

HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ JULY 16, 2011 ◆

HOMELESSNESS: THE HIDDEN PRICE OF PARADISE

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EDITORIAL

What to Do with Oahu's Homeless Population

The latest statistics show that there are roughly 5,700 homeless people in Hawaii. A good number of them are mainlanders who have decided that if they're going to be homeless, what better place is there than Hawaii with its nice weather and numerous social service agencies.

Last May, Gov. Neil Abercrombie announced his 90-day Action Plan to address homelessness. The governor's ultimate vision is to end homelessness in Hawaii. While commendable, the truth is that eliminating homelessness will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, in a democratic society wherein people can choose to be homeless. In fact, the numbers will only worsen in the coming decades.

Several large-scale public works and public infrastructure projects with a combined price tag of well over \$12 billion are in the pipeline. First, there is the \$5.5 billion rail transit project. The City must also upgrade its sewer treatment plants and sewer system that could cost another \$5 billion. Then there will be near 10 percent rate hikes proposed by the Board of Water Supply to help fund needed upgrades and repairs to its aging pipelines and water delivery system. Oahu's population is expected to increase to about 1.45 million by the year 2030 but there simply isn't the population density to spread out the financial impacts of these large projects among taxpayers. In fact, hefty tax hikes and increases in sewer and water bills may just be enough to send many families living from paycheck-to-paycheck to the poorhouse.

So what should be done? To even begin to address homelessness, we must first cast aside our fears—fears that have been based on stereotypes and misconceptions about the homeless. The majority of folks who are experiencing homelessness are basically decent people. The only real difference between them and the rest of society is the lack of a place to call home. Sure, some of the homeless are of questionable character. But then again, so are some of those who aren't homeless. Need proof? Simply pick up the latest newspaper issue and scan the headlines.

Once we get fear out of the way, we will be better able to see what needs to be done to create successful solutions for solving homelessness. Homelessness is not an easy issue to address. But the task is all the more difficult if we continue to allow fear to make the decisions for us.

Capitalizing on 2011 APEC Summit

On mid-November, some 20,000 visitors will converge on Oahu for the 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit. This meeting of leaders from some 21 nations, including the U.S., is expected to bring tremendous prestige to Hawaii.

The opportunity to host APEC did not happen by accident. A coalition led by the East-West Center, Hawaii Tourism Authority, elected officials, the military and business leaders lobbied hard for Honolulu to host the event. The fact that Honolulu was chosen as the host city from other key destinations shows that it can indeed compete against the very best. One of the main reasons was Honolulu's reputation as a safe and secure visitor destination. The last major international gathering in Honolulu was the Asian Development Bank meeting in 2001. Fears of violent protests that occurred in other host cities fortunately never materialized here.

As the summit nears, much work still needs to be done to prepare for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The lionshare of funding has been set aside for security and first-responders. City and State crews have joined with the private sector to spruce up

(continued on page 3)

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Have you driven ewa along Beretania Street recently and passed by Aala Park? If so, you are bound to have noticed a row of tents and makeshift structures on the mauka side of the venerable park. Although plentiful in the Downtown corridor, similar homeless structures can be found islandwide—from bustling Waikiki to the scenic Waianai coast to the sleepy town of Wahiawa.



Our readers may not realize it, but mid-July marks roughly the halfway point in Gov. Neil Abercrombie's ambitious 90-day plan to address Hawaii's homeless problem. Obviously, the work is far from over and the results cannot be measured until much later. If you are concerned with the impacts of homelessness, then you're in luck since it is the cover story for this July 16th issue. To learn more about the problem and what government and private sector leaders are doing about it, please read "Ending Homelessness in Hawaii" on page 4. Mahalo to contributing writer Gregory Bren Garcia for yet another outstanding article!

