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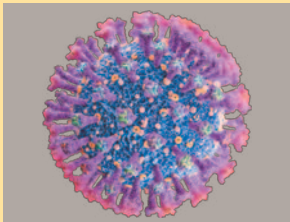


# Fil-Am Voice

Magkaisa Tayong Lahat | “Let Us All Unite”

August 2021 • Vol 5 No8 | FILIPINO AMERICAN VOICE • UPLIFTING OUR COMMUNITY | FREE

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## Managing Tourism: Searching for Balance

Alexis Vilorio

After a year and a half of travel restrictions, safety protocols, quarantines and vaccines, tourism is once again carving its path here on the island. Travelers ecstatic to escape their homes have been running rampant on the island since the opening of Hawai'i's pre-travel testing program. The State has since allowed tourists to bypass testing with proof of vaccination. Previously, this option was only open to Hawai'i residents traveling to neighbor islands.

As the vaccine distribution slowly inches to the level that government and health officials suggest will move the islands closer to normalcy, residents increasingly remain focused on other concerns regarding tourism on the islands. Can the natural resources of the island support



“Over tourism” or its sudden rapid growth in Hawai'i has been a recent concern since the government lifted lockdowns and encouraged resumption of business—not considering the recent rise in the Delta variant. On July 9, after the 4th of July holiday, masses of visitors were at the airport baggage claim area.

PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA

so many people on the island? With anecdotal reports of the airport at full capacity with elongated waits, the road to Hāna blocked by hordes of rental cars and beaches

packed with visitors, the concerns of residents appear valid. How can we limit tourism to ensure the quality of life for those who call Hawai'i home? What can we

do to balance jobs with growing tourism counts?

In the months following the epidemic shutdown, residents began calling for sus-  
see TOURISM next page

## LEADERSHIP SERIES

### Kirk Caldwell

The First in a Series.

PHOTOS COURTESY KIRK CALDWELL

**E**DITOR'S NOTE: In 2022, Leadership for the State and Maui County will be at the forefront with elections for Governor, Maui Mayor, County Council, and due to reapportionment, all State Senators and State Representatives. The primary election will be held in on August 13, 2022 with the General Election on November 8, 2022, and it's not too early to start thinking about the type of State and County leaders needed. While no one has officially declared their respective candidacies, several have expressed interest in the gubernatorial race: for-

mer Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell, Business Executive / former First Lady Vicky Cayetano and current Lt. Governor Josh Green. They were simultaneously sent identical questions with the same response date. This month's Focus is on former Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell, September's Focus will be on Business Executive/ former First Lady Vicky Cayetano and October's Focus will be on Lt. Governor Josh Green.

**1. IN 100 WORDS OR LESS, PLEASE TELL US YOUR BACKGROUND, INCLUDING**



Mayor Kirk Caldwell

**DETAILS ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, EDUCATION, AND EXPERIENCE IN THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND NON-PROFIT SECTORS.**

I was born in Waipahū, grew up in Hilo as the oldest of five, and have a wonderful wife and daughter. After working on the plantation as a kid, I graduated from Tufts and UH law school. I served as a state legislator, Honolu-

lu's Managing Director, and managing partner at a law firm. Serving as Honolulu Mayor during COVID-19 re-enforced a passion to make change for a better quality of life for Hawai'i families and to preserve our local values, values I experienced with my former bosses—Senator Inouye and Chief Justice Richardson—and in the communities I grew up in.

**2. IN 200 WORDS OR LESS, PLEASE TELL US: A) WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR HAWAI'I/MAUI? B) WHAT IS RIGHT WITH HAWAI'I/MAUI? C) WHAT IS WRONG WITH HAWAI'I/MAUI?**

We must not lose what makes Hawai'i special—our people. My vision is a Hawai'i that maintains our values while providing more opportunities for our local families, including access to education,

see CALDWELL p.3

FREE





**Rod Antone**  
Executive Director, MHLA



**Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez**  
Maui County Council Vice-Chair



**Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran**  
Senate Ways and Means Committee



**Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura**  
Infrastructure & Transportation Chair

## Tourism ...

from p. 1

tainable changes to tourism but opinions vary on what actions can and should be taken. Some call upon state and county legislators and tourism executives to act while others call upon tourists themselves to be mindful of the ground they land on. (See Liza Pierce’s column Kwento-Kwentuhan on page 15 for advice to tourists.) Some residents are taking their own actions and finding ways to protect Hawai’i and the beauty it possesses.

Maui native Rod Antone, the Executive Director of the Maui Hotel and Lodging Association (MHLA), shares his take on tourism in recent times. Even before the beginning of the pause of Hawai’i’s visitor industry, Antone states the industry was already

working on ways to better manage tourism.

But then came the pandemic and those plans were placed on hold while the industry tried to figure out how to manage the crisis at hand.

“At first we thought maybe this would last a couple of months, then later it was that this would last a couple of years,” Antone said. “So first we had to figure out all kinds of logistics, such as, ‘How do we shut down our properties?’ And ‘How much staff do we need to keep it secure?’ More importantly we asked ‘How can we make sure our employees continue to have access to medical benefits during a pandemic?’ And then that question led to ‘How long can we last paying benefits while the hotel operations are closed before we can’t any longer?’”

Having previously worked as the Communication Director for former

Maui County Mayor Alan Arakawa, Antone realized a medical pandemic was not one of the scenarios the Maui Emergency Management Agency (formerly Maui Civil Defense) had ever planned for.

“Working with the County of Maui, we have contingency plans for many natural disasters, such as hurricanes and tsunamis but the pandemic plan was never developed.” Thankfully though, hotels were quick to adapt and react. “We were all learning as we went along. One of my general managers said we’re ‘writing the book as we read it,’” he said.

As far as the return of tourism, Antone said University of Hawai’i economists forecasted it would not be until the end of 2021 that tourists would return in decent numbers. But by February Antone said hotel general managers were seeing more and more reservations.

“They could already see more groups booking for May and into the summer,” Antone said. “What the economists may not have taken into account was Hawai’i would be the only travel destination available for mainland U.S. tourists. Asia and Europe are still difficult for foreigners to access so they’re coming here instead.”

Antone elaborates those working in the industry do not intend to bring the island chaos but benefit those working and living on the island. Trying to find ways to better manage tourism, he emphasizes that as a local, it is important to prioritize residents who call Maui home.

“We want tourist dollars to benefit the community and it does,” Antone said. “But we can find ways to manage better and communicate with our visitors more efficiently.”

Tourism impact instead of tourism marketing seems to be on the minds of government leaders. “For years, we have talked about the impact of the tourism industry but it wasn’t until the industry was shut down, that we had the opportunity to see what a sea of 22,000 parked rental cars looked like, as they sat for weeks unused or how much wastewater the transient accommodations created, as we projected 70 percent less wastewater in West Maui for the upcoming fiscal year,” said Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, Vice Chair of the Council and Chair of the Council’s Budget Committee.

Recently, the Hawai’i State Legislature and the Maui County Council have used the power of the purse to refocus tourism.

The State Transient Accommodations Tax—or TAT—commonly called

the State hotel room tax—applies to all transient accommodations including vacation rentals, condominiums and other dwellings used by visitors (and off-island residents). The current TAT rate is 10.25 percent. In years past, the State took in all the TAT receipts and allocated a portion of it to the various Counties while also funding the Hawai’i Tourism Authority (HTA).

This past legislative session, the Legislature passed a bill making major changes to the TAT and HTA. Governor David Ige vetoed the bill but the Legislature overrode him.

“The Legislature, by overriding the Governor’s veto, effectively shifted HTA’s funding from dedicated amounts from the State hotel room tax to federal and state general tax revenues,” said State Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran (D-Central Maui), who serves as the Vice-Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. “HTA will need to justify future budget requests to the Legislature like other state agencies and programs.”

By requiring HTA to come to the table each year to justify their planned spending, the Legislature will have some control over how HTA spends state money. “Legislative leaders also hope HTA will shift from simply marketing and growing tourism for the sake of growth to more effectively managing the hospitality industry with local communities and local officials concerns in mind,” explained Keith-Agaran. “Legislators heard a message loud and clear from constituents that returning to the unbridled growth of the last decade was not acceptable to much of the community, including people dependent on tourist spending.”

On Maui, the County Council also reigned in the funds budgeted for the Maui Visitors Bureau (MVB). Historically, the County budget provided grants to MVB which were to “be used to market and promote Maui County as a visitor, meeting and convention destination to domestic and international markets.” Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura (Upcountry), who is Chairperson of the Council’s Infrastructure and Transportation Committee, noted the County’s funding for MVB decreased over the years from \$4 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 to \$3.7 million in FY 2019, \$2.54 million in FY 2020 and \$1.3 million in FY 2021. “MVB’s mission is to promote Maui as a destination,” explains Sugimura. “During this past budget session it became evident that the

see TOURISM p.4



## This Is How We Farm

As a proud part of Hawai’i’s agricultural community for 50+ years, Bayer’s farms on Oahu, Maui and Molokai are dedicated to the development of new varieties of crops that can benefit people around the planet.

Globally, agriculture continues to face myriad challenges including food production, labor shortages, water stresses, pest control, and plant diseases. Bayer Hawaii works to produce modern seeds that help farmers achieve better harvests while reducing their impact on the environment. Our ultimate goal: to help create and support a sustainable food system for future generations.

Learn more about How We Farm at [hawaii.bayer.us](http://hawaii.bayer.us).

@BayerHawaii



Science for a better life





Caldwell with Community Workforce Agreement and construction leaders.



Caldwell at a Foodbank drive at Aloha Stadium.

