



### What's valued for 2026?

The greatest of goals—love and compassion!

See p4



### ICE In Our House Now

Does distance shield us on Maui for what's probably inevitable? Authoritarianism on Hawaii's shores ...

See p5



### New Year, We Hope

Many challenges are left by the previous year. What's in store for us in 2026?

See below



# Fil·Am Voice

Magkaisa Tayong Lahat | "Let Us All Unite"

January 2026 • Vol X No 1 | FILIPINO AMERICAN VOICE • UPLIFTING OUR COMMUNITY | FREE

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# 2026 Looking Forward

Alfredo G. Evangelista | ASSISTANT EDITOR | Story begins on Page 2



The Fil-Am Voice wishes peace for the the entire world during the troubled times we are now living in.

IMAGE: LAWRENCE PASCUA WITH PICSART AI GENERATOR

# FREE

**Resolutions.** Hopes and dreams. Things we always talk about at the beginning of the year. Yes, many of us swear to be healthier—lose weight, start walking, cut down on sugar and fats. All that stuff. Easier said than done. Maybe it is easier to just buy larger clothes; head out to Costco or even buy stuff on Amazon. I have discovered Amazon sells pants with those stretchable waist bands. (Sorry Macy's but most of your clothes are slim fit!)

**World Peace.** That is one that was always thrown in for what we wished for in a new year. Sadly, it is still serious. The war in Ukraine is still ongoing—it began some twelve years ago when Russia annexed Crimea. And it is still going on. And the amount of money poured in by the United States is astronomical. \$187 billion has been authorized since February 2022, with an estimated \$130 billion that has reached Ukraine. Some of the money appropriated has not yet been released.

But think about it. Over \$100 billion of U.S. taxpayer funds, with an estimated U.S. population of 341.8 million—that is over \$500 per U.S. resident that has been authorized for the war in Ukraine. And do not be fooled. It is not ending anytime soon. Yes, the 24-hour end to the war promised by candidate Donald Trump is twelve months overdue.

**Domestic Peace.** Almost six years ago, the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis started riots across the nation. Protest after protest. This month, ICE killed two innocent protesters—Renee Nicole Good and Alex



Billions of our U.S. tax dollars have already been spent in the defense of Ukraine against Putin's Russian aggression.

HOMDATROX, CCO, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Pretti. Only time will tell if the reaction to these two needless deaths will be the same as the Floyd death.

**Local Politics.** Yes, 2026 is an election year. The hottest race on Maui will be for Mayor. Incumbent Mayor Richard Bissen Jr. will face off against current Council Vice Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura and probably other lesser-known candidates. Solutions to the housing issue, response to the Lahaina

fire, and the economy are probably going to be the most debated issues. And with Sugimura moving on from the Council—and the death of Councilmember Tasha Kama last year—the make-up of the Council will change. (Kauanoe Batangan was appointed by the Mayor to fill Kama's seat after the Council could not agree on a replacement. Will Batangan be able to hold on to the seat? Will the 'Ohana Coal-

ition become the majority?)

**The Governor's Race.** Governor Josh Green will be running for re-election and so far, there appears to be no one strong enough to defeat him—Democrat, Republican, Independent, or Non-partisan.

**The Courts.** Will there be more Filipinos appointed to the courts? There are vacancies on the Hawai'i Supreme Court (Chief Justice), the

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**George Floyd protests** were in full swing in Washington D.C., Lafayette Square.  
 PHOTO: ROSA PINEDA - OWN WORK, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=90812285>



**Thousands join the throngs** in the 'No Kings' Protest in downtown Minneapolis, MN.  
 PHOTO: CHAD DAVIS. - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/146321178@N05/54862530597/>, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=176974299>

Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals, and here on Maui in the Second Circuit Court. Applications for the Chief Justice was extended a number of times as not enough applied but it appears now the minimum has been reached. The last Supreme Court Justice of Filipino ancestry was Simeon Acoba, Jr., who retired in 2014. The first Supreme Court Justice of Filipino ancestry was Benjamin Menor (who retired in 1981) while the second Supreme Court Justice of Filipino ancestry was Mario Ramil (who retired in 2002). (Acoba is the only Judge of Filipino ancestry who was appointed to the Hawai'i Intermediate Court of Appeals, where he served before being appointed to the Hawai'i Supreme Court. Artemio Baxa was the only Judge of Filipino ancestry appointed to

the Circuit Court bench on Maui. Baxa retired in 2001, after serving for three years.)

**The old Chart House.** No, not the one in Lahaina but the one in Kahului that was also the old Hideaways. Café O' Lei purchased the site years ago but there have been delays due to permits. This month, Café O' Lei posted on social media it was hiring... but no firm date on when it would open. I hope that when they do open, they will bring back my favorite dish—the chicken curry salad. Dana, are you listening?

**The Super Bowl.** Early next month, the 60th Super Bowl will take place in San Francisco. My wife's team—Seattle Seahawks will face off against my nephew Jeremy Cajigal's **see 2026 next page**



**Mayor Richard Bissen, Jr.**  
 COURTESY PHOTO



**Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura**  
 COURTESY PHOTO



### Investing in your future

As an avid believer in STEM education, Bayer is proud to support students across the islands. Applications for our **2026 Life Sciences Scholarship** program are now available to graduating seniors of all high schools in Hawaii who will be attending an accredited college or university to pursue a discipline related to the life sciences (including agriculture, agronomy, biology, botany, genetics, horticulture, plant physiology, chemistry, crop science, soil science, and more).

Eligible students can download a scholarship application at [hawaii.bayer.us/education](http://hawaii.bayer.us/education). Best wishes as you continue to invest in your future!

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## From the Editor's Desk

Vince Bagoyo, Jr.  
EDITOR • FIL-AM VOICE



God commands us in Matthew 22:39 to "love your neighbor as yourself" which means showing kindness, care and generosity, treating others with the same respect and consideration you give to yourself and upholding the dignity of others.

IMAGE COURTESY IVELINR | DREAMSTIME.COM

# New Year, New Beginning, New Goals 2026

**H**appy New Year! Oh well, another new year, another year of making resolutions—that I/we most likely will not be able to reach. Most of the time I do not even try very hard. Sadly, most well-intentioned resolutions, including mine, will be quickly abandoned. Before we celebrate to welcome 2026—let me first reflect from the past year's resolutions that I continuously fail to achieve year after year:

### Lose weight

This is always my first resolution of the new year knowing I will most likely fail to achieve, not because of lack of trying but not enough discipline to do what it

takes to lose weight—like eating more healthy food (can't resist those homemade delicious pastas and *lechon kawali*), eat less or resist eating sweets.

### Exercise more

Oh boy, this is a big one. It is one I like to make but consciously know I will fail miserably. I make this goal every year and sometimes I make it the first month of the year, then slack off the rest of the year. I think I should be more disciplined and not make any more excuses. Start with small steps and it should not be a chore. Maybe I need to find an exercise that I love like hiking to enjoy the beauty of God's amazing creation.

see FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK p. 7



Councilmember Kauanoë Batangan  
COURTESY PHOTO



Governor Josh Green  
COURTESY PHOTO



The late Justice Mario Ramil and Retired Justice Simeon Acoba, Jr., with their spouses.

