



United To Help
 Heroes brought forth to aid the survivors of the Lahaina Wildfires.
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Filipino-American History Month
 Keith-Agaran gives a Maui history.
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Our Culture is Brought to Life
 Our Community In Action continues to make Filipinos visible.
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FilAm Voice

Magkaisa Tayong Lahat | “Let Us All Unite”

Octoer 2023 • Vol 7 No 10 | FILIPINO AMERICAN VOICE • UPLIFTING OUR COMMUNITY | FREE

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Janitors are heroes too. Jhanesty takes a look.
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Counsel General has frequented Maui by need.
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Renie Menor featured in Sakada Offspring.
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Maria Imelda Josefa Remedios “Imee” Romualdez Marcos visited Maui at Tante’s Island Cuisine in Kahului with Philippine delegation in tow to encourage the hearts of Filipino family survivors of the Lahaina Wildfires.
 PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA

Sen. Imee Marcos Makes Special Visit With Lahaina Fire Survivors

Alfredo G. Evangelista | ASSISTANT EDITOR

FREE

“I commiserate with you and we feel your pain even as we are unable to fully comprehend the tragedy that you feel,” said Philippine Senator Imee Marcos to a standing room only audience at Tante’s Island Cuisine that included thirty Lahaina fire survivors. “We know that these family members that you have lost will never come again and as a result it is a pain that cannot be assuaged by mere words or even help.”

Marcos would specifically address several of the Lahaina

fire survivors who were invited: “Kevin Baclig—the sole survivor of a household of ten; Anna Cabanilla and the Cabanilla family who have lost both members of their family as well as their home; Alvin Constantino whose mother and brother disappeared in this dreadful fire; to the many business owners whose businesses were completely destroyed like the Cabanillas; we commiserate with you and we hope that we will in some way be able to help you.”

Baclig suffered one of the

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Senator Imee Marcos greeted Kevin Baclig who lost nine family members.
 PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA

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Consul General Emil T. Fernandez escorted Senator Imee Marcos as she spoke with each of the Lahaina fire survivors.

PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA

Survivors ...

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most tragic and poignant events. Thirty-year old Baclig arrived on Maui in 2020 during the pandemic to be with his thirty-one-year-old wife Angelica, who worked two jobs (Foodland and Panda). Baclig lived with Angelica and her parents Joel and Adela Villegas and his brother-in-law Junmark Quijano in one house. In the other house lived Felimon Quijano (Angelica's uncle), Luz Bernabe (Felimon's sister), Lydia Coloma (Bernabe's sister), Salvador Quijano (Coloma's husband) and Glenda Yabes (Bernabe's niece). Everyone except Baclig perished in the fire; Baclig was working at Hale Makua at the time. Baclig plans to bring the remains of his wife (who he was married to for six years) as well as the other family members to Sinait

in the Philippines. Bernabe will be buried on Maui with her husband.

Marcos devoted time speaking with all the survivors in attendance. When she entered Tante's Island Cuisine, she stopped to meet with each gathering of survivors, many of whom had tears in their eyes. "I met with survivors and heard their emotional and mental struggles trying to cope with their loss of loved ones, homes and friends," Marcos told Emme Tomimbang-Burns in a subsequent exclusive interview. "At first, they couldn't believe it was me—we cried, hugged and they shared their immeasurable grief. I had no idea so many of them were Filipinos from our part of the country."

"She asked me about my family," says Baclig. "She also asked me how I am. I was very thankful to her for giving her time to us for the Lahaina victims even though she was not sched-

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A tearful Ana Cabanilla talks with Senator Imee Marcos about losing three family members and her family losing multiple homes.

PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA



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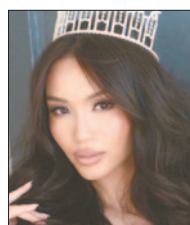
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From the Editor's Desk

Vince Bagoyo, Jr.
EDITOR • FIL-AM VOICE



Rick Nava, Lt. Gov. Sylva Luke and Kit Furukawa take a breather for a photo at the *Hawak Kamay* resource fair at the Lahaina Civic Center.

PHOTO COURTESY RICK NAVA

Maui Community United to Help Our Kababayans Affected by Wildfires

Over two months ago the fires in Lahaina brought devastation and destruction to the homes, businesses and memorable sites in our popular, historic town of Lahaina, also enjoyed by millions of visitors from around the world. The lives of thousands of Filipino families are forever changed by the losses of loved ones. Most survivors are in shock and still grieving, coping minute by minute with the trauma and anxiety caused by this event, knowing it will take a long time to rebuild their homes and their lives. Their needs are many and enormous. Our Filipino community must provide support and encouragement to our grieving kababayans.

The question before us is “How

do we as a community best respond to those who have been impacted—today, next week, next month and yes, in the years ahead?” Many are suffering and often ask why God allowed this tragic event to happen to so many people. There is no easy answer. To those who are asking this question, I offer the thought the one thing I know for sure is God knows what you are going through and cares about your pain. He is forever present during this difficult time as you rebuild your lives.

The tragic devastation has brought forward many heroes—caring for and supporting those who were affected by the fires—providing comfort, a place to live for those who have been dis-

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Nelda Pagdilao explains to Senator Imee Marcos they buried her husband Pablo a couple of days prior to Senator Marcos' visit.

PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA

Survivors ...

from p. 2

uled to come here to Maui. I heard she was supposed to be in Honolulu only and she wants to come to Maui for a short time.” Other Lahaina fire survivors agreed with Bacilig. “It was very important Senator Imee came to Maui to share her love and sympathy to the Filipinos and Lahaina fire victims,” says Evelyn Cabanilla, owner of Ilocandia Filipino Store which burned in the fire.

Ana Cabanilla, who lost her fifty-year-old brother Eugene Recolizado, her fifty-one-year-old sister-in-law Maria Victoria Recolizado and their eleven-year-old son Justin Recolizado, was grateful for the Senator's visit. “I was really touched she took the time to come and speak with people and hear their stories.” Cabanilla and her husband Jordan also lost their home. Her in-laws, Jose and Milagrita Cabanilla, and her cousins Jayson Cabanilla and Jordan Cabanilla also lost their homes.

In the exclusive interview with Tomimbang-Burns, Marcos also mentioned the Pagdilao family who a few days before her visit held services for Pablo “Siding” Pagdilao. “I specifically remember Mrs. Pagdilao who was trying to get her [disabled] husband [over the seawall] to the water—but couldn't. And he instructed her to go on ahead. He died.” Mrs. Pagdilao's children hope to fulfill their parents' plans to mark what would have been

their fiftieth wedding anniversary in the Philippines next March.

Marcos, the eldest sibling of Philippine President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr., broke away from a packed calendar on Oahu to breakfast with the survivors on Maui. She arrived in Hawaii earlier in the week on an unofficial visit filled with back-to-back events on Oahu, planned months in advance by various Oahu Filipino organizations. “We felt it was very important to be with you today,” she told the Lahaina fire survivors. “We managed to come over despite the rather tight schedule in Honolulu. Just as the Consul said, we are here very briefly but I am here to just hear your stories and share the tragedy and the loss of Lahaina and many of the businesses here in Maui.”

“Maui is so beautiful,” Marcos said to Tomimbang-Burns. “I was very sorry I couldn't go to Ground Zero of Lahaina. It was forty minutes away and I had only an hour or so on the ground. But our reception at Tante's in Kahului gave me a close up look at the families affected by the wildfires.”

After her speech, Marcos took photos with each survivor and often brought them to meet Maui Mayor Richard Bissen, Jr. who was standing on the side while photos were taken. “We weren't prepared to bring relief to the survivors but I will speak to our Mayors when we return and see what we can offer,” she said to

see SURVIVORS p.6



Senator Imee Marcos sat for an exclusive interview with Emme Tomimbang-Burns upon her return from Maui.

