

The 2018 Sau Ia (IFBB) Body Building Overall Women's Champion, Titiula Manuma and the 2018 Sau Ia (IFBB) Overall Men's Champion, Ben Matale Fili. Posing with Fili, is Sau Ia's Body Building President, Peter Reid, who announced it's the first time the International Federation of Body Building (IFBB) is hosting an event in the Territory. See more photos and story for details in today's Sports section.

[photo: TG]

ONLINE @ SAMOANEWS.COM

DAILY CIRCULATION 7,000

Local weather office replies to complaints about their service during Gita

SAYS THEY ISSUED WATCHES AND WARNINGS TO THE PUBLIC, IN TIME TO PREPARE

by Ausage Fausia
Samoa News Reporter

Complaints and concerns have been raised in the territory about the lack of emergency communication and updates during Tropical Storm Gita that struck American Samoa on the 9th of February. In an exclusive interview with Samoa News, last Friday, Elinor Lutu-McMoore, Meteorologist in-Charge responded, after first apologizing to the community, especially to all the families that were affected because of tropical storm Gita.

The local weather service communications was knocked out during Gita, when power and

communications lines went down at the airport, where the National Weather Service Office (NWSO) is located. Service was not restored until much later — after the worse of Gita and the monsoon trough had moved away from American Samoa.

Members of the community who called Samoa News last week said that not only did they not get official warning from our local NWSO about how strong the winds were, but they were also misinformed in the weather reports that were announced on air on Thursday, the day before Gita hit American Samoa.

(Continued on page 12)

FEMA: They're still in response mode

A 2ND DECLARATION, A MAJOR ONE, IS NEEDED FOR FEMA ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO HAPPEN

by Fili Sagapolutele
Samoa News Correspondent

Preliminary assessment disaster (PDA) will be wrapping up soon, says US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) public information officer, Victor Inge, who arrived early last week. PDA provides data of damage to public infrastructure as well as homes and business following Tropical Storm Gita, which hit Tutuila on Feb. 9.

"We're supporting the governor and the territory's priorities," Inge said in a Samoa News interview yesterday. "We are seeing signs of recovery, schools are going to reopen [today] and we've seen some significant impacts to some primary residences."

He also says that FEMA has asked people who suffered impacts to their primary residences to go ahead and take pictures of the damage and to clean up.

"In essence not to wait for us, to go ahead and get your lives back together," he said.

Also on island since early last week is FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer for the local disaster, Benigno Bern Ruiz, as well as a small FEMA team, deployed to American Samoa, two days after US President Donald J. Trump, approved Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga's request for a federal declaration that an emergency exists in the territory.

Inge explained that the presidential emergency declaration "allowed us to move forward and begin to pre position supplies, and get things headed this way."

Asked about the type of pre position supplies, he responded, "We typically move things that are going to be needed that we know of, such as cots, blankets — commodities and personnel, the incident management assistance team, or IMAT," the chief resources that provide a forward federal presence of coordination and response to a disaster.

The IMAT team last week joined the ASG EOC damage assessment teams conducting assessment of disaster-related damages for individual loss and public infrastructure.

(Continued on page 12)



This photo, courtesy of Faleosina Voigt was posted on social media by ASPA along with the photo caption, "The cause of the power outage at Masefau Elementary School — a fried rat".

It didn't say when this incident occurred, during or after Tropical Storm Gita — but it highlights the problems ASPA's crews are facing as they now go from building-to-building, whether a home, school, or place of business. They have to check it out first, before they can turn the power back on.

[photo: Faleosina Voigt]



American Samoa Power Authority crews seen yesterday working on restoring electricity to family homes in Ili'ili that have been without power since last week Friday — after Tropical Storm Gita swept through Tutuila.

[photo: courtesy]

Faasalalauga Suafa FUGAIPAOGO i PAGO PAGO

Tulouna ia ou Paia fa'aete gatā Samoa e afua mai i le mauga o ao; Se ia pa 'ia fili ma puletu'u na tauilo ai manū o malō. Tulou , Tulou, Tulouna lava.

O le'a 'ou le tā i utu ma'au i ou paia fa'a le talalelei. Paia fa'a le atunu'u; Ae maise ou paia fa'a le malō; Nu'unu'u ia I to'oto'o o le Faleula; Tama matua, pona o'o ma tau to'oto'o; ma le fofoga o Tua'olo na fale sefulu iai motu; Ae tainane Tumua ma Pule. Tulou, Tulou, Tulouna lava.

Magalo ia so'u leo, e talo atu ai ma le ava tele e tatau ai, I Suli uma ma feoi o le Suafa FUGAIPAOGO i Pago Pago, i le Afioaga i Iliili, o le'a faia le tatou talanoaga i le aso 17 Mati 2018 i le sefulu i le taeao, i le maota o Fugaipaogo i Iliili lava.

O le'a le avea lou le aua'i mai e taofia ai se finagalo autasi o Aiga. Fa'amoemoe o le a tatou auai fa'atasi i lea aso, pe a tusa ai ma le finagalo o lo tatou Tamā oi le lagi.

Soifua: Fa'asoasoagatumua Fuga Viena.

Exec order out- lines emergency procurement and hiring procedures

IDENTIFIES WHO ARE IN CHARGE

by Fili Sagapolutele
Samoa News Correspondent

After declaring a State of Emergency due to Tropical Storm Gita, Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga issued a Feb. 13 executive order outlining, among other things, emergency procurement and hiring, as the government focuses on post-storm recovery efforts.

Under provision of local law, the governor — upon declaring a state of emergency — is “authorized to issue further orders prescribing procedures for the conduct of territorial business, or orders, rules or regulations, or any territorial agency, if strict compliance with the provisions of any statute, order, rule or regulation would in anyway prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the emergency.”

In the aftermath of Gita, the governor says it’s important to expedite necessary debris cleanup and removal, temporary and long-term repairs to damaged or unsafe government infrastructure, and to ensure the public health and safety of the people of the territory, according to the executive order.

For the duration of the declared emergency, the governor authorized the ASG Chief Procurement Officer to “exercise emergency procurement powers” — pursuant to local statute — which allows emergency procurements where there exists a threat to public health, welfare, or safety in the territory.

Additionally, an emergency procurement must be competitive as practicable under the circumstances. A written deter-

mination of the basis for the emergency and for the selection of the particular contractor must be included in the contract file.

The governor’s order also authorizes the chief procurement officer to carry out small purchases, which may be used for contracts for construction and for goods and services not to exceed \$100,000.

In addition, the governor’s order also authorizes the Human Resources director to make “emergency appointments” — under Section 4.0244 ASAC (American Samoa Administrative Code), or regulations.

This regulation states: “Overtime — means work performed in excess of 40 hours per week for employees with a regular workweek. Exceptions: For fire-fighters, it is work in excess of an average of 60 hours per week or 240 hours in 28 days; for hospital employees, it is work performed in excess of 8 hours per day.”

According to the governor’s order, the “same authorities (listed above) are extended to executive directors” of ASG semi-autonomous agencies and authorities having independent procurement and human resource management authority.

“With the exception of payroll expense, there is an absolute freeze on the expenditure for local funds for any purposes not related to the provision of services essential to the health and welfare of the public,” or directly related to the storm recovery efforts as may be approved by the Governor’s Authorized Representative (GAR), according to the governor’s order. (Lt. Gov. Lemanu Sialeaga Palepoi Mauga is the GAR.)

Russia: 5 dead in church shooting; police kill suspect

MAKHACHKALA, Russia (AP) — A gunman opened fire with a hunting rifle on churchgoers leaving a service in Russia’s Dagestan region, killing five people and wounding four others, then was shot and killed by police, authorities say.

The shootings took place Sunday evening in Kizlyar, a town of about 50,000 people on the border with Chechnya.

Four people died at the scene and a fifth died at a hospital, regional Interior Ministry

spokesman Ruslan Gadzhibragimov said. The gunman was a local resident, and his wife has been detained for questioning, he said.

The motive for the attack was not immediately known.

Dagestan is a predominantly Muslim region between Chechnya and the Caspian Sea. Following two separatist wars in neighboring Chechnya, an Islamist insurgency spread to Dagestan.



“I should have prepared”, says one father who lost home in storm



The remains of Falaula Paulo’s home in Pago Pago after Tropical Storm Gita destroyed it. He says he should have listened to his wife and ‘prepared’ for the coming storm, instead of listening to rumors and friends that it would just be ‘strong winds’.

[photo by AF]

by Ausage Fausia
Samoa News Reporter

Some families have admitted that Tropical Storm Gita caught them unprepared, because they underestimated the damage it could cause. One family spoke to Samoa News last week about their ordeal — where their house was left with no walls, no roof, as they fled to a government shelter during the storm that had strong gusts of winds of up to 85 mph, with pounding rain following on its heels.

“I was not aware of whether or not there was going to be a strong storm or cyclone coming. I was relying on verbal reports from some of the village people and friends that there was ‘no hurricane’ but only strong winds,” recalled Falaula Paulo.

Speaking with Samoa News this week, Paulo said that Gita destroyed two of the small houses his family had lived in for decades.

“We were not even prepared for anything to happen, we just sat around on Thursday night inside our house thinking that we will not be affected by the strong winds, but when Friday morning came, our two small houses were gone. We are devastated but at the same time are grateful to God for His protection,” he said.

Paulo, his wife and two little children were living in one house, while his uncle and wife and their 4 children occupied the other.

Paulo and his uncle are employed as carpenters at one of the local construction companies on island, while their wives work at StarKist Samoa as fish cleaners. Two children attend high school, while the young ones attend elementary.

When asked about what lesson he learned from this natural disaster and what he must do as an example for other people, Paulo said that “preparation” is the key.

“I’ve learnt a lot from this hurricane — that I should not rely on rumors or on the reports from my friends and other people, but I must be prepared at any time when a hurricane, storm or only strong winds are said to be coming at us. I don’t want this thing to happen to my family again. We should have done something to try and save our houses for our children to live in, unfortunately we were unprepared for it,” he said.

According to Paulo, it was after work two weeks ago, Thursday, when he heard rumors that there was a possible hurricane coming to American Samoa. He did not take it seriously because he thought that the hurricane season for Samoa had just passed — that it’s between November of last year and January of this year.

