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Through the tragedy and devastation, God will provide a rainbow at the end.  
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**The Crown Returns to Maui**  
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# Fil-Am Voice

Magkaisa Tayong Lahat | “Let Us All Unite”

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**Alfredo G. Evangelista**  
ASSISTANT EDITOR  
*EDITOR'S NOTE: The Fil-Am Voice is deeply saddened by the wildfire that ravaged Lahaina town, where many Filipinos reside and call home. In particular, the Fil-Am Voice sends its love to our Lahaina distributor Nora Cabanilla-Takushi and her family, our Distribution site partners, and our Advertisers who suffered through this tragic disaster.*

“It’s like watching a horror movie,” says Nora Cabanilla-Takushi, past president of Binhi at Ani. “We don’t know how to describe what happened to the west side, to Lahaina.”

Like Cabanilla-Takushi, Lahaina community leader Rick Nava is at a loss for words. “I can’t even describe the feeling,” he says. “None of us expected this to happen. It’s like what you see in the movies but it’s just surreal.”

For Pacita Agmata, the past thirty days have been worse

# Disaster In Lahaina

than a disaster movie. She lost her husband Epifanio in early July—two weeks after an auto accident. And when she was cooking food to celebrate the one-month death anniversary of her beloved Epifanio, she had to drop everything and leave her house on Ainakea Street with only the clothes on her back. Luckily, Agmata’s aunt was there so they drove

to Nāpili Market to seek shelter.

Bart Santiago, Sr., who will be ninety-two years old later this month, balked at abandoning his Kahoma Street home in the Wahikuli subdivision. A prior fire had come close to the house without any impact recalled his son-in-law Elmer Tolentino who lived downstairs with Bart’s

daughter Shirley. “He wanted to stay but I forced him to leave,” says Tolentino. “The first time it was the same situation; it was close to the house but didn’t affect it. He thought it would be the same way.” But this time, Santiago lost all four of his homes and like Agmata, escaped with nothing except the clothes on  
**see DISASTER next page**

**M**aui has been leading the news locally, nationally and even internationally. But not for a reason we would want. Only a fourth indictment of a former U.S. President relegated us to the second story.

The national and international media appeared to invade Maui just hours after the August 8th fire engulfed the historic town of Lahaina and for the first couple of days, the Maui wildfire led most mainstream cable and network news shows. West Maui Senator Angus McKelvey lost his condo, getting out with just the clothes he had on. On Wednesday, West Maui was closed off without power, no cellular service, utility poles still blocking roads like they had in slowing and hampering evacuation during the chaotic Tuesday night of flames.

Sylvia Luke was acting

## DINENGDENG & PINAKBET

### The Fire This Time ...

**Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran**

Governor on Tuesday, August 8th—nothing really pressing since Hurricane Dora, as predicted, veered south of the islands—but it seemed to strengthen and weaken in fits and starts—and local meteorologists had forecast strong winds for several days. In flying home from Kaua’i through Honolulu Monday afternoon, I experienced some of the turbulence as we bounced past the Kaheawa windmills before sweeping down to the Kahului runway.

On that morning, Maui fire

crews contained a brush fire along Lahainaluna Road and resources could be moved up-country to suppress flames in challenging gulch-riddled terrain in Olinda.

But the Lahaina fire at some point suddenly flared as Dora-wake winds swooped down the West Maui slopes. A witness told me a MECO pole snapped; another thought a series of poles splintered. Some Maui Fire Department (MFD) crews had remained to treat hotspots from that morning. One media story reported

MFD frustratingly found water pressure inadequate in hydrant after hydrant. Anecdotal, some said pipes melted at some point as the fire moved through relentlessly. Two engines were engulfed and MFD and patrolling police started an *ad hoc* evacuation of Lahaina town residents.

No sirens sounded.

Early on, the media repeatedly raised the question of notice to Lahaina residents. Hawai’i boasts a comprehensive system of warning sirens. Anyone who has lived here for a while is familiar with the drill. 11:45 a.m. on the first day of the month. The tsunami alarm goes off. We’re supposed to then check our television or turn on our radio, and, today, probably check one of the social media platforms we use. Think North Korean missile alert. We’re supposed to pause and find out what kind of danger we’re

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**FREE**





Wreckage along Front Street.  
PHOTO: GIL KEITH-AGARAN

# Disaster ...

from p. 1

his back. Tolentino lost documents and medicine.

Cabanilla-Takushi’s husband Craig is on dialysis and Cabanilla-Takushi was able to pack all his medicines but forgot his prosthesis. Luckily, Cabanilla-Takushi’s house did not burn to the ground and she was later able to return and retrieve her husband’s prosthesis. (The roof was damaged and Cabanilla-Takushi is desperately seeking tarps to cover the roof because of the impending storms.) The West Maui dialysis center burned down so she had to find kidney treatment for Craig in the Wailuku area. Due to the hardship of going back and forth to Lahaina, they decided it best for Craig to remain in Wailuku—separated from the rest of his immediate family.

Nava, who lives on Ka’akepa Street with his wife Rina, his 92-year-old mother-in-law, his daughter Tiffany, his son-in-law Keola, his ten-year-old grandson Koby and his five-year-old grandson Jett, says he was able to grab his laptop while his wife grabbed a suitcase still full of clothes from a recent trip. His mother-in-law got some of her medicines. “My daughter got some clothes for the boys. And we were able to get our important documents from the safe.”

Everything happened quickly. “I could hear the police coming through. They were on their loudspeaker. Rina was inside the house but heard it. It was hard to hear everything because

of the wind and the sound of the fire. The windows were closed because it was dusty and windy to prevent the smoke from coming in. At that time, we were trying to protect the house because we didn’t think the house would be burned down.”

Earlier that day, a Lahaina fire was reported to be contained. But at around 3 p.m., Cabanilla-Takushi says the “wind was very strong. I noticed black smoke around Kelaweia Mauka,



Pacita Agmata  
PHOTO COURTESY PACITA AGMATA

where my family’s houses are. The fire inflamed so fast that people didn’t get a chance to evacuate fast enough because of the traffic.”

The Nava’s flight proved harrowing. “We were planning to drive down towards the Gateway but we could see the house in front of us was already on fire so we drove up and went to Kanakea Loop.” Others had chosen the same route and got bogged down. Nava considered leaving on foot

but then decided the better option was to bust a gate down. Nava recalled, “Someone found a guy with a bolt cutter who cut the chain. My son-in-law Keola is a police officer with Maui Police Department. He was getting ready to go to work but he was able to call a friend who pulled the gate to allow us to pass.” Rolling out the gate along Lahainaluna Road to the Lahaina Bypass, they saw burning cars on the left while homes burned on the right. “We got through that,” he remembers. “I saw the roof of our house burning while driving up to Kanakea Loop to escape the fire. We ended going through the bypass to



Bart Santiago, Sr.  
PHOTO COURTESY SANTIAGO ‘OHANA

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American Heart Association has again awarded Maui Memorial Medical Center (MMMC) top honors for our nationally recognized cardiovascular care.

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Maui Memorial  
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Lahaina ...

from p. 1

in. No survivors of the Tuesday night fire interviewed by a broadcast or print reporter recalled getting any kind of evacuation warning.

U.S. Rep. Jill Tokuda noted on *Face The Nation* that local residents are almost conditioned to associate our sirens to an incoming tidal wave. Our instinct is to run to the hills.

Almost a week after the Lahaina fire, emergency management personnel finally noted the siren system has not been used to warn of fires.

My Central Maui community was not directly affected—someone mentioned a small brush fire that day around maybe Waikō Road which was contained early. Kallie, my mom Lydia, Velma and most of my other family were fine (a niece and her fiancé and a daughter evacuated their Kihei home briefly late Tuesday when the Pulehu Road fire threatened to come down Lipoa).

But Lahaina was lost. And survivors who escaped suggested early on that many did not make it out of town. That seemed unlikely, in part because you don't want to believe that could really end up as reality.

Wildfires are not expected to kill a large number of people. They usually happen in sparsely populated rural and forested areas. The official death toll of the California wildfire that destroyed Paradise was eighty-five. Maui surpassed that number within a few days as local officials conducted initial recovery. Gov. Josh Green, M.D. warned people should brace themselves for unprecedented tragedy.

West Maui had been out of power since Tuesday. Cellular and internet service was also gone. The residents and visitors remaining in West Maui were effectively isolated with little modern ways to share information except the old-fashioned way—face-to-face. They did not know what was happening and whether anyone was coming to help them.

Josh flew back from Boston, arriving late Wednesday night. He came to Maui Thursday morning to tour Lahaina town with senior U.S. Senator Brian Schatz, Molokai State Senator Lynn DeCoite, and his Maui liaison Leon Bolosan. They were somber.

