

HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

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CELEBRATING THE FILIPINO CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

COVER STORY PAGE

4



PHILIPPINE NEWS

NOYNOY AQUINO ENJOYS GOOD LEAD — LP

12



LEGAL NOTES

IMMIGRATION REFORM ASAP INTRODUCED

13



GLOBAL NEWS

RP TO PARTICIPATE IN 2010 WORLD EXPO IN SHANGHAI

15



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EDITORIAL

Celebrating the True Meaning of Christmas

A story was told many Christmases ago of police officers responding to complaints of an abandoned building on the outskirts of town. Upon entering, the officers found dilapidated sleeping quarters where many homeless, drug addicts and other “dregs of society” sought shelter from the bitter cold. The place had at one time served as the town’s dance hall. In fact, sparkling globe lights still clung tightly to the dilapidated ceiling. But now, it was nothing but filth and squalor and reeked of an overwhelming stench.

Well, the residents were rounded up and the case sent to court where it came before the judge who discovered a rather astounding story. One of the derelicts from the abandoned building said to the judge, “Your Honor, I am an upstanding citizen of the community. I don’t use drugs or alcohol. I was in there to take care of the others.”

The man’s claims were investigated and found to be true. His name, which was struck from the court records, is of no significance to the story, but the people in the unit called him “Father God” because of his compassion and kindness. He had paid the rent so that these drug addicts and derelicts would have shelter. Amazingly, the man they called “Father God” looked just like them. This compassionate, law-abiding citizen had chosen to appear like the others so that he could better take care of their needs.

When you really think about it, this story carries practically the same message as the birth of Jesus Christ. In Philippians 2:6-7 we read that although Jesus was God, He “gave up His divine privileges, took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being...”

God Almighty willingly gave up the magnificent splendors of heaven to become just like you and me. Why? Just like “Father God” who took care of the castaways in the abandoned building. He chose to do so in order to identify Himself with us—which is an incredible act of love!

So you see, Christmas is not just about presents, singing carols or Santa Claus. It’s okay to take part in these festivities, but if you and your family really want to celebrate the true meaning of

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Christmas this year, Santa—a fun mythical figure—should be an afterthought. The real Christmas story is the story of God’s becoming a human being in the person of Jesus Christ. The birth of the Messiah, the babe in the manger, Jesus Christ... the ultimate Christmas gift!

That is why we celebrate Christmas each year—out of gratitude for what God did for us. We remember His birth by giving each other gifts, worshipping Him, and being especially conscious of the poor and less fortunate. Jesus is truly the Reason for the Season!

OPEN FORUM

GMA Should Retire for the Sake of Filipino People

By Jimmy Jay Dean Encarnacion
Pearl City

Public servants are employed by the government—either via a civil service exam, election or appointment. Their duties include serving the people and satisfying the needs of the citizens.

If they abuse their powers and positions and violate the law, they are subject to resignation, removal from office and prosecution. By the laws and constitution of the Philippines, the president and members of congress are subject to impeachment. But they have a benefit and privilege of immunity once they leave office.

In reference to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, she has filed to run for congresswoman in the province of Pampanga. There is no ordinance in the Philippine constitution that prohibits her from seeking any position or office after her presidency expires in the year 2010.

This is a very delicate and controversial issue. Personally, I believe that President Arroyo is seeking security and immunity. She has been constantly accused by a growing number of opposition leaders, former allies and civic groups for alleged fraud, vote rigging in the May 2004 poll, corruption, cheating and betrayal of the public trust. She has admitted that she cheated and manipulated the

presidential election.

Based on an article in the *International Business Times* dated December 12, 2007, a poll by Pulse Asia Inc, ranked President Arroyo as the most corrupt Philippine leader in history—more than Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada, who were both ousted from office.

Honestly, if Arroyo believes that she did a good job during her nine years as president, she won’t have to prove herself or accomplish anything more. She must not and should not run for any future office or position to serve the country. She must retire and settle as an adviser, diplomat or consultant in the political arena, so to speak.

The truth is that the Philippines was among Asia’s best during the 1960s. We were second to Japan in terms of progress and a vibrant economy. Now, it is so sad and disappointing that we are behind among other countries in Asia. Despite its modern day technological advances, the Philippines is still considered a Third World Country. I firmly believe that we are in this situation because of our leaders who are running our government with graft and corruption.

Filipino people are motivated, persistent and hard-working people. We are also articulate, brilliant and industrious. For the sake of the economy and progress of the nation, let’s unite and change the future and rebuild our nation for the sake of a new generation!

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COMMENTARY

Transit-Oriented Development Is Key to the Success of Mass Transit on Oahu

By **Donovan Dela Cruz**
Councilmember



he long-term success of mass transit depends on creating a user-friendly environment desired development along the route of the transit system. Successful Transit-oriented development (TOD) in Dallas, Salt Lake City, Sacramento, and San Jose ensures a volume of ridership that makes transit cost-efficient work and provides good examples for Honolulu to follow.

TOD curbs urban sprawl and reduces the cost to taxpayers for constructing and maintaining new infrastructure, i.e. roads and sewer lines that comes with suburbia. Major benefits of TOD include:

- Developing affordable housing and senior housing
- Focusing density by creating dense, mixed-use, mixed-income developments around transit centers
- Revitalizing older communities and depressed neighborhoods
- Creating more walking and bike paths, community gar-

dens, and urban parks

Successful TODs incorporate vertical high density residential buildings, ground level commercial retail space, office buildings and a mix of daily activities such as preschools, grocery stores and restaurants, conveniently accessible to both transit riders and TOD residents and visitors. TODs can ensure pedestrian friendly neighborhoods; reduces automobile use; provides the enough nearby development mass to financially support local merchants; and, also creates transit ridership demand.

According to AIA's Communities by Design's 10 Principles for Livable Communities, "Restoring, revitalizing, and infilling urban centers take advantage of existing streets, services and buildings and avoids the need for existing infrastructure. This helps to curb sprawl and promotes stability for city neighborhoods."

Affordable housing must be a vital component of TOD. According to a recent article in Housing Policy, Smart Development Patterns, "TODs consist of luxury apartments and condo-

miniums targeted at high-end consumers, especially in a market where the supply for homes is tight and the demand is high." We need to develop and implement carry out TOD housing strategies that strike a balance between delivering affordable housing and market rate units so private investments are encouraged and financially worthwhile.

Several cities have successfully executed affordable strategies that include land banking, expedited permit review, establishing affordable rentals, tax increment financing and inclusionary zoning. They also apply incentives such as sliding-scale densities within a ¼ mile TOD development area radius which set higher densities at the center of TODs and lower densities further away. These cities also reduced or removed parking requirements to reduce construction costs and incorporate mixed-use zoning.

Unplanned TOD spawns gentrification, which means restoring and upgrading lower-value urban properties that result in displacing lower-income residents and businesses.