“My wife instructed me to bring our old tin roofing that were stacked at the back of the house to protect our house windows from the wind and the rain that would be caused by the coming storm, but I told her that there is no storm coming to Samoa,” recalled Paulo.

Paulo said that according to rumors and on the air reports he got from his friends, there was no hurricane or storm, “only strong winds” coming.

“I underestimated Gita by ignoring my wife’s advice. I wish I could turn the time back so that I could correct my mistake, but it’s too late for now, but I hope that my story will help anyone else out there who is just like me,” said Paulo with

tears in his eyes.

“Look at where my house was standing,” said Paulo pointing to the location where his house used to stand. “That was the place God gave me to raise my family, unfortunately I failed to do my part as a father.

“I thank God for saving my family’s life and even our whole nation from this natural disaster. Even though we lost everything because of the storm and the rain, we’re still grateful that we’re worshiping a living and awesome God who ignores our failures, but helps us during our time of need.”

Paulo, together with his family and his uncle’s family moved to a government shelter at a high school building Friday morning.

Paulo’s wife, Makerita, is a 40-year-old mother, who was in tears when she heard her husband’s story.

“It’s really sad if we think

(Continued on page 7)

PIGS FOR SALE

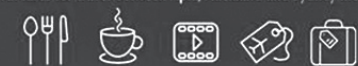
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UPDATE ON GITA RECOVERY EFFORTS

by Samoa News staff

All public schools are scheduled to reopen today, after being closed all last week following damages caused by Tropical Storm Gita, which also resulted in the cancellation of classes at the American Samoa Community College that is also set to resume today.

More than a week after the storm, electricity has been restored to many areas of Tutuila, as residents continue clean up over the weekend and into yesterday, which was a local and federal holiday.

NATIONAL PARK TRAILS CLOSED

The National Park of American Samoa recently began efforts to assess damage done to park forests and reefs by Gita and early survey reports reveal extensive damage to park trails in the form of downed trees, mud and debris slides, and fallen rocks.

At this point, all trails within the National Park and the Blunts Point World War II Heritage Trail are closed due to safety concerns, according to NPAS in a news release last Friday, adding that until further notice only authorized personnel with the proper training and safety gear are allowed on any trail the National Park Service maintains.

No park building or its facilities were damaged in the storm, and the Visitor Center in Pago Pago is open as usual.

Park’s superintendent, Scott Burch says park staff is working hard to assess damage and clear trails, but the scale of damage they are seeing will take many weeks or months to clear before trails can reopen.

He also says that the park is currently working with territory and federal partners to determine appropriate steps for recovery.

ELECTRIC RESTORATION

As of 6p.m Sunday, Feb, 18, the American Samoa Power Authority says all Feeders — Primary lines — are energized up to Fagamalo, while the remaining areas are in Tualauta with broken poles and power lines.

And ASPA has restored power to nearly 87%, or 10,440, out of its 12,000 electric customers, while all customers have water but the pressure is low in

some areas.

With crew working long hours, power was restored over the weekend to private schools and the last remaining two public schools Fagali’i and Alataua elementary schools.

According to ASPA there is no power to Mt. Alava — where the KVZK-TV antenna is located — as the road to the site is inaccessible due to fallen trees and rocks. Therefore KVZK-TV is not on air.

It also points out that the island-wide precautionary Boil Water Notice issued during the storm is now lifted, however, the Boil Water Notice for the following affected areas remains in effect:

Starting from ILIILI at the Antioch Assembly of God Church eastward to PAGO PAGO at service connections on the ocean (sami) side ONLY. (Check on ASPA Facebook page for more details).

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) post-storm special bulletin last Thursday afternoon announced that ASPA was offering free socket meters to all its customers, but responding to Samoa News inquiries ASPA managing director Paul Young told Samoa News last Friday morning that he’s not sure who made such a statement, when the Authority only has a limited amount of socket meters from FEMA in its inventory, left over from a recent disaster.

He explained that a meter socket is a box that is installed to the side of the house and is where the electric service connections from ASPA goes into and the meter sits on. And the cost ranges from \$50 to \$100 depending on the size.

“If your meter socket was damaged by the storm, we have a limited amount to issue to customers that may need them. This will only be for customers that have a damaged meter socket due to Gita,” he said.

TELECOM SERVICE

According to EOC’s weekend post-storm special bulletin, the American Samoa TeleCommunications Authority (ASTCA) has four communication towers that are down causing delays to return telephone service to normal in a few areas.

Bluesky American Samoa Facebook page provides new updates of its service including Moana TV.



Rescuers search for survivors at the collapse of a garbage mound in Maputo, Mozambique, Monday, Feb. 19, 2018. Mozambican media say at least 17 people died when heavy rains triggered the partial collapse of the mound garbage.

(AP Photo/Ferhat Momade)

17 killed in garbage dump collapse in Mozambique

Authorities believe more bodies could be buried at the Hulene garbage dump on the outskirts of Maputo, and a search was underway. The garbage in the poor, densely populated area where the disaster happened rose to the height of a three-story building, according to the Portuguese news agency Lusa.

Lusa and Radio Mocambique both reported 17 deaths. Half a dozen homes were destroyed and some residents in the area fled for fear of another collapse.

“The mountains of garbage collapsed on the houses and many families were still inside these residences,” Fatima Belchior, a national disaster official, told Lusa. Authorities are trying to help people who lost their homes, she said.

The Hulene garbage dump is the largest such facility in Maputo. People often comb through the garbage, searching for food and items to sell.

Health workers have long raised concerns about the impact of the fumes, flies and other hazards of the dump on the surrounding community. Municipal officials have previously discussed the closure of the dump.

Was pirate Black Sam Bellamy found? DNA test could tell

YARMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — Researchers are working to use DNA to identify whether a human bone recovered from a Cape Cod shipwreck belongs to the infamous pirate Samuel “Black Sam” Bellamy.

The Whydah (WIH’-duh) Pirate Museum in Yarmouth, Massachusetts, publicly displayed the bone Monday. It was found near what’s believed to be Bellamy’s pistol. The objects were pulled from the Whydah Gally (GAH’-lee) shipwreck several years ago.

The museum has enlisted forensic scientists to extract DNA and compare it with DNA from a living Bellamy descendant. Testing will take about a month. The Whydah sank in 1717. The wreck was discovered in 1984. Most of its treasure is thought to remain on the ocean floor. Forbes has listed Bellamy as the highest-earning pirate ever, plundering about \$120 million worth of treasure in a little over a year.

Wood asks for reduction of bail to look after his ill mother

WILLING TO WAIVE HIS 4TH AMENDMENT RIGHT

by Ausage Fausia
Samoa News Reporter

The High Court has taken under advisement a motion filed by the attorney representing a drug defendant, asking the court for a reduction in bail, last Friday.

Joshua Revelli from the RDA Law Firm represents Cody Wood, while Assistant Attorney General Christy Dunn represents the government.

Wood's bail set by the District court is \$200,000 and according to Revelli his client and family have been unable to come up with the amount, and asked the court to reduce bail to either \$5,000 or a reasonable amount — less than \$200,000.

In supporting his client's motion, Revelli said that despite the fact his client has been charged with a very serious offense, he wanted the court to know that this is Mr. Wood's first criminal offense in his life.

"This is a guy that has not had a traffic ticket for many years of his life, nor is he a danger to the community," Revelli said.

Chief Justice Michael Kruse quickly asked the defense attorney to define what he meant "not a danger to the community." Revelli responded that he's referring "in terms of violence."

The defense said he expects the government will disagree with his argument because they feel that they charged his client with unlawful possession of a firearm. However, he pointed out to the court that his client is not charged with unlawful use of a weapon, in fact — he's being charged with possession of an unlicensed handgun.

"He's not being charged with any violent crime. He's being charge with unlawful possession of controlled substances — so he's not a danger to the community nor has he ever physically harmed anyone," Revelli said. He argued that if there is a concern from the court in regards to his client being a danger to the society, Mr. Wood has agreed to waive his 4th amendment right and allow a search of his property by any officers at anytime to make sure that he's not in possession of any contraband," the defense attorney said.

"Wood is not a flight risk," argued his attorney. "He has a 70-year-old mother he has to take good care of her, and that's is the reason why he's asking for a reduction on bond, so that he can make sure he has time to take care of her and also make himself available for his trial."

According to the defense counsel, his client's mother is totally disabled and she needs her son everyday to assist her. Wood's primary task has been to take care of his mother. When he was arrested, another family

member stepped in and is taking care of his mother, but that family member has left island.

"... For all these reasons, we're asking for a \$5,000 bond, and if that's too low for the court, then we're asking for something that is affordable for him," said Revelli.

Kruse told the defense attorney, "You need to be realistic counsel. This is not a contractor's negotiation. I asked how you define danger and you talk about violence."

"The court's concern is that, there was a teacher who was a dealer, and when he was out for early probation, he then went out again dealing. That's the aspect of danger you also need to address."

"I'm bound by the Fono's level of the definition of the seriousness of drugs. We still have that old initial drug law that talks about how serious drug offenses are. Now you come here and ask under ... emotion ... about a sick mother, be realistic."

In response, Revelli said that he was under the impression from a November court memorandum that the court will consider those sort of mitigating factors like the wavier of the 4th amendment right to search property, random [drug] testing and random search to ensure that he wasn't going back to dealing.

(The Fourth Amendment (Amendment IV) to the United States Constitution prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures and requires any search warrant to be judicially sanctioned and supported by probable cause. It is part of the Bill of Rights.)

"Here's my problem", Kruse said. "Do you see my chaplain over here," pointing to the court interpreter sitting in front of the Judges Bench with other court staff. "He doubles as a probation officer and he doesn't have time to go out and monitor people. [We have limited] resources and you're putting the burden on us."

When asked for the government's position, Dunn said, "The government's position is that the affidavit of support stated that at the time Mr. Wood was arrested and a search warrant executed to search his home at Taputimu, DPS seized \$50,000 in cash, and methamphetamine and marijuana — with a street value approximately over \$100,000.

"Not only has he been charged with unlawful possession but also charged in possession of a weapon, but mostly possession with the intent to distribute. The government feels that because of the combination of dealing drugs with weapons, it makes it one of the most dan-

gerous crimes on island."

