

Life in the Philippines



Today, June 4th marks the first full year since my wife Tess and I moved from Guam to the Philippines, now the third country I lived in outside the USA for more than one year. There are so many unusual sights here I've never seen anywhere else in the world that I thought the regular visitors of this website might like to see them too.

One of the most inconvenient things about life in the Philippines is frequent power outages. I don't know about Manila or other large cities, but where I live in the province of Northern Samar, power outages are frequent. They can occur anytime, and when they do, we also have no WIFI to connect to the Internet. I keep my laptop charged so I can still do some work on articles even without an Internet connection.



The main shopping street in downtown Allen.



Human powered tricycle taxi in downtown Allen.



Beautiful scenery like this is abundant. This one is Mt. Bulusan across the San Bernadino Strait, a view from Caba Beach, Cabacungan, the city of Allen in Northern Samar.



Imaga beach in Northern Samar.



Our first vehicle was a 125 CC Honda TX. Since I had the accident and broke a bone in my elbow in September, 2023, we added a sidecar to it so that I would never fall again. At first it was very difficult for me to steer. I nearly ran into a ditch! But I got used to steering it and now I have no problem. My arms got stronger. We now call it a tricycle or a "trike." It can take up to 3 passengers or more if they are children, and we can haul stuff with it.



This rooster is right outside our house next door. They are raised for cock fighting. You see one of its legs is tied to a rope which limits how far he can walk.



Another view of the trike. Our gasoline costs monthly are now only 1/5 of what it was in Guam.



This is an example of how Filipinos use a sidecar to haul things. Our neighbor Jason is using it to carry tables to another location.



This is a popular public mode of transportation called a Habal-habal. This one is maxed out with passengers. We rode on them many times.



Trikes are also used for public transportation, but as a rule the trike driver won't take you as far as a habal-habal driver will. a 20-minute ride to town on a habal-habal is a little less than one US dollar.



This is another type of tricycle with the front wheel in the center. I hear it's much easier to steer than one with a sidecar like ours.



This is a public transportation vehicle called a Jeepney. This one is privately used. I never rode on one because they're not used here. I saw them in Manila.



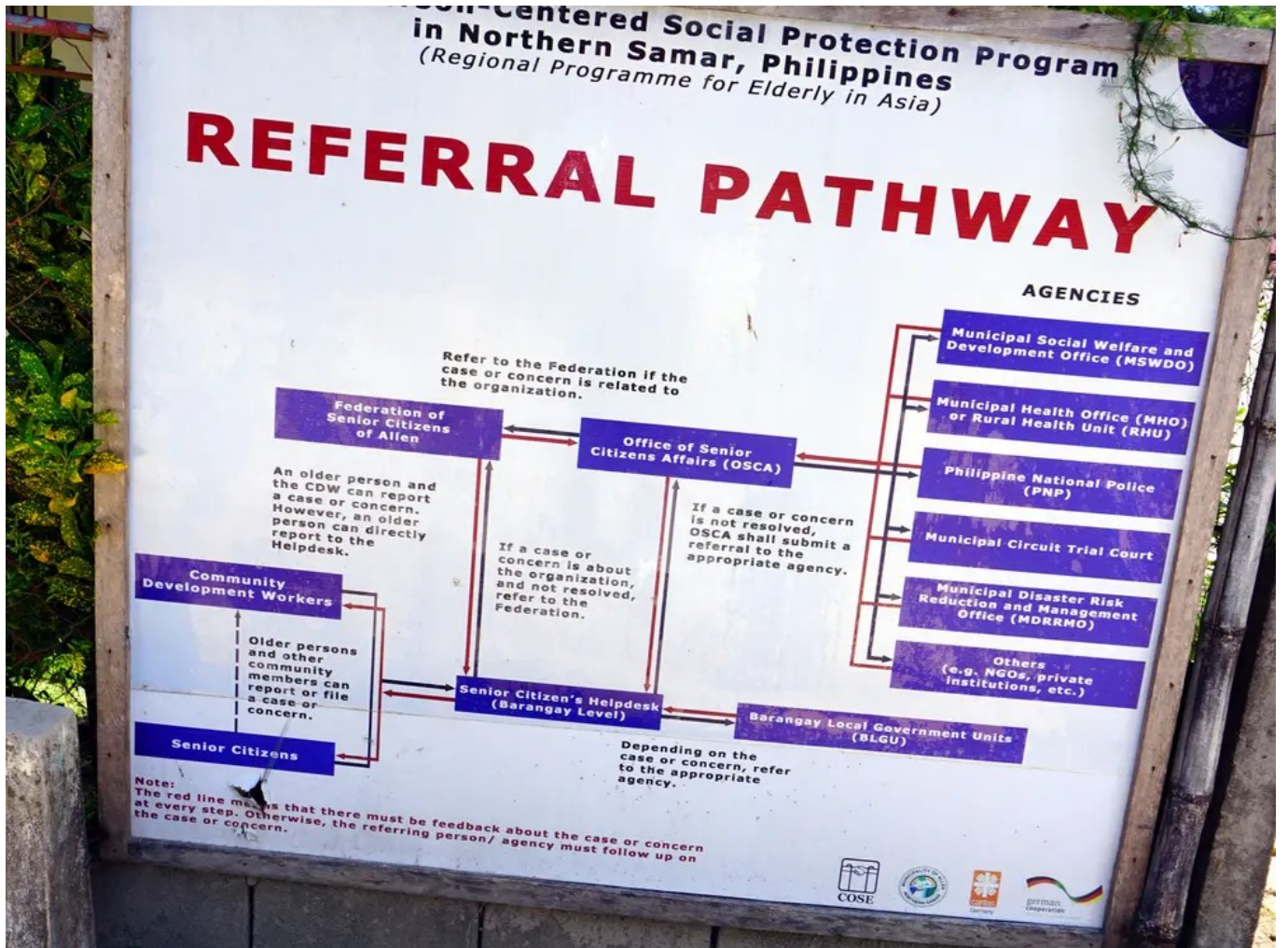
A man powered trike-taxi! It's a regular bicycle with a sidecar attached. I think it must take a lot of effort to drive.



