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REBUILDING THE ECONOMY AT A SUSTAINABLE PACE



A D V E R T I S I N G S U P P L E M E N T 8 S E P T E M B E R 2 0 2 0

By BEA CABRERA beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com CORRESPONDENT

Four years ago, soon after having a health issue that made walking and carrying heavy loads very difficult, Rick suggested to the grocery store where he regularly shops to create an online portal where customers can buy grocery items using an app on their phone, pay for the items using their debit or credit card, and have someone at the store deliver the items to his home. And he was willing to pay a premium for that convenience. Who would have thought that a global pandemic would accelerate that idea into reality?

Last week, Joeten launched its "Easy Grocery," a unique service that will make grocery shopping convenient and an enjoyable experience. You don't have to stress going out of the house to get food and household items you need because, with Joeten Easy Grocery, it would seem like you have partner or assistant in meeting your family's grocery needs.

According to Gederryn R. Domingo, marketing manager/buyer at J.C Tenorio Enterprises, Joeten "Easy Grocery' is a collaboration with Eats Easy, an app that manages fast and efficient food delivery on Saipan. "Now they also experience.

For your convenience, Joeten launches **Easy Grocery**



Joeten teams up with Eats Easy to create the "Easy Grocery," a unique service that makes grocery shopping convenient and an enjoyable



have grocery delivery from Joeten....[The] Eats Easy app has existed since February this year and, being the first GPS mobile app on Saipan, Joeten recognized how beneficial this could be for shopping centers/supermarkets," she said.

"The idea was inspired by Eats Easy's purpose to serve our island hassle-free food that's delivered right to your door. ... We approached the Eats Easy team in March and, after numerous meetings, discussions, trial runs here and there, a couple months later we launched Easy Grocery," she added.

Domingo said that grocery delivery has been popular and successful in the U.S. mainland for many years now. She said the concept was already in the works even pefore COVID-19 but the impetus to create online shopping became more urgent due to the pandemic. "We all are familiar with Walmart, a retail corporation that offers grocery delivery in the U.S. mainland. We thought that it would be better to present and expand grocery delivery service to our community," she said. "Trying to find time, especially on a busy schedule, to make dinner is one thing, but to find time to go to the grocery store is See JOETEN on Page 16



fears and hope

By BEA CABRERA CORRESPONDENT

she said.

Palacios said.

BEA CABRERA

members that businesses are

following safety protocols

and, if businesses do not fol-

low the safety protocols, their

operations will be shut down

Although the future still

remains uncertain, CNMI

businesses have welcomed

the move to reopen after

several months of zero busi-

ness activity. "No one knows

what next week or even next

month will bring. In our small

business forum, some busi-

nesses mentioned they were

thriving; others are still strug-

gling. Businesses are taking

See COVID-19 on Page 16

by the enforcement agen-

cies," Palacios added.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Velma Palacios speaks at the town hall meeting held last month that provided a platform for business leaders and owners to vent out challenges

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When news broke that the CNMI's COVID-19 Emergency Directives would be amended, many restaurant businesses were fearful that the new directives may include taking away dine-in services that could shut businesses down. It was, therefore, with a sigh of relief for many businesses when the amendments involved only new curfew and business hours, remote learning for schools, limited gathering for people, and restricted building occupancy. With this, local businesses pressed ahead with providing services to the community and jobs to their employees, while encouraging the continued practice of health and safety protocols. According to Saipan Chamber of Commerce

president Velma Palacios, the Chamber has not heard any negative feedback from businesses regarding the new COVID-19 requirements. "The main change was the curfew and in general businesses are complying with the COVID-19 Task Force requirements to reopen and to ensure the safety of their employees and customers,"

Many restaurants and customers are happy that the new regulations did not take away dine-in operations. "We agree this a good thing, as many restaurants have been working on complying with the COVID-19 requirements to offer dine-in services. The more businesses open, it will be good for our economy,"

"This is also a start to provide some level of confidence to our community

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A D V E R T I S I N G S U P P L E M E N T



Exquisite Productions Presents FARTH ARIANAS 2020

NORTHERN MARIANA'S FIRST VIRTUAL PAGEANT



L to R: Kaitlin Borja, Maria Lael Terlaje, Julia Biton, Zoe Stephanson & Arianne Cabrera



Northern Marianas

pageant goes virtual

By BEA CABRERA eacabrerasaipan@gmail.com ORRESPONDENT

The much-awaited Miss Earth Northern Marianas Pageant 2020 will push through this year, with organizers breaking norms and traditions in this new normal by proceeding with the pageant virtually.

