

# Tinian land lease in place until 2008

■ **Extended:** Island leaders oppose using land for 'a bunch of cows,' despite 1979 agreement

By GAYNOR DUMAT-OL  
*Daily News Staff*

Tinian leaders had a golf course and other tourism-related developments in mind when a private company's lease of a vast Tinian public land was expiring last month.

The land, totalling 3,000 hectares, had been leased by Micronesian Development Co. since 1965 and used largely for cattle grazing.

The Tinian leaders were expecting Micronesian Development Co.'s lease to expire on June 10 so they made plans to open the land to developers who want to build tourist facilities such as a golf course, hotel resorts and condominiums.

But those plans might have to wait until year 2008.

Tinian leaders have learned that Gov. Froilan C. Tenorio has approved an extension of Micronesian Development Co.'s lease.

The lease extension agreement says Micronesian Development Co. could continue using the property for agricultural purposes until June 10, 2008. It says also that the firm — partly owned by investors in Japan — has the right to an "automatic extension" after 2008 for another 10 years.

Tinian Sen. David Cing this week sent a letter to the governor to say he was disappointed.

Because of the lease extension, the land would remain a grazing area for "a bunch of cows," Cing said.

Kurt Burkhardt, the governor's deputy public information officer, said that the governor's signature on the lease extension was merely a formality, however, because Micronesian Development Co. in 1979 obtained the

commonwealth government's approval to have the option to extend its lease.

The now defunct Marianas Public Land Corp. in September 1979 granted Micronesian Development Co. the "exclusive option" to twice extend its lease until year 2018, according to the 1979 agreement between both parties.

Under its lease extension, Micronesian Development would pay the commonwealth government \$25 for every hectare per year. It would make payments every quarter, as per the lease extension.

The Tinian senator said that price is low. Cing said that property's fair market value was \$25 per square meter.

Tony Yamauchi, president of Micronesian Development Co., defended the lease by saying in a phone interview that the price he paid was three times more than the first lease value.

Tinian legislative delegation Chairman Joaquin Adriano, Mayor Herman Manglona, Sen. Henry DLG San Nicolas, and Tinian municipal council officials, sent a letter to the governor on July 18 and opposed the lease extension.

Micronesian Development Co. operates The Bar K Ranch and told the governor in a letter that the ranch has a thousand head of cattle and horses.

The Tinian leaders argued that the firm does not need a lease extension for all of the land covered by the 1965 lease agreement.

"As you are aware, the leaders of Tinian have held several meetings regarding the future development of Tinian and, in particular, how the land...can be utilized to enhance our economic development potential," the Tinian leaders said in a letter to the governor.

"Several options to boost the local economy are being considered, including a hotel resort, golf courses, condominiums and related amenities," the island leaders wrote.

# Manglona walks out



Rotas's delegate to the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin T. Manglona, staged a walkout Wednesday to bring attention to his proposals to strengthen local government authority. Manglona said of the delegates at the convention, 'Nobody was listening.' Story on Page 3.

# Police chief: Group helped keep wife-beater in jail

By GAYNOR DUMAT-OL  
*Daily News Staff*

A support group for victims of domestic violence has succeeded in its first campaign here against the early release from prison of a wife-beater.

tenced the husband to three years in prison. Pinaula became eligible for parole when he served a third of his sentence.

The latest conviction was about a beating in which prosecution said Jessica Pinaula's eye wound required seven stitches

his wife and their three children who are 5- to 7-years old in their home, boarded the windows, nailed the doors put gasoline around their house and threatened to set his family on fire.

Victim Help members called upon

locked up longer than one year.

"We're looking at it as justice for the victim," Ogomoro said of the parole board's decision. "We're not against Mr. Pinaula. We're against the violence."

# Delegates debate 'sensitive' land issues

By DAN PHILLIPS

Public policies involving all the land in the Northern Mariana Islands were discussed at length during Saturday's session of the Third Northern Mariana Islands Constitutional Convention.

