

Reviews of the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, and Nauru are not included in this issue.

GUAM

Natural disasters. Widespread corruption. Fights over land use. Women and men sent to war. A heartfelt effort to save a child's life. A former community member dies in the NASA tragedy. Threat of attack from fatal disease and terrorist organizations. Economic crises. These are some of the events the people of Guam faced during the twelve-month span from July 2002 to June 2003. In the midst of all this, they continued to work; attend school; celebrate weddings, christenings, local and national holidays; and live life one day at a time as they participated in, discussed, and strove to thrive through this last year.

Guam lies in what is commonly referred to as "typhoon alley." While the people of Guam are old hands at weathering tropical storms, surviving two devastating typhoons in one year tested even the toughest veterans. Five days into July of 2002, typhoon Chata'an (which means "rainy day" in Chamorro) struck Guam. US President Bush declared Guam a federal disaster area, freeing money and resources for the disaster-relief effort. Then, before the community had a chance to completely recover and rebuild, the island was struck again—this time by supertyphoon Pongsona (the name of a Korean flower).

More than 3,000 of Guam's com-

munity members lost their homes, with parts of buildings and belongings scattered throughout the villages, strewn across lawns, and stuck in trees. Some 700 concrete poles snapped or otherwise needed replacing, and numerous cars were overturned. At the height of the storm, fuel tanks at the Mobil fuel farm near the island's commercial port ignited and burned for five days, cutting off Guam's gasoline supply.

For months, tents serving as temporary shelters dotted the landscape. The land was stripped of vegetation, exposing lanchos (family-owned ranches), neighborhoods, and commercial and military developments normally hidden by the dense island jungle. Again, President Bush declared Guam a federal disaster area. The island swarmed with hundreds of typhoon-relief workers and volunteers, including Federal Emergency Management Assistance officials and other assistance teams.

Pongsona wreaked more financial devastation on Guam than any other typhoon (*PDN*, 19 Feb 2003). The total estimated government claimable damage of Pongsona thus far is \$226 million. The final agreement was that the US federal government would finance 90 percent, with the Government of Guam (GovGuam) shouldering responsibility for the remaining 10 percent.

While Pongsona exacted a heavy toll on the island, many have appreciated the resultant infusion of millions

of typhoon-recovery dollars into the island's economy, some of which might be used to upgrade the island's facilities and infrastructure. The typhoons have also given Guam community members a chance to show their strength and support of one another. For months after the typhoons, the "Islandstyle" section of the *Pacific Daily News* (PDN) displayed pictures of community members, businesses, and organizations that had donated time and money to help their island community recover. The lingering impact of the storms was evident on 1 January 2003, when the newspaper reported that many Islanders' New Year's resolutions focused on desires for hot meals, homes, and fresh starts. While vegetation eventually filled out the jungle, much typhoon-related repair work still remains to be completed.

More than a year of forums and campaigning has brought about other island changes. One message from the primary election was that the majority of Guam's voters were opposed to having a Gutierrez at the helm of the Government of Guam for another four years. First Lady Geraldine "Geri" Gutierrez and US Major General Benigno "Benny" Paulino lost their bid to be the Democrat candidates for governor and lieutenant governor to then Guam Congressional Representative Robert R Underwood and Guam Senator Thomas "Tom" C Ada, by an almost 1:2 ratio (PDN, 9 Sep 2002). This ended Gutierrez's formal campaign for governor, an effort informally initiated years earlier when neon and other red and yellow signs stating simply the name "Geri" were planted around the island. As

Geri herself noted, it was difficult for the people of Guam not to consider her bid for governorship an extension of her husband's time in power (PDN, 9 Sep 2002).

Guam's people observed relatively clean campaigns this election cycle, with a few notable exceptions, including an anonymous mass mailing and certain ads in island media. After the primary, gubernatorial candidates campaigned more aggressively, highlighting not only their team's strengths and visions but also what they felt were the opposing team's limitations.

In November, Republican Senators Felix Perez Camacho and Kaleo S Moylan, sons of Guam's first elected governor and lieutenant governor, respectively, were voted into office by an 11 percent margin over the Democratic gubernatorial team. The PDN front-page headline following the election declared, "Hope Prevails," playing on the winning team's slogan, "There is Hope." Democrat Madeleine Z Bordallo, who had been the first female lieutenant governor of Guam, also earned the distinction of becoming the island's first female congressional delegate, comfortably edging out then senator and former governor of Guam, Joseph "Joe" Ada.