The Miss Earth 2020 Northern Marianas pageant will be on Sept. 19, 2020, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan from 4pm to 6pm. The international pageant itself will start on Sept. 21, 2020, and the finals will be on Nov. 29, 2020—all done virtually.

Dee Clayton, president of Exquisite Productions that organizes the Miss Earth Northern Marianas, said the around world remains important despite the pandemic. "It is important to address climate change as well as the pandemic. This is the time where we take responsibility to bring awareness to the environment and to also advocate and spread the word to have a safe community and be aware of our health," she added.

directives and restriction or- Deleon Guerrero added. ders from our government eant," she said.

clude the swimwear, evening

wear, native costume and the question-and-answer portion. They will be prejudged and the finals will be at the coronation itself.

The current titleholder, 2019 Miss Earth Northern Marianas Leisha Deleon Guerrero, is a student at the Northern Marianas College. Among the projects that she has undertaken for environmental awareness and sustainability as Miss Earth Northern Marianas promotes the 5R Campaign, which intends to spread the idea of "Reduce. Reuse. Refuse. Respect. Rethink" as a lifestyle in the Marianas.

In an earlier interview, she said that it is her responsibility as Miss Earth NMI to pursuit of strong environmen- lead the community and the tal programs in the CNMI and youth to be part of this beneficial change within the islands. "The 5R campaign is a call for members of the community to reduce the amount of waste they generate, to reuse materials, to refuse excessive packaging, to respect the environment, and to rethink lifestyle choices."

"The Miss Earth NMI pageant and mission is one of According to Clayton, the the most relevant to date pandemic makes it difficult considering we are in a globto organize a pageant even al climate crisis. Miss Earth virtually. "This is due to the is also known for our motto, protocols that we have to fol- 'Beauties for a Cause,' and low but, as long as we take that's exactly what being precautions, commit to the Miss Earth NMI is all about,"

This year, seven young leaders, I think we can still women will vie for the chance move forward with the pag- to represent the Marianas at the Miss Earth international Organizer will be using pageant in December. They Facebook Livestream that are Arianne Cabrera, Zoe will also capture the activities Stephanson, Jessme Jones, of each contestant and in- Maria Terlaje, Jaybriana See MS. EARTH on Page 16

SAIPAN TRIBUNE



accepted," Hirano added.

Contactless debit and credit cards distribution started on June 29, 2020. Other FHB digital alternatives such as Digital Home Loan portal for mortgages allows customers to go online, have easy access to details and manage their mortgage; and FHB Mobile Banking, which allows account holders to manage their account, deposit checks using their mobile device, pay bills and more.

For more information, visit fhb.com/contactless.



FHB.COM

FHB introduces 'Tap & Go' technology

By BEA CABRERA eacabrersaipan@gmail.com

CORRESPONDENT

irst Hawaiian Bank has made using your FHB debit and credit cards easier, faster, and safer. FHB is the first financial institution in Hawaii to unveil its "Tap & Go" contactless debit and credit technology, nal, which is a huge plus during the pandemic.

According to FHB senior vice president and Card Services Division manager Gregg Hirano, this Tap & Go technology happened at a right time when people are starting to get comfortable with resuming their daily lives after confinement, quarthe COVID-19 pandemic and when economic flow is on the move again. "With consumers returning to their daily activities of shopping and dining, our new contactless payment cards offer

chip-enhanced technology, we're able to quickly respond transactions and a safer ento changing consumer preferences with cards that enhance convenience, speed, security and safety."

field communication wireless which means you can settle FHB debit or credit card over your bill, check, or account the contactless symbol on without the card leaving your merchant terminals to make rano describes the process as and shopping.

