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The New Puerto Galera Fortnightly Journal

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Puerto Galera under state of calamity due to water crisis

The Sangguniang Bayan last July 10 passed a resolution declaring the municipality under a state of calamity due to the water crisis. Municipal Resolution No. 2018-07-094 quoted the report of the waterworks office that 9 out of Puerto Galera's 13 barangays are experiencing severe water shortages due mainly to the decreasing water level of both Baclayan and Dimayuga reservoirs.

Edwin Macatangay of the waterworks office said that the water sources located at Novinasan, Managan and Dimayuga are not producing sufficient water to supply the needs of the barangays.

The water sources only

produce around 4000 cubic meters of water per day which is way below the daily of average 7000 cubic meters. The decrease further widened the gap between the daily demand of the municipality which is 10,000 cubic meters per day and what can be supplied by the waterworks office.

The worsening situation with more than 60 percent of the residents experiencing water shortages is alarming and necessitates immediate action.

Furthermore, the resolution states that both the municipal disaster and risk reduction management council and the association of barangay chairmen passed a resolution enjoining

municipal officials to find and implement the quickest solutions to the current water crisis.

Mayor Rocky Ilagan said that he has a short term or immediate solution for the Baclayan reservoir which supplies water to Sabang, Sinandigan, Palangan, Poblacion, Sto. Nino, Balatero, San Antonio and Small Tabina. The plan is to tap more springs in Baclayan as additional water sources for the reservoir.

Mayor Ilagan said his medium term plan includes the development and construction of another reservoir in Ponderosa and improvement of the Dimayuga Reservoir which will

>>> on page 2

DPWH grants P150M for treatment plants of PG

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) through the help of Congressman Doy Leachon has allocated 150 million pesos for the construction of modern waste water treatment plant facilities in Sabang and White Beach.

Mayor Rocky Ilagan said the construction of a plant in Sabang is now ongoing and will be followed by White Beach which will be also funded from a grant of the national government subsidy program for the implementation of sewerage management projects for first class municipalities like Puerto Galera.

Mayor Ilagan said they are very grateful to DPWH Secretary Mark Villar for announcing that Puerto Galera is already qualified for the subsidy which he said will pave the way for the lasting so-

lution to the issue of uncontrolled sewage discharges into the sea.

The Mayor said that this projects will address the coliform contamination problem that was reported earlier by the DENR. The DENR even went to the extent of recommending the closure of the entire Sabang Beach and business district due to the coliform contamination which was about 100 times the tolerated level.

The DPWH has already downloaded 100 million pesos for the Sabang project while 50 million pesos has been approved for the White Beach project after it qualified for 50 percent subsidy for the project capital expenditure (CAPEX) as it awaits for the submission of other documentary requirements such as

local ordinance for sewerage management, feasibility study, local and environmental permits.

Under the plan, wastewater will be collected from all households and commercial establishments through a piping system and will be pumped to a sewerage treatment plant after which it will be treated before being discharge to the sea or reused.

Meanwhile, Vice Mayor Marlon Lopez said that the Sangguniang Bayan will soon be considering a proposed ordinance to set the guidelines for connecting to the sewerage treatment plant (STP). For commercial establishments, the connection to the STP shall be mandatory and shall be a pre-requisite in securing and renewal of the Mayor's Permit and Business License.



Goodbye outrigger ferries, thank you for your service...

MARINA phase out order cripples tourist industry

Resort and hotel owners claim that the tourist industry of Puerto Galera was severely affected when MARINA implemented the phase out of all wooden hulled ferries last July 1. They said that many of their guests are finding it too difficult and too stressful to travel from Batangas pier to Puerto Galera and vice versa. As word got around about the hassles of traveling, many tourists are now postponing, cancelling while some are opting to go to other destinations.

MARINA said that only steel hulled or fiberglass vessels are now allowed to ferry passengers which meant less number of trips with only 2 car ferries and 2 fast craft vessels serving the Batangas-Puerto Galera route. Before, there were about 14 wooden hulled ferries and the departure was almost

every hour. Now if one misses a trip, the waiting time for the next available ferry departure might be 3 to 4 hours long.

The resort owners added that another damaging repercussion of the phase out was the subsequent closure of White Beach and the Sabang jetty pier as entry points for passenger ferries. This means that their guests need to travel from and to either Balatero port or Muelle pier. This is more inconvenience and additional travel time especially for tourists staying in Sabang. The road to Sabang remains unfinished and unsafe with numerous potholes that make for a very bumpy ride on trikes and jeepneys.