Private and public landowners and lease holders, including businesses, homesteaders, farmers, adopted children and heirs, will all be affected by the decisions made on these sensitive issues.

Proposals finalized by the Convention's Committee on Land and Personal Rights, then approved by the Convention, will then be considered by the people of the Commonwealth.

After extensive discussion, the Convention gave preliminary approval on Saturday to the committee's proposed changes in Articles 11 (which deals with public land) and 12 (which limits land ownership to indigenous residents) of the CNMI Constitution.

The Convention is scheduled to consider Article 11 for a final vote either today or tomorrow, with Article 12 to follow. Today's session is scheduled to start at 9 a.m. and tomorrow's session is slated for 10 a.m.

Although most of the Convention delegates agreed that the proposals would improve the existing language in Articles 11 and 12, two leading activists said that if the proposals approved on Saturday on first reading end up being approved by the Convention and voters, it would mean nothing short of disaster to the people.

Saipan lawyer Ken Govendo, one of the most outspoken advocates of protecting beachfront public land from further economic development, said that although the new proposals in Article 11 sound nice, "There are a thousand ways to get around it. This is not going to protect public land at all."

"This will only have another Marianas Public Land Corporation, and the same way that public land was leased out in the 1980s to the politicians and the connected people will continue," Govendo said.

The Convention's proposal would create a Marianas Land Bureau to manage CNMI public land, along with providing a mechanism for resolving land exchange disputes and for protecting

public land in "preserves".

Another Saipan lawyer, Ted Mitchell, who has long been an outspoken advocate of a strict Article 12 and who represents several people trying to reclaim their land due to alleged Article 12 violations, said that the existing Article 12 "provides a straightforward way to enforce Article 12. This new proposal is not at all clear and it would leave it all up to the courts."

Govendo and Mitchell were among the less than 10 people from the public who took time on Saturday to witness the Convention's discussions on the land issues. The Tribune was the only one out of the Commonwealth's six newspapers to be represented.

## Article 12 changes called 'fair'

A number of substantial changes in Article 12 have been proposed by the Convention's Committee on Lands and Personal Rights, with the Article 12 work being led by Committee Chairman Joe Lifofoi and committee members Marian Aldan-Pierce and Lillian Tenorio.

Section 1 of Article 12 would be changed so that a buyer must, in the words of Convention legal counsel Deanne Siemer, "disclose relevant information to the seller, such as whether the buyer is an agent for someone else, whether there are commissions being paid, and whether there are plans to develop the property or whether the buyer will join the parcel with other parcels."

Siemer said that changes are designed to ensure transactions that are fair to all of the parties involved.

Mitchell said that Article 12 was never meant to be fair, pointing out that it is discriminatory by its very nature, following the mandate of section 805 of the Commonwealth Covenant, which requires that ownership of Commonwealth land be restricted only to people of Northern Mariana Islands descent.

Section 2 of Article 12, as proposed, would now allow "a transfer by inheritance of a life interest to a person who is not of Northern Marianas descent and who is a spouse or child who was adopted before six years of age." Tenorio said this would "take care of the fraudulent adoptions of 17-year-olds for purpose of transferring title."

In addition, the new section 2 would allow "transfer to a mortgage

See Delegate, Page 6



Carmacho



Aldan-Pierce

## Local government issue stalls Convention

By DAN PHILLIPS

Ongoing debate over the authority of local island governments led to the second successive session postponement at the Third Northern Mariana Islands Constitutional Convention yesterday.

The failure to reach a compromise on local government issues led to the cancellation of Wednesday's scheduled session and the same problem, along with a personal tragedy that took the Rota delegates away from the Convention, forced cancellation yesterday.

At the core of the controversy is the same issue that has been critical in negotiating the Commonwealth Covenant and the first two constitutional conventions: How much authority on each island local leaders should have and how much authority the central CNMI government should have.

The issue was recently the subject of a controversial Superior Court decision in the



Manglona

case filed by Rota Mayor Joseph Inos against Gov. Froilan C. Tenorio. Tenorio favors a strong central government, limits on the powers of island mayors and accountability on the part of island mayors.

