

Wahu Pahrekier Sapwekeika: Pohnpei's Inauguration theme emphasizes deep tradition of respect

By *Bill Jaynes*
 The Kaselehlie Press

January 8, 2024

Pohnpei—Pohnpei's government transitioned to new leaders with the swearing-in of Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lt. Governor Francisco L. Ioanis this morning at the Joint Inaugural Ceremony at the College of Micronesia FSM Gymnasium.

The program began with the arrival of the Mwolen Wahu and the leaders at 11:00 as

scheduled. Kenson Santos and Jacqueline Elwise Edgar served as the Master and Mistress of ceremonies. The Pohnpei Anthem was performed by Kenson Santos and Stephanie Edward, after which the Senators who had taken their oaths of office earlier in the day were individually introduced along with the new Governor and Lt. Governor.

In the past, inauguration events have often served as showcases for performances of the FSM National Anthem, and this inauguration was no different in that respect. The Seventh Day Adventist Choir performed the FSM Anthem in stunning and well-harmonized style with symphonic background, leaving the participants stunned.

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Many Pohnpei residents surprised by drought conditions: Pohnpei government warned six months ago

By *Bill Jaynes*
 The Kaselehlie Press

January 11, 2024

Pohnpei— According to an El Niño Advisory by NOAA issued on January 10, Pohnpei will experience dry conditions for at least the next three months. It was certainly not the first warning of the potential for drought conditions. The first NOAA advisory was issued in July of last year.

According to many posts on social media, the announcement came as a surprise to the people of Pohnpei, and then only after Pohnpei Utilities Corporation (PUC) issued an announcement requesting its customers to avoid high water usage activities such as public car washes. It also asked its customers to be certain that water pipes and fittings are not leaking and that faucets are working well.

Though the drought predictions are not in fact new, this afternoon, Pohnpei Department of Public Safety (DPS) officials called an emergency meeting. Though many briefings have been held over the last six months, the gathered group discussed the issues and agreed to come back with a current drought plan in time for another meeting that will take place tomorrow after The Kaselehlie Press publishes.

As long ago as July of last year, NOAA issued a strong El Niño advisory, which was shared with Pohnpei's disaster planners. The North Pacific weather is always drier during El Niño conditions while in the South Pacific, the effects are the opposite. However, from July to December of 2023, Pohnpei, Ngatik, and Kapingamarangi

[Click here for continuation on page 4](#)

LAYOVER IN HAWAII?

In Hawaii, a dedicated team of young Micronesians has launched Hawaii Transit Service, a startup committed to assisting Micronesian travelers facing difficulties during layovers in Hawaii. Recognizing the challenges of closed facilities, fully booked hotels, uncomfortable airport conditions, and families not having a space or availability to accommodate, the founders have created a solution.

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YOUR FAMILY AWAY FROM HOME



FSM Department of Education announces Scholarship program cut from the FSM budget

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

January 9, 2024

FSM—In response to the recent amendment to the FSM Constitution mandating revenue sharing from fishing fees, the FSM Department of Education has announced that it must currently cut the FSM Scholarship Program. The announcement said that the amendment has led to sweeping budget cuts across various sectors, with the FSM Scholarship program being notably affected.

The FSM Department of Education, acknowledging the repercussions of these budget cuts, is now in the process of preparing a supplemental budget request. This request is slated for submission during the upcoming congressional session and has a singular focus — to restore the vital funding for the FSM Scholarship program. This announcement underscores the government's dedication to ensuring that the educational aspirations of students do not falter due to financial constraints.

Furthermore, the FSM Department of Education is actively collaborating with State Departments of Education to explore possibilities for bolstering state-level scholarship initiatives. This collaborative effort is a response to the broader implications of the budget cuts and aims to provide additional financial support avenues for students pursuing higher education.

The Simina-Palik administration has prioritized the restoration of scholarship funding, emphasizing its commitment despite the challenges posed by the amended Constitution. The administration says that it stands resolute in working closely with all branches and levels of government to identify viable solutions. They say that their overarching goal is to safeguard the educational pursuits of FSM students, ensuring that the impact of the budget cuts on the scholarship program is addressed comprehensively.

USNS Mercy arrives in Chuuk, FSM

by **Ensign Lacy Burkett**
Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

January 10, 2024

Chuuk—On January 10, the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) arrived in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, in support of Pacific Partnership 24-1.

The arrival of USNS Mercy to Chuuk marks the final stop of Pacific Partnership 24-1, the largest multinational humanitarian and disaster relief mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific.

Mercy's arrival to Chuuk marks the seventh time Pacific Partnership has worked side-by-side with the Federated States of Micronesia, with an earlier stop in Pohnpei in December 2023.

At the invitation of host nations, Pacific Partnership's mission partners conduct tailored humanitarian civil action preparedness activities in areas such as engineering, disaster response, public health, and host nation outreach events.

The U.S. Pacific Partnership Band, comprised of musicians from the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band and the Royal Australian Navy, will perform in a variety of community engagements.

"The Pacific Partnership's visit to Pohnpei last month reached FSM citizens through health and community service outreach—from eye and dental care to subject matter expert training to medical procedures," said U.S. Ambassador Jennifer Johnson, ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia. "Seeing people of all ages enjoy the talented musicians of the Pacific Fleet Band was a great highlight of the visit. We look forward to this second phase of the mission in Chuuk, where the Mercy can provide an even greater range of medical assistance."

In addition to activities aboard the hospital ship, Pacific Partnership medical providers will work shoulder-to-shoulder with providers at Chuuk State Hospital, ensuring that information exchanges result in more sustainable medical practices once USNS Mercy leaves Chuuk.