Allan Nash of El Galleon Dive Resort and an icon in the Puerto Galera dive industry said that the difficulties now being experienced by the tourists are

just "disgusting". He said that what is happening now is the worst ever as many resorts report of dramatic decline in their occupancy rate.

Add to this, Nash said, that resorts cannot even use their own boats to fetch their guests as the motorbanca association will not allow them to do so.

Several resort owners are posting on Facebook the bad experiences of their guests while they travel to Puerto Galera. Tourists are confused when they arrived at Batangas pier since the car ferries ticket booth is in Terminal 2 while the fast craft vessels ticket booth is in Terminal 3. Oftentimes, they fall prey to unscrupulous persons who feed them wrong information to rip them off.

There are also many reports of over-charging trike drivers >>> on page 3

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Puerto Galera under state of calamity ...

supply water to Balatero, San Isidro (White Beach) and Aninuan.

Once Balatero is connected to the Ponderosa Reservoir, this will lessen the load for the Baclayan Reservoir by around 25% which will improve water supply to Poblacion, Sabang and others.

The Mayor is appealing to residents to report leaking pipes to the waterworks office and to always conserve water. The Mayor instructed the waterworks office to immediately fix and plug-up all leaking pipes.

Financial aid

Upon receiving the Sangguniang Bayan resolution, the Mayor immediately went to

Manila to find funding sources for the rehabilitation and construction of the water system.

In one occasion, Mayor Ilagan gate-crashed the command conference of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) to impress upon the surprised national government officials the urgency and seriousness of the current water crisis of Puerto Galera.

The Mayor presented the resolution declaring a state of calamity to Undersecretary Ricardo Jalad, Assistant Secretary Nicanor Faeldon and MIMAROPA Regional Director Eugene Cabrera, all from the OCD.

Fascinated by the Mayor's

impassioned presentation and aggressiveness, the 3 officials pledged immediate national government support. They asked that the Mayor submit the program of works and costing of all projects for possible funding by the national government.

Being in a state of calamity, all projects will be fast-tracked to immediately end the water crisis.

A couple of weeks later, Mayor Rockey Ilagan returned to the OCD and submitted the required documents. The OCD pledged a total of 173 million pesos to end the water crisis of Puerto Galera.

The Mayor said 44 million pesos might be downloaded

within this year which will be used to construct new reservoirs and to rehabilitate the pipelines going to White Beach, Sabang and Poblacion. The remaining 129 million pesos hopefully will be downloaded next year, the Mayor added.

The Mayor said the funds will not only end the water crisis but will ensure sufficient supply of potable water to all the barangays.

The Mayor said that he will also go to the Governor, Congressmen and Senators to financially aid the municipal government in its quest to finally provide clean, potable and sufficient water supply to all the barangays of Puerto Galera.

Mayor Ilagan to seek more funding for Muelle project

Mayor Rockey Ilagan is seeking more funding for the Muelle Bay Puerto Galera Cultural Heritage Park project which is now under construction.

The Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) granted 60 million pesos for the project which features a replica of a Spanish galleon, a modern passenger terminal, lighthouses and renovation of the tourism office building, a grandstand and additional reclaimed space at Muelle pier.

However, reliable sources said that the 60 million pesos would not be enough as a big chunk of the budget is being

spent for the reclamation which seems to have been wrongly estimated.

Our source said that the budget for the grandstand is no longer sufficient and that the Mayor needs to find additional funding for it.

Earlier this year, the Muelle project was started with the demolition of around 50 percent of the stalls. The remaining stalls will be removed as the construction phase move towards the passenger terminal giving the remaining stall owners time to prepare and continue their livelihood while construction is ongoing at one side.

Octopus Divers Sabang

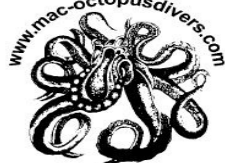
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MARINA phase out order ...

which prompted Mayor Rocky Ilagan to allow jeepneys to operate in Balatero and Muelle pier. The Mayor warned the trike drivers that severe penalties will be meted out to those caught over-charging.

How did it start?

Last June 18, owners of shipping lines operating the Batangas-Puerto Galera route received a letter from MARINA terminating the CPC (Certificate of Public Conveyance) of all wooden hulled ferries.

A CPC is the franchise issued by MARINA for a shipping operator to ferry passengers and cargoes within Philippine waters.

MARINA said that they conducted a market study and determined that the Batangas-Puerto Galera route can be "fully served" by operators of steel-hulled ships or ships with technically-improved hull material.

