



# 1st Marianas History Conference

## ONE Archipelago, Many Stories

June 14-16, 2012 · Fiesta Resort & Spa

# Overview

One of Seven



# Northern Marianas Humanities Council

*Navigating the Human Experience*

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is a non-profit, grants-making corporation established in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in 1991 and has maintained 501 (C) 3 tax status since 1994. It is affiliated with and receives annual grant support from the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities and additional support from other federal, state, and private grants and donations.

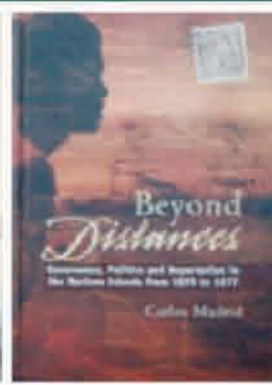
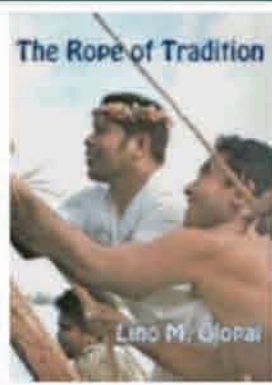
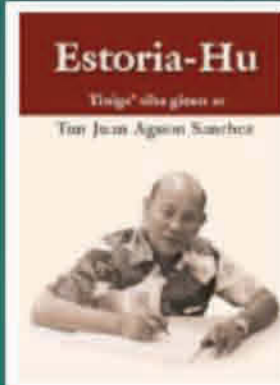
The mission of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council is "to foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the humanities through support for educational programs that relate the humanities to the indigenous cultures and to the intellectual needs and interests of the people of the Commonwealth."

The Council offers a variety of programs such as the Motherhead Program, Junior High Mock Trial, Valentine N. Sengebau Poetry Competition, Teacher's Institute, Community Lecture Series, and Your Humanities Half Hour radio show. It also provides grants to organizations to support grassroots humanities projects in the community.

In June 2012, the Council along with Guampedia and Guam Preservation Trust hosted the first Marianas History Conference. The conference theme, "One Archipelago, Many Stories," was highlighted in over 30 presentations covering ancient history through recent history of the Marianas.



In addition, the Council has supported the publication of books that document the rich history and culture of the Northern Mariana Islands. Such publications include *Estoria Hu* by Tun Juan Agnon Sanchez, *The Rope of Tradition: Reflections of a Saipan Carolinian* by Lino M. Olopai, *Microchild: An Anthology of Poetry* by Valentine N. Sengebau, *Edge of Empire: The German Colonial Period in the Northern Mariana Islands* by Dirk HR Spennemann, and *Beyond Distances* by Carlos Madrid. For more information visit our website at [www.nmihumanities.org](http://www.nmihumanities.org).



# Marianas History Conference

## Overview



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# Table of Contents

## Marianas History Conference Overview

Conference Schedule.....	1
Marianas History Conference 2012.....	3
Setting an Agenda: Quilting the Patches and Stitching Them Together .....	9
<i>By Francis X. Hezel, SJ</i>	
Leapfrogging Through History: Hayi Mañaina-mu.....	17
<i>By Robert A. Underwood</i>	
Guam History in the Making.....	21
<i>By Pale Eric Forbes, OFM Cap.</i>	
Buried Beneath Lattes and Bombs .....	31
<i>By Eva Aguon Cruz, d̂ako'ta Alcantara-Camacho and Moneka DeOro</i>	
Marianas History Conference Steering Committee .....	37



# Conference Schedule

June 14-16, 2012, Fiesta Resort and Spa, Garapan, Saipan

**Keynote Speakers: Dr. Robert Underwood and Fr. Francis X. Hezel, S.J.**

## Thursday, June 14

- Arrival of off-island participants
- Conference Registration
- Administration of Public History Roundtable
- Welcome, Keynote Addresses
- Reception at Azucena Room, Fiesta Resort with performance “Buried Beneath Lattes and Bombs”

## Friday, June 15

- Opening Speaker: Pale’ Eric Forbes, OFM Cap.
- Conference Sessions (Two concurrent sessions)
- Open evening
- Film screenings at American Memorial Park

## Saturday, June 16

- Conference Sessions (Two concurrent sessions)
- Closing Plenary Session
- Island Style Dinner (Fiesta Resort and Spa)

## Sunday, June 17

- Free day/ tour of island sites (optional)
- Film screenings at AMP

### Additional Activities

**Film Screenings.** Films on Marianas history and culture were shown at the theater at the American Memorial Park on the evening of 15 June and during the day on 17 June.

**Marianas History Book Exhibit/Sales.** Books on Marianas history and culture.

**Local Art Exhibit/Sales.** Artists from Guam and the NMI displayed and sold their work.

**Poster Exhibit.** Posters on Marianas history were exhibited during the conference.

**Optional Tours.** Conference participants were invited to participate in optional tours of historic and cultural sites on Sunday, June 17.





# Marianas History Conference 2012

The 1st Marianas History Conference took place at the Fiesta Resort, Garapan, Saipan, on June 14-16, 2012. It was organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Humanities Council, Guam Preservation Trust and Guampedia.com after an initial planning meeting in August 2011 on Saipan. About 250 people from around the world attended.

The conference theme, “One Archipelago, Many Stories,” highlighted the deep and rich history of the Mariana Islands. It also bridged the political division of the archipelago which dates to the late 19th century.

The conference covered a full range of topics associated with the Archipelago’s history. Papers were submitted under the following general categories:

- Ancient History (including the results of archaeological research)
- Early Colonial History (17th – 18th centuries)
- Late Colonial History (19th – early 20th centuries)
- World War II History
- Recent History (post-World War II)
- Oral History and Genealogical research

The organizers encouraged a diverse group of researchers, scholars and professionals, including students, to submit proposals and participate. More than fifty people responded, with abstracts for forty-six papers and six posters from countries around the globe. Historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, economists and ethnic studies scholars from Guam, CNMI, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, U.S., Germany, Spain and England who have done research in or on the Marianas participated in the conference.

Dr. Robert Underwood, President of the University of Guam, and Fr. Francis X. Hezel, S.J., the founder of Micronesian Seminar in Pohnpei, served as the keynote speakers. Fr. Eric Forbes, OFM Cap., gave a special presentation on the role of history in our community.

