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# NEWS EDITION

SEPTEMBER 29, 2012

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

## FILCOM CENTER AT 10: A DECADE OF ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

By Belinda A. Aquino, Ph.D.



Participants in a citizenship class at the FilCom Center observe a mock interview to help prepare them for an interview with a consular official. The class is sponsored by the Hawaii Immigrant Justice Center at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii and the FilCom Center

**O**n Saturday, October 6, 2012, the Filipino Community Center (FilCom) will mark its coming of age with a Bayanihan Gala Fundraiser Dinner starting at 6 pm at the Hilton Hawaiian Village's Coral Ballroom.

After 10 years of existence, the FilCom has spanned a whole generation of struggle, hard work, uncertainty, persistence, engagement with the community and a path to achievement. And it should be at that stage in time when it has acquired the ability to chart a more stable footing for its future survival.

Its second decade should be that of FilCom making its way to becoming

a vibrant institution in the community with a continuing narrative of bold initiatives that will bring it closer to its basic mission. Briefly stated, this mission aims to develop and operate a community center that provides a comprehensive infrastructure for the promotion and perpetuation of the Filipino culture and spirit in Hawaii based on fundamental values of the ancestral homeland.

This framework of institutionalization is key to the future

of the Center. The concept refers to developing any system, be it a school, hospital, church, bank, bureaucracy, or other, according to established institutions and best practices of professionalism rather than on individual, personal or partisan considerations.

A major feature of the upcoming celebration will be the conferment of honors to U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Akaka for his long public career and outstanding

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### PUBLIC URGED TO TURN IN UNUSED, EXPIRED MEDICATION

by HFC Staff

**T**he Department of the Attorney General, in partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and State Narcotics Enforcement Division, is coordinating its 5th National Take Back Initiative on the islands of Oahu, Kauai, Maui and Hawaii.

Those who have expired or unused prescription medications are encouraged to



turn in their medications on Saturday, September 29, 2012, from 10 am to 2 pm at various collections points. On Oahu, drop-off locations include:

- Hawaii State Capitol

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### FIL-AM ARTIST BAGS NEW ERA'S INTRODUCING GLOBAL COLLECTIVE ART COMPETITION



Visual artist Marconi Calindas

by HFC Staff

**M**arconi Calindas, a San Francisco-based visual artist emerged

as the big winner for the New Era Introducing North America 2012 Global Cre-

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## EDITORIALS

# Ten Years and Going Strong

**A** decade ago, a dream long resident in the hearts and minds of Hawaii's Filipino community finally came true with the opening of the long-awaited Filipino Community Center (FilCom). Filipinos finally had a place to meet, exchange ideas and celebrate their rich culture.

Not only is it a symbol of ethnic pride, the FilCom Center is the crown jewel of the efforts of many who toiled countless hours to turn their collective dream into a reality. The story of the FilCom Center is really about many hands pulling together. The effort was launched by small band of visionaries who were joined by dozens of volunteers from all walks of life who secured pledges, grants and loans, and donated professional services.

The \$14 million FilCom Center, which is the largest Filipino community center outside of the Philippines, sits on former sugarcane land next to the landmark Waipahu Sugar Mill and has already served a key role in the revitalization of Waipahu.

It has been well-utilized for private functions such as seminars, banquets, wedding receptions and other private events. And not just by Filipinos. The FilCom Center has been used by Samoan, Laotian and other



ethnic groups for awards banquets and church functions.

The FilCom Center also offers review classes for qualified individuals ready to take the NCLEX-RN board exam; classes in Filipino folk dancing, ballroom dancing, computer, taekwondo and es-crima; academic classes on citizenship and personal finance; Filipino for Kids Program for youth to learn more about the Philippines' rich culture and heritage, as well as a host of other cultural projects and community activities.

For all of its achievements, several challenges lay ahead for FilCom, notably finances. The Filipino community should fully support the FilCom Center, not only with tax deductible donations but to also volunteer at the office, during events or for teaching courses. If you have a skill to share, please let them know. The FilCom Center should and must continue to be at the forefront of community activities and services for Hawaii's Filipinos. May it forever stand as a tes-

tament to the resilient spirit of the Filipino people and their significant contributions to Hawaii's history and serve as sentinel of Filipino arts and traditions. ■

## Job Generation

**D**espite prevailing woes in the global economy, overseas deployment of Filipino workers went up by 1.3 percent in the first half of the year, according to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. That's 891,460 Filipinos leaving the country for jobs overseas in just six months - good news for those back home who will receive their remittances, and good news for economic growth figures.

The government, however, cannot ignore the continuing crisis in the eurozone and the general economic slowdown in other parts of the globe. Even China and India, economic giants of the developing world, are feeling the downturn and are retooling strategies to improve economic performance. Violent unrest in the oil-producing states of the Arab world is compounding global economic instability.

Amid the uncertainty, the Philippines must be ready to absorb more of its own workers. The overseas deployment has its social costs. Many industries are also running out of skilled workers because of the continuing exodus. President Aquino, even during his election campaign, said his long-term goal is to create an environment that will make it unnecessary

for millions of Filipinos to find better employment opportunities abroad.

Efforts so far to achieve that long-term goal of creating enough decent jobs have not taken off. The public-private partnership or PPP initiative was supposed to be the flagship program for job generation of the Aquino administration. Launched with fanfare in November 2010, the PPP has stalled, with only one project set to start construction next month: the Daang Hari-South Luzon Expressway link, with an estimated cost of P1.96 billion.

Bidding has been conducted for a second PPP project to construct school buildings, estimated at P10 billion, with the awarding expected soon. The government had promised to bid out eight PPP projects this year.

Although surveys continue to show strong business confidence in the administration, the numbers are not being reflected in levels of foreign direct investment. Response to the PPP initiative was so tepid that the government announced it would just tap official development assistance to finance PPP projects. At the start of his term, the President said one of the immediate challenges the nation faced was regaining business confidence. He has taken several steps in the right direction, but more must be done to fuel job-generating investments. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)) ■



NEWS EDITION

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# Honolulu's Rail Project Down But Not Out

by Dan GRABAUSKAS



Following the August ruling by the Hawaii Supreme Court, a temporary hold has been placed on any new construction for the Honolulu rail transit project until all archaeological inventory survey (AIS) work is completed for the rail route. Despite the delay, rail for Oahu remains on track.

HART remains fully committed to moving the project forward as well as being in full compliance with all laws. Work done thus far includes the construction of support columns for the elevated rail system in Leeward Oahu and grading work for the system's train maintenance and storage facility in Waipahu.

We estimate that construction of the rail system will resume in about nine months. We are working closely with the contractors and will have further discussions with them on what types of work are allowed during the interim. The rail project is one of the largest job creators for our local construction industry and we look forward to completing the AIS work so the contractors can move forward with construction.

To accomplish this, we are looking at ways to accelerate the archaeological sur-

vey schedule but will also ensure that this important work is done in a responsible and respectful manner. Archaeological survey work for the first half of the route from Kapolei to Aloha Stadium has been completed and no *iwi kupuna* have been found. This same work is also underway on the final portion of the 20-mile alignment from Honolulu International Airport to Ala Moana Center.

As the archaeological survey is being completed, work will continue on the design and engineering phases of the project, including the train cars and other facets of the rail system, so construction can progress as quickly as possible once it resumes.

While a previous estimate of projected construction delay costs could run between \$7 million to \$10 million a month, the exact costs are still being finalized. Please note that we have a built-in contingency of more than \$600 million to cover

unforeseen costs. The revenue for the contingency and overall construction comes from two sources—the half-percent surcharge on the General Excise & Use Tax (GET) collected since 2007 and federal funds. This is in addition to a \$193 million surplus projected at the end of scheduled rail construction in 2019.

While the project has been in the news recently in connection with the mayoral race, it is premature to say what impact a new mayor would have on the project. HART will work closely with its Board of Directors and other stakeholders in the coming months to determine what course will be needed. This is the farthest a rail transit project has come in decades. As we move closer to receiving our \$1.55 billion Full-Funding Grant Agreement, we remain committed to doing our best to keep the project on track and on budget.

