

HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ WEEKLY ◆ FEBRUARY 7, 2009 ◆

MAYOR APPOINTS FILIPINOS TO HIS CABINET

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Manny Lanuevo

Deputy Director
Dept. of Environmental Services

Jeffrey Cudiamat

Director
Dept. of Facilities Maintenance

Sandra Sagisi Moser

Deputy Director
Dept. of Customer Services



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EDITORIAL

Filipinos in Mufi's Cabinet

Something wonderful happened for the Filipino community at the start of the new year. After a General Election in which he sparred with an opponent over a lack of Filipinos in his cabinet, Mayor Mufi Hannemann announced in early 2009 a list of candidates he wished to hire.

Among them were several Filipinos. The announcement was welcome news for a community wondering if the mayor would ever appoint a Filipino to a top level position. After all, Hannemann enjoys broad-based political support among their rank and file.

Pending their confirmation, the mayor's three Filipino appointees—Jeffrey Cudiamat, Manny Lanuevo and Sandra Sagisi Moser—are imminently qualified for their positions in City government, particularly Cudiamat, a well-respected engineer who will be the top man at the Department of Facilities Maintenance. Lanuevo is no slouch either and is a seasoned engineer in his own right. He will put his talents to use as deputy director at the Department of Environmental Services. Then there is the immensely-talented Moser, who has earned her stripes as a news reporter and is a perfect fit at the Department of Customer Services, where she will be second-in-command.

While it is important for qualified Filipinos to be appointed to upper level management positions in government for the sake of bolstering ethnic pride, ensuring that Filipinos have a voice in key decision-making and other obvious reasons, perhaps it is time to put the race card aside for now and view these three appointees simply as professionals at the top of their fields—engineers and a journalist—who just happen to be Filipino.

It's a designation all three would be happy with.

Let's Hope Swim Champ Learns From His Mistake

Recreational drug user. That unwanted description will probably stick with Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps—for the time being at least—after a recent photo of him smoking a marijuana pipe was published in a British tabloid. It wasn't the first time the swimming phenom has found himself in hot water. He was arrested in 2004 for DUI only a few months after the Athens Olympics.

With a recent decline in the stigma attached to marijuana use, some may wonder what the big fuss is about. It bears repeating that while privileged Americans like Phelps take a recreational pot hit now and then, thousands of poor minorities—families and children—struggle to survive in communities devastated by drug abuse. Innocent victims have been killed by Mexican drug cartels that continually smuggle pot into the U.S. For these cartels, marijuana is the king crop.

The incident has tarnished Phelps' "nice guy" image—which is sad, especially since there are so few of them around. Children have a natural tendency to look up to larger-than-life heroes, and whether he realizes or likes it—kids will look up to him.

So far, USA Swimming has suspended Phelps from competition for three months. As for his multi-million dollar endorsements, only Kellogg's cereal company dropped its deal. Phelps' other sponsors have stood by him, even though they haven't condoned his behavior.

Phelps has apologized for his bad judgment and vowed it wouldn't happen again. Let's hope that going forward, he will be more cognizant of the responsibilities and accountability that come with setting a positive example for others, particularly young people. Phelps needs to more consistently set the type of example expected from a great Olympic champion.

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Welcome to another issue of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle! If you've been feeling rather romantic of late, it's probably because Valentine's Day is right around the corner. We hope you've already made plans for that special someone in your life. It doesn't have to be anything too expensive or elaborate—as long as it comes from the heart and shows thoughtfulness and appreciation for your special someone.



In our cover story for this issue, we introduce our readers to three Filipino appointees to the administration of Mayor Mufi Hannemann. While they are among several other mayoral appointees who must still be confirmed by the Honolulu City Council, we expect these three to pass with flying colors. It's interesting to note that despite the very real possibility of Hannemann resigning as mayor to run for governor in 2010, all three of the Filipino appointees, when we interviewed them, jumped at the chance to work at City Hall. Their willingness to do so, despite the fact that they could be out of a job in as little as two years, speaks volumes about the mayor's leadership and his ability to inspire others around him. Please read more about the appointees and their backgrounds beginning on page 4.

On page 7, we have a profile story of Dr. Celia Ona, who was recently inaugurated as the new president of the Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii (PMAH). Dr. Ona's goals as president are to continue much of the organization's missions, which includes providing support among fellow Filipino doctors, as well as offering humanitarian aid to the world's less fortunate via the PMAH Ohana Missions and the Baynihin Clinic Without Walls. She will also continue the the other existing PMAH projects. Mahalo, Dr. Ona, for your community service and aloha spirit. We wish you all the very best in your new term as PMAH president!

In closing, we hope you will take time to read these and other articles of interest in this issue—articles such as the Mayor's Column, the Governor's Column, Legal Notes and Philippine Language. Mabuhay once again for your support of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle! Until next time...

Aloha and Mabuhay!

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Publisher & Executive Editor
 Charlie Y. Sonido, M.D.

Publisher & Managing Editor
 Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

Associate Editors
 Dennis Galolo
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Creative Designer
 Junggo Peralta

Design Consultant
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Photographer
 Tim Llena

Administrative Assistant
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Contributing Writers
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 Rowena Ballesteros
 Clement Bautista
 Linda Dela Cruz
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 Amelia Jacang, M.D.
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Advertising/Marketing Director
 Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

Account Executives
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 J.P. Orías

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MAYOR'S COLUMN

"Honolulu—A Wonderful City"

(A condensed version of the Mayor's Inaugural Address, presented on Jan. 2, 2009 at the Hawaii Theatre)



By Mayor Mufi Hannemann

Election to office is always a gratifying and humbling experience: Gratifying because it represents the conclusion of a hard-fought victory made possible by the tremendous support of many of you gathered here tonight; humbling because of the enormous responsibilities entrusted to those elected to serve.

Gail and I are deeply grateful for the resounding vote of confidence you gave me in November's election, and attribute

our reelection to your faith in the ambitious goals we set forth just four years ago and your recognition of our success in achieving them.

As we vowed when we first took office, we have put our financial house in order and are living within our means. We are one of the safest big cities in the entire nation. We're rebuilding an aging sewer infrastructure. We're repaving our roads. We're cleaning up our parks and improving our public facilities.

These are not my successes. They are ours. I speak of the members of the Honolulu City Council, the members of the Legislature, an exceptional Congressional delegation, leaders from the business, labor, and non-profit community, and



Mayor Mufi Hannemann was sworn into office for his second term on Jan. 2 at Kapolei Hale. (L-R, Family Court Judge Bode Amilale Uale, First Lady Gail Mukaihata Hannemann, Mayor Mufi Hannemann)

countless individuals across our great state, who have come forward to be a part of the solution, to offer their ideas, and to pledge to work together to make our home, our Honolulu, the best place to live, work, and raise our families.

From our perch on that foundation, we now look to the future.

We are bolstering the City's efforts to protect our precious environment through our 21st Century Ahupuaa, a program that melds our host culture with the technological advancements of modern society to preserve all that's wonderful about our islands.

Thanks to the electorate's affirmation, we're on the cusp of building a mass transit sys-

tem that will create thousands of jobs, enhance our quality of life, and help meet Oahu's transportation needs well into the 21st century—an accomplishment that had eluded every City administration for more than 40 years.

But these are difficult times, like no other we've seen in recent memory.

In my inaugural address four years ago, I asked you to join me in a prayer for the brave men and women—many from Hawaii—who were serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are still there, and our thoughts continue to be with them as we pray for their safe return to their loved ones here at home.

The meltdown in the financial industry has been a contagion that has spread across the globe and infected nations, and just about every corner of the global economy. Hawaii has not been immune.

The City and County of Honolulu is retrenching in

preparation for a decline in real estate values and a commensurate drop in the property tax revenues that are the City's primary source of income to underwrite everything from police and fire services to sewer repairs and road repaving.

It would be so easy to throw our hands up in the air or resort to finger-pointing and blaming others for these problems. There's so much gloom-and-doom that there seems to be a feeling of defeatism, a loss of hope that I believe is even more harmful than the condition of our economy.