I went out with the electric utility (MECO/HECO) Friday with Sylvia and Lynn. Shelee Kimura, head of the utility, had been on Maui since the fire to take a direct hand in the repairs. Crews from Honolulu and Molokai had traveled to Maui to work on clearing their equipment and figuring out

how to fix their lines. Shelee noted some of the MECO/HECO workers had friends and family among the missing, had lost homes in the fire themselves and had been working long shifts to get one of its three lines back up (it's a redundant system so much of West Maui could be connected again without bringing all three back on-line—some experts had said it could have taken months).

MECO's people heated up the upper transmission line—one of three in that section of the system. They brought in portable equipment because the Lahaina substation was destroyed. That work restored some power in West Maui—about 3,700 of the 12,000 customers that MECO had in that region of the island.

MECO crews were also working to complete removing and then replacing the fallen poles. While talking to them, Angus came driving by. He waved and we flagged him down. He fled his condo with only the clothes on his back. In the few days following, he had gotten another T-shirt so now he had two. One of the MECO linemen gave him another shirt and McKelvey said he now had three. He has been agitating for services and supplies—more once he could charge his phone and more connectivity was restored. He'd texted us a few times in the days after the fire about what he and others needed when limited connectivity and power to charge his phone was made available at Kapalua Airport. He had to find and stay in a certain high place to get even a little coverage.

Even though some Starlinks were deployed to restore some communications, West Maui residents complained they still were getting little information from official government sources. The road was effectively closed even when fallen poles and other debris were cleared. Boaters and other watermen began to make trips to and from West Maui to deliver supplies that government, in the perspective of the isolated residents, was not bringing in quick enough. That continued even after the County established distribution points (the first spot picked was the Ritz Carlton which symbolically and geographically may not have been the best choice for residents closer to Lahaina town who lost vehicles or had no access to fuel—one of many growing pains in rolling out relief efforts).

Late Saturday, FEMA's urban search and rescue/recovery teams and cadaver dogs went into the impact area. FEMA administrator Deanne Criswell led the feds in full force (President Biden approved a federal disaster declaration within six hours of Josh sending in the application paperwork and POTUS

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Cars lined up attempting to escape.  
PHOTO: GIL S.C. KEITH AGARAN



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## From the Editor's Desk

Vince Bagoyo, Jr.  
EDITOR • FIL-AM VOICE



Our grandchildren in San Diego, Calif. are shown here packing relief boxes for victims of the recent Lahaina wildfires.  
PHOTO: MEREDITH BAGOYO BURNS

# God Is Faithful in Light of Devastation

We know times of disaster and devastation bring uncertainty, fear and hopelessness. They can shake us to our core, test us and stretch us beyond our limits. And yet, these times of challenges we face from the devastation caused by fire can also reveal a resiliency and strength like we have never known. As we come to terms with our changed island home, we can turn to God and His promises to bring comfort, encouragement, reassurances and hope for the days ahead.

This moment affects us all. As a community, as an island, as a person. And as we rise to meet needs and respond to our changed world, we are reminded of the exhortation of Paul to the Philippian church: *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than*

*yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.* (Philippians 2:3,4) A dear friend reminded me: *Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.* (1 John 3:18)

From the outset, we have witnessed love in *action* reflecting the goodness of God through the residents of Maui: first responders putting their lives on the line to save others; churches collecting goods and opening their doors ready to assist in any way; local and county organizations mobilizing to support our hurting community; and individuals opening their closets, their food pantries and their very homes to those who are directly affected by this disaster.

So, before us we have the selflessness of Jesus and the reminder **see FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK p. 6**



Remains of the Lahaina Public Library.  
PHOTO: GIL S.C. KEITH AGARAN

## Lahaina ...

from p. 3

promised Josh, Brian and junior U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono all the federal government's resources would be made available).

Kahului representative Justin Woodson sat next to the Governor on the plane and Josh invited Justin and any other Maui legislator to tag along on the convoy into the impact zone. Justin texted me while I was walking Maka at the park and invited me and other legislators to meet them at the airport within thirty-five minutes.

My trip to West Maui with Lynn and Sylvia on Friday stayed above the impact zone (Lynn, being on O'ahu, was asked to go along on Brian and Josh's Thursday entry into Lahaina town)—but you could see how haunted Lahaina looked—it truly resembled a war-torn town from the movies in the distance. Hollowed out shells. Roofless. Rubble. Burned out cars and trucks abandoned on the streets. A long line of cars sat stacked at the end of Front Street—never getting out past the old Chart House.

Lahaina looked even more heartbreaking up close on Saturday.

There was hope about the Banyan tree when the arborist described some branches still had sap—not the usual ooze a healthy tree would have when stabbed—but enough to show promise of life. Water tankers were spraying it when we arrived at the square.

But the reality is the number of people we lost is going to grow as recovery teams comb more of the sensitive areas. A goal throughout the week was to move as many visitors out of West Maui which was without

power or running water. Most are now gone—either to complete their vacations on another island or at home. The airlines all stepped up to improve lift out of Maui to O'ahu or the mainland.

But the tourists seemed to almost have been replaced by journalists from every media outlet you could find. Any God respecting elected official or local influencer could appear on any cable or network news show if they were willing to get up at some godawful hour to Zoom or Skype and talk about the fire and its impacts. And the reporters captured and broadcast footage of Lahaina town—Lahaina town burning—Lahaina town desolated—Lahaina town emptied of life. Mayor Richard Bissen decided to allow some access back to West Maui conditioned on no entry into the gutted remnants of the town. Nevertheless, about two hundred people crossed into the sensitive areas, overwhelming the small force of MPD guardsmen stationed across Honoapi'ilani Highway, including the media (the areas haven't been cleared of toxic substances and have not been fully searched for victims). The breach of the condition prompted Rick to rescind allowing people back into West Maui. No one was supposed to go down to the town.

Recognizing many West Maui residents who fled the fire still wanted a chance to go home, the County subsequently attempted to implement a placard system to make access from Mā'alaea easier for West Maui residents, first responders and others with a reason to go into the region. After only a few hours, MPD stopped the experiment due to the sheer volume of people who wanted to go in **see LAHAINA p.6**



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Nora Cabanilla-Takushi and family in 2022.  
PHOTO COURTESY NORA CABANILLA-TAKUSHI



Rick Nava and family in 2020.  
PHOTO COURTESY RICK NAVA



Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr. speaks to reporters at ground zero.  
PHOTO: GIL KEITH-AGARAN



Governor Josh Green at ground zero.  
PHOTO: GIL KEITH-AGARAN

Wreckage near the Pioneer smoke shaft.  
PHOTO: GIL KEITH-AGARAN

## Disaster ...

from p. 2

Wailuku. We stayed there for a few hours or so, waiting. We watched the whole town of Lahaina burn down.”

“We were evacuated around 6 p.m.,” recalls Cabanilla-Takushi. “The fire moved towards Front Street. It was a nightmare.”

Agmata also left her house around 6 p.m. “In the afternoon, there was a

big wind. I saw smoke and something was burning nearby,” she says. “I felt the heat because the fire was near the house. Auntie said ‘Let’s go!’ and she drove us to Nāpili to escape.” They didn’t see the house burn down but a friend later told them it was torched. Agmata moved around in the days following, staying in Nāpili for a day and then sheltering at the War Memorial gymnasium on Thursday and then to a friend’s house. She is presently housed at the Westin in Lahaina

where her niece works.

Nava and his family have also been taken in at the Westin KOR where his daughter also works.

Tolentino travelled a more circuitous route to safety. “As soon as we got out from the house, there was a police officer with his megaphone telling everyone to get out,” he recounted. They took the Civic Center route and sought shelter there. But when the fire moved towards the Civic Center, they evacuated to Nāpili.

Location and escape route chosen made a difference. The television stations have broadcast images of cars lined up on Front Street, all burned. “My neighbor drove down Lahainaluna Road and ended at Front Street and had to evacuate in the water,” says Nava. “I can only assume the worst.”

Cabanilla-Takushi relates her daughter’s friends’ parents perished in their cars trying to get out. “It’s too

see DISASTER p.7



# Lahaina ...

from p. 4

without meeting the criteria set out. It's been strange and numbing. Tuesday we were worried about Upcountry Maui (Olinda/Kula/Pulehu) because the West Maui fire was "contained"—a few hours later Lahaina town burned down overnight. The high winds made it dangerous to fly helicopters to drop water buckets on the flames—that may not have mattered because the holocaust seemed to move so quickly through Front Street, whipped forward by strong winds coming down the West Maui slopes. Josh estimated the fire moved a mile a minute.

Central Maui has been sheltering and feeding evacuees at Maui High School and the War Memorial Gym (we were also collecting donations of non-perishable food, bottled water, and toiletries at various businesses, community centers—including Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center—and the shelter sites). War Memorial was chaotic with people trying to donate nonperishable food and other supplies lining Kanaloa—people dropped off what they had and the volume overwhelmed the people there initially—stuff was donated unsorted (food and clothing and necessities all stuffed into the same donation bag). It took a few days to get more organized so donations could be sorted and some system implemented.