With regards to the defense's argument that the defendant is not a flight risk, Dunn pointed out that Mr. Wood's co-defendant has already fled the island. And for that reason, the government feels that there is nothing to prevent the defendant from taking his sick mother with him if he wishes to flee the island.

Dunn also pointed out to the court that at the time of the defendant's arrest, a family member had stepped up to take care of his sick mother. The government believes an arrangement can be made inside the extended family, for another member to step up to take care of the defendant's sick mother.

"The government believes that Mr. Wood is not only a

danger to the community but also a flight risk. And for those reasons, we ask the court to leave the bond as it is," she concluded.

Wood is still in custody awaiting a decision from the High Court in regards to his motion. In the meantime, another co-defendant in the case, Taisia Lemalie, who is charged with one count of unlawful possession of a controlled substance, to wit; marijuana, is still in custody unable to post his \$5,000 surety bond.

During his pretrial conference hearing last week, Lemalie's attorney, Public Defendant Douglas Fiaui acknowledged receiving discovery from the government. He asked the court to set the matter for trial, after

they were unable to reach an agreement with the government. The trial is set for April 2020.

The third defendant in this case is still at large, and Police Commissioner Le'i Sonny Thompson confirmed to Samoa News last week that they're still searching for Steve Tuatoo.

Tuatoo, a former cop was arrested following the raids in November, however he was released from jail pending charges; and immediately left the territory. DPS has received reports that Tuatoo was seen in Seattle, Washington around November of last year.

Kruse was assisted by Associate Judges Faamausili Pomele and Muasau T. Tofili on the bench.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

NOTICE is hereby given, pursuant to ASCA 37.1105, that Development Bank of American Samoa intends to foreclose a mortgage recorded in the Office of the Territorial Registrar in Land Transfer, Volume Number 11, page 136, recorded October 10, 2012, and that the property subject to the mortgage will be sold at public auction.

PROPERTY TO BE SOLD ON "AS IS BASIS": All of the mortgagors' interest in all that certain real Lease Agreement of Individual Land, which includes one residential structure, consisting of approximately 0.11 acres, more or less:

All that certain real property lying in Land Square 29, Unit "B" situated in the village of Nu'uuli, County of Itua'u, Western District, Island of Tutuila, American Samoa, being a portion of land known as "Asofitu," owned by the late Lavatai Fuavai, and is more fully described as follows:

Starting at a point which has coordinates N=292977.65 E=247185.78, American Samoa Datum of 1962,

***Run thence on azimuth 44° 03' 00" 80.00 feet to a point
Thence on azimuth 134° 03' 00" 60.00 feet to a point
Thence on azimuth 224° 03' 00" 80.00 feet to a point
Thence on azimuth 314° 03' 00" 60.00 feet to the point of beginning***

Containing 0.11 acres more or less, as delineated in the map approved by Aiumu, R.P.S. No 8, and dated January 15th, 2009.

Date of Sale: Tuesday, April 03, 2018 at 2:30pm at the property unless postponed or canceled by public announcement.

Location: The property is located at Nu'uuli.

Minimum Bid: \$53,605.00

Contact: For more information please contact Tavai Ieremia at Development Bank 633-4031 or email tavai@dbas.as.



School shooting puts pressure on Florida lawmakers to act



The casket of Alaina Petty, a victim of Wednesday's mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, leaves her funeral in Coral Springs, Fla., Monday, Feb. 19, 2018. Nikolas Cruz, a former student, was charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder on Thursday.

(AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)

PARKLAND, Fla. (AP) — The deadly shooting at a Florida high school has put pressure on the state's Republican-controlled Legislature to consider a sweeping package of gun-control laws in a state that has resisted restrictions on firearms for decades, lawmakers said Monday.

The legislative effort coalesced as 100 students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School prepared to ride buses more than 400 miles to the state capital Tuesday to urge lawmakers to act to prevent a repeat of the massacre that killed 17 students and faculty last week.

The suspect, 19-year-old former student Nikolas Cruz, made his first appearance in court Monday. Wearing a prison jumpsuit, he kept his head down and didn't appear to make eye contact with the judge or others in the courtroom, though he responded briefly to someone

on the defense team. A previous appearance was by a video connection from jail.

His lawyers have said he will plead guilty if prosecutors agree not to pursue the death penalty. No decision has been made on that.

Soon after the shooting, several legislative leaders were taken on a tour of the school to see the damage firsthand and appeared shaken afterward.

The attack seemed to overcome the resistance of some in the state's leadership, which has rebuffed gun restrictions since Republicans took control of both the governor's office and the Legislature in 1999. However, there is still strong resistance by many in the party to any gun-control measures, leaving the fate of new restrictions unclear.

Sen. Bill Galvano, a Republican and the incoming state Senate president, said the Senate was preparing a package

that would include raising the age to purchase any firearm to 21, creating a waiting period for purchasing any type of firearm, banning bump stocks that can allow semi-automatic guns to spray bullets quickly and creating gun-violence restraining orders.

Authorities said Cruz had a string of run-ins with school authorities that ended with his expulsion. Police were also repeatedly called to his house throughout his childhood. Cruz's lawyers said there were repeated warning signs that he was mentally unstable and potentially violent. Yet he legally purchased a semi-automatic rifle.

"We need to make sure everything is working and to learn from the experience," said Galvano, who was among those who visited the school.

The Senate is also considering boosting spending on mental health programs for schools and giving law-enforcement greater power to involuntarily hold someone considered a danger to themselves. The body will also look at a proposal to deputize a teacher or someone else at school so they are authorized to have a gun.

Galvano said senators want to examine ways to protect schools that do not have resource officers — often armed law enforcement officers — on site.

State House leaders and Gov. Rick Scott also are considering possible changes to firearms rules but have not given any details. Scott planned meetings Tuesday on school safety, and

(Continued on page 8)

RHD Relief Efforts underway in American Samoa

NEW ECHO MACHINES AND ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY TRAINING

Fagatogo, American Samoa — To assist with American Samoa's Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) relief efforts, David Adams from Duke University Medical Center, an Advanced Cardiac Sonographer, and his colleague Peg Knoll from the University of California Irvine Health, arrived on island to conduct a two-week didactic and hands-on (live scanning) training on echocardiography, a painless procedure that uses sound waves to take "pictures" of the heart.

Additionally, the Department of Public Health (DOH) acquired two new ultrasound machines (Philips CX50 CompactXtreme Ultrasound Systems). Seven medical professionals from DOH and LBJ hospital will be trained on the proper use of these new echo machines to perform limited screening exams, which will enhance operational efficiency and improve the quality of care locally.

To determine the prevalence of RHD in American Samoa, a team from Oregon Health and Science University (OSHU) conducted echocardiographic screening. The findings of their study, published in September 2017, raised a call to action:

"The prevalence of RHD in American Samoa (12.9%) is to date the highest reported in the world literature... while American Samoa has a small overall population at 55,519 people according to the 2010 US Census. This study demonstrates the significant burden of rheumatic disease, which rivals that of larger countries.

"Furthermore, we proved with this study that a robust screening protocol using portable echocardiography machines is feasible and also facilitates education. A calculated screening protocol focusing on older children should be undertaken in populations at high risk for this ultimately eradicable disease."

Prior to this revealing study, a list from the LBJ Pediatrician showed that a total of only 284 patients had been diagnosed with Rheumatic Fever (RF) and RHD.

However, the OSHU study showed that the number of children living with RF and RHD in the territory is much higher than those listed in the LBJ and DOH shared data registry.

Based on the prevalence rate of 12.9%, and the number of school children attending public (13,823) and private (3,225) schools in American Samoa, it is estimated that 2,199 children are potentially suffering from RF/RHD.

These figures suggest that only 15% of children aged 5-17 years have been or are being treated for RHD, leaving 85% of American Samoa's children vulnerable to this debilitating disease.

In light of this alarming data, DOH has set RHD as a public health priority, and has organized an RHD Advisory Committee and a local RHD team to develop a comprehensive RHD prevention and control program.

About the Company: The Kuaea Group is a consulting agency located in American Samoa. The group has more than 20 years of professional experience and expertise in marketing and management of products and services, programs, and processes for corporate, government, and non-profit organizations.



Denyse Christian, hugs her son Adin Christian, 16, a student at the school, at a makeshift memorial outside the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, where 17 students and faculty were killed in a mass shooting on Wednesday, in Parkland, Fla., Monday, Feb. 19, 2018. Nikolas Cruz, a former student, was charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder on Thursday.

(AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)



AMERICAN SAMOA COMMUNITY CANCER COALITION

SEARCHING FOR CANCER PATIENTS AND SURVIVORS TO TAKE PART IN ONE FOCUS GROUP ON ONE OF THE FOLLOWING DATES:

FEBRUARY 24, 2018	10:00AM-11:30AM
FEBRUARY 27, 2018	5:30PM – 7:00PM
MARCH 17, 2018	10:00AM – 11:30AM
MARCH 20, 2018	5:30PM - 7:00PM
APRIL 28, 2018	10:00AM – 11:30AM
APRIL 30, 2018	5:30PM – 7:00PM
MAY 12, 2018	10:00AM – 11:30AM
MAY 15, 2018	5:30PM - 7:00PM
JUNE 16, 2018	10:00AM-11:30AM
JUNE 19, 2018	5:30PM – 7:00PM

PARTICIPANTS MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

- BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD
- UNDERSTAND AND SPEAK ENGLISH AND/OR SAMOAN
- PHYSICALLY ABLE TO WALK UP A FLIGHT OF STAIRS AND SIT THROUGH AND PARTICIPATE IN A 1 ½ HOUR MEETING

THE FIRST 10 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS FOR EACH GROUP DATE WILL BE ACCEPTED. \$20 GIFT CERTIFICATE PAID TO EACH PARTICIPANT.

PLEASE CALL THE AMERICAN SAMOA COMMUNITY CANCER COALITION AT 699-0110 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

FOCUS GROUPS WILL BE HELD AT THE COALITION OFFICE IN NUUULI.

Coolstuff

CRKT CYCLONE PACK AXES

by Barry Markowitz

Our Samoa next door neighbor, the late Chester Hagerdone, was one of most pragmatic Coolios we ever had the honor of hanging with. Cyclone Ofa 1990, when our favorite Mango tree went down, Chester asked and received it for his classic iron wood-stove.