In the meantime, HART

will continue asking for your support in moving this important project forward. Rail will be an efficient and reliable transportation option for the Filipino community living on Oahu. Seven of the 12 communities along the rail route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center have a significant Filipino population that could commute by train to work and other destinations.

Having elevated trains operate safely above and away from the surface traffic below is what will encourage ridership of Honolulu's rail service. An elevated train will

not be affected or delayed by the surface traffic congestion and will arrive frequently and on time at each station.

Despite this recent temporary setback, rail is finally moving forward after 40 years of discussion and planning. It took a collaborative effort by many people and organizations on many different levels, and soon we will resume the tangible results of that effort. ■

DAN GRABAUSKAS is CEO and executive director of the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART).

## SOCIAL SECURITY UPDATE

# Don't Let Identity Thieves Trick You

by Shona BARNES

Halloween is a time when many people like a good scare. Whether it's a frightening costume party or a horrifying haunted house, kids and grown-ups alike line up for a good fright. What makes it enjoyable is that it's all in good fun. People know that there is no real danger as long as precautions are taken.

The days leading up to Halloween—October 20 to 27—also happen to be National Protect Your Identity Week.

Law enforcement officials remind the public that identity theft is a real threat. Identity

thieves victimize millions of people each year. Take the proper precautions and don't be tricked by identity thieves.

Be sure to safeguard your personal information, such as your Social Security number and mother's maiden name. Identity thieves hunger for such information like trick-or-treaters hunger for candy.

You can help protect yourself by not carrying your Social Security card with you and not providing your personal information to unknown sources over the internet or by email. Be sure to shred any documents, bills, or paperwork before you throw it away. Most importantly, never reply to an email claiming to be from Social Security that asks

you for your Social Security number or other personal information.

If you think you've been the victim of identity theft, you should contact the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-IDTHEFT (1-877-438-4338); TTY 1-866-653-4261. Or you can go to [www.idtheft.gov](http://www.idtheft.gov) and click on the link for "Report Identity Theft."

Learn more about identity theft at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10064.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10064.html).

If you want to get involved with Protect Your Identity Week, visit [www.protectyouridnow.org](http://www.protectyouridnow.org).

Don't fall victim to an identity thief. Safeguard your identity and take precautions to keep the "bad guys" at bay—during Protect Your Identity Week, Halloween and all throughout the year. ■



Michael A. McMann, M.D.

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(cont. from page 1; **FILCOM...**)

contributions to the community as a public servant for the past 36 years. Sen. Akaka is retiring in a few months after his term in Congress expires.

**FILCOM'S HISTORY**

The FilCom Center as we know it today traces its roots to a tiny one-room office at Umi Street in Kalihi where it all began in the 1990s. It was formally incorporated as a non-profit organization with a board of directors composed of Roland Casamina as president, Mario Ramil as vice president, Lito Alcantra as secretary, Felipe "Jun" Abinsay as treasurer and Stanley Suyat as director. It was a time for visionary planning on the part of these early pioneering leaders. They vigorously recruited volunteers to raise funds from the Filipino community and undertook activities that strengthened the fledgling organization.

The first Filipino Fiesta was held at Kapiolani Park and organized by Eddie Flores Jr. In 1994, the future Center got its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. Meanwhile, negotiations had begun with American Factors (AMFAC) for the donation of a two-acre lot on the site of an old sugar mill on Waipahu as the future location of the Center. At the end of the decade, Wimberley Allison Tong & Goo provided pro bona services to design a three-story building on a 50,000 square-foot space of the donated land. Then-Gov. Benjamin Cayetano released \$1.5 million

appropriated by the state Legislature to build the Center.

Ground breaking ceremonies started in March 2001 and in June 2002, the FilCom moved to its present location. Aggressive fundraising and grants writing by the early leaders went into full swing and garnered substantial donations from private foundations such as the Consuelo Foundation and the Harry & Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, among others. The project also received grants from the public sector, notably \$1.5 million from the State and various grants-in-aid funds from the federal government, with support from U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye. Initial planning funds came from the City using CDBG funds from the federal HUD.

Historically, the concept of a community center as a gathering place or "watering hole" for Filipino activities in Hawaii started way back in the 1960s when a group of East-West Center grantees came for the first time to Hawaii to pursue graduate studies. The Ala Moana Center at the time was just starting out and the only Filipino business enterprise was Philippine Handicrafts, which was owned and operated by Mrs. Soledad Arre Alconcel. The East-West Center grantees would hang around and Alconcel would talk story when she was not busy with customers. She would talk enthusiastically about her dream of establishing a real community center where Filipinos could chat and keep abreast of what was happening in the Philippines.

The kind-hearted Alconcel would eventually establish the

Philippine Cultural Foundation—the beneficiary of her life insurance to help establish the Filipino center she had dreamed about.

FilCom's current president and chief operating officer, Rose Cruz Churma, was a part of the initial stages of FilCom's development as project manager. She had the main responsibility of overseeing the construction of the future building. An architect by training, she had the academic expertise and experience to oversee the building. She had also served as interim executive director for a few years before a formal search was undertaken. Eva Laird Smith and Luella Costales served brief stints as executive director.

In 2004, the positions of president and chief operating officer were merged for a better streamlining of the Center's structure. This meant recruiting an individual who had both the professional stature for management purposes and technical skills, particularly on financial and logistical matters.

Geminiano "Toy" Arre, Jr., brother of the late Mrs. Alconcel, had just finished a visiting consultant stint at the City of Manila and he seemed like the most qualified candidate for the job. A former University of Hawaii bookstore manager and housing administrator, Arre also served as finance director of the City. With his formidable credentials, he hit the ground running.

During the next seven years, Arre continued the aggressive fundraising and grants writing efforts of FilCom, which grew in stature and started becoming the "center of gravity" of the Filipino community. It played a critical role during the Centennial observance of Filipino immigration to Hawaii by providing technical assistance and institutional support to the Filipino Centennial Commission, which was created by the state Legislature to implement a year-long program of centennial activities in 2006.

Input from the Philippines included a full-size of Jose Rizal, the national hero, and a mural portraying the early plantation history of the Filipino community with the recruitment of 15 *sakadas* to work on the sugar plantations.

When Arre retired for the third time in his long public career after seven years at the helm of FilCom, a search was

undertaken to select his successor. It was the end of an era and the beginning of another. Churma accepted the offer to come home to an organization she had nurtured earlier. She gave up her private practice as an architect where she was making more money than the salary she would receive from the non-profit.

When asked what motivated her to do it, her casual answer was simply, "I guess I was out of my mind to get into something like this knowing how difficult and seemingly impossible it was in those years." Both Casamina and Flores and other core members of the organization lauded her bold decision to succeed Arre.

As an architect, Churma understands the building as though it was another person she has known so well. It's amazing how instinctively she would say, this space could be used for a sink, or for something else as she makes her rounds in the building. She has a functional sense of space, as would be expected, coupled with what would be aesthetically pleasing.

**CONTEMPORARY SCENE:  
ENGAGEMENT AND  
ACHIEVEMENT**

It has been a decade since a modern FilCom has emerged in our midst. It is the envy of overseas Filipino communities much larger in scope than Hawaii's, such as those on the U.S. mainland and in Middle East enclaves. Its architecture is European and its design attractive. The courtyard features the mosaic of Consuelo Zobel de Ayala Alger, the founder of the foundation bearing her namesake.

FilCom's programs and projects that have been developed in the early years include the following:

**1. Collaboration and Networking.** The FilCom has provided structural and technical support to various volunteer projects, such as NAMI (Nursing Associates and Mentors, Inc.) under Bea Ramos-Razon, which conducts review classes every year for nursing graduates (especially from Philippine universities) to prepare them to pass the tough state licensure exam. NAMI predates the formal establishment of FilCom in 2002, making it the oldest volunteer program under the auspices of FilCom.

The Filipino for Kids Program, initiated by UH instructor Imelda Gasmen, is another example of a volunteer program supported by FilCom aimed at giving Filipino children familiarity with their ancestral language, in hopes of strengthening their sense of cultural identity and understanding their ethnic roots. Other cultural projects and activities that have used the Center for enrichment purposes are the ballroom dancing groups led by Edith and Roland Pascua and the *escrima* (martial arts) under Pedoy Escrima. Even non-Filipino groups like Taekwondo (Japan International) have used FilCom for their activities.