This year's mission will also feature nearly 1,300 personnel

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF
THE KASELEHLIE PRESS
WILL BE RELEASED ON:**

January 31, 2024

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

Monday, January 29, 2024

11th Pohnpei Legislature Committee to Wait on the Governor commences dialogue with Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Ioanis

Pohnpei Public Information

January 10, 2024

Pohnpei—A delegation from the 11th Pohnpei Legislature, led by Committee to Wait on Governor Chair Senator Aisek Artui, held a meeting with Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Ioanis to discuss key legislative priorities and kick off the first regular session. The committee, including Senators Welfred Edmund and Benjamin Ludwig, along with legislative staff member Mary Immanuel, engaged in a constructive dialogue at the state capitol today.



Chief of Staff Kapilly Capelle and Public Affairs Officer Peteriko Hairens, representing the executive branch, joined Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Ioanis in the meeting. The atmosphere was one of collaboration and commitment to the betterment of Pohnpei.

Senator Aisek Artui, Committee Chair highlighted the commencement of the first regular session on January 8, 2024, which is set to continue for 60 days as mandated by law. He extended warm congratulations to Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Ioanis on behalf of the 11th Pohnpei Legislature, expressing unwavering support for their leadership.

The Committee Chair emphasized the importance of a strong partnership between the legislative and executive branches for the benefit of the people of Pohnpei.

Committee members, Senator Edmund and Senator Ludwig also echoed remarks delivered by Committee Chair, Senator Artui, extending congratulations and commitment to cooperation and collaboration.

The meeting laid a solid foundation for future collaboration, setting the tone for a productive legislative session that aims to address the pressing needs of the community, including the reorganization of standing committees at the Legislature and the nomination of cabinet members for the Legislature's advice and consent in the first 100 days of the Joseph/Ioanis administration.

...USNS Mercy

Continued from previous page

from allies and partner nations including Australia, Chile, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, and New Zealand.

Born out of the devastation brought by the December 2004 tsunami that swept through parts of South and Southeast Asia, Pacific Partnership began as a military-led humanitarian response to one of the world's most catastrophic natural disasters. Building on the success and goodwill of this operation, the United States helped spearhead the inaugural Pacific Partnership mission in 2006.

Pacific Partnership, now in its 19th iteration, is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. Each year the mission team works collectively with host and partner nations to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities, increase security and stability in the region, and foster new and enduring friendships in the Indo-Pacific.

For more information about Pacific Partnership visit www.facebook.com/pacificpartnership, www.instagram.com/pacific_partnership/ or <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/PacificPartnership>. Pacific Partnership public affairs can be reached via email at cherycollins.pp24@gmail.com.

Generous donation of school bus enhances Early Childhood Education at Kolonia Elementary School



Pohnpei State Public Information

January 11, 2024

Kolonia, Pohnpei—Mr. Kiyoshi Goto and the dedicated employees of Yoshie Enterprises have donated a school bus to the Kolonia Elementary School Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. The generous donation was officially handed over in an informal ceremony attended by Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, Lt. Governor Francisco L. Ioanis, and Mr. Anthony Torres, representing the employees of Yoshie Enterprises.

Governor Joseph and Lt. Governor Ioanis warmly welcomed the school bus, which can seat 51 children and 3 adults, expressing their gratitude for the invaluable contribution to the education system in Pohnpei. Mr. Torres, emphasizing the donation's significance, portrayed it as a gesture from the people to the government,

highlighting the unity between Yoshie Enterprises' employees and the community they serve.

Governor Joseph expressed his sincere appreciation to Mr. Kiyoshi Goto and the employees of Yoshie Enterprises, acknowledging Mr. Goto's longstanding commitment to philanthropy. Over the years, Mr. Goto has donated ambulances, police motorcycles, and school buses, and contributed to hospitals and correctional facilities with food donations.

Lt. Governor Ioanis echoed his appreciation, quoting U.S. President John F. Kennedy by urging the community to consider not only what the government can do for them but also what they can do for their government. The sentiment resonated with the collaborative spirit behind Yoshie Enterprises' generous donation to the children of Pohnpei.



Guam Weather Office issues Drought Advisory for Yap State

Yap Department of Youth and Civil Affairs

January 10, 2024

Yap, FSM—Guam Weather Office has provided crucial drought information and outlook for D1 and D2 conditions in the State of Yap. Due to prolonged El Niño and dry spells, citizens are urged to exercise caution and brace for potential challenges.

The NOAA and WSO teams identify five drought categories: D0 (Abnormally dry), D1 (Moderate Drought Conditions), D2 (Severe Drought Conditions), D3 (Extreme Drought Conditions), and D4 (Exceptional Drought Conditions). Ulithi outer island is currently facing D2 - Severe drought, while the main

island of Yap is experiencing D1-Moderate Drought conditions.

In light of these conditions, Director/DCO Ivan Kadannged is advising citizens to proactively plan and prepare for the drought season. Recommendations include monitoring and conserving water usage, restricting construction fires, and preventing wildfires to mitigate various impacts and flu outbreak risks.

For further information, please contact the Office of Planning and Budget at (691) 350-2166 or the National Weather Service at (671) 472-0900 or visit the National Weather Service website at www.weather.gov/gum.

...El Niño

Continued from front page

experienced “very wet” conditions while Oroluk, Mwakilloa, Pingelap, Kosrae, and Nukuoro experienced no extreme conditions.

The wet weather conditions of July through December may have contributed to the seeming lack of preparations or communication regarding those preparations. Further, by previous policy that has not been revoked, the warnings went out only to Pohnpei Disaster Coordination Office, a part of DPS which then made decisions on how and to whom the information should be disseminated. According to a previous State policy, the FSM's National Weather Service was barred from sharing the information directly with the public up to and including today.

Yesterday's NOAA El Niño Advisory gave its predictions for Pohnpei, its outer islands, and for Kosrae. The bottom line of the announcement is that there is a high to very high chance that all of the islands will have very little rainfall for periods of time through the month of March. Some, including Pohnpei, have a very high chance for very dry weather for the entire time.

NOAA predicts that there is a 60 percent chance that the El Niño Southern

Oscillation will begin to neutralize from April through June, indicating that dry conditions may begin to lessen in severity during that time.

