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High power rates and brownouts plague Puerto Galera business

For many weeks now, Puerto Galera residents have been suffering from high power rates and frequent brownouts. What is most depressing is that no one seems to be doing anything to address the problem. The people have not seen leadership from any government official to get answers from the power supplier of Mindoro, ORMECO.

Mr. Roman Araño of ORMECO said that the rate since September is 10.6638 per kwh. The reason for the increase is because of ORMECO's contract with MIRANT, a power producer that sells electricity to ORMECO at approximately 12 pesos per kwh. Even if NAPOCOR and the other power producers sell electricity at half the price of MIRANT, the final rate would be the average of all the power producers.

Araño said ORMECO is under contract to buy electricity

from MIRANT worth 4 million pesos a day. More electricity from them means higher power rate for the consumers.

ORMECO consumers should find out more about the contract with the power producers. Business leaders and government officials should find ways to decrease the price of electricity now that the price of fuel is going down.

Mayor Hubbert Dolor recently said that a hydro-electric power plant may be possible for Puerto Galera. Aside from this, PHESI has been meeting with officials regarding the multi-billion wind farm to be constructed at the mountain of Tabinay. Both these power plants will produce electricity at a much lower cost. If more power producers will sell electricity at 6 pesos or even less per kwh then the rates will also go down.

Frequent brownouts

More than the rates, what

irritates most residents and businessmen are the frequent brownouts that have been plaguing Puerto Galera for weeks now. While writing this article, there were three brownouts that occur at short interval and then the fourth which lasted for almost 10 hours.

The brownouts can happen anytime but mostly during the night. A power outage can happen even during fine weather which makes more people wonder as to the cause.

Last September, Araño said that the brownouts happened when ORMECO was replacing the 5mVA transformer in the Minolo sub-station with a bigger 10 mVA transformer. ORMECO had to do this to cope with the increasing power demand of Puerto Galera.

Araño explained that the old transformer was no longer enough for Puerto Galera and

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Raps filed against Mayor Dolor

A resort owner here has filed a complaint against the Puerto Galera mayor for the recovery of his land property and a petition for the issuance of a temporary restraining order and an injunction to the Regional Trial Court to desist the chief executive into entering an agreement with a private company for the development, construction and operation of water system in the area.

Lawyer Ben Malcontento representing Mulawin Investment Inc., the owner of Kalaw

Inn resort in Puerto Galera has filed a complaint against Puerto Galera Mayor Hubbert Christopher Dolor to prevent him in entering into an agreement with Puerto Galera Water Consortium composed of JL Business & Technology Consultancy, Inc., Oppax Group, Holdings, Inc., Pro-Environment Consortium and Sanlahi Builders Corp.

In his 15-page complaint, Malcontento alleged that the municipality of Puerto Galera through Dolor has eminently showed its intention in enter-

ing into the agreement without any consultation with the rightful owner of the property in Barangay Baclayan, the prominent Kalaw family of Batangas.

"In this project, the Puerto Galera government will give the three-hectare property to the private proponent for free," Malcontento told The Star adding that the Kalaws originally lent the property to the municipal government 19 years ago for the layering of the 2000 meter pipeline leading to the water

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Valencia asks court to reinvestigate graft case

Oriental Mindoro Rep. Rodolfo G. Valencia has asked the Sandiganbayan to review and reinvestigate a graft case involving a P2.5 million calamity loan fund which the provincial government of Mindoro extended to a private boat owner 14 years ago.

After the adverse decision of the Sandiganbayan against him, Valencia delivered an impassioned speech at the plenary session of Congress, saying that utmost care must be exercised by the courts to spare the innocent ones in deciding cases.

Valencia, adjudged as an outstanding congressman and governor for many years, showed his colleagues Presidential Proclamation 306 issued by then President Fidel V. Ramos in 1993 declaring a State of Calamity in Mindoro Oriental as a



result of natural calamities that hit the province.

Lawyers' procedural legal oversight should not be considered as the ultimate basis in deciding cases, said Valencia, who was governor of Mindoro when the calamity loan was extended.

He said he has already explained his appeal for review and reinvestigation of the case to the anti-graft justices who

may consider to grant his request in the interest of justice and fairness.

"I have explained this to the Honorable Justices and I am happy that it may now be possible for me and my colleagues to make the proper presentation of evidence in the course of a reinvestigation and review of the case," Valencia said.

One of the Ten Outstanding Young Men awardees of the Philippine Jaycees in the 1980s, the lawmaker branded the case against him as politically motivated and vendetta driven, and blamed it on his detractors and political rivals.

"You can, therefore, imagine our shock and surprise when we learned about the adverse decision of the Sandiganbayan against us," he said. The Ombudsman has previously dis-

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Ordinance on "towers" back to Council

The Provincial Board after reviewing an ordinance regulating the construction of cellular sites, towers and repeaters (CSTR) decided to send it back to the Municipal Council for corrections.

The Municipal Council approved Municipal Ordinance No. 07-07 which allowed cellular communication companies to construct cellular towers in all the barangays of Puerto Galera. The new ordinance amended Ordinance No. 04-20 which limited the establishment of cellular towers in 3 barangays, namely Villaflores, Tabina and Dulangan.

The rejection of the amending ordinance made its opponents happy including a former councilor who said that opening all the barangays to cellular towers will contribute to more unsightly structures in Puerto Galera.

The Committee on Transportation and Communications and the Committee on Laws, Ordinances and Legal Matters of the Provincial Board said that the title "regulating the construction" of CSTR is wrong.

The joint committees asked the Council what will be regulated now that construction will be allowed in all barangays and

what acts will be penalized.

Before an ordinance can be implemented, the Provincial Board must first review and then approve the municipal ordinance.

In determining the validity of the ordinance, the Provincial Board considers both its form and substance. The Board said that in substance the ordinance is alright but when it comes to form, the ordinance is lacking.

Councilor Jayjay Evangelista, one of the sponsors of the amending ordinance said that the Council will consider the advice of the Provincial Board.

Valencia asks court to ... from p.1

missed the same administrative case for lack of merit and substantive evidence.

The case stemmed from a P2.5 million loan the provincial government entered into on January 12, 1994 with the owner of a private boat for its repair to be used to save lives and deliver relief goods following three natural calamities that devastated Oriental Mindoro in 1993.