"These new contactless cards provide both customers and businesses a conveantine, or lockdown due to many point-of-sale terminals opening and small businesses look for ways to ensure transactions," Hirano said. success, contactless cards alexperience and increased

their hand," he said. "Using rants, and grocery stores, the the latest advances in digital, elimination of hand-to-hand transactions enables faster vironment for employees. ... Contactless cards can process transactions nearly 10 times faster than a regular chip-The new cards use near- enabled card. Businesses can complete transactions more connectivity and customers guickly, reducing the amount simply "tap" by hovering any of time customers must wait in line to make a purchase."

Where security is concerned, FHB debit and credit hand or touching the termi- a payment. Customers may card holders are assured of need to enter a PIN number safe and secure transactions for transactions over \$50. Hi- every time as FHB cars are embedded with multiple layanother tool for customers' ers of security to protect FHB need for frictionless banking cardholders against fraud. "Transactions are secure since the card never leaves the hand of the customer and the built-in chip technology gennient, fast, and secure way to erates a unique code for each make everyday purchases at transaction, as it does with regular chip-enabled cards. statewide. As Hawaii's local For added security, Mastereconomy continues its re- card's Zero Liability still protects users from unauthorized

"Contactless 'Tap & Go' low for a speedier checkout technology is a convenient alternative to cash and is alour customers the ability to customer loyalty," Hirano ready available for use anymake their purchases quickly said. "For businesses like cof- where that Apple Pay, Samwith their card never leaving fee shops, fast casual restau- sung Pay or Google Pay is



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Moving forward together

As we go through these **challenging times** again, let us be reminded how the **CNMI**, as **one community**, manages to **weather every storm** that comes our way — by **working together**, **giving each other** a **helping hand**.





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By BEA CABRERA ORRESPONDENT



ne pandemic may have put a stop to many things in your life, delayed some plans, and maybe made you change your priorities but it should not mean a life monotonous, black-and-white life. Despite the challenges, many refreshing and enjoyable breaks awaits you at Aqua Resort Club.

formation.















Shirley's Coffee shop have allotted one to two curbside pick-up slots in all of their branches to cater to customers who don't want o get out of their cars.

Novel ways of doing business

y BEA CABRERA RRESPONDENT

Since March, CNMI businesses and establishments have been squeezing their creative juices to find viable alternatives to meet their customers' needs in ways that are safe for both customers and employees and that the new trend now is the good news is it is working.

Curbside pick-up Curbside pick-up allows a

having to get out the car because the order is brought to one's car by a server.

At the reopening of Bubba Gump last July, Robert H. Jones, chairman and CEO of Triple J Enterprises, Inc. said not dine-in but drive-thru and pick-up services. "This is something that is being See NOVEL on Page 16

der and pick it up without



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out at 5pm and a 10% discount on Couple's Massages at the ARC Spa. Get this spe-(exclusive of tax).

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> Crisp on the outside and mochi mushy on the inside, Mochi Donuts go for only \$2 apiece. An assorted box of six that includes chocolate, strawberry, matcha, sugar, coffee caramel and honey lemon goes for only \$9 and assorted box of 12 that includes ube (purple



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NOVEL From Page 14

done in the United States now... and we have it as well. At Bubba Gump, just give us 15 to 20 minutes to prepare and we will serve it straight to your car," he said.

Brabu Pharmacy created a drive-thru option or "Express Tent" for people who don't want to go inside the store, especially the elderly. Shirley's Coffee Shop, Loco & Taco, Sura Restaurant Saipan, and Surf Club also offer this alternative.

Drive-thru

Drive-thru service has become one of the most convenient and reliable means to get food.

Since the start of the pandemic, McDonald's has never diners getting food from an stopped the operations of their drive-thru service, on top of their "Mobile, Order and Pay" app, which has become a popular tool for people to skip the line while still getting their favorite McDonald's items without having to worry about their health and safety.

"This app was launched in 2016 but it proved to be an effective tool for our customers to order their favorite Mc-Donald's items. ...Through MOP, customers can avail of this, whether it is for takeout, drive-thru, dine-in, or curbside [pick-up]," said Mc-Donald's vice president Joe Ayuyu Jr.

