

Delegates of the FSM's Fourth Constitutional Convention seated and organized

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

January 7, 2020

FSM—The 24 elected members of the Fourth Constitutional Convention were seated this morning in the chambers of the FSM Congress in Palikir, Pohnpei.

Over the next 30-45 days, the members of the Constitutional Convention will meet to discuss issues of import to the Nation's citizens, with the overarching goal of proposing—where deemed necessary—amendments to the Constitution. Amendments proposed by the Convention will be put

to a public plebiscite vote requiring the assent of 75 percent of the voters in 75 percent of the FSM States before passage.

This morning, President David Panuelo served as the Temporary President of



the Constitutional Convention until after FSM Supreme Court Chief Justice Dennis K. Yamase issued the delegates' oaths of office and the sworn members elected their own President, former FSM Vice President Redley Killion of Chuuk.

"An important opportunity," President Panuelo said, "inscribed into our highest law of the Nation, so as to ensure preservation and maintenance of the rights of the people, is the right of our citizens to be able to once again ask

this fundamental question: how can we make things better for our country? This question is amplified at this very moment for delegates to ponder on and think

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Legislature's bill to ban harvests for the next five years on Governor's desk for consideration

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

January 10, 2020

Pohnpei—On Wednesday afternoon of this week, the Supreme Court verbally ruled to deny Young Sun International Trading Corporation's motion to dismiss and to keep the Temporary Restraining Order in place that bars the harvest of sea cucumbers. Though the ruling was verbal, Justice Mayceleen D. Anson said that since the issues under discussion were complex she would also be issuing a formal written ruling.

Anson scheduled a hearing to consider the issuance of a

permanent injunction for 2:00 this afternoon after press time.

Attorney Salomon Saimon had submitted a motion to dismiss on behalf of his client Young Sun International Trading Corporation, arguing that the FSM Supreme Court does not have subject matter jurisdiction in the matter, for failure of the plaintiffs to state a claim upon which relief could be granted and for issue preclusion. He further argued that the case must be dismissed because the Plaintiffs lack jurisdiction because their guardian, attorney

Marstella Jack was improperly appointed. He said that the parts of the Convention of the Rights of the Child are inapplicable to the subject at hand. He also argued that the issue of the contract between the State and Young Sun for sea cucumber harvests had already been legally decided on its merits and therefore could not be brought up again in another case by another plaintiff.

In fact, the Mwolen Wahu dropped its

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FSM court set to hear motions and oppositions on “First Lady” case filed by Janet Semes Panuelo

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

January 10, 2020

FSM—Supreme Court Justice Larry Wentworth to hear motions to dismissed filed by the defendants in the complaint that Janet Semes Panuelo filed against them related to the use of the term “First Lady” in reference to Patricia Edwin. The hearing will be at the Supreme Court chambers in Palikir from 10:00 to 10:30 on January 16.

Attorney Salomon Saimon is representing President David W. Panuelo and Tricia Edwin. FSM Attorney General Jose Gallen is representing the FSM Government, the FSM Public Information Office, FSM Department of Foreign Affairs, and the FSM Congress. Both attorneys have filed motions to dismiss on behalf of their clients.

Attorney Marstella Jack has filed an opposition to those motions.

Secretary Gallen’s motion to dismiss the claims that relate to the government and its offices contains arguments supporting his claim that all claims against his government clients should be dismissed. “...the causes of action alleged by the Plaintiff against (his government clients) all share a common and fatal flaw: they assume that branches of this government have a collective duty to police the statements of the executive when they concern his private life. No such duty exists, nor has one ever existed. It is not the job of Congress to choose the

President's partner, no more than it is the Judiciary's.”

Gallen’s motion says that the plaintiff failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. He argues that the claim of tortious interference with a marriage contract does not apply since marriage contracts are fundamentally non-economic in nature, and are therefore outside the scope of tortious interference.

He argues that the claim that his clients acted to cause intentional infliction of emotional distress by “validating... Patricia Edwin’s false representation as First Lady of the FSM cannot legally be supported. “In order for conduct to be actionable under this theory, it must be "so outrageous in character, and so extreme in degree, as to go beyond all possible bounds of decency, and to be regarded as atrocious, and utterly intolerable in a civilized community,” his brief says and sites legal precedence to support the argument.

On behalf of his clients President Panuelo and Patricia Edwin, Attorney Salomon Saimon filed a motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. In it he says that David Panuelo and Janet Semes Panuelo were married in 1989 but that four years ago the marriage was dissolved under recognized Pohnpei customary law. He claims that he then met and married Patricia Edwin under customary law but only after his marriage had been dissolved under that same customary law.

Saimon says that with the filing of the present matter, the customary divorce from the plaintiff is formally being questioned for the first time. “Because of this questioning and as required by Pohnpei law, Defendant Panuelo has now begun the process to confirm the customary divorce of the marriage that took place in 1989 with the Plaintiff... The complaint fatally presupposes that the persons of Panuelo and the Plaintiff are still married pursuant to Pohnpei law... the resolution of that factual question (customary divorce that took place years ago) and legal question (the forthcoming confirmation thereof) can only be resolved when Pohnpei Supreme Court resolves (President Panuelo’s petition at the Pohnpei Supreme Court)” to confirm the divorce under customary law.

In her opposition to the government’s motion to dismiss said that while it may be true in a certain set of circumstances that there is no law requiring Congress to “police David Panuelo’s private life...it does not necessarily follow that Defendant FSM Congress is wholly without some kind of a duty or responsibility to ensure that the actions of its own members do not undermine the integrity of the Legislative branch and the FSM Government.” She reminded the Court of the Constitutional provision that allows Congress to discipline one of its members and by a 2/3 vote to suspend or expel the member.

On the applicability of tortious interference with the marriage contract Jack contends that the AG’s argument is incomplete in that his case reference quoted only part of

the judge’s ruling that upheld the right of individuals to be secure against harm and interference from others. She argued that her client’s economic situation that she had prior to Defendants’ tortious actions changed drastically and she no longer has the access to her prior of economic support.

She says that the government also downplayed the seriousness of her client’s emotional damage or harm caused by their actions.

Jack’s opposition on behalf of her clients to Saimon’s motion to dismiss argues that under Pohnpei case law, only customary marriages can be dissolved through customary divorce. She cites a Pohnpei Appellate case in which it was ruled that in order for a marriage union to be dissolved, it must be dissolved in accordance with the way it was acquired. She claims that David Panuelo must go back to the Catholic Church to seek a dissolution of marriage to Janet Semes Panuelo and not the Pohnpei Supreme Court. Semes Panuelo has filed a Motion to Dismiss “as an answer to David Panuelo’s attempt to legalize his alleged customary divorce (in the Pohnpei Supreme Court).”

She says that because of those factors, “it cannot be said that it appears to a certainty that Plaintiff’s complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted,” as Saimon’s motion to dismiss claims.

Supreme Court Justice Wentworth will hear all of the motions on Thursday, January 16, 2020.

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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FSM conducts “Holiday Hoops” high school basketball tournament

Alvie B. Cabañez
Kaselehlie Press Volunteer Contributor

For over a decade, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) successfully conducted the annual Holiday Hoop’s Tournament last December 22- December 31, 2019. The purpose of the tournament is to provide socialization among student athletes and to keep them busy with basketball and away from alcohol and drugs.

