

HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

NAIA-3 TO OPEN FOR DOMESTIC FLIGHTS ON JULY 23

By HFC STAFF

Despite controversies on the project and after years of delay, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 will have a dry run on July 23, 2008 with an initial number of 23 domestic flights per day.

Michael Defensor, Chief of the Presidential Task Force on NAIA-3, said that for the past several weeks, workers have been busy making final preparations for a dry run.

(continued on page 4)



The Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 (NAIA-3)

30,000 Pinoys in S. Korea to be Deported

By Jose Rodel CLAPANO

Migrant International recently asked President Arroyo to take drastic measures to ensure the safe return of 30,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who are expected to be deported as South Korea steps up its campaign against undocumented migrant workers.

In a statement, Migrant International chair Connie Bragas-Regalado said that Migrant members in South Korea informed them that South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak's marching orders are to flush "unregistered aliens" out its borders.

"Thousands of OFWs are expected to be arrested, detained, prosecuted and deported from different countries as massive crackdown of undocumented workers will intensify in EU (European Union) countries, South Korea and Malaysia. We have received reports from our members in South Korea that after President Lee Myung-Bak's marching orders to flush out unregistered aliens in their country last February, immi-

(continued on page 4)

Filipino Priest Holds Healing Service in LA

Tens of thousands were present at the Los Angeles Sports Arena last month for Heal LA—a healing service and Eucharistic celebration. Many were touched by Father Fernando Suarez and healed, they claim of various ailments.

"The healing that Jesus is going to give is not only physical," said Fr. Fernando during his homily. "You will be healed spiritually but what's important to me as a priest, and to God, is that you acknowledge that God is the only one who heals. God's love heals."

Fr. Fernando celebrated Mass with concelebrants Fr. Albert Avenida, Heal LA Spiritual Adviser, and Fr. Ramon Valera of St. Cyprian Parish in Long Beach and half a dozen other priests from various parishes. Fr. Valera appealed to the massive crowd for donations for Fr. Fernando's charitable organization, the Mary Mother of the Poor, and to help defray some of the expenses of the event.

Heal LA's Eucharistic and Musical Celebration was ushered in not by the usual



Healing-priest Father Fernando Suarez

recitation of the rosary-based Chaplet of Divine Mercy, but by chanting the novena.

There were numerous testimonies of physical healing during the Holy Mass, announced by Fr. Jeff Shannon, C.C., Fr. Fernando's companion during their healing ministries, even before the latter had laid his hands on thousands of believers.

There were many more testimonies of instant healing after being touched by Fr. Fernando from people using canes, walkers, and even wheelchairs; those who have cancer; those who couldn't hear or see; and those who have been in pain for years, among many other ailments.

(continued on page 4)

RP Bowlers Strike Gold in Asian Bowling Tourney

Veteran Pinoy bowler Chester King dishied out a sterling performance, while teammate Raoul Miranda held his own ground to give the Philippines a gold-silver finish in the men's all-events competition in the 20th Asian Tenpin Bowling Championships in Hong Kong.

King added a three-game series of 648 pins to his Asian three-game record of 813 to amass a 24-game total of 5534 (230.58 average) from his singles, doubles, trios and team outings. Miranda, already the singles bronze medalist, accounted for 5444 (226.83) to hold off United Arab Emirates' Hussain Al-Suwaidi, who settled for the bronze with 5366 (223.58).

King's fiery showing gave him his first individual gold. Earlier, he teamed with Mi-



Gold-medalist bowler Chester King

randa and Frederick Ong to give the Philippines its first gold medal in the trio event. The trio of Pinoy bowlers smashed three Asian records en route to claiming the Men's Trios gold medal.

Over 167 bowlers from 19 countries competed in the event, which was held from July 4-11, 2008. (Good News Pilipinas)

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EDITORIAL

Waste of Public Funds

The deal has been voided and the signatories have either resigned or retired from the Commission on Elections. But Juan de la Cruz continues to bear a heavy burden in connection with the poll automation contract signed by the Comelec with the private consortium Mega Pacific.

Comelec Chairman Jose Melo wants to get rid of nearly 2,000 voting machines that cost taxpayers P1.04 billion. The machines were supposed to be used for the country's first-ever automated elections in May 2004. But the Supreme Court found the deal irregular and invalidated the contract. The SC recommended the investigation of Comelec officials for possible corruption and prohibited the use of the voting machines. But Mega Pacific, having delivered the machines and received full payment, refused to take back the machines or refund the P1.04 billion.

Benjamin Abalos has since resigned as Comelec chairman — not over the automation deal, but amid allegations that he had dangled a P200-million bribe and brokered the \$329-million national broadband network deal signed by Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza with executives of ZTE Corp. in the presence of President Arroyo in China. Like the automation contract, the broadband deal has been scrapped.

With Mega Pacific's no-return, no exchange policy, the Comelec is stuck with nearly 2,000 white elephants worth P1.04 billion, on top of which taxpayers are shelling out P22 million annually for storage, according to Melo. No one has been sent to prison for this atrocious waste of public funds. Now the government is preparing to spend more in hopes of making the general elections in 2010 fully automated.

Even as the nation pursues poll modernization, there should be no letup in efforts to make those responsible for the Mega Pacific deal account



for the waste of over a billion pesos in public funds. At the same time, the new Comelec officials should learn their lessons from the botched deal and see to it that the anomaly will not be repeated in the next attempt at poll automation, which is less than two years away. (www.philstar.com) ■

Return to Mass Transportation

The Light Railway Transit and the Metro Rail Transit are filled to capacity. And the number of commuters is expected to increase further as motorists, grappling with soaring fuel prices, rediscover the advantages of mass transportation and leave their cars at home.

The factors that push people to use private vehicles particularly in Metro Manila almost always have something to do with the inefficiency of the country's mass transportation facilities. For Philippine mass transportation, the jeepney is truly iconic: gaudy, noisy, an environmental hazard with its emissions, slow, uncomfortable, inefficient, and driven by some of the most undisciplined drivers on the planet. But the fare is cheap, and no politician has mustered the guts to consign jeepneys to museums.

Drivers and operators of public utility vehicles have resisted every effort to end anarchy in city streets. The result: long waits at every stop for passengers, traffic jams and consequently fewer trips for PUVs. Even air-conditioned buses linger long to at too many stops. And so people

prefer to use private vehicles.

If the government can end the street chaos, more people will take buses and jeepneys. The speed and predictability of the travel schedules on the MRT and LRT have made them the most popular modes of mass transportation amid the fuel crunch. Their popularity should encourage the government to expand such railway services, to eventually cover all major points in Metro Manila.

At the same time, the government should speed up the modernization of the traditional railroad system, which is a good mode of transporting both passengers and cargo. Putting shipping containers on railway trains instead of truck haulers will drastically reduce traffic jams in Metro Manila. The traffic-free and speedier system of cargo delivery will also be good for investments. But this administration cannot construct even a 38-kilometer-long railway facility without the project becoming bogged down in a scandal. Commuters will just have to bear with packed LRT and MRT coaches until 2010. (www.philstar.com) ■



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MAYOR'S COLUMN



AROUND THE ISLAND

by Mayor Mufi HANNEMANN

Let's Support the Arts and Make the US Friendlier to Visitors

Our nation's vibrant arts and entertainment scene, and our hospitality to visitors from abroad, are vitally important to our economy and to the perceptions that people form about our nation and its people. That's why I am very active in helping to guide policies that support the arts and the visitor industry here in Hawaii and nationwide.

On behalf of Americans for the Arts and the US Conference of Mayors, I recently presented singer and songwriter Gloria Estefan and her husband Emilio Estefan, Jr. with National Awards for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts, in recognition of their contributions as artists and humanitarians and their life-long support of music.