The Red Cross people seemed to simply be observing and waiting to take over at some point (which they did when Criswell came to town). Maui High—which served as a shelter more recently—was more organized—probably the same administrators and teachers and counselors vol-



Front Street, August 12, 2023.  
PHOTO: GIL S.C. KEITH AGARAN

unteering like the last time it was used as a shelter with Red Cross volunteers working smoothly with them and the medical volunteers from the community clinic. They had the same kind of hodgepodge of donations but kept the piles away from the gym entrance so there could be some sorting in front of the band building. King's Cathedral and the Latter-Day Saints Church, and later Grace Bible, were added as shelters as the need grew. Hannibal Tavares Community Center hosted upcountry evacuees as the Olinda/Kula fire remained uncontained. After FEMA visited Lahaina, we stopped at the largest of the shelters at the Gym—Tuesday night it was a mixture of South Maui (Kihei) evacuees and some West Maui—Wednesday morning, Kihei folks could return home or head to the airport while West Maui people—many who lost

their homes to the Lahaina fire—replaced them at the shelters. Some visitors spent Tuesday night at the airport if they were stuck on this side when the County closed the road to Lahaina. Some early storylines covered how Maui overnight lost a lot of historical and cultural sites—Lahaina was the Capitol of the united Hawaiian Kingdom. Lahaina also represented the push and pull that marks much of Hawai'i's history—the native culture and population encountering foreign and different values and thinking, and even the clash between those outside cultures themselves. Lahaina was a popular and prized stop in the whaling trade but also where early missionaries planted the first Protestant church: Waine'e Church (later Waiola Church). Over time, the town reflected the shift to plantation culture with the population filled with Asian workers who erected the Buddhist temples, the Maria Lanakila Catholic Church and school, and the Hawaiian Anglican Church of the Holy Innocents, along the same corridor as the first Protestant house of worship.

But much of the physical presence of the history disappeared overnight in the fire, including Waiola where some Hawaiian royalty were interred as well as early missionaries, the Baldwin Mission House, Lahaina Public Library, Pioneer Inn, Holy Innocents Episcopal Church, Lahaina Jodo Mission (with its large statue of the Buddha), Lahaina Hongwanji, the shops and restaurants that lined Front Street, the Banyan Tree, Kamehameha III Elementary School and likely more that I'm forgetting. The fire chief told me the brick and concrete structures did the best—but most of Lahaina was wood and other organic materials. Yet the sign outside of Holy Innocents and the library survived, as did the façade of Maria Lanakila and the Jodo Mission Buddha.

I understand intellectually the value of history and culture. I really do. As I write this, we're in the recovery phase. People in the shelters will be moved to Kā'anapali hotel rooms or Airbnb rentals. FEMA and other federal and state agencies will move to processing claims. The Department of Education will decide where West Maui's children can and should attend classes. But most importantly, additional USR teams will continue the painstaking

work of combing through the wreckage, continuing the recovery of people who never left Lahaina town. One of my father's kinsmen died during the Lahaina fire—we heard it through the family coconut wireless. It was confirmed by members of the clan living in Las Vegas who added our uncle's spouse had also perished. We'd just seen them at a family gathering to commemorate the death anniversary of another aunt. They'd been driving to a sister's home when their route was diverted down to Front Street—perhaps because of electrical poles fallen on other streets. When the fire began to blow cars in the stalled convoy, they abandoned their truck which may have already caught fire. Unable to hoist himself over the wall, he apparently implored her to save herself.

I broke it to my mother we lost two of our relatives. But after driving to work, another relative instead shared my aunt actually survived. She jumped into the ocean. A niece showed her mother a video posted on social media showing a woman clinging to the breakwater that may have been our aunt. My aunt was picked up by a boat.

We were fortunate the rest of our extensive clan survived, even if they all lost their houses and businesses. They are alive. As another survivor texted me, confirming his entire family escaped, "I would count that a victory." But there will be more casualties. And some, DNA analysis allowing, will be identified and next of kin informed. Not all of the remains will be identified in the near future. Experts to this day continue to work on identifying the remains of people who died on 9/11. Sylvia, Lynn and I also toured King's Cathedral which transformed its entire sanctuary and large reception space and classrooms into a shelter. Afterwards, one of the pastors invited us to pray before we left. That was the highlight of my week.

And the media and the survivors and those who likely have lost family and friends understandably have moved to the next stage of grief—they are angry and looking to blame someone. Why didn't the sirens go off? Why didn't MECO de-energize the lines in Dora's wake? Why didn't the government get food, water and other supplies quickly to the people who were left in West Maui without electricity, flowing water and no way of communicating with the rest of the island or state? Instead, all they saw were regular people sailing over from Molokai and Mā'alaea to bring supplies to Nāpili because they couldn't bring help by land.

In a few days, the news media may have already turned to another story. The Lahaina fire is just another item of history, perhaps visited in time to check on progress. But we, as a community, will still be here looking to see what we make of ourselves next. But me? I'm still just a little numb. ✨

**Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran** represents Central Maui in the State Senate. Donations for relief from the impacts of the Lahaina fire can be made to the Maui Strong Fund with the Hawai'i Community Foundation. <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/maui-strong>

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

Love is an action word. Now more than ever, we need to search our hearts and look beyond ourselves to extend compassion, grace and comfort in practical ways. We must let go of our personal idols of comfort and security and look to give, give and give some more. Each of us has much to share and will be called on to share it in the days, weeks and months ahead. For those who are suffering and in great need, you are not alone. Our circumstances are never assured and constantly change. But God is steadfast and when we cry out to Him as Jeremiah does in Lamentations, He is faithful to answer and we are reminded to stand on the truth of *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.* (Lamentations 3:22-23)

We look to Him for hope rather than the situations in which we find ourselves. We cannot pretend to know why something as devastating as the recent fires would

happen. But often it stirs our hearts to find God; to search His Character and to remember His Love is overall. We have an opportunity to focus not on what we have lost and cannot change but on what makes us Maui 'ohana and therefore stronger than we are as individuals. I saw this posted on Facebook attributed to Clifford Valite: *The famous Banyan Tree on Front Street in Lahaina is still standing. Leaves and branches got burned, but its roots and foundations are strong just like the people of Hawai'i. Give it time and it will start blooming again to become stronger and more beautiful than ever.* That sentiment is reflective of God's promise of beauty from ashes when we place faith in Him. Maui, May the Lord keep you and Bless you as we care for each other. ✨

*Vince Bagoyo*  
VINCE BAGOYO, JR. | EDITOR





Waiola Church in 2015.

PHOTO: ALFREDO EVANGELISTA



Lahaina Jodo Mission in 2015.

PHOTO: ALFREDO EVANGELISTA



Cabanilla-Takushi's grandchildren enjoying the sunset.

PHOTO: NORA CABANILLA-TAKUSHI

# Disaster ...

from p. 5

heartbreaking and sad to think of all those people who were not able to get out of the fire,” says Cabanilla-Takushi.

Indeed, the list of unaccounted persons is still estimated to be over a thousand. Many on the list published on social media consists of Filipino surnames. After all, many *Sakadas* helped to create the Lahaina community during the height of the sugar and pineapple industries.

Several notable small businesses owned by Filipinos were destroyed. “It’s so tragic,” says Nava. Cabanilla-Takushi, a *Sakada* offspring, discloses her brother Jose Cabanilla and his two sons lost their house, as did her nephew Ryan Saribay, his dad Rudy Saribay and many close family members and friends.

The stories shared are just a small sample of the tragedy faced by Lahaina’s Filipino community.

“The wind was blowing around 60 to 70 miles per hour. I got out of my car to hug someone and the wind lifted both of us off the ground,” says Nava. “The fire department did not have any chance whatsoever to contain this fire.” Over fifteen firefighters lost their homes and two MFD Engines were destroyed during the fire.

The blame game has already started. At the first news conferences led by Governor Josh Green with Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr. and other County officials in attendance, reporters already questioned the lack of sirens. A number of lawsuits have already been filed claiming Hawaiian Electric should have shut down the grid, similar to what is being done in some other states. On August 11, Attorney General Anne Lopez promised a comprehensive review of critical decision-making and standing policies.

The death toll continues to mount. Maui Police Department Chief John Pelletier has asked for patience, prayers and perseverance while the slow process of recovery continues.

Pelletier even chastised some media personnel for breaching the barriers meant to keep people out of the fire impacted zone, suggesting they may have walked on the ashes of the deceased. Pelletier disclosed identification of the remains will depend on rapid DNA tests. Those with missing family members are advised to take a DNA test at the Kahului Community Center.

But patience, understandably, is wearing thin. Folks are expressing their frustration at not being allowed to return to their destroyed homes in the area now known as Ground Zero on social media. But there are real health and safety issues due to the burning structures. My niece’s father was a retired member of the New York Police Department during 911. Unfortunately, during his heroic rescue efforts, he was exposed to all the burning materials and he now has cancer likely as a direct result.