A roundtable discussion on the administration of public history in the Marianas was also held the first day of the conference. The roundtable was arranged to initiate dialogue among key organizations on Guam and the NMI that use public funding to support the study, interpretation and dissemination of Marianas history. Participants examined challenges and opportunities confronting their work and

considered strategies to facilitate the study of Marianas history in an efficient, coordinated and cost-effective fashion.

Besides the roundtable and paper and poster presentations a movie night was scheduled where participants viewed films to do with Marianas history. A round-the-island tour of historic sites followed the conference on Sunday, June 17.

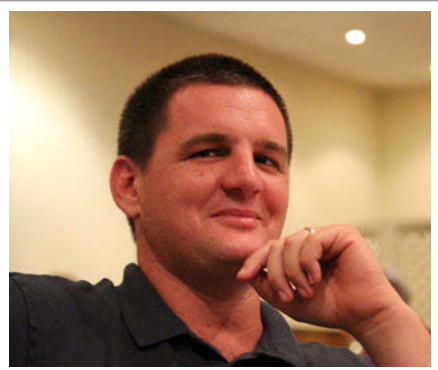
The conference proceedings were funded, in part, by grants received from the National Endowment for the Humanities through the Northern Marianas Humanities Council and the Guam Preservation Trust. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, Guam Preservation Trust or Guampedia.com















## Setting an Agenda: Quilting the Patches and Stitching Them Together

*By Francis X. Hezel, SJ*

“One Archipelago, Many Stories” is the theme of the conference suggests that history wears many different faces. But the corollary is equally true: that the multiple tales revealing different facets of the archipelago need to be woven into a single story. This is, after all, the challenge of doing history. If the different perspectives must be taken into account, at the end they should tell a story that is accessible to the people of the Marianas. This is a corporate project, one that demands the cooperation of those with bits and pieces to contribute.

This is always the case with history. We stitch together and compare many stories from different perspectives to get what we call “history.” Different perspectives are always important: e.g., history of Buffalo varies depending on where you stand German family, Polish on the East Side, Italians on the West Side.

History is always a composite. It must take account of many different sub-populations. It’s no longer the tale of the kings and presidents, national leaders, but their people as well: what has come to be called “social history.”

A recent example: At Yap Homecoming Festival the island group recognized the contribution of Chamorros to the colonial history from the Spanish era in which people from the Marianas were brought to Yap to work as administrators and teachers over a 70 year period.

But the reverse of this theme is also true: “One story (history), many islands”

Marianas Archipelago shared a common settlement, common language and culture, and most of its social and political history at least until Spanish-American War.

If the archipelago shares so much, it’s time to gather our forces from both sides of the Guam-CNMI divide, formed in 1899 and deepened since then by different colonial experiences and by the feelings engendered during WW II.

It's time to work together to fill in the blanks in the historical record and construct a richer and deeper picture of the past. Then, of course, to present it to the people we serve. This is not to belittle the enormous work already done there are plenty of splendid examples. It's just to say that there is always more to do.

History is a little like quilt-making. Some of us work to make the splendid patches the place of Spanish ovens in the islands, the story of the Macabebes (the pro-Spanish troops from the Philippines), the whale ship trade in Guam in the early 19th century. Others stitch these together into a patterned quilt. The result is what we call history.

### **The agenda for Marianas history**

The first of two items on my own agenda are to fill in the blanks. The second I intend to address at the very end of this presentation.

“Filling in the blanks” can mean two different things: first, addressing gaps in the historical record and using whatever means at our disposal to offer an understanding of what has happened in these times periods; and second, canvassing for stories from various sub-communities from their own stockpile so that those on the East Side and the West Side are fairly represented.

In our historical work in the future we will have to set priorities for ourselves, with an eye to exploring those periods and gathering information on those groups about which we know very little at present.

To accomplish this, we will need all the resources at our disposal, large and small: linguistic studies, archaeological reports (including even the site studies that have been done in connection with recent construction of hotels and the like), stories that grandma told about life 60 years ago, and so much more. Anything can help, let me assure you.

Each of us has an individual role to play in gathering these resources, but it's time for us to collaborate much more closely to achieve a more ambitious goal: offer people a deeper understanding of their past. If we hope to do this, we're going to have to work together to do it.

Understanding of the past underscores the identity of a people. This is all the more urgent as the speed of social change accelerates as it surely has in CNMI and



Guam and as the ethnic composition of the population becomes more varied. This, too, has happened throughout the Marianas.

### **Examples of gap-filling**

Years ago, I remember wondering when we were ever going to get beyond the early mission period and the so-called Spanish-Chamorro wars – a period that had been written about repeatedly – and find out what happened to people after the reduction of the population in 1700 as the new Spanish colony settled down. So I looked through boxes at MARC that contained Spanish documents from the early 1700s and found all kinds of interesting things: how the Spanish governors got hold of the subsidy so they could invest in the Manila galleon trade and get rich; how Filipino troops married local women and became the village authorities, collecting taxes for the governor; how most people were dirt poor at the time, not least of all the soldiers; etc. The result of this collaboration between MicSem and MARC was a monograph that was published by CNMI HPO. It attempted to fill the gap between 1700 and 1740, a critical time for the colony.

Then there was Scott Russell's contributions on the early Carolinian settlements on Saipan, that pieced together oral tradition with documentation from the period to give us a richer understanding of how the Carolinian community grew in the northern islands.

Not too long ago Carlos Madrid did research on the deportees from the Philippines and Spain that became such a prominent part of history in the late 19th century. This led to a book that deepened the understanding of Guamanians and people of the Northern Marianas on their past.

Not everything needs to result in a book or monograph. Toni Ramirez's work in compiling an exhibit on Chamorros in Yap sparked interest everywhere, including in Yap itself, on this facet of their history. The archaeologists in our midst have been working for years to try to present a view of life in the islands before the arrival of the Westerner. Rlene Steffy has been scouring Guam, village by village, to do mini-histories of the major settlements on the island.

We can all do this sort of thing. We need to frame our questions, share with one another the materials available to find answers, and so fill the gaps.