The El Niño Advisory provided a listing of potential “Very Dry Impacts” over various continuing periods of time clarifying that results may vary depending on island size, geology, soil type, and are estimates only.

It said that one month of very dry weather would be most relevant for shallow-rooted crops such as cucumbers, bell pepper, eggplant, and cabbage. There could be a pink eye outbreak in the outer islands and scheduled water outages. The latter has already occurred.

Three months of dry weather would be most relevant for “sakau, low water level in dam, socioeconomic stress, increasing cost of food crops, outer island school closures...fires...outer island wells drying up, cholera and skin disease outbreak, purchase of water tanks for outer islands...boiling of drinking water.”

Six months would be most relevant for yam, banana, sweet potato, wells, theft, and burglary, main island river and streams running low, and main island school closures.

After a year, Giant Taro, citrus trees, breadfruit, coconut, mango, betel nut, and others would be affected, and outer island migration might be needed.

Pohnpei State Disaster Coordinating Office recommends state of emergency amidst El Niño drought conditions

Pohnpei State Public Information

January 11, 2024

Pohnpei—On January 11, 2024 Pohnpei's Office of the Governor released the following important notice regarding El Nino conditions:

The Pohnpei State Disaster Coordinating Office has briefed Governor Stevenson A. Joseph on the escalating drought conditions induced by El Niño. Urgent action is imperative, and the recommendation for a State of Emergency is forthcoming.

Key Points:

- Drought Emergency: El Niño has triggered severe drought conditions in Pohnpei, necessitating immediate attention to protect the community.
- Governor's Briefing: Governor Stevenson A. Joseph has been briefed on the gravity of the situation, and the State Disaster Coordinating Office strongly recommends a State

of Emergency declaration.

- Water Conservation Alert: Pohnpei Utilities Corporation (PUC) has issued advisories urging water conservation. Please adhere to PUC's guidance and conserve water resources responsibly.

Upcoming Emergency Order:

When the Emergency Order is issued, the public will be promptly notified. Information regarding necessary measures and expectations will be shared to ensure community safety.

Stay Calm and Informed. Remain calm, stay informed through official channels, and follow PUC's water conservation advice. Your cooperation is crucial in managing this emerging situation.

For more information, contact:

Pohnpei State Disaster Coordinating Committee: 320-3881
Pohnpei Utilities Corporation Contact Information: 320-6250

necessarily linked to climate change.

El Niño is a natural climate phenomenon marked by periodic warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. It occurs irregularly every 2 to 7 years, influencing global weather patterns. During El Niño events, warmer ocean temperatures impact atmospheric conditions, causing shifts in precipitation, droughts, and temperature changes. Importantly, it is a naturally occurring phenomenon not

As The Kaselehlie Press was going to press, a massive fire was burning at the waste management landfill in Dekehtik. It is not clear if the fire is related to the drought or if there was another cause that was exacerbated by the extremely dry weather. The Pohnpei Fire Department water tanker truck continues to make trips into town to refill the tank with precious water resources.





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...Inauguration

Continued from front page

Governor-Elect Joseph's pastor from the Seventh Day Adventist Church gave the invocation.

Outgoing Governor Reed B. Oliver gave the welcoming remarks after which Associate Justice Mayceleen JD Anson administered the oath of office to Lt. Governor Ioanis. Chief Justice Nelson Joseph administered the oath of office to Governor Joseph.

Former Governor Oliver respectfully and symbolically handed over the reins of the Pohnpei State government to the newly sworn Governor with an exchange of a paddle after which Governor Joseph gave his inaugural address.

The theme of the inaugural events was "Wahu Pahrekier Sapwekeika." During his speech, Governor Joseph tried to explain precisely what the theme means and asked Iso Nahnken of Nett Salador Iriarte to try to help him explain it better when he gave the address of the Paramount Chiefs. According to reports, he also had difficulty explaining precisely what it means. It wasn't that neither of the two men knew the meaning. It is just that the meaning is complex and VERY difficult to put into words even in Pohnpeian. To oversimplify, the term is one that any pwilidak, or native-born Pohnpeian would know in their hearts means a deep-seated respect for all things and people. It is a system of belief and tradition that is lived rather than vocalized.

Governor Joseph spoke somewhat on the theme of that kind of respect when he recounted history of Isokelekel who set up a system of government with eight leaders each of whom served cooperatively and with respect. He said that he expected the Government of Pohnpei to function much the same way saying that he is not the boss. He is one of the cooperative leaders and he expects all of the leaders to work together for the good of Pohnpei.

After Iso Nahnken Iriarte gave his speech on behalf of the Paramount Chiefs, the Mwoalen Wahu, Reverend Midian G. Neth, the Secretary General Synod Church Council pronounced the benediction.





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Non-profit "Pacific Hearts" aims to eradicate Rheumatic Heart Disease in Pohnpei with continuing missions and information

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

January 10, 2024

Pohnpei— Dr. Anthony McCanta, a pediatric cardiologist based in Orange County, California, along with his team associated with the non-profit group "Pacific Hearts," has been treating children at a clinic in Pohnpei. The primary goal of "Pacific Hearts" is to eliminate Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD), which is caused by untreated strep infections.

RHD is the damage to the heart valves caused by Rheumatic fever. Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory disease that begins with strep throat. It can affect connective tissue through the body especially in the heart, joints, brain and skin. Anyone can get RHD, but it is most common in school-aged children, 5-16 years old.

"It's pretty much about getting people on board with treating strep early," said Dr. McCanta. "In the United States, it's exceedingly rare. When I'm not here, I've seen, I think, five cases in ten years in California, and saw more than that today."

His team treated 49 patients today, with 15 to 20 of the children having active RHD cases that are currently under treatment. The rest were screened for the disease.

McCanta mentioned that Pohnpei healthcare workers have diligently screened for RHD, estimating that at least 90 percent of Pohnpei children have been screened, possibly more.