Known as the "Queen of Latin Pop," Gloria Estefan has received five Grammy Awards and is

among the top 100 best selling music artists, with over 90 million albums sold worldwide and 15.5 million in the US. Emilio Estefan, Jr. is a musician and producer who also received five Grammy Awards, and serves on the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

I proudly presented the awards during the US Conference of Mayors' annual meeting, held in Miami in June, where I also participated in a strategy session on ways the new US presidential administration can work with the nation's mayors to implement a Ten-Point Plan for addressing issues that affect Americans in our cities. As a result of my earlier efforts, the plan includes support for tourism and the arts, and calls for the creation of a Cabinet-level Secretary of Culture and Tourism charged with forming a national policy for arts, culture and tourism.

During the strategy session, I led a discussion focused on tourism and the arts in my capacity as chairman of the Conference's Standing Committee on Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports. One outcome of the session was an announcement that I and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley will spearhead a

new task force of mayors and private sector organizations to support Chicago's bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games. In supporting Chicago, the idea is to also launch a "Discover America" campaign to invite international visitors to the Olympics to also visit other US cities, such as Honolulu.

I also urged the mayors to continue to support the Travel Promotion Act that Hawaii Senator Daniel Inouye has championed, which includes an international tourism marketing campaign and provides the Cabinet-level position for tourism. In addition, I urged the mayors to continue backing an expansion of the US Visa Waiver Program and the streamlining of US entry requirements.

The US continues to miss out on the international travel boom that's been fueling economies around the world. As total international arrivals jumped from 682 million in 2000 to 846 million in 2006, America's share actually dropped. According to the Travel Industry Association, this decline has cost America nearly \$150 billion in lost visitor spending and 250,000 American jobs - affecting every state and city across the country. These effects have been felt most acutely at the local level,

where overseas visitors to our nation's most popular destinations have declined by some 20 to 34 percent. For us here at home, the impacts have hit us hard - as with the demise of both Aloha Airlines and ATA.

A sagging US economy, rising fuel costs, and increased competition are all factors, but one of the key underlying reasons for America's diminishing share of the worldwide travel market is the

general perception abroad that the US is unwelcoming and unfriendly. More and more foreign travelers view America as having the "world's worst entry process" and are choosing to go and spend their travel dollars elsewhere. Even Hawaii's famous "aloha spirit" may not overcome what is known for being a burdensome, frustrating, and inhospitable US visa and entry process. Since 9/11, homeland security is understandably foremost, but a better balance is needed between security and hospitality. ■

U.S. Small Business Administration



SBA TRAINING EVENTS AND CALENDARS JULY 22 -31, 2008

THE ART OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Date: Tuesday, July 22, 2008
Time: 5:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Location: Maui City Business Resource Ctr
Cost: FREE
RSVP: (808) 873-8248 Maui

Veteran publicist and marketing executive Claudia Gray will discuss the process of creating publicity and marketing campaign for a major motion picture. Discover many innovative ways to capture the public eye! Gray has worked on projects for Warner Brothers, Universal, New Line Cinema and most recently, on the Academy Award winning film, "No Country for Old Men."

STARTING A BUSINESS? INTERESTED IN IMPORTING AND EXPORTING?

Date: July 23, 2008
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Location: Maui Arts & Cultural Center
Cost: FREE
RSVP: james_nakano@ftz9.org
808-586-2509

Come to learn about the available resources and programs to help your business grow! Presenters will include professionals from the Maui Chamber of Commerce, High Technology Development Corporation and the Manufacturing Extension Program (MEP), Business Action Center, SBA, Foreign Trade Zone, Hawaii Customs Brokers Association; and the U.S. Export Assistance Center.

SBA'S 504 LOAN: FIXED ASSET LOANS

Date: Wednesday, July 30th
Time: 9:00 a.m. -10:30 a.m.
Location: USDA Forest Services Conference Room, 60 Nowelo Street, Hilo, Hawaii
Cost: FREE
RSVP: Jerry Hirata, 541-2990 Ext.203 or Email: jerry.hirata@sba.gov Hilo

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Time: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
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HEADLINE NEWS

(cont. from page 1; NAIA...)

"We'll start July 23 on a dry run basis and have 23 domestic flights for six months," he says. "We will have Cebu Pacific at saka under Philippine Airlines express, and Air Philippines. Once we open for international flights, most probably by February or March 2009, we should be fully operational."

When fully operational, Defensor said NAIA 3 will service about 140 flights a day.

Terminal fees collected from the airlines will be put into an escrow account until the government has complied with the

(cont. from page 1; 30,000 Pinoy...)

gration authorities there were given quotas of 3,000 arrests and deportations monthly - 600 for Seoul and 250 for Busan," Regalado said.

Regalado said the more than 30,000 undocumented Filipinos are among the 653,000 foreign workers in South Korea.

The European Union earlier approved new immigration rules which will oblige authorities to expel undocumented migrants, impose imprisonment of 18 months and ban entry for five years.

Regalado said Europe is host to more than 100,000 undocumented OFWs.

She said that in Malaysia, half a million undocumented Filipinos of the 1.3-million undocumented foreign workers will face possible arrest, detention and deportation.

(cont. from page 1; Filipino Priest...)

Emily Carlson, 8, from Santa Fe Springs, came to see Fr. Fernando for the second time. Emily suffered from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), but after her first contact with Fr. Fernando, she was healed.

"Even my teacher says I be have better now," said Emily.

Her mother, who exuded much faith, followed with a passionate testimony.

"When Fr. Fernando touched my daughter at the St. Benedict Church in Montebello," she said, "I knew she was already healed. That was on February 22, 2008. We are here again to experience God's love."

DOWN-TO-EARTH HEALING PRIEST

After hearing Fr. Fernando's homily, Dr. Manny De Sagun from San Bernardino commented that

Supreme Court order to pay NAIA 3's builder, the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (PIATCo).

PIATCo is asking from the Philippine government a total amount of US\$565 million as compensation, while the German firm Fraport is asking for a US\$425 million settlement for its investments in the expropriated facility.

The NAIA Terminal 3 was more than 90 percent completed in 2002. However, the Supreme Court prevented it from opening after voiding a multi-billion dollar contract between the government and the international con-



Michael Defensor

sortium over graft issues.

An attempt to open the terminal last year was aborted after engineers found structural problems, among them a ceiling that collapsed and weakened beams. ■



Conejos' statement that the Malaysian government has every right to deport undocumented Filipinos.

"This is proof that the government has no plans at all in helping the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos in Malaysia, and those in the same predicament in other countries, who stand to face brutal and inhumane deportation," Regalado said. (www.philstar.com) ■

know that after such action, Fr. Fernando says he receives many e-mails of thanksgiving.

MAHALO VOLUNTEERS

Heal LA organizers are thankful for the 700-strong group of volunteers, as well as the security personnel for maintaining and orderly and disciplined crowd.

"They worked harder than me," said Fr. Fernando.

Heal LA also celebrated Fr. Fernando's ordination to the priesthood on May 18, 2002, after joining the Companions of the Cross, a religious community of priests and seminarians founded in 1985 by the Rev. Robert Bernard in Ottawa, Canada.

For more on Father Fernando and a schedule of events, please go online and visit: <http://www.fatherfernando.com/thealingmasschedule.shtml>. (www.fil-ammation.com) ■



"Father Fernando is not only down-to-earth but also very practical, with a great sense of humor."

There was also the time the "healing priest" mentioned that he gets 80,000 e-mails a month.

"There's no way I can read all those e-mails," he quipped, "so I pray over the computer (gesturing with outstretched hands) and ask God to bless them all."

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

U.S. Senate Committee Approves \$602M in Federal Funds For Hawaii

THE U.S. SENATE Appropriations Committee unanimously approved \$602.3 million for Hawaii-related projects, with 94 percent of the funds—nearly \$565.7 million—dedicated to military construction, U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye announced.

The committee also approved \$22 million for the East-West Center and nearly \$14.7 million for various agriculture initiatives. The Hawaii-related programs are contained in three funding bills for Fiscal Year 2009 that the Senate Appropriations Committee advanced to the full Senate for consideration.