By fully served, MARINA means the route wherein the public need or demand for water transport is sufficiently met on a daily basis.

Atty. Sharon Aledo of MARINA said that the current ferries operating in Puerto Galera – MV Polaris of Starlite Ferries Inc. (RoRo), MV San Carlos of Atienza Interisland Ferries, Inc.

(RoRo), MV Genesis 1 of RDI Genesis Shipping, Inc. (fast craft) and MV Golden Raptor of MSL Shipping Lines (fast craft) – will be able to handle the volume of passengers for the time being.

Aledo who also heads the Legal Department and Franchising office said that in case more ships are needed, MARINA can give more franchise to interested ship operators.

Aledo said that the phase out had been known to all ship operators since 2016 when the MARINA issued the Memorandum Circular 2016-02 or The Revised Rules On The Phase Out Of Wooden Hulled Ships Carrying Passengers In Domestic Shipping.

Aledo said the ship operators should have modernized their ships since they knew already that the day of the phase out will happen.

Some of the ship operators thought that since their franchise go beyond the year 2018 deadline that they can still sail until the expiration of their CPC.

However, the MARINA Memorandum Circular clearly states that the validity of the CPC shall not exceed the phase out period which was set on July 1, 2018.

White Beach and Sabang Pier

MARINA ordered shipping operators to actively use the ports of Muelle and Balatero, and that the Sabang wharf and White Beach are to be used only by private ferries or bancas used for tourism, site-seeing and diving purposes.

This means that the operators of wooden hulled private ferries or bancas may still be allowed to sail and dock at any location including Sabang and White Beach provided that they comply with the conditions set forth by the MARINA.

The non-use of White Beach as an entry point places in limbo the newly constructed passenger terminal designed and donated by world renowned architect Andy Locsin. A Facebook post by a representative of Mr. Locsin is now offering the building for rent at 75,000 pesos per month.

FSL and Mayor Ilagan

Mayor Rocky Ilagan whose family owns the Father and Son Shipping Lines (FSL) had written letters to MARINA seeking to postpone the implementation of the phase out and the continued use of White Beach and Sabang pier.

MARINA apparently declined the Mayor's appeal and



Empty ticket booths at Batangas Pier Terminal 3 of the Puerto Galera outrigger ferries

went on with the implementation.

Mayor Ilagan said that FSL once employed more than 150 people for their 7 wooden hulled ferries. The other shipping companies like MSL, QLV, Galerian and Rhealaine also had hundreds of employees who lost their job as a result of the phase out.

The Mayor added that he will be converting his ferries into floating restaurants that can cruise inside the Puerto Galera Bay.

The Mayor added that he had known that the phase out will happen and that is the reason why he started his new shipping company, RDI Genesis Shipping Inc, and has now one operating fast craft. He said that another fast craft will

be ready by September.

The Mayor said that this might in the beginning have a bad effect for tourism as tourists would need to wait for several hours to catch a trip to and from Puerto Galera.

MSL and others

Leopoldo Villanueva Jr., owner of Minolo Shipping Lines, argued that the route is not fully served contrary to MARINA's finding. He added that this negatively affect the tourist industry because there will be lesser trip schedules and the waiting time will be much longer.

"I am appealing to MARINA to give us more time, and that after 6 months if we cannot provide the modernized vessels then they can do the

phase out and that will be OK for me."

"I have already talked with the Director and Atty. Aledo but they do not want to listen to us and want to do the implementation come what may... It is as if we are talking to deaf people."

Villanueva also laments the authority given to the operators of the wooden hulled private ferries since they are not yet covered by the phase out and may still operate their business.

Leny Del Mundo of QLV Shipping Lines and owner of Mindorinne Oriental said that the closure of White Beach to passenger ferries will cause a huge inconvenience to tourists going to White Beach and also Sabang.

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*Noe Lineses SILVER BULLET***What is right in Sabang and what is wrong in White Beach?**

This has always been asked whenever people compare the low season of Sabang and White Beach. Apparently the low season of White Beach is longer than Sabang and more severe in terms of occupancy rate.

Sabang's off season is shorter, from 3 to 4 months whereas White Beach would take up to 6 to 7 months.

During the off season in Sabang, there are times when Chinese and Korean tourists come in droves, eager to take advantage of the lowest costing packages. There are times when there is actually no off season in resorts that cater to these nationalities. However, those that cater mainly to Europeans and white-skinned tourists are not as lucky.

Generally, Sabang is more resilient to the low season than White Beach.

