How does the Iran War affect Maui

A sober look at the facts.

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My family's penchant for gaming in sports!

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Fil•Am Voice

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The Dignified Transfer of Remains of Six U.S. Soldiers.

Photo: The White House, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

War In Iran

Alfredo G. Evangelista | Assistant Editor

Thirteen U.S. armed forces killed—six in a drone strike in Kuwait, six in a refueling aircraft crash in Iran, and one at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, and as many as three hundred wounded. So far.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei killed in an early salvo. (His son Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei was later elected to replace him.) Other Iranian officials killed included Ali Larijani (Iran's top security official), Mohammad Pakpour (the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Commander in Chief), Majid Khademi (the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Intelligence Chief), Abodolrahim Mousavi (the Iranian Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff) and Aziz Nasirzadeh (the Defense Minister).

U.S. military sites in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates were attacked by Iran using drones and missiles.

U.S. embassies in Kuwait City and Riyadh were also struck.

The U.S. and Israel targeted a variety of locations including Iran's capitol Tehran, Chabahar, Isfahan, Karaj, Kermanshah, Minab, Qom, Shiraz and Urmia.

The Strait of Hormuz—which is between the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf—closed by Iran using fast attack boats, a variety of drones, electronic communications jamming, and mining sections of the waterway. The result—global crude oil prices moving above $100 a barrel as a fifth of the world's oil and other commodities (including fertilizer ingredients) regularly passed through the Strait of Hormuz. Commentators believe the lack of fertilizer will lead to an increase in the price of groceries.

Locally, gas prices moved above the five-dollar mark. (On March 19, AAA Hawai'i reported gas prices in Kahului averaged $5.14, an increase of 29 cents from the previous week and 62 cents higher than a year ago.)

On February 28, the U.S. and Israel, without their European and other allies, launched attacks on Iran. Since beginning his second term, President Donald J. Trump, has been pressing Iran to stop its nuclear program. (Previous presidents had declined to join Israel in any direct military action against Iran.)

During Trump's first term, the United States had withdrawn from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a nuclear pact the Obama administration had negotiated with Iran and signed by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia and the United States—as well as Germany.

The Trump administration dubbed the Feb. 28 attack "Operation Epic Fury."

To date, the U.S. military has expended billions of dollars and used a considerable number of expensive missiles and ordnance in both attacks and in defending against low-cost Iranian drones and munitions. Experts estimate the United States spent $11 bil-

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Collage of photographs from the United States–Israel war with Iran. Left column (top to bottom): the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group in the Arabian Sea, February 6, 2026; the launch of a Tomahawk missile from the destroyer USS Delbert D. Black, February 28, 2026; dense black clouds of smoke rising over Tehran, March 3, 2026. Right column (top to bottom): a U.S. Navy Super Hornet taking off from the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, February 27, 2026; a formation of Israeli Air Force F-16 fighter jets flying over Deir ez-Zor, heading toward Iran, March 4, 2026; the residence of Ayatollah Khamenei in Tehran after a U.S. airstrike, February 28, 2026.
Photo: Tasnim News Agency, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Iran War ...

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lion to $16 billion in the initial weeks of conflict, as well as depleting munitions stockpiles.

In Washington, D.C., Hawai'i's Congressional delegation—all Democrats—quickly denounced the war.

"This is a war of choice and a mistake that knowingly risks the lives of U.S. service members and people in the region in the name of regime change. Had President Trump stuck to negotiations or not exited the JCPOA, this could have been avoided," said senior U.S. Senator Brian Schatz. "The administration must de-escalate immediately. Congress needs to vote and make clear: we will not sign off on another needless war or repeat the deadly mistakes of the past."

Schatz is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Schatz' colleague in the Senate, Mazie Hirono, echoed his sentiments. "The President's unilateral decision to strike Iran for purposes of regime change is a clear violation of the Constitution, which gives Congress, not the President, the sole power to declare war. What's more, this President has not articulated a clear strategy for what comes next. I fear that he is recklessly putting the lives of our servicemembers and personnel in the region at risk," said Senator Hirono. "Today, my thoughts are with American service-members and personnel and their loved ones, as we work to ensure their safety and avoid a broader conflict. With President Trump dragging our country toward yet another endless war in the Middle East, it's critical that Congress immediately votes on Senator [Tim] Kaine's War Power Resolution to reassert our constitutional authority and prevent further escalation."

Hirono is a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Congresswoman Jill Tokuda, whose district includes Maui County, also called for a vote. "This morning, Americans woke to the news that our nation launched large-scale military strikes on Iran. In starting this conflict, President Trump neither sought authorization from Congress nor presented the American people with evidence of an imminent threat that would justify bypassing it. The Constitution is clear: the power to take this nation to war does not rest with one person alone. Instead, we are left with the President's own acknowledgement that our service members may die in this conflict as he calls for regime change in Iran. There is no question that the brutal Iranian regime has sponsored terrorism against our country and brutally repressed its own people. But every American, especially those with loved ones serving in our military, must ask whether this President has sufficiently justified sending our troops into battle and whether he has laid out a strategy and plan that will guide this conflict toward a defined and achievable end. President Trump has failed on both fronts. He

has not demonstrated an imminent threat to justify this conflict, nor has he laid out how and when this conflict will end. The human toll abroad and the economic pain at home should never be the price Americans pay for one man's war. We deserve better than this."

Congressman Ed Case issued the following statement: "Our Constitution and laws say that a President cannot take our country to war without Congressional authorization unless there's an imminent threat to our country and then only for a limited period subject to Congressional approval. History teaches us that the grave risks and consequences of war are too great to allow any President to ignore these foundational checks and balances and act unilaterally. Iran cannot be allowed to have nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them against us, and so there may be circumstances under which war would be our only option. But as there has been no demonstration of an imminent threat to our country, this action is not authorized and that cannot be ignored. The President must fully explain to Congress and the American people the imminent threat we face justifying this action and the specific case for war. Congress must reconvene now to obtain all of the facts and vote to continue or end this military action. We all pray for our service-members in harm's way and their families and for the innocent lives that are being lost and shattered."

Case is a member of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittees on Defense and Homeland Security.

Iran War map. Ganesha811, CCO, via Wikimedia Commons
PHOTO: TASNIM NEWS AGENCY, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Tokuda's and Case's statements highlight the legal concerns about Trump's war. While Trump is the Commander in Chief under Article II, Section 2 of the United States Constitution, the Constitution also limits his authority regarding war. The Article One branch, the U.S. Congress holds the Constitutional authority under Article I, Section 8, to declare war and fund military operations. The President, head of the Article Two branch, can only act against an attack or when there is an imminent attack. The 1973 War Powers Resolution restricts a president's actions to sixty days unless Congress gives its approval.

So far, the Democrats and other members of Congress have failed to rein in Trump.

On March 4, the U.S. Senate by a vote of 47–53, failed to halt Trump's war against Iran.

The next day, a resolution to direct Trump to remove U.S. forces from Iran failed in the U.S. House by a 212–219 vote.

Trump's initial explanation and subsequent remarks about war goals rambled.

Our objective is to defend the American people by eliminating imminent threats from the Iranian regime. A vicious group of very hard, terrible people. Its menacing activities directly endanger the United States, our troops, our bases overseas, and our allies throughout the world. ...

Iran is the world's number one state sponsor of terror, and just recently killed tens of thousands of its own citizens on the street as they protested. It has always been the policy of the United States, in particular my administration, that this terrorist regime can never have a nuclear weapon. I'll say it again, they can never have a nuclear weapon. That is why in Operation Midnight Hammer last June, we obliterated the regime's nuclear program at Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan. After that attack, we warned them never to resume their malicious pursuit of nuclear weapons, and we sought repeatedly to make a deal. We tried. They wanted to do it. They didn't want to do it. Again they wanted to do it. They didn't want to do it. They didn't know what was happening. They just wanted to practice evil. But Iran refused, just as it has for decades and decades.

They've rejected every opportunity to renounce their nuclear ambitions, and we can't take it anymore. ...