He emphasized that given the same situation, "I will not hesitate to repeat what I did for the sake and welfare of my con-

stituency."

Valencia said the loan was a credit agreement between the provincial government and the boat's owner, Engr. Alfredo Atienza, payable monthly within a period of one and a half years.

He said at the height of the natural disasters, Atienza was willing to make available his roll-on, roll-off boat for disaster relief operations, provided the provincial government shoulders its repair to make it operational.

Valencia cited the provisions of the Local Government

Code of 1991 that every local government unit shall exercise the powers necessary, appropriate or incidental for its efficient and effective governance, and those which are essential to the promotion of the general welfare.

It also stipulates that the chief executive of a province is empowered to carry out such emergency measures as may be necessary during and in the aftermath of man-made natural calamities and disasters.

By: Johnny Dayang, Manila Bulletin, Sept. 21, 2008

Police score twice versus illegal logging

Following orders from Mayor Hubbert Dolor to go after illegal loggers, the police captured more than 600 hundred board feet of abandoned logs in Balatero last October 2.

This was the second accomplishment for the police who intercepted a truck laden with more or less 500 board feet of illegal lumber last September 23.

Mayor Hubbert Dolor and Police Chief Art Catalbas are stepping up drive against illegal logging after various sectors had voiced alarm over the unrelenting destruction of the rainforest.

Although no one was apprehended, the total amount of the recovered logs will reach more than 40,000 pesos, a big blow to



the illegal loggers.

The remaining rainforest is only 20 percent according to Michael Wolf, a German resident who has been actively campaigning to save the rainforest for many years.

Wolf said that almost all the BIG trees are gone, lost to illegal logging.

ED: To the POLICE, Thank you for a job well done. WE hope that your efforts will put an end to illegal logging...

Raps filed against Mayor... from p.1

reservoir.

"Pinahihiram lang ng mga Kalaw ang property apparently for public consumption, pero kung private entity na ang gagamit at pagkakakitaan, ibang usapan na yan," Malcontento said.

Malcontento said the complaint aroused in January when Dolor started to announce to the public through local newspapers that he will enter into a business

partnership with private proponents in rehabilitating the water system of Puerto Galera.

"Actually the project is laudable because it will benefit the people, but along the way, procedures have been disregarded including the bidding procedures, no municipal resolution for the mayor to negotiate and most importantly, they are giving a private property which is

not even owned by the municipality," Malcontento said.

In the proposed memorandum of agreement, which is considered in a final planning stage, the financier of the said project will be the municipal government which violates the Build, Operate and Transfer ruling, said Malcontento.

By: Arnell Ozaeta, Philippine Star, September 23, 2008

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Bantay Dagat: On the frontline of marine conservation

The Bantay Dagat was created to help in the enforcement of ordinances and laws related to the protection of Puerto Galera's marine resources. Composed of a small group of fishermen, the Bantay Dagat figured in the news two years ago when they caught several illegal fishermen. That time they were upset with the government, since allegedly a former official was the one giving permission to the illegal fishermen.

Now the Bantay Dagat is again at the frontline of marine conservation, going after illegal fishing. Several fishermen from Minolo and another bunch from Batangas were caught near Escarceo Point. The fishermen were photographed, fined and later presented to Mayor Hubert Dolor. The Mayor gave them a stern warning. The fish-

ermen coming from poor families were set free but their fishing implements including the compressor were confiscated.

Like any organization, the Bantay Dagat needs funds to be able to function effectively. Two years ago, municipal officials promised them that some funds from the Environmental User Fee (EUF) will be given for the operations of the Bantay Dagat. This promise might not be fulfilled as the remaining EUF funds have been budgeted for the Sewerage Treatment Plant of Sabang. However, Mayor Dolor said that members of the Bantay Dagat are getting an honorarium of 500 pesos a month.

The government passed the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) ordinance which defined activities allowed within said areas.

The MPA was meant to protect the spawning and breeding areas so that more fish will be caught in the outlying areas. It was also meant to protect the popular dive sites which are the major draw to Puerto Galera for divers from all over the world.

Clearly the 500 pesos a month allowance is small but it does help a lot.

The municipal government must encourage volunteerism especially from the fishermen.

More funding should be allocated for the operations of the Bantay Dagat. They need fast motorboats, fuel, binoculars, camera and others which will help while they monitor the seas against illegal fishing.

Both the government and the private sector especially dive aficionados should help the Bantay Dagat.

FSL boats now run on biodiesel

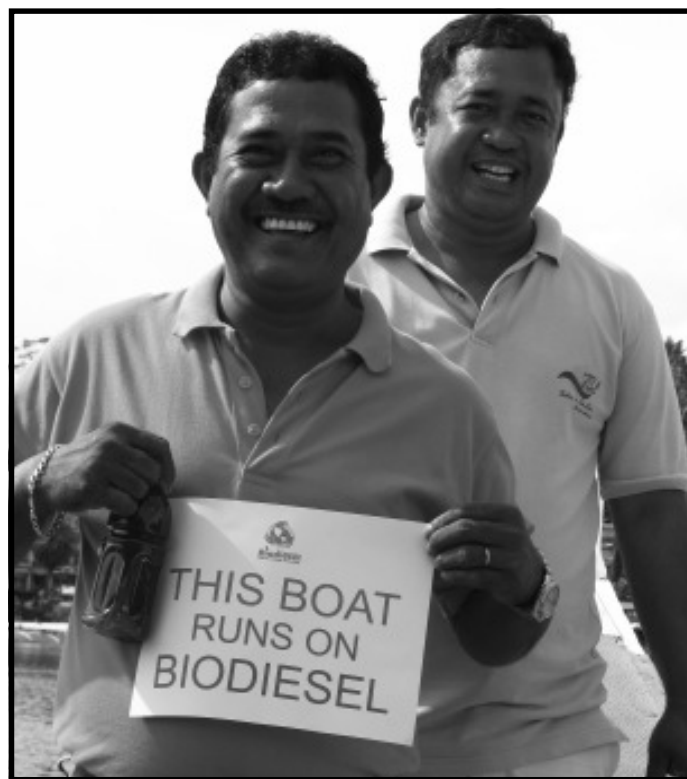
A shipping company has recently started using biodiesel on its motorized bancas. Rockey Ilagan of Father and Son Shipping Lines (FSL) said that three of their ferries are now using a mixture of 70 percent biodiesel and 30 percent conventional diesel as fuel.