But why is that? Can it be explained simply because White Beach primarily serves Filipino tourist while Sabang caters to foreign tourist. Or are there reasons that make it right for Sabang and wrong for White Beach. Can lessons be learned or is it the way it had been and will always be.

Mr. J is one of the most sought after managers in Sabang yet he had kept a low profile. He had been quietly getting things done and successfully opening one business after another in an almost surreptitious manner.

Mr. J shares his insights on why the Sabang businesses that are under him thrive even during the off season when most establishments especially in White Beach are practically moribund.

Mr. J said that aside from diving, Sabang provides a variety of entertainment and a colorful nightlife, numerous restaurants offering specialty cuisines as well as all types of bars offering plentiful reasons to get tipsy and have lots of fun.

Mr. J said that most businesses in Sabang always try to learn new things.

"When something new appears in the

market, we take a crack at it and apply it in Sabang and if it works, fine, if not go to the next new thing."

The quality of Sabang resorts is undoubtedly far superior to most White Beach resorts. The space is bigger, the beds are upscale and the room amenities are all superb and high-class.

Yet the prices of the rooms are very competitive. Mr. J said that their room rates are even lower than what is offered in White Beach.

"What we do is we offer a package with diving, food and fun activities. The rooms we give them very cheap but we still earn money because of the other items in the package."

Mr. J also said that the Sabang business owners are more attuned to what tourism needs.

"We are more united, we generally do not engage in cutthroat or in bad mouthing the competition."

"When something bad happens in a resort, we take care of it and prevent that bad event from coming out in the open."

"We are also very serious with safety, security and the privacy of our guests."

Mr. J said, "Look at this bar, we buy the most modern equipment and try to be at par with the best in the country. Why? Because we want our guests to be awed and feel special and that makes them come back over and over again."

Lastly, Mr. J said, that they use lot of their resources for marketing and advertising campaigns.

"We do not have that mentality that some Filipino business owners have – that the tourists will come no matter what.

There are so many destinations out there and we want our resorts to be the first one they see, and when they see us that they will actually book a room and stay with us.

That is the reason why we really do not have an off season but we do have a normal season. Tell that to White Beach."

The Muelle Black Rice

Noted historian William Hesselstine wrote: "Writing intellectual history is like trying to nail jelly to the wall."

In the case of the burned grains scattered along the banks of Muelle cove, it goes far beyond that. Writing the history of the "black rice" is like looking for a needle in a haystack. I have not seen any old manuscript that tells the story of the "black rice". I interviewed many old folks and they can offer only accounts handed to them through generations. There are however quite a number of myths about its origin, one of which had been used by some enterprising resort owners as a come-on for sightseeing tours. Before I tell you the myth, let me first tell you the facts we have gathered.

From records and interviews, we found out that a garrison for Spanish soldiers was built in Muelle. The Spaniards built watchtowers in Dampalitan Point, near Coco Beach to sound off warships patrolling Puerto Galera Bay against Moro pirates. The Bay has been used extensively by Spanish galleons and Chinese merchant ships that sought refuge and traded with the natives for food and other re-supply necessities. The rugged topography of Puerto Galera made it essential for the Spaniards to build a warehouse for palay (rice) adjacent the barracks. Farmers from far-flung villages brought their sacks of palay to the warehouse to be stored until a ship would come to collect them.

One night the warehouse caught fire and was burned to the ground along with an unknown number of sacks of palay. The garrison also did not survive the fire. The blackened grains were scattered all over the banks of Muelle and were preserved for more than 200 years and now known as the "Black Rice of Muelle."

The basis for saying that the warehouse got burned in the late 17th century was a murky account of a great, great grandfather who lived in the late 18th century narrating that the "black rice" was already there before he was born. Perhaps, a scientific study can be made to determine the real age of the mysterious grains. It can be earlier but what great news would it bring if it would be much, much older.

How many of the grains are still in Muelle? No one can tell but for sure there are not a lot of them now in Muelle. Not only because the grains had become popular souvenir items but the oil and



The Muelle Black Rice

other chemical pollutants that pours into Muelle dissolve the tiny artifacts into mere ashes. When I was young, circa 1980, one can still see the "black rice" along the shore in front of the Coco Point Restaurant. Now, you can only find the "black rice" if you dig a foot deep and only in certain portions of the cove.

The construction of the wharf and subsequent renovation buried most of the grains under concrete and marble riprap. The municipal government had passed an ordinance prohibiting the collection of the "black rice", however, there is no provision to preserve and more importantly, to protect it.