For these reasons, the United States

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From the
Editor's Desk

Vince Bagoyo, Jr.
Editor • Fil-Am Voice

Vince Bagoyo (left) spreads a little aloha from Maui by throwing the 'shaka' sign during their medical mission in Sison, Pangasinan.
Image courtesy Vince Bagoyo, Jr.

Called to Serve

For all God's followers, whether you are a recent or a long-time believer, we are all called to serve. As believers we are called to the ministry, acting as stewards of God's grace by serving others with humility, love and strength that God provides. This calling to serve others is rooted in Christ's example of serving rather than being served (Matthew 20:28). It is a form of worship, purifying our heart and fostering community. The purpose of our calling is not for selfish ambition or human applause but to bring glory to our Creator. Each one of us is equipped with specific spiritual gifts to serve others—maybe a gift of encouragement—using words that inspire and uplift others or a gift of generosity sharing resources to help and support others. Service to others is an expression of freedom in God, driven by love rather than obligation (Galatians 5:13). As I mentioned earlier, each of us has at least one gift and it is to be used in humility. For some, they use their gifts for personal ambition of power and control—rather than for the good of our community.

In response to our calling to serve, my wife and I together with

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Fil·Am Voice

Location
24 Central Avenue
Wailuku, Maui, Hawai'i
USA 96793

Contact
Tel: (808) 242-8100
Email:
info@filamvoicemaui.com

Internet
Web:
www.filamvoicemaui.com
Facebook:
facebook.com/FilAmVoiceMaui

Publisher
The Fil-Am Voice, Inc.
Tante Urban, President
info@filamvoicemaui.com

Editor
Vince Bagoyo, Jr.
info@filamvoicemaui.com

Assistant Editor
Alfredo G. Evangelista
info@filamvoicemaui.com

Art Director
Lawrence Pascua
mauidzyn@iCloud.com

Ad Executives
Alfredo G. Evangelista
info@filamvoicemaui.com

Sharon Zalsos Banaag
info@filamvoicemaui.com

Contributing Writers
Elizabeth Ayson, Ph.D.
Vince Bagoyo, Jr.
Sharon Zalsos Banaag
Dulce Karen Butay
Patrick Constantino
Alfredo G. Evangelista
Ehra Louise Guiwa
Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Lawrence Pascua
Lucy Peros
Liza Pierce
Tante Urban

Distribution
Dulce Karen Butay
Nora Cabanilla-Takushi
Alfredo G. Evangelista

Web Master
Nick Ponte

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President Donald Trump announcing strikes on Iran, February 28, 2026.
Donald J. Trump, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Iran War ...

from p. 3

military is undertaking a massive and ongoing operation to prevent this very wicked, radical dictatorship from threatening America and our core national security interests. We're going to destroy their missiles and raze their missile industry to the ground. It will be totally again obliterated. We're going to annihilate their navy. We're going to ensure that the region's terrorist proxies can no longer destabilize the region or the world and attack our forces, and no longer use their IEDs, or roadside bombs as they are sometimes called, to so gravely wound and kill thousands and thousands of people, including many Americans. And we will ensure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon. It's a very simple message. They will never have a nuclear weapon.

This regime will soon learn that no one should challenge the strength and might of the United States Armed Forces. I built and rebuilt our military in my first administration and there is no military on earth even close to its power, strength or sophistication. My administration is taking every possible step to minimize the risk to U.S. personnel in the region. Even so, and I do not make this statement lightly, the Iranian regime seeks to kill. The lives of courageous American heroes may be lost, and we may have casualties. That often happens in war. But we're doing this not for now. We're doing this for the future. ...

To the members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, the armed forces and all of the police, I say tonight that you must lay down your weapons and have complete immunity. Or in the alternative, face certain death. So, lay down your arms. You will be treated fairly with total immunity, or you will face certain death. Finally, to the great proud people of Iran, I say tonight that the hour of your freedom is at hand. Stay sheltered. Don't leave your home. It's very dangerous outside. Bombs will be dropping everywhere. When we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take. This will be probably your only chance for generations.

For many years, you have asked for America's help. But you never got it. No president was willing to do what I am willing to do tonight. Now you have a president who is giving you what you want. So let's see how you respond. America is backing you with overwhelming strength and devastating force. Now is the time to seize control of your destiny, and to unleash the prosperous and glorious future that is close within your reach. This is the moment for action. Do not let it pass.

Almost immediately, however, the Trump administration issued differing reasons for the war. On March 2, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth said the strike was to end a 47-year war. Later, Hegseth said the strike was because Iran refused to negotiate. Also on March 2, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the war was in response to Israel planning to strike. But that was contradicted by Trump's own statement that it had nothing to do with Israel planning to strike.

Israel's official explanation also differed from the Trump's administration, calling it a "preemptive strike."

But there was no evidence from the United States or Israel of any Iranian plans to attack.

With the Republicans narrowly controlling both chambers of Congress, it appears any effort to stop Trump's Iran War will fail unless the GOP members have a change of heart. In the meantime, America can look forward to continued higher gas prices, travel disruption, increased inflation impacts on the economy, more American casualties and unrest in the Middle East and the rest of the world.

Assistant Editor ***Alfredo G. Evangelista*** *majored in Political Science at the University of Southern California before receiving his law degree.*

Gina Duncan, R (PB)
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Old-school sports brackets are still in vogue with me

Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

I've noted before that I haven't been to Las Vegas very much. Last century, my grandfather Lino and grand uncle Juan used to make an annual trek to Sin City on one of those local charters. My mother Lydia, sister Vel and her buddy Nelson go often, and now that they're all retired, they're regulars at the California or Fremont. I've been to Las Vegas three times, and once was just a layover at Harry Reid International Airport (formerly McCarran) while the other two for conferences.

I admit, however, making an occasional sports wager with friends. Super Bowl blocks, or a stupid bet on the Bengals (I've even donated to legal sportsbooks by buying futures on Cincinnati winning the AFC title and Super Bowl). I've put money on the San Francisco Giants during the Even Year era in the World Series (betting on regular season games takes too much time, although I keep thinking SF can sometimes take a series against the evil empire and owe a lot of lunches to friends who are fans of the boys in blue). I cheer for the Golden State Warriors but have never gambled on them (perhaps I cling to memories of empty arena seats in Oakland except when the Los Angeles Lakers or Chicago Bulls came into town, which dates my fandom I admit).

I do look forward each year to March Madness. Now that's a fun time that I've indulged in since college (when brackets were on paper and not online with ESPN, Yahoo or other services). My undergraduate classmates hailed from all over and brought their regional biases for basketball programs, but the Southerners (partisans of powers like North Carolina, Duke, Kentucky, Louisville, Clemson, Maryland, Georgetown, Virginia), New England (followers of St. Johns, Villanova, Syracuse, Seton Hall) and Midwesterners (fans of Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Michigan State, Marquette, Illinois) loved their hoops and the tournament.

Westerners like me clung to UCLA, UNLV, New Mexico, and Arizona making some kind of noise—with the ACC, Big East, Big Ten, Big Eight and SEC hoarding the at-large bids. I was happy to be at Boalt Hall when Kevin Johnson played for the California Golden Bears. And that became a problem in filling out brackets because I consciously had western schools upsetting the favored teams from other regions that collected all the at-large bids (I just knew that the selection committee was making a mistake in seeding teams and handing out bids to undeserving programs).