While Cool Stuff waited in long sweaty lines for propane, Chester was drinking warm Vailimas (no electricity for 3 months) and enjoying hot meals, courtesy of my mango wood. Lesson learned... downed trees are an asset, not just rubbish to clear.

Whether you are clearing your downed trees, or processing them for use, you really need to get to CBT Hardware, Neil's Ace Hardware Center, or the Tool Shop to score some gear.

Shopping at CBT Hardware on Wednesday, pre Gita, they had heaps of sapelu, and axes. Buy local if they have inventory, but if not the CRKT options can be rushed by USPS Priority Mail, or ordered online from CRKT

<https://www.crkt.com/catalogsearch/result/?q=+Axes>

The Pack Axe (\$89) by Elmer Roush is only 11.25" and weighs only 1lb, 2oz. The shape of the Pack Axe hickory handle is so perfect it melds to your arm perfectly, as if you actually have the power of a 4-foot handle.

Designer Roush also brought us the larger Freyr (\$99) 16", 1lb 12.7 oz (above) and the Birler (not pictured \$89) 16", 1lb 13 oz medium sized axes.

Forged by War, is a wonderful niche of CRKT military veterans and their unique serviced inspired designs. Elmer Roush is part of

CRKT makes lightweight solid pack axes that, coupled with a handsaw, might just meet your post Cyclone Gita needs. Top to bottom: Pack Axe, Freyr, and the Silky Pocket Boy.

[Photo by Barry Markowitz]

this special group that proudly embraces the CRKT slogan "Designed by Vets. Driven by Duty".

While most of Samoa has lived by the "one machete serves all needs" concept, respectfully you need an axe, and you need a saw.

Go for the Japanese made Silky, in a variety of lengths and saw-tooth purposes. My Silky Pocket Boy (REI \$39.95) was on me during Cool Stuff's Tropical Storm Gita scary photo documentation... in case I had to escape or cut another out of the serious drama we all faced.

A special Cool Stuff salute to American Samoa's Department of Public Safety: At all hours and in the worst of Gita, our Territorial Law Enforcement was ALWAYS bravely on patrol... they are in our Cool Stuff photos and video for history to remember and respect.

I should of...

Continued from page 3

about it. It really hurts me because our family had a chance to do something to protect our house especially our essential belongings. Unfortunately, it was all my husband's fault; he took the advice of his friends instead of listening to me, his wife," she said.

Asked about the most important thing on her mind after Gita took away everything the family had, Makerita smiled and said, "My dream is that one day, we'll live in a brick house with my children. Our wooden house is gone and I know for sure that God will provide for our needs through a good Samaritan so that we can build a new and a solid house for us.

"This is the house my husband built over ten years ago. As you can see in our area, there's water everywhere and you know the unhygienic conditions that come with water and dirt, it's never good — but I pray that I will not be seeing this condition very soon.

"I know it sounds funny to other people if they read your

newspaper about our family's ordeal, but I'm saying this from my heart that I hope that sooner or later something good will happen for my family."

Paulo and his wife did not want their photo to be published in the newspaper.

In the meantime, the Samoana High School shelter has closed its doors due to school beginning this week Tuesday. Samoa News was told by a villager of Pago Pago that the Secretary of Samoan Affairs, Mauga Tasi Asuega, through village leaders, faipule and faifeau, has asked that different church denominations to open their halls to families in need and provide shelter — to house and feed these displaced families.

The villager said his church is currently taking care of 3 families, and there is a question of whether or not the government will continue to feed these families through the school lunch program. He said they are feeding them while awaiting an answer from the government.



ACCURACY

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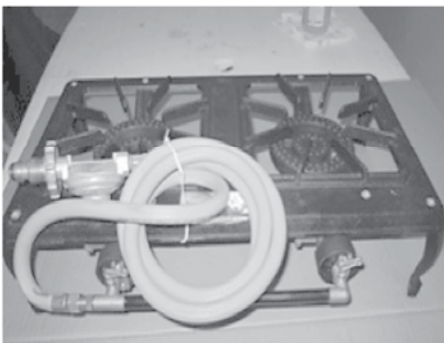
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CALL into origin energy gas showroom at tafuna industrial park 699-9740



Last Thursday, Krispy Krunchy Chicken made a donation of meals to the hard working crew of ASPA — providing 200 Chicken sandwiches and 10 cases of water. According to KKC president Crystal Veaea, KKC is giving kudos and thank yous to the hardworking responders to Tropical Storm Gita's recovery efforts. On Wednesday, Feb. 14, they donated lunch to the Bluesky line crew and on Friday were to provide lunch to the Department of Homeland Security crews. In the picture (L-R): ASPA employee Adam Hirata, Krispy Krunchy Chicken president Crystal Veaea, ASPA employee Serina.

[Courtesy photo]



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School...

Continued from page 6

said he would announce proposals on mental health issues later in the week.

Still, some Republicans questioned whether additional gun restrictions are the answer.

"I really don't want to see this politicized into a gun debate," Republican Sen. Dennis Baxley. Referring to gun-control advocates, he said: "Sometimes I wish they were right, that this would fix it, but it won't ... We have a terrible problem with obesity, but we're not banning forks and spoons."

Democrats believe raising the age limit and creating a waiting period to buy rifles isn't enough. "That's unacceptable. That's a joke," said Democratic Sen. Gary Farmer of Broward County. "I don't see that as a restriction. It never should have been that an 18-year-old could buy an assault weapon. No Floridians should be able to buy an assault weapon."

Cruz legally purchased at least seven long guns, including an AK-47-style rifle he bought less than a month ago, a law enforcement official said Monday. The official is familiar with the investigation but isn't authorized to discuss it and spoke on condition of anonymity. Federal law allows those 18 and over to buy rifles, and Cruz passed background checks necessary to obtain the weapons. Since the attack, students from the school have become increasingly vocal in their demands for gun-control measures. Many have pointed out politicians who take financial support from the National Rifle Association, and some have lashed out at President Donald Trump, saying he was busy blaming Democrats for failing to pass gun restrictions while taking no action of his own.



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Poloa'i e le Fa'amasinoga ia Joeita Fa'aaliga e tuua le atunu'u

tusia Ausage Fausia

Ua poloaina e le Fa'amasinoga Maualuga le ali'i o Joeita Fa'aaliga ina ia ona tuua le atunu'u ae toe fo'i atu i Samoa ma nofomau ai mo le umi o lana nofovaavaaia, tusa lea e 12 tausaga.

Ao fa'atele ona tolopo mai e le Fa'amasinoga Maualuga o le mataupu a Fa'aaliga, ona o le taumafai e sailia poo ai moni le igoa o lana sponsor na talosagaina le pemitā e 30 aso lea na ulufale mai ai i le 2012, ma nofo fa'asolitulafono ai lava i le atunu'u seia oo i le taimi na ia fa'atinoina ai le mau solitulafono eseese e pei ona fa'asala ai o ia i le falepuipui, o le aso Tofi na te'a nei na tuuina aloaia mai ai loa le fa'aiuga a le fa'amasinoga fa'asaga ia Fa'aaliga.

O le fa'aiuga e pei ona tolaulauina e le afioga i le ali'i Fa'amasino Sili ia Michael Kruse, o le a leai se faaiuga e faaleaoga ai le nofovaavaaia a Fa'aaliga, ae ua toe faaopoopo i ai e le fa'amasinoga le isi tuutuuga mo lana nofovaavaaia sa tuuina atui le 2013.

O lea tuutuuga, o lona tuua lea o le teritori o Amerika Samoa, ma aumau ai i fafo atu mo le umi o lana nofovaavaaia e 12 tausaga.

Ana faapea e fa'aleaoga e le fa'amasinoga le nofovaavaaia a Fa'aaliga, e ono poloaina o ia e tuli tausaga e 34 i totonu o le falepuipui. E lei finagalo le fa'amasinoga e tuuina atu lea ituaiga fa'asaga ia Fa'aaliga, ona o le manatu i le ono ave lea ma avega i le malo.

Na tolopo mai le mataupu a Fa'aaliga i le 2 vaiaso talu ai, ina ua poloai e Kruse le loia a le malo ia Robert Morris ma le Pule-sili o le Ofisa o Femalagaaiga, afioga Peseta Dennis Fuimaono, e saili atu le faila o lo o i ai le kopi o le ulua'i talosaga o le pemitā a Fa'aaliga.

Ina ua toe valaau le mataupu a Fa'aaliga i le vaiaso na te'a nei, na manatu ai loa le fa'amasinoga o le a fa'atulaga se aso faapitoa e iloiloaina ai le mataupu e fa'atatau i le faila ma le sponsor a Fa'aaliga, ae o le a fa'ate'a muamua atu loa le fa'aiuga fa'asaga i lenei ali'i talavou.

O Fa'aaliga, na ulufale mai i le pemitā e 30 aso i le masina o (Faauau itulau 11)



O le tama'ita'i o Divne Siliva ma lona tina o Davina Siliva ua fiasia fa'atasi ma lo latou aiga atoa sa auai i le fa'atautoga o Divine i le US Army i le aso Lulu na te'a. O ia o le alo e fa'asino ia Davina ma Afa Siliva o Nu'uuli ma Tula.

[ata: Leua Aiono Frost]

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O se va'aiga i le tama o Elisaia Tauai, alo e fa'asino ia Rev. Pou Taua'i ma le faletua i Utumea EFKAS ua mae'a fa'atautoina o ia i le US Army i le aso Lulu na tuana'i nei. Ua fiafia fa'atasi fo'i lea aiga i le McDonalds Restaurant i Tafuna.

[ata: Leua Aiono Frost]



Le tama'ita'i o Lydia Atuai na a'oga i le Tafuna High School ua fiafia fo'i ma si ona tina, Mele-naite ina ua mae'a fa'atautoina o ia i le afiafi o le aso Lulu na te'a nei. O ia o se alo e fa'asino ia Penitiko Atuai ma Melenait Atuai o Tafuna.

[ata: Leua Aiono Frost]



Le tamaita'i o Alvira Liusamoa [lona lua mai tauagavale] ua fa'atasi ma ana uo i le McDonalds restaurant ina ua mae'a lona fa'atautoga i le US Army. O ana uo sa auai ma ia o Lois Skelton, Tanya Skelton, Trina WooChing ma ua fa'ailoa mai na a'oga uma i latou i le Manu'a High School.