**2. Church, religious, family and individual groups have made FilCom their meeting place periodically for numerous occasions** like baptisms, birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, funeral services and other special events in keeping with Filipino cultural observances. Recently, memorial services for Arminahila "Nena" Tampon, mother of media personality Emme Tomimbang, was held at FilCom. The Filipino ohana has indeed found a second home at the welcoming spaces of the FilCom Center.

**3. Other professional, social and cultural programs have found a hospitable venue in the Center's function rooms or the courtyard and the spacious auditorium for community groups** like the UFCH, COVO, OFCC, FCCH, GUMIL, UPAAH, FAUW, PNOH, Filipino Jaycees, Knights of Rizal and other regional, linguistic and cultural organizations too numerous to mention.

The FilCom is also "home ground" for the Banda Kawayan, a unique Filipino musical group whose only instrument is the good old Filipino bamboo. This has attracted a number of very young performers who have acquired a deeper appreciation of their ancestral artistic and musical heritage. The longtime Silangan Singers, under the leadership of Ruth Pfeiffer, have also performed on various occasions at FilCom.

The next major cultural program to be presented is "Ram-rambak," a mosaic of Ilokano and Amianan (Northern Philippines) languages and cultures.

(continued on page 6)

**Joseph M. Zobian, M.D.**



**Board-certified ophthalmologist**  
U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer, Philippines  
San Marcelino, Zambales  
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Tagalog and Ilokano spoken

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(cont. from page 4; **FILCOM...**)

It will be presented on September 30, 2012 at 4 pm at the Consuelo Courtyard at FilCom by Dr. Aurelio Agcaoli, UH professor of Ilokano Language & Literature. Ramrambak is the first of a series of "FilCom Sundays" to be held on the last Sunday of each month. Each FilCom Sunday will have varying themes and various Filipino community groups are being encouraged to take the lead in organizing each of the Sunday events.

**4. Financial Literacy classes or the Kinabukasan Series (Kinabukasan is a Tagalog term derived from "bukas," meaning "tomorrow") are also held at FilCom.** The series are designed to give participants a better understanding of their financial affairs, particularly with regard to taxation, loans, mortgages, financial planning, insurance and similar topics. This is the first in a series of cultural enrichment classes that will be scheduled at the Center. Others will be on wellness and health, entrepreneurship, literature and language, and other major topics affecting Filipino daily life in Hawaii.

**5. The Citizenship Course has been introduced on the FilCom agenda to accelerate Filipino participation in government and civic affairs, especially with regard to the rights and obligations of citizenship.** While the Filipino community is the largest ethnic group in the state, citizenship, voter

registration, and actual voter turnout rates are quite low compared with other minority groups. Churma has arranged with the Hawaii Immigrant Justice Center of the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii to send their volunteer lawyers like Bow Mun Chin to conduct the course. The first group of graduates received their certificates for completing the five-week Citizenship Course on September 15, 2012. Hopefully, they will file their citizenship papers shortly.

**6. Computer classes designed to improve one's working skills are also held regularly at the Center for various groups.**

**A WORD ON SEN. AKAKA**

The senator comes from a family of distinguished professionals identified with and symbolic of the Hawaiian renaissance. His brother, the late Rev. Abraham Akaka of Kawaihau Church, is best remembered for delivering the stirring principal address at a special church service on Hawaii statehood in 1959, which is still being quoted today.

Akaka served as a civilian worker in the U.S. Corps of Engineers and later in active deployment with the U.S. Army from 1945-47. His tours of duty included Saipan and Tinian. After the war, he received his B.A. in education from UH and started his career as an educator. He was a school teacher first and later appointed principal in Hawaii's Department of Education.

Shifting to politics, he was



Aspiring nurses prep for the NCLEX-RN exam. Review classes are held at the FilCom Center and conducted by Nursing Advocates & Mentors Inc (Inset: Sen. Daniel Akaka)

first elected to the House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress as a Democrat in 1976. When U.S. Sen. Spark Matsunaga passed on, Akaka was appointed to take his seat. Subsequently, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1990 and re-elected in 1994, 2000 and 2006. Akaka is the current chairman of the Senate's Indian Affairs Committee and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia. He also serves on the Armed Services, Banking, Urban Affairs, and Veteran Affairs committees.

The senator's principal legacy consists of his determined efforts to have a bill passed to grant federal recognition to Native Hawaiians similar to those of other Native American populations. Introduced in 2000 and known as the Akaka Bill, its stated purpose is to "provide a process for the reorganization of the single Native Hawaiian governing entity and the reaffirmation of the special political and legal relationship between the United States and the native Hawaiian governing entity for purposes of continuing a government-to-government relationship."

Unfortunately, even after nearly a dozen years, the bill has still not been scheduled for a full Senate vote, even if it has passed appropriate committees. Objections coming from Akaka's colleagues, mostly Republican, revolve around the bill's being "unconstitutionality raced-based." In the current session, a scaled-down version deleting the objectionable sections has been passed again by the committee and will be presented for a full Senate vote.

Akaka has been most supportive of Filipino-related issues in the Congress. In 2009 at the Willard Hotel in Washington D.C., he and U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye were given a presidential citation from then Philippine

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who expressed recognition and appreciation of their work on behalf of Filipino World War II veterans. U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa has co-sponsored or co-authored many of these veterans-related legislative measures in the House. The Hawaii delegation to Congress has been instrumental in getting the relevant legislation passed, resulting in substantial benefits to Filipino veterans who fought side-by-side with the U.S. in World War II. Some of these bills related to Filipino veterans benefits are still pending.

**CONCLUSION**

During the past decade, much has been accomplished by the FilCom Center despite its limited financial resources and professional staff. It derives its income from rentals of spaces and rooms by business groups and other non-profits. There are offices for insurance, medical and dental clinics, small business and other groups, which are not necessarily Filipino-operated. For instance, the Waipahu Family Health Center of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center has its offices at FilCom.

Given its legal personality as a non-profit, the FilCom is not allowed to operate a business for profit. This is problematic in light of the fact that as of now, the Center is still in debt to the tune of a whopping \$3 million, which arose out of negotiations with AmFac when the lot was donated.

Churma is aware that this is like the albatross around FilCom's neck, which can be gradually resolved with generous donations from philanthropic benefactors in the larger community and from the Philippines. The Center is just making it in terms of its operating and maintenance costs, which amount to about \$21,000 a month. It is obvious that it will need much more than the rentals and modest do-

nations that come occasionally. But Churma is profusely thankful for a continuous supply of volunteer workers and professionals from the community who donate long hours to assist the Center.

A cautious optimist, Churma continues to work even during weekends to reach creative and productive solutions to the Center's basic problems. She hopes that the spirit of collaboration that has been shown over the last decade will continue with even greater vigor. She uses the concept of "community partnership" given that is the only way an organization of FilCom's nature can continue to operate with sustained vitality.

"You develop support groups that want to offer their services or certain activities that at the same time promote the mission and goals of FilCom," she says. "For example, in the case of the upcoming Ramrambak festival, the organizers want to develop cultural and linguistic awareness of a certain region in the Philippines, which squares with our objective of promoting Philippine culture."

"Likewise, in the upcoming Filipino-American History month in October, community organizations which have existed for a long time can showcase their products and activities, which complement our basic activities in the Center."

Fil-Am History Month was introduced by state Rep. Joey Manahan to recognize the contributions of Filipino-Americans to Hawaii every October of a given year. The second decade of FilCom under the stewardship of Churma and her board of directors and governors should see a more intense engagement with the community for more productive results in terms of generating more human and material resources for the Center, which has rightfully earned its place as "the ultimate source pride of Filipinos in Hawaii."

For inquiries about the 10th anniversary Bayanihan Gala on October 6, please call 680-0451.