Now let me tell you about the myth. An old woman appeared one day and begged for food from the soldiers manning the garrison. The warehouse was full of palay but the soldiers refused to give the old hag any food. And so, it was said, that the old woman uttered a curse against the soldiers and that very night a fire broke out and burned the garrison and the warehouse to the ground along with the Spanish soldiers.

Puerto Galera is not only gifted with abundant natural resources and beautiful land and seascapes, we also have a rich history and wonderful culture that need to be recounted, revived and preserved.

The Puerto Galera Fortnightly Journal

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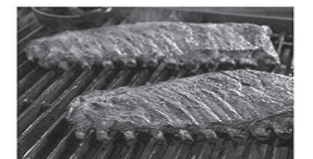
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Letter to the Editor

It was better 25 years ago

A good friend who owns a resort in Sabang wrote this email to me -

Hi Noe,
2018 and look where we are going... backwards

I know the Mayor is trying his best, he must be getting frustrated as well.

First they hire a road contractor that has no real machinery... the 3 month road fix is now at its 14th month.

Then they hire water contractor ... places in sabang haven't' (had) water for 4 months now.

Then the DENR try to get businesses to self destruct (suicide bombers).

Then they hire another contractor to put approx 6800 holes in the road and left it that way.

Then they stop public boats to Batangas... now it could take 7 hours from Manila to Sabang if you don't get ripped off by tricycle drivers for 250 pesos just to rattle your bones over 6800 holes.

Now they look like they will renege on the last meeting where they said private boats are ok, now it seems they are after them now and (will) close

Berberabe ... how many families will be affected?

Coast Guard said they would put pontoons at Batangas pier for speed boats... never happened.

Then the DENR are around looking for discharge permits permits to operate a generator.

Then the BFP have come up with a new one ... if you have more than 6 burners you must have a hood and automatic fire suppressant over the burners (worth) over 370,000 pesos.

(It was) better 25 years ago"

The only reply I can tell my friend is "C'est la vie."

I am not a dreamer but I see things differently than what is the prevailing thought of people who have had enough of broken promises and unfinished projects.

Having been born here and having access to information from the decision makers, I tend to be more optimistic. I believe that the near future will be much better. That the only way is upwards and there are great opportunities that are coming our way.

No more 2019 Malasimbo Music And Arts Festival?

In a telephone interview the founder of the Malasimbo Music and Arts Festival, Mr. Hubert d'Aboville said that there might not be any Malasimbo Festival at Villa Malasimbo, He said that if ever there will be a 9th Malasimbo Festival, it will most likely be held at the Locsin Property in White Beach. He said that he will not be involved but will let his daughter Olivia and husband Miro to handle everything about the Festival.

Mr. d'Aboville said that ne-

gotiations are underway between the Locsin Family and Miro and Olivia and Mayor Rocky Ilagan.

He said that all the 8 Malasimbo Festivals, although had been great and had hugely promoted Puerto Galera here in the Philippines and abroad, had been very stressful to their family and had not been financially sustainable. He said that the Department of Tourism unlike before is no longer sponsoring the event. Also, he added, they

had always problems and concerns with the safety and security of the thousands of guests that attended the festival.

Mr. d'Aboville said that if ever there will be another Festival, this might be held on the first weekend of March.

We at the Fortnightly would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Hubert d'Aboville for all his efforts to promote and uplift the tourist industry of Puerto Galera.

Merci Beaucoup Monsieur.

How to make Puerto Galera "great" again? - An Unsolicited Advise

1. Protect, Preserve, Conserve the Environment, the foremost tourism asset of Puerto Galera.

2. Re-instill and institute the famed, long-stagnant Filipino Hospitality - when Guests are Bisita and not ATM machines.

3. Lessen Travel Time, Improve Transportation System - We need FastCat, Fastcraft vessels. A Tourist Information and Assistance Center in Batangas.

Remove the gridlock, bottleneck at Passenger Terminals. Make it

convenient, facilitate access and provide a welcoming atmosphere for inbound tourists.

4. "Honesty is the Best Policy" - motto for all stakeholders

5. Make use of all media to promote, to sell and to invent a new image for Puerto Galera.

6. Create new attractions, upgrade the existing.

7. Formulate and execute a tourism plan - even a short-term but achievable plan is more practical than a long-

term vision.

8. Discipline is key. Implement the laws. Punish violators.

9. Human Resources Capability Building program - Get the Best of the Best to work for you Mayor ??

10. Unite the people - In Unity there is strength but govern with the mindset - It is not possible to please everyone - what is best for the majority must and should always prevail.