In news you can use, please turn to our "Hawaii Filipino News" section page 6 for an article on avoiding summer wedding scams. Common sense tips offered by the Better Business Bureau (BBB) can save tons of heart and headaches for the young woman who may be getting married this summer. Also on page 6 is an advisory from Hawaii State Department of Health officials for summer travelers. If you are among those who will be traveling abroad, please remember to get vaccinated for measles. Remember—it's always better to be safe than sorry. Lastly, we all know that Filipinos love a beauty pageant. Perhaps none is much more anticipated than the annual Miss Oahu Filipino Pageant, which is set for July 30th at the New Empress Restaurant. So please get your tickets for this special event, which is sponsored by United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH) and the Oahu Filipino Community Council (OFCC). Best wishes to all three lovely contestants!

In closing, we truly hope that you are having a wonderful summer break. So far, we have been blessed with rather good weather and a welcomed break in the amount of morning and afternoon traffic. Let's enjoy and make the most of it while we can, since school starts in a few short weeks. As always, we invite our readers to contact us at: filipinochronicle@gmail.com if you have story ideas, tips or concerns regarding Hawaii's dynamic and vibrant Filipino community.

Until next time...*aloha and mabuhay!*

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

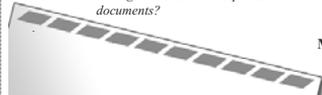
LETTERS

PRESERVING A PIECE OF HISTORY

I read your recent article regarding the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints acquiring and digitizing vital information of our early Filipino contract laborers. Its valuable contents await for an in-depth documentation by Filipino-American historians.

Prior to the Mormon acquisition of these records, I did manage to see the vast Filipino Affairs archives when it was stored at the Hawaii Sugar Plantation Association (HSPA) offices in Aiea. Among its vast cabinets of individual card files, I was able to hold in my hand a card that listed my father's name along with other vital information. I trembled with emotion thinking of his long journey. I was told that the U.S. Embassy in Manila often contacted HSPA to validate Hawaii birth records of Filipinos who returned to the Philippines.

In March 2002, the HSPA board of director's new policy no longer permitted access to its Filipino archives/records. What I am most concerned about is—will the LDS archivists simply destroy the historical archives after they have been digitized? Is there a Filipino organization out there willing to obtain these important documents?



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OPINION

Priority Measure

SKETCHES BY Ana Marie Pamintuan

On his inaugural speech and subsequently in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) last year, President Aquino mostly described the state of the nation he inherited from his predecessor, with a bit of his to-do list thrown in.

This year, people expect more of the to-do list in his second SONA, even as he inevitably provides more details of the mess he inherited. P-Noy is not seen as a visionary, but this year he should be able to provide a blueprint, or even a glimmer of a blueprint, of what he intends to accomplish in his term.

He should also stop waffling and give priority to legislative measures that he has long endorsed, such as the Reproductive Health (RH) bill.

This bill, like the one on Freedom of Information that Prospero Nograles managed to kill in the final seconds of the eleventh hour in the previous Congress, has already been debated to death.

It's time to put the RH bill

to a vote, before Congress becomes preoccupied with deliberations on the 2012 national budget, which must be passed before yearend. Merely computing how much pork barrel they should allot to themselves would already eat up a lot of lawmakers' time.

World population will breach seven billion this year, with the Philippines accounting for 94 million according to official estimates, although if we include those whose births are not registered, the actual figure could be closer to 100 million. We're growing at an average of two million people a year.

We love babies, they're bundles of joy, but it seems this is not true for all. Some babies get dumped in airplane lavatories; others are set afloat in the Pasig River; still others are abandoned at the doorsteps of orphanages and, yes, churches.

Some babies never become babies; they are flushed down toilets or tossed into garbage heaps or, again, into the Pasig before they reach full growth in their mothers' wombs. Sometimes the mother dies in the process.

Babies can be bundles of joy — especially if we can feed them, shelter them, keep them healthy and educate them, and in general give them a decent life all the way to adulthood.

The plain and simple fact is we can't. This is true for millions of Filipinos.