"I am especially pleased that the Military Construction Appropriations Bill dedicated \$21.3 million for Phase 5 construction work of Saddle Road because this project involves both public safety and national defense preparation," said Sen. Inouye, a member of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee since January 1971.

A 13-mile stretch of Saddle Road, known as Military Access Road, is designated to be realigned to eliminate potential problems involving military vehicles and artillery firing positions with the general public. Since 2001, \$67 million in federal funds has been spent on the first four phases of the Saddle Road project.

The Military Construction Appropriations Bill also includes

\$279 million for improvements and infrastructure expansion at Schofield Barracks that will be undertaken through five phases.

In the Agriculture Appropriations Bill, the Hilo-based U.S. Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center was awarded \$2 million for continued construction work and \$1.25 million to expand its research portfolio to include the development of new post-harvest processing techniques and value-added products that can help the local agriculture industry grow.

The on-going wildlife services and brown tree snake interdiction program was earmarked for \$1.1 million. ■

FCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS' OATH-TAKING



Lt. Gov. Duke Aiona (far right) administers the oath of office for the newly elected members of the Filipino Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors. The installation banquet was held on Saturday, July 5, 2008 at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa. Over 400 people attended the event. Congratulations to all of the newly-elected officers!

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Hawaii's Plantation Village to Dedicate Flag Memorial Plaza



HAWAII'S PLANTATION Village will dedicate the new Flag Memorial Plaza and hold the first official flag raising at a special ceremony on July 25, 2008 at 9:30 am.

The circular monument features nine flags that represent the eight major countries who supplied laborers for Hawaii's sugar plantations—the Philippines, Hawaii, China, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Japan, Okinawa and Korea. Each respective flag will be raised for the first time, along with the American flag, as part of the dedication ceremony.

The dedication ceremony also commemorates the 100th Anniversary of the Filipino immigrants' arrival in Hawaii and thanks Hawaii's Plantation Village for keeping alive the legacy of those hard working ethnic groups who lived, worked and played on the plantations, thus creating Hawaii's unique, multi-cultural society of today.

The respective flags will be raised by members of Waipahu High School's Junior ROTC, Domingo Los Banos, a community leader and WWII veteran, will emcee the event. Speakers include Dr. Patricia Brown of the Filipino American Historical Society of Hawaii. Baybee Hufana-Abilan of Mayor Mufi Hannemann's office, and Hawaii's Plantation Vil-

lage sponsor Richard Hirata.

Sponsors of the event include the Filipino-American Historical Society of Hawaii, AIG Hawaii, The Children's House, Group 70, George Hideo Morisada & Family, Banna Associates, G. Takayasu & Son Waipahu Bicycle Store and David's Yard Service.

The event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

BACKGROUND

Established by the Friends of Waipahu Cultural Gardens Park, the Hawaii's Plantation Village is a living history museum and ethnobotanical garden located on a 50-acre parcel in the heart of Waipahu's sugar plantation country. Its mission is to ensure that the struggles, sacrifices, innovations and contributions of Hawaii's sugarcane forerunners are preserved and acknowledged as cornerstones of Hawaii's multi-ethnic society.

Hawaii's Plantation Village opened its doors in 1992 and offers tours and activities including cultural festivals, educational seminars, craft workshops, special gallery exhibits and restoration of the kalo loi, or taro patches.

The Village's primary visitors have been Hawaii's youth. In fact, during the past 12 years, more than 190,000 students have vis-

ited its grounds. After touring the restored buildings and replicas of plantation structures, houses of different ethnic groups, the community bath, camp office and plantation store, Hawaii's youth cannot help but gain a deeper sense of appreciation for their roots and pride in their cultural upbringing.

Other visitors to the Village consist of local residents and tourists whose numbers are estimated at 9,000 each year.

More information is available by calling 677-0110 or visiting: www.hawaiiplantationvillage.org. ■

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Education Policies Pushed to Produce Globally Competitive Workforce

by Helen FLORES

THE PHILIPPINES SHOULD pursue education policies that would help develop a globally competitive workforce and intensify public-private partnerships to fast-track political and economic reforms in the country, the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) said yesterday.

AIM president Francis Estrada made the recommendations after the Philippines was ranked 40th in the 2008 Competitiveness Yearbook by the Swiss-based organization Institute of Management Development (IMD).

The country's latest ranking was an improvement from last year's 45th among competitors in the world economy.

Estrada said that in order to become globally competitive, the country should also embark on programs that would help mitigate the impact of food, energy and climate security issues as well as to accelerate the completion of infrastructure projects.

"The Philippines is one of the gainers in Southeast Asia in the 2008 world competitiveness report," Estrada said during a forum at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City yesterday.

This year the Philippines had



an index score of 50.478 points compared to 47.163 last year in the competitiveness yearbook.

The United States ranked first with 100 points followed by Singapore, 99.330; Hong Kong, 94.964; Switzerland, 89.656; Luxembourg, 84.405; Denmark, 83.852; Australia, 83.500; Canada, 82.852; Sweden, 82.464; and Netherlands, 80.476.

Other Asian countries in the survey included Malaysia, 19th; Japan, 22nd; Thailand, 27th; India, 29th; Korea, 31st; and Indonesia, 51st.

Under economic performance, the Philippines ranked 49th in domestic economy, 51st in international trade, 52nd in interna-

tional investment, 49th in employment, and first in prices.

Under the state of efficiency, the Philippines ranked 48th in public finance, 14th in fiscal policy, 50th in institutional framework, 44th in business legislation and 18th in societal framework.

Under the business efficiency category, the country placed 43rd in productivity and efficiency, 15th in labor market, 33rd in finance, 37th in management practices and 24th in attitudes and values.

However, the country ranked 54th in basic infrastructure, 31st in technological infrastructure, 53rd scientific infrastructure, 44th in health and environment and 52nd in education. (www.philstar.com) ■

Metro Rail Transit to Deploy More Coaches



DUE TO THE RISING COST of fuel and an economic downturn, half a million pinoy are now taking the Metro Rail Transit (MRT)—and the number is expected to surge up to 1 million very soon.

Before year's end, the MRT hopes to deploy additional coaches capable of transporting between 700,000 to one million passengers a day.

MRT general manager Roberto Lastimoso said the daily volume of train passengers has reached 500,000, which is 200,000 over the daily volume.

"We are expecting the number to rise to 700,000 or even one million passengers a day," he said.

The retired chief of the Philippine National Police aid the government has decided to buy an additional 73 coaches to meet the

rising number of passengers.

MRT services will also be extended by one hour to accommodate more passengers, particularly along the North Edsa station, which usually registers between 10,000-20,000 commuters, especially on Mondays and paydays.

"We doubted our security measures by deploying more guards, and we will also install close circuit television cameras in various stations," he said.

The government currently subsidizes the operations of the MRT with an average of P40 per passenger, who only pays P15 from Taft Avenue in Pasay City to North Edsa in Quezon City.

To help commuters cope with the current economic crisis, the government has decided against hiking fares for the MRT. (Good News Philippines) ■

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Lim Orders Rescue of Couple From Hospital Over Unpaid Bills

by Sandy ARANETA

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM has ordered his staff to "rescue" the parents of a newborn infant who reportedly died of a heart condition at the Chinese General Hospital.

Mark and Aileen Mangaliman, in a letter to Lim dated July 11, said the hospital is holding them against their will because they failed to pay the bills.

"I ordered my chief of staff, Ricardo de Guzman to... rescue the parents who are being prevented from going home and to effect the release of the body of the baby," Lim said. "The parents have already signed a promissory note."

He said the hospital cannot detain patients or their relatives over unpaid bills because it is against the law.

In their letter to Lim, the Mangalimans said they went to the hospital for a regular prenatal check-up on July 6. They said the obstetrician-gynecologist did not allow them to go home, telling them that Aileen was about to give birth.