On August 11, the State Department of Health issued an Advisory expressing caution about several topics

including ash: “Ash may cause irritation of the skin, nose, and throat, and may cause coughing. Ash and dust (particularly from burned buildings) may contain toxic and cancer-causing chemicals including asbestos, arsenic, and lead.” The Health Department also advised “Unstable buildings and structures may contain hazardous materials and could collapse and cause injury.”

The fire’s effect on our keiki has yet to be explored. “Fortunately for us, we stayed at my stepmom’s house in Happy Valley and there were three other kids for them to hang out with,” says Nava. “They were all crying though when we were leaving our home.”

The loss of Lahaina’s historical sites is irreplaceable. Waiola Church (the first Christian church established in the islands), Holy Innocents Episcopal Church, Lahaina Jodo, the Baldwin House, Pioneer Inn, Lahaina Hongwanji, Lahaina Methodist and Lahaina Baptist all burned. But some surprising structures survived—the sign in

see **DISASTER** on next page





PHOTO ABOVE: Pioneer Inn in 2015.  
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

PHOTO RIGHT:  
Baldwin House in 2015.  
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA



PHOTO LEFT:  
Inside Holy Innocents Church in 2015.  
PHOTO: ALFREDO EVANGELISTA



The Banyan Tree gets watered.  
PHOTO: GIL KEITH-AGARAN



Volunteers at the Maui High School shelter.  
PHOTO COURTESY JAMIE YAP

## Disaster ...

from p. 7

front of Holy I, the outline of Maria Lanakila's façade and tower, the Jodo Mission Buddha statue and some doors and walls appear singed but still standing. The signs marking Lahaina Public Library, King Kamehameha III Elementary School and Fleetwood's remain legible. And an arborist is optimistic portions of Lahaina's iconic 150-year-old Banyan Tree may survive.

When the complete destruction of Lahaina was learned, many groups sprang into action. Maui High School's gymnasium became a shelter, housing almost two thousand folks while many even stayed in their vehicles in the parking lot. "We just want to thank the volunteers who showed up to help!" says Maui High School principal Jamie Yap. "So many of our school staff gave up their time to help; I'm so proud of our staff!" The other initial shelter was the War Memorial gymnasium. Later, King's Cathedral and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, amongst others, hosted shelters.

Volunteers staffed the shelters and brought food. Binhi at Ani prepared hot meals for those sheltered at Maui High School, the War Memorial and King's Cathedral, as well as for first responders at Maui Health and the Department of Public Works. Top Chef Sheldon Simeon gathered his fellow chefs at the University of Hawai'i Maui College Culinary Academy and pre-

pared thousands of plates. Chef Joey Macadangdang at his Nāpili outlet of Joey's Kitchen prepared food and provided it for those in need. Asked why he made the commitment to keep his doors open and cook in the dark to serve the community, Macadangdang's immediate response was "Because that's what we do. Several members of my staff lost their homes and despite their hardship, we know how important it is to take care of each other because this is our community. It's time to give my love and support to our community. That's why I cook for the community. I couldn't have done it without the support of my staff. To our community, *mahalo* to all the donors and volunteers."

Community support has expanded beyond the island of Maui. The State Senate organized a donation drive, resulting in over ten thousand pounds of food and other high need items. The Hawai'i Community Foundation established the Maui Strong Fund and Maui United Way created donation avenues to assist and fund relief efforts. Smaller organizations have also announced fund raising drives and many affected families have started go-fund-me accounts to supplement the government assistance and insurance claims, all of which will take time.

President Joe Biden declared an emergency within six hours of the State of Hawai'i filing an application. Government agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) are already on Maui. The State deployed a joint com-

mand of active-duty military and the Hawai'i National Guard. Assistance also came from police and fire fighters from the City and County of Honolulu and other states and municipalities such as Las Vegas and Washington state.

The significant amount of Filipino residents in Lahaina prompted Philippine Consul General Emil T. Fernandez and three Consular officials to spend August 15 and 16 on Maui. They attended to sixty-six Filipinos, who applied for the replacement of their lost passports. According to Consul General Fernandez, a larger team will return to Maui before the year ends and stay for a longer period to attend to the consular needs of Maui's Filipino community. During the visit, Consul General Fernandez was able to meet with affected Filipinos, including several teachers who recently arrived under the J1 Exchange Visitor Program, local Filipino community leaders and county officials, including Mayor Richard Bissen and his Executive Assistant Sharon Banaag.

Consul General Fernandez relayed he listened to the heart-wrenching accounts of the survivors, most of whom had lost their homes and belongings. "I continue to be amazed at the resiliency of the Filipinos in Maui, despite their ordeal," he said. "Amidst the tragedy and devastation, I also heard of stories of benevolence and bravery, including Rod Domingo who volunteered to pro-

vide aid at the War Memorial, as well as Heidee Gudao and Christine Espina who knocked on the door of their elderly neighbor as they evacuated Lahaina and led him to safety. The Consulate will continue to support and assist all members of the community, regardless of their nationality and status, as it contributes to the recovery efforts."

While the recovery and rebuilding of Lahaina will take several years and cost billions of dollars, the Lahaina Strong spirit will always be a guiding force. "The love and support from our community is tremendously awesome," says Cabanilla-Takushi. "Be strong, Lahaina, we'll get through this with the blessing of our mighty Lord."



**Alfredo G. Evangelista** is a graduate of Maui High School (1976), the University of Southern California (1980), and the University of California at Los Angeles School of Law (1983). He is a sole practitioner at Law Offices of Alfredo Evangelista, A Limited Liability Law Company, concentrating in estate planning, business start-up and consultation and nonprofit corporations. He has been practicing law for 39 years (since 1983) and returned home in 2010 to



be with his family and to marry his high school sweetheart, the former Basilia Tumacder Idica. His mom Catalina celebrates her 99th birthday this month.





PHOTO LEFT: Binhi at Ani volunteers preparing food for the shelters.  
PHOTO: ALFREDO EVANGELISTA



PHOTO ABOVE: Chef Joey and Juvs Macadangdang (front right) with firefighters from the County of Hawai'i.  
PHOTO COURTESY JOEY'S KITCHEN NĀPILI



PHOTO LEFT: FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell confers with Mayor Bissen at Ground Zero.  
PHOTO GIL KEITH-AGARAN



PHOTO RIGHT: Chef Sheldon Simeon and his dad cook pork and peas.  
PHOTO: GIL KEITH-AGARAN



Lahaina Strong logo. IMAGE COURTESY LACEY & MIKE REICH



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Community... In Action



Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center is open for your celebrations.  
PHOTO: CEASAR LIZADA



Enhance@Fitness for Kūpuna at Binhi At Ani Filipino Community Center classes are held.  
PHOTO: CLAUDETTE MEDEIROS



The Maui County Federal Credit Union team preparing lunches for the Bayanihan Feeding program.  
PHOTO COURTESY BOBBY PAGAY



The twenty-five Binhi at Ani Scholarship Recipients and the presenters.  
PHOTO: CEASAR LIZADA PHOTOGRAPHY

BINHI AT ANI

Celebrate your special events at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center. The Center can be rented from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. for \$1150 (including the cleaning fee) plus a \$300 security deposit; from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. for \$800 (including the cleaning fee) plus a \$300 security deposit; or from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. for \$950 (including the cleaning fee) plus a \$300 security deposit. If alcohol will be served and/or provided, there is an additional fee of \$300 and you must hire two licensed bartenders. Self-service coolers and/or guests providing their own alcohol is NOT allowed.

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 2 p.m. Telephone (808) 877-7880.



Bayanihan Feeding Program provides

a Sunday lunch to Hale Mahaolu Residents in Central Maui (Hale Mahaolu Elua and Hale Mahaolu Akahi, which was added in October). As of July 31, a total of 16,902 meals were delivered. Teams serving during July included Maui County Federal Credit Union, Maui Filipino Community Council, Miss Maui USA, Philippine Nurses Association of Maui, Hawai'i and UHMC Kabatak Club. There is a need for additional teams of volunteers to prepare the free lunches.

Create a Team by contacting Lucy Porte at (808) 276-8026. Tax-deductible donations are accepted via Paypal or a Credit/Debit card or by mailing a check payable to Binhi at Ani, 780 Onehe Avenue, Kahului, HI 96732 [Memo: Feeding Program].

The Bayanihan Feeding Program is supported by grants from Bayer Crop Science Hawai'i and Nareit Hawai'i.

**Bayanihan Health Fair**  
The first annual Bayanihan Health Fair will be held on Saturday, October 21

COMMUNITY... IN ACTION

Compiled by Assistant Editor Alfredo G. Evangelista.  
Send your community briefs to [info@filamvoice.com](mailto:info@filamvoice.com).

from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center. For sponsorship and vendor opportunities, please contact Event Chairperson Alfredo Evangelista at (808) 242-8100.

