

HAWAII-PHILIPPINE NEWS EDITION

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# HAWAII PHILIPPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

## RE-ORG COULD THREATEN UH HAMILTON LIBRARY'S ASIA COLLECTION

By Vincent K. POLLARD

Located on the mauka side of the University of Hawaii-Manoa campus, the Asia collection occupies the third and fourth floors of Hamilton Library. In this little-known resource for the Filipino community, one can find newspapers, journals, magazines and books on Philippine history, politics, sociology culture, geography, music and dance.

Filipiniana in the Asia Collection are in Tagalog, Ilokano, Cebuano and other languages of the Philippines, as well as in Western languages. The Philippine Research Resource File is packed with "underground" leaflets and newsletters secretly published during martial law from 1972-1976.

According to Allen J. Riedy, the Asia collection is supported by taxpayers and therefore "open to the public."

### ASIA COLLECTION STAFF

After a national search in 2004, Mr. Riedy was selected as head of the Asia collection.

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Allen J. Riedy, Head of the Asia Collection at UH Hamilton Library in Manoa, shown in his office at the Asia Collection department. Photo courtesy by A. Riedy

## UST Singers Wow Audiences on Fourth Trip to Hawaii

By Fiedes DOCTOR



"Beautiful...brehtaking...excellent" These are the words that were used to describe the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Singers' performance "Beyond Dreams" at Farrington High School Auditorium on May 8, 2009. It was the group's fourth visit to Hawaii and they never failed to mesmerize.

Brigid Omeara was one of many in the audience who were mesmerized. It was her first time to watch the UST Singers.

"It was extremely exhilarating to watch them. They are really talented," she says. "I was amazed."

The audience of more than 300 gave the Choir of the World Champion (in Langollen, United Kingdom) a much deserved standing ovation coupled with exuberant applause after the finale. Their rendition of "The Lord's Prayer" touched most hearts while their en-

(continued on page 4)

## RP to Fare Well Even If Crisis Lasts - Standard & Poor's

By Des FERRIOLS

MANILA, Philippines - Even if the global recession is to extend longer than expected, Standard & Poor's (S&P) said the Philippines would fare relatively well although the impact on the country's debt profile could trigger a credit ratings downgrade.

S&P said the possibility of an extended recession scenario is remote but if the US economy contracted by five percent this year and continued to decline in smaller increments until 2012, debt profiles would change significantly across Asia.

S&P was quick to point out that its

simulations were not actual projections of credit ratings actions but merely tested what would emerge should the global recession fail to turn around by 2010 and last longer until 2012.

"The alternative scenario considered in this exercise sees most of Asia going through four consecutive years of economic contraction," S&P said in a report entitled "Fiscal Health Of Asian Sovereigns If 'Green Shoots' Withers."

S&P said the exceptions were China, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam, where government spending and private domestic demand are projected to keep growth positive through the period.

"The Philippines also fares relatively

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# EDITORIAL

## Flu Crisis Not a P.R. Problem

It is understandable for the tourism-oriented sector to be concerned about the latest health crisis posed by the Influenza A(H1N1) virus. After all, diseases and tourism do not mix. So, naturally, the tourism-oriented sector would rather not see any health crisis in the news.

Unfortunately, whether the tourism-oriented sector, or anybody for that matter, likes it or not, a health crisis does not depend on whether it gets reported in the news or not. If it hits, it hits. And that is that.

Indeed, all things considered, it is so much better for a health crisis to be reported as extensively as possible. A well-informed citizenry is so much better than having people grope their way through a sea of ignorance.

And if proper information comes at the risk of making people fearful, then that is a small price to pay than having them sink into a false sense of security in face of something that may sneak up on them from behind with unforgiving force.

And that is why it is difficult to understand how health authorities are handling the situation, because rather than being open and forthright in dealing with the public, they seem to adopt a similar stance to that of the tourism-oriented sector.

Again, the position of the tourism-oriented sector is understandable. But the position of health authorities is not. While the former may suffer from any news about a health crisis, the latter can only have everything to gain when dealing with a well-informed community.

All other countries that have had to deal with this health crisis have been very open with their societies about the disease. They do not hedge from reporting on any new development even if the news is bad and may



drive people to great fear.

But in the Philippines, the reverse is happening. Health authorities are treating the crisis as if it were a public relations concern. Instead of coming forward and volunteering information, the media have to pry it from them.

(www.philstar.com) ■

## Asia Collection Crisis at Hamilton Library

News of a rumored reorganization at Hamilton Library, the University of Hawaii-Manoa's flagship library, have worried Filipino faculty members, colleagues, researchers and graduate-level students. There have been preliminary talks to intershelve the Asia collection's books and periodicals with materials in the general library's bookshelves.

Critics of the proposal say the cost-cutting measures would make it much more difficult for faculty and researchers to find materials they need and would force them to search through the library's entire general collection. Furthermore, integrating the Asia Collection within a much larger collection will diminish, if not eliminate, its Asian identity.

The Asia Collection is a unique component of the UH library system. It is a source of pride, prestige and international recognition for UH, particularly in certain areas like the Southeast Asia and Philippine materials. A treasure trove of rare materials, including "underground" leaflets and newsletters secretly published during martial law in the Philippines from

1972-1976, can be found in the Philippine Research Resource File.

Over the years, the Asia Collection, which includes Philippine research materials, has gained a sterling reputation surpassing that of Harvard, Cornell, Yale, Berkeley and other more prestigious universities. Many prominent scholars have dropped by the Asia Collection to review its extensive materials. In fact, since the founding of the Center For Philippine Studies in 1975, faculty members say they have hosted over 500 of the best scholars and prominent visitors from the Philippines, many of whom noted the vital importance of the Asia Collection in their visits here.

Given our strategic location in the Asia-Pacific region, it is critical that the State continue to have an adequate center for storing and acquiring the best materials on the study of this region. Sadly however, despite the best efforts to save the Asia Collection, it may end up a victim of the budget crisis. Universities and libraries are the last remaining bastions of higher education and learning that will ensure the quality of education for future generations of Filipinos or Filipino-Americans. Should the re-organization take place, those interested in further studying the Philippines and other Southeast Asian nations may have a much more difficult time doing so. Hence, it is important to voice your concerns, while there is still time to save the Asia Collection. ■

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# LEGISLATIVE CONNECTION

## The End Is Here



by Senator Will  
**ESPERO**

Controversial issues gather a lot of attention but overshadow the large amount of work the Legislature does. During the non-legislative session, many people bring ideas to lawmakers and the Legislature passes many of these good ideas. These are some of the bills which the Legislature approved and will send to Governor Lingle for her signature.

**SB 266** Climate Change Task Force, establishes a task force to assess the impact global warming and climate change will have on Hawaii.

**SB 536** Starlight Reserve, requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to develop a statewide starlight reserve strategy to preserve the quality of the night sky and its associated cultural, scientific, astronomical, natural, and landscape-related values.

**SB 539** Reentry Intake Service Center Division, reorganizes the intake service center division of the DPS with emphasis on re-entry and creates a re-entry commission, and directs DPS's reentry intake service center to work closely

and collaborate with each county's work furlough programs, the Hawaii paroling authority, and the correction program services division to ensure that inmates' reintegration needs are being met.

**SB 714** High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes, allows the director of the Department of Transportation to declare an emergency to open use of HOV and zipper lanes to all cars when the police or emergency services personnel shut down one or more lanes of traffic.

**SB 1164** Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, enacts the interstate agreement to remove barriers to education faced by children of military families due to frequent moves and deployment of parents.