(DR. BELINDA A. AQUINO is Professor Emeritus at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Hawaii-Manoa, where she served as professor of political science and Asian studies and director of the Center for Philippine Studies before she retired. A political scientist, she is an internationally known authority on contemporary Philippine politics and society, as well as Filipino overseas communities). ■

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

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- Pearl Harbor Navy Exchange, main lobby
- Schofield Barracks Army and Air Force Post Exchange (PX)
- Town Center of Mililani
- Windward Mall, center court

The 5th National Take Back Initiative will also have an exhibit booth at the Hawaii Senior's Fair at the Blaisdell Center from September 28 -30, 2012 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

This service is free and anonymous with no questions asked. Tablet, capsules and all other solid dosage forms will be

accepted. Since September 2010, Hawaii, Guam and the Northern Marianas Islands have collected a total of nearly 6,700 lbs of expired and unused prescription medications.

With each Take Back effort, the total amount of expired or unused prescription medications collected has increased. On the most recent Take Back day, citizens turned in a record-breaking 552,161 lbs (276 tons) of medications for safe and proper disposal at the 5,659 Take Back sites available in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

According to data from the National Survey on Drug Use

and Health, the number of adults aged 18-25 who used prescription drugs for non-medical purposes in the past month declined 14 percent—from 2 million in 2010 to 1.7 million in 2011.

This decline has resulted in an overall 12 percent drop in the number of Americans abusing prescription drugs. Complete survey findings can be found at [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

Law enforcement and medical professionals remind the public of the following:

- **Unused or expired medicine should be disposed of properly when it is no longer needed for the ill-**

**ness for which it was prescribed.** Medicines may lose their effectiveness after the expiration date. Improper use of prescription drugs can be as dangerous as illegal drug use.

- **Having unused and expired medicine in your home increases the risk of accidental poisoning.** Homes where children or the elderly live are especially vulnerable to this danger. People may mistake one type of medicine for another type. Children may also mistake medicine for candy.
- **Unused or expired medi-**

**cine should not be thrown in the trash or flushed down the toilet.** Proper disposal helps reduce the risk of prescription drugs being used inappropriately. Proper disposal helps reduce the risk of prescription drugs entering a human water supply or potentially harming aquatic life.

The 5th National Prescription Drug Take Back Initiative is a partnership between the Department of the Attorney General, the DEA, and the Narcotics Enforcement Division, Department of Public Safety. ■

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Kumu Kahua Theatre Announces Playwriting Contest

KUMU KAHUA THEATRE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII-MANOA'A THEATRE & DANCE DEPARTMENT are co-sponsoring a playwriting contest. Playwrights are invited to enter their work for cash prizes.

The contest is held each

year in an effort to bring new and exciting drama to the stage. Prizes will be offered in the following categories:

- Hawaii Prize (\$600) is open to residents and non-residents. The play must be set in Hawaii or deal with some aspect of the Hawaii experience.

- Pacific Rim Prize (\$450) is open to residents and non-residents. The play must be set in or deal with the Pacific Islands, the Pacific Rim or the Pacific/Asian American experience.
- Resident Prize (\$250) is only open to residents at the

time of submission. The play may be on any topic.

All plays must be original and must not involve adaptation from any copyrighted source. Also, they should not have received previous production in their current form. The contest is free and the deadline to submit

entries is January 2, 2013. The contest, in concert with playwriting classes at Kumu Kahua Theatre, is part of an ongoing effort to actively develop Hawaii's art and artists.

For more information, visit: [www.kumukahua.org/our-events/contests](http://www.kumukahua.org/our-events/contests), or call Kumu Kahua Theatre at 536-4222 to request a flyer giving full details of the contest rules. ■

City's New Online PV Permit System Off to Fast Start

CITY OFFICIALS SAY THAT THEIR NEW ONLINE photovoltaic building permit system has gotten off to a very successful start with more than 300 permits issued in a little more than a day since the self-service system was launched on September 20.

The expanded online system allows licensed contractors to go to the Department of Planning and Permitting's (DPP) website at <http://dev.honolulu.dpp.org> and issue their own photovoltaic (PV) permits for most single-family residences. The application process is easy to complete and can be done right up to the start of a job.

DPP officials implemented the online program because resources had been overwhelmed by PV permit applications as the popularity of the environmentally-friendly systems has grown. Appointments with DPP plan reviewers were dominated by PV requests, which meant applicants for other types of building permits suffered.

"The new PV permit feature will lessen the burden on DPP staff, which will now be able to devote more time to customers who often have very complex projects to review," says DPP Director David Tanoue. ■

HELPLINE

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am Eleanor Manalang from Manila. I just browsed your newspaper in my desire to get in touch with my friend, who was my co-teacher and best friend here in Manila. She migrated with her family to Hawaii back 1975, which was 37 years ago. Her name is Rebecca Ancheta Aris. I heard she's now on Maui. Her son Aristotle Aris, who is my godson, is now a doctor. Rebecca Ancheta Aris also has her own beauty parlor.

I am planning to visit Hawaii sometime next year and I would be happy to meet and surprise her. I hope your newspaper and readers can be of help in my search for my friend. If you know of her whereabouts, please contact me at [ella\\_manalang@yahoo.com](mailto:ella_manalang@yahoo.com).

Thank you and I look forward to seeing beautiful Hawaii next year.

Eleanor Manalang  
Manila, Philippines

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# Rizal Assembly and Conference a Huge Success

by **Serafin COLMENARES JR., Ph.D.**

**THE RECENT 4TH U.S. REGIONAL ASSEMBLY AND CONFERENCE** of the Order of the Knights of Rizal (OKOR) held at the Ala Moana Hotel from September 1-3, 2012 ended as a huge success. Participants from the U.S. mainland, Canada, Europe, the Philippines and Hawaii agreed that it was well-planned, well-organized and well-executed, that the speakers were excellent and of top caliber, that the topics discussed were eye-opening and challenging, that the tour and activities were informative and exciting, that the gala and entertainment were top-notch, and that, overall, it was a very memorable educational, cultural and social experience.

Sir Jun Hornilla of New Jersey congratulated the host Hawaii Chapter for "the splendid and successful job," while Sir Tom Rodriguez of Arizona called the three-day event "a resounding success."

Specifically, the assembly produced the following outcomes which bode well not only for the Order of the Knights of Rizal but for the Filipino community in Hawaii as well:

**OKOR STRATEGIC PLAN**

The supreme commander elucidated to participants the thrust of the KOR strategic plan based on the theme, *Buhayin si Rizal sa Bawat Filipino*, which aims at rekindling the spirit of nationalism among every Filipino. The workshop that was conducted focused on four goals—increasing membership, deepening knowledge about Rizal, improving communications and initiating projects. It produced a number of ideas for the Supreme Council to consider, not only for strengthening the Knights of Rizal as an organization, but for improving the work that it does in propagating Rizalian ideals and promoting national development in the Philippines.

**SENTRO RIZAL**

Undersecretary Mary Grace Ampil-Tirona, executive director of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, announced that the Filipino Community Center, with the support of the Knights of Rizal-Hawaii Chapter, has been designated by the Philippine government as the first-ever Sentro Rizal outside the Philippines, a center for the propagation of Filipino culture and

Rizalian ideals, as established by Philippine law in 2009. She also challenged other Knights of Rizal chapters to work and collaborate with Filipino community centers in their respective areas to also get designated as Sentros Rizal.

**RIZAL AWARD FOR PEACE**

The 2nd Dr. Jose Rizal Award for Peace was presented to Dr. Jorge Camara in recognition of his accomplishments as an ophthalmologist, educator, humanitarian and community leader. The evening gala itself was well-attended and the out-of-state visitors were mesmerized by the singing talents of Kristian Lei and Deputy Consul General Paul Cortes.

**U.S. REGIONAL OFFICERS**

A new set of officers for the U.S. Region for the term 2012-2014 was appointed. Sir Tom Rodriguez, KGOR, of Arizona is the new regional commander, with Sir Francis Sison, KGOR, of New Jersey as his deputy. The U.S. Region is divided into five areas, each with its own area commander and deputy. Sir Serafin Colmenares Jr., KGOR, of Hawaii Chapter was appointed area commander for the Western USA area, covering the states of

Hawaii, California, Nevada, Arizona, Oregon, Washington and Alaska. His deputy area commander is Sir Conrado Ballecer, KCR, from the Arizona chapter.