[ata: Leua Aiono Frost]



tusia Ausage Fausia
TAUMALOTO AIAVA

Ua poloaina e le Fa'amasinoga Mauauga le ali'i o Taumaloto Aiava, ina ia ona tuua vave loa Amerika Samoa ma aumau ai i fafo atu mo le umi e 5 tausaga o lana nofovaavaaia, ina ua fa'amalieina le fa'amasinoga i mau sa tuuina atu e le malo, e lagolago ai le le usita'i o Aiava i tuutuuga o lana nofovaavaaia sa tu'uina atu i le 2014.

O se tasi o tuutuuga o le nofovaavaaia a le ua molia na tuuina atu i le 2014, o le totogi lea o lana salatupe i le fa'amasinoga. Ae ina ua le fa'amaoni le ua molia e totogi lana salatupe, na talosagaina ai loa e le Ofisa Nofovaavaaia le Fa'amasinoga mo sana poloaiga e sailia mai ai le ua molia.

E tele masina o tau sailia e le fa'amasinoga le ua molia, ma fa'atoa maua ai loa i le masina o Tesema o le tausaga na te'a nei, ma pu'e fa'apagota ai loa ae taofia i le toese i Tafuna e fa'atali ai le aso e lau ai lana fa'asalaga.

O le vaiaso na te'a nei na tuuina atu ai loa le fa'aiuga a le fa'afmasinoga fa'asaga i lenei ali'i. Na faatoese le ua molia i le fa'amasinoga e tusa ai o lona le usitaia o lana poloaiga, ma ia talosagaina ai se isi avanoa mo ia se'i toe fo'i atu ai i tua e mafuta i lona aiga aemasie lona atali'i. Sa ia ta'utino fo'i i le fa'amasinoga, o le a saili sana galuega e totogi ai lana salatupe.

Na talosaga le loia a le ua molia ia Douglas Fiaui i le fa'amasinoga, mo se isi avanoa e tu'u atu ia Aiava e saili ai sana galuega e totogi ai lana salatupe. Na faailoa e Fiaui i le fa'amasinoga e fa'apea, sa usita'i le ua molia i poloaiga uma lava o lana nofovaavaaia,

se'i vagana ai lava le poloaiga o le totogi o lana salatupe ua faatamala ai o ia, ona o le tupe uma sa ia te ia, sa fa'aalu lea e tausi ai si ona atali'i.

Saunoa le fa'amasino sili ia Michael Kruse e fa'apea, ina ua mae'a ona latou iloiloaina ma ona uso a Fa'amasino le faila a le ua molia, na iloa ai le tele o avanoa sa tuuina atu e le fa'amasinoga ia te ia, ma o ni isi o ia avanoa e aofia ai le taofia lea o lona tuliina o fa'asalaga fa'a falepuipui.

Peita'i e foliga mai i le silasila a le fa'amasinoga, e leai se fa'aaloalo o lenei alii i le fa'amasinoga, atoa ai ma lona le fa'aaoga tatau o avanoa ua tuuina atu.

O le faaiuga la a le fa'amasinoga, o le a leai se isi faaiuga e faaleaoga ai lana nofovaavaaia, ae o le a faamallosia loa le poloaiga lona 3 o lana nofovaavaaia sa tuuina atu i le 2014, o lona tuua lea o Amerika Samoa ma aumau ai i fafo atu mo le umi o lana nofovaavaaia e 5 tausaga.

TAO LIU

O le ali'i Asia lea na tu'uia i lona umia faasolitululafono o fualaau faasaina faapea se a'upega, ua ia ta'utino i le fa'amasinoga e fa'amaonia tuuaiga fa'asaga ia te ia. O le vaiaso na te'a nei na ta'usala ai e le fa'amasinoga mauauga ia Tao Liu i moliaga o le umia faasolitululafono o fualaau faasaina o le aisa, umia faasolitululafono o fualaau faasaina o le mariuana, umia o se fana e lei laiseneina, atoa ai ma lona sola ese mai i le toese i Tafuna.

I le tali ioe ai o Liu i moliaga e pei ona ta'usala ai o ia e le fa'amasinoga, sa ia tautino ai e fa'apea, i se taimi o le aso 21 Aokuso 2016 i Amerika Samoa,

(Faaauau itulau 11)

► Poloa’i...

Mai itulau 9

Setema 2012 ma nofo faasolitulafono ai lava ina ua mae’a le 30 aso ae lei toe fo’i o ia i Samoa.

I le masina o Me o le tausaga na sosoo ai, 2013, na talepe ai e Fa’aaliga se faleoloa ma gaoi le tele o oloa. O le masina o Iulai o le tausaga lava lea, na toe talepe ai fo’i e Fa’aaliga le isi faleoloa ma gaoi le tele o oloa. O ulua’i mataupu ia e lua na molia ai e le malo ia Fa’aaliga ma fa’asala ai loa o ia i le falepuipui.

A o tuli ai le fa’asalaga fa’a falepuipui a Fa’aaliga, na soloa i tua o ia i le masina o Iulai 2016 ma ia osofaia se faleoloa Asia i le po, ae gaoi le \$1,500 sa i totonu. I le masina lava lea o Iulai o le 2016, na toe sola ese ai fo’i Fa’aaliga i tua o le falepuipui ma ia gaoi le ato tupe a se fafine sa i totonu o lana ta’avale, lea sa paka i luma o le ofisa o le Pulega o le Eletise male Suavai i Tafuna.

Na tuli e le to’alua o le fafine ia Fa’aaliga ma maua, ma logo ai loa Leoleo e uiga i lea fa’alavelave, o iina na fa’atoa iloa ai e Leoleo o Fa’aaliga sa sola i tua mai le falepuipui.

Mai solitulafono esecese e 2 o le sola i tua mai le falepuipui faapea ai ma le gaoi o le aso a le fafine sa i totonu o le ta’avale, na poloina ai e le fa’amasinoga ia Fa’aaliga na te tuli tausaga e 12 i le falepuipui.

Afai loa ae mae’a ona tuli lana fa’asalaga faa falepuipui e 12, e ala i lona tuliina o le tasi o vae tolu e 4 tausaga, ona agava’a loa lea o ia i le polokalame o le Palola, ma poloina ai loa lona toe fo’i atu i Samoa.



tusia: *Leua Aiono Frost*

FAATAU VA’A TUGBOAT MO LE UAFU I FAGATOGO

Ua ma’ea ona fa’atauina e le Matagaluega o Uafu ma le Malae Va’alele le tugboat o le “Peggy H” i Alabama i le vaiaso ua tuana’i.

Ua mafua ona fa’atau lea va’a, ina ia lua i ai tugboats i le Uafu e pei o aiaiga o tulafono a le US Coast Guard, lea sa tu’u ia Amerika Samoa le avanoa e fa’atau ai se isi va’a, ae le’i oo ia Mati 15, 2018.

O le tausaga na fausia ai ‘Peggy H’ o le 1983, ona toe fa’afouina i le tausaga ua te’a. Ma sa i ai i Alabama le sui fa’atonu o le matagaluega o Uafu ma Malaeva’alele ia Chris King, fa’atasi ai ma ali’i Kapeteni o Lafoga Alovao ma Mike Pulu, ma isi sui e to’atolu ina ia malaga mai lea va’a i Amerika Samoa.

E le’i mautinoa se aso e malaga ese ai le va’a mai Alabama mo Amerika Samoa.

E LE’I AMATA TAUTUA A LE FEMA MO MEA FA’ALEAGAINA E LE ‘AFA

I se pepa o fa’amatalaga mai le ofisa a le malo o Amerika Samoa, Emergency Operations Center (EOC), o lo’ taua ai se fautuaga mai le vaega a le fetarale, le FEMA, e fa’apea, e le o tatalaina le ofisa e faila ai mea totino ua faaleagaina i tou maota ona o le ‘afa o Gita. Ma ia lava mai pea le onosa’i a’o fa’auau le auiliiliga o faamaumauga i se repoti o galulue faatasi ai le FEMA ma le malo o Amerika Samoa.

E faamanatu atu fo’i e le FEMA ia “‘Aua ne’i faatali mo le FEMA. A ia tapu’e ata o mea sa faaleagaina i le afa o Gita ma amata loa ona faia galuega e toe faaleleia ai tou maota.”

I le taimi nei, e le o sailia e le FEMA ni tagata faigaluega. A iai se suiga, o le a fa’ asalalauina atu i leitio ma nusipepa.

Mo fesoasoani ma le Koluse Mumu i Amerika Samoa, vala’au le telefoni, 699-6011 mo nisi faamatalaga.

Ua fa’ailoa mai foi e le EOC o lo’o faaauau a latou asiasiga i nu’u ma afioaga e pei ona fesoasoani atu iai afioga i pulenu’u, mo fa’amaumauga i mea na fa’aleagaina e le ‘afa o Gita. Faamol-emole, ia lava mai pea le onosa’i, ona o lo’o savalia e vaega ta’itasi afioaga e faia asiasiga i aiga ta’itasi.

Afai sa misia e lenei vaega ona asia lou maota, ia faafesoota’i atu le pulenu’u o le afioaga, pe telefoni fo’i i le Ofisa o le Mataupu Tau Samoa i le 633-5201, po’o le EOC i le 699-3800.

TAPUNIA ALA SAVALI I “LAUFANUA FA’ASAO” I TUTUILA

Ua fa’alauiloa e le Ofisa o le National Park of Ameican Samoa, le tapunia o ala savali - trails - e pei ona masani ona tatala i le mamalu lautele o le atunu’u fa’apea turisi asiasi mai i Amerika Samoa, ona o lo’o tele se afaina o ala savali i totonu o Laufanua Fa’asao i Tutuila nei.

Ua le gata le fa’aletonu i le vaomatua fa’asao, ua fa’apena fo’i ona i ai afaina o le a’au po’o le gataifale fa’asao ona o le tele o tafega o vaitafe ua o’o atu i le sami, ona o le ‘afa o Gita.

O ala savali ua fa’aleagaina ona o la’au pa’u’u, sologa i palapala ma ma’a ma ua punia ai nei ala savali.