# Caldwell ...

from p. 1

jobs, and affordable housing. Working summers on the sugar plantation while growing up reinforced in me what is right with Hawai'i. The work we put in on the *sabidong* gang made me realize that we all have more in common than separates us. We valued hard work, our families, and our community; we were able to get through a hard day's work by laboring together. With economic and public health challenges ahead, I know the people of Maui and Hawai'i are ready to work together to make change inspired by our values that put people first. We still see inequality in Hawai'i, including racism faced by the Filipino community, a lack of affordable housing, and barriers to accessing education and good jobs. With tourism reopened on Maui, our visitor industry should bring back workers and provide pathways for advancement. I also think it is important that Maui College provide the tools our youth need, including expanding the nursing program and providing access to other health-related certifications and degrees.

## 3. IN 125 WORDS OR LESS, PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HAWAII'S/MAUI'S FILIPINO COMMUNITY.

As a teenager, my father wanted me to do the hardest job on the plantation, and that was weed spraying with the *sabidong* gang. I worked on a team with Filipino Americans for multiple summers doing the toughest work of my life. We would eat lunch together, share stories, and I learned

that each one shared their hard earned pay with their parents, families, and communities. That sense of responsibility to one another, compassion, and respect for others, where they came from, and what they dream of, are our shared values. As Mayor, I had the opportunity to work more with Honolulu's Filipino community, travel to the Philippines, and see these values at play again. I look forward to developing an even stronger working relationship.

## 4. IN 500 WORDS OR LESS, PLEASE IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN THE THREE GREATEST NEEDS OF HAWAII'S/MAUI'S FILIPINO COMMUNITY.

As I talk-story with families across the state, many of us share the same concerns: how to get a good job and afford a home, how to give our kids a good education and future, and how to feel safe and welcome in our homes and communities. These concerns directly relate to economic security, providing a future for our keiki, and keeping our families safe. Tourism is picking up; however, many workers are not being called back to work, and positions are being eliminated. I have walked picket lines with Hawai'i's workers, and I will continue to support workers' rights and fight to protect those jobs that our families rely on. I am also dedicated to increasing truly affordable housing. Too many of our local families are moving to the continent because they are being priced out. If we want to ensure a bright future for our keiki, we must ensure that they can afford to live in Hawai'i. As Honolulu Mayor, we not only tried to incentivize the private development of units, but we directly built more than two thousand units for Hawai'i fami-

lies and made City lands available to build units our local families could afford. At both the island and state levels, we have to do much more. Building a brighter future for our keiki means ensuring that we have strong public schools, access to affordable college, and good jobs. As Governor, I would invest resources in Maui College and our UH system. Expanding the nursing program and providing opportunities for youth to pursue other health-related career paths, such as health technicians, would allow for Maui's youth to access a quality education and job opportunities without having to leave the island. We must al-

so root out all racism that allows structural inequality to exist, including racism that prevents Filipino Americans from accessing educational opportunities and the jobs they deserve. Keeping our families safe has taken on new meaning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many Filipino community members care for Hawai'i residents on the frontlines, including in our healthcare system and other essential services. With so many of our doctors, nurses, and other essential workers putting their lives on the line for us, as Governor I would work to make Hawai'i safe for those front-

see CALDWELL next page

**"We must also root out all racism ... that prevents Filipino Americans from accessing educational opportunities and the jobs they deserve."**



Caldwell at a Healthcare Professionals Lives Matter event.



# DON'T WAIT TO VACCINATE

## IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU

COVID-19 and its variants are on the rise in our community, again. This is the "pandemic of the unvaccinated" as nearly all new, positive cases are within unvaccinated residents. Let's work together to be a part of the solution and to protect our most vulnerable from the potentially deadly consequences of this virus. Don't let COVID-19 happen to you or to the people you love. If you have not been vaccinated yet, please do so right away and help end this pandemic.

**Some facts to consider:**

- The Delta variant is the most contagious of the COVID-19 variants.
- 83% of the new cases in the U.S. are caused by the Delta variant.
- If you are fully vaccinated and test positive, you are 93% protected against serious illness or hospitalization from the Delta variant.
- 99.5% of new COVID deaths are in unvaccinated people.
- Consider our keiki under 12 years old – they aren't eligible to get vaccinated and have returned to school – let's do what we can to protect them.

For more information on how to get the COVID-19 vaccine, visit [mauihealth.org/covidvaccine](https://mauihealth.org/covidvaccine).







## From the Editor's Desk

Vince Bagoyo, Jr.  
EDITOR • FIL-AM VOICE



A beach in a South Maui resort area during the statewide lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic shows a pristine and serene, sandy shore.

PHOTO: CEASAR LIZADA

# Leaders with Bold and Real Solutions Needed to Meet Maui's Challenges ...

*Elections are just one year away!*

Can you believe we are just a year away from electing new leaders for our County? Our community faces many challenges. Visionary leaders are needed to act on behalf of our residents and our visitors.

During every political campaign, candidates promise to address and solve problems. We ask our current leaders, "Have you fulfilled your promises? What have you delivered?" Voters ask themselves who deserves to be re-elected and which leaders should get

our votes.

This is a critical time for citizens to exercise their right to vote. Voting in Hawai'i is now more convenient than ever. No stamp required when you vote by mail. No more excuses!

Some of the most daunting issues to be urgently addressed include domestic violence, drug abuse, homelessness, mental illness and much more.

At the top of the list is the housing shortage for our residents. This crisis must be faced head-on. Not

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## Tourism ...

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need to 'manage' visitors was more critical than 'promoting' Maui as a destination. The visitors arrived in pre-pandemic numbers once travel resumed and the need to promote Maui as a destination was not critical. They came without promoting."

Over Sugimura's objection, the County Council decided to eliminate the MVB line-item grant. Sugimura explains she believed MVB should play a critical role in the management of tourism. The Council did include a \$500,000 line item for a Tourism Management Grant, which Sugimura supported. Any outside agency, including MVB, has the option to apply for the grant.

The State Legislature also brought more control of tourism dollars back to the Counties. "The Legislature also finally authorized another tax power to the counties, allowing them to levy their own TAT up to 3 percent, allowing the Mayors and County Councils more flexibility in managing visitor impacts on local infrastructure and programs," said Keith-Agaran. "Previously, the Counties relied on real property taxes and certain fees for general use with some portion of the State collected TAT." Maui Mayor Michael Victorino and the County Council, led by Chairperson Alice Lee are working to implement the new visitor tax as quickly as possible.

"Many admit we've become far too over reliant upon the tourism industry, a reality underscored by our having experienced the highest unemployment rate in the country due to COVID-19," said Rawlins-Fernandez. "We must diversify quickly, investing in the structural and social holes the pandemic revealed, such as growing more of our own food, expanding our healthcare industry, and occupational education opportunities."

ties."

The steps towards a sustainable island economy and ethical tourism seem steep to many and will not be quick to climb. "Where will the jobs come from?" is a common question posed. This was clear when most of Maui's population was living off unemployment benefits during the height of the pandemic. The hospitality industry simply provides a large proportion of private sector jobs in Maui County. MHLA's Antone estimates there are 10,000 jobs in Maui's visitor industry and many small businesses rely on the tourism industry.

The State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism recently released some startling information as to job loss: "Maui County lost 20,600 jobs or a 25.7 percent decrease in the first quarter of 2021 over the same quarter of 2020. Jobs decreased the most in Accommodation which lost 6,300 jobs or 48.5 percent. This was followed by Food Services and Drinking Places which lost 5,800 jobs or 55.2 percent, Professional & Business Services which lost 2,100 jobs or 28.8 percent, Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities which lost 1,700 jobs or 35.4 percent, and Retail Trade which lost 1,700 jobs or 17.3 percent in the quarter. The Government sector lost 600 jobs or 6.5 percent in the quarter."

Agriculture—sugar and pineapple—used to employ the highest number of Maui residents. When Alexander & Baldwin announced on January 6, 2016 it would be closing H.C.&S., Hawai'i's last sugar plantation, only 675 employees remained.

In December 2018, Mahi Pono announced it purchased the former H.C.&S. agriculture fields. Mahi Pono's website proclaims "We are a Maui farming company here to transform 41,000 acres of vacant former sugar cane land into a thriving hub

see TOURISM p.6



Donna, Maya, Kirk, and their two dogs.

## Caldwell ...

from p. 3

line workers, safe for our local families, and safe for our small businesses. We had to make hard decisions when the pandemic began, but we did it to ensure the safety of our communities. Additionally, Filipino Americans experience disproportionately higher rates of certain underlying conditions,

which places them at higher risk during the spread of COVID-19 variants. We must work to fill healthcare access gaps, increase Filipino American-specific data collection, and invest in increasing language access to serve all members of our community. I believe that relationships are the heart of Hawai'i, and I look forward to continuing to listen, learn, and build relationships across our diverse communities. ✨



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It's back to school time. How was your experience in buying your kids' school supplies? Are you happy the kids are finally going back to the classroom to learn? It's no longer logging in to the laptop or computer to join the class. Of course, not everyone is happy about kids going back to the school because of

# Let's Talk Pinoy!

Dulce Karen Butay

safety/health concerns. Well, we can't please everybody. No matter what you do or what you say, someone will not be happy about it. The best thing

to do is stay healthy. Boost your immune system by eating healthy and exercise regularly. Always practice personal hygiene. And have a good night's sleep. Let's see what's going on with Michael and Angel this month and where they will be going next, shall we?

"YOUR BAHAY (house) is so big. It's *napintas* (beautiful)! Only the *maya-man* (rich) people in the Philippines have this kind of *balay* (house). Do you have maids too?"