Thank you. Viva Puerto Galera. -- Noe Lineses

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Children's playground and adopted sons and daughters

There is one thing that Puerto Galera does not have and that is a public children's playground. It is really a shame that a first class municipality does not have a place and facility for young kids to play and have fun at.

A group of foreign residents and Filipinos made it their project to put up a children's playground at Plaza Iluminada in Poblacion (town center).

A Facebook group (Puerto Galera Children's Playground) has been setup where members can discuss and be updated on what is happening with the project.

If you wish to contribute in the realization of this project, please join our Facebook group and say hello. You may also email us at info@puertodegalera.com – thank you.

Congratulations to Arcobaleno Pizzeria located at Minolo, San Isidro for winning our survey for the Best Pizza Restaurant for the year 2018.

There are 16 Italian-managed pizza restaurants and Claudio Orsini takes the cake as

netizens continue to pour in kudos affirming the well-deserved win of Arcobaleno.

Mr. J brought us to a new bar and we were surprised that there is now gay (homosexual) entertainment in Sabang. The comedic performance that lasted for more than 1 hour was well-received by a jam-packed crowd of Korean and Chinese tourists.

Mr. J told us that he introduced this novelty to bring something new to the Sabang nightlife. So far, the crowd seems to be loving it.

The Fortnightly will be nominating several long-time foreign residents to be adopted sons of Puerto Galera.

One criteria for becoming an adopted son is a certification from the Barangay Captain of the nominee's good moral character. The nominee must also have contributed to the community "in aspects of economic, education, health, environment, social and cultural."

The Fortnightly is appealing to the local authorities not to be miserly in recognizing the

many contributions of many foreigners who have been outstanding members of the community. There are many foreigners in Puerto Galera who deserve to be made as adopted sons or daughters of Puerto Galera. Asking for money from them has become customary - but the way we thank them is largely superficial. More often than not, we take them for granted - demanding favors as if they are obligated to us. Yet all of us agree that without them our tourism could have never taken off (and continue to flourish thanks to their continuous promotion of Puerto Galera abroad).

Less than 30 have been accorded adopted sons and daughters status. Among them are as follows: Fr. Erwin Thiel, Tony Taylor, Petra Aliño, Leandro V. Locsin, Cecilia Yulo Locsin, Estella Zamora, Jaime Zobel, Bea Zobel, Yves Berset, Angelita Zaballa, Xavier Reumaux, Allan Nash, David Austin, Michael Waeber, Chuck Driver, Luis Y. Locsin, Leandro Y. Locsin Jr., Santanina Rasul, Thomas Zudrell and Hubert d'Aboville.

Poor service ORMECO

ORMECO's management always boast of the awards they get, besting other electric cooperatives in the country, but such accolade is a blatant lie especially to residents of Puerto Galera.

Yes they have an efficient billing and collection system; we, consumers, pay our bills on time which make ORMECO a top earner among its rank. But ORMECO fails miserably in providing the very reason why it exists, in providing reliable, stable power supply.

It is a given that if one establishes a business in Puerto Galera, he or she needs a backup generator for the business to survive. Such unreliable, erratic service is more evident during the summer peak tourist season with not only frequent brownouts but also voltage fluctuations occurring and affecting all business establishments.

This summer is no exception as brownouts plague Puerto Galera throughout the season. Many also report that either power surges or the low power voltage as the main culprit in damaging ex-

pensive electric devices and equipment which no one has dared ORMECO to pay for, at least officially. In social media, ORMECO is the most hated, most complained about service in the entire Puerto Galera.

The reason for such distaste is that ORMECO never improves its customer service relations to Puerto Galera consumers, its second biggest source of income in the province. Calling the ORMECO hotline is not reliable; sometimes they answer, most of the time they don't. And when the brownout happens late night or early morning, one can only expect the repair after many hours of no electricity. It is never a 24/7 service, not enough repair and maintenance crews, over-all, very poor service.

ORMECO's excuses are varied. They blame the power supplier but most of the time the brownouts occur because a tree branch fell on their distribution line which could be avoided if they regularly do clearing and preventive maintenance operations. The excuses could

be acceptable if ORMECO do not have the funds to run a better, efficient, service-oriented electric cooperative, but the thing is, they got millions of pesos of income and yet their service plainly sucks.

It is apparent that the voice of Puerto Galera is not heard in the board meeting of ORMECO. The feeling of helplessness must end. And it will end if the numerous complaining consumers will act instead of just talk. But who will lead us. The guy who is supposed to represent Puerto Galera in the ORMECO board is from Baco and he seems nonchalant amidst all the consternation.