**EXALTATION AND AWARDS**

Several members of the Hawaii Chapter were recognized during the assembly. Sirs Colmenares and Clement Bautista of the Hawaii Chapter received the Distinguished Service Awards, while Sir Raymund Liongson was exalted to the fourth degree of Knight Grand Officer of Rizal or KGOR, the second highest degree for a Knight of Rizal. The Hawaii Chapter now has four KGORs—Sirs Ben Alibudbud, Ben Sanchez, Serafin Colmenares and Raymund Liongson.

**NEW MEMBERS**

New members of the Hawaii Chapter were also initiated during the assembly. They are Sirs Ben Cabrerros, Ryan Fernandez, Mario Palma and Jay Raymundo.

The conference featured several "high powered" speakers who talked about various aspects of the theme "Rizal's Legacy: Its Implications to Nation Building." The speakers included Dr. Belinda Aquino, who spoke about Rizal's Vision: Building a Filipino Nation; Dr. Patricio Abinales, who

discussed The Importance of the Fili in Rizal's Political Thought; Dr. Aurelio Agcaoili, who looked into Rizal and the Virtues of Diversity and Multiculturalism; Dr. Raymund Liongson and Clement Bautista, on Rizal's Critical Consciousness and Nation Building; Dr. Lilia Santiago and Dr. Vina Lanzona on Rizal, Women and Nation Building; and Jeffrey Acido and Riz Donna Almagro, who gave their views on Rizal and the Role of the Youth in Nation Building.

These papers, together with the message of Philippine Deputy Consul General Paul Cortes; the opening and closing messages of Sir Reghis Romero, Supreme Commander of the Order of the Knights of Rizal; and the speech by Undersecretary Mary Grace Ampil-Tirona, will be compiled and published as a book by the Hawaii Chapter.

The next biennial U.S. Regional Assembly will be held in 2014, date and place still to be determined. Meanwhile, the next International Assembly will be held in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines in February 2013, while the 4th Canada Regional Assembly will be held in Montreal, Canada from August 31 to September 2, 2013. ■



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(cont. from page 1; FIL-AM...)

ative Project. Marconi snagged a \$10,000 grant to start and assist his artistic career and a full-page in a limited edition book.

Over 1,000 visual artists from the U.S. and Canada submitted entries for the competition. Only 350 of them made it to Phase One of the competition. Of that amount, 100 artists made it to Phase Two where the artists received a blank New Era 59fifty Cap as their canvas for their masterpiece. The field of 100 was further whittled down as only 70 entries made it to the exhibition gallery tour across the U.S. and Canada.

Calindas' piece bested 100 finalists from across North America and tells a story about the harsh realities of bullying and being different that eventually leads to taking a victim's own life due to the cruelties set upon him or her.

His artwork is composed of the New Era 59fifty cap and three separate paper mache masks. The cap is divided into four frames that show what a child goes through with the perils of bullying. The first frame shows a child being taunted, teased and mocked by his

peers. The second frame shows the victim being beaten as others just watch in utter delight. The third frame shows the victim contemplating how cruel life is and how to end this misery. The last frame shows the lifeless victim being cradled in the arms of a mother figure.

The three masks underneath serves as the cap's base and shape a head. One mask shows a victim kneeling with a blunt object in his hand. The second mask shows pills and tablets, while the third one shows a gun and tears of blood. On the base of the art piece are a pencil and a small note that reads, "Dear Mom, I'm sorry. I love you."

Calindas named his piece "A Little Too Late" because most of the time, we want to help someone in dire need but find out that we are a bit late in providing assistance. According to Calindas, it is unfortunate that the inspiration for his winning piece came from victims of bullying who ended up taking their own lives.

"I took the risk of making this subject matter because I felt I had to," Marconi says. "I felt that their stories needed to be told



Marconi's winning masterpiece for this year's New Era Introducing Global Creative Project

and shared—as sad and as tragic they are.”

Calindas added that he took a chance in spite of its sensitivity.

“The subject matter is very close to me as well. I was a victim of bullying in high school because I was thin and effeminate but unlike others I put a stop to it by confronting that bully and expressed my anger,” he says. “Right after that, the bullying stopped. However for most victims, it's not that easy.”

Calindas shares his victory with those youngsters who still endure the pain of bullying for being gay or by just not being like the others. He is also thankful and grateful to the New Era Introducing for providing a venue to all artists to express themselves, including their true selves, through this prestigious competition.

“We are living in a new era of tolerance, understanding and acceptance,” says contest judge Paul Parton, a partner at the renowned advertising agency Brooklyn Brothers. He and two other judges asked themselves which entry would be the one they would take and display at home. Clearly, Calindas' piece won over their artistic taste. Parton described Calindas' masterpiece as “the whole package.”

Other judges included fashion designer and New Era Caps product developer Ashley Bifulco and visual artists David “Lebo” Le Batard and Shaun Curtain. New Era event manager Jim Wannemacher says it was a massive undertaking for he and the judges to choose the winner.

Calindas' winning piece and 69 of the competition finalists will be on gallery tour in an inaugural exhibition on September 28, 2012 in New York City. The three-day exhibit continues the following week in Miami then to Los Angeles and finally in Chicago. New Era will take the tour across Canada thereafter.

The U.S. touring exhibition will be at the following cities:

- New York City, September 29-30

- Miami, October 6-7
- Los Angeles, October 13-14
- Chicago, October 20-21

While Calindas' subject matter varies from pop icons to triumphs of the human spirit, art observers say it's the boldness of his visual vocabulary that holds the viewers attention and continues to attract a widening audience. Black lines and pure hues are the trademarks of Calindas' distinctive rendering style.

Translating his art onto clothing using designs inspired by Guam and Northern Mariana Islands, his clothing line, Wear-A-Marconi is gaining momentum throughout the Pacific Rim—including publication in popular Japanese magazines.

New Era is an international lifestyle brand that's best known for being the official on-field cap for Major League Baseball. The brand is worn as a symbol of self-expression by athletes, artists and some of the most interesting people around the globe. New Era's Introducing Global Collective Art Competition aims to recognize and showcase the creative minds of tomorrow by inspiring individuality. ■

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## Love Endures as Expat Overcomes Phl Adoption Process

by **Helen FLORES**/  
Monday, September 24, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **A 50-YEAR-OLD AMERICAN EXPATRIATE WENT THROUGH** an emotional and expensive adoption process in the Philippines in taking custody of a Filipino child.

James Lafferty, general manager of British American Tobacco-Philippines, said he and his wife Susan fought for almost two years to gain custody of five-year-old Kenji.

"The court is very thorough. I have to testify six times. My children have also testified in court hearings," Lafferty told The STAR.

"The adoption went through about a year and a half ago. Because I lived in 15 countries, I have to get police clearance in all these countries, paying \$20,000 for attorneys' fees alone," he said.

Lafferty said the adoption process in the Philippines is expensive, tedious and time-consuming.

Foreign adoptive parents are required by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to have three to six years of residency in the Philippines.

Under the amended Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) on inter-country adoption, foreign adoptive parents must have the following qualifications: at least 27 years old; has the capacity to act and assume all the rights and responsibilities incidental to parental authority under his/her national law; has undergone appropriate counseling from an accredited counselor in his/her country; has not been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude; is eligible to adopt under his/her national law; can provide the proper care and support and give the necessary moral values and example to the child and, in the proper case, to all his/her other children;

Comes from a country that has diplomatic relations with the Philippines; whose government maintains a foreign adoption agency; and whose laws allow adoption; and files jointly with his/her spouse, if any, who shall have the same qualifications and none of the disqualifications to adopt as prescribed above.

"During court hearings they asked me what would I deprive him... if he needed my kidney take both and I will die. He can take my liver, my kidney I would absolutely die for him. He's my son," Lafferty said.

### 'CHRISTMAS GIFT'

In December 2007, Lafferty received a call from an orphanage in Antipolo, Rizal asking them to become foster family of a three-week-old baby boy.