Affordable housing will reduce housing and transportation costs for low-income families and seniors making it easier and cheaper to go to work. And again, to combat urban sprawl, families must be able to afford to live within the urban core, reducing traffic congestion and our carbon footprint, overall.

Therefore, the city must ensure that policies are in place and work to prevent gentrification. We must provide incentives so developers can afford to build affordable housing and which will result in more integrated and diverse communities.

For these reasons, I fought for Ordinance 09-4 to include affordable housing requirements within TOD.

Senior housing also must be a priority in TODs. Atlanta, Denver, Houston, and Baltimore have incorporated "age in place" principles in their land use and zoning codes. Each city developed policies that make living affordable and transportation accessible to meet the needs of those 50+ as they age, allowing them independence.

"Age in Place" refers to stay-

ing in one's own home and community while growing older while remaining independent. Seniors need expanded and improved access to transit; access to public parks; walk-able neighborhoods; and shopping and services easily available.

There is no "one-size-fits-all" TOD template suitable for every community. Each community will have unique TOD development needs and expectations. Therefore, community-responsive planning is essential to its success.

Regional and local development plans must be updated to incorporate mass transit facilities and support desired growth. Denver paid millions of dollars to have mass transit lines realigned to ensure development occurred where the community designated density.

TOD can help us realize our goals and objectives of community development plans that need to include opportunities for affordable housing, "age in place" principles, planned density, mixed-use, mixed-income developments and revitalization of older communities and depressed neighborhoods. By focusing density in TODs we can preserve open space; keep the country, country; and ensure long-term success of mass transit on O'ahu.

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Celebrating the Filipino Christmas Spirit

By Gregory Bren Garcia

Tons of clothes, toys of all shapes and sizes, a parade of cakes and pastries, and countless other gift items line the stalls in La Vista Subdivision's Christmas bazaar.

The shopping frenzy occurs every year in the community center of this affluent, gated neighborhood in Quezon City, Metro Manila and attracts thousands of visitors. In one of the stalls, *bazaariista* Apple Cruz-Mariñas has neatly organized her wares, all set for the on-rush of holiday shoppers on the look-out for the best gift items and the most reasonable deals.

The giving of Christmas gifts, traditionally known as *aguinaldo*, is one of the Philippines' most cherished traditions, one that creates the dazzling spectacle of a Christmas rush unlike any other in the world.

As a matter of fact, not even the sluggish Philippine economy seems to have affected the vibrancy of this year's holiday shopping activities. Malls, department stores, and most espe-

cially the many *tiangge* (bazaars and flea markets) are overwhelmingly crowded this year.

"Business is booming during the Christmas season. Employees enjoy shopping with their thirteenth month pay and other bonuses to buy gifts and stuff for their family and friends," says Cruz-Mariñas, a human resources accounts officer whose penchant for selling trinkets encouraged her to join the La Vista bazaar.

In her stall, she sells a motley collection of ladies' clothes, bags, imported shoes, watches and even unremarkable doodads which shoppers seem to purchase in profusion only during the holidays.

"Would you believe they sell?" she says of a set of paring knives that somehow found their way into her merchandise.

Indeed, with so many bazaars these days, *bazaariistas* like Cruz-Mariñas have devised creative ways to attract customers. "You have to have a variety of items to sell, or something unique that the other booths don't have, like painted pet snails for kids or key chains with a live cactus inside a tiny bottle. They are *kakaiba* (unique) and people and kids are really buying them," she says.

And it is not only the well-to-do who enjoy this annual Christmas shopping extravaganza. In Divisoria, Manila's shopping mecca, people crowd into the narrowest of streets occupied by open-air flea markets, or into one of the older malls which house more bazaars and places to eat. This commercial district in the heart of Manila, nestled between the ancient districts of Binondo and Tondo, is lively all year round and famous all over Asia for its wide assortment of low-priced merchandise and wholesale bargain items.

During Christmas, Divisoria explodes into a cacophony of



Bazaariista Apple Cruz-Mariñas

colors and sounds and becomes a point of pilgrimage for value shoppers from all walks of life.

The Beginnings of the Filipino Christmas

Christmas is the most important holiday in the Philippines. Rooted in the Roman Catholic heritage of the Spanish colonial era, Christmas was introduced to the Philippines a short time after 1565, when the Spaniards formally established their presence in the islands. Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, who came with members of the Augustinian religious order, began the Christianization mission at the Villa del Santissimo Nombre de Jesús (Town of the Most Holy Name of Jesus) in Cebu, the first Spanish colony in the Philippines.

The Spaniards were the ones who instituted the nine-day novena and morning mass known as *Misa de Gallo* or Rooster's Mass, owing to the fact that it was convened at around 4 a.m. when roosters begin crowing. The tradition continues to this day and is known colloquially as *Simbang Gabi* or Night Mass.

The Spanish friars also introduced the displaying of the *Belen*, the tableau of the Nativity Scene which became a staple in churches and in the homes of Filipinos, beginning at the residences of the *Ilustrados* or the educated elite. During the Spanish era, Filipinos also began the singing of religious Christmas carols and the giving of gifts,

wherein godchildren often visited the homes of their godparents to receive their *aguinaldo*.

But perhaps the centerpiece of the Spanish influence on Filipino Christmas is the *Noche Buena*, a festive family meal held on the eve of Christmas. Being already a crossroads of cultures even during the Spanish colonial era, Filipinos often served feasts that combined the islands' native gustatory traditions mixed with those from Spain, China, India, Indochina and England.

Christmas in the Philippines Today

Today, the Philippines' brand of Christmas is as unique as it can get. Traditional Spanish Christmas customs have been combined with those from the U.S. when it occupied the Philippines in the early 1900s. Filipinos celebrate the Spaniards' nine-day novena mass from December 16-24, as well as the Americans' 12 days of Christmas from December 26-January 6. Combined, these 21 days of Christmas festivity is the longest known in the world. Nowadays, Christmas carols even start playing on radio stations as early as September 1!

Thanks to the Americans' influence, Christmas trees are now essential embellishments, from the humblest of homes in the provinces, to town plazas, to the grandest malls in Manila. Christmas cards of the Hallmark kind are also sent everywhere from Vigan, to Daly City, to



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COVER STORY

Geneva, owing to the Filipino global diaspora.

The Filipino lantern called the *parol*, is another Filipino Christmas icon. The simplest of these are made of bamboo scaffold wrapped in *papel de Japon*, thin colored papers which probably originated in Japan during the Spanish era. Nowadays, the more expensive parols are made of *capiz*, which is a beautiful white or opalescent material made from a variety of sea shells and lit with multi-colored light bulbs.

Attendees of the *Simbang Gabi*, most especially in the provinces, would often gather in the churchyard after the mass to eat breakfast consisting of hot cacao drink, coffee or *salabat* (a drink brewed from ginger) and delicious Filipino rice cakes and puddings like *bibingka*, *puto* and *ube halaya*. Of course, the ubiquitous *pandesal*, which can be dipped into a cup of hot coffee, never runs out of fashion.