Even the efficient economic and fiscal team of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, herself an efficient economic and fiscal manager, admitted as much when they said the benefits of the country's economic growth failed to trickle down to the masses.

In her final months in power, GMA allowed the Department of Health to revive a moribund family planning program, kicking it off with the outright distribution of condoms in Manila to coincide with Valentine's Day 2010. Some of the most vocal supporters of the RH bill in Congress belong to GMA's party.

Women with sufficient education and financial means do not need the RH bill. They can afford the services of OB-gynecologists for advice on reproductive health, they can afford any form of contraceptive, and they know all the choices open to them when it comes to RH.

Local government units, on their own, are also free to implement family planning and reproductive health programs for their residents. Thirty-six LGUs currently have such programs in place.

But national legislation will make RH programs universally accessible, with sufficient state funding. The program will no longer depend on the views of local politicians, for whom women's reproductive rights may be an alien concept. The power base of a number of these politicians is rooted in coddling squatters — in keeping them poor, lacking in education, and multiplying as rapidly as rabbits.

P-Noy doesn't have to certify the RH bill as "urgent" — a term that binds Congress to act on the proposed legislation with as much dispatch as in a national emergency. Declaring it simply as a "priority" will suffice to put the RH bill to a vote.

We've heard all the objections to the bill. Most of these were read on the House floor by boxing champion Manny Pacquiao (whose wife enjoyed the freedom to take the pill) and were duly punctured by RH bill proponents.

The loudest criticism — that contraception is tantamount to abortion — boggles the mind. If no conception takes place, how can life be aborted?

A condom puts a wall between the sperm and ovum; the two never get to meet. Even Pope Benedict XVI has given

his reluctant nod to condom use for sex with prostitutes, ostensibly to prevent AIDS/HIV and save lives. So he can acknowledge the reality of sex that's not for procreation with prostitutes, but not sex that's not for procreation between spouses or lovers?

Supporters of the RH bill have presented their main arguments for its passage.

One is health: women who space their childbirths are generally healthier, and so are their children. The highest rates of maternal and infant mortality occur among women with brief breathing space between numerous childbirths. For detailed figures, you can ask the National Statistics Office, the Department of Health and agencies of the United Nations.

A second argument pertains to human rights: reproductive health is a basic right of women. It's not surprising that the Roman Catholic Church, a bastion of male chauvinism, is unable to comprehend this point.

A third is economic: our country cannot meet the needs of our population.

And a fourth is our international commitments, particularly to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which specifically include women's access to reproductive health programs.

This bill has been talked to death. It's time for P-Noy to ask Congress to put it to a vote.

(www.philstar.com)

EDITORIAL (cont.) (from page 2, CAPITALIZING...)

Waikiki and public facilities. One target is beautifying Nimitz Highway from the Airport to Waikiki. In anticipation of the tens of thousands of guests, APEC's host committee has issued a call for volunteers to serve as directional guides, transportation escorts and informational assistants.

Residents will unfortunately be impacted by traffic and tight security measures, especially in Waikiki when presidents and the world's leaders are out and about. Please be patient and remember that these inconveniences are a small price to pay for the tremendous international exposure Hawaii will receive.

If all goes well, the APEC Summit will demonstrate to the entire world that Hawaii's culture and strategic location make it the ideal site to gather global leaders and debate the needs of a diverse society. And that Hawaii is more than just a place to vacation—it is also a great place to do business, especially for the Asia-Pacific region.

If we ever are to become the Geneva of the Pacific, as some of our leaders have envisioned, this event could be the start. Let us take full advantage of this golden opportunity and not let it slip away.

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Ending Homelessness in Hawaii

By Gregory Bren Garcia

The Law of the Splintered Paddle was a royal decree first pronounced by Kamehameha I in 1797 to protect Hawaii's innocent and defenseless. It was later adopted into Article 9, Section 10 of the current Constitution of Hawaii as a unique and living symbol of the state's responsibility to protect the well-being of its most vulnerable citizens. It is an important foundation upon which Hawaii's social welfare and judicial systems rest.

