

On My Mind
11/22/02

Wouldn't it be nice if someone out there - up there? - had the courage and the integrity to tell the rest of us what the status of the CNMI's finances really is? Tell us whether the accusations by Rota's Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona, that his requests for funds that were budgetted, authorized, and approved, are not forthcoming because someone has reprogrammed them elsewhere? Tell us why payment of refunds and rebates is being dealt with separately this year? Tell people what the chances are of their getting their refunds and rebates at all, and if so, when?

Wouldn't it be nice if someone were to explain why deductions taken from government paychecks for health insurance and/or for the retirement fund, aren't being turned over to CHC and the NMIRF, respectively? If someone explained what deep pockets are being used to pay off the thousands of dollars owed to the Retirement Fund's third party health insurance administrator? How the government is planning to correct the cash flow and general budget short-fall problems, what it depends on and how long it will take?

The not knowing, the not being sure, the lurking suspicions fed by rumor that what money there is isn't being fairly allocated, is destructive, debilitating, demoralizing. Perhaps if the full picture were known, there'd be more willingness on everyone's part to accept rebate and refund payment delays, put off pay raises, postpone major expenditures. There'd probably be less complaining, protest, carping if people were given the truth instead of double talk and evasiveness.

There is, of course, the uneasy suspicion that perhaps no one up there really does know what the status of the CNMI's finances really is. And that no one does have any idea how to correct the problems, much less within what time frame. In which case, heaven help us all!

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It doesn't help "get the picture" when what appears in print is so frequently garbled, incomplete or inconclusive. Take, for example, the stories on the observance of "Feed Saipan." The signing of a proclamation declaring November 21 "Feed Saipan" day was reported in the press, but no information on just what "Feed Saipan" is, or what it means or what is supposed to happen on "Feed Saipan Day" was provided.

Another example is the story about Rota's road project, which appeared in the <I>Variety</I> on November 18. Apparently the governor is objecting to the Federal Highway Administration's cancellation of the contract with Western Equipment Company to build the road, after the company abandoned the project. There is no explanation as to why the governor feels the contract should not have been cancelled, or what the trade-offs are in trying to continue the project through Western Equipment Company's bonding firm.

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The fact that the CNMI lacks the equipment to transfer hospitalized infants to off-island medical facilities is certainly a worthy news story (See the <I>Variety</I>, 11/19/02, page 3). But did it really take the governor's putting on a nurse's "scrub" shirt to call attention to the problem? It is, if course, not at all clear whether the governor's new PIO had a hand in the governor's appearance in the neo-natal intensive care unit of the hospital, but the fact remains that this time the governor has gone too far in his seemingly unquenchable search for a daily "photo op" for the press.

The expression on the head of the CHC's neonatal intensive care unit, featured on the front page of the <I>Variety</I>, would seem to say it all: "What on earth do you think you are doing here?" Grabbing publicity at the expense of the acutely ill, disrupting sterile precautions, invading the privacy of the labor room is gratuitous behavior that is neither dignified nor informative. Moreover, the comment by Senator Paul A. Manglona, who accompanied the governor, that "Now we have an idea of how it feels to be a nurse" could hardly have been more condescending.

Please, governor, won't you please stop the grand-standing, stay in your office, and at least give the impression that you are attempting to solve the CNMI's monetary woes, among others?

smoking has residual effects! Farley article on benefits of stopping smoking..... circa 10/20

classes on tourism include litter, safety from robbery.....

mall and duty free shopping.....

stats deceptive on outdoor kitchens, airconded houses, by NMHC Trib, 8/9, p 2

NMC training good - MV, 7/31, p p

Palau proposal to ban imported handicrafts Trib 8/1, p 13

Puerto Rico comparision

praise Torres!

From Rachel's Environment and Health News # 737:

medicines. dates on goods. fat content

Palau - good example of how to do things right. See issues of 6/7-14.....

mediation - no right or wrong means no sides to take.....

Palau - re gambling - will Remengsau's position hold?

tourism & shoppes in hotels

\$2 million to DPS, PSS, DPH ok if all islands included - Trib 5/22, p 3 (or 13?)

Canadian doctors have long-term temporary visas to U.S. through NAFTA. Trib 9/6/01, p.7

DPS - gun crimes: locals vs koreans/aliens?

Variety 4/2, p 1

Random notes from the past:

In response to a request for a list of flat rates charged to electrical consumers who are not metered: "There is no such list since the utility performs an assessment of the user's average monthly consumption by counting lights and appliances, by listing the information on the specifications data plates [a form for recording watts, amperes, number of hours, numbers of days, etc.] and determining the average number of hours of usage.

"Of 3339 electrical power users, during April, only 2012 were metered. This means there were 1327 consumers who were on flat rates." <I> June 1983 </I>

re: water usage: "10 years ago when a survey was taken of the water system, 75 percent of the island's homes and businesses were monitored for water usage. Now in 1988 CUC estimates that only 1 in 39 users were metered....Adding to the general chaos of the water system usage is the fact that wells which supply the mains and holding areas with water are also not metered, so no one really knows how much water is actually pumped out of the water lens which is on Saipan." <I>March 1988</I>

It is better now, isn't it?

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PDN reef coverage

consider Dan's paper that CNMI still could claim territory status under UN

A newspaper goodie too good to pass up: In the coverage of the crashed police car: "he added that the accident site in Susupe is the same location where a police officer, years back, ended up being amputated after figuring in an accident." Courtesy the <I>Tribune</I>, 3/12/02

ADA and 2nd floor

argument that prisoners getting 3 meals a day, better sleeping conditions, etc. is = argument here re alien workers at low wages

do MicSems - esp re settling disputes

comment re lack of kitchen facilities in census report - custom is to cook outdoors.... Trib 2/25, p