Rheumatic Heart Disease is mainly caused by the immune system's response to untreated strep infections, a condition almost everyone has experienced at some point in their lives. The immune system attacks the heart valves, and once damaged, it is irreversible without surgery, which is not available in Pohnpei. However, early diagnosis can

prevent the condition from worsening through monthly penicillin injections. Expensive surgery, not available in Pohnpei, requires patients to be referred off island.

"It is really hard here to isolate and figure out who is at risk," he said, noting that the strep in Pohnpei is rheumatogenic, behaving differently than strep in other parts of the world. In places like the western world, rheumatogenic strep has been eradicated. Dr. McCanta said that treating strep early can prevent the possibility of RHD completely.

"Any time a child is having fevers and joint swelling or joint pain, and then also just routine strep, like a routine sore throat, they should call or get into their doctor or the local public health

nurse," he said.

If a child has sore or swollen joints such as knees, ankles, elbows, or wrists; if they have a fever, a skin rash, difficulty walking, or lumps under the skin of elbow, wrist, knees, and ankles they should be taken to get tested for RHD.

Vanessa Patino, the ultrasound technician with Dr. McCanta's team, said that their testing capabilities are somewhat limited. Nevertheless, she explained that with ultrasound testing, she can observe the backflow of blood through a damaged mitro-aneurotic valve in the heart.

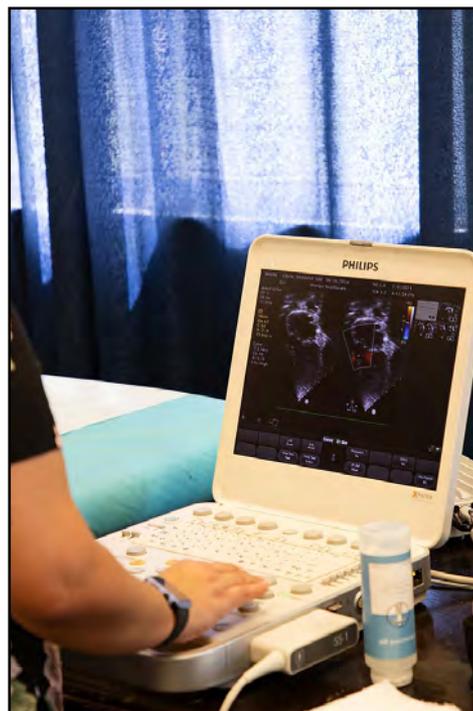
This visit marks Dr. McCanta's sixth RHD screening. "Pacific Hearts" is descended from his mentor, Dr. Mel

Singer, who began coming to the FSM, Palau, and RMI in 1993 for about six weeks each year for several years. Dr. Singer initiated the mission after his son, a US Peace Corps volunteer, informed him of many children dying of severe heart failure at a young age. Singer responded and continued the mission for several years.

Singer did not live to see the non-profit organization founded to continue his work into the future.

Dr. McCanta and his team will depart from Pohnpei on Saturday and head to Chuuk to perform similar work.

Even after the team's departure, concerned parents can call 320-6613 or 320-2217 with any questions.



Job Vacancy

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) agency, is now seeking one qualified person to work as Administrative Officer. Details are set out below.

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*When you submit application documents through e-mail, please title as: APPLICATION FOR JJCA MICRONESIA OFFICE to <Yamauchi.Kunihiro2@jica.go.jp, billentrishfarrah.fm@jica.go.jp>

CLOSING DATE: Jan 19, 2024

Please note that we will notify only short-listed candidates for next step of selection. Applications and supporting material will not be returned to applicants.

Congress mourns the passing of Congressman Harper

FSM Congress Information Services

January 12, 2024

PALIKIR, POHNPEI – With heartfelt condolences to the family, the Office of the Speaker announces the passing of Chuuk State Senator Florencio Singkoro Harper who had represented the Mortlocks region in the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia since 2011.



Services as a Lab Technician and then continued on to the Department of Education as a classroom teacher. He is most noted however for his tenure at the Legislative Branch where he devoted 29 consecutive years of his life as a member of the Chuuk State Legislature.

Elected to the Chuuk State Legislature in April 1982, he was a long serving member of the Chuuk State Legislature having served as a member when it was one house or Unicameral during which he held the Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship of various committees. He continued with the Chuuk State Legislature when it transitioned to its current Bicameral setup and was elected to its House of Representatives.

The late Senator Harper passed in the early morning hours of January 08, 2024, at the Guam Regional Medical City hospital in Dededo, Guam - he was 70 years old. While the family is ironing out the repatriation and funeral details, the family has shared with the Congress that the first week of February has been the timeline agreed upon for the remains to return to his home state of Chuuk.

He was a career politician who devoted over 42 years as a public servant to both the state of Chuuk and to the Nation as a whole. He served the people of Chuuk State as an elected representative beginning in 1982. He was elected as a senator to the then one-house or unicameral Chuuk State Legislature and maintained his seat for the next 29 years. Through its transition to the current bicameral house, the late Senator Harper was re-elected and held the gamut of leadership roles from chairmanship to presiding officer with the final years at the legislature spent as the Speaker of the Chuuk House of Representative. In 2011, he was elected to the FSM Congress as representative of the Mortlock Islands Congress where the next 13 years he dedicated his energy and vision in service to his people and the nation as a whole.

The late Senator Harper is survived by his wife Meriam and their 7 children: Akina, Neimen, Sadsy, Atlad, Flores, Besser and Lastynn; and their 22 grandchildren.

He was first elected to the Congress in 2011 and seated as the Floor Leader of the 17th Congress and held the role until the reorganization of the Twenty Third Congress in 2023.

He brings to Congress a background rich in public service, having dedicated over 30 years of his life in service to the government of the State of Chuuk in various leadership roles and capacities at both Branches of the Executive and the Legislative.

The late Senator Harper served the Executive Branch of the Chuuk State Government at the Department of Health

At the House of Representatives of the Chuuk State Legislature, he ran the gamut of leadership with Chairmanship on various committees to the roles of presiding officers where he was Floor Leader to Vice Speaker of the Body. His final years at the Chuuk State Legislature were served as the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 8th, 9th and 10th Legislatures when he was elected to the FSM Congress.