I ask you: Is this the spirit that made our nation the envy of the world? Is this the attitude that will keep us strong and united? Is this the inspiration that propelled our Polynesian forefathers to navigate and settle the mighty Pacific?

I say, no. Hawaii is a place of greatness; we have much to be proud of. My friends, we can do anything.

It is in this spirit that I ask all the people of this city to come together ... to work together ... to dream together, of a better future for Honolulu. It is in this spirit, as the mayor of the 12th largest city in the country, that I approach my second term in office:

- Ready to listen.*
- Ready to collaborate.*
- Ready to lead.*

Let's make this a wonderful city ... and a wonderful world. Aloha ke Akua.



After Mayor Mufi Hannemann presented his inaugural address at the historic Hawaii Theatre, he briefly joined musical guests C and K on stage.(L-R, Cecilio Rodriguez, Mayor Mufi Hannemann, Henry Kapono.)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Filipino Legislators Honor Local Heroes at Civil Air Patrol Banquet

On January 11, 2009, Sen. Will Espero and Rep. Kymberly Marcos Pine presented certificates on behalf of the State Legislature to cadets and members of the Hawaii Civil Air Patrol during an exclusive awards ceremony held at the newly-constructed Pacific Air Museum.

With white tablecloth-covered tables set among a backdrop of vintage World War II aircraft restored to factory-new condition, both lawmakers were among several hundred VIPs who celebrated the Hawaii Civil Air Patrol's accomplishments with live music performed by a country music band, dancing and dinner.

The mission of the Civil Air Patrol is to serve America by performing Homeland Security



Rep. Pine and Sen. Espero at the Civil Air Patrol Banquet with Capt. Richard Hargrave (middle)

and humanitarian missions, developing America's youth and educating citizens on the importance of air and space power.

Sen. Espero and Rep. Pine honored Cadet Captain Megan Hoke for her achievements as

"Cadet of the Year" and Lt. Colonel Roland Victorino who was named "Senior Member of the Year."

Both legislators are members of the Legislature's committees for Public Safety and Military Affairs.

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Three Filipinos Named to Mayoral Cabinet

By HFC Staff

After a lengthy wait, many leaders in the Filipino community are pleased with the announcement of several Filipinos who have been appointed to the administration of Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

The three appointees are Jeffrey Cudiamat, Manny Lanuevo and Sandra Sagisi Moser. If confirmed by the Honolulu City Council, Cudiamat would be the new director of the City's Department of Facilities Maintenance (DFM), Lanuevo the deputy director of the Department of Environmental Services (ENV) and Moser the deputy director of the Department of Customer Services (CSD).

John C. Ramos, president of the Filipino American League of Engineers & Architects (FALEA), was among several Filipino community leaders who testified before the City Council on January 28, 2009 in support of the three appointees.

"I feel really good and proud that Mayor Hannemann has appointed Filipinos to his cabinet," Ramos says.

Too Little, Too Late?

The appointments came as Mayor Hannemann embarks on his fifth year and final term as mayor. Some Filipino leaders feel that the recent appoint-

ments are long overdue. They point out that the only Filipino he appointed in his first term was Baybee Hufana-Ablan as executive secretary of the Neighborhood Commission in 2005.

Hufana-Ablan's term was brief, as she was re-appointed in early 2006 as senior advisor to the director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. The reshuffle left Hannemann's executive assistant, Joyce Mina Oliveira, as the top Filipino in his cabinet.

Nevertheless, the three appointments were welcomed news for Filipino leaders such as Eddie Agas, president of the



Mayor Hannemann's three Filipino appointees in his cabinet are (L-R) Manny Lanuevo, Deputy-Director of the Department of Environmental Services (ENV); Jeffrey Cudiamat, Director of Department of Facilities Maintenance (DFM); and Sandra Sagisi, Deputy-Director of the Department of Customer Services (CSD)

United Filipino Council of Hawaii.

"Personally, I'm proud that the mayor appointed Filipino cabinet members," he says. "I hope he will continue to appoint more Filipinos who are really community-oriented, hard-working and have a positive attitude."

Lina Longboy, president of the Oahu Filipino Community Council, says that part of the problem may have been that Filipinos were too casual about applying for cabinet positions.

"It's about time deserving Filipinos come out to apply for these high ranking positions and rise above other candidates," she says. "Most positions are not advertised but it is common knowledge that vacancies exist. When you are deserving and have ambition, you always research for possibilities and opportunities. You don't wait to be tapped."

Election 2008

The paucity of Hannemann's appointments of Filipinos to cabinet positions was criticized by mayoral opponent Ann Kobayashi in the 2008 General Election. She accused Hannemann of renegeing on a promise to the Filipino community to appoint one of their own to a cabinet position—an accusation that the mayor flatly denied.

"He promised the Filipino

community that there would be a Filipino director but out of 200,000 Filipinos on Oahu he couldn't find a single one to serve as director," Kobayashi said in an interview with the Chronicle a few weeks before the General Election.

Hannemann fired back and accused the veteran councilwoman of failing to hire a single Filipino to her staff.

"She can't throw darts at someone else without looking at herself first," Hannemann said in a separate interview last year with the Chronicle.

Hannemann said that the only promise he made was that he would try to put together a cabinet that was reflective of the face of Oahu and that would have people from every ethnic group. One Filipino he offered a job to was Bennette Evangelista, vice president at Actus Lend Lease, but she turned it down to remain in the private sector.

In all fairness, the mayor did appoint Filipinos such as James Pacopac and Greg Hammer to albeit to less visible boards, such as the Board of Parks & Recreation and the Liquor Commission, respectively.

Observers say that the debate over the scarcity of Filipinos in his administration may have led to more appointments this time around.

Meet the Appointees

Cudiamat is a professional engineer who has worked for various contractors and agencies and owns two engineering firms. He holds a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering and is also pursuing a master's degree in structural engineering.

Cudiamat's department is responsible for overseeing the repair and maintenance of City roads, sidewalks, streams, storm water drainages, vehicles and public buildings. His background in structural and civil engineering as well as architectural design promises to be assets to the City. He also brings to the table leadership skills and management experiences as a business owner and community leader for various organizations.

One advantage of working in the private sector is that he can assess the department using a "fresh, new set of eyes that can re-evaluate current processes."

"I feel that I bring a positive, youthful enthusiasm to get things done," he says. "I recognize that there will be hurdles along the way but I am ready to meet the challenges."

Cudiamat said it was the opportunity to make a difference in the community that ultimately made him decide to work for the mayor.

"I have always been community-minded," he says. "In



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COVER STORY

this position, I have the opportunity to positively improve the quality of life for the citizens of Honolulu on a much grander scale than the number of people I affect through my businesses."

"He was recently named as the Young Engineer of the Year by the Hawaii Council of Engineering Societies and in 2008 was named the Young Filipino Entrepreneur of the Year by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce.

"I would like to express my utmost gratitude to the Filipino community for the outpouring of support for me in this appointment to this high-level position. I hope that I can represent our people with esteemed dignity, pride, and professionalism," he says.

Born in Manila, Lanuevo earned his Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from Mapua Institute of Technology and later moved to Hawaii in

1988. Since then, he has worked as an engineer with the State Department of Transportation.

Lanuevo first met the mayor in late 2008. Even before the face-to-face meeting, Lanuevo was impressed with Hannebmann's leadership and ability to make tough decisions on controversial issues.

For Lanuevo, it is an honor to be considered for the deputy director position at the Department of Environmental Services. He looks forward to the challenges that lay ahead in his new position.

"This new position is obviously full of challenges but I'm positive that my 35 years in the workforce as an engineer and the various trainings and seminars that I have taken will come in handy in looking for solutions to problems dealing with the public's health and safety," he says.

Lanuevo is also actively

involved in community affairs, having served as past president of the Hawaii Council of Engineering Societies and as former president of FALFA. Currently, he is the president of the Hawaii Society of Professional Engineers and chair of the Fil-Com Center's Construction Committee.

Moser is a well-known television personality, having worked in the news media and in public relations for 15 years, most recently at a major Honolulu PR firm. She also handled media relations for the Honolulu Festival. Her experiences are perfect fit as deputy director of the Department of Customer Services.