All the games were played at the public gym during the week long tournament. It was highlighted by the exhibition game of the team’s coaches versus the technical committees. The awarding ceremony commenced immediately after the boy’s championship game between Chuuk High School (CHS) and Xavier School, where CHS won. The girl’s championship was played at an earlier match where Pohnpei Islands Central School (PICS) defeated Calvary Christian Academy (CCA).

All throughout the boy’s championship match, CHS has yet again proved how strong and defensive team they were. But Xavier School didn’t give up without a gallant fight. Both teams were neck and neck towards the end of the second quarter. However, on the second half of the match CHS pulled away with fifteen points that silenced the Xavier fans.

With the high-flying, Terno Phylon scoring almost at will, the Chuuk team steadily pulled away until they practically settled

the issue with five minutes left in the fourth quarter when their lead ballooned to twenty points from the 3-point zone, well-placed pass, and one-handed alley-oop finish.

Athleticism, speed, strength, and talent, all of those are the true keys to becoming a good basketball player, but when you add creativity to that mix, that is when the good become great. These attributes were shown by the student athletes anchored by their passion for the sports.

Special awards were given to outstanding players who showcased leadership and sportsmanship inside and outside the court. In the Boy’s Division; KN and Praiser Edmund from Chuuk High School, Tabu Saimon from Xavier School, Norton Sibanuz from SDA, and Prandson Lorette from Kosrae were among the Mythical Five recipients. In the Girl’s Division; Darla Carl from SDA, Judy Heine and Hailey Une from PICS, Leila Jade Lane from OLMCHS, and Mayren Wichep from CCA received the award. The Most Valuable Player (MVP) plum was awarded to Terno Phylon from CHS who finished with twenty points and Myranda Mickey from PICS who finished with thirteen points.

Chuuk High School took home the championship trophy. Xavier School in second place and Kosrae High School in third place. In the girl’s division, PICS emerged as the “Princess of Hoops”, CCA in second place and OLMCHS in third



place.

The boy’s team was divided into two teams; Pool A and Pool B. The teams under Pool A were Chuuk High School, Kosrae High School, Nanpei Memorial High School (NMHS) 1 & 2, PICS 1, CCA. The teams under Pool B were Xavier School, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School (OLMCHS), PICS

2, Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) School, and Pohnpei Catholic School (PCS).

The tournament was organized by FSM Sports and Recreation Coordinator, Castro Joab, and by the aid from Pohnpei Sports Office, Department of Public Safety, Central Union for Young Adults (CUYA), school administrators, Kleen Kut, and Senator Ferny Perman.

FSM President David W. Panuelo Congratulates David Kabua for his Election as President of the RMI

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On January 6th, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), sent a letter to formally congratulate His Excellency David Kabua for his election as President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). President Kabua is known to the FSM National Government as an exemplar of humility and compassion juxtaposed with courage and resolve, and the Nation looks forward to collaborating with President Kabua in future sub-regional, regional, and international affairs.

“Your election, my friend,” President Panuelo wrote in his letter to President Kabua, “is indeed a true testament of your character as a leader with vision, wisdom, and sheer dedication towards service delivery for your country and people. I have every confidence in your leadership and commitment in tackling the challenges that are ahead.”

The FSM National Government congratulates the people and Government of the RMI for a successful election and equally successful transition of power.



Employment Opportunities

College of Micronesia – FSM Mission Statement
The College of Micronesia-FSM is a learner-centered institution of higher education that is committed to the success of the Federated States of Micronesia by providing academic and career & technical educational programs characterized by continuous improvement and best practices.

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Security & Safety Officer I	FMI Campus	\$5,196	February 24, 2020
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****Serious inquiries can be made to the Human Resources Office at email address hro@comfsm.fm and telephone number (691) 320-2482 extension numbers 179, 180, 181 or visit us at www.comfsm.fm.**



Vacancies

DIRECTOR OPERATIONS

About the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (Forum Secretariat) is the region's premier political and economic policy organisation, with a vision of helping to create a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives.

The international organisation works to achieve this vision by fostering cooperation between governments, collaboration with international agencies, and by representing the interests of its members - including directly engaging with community members in order to identify pressing needs of the region.

The work of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is guided by the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR) as:

The expression of a common sense of identity and purpose, leading progressively to the sharing of institutions, resources, and markets, with the purpose of complimenting national efforts, overcoming common constraints, and embracing sustainable and inclusive development within Pacific countries and territories and for the Pacific region as a whole.

The FPR is underpinned by the Blue Pacific narrative, endorsed by Forum Leaders in Samoa in 2017, which calls for a long-term regional commitment to act as one "Blue Continent" as the means to achieve its development aspirations. The Leaders vision was that it would serve as the platform to reinforce and inspire the region in its shared stewardship of the Pacific Ocean, and to reaffirm the connections of Pacific peoples with their natural resources, environment, culture and livelihoods.

About the Opportunity

The Forum Secretariat is now looking for a Director Operations to join the team in Suva, Fiji. This role is focused on providing leadership and management of the Secretariat's day-to-day administration and business operations in support of the Secretary General. The position will report to the Secretary General through the Deputy Secretary General and will be a member of the Senior Management Team.

To facilitate the above, the incumbent will support the Secretary General through the Deputy Secretary General for:

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The Secretariat seeks a strategic and proficient individual who holds an advanced University degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in management or related fields and first degree in Management, Finance, Accounting or Human Resource. Candidates with substantial years of practice experience in a senior management position particularly in Human Resources best practice and financial management of a medium/large organization with excellent leadership and people skills will have an advantage.

About the Benefits

The appointment carries a competitive remuneration and benefits package including medical and life insurance. The starting salary will be in the range of SDR 56,718 to SDR 74,965 per annum. At the 1 November 2019 exchange rate this salary range was equivalent to FJD170,683 to FJD225,594. For non-Fijian nationals, this salary may be tax-free. To be eligible for this position, the applicant must be a national of one of the following Forum member countries*. Applicants must be willing to travel periodically.

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply through our website: www.forumsec.org where an information package containing the job description and remuneration details is also available. Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees. The Forum Secretariat is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Deadline for applications is at 5pm (Fiji time), 24 January 2020.

* Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE KASELEHLIE PRESS WILL BE RELEASED ON: January 27, 2020

Deadline for submission of articles or
advertisements for this issue is
the end of working hours on:

Wednesday, January 22, 2020



The Australian Embassy congratulates the FSM Boxing Association's Fighting Fit: Increasing female participation in Boxing in FSM project - a recent grant recipient of our Direct Aid Program (DAP). Second Secretary and Consul Takuro Steele presents a \$11,570.00 cheque to Coach, Adam Milburn.

The project seeks to implement a multi-dimensional approach to raise awareness, educate, improve equipment and facilities, and provide greater opportunities to train and compete locally and internationally. Boxing training is a fun, low cost, inclusive and effective way to reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases in the community. Boxing training can increase awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, competition and teamwork, and can empower young women with the self-discipline and confidence required to become role models and future leaders in the local community.

DAP is a flexible, small grants scheme for development activities for up to USD \$20,000. DAP applications can be submitted year-round. For more information and to apply online, visit www.fsm.embassy.gov.au



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...FSM Con Con

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about. This question, among others, must guide every action we take.”

