



# Yap Visitors Bureau Qtrly Newsletter

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## Yap Living History Museum receives donation of historical artifacts for new building

(Colonia, Yap) --- Art Mergist, a former Peace Corps Volunteer and teacher in Yap during the 1970's, has donated his collection of historical artifacts including yearbooks from the school where he taught, paintings and a string of traditional shell money to the Yap Living History Museum in Colonia. "We are very excited about the construction of the new climate-controlled building to house this collection. YVB is currently coordinating with YSPSC for the relocation of a water pipe that must be done before construction can begin," said Don Evans, General Manager of Yap Visitors Bureau.

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***Atilana Rambayon (Art Mergists friend who delivered the collections to the FSM Consulate Office-Guam) Teresa Filepin, FSM Consul General, at the FSM Consulate Office-Guam.***

“When completed, Mr. Mergeist’s collection will be displayed along with historical photos and other educational materials. We are looking forward to having not just visitors to Yap and residents but also local school children visit the new addition to the museum to learn about Yap’s culture and heritage.” Until then, the collection has been loaned to the FSM Consul General’s Office on Guam where it will be on display until the completion of the new building later this year. Visitors are welcome to stop by the FSM Consulate office at 1755 16, Tamuning, Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm to view the artifacts.



### **Hong Kong’s divers and marine conservationists target of Yap’s tourism representatives**

Colonia, Yap. Ruud Van Baal, General Manager of Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers, attended the Diving & Resort Travel Expo in Hong Kong recently where he joined the Yap Visitors Bureau’s booth with Jan Mok, public relations representative in Asia for the Yap Visitors Bureau.

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***Two booth visitors, Ruud Van Baal, General Manager, Manta Ray Bay Resort, Jan Mok, Asia Public Relations Rep, at the Yap Visitors Bureau Booth in Hong Kong DRT Show.***

“ The DRT show is an excellent tool for us since it brings together the largest gathering of diving enthusiasts, marine conservationists and those who simply have a passion for the underwater world,” said Van Baal. “We’ve seen an increase in inquiries and bookings from that market since we first began participating in the show in 2017.”

With attendance estimated at 50,000 visitors, Mok added that they “talked to many visitors, dive operators and the media.” Follow-up after the show included sending digital booklets about Yap’s many options for adventure travelers who requested more information.

The Shanghai DRT Show is next on YVB’s 2019 schedule on April 12-14 followed by the Taiwan show on May 31-June 2.



*Ruud Van Baal, General Manager, Manta Ray Bay Resort, helps promote Yap to visitors at the YVB Booth.*



### **St.Mary’s School 8th Grade Class Visits Yap Visitors Bureau**

On January 7, 2019, the St. Mary's School 8th grade class went on a field trip to selected offices in Colonia, including the Yap Visitors Bureau. The class arrived in the afternoon with the intention of learning what Yap Visitors Bureau does and how it functions. Tom Tamangmow, Manager of Product and Development, along with the YVB staff, gave a short presentation and answered the students’ questions. YVB folders and maps were given to the students as a token of appreciation for their visit.

# UPDATES



## **Solar Panels for Yap Visitor Bureau's Office Building**

We are very happy to report that funding for the JEMCO solar panel project has been processed. This project will solarize the Yap Visitors Bureau building in order to reduce the bureau's utility bill by approximately 90%. The solar panels have just arrived from California and are soon to be cleared by Customs.

## **Familiarization Tour (FAM) Project**

YVB has been actively involved in planning a full agenda of activities for representatives of Valor Tours, "America's oldest and most experienced military tour operator," for arrival in late March. A group of US Marine Corps officers joined the representatives for the three-day visit. Patrick Ranfranz, founder of the Missing Air Crew Project, and partner with YVB in establishing the twenty three WWII memorials throughout Yap, was on island at the same time and conducted the in-depth tour for the visitors. We will provide more information and photos in the next newsletter about this exciting opportunity to bring visitors interested in learning about the Pacific theater during WWII to the island. "Yapese people enjoy what we have today because of those who sacrificed their lives for us," said Tom Tamangmow, Products and Development Manager of Yap Visitors Bureau.



Other FAM opportunities include a bird watching tour representative who is planning to visit in June to discuss bringing bird enthusiasts to Yap. We will also be supporting the Hong Kong DRT Show (Dive, Resort, Travel) that takes place December 14-16 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, as well as other travel trade shows scheduled in the Asia region.