"When approached for the position by Mayor Hannebmann, I felt honored and privileged," she says. "Although I never dreamed of being in public service, it felt right and the rest is history."

Moser purposely avoided

"Personally, I'm proud that the mayor appointed Filipino cabinet members, I hope he will continue to appoint more Filipinos who are really community-oriented, hard-working and have a positive attitude." — EDDIE AGAS, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED FILIPINO COUNCIL OF HAWAII.

taking a job in politics after her father, the former mayor of Bacarra, Ilocos Norte, was gunned down in the Philippines on election day in 1965. She was two years old at the time.

"I'd recall stories from my late mother about the horrible moments of that fateful day," she says. "Because of my father's murder and the history of politics in the Philippines, I never dreamed of ever being in the political arena. However, when I had a chance to work for a successful, trust-

worthy and great leader, I knew working for Mufi Hannebmann was an opportunity I had to take."

Moser also owns a mortgage franchise, is a licensed realtor and served as a former director at a local university. Moser holds a Bachelor's degree in communications and an Associate's degree in fine arts. She was twice nominated for Emmy awards in news writing and for her battle with cancer and she also won a variety of reporting and media awards in Hawaii.

GOVERNOR'S COLUMN

Collaboration in Government Projects and Initiatives

Current infrastructure funding barely maintains the status quo. This plan proposes new revenue streams, generated by increases in the liquid fuel tax, state vehicle registration fee, vehicle weight tax and rental car surcharges, that would boost the amount of available funds we have from \$2 billion to \$4 billion for needed highway improvements statewide.

The proposed increases would only take effect on the condition that Hawai'i's job growth increases by one percent for two consecutive quarters, projected to begin no earlier than fiscal year 2012. During this global economic downturn, we realize that we must remain sensitive to the financial situations of our local families.

Current estimates show that every 10 minutes of traffic delays on our highways costs drivers roughly \$600 per year in lost productivity and fuel costs, and \$3,300 per year for commercial vehicles. Given the impact traffic has on our finances and residents' quality of life, it is clear that the long-term savings – and increased safety – which substantive improvements to our highways

would produce make the initial investment sought by the legislation worthwhile.

Of course, if we are asking the public to increase their participation in roadway solutions, we need to be up front about when projects will be delivered, the price tag of each project and when each initiative will be completed. To do this, we are proposing that the revenue be placed in a newly created special fund that would provide greater accountability and transparency.

On O'ahu, projects this legislation would help to move forward include the addition of a 6.2-mile PM contraflow lane starting at the Radford Drive overpass and ending at the H-1-H-2 merge that will shave five to 10 minutes off of afternoon commute times for Ewa-bound drivers, as well as the addition of an eastbound lane from the Middle Street tunnel to Vineyard Boulevard, which will allow two lanes to continue without merging and reduce commutes by as much as 20 minutes for eastbound commuters at all hours of the day. Both of these projects have already received the Legislature's support.

During my State of the State Address on January 26th, I was able to speak in more detail about many of my Administration's initiatives and the need for collaboration between the public and private sectors and across the political aisle. I encourage you to listen, watch or download the text version

from my website at www.hawaii.gov/ou.

I also hope you will take an active role this session – which ends May 7 – either through submitting testimony, voicing your opinions to your legislators or sending my office your ideas and concerns at governor.lingle@hawaii.gov.



By Governor Linda Lingle

On overcoming current economic difficulties, we cannot operate in a "business-as-usual" fashion. The need to intensify our efforts has been the thrust behind my Administration's ambitious \$1.87 billion capital improvement project initiative to stimulate the economy and create jobs. It is also a major theme of legislation that my Administration, in collaboration with legislators, is proposing this session to change and improve how our state departments fulfill their responsibility to the people of Hawai'i.

The Department of Transportation, working with the chairs of the Senate and House transportation committees, is leading the charge with legislation it unveiled on January 22 for a \$4.2 billion, six-year Highway Modernization Plan made up of more than 180 projects that will deliver the type of roadway improvements residents have been waiting for and deserve.

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LEGISLATIVE CONNECTION



By Senator Will Espero

STEM, (Part One)

other dedicated science teachers, have turned students on to robotics at Ewa Beach's James Campbell High School (JCHS), located in my senatorial district. This year's JCHS robotics team is heading to Dallas, Texas this spring to compete in the VEX World Championship, having captured the Excellence Award, the top honor, at the 2008 VEX Pan-American Robotics competition last December. The task of the VEX tournament this year: building and maneuvering a robot that can move a three-inch cube from one spot on the floor and lift it into a triangular chute a distance away. JCHS's robot won the Innovation Award and took top honors at an earlier Maui tournament, with a design so successful that other teams put it on YouTube. By the time the next tournament arrived, other schools incorporated it into their own robots. Other area schools with robotics programs include Waipahu Intermediate, Ewa Beach Elementary, Holomua

Elementary, Iroquois Point Elementary, Kaimiloa Elementary, and Pohakaea Elementary.

This is precisely the kind of enthusiasm and excitement that I envisioned when I advocated robotics education back in 2004. The hands-on learning that comes when students transform theories into an actual working model gives them the experiential knowledge, fervor about science, and sense of competence that will motivate them to go into these valuable, high-skilled, high-paying, much needed careers. Robotics education turns theory from book, calculator, and paper into the "real thing." Seeing concepts in action opens up science and math to students, who learn that these are not subjects only for the "cream of the crop," but exciting ones they can master and enjoy.

The wave of enthusiasm about robotics is encouraging, and great news for the U.S. The popularity of robotics has soared rapidly in Hawaii's elementary, middle, and high schools, growing from 95 programs in January 2008 to over 300 just a year later.

The Robotics Organizing Committee (ROC) develops, coordinates, and supports robotics education in schools across the state. Representatives of all six robotics programs, members of the state government, and local business supporters contribute to the ROC, joined by the overwhelming and widespread community effort by teachers, parents, mentors, and other volunteers who devote their time and



expertise. The ROC members are Dr. Song Choi (VEX Robotics), Sara Tamayose (FIRST Lego League), Aaron Dengler (FIRST Lego League), Art Kimura (Botball), Alex Ho (FIRST Robotics), Cindy Fong (Underwater ROV), Mark Rongstad (Underwater ROV), Eric Hagiwara (Micro Robotics), Dale Olive (Micro Robotics).

There are six robotics education programs in Hawaii's schools.

Student teams in FIRST Robotics solve a common engineering problem over six weeks using a standard kit of parts with no instructions. 2008 saw the inaugural FIRST in Hawaii Regional Robotics Competition, with more than 700 student participants, including 450 from Hawaii. The 2009 season kicked off on January 3. The Hawaii Regional at the UH-Manoa on March 26-28 will again be an international competition of teams from Hawaii, the mainland, the Philippines and Mexico.

Students in Botball build a pair of robots to work in tandem. The Hawaii Botball region is the largest in the U.S., with about 38 teachers/coaches and 400 students.

Elementary and middle school students in the FIRST LEGO League build robots and prepare presentations on their research and construction. Competitions typically center around global challenges, such as last year's issue of climate change.

Middle and high school students in VEX Robotics design and assemble robots. Hawaii hosted the 2008 Pan-Pacific Championship, an action-packed three-day competition with over 800 students from Hawaii, California, and China.

Students program robots for use in swimming pools in Underwater ROV (Remote Operating Vehicle). Aquatic circumstances present different challenges for the robots, including buoyancy, propellers, and water-proofing. Hawaii is trying to host the 2010 MATE International ROV Competition in Hilo.

High school students in the advanced Micro Robotics program use microscopes and magnifying lenses on their robots. In 2008, Hawaii high schoolers who competed in Nagoya, Japan, placed second among the university students they competed against. Hawaii's high school team sparked so much interest that the president of Cal Tech University visited Hilo to personally invite them to participate in an intensive summer math and science program at the university.

