

The *This bi-weekly publication is \$1.00*
KASELEHLIE PRESS

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Chuuk students marginalized by Chuuk Department of Education

Auditors say that many schools have no textbooks or planned curriculum

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

Chuuk, FSM—Over 12,000 students were registered to be educated by Chuuk's Department of Education during the 2008-2009 school year, over half again as many as Kosrae's entire population. According to a recently released Office of the National Public Auditor (OPA) report, a good many of Chuuk's students are learning as best they can with no text books whatsoever. Though textbooks have been ordered and are on hand in the Chuuk Department of Education (DOE) warehouse either those text books are not getting to the schools in a timely manner or once they do get there they are stored. Sometimes teachers are not aware that text books are available for their use but sometimes teachers choose not to use text-

books because they don't understand how to teach from them.

OPA released their audit report on Chuuk DOE textbooks and instructional materials on February 9, 2010. The report covered fiscal years 2006 through 2008.

Many of Chuuk's students are suffering academically. The audit team noted that only 10 of 312 (3%) of students from the Chuuk public high schools passed the Spring 2008 College of Micronesia Entrance Test (COMET).

According to an authoritative source outside of the audit report, students of one school in Chuuk scored an average score in 2008 that was "below random" on the COMET test. A "random score" would be the score that a

test taker would be anticipated to make if he or she marked answers at random without looking at the questions. The source said that a school wide average of "below random" is considered to be statistically impossible.

While FSM Public Auditors were conducting a previous audit on procurement activities of the Chuuk Department of Education they found that a significant stash of textbooks in a Chuuk Department of Education warehouse had been received more than eight months prior to that audit. OPA decided then that an audit focusing specifically on textbook and instructional materials should be conducted. The previous audit was published in July of 2009.

See "Chuuk Textbooks" on page 8

In This Issue:

Girls Soccer in Chuuk



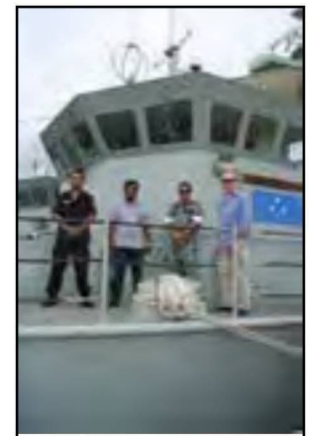
See back page

FSM Hires Economist



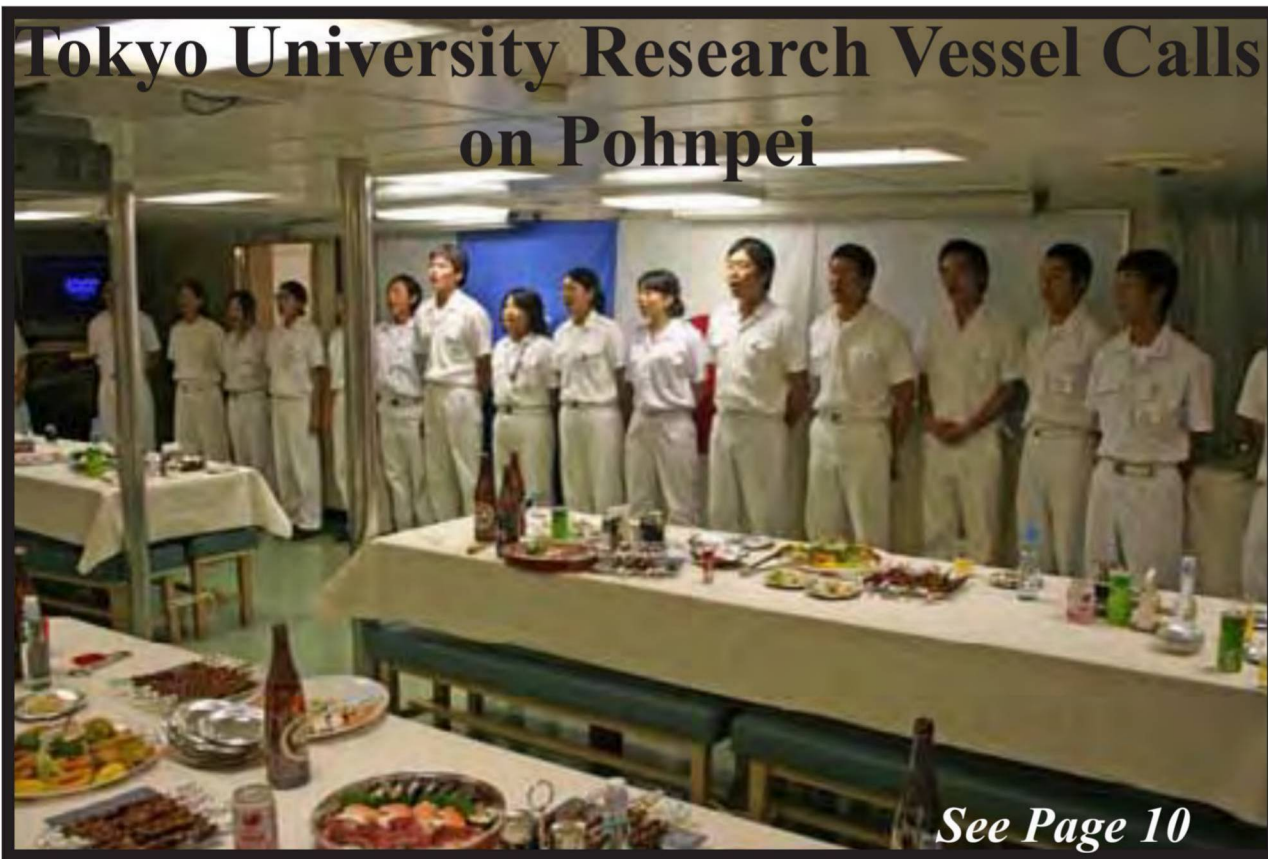
See Page 2

Fighting Transnational Crime



See Page 4

Tokyo University Research Vessel Calls on Pohnpei



See Page 10

Auditors allege executive credit card abuse at Telecom

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

Pohnpei, FSM—A report released by the FSM Office of the National Public Auditor (OPA) on February 24, 2010 has called into question the corporate credit card usages of FSM Telecommunications, Inc. (FSMTC) executives.

The report was based on an in depth audit conducted by OPA of FSMTC's credit

card expenditures made during fiscal years 2007, 2008, and eight months of fiscal year 2009. The audit took OPA several months to complete.

FSMTC, a public corporation of the FSM is annually audited by Deloitte and Touche. Their audits, which cover all of FSMTC's financial operations, are generally completed in a few weeks.

During the period under review \$366,963

was charged to corporate credit cards for purposes that included meals, airfare, taxi fares, hotel bills, and purchases of equipment for FSMTC amongst other types of purchases.

Only three officers are issued corporate credit cards. Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Takuro Akinaga had one, as did Chief Operating Officer (COO), John Sohl

See "Telecom Audit" on page 5

FSM Fisheries Observer Training

By *National Oceanic Resource Management Authority*

February 18, 2010-

In support of its mandates to continue to be an effective guardian of living and non-living marine resources in the FSM EEZ, FSM resounded its partnership with the Parties to the Nauru Agreement in their collaborative effort to protect and promote fisheries of common interest in their respective exclusive economic zones (EEZ) by signing onto and adopting the Third Arrangement to implement the Nauru Agreement in May 2008. The Third Implementing Arrangement (3IA), which has also been adopted as part of the Tuna Commission conservation and management measure 2008-01, has four major elements concerning the purse seine fishing in the PNA region. The elements include closure on FAD fishing during July – September, full retention of tuna catch, high seas pockets closure as condition of license to fish in any of the respective PNA EEZs and full observer coverage on the purse seine fishing in the PNA region. The 3IA entered into force on January 01, 2010.

To fully implement the four elements of the 3IA requires the services of fisheries observers and FSM NORMA Fisheries Observer Program, like other members of PNA fisheries observer programs, finds itself in need of more fisheries observers to add to its current pool of observers. FSM NORMA, with the technical and financial support and expertise from the SPC, FFA and WCPFC Fisheries Observer Programs and our good friends from NOAA, has just recently completed the 3rd Fisheries



Photo Taken by: Clement Wichlme

Observer Training, successfully adding 20 more observers, including the first two FSM female observers to the pool.

All trainings followed a certain selection procedure to find and select candidates for the training course. The recent training started out with a total of 127 interested individuals who were tested, shortlisted and interviewed and 21 qualified, who were again assessed and further shortlisted to 16. Two individuals from the previous training course were recruited to this group, in addition to two SPC funded newly hired NORMA Data Entry Staff, Ms. Yvonne Falaiepiy and Ms. Caroline L. Movick. All twenty trainees were certified under the Regional Observer Program (ROP) Standards by SPC and FFA.

The training course lasted for four weeks, starting on January 25, 2010 and ended on February 18, 2010. The training was conducted by Mr. Siosifa Fukofuka (SPC Trainer) as the lead trainer with the training as-

sistance of Mr. Elton Cloudmar and Augustine Jeik (RMI Trainers) and FSM's very own trainer, Mr. Steve Peter. The FSM and RMI trainers have been undergoing training themselves to be trainers as well. They are experienced observers being trained to be trainers themselves in order to conduct their own national observers' trainings when needed. Also contributed to the success of the training were NOAA's Mr. John Kelly and Mr. Joe Arceneaux, FFA's Tim Park and staff of Pohnpei Red Cross with technical, financial and expertise assistances.

Upon completion of the training, NORMA Fisheries Observer Program operates with a pool of 52 observers, including the 14 cadets. NORMA intends to recruit more observers to have at least 100 fisheries observers. The plan therefore is to hold another training before the year ends. It is hoped that if funds are available trainees will be recruited from the other States.

Office of SBOC gets new Economist


FSM Information Services

March 11, 2010

Palikir, Pohnpei—The FSM Office of Statistics, Budget, Overseas Development Assistance and Compact Management (SBOC) has a new Economist working with them in Palikir. His name is Mr. Samuel Brazys and he is originally from the city of Indianapolis in the United States. Mr. Brazys has a strong educational background in Economics as he has graduated from Marquette University with a B.A. Summa Cum Laude in Economics and Political Science, and then from The London School of Economics and Political Science, London UK with a Master of Science degree in Merit in Politics of the World Economy. He also has a Masters of Arts degree in Economics from Indiana University, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Indiana University.