PHOTO COURTESY ALFREDO EVANGELISTA



Jeremy Cajigal sporting a Patriots Family Is All That Matters flag that he purchased on Maui. Dayton Galiciniao and Zhorein Magliba are the owners of the FAM store at the Queen Ka'ahumanu Center.

PHOTO COURTESY JEREMY CAJIGAL

## 2026

from p. 3

team—New England Patriots. (Jeremy is such a die-hard Patriots fan he went to a playoff game. I did accompany my

wife to the Seahawks' last home game of the regular season when they beat the Los Angeles Rams—Lawrence Pascua's team—in overtime.) Yup, I'm a Raiders fan and I hate the Patriots so I'm gonna be cheering for the Sea-

see 2026 p.12



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# DINENGDENG & PINAKBET



## Does the Pacific Ocean protect Hawai'i from recent ICE operations?

Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

**H**awai'i is one of the most remote places in the world. The early explorers from Marquesa and Society islands navigating by the sun, stars, winds and currents were probably lucky to originally find these islands (which Mark Twain poetically called “the loveliest fleet of islands anchored in any ocean”). Certainly Captain James Cook didn't expect to find them (unless he had access to some Spanish maps that may suggest the location of some isles in the general vicinity of our homes).



37-year-old ICU nurse Alex Pretti, fatally shot to death by a Border Patrol officer, was recording the actions of federal agents in Minneapolis.

PHOTO: UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The moat that is the Pacific Ocean can lead us to complacency, that we're somehow safe and insulated from what's happening on the mainland and the rest of the world (putting aside the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941).

But modern technology and globalization have narrowed whatever isolation under which we can shelter. Certainly anyone with access to cable television or a computer feed can't escape the 24-hour news cycle. What happens in Kyiv, Davos, Gaza, Manila or Tokyo is instantly available.

But the Pacific expanse makes it easy for us to look away.

At some point we can't ignore what's happening. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, God advises, *When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The*

*alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.* (Leviticus 19:33-34 NRSV). I realize some today undoubtedly rationalize that the passages on strangers in a strange land apply only to “legal” strangers—but there's no distinction between different types of immigrants in scripture.

So don't look away. Hawai'i residents can't be unaware of the murder by ICE of Renee Nicole Good in Minnesota—the videos have been analyzed *ad nauseum*. Or that her killer called her a “fucking bitch” or that other ICE agents sneer “that's why that lesbian bitch is dead” to other Minnesota protestors.

Maybe it shouldn't be surprising that the same federal agency manhandled 79-year-olds protesting that murder or tackled a guy dressed in a giraffe costume or ignore whether a person of color is an American citizen (they've even detained off-duty police officers and disabled veterans). And then lie about what happened. And, no matter how the administration describes it, ICE has also arrested a 5-year-old child and tear-gassed a family of six driving home from a middle school basketball game (with a baby hospitalized).



Social media networking app “LinkedIn” allowed this want ad posted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to be shared to users of their app. The preceding text reads, “Need a job? Join ICE today.”

IMAGE: U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT VIA LINKEDIN



Renee Nicole Good caught on film by former border patrol officer and alleged killer Jonathan Ross made a stop in Minneapolis that led to Good's death. The Trump administration branded Good a “domestic terrorist” who “weaponized” her vehicle to attack ICE agents in Minneapolis.

PHOTO: JONATHAN ROSS, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A whistleblower recently disclosed ICE has been advised they can kick down doors without judicially reviewed warrants or that even “mis-

taken” arrests of American citizens counts against the daily quota (so ICE has an incentive to round up

see DINENGDENG & PINAKBET p.7

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Nathan Salaguinto



Shayne Banchiran



Charley Garo



Malychah Tumacter

As the new year begins, many of us are starting the resolutions we made as the clock hit twelve. Whether that means being more outgoing, becoming more fit or saving money, our New Year's resolutions set the tone for the year and hold deep value within us like unspoken promises. We often cling to the same traits and habits, however, that have built up over the years, ultimately because it's a part of who we are. If we keep changing every little thing about us, how do we remember the path we took to get here in the first place?

A junior from Baldwin High School, **Nathan Salaguinto**, associates himself with the traits of being humorous, charismatic and loving. Over the years, Nathan realized having a good mindset is what has made him the amazing individual he is to-

# Google® Is Not Everything ... New Year, Same You

Ehra Louise Guiwa | MAUI HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2028

day. "I feel like growing up in an environment where people like me aren't always treated as equals made me resilient, it taught me to have a good mindset and a good heart."

Love is such a powerful yet vulnerable feeling; being able to express it, as Nathan does openly, is truly admirable. "I wear my heart on my sleeve and show off how I truly feel through my behavior and my creativity flows like a river."

For Maui High School sophomore **Shayne Banchiran**, her identity is rooted in her family upbringing: "I've always been taught by my parents to become the best version of myself by being responsible and hardworking, despite situations and hardships." To Shayne, being responsible is one of her favorite traits; not only does it connect her with her family but also with her faith. Shayne mentions being a pastor's daughter and how her dedication through religious practices such as "daily prayers, reading the bible and even worshipping Him through singing," ties into her discipline.

**Charley Garo**, another Maui High School sophomore, comments, "Some traits I've kept the same over the years are helping others and trying to do good whenever I can." Charley describes himself as a positive and easygoing person, no matter the situation. He also emphasizes "I think my actions say the most about me and the way I carry myself around people." Rather than letting his words define him, he takes great fulfillment in showing them through how he makes others feel.

"My drive for success and my willingness to be transparent," is what **Malychah Tumacder** reflects on when thinking about traits she has kept consistent over the years. She

further explains her dedication from "the idea of being my greatest or having to achieve something." Although she is just a freshman at Maui High, Malychah carries a profound sense of emotional understanding of life. She understands things might not go the way as planned or new opportunities may pop up but instead of shying away from these experiences, she takes this to her advantage.

While these traits build our character on the inside, self-expression is what allows them to be seen. Through trial and error, we can find comfort in the ways we choose to express ourselves. Whether that be through fashion and music like Nathan, Malychah, and Shayne.

For me, I express myself whenever I write, although I may not be the most articulate person but I believe writing should evoke emotions. You wouldn't read something that would make you feel bland; you read for your entertainment, to feel sad, happy or frightened.

We often keep so many worries in our minds it can feel overwhelming but through writing, my thoughts become more coherent and it lessens my troubles.

After reading this month's column, reflect on how you choose to express yourself and what are the traits you choose to hold onto. ✨

**Google® Is Not Everything ...** is a monthly column authored by high school students. The column's title emphasizes that education is more than just googling a topic. Google® is a registered trademark. This month's guest columnist is **Ehra Louise Guiwa**, a Sophomore at Maui High

School. She is the President of Sabers Of Law (Maui High's Mock Trial Club), one of the Executive Vice Presidents for Student Government, Historian in the Key Club, and a student of eskrima under Doce Pares Multi-Style Hawai'i. Ehra Louise is in the Law and Public Safety pathway at Maui



High and aspires to be a U.S senator. In her free time, she enjoys sewing, baking, volunteering at church, spending time with family and friends, and exploring. She is the only daughter of Merlyn Guiwa and Reymund Guiwa.

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Current ICE policies are endorsed by Pres. Trump.

