation can-
celed was very sad to hear. Us seniors have worked very hard and have faced so much. I am hoping to have a banquet of the class at some point."

"I didn’t want my sen-
ior year to end like this but things happened unexpect-
edly. COVID-19 has caused a major impact on all of the things we do. It has made a huge impact on us, our lifestyle and our education. Many of us are expecting and looking forward to celebrating graduation with friends and family. I was hoping to have a bunch of fun to be in the graduate hall. From my friends and I, we have stuck together these last four years, put all our efforts and our best to complete everything. It’s supposed to be one of the most significant moments of our lives and yet COVID-19 took it away from us so quickly. No formal goodbyes from our friends and teachers. It is what it is and
I hope this pandemic will end very soon and go back to normal. After high school, I plan to attend the University of Hawai‘i Maui College and continue to work hard for my future. I hope you don’t lose hope because of this. This is just one of the obstacles we have to face and lessons we have to remember through our journey for a successful life. I pray to God for everyone’s safety.” Lielid Dagdag, Maui High School, daughter of Manny J. Dagdag and Grace B. Dagdag.

“To me, COVID-19 has brought upon a great deal of mourning of cancelled activities, not being able to see loved ones on a day-to-day basis and how we used to live our lives. As of now, I believe that this entire pandemic will change our day-to-day lifestyle and how we approach certain things. Though unfortunately, graduation got canceled. I think that we owe it to our healthcare workers and the rest of the essential workers to understand the situation. They are continuously providing service to our community and we owe it to them to abide by the regulations. Even with this pandemic occurring, this has not changed my plans for after high school. I still want to become a doctor (specifically a pediatrician), to help save lives and serve my community. I will be majoring in Biochemistry at Seattle University in the fall and am excitedly a pediatrician), to help save lives and serve my community. I do not know of a state of lethargic acceptance of what’s happening; I can say all the things I am missing, I can feel the dread of oncoming regret but I can’t do anything to stop it. So now, I’ll just keep pushing forward and look to a better college experience, hopefully at UH Mānoa where I can go Pre-Med. If anything, I am looking forward to our one-year reunion.” Joelyn Cassler, Baldwin High School, daughter of Ryan and Krisy Garcia.

“After high school, I plan to go to Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. I will be majoring in business studies of hospitality and entrepreneurial studies. After college, I plan to create my own business or work in the business industry. When I first heard about COVID-19, I really didn’t believe or think that it would have a negative impact on my dreams of attending college will really happen.” Taylor Ganner, Lahainaluna High School, daughter of Alfred and Charmonne Ganner.

“I’ve never been one for ceremony, so graduation wasn’t that big a deal to me in the first place. Yet, after taking the cap and gown pictures for our alternate ceremony, I couldn’t help but think ‘Is this really it?’ I was handed the little embellishments I had worked so hard for, took pictures that I hadn’t lasted five minutes and was out. I wasn’t expecting much of the traditional commencement but I didn’t feel the sense of closure and accomplishment that comes with graduating. I think I’m because I miss having a proper send-off from the daily life of high school. We didn’t get those last few months, then weeks, then days of jittery excitement. I miss my friends and teachers. It’s like I’m in limbo and all of a sudden I was slapped with a hack-job graduation and two weeks of finals to end my journey. Since COVID-19 was no one person’s fault though, I am kind of of a state of lethargic acceptance of what’s happening; I can say all the things I am missing, I can feel the dread of oncoming regret but I can’t do anything to stop it. So now, I’ll just keep pushing forward and look to a better college experience, hopefully at UH Mānoa where I can go Pre-Med. If anything, I am looking forward to our one-year reunion.” K. Lianna Garcia, Baldwin High School, daughter of Ryan and Krisy Garcia.
Disrupted ...
from p.3

the last semester of my senior year. It was really surprising to think that the last day of school before spring-break was the last time I would see all my friends and teachers on campus. After hearing that graduation would be canceled due to the circumstances, I was really heartbroken. Here I am, facing seeing all four your family and everyone that supported you from the beginning was the only thing I was looking forward to this year and it's a shame I won't be able to see that. But I know that it's just a little set back you'll face in a life of luck. "Althea Gardeque, Maui High School, daughter of Ninfa and Venancio Gardeque.

"The coronavirus will change our life as we know it but if we all work together we will come through it stronger. We just have to deal with it and move on. I am disappointed about the traditional graduation ceremony being canceled and not getting to celebrate with my friends but I am more disappointed about the cancellation of my robotics tournaments. Since January, my team has spent countless hours building and building our 120 lb. robot from scratch. Many of us sacrificed our after school, weekends and holidays. Some of us didn't even come home till 9 p.m., sometimes 11 p.m. We worked very hard and were looking forward to seeing it compete because we felt we had a pretty good robot. As a senior and the third head builder this robot, to me was the product of the knowledge and expertise I’ve gained from my seven years of being involved in robotics. The COVID-19 did not necessitate change my plans after high school. I am still planning on attending UH Mānoa to study engineering and team with the Air Force ROTC." Alex Macarez, Maui High School, son of Genor and Nora Macarez.

"As part of the class of 2020, I am incredibly devastated having my graduation canceled. For twelve years, I watched as each class ahead of mine walked across the stage, grabbed their diploma and received a traditional ceremony celebrating a big milestone in their life. It gave me motivation to complete my courses and be one of those to walk across the stage. It truly means a lot to me. This experience was taken away from the Class of 2020. Although with graduation being canceled causing a lot of heartbreak, I am grateful to know that the community still tries their best and let our class know that our hard work will not go to waste. I was able to make an alternative ceremony celebrating the Class of 2020. It is still a milestone to complete twelve years of school and moving forward, I will continue my education attending Grand Canyon University to pursue my degree and accomplish more milestones." Shamar Amber Medrano, Maui High School, daughter of Anabelle Medrano and Ernesto Medrano.

"It’s very saddening that the class of 2020 will not be able to experience what is a very important milestone in our lives. Throughout many years of school- ing and we didn’t even get to the best part of it, which is walking the line. We also won’t get to experience our senior luau as it was the last chance together. Those were some activities that I was really looking forward to this last quarter because it’s one of the last times our class will be together. This pandemic is a weird time for all of us and I just trying to get through it all like everyone else. Before this pandemic, I had plans of traveling to Canada for the last time as I have not seen fam-

the news about our graduation being can-
celed. It sucks for everyone to be in this position knowing that we spent thirteen years of our life going to and striving in school just to throw our work hard in the trash just because of the corona virus that be-
came a worldwide pandemic. I was expecting the HEMOE to postpone instead of canceling our traditional ceremony because the entire State of Hawai‘i would want to see the class of 2020 walking the line and getting their diploma in cam-
pus in their cap and gown instead of doing many alternative graduation just for the safety of avoiding the social distance. Bes-
ides the cancellation of graduation comes to the other events happening in school such as our Senior Lu‘au where we spend the last time together at our school as well as doing long practice for us to practice and sing our class graduation song and also walking out of school for the last time ever before leaving high school to go onto our own paths as an in-
dividual. I’m already assuming that me and my sister’s graduation party is canceled and my college visit as exploring my college had to be postponed to the day I have to move in. My plans after high school have stayed the same where I’m planning to attend Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California for the upcoming Fall 2020 Quarter where I’m majoring in Food Science. "Schaun Moniz-Quemado, Maui High School, son of Antonio Quema-
do, Jr. and Carmelita Quemado.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our way of living for the past couple of months which included us now wearing masks in public places and having a lockdown. The cancellation of our Maui High Graduation cer-
mony is something that I was participating in the ceremony was going to be a monumental moment for me and my family. I wouldn’t have been the first in my family to walk the line. I really wanted to see every single one of my classmates graduate and congratulate me but now I won’t have that opportu-
nity. I’ll still be attending college in the fall of this year and if this pandemic is still around then I will have the option of online college courses. I’ve been managing my ex-
tracurricular activities by doing virtual meet-
ing online like Zoom. I mail all my friends and I hope the COVID-19 starts clearing up around the world so I can go back to doing fun activities and spending time with friends and family. We can get through this together." Nadz Murray, Maui High School, son of Tony Murray and James Murray.