Modern Filipinos also attend several Christmas parties at their own home, the houses of their relations and in-laws, the office with their work colleagues, the church where they belong to and the civic associations of which many Filipinos are members of. Such parties often culminate in an activity colloquially known as "exchanging gifts," the modern version of the *aguinaldo*.

Big cities all over the country are also awash with fairy lights and many Christmas-themed concerts and musicals are held. Television stations hold countdowns for the coming Christmas and most of the advertising and marketing campaigns by big companies are dressed up in holiday garb.

Christmas Away from Home

Ray Gerard de Leos, a Filipino-American nurse based in Chicago, Illinois, remembers all these festivities from his native homeland. His family migrated to the U.S. when he was in the fourth grade and has seldom returned to the Philippines. The last time Christmas he spent there was 10 years ago.

"I've always hoped to spend Christmas again back home. I'll spend it with my relatives, of course, and we'll probably have our Christmas favorites like ham, *castañas*, fruits sweets, and many more. Unfortunately, I've yet to spend Christmas in the Philippines again. It's been 10 years, so I can hardly wait for that moment when I finally do so," de Leos says.

On the other hand, Sassy Mae Sumulong, a resident of Hawaii, tries to enjoy the Christmas Season in her adopted homeland as much as she can.

"If our budget permits, we prefer to spend Christmas back home in the Philippines. But since finances have been tight recently, we end up doing the practical thing by going to work on the eve of Christmas and just resting during the holidays," she says.

Despite being away from home, she says her family deals with their yearning for the Philippines by being together on Christmas.

"We got some relatives down here and we usually have lunch or dinner during Christmas day. Not as festive as we could have done back in the Philippines but still we're thankful that we've celebrated the holiday," she says.

The Real Meaning of Christmas

Despite the good economic performance of the Philippines in recent years, Filipinos who live on the fringes of this growth will continue to experience a feeble Christmas. Poorer Filipinos could only serve a few modest Christmas fares while the poorest of the poor won't be able to afford anything at all. This sad reality is driving more prosperous families and individuals to join activities organized by non-government organizations, schools and media companies to try to alleviate the situation. Patriotism and civic-mindedness is gaining ground, as the clamor for major societal change grows louder in preparation for the presidential election in 2010.

Even Filipinos based



The *Simbang Gabi* at Quiapo Church in Manila

abroad are doing their part and in sharing their blessings with their countrymen. JP Orias, columnist at the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle, took his longing for his homeland to a higher level when he decided to join the Ilocos Surian Association of Hawaii's (ISAH) medical mission. The mission visited the northern Philippine provinces of Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte, as well as Parañaque City, a part of Metro Manila which has been recently devastated by typhoon Ketsana (Ondoy).

Aside from affording the beneficiaries with medical care, the mission also incorporated elements of education, culture and entertainment to provide the people with a very memorable Christmas.

Orias says that Christmas for him means going back to the principal doctrines of the Christian faith—like loving one's neighbors. However, he also believes that Christmas

he says.

The idea of going back to the basics of Christmas and sharing love with one another is something that de Leos also believes in. According to him, this love becomes most apparent when Filipinos spend the Christmas holidays with their loved ones.

"Nothing compares with going back to the Philippines," says de Leos. "The excitement is just hard to explain. Yes, it's being able to eat real deal *kare-kare*, *suman* and *halo-halo* again after so many years, but more importantly, it's all about reuniting with family and friends."

Sumulong agrees to this and says that during Christmas, she looks forward more to being with her family and friends than enjoying the festivities.

"Filipinos have this special way of making the season feel so warm and special. Although gifts and lots of food are great during the holiday, nothing compares to the thought of just being with special people in our lives and spending time with them, telling one another stories and simply being merry during the holidays," she says.

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Christmas Caroling in the Philippines: "Nanamsako po"

LEGAL MATTERS



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

When Gerry Spence agreed to be Imelda's lawyer in her New York racketeering case, he stipulated that Imelda will not do any talking, and that he will do all the talking. Imelda agreed. According to a Honolulu attorney whom Doris Duke commissioned to get Spence, Imelda was actually happy to meet a macho man who could tell her what to do. Poor Manong Andy, he was no macho in the face of Imelda. He became a machonin (from the Tagalog word "masunurin" meaning meekly obedient).

Imelda complied with Spence's condition. No press conferences, no interviews. Imelda was acquitted. To this day, scores of lawsuits have been filed against Imelda. All have been dismissed. She must be following Spence's imprimatur -- let the lawyers do the talking. Imelda is, indeed, a lawyer's dream.

Imelda-Lawyer's Dream; Tiger-Lawyer's Nightmare

Talkative Tiger

Contrast this with Tiger Woods. In our last column, we commended Tiger for not talking to the police or anybody after his post-Thanksgiving car crash. The ink had hardly dried on the newspapers before Tiger started talking. He admitted to "transgressions" and "infidelities". Susmariosep.

Did he consult with his attorney before talking? If he did and his attorney told him to go ahead, then his attorney is ineffective. If his attorney told him to shut up but he talked anyway, then he has become a lawyer's nightmare. An uncontrollably talkative client is almost impossible to defend.

As a result of his loquaciousness, more than a dozen women have come out saying they were Tiger's mistresses. You can bet that there will be more.

Adultery is still a crime in some jurisdictions. Fortunately, it is not in Hawaii. What is Tiger going to do if some publicity-seeking prosecutors in those states where adultery is still a crime file criminal charges against him for adultery?

Look at former President Clinton. He never admitted

committing adultery: "I never had sex with that woman, Miss Lewinsky." At that time, adultery was a crime in Washington, D.C. When his DNA was found in the semen-stained blue dress of Miss Lewinsky, he was asked whether he still maintained that he did not have sex with her. He reportedly remarked: "It depends on what you mean by sex." Is cunnilingus (sucking a male organ) sex?

Lawyer caught in the act

An Ilocano lawyer arrived home late one night. As the maid opened the door, the moonbeams shone on her radiant face and luscious lips. The lawyer kissed her tenderly. She kissed him back passionately. He carried her to the couch and they proceeded to make. Suddenly, the lights were turned on.

"*Hey, anong ginagawa ninyo?*" (Hey, what are you doing) barked his wife at the top of the stairs.

" *Eh, akala ko ikaw,*" (Oh, I thought it was you) replied the lawyer.

"*Gago, bakit mo naman akala na ako,*" (Stupid, what made you think that it was me).

"*Hindi nagsasalita in hindi*

gumagalaw katulad mo." (She was not talking and she was not moving just like you).

This defense is known as mistake of fact or mistake of...

My playboy friend who studied law at the Universidad Central de Madrid once advised me: "Negar hasta muerto" (Deny until you die)". As British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli said, which Henry Ford II who reputedly had more wives than Henry VIII repeated: "Never complain and never explain."