IMAGE: POTUS ICE

everyone).

But we know Maui isn't so isolated.

ICE has already invaded a home in Kahului in the early morning hours and forced public school teachers out on the street in their sleeping clothes. In that incident, ICE did not identify themselves or provide any warrant (all this time I'd assumed the search was judicially reviewed and issued). They did not allow an American citizen to go back in the house to get her identification. It didn't matter they had rounded up teachers recruited here by Hawai'i's Department of Education and living and working here under approved federal J-1 exchange VISAs from the

Philippines. ICE refused requests the teachers be allowed to call their schools to warn them they would be late for work.

It turned out the person ICE was looking for no longer lived in that house.

So ICE left. No apology. Don't look away—this happened on Maui.

Part of what makes America great was adoption of a Bill of Rights as a condition of the different States ratifying the U.S. Constitution. A bedrock right is embedded in the 4th Amendment. That part of the U.S. Constitution protects individuals from unreasonable government searches and seizures, ensuring privacy and security in their persons and homes, requiring warrants to be based on probable cause, supported by oath and specifically describing what is to be searched or seized, thereby guarding against arbitrary intrusion by law enforcement.

Apparently the 4th Amendment now has an ICE exception.

I didn't vote for that.

And I assume you didn't either. ✨



Good Shepherd Episcopal Church coordinated a sign-waving in support of Renee Good.

PHOTO COURTESY GOOD SHEPHERD EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

### Spend less and save more

This is another tough goal to do but it is worth trying to prepare for the rainy days. With all the distraction and marketing ploys by Amazon Prime and many other businesses, I need to avoid buying stuff I do not need—small luxuries like daily Americano coffee or latte and other unnecessary items. Instead, I will start brewing my own coffee at home. One thing I have not tried as a New Year's resolution that I think will save me some money is to do the "no spend" month. This is worth a try. For one month I will avoid spending any extra money on non-essentials. This means no going out to eat, no hobby supplies, no brand clothes and so on. So when I spend less, that will result in saving more for retirement and for unexpected "rainy days."

My New Year's resolutions this year will be a little different and a departure from past resolutions with the focus more on others than "me," that will involve more an act of service like nurturing relationships through spending quality time and doing better listening. Here are some of my New Year's resolutions for 2026 that I will try my very best to do that requires a little effort with the hope of a long-lasting impact on the lives of others:

### Extending kindness towards others

By intentionally and consciously showing compassion, generosity and warmth to others. It is about reaching out with empathy, a simple smile to strangers, inviting someone to dinner and listening without judgment, and offering kind words. Extending kindness will result in stronger relationships with family, friends, co-workers, strangers and neighbors. It will ultimately foster trust and restore faith.

### Practice patience

This is another tough goal for me in 2026. I must admit—I am a little impatient, especially when it comes to people who procrastinate on work that are important in my line of business. I have very low

tolerance of people who continually make excuses, especially political leaders who are unable to find solutions to problems facing our community such as the housing crisis facing our residents, homelessness, economy and so on. I need to work more on being patient towards others and be more understanding and give more grace as Jesus Christ did for me. I need to emulate those who exude patience and be steadfast in trusting God who is the author and finisher of our faith. I am constantly reminded by God's Word in Philippians 4:6 that says, *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

### Extend love and compassion

This is easier said than done but God commands us in Matthew 22:39 to "love your neighbor as yourself" which means showing kindness, care and generosity, treating others with the same respect and consideration you give to yourself and upholding the dignity of others. This command about love extends beyond neighbors. It includes even strangers and those we disagree with, essentially everybody. I am mindful of the difficulty of abiding with one of my key New Year's resolutions for 2026, I need to be intentional in embodying Christ's love of gentleness, humility and forgiveness. I need to move beyond self-focus to joyful service.

On behalf of the *Fil-Am Voice*, I wish all of you a Blessed New Year! We hope your New Year's resolutions for 2026 will mirror God's amazing unconditional love. If God prompts you to serve others' needs, be faithful to do it, trusting that His guidance leads you to abundant life. ✨

VINCE BAGOYS, JR. | EDITOR

**Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran**, born and raised on Maui after Hawai'i became a State of the Union, served in the State legislature representing Central Maui from 2009 to 2023. He previously worked in the administrations of Hawai'i Governor Benjamin Cayetano and Maui Mayor Alan Arakawa. He practices law in Wailuku.



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# Community... In Action



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



The Maui Kupono Builders team (Kahiau Ting, Ryan Koshi, Kiki Ting and Desiree Ting) won the Mayor Richard Bissen Bowl (awarded to the first place team) in 2025.  
PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA



In 2025, Dr. David Anzai won the Grand Prize donated by Philippine Airlines.  
PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA



In 2025, Alexander Talavera won the early bird contest donated by the Friends of Yuki Lei Sugimura.  
PHOTO COURTESY BINHI AT ANI



A few of the volunteers pose after the shot gun start in 2025.  
PHOTO COURTESY BINHI AT ANI



The Philippine Nurses Association Maui Hawaii volunteered for the Bayanihan Feeding Program.  
PHOTO: CHRISTINE GUMPAL

## BINHI AT ANI

Celebrate your special events at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center. The Center can be rented on Mondays through Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. for \$1,400 (which includes the cleaning fee) plus GET and a \$500 security deposit or from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. for \$1,200 (which includes the cleaning fee) plus GET and a \$500 security deposit.

On Sundays, the Center can be rented from 1:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. for \$1,050 (which includes the cleaning fee) plus GET and a \$500 security deposit.

If alcohol is provided and/or served, there is an additional fee of \$300 and you must hire two licensed bartenders.

If alcohol is BYOB or placed in coolers, there is an additional fee of \$500.

The office is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays by appointment



# COMMUNITY... IN ACTION

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

only. Telephone (808) 877-7880. **Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament** will be held on Sunday, March 8, 2026 at The Dunes at Maui Lani Golf Course. A Platinum Sponsorship (eight golfers) is available at \$1500 while a Gold Sponsorship (four golfers) is available at \$800. Tee sponsorships are available at \$250 and cash donations are also accepted.

Those who submit their paid application by Feb. 6, 2026 will be entered into an early bird drawing sponsored by Friends of Yuki Lei Sugimura. Island Honda is sponsoring a \$25,000 hole-in-one prize at Hole #17. There will be a Jack-Pot at hole

#3 (additional entry fee of \$20) and a Jack-Pot at hole #8 (additional entry fee of \$20). There will be Closest to the Pin prizes on holes #3 and #8 and On-The-Green contests on holes #6 and #17. The grand prize will be donated by Philippine Airlines (economy airfare to Manila).

The deadline is February 15 but don't wait until then as this tournament is expected to be sold out.

All net proceeds from the golf tournament funds Binhi at Ani's annual scholarship programs. In 2025, Binhi at Ani awarded \$31,000 in scholarship grants to twenty-three outstanding 2025 high school

graduates.

For more information, contact Tournament Chairperson Alfredo Evangelista at (808) 242-8100 or [AlfredoGEvangelista@gmail.com](mailto:AlfredoGEvangelista@gmail.com).

**Bayanihan Feeding Program** provides a Sunday lunch to Hale Mahaolu Residents in Central Maui (Hale Mahaolu Elua and Hale Mahaolu Akahi) and Maui Adult Day Care.