"Using biodiesel marks our firm commitment to help the preservation of the environment and to continue our tradition of innovativeness," said Ilagan who is soon graduating with a Master's Degree on Business Administration from the prestigious Asian Institute of Management.

Biodiesel is the name of a clean burning alternative fuel, produced from domestic, renewable resources. Biodiesel contains no petroleum, but it can be mixed with diesel to power diesel engines with little or no modifications. It is better for the environment because it is made from renewable resources and has lower emissions compared to petroleum diesel.

Ilagan said that aside from the benefits to the environment, their company will also be spending much less on fuel. A liter of fuel-grade biodiesel cost more or less one-half the cost of petroleum diesel or approximately 20 pesos per liter. Ilagan added that because of the reduction of the price of fuel, FSL might also lower the price of the ticket. The fare from Puerto Galera to Batangas increased to 260 pesos per person during the hike in fuel prices last month.

Ilagan said that he first conjured of using biodiesel on his



Councilor Kardo Ilagan, a strong adherent of biodiesel and Pablito Balmes onboard Penguin 3 powered by biodiesel

boats while on a workshop sponsored by his school in Baguio city. He and long-time friend and classmate Ivan Lim, son of the owner of Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan, were thinking of ways to reduce the operating costs of their businesses. Ivan Lim manages the new Dos Palmas Resort at Verde Island.

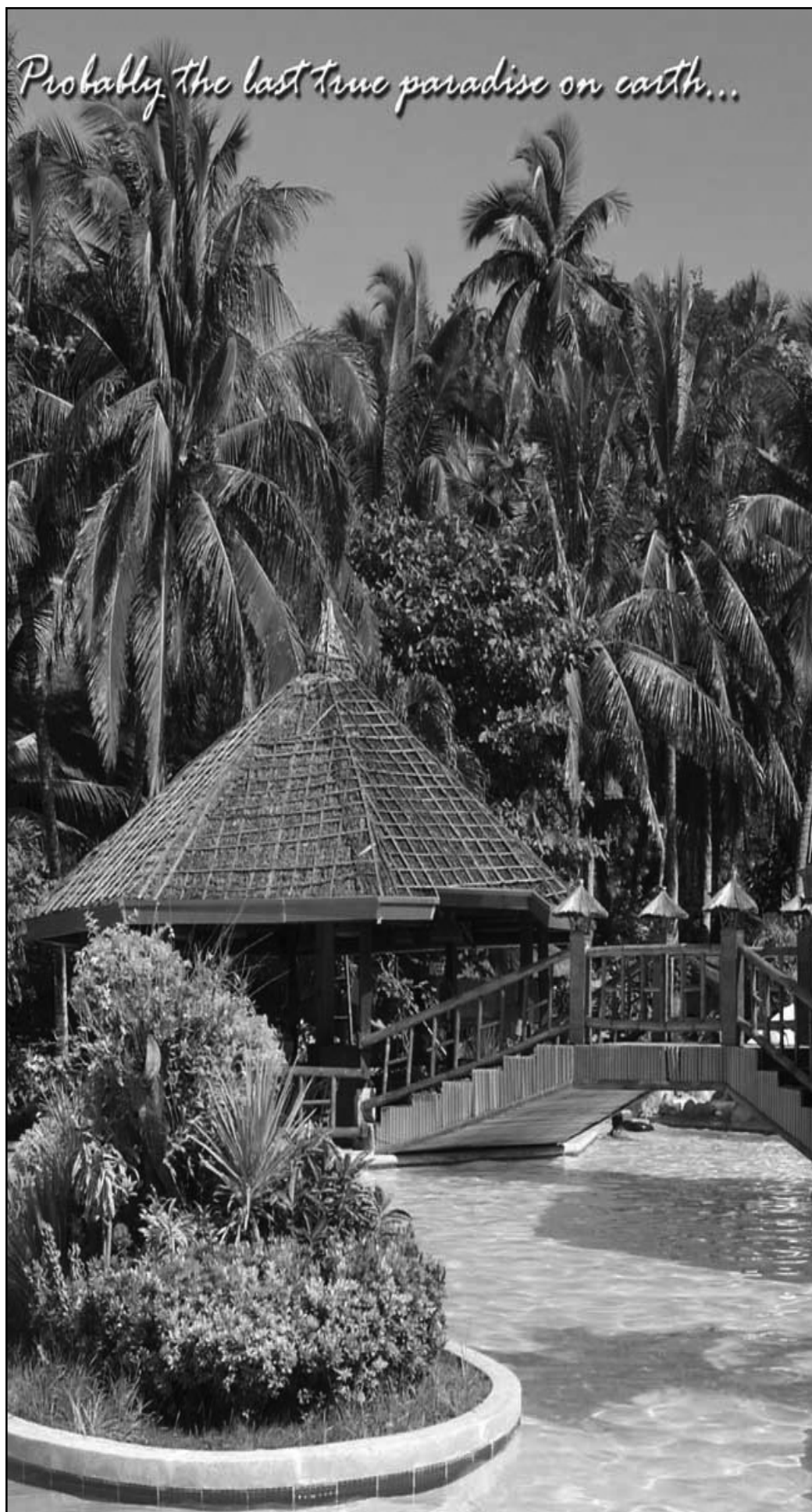
Ilagan said that both FSL and Dos Palmas rely heavily on diesel to power up the boats in the case of FSL and the Resort in the case of Dos Palmas.

The classmates began researching on biodiesel and met a leading Filipino scientist who specializes on biodiesel. A short time after that, they invested on a processing plant that now

produces biodiesel for both FSL and Dos Palmas.

Ilagan said that the biodiesel that they are now producing will only be for the use of their business. He said that there are many regulations if they embark on a commercial venture. However, Mr. Rockey Ilagan and Mr. Ivan Lim are seriously considering producing electricity for the province of Mindoro using biodiesel. They believe they can sell electricity to ORMECO at a much lower cost than power plants using petroleum diesel.