"Sorta. We have a *bale* (house) cleaner who comes to the *bahay* (house) just to tidy up a bit every day. We also have a yard man who comes every Wednesday morning. And a handyman who comes in to do some light repairs. *Nanay* (Mom) sometimes has a cook who comes to the *balay* (house) to prepare food but she actually loves to bake.

"In West Philadelphia born and raised, on the playground is where I spent most of my days, Chilling out maxin, relaxing all cool, and shooting some b-ball outside of school," Angel sings bobbing her head.

"When a couple of guys who were up to no good started making trouble in my neighborhood. I got in one little fight and my *Ima* (mom) got scared and said, you're moving in with," Angel looks at Michael who is grinning ear to ear.

"With your aunty and uncle from Bel-Air!" They both laugh while singing.

"Oh come on! It's not like that. Seriously, we are not really *manggaran on* (rich). You know, we have the big *maanyag* (beautiful) *bahay* (house), the nice cars and the family reputation status but really we are up to our necks in debt. It's actually the opposite honestly. Sometimes I wish we acted more like normal people rather than trying to impress the world and keep up with the Joneses."

Michael turns off the car engine and opens his *pintuan* (door). He walks to Angel's side and opens the *ganhaan* (door) for her.

MICHAEL: "Let's go to my room ... "

Angel looks at him with horror in her eyes.

"It's not what you think, silly," he says with a grin on his face. "I just have to go get a change of clothes and other important things. We will go to another *balay* (house)."

"Whaaaat? You have another *balay* (house)?" Angel looks completely bewildered.

Michael punches in numbers on the key pad and pushes the *lukub* (door) inward.

"Yes, my parents have a *bale*

English	Pilipino	Ilokano	Cebuano	Ilonggo	Ibanag	Kapampangan
House	Bahay	Balay	Balay	Balay	Balay	Bale
Mother	Nanay	Nanang	Inahan	Nanay	Yena	Ima
Door	Pintuan	Ridaw	Lukub	Ganhaan	Puwerta	Pasbul
Beautiful	Maganda	Napintas	Gwapa	Maanyag	Makasta	Malagu
Job	Trabaho	Ubra	Trabahu	Obro	Trabaho	Trabaho
Grandpa	Lolo	Apo lakay	Lolo	Lolo	Lolo	Inkong
Come in	Pasok ka	Dumanun Kayo	Moabut sa	Sulod	Mattalung ka	Lungub
Hand	Kamay	Ima	Kamot	Kamut	Lima	Gamat
Lips	Labi	Bibig	Naabil	Bibig	Bibig	Labi
Where?	Saan?	Inno?	Aha?	San o?	Sitaw?	Nokarin?

(house) in Kihei, a house in Kula and an apartment building in Nāpili. It's my dad's 'retirement' portfolio that he keeps talking about. Most of them are being rented out and managed by a property manager. Come in." Michael holds the *puwerta* (door) so Angel can go in.

"Oh wow. Your *bahay* (house) is so big and *maganda* (beautiful). It's so amazing. Here I am dreaming of just having my own room and a simple *trabaho* (job) when your family has so much land," Angel replies.

"It's okay Anj, my family has been in Hawai'i for so long that I cannot even remember who is the one who came here," responds Michael.

Michael closes the *ridaw* (door) behind and continues to walk to the living room then to the stairs.

"How about *Inkong* (Grandpa)?" Angel asks while slowly walking upstairs glancing at the pictures on the wall.

"*Lolo* (Grandpa)?" Michael questions. "Nobody talks about him, so I really don't know."

"Whaaat? How can you not know about your *Apo Lakay* (Grandfather)? Is he still alive? *Nokarin* (Where) is he?" Angel asks.

Michael unlocks his room and goes to the closet. He grabs a bag and tosses some shirts in it.

"Hello?" Angel says and closes the *pintuan* (door).

"Michael?" Angel persists.

Michael doesn't respond and goes to the restroom and loads some body products into another bag.

Angel grins. "Oh, you want to ig-

nore me huh?" she says to herself.

She decides to stand by the bathroom *pasbul* (door) doing a sexy pose where she can barely contain her laugh.

"What about now? Can you tell me about *Lolo* (Grandpa)? *San o* (Where) is he?"

Michael exhausts a deep breath and snaps his toothbrush. "I don't wanna ... ." As he turns around, he sees her standing there and a bit startled, he stumbles on his words.

Angel stands by the bathroom *ganhaan* (door), flaunting her figure and over emphasizing her chest. Smirking as she looks at him.

He stutters a bit and turns back around. "I don't want to talk about him," he says as he drops his head looking into the bathroom sink. "Oh, there is a pubic hair in this sink, how embarrassing," he says to himself. He slowly shifts his eyes to the ground and scans the area just using his eyeballs so as to not make it so obvious. "OMG, there is a lot of pubic hair everywhere!" A panic alarm goes off in his head.

He quickly walks backwards and into Angel as she stumbles backwards and falls down almost bumping her head on the bed frame.

"Oh my gosh Michael, what was that about," Angel asks.

Michael is now standing in the doorway, leaning, smiling and trying to act normal. "Oh nothing," he says while trying to cover as much area of the *pintuan* (door) as possible.

Angel tries to get up and her *kamay* (hand) slips as she falls down again. "Oof!" Her face slides to the rug. Her *ima* (hand) is on top of something under the bed. She clenches her *kamot* (hand) and pulls it out. It is a magazine. *Playboy*. Shocked, she gasps.

Michael screeches and tries to grab the magazine.

Swiftly, Angel moves it just out of reach and they struggle on the ground.

Angel laughs and continues to tease him. He struggles to capture the magazine in her hands.

Rolling on the ground, the struggle quickly changes as Angel turns around. And as Michael lies on top of her, their faces close up.

Michael looks her in the eyes and then to her *labi* (lips). "Oh, she's so *malagu* (beautiful)," he says to himself.

Moving his gaze down to her *labi* (lips), he gives her a kiss.

They kiss and the magazine drops to the carpet.

So where is this kiss leading to? Keep an eye for the next issue. Please visit us on our Facebook page and leave us a comment or ideas at [www.facebook.com/filamvoicemaui](http://www.facebook.com/filamvoicemaui).

I'm Dulce, helping you to master your Filipino Languages. Like always, let's laugh, let's *making* (listen) and Let's Talk Pinoy! *Hanggang sa muli!* (Until next time!) *Ingat!* (Take care!)

**Dulce Karen Butay** was graduated from Maui High School and received her Associate in Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Maui Community College. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, specializing in Accounting, from the University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu. She is currently the Administrative Officer at the County of Maui, Department of Finance. Butay is a licensed Resident Producer of Life Insurance with World Financial Group and an Independent Consultant of Saladmaster. She is now part of Saladmaster's Travel Club and won an all-expenses paid trip to Cancún, Mexico. Butay has traveled to Texas, the Philippines and Thailand as one of the delegates from Island Healthy Solutions, a Saladmaster dealer here on Maui.





From the  
**Editor's Desk** | Cont'd from p. 4

being a new problem, it has been talked about by many elected officials for over two decades and yet it gets worse year after year, with no real solutions in sight. The main root of this crisis is the lack of affordable housing. For decades, Maui County failed to build enough housing to keep up with housing needs, creating a shortage that has pushed up prices for all homes. It is not surprising the median price for homes on Maui has now reached over \$1 million and climbing, making it even more difficult and unaffordable for many hardworking families, even when they work at more than one job. Unfortunately, housing costs have risen much faster than wages.

Low-income households have borne the brunt of rising rents. When people must spend so much on rent, they have little cash left for savings, children's education, health-care and other essentials, and still left with hardly enough to buy spam and Vienna sausage. With a temporary loss of income due to the pandemic and unexpected expenses, they easily fall behind on their rent and will soon face eviction.

A source of assistance is Hawai'i Community Asset, a nonprofit organization which was contracted at a cost of \$300,000 by the Maui County Council to complete a Comprehen-

sive Housing Plan for Maui. This plan was recently submitted to the Council for review and consideration. The plan calls for 5,000 housing units built within five years to supposedly address Maui's housing crisis at an estimated cost of a whopping \$1 Billion or more (yes, with a big "B"). Can Maui afford to spend this huge amount of money to address this crisis? Our hope is this plan will not be another study collecting dust on shelves but will be implemented with bold leadership. There have been multiple housing studies done in recent years but somehow real change has been illusive, lacking in both focus and action.

Another challenge facing Maui is the impact of tourism on our local lifestyle. This issue was magnified during the lockdown, at which time we enjoyed not having traffic problems on our highways and having the beaches all to ourselves. Some have called for "no more tourists," but without any reasonable solutions to replace our tourism industry, on which we have heavily relied upon for economic stability. Most of our residents are employed in tourism and related businesses. Without our visitors, there would be many unintended consequences such as high unemployment—even more home-



**A beach in Kā'anapali**—a West Maui resort area—after the statewide lockdown had been lifted, shows shore birds lounging on the beach.  
PHOTO: CEASAR LIZADA

lessness—and families unable to send their children to pursue lifelong dreams of a higher education as well as an inability to pay for mortgages and rents, leading to an increase in social problems. Moving to a no tourism policy is not a viable option. We need to find that delicate balance.

The question should be, "How do we best manage our tourism industry to lessen the impact on our local way of life?" I believe we can do both if we all work together to create, discuss and agree on real solutions.

The COVID pandemic highlighted many of the problems and weakness-

es Maui is facing and may continue to face if we do not have the collective resolve to address them. It will require leadership and community unity to move forward with real solutions for our day-to-day problems.