Through December 31, 2025, a total of 41,407 lunches have been distributed.

Teams serving during the month of December 2025 include Central Pacific Bank, Confederation International Association of Samahang Ilocano

Group, Maui County Federal Credit Union, Philippine Nurses Association Maui Hawaii and Seventh Day Adventist (Kihei and Lahaina).

There is a need for additional teams of volunteers to prepare the free lunches. Create a Team by contacting Melen Agcolicol at (808) 205-7981. Tax-deductible





The 2025 Binhi at Ani Scholars and presenters during the 2025 Seed and Harvest Dinner.

PHOTO: CEASAR LIZADA PHOTOGRAPHY



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

PHOTO: CLAUDETTE MEDEIROS



Mayor Richard Bissen swore in the newly-elected Board of Directors of the Maui Filipino Community Council and its Foundation on Jan. 10 during the Dr. José P. Rizal Scholarship Dinner.

PHOTO: VINCE BAGYO, JR.



Nine recipients received the Dr. José P. Rizal Award, and outgoing president Madelyne G. Pascua received the Leadership Award.

PHOTO: GODDY CREATION, LLC



The Barong Tagalog contest was won by Reynaldo "Rey" Ramos and Filipiniana Attire contest was won by Chloe Sta. Maria .

PHOTO: GODDY CREATION, LLC

donations are accepted via Paypal or a Credit/Debit card or by mailing a check payable to Binhi at Ani, 780 Onehe'e Avenue, Kahului, HI 96732 [Memo: Feeding Program].

The Bayanihan Feeding Program is a partnership with Maui Food Bank and is supported by grants from Bayer Crop Science Hawai'i and Nareit Hawai'i.

**Enhance@Fitness for Kūpuna at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center** classes are continuing. Offered in partnership with the County of Maui, Office on Aging, classes are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6:15 a.m. to 7:15 a.m.; from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.; from 8:45 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Enhance@Fitness is an exercise program for those over 50 years of age that improves cardiovascular fitness, strength, flexibility and balance. Since July 2022 and through May 2025, there have been 944 classes with seventy-five participants. 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.mauhi.us.

**Scholarship.** Applications for Binhi at



Ani's Scholarship Program for graduating 2026 high school students are now available through the portal: <https://baa2026application.paperform.co/>. The deadline is 4 p.m. HST on Friday, March 13, 2026. (Late submissions will be automatically disqualified.) The eligibility requirements are: 1) must be a resident of the island of Maui; 2) must be scheduled to graduate in 2026 from a high school on Maui with a cumulative grade point average (through the 1st semester of 2025) of at least 3.50 on a 4.0 scale; and 3) must complete the application as instructed and provide all required documents. An independent panel of judges will base their decisions on grade point average (30%), activities, awards, honors, and employment (30%), a short essay (30%), and letters of recommendation (10%). The recipient or a family member must be present at the awarding ceremony (The Seed and Harvest Dinner) on July 9, 2026. For more information, contact Scholarship Chairperson Edward Garcia at (808) 269-2777.

## MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL AND MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOUNDATION

The Maui Filipino Community Council and the Maui Filipino Community Council Foundation recently held the Dr. José P. Rizal Scholarship Dinner 2025-'26: Leadership Awards, Installation of Officers & Filipiniana Gala at the Maui Beach Hotel Ballroom. The Leadership Awards honored individuals who exemplify the courage, intellect and compassion of the Philippine national hero, Dr. José P. Rizal. The event also served as a fundraiser for the MFCC Foundation that will provide scholarships for deserving high school graduates pursuing higher education.

The honorees were: Distinguished Service: Tante Urban; Outstanding Citizen: Nestor Ugale, Jr.; Outstanding Youth: Angel Alba; Outstanding Member: Perlita Manlansing; Excellence in the Arts: Lance Collins, Ph.D.; Excellence in Education: Sydney Villegas, Ph.D.; Excellence in Medicine: Dr. Gloria Rongcal Gage; Excel-

lence in Literature & Media: Vince G. Bagoyo, Jr. and Excellence in Science: Alvin "Kai" Pelayo.

The evening also featured a Filipiniana Attire Gala. The winners were Chloe Sta. Maria for the Filipiniana womens attire and Reynaldo Ramos for the men's Barong Tagalog contest.

Last, the 2026 MFCC Board of Directors were installed by Mayor Richard Bissen. Among them present were Lawrence Pascua, President; Cherry Respicio Urias, Recording Secretary, Marilyn M. Romero, Corresponding Secretary, Judith Piano, Treasurer;

Aileen Concepcion, Assistant Treasurer; Virgilio "Leo" Agcolicol, Auditor and Directors Cornelio "CJ" Ancheta, Emerita "Emi" Cortez, Melanie Garde, Domingo "Jing" Gumpal, Arthur Latayada, Elmer Tolentino and Bart Santiago, Sr.; also, Greg Peros, Honorary Director and Madelyne G. Pascua, Immediate Past President. Those who could not be present were Michelle L. Santos, Vice President, Antonio V. Ramil, Esq. (Ret.), Honorary Director and Benjamin Acob, Esq., Legal Counsel.

## Ti Biag ken Pammati “Life and Faith”



Jonathan and Shardi Tavares' family—Patrick Constantino's grandchildren and great grandchildren Kensley and Skyler were baptized at Holy Rosary Church in Pā'ia.

# The Renewal of Our Baptism of the Lord

*A New Beginning 2026*

Deacon Patrick Constantino | PHOTOS COURTESY PATRICK CONSTANTINO

**E**very New Year we need something to remind us we need to look at things differently. Our Baptism is a good place to start. A time to make adjustments, a time to reset our lives and a time to make a difference in our Life and Strengthen our Faith in Jesus Christ!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (3:13-17)

*Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?”*

*Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him.*

*After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

“He went about doing good... for God was with him.”

One of the blessings of being Catholic, one of the perks, if you will, is we have so many opportunities to get stuff. This stuff comes in all shapes and sizes. We get crosses and crucifixes and prayer cards. We

get thousands of Saints to imitate and from which we can ask for prayers. We get palms and statues and scapulars and ashes on a Wednesday whose date changes from year to year. We get candles to remind us of Jesus and incense to symbolize our prayers and countless religious schools to choose from some of the best anywhere. We get all sorts of devotions and holy medals and manger scenes. We get retreats and parish picnics and World Youth Days and Eucharistic processions. And, of course, we get so many fish fries to choose from during Lent.

Yes, being Catholic means having the opportunity to get a lot of different stuff, having a lot of experiences not everyone gets to have. And, of course, there's the one I left out on purpose, the one that has the greatest meaning for us far above any of those others. I'm talking about the sacraments.

Nowhere do we get more. We call this great gift—grace—God's very life poured out for us and into us. And while there are no limits on God's grace, we believe there are special moments in our lives of faith and the life of the Church, special experiences in which our God comes to us in unique and powerful ways. In sacred food. In promises made between spouses. In oils that heal. In

oils that consecrate. In words of reconciliation. All powerful in their own way.