The two friends have great ideas for their business that will also benefit the people of Mindoro.



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*Noe Lineses SILVER BULLET***Garbage problem, abusive officials and more on the water project**

Let me start with the water rehabilitation project. We all know about the case filed by Kiddo Kalaw against the project. It is in the court now so we cannot comment on the issue. The municipal legal consultant, Atty. Edilberto Bunquin said that the lawyer of Kalaw should be more prudent when speaking to the media and that all statements pertaining to the case should be articulated in the proper forum. To speak about the merits of the case might give undue media mileage and pre-empt what's on the mind of the reading public.

Many people now are wondering why water is becoming inadequate. There are theories formed mostly against Mayor Dolor. We spoke with the head of the waterworks office and he confirmed what has been predicted long time ago by many environmentalists. That sooner or later our water supply will be affected by the unrelenting destruction of the rainforest.

We have to be more resolute in protecting the watershed area. Remember the slogan, when the buying stops, the killing can too. The slogan can also apply to the rainforest of Puerto Galera. Those who buy illegal logs are as guilty as the ones cutting the trees. We have to make a concerted effort to protect the rainforest if we want water to continue to flow in our faucets.

Garbage may soon take the top spot in the list of Puerto Galera's most pressing problems. Soon it will be high season again and the volume of rubbish will be too much for the current disposal system.

When Balatero said "No More" to garbage, the big barangays, namely, White Beach, Sabang and Poblacion, were ask to

separately handle their garbage. The barangays spent thousands of pesos to dig holes and take care of their waste.

But the question is: Shouldn't the municipal government be handling the garbage problems of the barangays since we do pay garbage fees to the municipality?

The Mayor had announced several months ago that there will a new dumpsite somewhere in Dulangan. Councilor Leo Persia said that the Council had authorized the Mayor to use 60% of the EUF funds for the purchase of the property for the new dumpsite. However, to make this into a landfill they would need heavy equipment which will be paid by the loan from Land Bank. This might take time as the Vice Mayor and some of the councilors are totally against the loan.

We have received disturbing reports that some barangay officials are turning into bullies even going further as to verbally and physically assault some of their constituents. The victims are too afraid to file a complaint against these officials who normally carry a sidearm.

To the victims, do not be afraid. There are many ways to get justice. One, you can file a complaint in Sangguniang Bayan. The Council had already suspended a Barangay Captain because of complaints from his constituents.

Two, you can file a complaint to the Ombudsman or in any court.

Three, we can refer you to our friends in the media who will be too happy to expose these abusive officials. Both ABS-CBN and GMA have TV programs that make public officials account for their misdeeds.

Concerns on EUF funds and the SWTP

When the Environmental User Fee (EUF) Ordinance was approved in January 2007, people thought of how lucky the new Mayor was. He will have at his disposal millions of pesos for environmental projects.

Halfway through his 3-year term, Mayor Hubbert Dolor now has more than 9 million pesos EUF funds, way below the initial estimate of 50 million pesos. However, the amount which is expected to reach 10 million pesos is still a lot of money.

When the term of the members of the Coastal Resource Management Board (CRMB) ended last September, many issues regarding the Environmental User Fee came out in the open.

The CRMB was supposed to play the leading role in the implementation of the EUF ordinance. Former CRMB member Kiddo Kalaw is saying that the CRMB is just a rubber stamp for the local government.

"It is more like a clerk checking that the t's are crossed and the i's dotted," says Kalaw.

Kalaw claims that the EUF ordinance is in conflict with the ordinance that created the CRMB.

Under the functions of the CRMB, it is the Board that "prepare and approve" the budget as well as handle the disbursement with the concurrence of the Sangguniang Bayan. This pertains to funds derived from the EUF.

However, in the EUF ordinance it is the Mayor that is in-charge of allocation and disbursement of EUF funds and the CRMB shall only perform a recommendatory function.

So, what happens if the Mayor disagrees with the CRMB recommendation?

Kalaw contends that this will not happen.

Kalaw enumerated the procedure: 1) The Mayor Allocates the EUF funds based on the purposes identified in the Ordinance; 2) The CRMB has no choice but to recommend the allocation as long as it is based on the purposes identified in the Ordinance; 3) The Council approves the allocation and recommendation.

Kalaw who recently sought a Temporary Restraining Order against the water rehabilitation project of Mayor Dolor said that the Mayor had already decided on where the EUF funds will be spent.

Mayor Hubbert Dolor reportedly wants the EUF to be allocated as follows: 65% will go to the Sabang Sewerage Treatment Plant (SWTP), 20% will be the share of the barangays, 10% will be the Endowment Fund and 5% will go to the General Fund of the municipality.

Another former CRMB member, Romeo Roxas, also voiced his concerns on the EUF allocation.

Roxas asked: "If the EUF funds are 100% allocated, where are we going to get the funds for other urgent projects...for the rest of

Puerto Galera's environmental protection and management?"

Kalaw said: "The remaining EUF are allocated for the SWTP for the next 10 years. That means no funding for White Beach, Muelle and the rainforest. The local government is to undertake a 170 million pesos water rehabilitation and expansion (project) plus 107 million pesos for the SWTP. This is all for water supply and waste management infrastructure. What good are these projects if there is not enough water supply from the mountains by the time these projects are finished?"

Environmentalists had warned that the continued destruction of the rainforest will result to a weakening of the water supply.

Kalaw and Roxas are asking the Mayor not to commit 65% for the SWTP of Sabang. However, in the recent Malayang Dayalogo (Open Forum) in Big Lalaguna, the Mayor defended the project as an absolute necessity. The Mayor said that tourists go to Sabang to swim and dive and that the sea must be free from coliform contamination to make sure more tourists will come to Puerto Galera.

The Mayor said that the "treasure" of Sabang rests in its beautiful dive sites.

The Mayor also allayed the concerns of Big Lalaguna residents saying that there will be no foul odor and that the noise from the generators would be minimal.

The Mayor would like to enter into an agreement with a private corporation under a Build-Operate-Transfer scheme for the SWTP. The Mayor reportedly will use 65% of the EUF collections to pay for the SWTP over a period of 10 years.