"COVID-19 has im-
pacted everyone’s life in the matter of months, there is no doubt about it. From the health care workers that work days on end trying to save lives, to those who no longer have jobs, trying to find ways to support themselves and their family. As for the high school seniors such as myself, we’ve lost one of the last remaining places of our high school careers. The experiences of senior KU, setting our seniors for the last time as we do the last things we have did together and the most important experiences of becoming a senior—graduation. Graduation was some-

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Importance of Higher Education

In the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." As an iconic world leader whose life demonstrates the power of education to change the world, we look to his example and know that what he says is real. For many of us who have been fortunate and blessed enough to benefit from the rewards of higher education, perhaps we too can provide some leadership to ensure our young people will take advantage of the countless opportunities for young people will take advantage of the countless opportunities for

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Paul Marano

From the Editor’s Desk
Vincent Bagoyo, Jr.
Editor & President • Fil-Am Voice
A beauty pageant or beauty contest is a competition that has traditionally focused on judging and ranking the physical attributes of the contestants. Now these contests have evolved to also incorporate personality traits, intelligence, talent, and a contestant’s ability to answer judges’ questions on various topics or subjects.

This month’s featured Sakada Offspring, Michelle Santos is an expert on the subject because she has been involved with the Miss Maui Filipino Scholarship Pageant for forty-four years. She truly knows the ins and outs of being in pageants and what it takes to win the contest. She lovingly shares her expertise when she is helping the girls throughout the contests. Michelle does not have children of her own but she is more than a mother to all the Miss Maui Filipino contestants all forty-four years. She is often considered by the pageant contestants as their Aunty Michelle or even their pageant mother. The girls create such great bonding between them and Michelle.

Michelle was born in 1957 on the island of Lāna‘i where her parents, John Santos, Sr. and Candida Santos were living at that time. Her Dad was working for the Lānaʻi Pineapple Company. She was two months old when her family returned to Maui and lived in Pā‘ia. She attended Pā‘ia Elementary until the 4th grade. In 1967, the entire family moved to Wailuku and Michelle attended Wailuku Elementary from 1967 to 1968. She attended ‘Īao Intermediate from 1968 to 1971. Then she attended St. Anthony High School from 1971 and graduated in 1975. In those days, employment for high school students was extremely limited compared to today where there are a lot of fast food joints which are continuously looking for employees. Michelle worked for the Maui Pineapple Company cannery. She worked as a trimmer during the summer prior to her senior year and she was able to pay for her entire tuition.

After graduating from St. Anthony in 1975, Michelle attended Maui Community College and majored in Secretarial Science. However, she did not graduate because she was hired by State Farm Insurance and worked there from 1977 through 2010. Besides State Farm Insurance, Michelle also worked for Royal State Insurance (2011–2013), Occidental Underwriters (2013–2015), County of Maui-Office of Mayor Alan Arakawa (2016–2019), and County of Maui-Office of Mayor Michael Victorino (2019–present).

Michelle has one brother, John Santos Jr. He also attended St. Anthony High School, Class of 1989. He works at Grand Wailea Hotel. He is married to Capri Santos.

Michelle is a very community-oriented person. She is involved in the following organizations and community activities: Maui Filipino Community Council as Recording Secretary, Miss Maui Filipino Scholarship Pageant as Pageant Director, Binhí At Ani Filipino Community Center as Recording Secretary, Mayor Alan Arakawa Kökua Community Fund as Recording Secretary, and a member of St. Anthony Church.

Michelle received several community-affiliated awards: Maui Filipino Community Council as Outstanding member of the Year (2002), Kalayaan Outstanding Leadership Award (2005), Filipino Centennial Celebration Outstanding Contribution Award (2006), Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce as Outstanding Filipino of the Year (2006). She is also a member of the Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant Pageant Director Committee.

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From the Editor’s Desk
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Education...
from p. 4

their education after high school. Technology is fast changing the trajectory of our economy. As an example, artificial intelligence (AI) is taking over many of the jobs that were previously handled by people. These new emerging technological advances like robotics are transforming many of our workplaces that now require higher education.

One of the practical reasons for earning a college degree is it prepares you for an eventual career. Because higher education allows you to pursue a career that interests you, and empowers you, that freedom to choose your career makes it more likely that you will enjoy it. Even more significant is the reality higher education provides a competitive edge in the career market. As employers recruit for their needs, applicants are ranked by educational standing and their specific fields of expertise: postdoctorate (specialization), doctorate, masters, bachelors degrees, in that order. In other words, not only is higher education recognized as a major factor, the completion of higher degrees of education is given commensurate value.

Financial security is everyone’s goal, a basic need. In the 21st century, education plays an even more significant role in other aspects of our lives. It is a proven fact gaining a higher education can increase your opportunities in the work world and can improve your overall quality of life. However, not every reason for pursuing a higher education is financial or monetary. Some of the best reasons are related to the personal growth of each person, a way of self-development, to better yourself, to strive always to become the best that you can be. Another option is taking courses towards credits for higher education is online, sometimes known as distance learning. There are many reputable universities and colleges offering this option by providing specific instructions for students on their websites. These online courses may be more financially feasible as compared to the traditional onsite learning. You do not need to leave home to earn a higher education. Perhaps it is also beneficial to mention here that for your young people who grew up on Maui, there are other reasons for studying away from the comfort and easy support near family. Many now believe that spending some years of learning, working, and living elsewhere results in a broader perspective about the world and that travel is a powerful educational experience. Travel is, in fact, sometimes a source of unexpected discovery of places we have only read about or seen in movies or newscasts, as well as about self, especially in the presence of many who do not share our values, experience or observations, and whose upbringing make them all the more interesting to us.

During this pandemic of COVID-19 many adjustments are being made by everyone about the things we once took for granted. Family and friends have become more precious. Self-reflection has led more people at a younger age to examine their own thoughts about legacy and what is profoundly important to pass on to the next generation. Life itself takes on a new kind of urgency to fulfill personal goals. Dreams for our children and their children have become increasingly intense and focused. In some ways, awareness about every aspect of daily living is seen with a higher, deeper sense of gratitude and that is definitely a good way to push ourselves to become the best that we can be.

