THE GUAM DAILY POST™

Today High 88° Showers and t-storms

Tonight Low 77° Showers and t-storms

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NEW CITIZEN: *Newly naturalized citizen U.S. Navy Master-at-Arms Gabriela Easter Satele stands to be recognized during a naturalization ceremony held at the University of Guam CLASS Lecture Hall in Mangilao on Thursday, Nov. 10. Matt Weiss/Post*

21 new citizens

Naturalization ceremony welcomes new Americans

By Neil Pang
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Twenty-one newly minted American citizens were welcomed into the United States of America during a naturalization ceremony held yesterday at the University of Guam CLASS Lecture Hall.

In a solemn ceremony presided over by Chief Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood, the 21 prospective U.S. citizens read an oath of allegiance pledging themselves to the United States before being formally welcomed by President Barack Obama in a video played before the entire audience.

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"It is my honor to call you a fellow citizen of the United States of America," Obama said in the video. "This is now officially your country, your home to protect, to defend and to serve through active and engaged citizenship. Together we are a nation united not by any one culture or ethnicity or ideology, but by the principles of opportunity, equality and liberty that are enshrined in our founding documents.

"You can help write the next great chapter in our American story and

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Maternity ward

GEDA has received notice to obligate $9.2 million for the renovation of GMH's labor and maternity ward.

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Seeking clarity

World leaders expressed anxiety over how Donald Trump will handle problems but offered to work with him.

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'Almost Christmas'

"Almost Christmas" overflows with such Everyman characters, all heightened mightily for the screen.

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together we can keep the beacon that is America burning bright for all the world to see. I am proud to welcome you as a new citizen of this country."

International backgrounds

Of the 21 new citizens welcomed into the U.S., one hailed from American Samoa, one from South Korea and the rest from the Philippines.

Gabriela Easter Satele, originally from American Samoa, was one of the 21 new citizens present during yesterday's ceremony. She is also an active-duty servicewoman in the U.S. Navy. She told the Post that while the entire process to become an American citizen was frustrating at times, she was extremely happy to be one now.

Satele said that with her naturalization, she is now the second member of her family to become a full-fledged citizen of the United States. She explained that the political status of American Samoa is different from that of Guam, and that children born of American citizens in American Samoa are not granted full citizenship. Instead, they must apply and go through official channels.

And that's just what she did. Satele said it took about two-and-a-half years after enlisting with the Navy.

Everything 'feels complete'

She was joined yesterday by 20 other individuals including Cecile Escalona. Originally from the Philippines, Escalona was joined yesterday by her husband, Jun, and her young son. She expressed excitement at finally becoming an American citizen and said it was at the pushing of her husband that she finally undertook the long process of naturalization.

Escalona has been a resident of Guam for more than 10 years already and said she just hadn't been able to get around to the issue of her citizenship until now.

"Everyone else in my family is a U.S. citizen, so now everything just feels complete," she told the Post after the ceremony.

Immediately following the ceremony, the new citizens were able to make use of the Citizenship Outreach Program provided by the District Court. Representatives of both the Guam Passport Office and the Guam Election Commission were present and available to assist new citizens with applying for a United States Passport and in registering to vote so they can participate in their civic responsibility in the next election two years from now.

Tydingco-Gatewood explained the reasoning behind the venue change for the ceremony, which would normally be held at the District Court, as being initiated by UOG Assistant Professor Daniel McKay. McKay, who teaches Introduction to Citizenship, had approached the chief judge to ask if she would speak to his class. She responded by suggesting that the class find a way to sit in during a naturalization ceremony so they could observe firsthand the solemnity that accompanies such an event. Through the efforts of McKay, the District Court and UOG, the naturalization ceremony was held at the UOG Lecture Hall for the first time in Guam's history.

Keynote address

The keynote speaker at yesterday's ceremony, Col. Brent Bien, focused on the importance of diversity and the valuable contributions that new citizens bring to the United States. He encouraged all of the new citizens to hold onto their respective cultures' values and traditions and to share those unique views with other Americans so they can learn and grow together.

In an interview with the Post after the event, Bien added to his message of diversity by explaining how the Marines, too, encapsulate a message of inclusivity.

"The great thing about being a Marine is that [your background] doesn't matter," he said. "We come in and take an oath to the flag and our country – all of America including its protectorates – and something is formed bigger than the individual and that's the Marine Corps."

In addition to the naturalization ceremony held yesterday, the U.S. Marine Corps celebrated its 241st anniversary.

Injured student released after hospitalization

By John O'Connor
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The student who was injured in an alleged altercation at George Washington High School was released to his parents yesterday morning after an overnight stay at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Wednesday, according to acting Guam Department of Education Superintendent Joe Sanchez. The student also received a CT scan, he added.

The apparent fight between the injured student and another student was captured on video and circulated through social media. At the end of one video, the injured student falls to the ground and appears to hit his head on a concrete walkway. What appears to be blood can be seen on another student's fingers as he holds the injured student's head.

Student violence isn't necessarily an issue the department can handle on its own, Sanchez said, but a major component of the solution involves talking to students and reminding them of the dangers of these activities.

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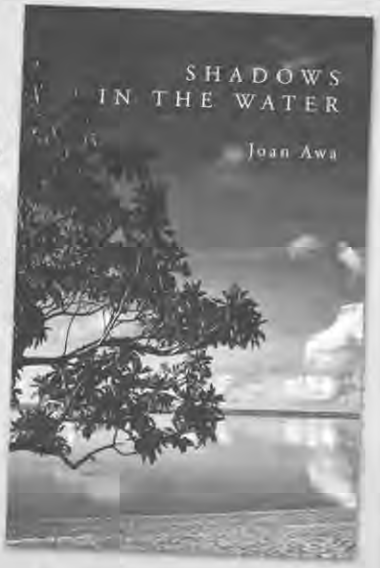

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