Roxas posed the following questions:

Is the SWTP the only priority area to allocate almost all unallocated collections? How about White Beach, Balatero, Sto. Niño, Muelle, Poblacion and the other tourist destinations?

While waiting for the 10 years to expire, do we have funds, plans, programs and policies so we can prevent other places from becoming the next Sabang?

We agree 100% that the government should address the wastewater problem NOW. But allocating 65% of the EUF on one project might not be judicious as this would mean ignoring other pressing environmental concerns, like the annihilation of the rainforest, the mounting garbage problem, siltation, et cetera. And who is asking for the 65% - is it the private partner who will also rehabilitate the water system? If they are, then perhaps we are giving them too much of the pie.

When you seek medical advice and your are not satisfied with the diagnosis, one normally ask for a second opinion.

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Forum for Visitors and Residents of Puerto Galera

ED: The Community Forum of our website, www.puertogalera.org, is receiving many posts from its members and we believe, although sometimes we do not agree with the opinions of the forumers, that many of the ideas and views expressed are interesting and newsworthy. If you wish your views to be published in this section, join the forum and share your ideas. A Forumer may use a nickname to protect his/her identity.

Continuing adult education in barangays

BY: TAGABUNDOK

I believe that education is not an exclusive exercise of academic institutions but should be quite accessible through sincere and creative ways of organizing people of many backgrounds to share their know-how with each other. And this is usually possible through private clubs, civic groups, town councils and even caring private individuals.

In my many years as a resident of Puerto Galera, I have observed a great number of people upland and what they had shared with me—their dreams, hopes and wishes are stifled because to them it seems of a lack of formal education.

So allow me some proposals.

1) That a continuing adult education program be initiated on the barangay level. Any council person interested or well versed with education procedures be in charge of the program. He/she will coordinate with schools of /near the barangay to appoint or recruit volunteer teachers to conduct weekly classes—either by shifts or on regular basis.

This council person will also coordinate with other resource speakers to give lectures once in a while on pertinent subject matters (which will be listed later) and/or other educational needs of the program (books, equipment, etc.).

2) That classes be held on Sundays (perhaps 2-4pm—after general obligations are met and before any party can probably start). But this should also be flexible depending on the general profile of the participants'

professions. If they are all involved in tourism then middle of the week would probably be more appropriate. But that would entail another private person to conduct classes and not public school teachers.

Since it be a 2-hour session, first half will solely concentrate on the learning of basic English with three important components: a) conversational grammar skills, b) vocabulary building and correct pronunciation and c) reading comprehension.

Second half of the session will delve on more practical subject matters. What I can see is much needed to be learned: budgeting, management, natural sciences, nutrition, family planning, child-rearing, herbal medicine, culinary arts, hygiene and grooming, horticulture, animal care, home agriculture and welfare aside from other community issues like garbage and waste disposal.

A strong cultural appreciation program is also suggested. The sharing of indigenous songs whether it be of any province the adults come from should be encouraged. Expats with knowledge of their countries of origin should be invited to give talks of their cultures and beliefs to expand the participants' understanding of other cultures outside of Mindoro.

3) Teachers and speakers are to be considered on a voluntary basis although to be still compensated through an allowance.

Each enrollee should be asked to pay (or be sponsored) an amount of P5 per session with an ordinary school year

as duration of one complete program.

An average class should be composed of at least 5 people with a maximum number of 20 for a more personal educational assistance. More than that would require another class set-up.

The revenue of course will be divided between allowances, tokens and use of whatever utilities. I have thought up of P5 basic because I have also thought of Mangyans who would want to avail of these educational opportunities.

4) A reading section is also recommended as part of the learning center set-up. Books, newspapers and other magazines may be solicited through private organizations (I already have a contact from New Jersey and another in Manila—both waiting for confirmations).

As part of empowering the adult students, sharing of personal know-hows, hobbies and researches should be required. Because of a diverse range of topics may not allow the right speaker to be available to lecture, the students can also be taught how to do research via Internet and/or hand-on experimentations then report it before the class.

5) As for the physical set-up, the barangay halls, chapels, private homes, etc can be used. It really will depend on the creativity and resourcefulness of the people in the barangay. All is needed is a blackboard and chalk as a start then perhaps book cabinets can later be added once the books and reading materials come in.

Forumers urgent call: We need a hospital!

yankee: if the mayor can borrow 43 million can you build from that amount a hospital? any contractors who can answer this? I am sure many other things needed inside can be donated from foreign countries maybe Willy Stellander can help us as well. when we all go behind this project i am sure some thing get build. Right now i see many foreigners leaving because they get older and feel not comfortable in PG. just asking i have no idea the cost of a small hospital, thanks

majikshrum: I'm sure 43 million pesos is more than enough for this town to build a decent modern hospital with a competent staff.

With that kind of amount, even a 20 room hospital can be built.

We have a mayor who is a doctor, don't you think it is absurd for his constituents to be shouting about building of a hospital? Don't you think that this should have been his no. 1 priority, or this should have been his campaign slogan?

People are dying in this town because they cannot get the proper medical attention they need.

If you get into an accident or you get seriously ill, pray that you reach calapan or batangas or else you are screwed.

bastarasta: Why dream small if we can dream big. I mean, this government can create projects worth 170M! just for water, why not, even half of

it for a life-saving institution.

Travelling more than an hour with bumpy roads to calapan or a risky sea travel to Batangas with your child or wife gasping to death, with a crying heart; you may wish to die first than expecting your loving child not reaching that hospital before he/she can even manage to close her eyes and finally say goodbye. No amount of comfort can cover the pain, agony, regret when somebody you love die in your arms...

Is that the right moment that you will start cursing and blaming the world?

But today is the right, precious time that we can create a loud clear voice and for our government to act before any other projects and before more parents and loved ones of Puerto Galera suffer the most unfortunate, isolated fate of hopelessness from this place everyone calls a paradise.

promdi: First you need a land where you build a hospital. Price of land in PG is very expensive. I heard that hospital is Mayor's priority and he trying to get the Locsins to donate the land.

Next you need to secure permits from more than 20 agencies. I heard the Mayor is doing this already.

The money is the third.