He said he was informed by a social worker that the baby was abandoned in a garbage pile by his mother.

Lafferty, then the general manager of Procter & Gamble Philippines, was donating overruns of their soap products to the orphanage.

"I was informed that the mother tried to abort the baby and that she has signed a waiver allowing him to be adopted," he said.

In March 2008, the DSWD allowed the couple to become the foster parents of Kenji.

"We only wanted to help but then we fell in love (with the baby)," Lafferty said.

He said his four children, Michael, 27; Morgan, 24; Kristen, 21 and John-Patrick, 18, treated Kenji as their own brother. Kenji turned five last Sept. 12.

"If I can save a life... if I can take a boy who had no opportunities that is my legacy. He can be somebody, he can be a productive member of society," he said.

The couple retained the name given to him by his mother.

"His name is Kenji Ramos, and we did not change the name given to him by his mother. He is a Filipino," said Lafferty.

"I can't save the world but I can save one. I can give this young man a chance. He is the apple of my eye, the center of my life," Lafferty said.

### SUPPORT FOR RH BILL

Lafferty expressed his support to the controversial Reproductive Health (RH) bill to minimize cases of teenage pregnancies in the country.

"I do support the RH bill. Me and my wife were teenage parents," he said.

Aside from helping abandoned children, Lafferty also supports Filipino athletes.

He is currently training athletes who will participate in the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.

Lafferty, who writes a regular column for The STAR, is a physiologist by profession and a former fitness trainer.

He also teaches at the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)) ■

# ELTON BRINGS ROCKET MAN TO PHL

from [www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)



**M**ANILA, Philippines - Forty years after Apollo 16 soared into orbit around the moon, Sir Elton John (photo) with his massive hit Rocket Man, is set to touch down in the Philippines and take even more giant leaps in the music history.

With a career spanning over five decades, singer-songwriter, performer, music icon Elton is all set to blaze Asia's concert scene with his unique brand of music. Fresh from a memorable and highly acclaimed performance at The Queen's Diamond Jubilee concert at the Buckingham Palace, the icon has embarked on a worldwide orbit with his Elton John and Band: 40th anniversary of the Rocket Man Tour.

Rocket Man was one of Elton's highest-charting songs on record charts. The song remained on top of the UK charts for 13 weeks and in the US Billboard charts

for 15 weeks.

Born Reginald Kenneth Dwight, Elton's rise from a pub pianist to one of the top-selling solo artists of all time has been nothing short of monumental. Sir Elton has notched 35 gold and 25 platinum albums as well as 29 consecutive US Top 40 hits. He has sold more than 250 million records worldwide and holds the record for the biggest-selling single of all time, Candle in the Wind '97, which sold over 33 million copies. Since his career began in 1969, Elton has played over 3,500 concerts all around the world.

Fans from all over the globe, Filipinos included,

are eagerly anticipating the musical trip of Elton to rocket into their shores. He bursts into Manila's concert scene for the very first time on Dec. 8 for a special one-night-only performance at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

For details on the concert, check out [www.eltonjohn.com](http://www.eltonjohn.com). Ticket prices are Patron VIP P12,000, Lower Box VIP P11,000, Patron P10,000, Lower Box P10,000, Upper Box A Premium P7,500, Upper Box A P6,000, Upper Box B Premium P4,350, Upper Box B P3,000 and Gen. Admission P1,000. Tickets are now being sold online. Log on to [www.ticketnet.com.ph](http://www.ticketnet.com.ph) or call 911-5555. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)) ■

## FOOD & LEISURE

# Manila is One of Asia's 10 Greatest Street Food Cities

by Ruth SINDICO

**M**ANILA, Philippines - Where can you find some of the greatest street foods in Asia? In Manila, of course.

Whether it's the deep-fried pork rind that is the chicharon or the fertilized

duck egg that is the *balut* (or as one New York Times writer calls it, the "Franken-snack"), the city serves the best street dishes in the continent, according to a listing made by Cable News Networks' travel website CNNgo.

"Whenever possible, foods are deep-fried, which



isaw and 'betamax' (bituka ng manok) makes them that much more mouth-watering and, as a bonus, kills germs," CNNgo's Lina Goldberg observes of Filipino street food.

CNNgo lists the country's

top ten street dishes as follows: *chicharon, taho, balut, kwek kwek, silog, isaw, kikiyam, banana cue* and fish balls.

It also goes on to recommend where they can be best enjoyed, complete with a detailed map.

While the article identifies Manila as the center of street food haven in the country, some of the street food it mentioned can be

found in Quezon City (isaw at the University of the Philippines Diliman and silog at Banchetto Shopwise) and Pateros (balut).

The other great street food cities in Asia according to CNNgo are Penang, Taipei, Bangkok, Fukuoka, Hanoi, Singapore, Seoul, Xi'an and Phnom Penh. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)) ■

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

# City Councilmember Issues Support for Sand Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

**COUNCILMEMBER ROMY M. CACHOLA** has issued his support for a cogeneration component at the Sand Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (SIWWTP).

"A cogeneration facility will provide a treatment alternative that would be safer for the public and save taxpayer money. It would kill the toughest pathogens in the sludge, which was one of the community's concerns relating to public health and safety," Cachola says.

Cachola's comments were in response to a press release from the City regarding the State Procurement Office's (SPO) validation of a contract to expand the biosolids digester at Sand Island. Cachola had asked the

SPO to review the contact and determine whether the City had followed proper procurement practices.

Cogeneration, a process which creates electricity from the methane produced by a bio-conversion facility, would produce energy that would be used to power the Sand Island facility, thus saving taxpayer money. Cogeneration was agreed upon by the administration and Synagro, based on a letter from Mayor Peter Carlisle to Councilmember Ann Kobayashi dated June 5, 2012.

Councilmember Cachola sent a letter to Mayor Peter Carlisle dated September 19, 2012 which spells out his support for the cogeneration technology, as well as a pro-

viso in the City's executive capital budget for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 relating to the Solids Handling Facility at the SIWWTP which states:

"No funds may be expended for construction until: 1) the department [of environmen-

tal services] has provided the Council with a detailed and impartial feasibility analysis that compares the viability and cost-effectiveness of constructing a publicly-funded second digester over a privately-financed thermophilic operation/project; and 2) the Council's convening of a

public hearing to be informed of the issued Request for Proposal[s] and to accept or reject the feasibility analysis. Should this analysis be rejected by the Council, no funds may be expended for this activity."

Councilmember Cachola has asked the Carlisle administration for an update on the procurement status. ■

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# GMA to Run Anew Despite Frail Health

by Paolo ROMERO/  
Thursday, September 27, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **FORMER PRESIDENT AND NOW PAMPANGA REP. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO** is likely to seek re-election despite her frail health, her key ally at the House of Representatives said yesterday.

House Minority Leader and Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez issued the statement five days before aspirants for senatorial and local posts are expected to file their respective certificates of candidacy for the May 2013 elections.

"She's going to run in 2013. If she was healthy, I

think she could better serve her constituents. The last time I saw her (Friday), she was just around 88 pounds," Suarez told reporters.

"The health of the President - I don't want to be accused again of being Dr. Suarez - is in limbo, because she wants to have, like everybody is saying, a final opinion from a specialist who knows her problem, which is not available in our country," he said.

"If ever there is one (specialist), then you must open



Cong. Gloria Arroyo

her up. And if you have three failed operations already, I think no doctor here would want to open her up again the fourth time," he added.

The 65-year-old Arroyo underwent three surgeries on her neck last year where doctors implanted several titanium screws to relieve pressure on nerves in her cervical spine.

The implants, however, were dislodged and are progressively blocking her food and air passage ways, prompting her doctors to declare that she is at risk of sudden death.

Earlier this week, the lawmaker tweeted that she had difficulty swallowing and had pain in her legs.

Suarez said it was possible that Arroyo's daughter, Evangeline "Luli" Arroyo-Bernas, would take the place of her mother in the event that her health condition prevents her from seeking another term in Congress.

In her Twitter account, Arroyo said she was looking forward to her regular physical therapy at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) to help ease symptoms of the ailment in her cervical spine.