**SB 1202** Transportation Energy Initiatives, establishes non-fossil fuel transportation as a state policy goal; requires designated parking spaces for electric vehicles; and energy-efficient vehicle purchasing for government entities.

**SB 1222** Humane Treatment of Pet Animals, prohibits confining a pet in a kennel or cage in a cruel or inhumane manner; prohibits restraining a dog to a stationary object by means of a choke collar, pinch collar, or prong collar, except when walking the dog or while the dog is in a supervised activity; and provides other clarification of the animal cruelty law.

**SB 1338** Solar Energy, allows the use of clotheslines on any privately owned single-family resi-

dential dwelling or townhouse.

**SB 1677** Lands Controlled by the State, requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Legislature to adopt a concurrent resolution to sell or give away certain public lands, and requires notice to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for sales, gifts, and exchanges.

**HB 262** Insurance Fraud, expands the authority of the Insurance Division's Fraud Investigations Branch, to prevent, investigate, and prosecute - both civilly and criminally - insurance fraud in all areas except worker's compensation.

**HB 591** Renewable Energy; Agricultural Activities; Preferential Rates, authorizes preferential rates for purchase of renewable energy produced in conjunction with agricultural activities.

**HB 615** Harassment; Electronic Communications, expands the definition of harassment to include electronic forms, such as e-mail. The existing definition of harassment, under HRS 711-1106, includes physical contact, verbalizations, phone calls, and similar communications.

**HB 981** Highway Safety, builds on last year's Ignition Interlock bill by adopting the recommendations of the implementation task force. Last year's ignition interlock bill seeks to improve safety by disabling a car when a convicted DUI driver's blood alcohol level reaches a threshold.

**HB 983** Education, requires the director of the Department of

Transportation to develop a streamlined process for federal Safe Routes to School grant programs and to provide program funds for school and community-based workshops and projects to reduce cars and congestion, encourage walking and bicycling, and promote health and safety.

**HB 1809** Recycling, establishes a television recycling program by January 2, 2010.

**Update HB 444**, Civil Unions. There was an effort to pull the bill out of committee onto the Senate floor, and the effort passed: 10 ayes, 15 noes (only

9 votes needed). Once on the floor, a motion to amend the bill was made and approved. What does this mean? The Senate version of HB 444 will cross over to the House, but it will not be discussed until next year. No further action is expected on HB 444 this year. Senators have expressed a desire to work with opponents and proponents of the bill to draft a compromise if possible.

If you would like a brief recap of all the bills passed, please e-mail my office at [senesper@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senesper@capitol.hawaii.gov).

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# HEADLINE NEWS (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1; Re-Org in Hamilton ...)

lection. His association with UH began in the 1970s when he studied Vietnamese and completed his M.A. in Asian Studies in 1977.

For a short while, he taught English as a second language locally and some of his students were young Filipino immigrants. In 1986, Riedy earned a Master's degree in library science. Four years later, he left for Cornell University in 1990 to become its curator of the Southeast Asia collection.

Librarian Elena Clariza, a colleague of Riedy, is a specialist on the Philippines. She joined the Asia collection staff in January 2009. Born in General Santos City in South Cotabato Province, Philippines, she lived for 15 years in Manila before matriculating to the University of California-Santa Cruz, where she earned a B.S. in biology.

After receiving an M.A. in Asian Studies at the UH-Manoa in 2003, Elena earned a second master's in library and informa-

tion sciences. Just four months in her new position, Elena already receives e-mail reference questions "from all over."

Clariza also collaborates with Dr. Belinda Aquino, Director of the UH Center for Philippine Studies, and Serafin "Jun" Colmenares of the State Office of Language Access on various matters affecting Filipinos and the Philippines.

In addition to immigrant outreach work, Clariza does community education for the Domestic Violence Action Center. She was also involved in the planning for statewide events commemorating the centenary of the first Visayan immigrants to Hawaii.

## UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Reorganization rumblings are audible across the UH campus. There has been preliminary talk to intersperse the Asia collection's books and periodicals with materials in the general library's bookshelves. If implemented, this move would threaten the Asia collec-

tion's value as a resource for teaching and research across the Manoa campus. The distinctive identity of the Collection, which has attracted faculty, students, scholars, researchers and professionals around the world to the Manoa campus to pursue their Asia-related research and professional activities. The collection is also of significance to Philippine Studies faculty members and their colleagues who do other Asia-focused teaching and research across the Manoa campus.

In an exclusive interview with the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle, Riedy further explained that the Asia collection is a "focal point for resources like the School of Pacific and Asian Studies."

The Asia collection's distinctive institutional profile enables UH research centers to qualify for National Resource Center grants from the U.S. Department of Education. Scattering the Asia collection's holdings across the entire library threatens its existence as

a distinct resource to the university and the community.

Dr. Aquino, who is also the Director of the Center for Philippine Studies at UH, works closely with Clariza in examining and acquiring library materials related to the Philippines that are to be stored in the Asia Collection. Dr. Aquino verified the significance of the Asia Collection's holdings.

"These materials are indispensable to scholars, researchers, students, professors and other parties who are interested in the Philippines and would like to study it from various angles," she says. "Research always renews and invigorates teaching. The library is the very institution that can perform this function."

"We understand the urgency of the current budget crisis but universities and libraries remain the last bastions of higher education and learning that will ensure the quality of education for future generations, many of whom are

Filipinos or Filipino-Americans."

Professor Ricardo D. Trillini, an ethnomusicologist and Chair of the UH Asian Studies Program, also defended the integrity of the Asia Collection.

"The Asia Collection embodies the importance of Asia for our University and for our State," he says. "The Philippine component belongs to that excellence. Its special position should not be downgraded or allowed to disappear into a general collection."

During most of the year, the Asia collection is open seven days a week. Hours vary, although the reference desk is closed on Saturdays and holidays. For more information about the Asia collection is available online at: [www.hawaii.edu/asiareff](http://www.hawaii.edu/asiareff).

VINCENT K. POLLARD is the author of "Globalization, Democratization and Asian Leadership: Power Sharing, Foreign Policy and Society in the Philippines and Japan" (Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004). ■

(cont. from page 1; UST Singers ...)

core "Ti Ayat" and "O Naraning a Bulan," both timeless Ilocano favorites, brought sweet nostalgia—and of course, another appreciative applause.

The 26-member mixed choral ensemble was founded in 1992, has gained a reputation as a

world-renowned choir and is unified under the baton of Prof. Fidel G. Calalang Jr. They have embarked on 13 concert tours that brought them to many different countries worldwide. Their repertoire includes contemporary, spiritual, Broadway, international and traditional songs.

Catalang's mastery and leadership showed forth in the unified voices of his men and women, composed of soprano, alto, tenor and bass. A flick of the finger or a wave of the arm brought instantaneous response: a soft whisper or an intense, strong song.

Similarly, the accompanying choreography was "powerful, entertaining and one of a kind," according to a UST alumnae who came to show support.

The performance was heavenly and

uplifting," says another.

The "Beyond Dreams" repertoire included "Magnificat" by Rene Clausen; "Ailes, was Oden hat, lobe den Herrn" by Johann Sebastian Bach; "Ave Maria;" "Irritations;" "O Voso Gallo Comadre;" "Down by the Riverside;" "Hay Quien Precisa;" "Witness;" "Eres Tu;" "Broadway Con Brio;" "Journey On" from "Ragtime;" "Anyone Can Whistle, New Music from "Ragtime;" "Learning to Let Go" from "Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens."