On May 17, 2011, the Hawaii State Government reaffirmed its commitment to preserving the principles of this seminal decree by announcing a comprehensive 90-day initial and immediate action approach to end homelessness in the state. Gov. Neil Abercrombie described the elimination of homelessness and the provision of dignified housing to every resident of Hawaii as a "moral imperative."

"We have to be coordinated and collaborative in our approach to homelessness so we can face this challenge as a society. This plan is about taking immediate action together. We are determined to get this done and the next 90 days are critical," the governor said in a press statement.

The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness Marc Alexander and his team have been tasked to coordinate government agencies, non-profit organizations, community and faith-based groups, enterprises, outreach service providers, shelters and citizens to work together in improving homeless people's access to welfare services.

Who Are the Homeless?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a homeless person as "an individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence." The term can also be applied to an

individual whose primary night time residence is an institution or a shelter that provides temporary living accommodations.

According to the 2011 State of Homelessness in Hawaii report published by the non-profit group National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), more than 656,000 people experience homelessness on any given night in the U.S.

In Hawaii, more than 5,700 individuals or 0.44 percent of the state population are homeless, more than twice as much as the national average. Around 2,500 of these individuals are "unsheltered," meaning they do not have ordinary lawful access to buildings in which to sleep.

Some 13 percent or more than 700 of Hawaii's homeless are also considered "chronically homeless." The HUD defines a chronically homeless person as an "unaccompanied disabled individual who has been continuously homeless for over one year."

The Office of the Governor also notes that almost one-third of the sheltered homeless are children; more than 10 percent are veterans; over 60 percent have lived in Hawaii for more than 10 years and almost 30 percent are of Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian ancestry. In addition, almost half of the families who are homeless include individuals who are employed.

Alexander told the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle that one of the biggest myths about home-



less people is that one could fit them all in a single profile.

"The reality is that when you listen to the story of one person who is homeless, you've heard one story. There are so many reasons and factors that can lead one into homelessness—unemployment, change in marital situation, drugs, alcohol, mental illness, unexpected medical crisis, unplanned pregnancy and any combination of these and other experiences," Alexander says.

"Another myth is that there are simple solutions to homelessness. Just as the reasons that lead to homelessness are complex, so the solutions out of homelessness are equally complex. There are no magic cures or instant resolutions to the challenge of homelessness. This is why the federal plan to end homelessness is a ten-year plan. And I anticipate that the state plan will also be a ten-year plan," he adds.

Why Homelessness Exists in Hawaii

While the NAEH estimates that there are just over 5,700 homeless individuals in Hawaii, this figure does not include those known as the "hidden homeless."

According to a Housing Policy Study conducted by the

"O my people, honor thy God. Respect alike the rights of men great and humble. See to it that our aged, our women and our children lie down to sleep by the roadside without fear of harm. Disobey, and die."

- Kānāwai Māmalahoe
(Law of the Splintered Paddle)

In Hawaii, more than 5,700 individuals or 0.44 percent of the state population are homeless, more than twice as much as the national average. Around 2,500 of these individuals are "unsheltered," meaning they do not have ordinary lawful access to buildings in which to sleep.

Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) in 2006, more than 96,000 people are part of the ranks of the hidden homeless. This includes people who live in less-than-ideal situations, like those sharing overcrowded apartment accommodations or those living in garages.

More than 260,000 Hawaii residents are also considered "at-risk of being homeless," meaning they will become homeless in less than three months if they suddenly lose their primary source of income.

While the driving forces behind hidden homelessness are not completely known, the HPHA infers that it may be associated with unemployment rates, economic conditions and home affordability. Hidden homelessness tends to rise as unemployment rate rises and also as housing becomes less affordable.