All God moments. All times we get something more valuable than we can imagine. And we must not forget the one that makes all the others possible—baptism and its counterpart, the re-commitment of Confirmation. Today we gather on the Baptism of the Lord—a celebration in which we recall and reflect on that day long ago when Jesus sought out John in the desert and submitted to the ritual washing he provided. But this one was different, for with it came an affirmation and declaration from almighty God.

I'll leave it to each of you to wonder about the details of that day. But we do sort of know what came forth from that day, the consequences of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan.

Luke in Acts of the Apostles put it simply. “He went about doing good... For God was with him.” Would people say that about us? We sometimes forget all the stuff our faith provides, all the stuff our Church provides are not ends in themselves. They are not things meant for our benefit and our benefit alone, not things we are meant to seek out and cling to as if they are a precious piece of gold.

Rather, all these things, and in particular all the God moments,

Sacramental and otherwise, we experience as Catholics are meant to be transformative—things that change us—so we can continue to live our lives more configured to that of our Lord.

And that means not seeing our faith as simply containing moments of getting but instead seeing those moments as starting points, launching pads for opportunities to pass those gifts forward, opportunities to fill our days with giving moments—days in which we simply look for ways to go about doing good—for God is with us. And so, baptism isn't some kind of spiritual life insurance, some kind of hedging in case this God thing is true.

It's actually a holy bonding, a uniting, a communing with our God—a tethering of ourselves to the Lord Jesus in an intimate way. And in doing so, we are stepping through a doorway into a new way of seeing, thinking and acting—that is, we are embracing and accepting and being willing to buy what Jesus is selling—doing what He did and going where He went and where He continues to lead.

In other words, baptism isn't so much about what we are able to get. It's about what we are willing to give. The problem for many of us, myself included, is we understand what this means. You see, if we are truly united to Jesus it means we are also united in His suffering and death. There is no new life without that. This dying is the doing good that was at the heart of Jesus' entire life shown most perfectly in his death on the cross—and is the same dying we are called to—an emptying of ourselves on behalf of others, a dying that allows us to rise with Jesus and become something new, something beautiful, something and someone that we were meant to be from the very beginning.

Is that who we are? Is that who we want to be? My friends, let's leave this place today reflecting on

see TI BIAG KEN PAMMATI p.12



Ricki Lee (left) and Remedy Ruff were baptized by Dcn. Patrick Constantino at Holy Rosary Church in Pā'ia. They are Constantino's nieces on the Cabacungan side of his family.



**A**loha and Welcome 2026! January marks a natural turning point—a pause between what has ended and what is just beginning. After the intensity of the holidays, the month settles in with a quieter rhythm, inviting reflection, recalibration and intention. It is a time when routines are rebuilt, goals are reconsidered and the year ahead begins to take shape. More than simply the first page of the calendar, January sets the tone for how we choose to move for-

# Let's Talk Pinoy!

Dulce Karen Butay

ward, offering a fresh start grounded in clarity and purpose.

As the year unfolds, the choices made in this first month often shape the momentum that follows. What are your goals this year? What is your

New Year's resolution? I'd love to hear! Share it with us at [www.facebook.com/FilAmVoiceMaui](http://www.facebook.com/FilAmVoiceMaui).

Shout out to our January birthday celebrants: Bessy Evangelista, Kallie Keith-Agaran and Camille Rhianna

Butay Hayen. Happy, Happy birthday to you! (Tagalog) *Maligayang bati sa iyong kaarawan!* (Ilokano) *Naimbag nga panagkasangay mo!* (Ibanag) *Makapagayaya nga aggaw na nikeyana mu!* (Kapampangan) *Masayang kebaitan queca!* (Ilonggo) *Masadya gid nga adlaw sa imo pagkatawo!*

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

ANGEL SITS STILL; her fingers curled in her lap. The silence hums softly, broken only by the faint buzz of the ceiling light. She can still hear her mother's voice echoing in her mind—*love finds a way to reach across years ... and heal what was left behind.*

"Maybe that's not such a bad thing," she says softly. "Sometimes stories choose us for a reason."

Michael looks at her—then really looks. The distance that had once existed between them dissolves, replaced by something raw and honest. "You sound like your *Nanay* (mother)," he says, a small *ngiti* (smile) tugging at his *bibig* (lips).

Angel *yuhom* (smiles) faintly. "She has a way of saying the right thing at the wrong time."

He laughs quietly, the sound easing the ache in the air. Then his expression grows serious again. "Angel ... after everything we just heard, if this is too complicated, I'll understand. I don't want—"

She shakes her *ulo* (head), stopping him. "Don't," she whispers. "Don't walk away just because the past showed up. It's not our story to finish—it's ours to start."

For a long moment, neither speaks. Then, slowly, he takes her *kamay* (hand) in his. And in that quiet room—between the echoes of the past and the fragile promise of something new—Angel feels the stirrings of hope.

Outside, rain begins to fall softly against the window, as if the *kalibutan* (world) itself decided to exhale.

Morning comes soft and gray, the kind of light making everything feel suspended—caught between night and day, between what was said and what still lingers unsaid.

Angel sits at the dining table, her

English	Pilipino	Ilokano	Cebuano	Ilonggo	Ibanag	Kapampangan
Happy New Year!	Manigong Bagong Taon!	Naragsak Nga Baro a Tawen!	Maayong Bag-ong Tuig!	Malipayong nga Bag ong Tuig!	Magayaya ka ta bagu nga dagun!	Masaplalang bayung Banwa!
Mother	Nanay / Inay	Nanang / Inang	Inahan	Nanay	Yena	Ima
Lips	Labi	Bibig	Ngabil	Bibig	Bibig	Labi
Good morning	Magandang umaga	Naimbag nga aldaw	Maayong buntag	Ma-ayong aga	Mapianga um-ma nikaw	Mayap a yabak
Head	Ulo	Ulo	Ulu	Buntuk	Ulo	Ulo
Door	Pintuan	Ridaw	Lukub	Ganhaan	Puwerta	Pasbul
World	Mundo	Lubong	Kalibutan	Kalibutan	Bida	Yalu
Hand	Kamay	Ima	Lima	Gamat	Duhol	Kamut
Eyes	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata
Smile	Ngiti	Isem	Pahiyum	Yuhom	Galo	Timan

*gamat* (hands) wrapped around a mug of coffee gone lukewarm. She'd barely slept. Every time she closed her *mata* (eyes), she saw her mother's face on the screen, heard Michael's voice—it feels like I've been carrying someone else's story.

When the *pintuan* (door) opens, she doesn't have to look up to know it was him. There was something about the way the air shifted when Michael walks in—unassuming but impossible to ignore.

He spots her instantly. No hesitation this time.

"*Magandang umaga* (Good morning)," he says softly as he slides into the seat across from her.

"*Naimbag nga aldaw mo* (Good morning)," she replies, trying for a *pahiyum* (smile) that didn't quite reach her *mata* (eyes).

For a few moments, neither speaks. The kitchen's hum fills the quiet—the hiss of the espresso machine, the low murmur of the refrigerator, the clink of wind chimes.

Finally, Michael exhales. "I talked to my uncle last night," he says, his tone low. "He remembers your *Nanay* (mom) right away. Said she was the

one who got away."

Angel's chest tightens. "She never said that," she murmurs.

"She wouldn't," he says gently. "But I think it meant something to him ... maybe too much. He said losing her changed how he saw love. Made him afraid to reach for it again."