Most recently Mr. Brazys has been an Instructor at Indiana University in the Department of Political Science. The courses he taught include International Political Controversies, WTO Backlash 9/11, Democracy and National Security, and one on Human Rights. An article he wrote called "A Race to Give? The Selective Effectiveness of United States Trade Capacity Building Assistance" is forthcoming in a leading international journal called the Review of International Political Economy and the dissertation that he is currently working on for his Ph.D. is called "Evaluating Trade Capacity Building".

He is already working on several projects in SBOC: a macroeconomic analysis of the amended Compact, a member of a multi-agency Task Force in Chuuk to evaluate the impact of education on the Chuuk economy and on FSM's economy, working with the Budget Division on predicting better revenue forecasts, and is also assisting with writing President Mori's 2010 State of the Nation Address.



The Kaselehlie Press

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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First Presidents of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Summit held on Koror, Palau

By National Oceanic Resource Management Authority

February 25, 2010

Koror, Palau - The First Presidents of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Summit was held on Koror, Republic of Palau on February 25, 2010. PNA is comprised of the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. PNA is a grouping of countries in the Pacific which was established in 1982 to promote cooperation in the conservation and management of the tuna resources that occur within their EEZs. PNA countries' waters account for nearly 60% of the tuna catches in the WCPO and 25% of the global tuna catches supplying the world's tuna canneries and processing facilities.

President Manny Mori arrived in Koror along with other PNA Heads of States to attend the one day historical meeting. This was the first gathering of the PNA Heads of States since PNA was established in 1982. The FSM,

Kiribati, Nauru and Palau were represented by Presidents while Solomon Islands and Tuvalu were represented by their Prime Ministers. Papua New Guinea and Marshall Islands were represented by their Ministers of Fisheries. The meeting was called by President of Palau H.E. Johnson Toribiong to follow up on his statement to the 64th Annual United Nations General Assembly in 2009 in which he called for the establishment of an OPEC-type arrangement to be developed for the PNA to extract greater benefits from the tuna fisheries that occur in PNA waters.

The Leaders delivered statements. In his statement, President Mori emphasized that sustainability of the tuna resources is of paramount importance to FSM and that any cartel type arrangement needs to be carefully considered against national priorities and circumstances. He also confirmed FSM's unequivocal support and unity with the Forum Fisheries Agency as the principal body from which regional fisheries policy is developed.

The Leaders adopted on 25 February the Ko-

ror Declaration, which contains the following agreed principles:

- To effectively conserve and restore highly migratory stocks while maximizing economic returns and explore suitable arrangements for the Parties to control output and limit effort;
- To promote the greater commercial utilization of the tuna resources for the benefit of the Parties, and towards this end, the "Vessel Day Scheme" as adopted for purse seine vessels is hereby confirmed;
- To close off additional high seas areas between 100N and 200S and 1700E and 1400 W in the Western and Central Pacific by prohibiting purse seine vessels licensed by the

Parties from operating in such waters;

- To initiate management practices that will enhance commercial and economic opportunities for the Parties through optimum utilization of the tuna fishery; and
- To proceed with the full assessment for certification of the skipjack fishery to increase the value of the tuna resource;

The Leaders directed their officials to summarize the presentations and identify issues which may be further developed. The Leaders also expressed their appreciation to H.E. Johnson Toribiong, President of Palau and the Government and people of Palau for hosting the Summit.

Correction/Retraction:

In the previous issue we used a headline on the front page that could have been interpreted in a way that we didn't intend. The "In this Issue" headline, "Enpein Bridge Causes Difficulties" could have been interpreted to imply that the allegations in a law suit on which we reported were true. That was not our intention. The "difficulties" we were alluding to are the kind of difficulties that are incurred any time a law suit is filed. It was a poor choice of words for a "teaser" headline and we apologize for any inconvenience to any of the parties.



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Generator Gas 2,500 watt.....	\$ 479. ⁹⁹
Generator Diesel 2,300 watt.....	\$ 699. ⁹⁹
Plate Compactor	\$ 999. ⁰⁰
Concrete Mixer.....	\$ 2,500. ⁰⁰
Air Compressors.....	\$ 59. ⁹⁹ - 99. ⁹⁹
Air Conditioner 9000 btu.....	\$ 499. ⁹⁹
Instant Water Heater.....	\$ 99. ⁹⁹
2 " Water Pump.....	\$ 449. ⁹⁹

Items listed are at an already discounted price, other discounts may not apply.

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Patrol Boats in fight against transnational crime

Press Release of the Micronesian Transnational Crime Unit

In a recent initiative the Micronesian Transnational Crime Unit (M-TCU) has partnered with the FSM National Police Maritime Wing in the fight against transnational crime within the region. This new initiative involves the deployment of M-TCU members on operational patrols with the FSM Patrol Boats in an endeavor to support the collection of information relating to illegal fishing and associated transnational criminal activity.

The M-TCU Police Advisor, Steve Hamilton of the Australian Federal Police said, "This recent partnership with the FSM Patrol Boats has not only provided us with new opportunities to assist the FSM National police in the detection of persons engaged in illegal fishing but it has extended our capabilities in the detection of other illegal activities including transnational crimes such as international narcotics trafficking and people smuggling."

The Micronesian Transnational Crime Unit, located in Pohnpei, is the central hub for the collection of intelligence and the development of investigations relating to transnational crime within the region. It is staffed by members of the FSM National Police, FSM Customs and law enforcement officers from the Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Common-

wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Federal Agent Steve Hamilton of the Australian Federal Police is seconded to the Unit to provide strategic and tactical advice

on transnational crime issues.

It is the focus of the unit to collect and share information relating to transnational crime issues within the Pacific law enforcement

arena with the view to protecting the Pacific communities from the threat of organized and transnational crime. The MTCU receives on-going strong support from the Australian, U.S. and FSM governments.



Captain Stewart PETER - FSM National Police Maritime Wing, Captain Johnny SANTOS FSM National Police - Team Leader - MTCU, Lt. Commander Paul RUHL - Maritime Surveillance Advisor - Australian Navy, Federal Agent Steve Hamilton - MTCU Advisor - Australian Federal Police



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...Telecom Audit

Continued from front page

and the former Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mathias Lawrence. Lawrence resigned in March of 2009 in order to take a position as the CFO of Micronesia Petroleum Corporation. His card was cancelled upon his resignation.

The OPA audit on credit card usage pointed out that the fiscal year 2008 audit performed by Deloitte and Touche mentioned that FSMTC credit cards were used for personal expenses. The audit team quoted from the management letter contained in that audit. "The auditors found that the personal charges were indicated as such and that an accounts receivable record indicated that the employee was being held liable for reimbursing Telecom the amount charged."

OPA's audit listed eight exceptions regarding corporate credit card usages by its management.

While some of the noted exceptions appeared to be open to some level of personal interpretation of policies, others pointed out clear deficiencies in FSMTC's handling of accounting for credit card purchases.

OPA recommended throughout the audit that Board should establish policies that are less open to interpretation.

In the order that they appear in the audit report the eight audit exceptions were:

1. Corporate credit cards were used to pay for dining and entertainment that may be excessive.

The auditor quoted as support for the audit finding from the legislation that established FSMTC who are responsible, "To incur indebtedness for the purpose of expanding and improving telecommunications facilities, to the extent and on such terms as are deemed commercially reasonable by the Corporation."

They also quoted the line from the legislation that says, "The Corporation shall exist and operate solely for the benefit of the public..."

Apparently, the audit team felt that some of FSMTC's expenditures did not comply with those legally mandated responsibilities.

OPA pointed out that one office had meals and entertainment (representation) exceeding \$1000 per month in 23 of 32 months tested. The report listed several functions costing in excess of \$500 per event. One event cost over \$1400. Five other listed events cost over \$1000.

Though OPA did list the purpose for each meal or event it considered to be excessive, it did not list how many people were hosted by the executive whose expenses were called into question.

An audit exception listed later in the audit pointed out that FSMTC did not always document their credit card expenses. It is

possible that because of this OPA could not actually document how many people were at each event though the audit did not specifically say so.

The auditor included a subjective comment regarding this audit exception. "While in the corporate world 'winning and dining' is an expected business practice for a sales-related organization trying to attract corporate customers, this does not apply to Telecom."

OPA said that the FSMTC Board did not establish any limitations on the use of representation funds though it does approve a budget for representation. OPA recommended that a policy be developed, reviewed and approved by the Board that specifies the appropriate guidelines and rules to govern the expenditure of representation funds.

OPA implied that what policies FSMTC had established were essentially weak and ineffective. I did not say that FSMTC violated its own policy regarding representation funds.

2. The executives did not comply with Telecom's Credit Card policy regarding unauthorized charges.

Because the FSMTC policy includes a clause regarding the use of corporate credit cards stating that "unauthorized charges must be reimbursed within 30 days," personal use of the credit cards by the executives became an acceptable practice. During the period under review the auditor noted \$27,698 in personal charges to the credit cards of the executives.

The COO had a balance owing for personal charges at May 31, 2009 exceeding \$7,000. \$3600 of that amount was aged beyond 240 days. The amount owing did not include interest and late fees incurred by FSMTC.

FSMTC CEO Takuro Akinaga said in his response to the audit, dated February 11, 2010 that the COO had, by that time, reimbursed FSMTC for all outstanding credit card charges.

OPA recommended that FSMTC policy be changed to dictate no personal use of the cards but to include a clause for "emergency use" under certain, specified circumstances and to include repayment requirements under such events.

A later note in the audit said that in March 2009, before auditors announced their intentions to perform an audit of executive credit card usage, the Board of Directors already had prohibited personal use of corporate credit cards. The audit never said whether or not any personal credit card charges were made in any of the final two months included in the audit period.

OPA also recommended that a clause should be included stating that card privileges will be cancelled if it is not used according to policy.

3. The executives did not comply with the Credit Card Policy that states in capital letters "THE CARD USERS ARE

LIMITED ONLY TO THE CORPORATE OFFICERS."

OPA said that this policy was the only one in which all capital letters were used.

The policy did not say that card users could be the only beneficiaries of the use of the credit cards. Just the same OPA listed as exceptions \$70,143 of transactions for FSMTC Employees and Board airfare expenditures and one unknown airfare at a cost of \$4,665.