Finally, we return to the question of what we can do to encourage and inspire our young Filipinos to seek education beyond high school. In order to maximize our efforts to encourage our youth to pursue higher education, we need to work together as a community. In addition to the scholarships, how about mentoring, career shadowing, leadership training, tutoring, to name a few. Our united mission to encourage our young people to strive for education beyond high school will give a clear message that as Filipinos, we give high priority to education as a value and goal for all our young people. We remind ourselves again that the main genesis of building the Binhí At Aní Center is to be a catalyst for higher education of our youth, not only as a wonderful place for social gatherings but more importantly, a place for learning. When we unite collectively in helping our young people in their pursuit of higher education—our potential is limitless, and our community will be a better place! ☁

Vince Bagoyo, Jr. / Editor

100th birthday celebration for Michelle’s Grandma, Emelia de Aquino.

Santos...
from p. 5

Commerce Gintong Pamana Leadership Award (2015), and Maui Filipino Community Council Outstanding Member of the Year Award (2019).

Michelle has several hobbies and interests: cooking, traveling, crafts, event planning, writing, and graphic arts. While she cherishes the pageant queens to the Philippines, she gets to see the different parts of the Philippines and truly experiences the rich Filipino culture, and gets to know the people, the different areas, the dialects and the food of each area, just to name a few. Michelle is probably more familiar with the Filipinos than most of us who were born there.

Michelle’s Sukada connection is through her maternal grandfather Pedro de Aquino, originally from Asingan, Pangasinan, Philippines. According to Michelle, her grandfather arrived in Hawaii in 1924. Pedro is considered as one of the old timers. He was recruited to come to work in the sugar cane fields of Hawaii and was assigned to work for Wailuku Sugar where he sprayed insecticide in the sugar cane fields. Pedro and his wife, Emelia Reyes lived in Wailuku, Maui. They raised eight children together including Michelle’s mom, Candida. Pedro died in 1998. The close-knit children of Pedro and Emelia de Aquino are Louisa Pacubas (deceased), Patricia Saltiban, Dolores Conroy, Andrew de Aquino (deceased), Fred de Aquino, Leonard de Aquino and Estrelita Marcellus. All of Michelle’s uncles and aunts graduated from St. Anthony High School.

I became involved with the Miss Maui Filipino Scholarship Pageant in 1976 as a contestant,” says Michelle. “I continued as a contestant coordinator and became the pageant director in 1998. It has helped me to become more confident and proud of my Filipino heritage. Being only half Filipino, I wasn’t raised in a traditional Filipino family or environment. Both my grandparents didn’t speak the language to their children but always instilled pride in them about the culture. My involvement with the pageant was mainly to honor my grandparents and to nurture Filipino women to become outstanding citizens. I had the opportunity to go to the Philippines see SANTOS p.14

Last Picture of Michelle’s Aunts and Uncles (her Mom’s Siblings). Back row: Leonard de Aquino and Fred de Aquino. Middle row: Estrelita Marcellus, Dolores Conroy, Patricia Saltiban, Andrew de Aquino. Front row: Louisa Pacubas, Emelia de Aquino, Candida Santos.
In small towns all over our state and hometown USA, high school graduation rites mark an important milestone for students and their families. Maui is no different. Graduation is both an ending and a beginning, capturing warm memories of the past and big dreams for the future. Former Governor Neil Abercrombie often waxed eloquently about the role of shared rituals in our civic life. Public observances complete one part of our lives while thrusting us into the next phase.

Maui High—the new one in Kahului—is my own alma mater, though I also hold a warm place in my heart for Doris Todd Memorial Christian Day School where I spent my elementary school years. I can still remember the cadence of the song, sung at football games and assemblies, and finally on graduation night:

We have come, dear Maui High School,
In our days of youth,
Here to find our joy and pleasure
In the search for truth.

Many studies you assign us
But we like each one;
And in this, our stride for knowledge
Leaves no task undone.

Maui High, we all do praise thee
For thy wise and kindly rule;
’Tis with loving hearts we greet thee
Our dear island school.

Maui High, we all do praise thee
For thy wise and kindly rule;
’Tis with loving hearts we greet thee
Maui High our island school.

I probably did not appreciate until years later that my marching down the War Memorial Stadium stairs to the strains of “Pomp and Circumstance” served as my commencement speech. I am sure he provided us three hundred or so Sabers and the hundreds sitting in the stands great advice. I presented the valedictorian address which was probably too long (the advisor did not give me a time limit). Friends and classmates assured me later that it was memorable and appropriate. My grandfather said it was good. My father granted approval. My mother cried. My sister said it was probably too long.

That was our traditional high school graduation. Looking back, I realize now it was a relatively new thing. As a kid, I attended an older relative’s graduation on the new Maui High School campus rather than the stadium. I remember that it rained.

The class of 1978 held the first commencement service at the War Memorial Stadium, I think it rained.

The class before us—the one with all the smart, good kids like Grant Chan and Michael Murata and Jeffrey Shumbo and Darin Okayama, and my neighbors Daphne Luna and Renette Carpio—commenced at War Memorial Stadium. It rained that night I seem to recall.

Liquid blessings was part of the Maui High graduation tradition. But if it rained on my graduation night I don’t recall anymore. My memories are of people—classmates, teachers, family and friends.

College commencement was almost a weeklong series of events, full of traditions and services meant to plant nostalgia into our hearts and graft it into our (fundraising) DNA. That May, my family traveled to New Haven, Connecticut and saw for the first time the college and town where I spent their hard-earned share of my tuition. In those days, we had no email or cell phones, let alone smartphones. Term papers were produced on old fashioned typewriters. Later in college, you could input essays on shared computer terminals, sending it to a printer almost a mile away (and you had to make another trip to fetch a corrected document). My mom sent handwritten letters (sometimes sending me a twenty-dollar bill with her notes) that I could speak briefly on the phone every couple of weeks for a few minutes. My sister got a car because they saved money on tuition.

When I proudly led my family around Old Campus where most freshmen lived, my grandfather grunted and asked why we didn’t just pave it over so there would be more parking for visitors. But with the rest of the family, he posed for a photo with the statue that stood in front of Bingham Hall where I lived my freshman year.

Class Day speaker was TV host Dick Cavett. Some classmates provided an insider baseball history of our class that at the time we couldn’t help but find grossly funny at times. After Class Day, we went back to our different residential colleges for a more intimate ceremony to receive our diplomas and to have a reception with our family and friends.

By the time I finished law school at Boalt Hall, I got the sense my family thought graduations were old hat. As a change of pace, I wore a New York Mets cap with my gown to receive my diploma. I suspected the clan dutifully flew out so they could explore San Francisco and plan a post-ceremony trip to Los Angeles to see other relatives and then a driving trip to Boulder Dam and Begas. They said I would have been welcomed to go along but they declined I need to see GRADUATION next page.
ed to stay in the Bay Area to study for the California Bar exam. Both the Giants and the A’s were in pennant races that summer so my law review books spent as much time in the bleachers as the Berkeley law library.

In retrospect, each graduation marked a progression of changes in my life. I hope I learned something about myself during each stop along the way. Now, years later, I value the small good moments more than I did at the time.