The BAB Korean Restaurant in Garapan reopened in May with a new drive-thru counter and is considered the first Korean restaurant on Saipan to offer this kind of service. With a good amount of food being served in cups, this makes service efficient, which is why ordering and waiting in line is not much of a hassle.

Buffets in a different style

Most restaurants have discontinued self-service buffets and salad bars in the CNMI but have come up with new ways to offer buffet-style dining that still ensure customer health and safety.

Last month Loria Restau-

COVID-19 From Page 9

it day by day, being flexible to reopen."

job losses and people find- sector led by Lt. Gov. Arnold the cannabis industry. ing it harder and harder to I. Palacios.

Buffet," one where customers order whichever food they want for as often as they want, where the food will be served when asked, for a flat fee.

According to Kensington while navigating through the pandemic. "A La Minute buffet is similar to buffet-style the community," said Eats dining but, instead of getting food from different stations you want, a la minute buffet served to you at your table when you order it," he said.

Resort & Spa Saipan opened stations, diners are asked to point at the food displayed at each food station and the wait staff will serve it to them.

The Miyako Japanese pick the lunch menu they of their living room couch. prefer and they can ask for the same items in the menu Maximizing skills over and over again until Naoki Oura was forced to they are satisfied

Delivery

food delivery app that aims petus that pushed him to cre-

rant of Kensington Hotel in- to deliver hot and fresh meals troduced their "A La Minute straight to your doorstep. "The idea came about to caare given an extensive menu ter to customers that have from which customers can no means of transportation, busy professionals that don't have time to cook or go out, the man'amko [elderly population] , and [persons with disabilities]. executive chef Lee Inok, he Nowadays, Eats Easy's new used his imagination to serve mission is to deliver food the community the right way to anyone who is hunkered down at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in

Easy president Clint Albert. Eats Easy has also partand getting food as often as nered with Joeten Corp. to make grocery shopping as means food is prepared and easy as ordering the items on the Eats Easy app and having Eats Easy deliver your grocer-The World Café of Fiesta ies to your home. Not only would this be convenient for last week and, instead, of the app's target audience but it would also be convenient array of dishes in different for people who don't like lugging heavy grocery bags from their car to their home. The Triple J SuperFresh

and Truckload Store has also developed its own indepenrestaurant at the Hyatt Re- dent app, where shoppers gency Hotel offers lunch set can also do their grocery menu. Dine-in customers shopping from the comfort

temporarily close his karaoke bar and restaurant, Saltv's, because of health and safety Eats Easy is the CNMI's first precautions. That was the im-



A La Minute buffet style was officially introduced in the CNMI last month by Loria Restaurant of Kensinaton Hotel

ate a side hustle he calls Ura-Ya, where he offers Japanese street food like takoyaki balls and baby castella (Japanese sponge cake) that he sells on

Garapan. "With the current curfew in place, it is hard for businesses like mine to make it because karaoke is usually enjoyed past 10pm by friends and family. If it is a restaurant it is fine because people will be coming for dinner and drinks early. Putting up Ura-Ya and using my skills has given me a source of income during the pandemic," he said.

the space in front of Salty's in

New business models

At this point, it is assumed that these new ways of dining and serving food is not going away once the CO-VID-19 pandemic dies down. These novel ways of obtaining one's food are predicted to become part and parcel of

MS. EARTH From Page 10

Manalo, Kaitlin Borja, and Tawnie Ngeskebei.

Clayton said that putting up a virtual pageant has its own unique challenges. "It was very hard because, while we are preparing and setting the date, new directive orders will come out and then we have to maneuver the plans and change it. We also have to follow the guidelines, which includes

From Page 8

Grocerv' and the community will appreciate that there is no minimum purchase to avail of this delivery service."

To avail of this service, just download the Eats Easy app on your phone. Once installed, click on the "Joeten Shopping Center" icon and choose which branch you want to order from (Susupe, Garapan, Dandan, or Kag- time saving," she added. man). Scroll through the categories provided or use the search box and type in a keycate quantity, and check out.

