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Jealous man throws own children into Agusan river

By OBET SAMONTE Correspondent

BUTUAN City—A jealous man tried to kill his two children—he threw them into the Agusan River in Barangay Maon here on Wednesday evening.

Marilou de Claro, chief of the city social welfare and development center for abandoned children, said jealousy made Bebot Palima, 43, try to drown his children.

CSWD's initial investigation showed that Palima became depressed when his wife left for Cebu City to visit her five children by her first husband. Palima and his common-law wife Victoria have also five children.

On the night his wife left, Palima took two of his children, whose ages are four and five, and allegedly threw them into the river despite neighbors' pleas.

Investigators said Palima subsequently jumped and swam across the river, and escaped.

Neighbors rescued the two tots and reported the incident to the police.

De Claro said Palima's neighbors turned the five children over to her office for custody. Residents fear that the man would return and hurt the children again.

She said the eldest of the Palima children disclosed that his parents often quarreled because the man was suspecting that his common-law wife was unfaithful.

A worried Victoria, who is out of town, told radio station DxBC that she would hurry back to Butuan to take care of her children.

Palima is now being sought by the police to face child-abuse charges, CSWD said.

Oro flood victims to receive aid

THE Cagayan de Oro City Disaster Coordinating Council (CDCC) is set to distribute on Monday checks as financial assistance to victims of the flashfloods that hit the city four months ago.

The families of four casualties and 10 of those injured would receive P90 thousand in financial assistance to be handed over by Mayor Constantino Jaraula and officials from the Office of the Civil Defense. Jaraula is the chair of the CDCC.

City Administrator Griselda Josen, CDCC executive action officer, said the fund came from the national government. See RECEIVE/p.7

Jaraula: Hunt case is Oro govt's concern

By HERBIE GOMEZ Editor in chief

MAYOR Constantino Jaraula yesterday expressed concern over the Thomas Hunt case. He said he would meet with expats here and would even bring the matter to the attention of the US Embassy in Manila.

"This is definitely city hall's concern. Everyone should be concerned. This should be the concern of everyone in Cagayan de Oro," said Jaraula. "It could taint our city's image and make our women here look like hustlers."

Thomas J. Hunt, a diabetic with a brain tumor, died at the Polymedic General Hospital last April 26. He had been in that hospital since late January and wasn't able to leave because he had no money to pay for his medical bills.

The financial difficulties were felt even after Hunt died. His remains, now at Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes, could not be given a decent burial yet because the unpaid hospital bills prevented the hospital from issuing a death certificate. There is also no money to pay Cosmopolitan for its services and facilities.

His widow, Janelaze Hunt née Songcuya, is reportedly still in the US where she has stayed even while Mr. Hunt was dying in the hospital.

Jaraula said he would arrange a meeting with some expats and concerned groups in Cagayan de Oro to see how city hall could help.

(The mayor phoned this paper early and asked if it can inform the expats that he can meet them at his office at 10 am yesterday. This paper sent a text message to one of the expats but there was no reply.)

Jaraula said he would also talk to local court worker Grace Songcuya, See CASE/p.4



Thomas J. Hunt's remains in an empty Cosmopolitan "chapel" on Thursday morning. City hall has expressed concern yesterday.

PHOTO BY DANTE SUDARIA

Govt needs only one witness against cybersex suspects, says Macauyag

By JIGGER JERUSALEM Correspondent

CITY prosecutor Fidel Macauyag yesterday said the government only needs one witness to win a conviction against Bo Stefan Sederholm and Emil Adreas Solemo and their alleged

Filipino accomplices.

The two Swedes and five others have been charged with human trafficking in connection with the alleged cybersex operations in Kauswagan here.

Macauyag said prosecutors were after of "quality,

not quantity."

The city's chief prosecutor said this after 15 of the women "rescued" by authorities from the alleged cybersex den last month bolted from a facility of the social welfare department.

The women pressed

various charges against the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) the other day.