Even if the local government has nothing to do with ORMECO, yet they get blamed also, we ask the Mayor to spearhead a dialogue with the management of ORMECO to improve their service in Puerto Galera – better customer relations, a working hotline, 24/7 repair crews and effective communication system, announcing as much as possible a brownout before it occurs.

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Presyo ng isda, sana ibaba

Bakit mahal ang presyo ng bilihin sa Puerto Galera? Isang pang-karaniwang katanungan na walang tiyak na kasagutan.

Gawin nating simple at paliitin natin ang saklaw. Bakit mahal ang presyo ng isda sa Puerto Galera?

Ang sagot daw ay dahil tayo ay isang "tourist town", marami daw turista dito at "can afford" ang mga taga-Puerto.

Himayin natin ang sagot na ito. Sa lahat ba ng "tourist town" ay mahal ang bilihin. Mali, di ba? Maraming "tourist towns" na mura ang bilihin, tulad ng Cebu, Davao, Baguio, Palawan at kahit sa Boracay.

"Can afford" daw ang taga-Puerto, o ibig sabihin ay kayang bumili kahit mataas ang presyo. Tama ba ito, mali din? Oo nga at marami ang kumita mula sa turismo subalit lahat ba ay kumikita ng malaki mula sa industriyang ito. Kung iisipin, ang tanging kumikita ng malaki ay yung may ari-arian sa Sabang at San Isidro. Labing-isang barangay o 80 porsyento ng populasyon ng Puerto ay hindi direktang nakikinabang sa turismo. Sa madali't sabi, mas marami ang hindi "can afford" sa taga-Puerto Galera.

Malinaw na hindi ito yung tinatawag na "law of supply and demand". Sa totoo lang maraming supply, pero kahit marami supply mahal pa rin ang isda.

Ayon sa isang tindera ng isda sa palengke maliit lang daw ang patong sa isdang ibinebenta nila kada kilo. Sampung piso lang daw. Subalit ng tanongin namin ang iba sa palengke, hindi raw ito kapani-paniwala.

May bumulong sa amin na ang karaniwang tubo ay mula 25 hanggang 40 piso kada kilo.

Sinabi naman ng isang mangingisda ibenebenta nila sa "middleman" ng mura at ito ay ibenebenta sa palengke ng halos doble kada kilo. Ayon sa kanya depende ang presyo ng isda sa dami ng nahuhuli at sa klase ng isda.

Ang nakakapagtaka pa ay kapag ang isa ay nag-presyo ng halimbawa 200 lahat ng



nagtitinda ng isda ay 200 rin ang pagbebenta. Eto daw ay kasunduan na ng mga mag-iisda.

Lahat po tayo ay gusto kumita. Sana lamang ay isipin natin na kawawa naman ang mga kababayan natin na hindi kayang makipag-sabayan dun sa mga mayayaman.

Meron pong solusyon dito sa problemang ito. Kaya natin na kontrolin ang presyo ng bilihin, partikular ang presyo ng isda.

Muli tayong manawagan sa Sangguniang Bayan. Tulungan ninyo kami na magbuo ng isang kooperatiba. Ang kooperatiba ang mamimili ng isda at ibebenta ito sa presyong tama at makatuwiran. Ang kooperatiba ang magdidikta ng presyo ng isda sa palengke.

Sa ating mga konsehal, kapag nagawa ninyo ito, lalo kayong mamahalin ng mga taga-Puerto Galera.

Sa mga mag-iisda, tingnan po ninyo ang ekonomiya ng taga-Puerto Galera at tingnan ninyo ang stratehiya sa pagbebenta. Maraming resort at restaurant ang hindi sa inyo bumibili ng isda dahil meron silang nakukunan na mas mura. Ang isa ay sa Abra pa bumibili dahil kung sa palengke ay baka wala na siyang tubuin habang ang isa naman ay sa isang supplier kumukuha at hindi sa palengke. Pwedeng makatulong sa inyo ang Sangguniang Bayan.

Kausapin ninyo ang mga konsehal na magpasa ng isang resolusyon na hinihimok ang mga may-ari ng resort at restaurant na sa inyo bumili ng isda. Yun nga lang, pagkaisahan ninyo na ibaba ang presyo ng isda. Ika nga ng Intsik, pag mura marami bili, pag marami bili laki kita. Sa huli, tayong lahat ay makikinabang dito.