PHOTO COURTESY EMME TOMIMBANG-BURNS



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DINENGDENG & PINAKBET

October is National Filipino American History Month

Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

From 2011 through 2019, the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce Foundation sponsored the Maui Fil-Am Heritage Festival as part of the commemoration. The festival, held initially at Maui Mall and then moving to the Queen Ka'ahumanu Center included some signature events like the Master P-Noy Chef cook off. A crowd-pleasing display of local culinary mastery, in the course of the decade, the Master P-Noy Chef cook off featured many of Maui's Filipino best chefs including Sheldon Simeon (2011), Joey Macadangdang (2012-14), Ritchard Cariaga (2015), Gemsley Balagso (2016), Isaac Bancaco, Rey Baisa, Jonathan Pasion (2017-2018), Kirk Areola and Dennis Yu-Cua. Abby Ferrer won the final title in 2019, besting former winners Macadangdang and Balagso.

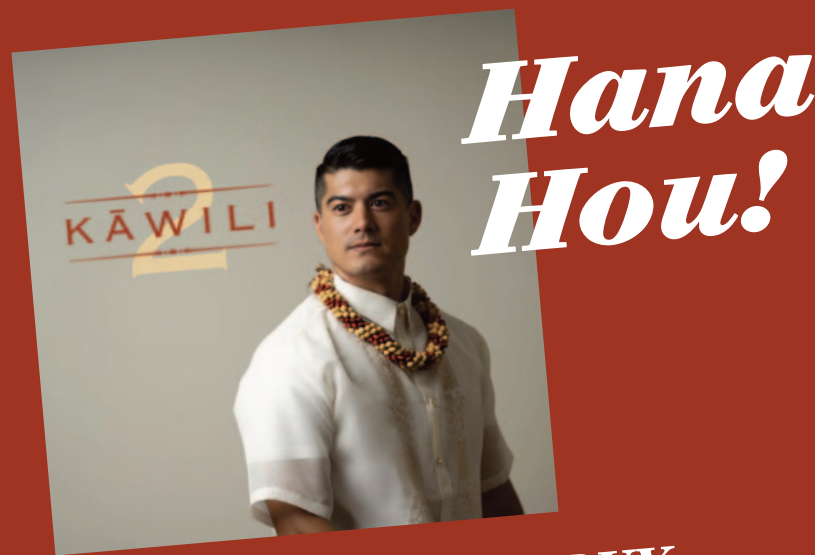
While the community continues to raise the Philippine flag at the County Building to mark the start of the October commemoration, the festival itself, like the Maui County Fair, went on hiatus during the pandemic. One festival feature lost was We Got History displaying Filipino contributions to the Maui community. From entrepreneurs like Lawrence Cabanilla, who owned Cabanilla Lahaina Shell and Cabanilla

Body & Fender, to Filipino medical pioneers like Jose Ligot Romero, Hilario Aquilizan, Marconi Dioso and Jose Chu-Chiaco, to Filipino managers such as Chris Rabang, Glen Casil and Fred Torres at major properties at Maui's resorts, the history portion chronicled and celebrated Filipino involvement in our island's life.

I was a History major in college (I had to find some professor to sign off on my concentration in American Intellectual History—literature, arts and film, music, philosophy and politics—not everyone in the academy believe there was anything unique about American society). I am conscious history is written after the history making. I expect to have more time to catch up on all the books I have been meaning to read.

While Maka walked me at Central Maui Regional Sports Complex the other day, I thought about how time shifts perspectives. As she took me on a brisk stroll up and down the sloping banks above and along the playing fields, I enjoyed the sounds of people in the 65-acre park. Pop Warner football practiced on one field, pee wee girls softball trained on one of the diamonds, little leaguers played catch and field

see FIL-AM HISTORY p.7



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Senator Imee Marcos introduced Kevin Baclig to Maui Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr.
PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA

Survivors ...

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Tomimbang-Burns. Marcos spoke to the largely Ilocano audience. “A great number of you are of course Ilocanos from Ilocos Norte so I feel very much at home and they greeted me very profusely and generously at the airport. I could barely surface above all the lei and goodwill.” Sixteen Mayors/Vice Mayors from the various towns in the Philippines accompanied Marcos on her Hawaii trip and many of them traveled with her to Maui. At the brief reception on Maui, Marcos introduced the Mayors or Vice Mayors from Bacarra, Badoc, Bangui, Banna, Batac, Currimaio, Dingras, Nueva Era, Paoay, Pasuquin, Pidig, Pinili, San Nicolas and Solsona. “With us today there are many of our Mayors from Ilocos Norte. I believe this is the biggest delegation of Mayors from the province of Ilocos Norte [ever].” Lahaina fire survivor Chamille Misay-Serrano who attended the event with her nephew Mel Misay was thankful Marcos came and brought the Mayors with her. “Seeing Senator Imee Marcos here in Maui made me so proud to be a Filipino. That only shows they do care about us Filipinos, no matter where we are, in any part of the world. Knowing they are so many miles away, they made the time to come visit and see how we, the Lahaina Wildfires Survivors, are doing, made us feel so loved and special! Ma-

see SURVIVORS p.8

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

placed, food clothing and a shoulder to cry on. One of the heroes is Kit Zulueta Furukawa of the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce, who led the recently held *Hawak Kamay* Resource Fair event on September 3rd at the Lahaina Civic Center. It was amazing and gratifying to see Maui's Filipino community come together in unity during this event attended by three thousand or more of the survivors seeing help. Reports indicate there were more than fifty resource groups present, including County, State, Federal and non-governmental agencies providing support and information to the victims, such as healthcare providers, social service agencies, labor unions, some churches and many more resources. And, yes, there were free haircuts, chiropractic services, Reiki massage (*hilot*), passport renewals and many favorite vegetables. According to recent reports, the event was a resounding success because of Kit's effective leadership and ability to bring our Maui Filipino community together in a much-needed response to a great cause. She is definitely a hero in my book!

Equally appreciated as a hero is Rick Nava, a longtime, multilingual resident, U.S. Army veteran, a community activist, who also lost his home in the fire. He has been instrumental in advocating for the needs of others facing the same challenges, especially Filipinos. Recently, Mayor Bissen appointed Nava as one of the five members of the Lahaina Advisory Committee that will provide guidance on how our County administration addresses and responds to the multiple needs of the fire victims. Rick is a well-reasoned voice representing our Filipino community, whose passion and determination ensures us all that our community will not be left behind as resources are offered by various agencies.

Another hero is the Binhi at Ani organization that is providing direct financial assistance (known as *Tulong for Lahaina*) to our Maui Filipino community members who lost their homes or businesses in the fires. This financial support is much needed to help ease the pain many

of our *kababayans* are experiencing in the aftermath of this tragic devastation. We are grateful to the Board of Directors of this important organization that is always there in response to community needs that arise.

Finally, *Kaibigan Ng Lahaina* (Friends of Lahaina) was recently established to help our Filipino community in this time of extreme need. Its mission is “To inspire and cultivate a sense of belonging.” It is so encouraging to see our next generation of young Filipino professionals with energy and vision to take the lead in this season of deep sorrow. A community picnic is planned for November 5th at Launiupoko Beach Park in Lahaina for the residents displaced by the fire.

We know there are many more heroes in our community who are working tirelessly for as long as it takes. We owe them our profound gratitude for their servant hearts, as they continue to help with unconditional support through steady effort and personal commitment.

These individuals and organizations that are noted above remind me of the parable found in the Bible, in Matthew 25:35-36, which states, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me ...” The moral of the story—as God's children, He expects us to help everyone around us, especially those who are suffering due to the devastation from the fire. Our Lord also expects us to be humble and generous in our giving to everyone. God is a Promise Keeper and the Light in the darkness. He will be with us during these difficult times as we rebuild our lives, our homes, our businesses and our community.