## Where do we begin in filling in the gaps?

I can only offer examples here. Understand that these are questions that have been explored many times before, to the credit of those who have done the hard work involved and others who have popularized what we know. But there is clearly more work to be done in these areas so much, in fact, that this work demands all the collaboration we can muster.

You are invited to add your own “blanks” to the list at different times in this conference and afterwards.

### 1) Ancient History

Who are these ancestors of ours? Where did they come from? Why did they come to these islands? How did they live? What are the earliest settlements in the archipelago? What can we infer about the way in which they spread throughout the islands? What plants and animals did they bring with them? Can we track the changes in food cultivation and animal life over the centuries?

Can we summarize in lay terms what we know from archaeological, linguistic and physiological evidence?

### 2) Precontact Times

What were the patterns of social organization before the Spanish entered the scene? What do we know about village life? What were the belief systems that guided Chamorros at this time?

What were the principles of political organization in the archipelago? Villages forming temporary alliances with one another? Was the village founded on ranked matrilineages, as in Chuuk and other islands in Micronesia? Or was there a stratified political system accompanied by the so-called “caste system” that Spanish observers thought they saw? What models from other island groups might be used to suggest possible social systems that may have been operative in the archipelago?

What do we know of the traditional religion? Was the veneration paid to ancestral skulls in the Marianas similar to the old practices found in Kiribati? What do we know of the spirit world?

### 3) 19th Century

We have plenty of facts, mostly observations of outsiders who came to visit. But how do we get beyond the facts to get a sense of how people lived?

Social history of Guam after 1817, the opening of the island to other nations. We know of the arrival of whale ships, the appointment of a non-Spanish port captain, and other events during this period. But what was daily life in the village like for the people?

What was the impact of deportees from Spain and the Philippines on the society during the last 30 years of the century. Thanks to the work of Carlos Madrid and others, we know the main facts of the era. But did this change the course of events in the Marianas in any way?

Resettlement of Chamorros on the northern islands, especially Saipan. How was this initiated and for what reason? What was the impact on the Carolinians who had already begun moving to the islands? How much intermingling was there between Carolinian and Chamorro people during the end of the 19th century and the years following? Was there a two-tier society that directly resulted from this? How did this influence German policies when they took over from the Spanish?

### 4) 20th Century

I'm not sure what the gaps are in our knowledge of this period. (But the program for this conference offers us many good leads.) Can we help one another with this?

These are a few suggestions:

- What was the impact of the political separation of Guam from the rest of the Marianas on social history during the early years of the 20th century? How did this affect families with branches in both places?
- How has the breakdown of the homogeneous village system, a long mainstay in both CNMI and Guam, affect community spirit, the ways of handling village problems, and law and order in the islands?

## **Product for the People**

In the end history is for the people not just the archaeologists and historians. History is supposed to give people a deeper understanding of themselves. In finding our roots, we discover ourselves. (Example: my aunt and her stories about the German neighborhood in Buffalo)

But not everyone has an aunt who commits her memories to paper to help us construct a personal history. Even if they do, what about the Poles and the Italians who were part of a city that once was a national treasure even if it has faded considerably since then?

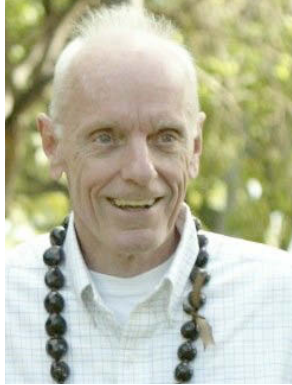
History needs quilt-makers, those who stitch together squares of cloth to form a patterned coverlet. Someone has to make sense of all the findings from those excavation sites and other studies. Don't let postmodernism and its warnings against one definitive history scare you off. Work on the individual squares if you want, but understand that they ought to be passed on to others who can blend them into a quilt of some sort. To change the metaphor, we can see the historical enterprise as assembling a building of Lego-blocks.

The blocks are important nothing can be built without them. But they can be best displayed as part of a whole, a building that someone has put together as a showpiece. Let others rearrange them afterwards, as they will do so in any case, but give them something to work with a model that they can alter as needed in the future. Bear in mind the comment of Gavin Daws, the author of *Shoals of Time*, the popular history of Hawaii published over 40 years ago: "History needs to be rewritten every generation." Why? New sources become available, new themes emerge, and finally a new audience with their own interests and questions must be addressed.

Products are important. Great work has been done on textbooks offering local history and culture. Textbooks are critical, but they're not the only means we have for educating people. What about presentations to adults in media that they can understand and enjoy? We could use films (as MicSem tried to do with the history of the region), but pamphlets can also serve this purpose. Dioramas in museums can be good teaching tools. Other things?

History always ends in presentation to the people so that they can deepen their own self-understanding, their understanding of themselves as a people. If history starts with curiosity about the past, it ends in service to our people.

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Francis X. Hezel, SJ, is a Jesuit priest who has lived and worked in Micronesia for forty-five years. He founded and directed the Micronesian Seminar, a church-sponsored research institute that engaged in a broad public education program for the islands.

He is the author of several books on the region's history and culture, including *The First Taint of Civilization*, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, *The New Shape of Old Island Cultures*, and a monograph on the early Spanish period in the Marianas.

Hezel also produced a seven-hour video series on the history of Micronesia that is available through [Micronesian Seminar](#).

His latest book, *Making Sense of Micronesia*, is to be published by the University of Hawai'i Press in the Fall of 2012.



## Leapfrogging Through History: Hayi Mañaina-mu

*By Robert A. Underwood*

Speech not provided.

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Robert Anacletus Underwood, a former member of the US Congress, is the current president of the University of Guam (since 2008). He is a distinguished educator with many publications and major presentations to his credit. He served as a classroom teacher, curriculum writer, school administrator, Guam school board member, dean of the College of Education and academic vice president of the University of Guam. His public service and professional record reflects his passion for his homeland, Guam, commitment to high educational standards and his devotion to issues of justice and equity. He is widely acknowledged as a leading authority on cultural, educational and linguistic issues as well as federal-territorial relations in Guam and Micronesia.