OPA pointed out that an executive decision was made to purchase travel arrangements internally using the Internet in order to eliminate the expense of travel agency service charges. That task was charged to the Executive Secretary, an employee who has been with FSMTC since 1988.

Approximately 60% of credit card purchases were purchases made by the Executive Secretary on behalf of one or another of the card holders who authorized the transactions.

OPA suggested that the executive decision authorizing the Executive Secretary to make Internet transactions on their behalf, a practice that commonly occurs in the corporate world, overrode the policy limiting credit card use specifically to the Corporate Officers.

The OPA opinion recommended that officers must not override existing policy and

procedure but should propose modification and new policies, along with new controls to the Board of Directors for consideration and approval before changes are made.

4. Audit staff could not verify the legitimacy of \$41,528 charged to corporate credit cards.

The audit team found that executives do not always submit supporting documentation for purchases made with credit cards. FSMTC's actual practice on occasion was to allow executives to indicate, upon inquiry, whether the purchase was for business or personal use.


Of the \$41,528 OPA mentioned as its fourth finding \$25,697 for airfare, hotels, restaurants and miscellaneous that "could easily have been misused for personal benefit. Telecom paid many of these charges without evidence as to whether the charges either in sum or individually, were appropriate, accurate or valid."

The audit team did not mention why it was that nearly \$16,000 of the \$41,528 for which there was no documentation could not have been misused in that way.

OPA recommended that all matters regarding credit card security, administration and accounting functions should be given to the Accounting Department. The Accounting Department which is normally supervised

See "Telecom Audit (2)" on page 9

In Appreciation



The Falcam family of Pohnpei would like to extend our deepest appreciation to all Pohnpeiians, Micronesians, and friends from our foreign communities who supported our family following the unfortunate and untimely passing of our beloved mother, Iris Falcam.

Your unwavering support and generosity during this most difficult time has been both humbling and inspiring.

They serve as a shining example of what family, friends and communities represent throughout our tiny island-nation: the bedrock and foundation of WHO we are, HOW we live, and the limitless bounds of our support to one another.

Most importantly, you have given of your time and your effort, and there is no greater way to pay tribute to, and honor, a mother, wife, grandmother, and friend who touched so many lives in so many ways. Your support will never be forgotten. From our family to yours, Thank You!

Expecting Better, Faster, Always on? Here it is!

With the submarine fiber cable laid between Pohnpei and Guam and going LIVE April 2010, FSMTC now undertakes to reform its Internet rates and also introduce brand new Internet services.

The Board of Directors met on February 19, 2010 and gave the new proposed Internet tariffs their provisional approval pending general public comments and feedbacks. The proposed tariff will change section 4 and 5 of the FSMTC Tariff.

WHAT'S NEW?

HIGH SPEED BROADBAND INTERNET

- Global IP over T1 – PREMIUM
- Reduced Rates up to 83% for Global IP over T1 Basic
- Very high bit-rate Digital Subscriber Line or VDSL
- Business Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line or Business ADSL
- Home Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line or Home ADSL
- EDGE and GPRS Data Service on Cellular Services

PROPOSED ISPEED SERVICES AND RATES

NAME	Downstream	Upstream	MRC*
ISPEED VDSL			
VDSL-1024	1024 kbps	1024 kbps	\$1,274.00
VDSL-2048	2048 kbps	2048 kbps	\$2,548.00
VDSL-3072	3072 kbps	3072 kbps	\$3,822.00
VDSL-4096	4096 kbps	4096 kbps	\$5,096.00
VDSL-5120	5120 kbps	5120 kbps	\$6,370.00
VDSL-6144	6144 kbps	6144 kbps	\$7,644.00
VDSL-7168	7168 kbps	7168 kbps	\$8,918.00
VDSL-8192	8192 kbps	8192 kbps	\$10,192.00
BUSINESS ISPEED ADSL			
Business Starter	256 kbps	64 kbps	\$100.00
Business Basic	512 kbps	128 kbps	\$200.00
Business Standard	1024 kbps	256 kbps	\$390.00
Business Premium	1024 kbps	512 kbps	\$479.00
Business Pro	1536 kbps	384 kbps	\$599.00
Business Elite	1536 kbps	768 kbps	\$718.00
HOME ISPEED ADSL			
Home Basic	256 kbps	64 kbps	\$33.00
Home Standard	512 kbps	128 kbps	\$65.00
Home Premium	1024 kbps	256 kbps	\$129.00
Home Elite	1536 kbps	384 kbps	\$194.00
GLOBAL IP over T1 Premium			
Premium 128	128 kbps	128 kbps	\$637.00
Premium 192	192 kbps	192 kbps	\$955.00
Premium 256	256 kbps	256 kbps	\$1,273.00
Premium 384	384 kbps	384 kbps	\$1,909.00
Premium 512	512 kbps	512 kbps	\$2,545.00
Premium 768	768 kbps	768 kbps	\$3,818.00
Premium 1024	1024 kbps	1024 kbps	\$5,090.00
Premium 1280	1280 kbps	1280 kbps	\$6,363.00
Premium 1536	1536 kbps	1536 kbps	\$7,635.00

One-time Charges for Proposed Services

VDSL Installation	\$99.00	
Home ADSL Installation	\$24.00	
Business ADSL Installation	\$24.00	
A/V DSL Relocation	\$21.00	* Monthly Recurring Charge
Global IPL Installation	\$1,999.00	
Global IPL Relocation	\$21.00	

WHAT'S CHANGING?

- New FASTER HIGH SPEED dedicated Internet access services with much lower prices and insert in Section 5 – Internet Services of the Tariff
- New pricings for Domestic and International Digital Circuits in Section 4 – Private Lines of the Tariff
- Remove and discontinue Visitor package dial-up Internet access
- Remove all dedicated Internet access services listed in Section 5 – Internet Services of the Tariff

WHAT'S NOT CHANGING?

- Postpaid Dial-Up Internet
- Prepaid Dial-Up Internet
- Prepaid WiFi

GLOBAL IP over T1 Basic (Rates reduced up to 83%)

NAME	Transmit/Receive	Existing MRC	Proposed MRC
Basic 128	128 kbps	\$1,910.00	\$319.00
Basic 192	192 kbps	\$2,670.00	\$478.00
Basic 256	256 kbps	\$3,430.00	\$637.00
Basic 384	384 kbps	\$3,640.00	\$955.00
Basic 512	512 kbps	\$6,310.00	\$1,273.00
Basic 768	768 kbps	new	\$1,910.00
Basic 1024	1024 kbps	\$12,330.00	\$2,546.00
Basic 1280	1280 kbps	new	\$3,183.00
Basic 1536	1536 kbps	\$18,350.00	\$3,819.00

Domestic Digital Lease Circuit (Rates reduced up to 68%)

NAME	Transmit/Receive	Existing MRC	Proposed MRC
Domestic 128	128 kbps	\$3,760.00	\$1,219.00
Domestic 256	256 kbps	\$7,040.00	\$2,437.00
Domestic 512	512 kbps	\$12,160.00	\$4,873.00
Domestic 1024	1024 kbps	\$16,640.00	\$8,745.00
Domestic 1536	1536 kbps	\$17,700.00	\$14,017.00

ALL SERVICES ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

Copy of detailed proposed rates is available at your local Telecom office and also on the corporation's website <http://www.telecom.fm>.
By virtue of Title 21 Chapter 2 Section 228 of the FSM code, FSM Telecommunications Corporation wishes to invite comments from the general public on the new provisional service rates.

Deadline for accepting comments will be thirty (30) days from the posting of this announcement. Date posted: February 19, 2010.
Comments should be addressed to:



FREDY PERMAN
CUSTOMER CARE/MARKETING MANAGER

FSM Telecommunications Corporation, P.O. Box 1210, Pohnpei FM 96941
ph: (691) 320-2740 fax: (691) 320-2745 email: tariffcomments@telecom.fm





Australia Awards

AUSTRALIAN LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Australian Leadership Awards Scholarships

Scholarship opportunities for current and future leaders for Intake 2011

The Australian Leadership Awards (ALA) Scholarships are provided by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) with the aim of developing leadership and linkages within the Asia-Pacific region. The Scholarships are offered to **high achievers from the region to undertake postgraduate study in Australia** and a Leadership Development Program. Study programs must relate to one or more of the priority areas of disability, economic growth, education, environment, food security, gender, governance, health, human rights, infrastructure, regional stability, rural development and water & sanitation.

ALA Scholarships seek to empower awardees to lead social and economic policy and development in their own countries and in the region. To enhance leadership skills, AusAID has invested A\$10.128 million over four years to deliver a comprehensive Leadership Development Program (LDP) to all ALA scholars. The LDP comprises of a three day conference in Canberra, regional workshops, leadership coaching and practice opportunities. The LDP aims to help scholars explore and harness their full leadership potential and enhance their understanding of development challenges at national, regional and global levels. The LDP also provides important networking and collaborative opportunities for participants.

**Applications for the commencement of the 2011 academic year open on 10 March 2010
and will close on 30 June 2010.**

Mandatory requirements for ALA Scholarships application*:

- A record of high-level undergraduate or post-graduate academic achievement;
- Appropriate results in one of the following English language proficiency test being achieved for no longer than two years prior to the date of the application ie IELTS with an overall result of at least 6.5 and no individual band less than 6; or the equivalent level of TOEFL. **You must have a TOEFL or IELTS score to be eligible.**
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* Please refer to the ALA Scholarships Handbook on the website for online application instructions.

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...Chuuk Textbooks

Continued from front page

Chuuk DOE received nearly \$26.7 million dollars funded by Compact Sector Grants during the audit period. Of that amount, over \$3.9 million, nearly 14% of the budget was spent for text books and instructional materials.

“Navigating with Pride: Vision 2020” was a blueprint for educational improvement in Chuuk laid out in 2001 through the year 2020. The Chuuk Educational Reform Plan (CERP) was adopted in 2005 to improve the Chuuk Department of Education (CDOE) management structure and internal controls. In 2007, a Chuuk State Strategic Plan for Education (CSSPE) 2007-2012 was not intended to be a new plan but its existence was essentially an acknowledgement that neither of the previous plans was working.

OPA looked at records and conducted physical inventory checks at fourteen sample schools in Chuuk when the schools were open for them to do so. To ensure the accuracy of textbook inventory levels, schools were asked to conduct their own inventory counts and report the results to DOE. The audit’s first finding was based primarily on those counts.

