



Daniel hosts a top 10-10 party
P18

The Marshall Islands

\$1 on Majuro

JOURNAL

ISSN: 0892 2096

Friday, October 14, 2016 • Volume 47, Number 42

Ben Wakefield as Batmon:
“Those aren’t zories... they’re state of the art combat slippers!”

Photo: Karen Earnshaw

Batmon vs Majuro

The film “Batmon vs. Majuro” premieres this Friday evening at Jitak, the sixth feature-length movie produced in the Marshall Islands by Microwave Films. While “Lijimu” (Netha Gideon) and a few characters in Batmon will be familiar to viewers, the new film is a departure in many ways from the previous films that were a collaboration between Jack Niedenthal and Suzanne Chutaro. The five previous films were all based on detailed scripts, while many of Batmon’s scenes were ad-libbed by actors whose dialogue flows as a natural progression of a

Continued page 2

Two fishing deaths

Hoang’s body found in lagoon, Ali dies from poison gas in hold

HILARY HOSIA

The bodies of two foreign fishermen from two fishing vessels were brought to Majuro hospital over the weekend. One died on a fishing boat following a fuel accident while the vessel was at sea. The other was found drifting in Majuro lagoon.

Twenty-nine-year old Hoang Hung’s body was discovered floating a mile out from Rubar curve in the lagoon Friday afternoon. Police told the Journal the body was bloated from being in the lagoon for some time.

Reports from the vessel’s fishing master said Hoang, a Vietnamese, was

shopping in Majuro a week ago Sunday afternoon with other Vietnamese crew and was present onboard that night before curfew time.

On Monday morning last week, while the vessel was preparing to depart Majuro, Hoang was missing. The captain ordered a search around the lagoon before notifying his agent in Uliga for advice. After failing to locate Hoang, the vessel was granted permission to depart Majuro 4:30pm the same day. Hoang’s body was discovered drifting in the lagoon six days later.

Ali Muslim, on the other hand,

died at sea onboard the vessel Sea Fox from a gas leak accident this past Sunday.

A thorough report submitted to the hospital by Captain Russell Casemero, Jr. says Ali, the chief engineer and two others collapsed while inside a well no one knew was filled with toxic gas. The four entered the shaft while the vessel was rolling its net to prepare for another set before they passed out from inhaling the toxic fumes.

Luckily, crew members discovered the men in time and three of the four

Continued page 2

Mejit doc jailed without charges

An outer island health assistant was accused of a crime, jailed for one week in Majuro without charges, in violation of the RMI Constitution, put on leave without pay, and is now in limbo awaiting a conversation to happen with the Minister of Health.

Whenever legal issues between the local council and an individual arise in the outer islands, the local government always has the upper hand because the accused has zero representation — no lawyer. This has been the practice since the rule of law was introduced into the Marshall Islands. Such is the case of Mejit Health Assistant Gordon Samson.

Mejit Lomejed local government arrested him on September 22 following a dispute involving a motor bike that the local council claimed escalated to Gordon

Continued page 2

Marshalls' N-suits fail in international court

A majority of judges in the International Court of Justice last week said they had no jurisdiction to hear complaints filed by the Marshall Islands against nuclear nations that sought court action to force them take steps to disarm. The court, however, was split nearly evenly on the question of jurisdiction to hear the cases against Pakistan, India and the United Kingdom. The ICJ ruled there was not enough evidence of a dispute so the court had no jurisdiction.

The activity in this court action was the result of filings instigated by RMI former Foreign Minister Tony

deBrum with the objective of limiting nuclear weapons.

"We are pleased that the Court recited its unanimous decision of 1996 that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects," said Phon van den Biesen, Co-Agent of the RMI at the ICJ. "Nonetheless it is difficult to understand how eight judges could have found that no disputes existed in these cases when they were filed. So that is very disappointing. It is particularly worrying that the World Court cannot be unanimous on what it takes to establish a dispute in the context of

nuclear disarmament." The President's Office issued a statement this week saying the lack of progress on global nuclear disarmament is "no way to honor or respond to the lesson that the Marshallese people have offered the world." The two paragraph statement from the President's Office said:

"While these proceedings were initiated by the previous government administration, the Marshall Islands has — for decades — repeatedly reminded the international community that our own burden and experiences with nuclear detonations must never again be repeated."

Former Mejit doc in limbo

From page 1

assaulting a person with a machete — an allegation he denies.

National Police diverted an AMI flight the next day, sending two police officers to Mejit to apprehend Gordon and escort him to Majuro. Gordon was the only passenger picked up from Mejit. If there was a machete attack victim, he didn't need medical referral to Majuro for treatment of injuries.