Underwood graduated from Guam's John F. Kennedy High School in 1965 and went on to earn a BA and MA in history from California State University, Los Angeles in 1969 and 1971, respectively. Underwood holds a doctor of education degree in policy, planning and administration from the University of Southern California. He also graduated from a management development program at Harvard University in 1988.

### **Guam delegate**

Underwood served as the Guam Delegate to the US Congress in the 103rd through 107th Congresses from 1993 to 2003 during which he sponsored major legislation for Guam, played an active role in US Department of Defense authorization bills and was an advocate for political development for insular areas and the extension of educational and social opportunities for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. During his tenure in congress, he became a senior member of both the House Armed Services and Resources committees. He emphasized the importance of Guam and the Asian Pacific region in national strategic policy and worked to

enhance the benefits of military personnel, especially those in guard and reserve units.

He passed major legislation for Guam that resolved long standing land disputes with the federal government, brought recognition to Guam's World War II generation and their case for war claims and enhanced local autonomy. Additionally, he built a successful record of bringing in federal funds for military construction, assistance to the government of Guam due to in-migration from surrounding islands and for several education programs.

Underwood ensured Guam's inclusion in major legislation such as the Telecommunications Act of 1996 that brought domestic telephone rates to Pacific territories, the State Children Health Insurance Program and the bill that established the Department of Homeland Security. He brought recognition to Guam's unique people by lifting the ban on betel nut (*pugua*) importation into the US Customs Zone, inclusion in the National World War II Memorial, the creation of Chamorro Standard Time (CST) and participation in national commemorative events.

As a member of the Hispanic and Asian Pacific American Caucuses, he spoke out for the protection of immigrant rights, educational opportunities and sensitivity to language issues. As chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus in the 106th Congress, he led the effort to include Asian Pacific Americans in scholarship programs, was instrumental in the development of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, spoke out against racial profiling and for including Pacific Islanders as a demographic category in federal programs.

### **UOG tenure**

Underwood is a University of Guam professor emeritus and taught courses in culture, education, bilingual education, administration and Chamorro. While at the university, he led the effort to include the Chamorro language and culture in Guam's school curriculum. He was appointed to the National Advisory Council on Bilingual Education during President Carter's administration and while at the University of Guam, he ran a multi-million regional education center for the Micronesian region, served as dean of the College of Education and as academic vice president. He also served as chairman of the Chamorro Language Commission for over a decade.



In more recent years, Underwood has participated in the effort to create the national Asian Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund and was elected to be the APIASF's first chair of the board of trustees. He has also worked on several research projects with the East West Center and the Asian Pacific Center for Security Studies.

In recognition of his efforts in building good relations in the Pacific, he received a Presidential Merit Award from President Gloria Arroyo of the Philippines and congratulatory resolutions from the Pohnpei, FSM and Northern Marianas legislatures. He was also named Citizen of the Year by the National Association of Bilingual Education in 1996, Alumnus of the Year by California State University, Los Angeles and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Guam Humanities Council.

### **Lectures by Dr. Robert Underwood**

*Available in Guampedia.com*

[An Appeal for Recognition of Chamorros as an Indigenous People](#)

[The Changing of the Colonial Guard: What do the Guarded Have to Say?](#)

[The Liberation of Guam Across the Generations](#)

[Thinking Out Loud: Ideas for Crafting a New Federal Territorial Relationship](#)

[Unfinished Business: The Meaning of 1898](#)



# Guam History in the Making

*By Pale Eric Forbes, OFM Cap.*

I am used to speaking to large crowds. I am used to speaking at 8AM especially on Sunday mornings. But I am also used to beginning it all by saying “Dear brethren” and taking up a collection after I finish speaking.

But, we’ll dispense with all that and simply wish everyone here a glorious new morning.

At a breakfast meeting not long ago, around the same time as it is this morning, four of us were sitting at table at the Fiesta Resort on Guam. Not long after we had settled down one of the four said, “Did you all know that this used to be the Dai Ichi Hotel years ago?”

We nodded. Some of us knew that, some not.

Then he said, “The Dai Ichi was the 3rd hotel built in Tumon.” Again we nodded, but this time we were noticeably giving him less attention and more attention to our menus.

“Yeah,” he says, “the land was originally the Leon Guerrero’s and can you believe they were being paid a measly \$2K a month for the land while the hotel was raking in millions?” This time none of us even looked up at him.

I think all people who work in historical research and its allied fields feel the way that poor fellow must have felt after we started ignoring him.

“Who cares?”

History is kind of like religion; many people doubt its usefulness. It’s a course one has to take, many times, in order to get through college. It’s a course many professors struggle with to keep students interested. In any book store, the history aisle will not be the most crowded. History books are notorious for not selling.

And yet just as in religion it is not uncommon for the most irreligious to sometimes walk into a church when nobody’s around and pray. And everybody whether they are conscious of it or not is interested in the past.

This very day on Guam the future of several men depends entirely on answering the question what happened? Why did it happen? Who put in motion the sequence of events that happened?

I am speaking of the trial of a professional wrestler accused of injuring two military men. That trial boils down to arguments of history.

Everyone is interested in the past. They just don't want too much of it. Which is why the more general the history book the more interest in it. We want to get to the bottom line. Tell me in a sentence what happened. Who did what. Why we are the way we are today. Who's to blame? Short and simple.

It's also why war histories are usually the most popular. People are more willing to be entertained by history rather than be instructed by it.

So history is potentially a very volatile means that can mobilize a community for a lot of good, but also for some of the world's saddest chapters, such as Anti-Semitism in the Germany of the 1930s.

Now it can be argued in that particular case and those similar to it that it wasn't in fact history but pseudo-history, a manipulation of history, that produced those movements. But therein lies the question.

Because how easy or how difficult is it for us to fall into the same category? Especially since there is a willing audience out there asking to be told "Who is to blame?" There will be no shortage of theorists to provide the answer.

Even in the trial I mentioned it all boils down to who do we put in jail? Who is the bad guy. And the trial is an exercise of historical research meant to answer that simple question.

I'm sure this trait can be found in all societies but I vividly remember how selective my grandmother and her sisters were about pre-war memories.

For, them, born in 1899, 1902, 1905 and so on life before the war under complete US Navy control was paradise. Everything was good, nothing was bad.

That's the bottom line. We get a short and clear answer, very quickly. Who do we love? The US Navy.