Let us all come together as a community in unity by extending a helping hand to our *‘ohana*!

Vince Bagoyo
VINCE BAGOYO, JR. | EDITOR



PHOTO ABOVE:

Keiki Art with hearts brought by Phil and Christine Sabado brought healing to keiki, allowing them to express a message in an artistic way on pre-cut heart-shaped pieces of construction paper.

PHOTO RIGHT:

Those affected by the Lahaina fires could have their hair cuts, gratis, at the Hawak Kamay resource fair.

PHOTOS COURTESY RICK NAVA





Sheldon Simeon prepares Pork & Peas with his father.
PHOTO: GIL KEITH-AGARAN



Leading board for the "We Got History Exhibit."
FILE IMAGE: MAUI FIL-AM HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Fil-Am History ...

from p. 5

grounders on another, and a girls team ran on the soccer fields. And walkers like me led by our dogs through all the activity. It is well used.

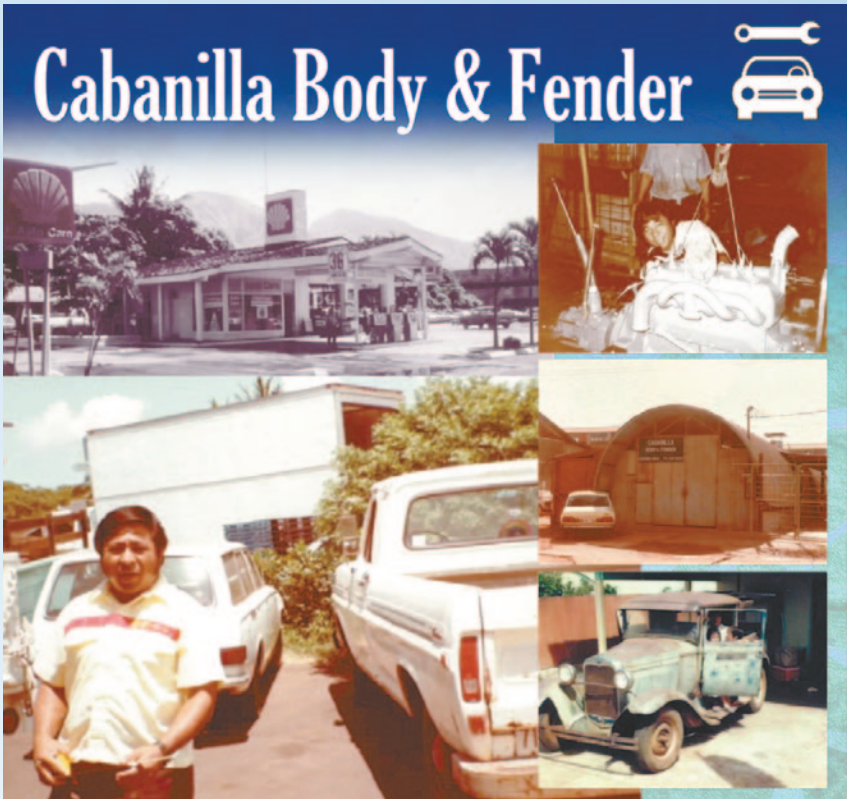
Additional fields would be well used as well.

Yet when then-Senator Shan Tsutsui proposed developing the new park like the Waipi'o complex on O'ahu, residents in the subdivision adjoining the 65-acres expressed alarm. They thought a recreational center would reduce property values. The park would attract rowdy drunk users. The location at the end of Kamehameha across from Pōmaika'i School would increase traffic. The County would never maintain all the new fields.

The Maui delegation—mainly Tsutsui and Kyle Yamashita—listened but nevertheless moved the project forward, adding a fence to separate the park from the nearby neighborhoods. They also heard from the many youth coaches and parents and wanted to provide more sports access for Maui's children.

Today the complex is an asset for Central Maui and the nearby residents.

The Mayor recently named a number of people to his Lahaina Advisory Team which will help guide his administration's fire recovery decisions. The folks serving should



Cabanilla Body & Fender history board displayed at the Maui Fil-Am Heritage Festival.
FILE IMAGE: MAUI FIL-AM HERITAGE FESTIVAL

keep in mind that the Lahaina lost was a community of multi-generational families and clans. Many Lahaina neighborhoods came out of the rural and agricultural plantation era, with homes and additions and 'ohanas constructed before formal zoning limitations, and modern urban building standards. As might be expected given the costs of housing and acceptable and expected cultural norms, many homes included multi-generational families.

A lot of questions remain. Will the County facilitate re-building residences allowing close knit clans to stay together? Will permit processing take so long displaced residents are compelled to sell and move? Will redevelopment guidelines effectively price out local residents from even attempting to remain on their family lands? And will policy makers

see FIL-AM HISTORY p.9



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Paoay Mayor Shiella Galano (from right) and her husband and former Mayor Jessie Galano accompanied Senator Imee Marcos to Maui.
PHOTO: ALFREDO G. EVANGELISTA



Senator Imee Marcos addresses the standing room only crowd at Tante's Island Cuisine.
PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA



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Lahaina fire survivors Chamille Misay-Serrano and Mel Misay pose with Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr. and Senator Imee Marcos.
PHOTO COURTESY CHAMILLE MISAY-SERRANO



Senator Imee Marcos is greeted by Binhi at Ani president Melen Agcolicol and Tante's Island Cuisine general manager Donna Urban-Higuchi upon her arrival.
PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA

Survivors ...

from p. 6

halo, Thank you and Salamat Po, Madam Senator Imee and to all the Mayors who made a special trip to Maui," Misay-Serrano said. "A special shout out to our Banna Mayor Chrislyn Abadilla and Vice Mayor Carly Abadilla for visiting my family and for the unending love and support since day one."

Marcos noted how Ilocanos—no matter the political winds or the change in administration remained steadfastly supportive of her family. As with her appearances on Oahu, Marcos made sure to "give thanks to all of you for the overwhelming support you have given my family over the years. I can do no less for your family."

"Despite the tragedy that has befallen on so many of our families, you remain here resilient and upstanding, helping each other and still determined to remain hopeful in the face of a [grievous] loss."

As Marcos explained, "Ilocanos are a tough breed. We come from a diffi-

cult country" and noted how the Philippines annually experiences many natural disasters. "We are used to typhoons. We are used to even huge floods and earthquakes have become commonplace and yet a fire of this magnitude—a fire that is so overwhelming and complete such as Lahaina where forty percent were actually Filipino is a tragedy we cannot imagine."

Kaye Lagpacan, a Lahaina fire survivor from San Nicolas, said "I am grateful that Senator Imee came to visit us, especially the Ilocanos." Lagpacan, who was renting in Lahaina, lost all her belongings and is now housed at her *kailian's* home in Kahu-lui. Leticia Domingo, another Lahaina fire survivor from San Nicolas concurred: "I was grateful that even if we are in another country, she comes and visits us and shows her concern to us, the survivors of the Lahaina wildfires."

As Marcos would further explain to Tomimbang-Burns, "As you know, we have weather calamities all the time in our country. So it's not new to us. But these wildfires were so devastating. I

see SURVIVORS p.19



B. Martin Luna

During a 30-year legal career, B. Martin Luna was consistently listed in Best Lawyers of America, Hawaii Super Lawyers and Martindale-Hubbell's Superior Lawyers to the State. He developed a reputation for being the "go-to" lawyer for real estate and construction law. He has been involved in many landmark cases and has been instrumental in the development of many public and private projects. He has been a member of the Hawaii Bar Association, the Hawaii Real Estate Bar Association, and the Hawaii Construction Law Association. He has also been a member of the Hawaii Filipino Chamber of Commerce and the Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association. He is currently a partner in the law firm of Luna & Associates, P.C., where he handles all aspects of real estate and construction law. He is also a frequent speaker at seminars and conferences on real estate and construction law.