Philippine arrangements, all by Catalang, included "Mamayang Akun," "Waray-Waray;" "Scenes from the North;" "Ilocano Medley;" "Kaw kasi," "Ininbig Kita," and

"Libis ng Nayon."

"I remembered the Philippines when I heard the Filipino songs," says retiree Marina Torio, fondly thinking of the country she left 48 years ago. "They have beautiful voices and are very well-trained and coordinated."

Equally-talented guest choir performer Doctors-on-Stage performed "All We Need is Love," "A Little Help From My Friends," "Something," "Let It Be" and "While my Guitar Gently Weeps."

A few days later on May 10, 2009, the UST Singers performed at the Fil-Com Center in Waipahu. An audience of about 600 gave the group a well-deserved standing ovation. ■

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(cont. from page 1; RP to Fare Well ...)

well in this scenario, emerging from a negative growth in 2011," S&P said, showing that in the event of a five-percent contraction in the US economy, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) would decline by 3.5 percent this year before turning (GDP) around in 2011 to grow by 0.7 percent and by 2.5 percent in 2012.

"We consider the likelihood of this extended-recession scenario to be remote," S&P said but if it happens, the pressure on public finances from bailing out preferred corporates and banks would also be higher than in the base-case scenario of a quick recovery.

According to S&P, public finance would be hard hit, particularly in the economies where sustained economic contractions are expected. Revenue shortfalls and expenditure pressures are likely to be large and would require the government to take on heavier debt burdens.

S&P said that financially constrained Indonesia and Philippines are expected to chalk up smaller deficits of two percent to four percent of GDP a year and possibly experience rising debt burdens from a deteriorating currency or higher reliance on external financing.

"Under an extended-recession sce-

nario, we assume that a significant share of the fiscal shortfalls would have to be financed externally," S&P said. "For this reason, public sector external debt of Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines would increase materially."

In addition to budget financing, S&P said the Philippine government might decide to borrow externally to boost a reserve cushion or intervene in support of its currency.

"Confidence-sensitive currencies, such as in Indonesia and the Philippines, are expected to come under pressure in this scenario, potentially leading to external borrowing for balance-of-payments support," S&P said.

Indonesia and Philippines, both rated "BB-", might be downgraded by one or two notches, S&P said.

"Debt ratios could go back to the levels of four to five years ago, which would still be broadly consistent with their current ratings," S&P said. "However, larger-than-assumed exchange rate movements could change these debt burdens sharply, as has occurred in past crises."

The resulting deterioration in external positions could then push ratings of these countries into a lower category. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)) ■

# MAYOR'S COLUMN

## Filipino Pride on Display Everywhere



### AROUND THE ISLAND

by Mayor Mufi HANNEMANN

This year's Filipino Fiesta and Parade was a wonderful event, full of community pride and spirit. Thanks to everyone who participated and came out to enjoy the fun—and especially to those who worked so hard to ensure the celebration's success. I look forward to these festivities every year, and was proud to join the parade with members of my Cabinet, other City employees and the City's Royal Hawaiian Band.

This terrific event, which the City co-sponsors, came just one week after Manny Pacquiao's stunning second-round knockout of Ricky Hatton for the IBO World Light Welterweight title, a remarkable demonstration of athletic ability.

The skill and speed that "Pac-Man" showed in Las Vegas on May 2 made it clear that he is the world's best pound-for-pound fighter. No wonder he is considered a national hero in the Philippines and has so many fans in Hawaii and around the world.

Friends tell me that Pacquiao's home town of General Santos City virtually came to a standstill when the fight began, and that people throughout the archipelago erupted in cheers when his lightning-fast left hook laid Hatton down for the count. Pacquiao has come a long, long way from the days when supported himself selling items on the streets of Manila. Congratulations, Pac-Man!

Some special community leaders here in Honolulu also deserve our congratulations, such as Imelda "Emmie" Collado Ortega Anderson, founder of Pinoy Power, the popular Filipino radio program heard daily on KPHI 101.5 FM and Oceanic Cable Channel 882.

At a celebration on May 1 at the Filipino Community Center, I was pleased to present a proclamation recognizing the program's

fourth anniversary and Emmie's many other achievements and civic contributions.

I was also honored to help present the 2009 Filipino Entrepreneur of the Year and Young Filipino Entrepreneur of the year awards on May 2 to Agnes Reyes and John Vicente at a celebration sponsored by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel. Congratulations!

I also made a surprise appearance nearby at the Divine Word College of Laao Alumni Global Reunion, where I was introduced by KNDI radio's wonderful host, Flor Martinez. People from all over the world attended the event, and I was honored to meet them.

Be sure to vote in the ongoing elections for members of the Neighborhood Boards. The elections are being conducted completely online for the first time, and eligible voters can cast ballots until May 22 from the comfort of their own homes, or from computers set up in Honolulu Hale, Kapolei Hale, and the Windward City Satellite City Hall.

The Neighborhood Commis-



Mayor Mufi Hannemann helped present the 2009 Filipino Entrepreneur of the Year and Young Entrepreneur of the Year awards to Agnes Reyes and John Vicente respectively at a celebration sponsored by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (FCHC) held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village on May 2. Left to right are State Senator Will Espero, FCHC President Jason Pasqua, Agnes Reyes, Mayor Mufi Hannemann, John Vicente, Rep. Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Rep. John Riki Karamatsos and Ben Cabreros (representing City Councilman Romy Cachola).

sion Office mailed online voting passcodes earlier this month to 115,000 voters. These passcodes, along with the last four digits of voters' social security numbers, will allow them to access and cast their ballots online.

Alternatively, voters will be able to cast secure ballots via telephone, using their passcodes

and last four digits of their social security number. Results of the election will be publicized shortly after the close of the elections. The new board members will assume office on July 1.

Candidate profiles and photos are posted at: <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco/2009scnpro.htm>

For more information, visit the Neighborhood Commission website at [www.honolulu.gov/nco](http://www.honolulu.gov/nco) ■

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

### Hirono Reintroduces Family Reunification Act



**U.S. REP. MAZIE HIRONO** has reintroduced the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, or H.R. 2412, which exempts the children Filipino World War II veterans from immigration quotas that have delayed immigrant visas to the U.S. and kept family members apart.

Some 200,000 Filipinos served with American troops dur-

ing World War II. A significant number of the 18,000 Filipino veterans who are still alive reside in Hawaii.

In 1990, Congress recognized the courage and commitment of Filipino World War II veterans by providing them with a waiver from certain naturalization requirements. As a result, many

veterans became U.S. citizens and permanent residents. However, allowances were not made for their children, many of whom have waited decades for petition approval.

The Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act provides for the further recognition of the service

of these veterans by granting their children special immigration status that would allow them to immigrate to the U.S. and be reunited with their aging parents.

Hirono initially introduced the bill in 2007. A companion bill will soon be introduced by U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka. ■



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# HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

## AIDS Education & Prevention for Teens

**THE LIFE FOUNDATION WILL BE** sponsoring "Island Roots," a free event for high-school students to recognize National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Tuesday, May 19th, 2009.

The event, which is scheduled from 9:30 am to 1 pm at Bishop Museum, will engage Hawaii's youth in the fight against AIDS and educate them on how to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases.

"Island Roots" will also feature Island 98.5 deejay Mento Mele, a Slam Poetry workshop by Kealoaha, the "It Could Happen to You" play by Kailahi Palama Health Center, lunch, prizes and the "HIV in Hawaii" video presentation.

Interested teens are encouraged to sign up by contacting Melanie Moore at 383-0163 or at: mmoores@lifeofoundation.org. More information is available online at: [www.lifeofoundation.org/islandroots](http://www.lifeofoundation.org/islandroots).