It is in the voters' hands to choose our leaders in next year's election. We urge all to get involved early ... to get to know the candidates ... and then to VOTE. ✨

*Vince Bagoys*  
VINCE BAGOYO, JR. | EDITOR

**Tourism ...**

from p. 4

of diversified agriculture." In August 2019, Mahi Pono planted its first-row crop, potatoes, which is available in Maui's stores. Since then, Mahi Pono has planted and harvested other crops including watermelon that is available at the local Costco. And along Kūihe-lani Highway, signs indicate Mahi Pono planted lemon trees. In Hāli'imaile, Mahi Pono planted citrus and coffee trees. Mahi Pono, under the leadership of former Lt. Governor Shan Tsutsui, now the Chief Operating Officer, has slowly advanced its operations.

But its current number of 280 full-time employees is a far cry from the thousands formerly employed by the sugar and pineapple industries, or even the numbers when H.C.&S. closed in December 2016.

"We need balance and reform of the tourism industry to better protect our natural and cultural resources and our residents' quality of life," said Rawlins-Fernandez. "The 2012 Maui Island Plan stipulates that the ratio of residents to tourists should never exceed 1:3 respectively, and that's a good start."

Ultimately, those in the community intertwined with the tourism industry have the intent of supporting locals and the land they live on. After all, it is their home too. For



**Shan Tsutsui**  
Chief Operating Officer, Mahi Pono

Antone and others involved in tourism, it is rooted in their love for Maui: "This is my home. I'm in the lodging industry and I know how much it already gives back." ✨

**Alexis Joy Vilorio** is a first-year student at Stanford University, receiving a full scholarship. She is majoring in Anthropology and Journalism. Both of her parents work in the visitor industry.

Assistant Editor **Alfredo Evangelista** contributed to this story. He is a graduate of the University of Southern California (B.A. Political Science) and the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law. His father worked for H.C. & S. while his mother worked for Maui Pineapple Company.



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Justice Benjamin Menor, the first Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of Hawaii, with his Law Clerk/Extern, Alfredo Evangelista in the Fall of 1982.  
PHOTO COURTESY ALFREDO EVANGELISTA

I have the disadvantage of not being a former law clerk. I've never worked in a court. Some of my friends interned while in college or law school for judges. After law school, I went straight to work at a Honolulu law firm. A lot of what goes on in the Judiciary is as much a mystery to me as other residents without a law degree. Last year, I provided some remarks recognizing the service of retired Justice Simeon Acoba, Jr. At the time, he was "retiring" from service on the Hawai'i Access to Justice Commission. This Commission was established on May 1, 2008 by Supreme Court

Rule 21, with the purpose to substantially increase access to justice in civil legal matters for low-income Hawai'i residents. This mandate was a major development marking a heightened movement to improve access to justice by institutionalizing the aspirational goals that justice must be extended to every resident of Hawai'i regardless of economic, social, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, age, geographic or other barriers to equal access to the civil justice system. This Commission held its first official meeting on July 23, 2008 and since its inception it has operated as a platform for proposing, initiating and evaluating expanded access to civil justice across different constituencies while facilitating improved coordination and collaboration among service provider and partners. After leaving the Supreme Court of Hawai'i, Justice Acoba continued a life-long devotion

# DINENGDENG & PINAKBET

## An Empty Bench

No Filipino has been on the Appellate Courts since Justice Simeon R. Acoba, Jr.  
Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran



Justice Mario Ramil (second from left), the second Filipino to sit on the Supreme Court and Justice Simeon R. Acoba, Jr. (second from right), the third Filipino to sit on the Supreme Court, were both honored by The FilCom Center in 2014.  
PHOTO COURTESY ALFREDO EVANGELISTA

to public service by accepting continued appointment to the Commission. Justice Acoba started his legal career as a law clerk to Chief Justice William S. Richardson. From there, he served as a special assistant to the University of Hawai'i President Harlan Cleveland in 1970 and later served as a Deputy Attorney General for the State of Hawai'i in 1971 before entering private practice from 1973 to 1980. While in private practice, Justice Acoba served as special counsel to the State Division of Occupational Safety and Health, the Campaign Spending Commission and the Hawai'i Public Utilities Division. He also served as a majority attorney for the Hawai'i State House of Representatives and later served as an adjunct professor and in-

structor at the University of Hawai'i School of Law and Hawai'i Pacific University. He also shared a law office with another young Filipino lawyer, Benjamin J. Cayetano. Acoba began a judicial career in 1979 when Chief Justice William Richardson appointed him as a *per diem* Judge in the District Court of the First Circuit. Eight months later, Governor George Ariyoshi picked him for the Circuit Court of the First Circuit where he served for fourteen years, from 1980 to 1994. He was only the third Filipino to serve as a Circuit Court Judge (the others were Alfred Laureta, appointed by Governor Burns in 1967, and Benjamin Menor, ap-see JURISTS next page

## History of Gubernatorial Appointments to the Bench

- 1967 Gov. Burns appoints Alfred Laureta to Circuit Court [appointed to federal court in 1978]
- 1969 Gov. Burns appoints Benjamin Menor to Circuit Court [elevated to Supreme Court in 1974]
- 1974 Gov. Burns appoints Benjamin Menor to Supreme Court [retired in 1981]
- 1980 Gov. Ariyoshi appoints Simeon R. Acoba, Jr. to Circuit Court [elevated to Intermediate Court of Appeals in 1994]
- 1989 Gov. Waihe'e appoints Ronald Ibarra to Circuit Court [retired in 2017]
- 1993 Gov. Waihe'e appoints Mario Ramil to Supreme Court [retired in 2003]
- 1994 Gov. Waihe'e appoints Simeon R. Acoba, Jr. to Intermediate Court of Appeals [elevated to Supreme Court in 2000]
- 1994 Gov. Waihe'e appoints Dexter Del Rosario to Circuit Court [retired in 2016]
- 1998 Gov. Cayetano appoints Artemio Baxa to Circuit Court [retired in 2001]
- 1999 Gov. Cayetano appoints Reynaldo Gaulty to Circuit Court [retired in 2009]
- 2000 Gov. Cayetano appoints Simeon R. Acoba, Jr. to Supreme Court [retired in 2014]
- 2005 Gov. Lingle appoints Kathleen Watanabe to Circuit Court
- 2007 Gov. Lingle appoints Randal Valenciano to Circuit Court
- 2009 Gov. Lingle appoints Ed Nacino to Circuit Court [retired in 2020]
- 2017 Gov. Ige appoints Catherine Remigio to Circuit Court

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Justice Simeon Acoba, Jr. (second from right) with future District Court Judges William Domingo (third from right) and Darolyn Lendio-Heim (right) and other statesmen of the Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association during the services for Justice Mario Ramil in 2017.  
PHOTO COURTESY ALFREDO EVANGELISTA



As Judiciary Chair, Senator Keith-Agaran confirmed the appointment to the ICA of Circuit Court Judge Derrick Chan. Judge Chan's retirement created the current vacancy on the ICA.  
PHOTO COURTESY GILBERT KEITH-AGARAN



Judiciary Chair Keith-Agaran confirmed Derrick Chan to the ICA, and Catherine Remigio, Keith Hiraoka and Todd Eddins to the Circuit Court. Hiraoka would later be elevated to the ICA and Eddins to the Supreme Court.  
PHOTO COURTESY GILBERT KEITH-AGARAN

## Jurists ...

from p. 7

pointed by Governor Burns in 1969). In May 1994, Governor John Waihe'e appointed Acoba as an Associate Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals (ICA) where he served for six years (Acoba remains the only Filipino to have ever served on the ICA). Then in May 2000, his former office mate, now Governor, Ben Cayetano placed him on the Supreme Court of Hawai'i where he served with distinction as an Associate Justice. He sat on the court for fourteen years, until reaching the mandatory retirement age of 70 in 2014. The only other Filipino Justices were Benjamin Menor, appointed by Governor Burns in 1974, and Mario Ramil, appointed by Governor Waihe'e in 1993. No Filipino has sat on either the ICA since he left that court or the Supreme Court of Hawai'i since his retirement.

After 35 years of leading the ad-

ministration of justice from the bench, Justice Acoba remained regarded as one of Hawai'i's most prolific jurists for his well-articulated opinions reflecting wisdom, experience and devotion to advancing justice and the rule of law.

Justice Acoba served twelve extraordinary years on this Commission, enhancing equal access to justice throughout Hawai'i's judicial system. Serving since its inception in 2008, Justice Acoba was integral to practically every initiative involving access to justice considerations and oversaw many of our significant statewide initiatives. As a founding member of this Commission, his leadership and foresight were invaluable to its formation and in directing its earliest achievements which demonstrated impressive and real progress in providing practical solutions to the ongoing challenge of improving access to the civil justice system.

Under his leadership we achieved significant results which included:

- establishing the cornerstone of access efforts—opening Self-Help Centers and Access to Justice Rooms in each judicial circuit where self-represented litigants can receive free legal assistance from volunteer attorneys;
- the promulgation of model *pro bono* policies to encourage increased *pro bono* participation; and
- amending Rule 23(f) of the Hawai'i Rules of Civil Procedure, to authorize the distribution of residual funds left over in a class action lawsuit to eligible organizations from the Indigent Legal Assistance Special Fund.

After retiring from the Supreme Court in 2014, Justice Acoba remained an active Commission member. Later in 2016, he was appointed Chair of this Commission, where under his leadership we continued to initiate, develop, implement and support measures to enhance equal access to justice throughout Hawai'i's judicial system.