Guam's community also voted against Proposition A, the proposal to raise Guam's legal drinking age from eighteen to twenty-one. Issues such as whether to legalize gambling and whether to hold a Chamorro self-determination plebiscite were not readied in time to be part of the 2002 election and are slated for a future election.

Nine freshman senators were elected in November, with Democrats

holding a nine to six majority. Senators selected incumbent Democrat Senator Vicente “Ben” C Pangelinan as Speaker of the twenty-seventh Guam Legislature. Douglas B Moylan, cousin to the lieutenant governor, became the island’s first elected attorney general. In a move to make such positions more accountable to the people of Guam, in 2002 voters were allowed for the first time to fill several other positions, including nine Guam Education Policy Board seats and the five-member Public Utilities Commission; the latter is to oversee the Guam Power Authority and Guam Waterworks Authority.

The incoming governor and lieutenant governor, Camacho and Moylan, held a modest inauguration, which was supported exclusively by donations and volunteer efforts. They stated that a low-key ceremony was fitting given the hardships being faced on island at the time. Camacho figuratively rolled up his sleeves to get to work, announcing in his inaugural address, “Let the legacy of our generation be this, that we overcame insurmountable challenges.”

Yet these newly elected officials confronted a growing cynicism towards island leaders. An increasingly popular channel for public scrutiny and skepticism has been the radio show, *Malafunkshun* (see <<http://www.Malafunkshun.com>> for a rotating selection of *Malafunkshun*); the name is a take on the Chamorroized pronunciation of the word “Malfunction.” The radio show creates songs, ditties, and the like, satirizing the island’s political, social, and economic conditions.

Just five weeks after stepping into office, a political cartoon ran, altering

the slogan “There is Hope” to “There is Hype” (*PDN*, 16 Feb 2003). Letters printed in the *PDN* “Voice of the People” section criticizing the new government appeared even earlier. In April 2003, sixty people gathered as part of a movement to recall Camacho, Moylan, and four senators, stating that they felt those leaders were hurting rather than healing Guam (*PDN*, 20 Apr 2003). Unfortunately, the current level of cynicism may hinder the recognition of honest attempts to improve the island, making it more difficult for island leaders to succeed at such reform efforts.

Yet the people of Guam have good reason to be skeptical. This year has seen an overwhelming number of indictments of those who were elected, appointed, or hired into positions of leadership and responsibility. Although these indictments are proof of the island’s improved ability to catch corruption, they have in effect eaten away at the morale of the people of Guam. Following is an overview of these indictments and convictions.

In November 2002, Dr Vivien Batoyan-Sagasi pleaded guilty to illegally distributing a painkiller; medical doctor and former Guam Memorial Hospital (GMH) Administrator Davina Lujan pleaded guilty to a felony drug charge; and Theresa Hart, former GMH associate administrator, pleaded guilty to charges in connection with an illegal wrongful death settlement. November also brought articles examining the questionable expenditure habits of Gerald Yingling, the former executive manager of the Guam Antonio B WonPat International Airport. Guam’s new airport management and board have filed two lawsuits against Yingling in an attempt to recoup that

money. In November, Islanders also discovered that Jonathan Toves, whom they had voted in as a public education policy board member, was a felon serving probation and set to go to trial on a criminal sexual conduct charge.

In February 2003, Guam Mass Transit Authority's former general manager, Joseph Antonio "Tony" Martinez, was indicted on numerous counts (to which he later pleaded guilty). His deputy, Antonio "Tony" Diaz, had been indicted three weeks earlier. A former Guam Ancestral Lands Commission employee was also indicted on several felony charges around the same time. On February 21, Guam's Office of the Attorney General initiated a "taxpayer lawsuit" against Gutierrez, Lujan, Batoyon-Sagisi, former Attorney General Robert Kono, attorney Phillip J Tydingco, and the private law firm Brooks, Lynch, Tydingco, and Quan, LLP, in an attempt to recover taxpayer money argued to have been improperly dispersed. That same month, the police department's highest-ranking uniformed officer, Guam Police Department Commander Colonel Joseph P Mafnas, was indicted on several charges.

In March 2003, former Senator and Chairwoman of the Territorial Land Use Commission Marilyn Manibusan was found guilty on 21 of 22 counts in federal court. In April, island newspaper articles appeared, stating that former Senator Thomas "Tommy" Tanaka had pleaded guilty to misprision (knowledge and concealment) of a felony.