"Swallowing difficulty and shooting pain in the shin again. Looking forward to

today's physical therapy," the lawmaker tweeted.

The former leader was rushed to the VMMC last August after she choked on a piece of melon and strained her fragile neck.

Her doctors have recommended that she undergo surgery abroad but she is prohibited from leaving the country by the Sandiganbayan and the Pasay City Regional Trial Court, where she is facing separate charges for graft and electoral sabotage.

Arroyo earlier said she now has to undergo more intensive physical therapy at the VMMC as the muscles holding her cervical spine have atrophied and the pain in her neck has worsened.

(www.philstar.com) ■



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## 'Center' to Strengthen Phl Territorial Claims Sought

from www.philstar.com  
Tuesday, September 25, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **LAWMAKERS ARE PUSHING FOR THE CREATION** of the Center for West Philippine Sea to study the basis of the claims of the country over the waters and islands in the West Philippine Sea under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), international law, local laws and historical data.

Under House Bill 6457 filed by Reps. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro) and Maximo Rodriguez, Jr. (Party-list, Abante Mindanao), the Center, which shall be attached to the Department of Foreign Af-

fairs (DFA) under the Office of Special and Ocean Concerns, shall propose actions and measures to defend the nation's sovereignty and patrimony.

Rodriguez said the Center shall also prepare concrete plans on how to develop and fully utilize all natural resources in the area and perform other duties and responsibilities that would strengthen sovereignty and other claims over the area.

Under the bill, an amount of P50 million shall be initially appropriated for the proposed creation of the Center which shall be provided by Congress in the annual budget of the Department of Foreign Af-

fairs under the annual General Appropriations Act.

The Center shall be headed by an Assistant Secretary of the DFA. He shall exercise supervision and control of the Center.

The Center shall prescribe and define its position structure and staffing pattern in accordance with existing civil service laws, rules and regulations.

"It is the policy of the State to preserve its sovereignty over the islands that it owns in the West Philippine Sea and its territorial sea, contiguous zones, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea," Rodriguez said. ■

## Virus Advisory Issued to OFWs in Saudi, Qatar

by Rudy SANTOS/  
Wednesday, September 26, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWS) BASED IN SAUDI ARABIA AND QATAR** have been advised to observe proper hygiene to avoid contracting a new flu strain similar to the potentially fatal Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The advice was issued yesterday by doctors assigned at the quarantine sec-



tion of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) following reports from the World Health Organization (WHO) of a case of the new flu strain reported in the United Kingdom.

The WHO reported on Sunday that the UK informed them about a patient afflicted with acute respiratory syndrome with renal failure, and who had traveled to Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

The patient is a previously healthy, 49-year-old male Qatari who manifested the symptoms on Sept. 3, 2012 and who had gone to Saudi Arabia prior to the onset of the illness on Sept. 7. He was admitted to an intensive care unit in Doha, Qatar.

(continued on page 13)



by Reuben S. SEGURITAN

# USCIS Releases Deferred Action Data and Updates Guidelines

**M**ore than 82,000 deferred action requests have been accepted by the USCIS since the program was implemented on August 15, 2012. Although only 29 requests have been completed as of September 13, 2012, 1,660 requests are awaiting review. More than 63,000 biometrics appointments have been scheduled so far.

Although the first few decisions were made rather quickly, officials still estimate that final determinations could take between four and six months.

The USCIS also recently updated its guidelines in response to additional inquiries re-

garding the policy and the procedure.

One of the new FAQs should give some measure of assurance to employers who may be asked for employment verification by deferred action applicants to support their request. It states that employers may, as they deem appropriate, give documentation verifying such employment.

Except when there is evidence of egregious violations of criminal statutes or widespread abuses, that information would not be shared with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for civil immigration enforcement purposes under the provision of Immigration and Nationality Act making the employment of unauthorized aliens unlawful.

Employment records can be submitted by deferred action applicants to prove physical presence on June 15, 2012 and continuous residence for five

years beginning June 15, 2007.

The USCIS also addressed the question of whether one must document presence in the U.S. for every day or every month of the 5-year period. The updated guidelines state that the requestor must account for as much of the period as reasonably possible. Although direct evidence of presence for every day or month is not required, it would be helpful if there is evidence of residence during at least each year of the period. Gaps in the documentation may raise doubts as to continued residence and result in a request for evidence.

The requestor may submit two or more affidavits of third parties to explain gaps in his continued residence. Note that the affidavits cannot be used to establish the continuous residence requirement itself.

The USCIS also clarified item 9 of Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization

that is filed with a deferred action request. The item asks the applicant to list all Social Security numbers that the applicant has ever used. The USCIS explained that the applicant must list those Social Security numbers that were officially issued to him by the Social Security Administration.

The updated guidelines also clarify that if an individual travels outside of the United States after August 15, 2012, he would not be considered for deferred action as a childhood arrival. He must first be granted deferred action and applied for and received advance parole before he may travel outside of the U.S. Travels before August 15, 2012, on the other hand, will be assessed in terms of whether they were brief, casual and innocent or whether they break continuous residence.

If the deferred action request has been approved, the individual may apply for advance

parole if he wants to be able to travel outside the United States. This is done by filing Form I-131 Application for Travel Document, and paying the filing fee of \$360. The applicant must indicate the circumstances for which international travel is sought. Advance parole is generally granted only when the travel is for humanitarian, educational or employment purposes.

Meanwhile, as the deferred action program moves forward, the Obama administration has decided to exclude its recipients from the scope of the Affordable Care Act, like other undocumented immigrants. According to federal officials, individuals granted deferred action are not "lawfully present" residents under the health care reform law who would otherwise be eligible for Medicaid or children's health insurance program. ■

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)

## PHILIPPINE NEWS

### Peso Drops to 42-Level

by Prinz MAGTULIS/  
Wednesday, September 26, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **THE PESO PLUNGED TO THE 42-LEVEL ON WEDNESDAY** as investors shied away from risky assets on the back of a possibility that debt-rid-

(cont. from page 12; VIRUS ... )

den Spain will seek a full blown bailout to save its economy.

The local currency shed 28.5 centavos to close at 42.02 against the dollar on Wednesday, weaker than its 41.735 close on Tuesday.

over the regions compared," WHO reported.

WHO officials said the coronavirus is a large family of viruses, which include those that cause the common cold and SARS.

The WHO does not recommend any travel restriction.

NAIA quarantine doctor Caloy de la Reyna said proper hygiene by washing hands with soap regularly and clean surroundings will prevent the spread of the virus.

"There's no need to panic, we are observing all incoming passengers from the Middle East and other parts of the world using our thermal scanners," he said.

([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)) ■

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([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)) ■



saved," the trader said.

She said investors were "unloading" risky assets, including those from the Philippines, noting of the drop in the equity market on Wednesday. The Philippine

Stock Exchange index closed 32.54 points or 0.61 percent lower on Wednesday to 5,292.630.

Another trader, meanwhile, said the peso weakened as demand for dollars intensified. "There was huge corporate demand as we approach the end of the month," he said.

Dollars traded amounted to \$1.217 billion, higher than previous day's \$832.202 million.

Both traders said the peso is expected to further weaken on Friday.

([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com)) ■

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**DAYASADAS**  
by Pacita C. SALUDES

**K**as natakeng ken man-nakikadua a makipagili, rumbeng a di liwayan ti tumalantan kadagiti rusat wenno pasken a pagtitiponan dagiti agkakailian. Daytoy ti napateg a pampanunoten ti natan-ok a makipagili.

Adda tay pasken a mangawis kenka tapno adda met tumalantan no sika ti agpasken. Mangipakita nga ammo ti makikadua ken makikaarruba.

Kasta met a no ania ti nakaipakumitan nga aramiden kadagiti grupo no nakigrupoka wenno nagsapataka iti aramidem, masapul nga ikarigatan nga itakder. Saan nga itantan wenno paginsasaan, kasta

# Palagip Kadagiti Napateg A Pasken Ti Kumonidad

kano ti tao a natankeng. Pagsasao dayta dagiti dudugan manipud ti lugar a Kailokuan.