O le a toe fa’ailoa mai e le i ni fa’asalalauga i le tatalaina o Laufanua Fa’asao, ae o lo’o tatala pea le Ofisa autu i le Pago Plaza i Pago Pago.

Saunoa le Park Superintendent Scott Butch, “Ua galulue malosi lava le aufaigaluega a le Paka

Fa’asao ina ia toe fa’aleleia le tele o a’afiaga o ala savali ma le lotolotoi lava fo’i o le paka fa’asao latou, ona fa’ato’a toe tatala ai lea o lau-fanua fa’asao mo maimoaga. E mautinoa e umi le taimi fa’aalu i lea galuega toe fa’aleleia. E tauau e faitau masini ma vaiaso fa’ato’a tatala lenei tautua mo le mamalu lautele.”

8 SUI KOLUSE MUMU SAN DIEGO

E to’avalu sui mai le Koluse Mumu i San Diego ua auai mai mo le fa’atautaia o galuega fesoasoani mo le Koluse Mumu i Amerika Samoa i le tautuaina o tagatanu’u ua pagatia talu mai le ‘afa o Gita.

O le Koluse Mumu i San Diego o le Ofisa Ulu lea mo le Koluse Mumu Amerika Samoa, ma ua fa’ailoa lo latou agaga fiasia ina ua o’o mai, ua amata ona fa’atautaia galuega e le tatou lala, ma ua i ai fo’i foa’i ua tapena i ai Amerika Samoa e tuufa’atasia ma ni latou fesoasoani ua aumaia, e fesoasoani i le atunu’u.

O le aumalaga lenei e aofia ai ma le Regional CEO Sean Mahoney, ma ua fa’atasia nei ma le to’a 40 o i latou o lo’o ofo atu le latou tautua mai le tatou Malo, ma o le a fa’atautaia latou galuega fesoasoani i so’o se vaipanoa o le atunu’u ua fa’amauina ua afaina i le Asiosio o Gita.

Fa’ailoa e Mahoney lona agaga fiasia e va’aia le agaga o tagata Samoa ina ia toe fa’aleleia vave o latou lotoifale ma toe fa’auau pea aluga masani sa i ai le soifuaga a’o le’i tupu le ‘afa.

“Ua va’aia e le o afaina le agaga o tagatanu’u o Amerika Samoa i lenei fa’alavelave fa’anatura, ua tumau lo latou agaga ia fa’aleleia le soifuaga ma toe fa’auau galuega sa masani ai. Ua ou fiasia ua o’o mai, ma o le a auai fa’atasi ma i latou e faia asiasiga a le Koluse Mumu i so’o se vaipanoa ua a’afia o le atunu’u.”

Ua o’o mai fo’i le tele o sapalai ua latou malaga mai ma i latou, peita’i ua tapena fo’i le Koluse Mumu i Amerika Samoa i foa’i na taua’aoina mai e nisi o Kamupani ma fa’alapotopotoga, ina ia taua’aoina atu i aiga pagatia, ma o asiasiga a le Koluse Mumu e mafai ai ona iloa patino igoa o aiga, nu’u e alaala ai, ma mea ua fa’aleagaina ona savalia lea ae ua mae’a fa’amauina.

“Tusa lava pe le o tusia suafa, e asiasi atu lava le Koluse Mumu i afioaga o lo’o va’aia le fa’aleagaina o fale i le afa, ma o iina fo’i e fa’amaumauina ai ma fesoasoani atu le Koluse Mumu i aiga pagatia,” o se saunoaga lea a le aufaigaluega a le Koluse Mumu.

LAPATA’IGA MAI ASEPA - FA’APUNA LE SUAVAI TAUMAFa

Ona o le tele o manu mamate ma a’afiaga fo’i tau lapisi ua suatia ma lafoa’ia e le ‘afa o Gita i vaitafe ma le sami, ae maise o puna o vai o lo’o fa’atumu ai fa’atanoa vai mo le fofoga taumafa o le atunu’u ma lotoifale o aiga, o lea ua lapata’ia mai ai le mamalu o le atunu’u, ia fa’apupuna muamua le suavai a’o le’i inumia.

O lenei lapata’iga ua fa’asalalauina faalaua’itele i le mamalu o le atunu’u ina ia nofouta ai.

Ua fa’auau fo’i ona faigaluega tagata mai le ASEPA ina ia mautinoa ua faia suesuega o le suavai taumafa ina ia fa’ailo atu nei lapata’iga ae ua mautinoa fo’i le afaina o i ai le suavai i le atunu’u.

Ua le gata i lea, ae ua o’o fo’i i masini vai mama i le tele o faleoloa, ua mae’a suesuea fo’i e le ASEPA pe mata o lelei fa’amama o nei masini vai, ma ia le toe a’afia mulimuli nisi ae le mailoa tonu le masini sa latou fa’aogaina.

For school shooting suspect, main question is life or death

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) ,Äi The evidence against the Florida school shooting suspect is so overwhelming, the only question left for the courts if he is convicted is whether he will be sentenced to death or spend the rest of his life in prison.

The fate of 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz, who faces 17 counts of first-degree murder in the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, will depend on his mental state and the wishes of the victims’ families, which have a say in how the prosecution proceeds.

Broward County Public Defender Howard Finkelstein, whose office is representing Cruz, said there were so many warning signs that Cruz was mentally unstable and potentially violent that the death penalty might be going too far. Finkelstein said Cruz would likely plead guilty if prosecutors opt not to seek the death penalty.

“Because that’s what this case is about. Not, did he do it? Not, should he go free? Should he live or should he die,” Finkelstein said. “He will never see the light of day again, nor should he. But I know personally I am very upset and angry that we all failed to spot a problem and do anything as a result.”

Michael J. Satz, the state attorney for Broward County, said Saturday in an email that, “This certainly is the type of case the death penalty was designed for.” He called the slayings “absolutely horrific and tragic.” However, he also said his office is working with law enforcement and will announce later what penalty it plans to seek.

The prosecution will likely take years. The sheriff’s office said Cruz confessed, and they have his AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, ammunition clips and video from the school. The FBI also said Friday it had gotten a call from someone close to Cruz who expressed concern that he had “a desire to kill people” and “the potential” to conduct a school shooting.

FBI Director Christopher Wray said in a statement that the information was not properly investigated and promised to get to the bottom of it.A major issue for the courts will be Cruz’s mental state. Officials have said he underwent unspecified treatment at a mental facility but quit after his mother died in November. His father had died some years earlier. Without any living parents, he was taken in by a local family.Cruz’s attorney, Assistant Public Defender Melisa McNeill, told reporters after Cruz’s initial court appearance that he had become unmoored from society and had no support network to lean on.



IN THE COMMUNITY

(Photos: Leua Aino Frost)



► FEMA...

Continued from page 1

The outcome of these assessments will determine which individuals qualify for FEMA’s Individual Assistance (IA) or Public Assistance (PA) program.

The FEMA team assesses the local situation and determines what the needs are and if there are unmet needs, according to Inge.

At this point, “we’re still in ‘response mode’ and we’re moving towards recovery,” said Inge, and “we are in the process of wrapping up our preliminary damage assessments” with local and federal partners collecting data — with the first team looking at damage to infrastructure, such as roads, public building.

And the second team is “primarily looking at things that impacted homeowners, renters and business owners,” he explained.

“The first team is looking at things... to support a request for a declaration that would cover Public Assistance — in terms of damaged infrastructure,” he explained. “And the second team is gathering data

that would be used to determine impacts to primary homes, businesses.”

Outcome or data of the assessments is then handed over to American Samoa to help with formulating a second request to the federal government for a “major declaration that would trigger the [federal] programs that would help the territory rebuild its infrastructure and to provide assistance to homeowners, renters and business owners,” said Inge.

He stressed that currently, “there’s no help for individuals” — homeowners, renters and business owners, adding, “We are working towards making a request for that.”

“Right now we’re providing what is called [for] under the emergency declaration, which allows us to provide direct federal assistance to the territory, whether it’s resources — which are people — and any unmet needs the territory has. And it’s by design to save lives and protect property,” he explained.

The emergency declaration “allows us to get moving down here. Now we’re here and what

we’re doing are those damage assessments, that’s going to support the governor’s request to the President for a major declaration, in essence it’s another major declaration.”

As to how long FEMA will be on island — a question that many have asked not only to Samoa News but, directly to Inge and other federal partners, the FEMA official said, “We’re going to be here as long as we’re needed. We’re going to be here until our jobs are completed.”

Right now, “we are working, we call it leaning forward, we are leaning forward in anticipation of [a second] declaration, so in the event that comes it won’t take us long to get set up and be able to speed up, as we are on the ground already,” he noted.

While PDA is ongoing this means, FEMA programs to file claims for federal assistance are not available.

And FEMA is also not hiring.

FEMA along with its local partners will provide updates through this newspaper and radio.

► Local...

Continued from page 1

According to a concerned citizen from Pago Pago, their family was not aware of whether or not there was going to be a strong storm or cyclone coming. They said that they relied on the weather reports from Samoa because there was no accurate weather report from our NWSO in Tafuna.

“The only weather report we heard on Thursday night before the hurricane hit us was the report by our local television station, saying that there’s nothing to worried about — we’re not going to face any strong wind — only low pressure,” said Filitoga Alema of Pago Pago.

A woman from Nu'uuli told Samoa News that she was confused about the terms our local weather office used to describe Gita, and the terms the Samoa weather office used to describe the same storm during their weather reports.

“I’m still confused and frustrated about what happened to my family because of Gita,” the angry woman said. “According to the weather report from our local weather office in Tafuna, they said — it’s a tropical storm watch/ warning, but according to the weather report from Samoa, it was a tropical cyclone CAT 1 warning. I was confused whether it was a storm or a cyclone, but then Gita came — it was a cyclone, not a storm.”

Most of the complaints from local people are on the terms used by our local weather office versus those the Samoa weather office was using.

In her response, Elinor Lutu-McMoore, Meteorologist in-Charge said, despite the dif-

ferent terminology used, it’s the same weather event.