If you keep on denying allegations of adultery, there remains a reasonable doubt that you may not have committed it. Even your wife might believe you. Once you admit it, then there is no more doubt.

Silent Pacquiao

Tiger should have followed Manny Pacquiao's strategy of denying any sexual relationship with the movie starlet who is his co-star in a film. He just smiled and asked people to respect his privacy. The story is dying down. And his wife is sticking with him.

Or Tiger should have imitated Italy's Prime Minister who shouted "Trash" "Rubbish" (in

Italian of course) to allegations that he had extra-marital affairs.

Tiger could be President of the Philippines

If Tiger was a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, he could easily become President. All of the Filipino male presidents from Quezon to Erap reputedly had mistresses. It is a sign of machismo which voters like. The only President who did not have a mistress was Carlos Polistico Garcia. In the words of Mayor Arsenio Lacson whom Garcia had denounced for having mistresses, "Garcia does not have a mistress because he has a face that only a mother could love."

(ATTY. TIPON has won all deportation cases he handled and obtained approval of all visa petitions he filed. He is from Laoag City. He has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. He served as an Immigration Officer. He specializes in immigration and criminal defense. Office at 905 Umil St. corner N. King, Suite 201, Honolulu, HI 96819. Tel. (808) 847 1601. Fax (808) 847 1624. E-Mail: filam-law@yahoo.com. Website: www.ImmigrationServicesUSA.com This article is a general overview of the subject matter discussed and is not intended as legal advice for any specific person or situation. Neither the writer nor publisher warrant the completeness or accuracy of the information provided herein at the time of publication.)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Ilocos Surian Association of Maui Holds Annual Christmas Party

By Rosalie Armington

Members of the Ilocos Surian Association of Maui (ISAM) held their 5th Annual Christmas Party last December 12, 2009 at the Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center.

Attendees enjoyed the festive evening, which included ballroom dancing, games, door prizes and entertainments.

Several ISAH members were honored for completing the Adult Basic Computer Training Program. They include Romeo and Amparo Guzman, Saturnina Balasan, Miguel Galicia, Melotica Sta. Maria, JoeMart Alcon, Rey and Felicitas Golino, Crescencio Yagin, Carlos Garcia, Sergio Mateo, Myrna Tabag and Ludy Casil. ISAM First Vice President Flo-

rante Garcia presented a Plaque of Appreciation to trainers Chito Ribao of AZ Computer Services & Digital Solutions and Ryan Piro of KPMW Wild 105.5 FM Radio.

In addition, the 2009 ISAM Scholarship was presented to Gaylord Garcia, Aiza Corpuz, Precious Binias and Allyson Arrieta. Several ISAM executive officers were also honored for their community service, including Miguel Galicia, Juanito Riglos and Melvin Pico. The Most Valuable Member of ISAM Award went to Nina Balasan.

The evening's funniest and most memorable event was the "Manang Biday Went Shopping at Macy's Contest" where male participants donned womanly attire and a Macy's shopping bag and walked like a model towards

the stage. Participants included ISAM executive officers Florante Garcia, Elias Sarmiento, Rey Golino, Wayne Dumlalant, Emmanuel Baltazar, Romeo Guzman, Carlos Garcia and Rey Piro.

The evening was not all fun and games as ISAM members generously donated \$10,000 towards typhoon relief efforts in the Philippines.

Randy's Catering provided the delicious food, Wayne Dumlalant provided the music and Joy Fontanilla of A&A Video Production provided most of the entertainment. The emcees were Bernie Sistoza, Judith Piano and Emmanuel Baltazar.

Sponsors of the event include Romeo and Amparo Guzman, Emmanuel and Eliza Baltazar, Artemio and Caridad Sanchez, Miguel and Lourdes

Galicia, Zachary and Frances Paz, Fred and Judith Dagdag, Rey and Cecille Piros, Meloti-

cia Sta. Maria and Wayne Dumlalant.

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

**BIBAK Hawaii's 30th Anniversary
Highlights Roots and Ties**

BIBAK Hawaii celebrated its 30th anniversary last November 28, 2009 at the Ohana Honolulu Airport Hotel with over 200 attendees, many of them dressed in Philippine Cordillera Region-inspired ethnic garbs and adornments.

Opened the evening with brief remarks was BIBAK Hawaii president and retired U.S. Navy, Hugo Prill Sr., followed by Fr. Alex Geston with the invocation.

Baguio-raised Consul and Mrs. Paul Cortez graced the evening as special guests. The evening's dinner featured Hawaiian and local favorites like poi and lomi-lomi. Matching the food selection was entertainment that included dances by the Smart Senior Forever Young of Waipahu and Polynesian dances by Rachel dela Cruz of Kalakaua Middle School.

Highlighting the Igorot heritage that ties BIBAK families and friends together from past to future, Ms. Rosalie Paradeza read a 1979 message of the first BIBAK Hawaii president, Angel Pawid.

Fr. Tim Quintero, one of the organization's earliest members, traced shared cultural and spiritual values that maintained success in both good and challenging times. The BIBAK Hawaii youth, led by their president Marielynn Pasiv-en, demonstrated their skills in playing Cordillera bamboo buzzers (pakkong in Ibaloi language).

Veteran players together with the youth learners played gong and solibao music from five distinct Cordillera ethnic groups. BIBAK members from Abra brought to life the Tinguanian Tadok dance, while those from Benguet presented the Ibaloi Tayao dance. The preservation of sound and movements was also evident in the Ifugao Dinuya dance and Bontoc Takik dance. The men and women displayed artistry



Consul Paul Cortez and BIBAK youth dancer Rachel dela Cruz

and spirited improvisation in presenting the Mountain Province Balangbang and Kalinga Tuppaya. The celebration of culture and community ended with audience members' participation in the Ibaloi Bindian dance.

BIBAK Vice President Rusti Meana closed the formal part of the evening. New acquaintances were formed and old friendships strengthened through the dancing that followed.

Lita Cagdan and Grace Prill coordinated the evening's events.

BIBAK was an acronym used by Igorot student organizations in Baguio and Manila in the 1950s and 1960s. BIBAK Hawaii adopted the acronym to stand for the six current Cordillera administrative region provinces—Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc (Mountain Province), Apayao/Abra, Kalinga.



BIBAK members perform a traditional dance

**Aduja Wins National American
Miss Jr. Pre-Teen**

Kaneohe resident Amber Aduja, daughter of former state senator Melodie Aduja and Lee Williams, was crowned National American Miss Jr. Pre-Teen Queen 2009-2010 in Anaheim, California at Disneyland during Thanksgiving week, representing the Aloha State of Hawaii.

Amber scored the highest in her age division in the areas of personal introduction, interview, formal wear modeling and community involvement. Amber also placed first runner-up in casual wear runway modeling and second runner-up in the most promising model categories.