National data from the HUD also shows that people be-

come homeless because they can't find affordable housing. According to the agency, the generally accepted definition of home affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Nowadays, however, an estimated 12 million Americans who rent or own households allocate more than 50 percent of their annual incomes on housing.

"Homelessness has been growing in Hawaii over the past few years. To be sure, the high cost of housing is a major factor in this crisis. It is by far the top reason for homelessness among families," says Alexander.

"These numbers show homelessness is not the concern of just a few people, but touches all of us. Beyond housing, we know that in order to address homelessness long-term, we will also need to focus much

(continued on page 5)

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COVER STORY

(from page 4, ENDING...)

more attention on workforce development, early childhood and parenting education, and more available mental health and drug and alcohol treatment programs, including dual- and triple-diagnoses programs.”

Addressing concerns beyond the housing problem should be a major consideration for the state. The HUD notes that the lack of affordable housing presents considerable hardship for low-income households because it prevents them from meeting their other basic needs, including nutrition, education, healthcare and the ability to save for the future.

In fact, according to the NAEH, many people come into homelessness with existing health or mental conditions. Health problems often require continuing and consistent care, but being in a state of homelessness inhibits this care because housing instability often detracts individuals from regular medical attention, access to treatment and recovery.

The First 90 Days

According to Alexander, the governor’s ultimate vision is to end homelessness in Hawaii.

“There’s a lot of good work being done already. But the idea is to bring an unprecedented level of coordination and collaboration among key players, including the state, federal, city and county units, non-profit service providers, business community and the public,” he says.

Specifically, the government’s 90-day action plan outlines nine specific objectives:

1. Identify and assess people who are chronically homeless for immediate services in Waikiki and the urban core of Honolulu.
2. Support the chronically homeless and chronically mentally ill who need men-

tal health treatment.

3. Identify available substance abuse treatment services and gaps in services to maximize access for the chronically homeless in need.
4. Identify and provide outreach as early as possible where persons who are homeless are established or increasing in number.
5. Coordinate community efforts to maintain clean public areas.
6. Ensure that existing shelters are maximized for capacity and service.
7. Provide information about sound relocation and financial planning, including Hawaii’s high cost of living, to individuals and families outside of Hawaii who inquire about the availability of services.
8. Establish the State Interagency Council on Homelessness.
9. Educate the general public about the most effective means to eliminate homelessness.

Enthusiasm and support for the plan appeared to be fairly high across the state early on. On June 2, 2011 the Office of the Governor announced that the Hawaii Community Stabilization Initiative, a collaborative of 11 funders administered by the Hawaii Community Foundation, would provide a one-year grant of \$116,500 to support the statewide drive to end homelessness.

“The Hawaii Community Stabilization Initiative is a partnership among some of Hawaii’s most generous foundations and donors,” says Chris van Bergeijk, Vice President of Programs of the Hawaii Community Foundation. “This group of funders is dedicated to helping persons most affected



“Homelessness has been growing in Hawaii over the past few years. To be sure, the high cost of housing is a major factor in this crisis. It is by far the top reason for homelessness among families. “These (statistics) are amazing numbers that show homelessness is not the concern of just a few people, but touches all of us.”

**- MARC ALEXANDER
GOVERNOR’S COORDINATOR OF HOMELESSNESS**

by the economic crisis. The governor’s plan calls for a coordinated effort to address a very complicated issue. We are happy to contribute toward these ambitious goals of ending homelessness throughout our state.”

On July 5, the state reached the halfway point in the plan. According to the Office of the Governor, one of the areas in which the state is achieving progress is convincing more businesses and charitable institutions to provide food at shelters and to service providers instead of in public areas.

In addition, 125 people from Waikiki and the urban core area have already been moved from emergency shelters or the streets into transitional or permanent housing. Alexander adds that there are enough emergency shelter space on Oahu for those who are homeless.