I’ve had the opportunity to deliver the commencement address twice at the University of Hawai‘i Maui College. In 2013, I told the graduates about the shared experiences of my childhood—guri guri with beans, party telephone lines, camping on undeveloped shorelines in South Maui. I also stole advice from someone else’s speech, urging the graduates to not be afraid to fail spectacularly—because you needed to change ‘um sometimes. I took my own advice by reciting ‘Ōlelo No‘eau, deathly afraid I would mispronounce some phrase or word. I’m told it was a little long.

Despite that, I was asked to give the commencement address twice at the University of Hawai‘i Maui College. In 2013, I told the graduates about the shared experiences of my childhood—guri guri with beans, party telephone lines, camping on undeveloped shorelines in South Maui. I also stole advice from someone else’s speech, urging the graduates to not be afraid to fail spectacularly—because you needed to change ‘um sometimes. I took my own advice by reciting ‘Ōlelo No‘eau, deathly afraid I would mispronounce some phrase or word. I’m told it was a little long.

Despite that, I was asked to give the address in 2017 as well. In that speech, I noted how quickly cultural touchstones had changed in just the four years since my last talk. Then as now, change is simply a given. And the speed of change changes too. I advised them to be pono even if no one else is.

I also suggested that the graduates leave Chancellor Lui Hokoana or President David Lassner a tip as they got their degrees. (“One or two bucks to show your appreciation for a job well done, and at a reasonable price.”) Lui and David must not have gotten much; I haven’t been invited back since.

For this Class of 2020, the end of school must be somewhat melancholy. I can’t help being sad that students will miss the traditional ceremonies. Already, with the County of Maui scheduling repairs to the Wailuku War Memorial Stadium parking lot during the graduation season, this year’s classes were facing a different schedule than past years.

For several years, I noted King Kekaulike commencing on Thursday, Baldwin High walking on Friday, Maui High finishing on Saturday and Lahainaluna celebrating on Sunday (I never figured out where Seabury Hall, St. Anthony and Kamehameha fit into the rotation). My first world problem this year was planning where I was gonna park for Baldwin and Maui High’s graduations.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, will leave Seniors a different experience from earlier Maui graduates. Instead of sharing the event with their classmates, they will have to observe social distancing throughout whatever ceremony is offered. Some will have a parade of cars on campus to receive their diploma sleeves. Others may have online celebrations. Graduation parties will have to wait until more than ten people can gather at a time.

Over the last year, my classmates and I had been talking about our 40th class reunion this June. (We mainly do that on Facebook because we’re old and don’t know Instagram and other social media platforms very well.) It’s tough to even plan the event with so many classmates living off-island, even abroad, and travel availability literally up in the air. I’m afraid continuing concerns and restrictions over the see GRADUATION p.10
“You can just drop me off in front of the post office,” Angel interrupted his thoughts. Drop off a maganda (beautiful) lady at a post office? Late at night? “I can drop you to your (house).” He offered.

“Indi (No), here is fine,” said Angel who opened the door as soon as the sakyanan (car) stopped. “I had a great time today. Thank you,” and exited the sakyanan (car).

“I’ll wait until you get to your balay (house),” Michael offered but Angel refused.

Instead, Angel waited for Michael to drive away before she walked towards the balay (house) she’s staying in. Heading to the tohunan (house), she saw that the lights were still on. She slowly and quietly opened the door.

The minute Lydia saw Angel, she started yelling. “Angel, it’s about time you got home. Where did you go the whole day? The dishes are waiting for you. So is the trash. The kitchen is a mess!”

Angel rushed to the kitchen and grabbed a sponge. Before she could ask, “What did you do today?” She was stopped by the tirading body trembling.

Lydia drifts towards her bedroom. The name calling doesn’t stop but it becomes distorted as she moves further away.

Suddenly, Lydia pulls her bahok (hair) and Angel almost falls backwards. “Why didn’t you put away the laundry? It’s been a couple days now and my clothes are not yet in my clos

Pansayna (I am sorry). Wiping the tears away from her na-wong face (face), Lydia dirits towards her bedroom. The name calling doesn’t stop but it becomes distorted as she moves further away.

The name calling doesn’t stop but it becomes distorted as she moves further away.

“Pansayna nai (I am sorry, Ma’am). I will put it away now.”

“Pukomana nai (I am sorry again)? Every day is sorry! Who do you think you are? You stay out late, probably you are going halo-holo (cruising) just to avoid chores! I’m going to pull all your break (hair) out. She grabs one side of Angel’s head and clenches even harder.

“Haan (No), please Ma’am, haun (No)!” Angel cries in agonizing pain. Angel whimpering in sorrow and barely able to speak, “Yes, pukomana naik (I’m sorry) Ma’am.”

Lydia releases her buhok (hair) and walks away. Meanwhile, Michael drives so slowly. His mind is full of questions about Angel. Why doesn’t she want me to see or know where she lives? What is she hiding from me? Is she living with someone else? What is this girl doing to me?

He reaches home and sits in his car for a long time. He sees the lights are on inside the balay (house) so he

knows his inahun (mom) is probably still awake watching her Filipino drama or teleserye.

He draws a deep sigh and slowly opens his sakyanan (car) door and walks slowly to the front door. He quietly unlocks the door and tippy-toes in.

“Is that you Michael?” his nanay (mom) asks.

Michael turns around and sees his nanay (mom) with the remote control.

“Oh hi, nanay (mom). Why are you still up this late?”

“I am watching my Filipino shows, Michael. I am your inahun (mother) after all! Why, I cannot watch? You know I work all day and take care of you and your dad after, can I not relax too? Watching my teleserye is my way of relaxing. Why are you asking about me? I am supposed to be asking about you?” He stood there at his yenu (mom) lectured him.

Mom: What did you do today?

Michael: Ah, you know… errands for the office.

Mom: Errands for the office until late night?

Michael: Yes, then went out cruising.

Mom: Cruising? By yourself?

Michael: With a kaibigan (friend).

Mom: A girlfriend?

Michael: No, ima (mom). Just a guyfriend (friend).

Mom: Ah… a kalaguran (friend), a maanyag (beautiful) girl. Yeah, your uncle just told me about it. He saw you with a naptors (beautiful) girl tonight.

Michael turns bright red with embarassment. He clears his throat and

Michael: Uncle Ray called you?

Michael reaches for a cup in the drawer.

Mom: Of course, he called me. Michael. He told me about your kufin (friend). How would I know about you and a migga (friend) that’s strolling in the park late at night. First Date? I hope you didn’t get in trouble with her parents. Did you drop her home? Where does she live? What is her name? What is her family name?

Maybe I know her parents? Maui is a small island. Did you kiss her? Tell your mother. When will I have grandkids? I’m getting old!

Michael drops his plastic cup on the kitchen floor and bums into the rice dispenser.

Michael: Yes, nanay (mom), I dropped her home… Haan (No), it wasn’t a date. Why so many questions? I have no answers for you.

Michael’s rupa (face) turns red as he rushes to his room.

Let’s Talk Pinoy!
Onset of COVID-19 has changed graduates’ outlook on adapting to today’s new normal.