Finding One: The Chuuk DOE failed to provide many student with textbooks and instructional materials.

“Overall, we found that many students did not have textbooks. In many instances entire classes were without any textbooks. In some instances, a school’s entire grade lacked books,” the report said.

The audit team pointed to several examples:

- The Chuuk High School 9th grade science class was not using textbooks. The books had been delivered to the school but they were in storage in the principal’s office. The teacher was not aware of the availability of the books.
- The Chuuk High School 10th grade did not have any science books.
- The Chuuk High School 12th grade Math class was being taught without books. 162 books were located in the principal’s office but the teacher, who has 10 years of teaching experience said that he was not familiar with the teaching methods used in the book and therefore did not use it. He said he couldn’t adequately explain it to his students.
- Faichuuk High School had only five physical science books and seven biology books though physical science is taught in both grades 10 and 11 and biology is taught in grades 11 and 12.
- At the first and second grade level students did not have books. DOE did not provide any 1st or 2nd grade textbooks. Some schools did have older books they were using. For example, the Etten Elementary School reported that it did have 1st and

2nd grade language books but no Math, science or social studies books. Other schools such as Panitiw Elementary School, Oneop Elementary, Murilo Elementary, etc. had no 1st or 2nd grade books at all.

- Etten Elementary did not have any language arts books for the 3rd through 6th grades.
- Neauo Elementary had only two 6th grade English books.
- Murilo Elementary had no 4th grade Math books.
- Sino Memorial Elementary had no 6th grade science books.
- Fonoton Elementary 3rd grade had only language arts books. The 4th grade had only Math books and the 5th grade only had only social studies and Math books. The 6th grade had only science books. The 7th grade had only science books and the 8th grade had only science and Math books.
- Nukuno Elementary had no 3rd grade language arts books, no 3rd or 4th grade science books and no social studies books for the 3rd through 7th grades.

In addition to the lack of textbooks, schools lacked materials such as pencils, paper, chalk, crayons, markers, rulers, etc.

12 of the 14 schools the auditors visited reported that they did not receive any school supplies during the 2008-2009 school year. Of the two schools that did receive supplies one reported receiving them in March and the other in May just before the end of that school year.

According to OPA, Chuuk DOE was given sufficient funds to purchase textbooks and instructional materials but they didn’t engage in standard management practices that would be expected of any organization.

Chuuk DOE did not develop a purchasing plan to identify which books should be purchased first, how many books should be purchased, and when the books should be purchased.

Auditors contrasted Chuuk’s lack of a purchasing plan to Pohnpei’s text book purchasing plan. Included in Pohnpei’s plan is a schedule for each year that lists the subject, grade, student population, number of textbooks needed, annual budget, date by which books should be ordered, and timeline for receipt and distribution. None of that exists at the Chuuk DOE.

Chuuk DOE, like Chuuk Department of Health Services did not implement an inventory management system. DOE was able to tell what books had been received but not where the books had gone after they had been received.

Furthermore, schools were not held accountable for reporting their inventory levels to DOE and only 57% had submitted inventory reports though not on any regular basis.

“At every level of the organization from staff to management to the Board of Educa-

tion, the Chuuk DOE failed to monitor and report whether it achieved the objective of providing textbooks to students,” the report said. “DOE Subject Specialists, who are required to visit schools on a periodic basis, did not report on the sufficiency or lack of textbooks when submitting reports to departmental officials.”

Further, a review of the meeting minutes of the Board of Education revealed that the Board did not receive any information regarding textbooks.

The audit team expected that due to the logistical difficulties of delivering books to the outer islands they might have found that there was a detailed plan to be certain that books were delivered in time for school years but found no plan at all.

They did find that there was an inequitable distribution of textbooks.

Polle Elementary school had been chosen by the auditors for a visit but when the audit team arrived in Polle all of the teachers and students had been dismissed in order to attend a funeral.

Based on the remaining 13 schools they were able to review they found that 72% of the students in those school had no science textbooks while two schools had a large surplus of science text books. Iras and Mechitiw had an extra 354 science books that were not being utilized while other students went without.

DOE provided textbooks free of charge to private schools in Weno. At least 1,350 Math textbooks were distributed but since APA could not assume that DOE delivery records were complete, they concluded that it is possible that even more books were distributed. Based on the records that did exist they discovered that private schools had received over \$82,000 worth of Math books that were destined for public schools.

Principals and teachers did not have a record of how many textbooks their schools carried. In some instances, teachers were not aware about the location of their textbooks although some of the textbooks could be located within the school premises such as in the principal’s office.

Finding two: Schools and students were not held responsible for lost and damaged textbooks.

According to DOE’s own policy on textbooks “Teachers are responsible to carry out quarterly inspections of textbooks issued to their students to ensure that they are being cared for.” Financial responsibility for care of textbooks ultimately falls on the shoulders of principals and teachers in the event that textbooks are missing or damaged. “Paychecks for the teachers (not the principals) will be held by the Department of Education until payment is made.”

The school can collect money for damages or loss from the students and must issue a receipt but since DOE was not requiring that schools perform inventories on anything resembling a regular basis, none of the policies were actually in force. With the excep-

tion of Southern Namoneas Fefan School which reported that it had more books than DOE thought they had, all of the selected schools reported inventory levels that were lower than the inventories indicated by what distribution forms there were on record.

According to a DOE official, copies of the Chuuk Textbook Policy were distributed to schools in 2007 but no further distribution or reminders occurred. Many school principals and teachers interviewed for the audit said that they were not familiar with the policy and did not recall having received written copies.

Principals reported that they had no idea how much they should charge for lost or damaged books. Some charged as little as \$20 for lost books while others charged as much as \$70.

Finding three: Due to lack of lesson plans, there is no assurance that curriculum standards are being taught to students.

Based on National DOE minimal curriculum standards that Departments of Education in each FSM state must meet, Chuuk DOE developed its own curriculum. Chuuk schools are required to follow that curriculum. The curriculum includes student performance standards in core subject areas of language, Math, science, and social studies.

Chuuk DOE developed a policy that requires all teachers to prepare a standardized lesson plan called the T-Form which according to audit team interviews with DOE officials, were to have been prepared by each teacher on a daily basis. The lesson plans should have been reviewed by the principals of each school.

Instead auditors found from their site visits that 88 percent of language arts teachers, 90 percent of science teachers, and 86 percent of social studies teachers did not prepare lesson plans or that the principals did not ensure that lesson plans were consistently or correctly prepared.

Audit interviews revealed that some teachers, having no access to or copy of the approved curriculum, based their lessons on what they knew and what they thought was appropriate and convenient to teach.

“Principals we met did not feel obliged to review the lesson plans and they did not view reviewing lesson plans as a mandatory task required by DOE management. For example, at an elementary school in Faichuuk, the principal admitted that he never checked or enforced lesson plans to be prepared by teachers. In addition, several teachers in other schools told us that lesson plans were not a mandatory requirement by their principal.”

FSM OPA may perform a follow up review within the next year to ensure that Chuuk State DOE has taken corrective measures to address all of the wide and varied problems regarding management of Chuuk’s text book and instructional materials.

The complete audit can be found at www.fsmopa.fm.

...Telecom Audit (2)

Continued from page 5

by the CFO, a card holder, should be empowered to ensure or govern proper use of corporate credit cards.

FSMTC is currently operating with an acting CFO who is not a card holder.

5. *Practices involving use of corporate credit cards for personal items created an environment that encouraged misuse.*

This OPA audit exception seems to be a re-statement of the first audit exception with subtle differences.

The audit team did note within this exception that in March 2009 the Telecom Board of Directors declared that personal items may no longer be charged to the Corporate Credit Cards.

The subject of offsets was a new topic under this heading. As an example of "offsets", OPA said that the practice had been that if the traveler made a \$10 personal purchase on the credit card and then paid \$10 in cash to a taxi driver then the charges "offset" each other and the corporation would pay the \$10 to the credit card and not pay the employee a \$10 travel reimbursement. OPA said, "While the practice may be inherently logical, Telecom did not institute controls or limits to prevent abuse. The lack of controls may inherently encourage executives to submit falsified records in order to offset personal charges to the corporate credit cards."

The audit team stopped short of saying that they suspected that any particular expense reports or trip logs had been falsified. They did say that taxi expense reports seem to have been created at the same time for all entries, indicating that the trip logs were prepared upon return to Pohnpei. Cash expenses were then offset against personal charges on a credit card.

The report also provided as an appendix, an example of one trip log that was not attributed to a particular executive or a particular business trip that executive took.

While it is not unusual for an executive to record financial transactions in a small easy to carry notebook and then prepare an expense report when the trip is over, the fact that many of the expenses, particularly for taxi fares, had no receipts to support them, suggested that the possibility for abuse existed.

OPA also listed taxi fares for travelers for trips that were probably personal in nature. The destinations included malls, shops, medical, entertainment, and residential areas. The total taxi fares for those types of destinations amounted to \$2,434 over the two and half years that were reviewed.

The COO claimed \$1843 in taxi fares of that type over the period reviewed.

OPA recommended that Telecom should establish a policy that sets limits for the

acceptable uses for taxis and for the dollar amounts that may be incurred. It suggested that any new policy should require the submission of appropriate receipts and documentation of the business purpose.

Later in the audit report, OPA admitted that it is a fairly common worldwide occurrence for taxi drivers to hand a blank receipt to a passenger for them to fill out at their leisure.

6. *The Credit Card Bank Account Activity was not reconciled and the outstanding liability (monthly statement ending balance) was not verified, not reconciled, and not accrued to the general ledger.*

The audit team found that the Accounting Department did not receive, review, or reconcile the monthly statements. The Executive Secretary, who performs Internet purchasing and requests payments, is the one who receives the monthly statements in conjunction with the daily mail. Copies of statements, said the audit team, are not provided to the accounting department.

OPA said that as a result of the current process there is no assurance that payment amounts are for legitimate purchases. It said that expected charges were sometimes paid in advance. While this is not an unusual practice when planning for an upcoming business trip OPA cited one example when airfare charges amounting to \$6,640.97 were paid after the trip had been cancelled because the accounting department was not made aware of the cancellation.

As an example of the kind of scenario that could occur as a result of the lack or reconciliation of credit card balances OPA said, "Accounting could be asked to pay \$1000 toward the credit card balance in preparation for a \$1000 hotel stay that will be incurred. If the hotel stay were cancelled, the \$1000 payment would be applied to other charges which may or may not be legitimate business charges."