## Hawaii to Receive \$10 Million in Unemployment Insurance Funds

**HAWAII HAS QUALIFIED FOR OVER \$10 MILLION** in unemployment insurance (UI) modernization funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), passed by Congress in February 2009, according to U.S. Rep. Neil Abernethy.

The Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations can use the funds to pay unem-

ployment benefits or, if approved by the Legislature, to administer its unemployment insurance program and deliver employment services.

"This funding is another part of the Obama Administration's economic recovery efforts. It will help more working people in Hawaii who have lost jobs because of the country's economic recession," says Rep. Abernethy.

U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis says that Hawaii's UI program includes a key provision that better meets the needs of the 21st century workforce.

"Hawaii uses recent wages when determining eligibility for benefits, which enables unemployed workers to receive the assistance they need and deserve even if they are relatively new entrants to the workforce," she says.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS

### Presidential Aspirants Face Off; No Fireworks

by Aureo CALICA /  
Wednesday, May 13, 2009

#### MANILA, PHILIPPINES - IT WAS THEIR FIRST CHANCE

for a face-off, but no fireworks lit up the gathering of presidential hopefuls at a forum where the Arroyo administration took much of the beating.

Senators Manuel Roxas II, Richard Gordon, Francis Escudero, Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro were thrown questions ranging from serious and sensitive to light and personal during the ANC Leadership Forum at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City the other night.

The forum, which was also in line with ABS-CBN's multi-platform launch of "Boto Mo, I-Patrol Mo: Ako Ang Simula," was launched exactly a year before the May 11, 2009 elections. Most of the audience were students of the university.

Invited but conspicuously absent were senators Panfilo Lacson, Manuel Villar, Loren Legarda, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and Metro Manila Development Authority Bayani Fernando.

Asked whether they would support an investigation of the Arroyo family for alleged corruption, all five said they would but Teodoro and Gordon stressed the need for evidence and that they would not do it out of vindictiveness.

Roxas said the anomalies that occurred during the Arroyo

administration should be laid out in the open "because it would be difficult for a society to move forward if (the people) are not able to learn from experiences in the past."

"There should be an investigation to know the whole truth. Justice must be blind. We should not side or defend anyone. The point here is we need to know so we can learn and not allow these things to happen again," Roxas said.

But Gordon cautioned that presidents must not be threatened with lawsuits all the time because the country might not be able to function well but as a general rule, those who broke the law must be charged.

"But it should not be based on speculations, unless there is evidence, (a case) must not be pursued," Gordon said.

Escudero said when he was minority leader in the House of Representatives, the opposition tried twice to hold Mrs. Arroyo accountable for allegations raised in the impeachment complaints against her.

"My position then was the people must know the truth and that the wheels of justice should spare no one, not even the President," Escudero said.

Panlilio, for his part, said the Philippines as a country of laws, must prosecute the Arroyo family if there are evidence that they had been involved in anomalies.

"Let justice take its course," Panlilio said.



The "Presidentialists": (L-R) Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, Gov. Ed "Among Ed" Panlilio, Sec. Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro, Sen. Mar Roxas, and Sen. Richard "Dick" Gordon

Teodoro also said the legal process should take precedence "but if they are mere speculations and do not have basis but only political harassment then I have said this, I would help my President."

Also at the forum, Panlilio, a "priest-on-leave" was asked about family planning. He said it could be discussed with the different sectors of society, including the non-Christians who might have a different view from the majority Catholics.

He also stressed that it's not his ambition to run for president and that he's willing to give way to a more deserving candidate.

"If I find a candidate who will have positive influence, I will not even run. Perhaps, I will support that candidate because I don't have a political agenda," he said.

Teodoro said he is proud to be

an administration ally and stressed he would not have accepted his job if he were ashamed of it.

When told by ANC host Ricky Carandang that his affiliation with Mrs. Arroyo could be a kiss of death, Teodoro was unfazed.

"No matter what one says for or against any administration, history will be the judge," Teodoro co-hosted the forum.

He said the Arroyo administration could also boast of a lot of achievements and that he was not afraid of being a "John McCain," the presidential candidate in the United States who was identified with then incumbent and unpopular American President George Bush, just like Mrs. Arroyo at this time. McCain lost to US President Barack Obama.

He said he is also in favor of changing the constitution through a constitutional convention.

"I will urge Congress to pass a law calling for Constitutional Convention. In my view, what we need as a nation is not only values renewal but institutional changes. Institutions shape behaviors," he said.

Roxas was asked how he felt about insinuations that he was using his fiancée, top-rated broadcaster Korina Sanchez to advance his political career. "I love Korina. We have been together for long, five years. We understand each other, we have dreams for each other and our relationship is strong. Like what you said, my crit-

ics are the ones saying that, so they are just envious," Roxas said to the audience applause.

There were light moments during the forum especially when Escudero said that the last movie he saw was "Kasal, Kasalo, Kasalo" of showbiz couple, Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo.

The audience also obviously liked it when he said he was willing to coalesce with Filipino boxing champion Manny Pacquiao as long as he would not be bringing with him the one "in Malacanang" apparently referring to Mrs. Arroyo.

He said Mrs. Arroyo's best contribution was to unite the country in rage against alleged venality in her administration.

"She has angered Filipinos that they are now seriously looking at whom to choose as our next leader, and to actively participate in the coming elections," he said.

Escudero admitted his being young could be both a weakness and strength. He said that while he was not born rich and might not be able to run a massive campaign, he and just about any presidential candidate may spend only about P600 million and not P3 billion for his campaign.

"The law says one can spend only P10 per voter. If there are 40 million voters, then one needs P400 million. The party can contribute another P200 million.

Thus, spending beyond that would be a violation," Escudero said.

Gordon became emotional at one point when they were asked about their personal heroes.

He said his father is his hero because despite his being born an American he elected to be a Filipino, raised his children as Filipinos and died as a Filipino hero.

Gordon said it was his father who made him realize that public service was a "365-day, 24/7" job and that one must learn to sacrifice for the sake of the common good.

He said every Filipino must learn to be a leader and that the country should have a President that could serve as good example and inspiration to the people. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

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# COMMUNITY PARADE



▲ Journey's new lead singer Arnel Pineda from Sampaloc wood Hawaii Filipinos with riveting performances. Pictured here (left to right) is Alan Arato, Tiffany Espinda, Arnel Pineda, Kalani Espinda, Jonathan Cain, Ross Valory, Deen Castronovo, Tom Moffatt, and Neal Schon backstage after Journey's first performance  
Photo courtesy of Tiffany Espinda

The Philippine Consulate staff attending the UST Singers concert at the Farrington High School Auditorium on May 8 in Kalihi ▶



UST Singers attending a reception given by Mr. & Mrs. Ronnie Bantay at their Makakilo residence on May 9 ▶



Angel and Cora Legaspi at the Philippine Consulate during the UST Singers Farewell reception on May 12



▲ Edmund Aczon, Toy Arre, Mayor Mufi Hannemann, Serafin Colmenares and Jean Jeremiah at the 17th Annual Filipino Fiesta



▲ (L-R) Consul General Ariel Abadilla, UST Singers conductor Fidel Calalang, Jr., and former Representative Jun Abinsay during the UST Singers farewell reception at the Philippine Consulate on May 12



▲ Charles Sonido performed the romantic lead role of Lun Tha in Punahou's musical production of King and I. His well-wishers include from left to right: Dr. Nicanor Joaquin, Dr. Arnold Villafuerte, Dr. Richard Kua, Imelda Joaquin, J.P. Orias, Dr. Mercedes Kua & Dory Villafuerte