Our lives are full of commencements, full of beginnings. We like having to experience a new beginning: of living a more healthy, physically distant life; one in which we will be less susceptible to catching germs and viruses that live all around us. You know, the world has known many pandemics. Hopefully, we will be learning a lot from these pandemics, especially from the 1918 influenza (Spanish Flu) pandemic, which killed an estimated 50 million people. It is estimated that because of this pandemic, the average life expectancy in the U.S. dropped by 12 years! Think of the beginnings that flowed from that aftermath!

We are in the season of commencements for students in our schools and colleges. They are in a time of new beginnings. Each student can look forward to the rest of their life, having graduated and moving into something new. Yet, this COVID-19 pandemic has put a cap on the celebrations that flowed from this milestone, in a way that has happened to the rest of our world as well.

Commencements are about beginnings, nonetheless. What do these mean as commencements, full of beginnings that flowed from this milestone? We all have, as we continue to live with less traffic and fewer people on the beaches. They experienced the simple pleasures of spending time with family (with appropriate physical spacing) or not. They learned to love the internet too much. They likely came to appreciate the comforts of gatherings of friends and family and perhaps, that Maui gradually resumed normal, value the way the community cooperated in flattening the proverbial curve. In a time when sacrifice might be a seldom used notion, the Class of 2020 may have glimpsed a little of what past generations experienced in coming to the islands for the dream of a better life. I would hope, however, that these moments will someday provide the same nostalgia for the moments shared with classmates as my own. More importantly, I trust these young adults can look back and reflect on their parents’ dreams and love for them. Regardless of how the Class of 2020 keeps the commencement rituals, it will become as much their tradition as what my class lived as ours.


Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran has walked in three commencement ceremonies—Maui High, Yale College and Bead Hall School of Law, the University of California at Berkeley. He has represented Central Maui in the State Legislature since 2009.

Let’s Talk Pinoy!

How is he going to explain to his inahun (mom) that he dropped Angel off in front of Pi’a Post Office? He doesn’t know where she lives; how is he going to invite her? He doesn’t have a phone number for her. How is he going to see her again? Panic overcomes him. Find out and keep an eye out for my article every issue. I’m Dulce, helping you to make the most of your life. Find out and keep an eye out for my article every issue. I’m Dulce, helping you to make the most of your life.

Sen. Keith-Agaran returned to provide the 2017 commencement address at UH Maui College.

Graduation …

From p. 8

the pandemic may require us to postpone or even cancel our plans. Like the Class of 2020, celebrating our time together at Maui High might have to be done in a different way.

Years from now, I hope their graduation day will not be full of regrets. Instead, I hope they have a measure of pride about living through these strange second semester of their Senior Year. They saw what Maui looks like with less traffic and fewer people on the beaches. They experienced the simple pleasures of spending time with family (with appropriate physical spacing) or not. They learned to love the internet too much. They likely came to appreciate the comforts of gatherings of friends and family and perhaps, that Maui gradually resumed normal, value the way the community cooperated in flattening the proverbial curve. In a time when sacrifice might be a seldom used notion, the Class of 2020 may have glimpsed a little of what past generations experienced in coming to this milestone. In a way that has happened to the rest of our world as well.

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Back in the day, writing letters was a big deal. That’s how we communicated with our loved ones who were far away. For example, the soldiers in World Wars I and II received encouragement from their family and friends through written letters. Those were precious.

There was also the popularity of pen pal services where people met and got to know each other through the exchange of letters via postal mail.

Then the telephone was invented. While it’s delightful to read letters, especially love letters, it seemed to be more exciting to hear the voices of our loved ones, so telephone became popular (later mobile phones and cellular phones were invented and offered more flexibility and use).

Email entered limited use in the 1960s. At that time users could only send to users of the same computer and some early email systems required the author and the recipient to both be online simultaneously, similar to instant messaging. In 1971, the first system able to send mail between users on different hosts across the ARPANET, using the @ sign to link the username with a destination server was invented by Ray Tomlinson. By the mid-1970s, this was the form recognized as email.

Email is like writing letters but it’s faster. Of course, you will need a computer and an email provider but people enjoyed using it. Computers slowly became part of many offices and home. People enjoyed getting email fast and the postal mail was nicknamed snail mail.

Skype was created in 2003 at a company founded by Niklas Zennström and Janus Friis. As Skype became available to mainstream users, it was a gift to many who are nurturing long distance relationships.

Oh, it is nice to hear the voices of our loved ones over the phone but it is even better to see them too! Skype was used by many Filipinos who loved ones who were far away.

In 2006, Facebook was introduced to the public and the social media became mainstream. It opened a new way of communication for families and friends. It even enabled us to get connected with long-time friends and forgotten family members who we have not spoken to for a very long time.

Then FaceTime entered our world in 2010 through the iPhone. While similar to Skype, it is easier to use if both you and the person you are communicating with have the required device, which is an iPhone. FaceTime Video uses the device’s front-facing camera to show the caller to the receiver and vice versa.

For many years, FaceTime only supported direct, person-to-person video calls but as of iOS 12.1, you can make group calls with FaceTime.

In January 2018, WhatsApp released a standalone business app targeted at small business owners, called WhatsApp Business, to allow companies to communicate with customers who use the standard WhatsApp client. WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook in February 2014. It became the world’s most popular messaging application by 2015 and has over 2 billion users worldwide as of February 2020. It is very popular because it is not limited to iPhone. Even Android users can use it.

Around this time, Facebook’s messenger also utilized the video conferencing technology and many families were able to communicate via video conferencing without having to pay extra or a subscription fee. Currently, this is my family in the Philippine’s choice of communication too (as you can see in the photos above).

Fast Forward to 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic entered our world and Zoom became the Long Distance Communication Tool of choice. Zoom conferences became a common practice when the Stay At Home ordinances were proclaimed in many places around the world.

Founded in 2011, Zoom helps businesses and organizations bring their teams together in a frictionless environment to get more done. Schools started using Zoom for online classrooms, families started using them to nurture their relationships while social distancing.

Oh, we have come a long ways with our long-distance communication technology! The questions now arise. Are we using these tools and technologies to nurture relationships? Are we using them to benefit us instead of distracting us? It is up to us to make the best use of technologies and our time. Let’s make the best of it. 🎉

Liza Pierce of A Maui Blog is an Interactive Media Strategist in Hawai‘i. She started blogging in 2006 and she loves talking story online and spreading aloha around the world. She’s lived on Maui since 1994 and considers Maui her home. A wife, a mother, a friend and so much more. She loves Jesus, Maui Sunsets Catcher, Crazy About Rainbow, End Alzheimer’s Advocate. Her life is full and exciting here on the island of Maui. Liza is currently the Interactive Media Strategist with Wailea Realty Corp.

Facebook Messenger has become my family’s video conferencing communication tool of choice during this pandemic.
T
to curb the spread of the infamous COVID-19 that has been sweeping nations off their feet, many have turned to alternative platforms to meet the demands of modern life. Operating using platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, and Skype, the world has become creative in their ways to unite while keeping their distance. From meetings to concerts to conferences, virtual communication is on the rise and changing life as we know it. In this scary time of stay-at-home orders, face masks, and social distancing, technology is what brings society together.