Amber is an honor student with a 4.0 GPA at St. Ann's Model School in Kaneohe. Her extracurricular activities in-

clude community service, including volunteering for the Lokahi Giving Project, taekwondo and Tahitian dance. She also participates in her school's choir and volleyball team.



The National American Miss Pageants are for "Today's Girl" and "Tomorrow's Leaders." The pageant program is based on inner beauty, poise and presentation. Emphasis is also placed on self-confidence, learning new skills, learning good attitudes about competition and setting and achieving personal goals.

Each year, the National American Miss Pageants awards \$1.5 million in cash, scholarships and prizes to assist the development of young women nationwide. Pageants are held in each state for girls ages four to eighteen in five different age divisions.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

RP Seen to Grow 4.8% in 2010

By Lawrence Agaocili /
Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009

MANILA, Philippines — Singapore-based DBS Bank Ltd. sees the economy growing faster at 4.8 percent next year from the scaled down rate of one percent on the back of strong consumption brought about by robust remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

DBS said the amount of money sent home by OFWs would grow strongly next year as the global economy recovers resulting in higher private consumption expenditure.

"The economy will continue to plod along on the back of global recovery," the invest-



ment bank said in its Economics Markets Strategy for Q1 2010.

The GDP growth outlook of Singapore's largest bank is bullish than the growth range of between 2.6 percent and 3.6

percent next year from 0.8 percent to 1.8 percent this year set by economy-managers through the Cabinet-level Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC).

"Looking beyond fourth quarter 2009, we will have the usual suspects to help the Philippines plod along," DBS added.

It pointed out that overseas Filipinos workers' remittances would grow by eight percent next year.

OFW remittances climbed by 4.5 percent to \$14.321 billion during the first 10 months of this year compared with \$13.707 billion in the same period last year. This after the BSP booked an all-time high

monthly remittance of \$1.531 billion in October.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) is now looking at a four percent growth in OFW remittances to a record level of \$17.1 billion this year from \$16.4 billion in 2008.

The BSP was originally looking at a zero growth but later revised the outlook due to the steady deployment of Filipino workers abroad and the increase access to formal remittance channels.

DBS sees private consumption expanding by 4.8 percent next year from 3.4 percent this year. Merchandise exports on the other hand would expand by 19 percent next year after contracting by 25 percent this year.

It added that the real GDP in key remittance sources like the US, Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong are set to expand by at least four percent next year after contracting by an average of three percent this year.

The investment bank said inflation would pick up slightly to four percent next year from three percent this year.

"With no significant demand-pull pressures, inflation will come to four percent compared to 3.3 percent this year," DBS said.

The BSP sees consumer prices expanding between 2.5 percent and 4.5 percent this year and between 3.5 percent and 5.5 percent next year. (www.philstar.com)

Mayon Rumbles with Fresh Explosions

By Paolo Romero /
Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The Mayon volcano, which has blown its top nearly 40 times in 400 years, menaced nearby residents with small eruptions of ash and lava Wednesday as Philippine authorities moved more than 30,000 people to shelters in case of a larger eruption.

Trickles of lava rolled down the 8,070-foot (2,460-meter) mountain towering over the Albay Gulf in the central Philippines, while five new ash explosions, one of them reaching 550 yards (500 meters) in the air, shook Mayon's steep slopes, said chief state volcanologist Renato Solidum.

During the day, the summit is shrouded in white clouds of dust and ash, and dark orange lava becomes clearly visible in the nighttime. Residents of Legazpi city on the foothills of the cone-shaped mountain con-

verge in a downtown park at night to watch the spectacle from a safe distance.

"There is the possibility that it can turn into the explosive phase of the eruption," Solidum told The Associated Press. "Right now, we cannot say for sure, but the initial phases of 2000, 2001 and 2006 eruptions are almost the same."

Scientists raised the alert level on Mayon to two steps below a major eruption after ash explosions late Monday. Albay provincial authorities quickly started moving thousands of families from a five-mile (eight-kilometer) danger zone around the mountain.

More than 30,000 had been transported out of the critical area by Wednesday, or 65 percent of the targeted population, said Cedric Daep, head of the provincial disaster management office.

"We have no more residents inside the danger zone. We are evacuating only those nearby," he said. Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales had ordered a

tight watch to prevent farmers from entering the zone, Daep said. The evacuation area includes three cities and five municipalities.

"It is such a big area. The objective is zero casualty," he said.

Residents in Albay are used to moving away from Mayon. Nearly 50,000 people live in the farming area.

Mayon last erupted in 2006, when about 30,000 people were moved. Another eruption in 1993 killed 79 people.

The first recorded eruption was in 1616 but the most destructive one came in 1814, killing more than 1,200 people and burying a town in mud. The ruins of the church in Cagsawa are among the Philippines' most iconic attractions.

The Philippines lies along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," where volcanic activity and earthquakes are common. About 22 out of 37 volcanoes in the archipelago are active. (www.philstar.com)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Society of Seven LV Welcomes Andy Bumatai for Holiday Shows

The Society of Seven Las Vegas, Waikiki's best entertainment show, welcomes Andy Bumatai, one of Hawaii's favorite comedians, for an encore performance in several holiday shows through the end of the year at the Outrigger Main Showroom. Bumatai will open the show with a hilarious stand

up comedy routine that will be followed by SOS LV's sensational and popular show.

Bumatai began his career opening for local comedian Frank De Lima and filling in for the late Rap Replinger in Booga Booga. He went on to perform stand-up comedy in Hawaii and the mainland. Bumatai is cur-

rently the executive producer of Nighttime Productions and produces and stars in his own online talk show "The Andy Bumatai Show."

Four hours of free parking will be offered at the OHANA East Hotel with showroom validations. A dinner package is also available at Hula Grill with seating at 6 pm. For reservations and information, call 923-SHOW.

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Noynoy Enjoys Good Lead - LP

By Aurea Calica /
Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009

MANILA, Philippines — The Liberal Party (LP) said yesterday its standard-bearer Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III continues to enjoy a wide lead over his rivals as shown in a separate questioning of respondents on their preferred successor to the presidency in the Nov. 4 to 8 Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey.

Aquino's campaign manager Florencio Abad said the side survey showed a 47 percent voter support for Aquino and only 20 percent for closest rival Sen. Manuel Villar.

As reported earlier, the latest SWS survey sought 1,200 respondents to name three leaders they want installed as the next president. Fifty nine percent of the respondents mentioned Aquino while 45 percent named Villar.

SWS claimed it did not provide a list of names to guide the respondents.

Aquino himself said the survey might be an inaccurate reflection of voter sympathy in the 2010 elections since it does not show the lead proportions in a 100 percent scale.

He said the next survey would be more accurate because candidates have already formalized their candidacy.

