

CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The 2008 - 09 was definitely a growing year for MINA! MINA now in our second year of our 2nd strategic plan developed in November of 2007. Many of our efforts have been in the grant writing and organizational efforts, and this certainly paid off with large grant from NOAA and the DOI Coral Reef Program.

Board Members and Officers

The terms of the following directors will naturally expire this coming May. They are Laurence Boyer, Fran Castro and Ron Smith. They have agreed to continue with another 3 year term in office.

We say a fond goodbye to Sixto Igisomar and Aya Masumoto.

Executive Director

Chuck Sayon is no longer the Interim Executive Director and has been replaced by Sam Sablan. We will be hiring a part-time Executive Director once our grants NOAA debris grant has been deposited.

Office Space

We want to thank Miss Kamata and Mr. Horiguchi for their contribution to MINA for the air conditioner and use of office space this past year at the MISA II buildings at the Paseo de Marianas.

Our new office space is here near the Naked Fish restaurant is shared with Pacific Marine Resources Institute, which is a non-profit environmental based organization.

Grants

MINA is the recipient of a \$25,000 DOI grant to further educate and do outreach issues on the Coral Reef and the marine environment. With this grant, we have continued to expand our teacher camp program.

MINA is also recipient of a NOAA grant for \$100,000 to be used in a marine debris program.

Partnerships and Projects

MINA worked with the Talakaya Project this past summer in doing the financial management and administration advisory support for the watershed reforestation project on Rota.

MINA also did the financial management of the RARE PRIDE Campaign, this campaign has successfully gotten the "PRIMO" campaign off the ground branding our indigenous butterfly fish as the official mascot and highlighting our marine resources.

MINA worked with the Friends of the Marianas Marine Monument doing also the financial management of the group in support of a Presidential monument declaration in the waters around the CNMI. MINA was instrumental in the early stages by working on advertising and

information outreach and development. Petition outreach and the public service announcements can be directly attributed to MINA for their development and early financial support. MINA board members came out in full when Federal Officials came for their fact finding missions and public meetings. MINA was also able to meet privately with CNMI government officials, NOAA and Dept. of Interior officials and met separately with CEQ Director James Connaughton here in Saipan. MINA was also able to meet with officials in Washington, DC to give our views in support of the Marine Monument. MINA also wrote letters to the media and newspapers in support of a marine protected area and keeping dialog and discussion open asking for flexibility from the CNMI's leadership.

Our 2nd Teacher Camp proved to be another successful outreach program. Supported by our grants from Light in the Eve, the DOI Coral Reef Initiative, Coastal Resources Management and the RARE Pride Campaign, we had more than 24 teachers sign up and actually had to turn some away due to limiting our enrollment. The two day classes saw our newly trained Tinian and Saipan teachers from the private and public schools using their new skills. To date, with their new curriculum developed, we have supported and subsidized about 150 CNMI school students on field trips.

While we were not successful, MINA was in negotiations with the WYLAND Foundation to have one of the Whaling Walls painted here in Saipan as part of the road to the 2008 Olympics. The walls are significant for their large scale life portraits of sea life. We received an outpouring of community support for in-kind donations and funds. We received permission from the CHC to paint the walls facing west on Middle Road, and financial and in-kind support from MVA, and a host of local businesses. While not successful, MINA plans on some type of art improvement project highlighting the marine resources in the near future.

The Future

- Marine Debris Program
- EPA CARE Grant
- Teacher Camp 2009 (Tinian/Saipan)

Fran Castro

Chair