Angel looks down at her mug, her reflection trembles on the coffee's surface. "It's strange, isn't it? How their choices still echo in ours."

Michael nods slowly. "Maybe that's why we were supposed to find each other. To finish what they couldn't—but in our own way."

She looks up at him then, her heart catching at the softness in his *mata* (eyes). There was no uncertainty there this time, only quiet resolve.

"I don't know what this is yet," Angel says, her voice steady but softened by honesty. "But I know I don't want to let the past decide it for us."

Michael smiles—a small, real *timan* (smile) reaching all the way to his *mata* (eyes). It wasn't loud or dramatic, it was certain. "Then let's not," he says.



He reaches across the table, his fingers brushing hers. The touch was simple deliberate, and warm. In that quiet moment, something long held back finally shifts, opening space for what could begin again.

This marks a turning point in Michael and Angel's story—a step into something deeper, where connection is no longer tentative.

Tune in to what lies ahead that will test them in unexpected ways, and the challenges they face may demand more than either is prepared to give.

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 *making* (listen) and Let's Talk Pinoy! *Hanggang sa muli!* (Until next time!) *Ingat!* (Take care!) ✨

**Dulce Karen Butay** 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 and is a licensed Resident Producer of Life Insurance with World Financial Group and an Independent Consultant of Saladmaster. She is a 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 on Maui.

2026

from p.12

# MILANO CORTINA 2026



Winter Olympics logo.  
PUBLIC DOMAIN

hawks. Sea----hawks!

**Winter Olympics.** Next month is also the time for the Winter Olympics that will be held in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy. If you like skiing, skating, luge and yes, curling. Yes curling, where the team uses brooms to sweep the ice. Quick question. What if a team from the Philippines used a walis to sweep the ice? Would that be okay? I mean everyone uses a walis nowadays—all the hotels and the maintenance companies. You can find them at Ace Hardware in case you want to buy one.

**Maui High School Class of 1976 50th Reunion.** Yes, the Spirit of '76—the first class to spend all four years at the Kahului campus will be celebrating its 50th reunion this year. The date is set—August 1st at the Maui Beach Hotel ballroom. I am on the committee again this year and we are all excited to spend time with our classmates. It is a mixed feeling because we're getting older and we've lost a few more classmates along the way. (Recently, I've been thinking a lot about my late brother Rogelio, who died of prostate cancer at the early age



At the Seahawks' final home game against the LA Rams.

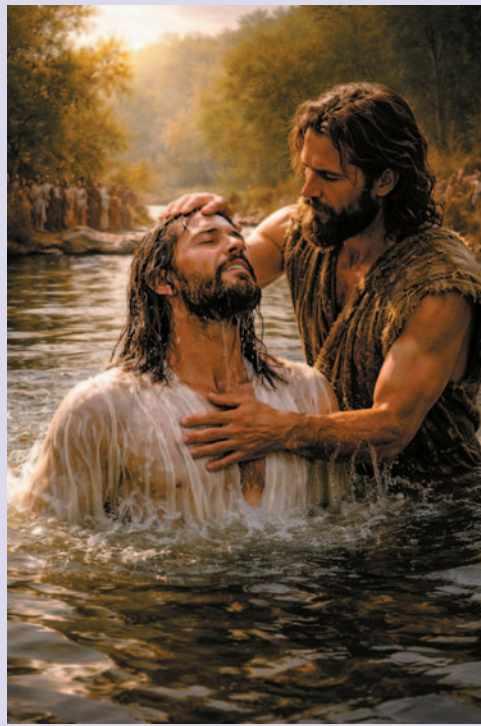
PHOTO COURTESY ALFREDO EVANGELISTA

of 69.)

In 2026, many of us will face challenges but remember, love trumps hate. So love one another, take care of yourself, and enjoy the moment. It's

see 2026 p.15

## Ti Biag ken Pammati | from p. 10



The Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. To remind us each year to renew our Baptism and to make changes in our life and faith, so we can receive Jesus' many graces!

IMAGE COURTESY LAWRENCE PASCUA

what exactly our baptism means for each of us. For most of us it was a long time ago. And for most of us the promise was made by others on our behalf—that moment when our parents essentially said to Jesus, "He or she is yours."

Hopefully each of us is ready to recommit ourselves to living the life God wants for us and from us—committed to not living a life that only benefits ourselves nor one that takes the easiest path.

And if we are

ready to do that, if we are still on board, still committed to being a faithful follower, let's say a simple prayer as we go to bed tonight, one that gets at the true heart of baptism. I'm still yours, Lord!

Jesus I trust in You!  
Amen! ✨

**Deacon Patrick Constantino** retired from active Ministry on July 1, 2022. He is still a Deacon in good standing with full faculties to perform all sacraments in the Diocesan of Honolulu Hawai'i. Constantino has been ordained for thirty-seven years. He is the first Filipino Deacon in the Diocesan of Honolulu. 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-four years. They are blessed with four children, eleven grandchildren, and fifteen great grandchildren.



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# Kwento Kwentuhan

## The Sari-Sari Store: A Taste of Home, Even on Maui

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

Growing up in the Philippines, the *sari-sari* store was more than just a place to buy snacks. It was part of daily life, woven into the rhythm of our neighborhoods. It sat quietly on a corner or right outside someone’s home, its wooden shelves packed with small treasures—candies in jars, sachets of shampoo, instant coffee, sardines, soy sauce and that unmistakable mix of sweet and savory aromas that instantly felt like home. When I was growing up in the Philippines, *Nanay* (my mom) had a little *sari-sari* store in front of the apartment we lived in. Memories of that remain in my heart.

As kids, we didn’t need much money to feel rich. A few coins could buy us joy—*chichirya* shared with friends, ice candy melting faster than we could eat it or a small chocolate bar that somehow tasted better because it came from the *sari-sari* store. It was also a place of conversation. You would hear laughter, neighborhood gossip, friendly teasing and the familiar call of *pabili po*. The *sari-sari* store connected people. It was simple, personal, and deeply Filipino.

Fast forward to life here on Maui. *Sari-sari* stores look different now. Instead of a small window with items hanging in plastic bags, we have modest storefronts with aisles and refrigerators. But the heart is the same. I fondly call these Filipino-owned small business variety stores “*Sari-Sari Store Fil-Am Style*” 😊

These small Filipino stores on Maui are often family-run. You’ll see the owners working the register,

stocking shelves and greeting customers by name. They remember what you like, ask how your family is doing and sometimes slip in a quiet recommendation: “Try this one—it’s good.” In many ways, stepping inside feels like stepping back into a familiar place, even if we are thousands of miles away from the Philippines. I love speaking in Tagalog when I visit these stores. Some of them also have Filipino cooked meals. I love eating Filipino Food without having to cook—I just buy from there, hot meals ready to eat!

What are some of the Filipino stores here on Maui? Here are a few examples (you can Google them for their exact location.) In South Maui where I live, we have Mabuhay Mart, and A&E Oriental Foodmart Phil-mart Oriental and Fast Food. In Central Maui, we have Asian Mart and Fast Food, JMA Imports and Paradise Supermart.