Former state senator Melodie Aduja with children, Amber (l) and William (r) posed with Virgil Apostol, one of the BIBAK warriors wearing a *haug* (traditional woven loincloth) and *anngau* (rain cape) made from palm leaves ▼



▲ (L-R) Dr. Elizabeth Abinsay, Mayette Smith and Dory Villafuerte during the UST Singers concert dinner reception at FilCom Center on May 10



▲ Solita Collas Monsod (seated) was in town recently as a distinguished guest speaker at UH- Manoa. She was given a farewell dinner at Longhi's restaurant. Shown here from left to right are Prof. Rick Trimillos, Edward Shultz, Dean of the School of Hawaiian and Asia Pacific Studies and his wife Malia, Dr. Belinda Aquino, Dr. Teresita Bernaldes and Sen Will Espero

Shalimar Pagulayan with Edwin Quinabo who celebrated his birthday recently ▶



▲ Allen Yadao graduated at Oklahoma City School of Law. He recently passed the Hawaii State Bar Association (HSBA) and is currently working with the Attorney General Office. He is shown here with his parents Mr. & Mrs. Fernando Yadao and sister Angie

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# PHILIPPINE NEWS

## Bangko Sentral Sees Remittances Still Driving Economy

by Paolo ROMERO /  
Thursday, May 14, 2009

**MANILA, Philippines – BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP)** Governor Amador M. Tetangco Jr. said yesterday a steady remittance inflows could still propel the country's economic growth this year and push the expansion towards the high end of the projected 3.1 to 4.1-percent range.

The level of remittance inflows this year has been the focus of much debate between government economists who see enough resilience to resist a decline and private sector economists who said inflows could decline for the first time since the Philippines started exporting workers.

But the BSP said remittance inflows could even out-perform the flat-growth rate that officials expect, saying that there is a

chance for remittances to actually increase.

If the current trend in remittances could be maintained, Tetangco said there would still be an increase in inflows this year, which would continue to finance consumer spending despite the global recession.

Tetangco said there was also cautious optimism over the global financial markets that fueled hopes of the crisis finally bottoming out.

"Of course that is the financial market which some people believe has seen the worst," Tetangco said. "There is a considerable lag time between the recovery of the financial market and its transmission to the real economy but if we see the recovery in major economies that would translate to a corresponding recovery in emerging economies."

As long as the US economy would not suffer a setback, Tetangco said initial indicators of improving prospects could be sustained although he admitted that no one was calling the bottom on the decline of the real economy.

Tetangco explained that with the improvement in the US economy, however small, markets expect sympathetic movements in the other economies as well.

"That means that the safe haven character of the US could somewhat tend to decline and risk appetite will tend to go up," Tetangco explained.

Tetangco noted that financial markets have already started to improve and this has translated in some recovery in risk-appetite. In turn, some funds have started to return to emerging markets including the Philippines.

"This is one of the reasons



Gov. Amador Tetangco

why we've seen uptrend in the strength of the peso," Tetangco said.

Supported by the resilience of remittances, Tetangco expressed optimism that domestic demand, particularly consumption, could continue to be buoyant.

"Both of these factors, together with the fiscal stimulus, we are seeing a growth rate closer to

the higher end of the projected range," Tetangco said.

Tetangco acknowledged the decline in the deployment of land-based workers abroad but said there are new markets opening in other destinations like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other parts of the world like Australia and some parts of Canada.

"If the trend we have seen in the first two months, plus this indication of sustained demand of Philippine labor—if these two factors continue then it is possible that we will see a better-than-zero growth in remittances this year," Tetangco said.

The BSP said the 7.5-percent decline in remittances projected by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is likely an understatement of inflows that have historically defied projections.

(www.philstar.com) ■

## Unemployment Hits Record High in Last 3 Months – SWS Survey

by Helen FLORES /  
Wednesday, May 13, 2009

**MANILA, Philippines – UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG ADULT FILIPINOS** reached a new record high of 34.2 percent in the last three months, the Social Weather Stations (SWS) reported yesterday.

The First Quarter 2009 Social Weather Survey, fielded over Feb. 20 to 23, found unemployment rising to 34.2 percent or about 14 million Filipino adults, from 27.9 percent or estimated 11 million from the previous quarter.

But the non-commissioned survey also found that of those unemployed, 13 percent voluntarily left their old jobs, while 12 per-

cent were retrenched, consisting of nine percent who were laid off and three percent whose previous contracts were not renewed.

The SWS data on unemployment refer to the population of adults in the labor force.

"This is because respondents in the standard SWS surveys are those at least 18 years old," it said.

SWS said unemployment in its surveys has been 20 percent and above since May 2005, except for December 2007 when it was 17.5 percent.

In the SWS data series, which began in 1993, unemployment was below 15 percent until March 2004, and then ranged from 16.5 percent to 19 percent from August

2004 to March 2005, the survey institute said.

"Over the past four quarters, adult unemployment is dominated by those who voluntarily left their old work, and those who were retrenched—either by getting laid off or by not having their contracts renewed," the SWS said.

The survey showed that in the February survey, 13 percent of the unemployed left their old jobs voluntarily, nine percent were laid off, three percent had their contracts finished and not renewed, and three percent said their employers closed operation. Six percent never worked before at the time of the survey.

The 1993-2008 figures are consistently based on the traditional definition of unemployment as not working and at the same time looking for work. Those not working but not looking for work are excluded from the labor force; these are housewives, retired, disabled, students, etc., it said.

On the other hand, the official lower boundary of the labor force has always been 15 years of age. Formerly, the official definition of unemployment was not working and looking for work, the SWS said.

However, from April 2005 onward, the new official definition

has included the concept of availability for work; it subtracts those not available for work, even though looking for work, and adds those available for work but not seeking work for the following reasons: tired/believe no work is available, awaiting results of a job application, temporarily ill/disabled, bad weather, and waiting for rehiring/offer call, it said.

"If the official definition is applied, the unemployment rate among adults 18 years old is 25.9 percent in the SWS February 2009 survey. It is lower than when computed using the traditional definition because the correction for those looking for work but 'not truly available' is much larger than the correction for those 'actually available' though not looking for work at the moment," the SWS explained.

The survey used face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults in Metro Manila, the balance of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. It has sampling error margins of  $\pm 2.5$  percent for national percentages and  $\pm 6$  percent for area percentages.

**SURVEY NOT ACCURATE – PALACE**

Malacañang however disputed the results of the survey,

saying this was based on perceptions and as such does not paint an accurate picture.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde cited the Labor Force Survey conducted by the Department of Labor and Employment, which he said was wider in scope and thus more accurate and official.

"I conferred with the Department of Labor and Employment and its reaction is that the SWS survey is not as accurate as the Labor Force Survey," Remonde said.

"The Labor Force Survey uses internationally accepted standards, has much wider reach and is really based more on reality rather than perception," he added.

However, Remonde said that the surveys, though disputed, are still being used by the government as a guide on finding ways to provide better services to the people.

"The perception of growing joblessness validates further the correctness of approach the President is giving to job creation and it should encourage the government to pursue job generation and creation both here and abroad with greater ardor," Remonde said.

Based on the Labor Force Survey for January this year, the unemployment rate was pegged at just 7.7 percent. (www.philstar.com) ■

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## DOH: RP Remains A(H1N1)-Free

**MANILA, Philippines – THE COUNTRY STILL HAS NO** reported cases of the influenza A(H1N1) infection, the Department of Health announced today.

The DOH said yesterday that 19 of the 23 local cases monitored for the virus have already been cleared of possible infection.