“When Samoa put out warning for ‘Tropical Cyclone CAT 1 Warning’ with the speed of 39- 54 mph, it’s was the same with our warning that was given out about the ‘Tropical Storm Watch/Warning, with the speed of 39-73 mph. It’s the same warning with about the same speed but different terminology,” she said.

The Meteorologist in-Charge said that their office issued the warning during the whole week before Gita stuck the territory on Friday morning. Prior to these warnings, the community was also informed that since November of last year hurricane season had started and goes on until April of this year.

“When we issue our watches that means you have to start your preparations, because when it’s a warning it’s already too late for you to prepare,” Lutu-McMoore said.

On Sunday of that same week, she said that was when they started putting out their messages, as the model showed something was coming, and on Monday, “we issued our flash flood watch and there were a lot of warnings throughout the whole week for our people to prepare.”

She said, “Before we even issued the tropical storm watch, we even gave out a wind advisory for our community to be aware off. On Thursday night before Gita stuck our territory, our tropical storm warning was also put out. We always want our residents to understand that every time we put out ‘watches’ of weather for a tropical storm

or flash flooding, our people would know what to do next.

“We also want our people especially our children to be familiar with the terminology we’re using here in American Samoa, and the terminology that the Samoa weather office is also using.

“It’s the same warning,” she emphasized.

Lutu-McMoore then repeated something that both Samoas’ weather offices have been stating: “I urge our people that if you live in American Samoa, please be more familiar with our terminology. If you are in American Samoa during the time of a tropical storm or cyclone, listen to the weather report from our local weather office, but if you’re in Samoa, please, listen to the weather report in Apia.”

She said, “I apologize if you feel we failed to do our part but regardless of what happened, our staff left their families and home and came over to the office to work 24-hours, because they know and understand how important this information is for our people. We did our best to make sure our community was safe.”

Lutu-McMoore stressed that the most important thing is for everyone to start thinking that whenever the hurricane season arrives everyone needs to start the preparations.

She also urges the community to voice and share their feedback with the weather office, whether it’s good or bad, because from there, they can build up a good working relationship with the community.

Trump endorses Romney for Senate bid in Utah



FILE - In this Thursday, Feb. 2, 2012 file photo, Donald Trump greets Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, after announcing his endorsement of Romney during a news conference in Las Vegas. Trump is endorsing Romney in Utah's Senate race, another sign that the two Republicans are burying the hatchet after a fraught relationship.

(AP Photo/Julie Jacobson, File)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is endorsing Mitt Romney in Utah's Senate race, another sign that the two Republicans are burying the hatchet after a fraught relationship.

The GOP's presidential nominee in 2012, Romney announced last week he would seek the nomination to replace retiring Sen. Orrin Hatch. In a tweet Monday night, Trump wrote, "He will make a great Senator and worthy successor to @OrrinHatch, and has my full support and endorsement!" Romney quickly accepted the endorsement via Twitter.

Trump has not always been so positive about Romney the political candidate. In 2016 Trump said the former Massachusetts governor had "choked like a dog" during his failed 2012 bid against President Barack Obama.

For his part, Romney gave

a scathing critique of then-candidate Trump during the GOP primary that year, calling him a "phony" who was unfit for office. More recently, Romney criticized Trump's response to last year's deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and last month called Trump's use of an obscenity to describe African countries as inconsistent with American history and values.

Members of both political parties have suggested that Romney, if elected to the Senate, would continue to call out Trump if he believed the president warranted criticism. However, Romney did not mention Trump or his scandal-plagued administration in his campaign announcement on Friday, focusing instead on how his adopted state of Utah could be a model for better government in Washington.

Asked Friday if he would

seek or accept Trump's endorsement, Romney demurred but said they had talked on the phone two or three times in recent months and had a cordial and respectful relationship.

Within minutes of Trump's tweet Monday night, Romney sent one of his own: "Thank you Mr. President for the support. I hope that over the course of the campaign I also earn the support and endorsement of the people of Utah."

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To the people of American
Samoa, our thoughts are with you.

The team at National Pacific Insurance are **ready to help**. If you have an insurance claim for damage caused by Cyclone Gita, **please get in touch**.

We are **extending our office hours** and will be open from **8am to 6pm** Monday to Friday beginning this week.

You can call us on **633-4266** or mobiles **733-1003** or **254-4040**.

Unfortunately our Tafuna office location is currently closed due to power outage. However you can reach us at our **Utulei Office; located on 2nd Floor Centennial Building**.

Please get in touch for any queries you have in relation to Cyclone Gita and your insurance cover.

Thank you

Your Team at NPI

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Experts: Underwater archaeology site imperiled in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Pollution is threatening the recently mapped Sac Actun cave system in the Yucatan Peninsula, a vast underground network that experts in Mexico say could be the most important underwater archaeological site in the world. Subaquatic archaeologist Guillermo de Anda said the cave system's historical span is likely unrivaled. Some of the oldest human remains on the continent have been found there, dating back more than 12,000 years, and now-extinct animal remains push the horizon back to 15,000 years.

He said researchers found a human skull that was already covered in rainwater limestone deposits long before the cave system flooded around 9,000 years ago. De Anda said over 120 sites with Maya-era pottery and bones in the caves suggest water levels may have

briefly dropped in the 216-mile (347-kilometer) -long system during a drought about 1,000 A.D. And some artifacts have been found dating to the 1847-1901 Maya uprising known as the War of the Castes.

Humans there probably didn't live in the caves, de Anda said, but rather went down to them "during periods of great climate stress, to look for water." Sac Actun is "probably the most important underwater archaeological site in the world," he said.

But de Anda said pollution and development may threaten the caves' crystalline water.

Some of the sinkhole lakes that today serve as entrances to the cave system are used by tourists to snorkel and swim. And the main highway in the Caribbean coast state of Quintana Roo runs right over some parts of cave network.



American Samoa Government
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



PUBLIC NOTICE

The American Samoa Department of Health Early Intervention Program "Helping Hands" would like to inform the public that the Annual State Application under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as amended in 2004 for Federal Fiscal Year 2018 is available for public comment for a period of 60 days.

A copy of the document is available to review at the DOH Helping Hands Office located in the Lumana'i building in Fagatogo.

Please call the DOH Helping Hands office at 633-8553 if you have any questions regarding this public notice.

Signed,

Ruth Te'o, DOH Part C Coordinator



Pacific Island News in Brief

OLE PALEMIA'S BLOG

[BLOG](#) [ABOUT](#) [CONTACT](#)

Ole Palemia blog and Facebook page has been the subject of a government-led hunt to identify the people behind them.

[photo: Screen shot from blog page]

SAMOA PM ORDERS ACTION AGAINST "OLE PALEMIA" BLOG

Prime Minister Tuilaepa Dr. Sa'ilele Malielegaoi has ordered

Attorney General, Lemalu Hermann Retzlaff, to "take action" against people whom they suspect are behind the "Ole Palemia" blog.

"I have directed the A.G. to take action against those people behind it," he told the Sunday Samoan. "Remember I told you nothing is hidden in this world.

I have said that to you more than once."

The Prime Minister would not say what "action" he has ordered the Attorney General to take.

Nor would he name the people, whom the Attorney General will take action against. He also declined to say how many people are involved.

Attempts to get a comment from Attorney General Lemalu were unsuccessful. Questions emailed were not answered.

The Ole Palemia blog and Facebook page has been the subject of a government-led hunt to identify the people behind them.

Last week, the page was removed by Facebook because it was in violation of their "Community Standards." This was confirmed by a notification from Facebook to its members.

A day later, another page emerged.

According to Prime Minister Tuilaepa, Facebook, Twitter and all other social media platforms are technological tools the government promotes.

"This is all part of the government's development," he said.

(Source: Samoa Observer)

NEW PRESIDENT OF THE FA'AFAPINE ASSOCIATION

Lawyer, Alex Su'a, is the new President of the Samoa Fa'afafine Association.

He takes on the role that was held by S.F.A. founder and President, the late So'oalo Roger Stanley.

Su'a is among the founding members of S.F.A. who is also the Legal Counsel.

This was confirmed by S.F.A. Communications and Public Relations Executive, Kevin Schuster, during an interview with the Sunday Samoan.

The announcement of the new officers was made during the Samoa Faafafine Association Special General Meeting last Friday.

"The new leaders are no strangers to the association, given their long-term involvement and contribution towards S.F.A. since its establishment."

"It was our first meeting since the passing of So'oalo who left behind a legacy and some big shoes to be filled particularly her drive, leadership and advocacy work both nationally and regionally for the faafafine and fa'afatama community," said Schuster.

"Since her passing, there has been numerous speculations on who will be next in line to continue the great work and leadership which was done by So'oalo for S.F.A. and especially for its partners."

Schuster said, "The S.F.A. Members and Executive had a standing ovation to welcome the new leaders."

"I'm humbled not necessarily of the position, but of the

confidence and the trust of the Executive Council who are also made of true leaders in their own respect," Su'a said.

"The S.F.A. will continue to address and advocate for the inclusiveness of fa'afafine and fa'afatama in all and every aspect of decision making in Samoa, at the same time be the voice for the L.G.B.T.I.Q. community, their families and allies."

A lawyer by profession for more than a decade, Su'a is a Senior Associates at the Summit lawyers. "I sincerely thank the Executive for their trust in me, I thank the Lord for this calling because it really is a call I can't object to."

Su'a concluded that team work is paramount in his new role. "There is no such thing as 'my plans' for S.F.A., rather it's 'our plans' for S.F.A."

"The Executive Council of which I'm its President is the operating body; the Advisory Council guides but it's our members and our stakeholder partners and us as Executive that plans for S.F.A. moving forward."

"It's gonna be the same drive, same passion and same objectives," said Su'a.

(Source: Samoa Observer)

CHARGES AGAINST SUSPENDED SAMOA POLICEMAN DISMISSED

A criminal case against a suspended police corporal in Samoa has come to an end after a District Court judge accepted a motion by the prosecution to withdraw an application for refiling all charges against the officer.

According to court documents all the charges against Hillary Eteuati were dismissed in a separate hearing in 2016 and in a Supreme Court appeal hearing last year.

But the lawyer for the accused had fought a long legal battle against the prosecution over why the police had wanted to refile the charges.

Mr Eteuati was originally charged with assault, obstruction, threatening words and armed with a dangerous weapon.