"Payment methods upon fee of \$5 and they can deliver she added.

will just be one more way for people to get food, whether through curbside pick-up or even grocery shopping. Anything that meets a need should become standard and a win for both customers and businesses.

hands so those things make it a challenge with this preparation. But we are ready to overcome. ... The whole world as well as the Marianas are going through a tough time at the moment. There is a lot of uncertainty with this new norm but I believe that people in other parts of the world and our community are very supportive of the environmental leaders that will inspire and encourage future gen-

anywhere on island," Dominao said.

"The mobile app makes you feel at ease and is quick and reliable. From the comfort of your home, your office or wherever you may be, simply pull out your phone, laptop, iPad or whatever device you are using, open the app, scroll, and add to cart. Other advantages of the mobile app include the convenience, it lightens your paper trail, you spend less time walking up and down aisles or waiting in counters, and overall

Orders are received from Monday to Saturday and the delivery schedule is from word of the product, click on 1:30pm to 5:30pm. Currently, able on the app, including household essentials, cleancheckout varies—from cash ing supplies, personal care on delivery, credit card, to products and others. "How-Paypal. Once you have com- ever, not every single item pleted your order, an Eats that can be found at our Easy customer service rep- store locations are listed on resentative will contact you, the mobile app, such as froset your delivery time and zen and produce, but we will you are pretty much all set. continue to add more items ... Eats Easy has a standard and more as we go along,"

the restaurant business and of masks and washing your

BEA CABRERA

As a working student, Santos hopes to remain consistent. "I'm not particularly sure how I will be able to balance all my commitments but I do hope I can in time. I do try my best to maintain a sense of organization by using a planner, which allows me to schedule my day and to list down my tasks," he said. "My goal for this semester is to find and maintain that balance in my life and in all my commitments. I am very involved in the community, especially with various ministries at Saint Jude Parish Church. I love what I do, regardless of wherever I'm at, and so trying to cater to all of that to the best of what I know I can do and what I know I can give is my main goal."

Justine Nauta, who is pursuing double major in Liberal Arts with Emphasis on Social Work and BS in Rehabilitation and Human Services at NMC, also works as a reporter for Saipan Tribune. "The thought of going back to school made me a bit





BAB Korean Restaurant built a drive-thru service at the beginning of the pandemic and lockdown in the CNMI to better serve customers.

put food on the table, the

fate of so many businesses clude more cutbacks or total messaging about the CNMI are in danger of becoming closure of business opera- both within and outside, just background chatter. tions due to CW-1 "touch-food security, encouraging to our current situation," Pa- That's where the Saipan back" requirement (which and supporting businesslacios said. "Some who have Chamber of Commerce would require some foreign to-business deals, and more the add-to-cart button, indi- most grocery items are availreopened are still trying to stepped in, giving busi- workers to exit the CNMI regular meetings with small decide how much of a busi- ness leaders and owners for 30 days before being businesses to make sure they ness loss they can afford or a platform last month in a given a new work contract), are always heard. whether they can continue special town hall meeting streamlining the governto adapt to the changes. to share their concerns, ment's permitting process- our recommendations with We hope businesses remain fears and the challenges es, reducing permit fees our government leaders. We open, as once a business they face of operating dur- that have recently gone up continue to comment on any closes their doors, it is harder ing a pandemic. They were with no clear notice to busi- proposed legislations which heard by a panel from the ness owners, and for the affect the business commu-In the midst of so much government and business government to finally open nity. We hope our govern-

Others include initiating a Palacios said.

Many of the concerns in- campaign that bears positive

"We have shared some of ment leaders take our input,"

BEA CABRERA

social distancing, wearing eration," Dee added. JOETEN another. We can all agree that shopping online has never been much easier with 'Easy

College life in the time of the pandemic

By BEA CABRERA eacabrersasaipan@gmail.com CORRESPONDENT

> he new school year is about to start and the new normal for students in the CNMI is "remote learn-

ing," which basically means online classes. Besides the lack of that warm in-person exchange with one's teachers and schoolmates, there is also the stuttering video, the lag in internet connection, that sound that keeps dropping from time to time, the unnatural sound to finish her degree program with of dogs barking in the background, and even the sight of one's teachers in sweatpants.