These soft drink bottles are filled with gasoline! I hear other southeast Asian countries also have them. They are used to gas up motorcycles. I don't normally buy gasoline here. I'd rather fill up the motobike's tank from a regular gas station in town, a 20 minute drive from home. I need to go to town at least once a week.



Drying newly harvested rice on the road. This one is on a sheet. Sometimes a sheet is not used. There are many stray dogs and they defecate on the roads.



English signs are common! I would never see a sign in English like this in Japan or Russia. All educated people in the Philippines can speak and read English pretty well, much better than most Japanese living in Japan. Even little kids know some English. I heard one little girl say, "What's that?" But the language they learn at home from their parents is either Tagalog or some other dialect.



Tess giving a Bible study to the children.



Another children's Bible study.



Teen Bible study. I am sharing my testimony how I started to share the Gospel a few weeks after I got saved in 1971 to my fellow Airmen while stationed at McClellan AFB in Sacramento California.

PISO WIFI

Acc piso Wi-Fi
Acc Piso Wi-Fi

RATES

P1 - 10 MINUTES

P5 - 1 HOUR

P10 - 2 HOURS 30 MIN

P20 - 6 HOURS

P30 - 12 HOURS

P50 - 1 DAY

P150 - 7 DAYS



RATES

P1 - 10 MINUTES

P5 - 1 HOUR

P10 - 2 HOURS 30 MIN

P20 - 6 HOURS

P30 - 12 HOURS

P50 - 1 DAY

P150 - 7 DAYS

Public WIFI. Just bring your laptop or phone within range of this, log into the WiFi network of the PISO WIFI, put a 5 peso (about 9 cents US) coin in the slot and you get one hour of Internet connectivity.



Our Barangay hall. Villages in the Philippines are called barangays. The person who is elected to watch over the barangay is called the barangay captain.



Drying clothes on fence.



Me on a horse. Besides the two houses I see in the area, there are goats, water buffalo, chickens, ducks, and lots of stay dogs and cats.

See more photos of my area in the Philippines on [Scenes of the Philippines](#)

[Guam Crippled by Super Typhoon Mawar](#)



On Wednesday May 24, around noon local time, Typhoon Mawar hit Guam and gradually increased in strength uprooting trees and destroying dwellings that were not designed to withstand high winds! Electric power was cut. By 10 PM the force of the wind was at its peak. It continued throughout the night and finally subsided mid Thursday.

The Pacific island of Guam USA has been my home for the past 5 years. My wife and I were mostly in our bedroom during the typhoon with the storm shutter of our window closed. This meant after electric power was cut by the typhoon, it was dark in our room throughout the day. We thankfully had battery powered LED lights, and were not in total darkness.

I'm writing this article to notify my friends and visitors that I've been handicapped for 3 days without Internet and I'm still without power. Mobile data for our phones was finally restored on Saturday morning. We are now in survival mode without power for our refrigerator, freezer, washing machine and electric lights. Thankfully we have propane gas to cook by. My brother in law with whom we are living with now set up a way to charge our phones from a car battery. That's why I'm able to write this post. Normally I use my PC to write posts but I can't use it now without electricity.