“Our Constitution was drafted by our Founding Fathers in such a manner that makes it very difficult for any change to happen,” President Panuelo said. “The threshold of 75% approval by the voting population in three of our four states [for proposed amendments] is a very tall order. I ask and implore upon you that we be practical...because if we are overambitious...it can be lost in the translation and public awareness process.”

After his election as President of the 4th Constitutional Convention, President of the Convention Killion also gave some brief remarks highlighting the importance of cooperation and reaffirming the notion that the Nation’s Founding Fathers employed the relatively frequent usage of Constitutional Conventions as a way to strengthen the Nation’s capacity to chart its own destiny.

“This Constitutional Convention is a reaffirmation of who we are, that we are Micronesians, proud of our heritage and committed to protect the promise of the future—including mutual enjoyment, and equitable sharing of the resources of our land, natural, cultural, and other

forms of resources,” President of the Convention Killion said. “I am confident that the different ideas that each of us will be discussing will be...of value in the improvement of our Constitution to further strengthen unity and prosperity and for our Nation.”

The delegates elected Iso Nahnken of Nett Salvador Iriarte of Pohnpei to be the Vice President of the Convention. They selected Andrew R. Yatilman of Yap to be the Floor Leader of the Convention and Johnson S. Asher of Kosrae to be the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

After a brief caucus, President of the Convention Killion appointed Mason Albert of Pohnpei to be the Chair of the Civil Liberties and Traditions Committee. Camillo Noket of Chuuk was later chosen as the Vice Chair for the committee.

Killion appointed Victor Nabeyan of Yap as the Chair of the Government Structure and Functions Committee. Akillino Susaia of Pohnpei was later selected as the Vice Chair for the committee.

The President of Convention appointed Peter Sitan of Chuuk as the Chair of the Committee on Public Finance and Revenue. Tandy Liwy of Pohnpei was later selected as Vice Chair for that committee.

He appointed Yoslynn Sigrah of Kosrae to be the Chair of the Committee on

General Provisions. The Vice Chair for that committee is Andy Choor of Yap.

He appointed Salomon Saimon of Pohnpei to be the Chair of the Committee on Style and Arrangement with James Naich of Chuuk serving as the Vice Chair of the Committee.

During the opening session, which continued much longer than anticipated,

President of the Convention Killion also appointed a Special Committee to Wait on the FSM President and the Speaker of Congress comprising Akillino Susaia of Pohnpei as Chair and members Andy P. Choor of Yap, Cindy S. Mori of Chuuk, and Yoslyn G. Sigrah of Kosrae.

The proceedings this morning were to have been live streamed



...Sea Cucumber

Continued from front page

claims in the case they had previously filed against Young Sun and the State. They dropped it before the FSM Supreme Court could rule on the merits of the case so there is no previous ruling that would bar Jack’s young clients from filing a claim.

During Wednesday’s hearing Jack said that her clients were not asking the court to consider whether the law allowing for sea cucumber harvests is Constitutional. “We have no issue with the law,” she said, “only with its improper implementation.”

She told the Court that on the 20th of December the Pohnpei State Legislature had passed a new bill governing sea cucumber harvests that if signed into law would establish a moratorium on sea cucumber harvests from 2020 through 2025. She said that if the bill becomes law, either with the Governor’s signature or without it, her clients would drop their claims against the defendants because their claims would then be moot.

The bill (LB 110-16) has been on the desk of the Governor since December 20. In addition to declaring a moratorium on sea cucumber harvests from 2020 through 2025, it sets the terms and conditions for the establishment of a Sea Cucumber Commission “for the proper administration and supervision of the commercialization of sea cucumbers. The Commission would consist of a panel of five members appointed by the Governor and with the advice and consent of the Pohnpei Legislature. The bill also establishes the five types of expertise members of the commission should have. The list includes a marine biologist representing the academic community, an expert in low-impact aquaculture projects, a government official charged with overseeing business matters, a member of the NGO community having interests in conservation matters, and a government official charged with overseeing environmental matters.

The bill if passed into law would also set up stringent harvesting criteria.

The standing committee report recommending the passage of the bill said, “When the Pohnpei Legislature enacted the sea cucumber law back in 2014, it was with the mindset that while the development of the sea cucumber will

be viewed as a commercial commodity for economic development purposes, it will be administered properly in such a way so as to put a balance between the conservation of our natural resources and the exploitation of the resource. This mindset is emphasized in ... Section 1 of L.B. No. 110-16. It is now the sense of this Committee, that the sea cucumber law as was enacted is not being implemented for its original intent and has created problems to the point that an amendment to it becomes necessary. Section 1 of the bill asserts the indispensable reason for this proposed amendment.”

Section 1 of LB 110-16 spans three pages and points out the long term environmental harm that could come from unsustainable management of sea cucumber harvests. It points out that while the Pohnpei Constitution mandates the government’s responsibility to develop Pohnpei’s economy, it must always do so with the conservation of natural resources and protection of the environment in mind.

It says that in 2016 the Administrator of the Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture declared an open season for commercial harvesting of sea cucumbers in 2016 that would allow for 67 tons of sea cucumbers to be removed from their natural marine

habitats. “This announcement was made without the comprehensive surveys, studies, analyses or scientific reviews that the Legislature finds necessary to be undertaken by our public officials to fulfill the intent of this particular law and for our government agencies to abide by the mandates of our Constitution itself.”

The section then points to the report by Dr. Peter Houk based on a long-term reef monitoring program in Pohnpei indicating that “harvesting of sea cucumbers at the present time is not recommended because of low densities of large species, and no substantial recovery of small species since their population declined in 2013.”

Attorney Jack told Justice Anson that she and her clients held out hope that Governor Elect Reed Oliver, who is currently the acting Governor of Pohnpei since Governor Peterson is currently off island, would sign the bill into law perhaps as early as this week.

At press time that had not yet happened and Governor Elect Oliver has not responded to our questions related to his intentions with the bill. Oliver will become Pohnpei’s Governor after he is sworn in at Monday’s inauguration event.

Young women from across the Micronesian region visit Palau Aquarium

Palau International Coral Reef Center

The Palau Aquarium was host to a group of young women this past Sunday, January 5, 2020. The group, which included representatives from the islands of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and Guam, were in Palau to attend the 2020 Teen Girls and Young Ladies Conference and Retreat in Koror, Palau, from January 2 to 5, 2020. The conference was hosted by the Guam Micronesia Mission Women's Ministry Department and the SDA Church Women Ministry.

The girls had the opportunity to explore Palau Aquarium guided by its director, Ms. Ilebrang Olkeriil, and all the Aquarium staff. The tour was included as part of the conference in order to educate about Palau's ecosystems and its globally recognized conservation efforts, as well as build a better appreciation of the environment. One of the girls who visited, Ms. Gina Anuntak from the Marshall Islands, said that "It's really amazing all the different things you have. I'm from the Marshall Islands, and for example, the trees that you have here, and how their roots work, and all the little fishes, are different from our islands. It's super interesting that another island can have such different things." In addition to Palau Aquarium, the group also assisted at local farms, and visited the local hospital, making a donation there.



Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) would like to thank the Guam Micronesia Mission Women's Ministry Department and the participants in the conference for their visit and welcome them to return whenever they are back in Palau, to experience again the wonders that the Palau Aquarium has to offer.