It's twice the challenge for college students who are also holding jobs like Sam Santos, Justine Nauta, Tovia To'Omata and You Sun Lee, where thy have to learn to balance the many hats they wear but not letting the pandemic get in the way of their career plans

For Sam Santos, who is pursuing his bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation and Human Services as a junior at the Northern Marianas College while working as a teacher aide at Marinas High School's Special Education Department, "there's a lot of thrill" in starting school again—thrill despite countless uncertainties.

"During the course of the islandwide lockdown, NMC was prepared to transition to virtual instruction, so this isn't so strange to me," he said.

"However, my thoughts do go out to those who encounter the 'technology barrier' due to a lack of access, not to mention with public school aiming to start [this] month, we're not exactly set in stone with regards to providing services for special education. There will be a lot of trial and errors."

Santos learns better in a physical classroom setting but remains positive about exploring remote learning more. "I've been taking online classes since I was a sophomore in high school....It's a lot of personal discipline in order to get out of any mental rut and try to be productive. ... Honestly, the anxiety is all mental. I have to constantly remind myself that I'm not the only one on this boat," he said. "I'm more amused than anxious as this is the 21st century learning at its finest. Yes, it has its setbacks, but if we really push through by riding the tide with everyone, this isn't so bad after all. It takes a whole lot of discipline and reassurance for me."



anxious just because the 50th and 54th COVID-19 cases were from within the community, but I got over it knowing that NMC will take all the precautionary measures to keep teachers and students safe. However, once I learned that we will go fully remote, I was content because, with my work schedule where anything can happen, doing online courses made me feel less stressed," she said "To be honest, although some

might argue with me on this, I like the idea that we are doing remote learning. We're still able to do classes as if we are face-to-face, but just through online. Also with my schedule, I don't have to rush from one class to another and so that's a big plus," she added.

Nauta is keeping her eyes on the prize: to graduate and, at the same time, give her 100% at work. "To cope, I pray. [Thank] God for blessing me with so much strength this year or [allowing me to] vent to my boyfriend about my stress. Then I just get over it and I have friends who cheer me on," she said."...I'm

almost graduating, and this pandemic won't stop me. There myself adapting to the current situations I am in, and if that are many things that I want to accomplish in life, but I need to means changing my preferred learning style to an online setget my degree(s) first in order to do that."

Third-year student Tiava To'omata, who is taking up Bachelor's of Science in Education: Concentration in Special Education at NMC while also working as an employment specialist

at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, said she decided to continue going to school because she wants no interruptions. "As I enter my third year in college, I realize that I am almost there and would have to push through any and all barriers, including this pandemic, if I would like to accomplish my goal," she said. "I trust the decisions that the NMC board and staff have made as I believe that they are putting into consideration



According to To'omata, balancing a full-time job as a fulltime college student is all about time management." I suggest investing in a planner where you can map out your day-today tasks and weekly goals and objectives to ensure that you are on the right track both at work and at school. Jot down all due date of all assignments and any miscellaneous projects that you are also working on. It is also very important to take time out like a 'breather break or 'self-care' day as it is important to maintain your mental health because being a full time employee and a full-time student can get overwhelming," she said

Her overarching goals are to pass all her classes as well as finish her degree program within the next two years. "I find

AQUA From Page 15

vance order is required. Pair these desserts with

coffee, smoothie, tea, or a specialty drink at Aqua Café. If you rinse and save your Aqua Café cup, you get a free drink of the day and a free starter plant on the third visit. This is Aqua's way of rewarding you for recycling and reusing. Aqua Café is open from 8am to 7pm from Friday to Sunday. Call (670) 322-1234 for more information.

ARC Spa reopens

Relax and unwind are key to describe every experience at the ARC Spa. Avail of their special summer promotion starting at Aromatherapy Facial Care for 60 minutes that includes head to decollete massage for only \$40, Aromatherapy Massage



and the deluxe aromatherapy massage for 90 minutes (60-minute body massage and 30-minute head to foot massage) for only \$50. If you book your massage

for 60 minutes for only \$40





between 10am and 5pm, to Thursday and from 10am you get a free refreshing tea to 9pm Friday to Sunday. Adfrom the ARC Café. Aqua Re- vance reservations required. sort Club Health Spa is open Call (670) 322-1234 for more from 10am to 5pm Monday information.





she added.

out to other students who are also taking full online classes," she said. "Helping each other and figuring out how to work the Purdue dashboard really help ease my concerns. ... The biggest difference with regard to schooling between pre-COVID-19 and during the pandemic is the learning environment. Learning at home can be challenging, having to manage time, but it also offers flexibility being able to change my schedule to my comfort."