**Enhance@Fitness for Kūpuna at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center** classes are continuing. They are held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 6 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Enhance@Fitness is a low-cost ongoing evidence-based group exercise and falls prevention program helping older adults at all levels of fitness to become more active, energized and empow-

ered to sustain independent lives. For more information on Enhance@Fitness, contact Enhance@Fitness Coordinator Ginny Kiick (808) 280-6251 or [gkiick@hotmail.com](mailto:gkiick@hotmail.com) or Wellness Coordinator Claudette Medeiros (808) 463-3166 or [claudette.b.medeiros@co.maui.hi.us](mailto:claudette.b.medeiros@co.maui.hi.us).

**Seed and Harvest Dinner**  
At the Seed and Harvest Dinner, Binhi at Ani presented its twenty-five scholarship recipients. Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr. installed the 2023-2024 Board of Directors, led by president Melen Magbual.

**Summer at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center** concluded on July 26 with a Presentation. Certificates were presented to the students who



Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr. installs the Binhi at Ani Board of Directors.  
PHOTO: CEASAR LIZADA PHOTOGRAPHY



The art participants of the 2023 Summer at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center, led by Philip Sabado and his wife Christine.  
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA



The zumba participants of the 2023 Summer at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center, led by instructor Eva Marie Arconado Mirzai.  
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA





Miss Hawai'i Filipina 2023 Sandra Nicole Desierto.  
PHOTO COURTESY SANDRA DESIERTO

completed the four week courses.

Take Out Tuesday

Binhi at Ani resumes its fundraiser titled "Take Out Tuesday" on Tuesday, September 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center. Available for purchase is a \$15 pork adobo plate lunch.

MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Congratulations to Maui's Sandra Nicole Desierto—the 2023 Miss Hawai'i Filipina who was crowned at the Annual Convention of the United Filipino Council of Hawai'i recently held at the Maui Beach Hotel's Moana Ballroom.

Elected as officers and members of the Board of Governors were President: Angie Dytioco-Santiago, Vice President: Gladys Mae Menor, Secretary: S. Penny Chung, Treasurer: Adela Domingo Salacup, Auditor: Hermie Pagaduan, Asst. Treasurer: Jasmine Chung, Asst. Treasurer: Chulet Paco and Immediate Past President: Leo Rojas Gozar. Elected



to the Board of Governors are Benymar Sadumiano and Gerico Caban (Hawai'i island), Roy Mendaro and Mario Trinidad (Kaua'i), Marilyn Romero and Emi Cortez (Maui) and Ben Pulido and Tina Salvador (O'ahu).

The Island Council Presidents are Miriam Guerrero Dublada (Hawai'i island), Lemuel Soria (Nancy Apalla effective 9/2/23) (Kaua'i), Noemi Barbadillo (Lāna'i), Domingo Gumpal (Maui), Robert Stephenson (Molokai) and Raymond Sebastian (O'ahu).

The Executive Secretary is Ardel Salacup while the Legal Counsels are Norma Doctor Sparks and Merlinda Garma.



PHOTO ABOVE:  
UFCH Officers and Board of Governors with State Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran.  
PHOTO COURTESY ANGIE SANTIAGO



IMAGE LEFT: Pork Adobo for \$15 on Tuesdays. A lunch that can't go wrong!  
IMAGE COURTESY AL'S BBQ PIT

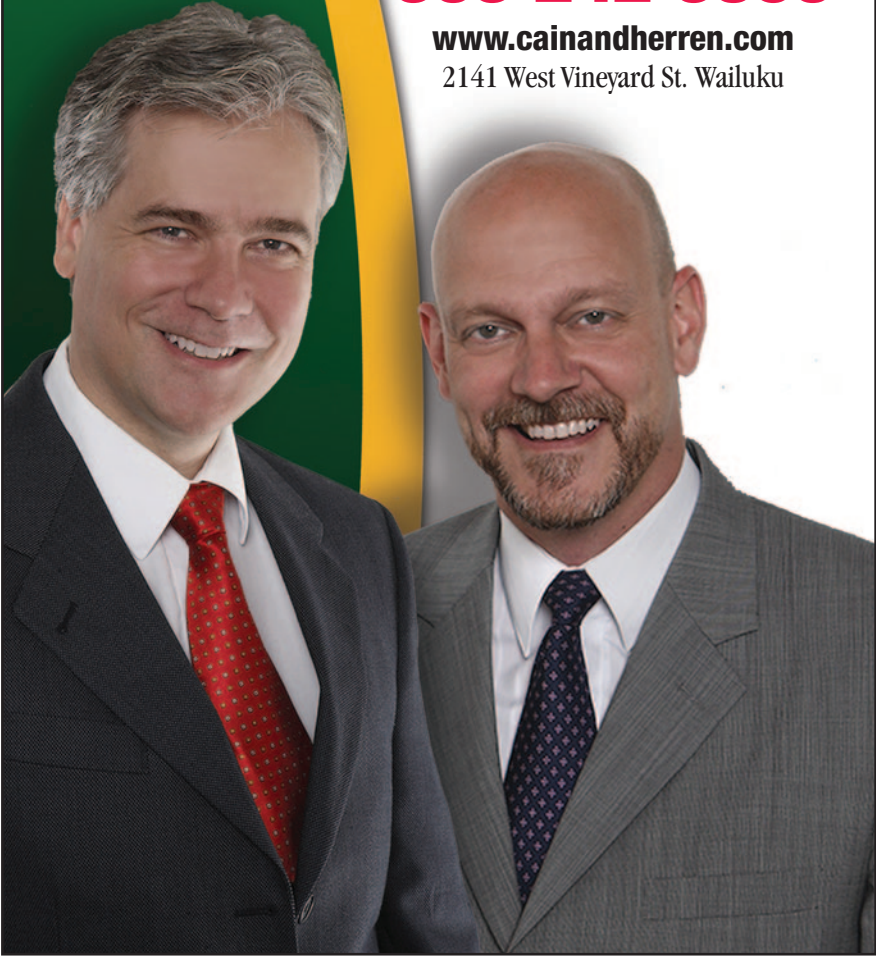
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Cayleb Ramos



Roxelle Trisha Mae Magliba



Dianne Ivy Lacaden



Michelle Castillo

As I drag myself into the kitchen the humid environment kisses my face, making me feel heavy with moisture. It's already noon and although I have just woken up, the scene in front of me is something I am very familiar with. Replayed at least five times a year for good measure, I watch the simmering pot of *sinigang*, made by my Papa, boil just until it's about to spill over onto the burning flames below. It's a routine that has happened more than a hundred times: spoonfuls of *bok choy*, tomatoes, pork, potatoes, and the occasional piece of *okra* that is avoided like the plague, fill my small bowl up to the brim. It's a scene and food that brings me immense happiness and comfort.

Not only does the bowl of soup make me feel physically warm, it also warms my heart. My grandparents don't live with me but rather in a home 5,403 miles away. They come to

# Google®

## Is Not Everything ... Homemade Happiness

Jhanessty Vaye Bautista | MAUI HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2024

visit during late fall and go back during early spring. In the time they spend with us however, food is always the number one indication they're home. During the five-month period, there is not a single day where the stove isn't being used. There isn't a single moment where someone isn't at the dining table, chowing away. There isn't ever a reality where there is no

food in our home. And firstly, I have to say, I am so grateful. But secondly, I'm a little embarrassed. I have no experience cooking traditional Filipino foods whatsoever! My culinary skills just about stops at the mark of making instant ramen and then eating said Filipino foods. It's just not one of my strong suits.

Thankfully, our world was graced with the existence of cooks. Their strong suits are the ones making our taste buds and stomachs happy. And on Maui especially, some of the best cooks I know are the peers I go to school with.

One of the most popular Filipino foods worldwide is the rich and flavorful dish of *adobo*. There are two types of *adobo*: pork and chicken, and while I'm not here to argue which type is better, pork *adobo* seems to be the outstanding winner for **Cayleb Ramos** and **Roxelle Magliba**. Although Cayleb is the only one enrolled in the culinary pathway at Maui High, the two of them learned how to cook this dish from the cooks they know who do it best: their parents. Cooking with their parents brings up fond memories for the two of them. "Me and my father were working on making pork *adobo* in a medium Ziploc® bag when the bag slipped out of my hands and all the peppercorns fell in. It was a real struggle trying to eat the *adobo* with all the peppercorns," he reminisces.

While Cayleb's memory cooking the dish is very amusing to look back on, Roxelle remembers a heartfelt moment that started her passion for cooking. "When it was my first-time cooking *adobo*, I wasn't entirely sure if I was doing it correctly. My mom left me to experiment on my own because she had to watch her Filipino television show. When I finished cooking it, I didn't expect my family to like it. Both my parents and my oldest brother, however, enjoyed it!" she excitedly exclaims. The praise she received from

cooking her first Filipino dish inspired her to go above and beyond to learn and enhance the dishes she makes.