Since then, some initiative include:

- additional resources for Self-Help Centers and Access to Justice Rooms—in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteer attorneys currently provide remote legal assistance by telephone;
- the Hawai'i Appellate *Pro Bono* Program which assists self-represented litigants with certain civil appeals by matching them with volunteer attorneys willing to provide free legal services;
- the Volunteer Court Navigator Program permanently established for the Second Circuit to help self-represented litigants understand court procedures in landlord-tenant, debt collection and non-family temporary restraining order cases; and
- ongoing development of a transformative Legal Navigator portal, an online legal services portal that will utilize Artificial Intelligence to help people identify legal problems and

see JURISTS p.16

# Happy 97th Birthday Mom!



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Doctor Errol Buntuyan gives a very persuasive talk about the importance of getting the COVID-19 shot. The video can be viewed at: <https://fb.watch/7hhNg7KGXK/>  
SCREENSHOTS: ALFREDO EVANGELISTA

# Another COVID Surge Hits Our Maui Community

Errol Buntuyan, M.D.

These last few weeks on Maui have been challenging. We are in another surge of COVID positivity due in large part to the ease of pandemic restrictions and the arrival of the Delta variant. Hospital admissions are backed up, clinics are flooded with testing requests and sick patients are seeking care. Below are some of the more frequent questions I have encountered regarding the variants and vaccine hesitancy.

## Why should we be concerned about the COVID Variants?

The main role of any virus in this world is to replicate and thrive. A virus needs a host's DNA to complete their replication cycle. With each viral replication cycle, there are mutations that can occur to benefit each upcoming generation designed to favor its success. Viruses that are successful can replicate faster, evolve to better enter more types of host cells and be more resistant to the host immune system by mutating its appearance. These more successful mutations become the COVID variants of concern.

The Delta variant is the current variant of concern. It originated in India and wreaked havoc in that country causing over 400,000 deaths in a truly short amount of time. We cannot forget the images of their overwhelmed hospitals running out of oxygen and the smoke from the mass cremation rituals darkening the skies of Indian cities.

The Delta variant is here on Maui and is spreading rapidly through our community. It will soon be the domi-

nant strain of COVID. What is worrisome is this variant replicates faster than prior strains. This means the viral load in an infected host increases with each rapid replication as more virus is made. The higher the viral load, the easier it is to spread and the symptoms of infection are more severe. More severe symptoms lead to increased hospitalization and potential to overwhelm our fragile healthcare delivery system.

## Why is it important to get vaccinated for COVID?

People who successfully completed the COVID vaccine series have created antibodies to the spike protein on the surface of the COVID virus. These antibodies and T cells attack the virus and render it useless. Vaccinated individuals in essence are already armed with the weaponry and have immune cells prepared to kill the foreign invader once it enters the body.

Those that are unvaccinated do not have these antibodies and T cells to protect them. The unvaccinated must go through the entire process of infection and illness from COVID to make these types of immune cells. COVID attacks and uses lung cells and mucous membranes to replicate and create more virus, causing the host to cough or sneeze. Thus, virus particles and droplets can spread in the air as well as land on surfaces. The unvaccinated have died from COVID because the pneumonia is so severe patients literally drown from the lack of oxygen as the lung cells are overwhelmed with this virus.

## Why are vaccinated people testing positive for COVID and do we still need to wear masks?

The number of vaccinated individuals getting infected with COVID is still relatively small. One theory of why the vaccinated are turning positive is the Delta variant replicates so fast the immune system may not stop all the virus that enters the host in time from replicating shedding particles. COVID swabs detect the presence of shedding virus particles. The amount of virus that is spread from a person who coughs or sneezes and is not wearing a mask is much higher. A person who is not wearing a mask can also breathe in more virus particles. So it is still important to wear masks regardless of your vaccination status.

People who are vaccinated and get infected with COVID do not get as sick as people that are unvaccinated. A very small percentage of vaccinated people get hospitalized or die from a

COVID infection because they already have the antibodies and T cells to fight and kill the virus. COVID vaccinated individuals often have no symptoms or have very mild cold/flu symptoms. You may become COVID positive but you will not suffer from the multitude of debilitating symptoms. It is still well worth getting vaccinated to protect yourself from severe illness and hospitalization from COVID.

## Are the COVID vaccines safe?

Many people are hesitant to get the vaccine because they feel it had been pushed too fast to production and they have not had enough time to be tested. All the COVID vaccines have undergone a huge number of tests on tens of thousands of volunteers before they received emergency use authorization from the FDA. Prior vaccines have not undergone this amount of testing prior to approval. Because COVID was causing so many horrible deaths in late 2019 and early 2020, see ITI SALUN AT YO p.12

# BACK TO SCHOOL

"It's time for Maui County students & teachers to return to the classroom. Let's welcome them back with Aloha!"



During July, County of Maui employees hosted a school supply drive that yielded more than \$100,000 worth of new school supplies.



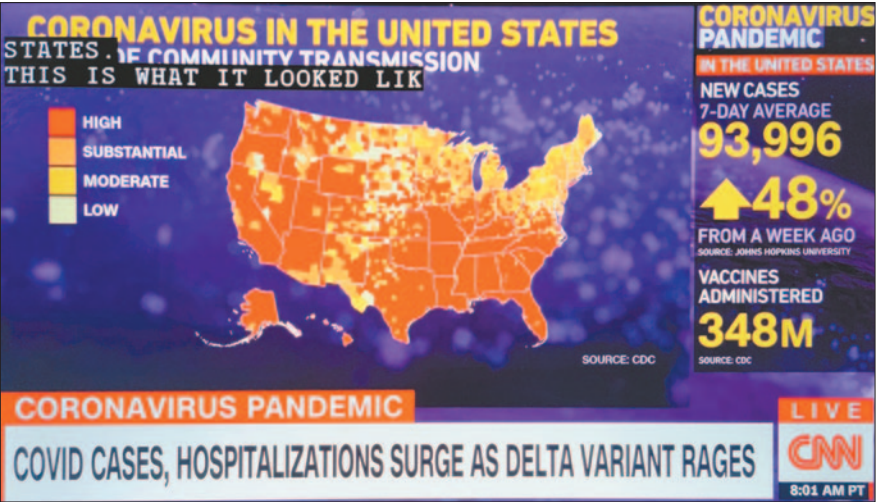
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A recent screenshot of CNN Coronavirus Pandemic report shows the ravaging effects that COVID-19's Delta variant has had on the U.S.  
SCREENSHOT: ALFREDO EVANGELISTA





Gabriella Jones



Vincent John Malabot



Ricky Nathaniel Villegas



Tia Lewis

The past year brought a collective push to regain a sense of normalcy in our social lives and routines. Bit by bit, businesses, parks and beaches opened, followed by recreational locations like movie theaters, malls and amusement parks. One of the most important openings is entirely in-person school. As a student who missed being in the classroom, I could not be more excited to return. At the same time, COVID cases were still climbing and I couldn't shake the feeling of *déjà vu* from last school year. This hurry to restore our society to its pre-COVID state seemed premature since the spread of the Delta variant.

My feelings about school this year were very mixed but I can't imagine I was the only one who felt this way. I asked four students from varying grades in high school what their

thoughts were about the new school year.

My sister, **GABRIELLA JONES**, began her first year at Maui High after having a completely self-guided online eighth-grade year. Her classes on an online program called Acellus consisted mainly of concept videos with online readings and questions. She admitted the virtual setting made it hard to learn and it was less effective than in-school learning for her. But now, as a freshman, she is looking forward to her in-person classes, particularly science and Arts and Communication. Not to mention, the thought of seeing her school friends for the first time in a year is exhilarating. "I hope we can watch football games together,

too," she says.

**VINCENT JOHN MABALOT** says his in-person Building and Construction II class is getting him the most pumped for this school year. "I want to work

lucky to have gone back to school the majority of last year (2020–2021)." At the beginning of last year, though, Seabury students had online school experience for a couple of weeks. Tia felt she was getting completely lost and sidetracked on the computer as a hands-on learner. Because of Seabury's smaller population, however, students could have classes outside and have room to socially distance themselves properly. Despite the precautions made for this year, Tia is optimistic about her twelfth-grade experience: "There is still plenty of hope that we will have a great senior year filled with endless memories and endless fun."

# Google® Is Not Everything... Back to School

Brooklyn Jones | MAUI HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2022

in the construction industry in the future and learning more about construction will help me later on." Certain pragmatic classes, like culinary or automotive technology, were hard to teach and learn last year.

VINCENT trusts his classmates at Maui High School will follow the regulations to help keep each other safe and in school. He admits he is "a little worried" about the virus spreading but is overall cool, calm and collected about this new chapter.

After not seeing most of the school for almost a year and a half, what can we predict will happen?

"I will be expecting smiles and hugs from friends, lost Freshmen and Sophomores wandering around the campus, licensed Juniors and Seniors bragging about their licenses and lifted yotas, and teachers and school faculty members screaming with joy." **RICKY NATHANIEL VILLEGAS** anticipates this frenzy for the first day of school. Ricky, a fellow senior at Maui High, hasn't set foot on campus since his sophomore year and is glad to be back.

As cases are on the rise, though, he's keeping his expectations realistic for the rest of the school year. Ricky says we may have to "say hello to Google Meet again" if the current trend continues. But until that happens, Ricky points out we shouldn't take our full-time school for granted and enjoy the time we are given with each other now.

As a senior at Seabury Hall High School, **TIA LEWIS** is used to physical learning: "Being part of a private school, I have come to learn that I am very fortunate and

As much as I didn't like distance learning, I was dreading the thought of going back to school. The number of new cases climbing each day scared me a lot and made me rethink if I wanted to go back.

Then I realized that at this point, the pandemic is a part of our lives now. As people, we learn to adapt, no matter how hard our circumstances get.

By now, good sanitization and masking should be a habit. In school, we know we will have to be socially distanced in lunch lines and classrooms. Yes, this year will be different but that does not mean it will be bad.