Abad said that in the same survey, respondents were asked to name just one leader they want to succeed as president. In the "choose one" survey, 47



Senators Mar Roxas and Noynoy Aquino

percent of respondents supported Aquino, while 20 percent supported Villar.

"The (newspaper) articles presented only the results to the question requiring respondents to choose three presidential candidates they liked," he said, referring to earlier reports of the survey.

In the side survey, Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, who had pulled out of the race, was supported by 12 percent of the respondents, former President Joseph Estrada by 12 percent, Vice President Noli de Castro by three percent, former Defense secretary Gilberto "Gibo" Teodoro Jr. by three percent, former Metro Manila Development Authority chairman Bayani Fernando by one percent, and spiritual leader Eddie Villanueva by one percent.

Receiving voter support of less than a percent in the side survey are Sen. Richard Gordon, 0.5 percent; Sen. Jamby Madrigal, 0.4 percent; Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn, 0.1; environmentalist Nicano Perlas, 0.1 percent; former Public Works secretary

gets more exposure outside Metro Manila.

Teodoro ranked fifth in the "choose three" SWS survey, mentioned by eight percent of respondents.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that in the past, there were candidates, like President Arroyo and former President Fidel Ramos, who ranked low in the ratings but won the election.

"The strategy is to have Secretary Teodoro move to the provinces so his presence will be felt and known," Ermita said.

"We still have five months for Teodoro and (Edu) Manzano to go around the country and introduce themselves to the voters."

Election-related surveys inconsistent

In a statement, professors of the University of the Philippines said the discrepancies in the results of election-related surveys need to be explained to the public, otherwise, it will cast doubts on the accuracy of all election-related surveys.

Dr. Prospero de Vera III, professor of UP College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) cited the study conducted by the Issues and Advocacy Center (IAC), which showed that Aquino has a voter support of only 30 percent, and Villar has

23 percent.

The survey said Aquino's popularity was on "stationary dive."

The survey was conducted by professor Edgardo Malay, publicist of former president Ramos.

Professor Roxanne Girlic Cipriano of the Department of Communication Research of the UP College of Mass Communication said the IAC survey is "full of inconsistencies."

She said the terminologies used by the survey group "do not fit the time-honored lingo and practice of the science of research."

"There is no such thing as a 'stationary dive', 'significantly dropped', or 'promoted'," she said.

She said the wrong use of terminologies raises serious questions about the professional competence of the group.

De Vera said polling groups should present the methods of the surveys to the public.

"It is time that we demand more accountability from the groups behind these surveys, including their owners, directors and analysts, and who pays for their surveys. If we do not do anything, we will be at the mercy of spin masters and manufactured information," he said. (www.philstar.com)

Hermogenes Ebdane, 0.

A percent of the voters are undecided.

"This (side survey) more accurate approach was the one that really reflected the sentiments of the people... All these data are in the same SWS survey conducted Nov. 4 to 8 as commissioned by Mayor Hagedorn of Puerto Princesa," he added.

Abad said "push-polling" is a "traditional politicians'" technique to bring a frontrunner's numbers down.

"The public should know that the numbers being trumpeted by our opponents do not show the real picture," Abad said.

Gibo can move up in ratings

Malacañang remained confident that administration standard-bearer former Defense secretary Teodoro would move up in the survey ratings once he

NFA to End the Year with a 15-day Rice Inventory



By Paolo Romero /
Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - The Philippine National Food Authority (NFA) is expected to end the year with an adequate rice stockpile, ensuring that the country will have enough supply of the staple.

NFA Spokesperson Rex Estoperez said Wednesday the agency's stockpile by the end of the year may reach

500,000 metric tons - enough for 15-days national consumption. Local rice procurement and imports beefed up the state-owned agency's stocks.

The NFA is tasked to maintain a 15-day inventory for national food security.

This means there's a possibility that the NFA may no longer hold another tender this month. The state-owned agency has already held four tenders for the supply of 2.05 million tons of rice for 2010.

The NFA has already

bought 750,000 tons of rice, mostly from Vietnam and Thailand through an open bidding recently. The agency is yet to award the right to supply a total of 1.2 million tons of rice to bidders during the Dec. 8 and Dec. 15 tender.

The Philippines is the world's largest rice importer and the NFA has to bring in about 2 million tons of rice each year as local production can't keep up with growing consumption. (www.philstar.com)



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LEGAL NOTES

Immigration Reform ASAP Introduced



By Reuben S. Seguritan

Representative Luis Guterierrez introduced on December 15 the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act of 2009 (CIR ASAP).

The bill contains the core principles that Representative Guterierrez outlined earlier. It seeks to reduce the long backlogs in family and employment-based immigrant visas, promote family unity, legalize undocumented immigrants, enhance border security and achieve effective immigration enforcement.

The bill according to the sponsors is the product of collaboration with many human rights advocates, labor organizations and members of Congress. It has already been endorsed by members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus.

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) immediately hailed the bill as a "sensible and realistic solution to our longstanding immigration problems, one that promises to restore order and end worker exploitation and create a fair, workable immigration system."

With President Obama's pledge to push for immigration reform early next year and the strong support voiced by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Sen-

ate Majority Leader Harry Reid, both Democrats, observers on Capitol Hill have given the bill a strong chance to pass next year.

"We have waited patiently for a workable solution to our immigration crisis... The time for waiting is over." Rep. Guterierrez declared.

In seeking to reduce the backlog of family visas and promote family unity, the bill will allow the recapture of unused family visas from fiscal years 1992-2008 and will provide for the future unused visa numbers to roll over to the next fiscal year.

It will also reclassify spouses and children of permanent residents as immediate relatives, thus making visa numbers immediately available to them. Immediate relatives are exempted from the annual cap. The number of visas issued per

country per year will also be increased.

Sons and daughters of Filipino World War II veterans will no longer have to wait for visa numbers because they will be exempted from the numerical limitations.

Employment-based immigrants will benefit because unused employment based visas will also be recaptured. Highly skilled workers will be exempted from the annual cap. Beneficiaries of employment-based petitions and their dependents will be allowed to file for adjustment of status and receive work authorization even if visa numbers will not be immediately available.

To ease the nursing shortage, nurses will be exempt from the current numerical limitation and a new program to train domestic health care professionals will be provided.

A legalization program for undocumented immigrants and their spouses and children will be created. Applicants must prove that they have been in the U.S. illegally before December 15, 2009, have contributed to the U.S. through employment, education, military service or other volunteer work, pay an application fee and a \$500 fine and must not have any conviction for a felony or for three misdemeanors.

Qualified legalization applicants will receive a conditional nonimmigrant visa valid for six (6) years and will be allowed to work and travel. They will be able to apply for permanent resident status and eventual citizenship.

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

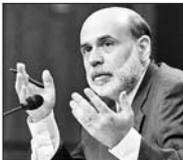
MAINLAND NEWS

Bernanke is Time's Man of the Year: Pacquiao in List of 'People Who Mattered'

NEW YORK (AP) — US Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has been named Time Magazine's "Person of the Year" for 2009.