And for these same elders of mine the Japanese all bad. Again bottom line who do we dislike? The Japanese.

This human tendency to want quick and easy answers black and white seems very efficient and convenient. It simplifies life a lot, doesn't it? We see it in religion, politics and more germane to our gathering today even in some attempts at doing history.

But now and then we see cracks in the concrete.

For one day my elders let it slip. It took them years to cough up the story. But they finally did. There was in fact one good Japanese.

He was stationed in Barrigada, where my family took refuge. Prior to the war, he had spent some time in the US. He spoke some English. He was drafted; not a career soldier. He wanted the war to end just as much as the Chamorros. And, above all, he was Catholic. He prayed the rosary with my family every night. My grandmother washed his clothes. He protected my 14 year old mother from other Japanese soldiers who may have been too interested in her.

All of this information came from people who for years had told me oh the Japanese. What a horrible time we had with them.

And in the trial of that wrestler things get awfully complicated as the trial goes on. Inconsistencies in the testimony. Witnesses who disagree. How about witnesses who haven't even come forward yet and may never come forward who may have a key part of the puzzle. Life isn't as simple, or as black and white, as we'd like it to be. We're not all divided into good guys and bad guys.

And so one the big dangers we must be aware of in doing history is to find convenient bits of information to paint a picture of the past that we create to use to justify our politics of the present. We are at the mercy of many variables when we do history. The scarcity of data. The objectivity of the sources. The sources that don't exist; leaving out critical colors and strokes that would have provided a fuller picture.

Even with the data we do have, there are many risks involved when someone educated in the 20th century tries to explain the meaning of a document from the 1700s. We can hardly do a good job doing that with contemporary documents. I am sure I'm not the only one who frequently has to explain verbally what I meant when I wrote this or that, to a contemporary! How much more respect ought we to have in deciphering a document written by an author who is dead and buried, who cannot explain himself.

Someone once said, "Doing history is like taking a trip to a foreign country. They do things differently over there."

How easy it is for us to moralize about the past. To look at the past and make moral judgments on the behavior of people dead for the last 300 years. Take yourself for example. You have your own personal history. And in that history, I'm sure you've made your fair share of mistakes, as I have. You'd be the 1st to call it a mistake. But someone comes along and hears your story, and places a moral judgment on you. But part of the reality is that, at the time, that was the only you you could have been at the time. That fact that at the time there wasn't another door for you to open at least that you could see is also part of the story. And if we're doing history, that piece can't be left out.

We see this all the time even today in our inter-generational differences. There are things my grandmother could never do that I find quite easy to do. But I can't pass moral judgment on my grandmother. She couldn't help but be who she was. Morality always deals with matters of free choice, and the limits of vision that influence one's perception of available choices, and there are many things in life over which we have little if any choice.

Another illustration of the complexity even of the Chamorro psyche which can tend at times to see things in black and white is a contrasting Chamorro trait - to be very compassionate at times when judging others. From my same elders who found it quite easy to distinguish between the "maolek" and the "baba," I heard the words "Konsidera i taotao." "Consider the person." This meant, OK, he or she did something wrong. But you have to look beyond that. Consider the person. Who she is. The life she has. Things beyond her control. Circumstances that she didn't choose; but were given to her. And she's trying in her own mind trying to make the best of it.

I admire this trait when we do history. Yine'ase' = empathy, compassion. Or at least an awareness of the limitations involved in being human – even in the perceived culprit of history.

For people are – at the very basic level – driven by the same need. Survival. Materially, emotionally, psychologically. And in their quest to survive – people do some things others will question. My survival will at times put me in conflict with others. And we can lament the outcome and the consequences. But the basic dynamic is fundamental to all : survival – or at least – one's perception of survival issues.

And the more dire the perception of survival issues is, the less empathy one tends to have for others; the less objectivity one tends to have.

We need to have consciousness of this when doing history, for no other reason than it is part of the story.

So today – we see more and more people of the land – born and raised here engaging in our islands' history. It's a great thing to see. To see in the list of presenters, of authors – surnames that have resonated in our islands for many generations. It's a sign that our people are beginning to take ownership of their own history. To be part of the research, the discoveries and the discussion. After all, it's about us; so we have to be part of the telling of the story.

And that's what I am trying to do – in a small way – on my blog ([Paleric.blogspot.com](http://Paleric.blogspot.com)). As much as possible – I get our local people to tell their stories on camera. In Chamorro.

What a difference there is between reading a book about Chamorro proverbs, or historical events. And hearing a Chamorro explain that proverb in Chamorro, or relate that event in Chamorro.

For every Chamorro that I've interviewed, there's always another with a different explanation. Some times the “facts” don't jive with others. Some times the orally transmitted facts conflict with the documentation. That's only one aspect. Putting that aside, what we do have is insight into the Chamorro mentality of that generation. What one considered good or bad; noble or inhuman; high value or low

value. We get a glimpse into Chamorro sensitivity; how things make a Chamorro feel. It's a wonderful window into a passing world that books cannot provide quite the same way.

Whenever I put on these Chamorro clips, I resist the temptation to translate them into English. Traduttore, traditore. The Translator is a Traitor. Things are lost in translation. But it's deeper than that. If I want to enter into their story, I have to speak their language. For the medium is part of the message.

Someone once said, "There is no such thing as history; there is only biography." There is no story just about war, but about the people who began the war, fought the war, endured the war. It's not about whaling but about the whalers; not about colonization but about the colonized and the colonizers. Who is going to tell their story? Will they get it right? Would our great grandparents read our historical analyses of their times and agree with us? Assuming that a conversation between them and us could even be had.

More than that. I know that the moment I start to translate what they said, I've already moved a bit away from what they were saying, because now I've moved into interpretation. How often have I tried to re-articulate something someone has told me in counseling, for example, and been told I got it wrong – and this was just re-articulation, not translation from one language to another. So these are the limits of human communication and we should be aware of them. And if all history is really biography, then think about the pitfalls of autobiography. Like the writer who prefaced his autobiography by saying, "Please forgive the lies I am about to tell." Reflective of the way we tend to, when speaking about ourselves, highlight the good and downplay the bad. For example, I don't think it will ever be in my lifetime that the story of Chamorro collaborators of the Japanese, who got fellow Chamorros in trouble, will ever be told. Yet it's part of the story.