The Mangalimans were told that their baby had a 50 percent chance of dying because of "pulmonary heart disease." They said the pediatrician told them they need to spend P200,000 to P400,000 in order to increase their baby's chances of survival.

The couple asked the pediatrician for another option since they have no money. The pediatrician then told them they need to have



their baby on oxygen, which meant spending P15,000 to P20,000 per day.

The baby's condition initially improved, but later took a turn for the worse. The Mangalimans allowed hospital personnel to take their baby off the oxygen after the doctor told them the baby's condition was not improving.

The baby died on July 8 at 4 p.m. The officer-in-charge of the morgue said there was no vacancy for the infant and asked the couple if they could sign a waiver, allowing the morgue personnel to put the body along with the bodies of adults in the freezer.

The Mangalimans said the hospital told them they had to settle the bills before Aileen and her baby can leave the premises, and their promissory note was still subject to approval.

The Mangalimans told Lim they are willing to pay the hospital bills, but they need to leave the hospital because they left a three-year-old son and a two-year-old daughter in the care of relatives.

The couple also expressed concern that their bill continues to rise so long as they are detained by the hospital. (www.philstar.com) ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Yahoo! Opens Manila Operations

INTERNET FIRM YAHOO formally opened a full-fledged local office to further strengthen the brand in the country, and to compete head-on against rival Google.

The establishment of its Manila office is perhaps the first among pure Internet companies since the dotcom boom in the late '90s and the subsequent bust in the early part of the current decade.

Aside from growing its Philippine operation, the Manila office will be tasked to provide services to Yahoo's regional office in Singapore, the company said in a statement.

The Yahoo Philippines office, which is located in Fort Bonifacio Global City in Taguig, is led by veteran IT executive Jojo Anonuevo, who was appointed to his new role as general manager in February 2008. He is supported by Cris Concepcion, a physician and U.S.-trained executive, who is serving as strategic consultant.

Concepcion said the establishment of the Philippine office will give Yahoo more access to local resources and an easier time to forge alliances with local clients and partners.

"We've gathered a lot of momentum since announcing our plan last February to establish a local presence," said Concepcion, adding that the company is looking to hire employees for sales, product, and marketing roles.

Concepcion said they are also looking for communications specialists, as well as editorial staffers who can work on the local content that the company will be aggregating as a result of its recent partnerships with media firms GMANews.TV, Manila Bulletin, and Philippine Star.

However, Concepcion said that unlike the Yahoo's U.S. site, the Philippine portal would not be creating local content—at least not yet.

"We're not doing that now, but there's always the possibility of that happening in the future if the business environment would call for it."

For now, he said the new subsidiary will concentrate its efforts in collating news stories from its content partners and firming up collaborations with game publishers like eGames and Level-Up.

Aside from the local news companies, Yahoo has hooked up with the Philippines' top three mobile carriers as part of its strategy to be a "partner of choice" among local firms. *(Good News Pilipinas)*

RP Trees Won't Be Cut Down to Give Way to Biofuel Crops – DOST

by Helen FLORES

THE COUNTRY WILL NOT allow the planting of biofuel crops in areas where trees would have to be cut down, a government scientist clarified Tuesday.

Dr. Patricia Faylon, executive director of the Department of Science and Technology's Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development, also belied international reports which said that biofuel production would encourage farmers to plant biofuel feedstock instead of food crops.

Faylon said biofuels, such as jatropha and sweet sorghum, are being planted in wastelands so that there will be no conflict with food production.

"We will use idle lands for biofuels production in the country, we will not be cutting down trees," Faylon told THE STAR.

The rise in food prices has intensified the heated food versus fuel debate.

A science magazine in the United States also reported that cutting down Brazilian rainforest to grow soybeans for diesel fuel would result in a so-called carbon debt that would take 319



biofuel crop

Faylon also belied reports that the biofuels production would increase greenhouse gas emissions.

"In the United States, they use inorganic fertilizers which increase greenhouse gas emission. But in the Philippines, we will use organic fertilizers or biofertilizers," Faylon said.

He added that currently, PCARRD has identified five high-yield varieties of jatropha curcas. Jatropha is being studied in the Philippines as potential feedstock for biofuels.

"We need more scientific studies to determine the best jatropha variety that has high yield," Faylon said.

years to repay.

Most prior studies have found that substituting biofuels for gasoline will reduce greenhouse gases because biofuels sequester carbon through the growth of the feedstock.

But according to reports, these analyses have failed to count the carbon emissions that occur as farmers worldwide respond to higher prices and convert forest and grassland to new cropland to replace the grain diverted to biofuels.

President Arroyo has signed the Biofuels Law which aims to lessen the country's dependence on imported crude oil.

The Biofuel Act of 2006 mandates the blending of cocodiester or coco-methyl ester (CME) in all diesel fuel and gasoline sold across the country.

Officials of the DOST earlier said the government would save \$26 million or about P1.3 billion worth of fuel imports with the initial implementation of the law. *(www.philstar.com)*

RP Trims H1 Budget Deficit to P18B

by Des FERRIOLS

THE GOVERNMENT POSTED its third straight monthly budget surplus in June as it held back spending plans that could help support the economy in a year when growth is expected to falter.

The June surplus of P769 million brought the government's first-half fiscal deficit to P18 billion, much smaller than a target shortfall of P41 billion, the Department of Finance (DOF) reported yesterday.

"That the actual first half deficit made up only 44 percent of the programmed P41 billion is no cause for celebration as the main boost for the deficit has been under-spending," said Radhika Rao, an economist with IDEAGlobal.

"Not an encouraging sign as it's a gamble to aim at narrowing the deficit at a time when the economy is slowing," Rao said.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said government spending amounted to P588 billion in the first semester, 17 percent lower than the programmed spending of P602.7 billion.

"Spending was slow," Teves said. "There was an increase in June. We hope to see this pattern in the second semester because our revenues are on track and we have the room."

At this rate, Teves said the government was sticking to its current projection that the deficit would reach P40 billion to P45 billion by end December.

Teves reported that total revenues amounted to P570 billion in January to June, about 11.7 percent higher than last year's collection and 8.3 percent higher than the revenue target of P561.7-billion for the period.

In June alone, Teves said revenues amounting to P86.8 billion were 12.7 percent higher than last year's P77.7.

Expenditures, on the other hand, rose by 12.9 percent to P86.8 billion against P76.9 billion in June last year.

"Accelerating the expenditures side is important," Teves said. However he admitted the low absorptive capacity of government line agencies.

"The challenge is to improve the absorptive capacity of agencies which is what caused the delays in the implementation of projects and low disbursement of funds," Teves said.

Teves said part of the problem was the incentive for line agencies to generate savings because at the end of the fiscal year, the part of the savings are used as cash incentives to government employees.

"There is an incentive to save," Teves admitted. "But there should be a balance between saving and need to implement. The reward for agencies should be balanced and we have to step up spending based on program and priority."

Despite the slowdown in spending, however, Teves said the government was still prepared to spend P75 billion more this year to implement its social

Agenda which was intended to cushion the impact of high oil prices and high inflation rates.

But Teves stressed that the government could not rely on covering just the social protection program since this was, by nature, intended to be a temporary relief for vulnerable sectors under the extraordinary circumstances where fuel prices are rising abnormally.

"We can't use this paradigm forever," he said. "This is only a temporary dent on our spending program and over the long term we have to solve how we are moving and implementing long-term projects that would address vulnerability issues permanently."

Teves expects the government to be able to sustain its revenue flow in the second semester for both the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau

of Customs.

In the first semester, BIR collections amounted to P389 million, outperforming its P379-billion program by 16.4 percent. The BOC's on the other hand, reported a total collection of P117 billion, 27 percent higher than the P116.4 billion target.

Teves said the increase in the collection of both the BOC and the BIR was due to the initial impact of

the rise in interest rates as well as inflation.

Expenditures, on the other hand, missed the first semester target by 9.7 percent as operations expenditures amounted to P456.7 billion against the P447 billion target.