According to the audit team some charges were not identified as unpaid until the audit team inquired about items in the test sample for which supporting documents could not be found.

OPA once again recommended the transfer of responsibility for credit card administration to the Accounting Department. They suggested, among other things that a Credit Card Administrator function be established and that the person in that position should serve as sole liaison with the credit card issuer.

7. *The Policy and Procedure does not specify the responsibilities, policies, and procedures necessary for individual card-holders and others who are charged with oversight.*

OPA recommended that the Telecom Credit Card Policy should be updated to include credit card security measures generally, and Internet purchasing specifically. It should specify the specific type of information required of card holders for example, item-

ized receipts, explanatory card holder notes for the purchase, for example number of meals purchased or persons receiving, and the expected benefit to Telecom.

Once again OPA recommended that the policy should list consequences if policies and procedures are not followed including the cancellation of card privileges and instead, use of alternative means, for example, travel advances only.

8. *Telecom incurred interest and late fees of \$2,294 on personal business charges not paid timely.*

Because business and personal charges were commingled within the same months the audit team could not determine the amount of interest and late fee charges that FSMTC incurred due to personal purchases not paid on a timely basis.

"Whereas it is typical for an organization to receive a credit card statement and then make payment for the statement balance, Telecom's procedure is to make payments for specific purchases in the days following purchase prior to receiving the monthly statement. Specifically, Internet purchases are in advance of travel and are paid within days of purchase, and travel vouchers are to be filed by the traveler within 10 days of return.

"Hence, the interest charges and late fees were incurred when Telecom was not reimbursed for personal charges on a timely basis, when business charges (travel vouchers) were not submitted timely, and when charges were not identified as unpaid. In-

terest and late fees were incurred only when charges were not paid within 25 days of the credit card statement date."

Basic accounting rules say that payments should never be made on the basis of statements but that statements should be verified against actual invoices. Since, as the audit team pointed out, there was no real reconciliation process or administrative oversight for reconciliation for credit card transactions, and because original receipts (invoices) were not always provided by executives, unnecessary late fees and interest charges were incurred.

OPA reiterated that the COO should reimburse FSMTC for all outstanding personal charges plus incidental credit card charges paid by Telecom for interest and penalty fees, something that the CEO said in his response, has already been done.

The eight point audit response by CEO Takuro Akinaga said essentially that management will work with the Board of Directors and the Accounting Department to develop appropriate guidelines and rules regarding appropriate credit card expenditures where they are lacking, and to set up credit card reconciliation and security measures that the Board feels should be implemented based on the audit.

OPA said that they may perform a follow-up review within the next year to ensure that Telecom has taken corrective measures to address all of the findings and recommendations provided in their report. The complete audit can be found at www.fsmopa.fm.

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Easter Sale!! Easter Sale!! Easter Sale!! Easter Sale!!

Tokyo University and COM-FSM sign a Declaration of Cooperation

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

Dekehtik, Pohnpei, FSM—On February 15, the crew of the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology research vessel the Umitaka Maru hosted a reception on board to celebrate an important agreement between the College of Micronesia FSM and Tokyo University. Tokyo University student crew members served refreshments and sang for the gathered crowd of Government and College officials.

The agreement between the two schools is designed to deepen the friendship and for expanding mutual understanding between the institutions through academic and education cooperation. The two schools have agreed to collaboration among faculty and staff members for research, symposia, and other academic pursuits as feasible and mutually agreed. It allows for exchange visits by students as mutually agreed and jointly arranged, joint research projects, and exchanged of information materials on education, training and research matters.

College President Spensin James said that this is not the first arrangement of its type with Universities in Japan. The College has similar agreements with other universities there as well.

When the vessel left the Port of Pohnpei, Clayton Maluwelgiye, an official in charge of aquaculture at the College of Micronesia was on board. He traveled to Japan where he received training on fisheries issues. His training was facilitated by the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation through their invitation program.

While in Japan Maluwelgiye visited with

representative of the Japanese fishing industries leaders and fishing facilities. In addition to meeting with Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology he also visited the Overseas Purse-Seine Fishing Association as well as the Hokkaido Regional Fisheries Institute and Hokkaido University where he conducted research on fisheries resource management.



Clayton Maluwelgiye with representatives of the Japan Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation at the FSM Embassy in Tokyo on March 3, 2010. When asked for his impression of Japan, he answered, "It is very cold." He also said that he was very happy to visit Japan and hoped to take back all he had learned to the FSM.



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Ieske K. Iehsi Appointed Senior Headquarters Executive of Micronesia Registration Advisors, Inc.

"I am pleased to announce that Ieske K. Iehsi has joined MRA, in a new full-time position, as our Senior Headquarters Executive, effective March 1, 2010" according to Mr. Steven K. Baker, Chairman and CEO of Micronesia Registration Advisors, Inc.

"Ieske has had a very distinguished 32-year career in the government of the Federated States of Micronesia", commented Mark J Heath, MRA's Vice President and CFO. He has a master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University, is an Edward S. Mason Fellow from Harvard's JFK School of Government, and has a bachelor's degree from the University of Hawaii.

Most recently he was the General Manager of the Pohnpei Port Authority, after serving in various high level positions including: FSM Secretary of Foreign Affairs, first Chief of Staff to the FSM President, Special Assistant to FSM President for Legislative Affairs, Special Assistant to Pohnpei Governor, FSM Liaison Officer to the U.S. Trust Territory Government, and Assistant Senate Clerk of the Congress of Micronesia. Mr. Iehsi's other experiences include: Vice President of the Association of Pacific Ports, elected delegate for the first Pohnpei State Constitutional Convention, Board member of Micronesian Maritime Authority and other national boards.

"Ieske's impressive educational background and the breadth of his experience at all levels of government, combined with his Japanese and international exposure, will certainly impress Japanese executives and be a major asset to MRA, as we promote the FSM in Japan, to attract captive insurance companies and investors to the FSM", said Wakaba Nakamura Taitano, MRA's Vice President.

"I am delighted to be given this opportunity to help play a part in this challenging undertaking for the government and the people of the FSM. I look forward to working with appropriate authorities and stakeholders in government, business and the civil society in pursuance of economic development goals of our leaders and our people", Ieske said about his new assignment.

MRA is a chartered domestic corporation with a long-term exclusive contract with the FSM National Government to promote the FSM in Japan. Accordingly, MRA promotes the FSM's captive insurance domicile, its corporate registry and related programs, and in the process encourages tourism and Japanese investment in the FSM. MRA has a branch office and staff in Tokyo in the Ark Mori Building in the Akasaka district, and MRA cooperates and coordinates closely with the FSM Embassy in Tokyo.

Letters to the Editor

The hidden im-em-migration problem

Dear Editor:

The article about the Deportee's issue was interesting to read. With many of the able bodied people going off island, finding suitable labor in Kosrae is becoming more difficult and in my view is driving up the number of contract laborers from the Philippines.

I do not begrudge people going off island to get good paying jobs or to support their families. I do, however, feel sorry for Micronesians that are working two to three jobs a week in the mainland just to maintain a basic standard of life.

The choices for business owners now must make have been narrowed down to:

1) Hiring someone and spending time and money to teach them and train them and then to watch them pack their bags and leave island after they've been trained,

2) hiring a deportee or

3) hiring contract labor from overseas.

It's not actually that bad yet but it is getting there. Basically our labor pool consists of young people who want to go off island or senior citizens.

What the individuals in Kosrae that you interviewed left out of their statements are the number of Kosraean people who have come back to Kosrae PRIOR to their US court hearings. I know of many people who have come back home to try to avoid charges outside the FSM. None of them that I know fled for offenses serious enough that would have required their extradition to the USA. However, their flight back to Micronesia surely means that they have outstanding bench warrants and would be detained if they tried to transit through Guam or Honolulu again.

Then if you will remember the FSM was forced to turn over all felony conviction records to the USA so now any FSM citizen with a local FSM Felony Conviction can not enter HNL or GUM without special proceedings.

In my opinion your article left out a large classification of people who are landlocked between Guam and Honolulu. We should not be talking about just the deportees. We should be talking about the deportees plus the number of people that have fled the US Legal System, and also the people with local felony convictions as well.

What I find interesting is JEMCO, on the FSM and US sides of the table and the fact that the Compact, from my understanding, allocates ZERO funds for public safety. So while the US is deporting everyone, our own Compact gives us no funds for public safety.

Drive already, would you?

Dear Editor,

In regard to the editorial about the 25 MPH speed limit, I certainly agree that 25 MPH is sufficient. But what about the drivers who forget where the gas pedal is?

I have driven more times than I could possibly count behind drivers that go so slow that my speedometer needle never moved. That was something that drove me to distraction and I'm sure I'm not the only one who has felt that way.

Once an opportunity, no matter how small, to pass the snail in the car in front, the driver in back, who knows where his gas pedal is, jumps on it and hopes for the best. There is usually a line of cars in back of the slowpoke adding to the frustration and increasing the potential danger. Combine those factors with narrow roads with no shoulders, and pedestrians and you have a real prescription for disaster.

If drivers, including both the slowpokes and the white knuckle speeders would drive at a prudent speed I think it would take a lot of pressure off everyone who drives and it would make things safer for everyone.

Thom Baker

It was funny to read all the Kosrae comments because it is a known and sad fact that often those charged with public safety in Kosrae do not have fuel for vehicles to operate. Our AG's (Attorney General) office is backlogged with cases as they are understaffed and without the proper personnel. Our court system is often lenient because we have one sitting judge, no rules or way to effectively deal with people who are underage and who commit most or many of the crimes. And our parole board would rather release people than keep them in jail because there is no money to feed the prisoners.

Our prison is outdated, there are NO rehabilitation programs that seem to be working, and there is very little treatment of alcoholism or domestic violence.

Kosrae Public Safety does what it can, given the resources allocated to them. I'm not pointing blame at just the police or AG's office. It's a vicious circle and it comes 'round to the US Compact. The US wants to ship the people back home but is not willing to assist in what we should do with them once they are in the FSM.

Yes, it is ultimately the person, family, community, state, and nation's responsibility to deal with these issues. But let us not forget that the United States had a heavy hand in creating some of these very issues. And the last few years under Compact II it appears that the US is trying to wash their hands of all the messes they created or helped to create.