Velma Coloma and Lydia Coloma in Las Vegas trying to decide on which buffet to hit
PHOTO COURTESY GIL S.C. KEITH-AGARAN

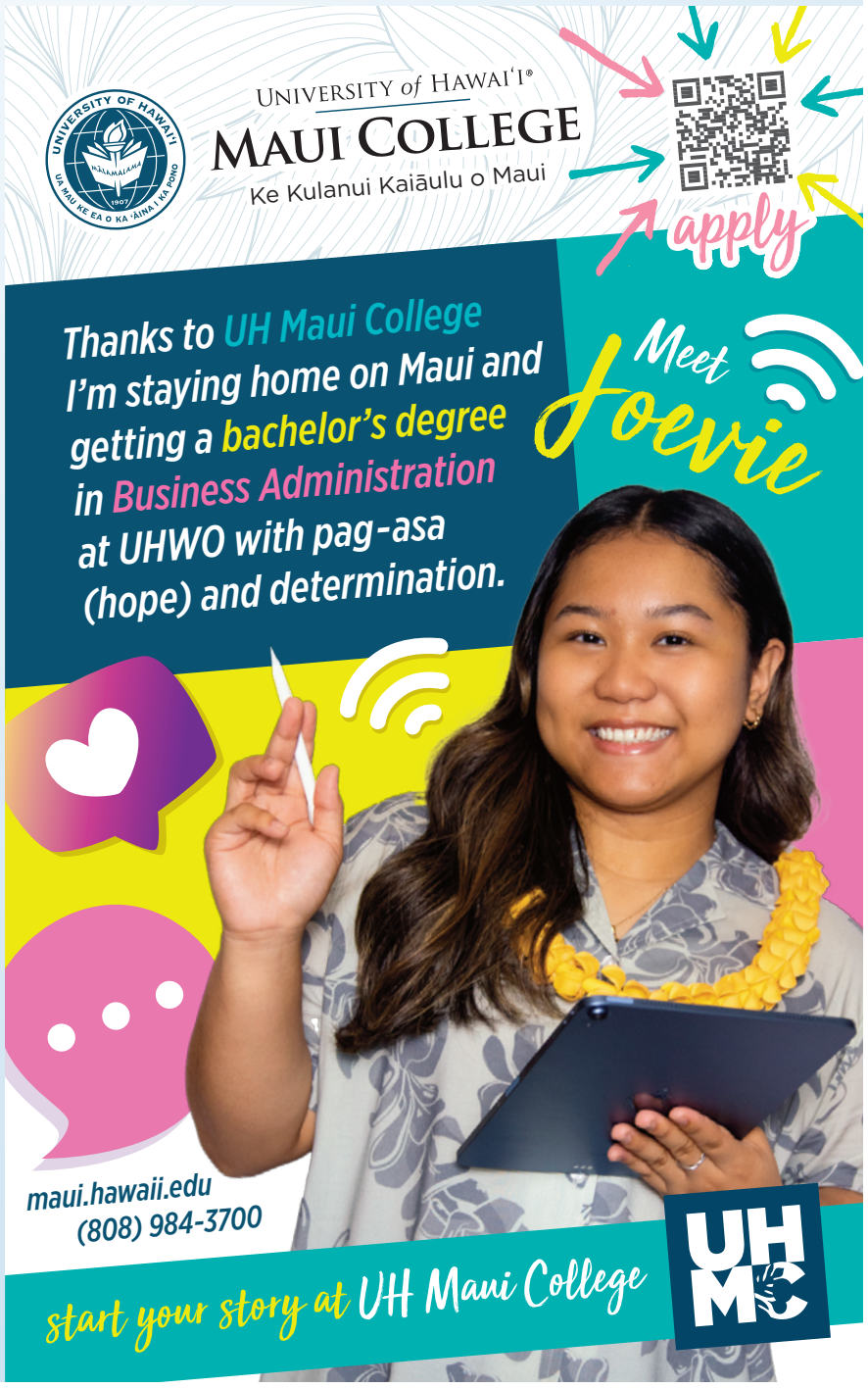
It's one of the reasons that I've enjoyed the success of Gonzaga and occasionally some of the old Pacific Conference/WAC teams (Oregon, Washington, Utah, New Mexico, Brigham Young, Texas-El Paso). Since marrying a Texas girl, I've also become a fan of Texas teams (especially her Alma Mater—Hook 'em, Horns, but also Texas Tech, Houston and Texas Christian). So now my brackets get skewed by relationship considerations.

I also enjoy Ivy League success on the hard court as much as the board room or high court, especially now that Yale has become one of the bullies of the conference. It's just a fact of life that old college ties are strongest during tournament time,

see DINENGDENG & PINAKBET p.7

Just a bunch of ILWU Retirees in Sin City March 2025.
IMAGE COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN

Nelson Magsayo, Velma Coloma and Elle Quemado making a donation in 2023 at the Fremont
IMAGE COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN



Aileen Kim

Anju Bekkum

Aleizay Angel

Raven Bugtong

Google® Is Not Everything … A Future in Her Hands

Ehra Louise Guiwa | Maui High School, Class of 2028

Women are the fundamental figures of greatness. They are leaders who confront injustice, provide comfort within communities and have become the backbone of society. I look up to many women in my life, political figures such as Sen. Mazie Hirono and Patsy Mink, educators like Ms. Jacy Sera, Ms. Suzuki-Sato and Auntie Tanya Barbero, and most importantly my mother, Merlyn Guiwa and grandmother, Erna Ann Guiwa. Each of these women have shaped me to the person I am today and have inspired me through their own unique ways. March is Women's History month. It is during this time when recognition is most important because it is these women in history who have paved the way for generations of girls to pursue opportunities that felt like a mere fantasy. Their legacies are reminders of the impact made if you just give someone an opportunity to do so.

I can see the same power and voice in young women across Maui Today. **Aileen Kim** from Baldwin High School shares a vision rooted in empowerment and representation: "As I mark the steps of my future endeavors, I hope girls and women see that it is possible. That within my footprints, they see a reflection of themselves and all that is possible." Aileen emphasizes how important it is for girls to find role models in their community. She finds inspiration from her mother, who pushes through life's challenges. Aileen is an active member in Hawai'i Student Council where she serves as the inaugural National Student Council Representative of Hawai'i, Maui District Student Council Organization Chairperson, and many more organizations where she continues to inspire those around her.

For **Anju Bekkum** of Hāna High School, she emphasizes the importance of representation in leadership, particularly in government. She comments, "I hope to see more girls in government ... I hope my time in She's in Office shows Maui girls, and especially Hāna girls, that we are capable of a lot more than we think we are!" She's in Office is a nonprofit organization aiming to end gender violence and accelerate women's political leadership. Anju stands as the Maui Chapter Lead Director and Hāna representative for Hawai'i State Student Council and Maui District Student Council Organization. Her desire is to see more in women active in decision-making spaces. Anju looks to her school counselor, a woman she describes as "positive, kind, very introspective, and full of life." This shows the way we make someone feel can impact us in the most unexpected way; Anju hopes to embody the same kindness to those around her.

Aleizay Angel from Maui High School is inspired by the sisterhood of peers she surrounds herself in. She comments, "We all have different strengths and different passions but we share the same commitment to making a difference ... Watching them pursue what they care about with that kind of commitment pushes me to do the same and reminds me that we're all in this together, lifting each other up as we go." Most students have a competitive mindset driving them to work harder. Aleizay's words bring a breath of fresh air and remind us collaboration is another mindset that students can take on. Her legacy she hopes to lead on is "that success isn't about collecting impressive activities ... but about doing things that actually make a real impact." She highlights the importance of leading a life of service and authenticity rather than recognition. As a captain of the Maui High Blue Thunder 2443 Robotics Team, officer of Girls Can Stem, officer of Interact Club and a former intern of U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz, Aleizay hopes to provide pathways and resources so the next generation is able to pursue what matters to them easily.

Raven Bugtong, another student from Maui High School, hopes to show younger generations of students that despite obstacles or limitations in their lives, determination will help them achieve anything. Raven spent most of her life in the Philippines before transitioning to the United States. Her resilient story shows how she navigated through unfamiliar systems and persevered. Raven comments, "I was able to find my footing, make my mark in my community and grow into leadership roles that once felt out of reach. Along the way, I built meaningful connections and a support system that became like a second family whom I can rely on and grow with." She hopes to uplift those who experience the feeling of being left behind and reassures them that they will "find their voice within their communities." Likewise, Raven finds inspiration from Michelle Obama, who builds her character through action-based leadership rather than relying solely on her political title. Raven is a Hawai'i State Vice President for HOSA, District Lieutenant Governor for Key Club, and a founder of SPFwithAloha, a health initiative working to underline the importance of sun protection, especially in Hawai'i.