In mid-May, a front-page article in the *Pacific Daily News* noted that the island's public auditor was question-

ing the activities of a nonprofit group headed by Geri Gutierrez. Later that month, Guam Contractors Licensing Board Chairman Augusto F Cruz was indicted on charges of forgery as a third-degree felony and two counts of official misconduct as misdemeanors. He was indicted a second time several weeks later.

The people of Guam continue to wait to see who will be held up next for public scrutiny. US Attorney Fred Black stated in January 2003 that his phone was "red hot" with people coming forward, and Attorney General Moylan has noted that corruption during the Gutierrez administration was "widespread" and that there was a well-organized "criminal enterprise" involving many government agencies (*PDN*, 11 Jan 2003).

Land continues to be an important issue. Concerned islanders, environmental groups, and the US Department of Fish and Wildlife have been debating the proposed designation of 24,800 acres (19 percent of the island) as critical habitat for endangered birds and bats. Islanders fear that such designation will restrict local access to land and further jeopardize the Guam-Chamorros' decades-long wait for the return of excess federal land. Twenty-nine deeds of land condemned by the US military after World War II were finally returned in 2003, while another set of deeds are slated to be turned over (*PDN*, 21 May 2003).

Guam's people are also waiting for the US government to appropriately address the suffering and sacrifices exacted from the island population under the three-year Japanese occupation during World War II. The US Congress passed the Guam War Claims Review Commission Act,

meant to study and resolve these claims, in November 2002 and continues to move forward.

Felt along with the rest of the world, the US forces assault on Iraq on March 20 had a significant impact on the Guam community. The island's emergency and law enforcement personnel were placed on alert. Islanders were encouraged to develop family disaster plans and an emergency supply kit and were reminded that a disaster could strike without warning. The front pages of Guam's newspapers, usually devoted to local topics, were filled with "War on Iraq" specifics, often noting various types of local involvement in the war. Fears developed not just for the safety of those whose friends and family members were serving in the US military, but also of potential terrorist aggression on-island. As elsewhere among US loyalists, demand for US flags increased.

March was celebrated as Chamorro Month featuring numerous community-sponsored events. Emphasis was on understanding that the Chamorro culture is alive and evolving, including elements adopted and adapted over the years that become uniquely Chamorro. This theme of a living, changing culture is highlighted in *Chamorro Heritage: A Sense of Place—Guidelines, Procedures, and Recommendations for Authenticating Chamorro Heritage*, a Department of Chamorro Affairs publication released in May 2003. According to Katherine Bordallo Aguon, a moving force in the book's production, it is meant to assist people in identifying Chamorro culture and traditions, and to provide a sense of who and what Chamorros are.

One cultural trait commonly seen is a willingness to help others in times of need. This trait was clearly demonstrated in January, when thousands participated in a three-day bone-marrow drive, the first such drive for Guam. The goal was to find a bone-marrow match for Justice Taitague, a five-year-old Malesso' (Merizo) girl who was dying of cancer in a California hospital. Although nearly 3,500 people poured out in hopes of saving her, Justice passed away one month later due to respiratory failure.

The people of Guam like to keep track of the accomplishments of Guam community members, whether they are on- or off-island. The most publicized Guam alumni last year was William "Willie" McCool, who had attended school on Guam in the 1970s and later married Aitlana "Lana" Vallejos of Dededo. McCool piloted the US space shuttle *Columbia*, taking with him the Guam flag that had been used during the island's first post-World War II liberation day celebration, and a resolution from the Guam Legislature recognizing his ties with Guam. On 1 February 2003, after a sixteen-day flight, the shuttle was engulfed in flames and broke apart, killing all aboard. In late April, President Bush signed a bill into law that renamed Guam's South Elementary/Middle School after Commander McCool (*PDN*, 27 Apr 2003).

Sporting events are a rallying point for Guam's community members. Guam's athletes play not only on intercollegiate teams, but also professionally; pro jet-ski racer Christopher "Topher" Baretto continued to represent Guam well internationally. But the top island sports story of 2002, as declared by the *Pacific Daily News*,

was the Guam Little League all stars' second straight year representing the Pacific region in the August 2002 Little League World Series (*PDN*, 2 Jan 2003). They were one of sixteen teams worldwide that qualified to play. Guam Little League all-stars played four games, making it to the international semifinals. June 2003 saw island athletes readying for the South Pacific Games, where Guam often earns distinction in basketball, baseball, and softball. Some also predicted that Guam would do well in the new South Pacific Games event, bodybuilding.