Winning competitions is thrilling, but the real achievement is that many students who previously had little interest in this tough academic area are now seeing that a career in science, technology, engineering, and math is not only possible, but satisfying as well. The incredible benefits of stimulating interest in an area so badly needed in our country are what motivates those of us who believe in STEM training to continue on this path. Students not only gear themselves toward this field through robotics education, they also develop critical thinking skills, team work, and problem-solving skills they will need to compete globally as adults. Developing our young people's capacity for innovation through robotics education trains them to adapt to changing times, and ensures a bright future for our state.

STEM is no longer simply the part of a flower holding the bud; it's a Hawaii Department of Education program that is helping our young people to bloom.

STEM stands for "science, technology, engineering, and mathematics." In 2004, I introduced a resolution to develop, support, and promote existing robotics education in Hawaii's schools to galvanize students about science and math. I am happy to say that robotics education has taken off, being enthusiastically embraced by students across the state.

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FEATURE

Doctor Encourages Service to Others

By Caroline Julian

Newly inaugurated Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii (PMAH) President Dr. Cecilia Ona said one of her goals is to renew the spirit in the joy of doctoring. She hopes the revitalization of the spirit will enhance and nurture the physician's calling to service.

It comes at a time when the state is facing a healthcare crisis, with more doctors leaving their practice behind to relocate to other states because of mounting issues concerning the medical industry.

Ona said some of the pressing issues facing Hawaii doctors today are: recruitment and retention of physicians, medical malpractice reform, improving reimbursement, and sustainability of medical practice.

She hopes to tackle some of the problems through PMAH's

Philippine Medical Student Association, which encourages, supports and motivates students' options in the healthcare industry. The association would also lend a hand in providing avenues for recruitment in rural Hawaii communities.

PMAH will also continue its mission when it was established 31 years ago, which is to provide support among fellow Filipino doctors.

Ona acknowledges the many Filipino physicians who work tirelessly to serve others without the expectation of rewards or recognition.

But she says the honor not only goes to doctors, but also to volunteers and healthcare providers who have sacrificed and committed themselves to help under privileged communities.

"You know out of that it brings healing to others... physically and emotionally," said Ona, who is currently the Direc-

tor of Refractory Mood Disorder program at the Department of Psychiatry at University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine. She is also a consulting psychiatrist at the Queens Medical Center's Cancer Center and Women's Health Center and director of the Electroconvulsive Treatment program.

As the newly-installed president of PMAH, Ona would also like to continue providing humanitarian aid through the the Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls, which the organization established in 1997.

PMAH will also continue other projects including, the Medical Scholarship Program and Waianae Care Project. But, there are also new projects that Ona wants to create, including the PMAH Ohana Missions, which will be an outreach medical mission to the Philippines.

She said that she initially had mixed feelings about being nominated as a candidate for

the organization's presidency. She witnessed what the job entailed when her husband, Dr. Fernando Ona held the position in 2007.

But she gladly accepted the nomination because of her passion for the industry and for helping others.

"It's a lot of responsibility, but at the same time it's a service to help out and it is a privilege to do that."

Leading an organization into a new year isn't new to Ona. She was president of the Hawaii Psychiatric Medical Association from 2004-2005. She was also involved in establishing the First Home for the Dying in Rochester, which was staffed by volunteers in providing free services to the terminally ill.

This year, Healthcare for the Barrios, a foundation which she



PMAH president Dr. Cecilia Ona

and her husband established, celebrates its ten years. The foundation provides free medical services, medicines, maternal healthcare and immunizations to ten villages in the Philippines

Dr. Celia and Dr. Fernando Ona have two accomplished sons, both in the medical field.

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Atlas Insurance Appoints Irlene Torres as Asst VP

Atlas Insurance Agency, Inc., has announced the appointment of Irlene Torres as assistant vice president of Information Services. She is of Japanese and Filipino ancestry.

Torres has over 20 years of experience in the insurance industry. She will continue to supervise and manage the company's information system, including agency management system, data management, business processes and help desk services.

She will also be responsible for overseeing projects related to agency management systems and information technology processes. Torres holds a Chartered Property Casualty Under-



writer designation.

Atlas Insurance is the state's largest locally-owned and managed insurance agency. It represents more than 40 local and national insurance companies with offices in Honolulu, Hilo, Kamauela, Kona and Wailuku.

Lingle Releases \$1 million For Veterans Cemetery Improvements

Gov. Linda Lingle has released \$1,050,000 for improvements to the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe.

The project is part of the governor's \$1.87 billion public infrastructure construction plan to stimulate the economy and create jobs.

Cemetery officials estimated that available columbarium

niches, or recessed compartments designed to hold urns, could be depleted before summer. The work includes the construction of over 2,000 niches in order to provide veterans and their families the option of being interred at the cemetery.

Funds will also be used to build a soil storage facility to shelter backfill material used for graves. Currently, the backfill

stockpiles are stored in the open and exposed to rain.

Construction on the columbarium niches is expected to begin in April 2009 and to be completed in October 2009. Construction on the soil storage facility is expected to begin in August 2009 and to be completed in July 2010.

The Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery is the final resting place of 8,055 Hawaii veterans and their eligible family members.

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City Council Opts For Costlier Airport Route

By Shalimar Pagulayan

In a 6-2 vote, the City Council revised the 20-mile transit route to connect to the airport instead of along densely-populated Salt Lake Boulevard.

Observers say that the switch to the airport, which was proposed two days after the 2008 General Election, is unfair to the many people who voted to support the rail in the election, believing that it would run along Salt Lake Boulevard.

"Residents testified that they voted for the steel-on-steel rail transit project because they were led to believe that it would go through Salt Lake. Residents are questioning the integrity of the City Council, which selected Salt Lake Boulevard in February 2007. They should abide by that decision," says Maurice Morita, Salt Lake Neighborhood Board vice chair.

Others say that the route switch comes at the worst possible time, considering the state's current economic condition and that the airport alignment costs \$220 million more than Salt Lake Boulevard.

"People are losing their jobs, worker hours are being cut and benefits frozen, businesses

are closing, homes are being foreclosed and more residents are on the brink of being homeless," says Councilmember Romy Cachola.

"By choosing a more expensive alignment, the Council appears insensitive to taxpayers. We should be fiscally-tightening our belts, not selecting a route that adds to the cost of the project."

Salt Lake Neighborhood Board member Mark Taylor pointed out the recent decrease in collections for the General Excise Tax (GET)—the local funding source for the rail transit project.

"It's questionable whether GET collections will be sufficient to cover the local contribution," Taylor says. "The recent economic downturn has led the State Council on Revenues to project a 3 percent decrease in state tax revenue this year. There's no end in sight to the national recession and the negative impact on GET proceeds will be significant."

In arguing for Salt Lake Boulevard, Cachola pointed out that in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), Salt Lake Boulevard had a better cost effectiveness index than the airport route. He urged his colleagues to delay the vote



City Council in session

until after the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) completes its review of ridership, user benefits, operation & maintenance costs and capital costs for both alignments.

"We should not be making a final decision since not all the facts are in," he says. "We should wait for the results of the final EIS and the findings of the FTA."

Some Salt Lake residents who felt betrayed by the Council's vote say the route switch was yet another broken prom-

ise to the community. In February 2007, the mayor met with neighborhood board members and community leaders and committed himself to support the transit line along Salt Lake Boulevard. When push came to shove, the community received virtually no support from the administration.

Then there was \$30 million for the widening of Salt Lake Boulevard that was taken away with a promise that the widening work would be postponed and done concurrently with the

construction of the rail line through Salt Lake.

"Widening Salt Lake Boulevard began in the 1970s and was supposed to have been completed by 1984," says Foster Village resident Roland Bueno. "Now 25 years later, it's still unfinished."

Cachola says that switching to the airport route may ultimately open up a can of worms.

"The Council's action may turn out to be a tool for rail opponents to reopen the debate and to possibly place the issue on the ballot for the next election," he says.

Cachola says that if rail makes it to the ballot in 2010, the public can thank Councilmember Charles Djou whose resolution was the spark that could ultimately end up scuttling the rail transit project.

Djou responded, when interviewed by the Honolulu Advertiser: "That's not my grand scheme here, but I'm not going to be crying any tears if that happens."

FALEA Launches Review Course

The Filipino American League of Engineers & Architects (FALEA) has started its Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Review sessions for this year.