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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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President Panuelo & Governor-Elect Oliver discuss National-State Government alignment of projects & programming, recommend FSM National Police augment State Police forces

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On January 9th, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), met with the Honorable Reed B. Oliver, Lieutenant Governor and Governor-Elect of Pohnpei State, and the Honorable Feliciano Perman, Lieutenant Governor-Elect, in a meeting to discuss the upcoming Pohnpei State Government’s interest in National-State programming alignment, recommendations for an Honorary Consul of the FSM in the State of Israel, and the upcoming State & National Leadership Conference tentatively scheduled between April and May 2020. The Honorable Joses R. Gallen, Secretary of the FSM Department of Justice, also attended the meeting, whose primary outcome was the broad agreement that alignment of projects and programming—where possible—between the National and State Governments should be encouraged, with the specific idea of FSM National Police forces augmenting State Police forces in their execution of relevant duties, such as traffic citations.

“Mr. President,” Governor-Elect Oliver said, “I am hopeful that the FSM National Government and Pohnpei State Government can cooperate on the alignment of projects. As we move

forward with our new Government, which will have its joint inauguration [on Monday January 13th, 2020], we will be sharing with you the things that we do and would also like to see what we can do with [the National] Government, together.”

“The more we talk, the better for our citizens,” President Panuelo said, who described how the FSM National Government—through the Nation’s bilateral relationship with the People’s Republic of China (China)—accepted ten million dollars of aid for improving the Pohnpei State Government Complex. “We signed six agreements in China, one of which is the renovation.”

Governor-Elect Oliver noted that the current plan is for Pohnpei State Government to vacate its current location, on the premise that upcoming renovations will include electrical and other work that require appropriate safety precautions, by making use of Government-housing near Pohnpei Island Central School. In addition, the Governor-Elect noted that he was hoping that China would not only renovate the building proper but its surrounds as well.

“We should upgrade our parking lot too, improve the landscaping, build an extension, and improve the complex’s energy efficiency—even solar panels

would be great,” Governor-Elect Oliver said.

“I support your wishes,” President Panuelo said. “The sooner you can convey your input on additions, the sooner China can take them into account. We need to demand quality work. For example, the roof: the one we have now is asphalt, but tile roofing would really last and be durable.”

The conversation then segued to Governor-Elect Oliver’s keen desire to coordinate with the National Government to emphasize self-reliance through the development and reinforcement of character education. The Governor-Elect advised his keen desire for the return of the U.S. Peace Corps, as well as the implementation of an FSM version of the Boy Scouts of America program.

“We’re at a time where technology has really outpaced and moved forward. Kids are so smart at looking at tablets every day, but respect, responsibility, and honesty, are traits that risk being lost,” Governor-Elect Oliver said. “If we can bring Peace Corps back—and if we can bring Boy



Leo A. Falcam Jr., Chief of Staff to the President; the Honorable Joses R. Gallen, Secretary of the FSM Department of Justice; His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM; the Honorable Reed B. Oliver, Lieutenant Governor of Pohnpei State & Governor-Elect; the Honorable Feliciano Perman, Lieutenant Governor-Elect of Pohnpei State; Mr. Kester James

Scouts back, not just the U.S. [version] but have [Peace Corps] train us on it—it would go far in making us self-reliant. The building of the FSM States is parallel to the building of character...if we can improve on anything, it has to be with the people.”

See, “Governmental Meeting” on page 10

FSM Postal Services & Okeanos Foundation for the Sea Complete Christmas Deliveries in Yap & Pohnpei

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On December 24th, 2019, the FSM Postal Service through Postmaster General Ginger Porter Mida confirmed that the Vaka Motu WAA’QAB completed its final delivery of Christmas packages to the island of Satawal, one of the remote neighboring islands of the FSM State of Yap. On December 16th, 2019, the Postal Service departed Yap proper.

The Postal Service, through partnership with Okeanos Foundation for the Sea, also sailed from Pohnpei proper to the islands of Sapwuahfik, Nukuoro, and Kapingamarangi to deliver Christmas packages, leaving Pohnpei on December 10th, 2019, and returning on December 21st, 2019.

Both Vaka Motus were filled with Christmas gifts, food, and regular mail parcels.

The FSM National Government extends its appreciation to the Honorable Marcelo K. Peterson, Governor of the State of Pohnpei, the Honorable Henry S. Falan, Governor of the State of Yap, and the Okeanos for the Sea Foundation for their support in making the FSM Postal Services’ Christmas delivery mission a success.

Citizens desiring a similar service in Chuuk State are encouraged to advocate for Chuuk State’s acquisition of one or more Vaka Motu canoes.

For more information, the FSM Postal Service can be contacted at:

- Pohnpei—+691-320-2614
- Yap—+691-350-2197
- Kosrae—+691-370-2057
- Chuuk—+691-330-2737



Postmaster General Mida strikes a dramatic pose as the Vaka Motu readies itself to sail to the neighboring islands of Yap State. Photo courtesy of Okeanos for the Sea Foundation

President Panuelo Joins NORMA & fisheries partners in delivering Christmas presents to hospital patients

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On December 23rd, 2019, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, joined Eugene Pangelinan, Executive Director of the National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA), Marko Kamber, President of Caroline Fisheries Corporation, representatives of other domestic fishing companies, and NORMA staff to surprise patients at Pohnpei State Hospital with presents.

The annual tradition of surprising hospital patients with the Christmas spirit began in 2018. “When I saw all these cars beeping and throwing candies,” Executive Director Pangelinan said, “I thought we should do something for those in the hospital, too.”

Gift boxes, buckets, and bags were prepared by NORMA staff with donations from all the major fisheries companies operating in the FSM, including Liancheng Fisheries, Caroline Fisheries Corporation, Taiyo Micronesia, Kasar Fisheries Corporation, National Fisheries Corporation, Dayang Seafoods, City Pro Management, Diving Seagull Inc., and FSM Seafoods. Gifts were available for every demographic imaginable, from newborns to little boys and girls, and from men and women to parents and grandparents. President Panuelo noted his appreciation to the FSM fishing industry, both for their generosity this Christmas and for the essential role they play in the Nation’s economic development.

The FSM National Government expresses its appreciation to NORMA and all of the fishing companies for their generosity, and to the Honorable Kapilly Capelle, Director of Health Services at Pohnpei State Government, Mr. Johnny Hadley, and all the rest of the Pohnpei State Hospital staff for their assistance in facilitating the President’s visit.

Just as the spirit of giving is what Christmas is all about, healthy and sustainable fisheries is what NORMA is all about. Interested in learning more about the role NORMA plays in the FSM’s economy, or wondering how you can join the team? Call NORMA at +691-320-2700, email at info@norma.fm, or visit their website at <http://www.norma.fm/>





Center for Entrepreneurship receives \$20,000 grant from Australian Embassy

On January 7, 2020, the Center for Entrepreneurship was awarded \$20,000, through the Direct Aid Program of the Australian Embassy to expand their Hydroponic Greenhouse Project.

The project aims to tackle the demand for fresh produce by purchasing an additional greenhouse and equipment to facilitate more hydroponic systems and crops. Currently, the Center provides a weekly average of 100lbs of crops to the College community through the College's Dining Hall. Through this grant the Center aims to increase production by 200%, and to train students in hydroponic methods in the hopes that the island can reduce its dependence on imported goods.

The Center would like to extend its thanks to the Second Secretary and General Consul Takuro Steele and the Australian Embassy for the amazing opportunity.



Photo By: Australian Embassy

CFE Director Timothy Mamangon receives check from Second Secretary and Consul Takuro Steele.