Lee said that working with many websites and navigating them is quite challenging. "... Also the time difference poses a big

challenge as I have some meetings late at night. Other than that, my professors have been great in communicating with students and giving clear instructions with what to do in class."

ting, I will adapt. I grew up with family always insisting that I

prioritize my education and that has stuck with me since,"

You Sun Lee, who is an incoming freshman at Purdue Uni-

versity in Indiana with plans to take up Psychology, admits to

being nervous. School started early in Purdue and Lee who is

still on Saipan and works part-time at the Law Office of Joe W.

She recently took a break from work to figure out her classes and create an organized time schedule to fit college life into her daily life. "My goal is to expand my knowledge on unfamiliar classes as well as managing my course load and making the most of my online classes," she added.

FOR THOSE IN SEARCH OF AN ADVENTURE IN THE WILD

CNM looking for a different kind of tourist

By BEA CABRERA beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com CORRESPONDENT

Plans to open up the Northern Islands to the world has been in the pipeline for quite a while now even before COVID-19 but that mostly just sat on a shelf somewhere, gathering dust. Yet now that the CNMI's entire tourism industry has come to a screeching halt, the Marianas Visitor's Authority is dusting off that plan and is working on shifting the interest of the world to lure adventure-type tourists to see and experience the wild and unspoiled beauty of the isolated Northern Islands.

First off was an online media campaign via the YouTube channel "Deer Meat for Dinner" that is hosted by Robert Arrington. MVA noted that the recent exposure of the Northern Islands via Arrington's channel showed that 19 videos about the Marianas generated 10 million views and has generated many inquiries.

MVA board member Gloria Cavanagh said that many of the inquiries came from people in the U.S. mainland. "We have people calling and most of them are from the mainland. These people have expressed interest and some people are even calling the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to find out what the protocols are, as far as quarantine is concerned," said Cavanagh. "We have had feedback from people who are actually serious about it and we are pleasantly surprised. In the event these people come here, MVA will not hesitate to assist these



'MVA has no grand illusion that there is going to be millions of dollars coming in. What matters now is serious interest and, if it's going to be just few people every year, that is fantastic because it puts us on the map that the CNMI is also that type of destination.'

tourists in trying to help them to get services out there as the would have to charter to go to the Northern Islands." A couple wrote the MVA directly about plans to visit. "My wife...and I started planning our trip to the Marianas after Robert's first videos of his first visit to your wonderful paradise. I do not plan to hunt, but I intend to camp (away from the wild cows), go fishing, crabbing, and play some music for some of you on my guitar."

Pagan is one of the Northern Islands and its beauty can only be appreciated if one is ready to take on mountain trails and rugged foot paths.

> A viewer left a comment under the "Dear Meat for Dinner" You Tube video, saying: "This second visit of Arrington to your islands is only strengthening my resolve to come visit your wonderful island paradise."

> According to Cavanagh, the tourists that they want are seasoned adventure-type travelers who would stay in a tent, are into discovering new landscapes, cultures, and don't mind minor inconveniences. "MVA has no grand illusion that there is going to be millions of dollars coming in. What matters now is serious interest and, if it's going to be just few people every year, that is fantastic because it puts us on the map that the CNMI is also that type of destination," she said.

> "That is going to be a small market but it's going to be a market like [what] Palau has. ...There are no plans to suddenly build a hotel [on] Pagan because these adventure-type tourists don't want to stay in a hotel. If they do, then it would be best for them to just stay on Saipan but if it's adventure, then the Northern Islands will be the perfect fit," she added.

> MVA managing director Priscilla Maratita *lakopo* said in a press statement that her office has been contacted by a group interested in filming an educational documentary in the Northern Islands next year. "...We hope their plans will solidify. We are excited that despite the special logistical needs, the Northern Islands are starting to generate visitor demand..."