Schools across the state have been taking advantage of these virtual platforms to keep students engaged but of course it is completely different from what would have been the rest of the school year. To protect the safety of students and their families, schools communicate with their students virtually and seek ways to give students the health and safety of students and teachers alike, is this mode of schooling effectively getting through to students? The staff and students of Maui schools continue to explore and live through this topic.

Glenn Prieto, a business teacher at Maui High School shares his take on the effects of COVID-19 on school. The advisor of Maui High school’s DECA Chapter, Prieto helps his students prepare for a future in business, preparing them for competitions and setting them up for success in the business world. After placing at the Career and Technical Student Organizations conference and qualifying for the International DECA Conference, Prieto and his students were faced with a disappointing reality right as the virus started to make its mark on the United States. “We were planning a trip in April for Maui High DECA students who qualified to compete at the International DECA Conference, which was canceled.”

The news did not stop there. As the state started making extensions to spring break as the virus took on Hawaii, Prieto was left to question what would happen over the course of the rest of the school year. “Then came the subsequent extension of Spring Break followed by the Stay-at-Home order. Questions started to race through my mind with regards to grades, school work, and what will happen with the kids; graduation; end of year Business Academy events. With the introduction of distance learning, some of Prieto’s questions were answered and teachers had to face the reality of the situation. “Once the reality settled in, it came down to how can we continue some form of continuity of learning and sense of normalcy to ease anxiety and any other emotions that students may be feeling,” Prieto says. Though new for many students across the state, Prieto is no stranger to distance learning. “I for one had earned my graduate degree mostly through distance learning, it was difficult at first. It takes a lot of preparation on the part of the teacher and a lot of discipline and follow-through for the student. The positive side of it is that it offers flexibility and can happen from anywhere and at any time.” Prieto’s success proves the effectiveness of distance learning on his part but he agrees that, for his students, it is not comparable to traditional classroom learning. “I cannot speak for all students, but for my students, the benefit is not there.” Much of Prieto’s lessons involve engaging his students in real-world situations in their area of learning: business. “It includes hands-on real-world experiences where, for example, finance students operate a satellite branch of a credit union or entrepreneurship students run their own pop-up businesses on campus. Students can learn and interact virtually through distance learning but the hands-on, learn-by-doing experience is not there.” Through these difficult times, Prieto makes sure to utilize the tools that he is provided with to give his students the best online learning experience he can. “I have extended the time usually demanded to allow students the flexibility and time to complete the learning activities. Live sessions are conducted as needed or by appointment and I make myself available through ‘office hour’ times, throughout the hours of the usual school day.” As the virus starts to calm down in the state, Prieto has high hopes for the upcoming school year. “The hope for next school year is that we are still able to offer the same level of learning and activities as well as support for students, no matter what form of schooling will be like. It has been challenging thus far and it will continue to be that way until the pandemic can be faced head-on either through treatment or a vaccine.”

The School-Community Relations Coordinator of Maui High School, Stacy Woodson looks at her view of the virus’ impact on school life. As the Department of Education responded to the virus as the situation escalated, Woodson found a sense of understanding, especially considering the novelty of it all. “This is uncharted territory. I understand that as much as possible they want to make decisions based on information and data that comes in. It’s a great big balancing act. Making informed decisions is best and yet at the same time sometimes you just have to make the best call with the information you have in front of you and run with it.” Woodson agrees traditional classroom learning is the best but she also makes sure to consider what is best for the current climate. “For most situations, I feel learning will be more successful in a physical school or educational setting but I feel distance learning was the best alternative and almost the only alternative next to not having any kind of learning at all.” Distance learning is the best alternative to none but
Disrupted …

from p. 4

ting that I have always dreamed of, not only was it because it meant we were done with school but it was a milestone we could proudly say we accomplished by simply walking down the line. Although this has created a barrier of negative emotions on seniors, as they lose motivation, I still plan on pursuing academic goals. Even though the world has come to a stop, it doesn’t mean your life has to. I still plan to go to the University of Hawai‘i Maui College, and take liberal classes at the good in all the chaos. With the absence of school, I am still experimenting and practicing about the different career paths this pandemic has created. Obviously there isn’t much we can do but follow the laws that were set in place to keep us safe.

“COVID-19 was a crazy ride, many ups and downs. Through the hardships, the class of 2020 has bounced back and reap the rewards that await in the future. Moving forward into college is going to be a challenge, yet exciting experience to attend Hawai‘i Pacific University located in Forest Grove, Oregon where I plan to stay for the next six to eight years getting my Ph.D. In Psychology to eventually become a clinical psychologist. I hope other senior has the same desire to continue and realize we are a part of history and everyone’s eyes are on us now. It just matters how you use the spotlight.” Hazel Mae Patrocinio, Maui High School, daughter of Araeli Prado-Rodriguez and Maya and Arturo Prado Vivero.

“Because of COVID-19, we won’t be experiencing Senior Breakfast, Senior Walk, Graduation and Homecoming. Our graduation will be on hold due to this pandemic, however, the thought of what type of nurse I want to be still haunts me. I plan on becoming a Trauma Nurse. If I face the challenges I have now, I know that was a serious issue the global community would be facing. I am sure that the government made a very tough decision of canceling our graduation ceremony, but I still pains me that I won’t get to experience this special day. Unlike the past, the class of 2020 won’t know the feeling of their loved ones cheering when our name gets called, walking up the stage to grab our diploma and having lei thrown around our necks to the point we can no longer see. Not only did our graduation get taken away from us but also the last few months of high school that is usually spent to honor us, the seniors. Because of COVID-19, we won’t be experiencing Senior Breakfast, Senior Walk, Graduation Practices, and most of all, the last day of school. We were not given the chance to say goodbye to our favorite teachers, to attend our last class of each subject and to sit next to the people who we just spent the last four years with. We had our last day of school without even knowing it.” Nicole Abigail Rawson, Maui High School, daughter of Clarita and Nelson Rawson.

“COVID-19 has affected everyone in many ways. Our average daily life has changed. We have to stay home and avoid gatherings for everyone to be safe. Also, we have stopped going to school, which made our last year of high school hard. My classmates and I never had proper goodbyes, final walk at our school, and a traditional celebration. It’s disappointing but it was for everyone’s safety. After high school, I still plan to go to University of Hawai‘i Maui College, daughter of Merlinda Rafael and Felix Rafael.

“After high school, I plan on attending UHMC and take liberal arts. At this age, I am still figuring out what I want to plan on taking for a career but I am still experimenting and researching about the different career paths this world has to offer. After this pandemic is over, I plan on being an intern for people with different professions to find out more about my likes and dislikes when it comes to the workforce. I think that the COVID-19 occurring at this time is very depressing for everyone, not just for us seniors. Due to this virus, many of our plans got canceled and are not able to stay indoors. However, if it weren’t for this virus I would not have gotten to spend time with my family and I would not have learned the value of the things I had or could do before, such as getting to hug my friends and seeing my cousins from the other side of the island. I realized that I lost a lot of things and that it is really accurate when people say that ‘you don’t realize the value of something until it is gone.’ Obviously, I am excited that I couldn’t experience the traditional way of graduation and the time I had left of school has been cut off. However, I understand that it is a new decision to keep our families safe.” Luzayla Roloff Rambasa, Maui High School, daughter of Amado Rambasa, Jr. and Luzviminda Rambasa.