Even interest payments fell below expectations by five percent at P141 billion against the P146 billion projection. *(www.philstar.com)*

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SOCIETY PAGE



Dr. Ceilo Guillermo & daughter Erica performing a duet in the recent *Butterflies & Kisses* musical fundraiser



Butterflies & Kisses performers and volunteers pose for a group photo



Dr. Nicanor Joaquin with his wife Imelda



Consul Paul Cortez and family at a recent fundraising event in Kalihi



Dr. Cely Paet and Rep. Joey Manahan at a recent show in Kalihi



Dr. Erlinda Cachola with husband Councilmember Romy Cachola at a function at the Ihilani Hotel



Esther Ines with children during a gathering at Ko Olina



L. to R. Elvie Gabriel, Babes Carandang (visiting from Boston) with mom and brother from the Philippines



Christa Lei Sonido with Larry and Aurelia Sera (visiting from the Philippines) after the former's performance in the Broadway hit "Rent" at Mamiya Theater last July 11. The play is being shown from July 4-20, 2008



Drs. Leah and Michael McMann with son Ryan spending quality time together at the Ihilani Hotel



Visiting Manila Neuro-Surgeon Dr. Eusebio Debuque (3rd from left) with old friends Drs. Sonido, Alguero and Ablan



Sasha Dee Daywaan being given the "final touches" by mom Janet before Sasha's dance performance in "Butterflies & Kisses"



Dr. Perlitia Lampitoc & staff attending a show at Farrington High School



Drs. Romy & Elena Febre of Florida, Dr. Donna Febre and Dr. Avery Go visiting friends in Honolulu



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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Palace Swears No Irregularity in P1-B Remittance of GSIS to OP

by Marvin SY

MALACANANG SAID yesterday there was nothing irregular about the remittance of P1 billion by the Government Service Insurance System to the Office of the President in 2004, which has become the subject of criminal and administrative cases against GSIS general manager Winston Garcia and the board of trustees.

But while the Palace is admitting that President Arroyo received the mockup check remitted by GSIS president Winston Garcia sometime in December 2004, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said this was deposited to the National Treasury on Dec. 9 that year.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Anthony Golez even volunteered the official receipt number (4197501) of the Palace Department of the Treasury for the deposit.

Ermita explained that the remittance of the P1 billion by the GSIS was consistent with Republic Act 656 or the property insurance law, which insures all the properties of the government against losses from calamities such as earthquakes and other accidents such as fires.

The GSIS, through chief legal counsel and spokesperson Estrella Elamparo, has explained that the law requires them to remit whatever unused or surplus earnings from its General Insurance Fund (GIF).

The state pension fund noted that the GIF is the repository of the GSIS' investment funds and earnings from its businesses.

"That has been included among the monies that the National Treasurer is managing. So as far as we know as of now, there's no such anomaly," Ermita said.

"I do not know what is that anti-graft case against GM Garcia but I'm sure he will be able to answer that properly in the proper forum," he added.

Ermita admitted that the complaint may be part of the black propaganda against Garcia, which started when he initiated a campaign to bring down the rates of Meralco.

"The benefits of GSIS members are derived from its Social Insurance Fund and not from the GIF. The P1 billion did not in any way diminish the funds allotted for the benefits of GSIS members," Elamparo said.

"As a matter of fact, GSIS members also received dividends of their own totaling P847 million in December of 2004, which came from the GSIS SIF," Elamparo said.

"The P1 billion that went to the national coffers came from the GSIS GIF, the P847 million that went to GSIS members came from the GSIS SIF. This should be illustrative enough of the senselessness of the claim that the GSIS raided the funds due GSIS members so it can give P1 billion to the government," she stressed.

The SIF is where the contributions of GSIS members are kept while the GIF is the repository of the GSIS investment funds and earnings from its businesses.

Elamparo said the timing of

the filing of the complaint before the Ombudsman by Albert Velasco, a dismissed GSIS employee, was highly suspect for the more than three years that had lapsed since the alleged offense.

Likewise, she said the GSIS is in the middle of a campaign for good corporate governance in Meralco in an effort to lower power rates, and that "non-issues" are being raised against the GSIS to "muddle the real issues concerning Meralco."

ILLEGAL AND IMMORAL

In his complaint, Velasco said Garcia and other GSIS officials violated Republic Act 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) as well as RA 656 (Property Insurance Fund Act) when they passed a resolution on Dec. 6, 2004 remitting P1 billion from the surplus of the corporation to the Office of the President instead of the National Treasury.

"It was clearly illegal and immoral. This is what we are questioning. While most members of GSIS are suffering – some of them even go to retirement without getting anything – it seemed so simple for Mr. Garcia to give P1 billion to Malacañang," the lawyer said in a radio interview.

Velasco said the amount should have been instead distributed to different government agencies, the properties of which are ensnared with the GSIS, citing RA 656 which states that the disposal of unassigned surplus of GSIS "shall be apportioned in accordance with the schedule approved by the System, among the government agencies whose properties are insured in the fund."

In their complaint, the employees association of GSIS sought the preventive suspension of Garcia and other GSIS officials involved "to ensure that documents pertaining to the illegal disbursements are not stolen or destroyed and in order that witnesses would come forward and testify without fear of reprisal from the accused."

They likewise asked Ombudsman Ma. Mercedes Gutierrez to inhibit herself from the case since she was the presidential legal counsel when the illegal diversion of GSIS funds was supposedly made.

"Garcia is bleeding the GSIS dry with his extravagance and unconscionable dissipation of its financial resources," alleged Velasco, who believes President Arroyo should immediately dismiss Garcia for "grave abuses and scandalous anomalies under his management."

Velasco claimed that Garcia had been saying in the past that the money was meant as a donation to the administration during the time that the country was in a "fiscal crisis" in 2004.

The lawyer said they have the support of other government employees associations and unions like Access of Social Security System, Action and Solidarity for the Advancement of Teachers, Department of Trade and Industry Employees Union, Nafema of National Police Commission, and Association of Public School Teachers.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita acknowledged that the Office of the President received the P1 billion from the GSIS and that a ceremony was even held for this purpose. (www.philstar.com) ■

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DOLE Projects Sabah Deportees to Double to 12,000

by Roel PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY — The Malaysian government is expected to double its deportation of illegal Filipino migrants to 12,000 repatriates, a senior labor official said here.

The figure is twice the num-

ber of deportees sent back to the country in the first semester, according to Undersecretary Lourdes Trasmonte of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Trasmonte had a meeting with Mayor Celso Lobregat who was presiding a conference on the

impact of the influx of deportees. The city is hosting thousands of Filipino deportees dropped by the Malaysian immigration.

DOLE acting regional director Yahyah Centi also disclosed that Malaysia would increase the number of deportees.

Centi said some of the 12,000-projected number of undocumented Filipinos, 80 percent of them are 18 to 59 years of age.

Centi said DOLE is profiling each deportee through its one-stop processing centers for their reintegration into the mainstream and would provide them with livelihood activities.

Lobregat, however, said the action plan is bound to fall since thousands of Filipinos who have availed of the program returned to Malaysia and ended up being deported again.

Lobregat said only few of the deportees have availed of the program in securing their documents for possible return to Malaysia. (www.philstar.com) ■

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Gov't Won't Lift OFW Deployment Ban to Iraq

by Mayen JAYMALIN

DESPITE THE IMPROVING peace and order situation in Iraq, the Philippine government is still unlikely to lift the ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to the war-torn country.

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) chief Rosalinda Baldoz said there is still no recommendation from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Middle East Preparedness Committee for the lifting of the deployment ban.

"We are awaiting the recommendation from DFA and the committee headed by Gen. Roy Cimatu and we will only take action based on their recommendation," Baldoz said.

Baldoz also clarified that the Philippine government is yet to determine the exact number of Filipino workers employed in Iraq at this time.

She belied reports that there are around 10,000 Filipino workers who sneaked into Iraq despite the deployment ban imposed by the Philippine government five years ago.