Thankfully today we found a water station where we brought 30 gallons of drinking water! Tap water is down to a trickle. We save it in buckets for washing clothes and bathing. Traffic lights are not working. Drivers at intersections are courteous to each other and yield to other cars when necessary. The landscape has changed with broken and uprooted trees. Gasoline stations have long lines with some people waiting up to 8 hours to fill their vehicles! On Thursday we had to wait 40 minutes in a long line at a local store to buy food.

A friend knew his rented house would not stand the winds and took his family to a hotel before the typhoon hit. It's good he did because the typhoon

destroyed his house. He and or his family could have been killed or seriously injured had they stayed. As far as I know, nobody on the island has died due to the typhoon.

The house Tess and I are now staying at has 8 inch concrete walls and was built to withstand wind gusts up to 350 miles per hour. We knew we would be safe. Most houses on Guam are typhoon proof. And none of the utility poles were knocked down, only the power and communication lines were.

This is the second typhoon we experienced on Guam, and by far the worst, not only for me, but for many others living in the tropics. My brother in law says there was a worse one in the 1990s when no tree was left standing!

If you know Jesus, please pray the Lord will heal this island and fix the broken power grid soon! From Monday May 29 and up to June 4th we have important business in town with legal authorities to accomplish. But we don't want to drive there without knowing we can get gasoline for the car without waiting too long for it.

I am claiming Romans 8:28 that the Lord will work this disaster for good for us and all His children on the island of Guam! And may those who don't know Him come to repentance and the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as a result.