I must mention we also now have a Seafood City Supermarket here on Maui. We are fortunate to have access to this larger Filipino grocery store. Seafood City carries a wide variety of products from back home. This supermarket is wonderful and it serves our growing community well. I am grateful for them, truly. But alongside this large store, we must not forget our Filipino-owned small grocery stores, the Maui version of the *sari-sari* store.

What I love most about these *Sari-Sari Stores Fil-Am Style* is the feeling of comfort. The shelves might carry *bagoong*, *longganisa*, banana ketchup, *pancit canton* or frozen delicacies you did not expect to find.



In most of the Filipino *sari-sari* stores on Maui, you can find these products; desserts like ube-filled hopia, pre-packaged polvoron and all sorts of street foods like squid balls.



PHOTO ABOVE: The store front of Mabuhay Mart is shown, and sits at 362 Huku Li’i Place in Kihei. PHOTO BELOW: Mabuhay Mart has a warm, friendly ambience and features a clean and organized presentation of products from the Philippines and other countries in Asia.

And suddenly, a simple meal becomes a memory—Sunday lunches, fiestas, family gatherings and childhood afternoons that feel closer than ever. When I pay, I talk story—*kwento-kwentuhan*—with the cashier, who is often the owner.

These small businesses matter. They represent resilience, hard work and the Filipino entrepreneurial spirit. Many of these store owners took a leap of faith, opening their doors not just to make a living but to serve the community. They provide access to cultural staples, yes but they also build connections. For new immigrants, longtime residents and second-generation Filipinos, these stores are reminders of who we are and where we come from.

Supporting Filipino small businesses on Maui is about more than convenience. It is about preserving culture, honoring our roots and making sure these stories continue. Every purchase—no matter how small—helps keep their doors open. It tells our *kababayan* they are seen, valued and supported.

The *sari-sari* store

may have evolved but its spirit lives on here on Maui. It lives in the warmth of a greeting, the familiar taste of home and the shared understanding that community matters.

So the next time you are stocking up on Filipino favorites, consider stopping by one of our local Filipino small grocery stores. You might come for the food but you will leave with something much more meaningful: a sense of home, right here on Maui. ✨

**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 Rainbows*; *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*.

## Sakada Offspring



Dee Cabalo Dilwith



Family Picture at Ha'ikū Gardens in Kāne'ohe in.



Trey Dilwith's graduation.

The grandfather of this month's Sakada Offspring was pro-education. His famous phrase when he was living was "It is easier to push a pen or pencil than pushing a plow." He shared this with his children and in turn his children shared it with their children and grandchildren.

This month's featured Sakada Offspring is Dee Cabalo Dilwith. She was born in June 1968 in Honolulu, Hawai'i. She attended Kalihi Waena (K-2), St. Anthony School (3-8), and St. Francis High School (9-12). After high school, Dee attended Leeward Community College for two years. She earned all her college foundation courses there with a goal of being admitted into the nursing program at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa campus. She took the board of nursing program and passed it with flying colors. She received her Registered Nursing degree in four years. After graduating from the University of Hawai'i, she worked at Kuakini Hospital starting in 1991 for 2 1/2 years. She then transferred to Queens Hospital where she is still working.

Dee received two plaques for working at Queens Hospital: one for 25 years seniority and one for 30 years seniority plus cash that came along with it.

Besides being busy working as a nurse, Dee still finds the time to serve the church at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Wahiawā as a Lecturer at their masses. As a nurse, she is also very involved with the Hawai'i

# Dee Cabalo Dilwith

Lucy Peros | PHOTOS COURTESY DELA CRUZ 'OHANA

Nurses Association in Honolulu. In her spare time, she likes to work out, go hiking and visit and talk stories with her parents, Ben and Connie Cabalo. Dee is their only child. She enjoys traveling, especially with her son, Trey or with her friends. She traveled to Asia and Europe. Her favorite place she has visited was a region in Turkey called Cappadocia. According to Dee, this was an amazing place because they stayed in a cave hotel and rode in a hot air balloon.

Dee has one son, Trey Dilwith who just graduated from the University of Hawai'i with a degree in Music Education. Trey is very talented. He was chosen by the University of Hawai'i Music Department to lead the graduating class of 2025 to sing the University's Alma Mater, the Star-Spangled Banner and Hawai'i Pono'i. Trey is planning to join the workforce as a teacher in the fall. He hopes to teach either at Leilehua High School or Kapolei High School.

Dee's grandfather, Elpidio Cabalo was one of the thousands of *sakadas*

*"He used to emphasize to us his grandchildren the value of education. He used to tell us to study hard and be somebody someday so our parents don't have to worry about us."*

— DEE CABALO DILWITH

who came to Hawai'i in 1946 recruited to work in the pineapple and sugarcane plantations. His younger brother, Macario Cabalo came along with him. At age 24, as a young father of two little boys, Ben (Dee's father, 4 years old) and Dominick (1 year old) came to Hawai'i aboard the *S.S. Maunawili*.

He was determined to come to Hawai'i, to work to find a better life for himself and his family even if it meant leaving his young family behind. He was born in Cagayungan, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines on December 6, 1922. He was a very industrious farmer and good fisherman. He was married to Alejandra Cabalo. Alejandra's father, Bonifacio Cabudoy was also a *sakada* who came to Hawai'i in 1923.

Elpidio worked for Maui Land and Pine on Maui while Macario went to work on Kaua'i. The back-breaking job at the pineapple field was easy for Elpidio because he was used to working as a farmer in the Philippines. At Maui Land and Pine, he did different jobs such as planting pineapples, harvesting the fruits, weeding the fields and he even drove the trucks to deliver the fruits to the pineapple cannery.

When he first arrived on Maui, Elpidio and many *sakadas* lived at Haleakalā Camp also called "Corn Mill

Camp," which is now the Pu'ukoa subdivision where many beautiful homes now stand. All the men who lived in the camp were single men. They celebrated Rizal Day, played sports, played music and even had sports like chicken fights (*biagan*) to keep them entertained. In those days, chicken fights were allowed. In the beginning, Maui Land and Pine was only offering some of the men work for three days a week. So these men, like Elpidio went to work at the private pineapple growers in Ha'ikū for extra money.

In the fields at lunch time, they ate together, potluck style. They formed into a circle, placed their *kau kau* tins, a two-tier tin container with a handle; the bottom part for the rice and the top part for the main dish in the center and shared their food with each other like a picnic.

In the 1960s Elpidio relocated to Korean Camp, closer to the Maui Land and Pine main offices before Hāli'imaile. This camp was also for single men only. In 1962, however, Elpidio's wife, Alejandra, son Dominick and daughter Lucy followed Elpidio to Hawai'i. His son Ben (Dee's father) arrived one year before them. So Elpidio had to relocate again, this time to Hāli'imaile Village where *sakadas* who have families lived. Alejandra also worked in the pineapple fields until she retired at age 62. Elpidio also retired from there at age 62. Both Elpidio and Alejandra lived a simple long happy life. They could have celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary if Elpidio had lived for two more months. He passed away at age 89 and Alejandra passed away at age 101.

Today, in the year 2026, the man who said "It's easier to push a pen or



The Cabalo Family.



The family took a picture at Alejandra Cabalo's 95th birthday.