I've also made a concerted effort to give a lot of attention to a generation of Chamorros whom I feel are under represented at the moment. The normal, familiar but unnoticed Chamorro born in the 1930s and 40s.

We tend to frame our Chamorro history around tragedies. Wars and foreign occupation. If one were to give a cursory glance at what's being said about Marianas history, one could walk away with the impression that it's all tragedy, and that we're



all either depressed or very angry. And that isn't necessarily true. I didn't detect a lot of either in my grandmother's generation of the turn of the century.

They actually were a very happy group of people. The Refaluwasch (Carolinians) of Saipan taught me a great lesson. If any group of people have a right in the Marianas to be depressed or angry, one might think it would be them. They were the 1st to re-populate Saipan after some years of depopulation. They were in the majority up until the early 1900s. Under the Japanese, they were placed at the bottom of the scale, below the Chamorros who were below the Koreans who were below the Okinawans. On and on we can spell out the way people have regarded them throughout history. And yet I was won over very quickly by their innate sense of dignity that has nothing to do with material wealth; their clear sense of self – there is no self-doubt in them; their happiness and their joy. It reminds me of my grandmother and her generation, although there were cultural differences in the expression of that inner strength and joy. The Refaluwasch still had their song and dance; my grandmother expressed strength and joy through economic resilience and Catholic piety.

We seem to be interested in our own Chamorro people in terms of the tragedies they've been through or face today.

But what about the other stories? Stories of Chamorros alive today, but whose generation is dying out.

Our own people have been left out of the process for too long. We have shreds, like the letter Carlos Madrid found in the Manila archives, written by the Chamorro leaders in Rota, explaining to the Spanish priest of Agaña why they didn't want to be transferred to Guam. Here at least we have a Chamorro source. A few letters by Padre Palomo. But even today, we have to be aware of a selectivity we might have about what Chamorros are worthy of consideration and those who don't meet our criteria.

We can never find out from generations past in their own words what happened to them and how they felt about it; let's not let this present generation fall into oblivion except for those Chamorros who can speak to the topics of our agenda.

In the course of time, I have become more aware of the possibility that, since Chamorro blood runs through my veins, I have a certain advantage of perspective,

of cultural insight and inherited knowledge. But that there is also a shadow side to this. That my proximity to the issues may heighten my sensitivities to perceived questions of survival, and the temptation to construct history as a remedy to these anxieties.

I am also very aware that this generation born in the 30s and 40s are the last generation of Chamorros with real proficiency in the language. The generation whose 1st language is Chamorro. Who think in Chamorro, not in English and then find the Chamorro words for it. It is one thing to be taught a language by a community and quite another to learn a language in a classroom or in books. You really don't know Christianity or Islam or what have you until you live it in that community. So, in the 10 or 20 years I have left before they go, I try to spend as much time as I can with people who can teach me nuances, usages, expressions, humor in the language that you can never get from books. From people who can handle the language with the same ease and agility as you and I can in English. This is the generation we can't let slip by; whom we can't interview just in English though they can speak it. For one day, younger generations will be coming to you and me as the keepers of knowledge and tradition, and what a scary burden that will be for us.

So, it's great that we engage in this work, but we must do with, to borrow biblical language, "with fear and trembling." Aware of the limitations. Aware of the biases. Aware of the things we might impose on a tapestry woven in the past whose weavers are no longer here to correct our misinterpretations. Anyone can make history. No special qualities are needed to make history in every case. If you want, you can be the first person from Guam or from Saipan to do this or do that. But it takes a great deal more care, more consciousness and more skill to write the history of the first person from Guam or Saipan to do this or that. It's a tremendous challenge, but one that is needed if a community is to keep discovering the pieces that make up its soul.

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Eric Forbes, OFM Cap., earned a BA in history at San Francisco State University in 1984. He earned his masters of divinity in 1990 from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. He has also taken post-graduate courses in pastoral counseling at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska and Franciscan studies at St. Bonaventure University in Olean, New York.

Forbes is the Capuchin superior for Guam and Hawaii. Born and raised on Guam, he graduated from Father Duenas Memorial School in 1980. Forbes entered the Capuchin Franciscan Order in 1984 and was ordained a Catholic priest in 1990. He was previously a pastor on Guam and Saipan, the vocation and formation director for the Capuchin Order and the Capuchin superior for Guam and Hawaii.

He is also an occasional columnist for the *Pacific Daily News* and a contributor in *Guam History : Perspectives, Vol 1* (Mangilao, GU: MARC). Forbes authored *Historia de la Mision de Guam de los Capuchinos Espanoles* (Pamplona, Spain : Curia Provincial de Capuchinos, 2001) as well as, *The German Capuchins in the Marianas 1907-1919* (2007: Capuchin Friars, Guam). His most recent publication is *Pale' Roman* (2009 : Capuchin Friars, Guam).

Forbes authors a blog about the Chamorro language and Marianas history:  
[Paleric.blogspot.com](http://Paleric.blogspot.com)



# Buried Beneath Lattes and Bombs

*By Eva Aguon Cruz, dâko'ta Alcantara-Camacho and Moneka DeOro*  
**Opening Session Performance**

Since the US Military took control of Guam, imaginary borders have been drawn between us, Chamorus. On Guam we are fenced out of our land, and we are in a severe cultural crisis. Amidst a military build-up, we run the risk of choosing a culture of war and secrecy, over our own culture of respect and *inafa'maolek*.

"Lattes and Bombs" is a metaphor contrasting our own potential - we could come together to build a sturdy foundation that elevates our people -, or we can allow weapons to be built, stored, and launched to destroy life. Indigenous people have always approached healing in innovative ways. This hip-hop theater piece weaves poetry, chant, historical analysis and cultural experiences to dream new discourse towards colonial borders imposed on us by imperialistic domination.