Brian Rogers

Out of business

Dear Editor:

When beliefs are based only on what you've been told, it's easy to get the wrong idea. It's time for all the facts.

In 2004, the FSM Supreme Court ruled that Pohnpei State put AHPW out of business (black pepper and trochus buttons), and awarded a judgment to AHPW.

Later, the FSM Supreme Court said one judgment cannot be offset against another. The award it gave AHPW and the development loan are two separate issues and an offset between them is not available.

Avoiding expensive litigation made sense, at the time, so AHPW offered to pay Pohnpei the remaining principle. The Pohnpei State AG rejected the offer.

In the FSMDB v. AHPW case, the FSM Supreme Court is concerned only with payment of the loan. It doesn't consider the relationship between being put out of business by the government and the inability to make further payments.

When AHPW was forced out of business, its income was cut off and the funds to make loan payments were no longer available. However, if AHPW had stayed in business, the loan payments would have continued as before.

It is common knowledge that a lender cannot cause destruction of a borrower and then force the borrower to repay a loan.

If the FSMDB collection efforts succeed, Pohnpei State will become guilty of unjust enrichment, and further litigation against Pohnpei State will be required.

When you think about it, paying for being put out of business by the government doesn't make much sense.

Bob Arthur

FSM Contractual Productivity

Dear Editor,

Our culture moves at a slower pace than the U.S., Australia, Japan and the EU.

The engineer's estimates used for deciding bid specification for construction projects paid for by those countries along with the projects paid for by aid organizations and development banks are based on productivity levels of countries than we are normally able to attain in the FSM.

In order to meet the time limits set by the contract the contractor oftentimes must employ workers who work at the productivity levels the project engineers specified. The FSM work force does not normally meet those levels of productivity. In many instances contractors find that it is necessary to use foreign labor to win the contract and to complete the contract on time.

One possibility is to lengthen the time allowed for completing a contract if only local labor is used. If any contract were done using this idea then large and automatic penalties would have to apply for use of any foreign labor whatsoever.

There would be an increase in the overall project cost due to longer completion time, but we would reap the benefit of keeping all of the wages and salaries within the local economy.

How much of a hurry are we in?

Martin Mix

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Opinion Editorial

Yes, Senator Halbert, there is public trust in Congress

By Zag Puas

(Editor's Note: Zag Puas, a native of the Mortlocks in Chuuk is currently a teacher of political science and a lawyer. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia.)

I was fortunate enough to observe Congress during its third regular session in 2010, and what transpired from this experience was an eye opener for me. I discovered that there is a gulf between image and reality with respect to the question of public trust in the Congress. For that reason, I wish to demystify certain distorted images perpetrated against Congress by the spin doctors of public opinion.

Political conspirators go an extra mile to portray the Congress as nothing more than a political forum where the fourteen elected elites descend on Palikir every year to have corroborees at the expense of the public. The conspirators' rather unfortunate exercise is an attempt to shift public opinion to be more suspicious about Congress. In many instances they are successful in negating the image of Congress in the public sphere. Personal bias and vendettas are the main ingredients of this kind of public exercise based on pseudo intellectualism if not insanity. It misrepresents reality in its entirety. It is therefore a truism that professional conspirators of public opinion do so for their own personal gains and in absolute defiance of the public's knowledge of the Congress.

For example, the fact that the compact funds have been reduced and no longer fill the pockets of the public should not be a premise to falsely accuse the incumbent Senators of withholding funds for their own personal use. It must be remembered that this a lean time for the nation and Congress must take stringent measures to ensure funds are implemented in adherence with the law.

One has to be exposed to the inner sanctum of Congress to comprehend the extent to which political conspirators will go to hatch their conspiracy theories for the purpose of luring the public to jump on their bandwagon. Should the current Senators have to bend to these political conspirators who are influenced by opposing political factions who are motivated to push their own political agendas? I would rather think not.

The Congress is duly charged with specific constitutional duties and responsibilities such as to protect the rights and the social welfare of the citizens based on accepted international standards. That means, the Congress must at all times legislate on matters that promote and protect the well being of the public. It is do exactly that. Like any organization, there is an established procedural process in Congress wherein legislation is always scrutinized intensively before it is introduced on the floor. The process includes public hearings in all the

States and ongoing discussions amongst the originators of the Bills, the legal staff and the administrators. Further research is always the norm to ensure the Bills pass both the domestic and international benchmarks. If they do not meet such benchmarks, the Bills must be sent back through the process for further analysis. Most Bills stay in the process for as long as they take instead of rushing them through for passage.

When the Bills are introduced on the floor, further scrutiny ensues to make them water tight to benefit the intended stakeholders and the public in general.

The floor is where the Senators show their political intellect and wisdom. It is a time for a political show down where the floor is littered with all sorts of commentaries with heated debates on the proposed Bills. The Congress springs into action and the Speaker is in full ready mode to invoke the standing rules if one steps outside the ring.

The outspoken members of Congress like Urusemal, Christian, Sitan, Halbert and Welly, for example, could hold up a Bill for many days (a Micronesian brand of a filibuster) to ensure that the intent, scope, purpose, and textual languages within are in line with the aim and objectives of the Nation. These Senators have the gift of detecting loopholes in any proposed Bill even before it hits the floor. They often demand more amendments, or in the alternative send the Bill back to the relevant Committee for a further hearing.

Senator Christian is a skillful, fearless political fighter, and an experienced orator full of wisdom. He can change the mood on the floor and set a new direction for debate at his own choosing like a master chanter from our ancestral past. He will fight to the death with his bare hands defending the FSM internationally.

Senator Urusemal is a fine statesman and a perfectionist. He likes to test the Bills by sinking them before they can float. His demeanour and performance is lawyerly like when addressing the forum. I studied him sometimes and thought that maybe he should become a courtroom brawler when he retires.

Senator Halbert enjoys political surgical precision to bleed his colleagues on the floor profusely and simultaneously move to rehabilitate those who refuse to sit at the table. He reasons with facts and great care. He deliberates with absolute intention on the issues and hangs them dry with devastating effects, like a super typhoon in its wake.

Senator Sitan is a witty black letter shooter and is intolerant of inaction as in the saying; "time and tide wait for no man". He pushes the issues to their breaking point where he then suffocates his colleagues with headaches leaving them calling for a breather, if not an emergency nurse. He is like a marathon runner who does not rest until he reaches his destination.

Senator Welly is a cool calculated player and will bridge the gaps when required. He is a smooth operator and a reflector, a good talent to have in a legislator.

These are just few examples about the inner mechanics of Congress the public should be exposed to for the purposes of deconstructing the notion that legislation created by the national legislative forum is self serving and thus susceptible to corrupt practises.

The other Senators are also contributing effectively to the well being of the public in their own ways, and have spoken on many issues affecting the Nation. You can hear them on the floor and during the standing Committees' public hearings.

Principally, it is no secret that transparency and accountability are inherently present in the Congress. It is a part of its policy, designed towards engaging the public to participate in the daily activities of the national legislature. The conscientious Speaker, Senator Figir, is the vanguard of this policy and often reminded his subjects about such in the last session. He is certainly in command and dislikes idleness from his fellow Senators or public servants.

So reserve some time to observe your Senators in action and keep your eyes on the ball. You will be intrigued with the curve balls thrown on the floor. This is what Congress is all about, a dynamic forum full of gifted and talented individuals with an array of skills, knowledge, and passion. They are all united in one objective only, and that is to propel the Nation in the right direction for the public good. In my estimation the Senators' performance should satisfy public expectation, as they are doing their very best.

In spite of the sweat and tears on the Congressional floor, there will always be bad elements at the highest level of politics. Conspiracy theories abound at the present time and are crowding the FSM political landscape. The spin doctors are out to take advantage of this reality exploiting the public unfairly on the uneven playing field at any costs while the incumbents are busy with their schedules. This sort of tactic will increase in intensity prior to the next election without doubt. The public must perceive the conspirators under a dim limelight in that they purposefully set out to inflict damage on the image of the incumbents in the community in the belief that their actions will garnish more votes for obvious reason.

It must be remembered that the doors of Congress are always open to the members of the public at any time. It is therefore your civic duty to take an active role in engaging the Senators as they are there to serve you. You elected them to represent your views in the national legislature and by that they are doing their jobs as humanely as possible just like any other conscientious person in the public service. Ask questions and you will be surprised about your Senators' knowledge of domestic and international

concerns. They are not there to mislead you, but to disclose any issues you want to know. This is transparency and accountability at their best.

If you are not satisfied with your own Senators' performance then establish the facts first or else take your seat in the spin doctors' club. Moreover, there are legal remedies if you are still in doubt. However, be careful when you publicize your own negative findings about your particular Congressman as the whole Congress is not responsible for an individual member's action. I am of the view that the Congress will continue to discharge its constitutional responsibilities in observance of public confidence. Let the record show that the incumbents are seriously fearful of citizens who are prepared to invoke the law should there be any departure from their constitutional duties. And that is a fact.

By and large, my first-hand experience with Congress as well as my own personal contacts in the community has led me to categorically claim that the public is still in support of the Congress despite the heavy bashing inflicted upon it by opportunistic political conspirators just recently. If politics is the art of the possibilities then Congress is practising such an art eloquently. In this dimension I can confidently say that "Yes, Senator Halbert there is still public trust in the Congress of Micronesia."

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Crossword - Words with 4 letters

- ACROSS**
1. Rate
 4. Test
 7. Limb
 10. Chum
 13. Tree
 14. Joey
 15. Copy
 16. Time
 17. Fuss
 18. Deer
 19. Hole
 20. Feat
 21. Pair
 22. Lack
 24. Hate
 26. Step
 28. Duds
 30. Tint
 32. Haul
 33. Veto
 37. Nail
 40. Soil
 42. Pair
 43. Grub
 44. Flub
 46. Blab
 47. Past
 48. Slog
 49. Drag
 50. Note
 52. Dear
 53. Mold
 55. Cask
 58. Mean
 62. Meal
 65. Pact
 67. Guys
 68. Rage
 69. Beak
 71. Live
 72. Rear
 73. Spot
 74. Hire
 75. Pose
 76. Thou

77. Iota
 78. Rent
 79. Owns
 80. Flub
- DOWN**
1. Dine
 2. Bush
 3. Gush
 4. Chic
 5. Part
 6. Rube
 7. Lick
 8. Coda
 9. Fare
 10. Turf
 11. Bend
 12. Slow
 23. Blew
 25. Pose
 27. Sums
 29. Soft
 31. Fade
 34. Plan
 35. Find
 36. Laze
 37. Grin
 38. Fury
 39. Iota
 41. Drop
 45. Rosy
 46. Next
 51. Sash
 52. Laud
 54. Keys
 56. Void
 57. Rein
 59. Icon
 60. Stay
 - 61: Join
 62. Duke
 63. Zone
 64. Cane
 66. Solo
 70. Ante

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9		10	11	12
13				14				15				16		
17				18				19				20		
21				22			23		24		25			
26			27			28		29						
			30		31		32				33	34	35	36
37	38	39			40	41					42			
43					44			45		46				
47						48				49				
50			51		52			53	54					
			55	56				57		58		59	60	61
62	63	64						65		66			67	
68				69		70		71				72		
73				74				75				76		
77				78				79				80		

summer songs

There's something about summer that inspires people, which explains why there are so many songs with "summer" in their titles. The puzzle below contains 37 song titles in which "summer" appears.