*Photo by: Island Beat Studios*

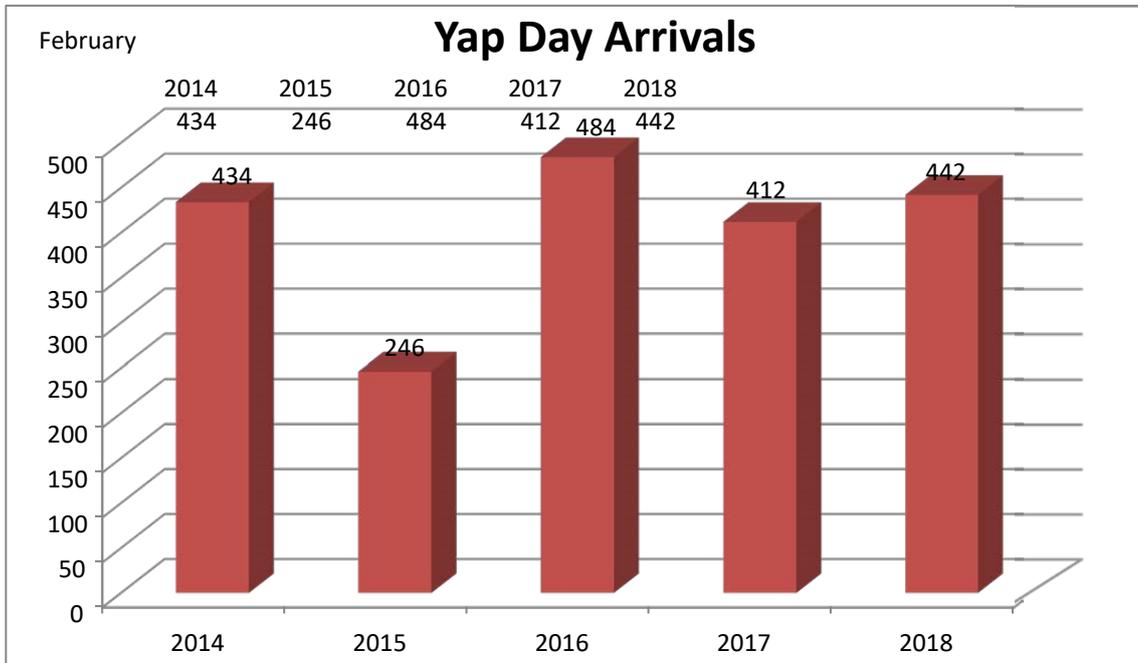
## Yap Airport Project

Yap Public Works & Transportation and Yap Visitors Bureau will work together to remodel and extend the current lobby at the Yap International Airport that will include a canopy over the driveway to shelter the passenger pick up and drop off areas. This project should be completed one year after the funds are available. This project is to improve the "gateway effect" for Yap tourism development.



Notice of Award was issued to Yap Co-operative Association (YCA) on October 23, 2018. The processing of contract was completed and signed on December 12. The notice to proceed was also issued to YCA on December 12. A pre-construction conference was held on January 2, 2019. Construction was to begin on January 7, 2019 with completion no later than October 3, 2019.





Yap Day Arrivals graph above shows number of visitors Yap welcomed between 2014 to 2018.

### Monthly Event (Taste of Yap) Project

YVB is in the process of purchasing the Victorian-style lamp posts for the Yap Living History Museum to support a series of monthly events called "A Taste of Yap". This will allow more evening events to be held at the museum site. Pop-up tents are also now available for vendors to use on the Museum grounds for a small fee.



*St. Mary's School 8th grade class showing their support on Yap Day. Go Local.*

### Human Resource Capacity Development Project

Yap Visitors Bureau is exploring ways to assist the preservation of traditional skills, and also support the Yap Living History Museum, a growing attraction in Colonia. Thought is being given to develop a program that will not only keep the museum buildings in good repair, but also teach youth these traditional skills as well. The General Manager is also coordinating with PATA for other customer service training programs to support tourism in Yap.



## Yap Day Celebration

Colonia, Yap— Yap Day, a popular holiday for the State of Yap as well as for visitors to island, was celebrated again this year on March 1. The program began at 11am with opening remarks from the Council of Pilung and Yap State Police Department's presentation of colors and followed by the national anthem sung by the St. Mary's School, 8th grade class. Ongoing demonstrations and displays during the day-long event included lei making, cooking, traditional skills and roles, marine and agriculture initiatives, booths offering food and handi-crafts, and more. The Living History Museum was this year's location. School activities, contests and dances from different villages were also presented at the event. The Yap Day celebration ended with a women's sitting dance at 7pm.



*Conch shell blown to officially open Yap Day.*

*Photo by: Duncan MacSwain*



*Photo by: Duncan MacSwain*



*Traditional food offered for sale.*



*Photo by: Duncan McSwain*



*Handmade crafts.*