LOT FOR SALE

Naghahanap kami ng mga ibenebentang lupa sa Puerto Galera para sa mga INVESTORS mula sa ibang bansa. Kung meron kang gustong ibentang property, makipag-ugnayan, tumawag o mag-text sa numerong 0939-9387818 o kaya ay mag-email sa puertogaleraoffice@gmail.com

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Oriental Mindoro
MUNICIPALITY OF PUERTO GALERA
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



In this day and age, the local government needs an effective partner in disseminating important information and gauging public opinion on issues affecting our community. Having the new Puerto Galera Fortnightly Journal back in circulation is a welcome development for this administration.

We know the challenges of governance under the realm and scrutiny of Social Media and it is imperative more than ever to release accurate news and information that a community newspaper can only accomplish to a much wider audience.

It is of similar import that our beloved town must and should have a record of events unfolding during these interesting times. I have the honor to announce several key projects that we have been working on specifically to immediately deliver basic services to all the barangays. Included in this list are the following: improvement and rehabilitation of the watersystem, establishment of an enhanced garbage collection and disposal system, installation of a sewerage treatment plant, construction of the Sabang road and many more infrastructure projects. We are also working on having a fully functional health and medical care facility following the licensing of our municipal hospital a few months after I assumed office.

Since tourism is our primary industry, I have made it a priority and am confident that we will soon become a major tourist destination of the country, all under the umbrella of the Bagong Puerto Galera, Better Puerto Galera program.

It is my hope and fervent wish that the resurrection of the Puerto Galera Fortnightly will usher in an effective communication link between the government and the private sector in particular, and the public, in general.

*Lastly, my congratulations to the staff of the Puerto Galera Fortnightly.
Thank you and God bless.*

ROCKEY D. ILAGAN
Municipal Mayor

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Oriental Mindoro
MUNICIPALITY OF PUERTO GALERA
OFFICE OF THE VICE MAYOR



Magandang Araw Po sa Inyong Lahat!

Ang pagkakaroon po ng isang pahayagan sa ating bayan ay isang magandang kaganapan at ito ay mainit na tinatanggap ng inyong lingkod. Sapamamagitan nito maipaparating ng pamahalaan ang mga programa, plano at proyekto sa publiko. Sa kabilang banda, malalaman ng mga opisyaes ng pamahalaan ang mga opinyon at saloobin ng ating mamamayan sa mga isyung nakaka-apekto sa kanila.

Umaasa ako na ang muling pagbuhay ng pahayagang ito ay magiging kasangkapan para sa higit pang pag-unlad ng ating bayan dulot ng mainam, mapag-kalinga at bukas na pamahalaan.

Inaasahan din ng mga mambabasa ng Puerto Galera Fortnightly na ito ay magiging patas at hindi magagamit sa pulitika bagkus ay tangi at pawang katotohanan ang mailalathala sa pahayagang ito.

Sapamamagitan ng Puerto Galera Fortnightly ipa-paabot namin ang mahahalagang anunsyo, impormasyon at balita mula sa inyong Sangguniang Bayan.

Maraming salamat, Congratulations at Mabuhay ang Bagong Puerto Galera Fortnightly Journal.

MARLON L. LOPEZ
Municipal Vice Mayor

**PUERTO GALERA FORTNIGHTLY JOURNAL BY NOE LINESES
DEPARTURE SCHEDULE OF PUERTO GALERA FERRIES**

NAME OF FERRY	TYPE	BATANGAS DEPARTURE	PUERTO GALERA DEPARTURE	PUERTO GALERA PORT/ CONTACT#	PASSENGER REG. FARE
MV GENESIS I	FASTCRAFT	8:30 AM	6:30 AM	Muelle Port	300.00
		12:30 PM	10:30 AM	0927-3099601	
		5:20 PM	2:30 PM		
MV GOLDEN RAPTOR	FASTCRAFT	7:00 AM	5:30 AM	Muelle Port	300.00
		10:00 AM	8:30 AM	0917-5146520	
		4:00 PM	12:00 PM		
MV POLARIS	RORO	10:00 AM 6:00 PM	5:00 AM 3:00 PM	Balatero Port 0917-6119926	225.00
MV STAR SAN CARLOS	RORO	6:30 AM	9:00 AM	Balatero Port	250.00
		11:00 AM	1:00 PM	0928-3374181	
		3:00 PM	5:00 PM		

**Puerto Galera Fortnightly by NOE LINESES
IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**



**MDRRMO
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0917-1469446
043-2873763
043-2873045



**PNP
POLICE STATION**

0917-3296806
043-2873043



**BFP
FIRE STATION**

0915-6031461
043-2873711



**PCG
COAST GUARD**

0929-6864198



**MSWDO
SOCIAL WELFARE**

0920-6131723



**PGH/ ER
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