The 12-week, 3-hour day classes are held on Saturdays and geared towards helping FALEA members prepare for the day-long general exam given a few times each year nationwide. Those who pass are eligible to take another day-long exam—the Professional Engineer (PE) exam—in electrical, mechanical, civil and other engineering fields.

FALEA has held review classes over the years to help members and others achieve these credentials.

"Unless you have credentials, moving up in your profession is very tough," says Marisol Tacon, an engineer with international consulting firm Lyon's Associates. "In this

business, there are so many qualified people. It's the designation after one's name that makes you stand out."

FALEA president John Ramos says that the organization is building on the legacy passed on by its founders and previous presidents.

"Part of FALEA's mission is to increase the professionalism of its membership," Ramos says. "Even if only a few individuals pass the exam as a result of these review sessions, it will have been worth all the effort."

For more information about this class or future classes, please contact FALEA board member Jeffrey Cudiamat, PE at 358-7111.



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Gaur Johnson, PhD, Class Instructor/Facilitator (top left) conducts the 1st Session of the FE Review Class, while Jeffrey Cudiamat, PE (top right), assists and responds to a question from one of the attendees.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

'Money Must Be Paid As High Up As the President'

By Aurea Calica / Friday, February 6, 2009

The Japanese contractor who provided information to World Bank (WB) investigators regarding alleged rigging of the bidding for road projects said he was told that bribes had to be paid to officials as high as "the president."

The Japanese contractor, whose name had been publicly announced as Tomatu Suzuki, told WB investigators that in one meeting with the late Sen. Robert Barbers, it was made clear to him that there would be no business in the Philippines without paying money.

"Money would have to be paid as high up as the president, senior government officials and politicians in order to do any further business in the country. To win a contract it would be necessary to pay the head of the bureau and politicians several million yen (several tens of

thousands of US dollars)," the excerpts, provided by government sources, stated.

But Suzuki said he did not have any direct contact with President Arroyo and only met with Barbers and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, who "first discussed bribes" and that they had a "rough approach."

Excerpts of the WB report on the blacklisting of three Filipino and four Chinese construction firms for collusive practices in the bidding for WB-funded government projects did not only name names of politicians and government officials involved in the anomalous practice, but also provided leads that investigators could pursue.

The Japanese witness, who left the country in 2002, "learned that money was important to do business in the Philippines," which was "a fundamental difference in their way of thinking."

Suzuka's local agent, who was identified as Trix Lim, said he would have to pay to get a contract and that dollars would resolve any problems with the WB.

The Japanese said he met Lim in 2001 at the Diamond Hotel with policemen and public officials and "Tito Miranda," identified as an assistant director of the Department of Public Works and Highways-Region 4, to discuss the payments.

"Mr. Suzuki thought Mr. Miranda was a secretary to Senator Barbers; Mr. Miranda asked Mr. Suzuki to pay the cost of a trip to Japan for Sen. Barbers; Mr. Suzuki refused," the report said.

Filipino, Korean and Chinese contractors interviewed by the WB in their probe had the same version of how to bag a contract for infrastructure projects in the country — through the right connections at the right price.

They also lamented that it was an open secret that contractors would have to adhere to the process or they would be kicked out of the loop. They expressed helplessness because despite the vulgarity of the bribery and collusion, it seemed that no one was in charge to put an end to it.

An informant of the WB said: "The corruption in the bidding is extensively from FG (First Gentleman, Mr. Arroyo), congressmen to DWP officer and contractors."

"No one have (sic) the ability to stop it," the report said.

A Filipino contractor said that in the past, projects could be awarded to a contractor after bribing individuals within the agency. But he said the system had changed and in many instances, politicians organized the bidding.

Lacson urges filing of raps

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the Philippine government

should take legal action against several officials, including First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, that were implicated in the World Bank (WB) report on alleged rigging of the bidding for government infrastructure projects.

"So what I'm trying to say is, why does it take the World Bank to take notice and take action and the Philippine government doesn't act?" Lacson told local newsmen in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan, where he attended yesterday the inauguration of a school building that was constructed under Mayor Reynaldo Velasco, a former police official and the senator's classmate at the Philippine Military Academy.

He said Malacañang always claims that the alleged anomalies involving top administration officials and Mr. Arroyo are mere speculations.

"Now it's the World Bank speaking. There is a reputable financial institution dragging the name of FG," he said. (www.philstar.com)

Baselines Bills to Compromise RP Territory?

By Aurea Calica / Friday, February 6, 2009

A University of the Philippines professor claimed yesterday that the two separate versions of the baselines bill approved by the Senate and the House of Representatives are unconstitutional and will compromise national sovereignty.

Lawyer Harry Roque of the Center for International Law said under the 1987 Constitution, "the waters around, between, and connecting the islands of the archipelago, regardless of their breadth and dimensions, form part of the internal waters of the Philippines."

"The two pending legislative measures, by adopting the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), would make such waters 'archipelagic waters' and thus subject to use by foreign vessels in the exercise of the right to innocent passage and worse, the right for planes to make flight over our airspace. Under the present wording of the Constitution, foreign vessels and airplanes cannot pass through our waters and airspace without our express consent. The two bills would do away with our right to

give such consent," Roque said in a statement.

The Senate version includes the Kalayaan Island Group and Scarborough Shoal as a "regime of islands" outside of the baselines, while the House of Representatives included them in the country's territorial baselines.

Roque said the passage of this baselines bill would also not ensure that the country would gain the benefits of an exclusive economic zone (EEZ), where coastal zones were given by the UNCLOS the exclusive right to explore and exploit natural resources.

"While this maritime zone could indeed extend up to 200 nautical miles from our base points, the reality is because of overlaps with our neighbors at all fronts, to wit: Palau in the East, Taiwan in the North, China and Vietnam in the West, and Malaysia and Indonesia in the South, it is unlikely that we could claim up to 200 EEZ as provided in the UNCLOS. These overlaps would have to be resolved on the basis of agreements," Roque said.

"This means that contrary to the line espoused by the government, we will not gain much by way of EEZ in exchange for our complete surrender of our



sovereignty over what is today considered as Philippine internal waters," Roque said.

Since the Philippines is the only archipelagic country among all claimant-countries to the Kalayaan Island Group or the Spratly Islands, "it behooves both rhyme and reason why the Senate version opted to treat Kalayaan under the 'regime of islands.'"

"As the only archipelagic country claimant to the disputed islands, it is only the Philippines that can include the Spratlys as part of its baselines since we are the only one entitled to use these baselines. (China has used such baselines in claiming title to the Paracels even if China is clearly not an archipelago.) Unfortunately, the Senate version surrendered what in reality is our

strongest claim to the disputed islands, that because we are an archipelago, the Spratlys form part of the unity of waters and islands forming our archipelago," Roque said.

"Worse, by using the regime of islands, the Senate version has acknowledged that the islands do not form part of our archipelago, but are also distant from our mainland, including Palawan. How can we now claim that the Spratlys is a natural prolongation of the land mass of Palawan for purposes

of making a claim for an extended continental shelf in the area of Kalayaan?" he argued.

Roque said the May 2009 deadline for making this claim for an extended continental shelf was what the Arroyo administration invoked as justification for rushing the enactment of a baselines law.

"This is an outright deception since the deadline is relative to making a claim for an extended EEZ and not a deadline for legislating an archipelagic baselines law," Roque said.

"Finally, the Senate version of the law is a repudiation of a declaration which an earlier Senate required as a precondition for its concurrence to the UNCLOS. Under this declaration, the country's territory should be governed still by our Constitution despite our decision to be a party to the UNCLOS. It is indeed a sad day in Philippine history that today's Senate would want to render nugatory an earlier Senate-imposed declaration intended to protect our national sovereignty and patrimony," he said. (www.philstar.com)

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Gov't Workers Protest Impending Layoffs

By Rudy Santos / Thursday,
February 5, 2009



MANILA, Philippines --- Thousands of government workers nationwide are threatening to abandon their jobs to dramatize their protest against their impending layoff.

Santi Dasmarinas, Taggol Trabaho spokesman, said government workers have agreed to take a "national action" against the planned rationalization program.