These four amazing young women hold a future within their hands. It is so motivating to be surrounded by a generation of young female leaders who are actively seeking changes and creating opportunities for others. As we celebrate Women's History Month, we can see the work is ongoing and the next generation of girls are ready to continue that legacy.

see GOOGLE IS NOT EVERYTHING p.15

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Dinengdeng & Pinakbet

| from p. 5

even if some alumni never attended a game at Payne Whitney Gym. My undergraduate buddies and I could never understand why we were not as competitive as then-Ivy elite Princeton or Pennsylvania hoops programs (the Quakers went to the Final Four within memory of our bright college years). In our minds, you only had to admit three or four decent players to fill out a more competitive basketball roster (if Duke, Michigan, Virginia, Notre Dame and Stanford could do it, why not Old Eli?) while football required a lot more.

13th seeded Yale rallied to edge SEC power 4th seeded Auburn 78-76 in the opening round of the 2024 NCAAM tournament East Region.
PHOTO COURTESY GIL KEITH-AGARAN

I joined the basketball boosters when Riley Wallace coached the Rainbows (it wasn't a big ticket item at the time). So I will cheer for Hawai'i when they make the tournament—I liked it better when UH was in the old WAC which occasionally had more than one bid. I'm glad the 'Bows are moving to the Mountain West although the league will not be as strong with programs departing for the new Pacific Conference lineup.

My booster time is why I have a semi-soft spot for Princeton (even when they keep Yale out of the tournament and despite the Big Three rivalry) and loved their 2023 Sweet Sixteen run. When prominent Hawai'i Princeton alum John W.A. "Doc" Buyers was unavailable to host Bill Carmody's Tigers in the 1998 Rainbow Classic, I was somehow volunteered (one Ivy is like any other Ivy is what the booster club powers that be reasoned and Princeton arrived in Honolulu on a two game losing streak anyway). Princeton swept through the tournament, slipping by Florida State, upsetting Texas and then beating UNC Charlotte.

I helped with a Thanksgiving holiday gathering for the players, coaches and the family that travelled with them thanks to Max Sword (Outrigger was the tournament title sponsor). I also got the Tigers use of the Stan Sheriff Center weight room which then-assistant coach John Thompson III saw and wanted them to use. I still have the Rainbow Classic champion wrist watch somewhere among my prized possessions. ✷

Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran *practices law in Wailuku. The last time he won an NCAA bracket pool, Louisville beat Duke for the 1986 national championship under Head Coach Denny Crum.*

From the
Editor's Desk

| Cont'd from p. 4

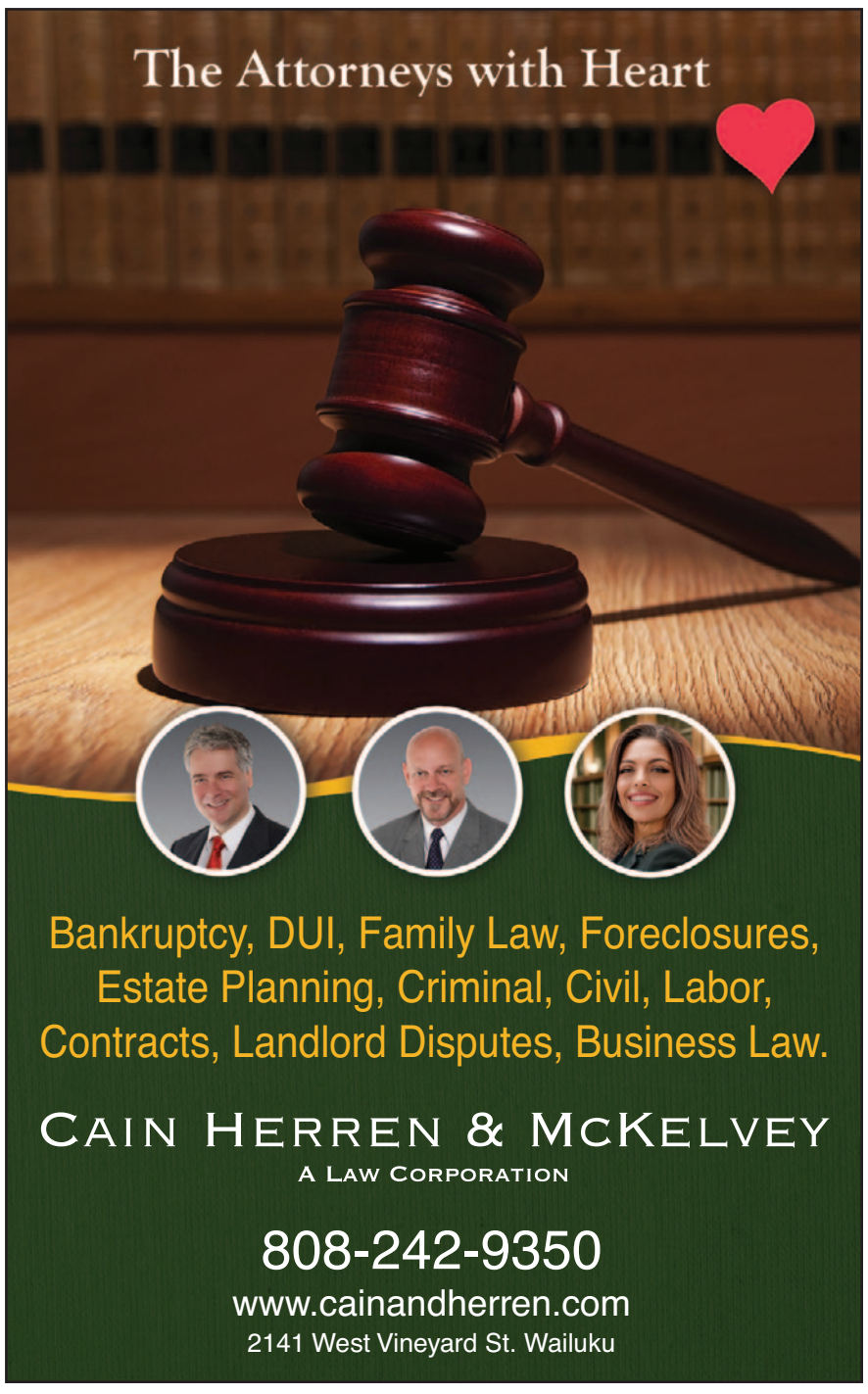
Jennifer Bagoyo shares the Gospel with the youth while waiting for the medical and dental mission to arrive in Santa, Ilocos Sur.
PHOTO COURTESY VINCE BAGOYO, JR.

fellow believers from Maui, Canada and faithful volunteers from the Philippines, had the honor and privilege to provide free medical, dental and optical services to the residence from various villages in the most southern, Tawi-Tawi, and northern parts in Pangasinan and Laoag City in the Philippines. Our mission volunteer team consisted of nurses, dentists, physicians, pharmacists, optical volunteers and prayer warriors. These various villages we served needed free medical care including free medicines. Our medical team was especially blessed to provide medical care to the women who have been trafficked over the years. In addition to medical care our team extended prayers, counseling and encouragement. As we listened to the trafficked women's stories and testimonies during the medical mission—we came to understand their challenges and their need for support, love and encouragement. We are reminded these women are God's children and deserve our wholehearted respect and *agápē* love. This is our second medical mission with this group and will not be our last—and we are already planning for next year's mission. If you are interested to join us during our next medical mission, please feel free to contact me at (808) 357-3842. You do not need a medical degree to be a part of our mission—you just need a servant's heart and a "calling to serve."