Rota Delegate Benjamin T. Manglona has stood strong in support of maintaining local authority over operations and expenditures, especially on Rota and Tinian.

Tenorio, however, has said the governor should control expenditures and law enforcement throughout the CNMI.

Saipan Delegate Tomas Aldan said that he could not

support the "creation of three separate and distinct executive branches."

Convention President Herman T. Guerrero, a Saipan delegate who is an executive assistant to the governor, said that under current law, the mayors are basically "glorified special assistants to the governor who are elected by the people."

Manglona disagreed, however, pointing out that without the compromises worked out in the negotiation of the Covenant and Constitution, there may have never been a Commonwealth.

He has repeatedly called for a "unified Northern Marianas," but many Saipan leaders, including several delegates, favor more central government authority on Rota and Tinian, mainly because the funding to support the governments on the two islands has traditionally been gen-

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## CONCON SUMMARY



The Constitutional Convention delegates have rejected earmarking of Commonwealth revenues for any purpose because of the need for all agencies to justify their budgets to the legislature and to live within the Commonwealth's means. In 1985, the second convention provided a fixed 15% of Commonwealth revenues for the Public School System and a fixed 1% for the Northern Marianas College. The delegates have tentatively rejected both of these guarantees.

The convention, which convened last month, was met with very large requests for earmarking from many agencies: the public school system wanted 45% of total revenues; the college asked for 5%; and the Civil Service Commission wanted 5%; advocates for the health agencies and the public safety functions wanted another 65%. "The advocates for various earmarking would have swept up nearly the whole amount of Commonwealth revenues every year," commented Convention President Herman T. Guerrero. "There would have been nothing left for many of the government agencies."

In response, the Convention has done away with all earmarking. "We think every government agency should have to justify its budget to the legislature," said Delegate Justo S. Quitugua (Rota). As priorities shift from year to year, this would leave the legisla-

ture with the flexibility to adjust to new needs and changing conditions. "I don't think any Legislature would be so irresponsible as not to provide for the educational needs of our community," Delegate Bernadita T. Seman said. Another remedy is to recall of public officials that the Convention delegates are considering making somewhat easier than under the current Constitution.

"Earmarking is a bad idea," according to Delegates Esther S. Fleming. "It follows agencies to become complacent to revenues, and less scrutiny is given to costs incurred during normal operations. We need every agency watching its costs carefully all the time. The earmarking system does not give them incentives to do that." The delegates have been lobbied hard by the agencies that now have a guaranteed share of Commonwealth revenues each year and stand to lose preferred status if the proposed amendments are passed. The delegates have also been pursued by agencies that would like to be granted an automatic share each year. "We are all pretty much united on this issue," said Guerrero. "If we give a guaranteed share to the agency, they will ask for that. And then the government would be locked in for 25 years until the Constitution might be amended again."

### NMC mission

Constitutional amendments ten-

# Earmarking of funds rejected

tatively approved by the Convention delegates have deleted the description of the Northern Marianas College and its mission from the Constitution. "These are legislative matters," explained Delegate Henry U. Hofschneider, Chairman of the Committee on Judiciary and Other Elected Offices which has jurisdiction over education. "Many people do not realize that we cannot act as a Legislature when we are in a constitutional convention. We need to stick to constitutional subjects, which are the basic framework for the government. Otherwise, Our Constitution would be hundreds of pages long."

The delegates were advised early in the pre-convention process by their legal counsel about the differences between Legislative matters and Constitutional provisions. The attorney General also provided that was legislative in nature and should be removed from the constitution. In applying these standards provided by the lawyers, the delegates were persuaded that all of the language about the College was legislative in nature and should be deleted.

"Everybody wants to be in the Constitution," said Delegates David Q. Maratita of Tinian, "but it is not our job to describe every government agency and tell it what to do. We have the greatest respect for the College and the job they are trying to do. They are a great asset to the Commonwealth, but these provisions just don't belong in the Constitution. All the advice we received agreed on that point."