FO'NA YAN PONTAN

Interpreted By  
si eva aguon cruz

in the beginning  
there was the  
beginning  
deep inside  
the thoughts of  
the highest  
coming together  
becoming one  
the any and everything  
without end  
forever  
limitless  
& without bounds.

so deep inside  
so very deep inside  
the thoughts of  
the most high.  
without end  
forever  
limitless  
& without bounds.

this is our ancestors'  
story of creation

*fo'na*  
*fu'una*  
*nana-hu*  
our mother

*puntan*  
*chelu-ña*  
our brother

he gave  
his back  
she made  
the earth  
our land  
*i tano'ta*

he gave  
his eyes  
she made  
the sun shine &  
the moon glow  
*i atdao*  
*i somnak*  
*i minalak*  
*i pilan*

he gave  
his blood  
she made  
the water  
*i hanom*  
*i uchan*  
*i tasi*

*fo'na,*  
*fu'una*  
our mother  
her body  
became  
our people  
i taotao ta

everything  
we are  
all  
that is  
life  
came  
from  
&  
goes on  
to  
the deepest  
the highest

where

*fu'una*  
*fo'na*  
the before  
the beginning

&  
*pontan*  
the point  
the end

unite  
&  
collide  
into  
being.

this is our ancestors'  
story of creation

i tinituhon

# Fåkmata!

*by dåko'ta alcantara-camacho*

*Fåkmata! Put haligi yan tasa  
i tano-mami i maga'haga  
i haga-ta kunga minegu Tåga  
lao, kao mangai respetu i taotao?*

TÅYA

This for Fena and Pågat through spiritual contact  
our land being stolen by business on contracts  
Dear Americans,  
This is the raw fact  
Chamorus are the number one casualty of combat!  
UGHHHH. And what is it we die for?  
The same reason that the government lies for: money.  
We're poor and so our vision is cloudy  
So we line up to sign up for a mission to Saudi  
While military hands takin cemeterylands  
Without lookin at how they own a third that they control  
Our island disappearing and we smashin down this road  
Foot on the gas, firing complex at our throats!  
Our survival depends on the revival of the ancient  
And our people re-creating the sacred  
Respect and love to my cousin that soldiers  
I just wish they were here defending our culture  
Inafa'maolek, respect's all we ask for  
Not a cash source dying in a task force  
Fighting for our culture is the last war  
Cause we can't time travel with American passports  
Its our culture that we're trying to save  
Why turn such a lively into a firing range  
When sacred medicines grow in this native residence  
Yet, military heads take without hesitance!  
*Pågat hao!* Respect the *lusong!*  
Why don't you fire your artillery on your lawn  
Building fancy homes on my aunties bones  
Dollar bills don't last like latte stones.

# Para i lahi-hu

*By Moñeka De Oro*

*Ma'āse, neni-hu*, as I sway you to sleep  
tenderly in my arm's keep

Deep in my motherly trance,  
I ponder our world's circumstance.

I hope there are great big ifit, guafi and nunu trees to climb  
And plenty hilitai, guali'ie, ayuyu and other gā'ga' to find

I hope for bula gāmson, guihan and hāggon to play snatch  
And that you won't have to worry about it being the last catch

I hope you hear the music in nature's bird song  
And see that the ko'ko', fanihi and sihek live on

I hope for enough suni, lemmai and niyok to pick  
And that what nourishes you never makes you sick

I hope there are perfect waves for you to surf,  
And that your boyish games are played on safe turf

I hope there is enough jungle to feel secluded  
And that our beaches are not overly diluted

I hope the night sky is star bright  
And not burned out by artificial light

I hope that the changing winds and uncertain tides  
Do not lead to our people's demise

*Ai adai, Ma'āse!*

Take advantage of every single opportunity to learn  
Because one day soon, it will be your turn.

But for now, I'll just sway  
Sway, sway.  
Searching for the answers for all that I pray.



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dåko'ta Alcantara-Camacho, Eva Aguon Cruz and Moñeka De Oro represent the next generation of Chamoru rights activists. Using their talents, they engage in spiritual and academic activities that embrace and reflect the dynamism of Chamoru culture. Through multiple forms of expression such as drawing, writing, rapping, singing and chanting, this trio shares their deep desire for healing and to build a peaceful and unified Marianas.

As a young woman proud of her Chamoru heritage, Eva finds pleasure in cooking Chamoru food and taking care of her family. Dåko'ta, a child of the Chamoru diaspora, recently returned to Guåhan/Guam to celebrate and perpetuate his experience of Chamoru culture. Moñeka is a proud daughter of Guåhan, who feels a deep spiritual connection with the island's sacred mountains, caves, rivers and beaches.

Alcantara-Camacho, Aguon and De Oro helped found Kannai, a collective of local artists committed to education and social empowerment. Kannai seeks to engage the current generation's consciousness on issues of decolonization with art.



## Marianas History Conference Steering Committee



### **Co-Chair: Scott Russell**

Scott Russell, executive director of the **NMI Humanities Council**, joined the staff of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council as program officer in late 2001 and became its executive director in December 2009. Prior to his work with the Council, Russell spent 24 years in the field of historic and cultural preservation, first as director of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Office of Historic Preservation (1977-82), and then as deputy director and staff historian for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Division of Historic Preservation (1982-2001). He has written widely on the history and historic resources of the Northern Mariana Islands including *Tiempon I Manmofona*, a comprehensive overview of the archipelago's ancient culture and early colonial history. Russell currently serves on the boards of the NMI Museum of History and Culture and the Pacific Marine Resources Institute, Inc.

### **Co-Chair: Rosanna P. Barcinas**

Rosanna Perez Barcinas, senior program officer at the **Guam Preservation Trust**, obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Urban Affairs and Public Development from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio in 1990. After returning to Guam, Rosanna briefly worked for the planning and engineering firm of Duenas and Swavely in 1991 before moving to Department of Commerce to be the Construction Planner for the Hagåtña Chamorro Village. Upon completion of the Village, Rosanna was hired as a consultant for the Guam Preservation Trust in November 1994. She is now the Trust Senior Program Officer and has been

involved in restoring more than sixteen historic structures around the island from Hagåtña to Malesso' (Merizo). Other than these structures, she has been involved in managing other preservation related projects, such as archeological studies, field schools, video documentaries and most notably Guampedia. She has been involved with Guampedia since its planning phase and managed grants from the Trust that brought Guampedia to its launch, with the development of entries related to history, language and culture.

