

On My Mind
9/25/09

There has been no column for the last three weeks because family members were visiting from off-island and they got priority....

*

Catch-ups:

Labor Day went by with hardly a sound. Not even those running for office paid any attention - except for one or two. An indication of who's got lots of money to throw around, and who doesn't?

*

Will we ever know what the total dollar cost was for bringing those Agrekko engines to Saipan? Seems the least the legislature could have done was pass a resolution of thanks for their having served so reliably while they were here.....

*

The September *Commonwealth Register* - or my copy of it - was printed on both sides of the paper. If it's continued, it will be, at long last, a significant step towards cost-savings as well as resource conservation in that department.....

*

Thank goodness enough of the independent candidates for office spoke up loudly enough to get the Election Commission to drop its very biased plan to list candidates by party. The excuse: 'it would make it easier for people to vote the party line' is just what the CNMI does **NOT** need this year - or any other time, for that matter.

*

Kudos to whoever designed the re-cycling ads that ran in the papers earlier this month. Both the 'how long does it last' and the one about 'not liking plastics in my belly' were clever, eye-catching, memorable. Let's hope the ads are themselves recycled - re-run in the papers, put on t-shirts and bumper stickers, distributed as posters.....

*

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has apparently decided to monitor and enforce its parking fees, now that money is tight. Reports say that in the past parking tickets had been shared, and their use abused, but that new controls will prevent that. If the poor economy results in other agencies similarly tightening controls to make sure every dollar due is properly billed and collected - it will have served at least one good purpose.

*

Two political parties recently held rallies (or pocket meetings?) in my neighborhood. One has to ask, "Why is it so necessary to shout?" They're already using microphones, and speakers - powerful ones, too. Shouting doesn't really lend itself to the sharing of information, to a reasoned presentation of ideas. All it offers is sound bites, slogans, one-liners. Isn't it about time candidates, as well as party officials, re-examined the value of hollering and yelling?

*

The Commonwealth Retirees Association will hold a gubernatorial candidate forum - preceded by a short business meeting - on Tuesday, September 29th at 6:00 p.m. at the multi-purpose center in Susupe. All four teams have agreed to attend, and are expected to focus on retirement-related concerns directly affecting government workers - not only those who have already retired, but all the rest as well. While sponsored by and for members of the CRA, interested members of the general public are welcome to attend. Don't miss this free chance to hear all four present their views!

*

Father Fran Hezel, in the newest issue of *Micronesian Counselor*, offers an elegantly written tale about the differences in perspective, outlook, behavior, of Micronesians and haoles. It should be required reading for all newcomers! Available at Micronesian Seminar's web site: < <http://www.micsem.org/pubs/counselor/frames/teachertalefr.htm> >.

*

For example, if the Environmental Planning branch of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Pacific, had read it, one would hope it would not have scheduled its hearings this week on the National Historic Preservation Act for the unusually late hour of 8:00 p.m. There have been no reports about how well attended - or not - the sessions were, about who came and who didn't (a hearing was also held on Tinian),.....

*

A somewhat related, un-ascribed, not-quite-precise quote garnered from the site < <http://www.thehungersite.com/clickToGive/home.faces?siteId=1> >: 'Most of today's major problems are caused by the differences in the way nature works and the way people think.'

*

Washington Post columnist Lee Hockstader wrote, last week, "Recession or no recession, a comprehensive reform bill [on immigration] must provide a way out of this mess born of neglect by offering a path to legality for undocumented immigrants already here and a mechanism for future workers, skilled and unskilled, to enter the country in adequate numbers to meet the job market's demands." He was commenting on the national picture, but his comment is just as applicable to the CNMI's situation. Immigration policy in the CNMI IS a mess, it WAS born of neglect, it must offer a path to legality for undocumented immigrants already here, and it must also provide a mechanism for future workers to enter the country in adequate numbers to meet the job market's demands. In other words, the CNMI's problem is not unique - it is shared by every state in the union! The full text of his column appeared in the 9/15 issue of the *Marianas Variety*, and can be found on the web at < <http://fbactinsider.org/newsArticle.jsf?documentId=2c9e4f6923b1fd790123b23f7e980062> >.

*

Despite a disclaimer in its "Letters to the Editor" policy statement that letters "en-

dorsing particular political candidates are discouraged," the *Variety* has published several letters in support of particular candidates of late, including one by the candidate himself, no less. Should one take the policy statement literally: that the *Variety* discourages people from writing such letters, but once they are written and submitted, it will exercise no discretion? Or, since the policy says nothing about letters criticizing candidates - and some of those have been published by the *Variety* as well - does its editor believe one cancels out the other - even if they are about different people?

*

CNMI's Commonwealth Health Center has been in crisis mode for quite some time - the problems with doctor shortages, nurse shortages, medicinal shortages, supply shortages, staff shortages, equipment shortages that are making headlines at the moment are not new. They've existed for years. Will anything come of the attention all of a sudden being given to them by everyone? It doesn't really look very promising. Those running for office who lose won't care after November 7. Those newly elected won't be able to do anything until after mid-January. And between now and November 7? No matter what is done, it won't necessarily stay in place. It becomes more and more obvious that only by privatizing does the CNMI stand a chance of ever getting good health care.

*

On a related note, if the Department of Health's dialysis center is as riddled with problems in the plumbing for the actual dialysis procedures as the *Variety* reported earlier this week, how could its acting administrator keep telling everyone that the dialysis center was due to open momentarily? Did he not know of the problems? Has he had them fixed, unbeknownst to everyone else? Or?

*

Maybe the answer is G.U.T.S.? That stands for "Get Up and Try Something." It apparently is a drug-education program, and was mentioned in a *Trib* article last week - though it did not show up on my Google search, so I've no details. Nevertheless, at the moment, it's almost to the point where trying something - or anything - would seem better than trying nothing!