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| June Pagdilao | Vice President of Sales Hawaiian Hotels and Resorts | Philippines | "Get your education. Pursue your dreams and Never give up. You will learn from your mistakes which will make you a better person and a better leader." |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>Born in Manila, June is the youngest of five children. He moved to Hawaii with his family when he was 10 years old. He attended the University of Hawaii and graduated with a degree in Business Administration. He then worked for several years in the hospitality industry before joining Hawaiian Hotels and Resorts. He is currently the Vice President of Sales for the company. He is a member of the Hawaii Filipino Chamber of Commerce and the Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association. He is also a frequent speaker at seminars and conferences on real estate and construction law.</p> | <p>June is a member of the Hawaii Filipino Chamber of Commerce and the Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association. He is also a frequent speaker at seminars and conferences on real estate and construction law.</p> | <p>June is a member of the Hawaii Filipino Chamber of Commerce and the Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association. He is also a frequent speaker at seminars and conferences on real estate and construction law.</p> | <p>June is a member of the Hawaii Filipino Chamber of Commerce and the Hawaii Filipino Lawyers Association. He is also a frequent speaker at seminars and conferences on real estate and construction law.</p> |

ABOVE: B. Martin Luna storyboard. ABOVE RIGHT: June Pagdilao storyboard. BELOW RIGHT: Rongcal-Gage storyboard.
FILE IMAGES: MAUI FIL-AM HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Fil-Am History ...

from p. 7

take the time to pay attention to folks who do not speak up or who do not trust the process or decision makers or who do not have articulate and recognized advocates for their views and concerns?

Maui is at the beginning of deciding how Lahaina is rebuilt. There are a lot of different visions. I hope the powers that be take time to find out what the less vocal residents would also like to see, especially

ly on the lands they always intended to leave as their legacy to their children and grandchildren.

Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran ends his time as the State Senator for Central Maui on October 31, 2023. He served as the State Representative from Kahului from 2009–2012 before moving to the upper chamber in 2013. He practices law in Wailuku with Takitani Agaran Jorgensen & Wildman, LLP. His law firm is representing Maui residents and businesses with claims arising from the Lahaina fire.

| Representative | Position | Roots | Advice |
|---|--|---|--|
| Gloria Rongcal-Gage, DMD | Dentist & Owner, Maui Island Cozy Dental | Pampanga, The Philippines | "Listen to your parents. Education gives you the knowledge and skills but can't give you the life experiences that your parents have already been through." |
|  |  |  |  |
| <p>Dr. Rongcal-Gage made the best of her opportunity and showed that it is possible to take the biggest leap from a level of no opportunity for education for her parents to the highest level of education and level of profession as a dentist for herself.</p> | <p>Dr. Rongcal-Gage obtained her Bachelor of Science in Doctor of Dental Medicine from Centro Escolar University in Manila. She passed the Philippines National Board in 1985 and became a licensed Dentist in 1986.</p> | <p>Moving to the United States, Dr. Rongcal-Gage joined her family in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. As she worked as a dental assistant, she had to figure out how to get her Hawaii dental license. Dr. Rongcal-Gage first had to complete the Dental Refresher program for Dentist at UCLA in 1993. Dr. Rongcal-Gage then passed the American National Dental Board in 1993 and the Hawaii State Dental Board examination in 1994. As a foreign dental graduate, obtaining her Hawaii dental license was one of her biggest challenges. Working and studying at the same time taught her the value of how faith and hard work go hand in hand.</p> | <p>Even with those achievements, Dr. Rongcal-Gage is quick to point out that one of the highlights and the most rewarding accomplishments is raising two boys with her husband of 25 years, Joe Gage. Although making time for them and teaching them that God comes first has been a challenge, her sons are well on their way to be successful themselves.</p> |

We are all working for you on Maui.

No kasapulan yo ti abogado nga mangtulong kadakayo nga mangtunton gapu ti puor ti Lahaina, tawagan yo ti numero (808) 242-4049. **Agtrabtrabaho kami para kadakayo ditoy Maui.**

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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



Philippine Nurses of Association, Maui, Hawai'i recently helped with the Bayanihan Feeding Program.

PHOTO COURTESY PNAMEI



Sebastian Guth (sixth from the left) led a delegation from Bayer to learn more about Binhi at Ani.
PHOTO: GILBERT KEITH-AGARAN

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 \$1,150 (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 provided and/or served, there is an additional fee of \$300 and you must hire two licensed bartenders. Self-service coolers and/or BYOB (guests providing their own alcohol) are 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.

A Bayanihan Christmas is set for Wednesday, Dec. 6 at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center. Last year, the event raised over \$7,000 for the In Memory of Agri-fina "Aggie" Cabebe/Binhi at Ani Scholarships, resulting in three \$2,000 scholarships awarded. This year's



funds will be allocated between the Cabebe Scholarship and the Tulong for Lahaina® Fund. Sponsorships/Premier tables are available at \$1,000 for a table of ten while individual seats are available at \$50. Contact Melen Agcolicol at (808) 205-7981 or Alfredo Evangelista at (808) 242-8100.

Aloha Beer Co. presents Tulong for Lahaina® Fundraising Golf Tournament

On Thursday, Nov. 9 at Hoakalei Country Club on O'ahu, Friends of Binhi at Ani, led by Felipe Abinsay, Jr., Steven Sombrero, Rito Saniatan, Jack Legal, Raymond Sebastian, Loida Alimboyoguen-Yamamoto and Angie Santiago, will host a Fundraising Golf Tournament to support the Tulong for Lahaina® Fund. If you are interested in sponsoring a team, contact Abinsay at (808) 469-7351, Saniatan at (808) 782-1947 or Binhi at Ani Legal Counsel Alfredo Evangelista at (808) 242-8100.

Bayanihan Feeding Program provides a Sunday lunch to Hale Mahaolu Residents in Central Maui (Hale Mahaolu Elua and Hale



COORDINATED BY BINHI AT ANI



COMMUNITY... IN ACTION

Compiled by Assistant Editor Alfredo G. Evangelista.
Send your community briefs to info@filamvoice.com.

Mahaolu Akahi) and Maui Adult Day Care. As of September 30, a total of 18,752 meals were delivered. Teams serving during September included Maui County Federal Credit Union, 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 One-he'e 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.

Sebastian Guth, who recently became in charge of Bayer North American Operations, led a delegation from Bayer Crop Science Hawai'i to visit Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center. Bayer Crop Science Hawai'i has granted Binhi at Ani \$20,000 in the last two years for the purchase of equipment for the Bayanihan Feeding Program

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



Binhi at Ani Legal Counsel Alfredo Evangelista recently toured the Hoakalei Country Club with Rito Saniatan, one of the Tulong for Lahaina® Golf Tournament Co-Chairs.

PHOTO: ALFREDO EVANGELISTA



October is Filipino-American History Month in the State of Hawai'i.
PHOTO COURTESY COUNTY OF MAUI



PHOTO ABOVE:
UHMC's Kabatak
Club Demonstrates
the "Tinikling"
dance on campus
as a membership
recruitment tool.

PHOTO COURTESY
JOHANNE
GUEVARRA



PHOTO RIGHT:
UHMC regularly
volunteers for the
Bayanihan Feed-
ing Program.

IMAGE COURTESY
JOHANNE
GUEVARRA

MAUI FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION



On October 3, 2023,
the County of
Maui, in coop-
eration with
the Maui Fil-
ipino Cham-
ber of Com-
merce Founda-
tion raised the
Philippine flag at

the County building to signify the start
of the month of October as **Filipino-
American History Month**.

MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The **Rizal Day Celebration and Instal-
lation of Officers** for the
Maui Filipino Commu-
nity Council is set for
December 30, 2023
at Maui Beach
Hotel's Moana
Ballroom. For
more information,
contact Marilyn
Romero at (808) 280-
2057.



The **Progress Awards and Affirma-
tion of the Board of Governors** for the
United Filipino Council of Hawai'i Foun-
dation will take place Saturday, Nov. 11,
2023 at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Re-

sort's Coral Ballroom. Cornelio "CJ" An-
cheta of MFCC will be receiving a
progress award for the excellence in ed-
ucation category. Tickets to this event
are \$130. Please call Angie Santiago for
more information at (808) 542-1418 or
email angie6696789@yahoo.com.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I MAUI COLLEGE KABATAK CLUB



With the start
of the semester
in August,
UHMC Ka-
batak Club
has been
busy recruit-
ing new mem-
bers. One of the
recruiting tactics
was to demonstrate

Tinikling on campus. Led by presi-
dent Diether Dadiz and Vice Presi-
dent Jenelyn Santos, Kabatak
meets weekly on Wednesdays at
3 p.m., primarily in Ka Lama 103.

Kabatak is planning for a vari-
ety of activities this year including
fundraising for **Fil-Grad**, a graduation
ceremony for Filipino Americans, hon-
oring those with Filipino roots, many of
whom may be the first in their family to
graduate from college. Kabatak also reg-
ularly volunteers for the Binhi at Ani
Bayanihan Feeding Program.



Rizal Day
celebration and
MFCC installation
of its officers will
be on the evening
of Saturday,
Dec. 30.

IMAGE COURTESY
LAWRENCE PASCUA

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Rucella Bianca Magliba



Meilina Tabon



Micah Mangisel



Kealen Coloma

I never believed superheroes could truly exist. People we can depend on and trust with our lives. People we look up to and believe in when times get hard. Up until this last year, I never truly saw the heroic actions of these people who seemed so normal to me.

Janitors. That’s who these people are. I always see them around my school: riding around in their golf carts, relentlessly watering the dirt in hopes that grass will bloom, doing some heavy lifting as they haul 50-pound tables on their own, interacting with teachers and students, and so on. Although they are the people who keep our school clean and fresh, that is not all that they are known for.

I appreciate our janitors for their hard work but furthermore, I appreciate them for being adults who treat us like family, to treat us in a way where we can truly appreciate our youth. I

Google®

Is Not Everything ...

Our Cleanest Heroes

Jhanessty Vaye Bautista | MAUI HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2024

distinctly remember three janitors in my time at Maui High where I felt supported, cared for and recognized.

The first was an experience that re-occurred often, a janitor driving up to me and my friends at seven in the morning. She talked about the puppies she raised, showing us photos, and also encouraging us to do our best in school but reminding us to make sure

we experienced life as well. The second was a janitor who I always saw with a bright orange flower tucked behind her ear. Me and my classmate went up to her and complimented her flower and she gave us the most genuine smile. It warmed my heart. We talked about her grandchildren and I remember her complimenting my name, a rare occurrence for me. We ended the conversation with a hug. The last was not as sentimental but it got me and my friends home safely. When my friend’s car broke down, this janitor came back to school when he was not on the clock to help fix her car. He did it with a smile, not even caring he had to come back to school to help us. He joked around with us but ended the event by giving us helpful advice so we stayed safe.

These three experiences may seem very miniscule in my life, compared to the long 17 years I have lived. However, they are embedded in my mind and my heart, filling me with appreciation for all the hardworking janitorial staff around the world. To further show my appreciation, I gathered students from the Maui High Filipino Cultural Club to come together to share their favorite interactions with our cleanest heroes who have impacted their lives.

Henynalyn Balisacan and Rucella Bianca Magliba both relate, as their favorite memories with our lovely janitorial staff stem from the positive interactions they have with them. “They often tell us to stay safe and wish us a great day, they are also really funny,” Henynalyn comments. Rucella recalls a memory made with a janitor from her middle school, “I remember most of the janitors said good morning to me daily. It would make my whole day because they always took time out of their busy schedule to say that to me.” And as they work hard, they are helping us in more ways than just keeping us clean and safe.

Meilina Tabon and Micah Mangisel have received help more than once from our favorite janitorial staff superheroes. Meilina mentions “One of the janitors used to pass my friend group

every day. As we shared hellos and small conversations, they also offered to hold onto our volleyball so we didn’t have to take it to class.” Micah then explains, “When I was on the way to the bathroom, I didn’t see the wet floor sign because it was hidden. One of the janitors stopped me to tell me to be careful so I didn’t slip and fall.” They help students avoid the tragedy of a runaway volleyball and save them from a detrimental fall. Moving forth, their kind actions are not the only things helping these students.

Kaley Alconcel and Kealen Coloma both felt a strong connection to our janitors, as they helped them push through some hard moments of their lives. Kaley Alconcel was having a terrible day and as she found comfort talking to a janitorial staff, they gave her a bag of chips and told her “You’re too pretty to be crying and dealing with these problems and I don’t know if this will help but please eat.” That small comment brightened Kaley’s day. Kealen also shared a similar experience but instead of words, it was just a smile that brightened her day. Furthermore, Kealen received recognition from a janitor in a way that motivated her to keep going. “The janitor who always cleans our club advisor’s classroom during our *Tinikling* practices always would tell me she enjoys watching us practice. She says she hears the bamboo sticks a lot, and to her surprise, we were getting the steps down fast. I can see she was smiling from her mask and it gave me so much joy and motivation.”

From a routine of interactions, to acts of service and most importantly, those once in a lifetime memories we make with them, our janitors become more than just janitors to us. All these students agree that without our janitors, life would be quite messy, both literally and figuratively. It is important to voice our appreciation to them, respect them and also do our part and clean up after ourselves so they are not doing everything for us. These are the true superheroes of our community whether we have realized it or not. *Maraming salamat po*, to all the janitors in our community. We love you, we see you, and we appreciate you. ✨

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

see HEROES p.18

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Poo! And just like that, September is gone. Where did it go? These next few months will pass by so fast the next thing you know it’s the New Year. October is supposed to be the month for the County Fair but due to a global pandemic and still recovering, it’s been canceled three years in a row.

What else is in store for the month

Let’s Talk Pinoy!

Dulce Karen Butay

of October? Halloween! I think it will not be a big event this year considering the wildfires that happened in Lahaina. We will keep it low key this year and hopefully we will be able to dress up and have events on our island again.

Shout out to our October babies: Daphne Butay and Melissa Domingo who both celebrated their birthdays on October 7, Taylor Banaag on October 11, Dhia Lei Alejo on Oct 18, Lisa Corpuz on October 22 and Zion Jesse Butay on October 30th.

Let’s see what’s going on with our story this month and where Michael and Angel will be going next, shall we?

SHE RUSHES TO UNLOCK the *lukub* (door) for her husband and lets him in.

“I was watering the plants outside and left the keys to the storage and the tools by the fence. I just remembered it when we were eating so I rushed to go out and get it. I left the back *pasbul* (door) open so I can come back but for some reason, it closed and is locked. I was not able to come in,” he explains to his wife.

“*Nanoyin* (What) are we going to do?” she cuts him off.