OOSTKNEDTCMPOH
 TRMNHINSIAMCAW
 FSOOLASTTEGRILO
 OWBOCRTROUVALI
 SBVIDSDNEHLWIN
 TERWOAELXMGBHB
 IFSEVEYROMANCE
 AKFOEDISREHTOR
 RRORSRZTXOSGYL
 TGSATFERINYPGI
 RTYMHHOLODGAXN
 OYOBEGBSGLNRDY
 PCBAINDIANLIZB
 CTEREHS DNUOSWZ

- ... SUMMER**
1. AFRICAN
 2. ALMOST
 3. BOYS OF
 4. CRUEL
 5. ENGLISH
 6. INDIAN
 7. LAST
 8. LONG HOT
 9. OTHER SIDE OF
 10. OVER THE
 11. PARIS
 12. PORTRAITS OF
 13. THAT

- SUMMER....**
14. BOY
 15. BREEZE
 16. CHILL
 17. DAYS
 18. IN BERLIN
 19. IN DIXIE
 20. IN SIAM
 21. KNOWS
 22. LOVE
 23. NIGHTS
 24. OF ROSES
 25. RAIN
 26. ROMANCE
 27. SAMBA
 28. SOFT
 29. SONG
 30. SOUNDS
 31. WIND

- SUMMER'S...**
32. DAY SONG
 33. GONE
 34. HERE

- SUMMERTIME...**
35. BLUES
 36. DREAM
 37. ROLLS

ANOTHER CLASSIC
LIMERICK BROUGHT TO YOU BY
TRASHBUSTERS

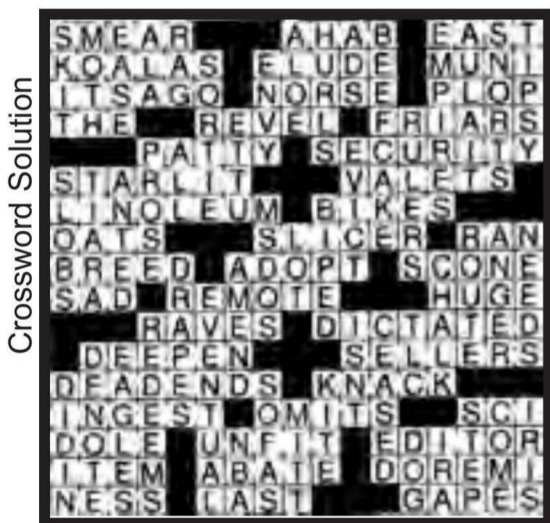
There was a young woman of Leeds
Who swallowed six packets of seeds.
In a month, silly lass,
She was covered with grass,
And she couldn't sit down for the weeds.

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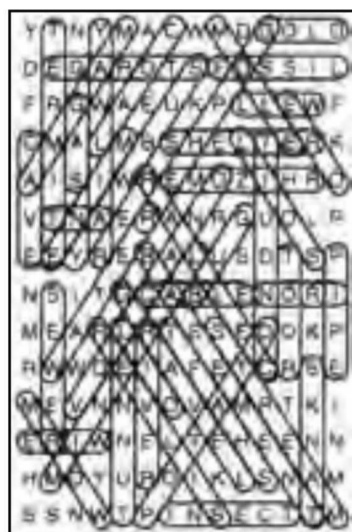
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Previous



Going Underground



Let it Rip

Pacific tuna tagging: what to do with the numbers?

By *Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)*

Friday 12 March 2010-

Twenty scientists gathered recently at an International Tuna Tagging Workshop held at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's (SPC) headquarters in New Caledonia. The world's largest ever tuna tagging project has released over 250,000 tagged tuna into the equatorial Western and Central Pacific Ocean and 35,000 tags have already been recovered. The data being collected will help in sustaining and protecting the world's largest resource of tuna.

The joint SPC/PNG National Fisheries Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme started in August 2006 in Papua New Guinean waters, where 15% of the world's tuna is caught. In 2007, funding from the New Zealand government (NZD 5 million) and European Union (EUR 1.56 million) enabled the operational area of the project to be extended

to cover the whole of the equatorial Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The last tagging cruise ended in October 2009. For around 90 days at a time, a 30-strong team of experienced Solomon Islands fishermen and SPC biologists roamed the seas on a pole-and-line fishing vessel, gently easing the fish on board to measure, tag and return them to sea within 15 seconds (further details on www.spc.int/oceanfish).

Most tags are thin rods inserted under the tuna's dorsal fin. Bigger fish were given express surgery and sent back to swim with an archival tag. The thin tags carry only a serial number, but the hi-tech archival tags keep track of geographical movement. In simple terms, the tag measures the light throughout the fish's journey. The data is then interpreted based on sunrise and sunset schedules for each time zone.

A vast communications operation was rolled out to inform fishermen, tuna canneries and

fishery agencies around the globe about the tagging project. Posters in 16 languages promised a reward for every tag sent back to SPC. The recovery rate, close to 14%, has improved on rates attained during similar campaigns in the 1970s (4%) and 1990s (11%). Tony Lewis, Programme Coordinator, says, "We had one person working half time on communications. Next time, we need to dedicate more effort to this crucial task."

From field to laboratory

The results of the tagging project will provide information on various biological and fishery processes such as exploitation rates, mortality, movement, growth rates, and spatial and temporal variability.

The SPC team met last week with representatives from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission and PNG National Fisheries. They were joined by independent leaders

in the field of data analysis from the USA (University of Hawaii, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service) and New Zealand (National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research) for an analysis workshop. The agenda for the week centered on modelling approaches, with the main aim being to prioritise the use of the tagging data for the Western and Central Pacific Ocean to answer critical fisheries management questions.

The output of this meeting will be a work plan for the months ahead for transforming statistics into useful information for fisheries. As Brian Kumasi from PNG National Fisheries puts it, "The growth of the tuna industry in the Pacific over the last decade has occurred in parallel with the growing use of FADs (fish aggregating devices). It is really exciting that we now have data that can measure the impact of these FADs on the quantity and quality of tuna in the region. This information, in addition to the other analyses that are planned, will lead to better management of our shared fishery resource."

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

- Alcoholics Anonymous meets every Wednesday at Cantero Hall at the Roman Catholic Vicariate office at 7:00 p.m. Public welcome. For details, call 320-8365.
 - Pohnpei Lions Club meets monthly every 4th Tuesday at China Star Restaurant at 6:30 p.m. Public Welcome.
 - The Christian Ministerial Association of Pohnpei meets the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in Cantero Hall at the Roman Catholic vicariate office.
 - Devotions every Sunday 9:30 a.m. at the Bahai Center in Dolonier. For details, call 320-2182.
 - Habitat for Humanity Pohnpei holds their meetings every Tuesday from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the Sei Restaurant.
 - Soccer practice/games at PICS field Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 5:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.
 - The Rotary Club of Pohnpei holds its weekly meetings Thursdays at 12:15 p.m. at PCR Nantehlik.
 - St John's Catholic Church in Kosrae conducts services every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. For further information, call 370-3240 or 370-3209.
 - FANGO holds its monthly Issue Based Dialogue (IBD) on the last Wednesday of each Month at the Sei Restaurant at 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. The public is welcome.
 - The Rotary Club of Truk Lagoon holds its weekly meetings every Wednesday at 12:00 Noon at the High Tides Restaurant. You are welcome to attend and can contact us at: rotarycluboftruklagoon@yahoo.com
 - Pacific Mission Fellowship - A Bible-based English Worship Service Invites you to join us on Sundays for worship at 9am - 11am, Children's Church for the kids too! Call: 320-2496
 - Ultimate Frisbee pick-up game every Tuesday 5:45pm at the Spanish Wall. All levels welcome! Call 320.2439 for more details
- The Community Bulletin is a free message board exclusive to announcements. To post your announcements to The Kaselehlie Press:**

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Kapinga Village Learns New and Healthy Local Food Recipes

By Mona Tara
Island Food Community of Pohnpei

On February 1 – 5, 2010, over 60 men and women from Kapinga village took part in local food cooking classes, facilitated by the College of Micronesia (COM)-FSM Cooperative Extension Service and the Island Food Community of Pohnpei. The training was led by Welsihter Hagilmai and Dora Semes of COM-FSM CES and Henrich Mateak and Richen Tonga of Kapinga village.

The purpose of training was to help the community learn how to use under-utilized local food such as green papaya, banana flower, hibiscus flower, lemon grass, spinach, chili pepper leaves, and other locally grown green vegetables.

One participant in the cooking class said, “I did not even know that a healthy drink could be made from hibiscus flowers.”

They also learned how to cook healthy food, like using less salt and sugar.

On February 12, 2010, a graduation ceremony was held and certificates of completion were presented to all graduates. After the ceremony, a feast was held for over 100 participants. They enjoyed tasting the new recipes that the participants had made themselves such as: banana flower patties, green papaya lumpia, sardines with chili leaves, breadfruit salad, banana flower salad, mackerel in banana flower and fish and soft taro wrapped in taro leaves.

Thanks are extended to the College of Micronesia-FSM Cooperative Extension Service for facilitating the workshop and the Global Environment Facility Small Grant program and US forestry for funding.



Participants of the Kapinga Village local food cooking class happily hold the dishes that they made and presented at the graduation on February 12, 2010.