How are you using your God's spiritual gifts? Is God calling you to serve your community? I hope your response is to obey and your willingness to share our gifts generously with a joyful heart. When we unite to serve others—we will be a force for good! God bless! ✷

Vince Bagoyo

VINCE BAGOYO, JR. | *EDITOR*



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

Barrio Wear Showdown® male division.
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

The Ilocos Norte cultural village is shown here in last year's Barrio Fiesta® where the cultural villages are featured inside the Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center.
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

Miss Barrio Fiesta® 1978 Myrna Baggao (Breen) walks the promenade to the center stage as the Reyna de Paz during the Santa Cruzan portion of the evening.
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

The Tinikling! dance is an annual staple for entertainment at the Barrio Fiesta®. Shown here is the dance group headed up by Keoni Manuel.
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

The Veterans Memorial Service was emceed by Sharon Zalsos Banaag, where special attention is paid to those who have served, paid the ultimate price and are honored for their sacrifice.
PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

COMMUNITY... *IN ACTION*

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

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 only. Telephone (808) 877-7880.

57th Annual Barrio Fiesta® will be held on Friday, May 22, 2026 (5 p.m. to 10 p.m.) and Saturday, May 23, 2026 (10 a.m. to 10 p.m.) at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center. There will be food, entertainment, culture, exhibits, contests (with prizes up to $500!), presentations, lechon tasting, drawings and more food!

Contests are expected to include Pabitin at the Barrio Fiesta!®, the Barrio Fiesta Voice®, Do the Sungka!®, Climb the Greased Pole!®, Kabataan Art Party®, Eat Da Pansit®, AnyKine Sisig Challenge®, Barrio Fiesta Balut Challenge® and Barrio Wear Showdown!®. If you are interested in participating in any of these contests, contact Event Co-Chair Alfredo Evangelista at (808) 242-8100.

Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament (sold-out again with 148 golfers) was held on Sunday, March 8, 2026 at The Dunes Maui Lani Golf Course.

Placing first and winning the Mayor's Cup sponsored by Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr. was the Maui Oil team (Mike Kuwashima, Royle Taogoshi, Jonah Logotala and Kami Kapaku) with a net 46.9.

The other teams that placed in the top 10 were Renew Health & Aesthetics (Rheyden Lagazo, Michael Baysa, Mario Elaydo, and Marvin Baysa) with a net 50.6; Law Offices of Alfredo Evangelista, LLLC (Alfredo Evangelista, David Anzai, Miles

Students from Maui Waena Intermediate perform a cultural folkdance with fans from the Southern region of the Philippines.

PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

Do the Sungka!® contestants have at it at this Filipino board game with stones or shells at the 56th Annual Barrio Fiesta®.

PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

The Outstanding Housekeepers are awarded and are meticulously handpicked by the resort-industry managers.

PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

Pabitin at the Barrio Fiesta!® was sponsored by the Friends of Justin Woodson at last year's celebration.

PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

The Winner of the Philippine Airlines drawing is shown center, flanked by Sol Solleza, Miss Barrio Fiesta Kyrah Pagdilao and Attorney Alfredo Evangelista, Binhi at Ani's Legal Counsel.

PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

The Philippine Nurses Association Maui Hawai'i assisted with the Bayanihan Feeding Program.

PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTINE GUMPAL

Inokuma and Riki Hokama) with a net of 51.0; Asian Mart & Fast Food (Levi Aguinaldo, Edward Coloma, Glenn Sarol and Felix Santiago) with a net of 52.14; Holoholo Pew Krew (Jr. Riglos, Jeremiah Hogan, Josh Rodarte and K. Hogan) with a net of 52.40; ILWU Local 142 (Mich Domingo, Rex Tuquero, Phil Reyes and Hayden Williams) with a net of 52.8; Balai Pata by Chef Joey Macadangdang (Ezra Macadangdang, Matt Ramelb, Randy Ramelb and Frank Urias) with a net of 52.8; Four Sisters Bakery (Arnold Magbual, Richard Ped, Elmer Arcano and Marcus Villaverde) with a net of 53.0; All Island Case Management Corporation (Edgar Talavera, Randy Talavera, Nelson Talavera and Paul Kinney) with a net of 53.4; Copy Services (Martin Paet, Rod Ruiz, Sean Riz and Nerio Tejero) with a net of 53.8; All Island Case Management Corporation (Richardson Talavera, Matt Talavera, Alex Talavera and Kanani Powell) with a net of 54.0.

Bobby Galapon won the Jack Pot ($1,155) at Hole #3 with a distance of nine feet nine inches. Tony Souza won the Closest to the Pin (two feet eleven inches) sponsored by Twin-Kees Taxi Services.

Rocky Kanae won the Jack Pot ($1,025) at Hole #8 with a distance of eight feet eleven inches. Levi Aguinaldo won the Closest to the Pin (six feet seven inches) that he sponsored.

Khongorzul H. Battsenel won the On the Green Drawing sponsored by Noble Travel at Hole #6.

Juanito Viloria won the On the Green Drawing sponsored by Bill & Amy Ruidas Hole #17.

The Friends of Yuki Lei Sugimura sponsored the early bird contest and the winner won a large smart TV.

Alzeah Lakalaka won the airfare to Manila sponsored by Philippine Airlines.

Sadly, no one won the hole-in-one contests (including a $25,000 cash prize at Hole #17) sponsored by Island Honda.

Many thanks to the Sponsors, Donors and volunteers who all contributed to the success of the 2026 Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament. Together with the generosity of the Scholarship Partners, Binhi at Ani raised $30,000 and will award twenty scholarships (four at $2,500 and sixteen at $1,250).

And yes, save the date for next year's tournament: Saturday, March 20 at The Dunes at Maui Lani. Remember, don't wait because the tournament will sell out again.

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 January 31, 2026, a total of 41,407 lunches have been distributed.

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 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,

see COMMUNITY IN ACTION p.10

Community... In Action

Having fun while raising funds for scholarhips.

PHOTOS: LAWRENCE PASCUA AND BASILIA EVANGELISTA

The 64th Miss Maui Filipina Pageant will be here soon. The current Miss Maui Filipina Bernadette Amorio Acaso (left) will be passing on her crown to one of the following 2026 contenders — Angel Alba, Ashanti Kahai-Rapanut, Chloe Malansing and Jenelyn Santos.

PHOTO: JOSEPH TREMONTI

The Coronation of Mrs. Maui Filipina 2026 Techie Bondoc Gaoiran will be on on Saturday, June 6.

PHOTO COURTESY GAOIRAN 'OHANA

ENHANCE® FITNESS

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 Claudettte Medeiros (808) 463-3166 or claudette.b.medeiros@co.maui.hi.us.

MAUI FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Gintong Pamana Leadership and Scholarship Awards will be held on Wednesday, June 10 at the Maui Beach Hotel, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Since 1995, the Maui Filipino Chamber of Commerce has honored and paid tribute to leaders of our community with outstanding achievement in the areas of public service, music & arts, medicine, law, education, community service and more.

For more information, contact president Grace Sales at (347) 223-1075.

MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL
TAGUMPAY SA PAGKAKAISA

MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The 64th Miss Maui Filipina Pageant will soon be here. Vying for the crown are Angel Alba, Ashanti Kahai-Rapanut, Chloe Malansing and Jenelyn Santos. For more information, contact Madelyne Pascua at (808) 268-0686 or Judith Piano at (808) 298-9596.

Tetchie Bondoc Gaoiran (spouse of Louie Troy Tacang Gaoiran) will be crowned as **Mrs. Maui Filipina 2026** on Saturday, June 6 at Maui Beach Hotel Ballroom, beginning at 6 p.m. Dinner tickets are available at $75.

For more information, contact Madelyne Pascua at (808) 268-0686.

Let's Talk Pinoy!

Dulce Karen Butay

March is here! The month when the year really starts moving … or at least when we realize those New Year's resolutions from January are already in serious trouble. Gym memberships are ignored, diets are negotiating with desserts, and the phrase "I'll start next Monday" has been used at least five times already.

In true *Pinoy* fashion, life keeps us busy. Work keeps us on our toes; family gatherings magically appear every weekend and somehow there's always food involved. Whether it's *pancit, lumpia* or someone insisting, "Just eat more, you're too skinny!"—we all know resisting is not really an option. In Filipino culture, saying no to food is almost like breaking a family rule.