Ama at Ina Recognition, First Binhi at Ani Rice Festival, December 20, 2009.

pencil than pushing a plow” got his dream come true. All his three children, five grandchildren and two great grandchildren (one just graduated and one graduating in June) received their college diplomas in their chosen fields. With faith, devotion and hard work, dreams can come true.

The following is Dee’s reflection on her grandfather, Elpidio Cabalo.

Although I did not spend too much time with grandpa Elpidio, I still have fond memories of him. One of my favorite memories was attending an event that honored him as being a sakada. We also went to Maui to attend a huge celebration to honor both Grandpa Elpidio and Grandma Alejandra as ‘Ama

at Ina’ (Mother and Father of the Year) at the Rice Festival held at the Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center in 2009. These were very proud moments I’ll always remember of my grandpa.

My late grandpa was a loving and caring man. He used to emphasize to us his grandchildren the value of education. He used to tell us to study hard and be somebody someday so our parents don’t have to worry about us. Our family values on the importance of education is the main reason why I went into nursing school to become a registered nurse. Like my grandpa, I’ve also instilled that in my son Trey who recently graduated from the University of Hawai’i Mānoa Campus with a Bache-



Dee with friends Barbara and Anna take a ride in a hot air balloon in the Cappadocia region in Turkey 2024.

lor of Education degree in Music. He will be pursuing a Master’s degree after being in the workforce for two years. I sincerely know my grandpa is happily looking over us. ✨

**Lucy Peros** is a retired schoolteacher, having taught at St. Anthony Grade School and Waihe’e Elementary School. Her late parents, Elpidio Cachero Cabalo (a 1946 Sakada) and Alejandra Cabudoy Cabalo both worked for Maui Land and Pine Company. Lucy enjoys being with other retirees in



the Enhance Fitness Program under the Department of Aging three times a week. Whenever she can, she joins other Waihe’e School retirees when help is needed at the school. Lucy also devotes some of her time as Lector and choir member at both Christ The King Catholic Church in Kahului and St. Ann Catholic Church in Waihe’e. She enjoys being with her granddaughters after school. She also enjoys writing, reading and gardening in her spare time.



Maui High School Class of 1976 reunions. PHOTOS COURTESY MAUI HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1976

## 2026

from p.12

okay to work hard but don’t forget to play hard as well.

**Golf anyone? ✨**  
Assistant Editor **Alfredo G. Evangelista** is a graduate of Maui High School (1976), the University of Southern California (1980), and the University of Cal-

ifornia 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 42 years (since 1983) and returned home in 2010 to be with his family and to marry his high school sweetheart, the former Basilisa Tumacder Idica.

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# A Miracle from a Higher Power

Tante T. Urban | PRESIDENT • FIL-AM VOICE

I have always known that my mother has protected me from harm and danger

She always said to me, “Kuna ti Dios-Agannad ka ta isalakan ka.”

My story begins with our plan to go to the Philippines to attend our high school reunion. The celebration will be the school alumni Centennial reunion.

Vince Bagoyo, Editor-In-Chief of the *Maui Weekly*, goes to the Philippines yearly to do a Medical Mission for his Ministry Two-Thirds World Network.

I asked Vince if he would do it in my hometown Magsingal, Ilocos Sur in conjunction with my high school reunion’s centennial celebration. He agreed.

We booked our flight for Sunday, Feb. 1 at 8:25 a.m. We packed our luggage ready for our travel to the Philippines.

Thursday, three days before our flight I felt fine the entire day. I did work in the kitchen, took my usual afternoon nap. When I woke up took a shower and did my usual routine of checking what was needed.

Lawrence Pascua, Art Director of the *Maui Weekly* came to the restaurant and we chatted. I was telling him of our trip to the Philippines. Sudden-

ly, I felt chills throughout my body. I excused myself and went to the kitchen by the stove to warm up, hoping the chills would go away. But it didn’t and became worse. I started shivering and shaking. All the kitchen staff saw me in this condition, so they said I better go rest. I excused myself from the kitchen, and told Lawrence my situation, then went to my room.

My wife Telly came as she was called by staff memberf, Sheree due to my condition. She helped me get warm and did an excellent job as she had training as a certified nursing assistant some years ago. Come morning, my chills, shivering and shaking were gone as I had gotten a good night’s sleep—right through the night.

Friday morning, I woke up feeling good. I did my daily chores and prepared more things at work in the kitchen to help the crew be prepared with the work while we would be away on vacation. I made a run to Costco to get some errands done and in fact carried big boxes as heavy as 75 pounds—no problem.

I took my daily afternoon nap and woke up feeling just fine.

I did more work, had dinner and went to bed. I slept well.

On Saturday morning, I woke up feeling fine. I had breakfast and final-



I truly believe, both my mother, and God are the “Higher Powers” that continue to protect me all my life long.

PHOTO COURTESY TANTE T. URBAN

ized what needed to be done before our flight tomorrow morning.

I called my daughter Bernie to say goodbye. As we chatted I mentioned what happened to me on Thursday night. She suggested I should see a doctor to get checked out. I followed that advise and went to Urgent Care.

They checked my vitals—no fever, no coughing, no chest congestion but my COVID-19 test result came back positive.

The doctor recommended COVID-19 medicine and said I should postpone my flight for at least 48 hours.

I had dinner, went to bed, and woke up at 5 a.m. for our flight in the morning.

At around 3 a.m. Sunday morning, I suddenly woke up with chills throughout my entire body. I started shivering and shaking—it went on for ten minutes so I woke up my wife. She tried to warm me up but it wasn’t working and our flight was just a few hours away.

We decided to call emergency medical response. They arrived and took my temperature. It was 108°F so they immediately took me to the hospital.

By now, with my condition, and at the last hour we knew we would not be able to go to the Philippines.

So my wife started making calls to the Airlines to cancel our flight. The Airline staff was nice enough to cancel our flight with a full reimbursement.

She also notified my nephew Boyet Agatep in the Philippines to not pick us up at the airport.

While in the emergency room, they stabilized me and I started to feel better. They tested me for COVID-19 and the result came back negative. With my COVID-19 test result at the Urgent Care that afternoon being positive

they wanted to re-test me again if there was a mistake on my first result in the ER.

The second test result coresponded with my previous test result—negative.

What’s up!? Was the COVID gone after just 14 hours?

The doctor kept me in the hospital four days to get better.

While in the hospital through our Facebook chat page, I started to inform my high school batch mates of my situation—that I would not able to join them.

One of our batch, Mildred Tolentino, mentioned that there is a new virus in the Philippines called *Nipah Virus*—that it is now all over Asia and they are very close to calling it a pandemic. The government is requiring every one to wear a mask.

This virus, as it is publicized, is more dangerous than COVID, as it can affect the brain and can cause a lot of damage including death.

As *Nipah* is still in its initial stage, there is no antiviral medicine yet to counter it.

To connect my story with the *Nipah* virus: I now believe that the incidence of chills, shivering and shaking were dire warnings for me not travel to the Philippines.

Had I gone to the Philippines and testing positive with the COVID virus, and got affected with the *Nipah* virus, who knows what could have happened to me?

Only the Higher Power knows. As mentioned in my initial introduction, I believe that God and my Mother are the “higher powers” who are always protecting me from harm.

A deeper question is; who sent me those dire warnings? ✨



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