Building a hospital is not easy. It takes time.

netmagus: I agree with you all that the hospital should be top priority. Danny Enriquez

told me that Mayor Dolor is talking to the Locsins re: the land for the hospital. The land is located near the boundary of Sto. Nino and Balatero. That would be an ideal site. If there is a land, then the next question would be financing the project.

Loan? Build Operate Transfer? If it is BOT, we need to entice a project proponent who will fund the project. If there was project proponent like in the water rehab project then that would be the best option. But it seems the hospital is less inviting than the water rehab project. No takers.

If it is a loan, it will need a feasibility study - how will the government make the hospital sustainable... this is a long process, but I agree, that in case there is no project proponent for BOT then the Mayor should consider borrowing money from Land Bank... however, if you borrow money the bank requires collateral - municipal properties, IRA share, EDF - which would mean that the Mayor will no longer have any project for the remaining years of his term as the funds will all be tied up paying for the interest/principal of the loan.

The Mayor is in a very difficult situation.

But I believe that the hospital is far better project than any of those projects that they are thinking for the Land bank loan.. We need the hospital more than the convention center, dormitory, gymnasium etc.

Letter to the Editor

Kudos to Mayor's Cup

I accompanied Tony Taylor to the Gym last Monday (September 15) afternoon to witness the opening of the Mayor Dolor basketball tournament. It was a real surprise to me to see practically all the Municipal employees perform their acts which must have taken weeks to prepare. All skits were very professionally done and what was revealing to me was how the Mayor

was able to provide the environment seen in this show of camaraderie and fun.

I'm sure this attempt to strengthen the bonding among public servants will result in a better culture of public service for the benefit of the public.

My Congratulations to Mayor Dolor.

Danding Taylor



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High power rates ... from p. 1

had been the cause of the brownouts which happened when Puerto Galera's demand reached more than the capacity of the 5mVA transformer.

It's now October and there are many power outages. When asked why we are getting brownouts even on a clear sunny day, ORMECO branch manager, Mr. Aceveda said that NAPOCOR is to blame.

Aceveda said there is no problem with the distribution lines and that the problem is with 69 kV transmission line of NAPOCOR. He added that the tripping off happens when NAPOCOR sends power to the transmission line.

Before electricity reaches the home, it passes 3 stages, namely, generation, transmission and distribution. Each of these stages is managed by different companies and brownout can occur at any of the 3 stages. Generation is handled by NAPOCOR and Independent Power Producers (IPP) like MIRANT. Transmission is controlled by NAPOCOR or TRANSCO and ORMECO handles distribution.

Businessmen are complaining that ORMECO is not being responsive enough in addressing the problem. They say ORMECO earns more than 1 billion pesos a year and yet could not ensure a stable, reliable supply of electricity.

Every time there is a brownout, the damage to business is worsened when other utilities like Internet and cellular telephone go offline. The Fortnightly Journal was delayed primarily because of the outages.

Resort owners complain of spending thousands of pesos to run their back-up generator. Worse is when appliances and other electrical equipments are damaged due to intermittent brownouts. ORMECO said they cannot be held liable for damages to appliances.



Brownouts happen when most needed

Nicanor Villaseñor of PHESI once suggested that to minimize the brownouts, Puerto Galera should get a direct connection to the proposed wind farm or any power plant that will be based here. Rockey Ilagan of FSL shipping lines said that an investor will be coming in to build a power plant here in Puerto Galera and that the generators will be using biodiesel which will be much cheaper than petroleum diesel.

Municipal officials should

hold a "Power Summit" similar to the "Water Summit" last January to discuss debate and find a solution to the current power crisis.

We call on the Mayor and the members of the Sangguniang Bayan to invite representatives from NAPOCOR, ORMECO, PHESI, the proponent of the hydro-electric power plant, Rockey Ilagan, resort owners, businessmen and other stakeholders. Let's get together and find a solution to a common problem.

Good news from ORMECO

Now that brownouts are a frequent occurrence, the good news that people would like from ORMECO is when the brownouts will stop. But the good news is not about the power outages.

When President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo began distributing 500 pesos to every Meralco consumers who use up 100 kWh in one month, many people from the provinces began asking if they will also get the same treat. Several months later the National Electrification Administration (NEA) told ORMECO that their consumers will also be given the same subsidy. The budget will come from the excess in VAT collections.

Roman Araño of ORMECO

said that a consumer whose billing is below 960 pesos will get a bill reduction of 500 pesos. The grant is not monthly but one time only.

Another good news came about also because of events that transpired in Manila. Remember the war between Meralco and GSIS which later resulted to Meralco refunding consumers for the meter deposit. NEA again told ORMECO that it must give back the deposit paid by residential consumers for their electric meters. The amount is close to 31 million pesos which ORMECO is negotiating to be deducted from the monthly bill instead of outright cash payment.

Water, now a major problem

When Mayor Hubbert Dolor announced that the water rehabilitation will soon be underway, many people began to imagine a stronger, more reliable water supply in the coming days. But one month after the launching of the water rehabilitation project, Sinandigan, Sabang and even Poblacion residents began to experience water shortages.

A Sabang businessman said that it was virtually impossible to operate his restaurant with no water.

As more and more people complain and the waterworks office not able to fully give an answer, many theories began to form as to the reason behind the water problem.

A Big Lalaguna resident, in one forum where Mayor Hubbert Dolor was present, accused the waterworks office of favoring some establishments and houses that do not experience water shortage. Another from Sabang said that he is wondering why his neighbor has water and he has not.

In the community forum at puertogalera.org, many are suspecting that there might be a sinister plan to pressure the people to agree to the agreement between the municipal government and the water consortium who will undertake the rehabilitation of the water system amounting to an unprecedented



Philanthropy during hard times: Dieter Schwab, a German married to a local lass from Sinandigan, generously shares his water to neighbors. Dieter gets his water from a deep well or buys from a water supplier to fill up his tank.

170 million pesos. The municipal government strongly denies the allegation.

Edwin Macatangay, head of the waterworks office said that the reason for the water shortages is because of the diminishing water from the source. Macatangay added that they could not fill up the main tank as there is less water now flowing out of the spring.

Because of the lack of water they have to schedule the supply of water to Sabang and Sinandigan. Macatangay denies that there is water shortage in Poblacion.