A petition signed by people on Mejit called for the Ministry of Health to remove him. The petition is dated September 23, the day National Police arrived in Mejit to take Samson to Majuro jail.

Gordon was confined behind bars for a week without a hearing or any form of due process. The RMI Constitution allows people to be held for a maximum of 24 hours unless criminal charges are filed in court.

But National Police authorities told the Journal that even if an outer island local government or community court accuses a person of some crime, it is rarely enforceable for prosecution at the national level in Majuro. So he was released by National Police on September 30 with no further word or information.

On Wednesday this week, Gordon told the Journal he was told to "go home and wait until I sit with the min-

ister of health" the last time he talked with Outer Islands Dispensary Director Arata Nathan.

Last Friday Arata told the Journal no replacement has been made for Gordon at Mejit, while one of his staff this week said a replacement had left to Mejit a week ago Monday.

Samson is now in limbo: the Ministry of Health has placed him on leave without pay since arrival in Majuro, a replacement health assistant may already have been dispatched for Mejit, and Samson is wondering what's next.

Samson has been the health assistant on Mejit for about a year and a half. Previously, he worked as a health assistant in Aelonlaplap for many years. He was trained in the early 1990s by Dr. Isao Kisino, and began working in outer island dispensaries in 1994.

Gordon is a father of four and his wife is expecting a fifth child.

Gordon has sought legal assistance and is hoping to get his life back on track in order to move on from being a victim of circumstances.



Weird characters fill Batmon flick

From page 1

particular scene. In fact, the idea for the movie started with the goal of producing a 10-minute short film, similar in length to the award winning "Zori" film Niedenthal and Chutaro produced several years ago. But it morphed into a film over an hour long as the collaboration between co-directors Niedenthal and Ben deBrum Wakefield developed. Finally, Chutaro, who is in Hawaii, wasn't here to participate in this latest film adventure on the streets of Majuro.

The idea for the feature film can be traced back to a few second meme Wakefield produced and posted on Marshallese Be Like about Batman in Majuro getting a call for help to stop a crime and running out of gas. "I just kept laughing at that one," said Niedenthal.

Niedenthal and Wakefield, with other actors, including Niedenthal's son Jukulius, and music personality Yasta "Yastamon" Bolkeim, kept adding new ideas that developed the film after filming had begun.

"It's a film like so many memes put into one," said Wakefield about the making of Batmon. "More ideas kept coming in."

"Ben said 'let's add this,' then I'd say okay so we need that, and we kept adding scenes," said Niedenthal. The film is "patterned after of the old Batman TV movies," he said, adding: "It's a real Marshallese story the way it is told."

Niedenthal said it's unlike his earlier films. "We never had more music, more car scenes, music on the radio," he said of Batmon. "It's been an amazing process."

He described waiting for opening night, this Friday, has been like waiting for a baby to be born.

"The filming," said Wakefield, "was kind of nerve wracking. The kids (in the neighborhoods where they filmed) would go crazy during the filming."

The original Batman TV series always featured "disturbed, messed up characters." Batmon has been true to its predecessors: Among Batmon characters who fit this description are Catwoman and Bingonella.

Wakefield said it was easy to get actors for the movie. "They're really good and not shy," he added.

Batmon vs. Majuro opens at 6:30pm Friday October 14 at Jitak and plays again the next night. Two showings are scheduled each evening.

Three fishermen survive

From page 1

men were rescued successfully: the captain had the men wear gas masks before lowering the fishing net to retrieve the unconscious men. While on deck, three of the men were revived, following several CPR attempts, but

not Ali — he was pronounced dead minutes later.

While the crew worked with the men, Captain Casemero notified Marine Medical Access, his company South Pacific Tuna, and the US Coast Guard in Hawaii.

Joe adds airport to ports portfolio

The Marshall Islands Ports Authority has named Joe Tiobech as its new director. The vacancy opened when longtime Ports Director Jack Chong Gum moved to become the General Manager of the Marshalls Energy Company recently.

At a meeting earlier this month, the Ports board of directors approved the hiring of Tiobech, a longtime manager of the Majuro seaport within Ports Authority and a ship pilot.

The board, chaired by local businessman Robert Pinho, also approved raising the base salary of Ports workers to \$4 an hour, as well as providing higher salaried personnel with a raise. In addition to Pinho, the Ports board includes Chong Gum, Majuro Senator Sherwood Tibon, Jaluit Senator Daisy Alik-Momotaro, NTA's Michael Sawej, KADA Deputy Director Anjojo Kabua and Do It Best Manager Larry Hernandez.