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Opinion Editorial

Facts of China's Xinjiang Issue tolerate no fabrication

Recently, there has been some misinformation and misunderstanding regarding China's Xinjiang issue circulated in the local and international media. In order to help the FSM people keep from being misled by distorted facts and false allegations, I feel obliged to share with you the following truth about Xinjiang and China's take on human rights.



Ambassador Huang

Xinjiang issue is not about human rights, ethnicity or religion, but about fighting violence, terrorism and separatism. It's concerning China's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

There exists none of so-called "concentration camp" in Xinjiang, nor are millions of Muslims and Uighur people detained there. In fact, since the 1990s to 2016, terrorist, separatist and extremist forces domestic and abroad launched several thousand terrorist attacks that

are against humanity, society and civilization, causing massive casualties as well as property loss to people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. You may refer to the relevant documentaries and White Papers at the following websites:

<http://news.cgtn.com/news/2019-12-05/Fighting-terrorism-in-Xinjiang-MaNLDDtnfq/index.html>

<http://news.cgtn.com/news/2019-12-07/The-black-hand-ETIM-and-terrorism-in-Xinjiang-MepKpOPAKA/index.html>

<https://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/39911/Document/1649933/1649933.htm>

<http://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/39911/Document/1660006/1660006.htm>

While doubling the efforts to crack down terrorist and violent crimes, the Xinjiang local governments focused on preventive counter-terrorism measures. They learned from some Islamic countries and established vocational education and training centers. People influenced by extremism were arranged to learn mandarin, laws and skills in the centers so that they can return to normal life with stable employment and improved livelihood. Many successful stories have proven the establishment of the centers is in the fundamental interests of the people in Xinjiang. Effective de-radicalization and poverty relief have also won wide support for these measures from the 25 million Xinjiang people. For the past 3 years, not a single terrorist incident has taken place in Xinjiang, which contributes to sound economic development momentum and harmonious relations among ethnic groups. Additionally, allegations claiming people outside the "concentration camp" are living under strict monitoring and lack of freedom are totally groundless. Since the end of 2018, over 70 delegations of more than 1000 people from 91 countries have made their visits to Xinjiang and the vocational education and training centers. The delegates include foreign officials, diplomats, journalists and religious people. They all highly praised China's efforts in countering and preventing terrorism and acknowledged it's worthy of learning from China's experience.

After all, Xinjiang affairs are China's internal affairs in nature, where no foreign government or force shall interfere. China highly appreciates the strong support by the FSM government for China's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity on the issues of Taiwan, Xinjiang and Xizang (Tibet), etc., just as the same way China strongly supports the FSM's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

There is no best, only better in human rights. In spite of the common objective of people from countries all over the world to protect and advance human rights, as manifested by the word "universal" in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the human civilization is diverse and dynamic, so there are tremendous differences in history, culture, domestic conditions and development priorities among countries, and virtually not a single country is perfect and doesn't have any room of improvement in their human rights conditions. We cannot and shall not pursue a completely uniform definition and standard of human rights, nor shall we allow any single country to set this definition and standard.

The Chinese government has always attached great importance to protecting

and advancing human rights, firmly adhered to a people-centered approach, continuously committed to the right of existence and development as the primary human rights and successfully opened up and embarked on a path of human rights development consistent with China's domestic conditions. On one hand, China achieved the fastest massive poverty alleviation. Over the past 41 years since the Reform and Opening-up, more than 800 million people were lifted out of poverty, accounting for 70% of the world's total, creating a miracle in the history of human development and poverty alleviation. On the other hand, China has established a complete legal system of human rights protection. Respecting and protecting human rights is a major principle of China's constitution. Just within the five-year period between 2014 and 2018, China introduced more than 1500 reform measures to elevate the standard of human rights protection, passed 32 laws closely related to human rights protection. Therefore, the 1.4 billion Chinese people enjoying peace, freedom and happiness have the best say on this issue.

While pushing forward the development of its domestic human rights cause, China also conducts extensive international cooperation and exchanges on human rights and fulfills its international human rights obligations to the end of promoting global governance of human rights towards a more fair, reasonable and inclusive direction. China has also received wide recognition from the international community for its path of human rights development, achievements in the human rights cause, determination in human rights protection and contribution to the world in this regard. You may check the following website for China's human rights development:

<https://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/39911/Document/1665097/1665097.htm>

In the spirit of respecting and promoting diversity and mutual learning among civilizations, China will fully respect and support all other countries, including the FSM, to follow a path of human rights development consistent with their own domestic conditions, and participate in the global governance of human rights. China will continue to work shoulder to shoulder with the international community to advance the world human rights cause and to build a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity.

...Governmental Meeting

Continued from page 7

"When I was in Fiji," President Panuelo replied, referencing his former career at the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs, "There is a Ministry of Home Affairs—that's how important it is. Fiji is so strong in local food, in [tradition], in culture, because the Government and the society at large have an investment in their people. Your administration should reflect this for the good of Pohnpei, and the National Government will help where it can."

The conversation continued in the broad direction of how the National and State Governments can cooperate—with ideas such as the removal of unsightly waste (e.g. unattended junk vehicles) and the beautification of public areas. However, the actionable outcome occurred when the conversation discussed law enforcement; both President Panuelo and Governor-Elect Oliver agreed that National and State Police forces should cooperate closely on matters such as traffic and littering citations.

"Small stuff makes a big difference," President Panuelo said. "Speed bumps at the appropriate community resident areas, enforcement of traffic citations. I sometimes feel that our National Police are underutilized—why not have the State Governments deputize them, with fines and fees going to the State but as a way to have the National Government Police forces more utilized? It would create visible cooperation between the National Government and the State Governments. People will feel it, and it can continue to spread as appropriate. We are all one Nation, after all."

"When we take care of the small things, the bigger things take care of themselves," Governor-Elect Oliver said. "It has to do with leadership. Yes, Mr. President, in the [Oliver-Perman Administration of Pohnpei State Government] the Director of Public Safety will be given that assignment. We'll collaborate to tackle our traffic problems, and even our investigations of [violent crimes such as murders]."

The rest of the meeting discussed the State & National Leadership Conference, wherein the President's Chief of Staff was asked if he could determine a suitable date in April or May for the Nation to come together, and Governor-Elect Oliver sharing with President Panuelo recommendations for Honorary Consuls of the FSM to the State of Israel.

The FSM National Government is committed to promoting peace, unity, and liberty across the Nation.

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FSM X TC
We Are You

President Panuelo reinvigorates Executive Branch's advocacy for the FSMPC/Vital Transformation Act and Calls for National Coconut Export Strategy

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On January 8th, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Honorable Yosiwo P. George, Vice President of the FSM, met with the Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the FSM Petroleum Corporation (FSMPC), more commonly referred to as Vital. The purpose of the meeting was to update the President on matters such as the proposed FSMPC/Vital Transformation Act, the current state of the Integrated Coconut Processing Facility in the FSM State of Chuuk, the registration of farming cooperative micro enterprises, and more. The primary outcomes of the meeting were the President's renewed vigor towards advocating for the FSMPC/Vital Transformation Act, the directive to develop a National Coconut Export Strategy, and the reinforcement of the FSM National Government's confidence in FSMPC/Vital to enhance the Nation's energy security and promotion of economic development.