Macauyag said, "What matters is not the number of

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Mayor Constantino Jaraula and Korean Embassy officials led by First Secretary and Consul Myoung-Joon Kim (5th from left) grace the office opening of a Korean association in Cagayan de Oro in Carmen on May 7.

CIO PHOTO

Armed men snatch Chinoy trader; no ransom demand yet

By TENG DATU Correspondent

ARMED men on Thursday snatched a young Chinese-Filipino businessman near his warehouse in Barangay Limbo, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

Authorities identified the victim as Christopher Yap, 28, a businessman engaged in the copra busi-

ness. He is a nephew of Phil Trade owner Robert Yap.

Officials said the men who abducted the younger Yap, also the owner of two hardware stores, a gas station and a school supplies store in Cotabato City, have not sought a ransom at presstime.

Police, quoting wit- See SNATCH/p.7

Case

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an aunt of Hunt's widow.

"If needed, I would bring this matter to the attention of Ambassador (Kristie) Kenney," said Jaraula.

Meanwhile, expats flooded this paper with e-mails after it broke the Hunt story yesterday.

The expatriate community in the city is watching this situation very closely, said Jil Wrinkle in an e-mail sent to this paper.

"We all see ourselves in Thomas Hunt. Unfortunately, what happened with his wife is something that we all have to deal with individually on our own depending on individual relationships and levels of trust and commitment with our wives," he said.

Wrinkle added: "The behaviors that the expatriate community sees by the Songcuya family, and Grace Songcuya specifically, is alarming to each expatriate equally: It has the majority of the expatriates (who operate on the concept of trust and camaraderie with the Filipinos they know) wondering what their own adopted Filipino family will do if there ever is a problem, and the minority of the expatriates (who operate on the concept of suspicion and pessimism around all Filipinos) saying 'I told you so.'"

Songcuya, Janelaze's aunt, has accused wives of expats of unauthorized solicitations and she has demanded an accounting of the funds that were raised.

But expat Mike Farrell who spoke to *The Gold Star*

Daily the other day and all the expats who sent e-mails to this paper defended the wives' group called the Expats' Ladies Charities.

Farrell said the group, led by Daisy Cline, did not deserve Songcuya's accusation. He said the expats' wives only decided to help when they saw that Mr. Hunt was not getting the kind of treatment he deserved from Janelaze and her relatives.

He said the group became involved only after a doctor informed an expat that the 72-year old Hunt was in the hospital and he "had no visitors for a month."

Wrinkle said, "The reason Grace Songcuya 'never saw a centavo' is simple: The Expats' Ladies Charities never gave any money to the Songcuya family for medicines because they were rightly concerned that the money would never be spent on the medicines Mr. Hunt needed. It was widely speculated that money sent by Janelaze to her family for Mr. Hunt's medications was never spent as it was intended. (Ironically enough, after Mr. Hunt's passing, the Songcuya family did take his leftover medications that the Expats' Ladies Charities had purchased and returned them for a cash refund at the pharmacies where they had been purchased.) That is why the Songcuya family 'never saw a centavo.'"

Wrinkle said the group bought various vitamins and

antibiotics and ointments that Hunt needed at pharmacies outside the hospital where they were cheaper.

For the expensive P5-thousand-per-day drugs that could only be purchased in the hospital, he said, the group never had enough money at any one time to purchase those.

"They were literally raising money in the morning, buying the medications in the afternoon with whatever they raised, and then getting them to Hunt in the evening," said Wrinkle.

He said the wives' group has all the receipts to show this.

Wrinkle said the group also did not raise funds for a funeral.

Mike Belter said the ladies' group repeatedly posted reports about the donations, donors, pledges and how the funds were used.

Belter said the expats' wives went from pharmacy to pharmacy "to price shop [and] make the money last longer."

"I personally am appalled that this aunt (Songcuya) that has not been present for anything should question what a bunch of foreigners do with their money or the charity they support which is a bona fide charity registered here in Cagayan de Oro. Money raised for Mr. Hunt's care was used for that and that only," said Belter.