March is also that in-between month. Valentine's chocolates are long gone, summer is peeking around the corner and we're all wondering how the year is already moving this fast. But no matter how busy life gets, the one thing we *Pinoys* never run out of is laughter, stories and the ability to turn ordinary moments into something memorable. So as we step into another month, let's keep the conversations going, keep the smiles coming, and of course, keep the food flowing.

Shout out to all the March babies! Happy birthday to Sharmaine Joleen Butay, Jovy Baguyo, Stacey Lee Baraoidan, Albert Cabiles Corpuz, Glenda Soriano, Monet Palacio Baniqued, Richard (Chad) Guiwa, Dustin (DJ) Metzler and Sharon Zalsos Banaag. Happy birthday in heaven to my dad, Jessie Butay and my sister-in-law, Juvylyn Butay. *Pada-pada kam nga kumablaaw ti naimbag nga panagkasangay yo amin!* (Happy birthday to all!) Happy, Happy birthday to you! (Tagalog) *Maligayang bati sa inyong 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?

English	Pilipino	Ilokano	Cebuano	Ilonggo	Ibanag	Kapampangan
Mother	Nanay	Nanang	Inahan	Nanay	Yena	Ima
What?	Ano?	Ana?	Hani?	Ano?	Anni'?	Nanoyin?
Heart	Puso	Puso	Tutu	Puso	Kasingkasing	Korason
House	Bahay	Balay	Balay	Balay	Balay	Bale
Eyes	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata
Voice	Boses	Timek	Tingog	Tingog	Boses	Bosis
Lips	Labi	Bibig	Ngabil	Bibig	Bibig	Labi
Hand	Kamay	Ima	Lima	Gamat	Duhol	Kamut
Smile	Ngiti	Isem	Pahiyum	Yuhom	Galo	Timan
Face	Mukha	Rupa	Mukat	Lupa / Arap	Nawong / Dagway	Goya / Nawong
Name	Pangalan	Nagan	Ngalan	Ngalan	Ngagan	Lagyu

Finally, Angel speaks, her *boses* (voice) barely above the wind. "You know *anni'* (what) my *Nanay* (mom) said after the call?"

Michael turns to her. "*Hani* (What)?"

"She said maybe love doesn't always come in the right order. Maybe it just waits until we're ready to recognize it."

He *ngiti* (smiles) then, the kind that reaches his *mata* (eyes). "Then I'm glad we're finally ready."

Angel squeezes his *kamay* (hand), her *puso* (heart) steady for the first time in a long while. Above them, the first stars begin to appear, scattered across the mauve sky—tiny reminders that even after darkness, there's always something finding its way back to light.

The morning after their night at the overlook, Angel's phone buzzes before dawn. The screen flashes with her *Inang* (mother's) name.

Angel answers the phone. The first thing she notices is her mother's look. Lena looks different—tired, watchful, as if every sound outside the window makes her flinch. The *balay* (house) is tidy but quiet, filled with the hum of secrets waiting to be spoken.

Angel notices it immediately. "*Inay* (mother), are you okay? You've been acting strange since our last call."

Lena hesitates, glancing toward the curtains before answering. "I didn't want to tell you this," she begins softly, "but it's time."

Michael leans forward, sensing the weight behind her words.

"Years ago," Lena continues, "I flew to California, I wasn't supposed to stay. I came on a temporary visa to work, just for a few months, to take care of an elderly who was not able to walk anymore. But then I met people who said they could help me extend my papers. I trusted the wrong ones."

Her voice falters. "The night I tried to leave … something happened. The man who was supposed to help me—he panicked when the police came. He ran. There was shouting, confusion and when they caught him later, he blamed me. Said I was part of it."

Angel's *mata* (eyes) widens. "He what? *Inay,* (mother) you didn't—"

"I didn't," Lena says firmly, tears glinting in her *mata* (eyes). "But when the reports came out, my *pangalan* (name) was there. And I was terrified. I didn't have anyone there. I thought if I turned myself in, no one would believe me."

Michael's throat tightens. "So you ran."

"I survived," she corrects gently. "For months, I've kept my head down, worked quietly, used my married *ngalan* (name). Then one day, I got caught and they took me in for questioning."

Angel's voice shook. "Who?"

"Some men from the government in uniform," Lena says, lowering her voice. "One said they are investigating the case. That they want to clear the records … but they need to find me."

Silence hung between them, heavy with fear and realization.

Michael looks at Lena, his voice steady. "I can only imagine, Mrs. Corpuz, what you went through. I wish someone helped you back then."

Lena looks at him—really looks—and something in her expression softens. "You remind me of him," she whispers. "Robert. Always wanting to fix what's broken."

Angel looks at her mother's *mukha* (face). "I never knew, *Inay* (mother)."

Lena tries to steady herself, pressing her trembling hands together as if holding them tightly could keep the past from spilling out. But the sobs came anyway—deep, shaking breaths that makes her shoulders rise and fall.

Angel moves quickly to her side. "*Inay* … it's okay," she says softly, wishing she could place a *gamat* (hand) on her mother's back. "You don't have to say it all at once."

After a moment, Lena wipes the tears from her cheeks with the edge of her sleeve. Her *tingog* (voice), when it returns, is fragile but determined.

"There's more to the investigation," she says. "The reason they're looking for me it's not just to ask questions."

Michael's brow furrows. "*Ano* (What) do you mean?"

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 *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.*

A man walking on a path to the Lord. It's time to make changes and reset our lives!
PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA VIA GOOGLE GEMENI AI IMAGE GENERATOR

He has certainly risen, every day of our life.
PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA VIA GOOGLE GEMENI AI IMAGE GENERATOR

Happy Easter

Deacon Patrick Constantino

Our reflection is from the Gospels John 20: 1-9 and Luke 24: 13-35.

Happy Easter, everyone! Alleluia!

What a joy it is to be with all of you this day as we gather to celebrate and give thanks for and rejoice in our incredible God—a God who refused to turn His back on us, refused to leave us to our own devices, refused to wash His hands of the whole affair as Pilate did as if to say, "It's not my problem."

Rather, He took our problems upon Himself, our mistakes upon Himself, our disobedience upon Himself, our self-centeredness upon Himself—that is, all of our sins upon Himself—in the process, in that saving act, He changed absolutely everything. No longer would humanity have to embrace the attitude, "Well, that's the way it's always been."

Instead, He gave us the opportunity to begin down a new path, with new eyes, new priorities, new hope. Not only would the world not have to remain what it had always been, but *we* would no longer have to be who we have always been. Put another way—He rose so we can rise with Him—that is, so we can experience an Easter for each Good Friday we are faced with.

Even the Good Friday we will experience at the end of our lives is not the end of the story. Something more beautiful awaits. The empty tomb assures us of that. In one sense this incredible loving act came to us completely from the outside, from the utter graciousness of God.

God redeems. God saves. God destroyed death forever. And we will forever be unable to be thankful enough for it. And in no way will we ever be able to repay it. That's simply impossible. What a God we have!

But make no mistake about it, although salvation came from without, from "beyond" so-to-speak, it was won from within—won by Jesus—our God who entered our world in a profound and humble and concrete way. And that should tell us something. You see, God didn't just "wave his hand" figuratively and make things better, although He certainly could have. No, this was an "inside" job. And that's partly because God had to make sure we know just how much we are loved, make sure we know how precious we are in His eyes, make sure we know we are not forgotten, and make sure we know we don't have to make this journey alone.

Our God will always be making this journey with us. Our God will always be by our side and within our hearts—guiding us and comforting us. And our God will always give us chance after chance after chance—forgiving us and picking us up and drying our tears and pointing us in the right direction again and again and again.

Put simply—Jesus' saving act might have been a once-in-history moment. That is true. He reconciled us to the Father in a way we could never do on our own. But the power of that act is not a singular kind of thing. Rather, it's meant to be a day-after-day, year-after-year, generation-after-generation transformation of each and every human person open to the power of it, the transformation of each and every human heart.

In a real sense, Jesus died to make each of us different—truly different—more alive, more loving, more connected—that is, bring us into true communion with our loving God.

Are We?