Bernanke, 56, heads the most important and least understood force shaping the American — and global — economy.

In the same magazine issue, Filipino boxing champion Manny Pacquiao was included in the list of "people who mattered" in 2009, being listed behind US President Barack Obama and ahead of Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin. Those green bills featuring



Ben Bernanke

dead Presidents are labeled federal reserve note for a reason: the Fed controls the money supply. It is an independent government agency that conducts monetary policy, which means it sets short-term interest rates — which means it has immense in-

fluence over inflation, unemployment, the strength of the dollar and the strength of your wallet, Time said.

And ever since global credit markets began imploding, its mild-mannered chairman has dramatically expanded those powers and reinvented the Fed.

Professor Bernanke of Princeton was a leading scholar of the Great Depression.

The article on Pacquiao, written by Howard Chua-Eoan, said, "Manny Pacquiao was considered a savior by two groups of people this year: Filipinos and boxing aficionados.

For his countrymen, the diminutive (5 ft. 6 in. and change) pugilist once again proved that their archipelago could produce more than tales of violence, poverty and natural disaster — that there was some undefined quality that could produce a fighter of such speed, resiliency and charisma as to be a living legend.

"For boxing fans, Pacquiao defied physics, rising through six

weight classes to win seven world titles — and galvanizing the sport like no other boxer in years. His two bouts this year were among the most dramatic in the sport: his second-round knockout of Ricky Hatton and his terrifying demolition of the rock-solid Miguel Cotto over 11 rounds. His visceral charm — or his bloody attraction — will continue into next year with his expected multimillion-dollar, hugely lucrative matchup against Floyd Mayweather Jr., the only fighter remaining who can claim to be his equal." (www.philstar.com)

GLOBAL NEWS

Opera by Filipino-Chinese Composer Premieres in Europe

Jeffrey Ching, a Filipino-Chinese composer based in Berlin, Germany, earned accolades and reaping success with the world premiere of "Das Waisenkind" (The Orphan) held at Theater Erfurt last November 29, 2009.

"Das Waisenkind" is a story of revenge loosely based on events in Chinese history on how one orphan solely survived the royal family massacre. The orphan was able to avenge the death of his parents with the

blood end of the antagonist.

The opera was partly chanted and partly sung, and incorporated English, Spanish, French, Italian and German phrases. Elaborate costumes and a well-set stage marked the musically-exciting and visually-engaging event directed by Jakob Peters-Messer.

A glowing review of Ching's work was published in the December 2 issue of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, one of Germany's

leading newspapers.

According to the article, Ching "succeeded in producing exciting contrasts in the orchestral piece with his remarkable imagination of sounds and sense of acoustic color/timbre of instrument."

Ching was born in 1965 in Manila to a Chinese family. He grew up and trained in England and America as a composer and Sinologist. He now lives in Berlin with wife, artist Andion Fernandez, who played the lead role of the orphan. (DFA)

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**DAYASADAS**

By Pacita C. Saludes

Naragsak A Paskuayo!

**Dagiti Organisasion Filipino**

Bulan pay laeng ti Nobiembre pagnumunuanen dagiti kamkameng no kaano ti panaselebrarda iti Paskua. No sadino a lugar ti pagselebranda, no ania nga aldaw ken oras, no ania dagiti maaramid a pangparagsakda iti Paskua. Kasla ti AKA napagnumunuaanda a "potluck" ti pagsasanguanda tapno pagbuburayanda dagiti saganada. Nairuamen daya kadagiti Filipino ditoy Hawaii. Kaaduanna dagiti pagtitiponan a maaramat ti "potluck".. Nupay adu latta met dagiti isuda lattan a grupo wenna familia ti mangisagana ti pagselebraranda.

Dagiti wedding, anibersaris, wenna pabuniat, adda met maipotlock if a member of the family wants to share the expenses heartfully to lessen the burden of the concerned. Anyway, aniaman a mapanunot a pang-

paragsak isu ti aramidentayo ita a Paskua.

**Naragsak A Paskuayato Amin!
Merry Christmas to All Mani-
nipud Ili Dayasadas**

Desiembre, maudi a bulan ti tawen masapul a taliwen ti sangapulo ket dua nga addang ti nalikudan no adda met laeng pagilasinan kadagiti nagbaddekan dagiti dapan no naung wenna narabaw. No adda met laeng kaipapananna a matialaw wenna nakaibati ti uray apagarawpaw laeng a nasayaat a ladawan, naaramidan wenna apagadillaw laeng a nakasukogan ta dapan. Dagita ngamin ti pakakitaan ti kinasiasinom a limmasabi iti daya a dalan a naglasatam. Siguraduem a tugotmo a saan a tugot ti sabali a nakabaybaymo. Nalad ngamin ken nakababain no nadlaw dagiti sabali a kinabaybaymo. Wenna dagiti adu a makaam-

ammo kenka a mangsursurot ti paddakmo. Sanguen manen ti sumaruno a bangkap a tapungan ket barbareng no naranraniag ken nasinasinaw dagiti madasadaman manen a dalan ken ad-du ti mabunobonan kadagiti bukeli ti bukod a talugading, naindayawan a tignay ken pannakilang. Dagiti natalinaay a tignay ken natalugadingan a kappamanunotan ken aramid ti mangpakita manen ti iti kinasiasinom. Dagiti wagas a panagbalbalikas ken nainsiriban a a pannaakaawat ken panagisawang kadagiti ibuksilan dagiti bibig nga ibuang dagiti nataknang a panagpamanunot ti mangpakigita iti kinasiasinom.

Ammuena a ti pannakilangan iti pakabasaan ken

pakaamirisan dagiti naitalimeng a galad ti kinatao. Maidiperensia iti ubing ken nataengan a pampunanon ken wagas a pannakilangan. Dita ken ti pakakitaan ti pannakumul a kas tao nga naindayawan. Saan a managin-bibile wenna managinpapatmat a maidasig iti siasino gapu ti pagsanikuwenna wenna pagsiriban nga impabulod laeng ti Apo.

Arakupen dagiti saguday a nasagraptayo iti daytoy a tawen. Ti Apo ti nangipapaay ket isu manen ti mangiwigiti ti sumaruno nga intay turongen, Naragsak manen nga isangpet ti Mannubot ni Ninio Jesus a Pagdaydayawan.

Merry Christmas manen ken NARANGRANG-AY A BARO tayo Amin!