The late Senator Harper's educational background started at the Satowan Elementary School then on to the prestigious Xavier High School and concluded at the then Community College of Micronesia (CCM). While his education ended at the CCM for personal reasons, Harper amassed experience and accolades from Blackstone Law School correspondence courses; Dale Carnegie Public Speaking courses; Evaluation of Laws and Good Leadership; Principles of Accounting; and Biblical Self-Help courses.

In addition to public services for the Chuuk State Government, he was active participant of the community where he was a member of the Head Start Policy Council; Board of Directors of TOCA; member of the First Satowan Constitutional Convention; and served as the Floor Leader of the Third Chuuk State Constitutional Convention. He also served on the following Boards: the Association of Pacific Islands Legislatures (APIL); Pacific Islands Development Bank (PIDB); and the Caroline Islands Air (CIA).

The departure of the late Senator Harper is a great loss to the Nation but a greater and more profound loss to his people in the state of Chuuk where his strength and energy was devoted to their growth, development and well-being.



Kosrae Congressman Welly dies in home state

FSM Congress Information Services

January 6, 2024

Palikir, Pohnpei—It is with great sadness that the Office of the Speaker announce the passing of Senator Paliknoa Kun Welly of the State of



Kosrae who has been the two-year representative of his state since becoming a Member of the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia during the Fifteenth Congress in 2007.

The late Senator Welly passed away on Friday – January 05, 2024, in his village of Walung in his beloved state of Kosrae – he was 72. The family has requested the state and national governments to respect the late Senator Welly’s final wishes to forgo any official gathering, wake or state funeral. In accordance to the late Senator’s wishes, the burial has been scheduled for the next day - which is today January 6, 2024, at 4pm at the home of his parents in Finpeah in the village of Lelu.

The late Senator Welly was first elected in 2007 as the State of Kosrae’s two-year representative to the 15th FSM Congress and has since been re-elected to maintain his role in the national Body. In 2013, he was elected Vice Speaker of the 18th Congress. The late Senator Welly has maintained the dual chairmanship of the Congressional Standing Committee on External Affairs and chairmanship of the Kosrae Delegation. He is survived by his wife Shruie and their children Kilafwakun, Arthy, Itchiro, Wilma and their grandchildren.

Prior to his political life, the late Senator Welly has wide ranging experience from military field artillery to convenient store management to chief prosecutor.

Born December 24, 1951, the Kosrae native was class valedictorian for both elementary (1967) and high school (1971). Right after high school, Welly left for the USA in pursuit of higher education at the United States International University (USIU) in San Diego, California. In June 1974, Senator Welly enlisted in the United States Marine Corps at Camp Pendleton in Field Artillery, as Fire Direction Control Man until he was honorably

discharged in August of 1978.

Two years after his discharge from the Marines, Welly worked in management for the Circle-K Corporation in San Diego where he spent the next 10 years. In 1991, while working in retail management

Welly enrolled at the California State University - Turtlock and graduated in 1994 with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement.

In 1995, Senator Welly returned to his home state of Kosrae and worked for the State Government for the next three years as the Administrative Officer for the Department of Education. Welly meanwhile was unrelenting in his pursuit of higher education and enrolled in an extension program through the University of Hawaii-Manoa for a Masters degree in Education Administration.

Upon his educational achievement, Senator Welly in July of 1999 accepted the role of Community Development Officer for the College of Micronesia Land Grant Kosrae Office and held the post for the next three years. In December of 2001, Welly became a member of the Kosrae State Bar and four years later became a member of the FSM Bar in 2005. After passing the Kosrae Bar, he immediately accepted the position of Chief Prosecutor for the Kosrae Attorney General Office. For the next 5 years, Senator Welly maintained his role as the Chief Prosecutor for the State of Kosrae until 2006 when he accepted a position at the state run Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority (KIRMA) as the Environmental Lawyer.

In 2007, Welly ran for and was elected as Kosrae States’ representative to the Fifteenth FSM Congress and was selected to Chair the Congressional Standing Committee on External Affairs and has maintained the chairmanship from the 15th Congress until the current body.

On May 11, 2013, during the 18th Welly was selected to Vice Speakership and during the reorganization of the 19th body resumed chairmanship of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and maintained his chairmanship up to the current 23rd Congress.

Pohnpei Ocean Data Buoy damaged

U.S. Embassy Kolonia

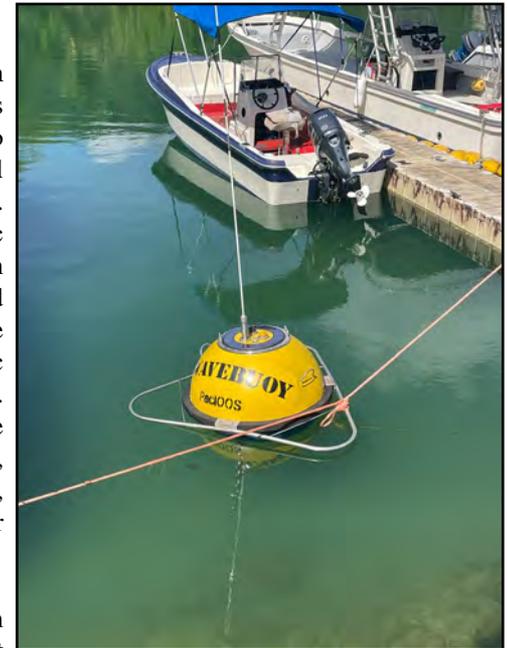
A new wave buoy off the northern shore of Pohnpei was cut from its anchor on December 28, just two weeks after installation and will take several months to reinstall. This buoy was part of the Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) network and was funded by the U.S. Department of State through the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It provided information on wave height, period and direction, surface current speed and direction, sea surface temperature, and air temperature.