"Government workers nationwide are taking to the streets and other forms of actions on Feb. 13 to signify our objection against the planned lay off of public employees," Dasmarinas disclosed.

According to Dasmarina, employees from 25 government agencies have declared Feb. 13 as "Tanggol Trabaho" Day so they could spend a day to defend their jobs.

"The point is to register our opposition against layoff and manifest our com-

mitment to do whatever it takes to protect our jobs, our only source of living," Dasmarinas explained.

Dasmarinas noted that at least 8,000 public employees are facing displacement with the planned implementation of rationalization program or streamlining of the government bureaucracy.

"We are in the middle of a financial crisis that made the unemployment ballooned to unprecedented level and the Arroyo administration is forcing us to retire earlier and yet many retired general are being appointed to the Cabinet," COURAGE president Ferdinand Gaitte said.

Labor Secretary Marianito Roque earlier reported that there are ongoing discussions to possibly defer the government's planned rationalization program. Various labor groups are also urging the government to delay the program.

(www.philstar.com)

Policeman Charged in Journalist Slaying

More than 60 journalists have been killed since 2001, making the Philippines one of the world's most dangerous places for reporters. The media watchdog group, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, said Cuesta was one of six journalists killed "in the line of duty" in the Philippines last year.

Blancaflor, head of a government task force in charge of investigating and prosecuting suspects involved in political killings, said the killings "affect the entire nation and not just a particular group of people."

Blancaflor said Acharon and his co-accused were "considered threats to public safety and security," and urged authorities to arrest them as quickly as possible.

Local newspapers have quoted Acharon as saying that the charges were meant to discredit city Mayor Pedro Acharon, his cousin.

Cuesta was in a coma for several days before he died. (www.philstar.com)

MANILA (AP) - Government prosecutors have filed murder charges against a police officer in the killing of a radio journalist in a southern Philippine city last year, an official said today.

Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor said arrest warrants were issued for Inspector Redempto Acharon and several alleged accomplices after charges were filed in court Tuesday in connection with the August 2008 slaying of Dennis Cuesta, program director of Radio Mindanao Network in General Santos city.

It is not clear why Cuesta was targeted but local media have noted that Acharon is a cousin of the mayor of General Santos - an official whom Cuesta criticized in his radio program.

The officer charged has denied any involvement.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

25 Filipinas Bound for Middle East Intercepted at NAIA

By Rudy Santos / Thursday, February 5, 2009

MANILA, Philippines--Members of the Migrant Compliance and Monitoring Group (MCMG) of the Bureau of Immigration offloaded from three different flights 25 Filipinas bound for the Middle East last night on suspicion that they may be illegally recruited for non-existent jobs.

Immigration commissioner Marcelino Libanan, who rushed to the airport terminal 1, said the 25 passengers were about to board Cathay Pacific, Singapore Airlines and Gulf Airlines for their flight to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain but their final destinations were Syria and Lebanon.

The passengers reportedly presented to immigration officers their employment visas which were inconsistent with the profession stated in their POEA clearance.

Libanan disclosed that Ferdie Sampol, chief operations and the MCMG, uncovered the modus operandi of illegal recruiters of erasing the original profession in the passengers' employment visa and replacing them with positions other than those that they applied for at the embassies.

"As much as we know that these Filipinos only want to work in their aimed destinations, we cannot allow them to leave the country for we know that their safety and well being are being further compromised



Commissioner Marcelino Libanan

by these illegal schemes", Libanan added.

Libanan warned illegal recruiters anew that the Bureau of Immigration will continue to strengthen their operations against their activities. (www.philstar.com)

Random Drug Testing Starts in Pasig City HS

By Dennis Carcamo Wed., February 4, 2009

MANILA, Philippines--The government's random drug testing in public and private high schools in Metro Manila started today in a public school in Pasig City.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus, Dangerous Drugs Board chairman Vicente Soto III and officials from the Department of Health kicked off the drug testing at the Manghangan National High School in Pasig around 9 a.m.

Sotto reiterated that the testing would be a good thing in the long run in fighting drug addiction in the country. He said it is a form of "self defense" against the growing drug menace as the

youth is always vulnerable targets of drug syndicates.

Sotto also clarified they are not going to single out students in the drug tests. Authorities have likewise assured the parents and guardians of the students that the rights of those who will be chosen to undergo the test will be upheld.

Lapus, for his part, said the guidelines issued by the DDB emphasize that no student will be suspended or kicked out of school if found using drugs.

Manghangan National High School has a total student population of 3,366 and only 15 students will undergo drug testing. Five students will serve as buffer if any of the selected students will be absent, school officials said. (www.philstar.com)

Securities and Exchange Commission Chief's Fate Hangs

By Paolo Romero Thursday, February 5, 2009

The fate of embattled Securities and Exchange Commission chair Fe Barin and other SEC officials will be known when President Arroyo returns on Saturday from the US, Malacañang said yesterday.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said Mrs. Arroyo is "very concerned" about the plight of thousands affected by the collapse of some pre-need firms, including Legacy Consolidated Plans Inc. owned by Sto. Domingo, Albay Mayor Celso de los Angeles, Mrs. Arroyo is expected to return to Manila on Feb. 7 after attending the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington.

Remonde's pronouncement came in the wake of senators' calls for Mrs. Arroyo to fire negligent SEC officials for failing to protect plan holders from anomalous practices of pre-need companies.

"Let's not preempt the President's actions," Remonde said when asked if the Chief Executive would heed the calls from the Senate for heads to roll in the SEC.

"The President will personally look into the matter when she comes back," he said.

He said Mrs. Arroyo will review the findings of the ongoing

congressional investigations and see what actions can be taken by the executive branch.

"The President will do everything she can to help the plan holders," he said.

In the meantime, he said an assistance desk has been set up at the SEC to help distressed plan holders.

Nograles investments no more

Speaker Prospero Nograles may have to say goodbye to the P10 million that De los Angeles claims he owes the House leader.

Romeo Mendoza Jr., general counsel of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC), said depositors of Legacy's 12 closed rural banks are each entitled only to a maximum of P250,000 even if they have bigger deposits.

"That's the maximum amount covered by the deposit insurance law," he told the STAR yesterday.

"I'm talking to you in general terms. I cannot talk about specific accounts," he said.

But he wouldn't confirm if the Speaker is indeed a depositor of any of De los Angeles' banks, saying the Bank Secrecy Law prohibits him from divulging such information.

"The law now covers us because we have taken over the closed Legacy banks. We have assumed the role of banker," he added.

Responding to questions,

Mendoza said clients with deposits larger than P250,000 can run after De los Angeles and his banks for the balance of their deposits.

"We in PDIC will also go after his assets for the amount covered by the insurance law," he said.

PDIC president Jose No-

grales, a brother of the Speaker, has estimated that total claims by about 130,000 depositors of Legacy's 12 rural banks will amount to P14.4 billion.

The PDIC has applied for a P14-billion loan from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to pay off Legacy depositors.

Last week, without mentioning any amount, Speaker Nograles admitted that he had "placements" in the Legacy

group of companies, presumably in its banks and not in the pre-need companies, which were not authorized to take deposits or engage in lending.

He said he was attracted by the group's offer of doubling deposits in three to five years.

He said he made his placements in 2004, and that he could have already recovered his capital in 2006 or 2008. (www.philstar.com)

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MAINLAND NEWS

US Stimulus Plan to Benefit Pinoy War Veterans

WASHINGTON — After a decades-long struggle, Filipino veterans of World War II finally may be granted US military benefits thanks to, of all things, the economic stimulus legislation.

A \$198-million provision of the proposed Senate stimulus bill would authorize one-time payments of \$15,000 to Filipino veterans who are US citizens and \$9,000 for non-citizens, including those in the Philippines.

The provision is a small part of the overall \$885-billion bill, but it has drawn criticism. North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr, top Republican on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, "finds it difficult to see how spending money in the Philippines will help stimulate the American economy," a spokesman said.

The veterans, many of whom are in their 80s and 90s, have fought hard for the benefits: In 1997 in Los Angeles' MacArthur Park — named after Gen. Douglas MacArthur — a group of protesters chained themselves to a statue of their former commander.