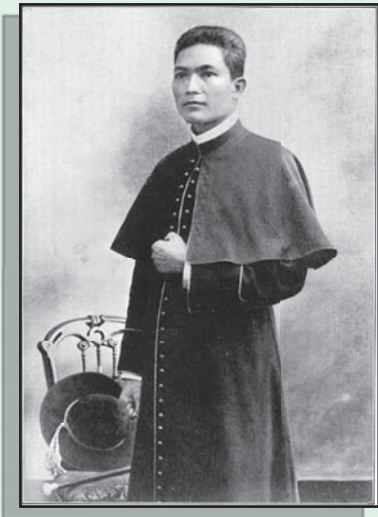
In the end, we must decide what we are going to do with what we have while we can. And we are all going to make the most of this year ... right after we grab some hand sanitizer first.

**Google® Is Not Everything ...** is a monthly column authored by high school students. The title of the column emphasizes education is more than just googling a topic. Google® is a registered trademark. This month's guest columnist is **Brooklyn Jones**, a Senior at Maui High School. She is an assistant editor in her school's journalism program, *Saber Scribes*, and also a member of the *Girls Can STEM Club*. Brooklyn is in the *ACOM Pathway* at Maui High, specializing in graphic design. In her free time, she swims for *Hawai'i Swimming Club*, bakes and likes to go to the beach. She is the daughter of *Melissa Ligot Jones* and *Darren Jones*.



## Join Us Virtually As We Honor Fr. Gregorio Aglipay Sept. 5, 2021 - Sunday

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# Ti Biag ken Pammati

## “Life and Faith”



Deacon Ken  
PHOTO COURTESY KEN BISSEN



Deacon Ken preaching at Mass.  
PHOTO COURTESY KEN BISSEN



Deacon Ken blessing a child after baptism.  
PHOTO COURTESY KEN BISSEN

On February 27, 2021 **DEACON KENNETH BISSEN, JR.** was a presenter at the international virtual conference “Prophetic Ministry and Impartation,” hosted by St. Clare Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group in Kenya.

Deacon Kenneth Bissen, Jr. is assigned to Christ the King Church in Kahului. He is the Spiritual Director of the Charismatic Prayer Group. He assists Fr. Gus and performs weddings, baptisms, funeral services and preaches at Masses—and anything he is called upon.

Deacon Kenneth was ordained in 2007. He is a graduate of California State University of Dominguez Hills, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and is currently employed by the Department of Water Supply, County of Maui as a Purchasing Specialist.

Deacon Ken’s maternal grandparents are from Naguilian, La Union, Philippines.

With his permission, Deacon Ken’s presentation is reprinted here:

*The year of 2020 came with the challenge of the pandemic and a new normal. Those challenges, opened doors to evangelize in real time throughout the world with the assistance of technology. My diaconate ministry needed to make a shift to this new normal. This new normal also brought joys. One of those joys is hearing my son verbalize his thoughts in his own unique way and its connection to me becoming a Deacon.*

*I will share with you my story of challenges on enhancing my journey to become a Deacon in the Catholic*

*Church of the Diocese of Honolulu. I was ordained a permanent Deacon on January 20, 2007 in Christ the King Catholic Church on Maui.*

*In 1995, my journey to becoming a Deacon was planted with a seed when my family moved to Maui from O’ahu. I had an opportunity to transfer from my State of Hawai’i job to my current position which is a Purchasing Specialist with the Department of Water, County of Maui.*

*This was not an easy decision to make to move my family. My beautiful wife Dr. Charmaine, accompanied me with our very young children. Lōkahi, our son, was going to turn three and Julia was only about nine months old. We also brought my eld-*

## Life and Faith

*Deacon Ken Bissen: Gifted to give and called to serve.*

**Deacon Patrick Constantino**

*erly parents who lived with us for seventeen years. One of our major concerns was the medical coverage for our son. Lōkahi was diagnosed with a rare genetic condition called Coffin Sins Syndrome which we did not know at the time of his birth. He wasn’t walking and our concern was will he ever walk and talk. He had many neurological medical issues and was missing part of his brain, a condition called agenesis of the corpus callosum. Our specialists were on O’ahu which meant we would have to travel to O’ahu several times a year. This would be an additional financial challenge with needed time off from work.*

*In the fall of 1995, I was informed by my Filipino maternal aunt who was attending St. Elizabeth Church in ‘Aiea, about this priest who conducts healing masses. My aunt knew about Lōkahi’s fragile health and told us that the priest was coming to St. Anthony Church in Wailuku, Maui in a couple of days to do a healing mass. I was coming home from work and praying to God while I was driving. I remember that conversation with God and I said “just think if he starts walking.” I was thinking and imagining that he would start walking while this priest was praying over him.*

*When I entered my home, I couldn’t wait to see Lōkahi. I opened the door of the house and there I saw Lōkahi sitting next to my Mom while she was standing. We expected Lōkahi to crawl to me and give me a hug. While I was waiting at the door for that hug, I received something better than a hug. Lōkahi gingerly started to stand up, holding unto my Mom and started to walk.*

*We were so astounded by this event that we could not say a word seeing a miracle happening right in front of us. Charmaine was not home at the time, she was at the doctor’s appointment so I took Lōkahi to meet her. When Lōkahi walked toward her, words could not describe the expression of joy on Charmaine’s face. Days later we still went to the Healing Mass at St. Anthony in Wailuku. When the time came to go up so that the priest would pray over him, I introduced myself and my son and spoke about my aunty who knew the priest very well and explained to him that we*

*came for prayers so that my son can be healed and walk someday.*

*When the priest noticed that he was already walking, without saying a word, he looked at me with his hands open gesturing like he is already walking. I looked at him and said, “I guess God beat you to it.” We both started to laugh, it was a laugh of joy.*

*I would say that event started me to believe that God has a plan for all of us. We are not just born to be born but born to serve one another and be a member of one body in Christ. St. Paul said in Romans 12:4–5: “For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.”*

*That means that all of us is a part of the body of Christ to do the work of the Father.*

*I feel in our own humble and special way my son, daughter and wife have been instruments of doing God’s work. One pastor from a Protestant church who knows us said that my daughter who was a young child at that time said that she has holy hands.*

*Today my daughter Julia has been working in the medical field for several years, at one time in physical therapy helping people heal, and now assisting people in hearing. Also, today I teach reconciliation class with Julia at Christ the King to high school students. My wife Dr. Charmaine is a retired District School Psychologist for Maui who worked with families and children. My son even with his multiple life long disabilities shows love*

**see TI BIAG KEN PAMMATI next page**



Bishop Silva with Deacon Ken and wife Charmaine.  
PHOTO COURTESY KEN BISSEN



Deacon Ken with wife Charmaine.  
PHOTO COURTESY KEN BISSEN



Deacon Ken’s family. Son Lōkahi, daughter Julia, wife Charmaine and Deacon Ken.  
PHOTO COURTESY KEN BISSEN



## Ti Biag ken Pammati | Cont'd from p.11

### "Life and Faith"

and compassion for others, and taught us the meaning of patience as we wait for him to communicate with us in the best way he can.

The event of my son walking opened my heart to God which led me to a door that God wanted me to walk through. I would have to say attending a Charismatic Life in the Spirit Seminar at St. Anthony Church in Wailuku made me walk through that door to think about being a Deacon in the Catholic Church. This journey did not start overnight. I had to grow in my spiritual life. I had a son who was very young and with medical needs. The medical professionals did not expect him to live past his first year of life. Lōkahi had repeated hospitalizations.

We had a very young daughter who also had her needs. However, all the attention and resources in the family were focused upon Lōkahi and helping him survive. On top of that I was adjusting to a new specialized field of employment.

Therefore, I trusted God and He has guided me and my family. It has been over fourteen years since I have been ordained and have met a lot of good people. There have been many happy moments like baptizing babies and young children, meeting with couples in the preparation of marriage and being a part of their journey even after their marriage. I enjoy being an instructor in RCIA classes and guiding individuals that

are seeking to be part of the Catholic community through baptism and confirmation. Because of this new normal as the result of the pandemic, I am able to preach and share the Good News of Jesus Christ through the technology of ZOOM and Facebook to the people in Nairobi, Kenya and around the world as a member of the Hawai'i Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (HCCRS). My wife Dr. Charmaine joins me for Couples for Christ using ZOOM which we participate with other couples in California, O'ahu and Maui.

There also have been moments of sadness, comforting those who lost their family members and friends especially during the past year because of the pandemic. Even though there were restrictions in attending funerals, the service was being recorded for those who could not attend especially those families in the Philippines.

Being a Deacon has its many challenges and blessings. One of those blessings has been my mentor Deacon Pat Constantino who mentored me and others during our many years in formation before we were ordained. Deacon Pat is still mentoring all the Deacons on Maui.

It has been rewarding and has given me the humility which I would not have experienced. In 1995, I started this journey not knowing what to expect. I still don't know

see TI BIAG KEN PAMMATI p.16

## Iti Salun-At Yo | Cont'd from p.9

the world's leading scientists were tasked to produce a safe and effective vaccine.

Worldwide 4.1 billion doses of vaccines were administered, in the United States over 344 million doses have been distributed. There are 1.13 billion people worldwide that are completely vaccinated from COVID. The most common post vaccinated symptoms were minor (arm soreness, fatigue, fever and headache) and often lasted no more than 1-3 days. The sheer number of distribution of these COVID vaccines attests to the safety and side effect tolerance of these vaccines.

### Why should I get the COVID vaccine?

The main reason to get the COVID vaccine is to avoid getting sick from COVID. The unvaccinated make up most of the current infections because they do not have the antibodies and T cells to fight and kill the virus. Because of the rapid replication of this variant, a higher viral load, and better virus efficiency, those who are unvaccinated are experiencing more severe disease symptoms and are being hospitalized.