The local recruitment industry earlier demanded the immediate lifting of the deployment ban in Iraq, claiming Filipino workers will be better protected if they were deployed there legally.

Recruitment leaders further added that employment in Iraq is safe since most Filipinos there are working inside heavily secured US camps.

The Iraqi Embassy in Manila has also called on the Philippine government to scrap the deployment ban so they could meet the rising manpower requirement in their construction projects. (www.philstar.com) ■

Antibiotic-Producing Mushroom Discovered

by Helen FLORES

A GROUP OF GOVERNMENT scientists recently discovered an antibiotic-producing microorganism from a type of mushroom which has been found to be effective in treating diseases of livestock, particularly swine, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) reported yesterday.

The scientists from the DOST's National Research Council of the Philippines, led by Dr. Asuncion Raymundo, a plant pathologist, found that the mushroom species *Clitopilus passeckerianus* produces the antibiotic called pleuromutilin.

The DOST said pleuromutilin prevents the bacteria from producing protein, an essential component of its diet. Without protein, bacteria stops reproducing and consequently die.

Pleuromutilin also acts as the building block for the production of tiaramulin, a biological compound effective in treating common hog diseases such as mycoplasmas, arthritis, enzootic pneumonia, and dysentery, the agency said.

"The team analyzed the DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) thread or theImage genetic code of the mushroom species *Clitopilus passeckerianus*. They employed classical and recombinant DNA techniques to determine how this particular species produces the antibiotic called pleuromutilin," the science department said.

Data from the DOST's Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development

(PCARRD) showed that the Philippines was among the leading hog raisers in the Asia Pacific Region in 2001.

However, the report also stated that Luzon's production rate, compared to that of Mindanao and Visayas has plummeted in 2001 compared to earlier years, attributing this to high mortality rate among swine on account of disease.

"The NRCP antibiotic derived from the mushroom has the clear potential to solve this problem," the DOST said.

Like tomatoes and apples, mushroom is a fruit. Scientists classify this fleshy fruit under the fungi kingdom - multi-cell microorganism that get their food and energy from other organisms.

For thousands of years, mankind has recognized the varied uses of mushrooms. In addition to being an effective fermenting agent, it is also considered an efficient waste disposer and major manufacturer of organic fertilizer, the DOST said.

Mushrooms can grow anywhere from farm animal manure, from spoiled food in the kitchen, to the dead barks and leaves in the deepest reaches of foliage.

"This latest NRCP research proves that the mushroom could no longer be ignored nor relegated as among the bottom dwellers in the plant kingdom. The discovery of pleuromutilin and tiaramulin should prompt stronger government funding and support to boost the country's hog raising industry and propel it to even greater global competitiveness," the DOST said. (www.philstar.com) ■



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MAINLAND NEWS

Fil-Am Workers at UCLA Medical Clinic Walk Picket Line

DRESSED IN A BLUE shirt and jeans and holding a sign that read "Service Workers on Strike: Taking Back UC," Rodolfo Aquino was one of dozens of Filipino University of California service workers employees on the picket line marching in front of the UCLA Ronald Reagan Medical Center and demanding fair wages.

"We are the lowest paid employees among all the University of California (UC) campuses," says Aquino. "Striking is the right way to do it."

In total, about 300 service workers and supporters walked the picket line on day 1 of the planned 5-day strike. Throughout the state, thousands of union

members from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3299, which represents about 8,500 UC service workers at 10 campuses and five hospitals, marched in solidarity for fair wages.

Meanwhile, UCLA hospital officials are concerned that the strike is affecting the care of UC medical patients. Officials were afraid that many of the workers would cross the picket line, leaving many patients unattended for the week.

"Right now, we're on a shift-to-shift basis," said UCLA Chief Medical Officer Dr. J. Tom Rosenthal. "We don't know who's going

to work or who's going strike. So far, many have come to work. We were afraid that we would have to close down the emergency room because we can't operate without them."

He added that the union disregarded a San Francisco judge's temporary restraining order that a strike poses an immediate danger to UC hospital patients.

"We believe that the union should follow the law," Rosenthal said. "But the union believes that a restraining order is a minor technicality."

According to union leaders, the paramount issue is fair wages. With the increase in lifestyle costs skyrocketing nationwide, union leaders said that service employees, who work as gardeners, janitors, cooks and servers across

campus, just couldn't afford to support their family with their current salary of \$10 an hour.

Another Filipino worker, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of retribution, has worked as a custodian at UCLA for the past 10 years and has only received raises only once or twice. She makes less than \$11 per hour.

UC representative Nicole Savickas said that officials have offered to increase the service employee's hourly rates from \$10.28 to \$11.50 or \$12 including health benefits on a "sliding scale" and pension benefits.

"The University of California is disappointed that AFSCME has chosen to strike, despite the court's ruling prohibiting such activity," says Howard Pripas, executive director for systemwide labor relations at the University of California. The union rejected the university's last offer.

Aquino, who works a second part-time job to support his family in the Philippines, said that the UC's latest proposal is still not enough.

"We're doing this for our family and other employees," he said. "We all want to be respected and get a fair wage." (www.philjournal.com) ■

LAPD Wants Quick Extradition of Fil-Am Gang Members

TWO BROTHERS from a violent Asian gang who were wanted in the 1990s for a series of murders and other crimes in California have been arrested in the Philippines and are currently awaiting extradition, according to Los Angeles police.

Marvin and Pierre Mercado, members of the Asian Boyz Gang, fled to the Philippines to avoid arrest and hid from authorities for over a decade. Seven members of the gang were eventually convicted and sentenced

to life in prison, including another Fil-Am, David Evangelista.

In 1995, the LAPD created a task force to find the brothers. Along the way, they were forced to overcome facing cultural barriers, language issues, and a strict code of silence.

Last September 2007, the Mercados were captured in Manila by LAPD detectives, FBI agents and the Philippine government. Currently, they are being detained in the Philippines pursuant to immigration viola-

tions. Their extradition has been pending an unusually long habeas corpus hearing.

Detectives from the LAPD have recently traveled to the Philippines to assist the FBI and Philippine authorities in extraditing the Mercado brothers back to Los Angeles to face trial.

Marvin Mercado has been indicted by a grand jury for six counts of murder and other charges. Pierre Mercado faces attempt murder charges, all stemming from their days as gang members. (Asian Journal Online) ■

U.S. House Overrides Bush Medicare Veto

THE U.S. HOUSE of Representatives voted 383-41 to override President George W. Bush's veto of the Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act, legislation that stops a 10.6 percent cut in the amount doctors are reimbursed for Medicare patient services.

Cuts in Medicare's reimbursement rates for doctors and other health care providers had led to fewer doctors willing to accept and treat Medicare patients.

"Without this legislation, there would be fewer doctors providing Medicare services for senior citizens," says U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie.

The Medicare Improvement Act also makes the following changes:

- Payments to Medicare Advantage plans will be lowered.
- Doctors and other medical service providers who are delinquent in their federal income taxes will have back taxes deducted from any Medicare reimbursements they receive.

• Mental health services will have the same co-payment as any other doctor visit.

"This bill also provides needed help to lower income Medicare recipients," says Rep. Abercrombie. "We've raised the amount of income or assets a senior citizen can have and still qualify for Medicare premium assistance."

Additionally, the legislation addresses another serious public health issue facing Hawaii—Medicaid funding for hospitals that treat large numbers of uninsured or Medicaid patients. These hospitals are losing money, which eventually could threaten their ability to remain open.

The states of Hawaii and Tennessee were inadvertently left out of a federal program that reimburses hospitals for treating indigent and Medicaid patients. The legislation continues interim reimbursement funding for Hawaii and allows more time to change the program permanently. ■

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Pinoys 3rd Largest Group of New Arrivals in U.S.

Washington-Alexandria-Rockville area.