### **Shannon J. Murphy**

Shannon J. Murphy is the managing editor of **Guampedia.com**, Guam's online resource. She has held this position since the planning phase of Guampedia in 2002. Murphy has a BA in communications with a minor in anthropology from the University of Guam in 1980. She went back to earn a graduate certificate in Micronesian Studies from the University of Guam in 2007. Murphy has an extensive professional background in journalism, particularly pertaining to Guam and the Micronesian region. Her roots in Guam journalism date back to her experience as reporter, feature writer and editor at the Pacific Daily News from 1980 to 1985 and then later as business, local news, and feature editor from 1990 to 1995. She also founded, edited and published San Francisco based Gaseta, a newspaper for Chamorros who live away from Guam, from 1985 to 1989.

### **Don A. Farrell**

Don A. Farrell came to Guam from California as a teacher in 1977. He taught at Inarajan Jr. High and John F. Kennedy High School. Three years later, in 1980, he switched careers to become a public relations officer for the Guam Legislature. He was the chief of staff to the Speaker of the Guam Legislature, Carl Gutierrez, from 1982 to 1986. In 1980 he founded Micronesian Productions and began publishing books. His books are:

- *Liberation 1944: The Pictorial History of Guam, 1984*
- *The Americanization of Guam: 1898-1919, 1986*
- *Tinian: A Brief History, 1988*
- *The Sacrifice of Guam: 1919-1943, 1991*
- *The History of the Northern Mariana Islands, 1991*
- *Saipan: A Brief History, 1992*
- *Guam: A Brief History, 1994*
- *Rota: A Brief History, 2003*

He is currently working on another book, “The Tinian Atomic Bomb Files: Declassified.” Farrell moved to Tinian in 1987 where he continues to do historical research, write and teach.

### **John A. Peterson**

John A. Peterson, PhD, is Assistant Vice-president of Research and Graduate Studies, University of Guam. He served as Director of the Anthropology Research Center and the Asian Studies Development Program at the University of Texas at El Paso, where he was an Assistant Professor. Peterson received his PhD at the University of Texas-Austin. Peterson has published his archaeological field research in a variety of scholarly journals, books and monographs, and cultural resource management reports. He has also served as a board member for various scholarly and community organizations. His most recent research has been heavily focused on reconstructing and interpreting the articulation of natural and cultural landscapes in the Mariana Islands and the Philippines. Peterson has also conducted extensive research on Spanish colonialism. During the past 40 years he has conducted fieldwork in Oceania (Marianas, Hawai’i), Southeast Asia (Philippines), and East Asia (China and Taiwan). Peterson has served on the State Board of Review, Texas Historical Commission, the state of Hawai’i Preservation Board, and the Guam Historic Preservation Board.

### **Judy Flores**

Judy Flores, PhD, is a folklorist, historian, teacher, and visual artist who has lived and worked in the island of Guam since 1957. She earned a BA from the University of Guam and an MA from the University of Washington. She taught secondary school art for 10 years, then served as folklorist for the Guam arts council for another 10 years. She helped found Gef Pa’go, Guam’s only living museum of Chamorro culture, serving successively as advisor, director and president over a 20-year period. She earned a second MA in Micronesian Studies from the University of Guam; and a PhD in Arts of Oceania from the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England. She returned to teach at the University of Guam, retiring in 2005. She is widely recognized as a professional visual artist of batik paintings that depict Guam’s culture and history that can be seen in many of Guam’s public buildings.

### **Rita P. Nauta**

Rita Pangelinan Nauta was appointed Guampedia.com’s Managing Director by the Foundation’s Board of Directors in July, 2011, to focus on the marketing and sustainable development of Guam’s on-line encyclopedia, a community-wide

project that serves to make Guam's history and culture accessible to the online global community. After graduating from California State University Long Beach in 1987 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, Nauta's professional career in marketing and communications began, inadvertently, when she was selected to represent Guam in the 1988 Miss World pageant in London. Her more than 20 years of experience in the marketing field encompassed local, regional and global markets. She's coordinated both local and regional marketing initiatives for the Guam Economic Development Authority for more than seven years, and managed the production and coordination of a myriad of product and service launches, including Guampedia.com, special events, and community-based initiatives over the last 15 years. Since 2002, Nauta has parlayed her marketing and communication skills into conducting professional development training on Guam, Saipan and Palau. Her passion for Guam's Chamorro culture and heritage has lead her to co-produce and direct Guampedia.com's short film, I Tinituhon: Puntan yan Fu'una.

### **Dominica M. Tolentino**

Dominica Tolentino is the Content Editor for Guampedia. She earned an MA in anthropology and museum training at George Washington University and her BS in biology from Georgetown University, both in Washington, DC. She worked toward completion of a PhD in anthropology from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Before joining the Guampedia staff, Tolentino contributed several entries on different topics, from religious practices to food. A former anthropology and history instructor at the University of Guam and UH Manoa's Outreach College, Tolentino has since been working with Guampedia as the content editor, in addition to researching and writing entries on ancient Chamorro culture and society.

### **Eulalia Villagomez**

Eulalia S. Villagomez is the Program Officer for the **NMI Humanities Council**. She is a graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo where she received her Bachelor of Art's degree in Business Administration. She is a board member for the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (NMCADSV) and a new member of the CNMI Youth Advisory Council. She has a special interest in volunteer work and volunteers for various community events.

### **Nathalie Pereda**

Nathalie Pereda is the media editor for Guampedia. Pereda earned a BFA in material studies with an emphasis on metal and wood design from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia awarded in 2006. A metal artist

since 2004, her work mainly consists of small to medium scale sculptures and jewelry. She also creates *ifil* wood jewelry for sale and exhibition at Guinahan Chamoru shop. She is the first female student with an apprenticeship under Joaquin “Tun Jack” Lujan, Guam’s master blacksmith and recipient of the prestigious National Heritage Fellowship Award. Pereda continues to learn traditional metal working techniques in order to make the tools that were once necessary for hunting and survival on Guam’s early farms. Pereda is also a volunteer for *Inadahen Lina’la Kotturan Chamoru, Inc.*, a non-profit organization which aims to preserve and promote the Chamorro culture and is working to build a cultural center for local artists, craftsmen and *serujanos/serujanas* (traditional Chamorro healers).