Ti Oahu Filipino Community Council (OFCC), iyawisna ti pannakakompirma (Reaffirmation) ti panagsaad dagiti opisyales ken Board of Directors ti 2012. Mangipaneknek ti nabunga ken nasayaat a panangidaulo. Maaramid inton Sityembra 29 (Sabado) itoy a tawen iti Ala Moana Hotel-Hibiscus Ballroom. Maidasar ti pangrabii iti alas sais impunto iti rabii. Daytoy ti ipanguluan ni Jean Jeremiah, kappili a presidente ita nga tawen.

## UNITED FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF HAWAII (UFCH)

Iyawisna met ti itatabunotayo iti reaffirmation met la dagiti kappili nga opisyales ti organisasion. Daytoy ti kadaddakkelan nga organisasion Fil-

ipino iti Hawaii. Sakupenna dagiti amin nga isla, Ti Oahu, Maui, Kauai, Molokai, Lanai ken Hawaii Grande.

Naragsak ti kappili a presidente a ni Jenny Alconcel Quezon. Kiddawenna kadagiti amin nga organisasion ti pananginominarda kadagiti asino man a kameng ti grupo nga addan ti naindaklan a gapuanan wenno naisangsangayan a gapuanan wenno naparnuar a naitulong ti kumonidad babaen ti sirib ken kabalalinanna nga inaramid a pagsayaatan ti kaaduan. Maikkan dagitoy ti pammadayaw iti daytoy a rabii.

Ur-urayen ni Jenny dagiti nomination form nga inwarasna. Dikay agtantan a mangpadayaw kadagiti napiliyo a nakagunod iti pammadayaw a maitaed iti dayta naindaklan a rabii ti UFCH a maaramid idia Ala Moana Hotel, Hibiscus Ballroom into no Octubre 19, 2012, 6:00 p.m.-11:30 p.m. Kas gagangay a makiddaw agarwat dagiti tumabuno iti arwat Filipina, barong kadagiti lallaki. Dayta ngamin ti mangipakita ti panangipateg ken panangitan-ok ti kina Filipino.

Maysa pay nga awis ti pan-nakaipalagip daydi Presidente

Ferdinand Marcos a maaramidto dita Philippine Consulate into no September 28. Awis daytoy nga iwarwaragawag ni Pastor Joe

Lazo. Naragsak a panglagip iti daydi Presidente Ferdinand Marcos - palagip manipud iti DAYASADAS! See you there! ■

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TAPNO MAIPAKITAM PANNAKIDADUAM A SITATALIN-  
GENNGEN

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NATALINAAY A PANNAKILANGEN ISUT MANGPALAGDA  
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## ■ MAINLAND NEWS —

# New York City Hospitals Cracking Down on Junk Food

**NEW YORK (AP) — PEOPLE NERVOUSLY WAITING AROUND IN NEW YORK CITY HOSPITALS** for loved ones to come out of surgery can't smoke. In a few months from now, they can't have a supersized fast-food soda. And soon, they won't even be able to get a candy bar out of the vending machine or a piece of fried chicken from the cafeteria.

In one of his latest health campaigns, Mayor Michael Bloomberg is aiming to banish sugary and fatty foods from both public and private hospitals.

In recent years, the city's 15 public hospitals have cut calories in patients' meals and restricted the sale of sugary

drinks and unhealthy snacks at vending machines. But now the city is tackling hospital cafeteria food, too. And the Healthy Hospital Food Initiative is expanding its reach: In the past year, 16 private hospitals have signed on.

Earlier this month, the city moved to ban the sale of big sodas and other sugary drinks at fast-food restaurants and theaters, beginning in March. Critics say the hospital initiative is yet another sign that Bloomberg is running a "nanny state," even though the guidelines are voluntary and other cities — including Boston — have undertaken similar efforts.

Hospitals say it would be hypocritical of them to serve unhealthy food to patients who are often suffering from

(continued on page 15)

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**MAINLAND NEWS**

**Mayweather Withdraws Doping Allegations, Settles with Pacquiao**

MANILA, Philippines – **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. ON WEDNESDAY BACKTRACKED** on his allegations that Manny Pacquiao was taking steroids, and a retired US judge has announced that both camps have settled the defamation suit between them.

Retired US judge and renowned mediator Daniel Weinstein said the camps of Mayweather and Pacquiao have reached a settlement on confidential terms.

The settlement comes a few days after Pacquiao won the defamation case he filed against Mayweather for accusing him of taking performance enhancing drugs. A federal judge has previously ordered the undefeated Mayweather to pay Pacquiao about \$114,000 for avoiding questioning about the lawsuit.

Malcolm LaVergne, a lawyer representing Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s father in the case, confirmed Weinstein's announcement.

"The matter has been resolved," LaVergne said in a report by espn.com's Dan Rafael. "Any

alleged terms of the resolution would be strictly confidential. Floyd Mayweather Sr. is very happy that this lengthy case has finally come to a conclusion."

The Mayweather camp likewise released an official statement saying it was not their intention to accuse Pacquiao of taking performance enhancements.

"Floyd Mayweather Jr., Floyd Mayweather Sr., Roger Mayweather and Mayweather Promotions wish to make it clear that they never intended to claim that Manny Pacquiao has used or is using any performance enhancement drugs, nor are they aware of any evidence that Manny Pacquiao has used performance enhancing drugs," the statement read.

The Mayweather camp also acknowledged Pacquiao as a "great champion".

"Manny Pacquiao is a great champion, and no one should construe any of our prior remarks as claiming that Manny Pacquiao has used performance enhancing drugs," the statement added.

Asked for comment by philstar.com, Pacquiao's legal adviser Jeng Gacal declined, saying it is a matter that could be best explained by their US lawyers.

Pacquiao himself likewise declined to comment.

Pacquiao filed the defamation lawsuit in Las Vegas in December 2009, seeking unspecified damages.

The Filipino boxing icon is scheduled to take on Juan Manuel Marquez on Dec. 9 (Dec. 10 in Manila).

The settlement could pave the way for a much-anticipated and long-overdue showdown between Pacquiao and Mayweather – considered the two best fighters in the planet.

Pacquiao has earlier gone public about his willingness to give in to Mayweather's demand for an Olympic-style random blood testing should a fight between them be finalized, airing his side on ESPN's "First Take" show last week.

The fighting congressman likewise said he is amenable to taking a 55-45 split of the purse in favor of Mayweather. (www.philstar.com) ■

**GLOBAL NEWS**

**Saudi Arabia to Lift Ban on Filipino Domestic Workers**

JEDDAH (Xinhua) -- **SAUDI ARABIA WILL LIFT THE 15-MONTH BAN** on Filipino domestic workers starting from Oct. 1, a Saudi official said.

Saudi Assistant Foreign Minister Prince Khalid bin Saood bin Khalid told Saudi News Agency Tuesday that work permits for do-

mestic workers from the Philippines will be issued from the beginning of next month.

"The ban was lifted after the Saudi embassy in Manila reached with officials in the Philippines an agreement related to job contracts and required documents for those workers," he said.

The agreement would protect the rights of those workers without affecting the rights of Saudi sponsors and their privacy. Saudi Arabia imposed a ban on Filipino and Indonesian domestic workers in July 2011, after the two countries approved some conditions Saudi Arabia considered as interference in the privacy of Saudi families. (www.philstar.com) ■

**MAINLAND NEWS (from page 14; NEW YORK ...)**

obesity and other health problems.

"If there's any place that should not allow smoking or try to make you eat healthy, you would think it'd be the hospitals," Bloomberg said Monday. "We're doing what we should do and you'll see, I think, most of the private hospitals go along with it."

The cafeteria crackdown will ban deep fryers, make leafy green salads a mandatory option and allow only healthy snacks to be stocked near the cafeteria entrance and at cash registers. At least half of all sandwiches and salads must be made or served with whole grains. Half-size sandwich portions

must be available for sale.

"People sometimes right now don't have healthy options," said Christine Curtis, the city Health Department's director of nutrition strategy. "So you are there at 2 in the morning and maybe your only choice is soda and chips." (www.philstar.com) ■

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WED, SAT 8:00 A.M. TO 12 NOON MILTON CHANG - Pharmacist



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