PacIOOS manages the buoy system out of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. PacIOOS Ocean Engineer Andreia Monteiro Queima, who leads the project, said:

“Damaging oceanic equipment means costly, difficult repairs for operators and disrupted service for people who rely on it. This buoy benefits everyone who is part of the ocean community, in the following ways:

- Pohnpei residents can check ocean conditions before fishing, sailing, or swimming and add to their local knowledge to make safe decisions.
- Local agencies, such as the Weather Service Office, can generate forecasts and formulate advisories to ensure public safety.
- Local authorities can monitor temperature and current changes that affect fisheries migration.
- The FSM government and its partners can plan for the future with better insight on ocean and weather trends.
- Environmental organizations can better understand how extreme events and climate change are impacting Pohnpei’s coast.”

To learn more about PacIOOS, please go to <https://www.pacioos.hawaii.edu>.



PacIOOS - by observing we learn

WAVERIDER BUOY IN POHNPEI

The PacIOOS Wavebuoy provides real time information about waves, currents, water temperature, and air temperature.

- INCREASE OCEAN SAFETY
- IMPROVE OCEAN FORECAST MODELS
- ENHANCE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The Waverider buoy will be deployed 1.2 miles offshore of North Point. It transmits data via satellites every 30 min.

All data is available online free of charge at:
[HTTPS://WWW.PACIOOS.HAWAII.EDU/WAVES-CATEGORY/BUOY/](https://www.pacioos.hawaii.edu/waves-category/buoy/)

Partners and Sponsors: [Logos for U.S. Department of State, Pacific Community, etc.]

PacIOOS - by observing we learn

PWOHI EN ILOK

Paiou en ilok kin sawaki wen lahud en iloak, ahd, karakar de lomwlofmur en nan sed mas likin paina oh karakar de lomwlofmur en nan wehwe en rahn akan.

- SEWESI KATIKALA KAHWAL SOUKESKPE NAN MADAU
- KADAMALA OPIWOU DE MESIH EN PAKAIRIO MWEKID EN NANSE OH NAN WEHWE
- TOHN KOUSOAN MWANGULA MWEKID EN NAN SED

Paiou en ilok wet pahh kohdi mas likin painahn North Point (Kepkepin Parem) nan mwail 1.2 (1.2 miles) dohkisang paina.

Komw kak patowan kilang menghtik en ilok, ahd de mwekmwekid mas likin paina, ni sohte isepe:
[HTTPS://WWW.PACIOOS.HAWAII.EDU/WAVES-CATEGORY/BUOY/](https://www.pacioos.hawaii.edu/waves-category/buoy/)

Partners and Sponsors: [Logos for U.S. Department of State, Pacific Community, etc.]

Chinese Agricultural Experts Group Constructs Agricultural Production Practice Base for Pohnpei Island Central School

The Chinese agricultural experts group of the China-FSM Agricultural Technical Cooperation Project (Phase XII) built 5 vegetable greenhouses as agricultural production practice base for Pohnpei Island Central School (PICS). The construction started on November 27, 2023 and completed December 15, 2023. On December 15, the experts group and PICS co-held a handover ceremony of the 5 China-aid vegetable greenhouses.

At the handover ceremony, Rolter Olter, Vice President of the PICS thanked the Chinese Government and the experts group for their hard work and general assistance. He said that agriculture science is a traditional advantageous subject of PICS, which has been in the front rank among schools of Pohnpei in the locally-held agricultural technical

contests over the years. Especially in the past five years, the Chinese agricultural experts have offered lots of assistance to PICS, and the agro-technical level of PICS has been advanced by leaps and bounds. The new greenhouses effectively meet the practical need of PICS of an agricultural production practice base and will further improve its teaching conditions of agricultural science.

Hu Shunxiang, group leader of the Chinese agricultural experts, said in his speech that Chinese agricultural experts will give full play to the advantages of the China-aid Agricultural Technical Cooperation Project in agricultural



technology, agricultural means, production demonstration, etc., to help students of PICS better learn agricultural techniques through practices. He looked forward to seeing new progress in the agricultural subjects of PICS and more agricultural talents of the FSM, so as to bring the China-FSM agricultural

technical cooperation to a new height. At the ceremony, teachers and students of PICS performed a folk dance for the experts group and invited them to taste many local agricultural products, such as coconuts, taros and breadfruits.

Pacific Partnership 2024

Free Medical Services Jan 11-19

Open To Public

DENTAL CARE

Chuuk State Hospital Dental Clinic	Chuuk Community Health Center Nepukos
Thursday, Jan. 11 8 AM - 3 PM	Thursday, Jan. 11 8 AM - 3 PM
Friday, Jan. 12 8 AM - 3 PM	Friday, Jan. 12 8 AM - 3 PM
Monday, Jan. 15 8 AM - 3 PM	Monday, Jan. 15 8 AM - 3 PM
Tuesday, Jan. 16 8 AM - 3 PM	Tuesday, Jan. 16 8 AM - 3 PM
Wednesday, Jan. 17 8 AM - 3 PM	Wednesday, Jan. 17 8 AM - 3 PM
Thursday, Jan. 18 8 AM - 3 PM	Thursday, Jan. 18 8 AM - 3 PM
Friday, Jan. 19 8 AM - 3 PM	Friday, Jan. 19 8 AM - 3 PM

Kukuwu Elementary School, Fefan	Sapeta Messa Elementary School, Fefan
Friday, Jan. 12 9 AM - 2 PM	Tuesday, Jan. 16 9 AM - 2 PM

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

FREE eye exams, glasses, and sunglasses.

Kukuwu Elementary School, Fefan	Chuuk Community Health Center Nepukos
Friday, Jan. 12 9 AM - 2 PM	Thursday, Jan. 11 8 AM - 3 PM
Sapeta Messa Elementary School, Fefan	Friday, Jan. 12 8 AM - 3 PM
Tuesday, Jan. 16 9 AM - 2 PM	Monday, Jan. 15 8 AM - 3 PM
	Tuesday, Jan. 16 8 AM - 3 PM
	Wednesday, Jan. 17 8 AM - 3 PM
	Thursday, Jan. 18 8 AM - 3 PM
	Friday, Jan. 19 8 AM - 3 PM

Referral Based Services

*Please request a referral from the Chuuk State Hospital or a Community Health Center prior to Jan. 10, 2024.