The Board of Regents of the College and its operations have been covered by the Legislature in detailed legislation. The guarantee of autonomy, necessary to accreditation, have been enacted into law. "The College wants the same pro-

## Red Cross gets more disaster





Delegate Jack Villagomez will reintroduce the rule against conflict of interest before delegates cast final votes on Article 12 amendments.

## Delegate pushes for local authority

By GAYNOR DUMAT-OL  
Daily News Staff

After failing for weeks to get enough support for his proposed constitutional amendments to strengthen local government authority on his home island, Rota delegate Benjamin T. Mangiona said he finally was told Wednesday afternoon that a compromise was being worked out.

Mangiona staged a walkout to achieve that.

### Proposals

Since the start of the convention in early June, Mangiona said he and other delegates from Rota have unsuccessfully pushed their proposals, such as a language that spells out enforcement and administrative functions their mayor could carry out.

When his latest move on Wednesday morning failed, he walked out.

"Why should I be wasting my time deliberating when they have made up their minds? Nobody was listening," Mangiona said. He declined to mention names, but convention records show most of those who have been opposing local government amendments from Rota delegates are from Saipan.

### Mayoral supervision

Mangiona said because Rota is far from the central government on Saipan,

the mayor there must be allowed to supervise government employees on the island.

"We do not want to go back to the days when, in the absence of direct day-to-day supervision (by the central government), government workers would be seen on the road, in coffee shops, playing poker, socializing— instead of working hard to serve our people," Mangiona said.

But Gov. Froilan C. Tenorio said earlier that a 1985 amendment in the constitution involving local government, has caused problems for the central government, especially in the enforcement of labor laws.

### Labor abuse charges

Reports of alleged abuses of alien workers not getting justice on Rota caught national media attention last year.

Mangiona said people on Rota are hurt especially when the labor abuse issue is tied with his island people's desire for more government decentralization.

"Every time they talk about it they start finger-pointing that the people of Rota are violating the laws, when Saipan is also doing it," he said.

Mangiona said he would now resume attending convention sessions.

With one week left in the convention, he said he hoped delegates from the islands of Rota, Tinian and Saipan would unite.

# Official will try to bar conflicts of interest

By GAYNOR DUMAT-OL  
Daily News Staff

Saipan delegate Joaquin P. Villagomez would try to block constitutional convention delegates who have personal interests that conflict with the purpose of Article 12 from participating in the final vote on proposed amendments related to that part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Constitution.

Villagomez said this week he would reintroduce a conflict-of-interest provision in the convention rules, before delegates cast their final vote. A similar proposal, made when the convention started in June, was defeated.

The final vote on Article 12 could happen any day now, with the convention's initial closing date only one week away.

During a plenary session last Saturday, the constitutional convention delegates gave initial approval of several proposed Article 12 amendments, after a three-hour debate.

Article 12 allows only persons or corporations of Northern Marianas descent to own land. Others could lease for up to 55 years.

Villagomez said the "looked like a rush job."

The Saipan delegate said a special-interest group for developers succeeded in getting delegates elected to the third rewriting of the CNMI constitution. A conflict-of-interest rule would counter that, he said.

The delegate, however, said he was not too optimistic about getting a majority support from the 26 other constitutional convention delegates on the conflict-of-interest rule.

By a vote of 16-4 with seven absences, the convention delegates passed on first reading the following amendments recommended by the Committee on Land and Personal Rights that would:

- Allow a corporation with at least 51 percent of its voting shares held by Northern Marianas descent to qualify to own land. The constitution currently requires 100 percent ownership by Northern Marianas descendants. The change is intended to attract foreign investment, the committee said in a report.

- Allow only children adopted by people of Northern Marianas descent before they reach the age of 6 to hold life interest to land. The committee said the amendment would prevent fraudulent adoptions of older children for the purpose of transferring land title.

- Allow a non-indigenous person married to a Northern Marianas descendant to hold interest equivalent to a lease for life.

"A spouse who has worked long and hard for many years with his or her mate and invested in joint family property should not be denied all inheritance of land," the committee stated.