In the latest update by the World Health Organization, there are 5,251 confirmed cases of the dreaded disease in 30 countries, with 61 people dead from the flu. (www.philstar.com) ■



# PHILIPPINE NEWS



## Consumer Confidence Higher in RP than Other Countries – Poll

by Ma. Elisa P. OSORIO / Friday, May 15, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IS HIGHER IN THE PHILIPPINES than other countries with six out of 10 Filipinos saying that there is no significant drop in their personal finances despite the global economic slowdown, according to a survey conducted by AC Nielsen.

The survey, which covered 50 countries, ranked the Philippines as sixth in terms of consumer confidence.

AC Nielsen managing director Victoria R. Santos reported that there was a steep drop in the global consumer confidence for the first half of this year when compared to the second half of 2008.

Santos said that the global consumer confidence index is down to 77 from 84 during the last part of the previous year. Out of the 50 countries surveyed, all posted a drop in consumer confidence except Taiwan.

In the Asia Pacific region, the Philippines was third in terms of consumer confidence with Indonesia and India leading the pack.

In terms of job prospects, there is a moderate sentiment in the Philippines with 43 percent saying that the job market is good or

excellent. However, Santos said that job security is still the biggest concern of most Filipinos.

Meanwhile, Filipinos are more confident for the first half of this year when compared to second half of last year with 63 percent saying that their personal finances did not go down significantly.

In spite of this, Santos said that Filipinos are more prudent in terms of spending. Only three out of 10 people surveyed said that this is a good time to spend.

The survey, likewise, showed that most Filipinos save the extra cash that they have. For the first half of the year, 69 percent said that they will put their spare cash in savings.

This is followed by spending for new clothes with 35 percent saying that they will use their spare cash to purchase apparel. This is closely followed by spending for gadgets and other technology related items with 34 percent.

Only 32 percent said that they will use their spare cash to pay for debts and credit card loans while 27 percent said they will take holidays or vacations.

Only 17 percent of surveyed Filipinos consider investing in stocks or mutual funds while nine percent said they will allocate their money for their retirement fund.

(www.philstar.com) ■

## Exports May Still Face Rough Sailing in Coming Months

by Iris C. GONZALES / Friday, May 15, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - PHILIPPINE EXPORTS MAY STILL FACE ROUGH SAILING in the coming months and that it may be too early for the government to conclude that the industry is on the road to recovery, the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS) said yesterday.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) reported recently that merchandise exports grew 15.9 percent in March from the previous month's level, with earnings reaching \$2.9 billion compared to \$2.5 billion in February.

However, compared to year-ago levels, exports in March declined by 30.9 percent or lower than the \$4.2 billion recorded in March 2008.

"This suggests that it may be too premature to conclude that exports are set to change higher in the coming months. At best, exports appear to be stabilizing," it said.

DBS said the improvement in exports to the US — recorded for the second straight month — is an encouraging sign.

"Encouragingly, though, exports to the US — still the country's largest destination at around 17 percent market share — improved for a second straight month, by 3.5 percent month-on-month."

DBS said that the possible decline in imports could trim the trade deficit, and in turn reduce the drag on the overall gross domestic product (GDP).

Earlier, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said that the export figures in March 2009 indicate that the industry is slowly recovering.

In a memorandum to President Arroyo, NEDA officer-in-charge Rolando Tungpalan said the improvement in March exports compared to February indicated an improvement in the economies of the country's trading partners.

"March 2009 exports represented an increase of 15.9 percent from the previous month, which was due to all major commodity groups posting positive month-on-month growth rates, indicating signs of the easing recession in trading countries," Tungpalan said.

(www.philstar.com)



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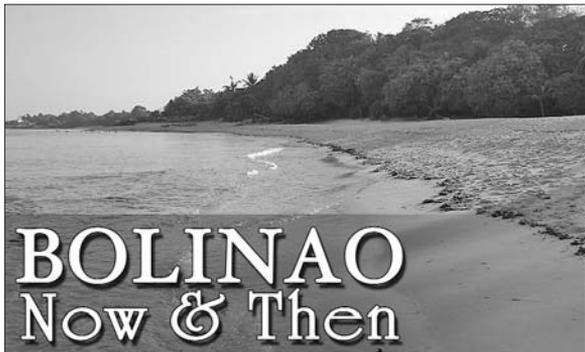
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## TRAVEL



by Ching M. ALANO /  
Wednesday, May 13, 2009

**M**ANILA, Philippines — It's clear to see that Bolinao, Pangasinan, has faithfully kept its date with history. Its white sandy beaches are probably as sparkling white as when Spanish Captain Pedro Lombi founded the first settlement there in 1575. Its waters are as pristine as when the first settlers first drew water from the Anson well. Its soil is as rich as when a certain Italian priest known only as Fr. Odoric held the first Mass in the Philippines (yes, antedating what is historically considered as the first Mass in the country held in Limasawa in 1521) after setting foot on Bolinao soil during stormy weather in 1324. And this town remains as charming as ever as it welcomes stressed-out, spaced-out city souls seeking refuge from life's many angsts and aggravations.

As in centuries past, the church continues to be the spiritual nerve center of the town. The townsfolk still regale visitors with stories of everyday miracles they

attribute to their revered patron saint St. James the Great as they prepare to celebrate St. James' quadricentennial on July 25. They believe that St. James mounted on his horse still vigilantly guards the seas and they swear that in the dead of night, they could still hear the clippity clop of a horse's hooves. Fr. Zosimo Navata says that people are saying that they could see the head of a horse looking out of the window of the convent.

Teofilo Corilla Jr., president of the Bolinao Parish Pastoral Council and a homegrown Bolinaon, relates, "There was a young man who once challenged the image of St. James, telling him to come down from his horse. The next day, he got sick and had fever for three weeks. He was told to go back to St. James and apologize. He did and he got well."

Where St. James goes, people follow. Once, people had to build a raft for him so that his image could be ferried to a chapel — they could not do so by land as the place was too

cramped to accommodate the rather humongous image.

"People were crying, they were emotional as they accompanied the image on the raft," Teofilo recounts.

People love repeating stories of miraculous healings. "Like when he was brought to Patar and then transferred to another barangay via Ilog Malino," Teofilo begins to relate. "Water started to flow from the image. The flow got heavier as the image reached the river. People who touched him said they were cured of their illnesses. For example, there was one parishioner who got rid of his scabies."

Through St. James' intercession, Bolinao has eluded many a big storm. "Once, there was a really strong typhoon that was predicted to pass Bolinao," relates Dely de Perio-Peralta whose late husband Eren Peralta was a former mayor. "Everybody was warned against passing through Bolinao that night. Through people's prayers to St. James, the typhoon did not pass Bolinao. Again, last year, there was a really strong typhoon that affected almost all the municipalities of western Pangasinan — the roofs of houses were blown away and a lot of buildings were destroyed. Even the big sports complex in Dagupan was dilapidated. But again, Bolinao was spared."

This good old-fashioned

town was also spared from the onslaught of industrialization. Dely is proud to tell us, "For two years, we fought a big Taiwan company who wanted to put up a P16-billion cement factory in our town. I believe Señor Santiago helped us because we always pray to him."

To celebrate 400 years of faith, Bishop Mario Peralta will say Mass on July 25 at the town plaza. In the evening, 400 torches will be put all around the church. Expected to be among the multitude of faithful attending the festivities are the Pangasinenses, now living abroad, who can't wait to come home.