One Step Forward- Mand Community Bans Soft Drinks at Community Functions

By Island Food Community of Pohnpei

On February 14, 2010, the Mand Community in Madolenihmw voted to establish a policy that the community will no longer be having or using soft drinks in its meetings and other gatherings of the community because of its hazard to human health. Mand Community consists of five kousapw or land sections that officially make up the Pwihn Keisu, Madolenihmw Municipality. This policy is made because of the health concerns that exist in the community. The concerns come mainly from the prevalent number of diabetic cases in the community and other health ailments that result from diabetes. Diabetes has become a world-wide health problem and here in Pohnpei, as determined by the 2008 Pohnpei STEPs Survey, we know now that one in three Pohnpei adults has diabetes.

Before the policy was voted upon, it was explained that the right to individually consume soft drinks remains with each individual. He or she has the choice to drink soft drinks or not to drink soft drinks. However, for the community functions, the community as a group has decided that it is no longer using or having soft drinks in its functions because of its hazard to human health.

Astronomical Tide Prediction March 17 - March 30, 2010

	Pohnpei				Chuuk			
Wednesday	03/17		03/24		03/17		03/24	
	03:56AM	4.0	10:01AM	3.2	02:58AM	1.7	06:29AM	1.7
	10:01AM	0.7	07:16PM	1.5	09:09AM	0.3	08:06PM	-0.2
	04:01PM	3.9			03:02PM	1.6		
	10:06PM	0.6			08:54PM	0.2		
Thursday	03/18		03/25		03/18		03/25	
	04:19AM	4.1	02:00AM	2.2	03:15AM	1.9	11:42AM	1.8
	10:30AM	0.8	04:53AM	2.1	09:41AM	0.3	08:09PM	-0.2
	04:25PM	3.7	12:08PM	3.5	03:19PM	1.4		
	10:25PM	0.7	07:31PM	1.2	09:00PM	0.2		
Friday	03/19		03/26		03/19		03/26	
	04:44AM	4.1	01:38AM	2.7	03:34AM	2.0	12:34PM	1.9
	11:01AM	0.9	06:39AM	1.8	10:17AM	0.4	08:15PM	-0.1
	04:49PM	3.4	01:06PM	3.8	03:31PM	1.1		
	10:44PM	0.8	07:53PM	1.0	09:03PM	0.2		
Saturday	03/20		03/27		03/20		03/27	
	05:11AM	4.1	01:55AM	3.1	03:57AM	2.0	02:54AM	1.1
	11:35AM	1.1	07:30AM	1.3	10:58AM	0.5	06:43AM	0.9
	05:12PM	3.0	01:48PM	4.1	03:28PM	0.9	01:13PM	2.0
	11:02PM	1.0	08:17PM	0.8	09:01PM	0.2	08:20PM	0.1
Sunday	03/21		03/28		03/21		03/28	
	05:42AM	3.9	02:19AM	3.6	04:22AM	2.0	02:29AM	1.3
	12:17PM	1.4	08:11AM	0.9	12:03PM	0.6	07:29AM	0.7
	05:34PM	2.6	02:25PM	4.3	02:35PM	0.7	01:46PM	1.9
	11:18PM	1.2	08:42PM	0.7	08:50PM	0.1	08:24PM	0.2
Monday	03/22		03/29		03/22		03/29	
	06:21AM	3.7	02:46AM	4.0	04:50AM	2.0	02:27AM	1.6
	01:21PM	1.8	08:50AM	0.6	08:30PM	0.0	08:11AM	0.5
	05:50PM	2.2	03:00PM	4.3			02:15PM	1.7
	11:27PM	1.4	09:07PM	0.6			08:25PM	0.3
Tuesday	03/23		03/30		03/23		03/30	
	07:21AM	3.4	03:15AM	4.3	05:26AM	1.9	02:37AM	1.9
	10:23PM	1.7	09:27AM	0.5	08:12PM	-0.1	08:51AM	0.4
			03:32PM	4.1			02:38PM	1.5
			09:32PM	0.6			08:23PM	0.4

Red Hibiscus Flower with Calamansi

Ingredients:

20 flowers
2-3 calamansi
1 gallon of water
Sugar (if desired)
Ice cube

Method:

1. Bring the water to boiling.
2. Pick flowers and clean them.
3. Put the flowers in the boiled water. Water will turn purplish.
4. Take the flowers out of the boiled water.
5. Squeeze the calamansi into the purplish boiled water and water will turn bright red.
6. Add sugar(if desired) and add ice cube.



Kapinga village local food cooking class participant Edlinda Siproy shows a cup of the brightly colored hibiscus drink made from the local red hibiscus flowers

13th Pohnpei 5K Fun Walk/ Run Winners

By: Jim Tobin

The 13th annual Pohnpei 5k Fun Walk/Run was held the morning of Saturday, February 20th at the Palm Terrace Shopping Centre. Over 255 people of all ages walked and ran the 3.1 mile course starting at Palm Terrace around the PICS High School loop, down Main Street and returning to the finish at Palm Terrace. The overall male and female winners were Tim Smith, with a super fast time of 16 minutes and 42 seconds, and Michaela Curr with a time of 22 minutes. The other division winners were: youth division 12 years and under – OJ Kapriel (23.38) and Marylinda Alexander (25.42), junior division 18 years and under division – Alinanstar Ifamilik (20.49) and Reiliza Saimon (23.13) and master division – Andrew Wright (32.18) and Elena Yamada (32.19). The times of the winners were very fast for the first 5k run of the year. This is a good sign of better overall fitness and health of the participants.

Also receiving awards were the top 10 finishers: 1st - Tim Smith (16.42), 2nd – Rendy Germinaro (18.40), 3rd – Luke Lavin (18.44), 4th – Makilino Ardos (19.46), 5th – James Bujold (20.10), 6th – Marlene Etnold (21.14), 7th – Alivanster Ifamilik (20.49), 8th – Roger Nakasone

(21.512), 9th – Marino Ardos (21.32) and 10th – Mikey Laurdine (21.58).

The major sponsors of the event were Am-bros Inc. (Guam) and Shim-bros Inc (Pohnpei) who provided shirts to all finishers and volunteers. Other sponsors were Palm Terrace Shopping Centre, FSM National Olympic Committee, Moylan's Insurance, Island Food Community of Pohnpei, Drops of Life, Pohnpei State Public Safety, K Press and the USA Embassy. A special thank you to the Island Food Community of Pohnpei for providing healthy food-stuffs (bananas) for the participants to eat and drink after the walk/run. The event was organized by the Rotary Club of Pohnpei as a fundraiser for its scholarship program and various community service projects.

The walk/run was the first of six scheduled races, with the first annual Dr. Eliuel K. Pretrick Memorial Scholarship 5k Run to be held on Saturday, March 20, followed by the 6th annual FSMNOC Women and Sport 5k on April 17, 14 annual COM-FSM 5K on May 8 and the 14th annual Olympic Day Run (to be held on all 4 FSM States) on June 17. All of the walk/runs are open to the general public. Our goal is to improve the fitness of our community. For more information contact the FSM National Olympic Committee office.



Was this the first organized girls soccer game in the FSM?

By Clark Graham

On Saturday morning March 6 a girls' soccer game was played between St Cecilia girls and Xavier High School (XHS) girls at Andersen Field, in Weno Island, Chuuk State. This may have been the first organized league soccer game ever played between two girls teams. If not the first, it certainly was one of the very few organized league games ever played by females in the FSM.

Head referee Tadashi Miyagi blew the whistle. The game began cautiously as the two inexperienced teams carefully moved the ball. This is not unusual in games where girls play and compete for the first time. Not being given opportunities, being told all their lives that they can't do it because they are girls, means they are often shy and concerned that their play may be viewed humorously and not taken seriously.

However, slowly and steadily the pace and intensity of the game picked up. Then suddenly St. Cecilia scored a surprising goal. The spectators erupted in cheers and the Cecilia players jumped up and down and yelled excitedly. First goal!

The first half continued with spirited play with the teams vying for an advantage. Because of

their newness to the game, the players had difficulty sustaining an offensive attack, but they tried again and again, never giving up.

Finally the Xavier girls brought the ball down and with several good passes scored to tie the game, thereby ending the first half. It was hot and the players retired to the sidelines to rehydrate and get instructions from the coach.

The second half saw more heated but even play, with no team able to gain an advantage. Then again suddenly the Cecilia girls had scored another goal to take a 2 to 1 lead. Again, there was loud cheering by those watching and screams of delight by the green Cecilia players and their JVI coach.

Now the game was in its closing minutes and the Xavier girls pressed the attack, trying as best they could to tie the game. Then a good pass was made to an open Xavier player on the left side of the field. Without hesitating she kicked a strong and solid shot that headed directly for the left side of the goal.

The Cecilia goalie, standing a bit right of center was a long way from that shot, and everyone watching knew this shot would go in and tie the score. But then, in what can only be described as a miraculous effort, the goalie was running to the ball. She reached out her right hand and, as though she was had played that position all her life, grasped the ball in her right hand and pulled it to her chest.

For a brief moment in time we were shocked and unable to speak. Did this really happen? Did this inexperienced young girl actually make a stop saving, amazing, all-star, never-to-be-forgotten, highlight real, FANTASTIC defensive save?

YES! Yes she did! And then the crowd erupted in cheers, yelling and arm waving. What an AMAZING defensive stop. My God, it was simply beautiful!

A few minutes later the final whistle blew to end the game. We watched as the girls of St. Cecilia School ran together, hugged one another, laughed and spoke excitedly. Those of us on the sidelines were smiling too, because this girls game, if not the very first girls soccer game, certainly one of the very few, offered everything a person could want in a competition.

But there is one final and important note. Just when you were thinking to yourself, it couldn't get any better than this, it did... After giving the girls their private time together, some of us went over to congratulate the coach. And here is the truly beautiful part:

She said, "The girls ran up to her excitedly, cheering their effort and asked me, 'WHO WON?'"

The answer is, "We all won!" We all had that warm feeling in our stomach as we realized we had been treated to something very special. We all felt a little bit better for having been there and watched as young women competed in the true spirit of sports: "For the love of the game."

Congratulations to the girls of St. Cecilia School and Xavier High School for one of the most enjoyable and satisfying sports events ever.

7:00 A.M., SATURDAY, MARCH 20
START/FINISH – PALM TERRACE
\$5.00 REGISTRATION FEE
T-SHIRT TO ALL
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ALL FUNDS RAISED WILL GO TO THE SCHOLARSHIP
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