The FSMPC/Vital Transformation Act is a proposed Bill for an Act that wouldn't fundamentally alter FSMPC/Vital's mission of delivering affordable, accessible, and high quality energy products and services, but would elementally evolve that mission to include a focus on renewable, sustainable, and clean energy (e.g. solar energy) in addition to its present mandate to provide petroleum-based energy products and services. President Panuelo advised that he has directed the Department of Resources & Development, the Department of Environment, Climate Change, & Emergency Management (DECEM), and other stakeholder agencies within the FSM National Government's Executive Branch to do the appropriate advocacy work to appeal to the 21st FSM Congress to review and, ideally, vote for the Transformation Act to become law.

It was noted that the Transformation Act, if passed, may play a role in FSMPC/Vital's capacity to become accredited with the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Such accreditation would strongly enhance the corporation's capacity to attract grants and additional investments, such as the contemporary partnership with SoftBank Energy, Ltd.

"We're hoping that the Transformation Act will allow us to evolve from a fuel-based electricity supplier to a...cheaper, greener solution," CEO Jared Morris said

to President Panuelo.

CEO Morris also spoke in detail about how FSMPC/Vital has been expanding its Pohnpei-based coconut product line, in large part through the solidification of a reliable network of suppliers.

"I'm pleased to report that in the last 12 months we've been able to register small businesses with the registrar...[and we] have five farmer groups in Pohnpei who have already incorporated as small, micro enterprises—with another seven on the way. That's eighty to ninety (80-90) farmers regularly supplying coconuts to us over the last 12 months. It's...in excess of 30,000 pounds of coconuts to the factory in Pohnpei per month," CEO Morris said. "We are confident that...this year we're going to step up from 30,000 pounds per month to 70,000 pounds."

It was advised that the 30,000 pounds of coconuts per month result in products such as soaps and oils, but when FSMPC/Vital increases its monthly supply to 70,000 pounds that the FSM can "start to see export growth. Small, but export growth. But...the really good thing is the increase in the number of registered small businesses—it's NOT one-off, it's been month-on-month growth, a [very real] and consistent supply of coconuts." "What about the other three states?" President Panuelo asked with regards to farming cooperatives. "Where are they in terms of similar arrangements?"

CEO Morris explained that that, in the FSM State of Yap, FSMPC/Vital works with the Yap Cooperative Association (YCA). "They're participating through supply of copra, because when you dry it—it can last a little longer. We have processing capacity to do...approximately 100,000 pounds of copra per month. And we export the copra oil from there," CEO Morris said.

"In Kosrae," CEO Morris continued, "We just finished our preliminary discussions with markets in Guam and Hawaii—I am hopeful that we can sign an agreement to supply with them fresh coconut. We have confidence in the supply chain coming in from Kosrae." It was noted that FSMPC/Vital has had success in building a reliable supply network. President Panuelo emphasized his full confidence in FSMPC/Vital to expand its work in this area, and that he would support FSMPC/Vital however he can in ensuring foreign markets like Guam and Hawaii



can benefit from FSM-grown coconuts.

"In Chuuk, we're continuing the engagement process with communities... we have communities ready to supply us, but there is a little bit of tension between what [FSMPC/Vital] can process and sell. The supply side is now stripping our ability to process...leading us up to the end of this year, when we have the Integrated Coconut Processing Facility ready, we'll have 100% use of coconut, and 0 waste," CEO Morris said.

It was explained that the Integrated Coconut Processing Facility—which, when fully operational, will purchase whole coconuts every day and at all hours (24/7, 365 days a year)—that FSMPC/Vital expects to start exports in the first quarter of 2021.

"This is, by far, the most promising project for the FSM," President Panuelo said, following up by asking how the FSM National Government can absolutely ensure its success for the Nation and its citizens going forward.

While several ideas came up—including, for example, mandating that the Government's ships operating under the Department of Transportation, Communication & Infrastructure include coconut collection as part of their mandate when on field trips to remote islands—the one that garnered the most discussion, and perhaps as well the most passion, was for a National Coconut Export Strategy to be developed and subsequently utilized by all parties.

"I think it's time for us to formalize a Task Force whose deliverable is to put

together a National Coconut Export Strategy," CEO Morris said, explaining that such a Task Force would include bodies ranging from the College of Micronesia-FSM and DECEM to the FSM Department of Justice and the FSM Social Security Administration. The resulting National Coconut Export Strategy would thusly describe each organization's specific and unique role as the Nation prepares to evolve its economy and enhance its capacity to provide economic opportunities for citizens of all backgrounds.

"Do it. I want you to work with [The Honorable Marion Henry, Secretary of the Department of Resources & Development] and other appropriate Cabinets and officials; recommend a draft to me, make this a priority," President Panuelo said.

"We look to [FSMPC/Vital] as the entity that can really transform and catapult us into a new level of development, strengthening food security, energy security, and all the other areas you're working on. Be sure that we are 100% in support of your efforts and that when there are things that we need to do or take action on, call on us—my office is open to you," President Panuelo continued.

The FSM National Government extends its appreciation to the FSMPC/Vital's CEO and Board of Directors for their ongoing work to benefit the Nation and its citizens.

Interested in learning more about how FSMPC/Vital works to make the FSM paradise in our backyards? Visit their website at <https://www.vitalenergy.fm/>.

Captain Bronson B. Martin of the FSM National Police Graduates from FBI National Academy

Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia in Washington, D.C.

December 20, 2019

FBI National Academy, Quantico, V.A. – On December 20, 2019, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, held its Two Hundred Seventy-Eight (278th Session) Commencement Exercise where over 200 participants graduated to join the club of distinguished graduates of the Academy. Captain Bronson B. Martin



of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National Police was among those graduating officers. FSM’s participation at the esteemed Academy was made possible through continued cooperation and collaboration of both the U.S. Government and the FSM Government through their respective embassies.

Also graduating with Captain Martin from the Micronesian region was Officer Reched M. Reched of the Republic of Palau Bureau of Public Safety. Captain Martin as an alumnus of the Academy proudly joins his father and former FSM Congressman Mr. Berney Martin, who graduated from the Academy in 1984 at the Academy’s 138th Session. Captain Martin’s achievement was a personal tribute, having now fulfilled his childhood dream of following the footsteps of his father to the Academy, as much as it was a call of duty to perform for his country, the Federated States of Micronesia.

In attendance to witness the graduation ceremony were staff of the FSM Embassy in D.C. represented by First Secretary Raleigh Welly; Chief Hilario Bermanis Jr., of the FSM Department of Justice, National Police; and families and friends of Captain Martin. The Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia in D.C. wishes to congratulate Captain Bronson B. Martin on his accomplishment as a graduate of the U.S. FBI National Academy.



FSM Government expresses condolences to Australia for loss of life & unprecedented devastation due to wildfires

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On January 6th, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), affirmed on behalf of the Nation that the wildfires presently devastating Australia—one of the FSM’s closest friends—are a humanitarian crisis that the global community ought to respond to. President Panuelo advised that he will be working with the 21st FSM Congress to determine how the Nation can extend a helping hand to a close friend and development partner.

While wildfires in Australia during summer months are not uncommon due to the country’s enormous land area and relative aridity, December 2019 and the first several days in January 2020 have seen fires grow and expand at an unprecedented level. To the knowledge of the FSM National Government, as of January 6th, 2020 approximately nineteen (19) people have died from the smoke and the flames, as well as five hundred million (500,000,000) animals. The more than two hundred (200) active fires have generated a smoke plume that is reportedly larger than the FSM, including its entire Exclusive Economic Zone, and more than forty-eight thousand (48,000) square kilometers of land have been destroyed.