Municipal officials also insist that the old pipes should be replaced with bigger pipes

to cope with the growing demand for water.

Environmentalists have warned that the unrelenting destruction of the rainforest which is also the watershed area will result to scarce water supply for the entire municipality. However, many people have turned a blind eye and continue to ignore the problem. Now that the water supply is becoming the number one issue, more attention will be given to the watershed area.

It would be a futile investment if the government spend millions for the water system and later find out that there is not enough water coming out of the spring.

Traffic enforcers, traffic violators

One of the accomplishments of the incumbent Mayor was when he introduced a Makati City type traffic enforcers in small-town Puerto Galera. Even the uniform is the same as Makati City. I do not know if Puerto Galera now has the illusion of becoming a city but sometimes applying the rules for a city might not be suitable to a small town like ours. And when you have traffic enforcers who think they are like LTO enforcers then suddenly the Mayor's accomplishment is becoming a liability.

I've personally experienced how the enforcers

harass motorbike riders when they forget to wear a helmet. Wearing a helmet is first and foremost a personal choice.

Granted that it is their duty to enforce the ordinance. The problem is when they are the ones violating the ordinance.

I saw a traffic enforcer in his uniform riding in a motorcycle not wearing a helmet and two other enforcers who just allowed him to pass by right in front of them in the center of town.

To the Mayor, is that fair? And if it ain't fair what will you do about it Sir?



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When a dream comes true... from page 8

money. "That helped me to complete my schooling. If I didn't become a singer, at least I would have something to help my family with," said Garcia.

In 2006 after graduating, Garcia came to Dubai to work for a German automotive company. "It was great job and I have fond memories of Dubai."

Tough decision

In Dubai, Garcia would gamely sing in karaoke bars not only to have fun with friends but to nurture a lifelong dream of becoming a singer. "In my heart, I was just patiently waiting for a chance. This burning passion to become a professional singer was so strong that I just couldn't put it out. In Dubai I was happy with my job and was also helping my family. Life was good but I knew it wasn't all there was."

Something bigger was in store for Garcia. And true enough, the opportunity of a lifetime came when she was accepted as one of the scholars of Pinoy Dream Academy (PDA) Season Two — a reality celebrity search aired on Philippine TV.

Leaving her stable job in Dubai to pursue her ambition was a tough decision for Garcia. "It was a very difficult choice considering I was all set in Dubai. But my dream was big-

ger than my emotion, so I followed my heart and became a scholar."

And that made all the difference for her. The PDA experience, she admits, changed her in many ways. From a not-so-confident but promising talent, Garcia bloomed into a fantastic performer. "I distinctly remember one of the judges telling me that I had the potential to become an international singer and that my voice and my looks had a cosmopolitan appeal. I could be singing well on stage and making people sing along with me, no matter where they were from."

Competition

Apart from becoming more confident, Garcia also learned how to temper her emotions. Living with people with different personalities in a house that had cameras all over the place was, according to her, a character-building experience. She made friends with housemates Cris and Sen, but had to deal with really competitive contestants who were all determined to win the big prize.

"We all knew it was a competition but that didn't stop me from making friends. That was my nature, and inside I knew I needed friends who could support me and whom I could support in return."

On the final night of the show, four scholars took to the life-changing stage. They had personally and professionally transformed over the course of their stay in the academy, but that moment defined their careers.

Garcia sang I am Changing and though she admitted she had some off-key moments, it was a performance the judges and the audience would remember. "The journey has just begun for me. I was a bit sad because the whole experience ended, but also excited because I am looking forward to bigger and better things in my life. Now, my dream has come true and there could not be any bigger prize than that," she says.

Five things about Liezel Garcia

Musical influence: Mariah Carey, Beyonce Knowles, Kyla, Lani Misalucha, Jaya, Sarah Geronimo and Ella Mae Saison.

Musical instrument she plays: Guitar (basic chords)

Musical instrument she'd like to learn: Piano and drums.

Greatest achievement: "When I graduated and when I was chosen as a finalist in Pinoy Dream Academy."

Biggest frustration: "I want to be a model but I know I'll never be one because I'm too small."

Song of my life: *On The Side Of Angels*.



The Walkabout

Around Puerto Galera in 30 days

comparing the number of guests who attended the Vice Mayor's party with the number of people who will be attending Mayor Dolor's November 3 birthday bash. The election after all is a numbers game.

Going back to the Kaaldawan, the Mayor said that he did not solicit money but had allocated funds from municipal coffers for the event. During the time of his uncle, the government spends hundreds of thousands of pesos and solicits from resort owners and businessmen for the Kaaldawan which coincided with the former Mayor's birthday.

The Kaaldawan Festival showcases Mangyan arts and culture. Expect Mangyan dancing and cultural performances from local schools. You can also buy Mangyan handicraft products, like beer holsters, baskets and other souvenir items.

The venue was also transferred to Baclayan, the traditional village of the Mangyans. The Mayor, participants and visitors will assemble near the Candava grocery store at 5 in the morning and from there hike all the way to Baclayan.

The program will start at 8

in the morning. The Mayor will also launch the Mangyan Cultural and Recreation Center. Everybody is enjoined to donate 100 pesos which will go to the Mangyan Iraya Cooperative Center as seed money for their livelihood projects.

After the day event, the Kaaldawan culminates in a Concert-For-A-Cause by renowned Filipino pop music artist Joey Ayala in the Municipal Gymnasium at 7 in the evening. The price of the ticket is just 30 pesos, proceeds will also go to the Mangyan Cooperative Center.

Joey Ayala is well known for his style of music that combines the sounds of Filipino ethnic instruments with modern pop music. His professional music career started when he released an album recorded in a makeshift-studio in 1982. To date, he has released six albums.

Some of the Filipino ethnic instruments Ayala is known to use include the two-stringed *Hegalong* of the T'boli people of Mindanao and the 8-piece gong set, *Kulintang* melodic gong-rack of the predominantly Muslim peoples of the southern part of the country. He also uses modern instruments in his

music, such as the electric guitar, bass guitar, and drums.

He is one of the few Filipino contemporary songwriters who insists on putting his creative energies at the service of cultural/social development.