- Allow parties of a lease to sever a provision from a lease agreement that provides for a term beyond 55 years in case of a change of law. "At the end of 55 years, the land would go back to the Northern Marianas owner," the land committee said.

- Allow Chamorros from Saipan who were sent to Guam, Yap, Palau and other places by the Japanese and who returned to Saipan after 1950 to qualify as a Northern Marianas descendant. The current cut-off date is 1960. "It means that anyone who was born or domiciled in the Northern Marianas in 1950, and who was a trust territory citizen, now becomes 100 percent Northern Marianas descent," the committee said.

- Allow a language change — from void ab initio (void from the very beginning) to voidable — in determining what happens to a disputed land. Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Jose Dela S. Cruz, a member of the convention legal team, said the term voidable would give the courts some flexibility to decide what to do when there is a violation of Article 12.

- Create an office within the Attorney Generals' office where landowners can go for advice. "This office would monitor Article 12 transactions and would be able to spot illegal practices as they come up, rather than waiting to be challenged in court," according to the committee.

- Provide a constitutional provision that limits to six years from the date a land deal took place, for a person of Northern Marianas descent to file an Article 12 lawsuit.

During the vote on first reading, Villagomez and three other delegates, Carlos S. Camacho, Vicente R. Aldan, and John Oliver Gonzales voted against the proposed amendments.

Gonzales said the statute of limitations would be tantamount to indirectly depriving the indigenous people of their right to file an Article 12 suit.

Article 12 is complex and it might take years for some people to realize that a violation has been committed in a land deal, Gonzales said. "Even the educated have difficulty understanding the complexity of the language," he said.

Villagomez said he wants the "legal jargon" in the proposed Article 12 amendments explained in layman's language, before final vote is made.

## BRIEFLY

### Local Red Cross chapter receives grants for \$200,000

The Northern Marianas chapter of the American Red Cross has received two major grants totalling over \$200,000 from its national headquarters.

Disaster supplies and materials, such as tents, blankets, water containers, food and drink containers, 10 kilowatt generators, lanterns, cleanup kits, and comfort kits comprise the first grant.

The Northern Marianas chapter has received six 20-foot containers of those supplies. The second grant provides for the renovation of the storage facility behind the Red Cross office near the air-

port.

An additional 18,000 cubic feet of storage space would be added to the storage facility. Construction of a vehicle shelter and a disaster services classroom three times the size of the existing facility would also be possible under the second grant.

Before receiving the grant for the renovation of its chapter house, the local Red Cross office requested for an extension of its lease with the Commonwealth Ports Authority for another 20 years, or up to the year 2020. The staff, volunteers, and board directors of the Northern Marianas chapter of the American Red Cross thanked the ports authority for approving the lease extension.

# Highlights of the Third NMI Constitutional Convention

## Earmarking revenues

The Constitutional Convention delegates rejected earmarking of Commonwealth revenues for any purpose because of the need for all agencies to justify their budgets to the Legislature and to live within the commonwealth's means.

In 1985, the Second Convention provided a fixed 15 percent of commonwealth revenues for the Public School System and a fixed one percent for the Northern Marianas College. The delegates this time around have tentatively rejected both of these guarantees.

The convention, which convened last month, was met with very large requests for earmarking from many agencies: The Public School System wanted 45 percent of total revenue; the college asked for 5 percent; the Civil Service Commission wanted 5 percent; advocates for the health agencies and the public safety functions wanted another 65 percent.

"The advocates for various earmarking would have swept up nearly the whole amount of commonwealth revenues every year," commented Convention President Herman T. Guerrero. "There would have been nothing left for many of the government agencies."

In response, the convention has done away with all earmarking.

"We think every government agency should have to justify its budget to the Legislature," said Delegate Justo S. Quitugua of Rota.

As priorities shift from year to year, this would leave the Legislature with the flexibility to adjust to new needs and changing conditions.

"I don't think any Legislature would be so irresponsible as not to provide for the educational needs of our community," Delegate Bennett T. Seman said.