A total of 38,830 Filipino immigrants received their American citizenship last year, down slightly from 40,500 in 2006. They comprised the third biggest group, next to natives of Mexico and India.

The DHS report said the number of people seeking citizenship doubled from 730,000 in 2006 to 1.38 million in 2007.

In a separate report, the DHS estimated there were 280,000 illegal Filipinos in 2006, which accounts for nearly 2 percent of America's total illegal immigrant population of nearly 12 million. The bulk—about 6.6 million—is from Mexico. The DHS said about 40 percent of these illegal immigrants are in California and Texas. (Asian Journal Online) ■

FILIPINO IMMIGRANTS comprised the third largest group of new arrivals to the U.S. in 2007, behind Mexican and Chinese nationals, according to a report released by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

A total of 72,596 Pinoys became new legal permanent residents or "green card" holders in 2007. The numbers are down slightly from 74,606 in 2006 but higher than the 60,746 in 2005.

New immigrants mostly settled in California, New York, Florida and Texas. In the metropolitan areas, most decided to live in the New York-New Jersey-Long Beach-Santa Ana area; Miami-Fort Lauderdale area; and

LEGAL NOTES

F-1 Options After Graduation



by **Reuben S. GURITAN**

First international students are faced with myriad concerns upon completion of their studies. They want to know how they can extend their stay and remain legally in the U.S., how they can gain work experience and support themselves, how long they are allowed to work and what other options are available to them after their studies.

After completion of their studies, F-1 students are allowed full-time work in the U.S. for a maximum period of 12 months under the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program. However, the hours used up during pre-completion OPT will be deducted in calculating the remaining period for authorized post-completion OPT work.

To be eligible for OPT, the F-

1 must maintain his/her status. This means that he/she had been enrolled in an academic program for at least one (1) year; remained in good standing and has not violated his/her status by engaging in unauthorized work. The authorized work must also be related to the student's field of study.

Students need to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) before graduating. There is no need for a job offer. They can only begin working upon receipt of the EAD card indicating the start and end dates for employment.

The new regulations require that designated school officials (DSO) track and confirm a student's status even after completing his/her schoolwork by reporting the name, addresses, employment and other relevant data through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) that is linked with the USCIS system.

To maintain status, F-1 students cannot accumulate more than 90 days of unemployment during the initial 12-month OPT period. Hence, when one applies for OPT, one cannot put in a start

date for employment of more than three months from graduation.

Under a recent interim rule, the OPT period of students in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) was extended to additional 17 months for a total of 29 months OPT. This was done in order to retain talented individuals in these fields and to allow them to transition into H-1B status. For students in these fields, they cannot accumulate more than 120 days of unemployment during that entire 29-month period of OPT. They must also make validation reports to the DSO every six months regarding their employment status.

Traveling outside the U.S. during the post-completion OPT period poses certain risks to the F-1 holder, particularly if the F-1 visa stamp on the passport has expired or is about to expire. To avoid re-entry problems, the F-1 student should advise his/her DSO of his/her travel plans and consult about the latest information and documentation requirements to be able to return to the U.S.

Currently, the policy allows re-entry if the student can present an EAD receipt notice, a DSO-en-

dorsed I-20 within six months for OPT and a valid visa stamp. It is better if the F-1 student can present an approved EAD card with still ample validity period remaining in order to secure a new visa stamp at a U.S. consulate or Embassy.

Prior to the expiration of the OPT period, the F-1 holder can decide to enroll in another academic program. A new I-20 will be issued and an I-539 form submitted to extend his/her status. He/she remains in "duration of status" (DSO) while pursuing full time studies in the U.S. A student who was not able to report to the school in a timely manner can have his/her status reinstated. The F-1 student can also change to another status in the U.S. by filing the I-539 form.

he 12-month OPT period is

renewed for each new educational level from Associate, Bachelor, Master up to Doctorate degrees.

OPT even while there is a re-remaining period on the EAD card automatically terminates when a student enrolls in a new degree program or transfers to another school.

Once the post-completion OPT has ended and the F-1 student decides not to re-enroll in school for further studies or to change to another status, he/she has up to 60 days from the expiration of the OPT to prepare for departure from the U.S. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: REUBEN S. GURITAN has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at 212 695 3281 or log on to his website at www.seguritan.com

GLOBAL NEWS

Philippine Boys Choirs Win World Championships in Choral Olympiad

THE LAS PIÑAS BOYS' Choir and the Kilyawan Boys' Choir of Quezon City were declared Champions of Children's Choirs and Choral Acapella Performers of Contemporary Music, respectively, during the awarding ceremonies of the 5th World Choir Games held in Graz, Austria.

The two performing groups bested their peers from more than 30 countries—including groups from South Africa, Indonesia, Japan, China, Russia, Spain, Germany, the U.S. and the United Kingdom—in a series of competitions in their categories.

Linglingay Lacantale, the Philippines' ambassador to Aus-



tralia, lauded the young performers for bringing glory to the Philippines with their talents and testifying to the musical artistry of the Filipinos in the prestigious international competition.

The event was the largest competition in the history of choir music. Many participating choirs were accompanied by folk dance groups and brass music bands, which or-

ganizers say turned the competition into a unique cultural festival.

China, Russia, Austria and Germany had the most participating choirs—over 170—followed closely by Indonesia, Hungary and Croatia with nearly 90 choirs. The large numbers truly reflected the Choir Games' motto "Singing together brings nations together." (DFA)

'Tribu' Wins Paris Filmfest Youth Jury Prize

Filipino screenwriter and director Jim Libiran's latest film "Tribu" won the Youth Jury Prize at the 6th Paris Cinema International Film Festival.

"Tribu" chronicles the violent lives and deaths of rapper gangs in the ghetto district of Tondo in Manila. Its dangerous, unlit streets and labyrinthine alleyways serve as

claustrophobic backdrop to a random killing that triggers a wild and bloody gang war.

Through the eyes of a 10-year-old boy, viewers are immersed into the impoverished, tough life of Tondo and its various gangsters, adolescent thugs and petty criminals whose pastimes are sex, drugs and their eloquently poetic street rap, delivered in their own unique tongue-twisting machine gun-style.

"To be recognized in the city where cinema was born is immensely satisfying," says Libiran.

"Tribu" also won Best Film in the Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival last year.

As part of the prize, "Tribu" will be promoted for possible distribution in France. The 6th Paris Cinema International Film Festival also featured a special program that showcased 47 other Philippine films. (Good News Philippines) ■

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PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE

Kombensyon Ti UFCH Idiyay Las Vegas Hulyo 17-19, 2008, Umuna a Pamdasan



ILOKO

by Amado I. YORO

LAS VEGAS? "The Entertainment Capital of the World" "Sin City", Ciudad ti Basol! Ania ti umapay iti nakemtoy iti Las Vegas? Alikawaksay, Sugal.

Ania ti yawagtoy itoy a taripnong dagiti delegado ti UFCH kombensyon iti Las Vegas 2008?

No inawagada daydi umuna a kombensyon ti UFCH iti Hawaii idi Hunio 19, 20, 21, 1959, nga indaulan ni nag-Ambassador Juan C. Dionisio, Sr., ken kakaduana, iti "PANAGTITIPON DAGITI AGILA" [gathering of the Eagles] ania met ngarud ti tumotop a yawagtoy iti DAMO a panangkombensyon ti UFCH iti Las Vegas, Nevada?

Iti unos ti 49 a tawen nabirokan kadin dagitoy nga agila ti biribirokenda? Natun-oyanda kadin dagiti arapaad iti biag?

Saan a makalibak ti pakasarsaan dagiti Filipino iti Hawaii. Dakkel met ti pasetda iti panaglu-pus ken panagdur-as iti Hawaii sipud pay idi 1906. Naselebraran payen ti maikasanganagust a tawen 2006.

Iti agdama, agila pay ngata dagitoy? Dagitoy kadi dagiti Philippine Eagle, the National Bird of the Philippines?