Among them are the De Perio siblings, some of whom now live and work in the US. All 15 of them — three boys and 12 girls — were delivered at home by their father, Dr. Miguel de Perio. Talk about home delivery! Dr. De Perio, mayor of Bolinao for 10 years, lived to a ripe old age of 95 years and six months and was ballroom dancing until a month before he died. His wife, Patrocino Gaerlan, died at 77.

Bolinao needs to raise some P10 million to renovate its centuries-old church. But for the faithful of Bolinao, renovating doesn't mean defacing their beloved parish church or selling its prized furniture or doors to antiques collectors who are eagerly waiting at the door to cart away the church's treasures. They shrink and ask, "How would St. James the Great feel about that?"

Much like their deep respect for Señor Santiago, the townspeople revere the place where they were born and raised, and which continues to nurture them. Like the Señor, they jealously and zealously guard their seas and shores, making sure that Bolinao's natural beauty is preserved for the future generations.

"We have unearthed artifacts that might have belonged to Princess Urduja," notes Eva Calza, former president of the Bolinao Historical and Cultural Society.

She adds, "The beaches of Patar are still original even if in the last five years, resorts have sprouted. In San Fabian, the

sand are still white and the waters are never murky."

The people of Bolinao are ever proud of their beaches, their caves, and tourist attractions that have drawn people to their sacred place. Among these attractions are the caves, where the movies *Pinakamagandang Hayop* and *Djesebel* were shot. And then there's the Cape Bolinao Lighthouse at Patar, the second tallest in the country (351 feet above sea level on a towering hill of solid rock), next to Cape Bojeador Lighthouse in Ilocos Norte. Judy Ann Santos once shot a movie here. Of course, there are the many private beaches and exclusive beautiful resorts, one of which is owned by Boying Celeste.

But the real tourist attraction in Bolinao, according to visitors, is its very friendly and hospital people. "Some visitors end up marrying here," says Dely. "There's a joke that once you drink the water of the Anson well, you'll be smitten with Bolinao forever."

While Bolinao offers so much food for the soul, it's got a lot to feed the stomach, too. Our gracious hosts pled us nonstop with the place's native delights, like binungay (rice cake in bamboo containers); assorted seafoods like the shellfish liswik, mamalanit, noga-noga, the famous ararosep (seaweeds); lobsters cooked in many delightful ways; shrimps, from the suathe to the prawns; and octopus sautéed in garlic, onion, and tomato; and fresh veggies from Baguio, that can be had for practically a song (or perhaps two songs). Of course, the star of the table is the Bolinao bangus.

"Did you know that 60 percent of the bangus in Pangasinan comes from Bolinao?" Dely de Perio shares this delicious foodnote. "Our bangus has a special diet that makes it really luscious. And they say we have the sweetest mangoes, the juiciest chico, and the best-tasting casuy."

Then and now, the gracious grand old dame that is Bolinao offers the travel-wearry visitor the warmth of home. ([www.phlistar.com](http://www.phlistar.com)) ■



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LEGAL NOTES

Longer Wait for Employment Visas



by Reuben S. SEGURITAN

Visa numbers for the employment-based third preference category (EB-3) which refers to professional/skilled workers and "other workers" will be unavailable from May 1 to September 30, 2009.

This means that during that period, no immigrant visas for these workers will be granted by the U.S. Department of State (DOS), and no adjustment of sta-

tus application will be accepted or approved by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

The last time visa numbers were available for this category was in April 2009. The cut-off date at that time for the EB-3 professional/skilled workers for all countries except China was March 1, 2003 while the cut-off date for the "other workers" for all countries was March 1, 2001.

The DOS explained that the demand for visa numbers received by the USCIS for adjustment of status cases with priority dates earlier than the established cut-off dates was extremely high and as a result, the annual limit had been reached.

The EB-3 category consists of two groups. The main group refers to professionals and skilled workers with at least two years of

training or work experience and they include teachers, accountants, nurses, therapists, and computer professionals, among others.

The other groups pertains to "other workers" with less than two years of training or work experience such as houseworkers and home health aides.

The yearly visa number allocation for the EB-3 category is 28.8% of the worldwide allocation of 140,000 that are reserved for all employment-based categories plus any number not required by the first and second preferences. The share of the "other worker" category is limited to 10,000.

With the current visa backlog, the projected wait for EB-3 professional/skilled workers is now about seven years while the wait for the "other workers" has lengthened to about nine years.

Many of the applicants have expressed their frustrations to the USCIS over the delay and this had prompted Mike Aytes, Acting USCIS Deputy Director, to address the issue.

Writing for the Leadership Journal of the Department of Homeland Security on April 24, 2009, Mr. Aytes cited several factors that caused the delay.

He said that 234,000 1-140 petitions were filed in late 2007 and early 2008 as a result of the new regulations and the clearing of the labor certification backlogs.

Also, adjustment of status applications rose to nearly 300,000 due to the anticipated increase in filing fees and the unexpected visa number availability in July 2007 for all EB-3 professional/skilled worker petitions.

Mr. Aytes further said that the USCIS was doing all that it could

to mitigate the harsh impact of the long visa wait such as completing the adjudication of older 1-140 petitions and processing newer petitions within four months.

USCIS, he said, is now issuing to eligible applicants employment authorization documents with a validity date of two years and is working with the State Department to insure that every available visa number is used. It will also transfer unused family-based visa numbers to the employment-based petitions as what it did in 2007. ■

REUBEN S. SEGURITAN has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695 5281 or log on to his website at [www.seguritan.com](http://www.seguritan.com)

MAINLAND NEWS

Filipina Launches Bid to Run Across United States

JOY ROJAS, 44, has begun her quest to run across the continental U.S.

A small crowd gathered at the Eagle Rock Mall in Los Angeles on May 10, 2009 to see her off. She is scheduled to arrive on September 8, 2009 at the Philippine Consulate in Manhattan, New York.

Rojas is scheduled to run a total of about 30 miles (50 kms) per day for four months. In total, her journey would cover 3,000 (5,000 kms), cross 12 states and four different time zones. If successful, she will be the first Filipina and first Southeast Asian woman to run across the U.S.

A survivor of tuberculosis,



Rojas will donate proceeds from her cross-continental run to two Philippine-based charities: the Anti-Tuberculosis Program of the Inner Wheel Club of Quezon City District

738 and the Social Services Division of the Philippine Heart Center.

Rojas' run, which she has called "Takbong Pangarap," is the culmination of a lifelong dream.

"For some strange reason I was dreaming of running across the United States, and now I'm here," she says. "I just have to go for it. Not everybody has this privilege of being able to do this."

Rojas is from Manila and a journalist by training. In 2005, she was the first woman to run across the Philippines.

To follow her progress or donate to the cause, visit [www.thepoc.net/index.php/Takbong-Pangarap](http://www.thepoc.net/index.php/Takbong-Pangarap) rapl. (Asian Journal) ■

Processing of Filipino Veterans' Claims On Track

ACCORDING TO WILLY C. GAA, Philippine Ambassador to Washington, the processing of Filipino World War II veterans' Equity Fund claims remains on track.

Ambassador Gaa based his statements on information from the U.S. Department of Veterans Af-

airs. The majority of claims are in the system and being processed.

He thanked those who have been instrumental in ensuring the implementation of the monumental measure and expressed hope that the waiting period for veterans to receive their benefits could be rea-

sonably reduced.

Ambassador Gaa also welcomed the inclusion of funding for the Filipino Veterans Equity Fund in the 2010 proposed budget that was submitted by U.S. President Barack Obama to Congress on May 7, 2009. (DFJ) ■



A nurse attends to ailing Filipino World War II veteran Charlie Yancha, 81, while claiming US benefits before the US Department of Veterans Affairs processing center at the Veterans Memorial Center in Quezon city in suburban Manila on February 23, 2009.