“We’re going back to the *hapag* (table) to finish our dinner,” Michael’s dad says.

| English | Pilipino | Ilokano | Cebuano | Ilonggo | Ibanag | Kapampangan |
|-----------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Door | Pintuan | Ridaw | Lukub | Ganhaan | Puwerta | Pasbul |
| Here | Dito | Dituy | Diri / Dinhi | Diri | Tawe | Keni |
| Table | Lamesa | Lamisaan | Lamisa | Hapag | Lamisa | Lamesa |
| Work | Trabaho | Ubra | Trabahu | Obro | Trabaho | Trabaho |
| Beautiful | Maganda | Napintas | Gwapa | Maanyag | Makasta | Malagu |
| Friend | Kaibigan | Gayyem | Bai | Miga | Kofun | Kaluguran |
| Face | Mukha | Rupa | Mukat | Lupa / Arap | Nawong / Dagway | Goya / Nawong |
| Thank You | Maraming Salaman | Agyamanak | Daghang Salamat | Madamogud nga Salamat | Mabbalo | Dacal a Salamat |
| Smile | Ngiti | Isem | Pahiyum | Yuhom | Galo | Timan |
| What? | Ano? | Ana? | Unsa? | Ano? | Anni’? | Nanoyin? |

(house)?” asks Michael’s dad to his brother Ray.

“*Anni* (What) do you think?” asks Uncle Ray back.

Robert looks at his wife and says, “You did not lock the front *ganhaan* (door)? I walked back to the dining room before you.”

Michael’s mom is speechless and looks at Michael with fear in her eyes.

Michael looks away. He doesn’t want to make eye contact with his mom. He stands up and gives his uncle a hug and says: “Uncle Ray! We were just having dinner. Please come and join us.”

Ray is hesitant to join them.

“*Ano* (What) is it Ray?” says Robert. He looks at his brother then he looks at the lady who just popped out from the living room.

Ray says, “This is Katherine. I work with her. We are working on a case.”

Ray introduces Katherine to his brother.

Robert says, “Of course I know Katherine. She has been the secret crush of Ray since grade school. He has a picture of you in front of our mirror in our room when we were still roommates.”

Ray blushes. “Stop it Rob,” is all Ray can say to his brother.

Robert continues, “Katherine, if you want to know how crazy my brother

is to you, just give me a call and we can talk stories for hours” and he laughs.

Michael’s mom finally speaks up and says, “Robert, why don’t you go and get some plates for them.”

“I will go and get them plates,” says Angel shyly.

“And who is this *maganda* (beautiful) lady?” asks Katherine.

Everyone is quiet and nobody wants to answer.

“I am Angel, Michael’s friend. You are *napintas* (beautiful) too, Ma’am,” Angel responds shyly and goes to get some plates and utensils.

“She is very *gwapa* (beautiful) and has an angelic face, is she your girlfriend, Michael?” asks Katherine.

“Yeah, Michael, she is *malagu* (beautiful), is she your girlfriend?” asks his dad.

Before Michael can answer, Angel is already back with two plates and utensils in her hands.

“*Dito* (Here), Uncle Ray and Katherine. Come sit next to me,” Michael answers and looks at each of them.

“We have *trabaho* (work) to do,” Ray tells Michael and looks him in the

eyes with a blank expression.

“Ahh ... loosen up Sergeant, *obro* (work) can wait,” says Katherine to Ray and takes a seat next to Michael. “Family comes first before *trabahu* (work).”

Ray does not argue, he follows Katherine and sits next to her.

Ray takes the plates from Angel and he notices she is shaking.


“Family first,” he says, looking at Angel in her eyes seriously. “*Maraming Salamat* (thank you), Angel,” he says softly, still looking Angel in the eye.

It’s the first meal they have with Uncle Ray with a lady guest. And it’s the first meal he has with Angel and his parents. This must be something, Michael thinks.

Anyways that’s all I have. Keep an eye out for my column in every issue. I’m Dulce, helping you to master your Filipino Languages. Like always, let’s laugh, let’s *makinig* (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 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.





CONSUL GENERAL'S CORNER

EMIL T. FERNANDEZ



PHILIPPINE CONSULATE ALLOTS OVER \$100K TO LAHAINA WILDFIRE VICTIMS

For the second time in as many months, the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu deployed a consular and assistance-to-nationals team to Maui to attend to Filipinos affected by the wildfires that ravaged parts of the island last August 8. Close to four hundred Filipinos were rendered services at the Lahaina Civic Center from September 22 to 24, including the replacement of lost passports, dual citizenship applications, legalization of documents and registration of overseas voters.

The Department of Foreign Affairs-managed Assistance-to-Nationals (ATN) Fund was tapped to defray the consular fees of Filipinos impacted by the disaster and provide financial assistance to casualties and the next-of-kin of those who perished. DFA officials in the Manila Home Office fast-tracked the approval of the request. Over \$100,000 was allotted for this purpose, with the bulk disbursed during the September visit so zero fees were effectively paid by applicants who lost their passports in the fire. In addition, fees for affidavits that had to be executed were automatically waived.

Among those who availed of the Consulate's services were Lahaina residents Victor and Constancia Ancheta who remarked, "Me and my wife are very appreciative and grateful to the wonderful humanitarian services of the Philippine Consulate General to the wildfire victims of Lahaina. We were treated professionally and efficiently. We are personally grateful to all the staff and Consul General, who were very accommodating to the victims' concerns, and thankful for the financial assistance provided."

Consulate personnel also visited burn victims, met with relatives of fatalities and checked on the well-being of the newly arrived Filipino teachers on Maui. Guidance was provided as



Consul General Fernandez with Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen, who visited the Philippine Consulate's consular and assistance-to-nationals outreach mission at the Lahaina Civic Center
 PHOTO COURTESY OF PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL OF HONOLULU

well for the repatriation process for those seeking to send the remains of their loved ones back to the Philippines. To this end, the Consulate is liaising with the U.S. State Department and the Maui Police Department for the necessary paperwork. Financial assistance was likewise provided by the Philippine Government through the Consulate for the newly discharged burn victim, relatives of several fatalities and all the Filipino teachers that were met.

Representations were also made with Federal Bureau of Investigation officials for the collection of DNA samples from the Philippine-based relatives of fatalities. As a result of this effort, six remains were positively identified after the Consulate arranged the collection by FBI officials of DNA samples from Ilocos-based next of kin at the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

"This outreach mission was unlike others I have been a part of in the past, as many of those we served were victims of the harrowing disaster. Several relayed accounts of their horrific ordeal and how they narrowly managed to escape the inferno."

— CONSUL GENERAL
 EMIL T. FERNANDEZ

The three-day activity was held at the Lahaina Civic Center, a stone's throw from the center of the devastation wreaked by unprecedented fire. The Center also served as the venue for the one-day *Hawak Kamay*: Filipino Resource Fair held on September 23, where visitors availed of the services of U.S. federal agencies, relief organizations and Filipino community associations. Providing support to the Consulate's special outreach mission were the Maui Immigrant Services Division and the Office of the Maui County Mayor. Filipinos impacted by the Maui

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Shown in the photo taken at the Lahaina Civic Center are (left to right) Consul General Fernandez, Director Jade Butay of the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations, Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke and Maui County Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura.
 PHOTO COURTESY OF PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL OF HONOLULU



Consul General Fernandez administers the oath of allegiance to sixty-one dual citizenship applicants during the consular and assistance-to-nationals outreach mission at the Lahaina Civic Center in Maui.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL OF HONOLULU

wildfires, who require assistance, may continue reaching out to the Consulate via email at honolulu.pcg@dfa.gov.ph. ☀

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 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).



Consul General Fernandez greets officials of the American Red Cross including Ms. Terry Stigdon, Regional Chief Executive Officer, at the Lahaina Civic Center.

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We Are Worth More Than We Can Imagine

Deacon Patrick Constantino | PHOTOS COURTESY DCN. PAT CONSTANTINO

The Lord Be With You! A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (20:1-16a).
Jesus told his disciples this parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o’clock, the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.’ So they went off. And he went out again around noon, and around three o’clock and did likewise. Going out about five o’clock, the landowner found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard.’ When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.’ When those who had started about five o’clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day’s burden and the heat.’ He said to one of them in reply, ‘My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?’ Thus, the last will be first, and first will be last.” The Gospel of the Lord.

Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. But only say the word and my soul will be

healed! Matthew 8:8. Our Lord who knows what we are worth! What are you worth?
Now I’m not talking about your net worth, not talking about the total dollars you would have if you liquidated all of your assets. That’s not what I mean. I’m talking about you—the person, the man or woman you are. What are you worth?
I’m guessing many of us put our own value as being higher than that of most other people. And we usually measure that value—that worth—not on one single factor but on many. I’m guessing most of us feel we are somewhat nicer or kinder than the average person on the street. And we probably think we have a much better sense of humor than most other people. That goes without saying. And other people don’t drive as well as we do, and don’t have as much common sense, and aren’t as trustworthy or responsible or hardworking as us. And I’m pretty sure none of us would ever consider going to our boss and saying, “You should really pay me less. I’m not worth the wage you are giving me.” Yes, many of us, maybe most of us, consider ourselves to be worth more than most people we know.
But what are we worth to God?
We just heard one of those Gospel passages that makes us want to shout at the top of our lungs, “That’s not fair!” We heard how everyone got paid the same even though they all worked different amounts of time. And that really doesn’t sit well with us, doesn’t seem right. Doesn’t seem just.
And if we were one of those workers who put in the most time yet got the same as those who started much later, and worked much less, we would not be okay with that! Not for a second. “What kind of crazy, illogical operation are you running here?” we might think to



At the Lahaina Strong donation center, laborers working in the vineyard of donations and giving with hope, faith and love.

ourselves. But that’s a really big IF.

- If we were the ones putting in a full day.
- If we had done the most work.
- If we deserved more.
- If others didn’t measure up to us.

This is one of those Bible stories where the majority of us probably only see ourselves as one character in the story. In fact, it might seem obvious—given we often have somewhat inflated images of ourselves. Who are we in the story? Well, I know who we want to be, know who we hope we are. We want to convince ourselves we are those laborers who worked the whole day—and therefore deserve the most, at least in our eyes, from our point of view. We want to believe others don’t quite measure up to us, we are the good guys, the ones who are part of the solution and not part of the problem.

The hard truth, my friends, is we are only one group in the story. That much is true. But it’s not the group we want to be in. You see, each of us, in our own unique way, is actually one of the workers who put in less than a full day—is a worker who doesn’t really deserve the wage the landowner chose to bless us with.

How can that be? Well, it’s really not that difficult to see when you think about it. We each give less than a full day’s work every time we cheat someone or act unjustly or fail to be generous. And we give less than a full day’s work every time we put someone down or gossip or treat someone with disrespect. We give less than a full day’s every time we turn our back on someone in need or fail to act with compassion or fail to forgive or fail to reach out to people who are lonely or on the margins. And we give less than a full day’s work every time we do wrong by a spouse or a child or a parent.

Put simply—we fail to give a full day’s work every time we fail to love, that is, every time we sin!

Don’t deserve a full day’s pay? That’s not someone else! That’s you!

And that’s me!

And so we should rejoice we have a God who doesn’t give us what we deserve. We should be eternally grateful God showers good things upon us not because we have earned those things but because that’s just who He is—a God of infinite mercy and generosity and compassion. We should be glad our God only exceeds the Love we are hoping for and never comes up short in that department. In other words, we should treasure the fact, the deep truth, that our God acts in ways we find it so hard to act.

What are we worth? Or rather, what are we worth to God?

In a certain sense, we are worth everything to Him! The Cross shows us that! The larger question is—What is He worth to us?

God is Good? *Ti Apo ket nasayaat!*
All the time? *Nga kankanayon!*
Jesus, we trust in You! Amen! *Apo Jesus, agtalekak kenka! Amen! ✨*

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‘anae. 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-two years. They are blessed with four children, eleven grandchildren, and fifteen great grandchildren.



At the UpCountry Strong Kōkua Emergency center, laborers working in the vineyard of donations and sharing faith, hope and love.

Pasko sa Maui in 2023

Liza A Pierce of “A Maui Blog” | PHOTOS COURTESY LIZA PIERCE

Pasko na naman, o kay tulin ng araw; Paskong nagdaan tila parang kailan lang. Remember this song?

Are you already thinking of Christmas? I am and I am guessing you are too. How can we not? Many stores already have Christmas items out on display. We Filipinos are known for starting the Christmas season in September (the start of BER months) and it’s now October ...

For many here on Maui, our Christmas will be a little different this year, and you know what I mean. With hundreds of families displaced by the August 8 Lahaina Fire, I can’t help but think of the many families who will miss their home this Christmas season. I also think of the many businesses struggling and employees being terminated due to the delicate situation in Maui’s tourism industry. This will be the first Christmas after the Lahaina and Kula fires, and it will be tough ...

How can we help? What can we do? We have to do something to somehow keep the Spirit of Christmas alive amidst the difficult situation we have on Maui. Glimmers. Let’s create some glimmers of hope.

One particular glimmer I saw is the opening of PLAY Imua. PLAY Imua, a free toy store on Maui, at the Maui Harbor Shops at Mā‘alaea! Merchandise at PLAY Imua is free to children and families impacted by the Aug. 8 fires. According to Imua Family Services, at this store, “Children have the self-efficacy to be able to explore the store and choose a toy

that is magical to them, without parents having to spend down limited income. Whether providing children with a fun toy, a gift to bring to a birthday party, a new costume for Halloween, or baby care products, the goal of this store is to help support parents and caregivers reserve their income for food, shelter and other essential items while allowing their children to have the essential ability to *play*. This is great for Christmas gift giving too!”

Mahalo to Imua Family Services for organizing this and Jakks Pacific Toys for providing all the merchandise in the PLAY Imua store. This generosity, along with the space provided by Maui Harbor Shops is a glimmer of hope for a Merry Maui Christmas.

Another glimmer of hope I saw was the success of the *Hawak Kamay* event organized by the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce. I am thinking that maybe ... just maybe ... another event similar to *Hawak Kamay* can be organized but this time with a focus on helping our *kababayan* celebrate Christmas amidst the hardship on Maui.

I also know Binhi at Ani is an organization actively supporting the Filipinos on Maui. I look forward to what they have plans for Christmas.

In the meantime, I’m going back to singing this beloved caroling song “*Paskon Na Naman*.” I love the ending lines about “love conquering all.”

Pasko pasko pasko na namang muli, Tanging araw na ating pinakamimithi. Pasko pasko pasko na



Aisles in stores islandwide are already filled with Christmas decorations to make your holiday season filled with aesthetic joy and happiness.



The Christmas “Grinch” is always there to steal away a little bit of the that happiness, so be wary!

Many stores already have Christmas items out on display, and that does not discount our local mega-stores like CostCo.



namang muli, ang pag-ibig mag-hahari. 🌟

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.





Renie Garo Menor



Renie's family gathered for her mom's 79th birthday in 2020.

A father's love and advice last forever and leaves an imprint among his children and grandchildren. This month's featured Sakada Offspring, Renie Garo Menor's father certainly did leave an imprint to her, her siblings and their children.

Renie was born on February 9, 1975 in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, Philippines. She attended Apaya Elementary School in Laoag City (Gr. 1 and 2). From grades 3–6, she attended Laoag Central Elementary School. For her high school years, she attended INCAT (Ilocos Norte College of Arts and Trades) in Laoag City. Before moving to Maui, she attended Northwestern University in Laoag City for two years.

When she arrived on Maui, she continued her college education at Maui Community College for two years and received her Associates in Accounting Degree in 1998 and her Associates in Liberal Arts Degree that same year.