Ala, padasek man a naganan daytoy a kombensyon iti "Gathering of Leaders Shaped and Equipped by the Sakada Centennial Experience & Gearing up to-

wards the Future"

"TARIPNONG DAGITI LIDER A SINKUKOG KEN KINAWESAN TI PADAS TI SENTENARIYO DAGITI SAKADA MAITURONG [TI MASAKBAYAN]"

Ta uray usigem no asino dagitoy agkombensyon iti California Hotel iti Las Vegas, kaaduana ti anak wenno annak, sarigint ket innabod dagiti immuna a sakada.

Sakbay ti Hunio 1959, babaen iti pannakakita ni Ambassador Juan C. Dionisio, Sr. a kasapulian ti a mabangon ti grupo dagiti kadaaran a mamagkaykaysa kadagiti lider a Filipino a mangibagi kadagiti gimong a sibiko iti teritorio ti Hawaii, insayangkatna ti kampanania idi Setiembre 1957.

Kas agapaden dagitoy a binatog: "Chairmen of the six island councils were all respected leaders of their communities. Anastacio Luis, Big Island, Marcelino Francisco, Kauai, Liberato Abado, Lanai, Rafael Cabebe, Maui, Antonio Abrahamo, Molokai, Justo dela Cruz, Oahu, HPD Lt. Roland Sagum served as chairman of the first convention.

There were 150 delegates with their theme: "Statehood and the Filipinos in Hawaii". It was August 21, 1959 when Hawaii became the 50th State of the Union, after Alaska, 49th. The first Miss Hawaii Filipina was held under a Fiesta Filipina Project."

Ita a mairsururat daytoy, "Aganaykami a duapulo a delegado iti Kauai," kinuna ni Abe Iloreta, presidente ti Kauai Filipino Community Council. "Sabalinto dagiti umay sadiay iti Gala Night ken dagiti umay met umaliwaksay."

Kas statewide umbrella organization, rumbeng la nga adda pannakabagi ti tunggal Island Council kas ito Oahu, Kauai, Molokai, Big Island, Lanai, ken Maui.

Iti Las Vegas, Nevada, ti umuna a pannakaangayna iti ruar ti Hawaii. Nairingring daytoy a banag kadagiti napalabas a kombensyon iti Kauai, Molokai ken Maui, a no diak mariro, ni Oscar Portugal iti Kauai ti nangidardarirag kadagiti a tiempo.

Adda mayat, adda madi. Ngem ad-adda a malmes ti proposal ta saan pay a nakasagana a ruar ti UFCH nga agkombensyon.

Maysa a rason, dagiti mauros a kuarta, agpaay latta koma ti Hawaii.

Kuna dagiti mangsuporta ti Las Vegas, tapno adda aliwaksay, adda padas aglalo ket "gambiling is permissible" in LV.

Nabangon ti Las Vegas idi 1905, sa nagbalin nga opisial a siudad idi 1911. Las Vegas [The Meadows] a green area. Marso 19, 1931 idi nalgalized ti sugal.

Idi naisingasing idi umuna nga OFCC Board miling idi Agosto 2007 iti FilComCenter, babaen ti panangidatag ti maysa a kameng, nupay agrigay a mangsuporta la amok ken nabayagen a maidardarirag daytoy pay la kadagiti immuna a kombensyon ti UFCH a naat-atararak metten a kas delegado, kas iti Kauai, Maui,

Molokai, Lanai, Oahu, a no saanak nga agriro, ni Oscar Portugal, pasado a UFCH president, ken sumagammano idi nga agrigay iti dayta a kapanunotan ti nangidardarirag.

Daytoy nga OFCC meeting iti Agosto 2007 kas pannakaidatagna diak supringen, ngem ad-adda nga agrigayak iti pannakasuportana, ta asino ngamin aya ti agkuna, amangan no iti sabali a disso, lugar ken venue, environment a makuna, ket kakuoy met ti panagbalali, ti duras ti panagaysayna. Ti ketdi kinalikagumak pay a maitanan, mabalin iti sumaruno a miling, tapno adda naan-anay a panawen a mangurus kadagiti daytaye, kas iti hotel accommodation, ti airfare, ken dadduma pay a mainaig iti kombensyon expenses.

Napatngan dayta a dawat, ket iti October 2007 OFCC board, sinungduranni ti mosion a mangsuporta ti UFCH Convention idiyay Las Vegas, Paset ti panangarukar iti in-inut a panagbalbalibaw amangan no addanto ibunga daytoy a kombensyon.

No maangay daytoy ket agbalig, saanto laengen a daytoy 2008 a maangay maen. Iti ababa a pannaon, kas panagawako, nairanta ti 2008 a kas trial-order basis.

Ti ammomi itoy a kombensyon ket maika-49 malbatay iti 1959 a damo a kombensyon.

ASINO TI SUMARUNO A PRESIDENTE TI UFCH?

Ti panagserbi ket saan a barengbareng. Mairsakipisio ti kuarta, panawen, talento ken pamilia.

Ta saan a problema iti pannakabotosmo no popularka ngarud. Ti imasna, ti panangisayangkat ken panangitupang kadagiti proyekto.

Ti panagserbi ket aramid, saan a titulo laeng.

Manamamma a ni Eddie Agas, Sr., OFCC past president, ken past Board of Governor iti UFCH, ti umuna a UFCH president a mabotosan iti ruar ti Hawaii.

Kinalikaligamun ni Agas ti agserbi a presidente iti UFCH. Idi pay la 1999 a panagpaaymi iti AdHoc Committee ti Sakada Centennial Celebration, impaktianan ti gaget ken regtana nga agserbi.

Manamamma nga agnayan a 80 dagiti delegado ti kombensyon idiyay. Mabotosan ti presidente, bise presidente, sekretaria, tesorer, auditor ken dagiti Board of Governors.

Pammalig: asino man nga opisial iti OFCC a mabotosan iti UFCH, nasken nga aglulusus daytoy iti puestona iti Oahu Council.

Maangylo ti sumaruno a kombensyon idiyay Molokai 2009.

GLOBAL NEWS Dagupan Teenager is Asia's Sudoku Champion

SARAH JANE CUA, a student at the Pangasinan Universal Institute, bested math wizards from across the Asia-Pacific region to win the top prize at the Sudoku Challenge 2008 Asia Pacific Open in Singapore.

The 14-year-old from Daguapan City also won a cash prize of US\$10,000. She was the second youngest among 50 contestants from Thailand, China, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Sudoku is a logic puzzle where the objective is to fill in a 9 x 9 grid so that every row, column and every 3 x 3 box (also called blocks or regions) contains the digits 1 to 9.

Cua's victory was hailed by the Mathematics Trainers' Guild-Philippines as proof that Filipino students can excel in mathematics given the proper training.

"Again, we have proven that Filipino students are bright and can compete in international competi-

tions such as the Sudoku Challenge. We are very happy with the results," said Dr. Simon Cua, MTG president and the first Filipino to receive the International Paul Erdos Award for mathematics.

Cua is one of several Filipino students trained and assisted by MTG to participate in the international Sudoku contest.

The MTG-Philippines is an organization of math experts and teachers in the country that trains and sends Filipino students to different mathematics competitions abroad including the U.S. (Good News Philippines) ■



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AUGUST 15, 2008 FRIDAY

Candonians of Hawaii - 8th Annual Scholarship Fund Drive & Installation of Officers • 6:00 P.M. to 12:00 Midnight at Pacific Beach Hotel - Grand Ballroom • For details, please call: Bernadette Fajardo 342-8090 • Sam Sonson-392-7047 • Dr. Ignacio Torres - 375-6995 • Delia Wong - 499-8971

SEPTEMBER 5, 2008 MONDAY

Oahu Filipino Community Council (OFCC), Inauguration and installation of officers • 6:00PM at Ala Moana Hotel • For details, please call: Cirivalina Longboy 375-0828 • Danny Villaruz 778-0233 • Carlota Ader 688-3215

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