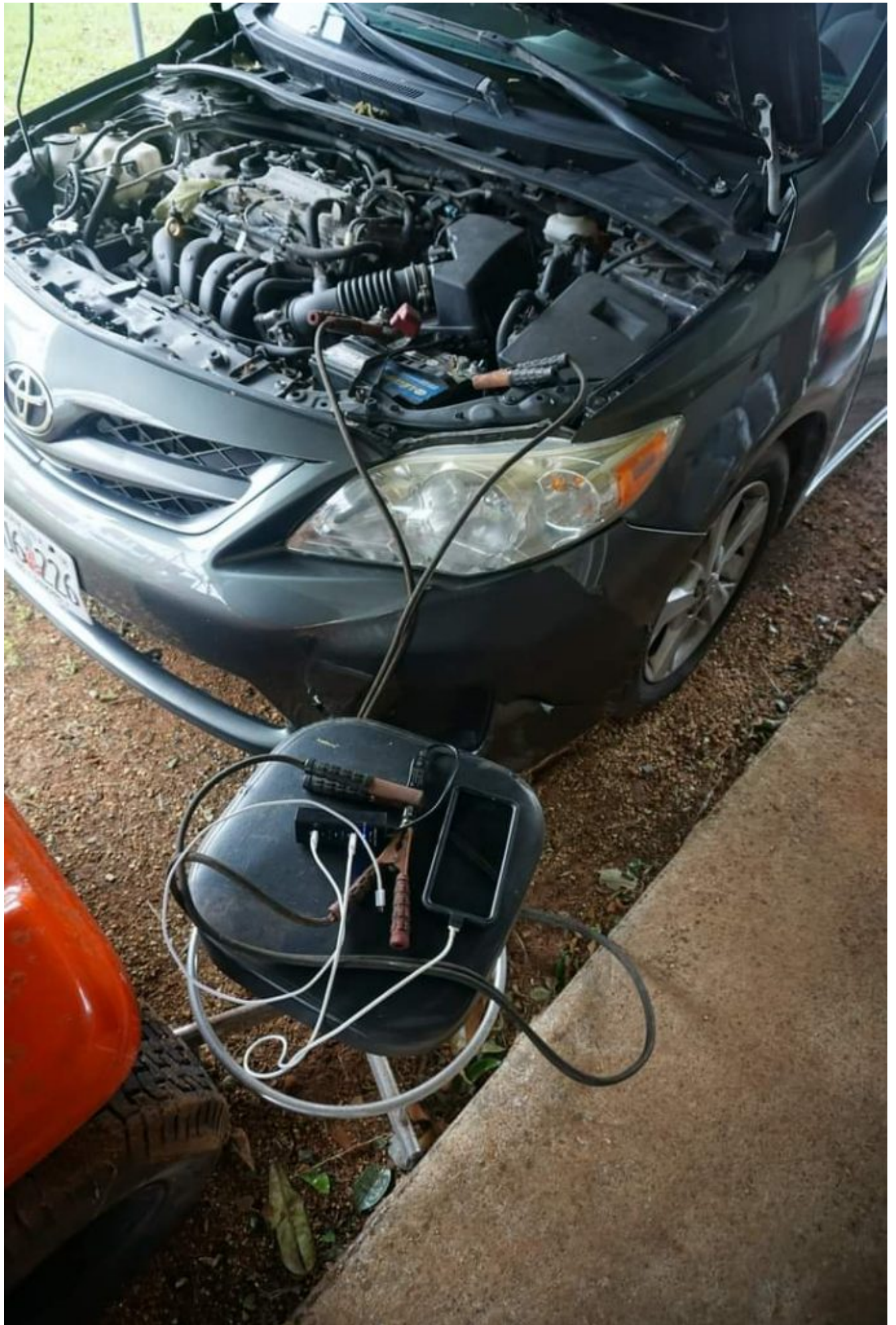
Uprooted tree



Uprooted palm trees



Uprooted trees



Charging our phones from a car battery.



Storing water



Storing water

Tuesday May 30 Update

Last night when I went to bed, I had two burdens on my heart, things I needed to do today but were made difficult to do because of the destruction of the typhoon. I claimed the promises of God that He would supply needed gasoline for the car, and He did today after a 3 hour wait! Most gasoline stations are closed, and the ones open have long lines. I saw one line at least two miles long! The one I waited at today was about half a mile long.

Public transportation on Guam is very poor. There are no trains and bus lines are few and don't go to where we regularly need to go. The existing bus lines don't have schedules posted by the bus stop. People are handicapped without a vehicle. I didn't drive or own a vehicle the 40 years I lived in Japan because public transportation was so good. And of course if you've read some of my early posts on this website, you know I loved to hitchhike. I never expected to drive ever again but living in Guam made it necessary.

And the second burden was also resolved, praise the Lord! I had to retrieve an important document from a government agency last Wednesday but couldn't because of the typhoon. Today I got it back.

I feel sorry for the poor tourists who came to Guam to enjoy the tropics and have ended up in a survival situation.

[Adventure Moving to Guam](#)



James and Tess Arendt

On May 5th I flew to Guam from Osaka, Japan, to meet my bride Tess for the

first time! She met me at the airport together with her father, her neice and nephew, and her brother Joey and his wife. I put an engagment ring on her finger at the airport in public, and strangers applauded us!

The first two nights we had to stay at a hotel at \$75 night. The place we intended to stay for free turned out to be a closed door!

On May 6th. Sunday, I attended the local church with Tess. It was a blessing to see so many Christians together in one place, hundreds of them! The pastor was so sweet and gave a message of love and hope.

I didn't bring all that much money from Japan. It was \$360 USD and 80,000 Japanese yen which I exchanged for \$696 USD. At \$75 a night plus money for food, that money would not last long! We were told apartments are expensive.

On May 7th, Monday, we moved to an AirBnB place at only \$35 a day on the tourist hotel street right by the beach on Tumon Bay! Walks along the beach in the evening were great! I talked to Japanese tourists in Japanese and had them take photos of Tess and me!

On May 8, Tuesday, Tess and I saw an offer in Chriaglist for a house at only \$570 a month, fully furnished and with WIFI! We downloaded the contract and would have sent that money through Money Gram the next day had not a good brother in Christ, Gregory, pointed out to us that it could be a scam! We listened to Gregory and didn't send the money. The owners are off island and living in Texas! Gregory pointed out the deal sounded too good and it looked flaky to him. We believe now he was right and are so thankful to have been saved from deceit and robbery!

On May 9th, Wednesday, Gregory took us to the Veterans Administration building where I applied for medical benefits from the VA. He also took us to see Ms. Amor, who offered us a studio apartment at \$670 a month. The location was very good but at that amount of money we were hoping to find something better. I also established a bank account and my own PayPal account.

On May 10, Thursday I received a gift from a brother in UK via the PayPay account. And later I received payment for a domain name I previously renewed for a friend in Australia. It totaled \$89, our first income since coming to Guam!

May 11, Friday, we received notice from Gregory of a house we can live in with an elderly lady at only \$300 a month! We were overjoyed! We will move today. Also we will meet a person who can possibly give me employment as a wedding pastor, a job I had much experience in Japan.

On May 13, Mother's Day, we met Ms. Paca's two sons, wives and children. We had a mother's day lunch with them. About 10 days later one of Ms. Paca's sons, Tiger, invited Tess and I to temporarily live in his million dollar house in the captial, Agana, to care for his 3 dogs and 2 cats while he and his family take a vacation in the Republic of Palau! They said we can eat up any food we find!

On May 20 Tess and I had our marriage ceremony in Yigo in Bethel Baptist

Church. The minister was William Maunsell.



James and Tess
Arendt