SURGERY (ONBOARD USNS MERCY)

- Ophthalmology:** cataract, pterygium
- General surgery:** hernia, gallbladder, soft tissue tumors
- Pediatric surgery:** hernia, undescended testicle, gallbladder, soft tissue tumor, circumcision
- Ear, Nose, and Throat:** chronic ear infection, neck masses
- Gynecology:** ovarian cysts, hysterectomy, tubal ligation
- Urology:** enlarged prostate, kidney stones, hydrocele, varicocele, circumcision, vasectomy
- Orthopedics:** hand conditions; bone, ligament, and tendon injuries

RADIOLOGY (ONBOARD USNS MERCY)

- CT
- Ultrasound
- Fluoroscopy

MEDICAL SUBSPECIALTY CONSULTATION (CHUUK STATE HOSPITAL)

- Cardiology:** heart disease, echocardiogram
- Nephrology:** kidney disease
- Pulmonology:** lung disease
- Endocrinology:** diabetes, thyroid
- Infectious disease**



Climate research takes on single greatest threat to Pacific region

University of
Auckland

January 9, 2024

Auckland, NZ—

With climate change identified as the single greatest threat facing the Pacific, Pacific researchers from Waipapa Taumata Rau, the University of Auckland, are taking bold steps to better understand the population dynamics of the region's 13 million peoples – projected to become 20 million by 2050.

A comprehensive report on Pacific population trends to 2050, released today, is the first product of the University's major Pacific-led research project on climate mobility.

The research is looking at where and how climate-related events and environmental changes (such as cyclones, floods, drought, salination of soil and drinking water, heat stress, and sea level rise) will impact Pacific people's decisions to 'stay in place', or to move: whether within countries, around the region, or beyond, including to NZ.

Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem MNZM, co-lead of the University of Auckland research team, hopes that actionable research findings with a Pacific lens will assist in addressing the serious challenges of climate mobility. The research aims to better inform government policy making, in support of effective, long-term and sustainable change.

Underhill-Sem, a Cook Islander, co-leads the University of Auckland research team with Dr Roannie Ng Shiu (from Samoa) and Dr Tina Newport (also from the Cook Islands). She comments that it has been a privilege to work alongside colleagues in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau.

"The insights that have been shared with us show a deep understanding of the challenges faced by communities, as well as careful thought about future options". The



Pacific research methodologies they use build on shared kinship links and the use of local languages in the 16 community sites where research has taken place.

The first report anticipates that people will move within, as well as away from their countries, the great majority of Pacific peoples will still be living and adapting to change in their home countries in 2050. The on-going population growth anticipated in most Pacific communities is expected to more than make up for the those who move out of their countries over the next coming 30 years.

Co-author Emeritus Professor Richard Bedford suggests in the report that looking at five different Pacific population clusters (Western Pacific, Central Pacific, Eastern Pacific, Northern Pacific and French Territories), rather than the traditional three (Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia), is a better way to understand the diversity and complexity of the Pacific.

More research reports, policy briefs and digital stories on climate mobility from the University of Auckland research team will be produced in the new year.

The research has been commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, funded with New Zealand's climate finance. This research is being carried out by the University of Auckland, the University of Waikato and Mana Pacific Consultants - a research team made up of Pacific researchers with strong Pacific knowledge, methodologies, relationships and networks.

OCPA releases its audit on the Chuuk Housing Authority (Audit Report No. 2023-02)

Office of the Chuuk Public Auditor

December 18, 2023

Chuuk—The OCPA completed its Audit Report No. 2023-02 entitled "Chuuk State Housing Authority: Not Aware of the Extent of Families in Housing Needs". The coverage of the audit was for the period beginning fiscal year 2020 to fiscal year 2022. The audit was conducted in accordance with the U.S. Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards for performance audit. The objectives of this performance audit were to determine whether the Chuuk Housing Authority (CHA) spent its funds in accordance with the Chuuk State Financial Management Regulations and to determine the extent to which the Chuuk Housing Authority has been strategically managing its operations and effectively performing its function as mandated by the law.

The Authority used to provide loans for construction of housing units but, due to limited funding, was currently administering only an in-house CHA Loan Fund for house repair and renovation. The Authority operates on two budgets. The first budget was non-appropriated fund, which was being

approved by the board for the operation of the CHA loan fund. The second budget was the appropriated fund passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. During three year period covered by the audit (FY2020-FY2022), the non-appropriated fund (loan fund) had average yearly collection of \$145,051.65 while the average yearly appropriated budget was \$67,182.50. The yearly average collections can be provided to only about 29 new loans.

The results of the audit disclosed that the CHA did not spend its funds in accordance with the Chuuk State Financial Management Regulations and other applicable laws for the spending of funds and managing its operations. The OCPA noted non-compliances with regard to loan processing documentations and internal control requirements for the operation of the CHA loan fund. Of the 25 samples of loan folders examined, there were 13 samples (52%) with non-compliance issues involving improper documentations of loans. Furthermore, the OCPA noted that CHA did not strictly follow the budget control procedures. The deficit spending was recurring

Click here for continuation on next page

Calling for Funding Proposals

We are seeking proposals for sustainable projects supporting women and girls across the Federated States of Micronesia that:

- ✿ Amplify women's leadership
- ✿ End violence against women and girls
- ✿ Women's Economic Empowerment
- ✿ Promote women's health and disability inclusion

Who can apply?

Women's groups, organizations and NGOs committed to gender equality and women's empowerment. We strongly encourage collaboration through partnerships for maximum impact.