He was one of the three officers who were investigated in a Commission of Inquiry last year for alleged breaches of police duties following the reinstatement of the police commissioner, Fuiavailili Egon Keil.

Mr Eteuati was the complainant in a police case which had led to original charges brought against the commissioner.

But the cases didn't proceed after an overseas prosecutor hired by the Attorney General had withdrawn the charges against Mr Keil because of insufficient evidence.

(Source: RNZI)



American Samoa Government OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT

INVITATION FOR BIDS IFB-033-2018

Issuance Date: February 15, 2018

Closing Date: February 28, 2018

No later than 2:00p.m. (local time)

1. INVITATION

Sealed bids are invited from qualified firms to provide the "Soil Remediation Work for the Fono Building" located in the village of Fagatogo, Territory of American Samoa.

2. RECEIPT & OPENING OF BIDS

Sealed bids will be received by the Chief Procurement Officer, American Samoa Government, Tafuna, American Samoa 96799, until 2:00 p.m. (local time), Wednesday, February 28, 2018 at which time and place the sealed bids will be publicly opened and read.

3. PRE-BID MEETING

A MANDATORY Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. at the Office of Procurement Conference Room. Bids will not be accepted from bidders who are not present at the Pre-Bid Meeting.

4. CONTRACT DOCUMENTS

Electronic copies of contract documents, including Plans and Specifications may be examined or obtained at the Office of Procurement free of charge.

5. The American Samoa Government reserves the right not to accept the lowest or any bid.

6. The American Samoa Government reserves the right to waive any informality in bidding as may be in the best interest of American Samoa Government.

DR. ORETA MAPU CRICHTON
Chief Procurement Officer

Trump revives push for limits on immigrants bringing family



Abby Spangler and her daughter Eleanor Spangler Neuchterlein, 16, hold hands as they participate in a “lie-in” during a protest in favor of gun control reform in front of the White House, Monday, Feb. 19, 2018, in Washington.

(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

By DEEPTI HAJELA and AMY TAXIN, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When the U.S. government approved Ricardo Magpantay, his wife and young children to immigrate to America from the Philippines, it was 1991. By the time a visa was available, it was 2005, and his children could not come with him because they were now adults.

More than a decade later, his children are still waiting.

Magpantay gets worried when he hears the White House is aiming to limit the relatives that immigrants-turned-citizens can sponsor, a profound change to a fundamental piece of the American immigration system.

“It is really frustrating and it is very dreadful for me, because after a long wait, if this will be passed, what will happen for them?” said Magpantay, a 68-year-old mechanical engineer in the Southern California city of Murrieta. “I won’t be able to bring them forever.”

For the past 50-plus years, family reunification has been central to U.S. immigration law. Those who become naturalized citizens can bring spouses and minor children and petition for parents, adult children and siblings to get their own green cards and become Americans in their own right, with their own ability to sponsor.

Many on opposing sides of the immigration debate have long felt the family reunification system needs reform. Immigration advocates want a reassessment of the quotas on how many people can come from a given country in a given year, which has created decadeslong backlogs for citizens of some countries.

Self-described “restrictionists,” including President Donald Trump, want a narrower, nuclear definition of family, making spouses and minor children the only relatives a citizen could sponsor. That’s a central plank of the sweeping immigration overhaul Trump has proposed, a move that activists say could cut legal immigration in the U.S. by half.

Congress rejected competing bills last week meant to resolve the status of hundreds of thousands of young people brought to the U.S. illegally, including one plan that mirrored Trump’s overall immigration proposal. The lack of resolution on an issue that was pivotal to Trump’s election leaves it as potential tinderbox for the mid-term congressional elections this fall.

In his State of the Union speech last month, Trump referenced an attempted bombing by a Bangladeshi immigrant in New York in December as proof of the need to curtail what he and others term “chain migration” in favor of a more skills-based system.

“This vital reform is necessary not just for our economy, but for our security and for the future of America,” he said.

Trump is giving a spotlight to an idea that “was clearly out in the wilderness” in a policy sense, and something only its advocates were really talking about, said Mark Krikorian, executive

director of the Center for Immigration Studies, which has long pushed for limits on family sponsorships.

“He has forced issues to the forefront that need to be debated,” Krikorian said.

Advocates of family reunification call the rhetoric around merit and skills a smoke screen.

“They’re being disingenuous — their goal is to reduce immigration overall,” said Anu Joshi, director of immigration policy at the New York Immigration Coalition. “This is just about cutting family, it’s a family ban.”

Prior to 1965, U.S. immigration was tightly controlled, with parts of the world all but ineligible and caps that ended up favoring immigrants from northern Europe.

Families of Italians and other Europeans pushed to change the law, resulting in a system that opened visas to all countries equally, with preferences for family reunification and, to a lesser extent, those with advanced skills or education.

At the time, politicians didn’t think the changes would make a great deal of difference and that European immigrants would be the main beneficiaries. Instead, Asians and Latin Americans started coming and then were able to bring their parents and siblings.

Dividing the available visas equally among countries also had an unanticipated impact. In countries where the demand was higher, like China, India and the Philippines, the line has grown so long that it can take years for someone to get a green card.

That’s a reality immigrants and their advocates wish more Americans knew, in the face of Trump’s State of the Union assertion that “a single immigrant can bring in virtually unlimited numbers of distant relatives.”

Jeff DeGuia, 28, recalled that it took his mother more than a decade to bring two sisters from the Philippines.

“There’s definitely this idea you are not really complete without your huge family,” said DeGuia, whose grandfather came to the United States for an engineering job in the 1970s. His family settled in Chicago, though he and his brother now live in Southern California.

“Your cousins are like your brothers and sisters, and your uncles and aunts are like second dads and second moms,” he said.

Proposals to scale back the number of immigrants allowed into the country will end up dividing families and drive more people to enter the country illegally, making them vulnerable to exploitation, said Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles.

Family immigration is also important, advocates said, because it signals immigrants’ commitment to make America their home, not just take a job that lands them here. For years, relatives have helped newcomers integrate into society.

Ex-workers at Russian ‘troll factory’ trust US indictment

By NAIRA DAVLASHYAN and IRINA TITOVA, Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP) — While Russian officials scoff at a U.S. indictment charging 13 Russians with meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, several people who worked at the same St. Petersburg “troll factory” say they think the criminal charges are well-founded.

Marat Mindiyarov, a former commenter at the innocuously named Internet Research Agency, says the organization’s Facebook department hired people with excellent English skills to sway U.S. public opinion through an elaborate social media campaign.

His own experience at the agency makes him trust the U.S. indictment, Mindiyarov told The Associated Press. “I believe that that’s how it was and that it was them,” he said.

The federal indictment issued Friday names a businessman linked to President Vladimir Putin and a dozen other Russians. It alleges that Yevgeny Prigozhin — a wealthy restaurateur dubbed “Putin’s chef,” paid for the internet operation that created fictitious social media accounts and used them to spread tendentious messages. The aim of the factory’s work was either to influence voters or to undermine their faith in the U.S. political system, the 37-page indictment states.


Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Monday that while the indictment focuses on “Russian nationals,” it gives “no indication that the Russian government was involved in this in any way.” Peskov reasserted that Moscow did not interfere in the U.S. election.

Mindiyarov said he failed the language exam needed to get a job on the Internet Research Agency’s Facebook desk, where the pay was double than the domestic side of the factory. The sleek operation produced content that looked as if it were written by native English speakers, he said.

“These were people with excellent language skills, interpreters, university graduates,” he said, “It’s very hard to tell it’s a foreigner writing because they master the language wonderfully.”



BEACH ADVISORY



American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency

Supporting efforts to clean our shores

AS-EPA

Release Date: February 15, 2018

Contact: AS-EPA Water Program at (684) 633-2304

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) is issuing a Beach Advisory Notice for ALL recreational beaches in American Samoa, as a result of Tropical Cyclone Gita.

This Beach Advisory is for precautionary purposes due to heavy rain and runoff into our local beaches.

AS-EPA is currently working towards testing all recreational beaches for the presence of Enterococci bacteria.

The testing of recreational beaches is to ensure that it complies with the American Samoa Water Quality Standards and ultimately to protect public health.

AS-EPA will notify the general public once water conditions are in compliance with the American Samoa Water Quality Standards.

The presence of Enterococci in the water indicates contamination by human and/or animal wastes. Swimming in water with high levels of Enterococci may cause stomach problems, skin rashes, and ear, eye, and wound infections. To reduce your risk: avoid swallowing beach water, be sure to rinse or towel off after a swim, and shower once at home. If you are ill, or think you may be ill, AS-EPA advises that you consult a physician before making any water contact in the beaches cited above.





O se va'aiga i le tama o Elisaia Tauai, alo e fa'asino ia Rev. Pou Taua'i ma le faletua i Utumea EFKAS ua mae'a fa'atautaina o ia i le US Army i le aso Lulu na tuana'i nei. Ua fiafia fa'atasi fo'i lea aiga i le McDonalds Restaurant i Tafuna. [ata: Leua Aiono Frost]



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Iranian rescuers find wreckage from plane crash

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iranian search and rescue teams on Monday reached the site of a plane crash that authorities say killed all 65 people on board, Iran's Press TV reported.

The Aseman Airlines ATR-72, a twin-engine turboprop used for short-distance regional flying, went down on Sunday in foggy weather, crashing into Mount Dena in a remote area of southern Iran. The airliner said all on board Flight EP3704 were killed, including six crew members. The crash of the aircraft, brought back into service only months ago after being grounded for seven years, was yet another fatal aviation disaster for Iran, which for years was barred from buying necessary airplane parts due to Western sanctions over its contested nuclear program. Press TV said search teams reached the crash site before dawn on Monday. The station said the weather had improved, though it was still windy. The semi-official Tasnim news agency cited the military as saying Russia had helped locate the crash site. Russia and Iran are close military allies. The TV broadcast footage of a helicopter joining the search and showed ambulances and rescue vehicles preparing to reach the site on Mount Dena, which is about 4,400 meters (14,400 feet) tall. The site is reportedly at a height of 3,500 meters (11,500 feet). Other Iranian news outlets and officials did not confirm that the crash site had been reached. State radio said five helicopters and five drones are active in the search operation. Iran's semi-official ISNA news agency said that more than 150 climbers have joined the operation.