That's really the challenge of this Holy Day. Yes, today is a day to rejoice. Absolutely. Yes, today is a day to give our deepest and most sincere thanks. Yes, today is a day to be filled with hope and optimism. Yes, today is a day to gather with family and friends and eat great food and hunt for Easter eggs and eat a year's worth of candy in one day.

But it's also a day to reflect—reflect on the ways we will choose to respond or not respond to what we believe in faith, choose to respond or not respond in love to our God who has loved us first and loved us best. Will we reach out to others the way God reaches out to us? Will we find ways to "lay down our lives," as Jesus did? Will we love continually and unconditionally or will we only love when it's easy? Will we forgive the things that seem unforgivable? Will we refuse to pursue revenge, refuse to try to get even, refuse to "make people pay," refuse to answer violence with violence? Will we be truly generous or will we simply give from our leftovers? Will we put the well-being of others ahead of our own? Put simply—*will we love?*

Jesus did all of that. For us. And He also did it to show us how to *live*. My friends, will we just say thanks today and go back to doing things the way we've always done them, go back to being the person we've always been? Will we somehow make the death and resurrection of Jesus not mean very much? Or will we give thanks the only way that truly matters—by being more than we were yesterday; by being the loving person God wants us to be, knows we can be, and died and rose so we could be.

Alleluia! He is risen! Let's rise with Him and make ourselves and the world a whole lot better than we were before!

Next week is *Divine Mercy Sunday*, let us be the person Jesus changed and continue to celebrate Easter through the year! *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.*

Women renewed and changed in the Lord! Road to spreading the good news. "Don't look back; you're not going in that direction."
PHOTO: LAWRENCE PASCUA VIA GOOGLE GEMENI AI IMAGE GENERATOR

Kwento Kwentuhan

In the Season of Lent: Reflections on Life, Death and Faith

Liza A Pierce of "A Maui Blog" | Photos: Liza Pierce

Lent season is upon us, and it always invites a quiet kind of reflection. This time of year naturally draws our thoughts toward life, death and resurrection. But if I'm being honest, it's not just Lent that has led me to pause and think more deeply … it's the recent passing of two people dear to me.

My Aunt and Godmother, *Ninang* Loleng, lived a full and beautiful life to the age of 94. My friend Joel, on the other hand, passed at 63, far too soon by our standards. Two lives, two different timelines yet both reminding me of the same truth: life, no matter how long, is still fleeting.

And so, I find myself holding on to two simple but profound thoughts.

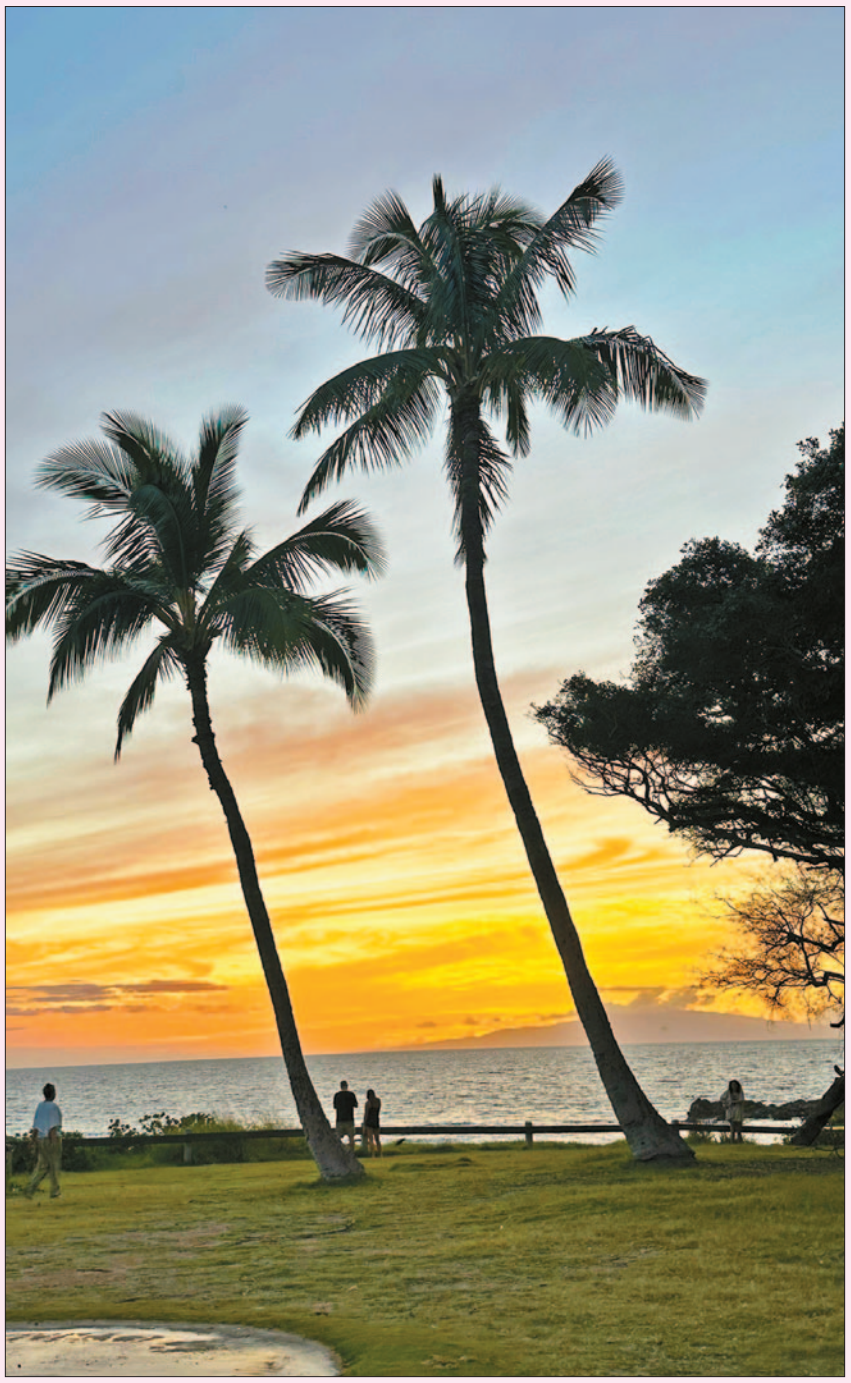
Life is short, so live in the moment.

We hear this often but moments like these give those words real weight. It's easy to get caught up in routines, worries and plans for "someday." We postpone joy, delay forgiveness and assume we'll always have more time. But the reality is, time is never guaranteed.

Ninang Loleng lived into her 90s and it reminded me a long life is a blessing. Nevertheless, life eventually comes to an end. And Joel's passing reminded me that sometimes, life doesn't follow the timeline we expect.

Lent, after all, is not only about sacrifice and reflection. Lent leads us to Easter, to the story of resurrection. It reminds us after suffering comes hope and after death comes new life.

So what do we do with that truth?



Sunsets are splendorous at Kama'ole Beach III, in Kīhei. Pierce says that 'sunset time is a good time to reflect on life.'

Heliconia grows at the Sands of Kahana. Liza Pierce took this photo during her personal retreat on the Westside in preparation for Lent. 'Retreats remind us to slow down and be in the moment,' says Pierce.

We cherish the people around us. We say "I love you" more often. We show up. We forgive. We laugh. We take the trip, make the call, write the message. We live, not perfectly but fully in the present moment.

Is there really life after death?

This is a question that has been asked for generations and the answer often depends on what one believes. For me, my faith gives me comfort and clarity. I believe there is life after death because of what Jesus has done.

In John 11:25, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." These words are not just poetic—they are a promise. A promise death is not the end but a transition into something greater.

Lent, after all, is not only about sacrifice and reflection. Lent leads us to Easter, to the story of resurrection. It reminds us after suffering comes hope and after death comes new life.

This belief doesn't erase the pain of loss. Grief is real and it can be heavy. *Ninang* Loleng and my friend Joel are both missed by their family and friends. There are moments when their absence is deeply felt. But alongside that grief is a quiet sense of peace and a hope they are now in a place where there is no more pain, no more suffering.

And perhaps that is the balance we carry during this season: to grieve but not without hope; to reflect but not without faith.