"We think this (stimulus bill) is the best chance for us to get this benefit approved," said Franco Arcebal, 85, of Los Angeles, a vice president of the American Coalition for Filipino Veterans. "We're only about 15,000 left now. I'm 85,

one of the youngest."

The payments were added to the legislation by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (Democrat-Hawaii), chairman of the Appropriations Committee and one of three remaining World War II veterans in the Senate.

"It's a matter of honor and the good name of the United States," Inouye said outside the Senate chamber on Tuesday. He noted that in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt promised the benefits, but Congress renegeed on the pledge in 1946.

As for whether the veterans' payments belong in the stimulus package, Inouye said, "I'm looking for any vehicle that will carry this forward."

Congress last year approved appropriation of the Filipino veterans' benefits, but authorization is needed before the money can be paid.

There is no provision for the veterans in the House bill. If the item survives in the Senate, it will be the subject of negotiations to reconcile differences in the two chambers' bills.

The veterans' measure is among a spate of bills aimed at rewarding the sacrifices of World War II veterans, who are dying at a rate of about 850 a day, and healing wounds lingering from the war era. Other bills include the "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act"



The U.S. Congress

to provide payments to members of the merchant marine, sponsored by Rep. Bob Filner, and a measure sponsored by Rep. Xavier Becerra to create a commission to investigate the government's actions in the World War II internment and deportation of Latin Americans of Japanese descent.

Among the critics of including benefits for the Filipino veterans in the stimulus package is Rep. Steve Buyer of Indiana, the top Republican on

the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

"I do not question the valor and courage of the Philippine Army, which fought alongside US forces to defeat Japan in World War II, and I am not opposed to discussing ways to compensate these veterans. However, to do so and say it under the guise of stimulating the American economy is a complete falsehood and is the lowest form of partisan politics."

Arcebal called the payments a "small token to recognize our service."

Even if the benefits do not make it into the stimulus bill, this could be the year that the veterans achieve victory.

Several of their long-time champions are now in key positions in Congress: Filner and Sen. Daniel Akaka, chair the House and Senate veterans affairs committees, respectively, in addition to Inouye chairing the Appropriations Committee.

And President Barack Obama, during the presidential campaign, expressed support for granting benefits to the Filipino veterans.

"If the Senate decides that this isn't the appropriate time or place, we're optimistic that we'll find the right vehicle in the future," said Rep. Mike Honda, chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. — *Los Angeles Times*

Filipina Remains Top Chef at White House



Cristeta Pasia Comerford

Filipina chef Cristeta Comerford—the first woman, minority and Filipino-American to head the White House kitchen, will cook for the Obamas, after the family decided to retain her services.

"She brings such incredible talent to the White House operation and came very highly regarded from the Bush family," said Michelle Obama. "I look forward to working with her in the years to come."

Michelle Obama said she appreciated Comerford's emphasis on the importance of healthy eating.

Comerford, who was born Cristeta Gomez Pasia in the Philippines in 1962 and later became a naturalized U.S. citizen, was promoted by the Bush

family in 2005 after the departure of executive chef Walter Scheib a few months earlier.

Scheib described Comerford as a "wonderful choice," adding that she was a great cook with an artistic eye and calm demeanor.

Food tech at UP

Comerford is the 10th of 11 children of an elementary assistant school principal father and a homemaker mother. She studied at the Padre Gomez Elementary School in Manila and finished her secondary education at the Manila Science High School.

Comerford majored in food technology at the University of the Philippines before emigrating to the U.S. in the 1980s with her parents. She originally stud-

ied French cooking and later specialized in ethnic and American cuisine. She began her career working at Le Ciel restaurant in Vienna before heading to the kitchens of two Washington restaurants.

She joined the White House as assistant chef in 1995.

In 2006, at the Asia-Pacific Leaders' Summit in Hanoi, President Bush jokingly told President Macapagal-Arroyo that relations between the Philippines and the U.S. was even better with a Filipino-American cook at the White House.

The head chef at the White House earns \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year creating menus for state dinners, holiday functions, receptions and official luncheons hosted by the president and First Lady.

Although the gala affairs are organizational challenges, Scheib says the greater challenge comes on the personal side—feeding the President, his family and guests.

"The job is about serving the first family, first, last and in every way. That's the only job," Scheib says.

A White House chef's sensitivity and understanding is just as important as culinary skills, given that the chef is among the few people who interact with the First Family in private. Scheib gives Comerford high marks in that regard. (*Good News Philippines*)

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LEGAL NOTES

Options for Dependents of Non-immigrant Workers



By Reuben S. Seguritan

Ot is not uncommon for non-immigrant workers to bring their spouses and dependent children with them to the U.S. In typical households, children usually continue to stay with their parents even after reaching the age of 21.

Normally, the spouse and unmarried minor children (under 21 years of age) of the principal non-immigrant worker may apply for accompanying visas as derivative beneficiaries.

For example, qualified family members of H-1 temporary workers can apply for H-4 visas;

dependents of intra-company transferees under L-1 can apply for L-2; dependents of those in O-1 category as persons of extraordinary ability can apply under O-3; those of R-1 religious workers can apply for R-2 visas; J-1 exchange visitors may bring in their spouses and minor children as J-2, among others.

For these categories, each family member must meet the visa eligibility requirement including proof that there are sufficient funds for his/her support during his/her stay in the U.S.

The authorized stay in the U.S. of a derivative beneficiary is usually co-terminus with the principal applicant, meaning that he/she will depart the U.S. when the principal applicant's authorized stay in the U.S. ends.

Normally, the dependents are not allowed to work while in the derivative status. They can only work if they apply for and are found eligible for their own work visas.

What happens if children of non-immigrant workers reach 21 years of age and would like to remain in the U.S. to study or work?

There are several options available for them.

Full-time students may change status to an F-1 classification once they gain admission to an accredited educational institution authorized to issue an I-20 form to certify eligibility for academic study in the U.S.

Upon certification of the designated school official, F-1 students may be authorized to work part-time for 20 hours per

week while school is in session or full-time during school breaks. They can also apply for work under curricular practical training or optional practical training if they meet the requirements to qualify under these programs.

Those who intend to pursue vocational studies instead of full-time academic and language courses may apply for M-1 visas.

For those who decide to study college in their home countries but spend vacation time in the U.S. with their families, aside from the B-2 visitors' visa, they can also apply under the J Summer Work and Travel program as a viable option to be able to travel and work in the U.S. during summer breaks. This program is available for

bonafide post-secondary students enrolled in a full-time course of study at participating accredited educational institutions or sponsor organizations which are pre-approved for exchange visitor programs to issue the DS-2019 or IAP 66 eligibility forms. A list of these sponsors can be seen on the U.S. Department of State website.

It is important to look into and consider these options for children of foreign nationals temporarily assigned and working in the U.S. in order to keep family unit intact and also to prevent the disruption of normal family life and values once the child attains majority age and is no longer qualified for derivative visa status but would still want to remain in the U.S. with his/her family to study and/or work.

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

MAINLAND NEWS

Supreme Court Upholds Gender Discrimination Rights In Schools

The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Fitzgerald v. Barnstable School Committee*, unanimously upheld the ability of students and parents to sue individuals, cities and governments for gender discrimination and sexual harassment under Section 1983, a Reconstruction-era civil rights law.

The Asian American Justice Center (AAJC) joined the ACLU and the National Women's Law Center in support of parents' right to sue.

In the case, a kindergarten girl experienced severe and

pervasive sexual harassment by a third grade boy. The parents of the kindergarten girl filed a federal lawsuit against the school district, claiming deliberate indifference to the harassment in violation of Title IX, the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution through Section 1983 and Massachusetts state law.

The lower courts ruled that the parents could not file under Section 1983 because a Title IX claim had already been filed and that Title IX was the only method to address the harass-



The magistrates of the present U.S. Supreme Court

ment.

However, the Supreme Court in its unanimous decision held that "Title IX was not meant to be an exclusive mechanism for addressing gender discrimination in schools or a substitute for Section 1983

suits as a means of enforcing constitutional rights."