TI KAIPAPANAN TI PASKUA (The Meaning of Christmas)



Ti Paskua iladawanna ti pakasaritaan ti Ayat Panangipakita ti Dios nga ay-aytemna ti lubong Napintas a pakasaritaan ti panangitedna Ken Apo Jesus kakaisuna nga anakna a mannubot Kadagiti managbasol a tattao ditoy Lubong Immay nangipamatmat ti napintas unay a pagulidanan Impakitana ti napintas unay a rumbeng a tuladen Imparangaragna ti pannakaiyanakna a nanumo Pinilina ti naulimek a katalalonan a nakaiyanakan Awan impakitana a kinaparammag kadagiti tao Kulloong ti nakaiyanakana, garami ti inna nagdugmonan Awan immeng ti bagi, lamolamo, suknalna dagiti karnero Sinagragna ti lam-ek panangipaduyakyakna ri kinanumo Awan ditoy lubong ti makaibuksil ti impamatmatna Sungani a panangipapan pagawatan dagiti dadduma Immay a maselebraran laeng ti PANNAKAIYANAKNA Ngem immay a pagwadan ken paragsakenna toy Lubong Immay a nangpatulad kadagiti tattao naigamer kinaparammag Innapos ti kinabknang, kinarang-ay a kasasaad Pinnilaw pannakairurumen dagiti awanan gasat.

NINIO JESUS TI NANGSUBBOT TI
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GLOBAL NEWS

RP to Participate in 2010 World Expo in Shanghai

By Ma Elisa P. Osorio / Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009

SHANGHAI, China — The wonders of the Philippines will be on display to at least 70 million potential tourists and investors as the country is scheduled to participate in the 2010 Shanghai World Expo to be held next year.

In an interview with The STAR, the Philippines special envoy to China Carlos Chan said that the Philippine Pavilion will be approximately 2,000

square meters and will be located near the Chinese Pavilion. Chan, who is also the owner of Liwayway Marketing (International), Ltd., which manufactures of the Oishi line of snack food products and drinks, said that the Philippine government has commissioned the Chinese government to construct the Philippine the pavilion.

The 2010 Expo is a good way to display the country's history and cultural essence to the world.

The 2010 Expo will run from May 1 to Oct. 31 2010 with more than 200 partici-

pants. The exhibition area covers 5.28 square kilometers or 20 times bigger than the Zaragoza Expo in 2008

The DOT together with the national organizing committee of the Philippines which consists of other relevant government bodies, will be in charge of the relevant affairs concerning the participation of the Philippines in Shanghai Expo 2010.

Among the participants of the expo are the United States, Canada, Macau, Nepal, Saudi, Turkey, Brazil and other. There are also corporate sponsors who will have their own pavilions. (www.philstar.com)

UN Commends RP Peacekeepers in Liberia

United Nations (UN) officials awarded medals to Filipino military peacekeepers serving in Liberia and commended them for executing their duties with "dignity and professionalism and for doing so always with a smile."

The medals were presented on December 8, 2009 by Ellen Margrethe Loj, UN envoy and Special Representative of the Secretary General, to 135 mem-

bers of the 12th Philippine Contingent serving in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia.

Ambassador Loj thanked the Filipino peacekeepers, who are led by Lt. Col. Vicente Gregorio Tomas, for their hard work and contributions to peace in Liberia. She quoted a Philippine proverb which says, "It is easy to be human, but it is hard to be humane," referring to the community outreach activities of the members of the 12th Philippine Contingent.

She also recognized the Fil-

ipino peacekeepers' efforts to clean up the Sun Beach area near Camp Abuja in Monrovia and their plans to offer humanitarian assistance to orphanages in collaboration with religious leaders in Monrovia during the Christmas Holiday Season.

In addition to Liberia, the Philippines also has peacekeepers supporting UN operations in Afghanistan, Cote d' Ivoire, Darfur, the Golan Heights, Haiti, Kashmir, Sudan and Timor Leste. (DFA)

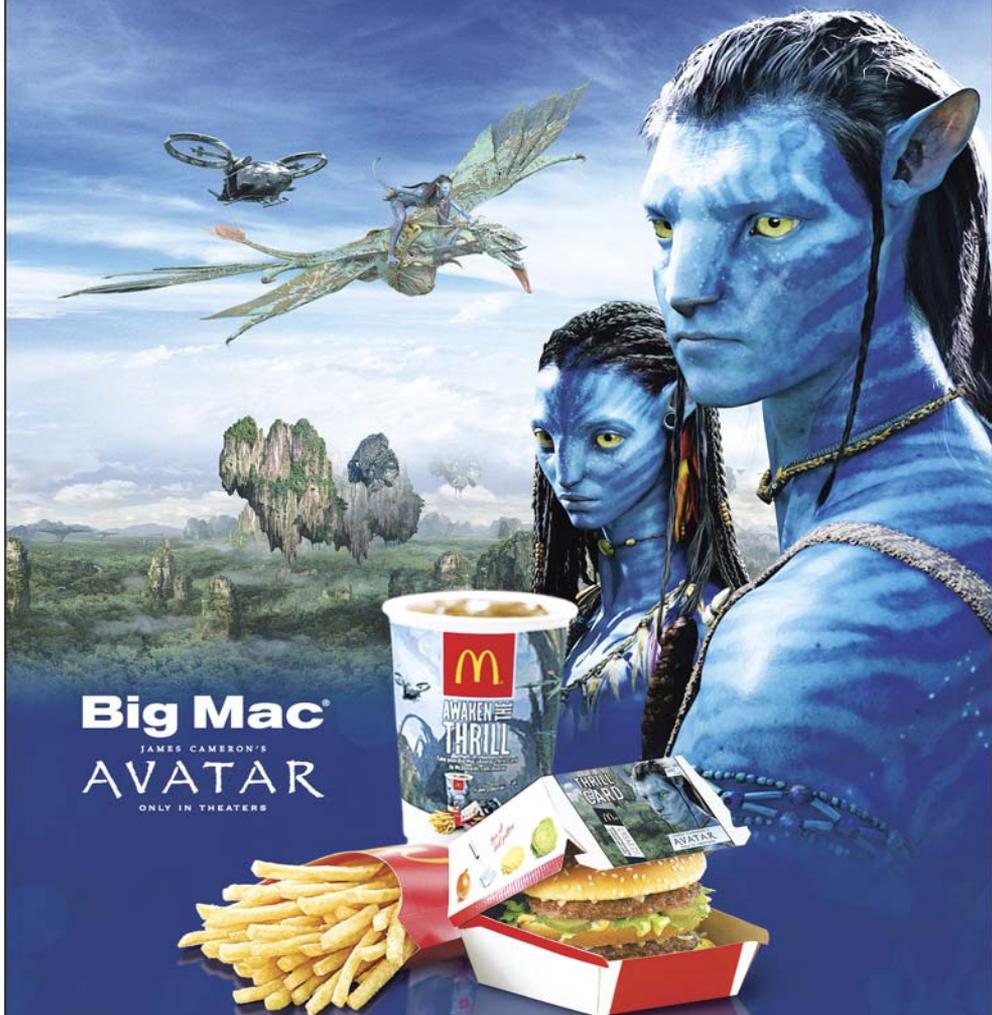
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