“The fires in Australia are equivalent to every island in the FSM burning—not just at once, and not just twice or even three times, but more than one hundred times each,” President Panuelo said. “An area the size of the U.S. States of Vermont and New Hampshire combined, or the Japanese Island of Kyushu, or the Chinese Island of Hainan, has been completely devastated. Communities full of people that our Nation knows as very dear friends are being hurt by these fires.”

Australia, among other means of assistance, aids the FSM’s maritime security regime through the provision of material support (e.g. the building and gifting of patrol boats) and training. Additionally, Australian citizens throughout the Nation serve in the FSM’s education, health, and other sectors, through the Australian Volunteers International (AVI) program.

“I call on our friends and the global community to please help Australia during this time of crisis,” the President continued. “And it absolutely IS a crisis. I can’t imagine any other word to describe people losing their homes and their livelihood, and the very Earth itself being robbed of its precious life.”

At the time of this release, President Panuelo advised staff within the FSM National Government to setup a meeting with the Australian Embassy to express the Nation’s sympathies and condolences for the lives lost and the unprecedented damage that’s occurred to Australia.



The aftermath of some of the fires in Australia (Sourced from <https://www.reddit.com/r/australia>)

Student Opinion Editorial

Behind The Scenes: Joining the Cast and Crew of An Island's Christmas Carol

by Xinyi Huang
08 January 2020

"Art is much less important than life, but what a poor life without it!"
-Robert Motherwell

An Island's Christmas Carol is the third production of the Pohnpei Players, a theatrical arts group in Pohnpei led by a wonderful and talented couple, Kristi and Wayne Parker. In 2017, their debut, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, embarked the journey to promote theater and arts in Pohnpei. In their Directors' notes, Kristi and Wayne gladly shared their incentive behind the successful Pohnpei Players, "Our hope... is to teach and train enough people so that one day, others will be able to take over and continue this great work for and with the community... we pray it'll be a blessing to many here, as it's already been to our family."

The show itself is adapted from Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol". It includes Act 1, Act 2, and a short 15-minute intermission. A classic Christmas tale with recognized literacy value, A Christmas Carol tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly cynical miser who is visited by the ghost spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Future. After these visits, Scrooge is transformed into a kinder and gentler man.

All of the cast have been given a suitable role to play, and many succeeded playing dual or multiple roles. In my case, the assigned roles to me were Belle, young Ebenezer's fiancée, and Mrs. Cratchit, wife of Ebenezer's employee. I found myself fully indulged in this delightful Christmas tale of redemption and reunion, sympathizing with characters like Tiny Tim (a poor crippled child of Mrs. Cratchit) and Want and Ignorance, which are personifications of child poverty. It is one of the main themes of Dickens' that reflect his indignation seeing children laboring in poor conditions in 19th century Britain.

15 December 2019 @ 8:30 in the evening, PICS Cafeteria

As we waved goodnight to the last audience, the tender breeze after a rainy day in Pohnpei cooled my sweaty forehead, but it hardly blew away my tingling excitement.

The last two and a half months in preparation of this local Christmas production has been a journey of discovering talents, learning lessons, and experiencing waves of sentiments. A sense of achievement bubbled as I embraced all the honest compliments, smiles of encouragement, and loving hugs from strangers as well as supportive family and friends in the audience.

In the blur of selfie-taking and autograph-signing, the buzzing of excited chatter faded in the background, and memories flowed...

27 September 2019 @ 5:30 in the afternoon, PCS

Today was the day, the first audition for the local Christmas play. I could hardly contain my excitement! Truth be told, I've never acted before and I wasn't fond of acting. I was simply interested for a novelty.

Everyone was eager to join when Kristi and Wayne visited our school to announce the auditions, but when the day finally rolled by, I was alone dragging myself towards the PCS, brushed away by peers who were reluctant to distract themselves from upcoming finals.

Exhausted after a tired day at school, I was handed a sticker with a lopsided number and asked to wait. The usual pouring of tropical rain began, wetting my hair. I stared at the rain, wincing.

I started to doubt my choice.

I gave it my best shot, butterflies tumbling as I was the first one called to tryout. Luckily, Kristi and Wayne were pros at calming nerves with their humorous acting. They never cared about being "silly" in front of kids. They could grab anyone on the spot to be immersed an intensive staged performance with their booming voices and lively movements that pulled heartstrings. Action speaks louder than words—it was through their non-judgmental and professionalism which we saw that we quietly absorbed.

7 to 12 October 2019, @ 5:30 to 8:30 in the evening, Mercedes Building, Kolonia

Rehearsals were plentiful and bustling with energy.

Step by step, we learned to manage our time, Each rehearsal was 2 hours in total and you might only be on stage for 30 min. Learning to make use of leisure time, then quickly adjusting to optimum theater

mode when you are needed is crucial, not only for yourself but also for others as people rely on you to signal their staging.

Hand-in-hand, we learned to be in-sync with our characters, as the directors instructed movements, explaining emotions and exemplifying them in detail according to the lines. Mr. Denise, who played Mr. Scrooge, always had his script covered with notes on expressions and standing positions.

Little by little, we learned to cooperate with the musicians, learning to wait two beats for the carolers and leaning in close to hear the piano since we didn't have speakers.

Finally, we learned to be patient while waiting backstage and fight the urge to make small talk—me, as an older kid, developed a few skills to keep smaller kids from horsing around.

Responsibility is no longer a word but an oath to keep. It goes without saying you should do your best acting for the show, but also pay attention to the on-going rehearsal, talk in hushed voices when others are acting in respect, volunteer—our show would have been nothing without generous volunteering among the crew. Above all, is the responsibility of understanding the essence of a team. From the musicians to the tech people, from the directors to all the cast, when you're sweating and itching, when you're tired and fed up, think about the directors who have to yell the same reminders multiple times each rehearsal. Think about some actors who have to sit behind a stifling curtain for 20 min waiting, just so they could have the perfect effect for their 5-minute scene after.

Rehearsals meant honing your acting skills with guidance. It meant working with effort when others are relaxing. Meanwhile, it also meant unveiling talents and friends you never thought you'd encounter. Growing as and contributing to a community is an experience I'd never trade.

22 November 2019 @ 4:30 in the afternoon, OLMCHS

As I packed my bag, a wide grin printed on my face, already picturing myself sinking in the couch, until I noticed a small piece of paper: Important! Dress Rehearsal for Belle on Friday till 8:00 PM!

My shoulders sank, as if a bucket of ice poured over me.

Didn't we practice 5 times already? Why over and over again?

An idea sparked. I texted Kristi I "had a family gathering", pressing send with sweaty palms. I felt guilt throbbing like a giant hand pressing my chest. Shaking it off, I tried to convince myself I've done enough. Look at all those who dropped out. Over one third of our original cast was gone.

I received Kristi's text soon, her tone obviously disappointed. My eyes scanned the screen, my heart tugged tighter and tighter as I read further,

"You've made a commitment, Cindy... and all of us need you to hold on to your commitment."