Another remedy is the recall of public officials which the Convention delegates are considering making somewhat easier than it is under the current Constitution.

"Earmarking is a bad idea," according to Delegate Esther S. Fleming. "It allows agencies to become complacent about their entitlement to revenues, and less scrutiny is given to costs incurred during normal operations. We need to have agency watching its costs carefully all the time. The earmarking system does not give them incentives to do that."

The delegates have been lobbied hard by the agencies that now have a guaranteed share of Commonwealth revenues each year and stand to lose their preferred

status if the proposed amendments are passed. The delegates have also been pursued by agencies that would like to be granted an automatic share each year.

"We are all pretty much united on this issue," said President Guerrero. "If we give a guaranteed share to one agency, they will ask for that. And then the government would be locked in for 25 years until the Constitution might be amended again."

## College out of Constitution

Constitutional amendments tentatively approved by the Convention delegates have deleted the description of the Northern Marianas College and its mission from the Constitution.

"These are legislative matters," explained Delegate Henry U. Hofschneider, Chairman of the Committee on Judiciary and Other Elected Offices which has jurisdiction over education. "Many people do not realize that we cannot act as a Legislature when we are in a constitutional convention. We need to stick to constitutional subjects, which are the basic framework for the government. Otherwise, our Constitution would be hundreds of pages long."

The delegates were advised early in the pre-convention process by their legal counsel about the differences between Legislative matters and Constitutional provisions. The Attorney General also provided advice about constitutional language added by the 1985 Convention that was legislative in nature and should be removed from the Constitution. In applying these standards provided by the lawyers, the delegates were persuaded that all of the language about the College was legislative in nature and should be deleted.

"Everybody wants to be in the Consti-

tion," said Delegate David Q. Maratita of Tinian, "but it is not our job to describe every government agency and tell it what to do. We have the greatest respect for the college and the job they are trying to do. They are a great asset to the commonwealth, but these provisions just don't belong in the Constitution. All the advice we received agreed on that point."

The Board of Regents of the college and its operations have been covered by the Legislature in detailed legislation. The guarantees of autonomy, necessary to accreditation, have been enacted into law. "The college wants the same provisions in the Constitution that they have in the law," said Delegate Justo S. Quitugua of Rota. "But that is a duplication that we don't need. They can rely on the Legislature to provide the autonomy they need. The Legislature has every interest in making sure the college keeps its accreditation."

The draft constitution under discussion at the Convention protects the college by providing it a specific exemption from civil service regulations. A community college on Guam was put on probation recently by accrediting authorities when the Guam Civil Service requirements were extended to its faculty and administration. Under the constitutional provision, the College maintains its own personnel office. It is not under the Governor's personal office.

"The College is assured that the civil service won't extend to its professional staff," said Delegate Quitugua, who heads a subcommittee on Civil Service. "We were very careful about that. They have all the necessary exceptions to guarantee their autonomy and independence provided in statutes, so their accreditation is assured in that area."

Under the language approved by the delegates, the Legislature is given wide latitude to create excepted positions that are not under the Civil Service Commission.

## Personal rights article

Delegates to the Third Northern Mariana Islands Constitutional Convention passed on second and final reading of Article I, Personal Rights, by a unanimous vote of 23-0, with four absences. After convention President Herman T. Guerrero (Jun Pan) announced the results, delegates broke out in a round of applause.

The Committee on Land and Personal Rights, chaired by Del Jose R. Lifaifai of Saipan, recommended that a new section be added, Section 11, with respect to the right of life. The language reads: "The right to life for every individual during the entire span from conception through old age is respected, honored, and protected in the Commonwealth. The right is subject to definition and regulation by the Legislature." The Committee also made amendments to Section 7, "Quartering Armed Forces" instead of the word "soldiers." This section provides: "No member of the armed force in time of peace may be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor time of war except as provided by law." Section 9, regarding "Clean and Healthful Environment" provides that each person has that right and that the Legislature shall pass no law infringing this right or permit the storage or dumping of any nuclear waste or radioactive material in the lands or waters of the commonwealth.