“After high school, I plan on attending the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I intend to study in Medical Technology and lend my set of hands towards our community’s healthcare. In order to get there, we cannot go back to how things were. And whether I continue my studies virtually or in a distant face-to-face setting, I know that I will learn nevertheless. And whatever happens, I know that I can surmount anything.” Aubrey Santiago, Maui High School, daughter of Alejandro Santiago and Myla Santiago.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is very unfortunate. Not only are lives being affected but many important events such as graduation are canceled. Many seniors, including myself, are sad by this decision but the safety for our community is the priority. Although there is the pandemic going on, my plans for college—attending the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and majoring in pre-medicine—still remain.” Princess Santiago, Maui High School, daughter of Nancy and Jerry Santiago.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will certainly be one of the biggest events that I have witnessed throughout my life. You would imagine that staying home all day and not going to school on work is a dream but I can most certainly tell you that it’s not! Especially for those who value daily routines and are used to going to school, this virus has truly disrupted the balance of our lives. The cancella- tion of many events, including graduations, due to the pandemic, has been hard to digest but it truly is heartbreaking for myself and many other seniors that were looking forward to a traditional graduation ceremony. Many graduating seniors look forward to the same, continuing my education at the Uni- versity of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I intend to study in Medical Technology and lend my set of hands towards our community’s healthcare. In order to get there, we cannot go back to how things were. And whether I continue my studies virtually or in a distant face-to-face setting, I know that I will learn nevertheless. And whatever happens, I know that I can surmount anything.” Aubrey Santiago, Maui High School, daughter of Alejandro Santiago and Myla Santiago.

Lauya’s Pig’s Feet Soup

This recipe took first place Award at the Maui County Fair 1973 University of Hawai‘i Extension Women section for their theme “Uses of Papaya.”

Ingredients

- 3 lbs. Pig’s Feet, cut up
- 2 med. Green Papaya, cubed
- 1 med. Round Onion, sliced
- 2 Bay Leaves, optional
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste
- 6 cups Water
- 4 cloves Garlic, crushed
- 1 Tbsp. Peppers
- 1/4 cup Vinegar
- Ajinomoto®, optional

Procedure

Put pig’s feet, garlic, onions, peppers and water in large pot. Add salt to taste. Let it boil for about an hour or until pork is soft or tender. Add vinegar. Peel and remove seeds of papayas. Cut into cubes and get into the pot. Do not overcook. If you do not have green papayas, use chayote fruits or two potatoes and half of a medium cabbage, chopped.
Sakada Offspring

Cont’d from p. 6

Santos ...

from p. 6

twelve times and each time I become more grateful but busier.
In 2010, Michelle was diagnosed with breast cancer. She bravely bat-
tled the disease with flying colors which makes her cancer free, her 10th
year anniversary this year. What a cancer survivor! With God’s grace and
Divine Mercy, Michelle is with us to-
day helping us in the Filipino commu-
nity with continuous capacity especially with the Miss Maui Filipina Scholar-
ship Pageant.
In 2017, Michelle was the primary car-
carer for her mom until she died in
2018. She claims her greatest joy is
her two nieces, Celise and Jena. Michelle said she always dreamt of
intering into Culinary school but never

Distance ...

from p. 12

there are challenges that can arise out of it. “There are many, many difficul-
ties with trying to make this sudden transition to online learning, especially for
students collectively are doing
ability. “I think leadership, teachers,
everyone is contributing to their best
evolving situation, Woodson knows
versus face to face, weakened commu-
on what teaching strategies can be uti-
lized in that learning curve, technical issues/malfunctions and
then, of course, things like a limitation
with an abrupt transition to distance
for a state-wide public school system.
Some of the main issues that come up
with the advent of coronavirus, I instant-
ly knew that the cancellation of the tradi-
tional graduation commencement for
the class of 2020 would follow. When the
Hawai’i DOE officially announced the
cancellation it was best for the safety and health of
our state, even if that meant sacrificing all
he had been waiting for. “I know this
was a difficult decision for our
school to make. Although my senior year didn’t end the way I ex-
pected it to, I’m glad our government to make it easy and fast and make a deci-
sion to keep our state safe.” In place of
the traditional graduation ceremony,
schools in the Baldwin-Kekaulike-Maui
complex have resulted to another al-
ternative. Although unorthodox for a
Hawai’i graduation, Ghensens keeps in
mind the safety of the community.
“Maui High School will be doing a
drive-through graduation commence-
ment. It’s not what I envisioned my
graduation to be but it’s going to be
the most we’ll get our schools to do to
ensure a safe environment for us all.”
Placing first at the Career and Techni-
cal Student Organization (CTSO) competi-
tions held in Honolulu, Ghensens was look-
ing forward to ending his HOSA ca-
career with a bang in Houston, Texas af-
after placing at the International level in
the year prior. “Having been one of
the Hawaii’s delegates at the HOSA In-
ternational Leadership conference in
the previous year, I can personally say that nothing can compare to an in-
person conference. As a result of last
year’s conference, I was able to cap-
ture a bronze medal with my partner
Brenna Alviedo and the moment we
were up on the stage was so magical
that we looked forward to attending the
next year’s conference.” Like many
other big events worldwide, the Inter-
see DISTANCE back page

Ating Kabuhayan

Commencement ...

from p. 10

accountable but in a more lingering
and less-by-the-clock way. How one
graduates from high school, from col-
lege or from training for a job or a ca-
career, will now be measured on how one
"thinks that all of this is not about
you but about others around you.
That face mask you need to wear now
is about keeping those around
you healthy. Earning that college
degree or getting that job, that will
now depend on how responsible
you are for the sake of others.
We are, indeed, commencing
into a new way of life, a new nor-
mal. Plagues—this pandemic—
does not discriminate. It is rampant
in urban and rural, even
isolated areas, from the densely to the
sparsely populated. In the 1918 pan-
mic, young adults, usually
unaffected by these types of infectious
diseases, were among the hardest hit
groups along with the eld-
ery and young children.
We congratulate our graduates and
wish them every success. But we
must caution them that as they com-
mence into this new normal, to be
safe and healthy, thinking of others,
especially those they live closely with,
their family and loved ones. As they
commence, we ask them to think of the
responsibilities that come with their
academic accomplishments. In
May in the year 2020 this at the very
least, includes wearing a face mask
while going out and about.

John A. Hauoli
Tamoai
Tamoai is a Priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii and a ret-
tired Social Worker, with 42 years of li-
censed practice. Born and raised on Maui,
he lives in Kahului with his wife, Susan D.
Tomoso, who is a retired Educator, with 30
years of teaching experience.

Michelle as a 1976 Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant contestant.

Michelle, a 1976 Miss Maui Filipina Scholarship Pageant contestant, found the time to do so. So instead, she cooks for her family and friends. Michelle’s favorite motto is, “Treat
others the way you want to be
treated.”

Her best advice to the girls
who are thinking of entering
the pageant is, “We will teach
collaboration as we provide you with important
tools to help you grow in life
and become successful
citizens of this community.
It doesn’t matter whether you
win or lose for it’s not the
crown on your head that counts, it’s how you wear it
in your heart.”
Michelle Santos, we salute you!