Everything grew silent as I processed those words. It seemed to weigh a thousand pounds. I remembered Mr. Olivier, who despite being a tough-looking adult would squat in the crowded dressing room for a long time, holding a flashlight towards his ghoul mask to make sure it glows on stage. I thought about Ms. Summer, one of our beloved tech people, who was always there waiting for me with my costume ready to help me change, who would encourage me in whispers before I went on stage. I recalled all my children in the play, Kash who could never get the straps on her costume right, Elijah who trusted me to give him signals, Lyka whom I helped with her makeup, who all called me "mom" with such enthusiasm.

Loving something meant responsibility and commitment. Pohnpei Players wasn't a simple search for novelty anymore.

I cried out, "I want to go to rehearsals!"

When I arrive and saw Kristi, she was organizing our props one by one, leaning difficultly on one foot. I gulped, trying to swallow a sudden lump in my throat. When she saw me, the sparkles in her eyes were ineffable. They were shining with something I could only describe as pride. It was the moment I am most grateful to have an amazing director, and grateful to myself for persisting.

During rehearsal, I sat there as usual, laughing with fellow theater friends.

Pohnpei Players was the safe harbor where I had a sense of belonging. We would gather to play the ukelele or simply fool around and make each other laugh. Just like Kristi said to me, "The best thing you can do when things are rough is to surround yourself with the people who love you... everyone in the play loves you very much, regardless of what role you play."

Pohnpei players was the magical place where I gained confidence on stage—I told Kristi joyously my stage fright evaporated when I was acting. She smiled and nodded, as she herself felt exactly how I did when she studied theatrical arts in college.

15 December 2019 @ 9:00 in the evening, PICS Cafeteria

I smiled as I tucked away my costume and wiped off my makeup for the last time. As the car drove farther and farther from PICS, I opened the windows and let the soft rain wet my face.

I can't help but stifle a laugh when I thought remembered hordes of us decorating the Christmas tree and having flashbacks of my heart pounding in embarrassment when my microphone went loose under my dress as we gathered to sing "For Here's a Jolly Good Fellow" at the top of our lungs.

"Take advantage of the times you have with what you love." Yes, Ms. Kristi, I miss everything already.

Letter from late Acting AG Rachelle Haemmerling's family to the people of Yap

Yap State Government

To our Dear Friends in Yap,

We will never be able to individually express our gratitude to the people of Yap, but we do want you to know how very much we appreciate you. We were overwhelmed with your kindness and generosity to our family while on the island. The lovely Memorial Service was one of the many ways you expressed your kindness to us. Words cannot express how touched we were with the outpouring of friends that attended the service and the amount of work that was poured into the preparation for the service. Your love for Rachelle and our family was displayed in so many acts of kindness—almost too many to mention. There is a chance we will forget to mention our appreciation to some and for that we sincerely apologize. We would like to express thanks to the following:

- Those that provided all the tents and chairs for the service
- The many people that set up all the tents, chairs and platform
- Jeff and his company for providing cold water to everyone that attended
- The sports complex for providing the platform
- YMA for making the platform so beautiful with the lovely flowers
- Thank you to all that spoke and gave honor to Rachelle: Pastor Mark Zimmer (Rachelle's Pastor), Pastor John Zimmer (Rachelle's former Youth Pastor), Consular Chief Tony Alexander (U.S. Embassy), Andy Waayan (AG's Criminal Investigator), Laura Tiningdad and Martina Reichhardt (YMA), Mary Layan (representing coworkers of Rachelle), Leilani Lemaiyeg (representing friends of Rachelle), Norbert Kalau (Pacific Mission Aviation), Governor Henry Falan (Yap State Government)
- Those who blessed us with music: Outer Island Church Choir, Harvest Baptist Bible College, Yap Baptist Youth and Children's choir, Kids of Ruu Community and ALL the musicians
- Diane and Jamie Zimmer for coordinating the Memorial Service and overseeing all the details, making the program and printing the bulletin
- Yap Baptist for all their work on the program and printing all the programs. Coordinating the space to hold the service and the parking for all the vehicles
- Thank you to the Manta Ray for the lovely accommodations and kindness to shown to us during our stay in Yap. You treat your guests so well!
- The government of Yap for the provision of a vehicle to use during our stay
- Local police, National Police for all our work on the case
- The FBI and ALL their excellent work, their professionalism, kindness, protection and support to our family
- Satawal Choir who sang to our family
- Your expression of love through notes and gifts, words of encouragement, and many prayers

We know that our loss is your loss too. Thank you for making the Memorial Service a time for us to come together with you and grieve together over a beautiful life that ended so early. We are thankful that we have been able to meet so many of you that had a part in our daughter's life.

Sincerely,
Tom, Tammy, Ryan, Emily, and Nick Bergeron
Simon and Deesha Haemmerling

FSM Postal Services Postage Pricing to Increase

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On January 9th 2020 Postmaster General of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Ginger Porter Mida, informed the Office

of the President that the United States Postal Service (USPS) will be increasing postage rates effective January 26th, 2020. Per the terms of the Compact of Free Association, as Amended, the FSM Postal Service is obligated to match (or

FSM government consultant arrested on charges of pandering, prostitution and obscene materials

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlle Press

January 9, 2020

Pohnpei—Yesterday morning Pohnpei State Police arrested New Zealand citizen Rob Solomon for charges related to prostitution. They also served a search warrant for his vehicle and home and all electronic devices. Solomon has for several years served as a highly valued consultant to the FSM National government. At press time Solomon was incarcerated at the Pohnpei State Jail pending a bail hearing.

The Pohnpei Supreme Court issued arrest and search warrants on December 24, 2019 but were not executed until yesterday morning.

The State charged Solomon with two counts each of pandering, prostitution, and obscene materials for events that allegedly occurred with two women in his rented home in Dolonier, Pohnpei in November of 2019. The charges were not clear on whether the incidents occurred simultaneously or on different occasions.

The Pohnpei State prosecutor claims in its charges that sometime in November 2019, Solomon influenced two separate local women to accept money to have

sex with him. If proved that would be the crime of pandering which carries a penalty of imprisonment of not more than one year and/or a fine of \$500.

Under Pohnpei law, prosecutors can charge a person with prostitution "who aids another in the practice of prostitution by hiring such other person for the purpose of having illicit sexual intercourse with the hirer". A person convicted of that crime could face imprisonment of not more than six months and/or a fine of not more than \$500.

Prosecutors allege that Solomon posted a pornographic video or videos on the Internet of himself having sex with each or both of the two women. The State says that that the video or videos "went viral" consequently potentially exposing children to the material. The State claims that in doing so Solomon committed the crime of "obscene materials", which carries a penalty of three years imprisonment and/or a fine of \$1000.

Pohnpei State prosecutors granted immunity to the women named in the criminal information in exchange for their testimony.

Solomon is innocent unless otherwise proven after a hearing in court.

President Panuelo to Deliver Xavier High School's May 29th 2020 Commencement Address

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On January 9th 2020 His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), met with Father Dennis M. Baker, President of Xavier High School in the FSM State of Chuuk, in a courtesy call. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the May 29th, 2020 Commencement Address at Xavier High School, which President Panuelo has confirmed he'll deliver.



be more expensive than) USPS postage rates.

"The definite rate has not been decided yet," Postmaster General Mida wrote in

a letter. "I will update [the Office of the President] as soon as we have received the increased rate—but for now, we would like to inform the general public that there will be a rate increase."



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"So glad this place has re-opened and is where I will stay from now on in Chuuk." - Apr 6, 2016

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