Underlying all current topics on Guam was the island's declining economic health. Common proclamations this year are that the government of Guam must "prioritize," "reorganize," "streamline," "rightsize," "privatize," and "be accountable." Guam is said to be experiencing the "longest, sustained and deepest economic decline in the island's history" (*PDN*, 7 Jan 2003). The governor created an economic recovery plan in March that projected substantial growth, 33 percent in three years (*PDN*, 20 Mar 2003). However, considerable debate arose over the feasibility of the plan's projections. Other stumbling blocks included appeals and protests by many GovGuam retirees, departments, agencies, and employees, who objected to the proposed pay-cuts, furloughs, layoffs, and to the termination of certain cost of living allowances and supplements. Likewise, the island's private sector has stated that it can ill afford the government's 2 percent increase in the island's gross receipts tax.

The government of Guam requires \$1.5 million per day to operate, while

its cash collections are less than half that (*PDN*, 13 Feb 2003). It is currently looking to borrow \$246 million—\$218 million to meet government obligations through the end of fiscal year 2003 (which includes covering a \$100 million cash shortfall from fiscal year 2002), with the remaining amount earmarked for bond insurance and other related costs (*PDN*, 29 Apr 2003).

A persistent problem has been the collection of fees owed to GovGuam agencies—which include the island's water and electricity utilities, telephone system, public health, education, garbage collection, and other vital services. Numerous GovGuam departments are facing budget shortfalls in the millions, and are unable to meet their payroll, cover their power and water bills, pay vendors, and make payments to the retirement fund. A recent audit revealed that Guam Waterworks Authority is owed \$12 million, only collecting an average of 47 cents for each dollar owed (*PDN*, 9 May 2003). Hard government policy lines have been drawn, such as Guam's Retirement Fund's policy of denying retirement benefits to those that retired from an agency that owes the fund money.

Guam's public has been most concerned with its ailing Department of Education, which declared a state of emergency in early 2003. Island public school students suffer a shortage of teachers, classrooms, textbooks, and other basics. Many of the island's schools are running double sessions, sharing a campus, and combating other problems such as poorly ventilated rooms and broken air-conditioning systems.

Contributing to the grim economic

forecast is the fact that tourism, the leading industry of Guam, has seen both a drop in visitor numbers and a shift to attracting thriftier tourists. By the end of 2002, Guam received 100,000 fewer visitors than it had in 2001 (*PDN*, 4 Jan 2003). Just five months into 2003, Guam was already down 100,000 tourists compared to the same period in 2002. Projections estimate this trend will continue through 2003, creating a low not experienced in nearly a decade (*PDN*, 28 Jun 2003).

Japan's continued economic recession and worldwide travel safety issues have been blamed for this decline. In response, Guam has worked this last year to expand its tourist base, hoping to increase the number of visitors from China and South Korea, but competition from other destinations is stiff. Efforts have also been made to entice US military visitors to the island. Another tactic discussed has been to combine efforts with neighboring islands to market the region as a whole. However, economists have advised that Guam must diversify its economic base beyond tourism.

Finally, as a footnote, we must acknowledge an event that had a profound impact on the people of Guam. On 6 July 2003, Angel L. G. Santos passed away at the age of forty-four, succumbing to a degenerative illness. Santos has been recognized as one of the island's most influential people. He was a loving and dedicated family member, a US Air Force veteran, a three-time Guam senator, and a candidate for governor in the island's 1998 primary. A captivating and inspiring speaker, Santos was perhaps best known as a Chamorro rights

advocate who was a member of and spokesperson for I Nasion Chamoru (the Chamoru Nation), an activist organization that promotes indigenous issues such as Chamorro self-determination. Santos was a person who challenged, investigated, pursued, and took action. An important part of Santos's legacy is that he caused people to think about and question issues concerning Chamorros and the island. The people of Guam mourn his passing.

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MARSHALL ISLANDS

Marshall Islands journalist Giff Johnson put his finger on the pulse of the nation in an article that described a "year of uncertainty" for the Republic of the Marshall Islands (PMIB, Feb 2003). In the preceding year, renegoti-