For the Daily News

## VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

### Resisting U.S. repeats history

We must not let Froilan Tenorio make the same kind of mistakes the Japanese did. Fifty years ago intransigent Japanese leaders led their loyal subjects headlong into an atomic war they lost. The leadership vastly underestimated the capacity of the U.S. The atomic age arrived as a result of aristocratic arrogance. The Japanese and the Germans both let blind loyalty based on notions of nationalistic and racist pride override reason. With leaders like that who needs enemies.

The United States as a nation of immigrants had an advantage. Success was measured more by merit than race or class or place of birth. There was no royalty. Reason and logic were more likely to rule political decisions. The people were more likely to participate in making hard decisions. They were more likely to be leaders.

It is simplistic and wrong, however, to lay all the blame on the leadership of any country. Responsible citizens must participate in making political decisions.

People must work together to find politically acceptable ways to pull out of a paranoid postwar quagmire. Can Tenorio lead the way?

Somebody, for example, convinced him to spend \$83,000 to have the labor code re-writ-

ten. Rather than follow the law already on the books Tenorio hired David Cahn from Washington D.C. to rewrite the law.

The Federal government of the U.S. has repeatedly advised the CNMI to properly enforce its labor laws. Instead, for some reason Tenorio has decided to rewrite the labor law. He must think that it is more important to encourage Asian investors like Willie Tan than to fully comply with the publicized demands made by the U.S. Why? The big business blue bloods will selfishly kill our general economy if we don't watch it.

### THOMAS M. SWEENEY 'Marianas Variety' story angers educator

As a proud member of the Public School System family, I am deeply offended by the article entitled *PSS Being Run Without a Plan* published in the *Marianas Variety* in the July 4 issue on the third page. I am definitely sure that this article has insulted the intelligence and credibility of the many highly educated and dedicated PSS employees who have invested so much time and energies at work and at home designing their blueprints for excellence in education for the best interest of our students in this beautiful Commonwealth. This article is simply far from the truth.

The PSS principals submit-

ted their Seven Year Plan in SY 1994-95. In this long-range plan, it addresses curriculum development activities, student evaluation instrument, professional staff development needs, facility improvement, staffing needs, teacher performance evaluation, proposals for special need areas, budgetary issues, projected enrollment, proposal for alternative programs, implementation of new concepts in education, parental involvement programs, and many others.

Prior to this requirement, principals were submitting their Five Year Plan with a year-to-year renewal process. Our visions for improvement in all areas were documented into these blueprints and publicized reflecting collaboration, professionalism, dedication, sense of direction, and a powerful evidence of caring in providing the best education possible for our students in this Commonwealth.

I speak for the teachers, program managers, counselors, principals, vice principals, and the many support staff and I would like to assure the Board of Education Vice Chairman, Mr. Dino Jones, that our public schools and Central Office are being "run" with variety of action plans. In addition to the Seven Year Plan, the schools and Central Office are constantly engaged in other strategic planning mechanisms, such as writing proposals for feder-

al or local funding to establish alternative programs, the accreditation process requirements, quarterly statistical report, school year report, annual budgetary submission, modified calendars, summer/intercession programs, and others. All these blueprints for excellence in our very own Public School System denote the importance of planning activities being performed at the school level and at Central Office.

What we need to critically address is to periodically re-evaluate all these plans and prioritize them to correspond with the new paradigms in education. It is in the context of our education that we begin to discern what in the world is worthy of our time and attention. It is also in this context that our current quest for leaders can be understood. From the destabilizing and uncomfortable confusion of charge, we sincerely yearn for leaders who see beyond the chaos, who can choose a direction, can forge ahead, are able to reassure us that the future holds promise, and can focus the energies of those who follow in ways that empower them to feel a sense of control over their lives.

Someone once said, "The single most visible factor that distinguishes successful major changes from change efforts that failed is strong support from top leaders."

TOM PANGELINAN

Pacific Daily News

## Focus

On the Commonwealth

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