As Lent continues, I am reminded to live more intentionally and to hold on more firmly to what I believe. Life is short but it is also meaningful. And death, while inevitable, is not the end of the story.

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.

Melissa Perez

Quirino Paet and Oldest Daughter Precila.

Quirino Paet

Melissa Joy Perez

Lucy Peros | Photos courtesy Perez ʻOhana

Tradition is not the past we remember but the values we carry forward with pride. The family traditions of this month's featured Sakada Offspring, Melissa Joy Perez are very important to them.

Melissa Perez was born in May 1978 on Maui, Hawaiʻi. She attended Lihikai Elementary, Maui Waena Intermediate and St. Anthony High School. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree from Oregon State University and her Masters in Teaching also from Oregon State University. She is presently employed by the Department of Education as an English Language Learner Complex Area Teacher for District Office. She is a member of the School Community Council at Puʻu Kukui Elementary School. She enjoys watching her son A.J. play baseball, spending time with her family and traveling with her family.

Melissa is married to Dr. Alfred Perez. He received his BA in Liberal Arts and MA in Interdisciplinary Studies (Education, Spanish, Ethnic Studies) from Oregon State University. He received his PhD in Curriculum Instruction from the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa. They have a son, AJ Perez, a 5th grader at Puʻu Kukui Elementary.

Melissa's brother, Jason Peros received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Las Vegas. He is now employed by Southwest Airlines. His wife, Cecilia Peros is an RN in Trauma Critical Care, VA Hospital in Reno, Nevada. They have two children, Marley and Nyree Peros. Marley is a US Army Lieutenant, RN. Nyree is studying Biochemistry at the University of Las Vegas.

Melissa's maternal grandfather, Quirino Obrero Paet was one of the thousands of *Sakadas* recruited by the Hawaiʻi Sugar Planters Association to come to Hawaiʻi to work in the pineapple and sugar cane plantations in January 1946. He was from Taleb, Bantay, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. He left the Philippines via Port Salomague in Cabugao, Ilocos Sur on board the *S.S. Maunawili*. He left behind his young wife Lucia, who was with child, son James and *hānai* daughter, Teresita Marinas. Part of the recruited *Sakadas'* contract was a free round-trip ticket back to the Philippines which they were able to use anytime.

In May 1946, Lucia, Teresita, James, and their newly born, Precila joined Quirino in Hawaiʻi. They were one of the very few families that lived in the camp among the single men.

Quirino worked at the Puʻunēnē Mill at the crystallization of molasses department for twenty-two years. After twenty-two years, he decided to work for the Pacific Construction Company. Following that, he worked at the Kāʻanapali Golf Course where he helped to plant the grass while they were building the Kāʻanapali Beach Resort Hotel. At the same time, he owned a yard maintenance company as his side job. Lastly, he worked for Maui Sunset as a grounds keeper and retired from there due to medical reasons. Unfortunately, Quirino passed away on August 9, 1992.

The Paets raised and slaughtered their own animals for their own consumption. In those days, there were no restrictions. They raised their own vegetables in their own backyards. They were self-sufficient. The Paets were blessed with thirteen ambitious community-oriented children. Precila, the third oldest child is Melissa's mother.

Quirino and Lucia Paet believed and favored Catholic education for their thirteen children. They all attended Christ The King School and all graduated from St. Anthony High School. To defray the cost of their tuition, they did odds and ends at the schools, e.g., clean the classrooms, the cafeteria, the bathrooms, etc. With the understanding of all the children, Quirino and Lucia set up a family tradition in which they sent their older children to college and in turn after they graduated and found a job, they would help the parents support the younger ones so they could also receive a college education. They did just that.

The Paets also had another family tradition. Every Christmas, they all gathered as a family including those who lived on the other islands or on the mainland and cooked *lechon* (roast pig) as their main dish. They also created their own family activities when they were together.

When Monsignor Osmundo Calip (founder of the Filipino Catholic Club), came to evangelize the Filipinos here on Maui specifically the *Sakadas* so they wouldn't forget their Catholic faith, Quirino and Lucia with other *Sakadas* took him around the camps to remind them to go to church and to not forget their loved ones back home in the Philippines. In 1950, Monsignor Calip formed the Filipino Catholic Club.

Melissa Perez lovingly said the following about her grandparents, Quirino and Lucia Paet: *When I think about my grandparents, the first word that comes to mind is loving. Grandma and Grandpa were the kind of people who made everyone feel welcomed and cared for. Some of my favorite memories are the summers I spent with my cousins while they babysat us. Those days were simple, full of laughter, and filled with moments that I now realize were incredibly special.*

Grandpa was definitely more on the strict side but his love always showed through his actions. He would take my cousins and me to the Noda Store and buy us ice cream, a small treat that felt like the biggest reward at the time. We would all pile into the back of his small Toyota truck. Looking back, it probably wasn't the safest idea but it's a memory that makes me smile every time I think about it. He also took us to the beach, where he would sit on the shore watching over us as we swam in the ocean, always

Quirino Paet and Lucia Paet with Oldest Daughter Precila and Youngest Son Joseph.

Quirino Paet and Lucia Paet sit and talk during Christmas family gathering.

This family photo taken at Maui Beach Hotel's Rainbow Dining Room shows Precila and James Peros with son, Jason (Cecilia) children Marley and Nyree, daughter Melissa Perez (Freddie) child AJ.

Paet Siblings pose for a photo at Precila's 80th Birthday Party; Joseph (from top left), Shirley, Amelia, Tessie, Renee and Vicky. Sally (from bottom left), Precila, husband James, Gloria.

quietly making sure we were safe.

Since Grandpa worked at the golf course, he had a putting green in the front of his house. We spent hours there playing golf, turning ordinary days into something fun and memorable. Those moments taught me that love doesn't always have to be spoken, sometimes it's shown through time spent together.

Christmas at my grandparents' house was one of the most meaningful traditions our family shared. Every year after midnight mass, everyone would gather at Grandma and Grandpa's home to open presents. The living room would be filled from wall to wall with gifts, laughter and love. But celebration went far beyond presents. Early every Christmas morning, my grandpa would roast a pig (lechon) *and from beginning to end it was a family effort. Everyone had to wake up early to help, from slaughtering and cleaning the pig to preparing the fire and slowly roasting it. As a child, watching this process taught me how important it was to work together as a family. When the* lechon *was finally brought out of the fire, it felt like a reward not just for the work we had done but for the togetherness we shared. Looking back now, I realize how much joy these traditions brought my grandparents. With twelve children, family meant everything to them, and bringing everyone together to work, to celebrate, and to share a meal was what made Christmas truly special.*

> Grandpa was definitely more on the strict side but his love always showed through his actions. He would take my cousins and me to the Noda Store and buy us ice cream, a small treat that felt like the biggest reward at the time.

Looking back now, I understand that what my grandparents gave us was far greater than memories. They gave us a sense of family belonging, a place where love was constant, and a reminder that family should always come first. You take care of your family. Through every tradition, every gathering, and every quiet moment, Grandma and Grandpa built a foundation that continues to hold our family together. Though they are no longer physically here, their love is still present the way we gather, the way we care for one another, and the way we honor family. Their legacy lives on through generations, and I carry it with me in my heart every day. I am forever thankful for the love they shared, the sacrifices they made, and the family they created, a gift that time can never take away.

***Lucy Peros** is a retired schoolteacher, having taught at St. Anthony Grade School and Waiheʻe 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 Waiheʻe 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 Waiheʻe. She enjoys being with her granddaughters after school. She also enjoys writing, reading and gardening in her spare time.*

Google® Is Not Everything …

| from p. 6

***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 Hawaiʻi. 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.*

Mahalo!

To all the golfers, volunteers and everyone who helped make the 2026 Binhi at Ani Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament a resounding success! Maraming Salamat Po, especially to our Scholarship Partners, Sponsors and Donors. Through everyone's efforts, Binhi at Ani is scheduled to award 20 scholarships totaling $30,000 — four at the $2,500 level and 16 at the $1,250 level.

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