Another popular Filipino dish garnering love and appreciation from both **Dianne Ivy Lacaden** and **Michelle Castillo** is *Bicol Express*. The two, along with many locals and foreigners of the Philippines, drool over the creamy and spicy dish. Of the two of them, however, Michelle is the only one who knows how to cook this specific dish. While Michelle cooks her favorite pork and chili pepper dish she feels "nostalgic, happy, and an overall connectedness" to her culture. "It brings back memories of family gatherings, special occasions or moments spent in the Philippines to the joy of sharing a special dish with family," she explains. While Dianne can't make *Bicol Express*, the dishes she can make fill her with a sense of accomplishment and happiness. "Cooking my favorite dish made me realize the joy of making something delicious and sharing it with loved ones," she describes.

The food of the Philippines is a treasure to the homes of many. For all of us, food represents a part of our family we got to grow up with. Generations and generations of families' individual and specialized recipes made in the comfort of our own home. Happiness can be from many things, but the meals we cook and meals we eat, are a homemade happiness in itself. 🌸

**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 **Jhanessty Vaye Bautista**, a Senior at Maui High School. She is President of Maui High's Key Club, Vice-President of Maui High's Filipino Cultural Club, Executive Secretary of Maui High's Student Government, a member of Blue Thunder, Maui High's Robotics club, and a member of the National Honor Society. Jhanessty is in the ACOM Pathway at Maui High, focusing on graphic design and entrepreneurship. In her free time, she reads books of any and all genres, sketches out designs for her new graphics project, sings karaoke alone or with a group of her close family and friends and loves anything with the popular videogame's Minecraft Bee. She is the daughter of Vanessa and Jhon Boy Bautista.



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This month is back to school time! Do you have all your school supplies ready? Did you have a hard time finding the list according to the grade level of your child? Or did you just order the ready-pack supplies? Is it worth the price for being stress-free? I remember the days when I labeled every single item on the school supply list. I got smarter over the years and just printed out labels instead of individually labeling the

# Let’s Talk Pinoy!

Dulce Karen Butay

items. It saves time and energy. Let’s get our children up and ready to learn this year by making them healthy. Shout out to our August birthday celebrants: Jesus “Jun” Butay, Jr.,

Omar “O” Lascano Lugtu, Adrienne Kawano, Gail Fujiwara, Vanessa Kate Erin Galiza, Jacinta Idica, Catalina Evangelista, Sean Matthew Impelido-Butay, Adrian Chris and Edrien Chris

Delos Santos and Gene Alvarez. Happy, Happy birthday to you! (Tagalog) *Maligayang bati sa inyong kaarawan!* (Ilocano) *Naimbag nga panagkasangay mo!* (Ibanag) *Makapagayaya nga agaw na nikeyana mu!* (Kapampangan) *Masayang kebaitan queca!* (Ilonggo) *Masadya gid nga adlaw sa imo pagkatawo.* Let’s visit our friends Angel and Michael and see what’s going on with them this month, shall we?

ANGEL FEELS NERVOUS when she hears what Michael’s mom says. She doesn’t know what to do or say. She just keeps silent.

She helps Michael’s mom set up the table, the plates and *makan* (food). She feels this will be her last day. She is being well-fed first then thrown to jail. “It’s ok, I know it’s my fault anyway for staying here without proper documentation. I need to be punished or deported. I wish I can just go home and be with my family,” Angel thinks to herself.

“Oh, how I miss my family. I hope my *Tatay* (father) is doing okay. I haven’t talked to him for a long time.” Her tears start rolling down her eyes.

She doesn’t know Michael’s mom is watching her.

“Angel? Angel? Angel, are you ok?” she asks.

She can’t find her voice. Instead, Angel hugs her and starts crying on her shoulder.

She let her cry until she feels better.

Angel feels embarrassed and lets go of Michael’s mom.

“Sorry, *po*” she says shyly. “It’s ok, *iha*. I understand,” Michael’s mom says.

They continue to set up the table and when it is done, they all sit quietly.

At the table, there’s Michael’s favorite combo, the *monggo* beans and the pork *adobo*.

“Oh mom, *Madamogud nga salamat* (thank you) for cooking my favorite *pamangan* (foods). I haven’t eaten good *pagkain* (food) for a week!” Michael exclaims excitedly.

“*Daghang salamat* (thank you). *Agyamanak* (thank you). *Maraming salamat* (thank you)!” Michael continues.

Michael takes the plate of rice and scoops it on Angel’s plate. Then he scoops some onto his plate and passes it to his dad. His *amahan* (father)

English	Pilipino	Ilokano	Cebuano	Ilonggo	Ibanag	Kapampangan
Come in	Pasok ka	Dumanun ka	Moabut sa	Sulod	Mattalung ka	Lungub
Mother	Nanay	Nanang	Inahan	Nanay	Yena	Ima
Food	Pagkain	Makan	Pagkaon	Pagkaon	Kanan	Pamangan
Face	Mukha	Rupa	Nawong	Nawong	Muka	Lupa
Thank You	Maraming Salamat	Agyamanak	Daghang Salamat	Madamogud nga Salamat	Mabbalo	Dacal a Salamat
House	Bahay	Balay	Balay	Balay	Balay	Bale
Good Evening	Magandang Gabi	Naimbag a Rabii	Maayong Gabi	Maayong Gabi	Mapia nga Gabi	Mayap a Bengi
Father	Tatay / Itay	Tatang / Itang	Amahan	Tatay	Yama	Tata

does the same thing. He scoops some rice on his *inahan* (mother’s) plate and then on his *yama’s* (father’s) plate.

Angel quietly admires how well Michael was raised. He is not a spoiled brat and respects his parents. Unlike those she knows who are arrogant and disrespectful to the parents by yelling and answering back.

Then Michael does the same thing with the *monggo* beans and pork *adobo*.

When Michael finishes placing *pagkaon* (food) on her plate, Angel gives him a shy smile and says, “*Dacal a salamat* (thank you).”

Michael sweetly responds, “My pleasure to serve you, Angel.”

Michael’s parents are just looking at them while they are eating. His *Nanang* (mother) is very happy seeing Michael smiling while he’s eating.

“*Yena* (mother), your *kanan* (food) is getting cold,” Michael tells his *yena* (mother).

His *tatay* (father) also comments and says “Let them eat and you should eat too so we can go and rest.”

Michael’s *inahan* (mother) rolls her eyes to her husband and starts eating.

There’s small talk and laughter while they are eating. Angel feels at ease now and is not scared of Michael’s *nanay* (mother). Although she looks strict, she is a very caring and sweet lady. Angel can’t help but

think of her own *nanay* (mother). They are almost the same. Her *nanay* (mother) looks strict too but is a very sweet lady. “I wonder how is my *nanay* (mother) now,” Angel says to herself.

“My *nanang* (mother) knows how to cook *monggo* beans too and pork *adobo*. Except her *nanay* (mother) puts bitter melon in the *monggo* beans. Her *inahan* (mother) says bitter melon is really healthy and helps to clean your blood and helps when you have diabetes.”

Michael’s mom asks her a question but she doesn’t hear it because she is busy with her own thoughts.

So she just says “*Ho?*” translating to “What is it?”

Michael’s mom repeats what she said to Angel, “You don’t like the *monggo* beans, *iha?*” *Iha* means endearment.

Angel replies shyly and says, “I love *monggo* beans *po*. I’m just not used to having it with *marunggay* leaves.”

Michael’s *inahan* (mother) replies and says “In Ilocos, we put *marunggay* leaves with. most other vegetables. We don’t like bitter melon because it makes us bitter and look older.”

And they all laugh at what Michael’s *nanay* (mother) says.

Knock, knock knock And they all stop laughing together when they hear a loud knock and puzzledly look at each other.

Then the knocking continues And continues with urgency this time.

Who is knocking late at night at Michael’s *balay* (house)?

How do you find people just dropping by your house unannounced, especially late at night? Do you ignore it or go and check who is at the door?


Anyways, that’s all I have. Keep an eye out for my article on every issue. 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 the owner of Maui Balsamic Vinegar, a




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.





# CONSUL GENERAL'S CORNER

EMIL T. FERNANDEZ



# FILIPINOS IN HAWAI‘I LEAD PARTICIPANTS IN 2023 VIP TOUR

After a three-year hiatus, the Very Important Pinoy (VIP) Tour resumed this year with a packed itinerary from July 17 to 23 with stops in Manila, Iloilo and Boracay. The largest contingent hailed from the State of Hawai‘i, led by Consul General Emil Fernandez, with 120 of the 292-strong U.S.-wide delegation coming from the Aloha State.

Officials of other Philippine Consulates in the U.S. who took part in the tour included Consul General Neil Ferrer and Consul Vanessa Bago-Llona of San Francisco, Consul General Senen Mangalile of New York, Deputy Consul General Alnee Gamble of Los Angeles, and Honorary Consul Audie de Castro of San Diego.