Lucy Peros is a retired school teacher, having
 taught at St. Anthony Grade School and Waiehe’s Elementary School.

Dubbed “Distance Learning,” teachers
can schedule and hold classes with their students via programs such as Zoom.

”Many who are not as accustomed to
tech in their daily activities have
to take the long-resisted plunge to em-
brace and utilize technology in new
days due to Corona. In a way, that
may be one plus coming out of all this.” Though she sees the positives in
this digital revolution, Woodson also
sees some difficulty. “A tough part
about it in our current situation is that
EVERY ASPECT is digital now. There
is very little benefit from technology in
the daily routine since it is currently
our only source of information, collab-
oration, socialization, entertainment,
etc.” Because of the virus, many
school events were canceled, including
the beloved graduation of our Seniors.
“As far as school events, many of
these were just postponed or canceled.
Graduation is the biggest heartbeat
to them all. Any virtual variation that
we can think up will still pale in com-
parison to a traditional ceremony.
I am among the biggest heartbreaks caused
by COVID in the Education sector.”

Alongside our Seniors, Woodson took
the time to honor all the individuals in
school who were affected. “Ultimately
I hope the upcoming school year
shows us how quickly we can bounce
back from major setbacks like the many
discriminatory events that suddenly came
at us.” Amidst these trying times, Wood-
on shares her words for the commu-
nity. “Let’s work together, be under-
standing, be cooperative, be resilient,
 don’t complain, be resourceful, be

hopeful, help others where you can.”
New alumnus of Maui High School
Ghenesen Balaan shares his thoughts regarding the many changes
that COVID-19 has prompted in his
life. As a Senior, Ghenesen was looking
forward to finally getting to see
on the graduation stage but he already
knew that the pandemic had other
plans. “When I first heard about the
possibility of school being closed due
to the coronavirus, I instantly
realized that the cancellation of the traditional
graduation commencement for
the class of 2020 would follow. When the
Hawai’i DOE officially announced the
news, I was distraught; we had our
last day at school without even know-
ing it.” Ghenesen knew this decision
was best for the safety and health of
his state, even if that meant sacrificing
all he had been waiting for. “I know
this was a difficult decision for our
school to make. Although my senior year didn’t end the way I ex-
pected it to, I’m glad our government
able to act fast and make a deci-
sion to keep our state safe.” In place of
a traditional graduation ceremony,
schools in the Baldwin-Kekaulike-Maui
complex have resulted to another al-
ternative. Although unorthodox for a
Hawai’i graduation, Ghensens keeps in
mind the safety of the community.
“Maui High School will be doing a
drive-through graduation commence-
ment. It’s not what I envisioned my
graduation to be but it’s going to be
the most we’ll get our schools to do to
ensure a safe environment for us all.”
Placing first at the Career and Techni-
cal Student Organization (CTSO) competi-
tions held in Honolulu, Ghensens was look-
ing forward to ending his HOSA ca-
career with a bang in Houston, Texas af-
after placing at the International level in
the year prior. “Having been one of
the Hawaii’s delegates at the HOSA In-
ternational Leadership conference in
the previous year, I can personally say that nothing can compare to an in-
person conference. As a result of last
year’s conference, I was able to cap-
ture a bronze medal with my partner
Brenna Alviedo and the moment we
were up on the stage was so magical
that we looked forward to attending the
next year’s conference.” Like many
other big events worldwide, the Inter-

see DISTANCE back page
While you cannot mark this milestone by walking in your caps and gowns to pomp and circumstance, your... community are proud of you and remain hopeful and confident about your futures. Make the new world your own.
From distance learning to virtual events, all we can do is be grateful for the measures that the world is taking to protect the health and wellbeing of society.

From distance learning to virtual events, all we can do is be grateful for the measures that the world is taking to protect the health and wellbeing of society.

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Distance... from p. 14

national Leadership Conference was canceled because of the virus. Instead, convention planners opted for a virtual event where all competition and seminars would be held online via various testing platforms and virtual conference applications. Ghenesis, however, thinks this solution does not make up for the real experience. “Honestly, when I heard the HOSA International Leadership Conference was taking the virtual route, I was disappointed. I would rather have them cancel it instead and offer the next year of attendees a much better experience in person. In other words, I was less motivated to attend.” Though there to compete, Ghenesis believes there is a whole other purpose of being at the conference as well. “The whole hype of the HOSA Future Health Professionals International Leadership Conference was to meet people from all over the world who share the same passion you do about the healthcare field in person.” Planning on entering her time at Maui High, “When I heard that school was canceled for the rest of the year, Romelyn was distraught to know what would happen to the last stretch of her time at Maui High. “When I heard that school was canceled for the rest of the year, I was sad at the fact that I wouldn’t be able to experience the last few months of my senior year with people I’ve grown up with,” Tabangcura says. Alongside her life-long bonds are her connections with the respected teachers of her school, a proper goodbye abruptly taken by the pandemic. “I also developed good friendships with a few of my teachers so I’m sad I couldn’t say a proper goodbye to them before I go to college.” When it comes to graduation, her feelings are different. “I’m sad that the class of 2020 won’t be able to experience graduation that we’ve waited twelve years for. It is the one-time event that marks the end of a chapter and opens a new one as we step into the adult world.” Thankfully, though, as her school organizes a drive-through graduation, Romelyn knows she is getting the best she can in these circumstances. “Although it is not the same as a traditional ceremony, we should still make the most of the situation and keep in mind we are all in this together.” As the president of her school’s HOSA chapter, Romelyn has placed at the state level in Human Growth and Development for almost her whole time in HOSA and, like Ghenesis, has qualified to go to the International Leadership Conference in Houston, Texas. Though committed to her event and her future, Romelyn has her own reservations regarding the virtual convention. “When I first heard about ILC being converted to a virtual conference, I was pretty sad because the physical experience of attending conferences, meeting new people and sharing and creating memories with my peers won’t be the same as participating in a virtual conference.” Despite the untraditional approach, Romelyn shared her gratitude towards the opportunity to represent her chapter and her state. “However, I am grateful that we are still given the opportunity to showcase our skills and abilities even though it may not be the traditional way of doing so.”

Admittedly, the pandemic that we are all living through does not make the best climate when it comes to school and even life in general but members of the community are making the best out of the situation. From distance learning to virtual events, all we can do is be grateful for the measures that the world is taking to protect the health and wellbeing of society. While essential workers risk their health for the sake of our community, we all can do them justice by staying home and doing whatever we can to keep both ourselves and others safe. Distance learning and virtual platforms have given everyone the opportunity to do so amidst a time where everyone is facing difficulty.

Google® Is Not Everything  
A monthly column authored by high school students. The title of the column emphasizes that education is more than just googling a topic. Google® is a registered trademark. This month’s guest columnist is Alexis Jo Viloria, a Junior at Maui High School. She is the founder and President of Maui High’s SaberScribes, their journalism club. Alexis is also a committed member of HOSA-Future Health Professional as the Secondary Representative of the Hawaii HOSA Executive Council and a state gold medalist. Alexis hopes to one day become a Pediatric Physician. She is the daughter of Alex and Juvy Viloria.