Renie is very resilient as far as her employment is concerned. She worked at Minit Stop, Dairy Road (1994–1998) while going to school, started as a cashier and left as an Assistant Manager. In 1999–2006, she worked at Bank of Hawai'i in the New Accounts and Loan Department. Then from 2006–2008, she became a Mortgage Loan Officer at Amber Mortgage, Company. She then moved to Central Pacific Bank Home Loans from 2008–2010 as a Mortgage Loan Officer. From 2010–2012, she moved to another financial institution, American Savings Bank. There she worked as a Bank Teller. Lastly, from 2012–present, she is a Family Service Advisor at Maui Memorial Park/Nakamura Mortuary. She is also a Licensed Life Insurance Agent from 2012–present.

Neil Barangan Menor, Renie's hus-

Renie Garo Menor

Lucy Peros | PHOTOS COURTESY GARO MENOR 'OHANA

band, works at the new high school, Kūlanihāko'i High School in Kihei as a cook. Neil and Renie have three children, Naomi Anela Menor—a Senior at Maui High School, Yzabelle Menor—a Sophomore at Maui High School, and Liam Jake Menor—1st grade at Kahului Elementary School.

Renie's siblings are: Lurlina (Richard) Gaoiran; they have a son, Renzo James Gaoiran, a Sophomore at UNLV.

Leonardo (Rachel) Garo, Jr.; their children are Leslie Garo (Bryson Alviedo)—Aria (9), BJ (3 months), Charley John Garo—8th Grade at Maui Waena Intermediate.

Robert (Margie) Garo; their children are, Christian Lee (Megan) Garo-Bentley (3) and Kylie Garo.

Michael Garo—single
At Maui Memorial Park, Renie is a Mariner's Awardee Recipient for the last five years. She is the Star Recipient for 2023.
Renie serves as a Lector and Eucharistic Minister at Christ The King Church. She is a member of the Christ The King Filipino Catholic Club. She is a member and officer of Dance International Production. She is also a member of the Mariner's Club.

Renie is a well-rounded person. She enjoys spending time with family and friends especially a day at the beach. She enjoys gardening, tending her mini garden, cooking, some dancing and singing as well as listening to music.

Renie's father, Leonardo Ramos Garo was one of the Filipino old timers who paved the way for other

Filipinos especially the last batch of Sakadas who came to Hawai'i in 1946. Leonardo was born in Barangay 39 Sta. Rosa, Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, Philippines on November 3, 1909. He was the youngest among nine children of Vivencia and Jose Garo. Renie claims she did not meet any of her Dad's siblings because he was the youngest and he got married at a later age. Of course, she is aware that she has a lot of older cousins.

Leonardo arrived in Hawai'i on January 29, 1931. He was only 19 years old at that time. He first worked on Kaua'i at the Kekaha Sugar Cane Company, as a field laborer. According to Renie, her father shared stories about how he came to Hawai'i and some of the events that happened when he was already in Hawai'i. At that time, her father came by ship and it took them a month on the rough ocean journey from the Philippines to Hawai'i. He even experienced WWII in 1941 in Hawai'i. He was so scared and they were brought to Honolulu at one point to keep them safe and took them back to Kaua'i when the war was over.

In March 1968, Leonardo went back home to the Philippines and married Renie's Mom, Rosita Tangonan Domingo. At that time, it was easier and faster to petition a loved one to come to Hawai'i. Rosita was able to follow Leonardo just a few months after their wedding. Soon after, they were blessed with three children,

Lurlina, Leonardo, Jr. and Robert. In November 1973, when he reached retirement age, the family decided to go back home to the Philippines and build a home there to raise their children. While enjoying their lives in the Philippines, they were again blessed with two more children, Renie and Michael, the youngest. As some Sakadas would humorously say, "Three were made in Hawai'i and two were made in the Philippines."

In 1986, Robert who was born in Hawai'i, came back to Hawai'i, on

Maui. He was followed by Leo, Jr. in 1987 and some of other relatives. Unfortunately, Renie's Dad passed away in November 1988 in the Philippines. Of course, the two boys had to go back home to show their last respects to their Dad. Following the funeral, in 1990, Renie's sister, Lurlina and her mom decided to follow the two boys as well. Then in 1994, a great reunion of the Garo family happened. Renie and her brother Michael joined the rest of the family.

Renie lovingly shared her reflection on her father:

Dad was one of a kind. He was such a very loving and responsible father to us (his children). Talk about one hard-working man and a great provider to his family. He would grow vegetables around the house and raise chickens, goats and pigs. He taught us to be helpful, kind, respectful, humble and to love one another.

Dad was known for his kindness,



Renie is shown here with her father in 1981.

Heroes ...

from p. 12

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 graph-



ics 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.

ing to school, he would stop and offer them a ride as well. The other kids were so excited to ride with us.

I lost my Dad at an early age, I was only 13 years old when he passed on November 27, 1988. He used to tell us he saw and read his book of life and it was written in that book that he would be lucky if he reached the age of eighty. Dad just turned 79 years and 24 days old when he died. We miss and love him so much. He would have been 113 years old today. ✨

Lucy Peros is a retired school-teacher, having taught at St. Anthony Grade School and Waihe'e Elementary School. Both of her late parents, Elpidio Cachero Cabalo (a 1946 Saka-

da) 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.



Garro family photo
Back row: From left, Lurlina, Rosita (mom), Leonardo Sr. (dad), Leonardo Jr. Front row: From left, Michael, Renie and Robert.

Family photo circa 2022
From left, Lurlina, Leo Jr., Robert, Renie and Michael. Seated: Rosita Garo (mom).



Survivors ...

from p. 8

could not imagine the threat and the panic of people running from it. We haven't had any fire emergencies so that was a new catastrophic tragedy to respond to."

Marcos urged the survivors, "We must remain resilient and hopeful in the face of all of this. There is a reason you survived and perhaps it is our faith that will tell us what to do next. And how to remain whole and united in the face of this tragedy. I think that the sharing of this, mourning together and praying is the only way to survive."

Tante Urban, owner of Tante's Island Cuisine, who co-hosted the event with Consul General Emil T. Fernandez recognized the importance of the visit: "It was wonderful of Senator Imee Marcos to come to Maui to meet with the grieving Pinoys who were affected by the Lahaina wildfires. Her presence and support uplifted our kababayans specially those who lost a lot in the Lahaina disaster. Thanks to ConGen Fernandez for leading the way for Senator Imee to come to Maui even for just a few hours."

Marcos promised Tomimbang-Burns "I will keep in touch with this community and see how they progress." ✨

Alfredo G. Evangelista's roots are from Paoay, Ilocos Norte. At the event, Evangelista shared a story from his ninety-nine-year-old Mom Catalina Gonzales Evangelista who recalled cook-



ing pinakbet and adobo guring ti baboy for future Ilocos Norte Governor Jose Evangelista and future Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos.

Multi-award winning and Filipino pioneer television reporter, anchor and producer **Emme Tomimbang-Burns** contributed to this story. Tomimbang-Burns had an exclusive interview with Marcos on the same day



Marcos traveled to Maui. The interview covering several topics including President Ferdinand "Bong Bong" Marcos, Jr.'s first years in office, will be broadcast later.

Lahaina survivor Chamille Misay-Serrano with Banna Mayor Chrislyn Abadilla and Vice Mayor Carlito Abadilla III. PHOTO COURTESY CHAMILLE MISAY-SERRANO



Senator Imee Marcos patiently poses with members of the standing room audience. PHOTO LAWRENCE PASCUA

Mahalo to my
family, friends and
neighbors for your
support and confidence.
It was my honor to
serve you in the state
legislature.

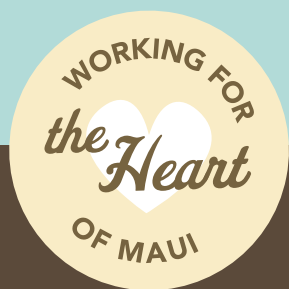


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