Hawai‘i’s commendable turnout can be traced to the Consulate’s aggressive promotion efforts and tremendous support extended by several local travel agencies including Maui-based Noble Travel, Four Seasons Travel, Aloha Tours and Travel, Everlasting Travel, JTB USA as well as the Honolulu office of Philippine Airlines, capably headed by its Area Manager Sol Solleza.

The tour began on July 17 with the traditional wreath-laying ceremony at the monument of our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. Present during the activity, which included a 21-gun salute by the Philippine military, were Manila City Vice Mayor John Marvin “Yul Servo” Nieto and Captain Teodoro Bolonio of the Philippine Navy. Lunch followed at the historic Manila Hotel courtesy of Philippine Airlines.

The highlight of the tour’s first day was a call on President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. at Malacañang Palace. The



Luneta  
 PHOTO courtesy of Sol Solleza and Rea Castillo

President warmly welcomed the group, expressing gratitude to them for visiting the country. In his remarks, he acknowledged the significant contributions of overseas Filipinos to the Philippine economy and society. He also emphasized the revival of tourism and its significance to the country’s further development.

The day concluded with a dinner graciously hosted by the Tourism Promotions Board, led by its Chief Operating Officer, Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles, and Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Charles Aames Bautista, at the Manila Peninsula Hotel in Makati.

From Manila, the group proceeded to the progressive city of Iloilo, where they were fêted to a sumptuous dinner by Mayor Jerry Treñas at the city’s Convention Center. The buffet featured delectable Ilonggo and international dishes and a lively *Dinagyang* dance performed by 2023 Aliwan Fiesta street dance competition champion Tribu Parianon. Vice Mayor Jeffrey Ganson and City Council members were also present at the event.

In Iloilo, delegates had the opportunity to visit several beautiful churches, including the Church of Santo Tomas de Villanueva in Miagao, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Other destinations included the Museum of Philippine Maritime History, Nelly Garden, Jolo Cathedral, Molo House and Balai Ilonggo. Participants were then provided the option to choose from several activities on their second day, including a culinary tour, adventure tour at Damires Hills or Isla de Gigantes day tour.

The group trooped to Boracay, Aklan by bus enabling them to have a view of the countryside and a lunch break at Roxas City, Capiz, where they filled themselves with fresh seafood, including oysters, crabs and shrimps.

Later that evening, Vice Governor Reynaldo Quimpo personally welcomed the participants at Seawind Restaurant in Boracay on behalf of Aklan Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores. The Vice Governor was joined by his lovely wife, Mrs. Gabrielle Calizo-Quimpo, who was a former Vice Governor and member of the House of Representatives.

Evident was how the beaches of Boracay were cleaned and how the town progressed through the years to include significantly more hotels and commercial establishments. Apart from enjoying several water activities, participants had the choice of experiencing the *kawa* hot bath in Tibiao Antique, go river tubing at the Blue Lagoon & Cold Springs, or trek Ibajay to reach Nawidwid Falls and Mount Balinsasayaw.

One week in the Philippines is certainly not enough but no matter how short, this year’s VIP Tour provided many with a welcome respite from life in the U.S. and a chance to learn of developments firsthand and be reacquainted with sights and tastes of our beloved islands. 🌟

**Emil T. Fernandez** is the current Consul General of the Philippines stationed in Honolulu. He graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Management Economics. Prior to his appointment to Hawai‘i, Fernandez served as Deputy Consul General in Frankfurt, Germany. His other foreign assignments included Washington, D.C. (2010–2016), Santiago, Chile (2005–2008) and Caracas, Venezuela (2002–2005). In Manila, Fernandez



Malacañang  
 PHOTO COURTESY RTVM

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Iloilo  
PHOTO COURTESY OF SOL SOLLEZA AND REA CASTILLO



Boracay  
PHOTO COURTESY OF SOL SOLLEZA AND REA CASTILLO

held several important positions, including Executive Director of the Office of Asian & Pacific Affairs (2016–2018), Director for Southern Europe of the Office of European Affairs (2009–2010), Special Assistant to the Undersecretary for International Economic Relations (2008–2009) and Acting Director of the Office of ASEAN Affairs (1999–2001).



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# Ti Biag ken Pammati

## "Life and Faith"



PHOTO LEFT: Bishop Larry Silva blessing the new Maui Lani Senior Citizen Housing in Kahului. The steward of the Gospel as head of the Catholic Church in Hawai'i.



PHOTO RIGHT: Proclaiming as a good steward, the Gospel of the Lord and preaching the Good News.



PHOTO RIGHT: Washing the feet of our youth on Holy Thursday, telling them to be good stewards and telling them to do the same as Jesus did.



PHOTO LEFT: The greatest thing God wants to do is that we Love one another and others as He Loves us! A good steward is to Love as God Loves. We celebrate our 62nd Anniversary on August 26,2023.

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (19: 23–30).

Jesus said to his disciples: “I assure you, only with difficulty will a rich man enter into the kingdom of God. I repeat what I said: It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were completely overwhelmed, and exclaimed, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For man it is impossible; but for God all things are possible.” Then it was Peter’s turn to say to him: “Here we have put everything aside to follow you. What can we expect from it?” Jesus said to them: “I give you my solemn word, in the new age when the Son of Man takes his seat upon a throne befitting his glory, you who have followed me shall likewise take your places on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Moreover, everyone who has given up home, brothers or sisters, father or mother, wife or children or property for my sake will receive many times as much and inherit everlasting life. Many who are first shall come last, and the last shall come first.”

The Gospel of the Lord!  
Think back to what Fr. Edison said of being Good Steward of the Gospel.

# To Be Good Stewards of the Gospel, We Must Love as God Loves Us!

Deacon Patrick Constantino

In today’s Gospel, Jesus sets out a difficult challenge, not only for the rich but for all of us. The image of the camel passing through the eye of the needle would have made sense to his listeners, for it alluded to entering a walled city with the animal. As the camel would typically be loaded with goods, to pass through the gate into the walled city, everything had to be unloaded first.

With this in mind, we can easily see what Jesus is saying is to enter the kingdom of God, we must first rid ourselves of all the cargo, all the burdens we carry. Some of us have more than others but even if we have few, it can be easy to become attached to what we have and resist giving it up.

Is it that possessions are bad? Not in and of themselves. But Jesus is emphasizing there is something greater than our possessions and even our relationships. That something greater is loving and trusting the Lord over and above all these things. It is putting all our possessions, all our relationships, our very

lives, at the service of the Lord in this life in the hope of spending eternity with Him in the next.

Cultivating such detachment is difficult. It isn’t just about giving something up; it is about having faith and trust in God, and about relying on God over and above all material possessions and our relationships. It is about truly believing, as Jesus tells us, all things are possible for God. It is about believing God does love us, as he has clearly revealed by sending his Son for our salvation and by the Lord’s continued presence in the Eucharist. Such a loving God will not abandon us. He truly Loves us and wants us to be good stewards of the Gospel. With God, everything is possible! Now look at the person next to you. Do you see God? What about around us? Do you See God? He is always there in a special way! Let us love for who they are! *Jesus, I trust in You!* ✨



On July 1, 2022, **Patrick Constantino** retired as a Deacon for the Roman Catholic Church in Hawai’i, after serving thirty-five years and becoming on June 18, 1987, 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. His last assignment before retiring was at 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 is married to his lovely wife Corazon for sixty-one years.



# Shave Ice on Maui

Liza A Pierce of “A Maui Blog” | PHOTOS COURTESY THE ALOHA 360

It’s summer time and we are craving for some *Shave Ice* to cool us off! *Shave Ice*, a quintessential Hawaiian treat, holds a special place in the hearts of locals and visitors alike. This refreshing dessert, distinct from a typical snow cone, features finely shaved ice, which absorbs an array of vibrant and natural fruit syrups, creating a burst of flavor with every spoonful. Maui, with its warm tropical climate and picturesque landscapes, is an ideal destination to indulge in this delightful icy treat. From iconic establishments to hidden gems, the island offers a diverse range of *Shave Ice* spots, each crafting their unique combinations of flavors capturing the essence of the Aloha spirit. Whether strolling along the sunny beaches or exploring charming towns, the cool and sweet relief of *Shave Ice* on Maui is a cherished experience, making it an essential part of any island adventure. Here is a list of favorite places to get *Shave Ice* here on Maui:

**Ululani’s Hawaiian Shave Ice** (multiple locations): Ululani’s is a beloved Maui institution known for its fluffy *Shave Ice*, vibrant flavors and generous toppings like sweetened condensed milk and mochi. You’re always close to a refreshing treat with several locations across the island.

**Tobi’s Shave Ice** (Pā‘ia): Tobi’s in Pā‘ia is a popular spot, offering organic and all-natural *Shave Ice* options. Their flavors range from traditional to unique and you can savor your *Shave Ice* while strolling through the charming town of Pā‘ia.

**Surfing Monkey Shave Ice** (Kihei): Surfing Monkey is a favorite among locals and tourists for its mouthwatering *Shave Ice* creations, made with premium syrups and fresh fruit toppings. Located in Kihei, it’s the perfect place to enjoy a re-

freshing treat after a day at the beach.