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IFS-A107534 Ed. 12/2006

# MAINLAND NEWS

## Researcher Concludes Filipinos Are Big Spenders

**WHEN IT COMES TO SPENDING**, Filipinos pack quite a punch, says Prof. Antonio Villegas Jr., from the College of Alameda and the University of San Francisco.

In fact, Filipinos plunk down an average of \$88.6 billion for goods and services annually, which is among the top for minority groups when it comes to spending, Villegas says.

Villegas presented the results of his nationwide study at a recent media forum organized by the Philippine American Press Club-USA and the Asian American Ad-



vertising Federation (3AF). Other interest facts from Villegas' research include the following:

- Filipino-Americans have the highest employment rate at 68.9

percent compared to 64.8 percent overall nationwide.

- 63 percent conduct their banking online and 75 percent use ATMs.
- 69 percent of Filipino Ameri-

cans are employed compared to 65 percent nationwide.

- About 5.5 percent of Filipino Americans live below the poverty line compared to 13 percent nationwide.
- McDonald's, Walmart, and Costco are their most popular brands.
- Filipino-Americans spend an average of \$147 a week on groceries.
- 93 percent regularly recycling.

Esther Chavez from IN-QUIRER.net notes that much information Filipino-American consumers is outdated and that tapping this market may be the way out of the recession for some companies.

"The Fil-Am market is a strong consumer base," she says. "Several mainstream companies who have reached out to us have benefited greatly."

(www.Inquirer.net) ■

## Filipina Artist Holds Exhibit in New York



MARIA PUZETA ESCANO

"May Morning" Oil on Canvas

**A PHILIPPINE-BASED PAINTER** who was discovered online is holding a surrealist/abstract exhibit titled "Collide" until May 28, 2009 at Ico Gallery in Soho, New York City.

Maria Puzeta Escano was invited by gallery owner Dalia Chako and curator Skylor Brumms who were impressed with her paintings.

"We think her work has a unique sensitivity and delicate nature with an angelic perspective that we find very appealing and makes us think of faraway worlds and beautiful dreams," Chako says.

Escaño took a long hiatus from the art scene. Her last exhibit was in 2002 with several friends in her hometown in the Quezon province. She stopped painting and concentrated on working for a design agency and not long after that, got married and became busy

with family life.

"I love doing art so much that I do not see making them as work. It is rather an answer to that need inside my soul to celebrate life," she says.

Escaño traces the inspiration of her idyllic, pastoral works and children captured in light-hearted mood to her upbringing in her hometown in Sariaya where the rich and vibrant culture of her Filipino-Spanish-American influences bore fruit.

"In my hometown, there was a park called Atienza's Park, with its once-flourishing meadows and trees, that played such a critical role in my creative yearnings," she says.

To view her New York exhibit, visit <http://icogallery.com>. Her other paintings can be viewed at her personal website, <http://puchetteescano.weebly.com>. ■

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## GLOBAL NEWS

### Pirates Release Two Vessels With Filipino Seafarers

**TWO MORE VESSELS WITH FILIPINO** seafarers on board were released by Somali pirates last Saturday, May 9, the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said.

The 32,000-tonne Malaspina Castle, with 24 seafarers on board, was freed by hijackers. Four of the vessel's crew are Filipinos.

The Italian-operated vessel was seized by pirates in the Gulf of Aden last April 6.

Greek-owned Nipayia, hijacked last March 25, was also freed by its captors on the same

day. It has 18 Filipino seafarers.

All Filipino crewmembers of the freed vessels were in good condition.

DFA officials are still awaiting details of the repatriation of the Filipino crew of the two vessels. Filipino seafarers on board three other hijacked vessels namely, the MV Saldanha, the Philippine-flagged MT Stolt Strength, and the M/V Titan have arrived in Manila.

The release of the MV Malaspina Castle and the MT Nipayia further reduces the number of Filipino seafarers in the custody of pirates to 59. (DFA) ■

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**JUNE TO AUGUST—Overseas Absentee Voting Registration for Filipino citizens** who wish to vote in the presidential elections in May 2010. Registrants may come to the Consulate in person with their

Philippine passports to accomplish the application form.

**JUNE 12, 8:30am**, at the consular grounds — *"Arang ng Kalayaan"* (Independence Day)

and another activity at 6:30 pm.

**JULY 10-14TH** — *Ambassadors and Consul Generals Tour to the Philippines*, a special package tour for the public.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### LITTLE MISS PHIL. HAWAII / SATURDAY

May 30, 2009 • Call Maggie Domingo-841-2841, Estrella Ramos-927-8188 and Janice Sevilla-895-8000

### LITTLE MISS PHILIPPINES HAWAII SCHOLARSHIP PAGEANT / SATURDAY

May 30, 2009 • 6 - 9 pm • Empress Restaurant • For more info. call Maggie Domingo at 841-2841 or Janice Sevilla at 895-8000

### MRS. HAWAII FILIPINA PAGEANT BY OFCH / SATURDAY

June 6, 2009 • 6 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village, Tapa Room • Contact person: Eddie Agas-783-3327, Carlota Ader-888-3215

### 11TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF PHIL. INDEPENDENCE / FRIDAY

June 12, 2009 • 7 pm • Featuring the music of Jay Cayuca and his band • Hilton Hawaiian Village Tapa Ballroom • For more info. call Jean Jeremiah at 387-5481 or Emily Reyes at 595-6316 x 242

### ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROJECT / SATURDAY

June 13, 2009 • 9:30 am - 1:30 pm • Likelike Highway & Kaihi Street • Contact Lina Longboy at 375 0828

### MISS OAHU FILIPINA PAGEANT / SATURDAY

June 14, 2009 • 6 pm • Hawaii Prince Hotel • Contact event

chair Danny Villaruz at 778-0233 or Lina Longboy at 375-0828

### OFCC GOLDEN JUBILEE PRESIDENT'S BALL / FRIDAY

June 26, 2009 • 6 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort & SPA H • Contact event chair Leo Gozar at 230-0088 or Lina Longboy at 375 0828

### OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL (OFCC) ANNUAL CONVENTION / SATURDAY

June 27, 2009 • 7:30 am - 4 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort & SPA • Contact event chair Carlota Ader at 688-3215 or Lina Longboy at 375 0828 for more details

### FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII INSTALLATION BANQUET / SATURDAY

July 11, 2009 • 6 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village • Call Rose Mendoza at 371-3902 or Bennett Evangelista at 398-5988

### VISAYAN CENTENNIAL EVENTS

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## PHILIPPINE NEWS

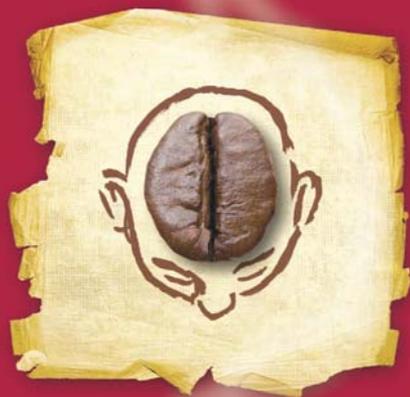
### Residents vs. Garbage Dump in Benguet



BAGUIO CITY RESIDENTS, along with villagers in nearby Tuba, Benguet, stop dump trucks from entering the eight-hectare open dump in Barangay Irtan which they said is threatening water sources in outlying communities. (www.philstar.com) Photo by Andy Zapata Jr.

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