Another reason to get vaccinated is to protect your loved ones. This variant is spreading rapidly through homes with both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. Currently children under twelve cannot get vaccinated and they have the highest risk of exposure. With schools already started in August, the number of tourists on island that we interact with, or if we ourselves are traveling, it is hard to prevent getting exposed to COVID. Because many people are no longer wearing masks, no longer social distancing, attending gatherings, going to bars, watching movies in theaters and eating in restaurants, the spread of COVID is much easier. Getting vaccinated and encouraging

others to do so will protect all of us from getting hospitalized and die from COVID.

The percentage of completed COVID vaccinations on Maui are the lowest in the State of Hawai'i.

We must protect ourselves and loved ones by getting vaccinated and encourage those that are hesitant. The Delta variant is here on Maui. It is more contagious and causes more illness. The antibodies and T cells created from the vaccines provide the weaponry for our bodies to fight and kill COVID. The only way to stop this variant and the evolution of other variants is to have a vaccinated community that makes it an inhospitable environment for this virus to replicate, spread and thrive. Trust the science, I do. I recommend the COVID vaccine to all my patients.


Clearly this pandemic is not over. We must still stay safe through this Delta variant surge. Reduce your risks of exposure, avoid large gatherings and stay home if you can. Wear your masks, use hand sanitizers and stay socially distant. We certainly do not want our island community to get thrown back into a lock down situation, so we must act now to get Maui vaccinated to protect ourselves and our loved ones. ✨

**Errol Buntuyan, M.D.** is a Family Medicine Practitioner and the Physi-




cian in Charge of Maui Primary Care at Kaiser Permanente. Born in Quezon City and raised in Southern California, he has been practicing medicine on Maui since 2007. Dr. Buntuyan promotes

whole food, plant based nutrition, regular physical activity, stress mindfulness and sleep hygiene as keys to optimum health and wellness. He enjoys cooking, playing tennis and travel.



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Community... In Action



Volunteers work at the Bahay Kubo in Kepaniwai Park. PHOTO COURTESY ZALDY UGALINO



Binhi can host your outdoor celebration. PHOTO ALFREDO G EVANGELISTA



The 52nd Annual Barrio Fiesta will be a hybrid event. SCREENSHOT ALFREDO G EVANGELISTA

COMMUNITY... IN ACTION

Editor’s note: Send your community briefs to info@filamvoice.com. This month’s column was compiled by Assistant Editor Alfredo G. Evangelista.

BAHAY KUBO HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The renovations are nearing completion but vandalism continues to be a problem according to Zaldy Ugalino, president of the Bahay Kubo Heritage Foundation. If anyone wants to volunteer to help maintain the landscaping during construction, please email bahaykubomaui@gmail.com. Monetary donations are still needed and can be mailed to Bahay Kubo Heritage Foundation, 32 Hapua Place, Wailuku, HI 96793. T-shirt sales are still available through flipsideurbanapparel.com.



BINHİ AT ANI

Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center continues to be open for outside gatherings (with specific limits as to the number of guests) and “drive-by” parties. There are specific COVID-19 rules. Please contact the office at (808) 877-7880 for more information. The office is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Barrio Fiesta

The 52nd Annual Barrio Fiesta is currently scheduled for Saturday, October 2, 2021, with a hybrid feature of both virtual and live/walk-in to pick up food that will be pre-sold. Contact Nora Cabanilla-Takushi, committee chairperson, at (808) 276-8861 for more information.

#BayanihanFeedingProgram

The program, which provides a Sunday lunch to Hale Mahaolu Residents in Central Maui, continues to need additional teams of volunteers to prepare the free lunches. The teams serving during the

month of August are Binhi at Ani, Philippine Nurses Association of America Maui Chapter, Miss Maui USA and Central Pacific Bank. Create a Team by signing up: https://forms.gle/cVUGB6XLmtJi7MVH8 or by contacting Chelsea Guzman, chairperson of Binhi at Ani’s Health and Wellness committee at guzman.chelsea.i@gmail.com. Tax-deductible donations are accepted via Paypal or a Credit/Debit card https://binhi-atani.org/donate/ or by mailing a check payable to Binhi at Ani, 780 Onehe’e Avenue, Kahului, HI 96732 [Memo: Feeding Program].

Board of Directors

The 2021–2022 Board of Directors held its organizational meeting and made the following committee appointments.

**Barrio Fiesta** - Nora Cabanilla-Takushi, chairperson; Florante Garcia, Donnie Dadiz, Alfredo Evangelista and Madelyne Pascua, co-chairpersons; Chelsea Guzman, Romeo Guzman, Rochelle Mendoza, Marilyn Oura, Lawrence Pascua, and Michelle Santos, members.

**Budget** - Madelyne Pascua, chairperson; Rosemarie Balmores and Alfredo Evangelista, co-chairpersons; Jeanice Paa, member.

**Building & Maintenance** - Mark Paranada, chairperson; Alfredo Evangelista and Florante Garcia, co-chairpersons; Donnie Dadiz and Romeo Guzman, members.

**Finance** - Marilyn Oura, chairperson; Arnel Alvarez, Jeanice Paa and Madelyne Pascua, co-chairpersons. Rosemarie Balmores, Rochelle Mendoza and Mark Paranada, members.

see COMMUNITY IN ACTION next page



The Binhi at Ani Board of Directors prepare lunch for the Bayanihan Feeding Program. PHOTO: ALFREDO EVANGELISTA

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES? 3 Things You Can Do To Prepare

1 PREPARE AN EMERGENCY KIT

Include 14 days supplies, food and water

2 MAKE A PLAN

Plan on what to do in the event of an Emergency

3 BE INFORMED

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MAUI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY





The newly installed Binhi at Ani Board of Directors is already organized and working (above).  
PHOTO KELSEY HEROLD



Takeout Tuesday (left)  
IMAGE COURTESY BINHI AT ANI

**Health and Wellness** - Chelsea Guzman, chairperson. Alfredo Evangelista and Marilyn Oura, co-chairpersons; Jeanice Paa and Madelyne Pascua, members.

**Mālama Nā Iwi O Kūpuna** - Nora Cabanilla-Takushi, chairperson. Madelyne Pascua and Michelle Santos, co-chairpersons; Carl Kaupalolo, Fely Dumayas, Wilmont Kahaiali'i and Kai Pelayo, members.

**Marketing** - Rochelle Mendoza, chairperson; Arnel Alvarez, Alfredo Evangelista and Jeanice Paa, co-chairpersons; Michelle Balala, Rosemarie Balmores and Lawrence Pascua, members.

**Nominations and Elections** - Melen Agcolicol, chairperson; Michelle Balala, Chelsea Guzman and Michelle Santos, co-chairpersons.

**Program** - Jaycel Pardo, chairperson; Michelle Balala, Jeanice Paa, Lawrence Pascua and Madelyne Pascua, co-chairpersons.

**Scholarship** - Michelle Balala, chairperson; Nora Cabanilla-Takushi, Alfredo Evangelista, Jaycel

Pardo, and Michelle Santos, co-chairpersons.

**Scholarship Golf Tournament** - Arnel Alvarez, chairperson; Alfredo Evangelista and William Ruidas, co-chairpersons; Michelle Balala, Nora Cabanilla-Takushi, Jeanice Paa, Lawrence Pascua and Michelle Santos, members.

**Takeout Tuesdays**  
Due to the closure of the Center forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, Binhi created a new fundraising effort titled Takeout Tuesdays. Six Takeout Tuesdays have been held, raising over \$17,000 to pay for Binhi at Ani's continuing overhead expenses. The next Takeout Tuesday will be held on August 31 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and will feature a choice of Four Sisters Catering Roast Pork, \$13, or Steak Plate, \$16. Free delivery for at least five orders. Contact Marilyn Oura at (808) 214-3305 for more information.

**MAUI FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION**  
The Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce Foundation held its 10th Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament on July 24 at The Dunes at Maui Lani. "We had a nice turnout for our annual



The golfers assemble for a pre-round group photo  
PHOTO CEASAR LIZADA

scholarship tournament," said Chris Rabang, president of the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce Foundation. "We are grateful for our golfers, donors, and of course our sponsors, who without them, none of this would be possible. I would like to especially recognize our two title sponsors, Tante's Mā'alaea and Hawai'i Care & Cleaning, for their generosity. Through the participation of our community, we were able to raise over \$15,000 that we will use for our scholarship program."

**MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
The Maui Filipino Community Council will award six \$500 scholarships to the Class of 2021.

**Caitlin Raquel Lizada Baclay**, daughter of Ryan T. Baclay and Jacqueline L. Baclay. The Lahainaluna High School graduate will attend the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, majoring in Biology.

**Alysha Fontanilla**, daughter of Eugene Fontanilla and Karen Fontanilla. The H.P. Baldwin High School graduate will attend Grace College, majoring in Accounting.

**Ariana Rose Pacleb**, daughter of Jupiter Pacleb and Marynor Pacleb. The La-

hainaluna High School graduate will attend the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, majoring in Nursing.

**Jeremy Peros**, son of Greg "Jay" Peros and Lorelle Peros. The Maui High School graduate will attend the University of California, Irvine, majoring in Computer Science and Engineering.

**Logan Rulloda**, son of Rick Rulloda and Miwako Rulloda. The King Kekaulike High School graduate will attend Brown University, majoring in Mathematics.

**Jadynne Zane**, daughter of Darryl Zane and Jeremy Zane. The Maui High School graduate will attend the University of Southern California, majoring in Biomedical engineering.