Karen K. Narasaki, president and executive director of the AAJC, called the Court's ruling as a "great victory" for students who experience gender discrimination.

"We have seen an increase in harassment against Asian-American students with school systems taking no action to address the matter," she says. "We hope that this ruling puts school districts on notice that gender discrimination and sexual harassment is a serious matter."

Vincent A. Eng, deputy director of the AAJC, says that Title IX protections were the result of efforts by the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink from Hawaii.

"She would be very pleased hear that the Supreme Court ruled that students facing gender discrimination have additional protections under the law," Eng says.

YMCA-Oakland Honors Filipina at Martin Luther King Celebration



Evangelina Canonizado Buell

The YMCA of the East Bay in Oakland bestowed the 2009 YMCA Martin Luther King Jr. Award for Human Dignity and Brotherhood to Filipina author and nationally recognized leader Evangelina Canonizado Buell. She received the award at a gala reception on January 29, 2009.

Buell was recently selected as one of the "100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the U.S." by the Filipina Women's Network. She also received the 2007 Global Filipino Literary

Award for her book "Twenty Five Chickens and a Pig for a Bride: Growing Up in a Filipino Immigrant Family."

She is the co-editor of "Seven Card Stud with Seven Manangs Wild." Her most recent book is "Filipinos in the East Bay."

Buell serves as co-chair of the Asian Pacific Advisory Council for the Oakland Museum of California and is the National Vice President of the Filipino American National Historical Society. She has

served as the president of the City of Berkeley Art Commission and has received many community awards for her activism.

The YMCA's recognition of Ms. Buell highlights her work

as an advocate for social justice and humanity, which is consistent with the timeless teachings of Dr. King, whose legacy is celebrated by the YMCA annually through a series of community based events.

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PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE

DAYASADAS



By Pacita Saludes



ayarig ti itatopog iti Baro A Tawen ti iseserrek ti Baro a balay a nangongen. A ti iseserrek tayo

makita dagiti adu a bambanag a kasapulán ken pagsayaatan iti baro a serkentayo a pagtaengan.

Tapno napinpintas, nataltalged ken langana ti ad-adda a makapnek ken makaparasgak nawadwada ngem iti daan a pagtaengan a panawan. Iti panangnawanwanan ti aglawlaw adu dagiti makitatayo a rumbeng nga inayon (imula) malalin a naserbi a kasapulán a di nasagráp iti nagpanawan. Nalukatan iti sirmata ti panangnagan kadagiti nalanglangto a bambanag (kas kadagiti mulmula a makapasalibukag kadag-

Taliawen Ti Nalikudan, Wanawanan Ti Tapogan, Riknaen Ti Idateng Ti Aldaw Dagiti Puso

iti mata ken rikna). Dagiti malalin nga imula nga abngba ti pagapitan dagiti sumarsaruno. Tan-awan ti nalawa a mawanawanan ket panunoten dagiti ad-adu pay a maaramid dagiti ima kas ipatuldo ti nasariyawet a panagpanunot. Malalin a pangpasayaat ti bukod a bagi ken pakairanudan ti sabali.

Ta ti kano tao a saan laeng a ti bukodna a bagi ti paspasalunatenna ad-adda pay a maparaburan ti nasalsaliwanwan pay a pangpampunot ken nabusbosna a bendisyon.

Kas kadagiti addaan kadagiti nadumaduma a talento nga usaarena para iti pagsayaatanna ket iragpinna met dayta a telento a pangabalit iti sabali. Pangdaaldad ti rusat ti sabali.

Kasta met dagiti babaknang, madaydayaw ken matangtangad, tomukno ti langit ti ragsak ken panganyaman dagiti maparaburanda. Nupay

adu met dagiti ad-daan a dakamatenda a dayta a parabur kada kuada a pangimameg kadagiti nakurkurang ti gasatna. Saan laeng dagiti makita nga aramid ngem nakarkaro pay dagiti balikas nga agasut kadagiti bibig a mangsagut ken manglais itay nanunomomo.

Apay a di iburay ti adda a gasat ken paglaingan iti sabali!

Apay kuma no ti gasat, paglaingan ken pagsanikuan siraragsak nga isingay iti sabali. Kunada a ti ragsak ti maipayan agsublikano iti mangipay.

Ngarud kuma no dagiti adda a talugading, pagsiriban, pagsanikan isingay ta mangted ti nararagsak a biag. Iburay ken iyusar ti adda ta isu ti mangted sabur biag para iti narangrang-ay, nararagsak a Baro A Tawen. Naimbag a gasat tayo amin ken "Nararagsak Nga Aldaw Dagiti Puso-puso!". Happy Valentines!

Nalabaga A Puso Ti Mangdarang

*Kayokat nga iwaksi ti nasimget a kabalko
Tapno diak maibudi ti kaaduan ti aglawlawko
Nalabaga a kolor mangartap ti nalidem a lubong ko
Mariknak ita aldaw dagiti puso*

*Aglang-ay ita ti nadumaduma a rikna a maibuanan
Nadumaduma a kaipapanan, narigat a maibuksilan
Adu dagiti agragsak, agliday, adu met ti
Mangkray ti maamatan riknada a nasneban
Ket narigat nga idesig, pmdno a kaipapanan.*

*Aldaw a naisangrat di mabilang a pangngeddeng
Makasalibukag, makadagem mangted linglingay
Makapagin-awa no maiburay nasaw-it nga isem
Ararapay agampayag ikarigatan a sukbalen*

*Payapayan rikna a mangako naim-imas a kaipapanan
Witwitan met rikna a nasneban no sungar, maaparan
Ta aldaw dagiti puso idenna ti kaipapanan
Nalabaga a puso ti maiparang ita nga aldaw.
Mangaron kadagiti nalubed di makariknak darang.*

GLOBAL NEWS

Pinoy Clothing Company Makes LED Technology Fashionable



Ever seen those customized shirts which literally light up? The imaginative apparel and a number of related products are made and distributed by Maverick By Design—an innovative Filipino company that has combined electro-luminescent technology with artistry and fashion.

Maverick by Design made its initial splash when it introduced paper thin Christmas

Young entrepreneur Harry Hawson showing off lighted canvass bag

lanterns which became very popular to tourists who wanted to bring the decorative parols back to their native country. With the holiday season over, the demand for parols have been replaced by specially designed lighted shirts with sound activated mini-devices that come in various designs and colors.

"The shirts are just head turners. They are unique, fun and quite a fashion statement, to quote the least," says Maverick by Design CEO Harry Hawson. So far, orders have come in from 48



"Umagang Kay Ganda" hosts enjoys their Maverick by Design shirts

countries worldwide, signaling a bright, colorful future ahead for the company.

The cotton lycra shirts are made of high-quality fabric with removable light devices. The lights last up to 10,000 hours, ensuring the items can be displayed and enjoyed for long periods of time. And whether people want their shirts or accessories to symbolize love, pride or whatever cool thing they can imagine, Maverick By Design has got them covered.

From its Pinoy Pride shirts, Heart canvass bags and purses to stylish glowing umbrellas, Maverick by Design does a variety of custom-designed work which can incorporate logos, names,

photographs, caricatures and other designs into various platforms using E.L. technology, depending on the customer's preference and budget.

Maverick by Design plans to expand its business in 2009. Hawson's business partner, fellow CEO Ty Presley will open a second location in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Together, the two hope to break into the global market faster.

Hawson says that he is proud to introduce this unique t-shirt concept to the world.

"You not only make heads turn with these items, it's a fun conversational piece," he says. What's more is it's Proudly Pinoy!! (Good News Pilipinas)

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OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL (OFCC) ANNUAL CONVENTION / SATURDAY

June 27, 2009 • Hilton Hawaiian Village

FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII INSTALLATION BANQUET / SATURDAY

July 11, 2009 • 6:00pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village • Call Rose Mendoza at 371-3902 or Bennett Evangelista at 398-5988.

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JUNE 12. 8:30am, at the con-

sulate grounds — *“Araw ng Kalayaan”* (Independence Day) and another activity at 6:30 pm.

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