**Bling Bing Shave Ice** (Kihei): Bling Bing Shave Ice offers a unique choice of Chinese *Shave Ice*, using finely shaved ice and gourmet condensed milk syrup. Located in Kihei, it’s a hidden gem for *Shave Ice* enthusiasts seeking delicious and innovative flavors.

**Peace Love Shave Ice** (Kihei): A family-owned spot in Kihei, offering a vibrant atmosphere and friendly service. They serve generous portions of finely shaved ice with a variety of tropical flavors and fun add-ons like ice cream and mochi.

**Gus Hawaiian Shave Ice** (Kihei): Bringing you the taste of authentic Hawaiian *Shave Ice* with their 64’ VW bus. Delicious *Shave Ice* with natural fruit. They are located in front of the World Mark condos at Alunui Ke Ali‘i Street in Kihei close to Kama‘ole Beach I.

**The Shave Ice Spot** (Kā‘anapali): Located at the Fairway Village, this cozy shop offers finely shaved ice with house-made syrups free from artificial additives. Their extensive menu includes classic and exotic flavors for a refreshing treat.

**Big Wave Shave Ice Company** (Lahaina): At their Westin Nanea location, expect finely shaved ice topped with premium, house-made syrups. Enjoy traditional and tropical flavors or have your *Shave Ice* served in fresh pineapples for an extra Hawaiian touch.

*NOTE FROM LIZA: This article was written prior to the Maui Fire. I decided to move forward with publishing this article about Shave Ice on Maui after deleting one of the Shave Ice shops orginally on the list: Break-wall Shave Ice, which was burned in the Lahaina Fire. The Ululani Shave Shop in Lahaina was also burned down but their shops in other towns*



Ululani’s Hawaiian Shave Ice



Bling Bing Shave Ice

are open. Our hearts pour out to the Lahaina and Maui residents affected by the fire. 🌻

**Liza Pierce** of A Maui Blog is an Interactive Media enthusiast. She started blogging in 2006 and she loves talking story online and spreading 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 Rainbow; End Alzheimer’s Advocate. Her life is full and exciting here on the island of

Maui. Liza is currently the Digital Media Specialist with Hawai‘i Life Real Estate Brokers. She is the author of the book Maui 2021 and Beyond.



Gus  
Hawaiian  
Shave  
Ice







Florendo Tabios



Alma & Florendo Tabios

# Florendo Aguilar Tabios

Lucy Peros | PHOTOS COURTESY TABIOS 'OHANA

Many of the Sakada Offspring who are now in their 60s and 70s came to Hawai'i during their teen years. Some of them continued their elementary and high school education here in Hawai'i. This month's featured Sakada Offspring, Florendo Aguilar Tabios is one of them.

Florendo was born on November 29, 1950 in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte, Philippines. He attended Filipinas Ele-

mentary School and Ilocos Norte School, and Arts and Trades in Laoag City. When he came to Hawai'i, he continued his education at Lahainaluna High School, from which he graduated in 1970.

After his high school graduation, he continued at Maui Community College (now called University of Hawai'i Maui College). He received his degree in Hotel Management. After graduating from MCC, he worked at Kā'ana-

pali Beach Hotel, Kuleana Condo Resort and Kapalua Bay Hotel, all located in Lahaina, Maui.

In 1991, Florendo started to work for the County of Maui with the Maui Police Department as a Public Safety officer and he retired in 2015. He married his wife, Alma O. Echalas on June 2, 1973. Alma worked at Liberty House/Macy's until she retired in 2014.

Florendo and Alma are blessed with two children, Floyd Louie Tabios and Alona Lei Tabios Watson. Both Floyd and Alona Lei attended and graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Floyd graduated with a major in Ethnic studies while Alona Lei graduated with a Psycholo-

gy degree. Currently, Floyd resides in Las Vegas with his wife Alyssa Tabios, along with their two daughters, Apolonia and Anna Tabios. Floyd is the General Manager of Eureka Restaurant in Downtown Las Vegas. Alona Lei works at the Westin Kā'anapali Ocean Villas in the Food and Beverage Department. She is married to David Watson and they have two sons. Both sons graduated from Kamehameha School on Maui and are currently attending Grand Canyon University in Arizona.

Florendo has several siblings. His oldest sister Erlinda Tabios Delos Santos was married to the late Elpidio Delos Santos. They had three children, Marilyn (deceased), Myrna Delos Santos Kittridge who lives in Los Angeles with her husband, Patrick Kittridge and Sam Delos Santos, who currently lives in Lahaina. Florendo's younger brother, Melandrino Tabios is married to Myrna Alagano Tabios. They reside

## Happy 99th birthday Mom!

*Agyamanak unay ti sakripisyo kanyak.*

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Faustino Tabios





Melandrino, Margarita, Florendo, Erlinda, & Faustino

in Lahaina with their son Myles Tabios. Florendo's youngest sister, Margarita Tabios Nelson (deceased) was married to Robert Lyn Nelson of Washington, also deceased.

Florendo is currently and actively involved with the organization Annak Ti San Nicolas of Maui as its Vice President. He is also a member of Maria Lanakila Catholic Church in Lahaina. Florendo enjoys gardening, cooking and hanging out with his friends every weekend.

According to Florendo, his Dad Faustino Labutong Tabios was born on February 15, 1922 and his Mom Monica Aguilar Tabios was born on May 4, 1922. Faustino helped his Dad (Florendo's Grandpa) farm their lands in the town of Dingras, Ilocos Norte, Philippines where he met Monica (Florendo's Mom). They married in March 1942 and were blessed with their first child, Erlinda on February 17, 1944. Around the same time, Faustino learned they were recruiting people to work in Hawai'i's sugar cane and pineapple plantations. Faustino was interested to come to Hawai'i. He was able to join the last batch of the 1946 *Sakadas*. At first, Faustino was sent to Wailua Sugar Plantation on O'ahu. He worked there for a year and was laid off. He then went to work for the Honolulu Railroad until unfortunately he was laid off again. Faustino was so resilient he found work on Lāna'i for the Pineapple Plantation in the early 1950s. At that time, they had a Labor Union strike, so he decided to move back to the Philippines. After a year in the Philippines, his uncle, Eleno Labutong, who was working for Pioneer Mill Company in Lahaina, sent a letter to Faustino saying there were job offers available. Faustino right away decided to come back to Hawai'i and worked at Pioneer Mill Company. He used his little savings to buy an expensive airline ticket. Even some of the people at their Municipal Hall were teasing him and told him he should use that money to buy some farming land in the Philippines instead of coming to Hawai'i. Faustino, however, was a very determined man. He took that chance and worked overtime to make up for the money he spent on his ticket.

In 1966, the immigration laws were revised to allow legal permanent residents of the United States to petition their immediate families to join them in Hawai'i. Faustino took this opportunity to bring Florendo along with the rest of his family to Hawai'i. They arrived in Hawai'i in October 1967. His oldest sister Erlinda was unable to join them because she was already married. With patience while waiting for the petition process and with an extra prayer together with the help of a brother-in-law, Erlinda along with her three children were able to come and join Florendo's family in 1974. They all lived in Waine'e Village (aka Lahaina Pump) for five years until Florendo's parents were able to purchase their first home in Kelaweia Mauka in 1972.

Both Faustino and Monica Tabios retired from the Pioneer Mill Company in 1986. Faustino worked as an irrigator and Monica worked as a seed cutter. Florendo said the following about his parents: *My Dad and Mom worked very hard to provide me and my siblings to have a better life in America. In fact, they did not only provide for us but also provided for their families they left behind in the Philippines and helped them come to America as well. My Dad's sacrifices of working here in Hawai'i while being away from his family for many years were appreciated. Bless our next generation in living the American Dream.* ✳

**Lucy Peros** is a retired schoolteacher, having taught at St. Anthony Grade School and Waihe'e Elementary School. Both of her late parents, Elpidio Cachero Cabalo (a 1946 *Sakada*) and Alejandra Cabudoy Cabalo of Hāli'imaile, worked for Maui Land and Pine Company. Lucy now enjoys retirement and has time to join other seniors in the Enhance Fitness Program under the Department of Aging three times a week. She also attends the line dancing class and other activities at Kaunoa and joins other Waihe'e School retirees when help is needed at the school. Lucy also devotes some of her time to activities at Christ The King Catholic Church. She enjoys writing and reading in her spare time.



Faustino & Monica Tabios at Margarita's Wedding

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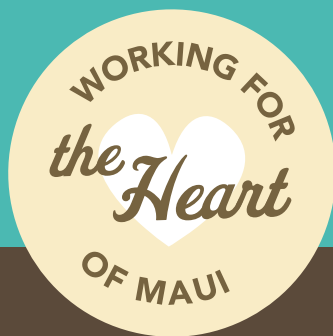
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