The Scholarship Recipients will be formally introduced on August 18 at the Council's 75th Anniversary (1946) Sakada Celebration and Scholarship Awards Dinner at the Maui Beach Hotel Rainbow Terrace. Dinner tickets are available at \$45 per person and may be obtained from Council president Emi Cortez at (808) 373-6371 or past president Marilyn Oura at (808) 214-3305. (No tickets will be available at the door.)



Benjamin Acob, Rudy Balinbin, Sandy Magallanes, Henry Parilla, Jim Peros, Joselito Yuzon.  
PHOTO COURTESY MAUI FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION

First place team: David Anzai, Kimo Apana, and Dennis Hinahara with Mayor Michael Victorino, Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce Foundation president Chris Rabang (right) and Wayne Aguiran (left).  
PHOTO: JUNNIE AGUIRAN



### Maui Filipino Community Council Class of 2021 Scholarship Awardees

Caitlin Raquel Lizada Baclay

Alysha Fontanilla

Ariana Rose Pacleb

Jeremy Peros

Logan Rulloda

Jadynne Zane



# Kwento Kwentuhan

## When in Hawai‘i, respect and follow Hawaiian Culture

Liza A Pierce of “A Maui Blog”

I learned visitors who know the basic Hawaiian values and cultures are the ones who enjoy their Maui vacation to the fullest. They not only fell in love with the place but they also all fell in love with its people.

So here are some of the important Hawaiian values you need to know. This is not a complete list by any means but I believe knowing and applying the following values is a good start: *Kuleana*, *Mālama*, *Kōkua*, *Pono* and *Aloha*.

### Kuleana

It is a uniquely Hawaiian value and practice which is loosely translated to mean “responsibility.” The word *kuleana* refers to reciprocal relationships between the person who is responsible and the things they are responsible for.

During the pandemic, the practice of *kuleana* was evident in the way the people of Hawai‘i protected their *kūpuna* (elders). Most, if not all, felt it is our responsibility to protect our elders, not just within our ‘*ohana* but the whole community as well. Hawai‘i is one of the first States where mask wearing was mandated

*kuleana* to *mālama* our ‘*ohana* and ‘*āina*. In our previous discussion on *kuleana*, we touched about the caring for our ‘*ohana* (family) and *kūpuna* (elders). In this section, I would like to turn our attention to *Mālama* ‘*Āina*.

As visitors to Maui, it is your *kuleana* to *mālama* the ‘*āina*. This means taking care of the land, which extends to taking care of the ocean, the creatures and the natural resources.

Here are some of the ways we can put this value into action:

- Use a sunblock that won’t hurt the reef.
- Don’t throw plastic in the ocean. Strive for minimal use of plastic.
- Don’t feed the *Nēnē*.
- Don’t get too close to the *honu* and do not touch them.
- Don’t get too close to the monk seal and do not touch them.
- Don’t litter—pick up your ‘*ōpala* on the beach, parks, etc.
- Don’t step on or touch coral.

### Kōkua

The word *kōkua* means help. Its deeper meaning is to extend help to others in a sacrificial way with no intent of personal gain. It is about giving without expecting anything in return. This value is manifested ever so clearly during the COVID-19 pandemic on Maui. With a very high unemployment rate, many people who lost their jobs and many entrepreneurs who lost their businesses needed *kōkua*. The people on Maui generously give. Many supported Maui Food Bank as this non-profit organization oversees the distribution of food to those who are in need of food.

When you come and visit Maui at this time, one way to show *kōkua* is by leaving generous tips to your service providers (food servers, room cleaners, drivers, etc.). I understand you are already spending a lot of money coming here to visit and some of you might be tempted not to give tips.

Going the extra mile by practicing *kōkua* will make you a better person



Aloha!

PHOTO COURTESY LIZA PIERCE

on Maui and beyond.

### Pono

Like many Hawaiian words, *pono* does not have a one-on-one English translation. If there were one, it would most likely be righteous as in the State motto: *Ua Mau ke Ea o ka ‘Āina i ka Pono* meaning “The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.” A simpler translation of *pono* is to do the right thing.

The concept of *pono* is taught to Hawaiian children at a very young age. It is a guiding principle that is to shape their every decision. “Is it *pono*?” they are asked. In their words, “Will what you’re about to do help bring harmony and good into the world?”

When you visit Maui, be aware of the value of *pono* when making decisions. For example, it is not *pono* to trespass on a private property.

### Aloha

When you’re in Hawai‘i, it is very common to hear the word *aloha*. A day won’t pass without you hearing it or seeing it. *Aloha* is probably one of the most used Hawaiian word. And it has a variety of uses and meanings. We use *Aloha* to say hello and goodbye, we use it as a greeting or salutation on a letter. We use *Aloha* for love. But really ... what is the true meaning of *Aloha*?

I read an article titled “Deeper Meaning of Aloha” by Curby Rule and the explanation gave me a whole new understanding of the word. *Aloha*’s deeper meaning is that it is a way of life. Here is an excerpt:

*The spirit of Aloha was an important lesson taught to the children of the past because it was about the world of which they were a part. One early teaching goes like this:*

*Aloha is being a part of all, and all being a part of me. When there is pain—it is my pain. When there is joy—it is also mine. I respect all that is as part of the Creator and part of me. I will not willfully harm anyone or anything. When food is needed, I will take only my need and explain why it is being taken. The earth, the*



A surfboard sculpture/sign reminds us to practice aloha while on Maui.

PHOTO COURTESY CAROL S. VANHORN

*sky, the sea are mine to care for, to cherish and to protect. This is Hawaiian—this is Aloha!*

Now that we have explored what *Aloha* is, the question is how do we apply it in our lives? How do we practice *Aloha*? There will be many opportunities for you to express *Aloha* during your visit to Maui and beyond. ✨

**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 spread-



ing *Aloha* around the world. She’s been living 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 Rainbows; 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.



An informational sign reminds us to practice aloha while respecting the living habitat that belongs to all honu here on Maui.

PHOTO COURTESY NOAA

and is strictly implemented. People wear masks because we feel it is our *kuleana* to do so.

### Mālama

The value of *mālama* is closely related to the value of *kuleana*. *Mālama* means to tend, to care for, preserve, protect and watch over. To put it together, we can say, “It is our



Ti Biag ken Pammati | Cont'd from p.12  
"Life and Faith"



Deacon Ken presentation at the International Virtual Conference: "Prophetic Ministry & Impartation." PHOTO COURTESY KEN BISSEN

what to expect in life. What I have learned during this journey is that I truly know who is in charge, it happened when I walked through that door that God opened for me and my family.

Thank you Deacon Ken for sharing and for your commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every Friday until September 17, at 7 p.m., Deacon Ken will be one of the presenters for the Hawai'i Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services titled "Life in the Spirit Seminar." This is a free webinar via ZOOM. Go to [www.hccrs.org](http://www.hccrs.org) to register for this free webinar.

Deacon Ken, you truly are "Gifted by God to Give," with all your heart and soul.

You truly are Gifted to give Life and Faith to our people! ✨

On June 18, 1987, **Patrick Constantino** was ordained as the first Deacon of Filipino ancestry for the Roman Catholic Church in Hawai'i. For twenty-two years, he

served as Administrator at Holy Rosary Church in Pā'ia, St. Rita Church in Ha'ikū and St. Gabriel Church in Ke'ānae. Constantino is presently assigned to St. Joseph Church in Makawao.

Prior to his ordination, Constantino was in government—first appointed in 1966 as Assistant Sergeant of Arms by the Speaker of the House Elmer F. Cravalho. When Cravalho became Maui's first Mayor, Constantino became his Executive Assistant—the first of Filipino ancestry. Later, Constantino became the first County Treasurer of Filipino ancestry and the first County Grants Administrator and Risk Manager of Filipino ancestry.



Constantino has served as a Deacon for thirty-three years and married to his lovely wife Corazon for fifty-nine years.

Jurists ...

from p. 8

access critical resources.

In 1990, when Justice Acoba was renewed for a second term as a Circuit Court Judge, out of the sixty-eight Judges statewide, there were only three Hawai'i judges of Filipino ancestry: Circuit Court Judge Ronald Ibarra and District Court Judge Joseph Florendo, both on Hawai'i Island. Our very small cohort of Filipino lawyers organized a dinner to recognize the three sitting judges along with recently retired federal judge Alfred Laureta, with a goal to increase the presence of Filipinos on the bench. A few years later, Governor Waihe'e named Mario Ramil to the Supreme Court and then Simeon Acoba to the ICA. Governor Cayetano would later elevate Acoba to the high court where for several years, two Filipino Justices out of five would serve.

Thirty years later, out of seventy-five sitting judges (there are five vacancies), there are only six Judges of Filipino ancestry. Three are on Kaua'i (Circuit Court Judges Randal Valenciano and Katherine Watanabe and District Court Judge Edmund Acoba) while three are on O'ahu (Circuit Court Judge Catherine Remigio and District Court Judges William Domingo and Darolyn Lendio-Heim). None on Maui. None on Hawai'i Island.

No Filipino has sat on the ICA since Judge Acoba



Artemio Baxa served as Circuit Court Judge from 1998–2001; Baxa is the only Filipino to have served as a Circuit Court Judge on Maui. PHOTO COURTESY ARTEMIO BAXA

left. With two recent chances to pick a Filipino for an ICA vacancy, Governor Ige passed on selecting the only Filipino on the list, Lance Collins.

Similarly, no Filipino has served on the Supreme Court since Justice Acoba retired with Governor Ige passing on selecting either Darolyn Lendio Heim or David Forman who were both on the list in the fall 2020. ✨



**Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran** represents Central Maui in the State Senate. He formerly served as chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee which includes as one of its responsibilities the duty to hold hearings on judicial appointments.



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