Moving on. Have you heard of the Afro-Asia Educare Foundation? Well, it is a Danish Foundation which collect computers from Danish schools and distribute them to schools in the Philippines and Africa. They recently donated hundreds of second-hand computers to local schools. Hans Nielsen, who was made an adopted son of Puerto Galera and Willy Stellander are the founders of the organization. Stellander said another shipment of computers will be arriving before the year ends which will again be distributed to the schools.

Moving on. The Coast Guard Auxilliary of Puerto Galera during the International Clean-up day last September 19 had a successful underwater clean-up campaign participated by 35 divers from 13 different countries. They collected 50 sacks of garbage weighing nearly 500 kilos.

Moving on. The PTCA of the Puerto Galera Academy is holding a Dinner-For-A-Cause on November 1 at the Municipal Gym at 7 pm; there will be live band and Videoke.

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When a dream comes true

By Vincent Anthony Garcia, Gulf News Report

Liesel Garcia has fulfilled her biggest wish — she became one of the top five finalists of Pinoy Dream Academy. Sure, she wasn't the big winner, but that didn't matter for the pretty and talented lass from Puerto Galera — a place known more as a hotbed of foreign tourists than a haven for talented singers.

For Garcia, it was enough that she finished one of the final four performers in the academy out of the more than five thousand hopefuls who auditioned.

Growing up on the island, Garcia always dreamt of making it big. She would wake up at five in the morning to practice singing with her grandmother - the person she credits for her singing talent. "I remember singing in public at the age of three; since then, thanks to my lola, I have been trying



Liesel Garcia of Balatero

to perfect my art with the hope of making it big in showbusiness," she said nostalgically.

Though singing took a backseat while she was in school, she would perform at small public events and competitions for a little fame and prize

>>> on page 7



The Walkabout

Around Puerto Galera in 30 days

Hello. Many events happening this October. But before that—Do you know that President Gloria Arroyo would have been our guest in Puerto Galera together with more than 450 visitors from Region IV last October 14? The event was the Regional Peace and Order Council meeting but because White Beach and the rest of Puerto Galera do not have a conference hall that can hold more than 400 people, the organizers moved the venue to Calapan City.

Had it been held here, lots of pesos would have been earned by the resorts in White Beach? This brings to fore the need for a large convention center in Puerto Galera for us to host huge meetings which are bringing a lot of money to places like Davao, Palawan, Tagaytay and Boracay.

Now if only the Mayor will consider relocating his proposed convention center in White Beach rather than on top of the public market, it would make a lot of sense.

Anyway, Tamaraw Beach Resort is building a conference hall that can possibly house more than 700 people.

Moving on. Puerto Nirvana Resort owner Romeo Roxas is making sleepy Poblacion livelier with large-screen movies and a live band.

There are a variety of shows from

Tuesday until Sunday. The show starts with a 6:30 showing of a movie followed by acoustic music and then performance by King Solomon's band. Guests will also have a choice of Karaoke singing, ballroom dancing and disco dancing before the band plays.

The King Solomon's band is headed by renowned singer Boy Sullivan of the legendary Big 3 Sullivan which made hits in the early 70's.

Boy Sullivan now 72 years old still sings quite well and plans to teach local musicians to play in his band. Interested persons may apply directly to Boy Sullivan at the Puerto Nirvana Resort.

Those that wish to experience Oldies music can call the Resort for reservation at 287-3408. They will even arrange transportation for you.

Moving on. Coral Cove is giving one night free stay to guest who will stay for 3 consecutive nights. The promo will last until the end of October. Also, the Veranda restaurant at Coral Cove serves delicious oven-baked pizza. Try it and don't forget their specialty, Indian Curry Buffet happening every Saturday.

Moving on. The big Oktoberfest celebration had splintered into smaller parties all over Puerto Galera. La Dusseldorf of MacMac is holding a fine Oktoberfest happening nightly in

Sabang. Macmac is a great host and you will surely experience a great Oktoberfest at La Dusseldorf.

Muelle might have its own Oktoberfest, all depends on the support of San Miguel Beer. The Mayor said he will push for a Muelle Oktoberfest celebration.

Moving on. The October 12 Kaaldawan Iraya was moved to October 25 because of conflict in the schedule with another Mangyan event. The Mayor said this will be a different Kaaldawan with the Mangyans front and center of the celebration. Well there was another Kaaldawan presentation that happened during the October 12 birthday of Vice Mayor Teo Atienza attended by hundreds of Mangyans who feasted with hundreds more Tagalog guests. The Vice Mayor was thankful he survived a mild stroke which got him rushing to Makati Medical Center for treatment.

The Mayor was not at the Vice Mayor's birthday party. We noticed many prominent residents among the crowd but not many barangay and municipal officials. The Vice Mayor will run for Mayor again in 2010 against incumbent Mayor and nephew Hubert Dolor.

One guest said, people will be >>> on page 7

Schedule of Shows



TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY (Ladies Night)		THURSDAY	
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Movie	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Movie/Concert	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Movie
8:00 – 9:00 PM	Acoustic	8:00 – 9:00 PM	Evening Spice	8:00 – 9:00 PM	Acoustic
9:00 – 10:00 PM	Karaoke Singing	9:00 – 10:00 PM	Disco Dancing	9:00 – 10:00 PM	Ballroom
10:00 – 11:30 PM	King Solomon Band	10:00 – 11:30 PM	King Solomon Band	10:00 – 11:30 PM	King Solomon Band/Disco
FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY (Ladies Night)	
6:30 – 8:00 PM	Movie	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Concert	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Movie
8:00 – 9:00 PM	Spice Acoustic	8:00 – 9:00 PM	Acoustic	8:00 – 9:00 PM	Acoustic
9:00 – 10:15 PM	Disco/Karaoke	9:00 – 10:15 PM	Disco/Karaoke	9:00 – 10:00 PM	Karaoke Singing
	Special Talent Contest		Special Talent Contest		
10:20 – 11:30 PM	King Solomon Band	10:20 – 11:30 PM	King Solomon Band	10:00 – 11:30 PM	King Solomon Band
11:30 – 12:30 PM	Evening Spice	11:30 – 12:30 PM	Evening Spice		
12:30 – 1:30 AM	King Solomon Band	12:30 – 1:30 AM	King Solomon Band		

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