Deadline: 31 January 2024

For more information
Kenye.Rikin@dfat.gov.au



The Pacific Community is deploying for the first time, recycled satellite buoys from drifting FADs

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

January 8, 2024

Noumea—To combat marine pollution, the Pacific Community (SPC) announces the inaugural deployment of recycled buoys from drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (dFADs) in their region, starting with the waters of New



Caledonia. This marks a crucial stride towards sustainable ocean resource management. This initiative has been possible thanks to Project ReCon, a collaborative circular economy scheme created by tech company Satlink in 2022.

Since 2019, SPC has been assisting national data collection programs on stranded dFADs in the Pacific Ocean, collaborating with stakeholders such as fisheries departments, NGOs and local community groups. "This project allows the region to monitor the number of dFADs lost and abandoned by industrial fishers and their environmental impacts while raising awareness and involving local communities", stated Dr Lauriane Escalle, Senior Fisheries Scientist in charge of the program.

The regular discovery of buoys lost by industrial purse seine fishers on the shores of New Caledonia and other Pacific islands countries and territories, as well as the recent deployment of satellite buoys on anchored Fish Aggregating Devices (aFADs) to support coastal fishers, has created the perfect scenario for re-purposing the found buoys for use on those nearshore aFADs, turning what would-be-waste into a resource.

"This initiative highlights our commitment to supporting sustainable ocean resource management within the region. Reconditioning and recycling buoys for local use contributes to a circular economy and mitigates the environmental impact of stranded FADs in the Pacific," noted Dr Graham Pilling, SPC's Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems division

Deputy Director and Head of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme.

With more than 30,000 buoys deployed on dFADs each year by industrial fishers and many ending up on the shores of Pacific nations, the need to reduce marine pollution is evident. Recently, SPC joined Satlink's Project ReCon, continuing a fruitful collaboration with the Spanish technology company, known for its close collaboration with much of the Pacific fishery industry, to address the environmental impact of stranded buoys.

Kathryn Gavira, Satlink's Head of Science and Sustainability, acknowledges, "Satlink is proud to count on SPC as a local partner for Project ReCon. We are committed to working together with the fleets to reduce the environmental impacts of their activities, in this case through the reconditioning or recycling of satellite buoys recovered on shore. Together, we are working towards a more sustainable future for the Pacific Ocean."

To be able to recondition the buoys, Satlink has garnered support from more than 20 companies that agree to transfer the buoy to a local partner for reuse. Then an evaluation is carried out by Satlink, SPC and other partners to determine the suitability of a recovered buoy for re-use.

This historic first deployment of recycled buoys on aFADs in the Pacific is a significant milestone, with plans to extend the initiative to the Cook Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia in the coming months.

...Chuuk Audit

Continued from previous page

problem in appropriated budget at an average of \$7,000 per year or 10% over the budget while the cash operating losses were sustained in the operation of the loan fund at an average of \$40,000 per year during the fiscal years covered by the audit. The OCPA also noted that the loan fund was used for expenditures not allowed by law, e.g., COVID 19 allowance, bonuses, and others. The Board approved these expenditures. The audit found that a total of \$23,720 was spent for unallowable expenditures. Lastly, the OCPA noted at least nine conflicts of interest loans amounting \$45,000. In the absence of related policy, these loans may have been prioritized and unnecessarily competed and crowded out the funds that were otherwise available to low-income households.

The OCPA also noted that the CHA has not been strategically managing its operation and effectively performing its functions that were mandated by the law. There was no strategic plan in place that will provide direction on how it could fulfill its functions mandated by the law. The CHA was not aware of the extent of families in housing needs. On current lending activities, the OCPA noted that the CHA and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) could improve their operating efficiencies by refraining from being involved in the procurement of the construction materials on behalf of the borrower. Unnecessary administrative time was being consumed waiting for quotation, creating and issuing Purchase Order (PO) based on summary of quotations, and processing the disbursements for POed items. These activities must be transferred to the responsibility of the borrowers. Furthermore, the OCPA also noted that the CHA has not been efficiently managing its accounts receivables (AR) and accounts payables (AP). The CHA was not efficient in collecting loans. In FY 2021, the CHA had written-off \$1.5 million bad debts or uncollectible accounts on loans for the construction of housing units. Of the new loans granted during the period covered by the audit, the accounts receivable as of September 30, 2022 amounting to \$44,658.48 from 10 debtors either had no collection or missed the periodic installment. There was also absence

of reconciled subsidiary ledgers for both Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable which could result in potential misstatements of the financial statements, particularly the receivable and the payable balances.

On other matters, the CHA Executive Director, based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), was asserting that CHA has uncollected receivable account since 2007 from the Chuuk Public Utility Corporation (CPUC) amounting to \$219,838.82. It helped CPUC then in resolving power outages and in purchasing its fuel needs. The DAS Director confirmed that the money was indeed provided to the CPUC through several cash releases as decreed by the Governor. He also said that intention was to get back the money; hence, an MOU was signed. He further said that they kept requesting for reimbursement. Since the CHA needs the fund for their loan activities, the OCPA recommend that the CHA should continue requesting for the reimbursement of the amount.

The OCPA had several recommendations to improve the operation of the CHA. It should update loan policies and procedures that should include policy on conflict of interest. Furthermore, it should strictly follow the budgetary control. Also, it should implement long term strategic plan and should refrain from being involved in the procurement of the construction materials on behalf of the borrower. Furthermore, it should implement strategies that would ensure that receivables are collected on time and the subsidiary ledgers are reconciled. Lastly, there should be regular management information reports that should be provided to the Board on cash in bank, accounts receivable, uncollected accounts, net resources (net position), net income/losses, cash forecast, revenue and expense report, and fund status report to serve as the basis of their informed decision related to the operation of the CHA and to keep intact and sustain the value of the loan fund.

The OCPA requested a formal response from both the management of the CHA and the DAS. It received the management response from the CHA but not from the DAS. The CHA management generally agreed on some recommendations but explained that the deficit spending that has been recurring in the appropriated budget was the salary increase that was approved by the Board to be funded by the loan fund