“For example, the Institute for Human Services has an average of 50 spaces available each night in their men’s shelter. The major Waianae emergency shelter has space daily for additional people. We don’t need more emergency shelter space, at least not on Oahu. The Sea Winds (housing) project also just opened in Waianae, providing 50 units for transitional and permanent housing. Our greatest need is more per-

manent housing with supportive services.”

As for key performance indicators, Alexander says the effectiveness of the methods they are employing will ultimately be measured by the reduction in the number of people who are homeless and in the prevention of new homelessness.

“This will require strategic and long-term commitments that will build more permanent housing with supportive services, increase workforce development, provide more educational programs and increase needed mental health and drug or alcohol treatment program availability. And most of it will require the support of the community for the long haul,” he says.

“It’s not about outputs, like ‘how many people did I feed last week?’ Rather, it’s about outcomes, like ‘how many fewer people need to be fed this week because of our actions?’ It’s a real shift in vision and thinking that challenges not just those who are homeless, but maybe even the way we have been providing services and the kind of services we have been offering,” Alexander says.

He also notes that one of the key instruments in the state’s vision to end homelessness will be the soon-to-be-formed Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness.

“This council will include government agencies, the faith-based community, non-profit service providers, the private sector and the community in guiding the plan that will end homelessness in our state,” he says.

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Outcomes Not Outputs

Alexander says the focus is on strategic thinking and on what the community needs to do to put an end to homelessness...not just to manage it.

“It’s not about outputs, like ‘how many people did I feed



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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Tips on Avoiding Summer Wedding Scams

This summer, love is in the air as many soon-to-be brides prepare for their long-awaited wedding day. When preparing for the day of their dreams, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises brides to proceed with caution when it comes to buying a wedding dress online, choosing a photographer and selecting a wedding planner.

Doing your research and asking for referrals can make all the difference in helping your special day go as smoothly as possible. Last year alone, the BBB received more than 970 complaints against wedding-related services. Services like wedding planners, bridal shops, car or limousine rentals, DJs, wedding photographers, florists and jewelers all topped the list. Many of the complaints centered on a company's unwillingness to honor cancellation and refund policies after a deposit had been paid.

From choosing a florist to

picking out the perfect wedding gown, more and more soon-to-be brides are opting for online retailers. While most venues have the brides' best interest at heart, it's important to recognize the red flags before shelling out their cash.

"With today's wedding averaging around more than \$28,000, there's not a penny left to gamble on unreliable vendors," says Dwight Keoloha CEO Hawaii's BBB. "It's important for all newlyweds to do their research before securing wedding services and paying any upfront fees."

BBB recommends that newlyweds consider the following when planning for their special day:

- **Research all online vendors.** When choosing to go with an online retailer for your wedding services or products start with a trusted site rather than shopping with a search engine. Search results can often lead you to



unscrupulous websites or phishing scams. Also, look for the BBB seal and other widely-recognized "trustmarks" on retail websites. Click on the seals to confirm they're valid. Confirm that your online purchase is secure. Look for the "s" after "http" in the URL or the lock symbol in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. Be sure to check the company out with BBB before doing business with them.

- **Review all terms and conditions.** Whether you're dealing with a company on-

line or in-person, review all terms and conditions carefully. What is the company's refund and exchange policy? What is their cancellation policy? What happens if the company can't hold up their end of the bargain? Who will perform the service on your special day? Be sure you understand your rights as a consumer before doing business with the company.

- **Keep documentation of your order.** For online orders, save a copy of the confirmation page or e-mails confirming the order until you receive the item or service and are satisfied. If you're dealing with a company face-to-face, be sure to get all details in writing, including specific dates, products, prices, cancellation and deposit policies and signatures from both parties.
- **Pay with a credit card.** Credit cards offer con-

sumers the added protection of disputing any charge over \$50 within 60 days of the purchase. Most established businesses accept major credit cards, so use them whenever possible, including payment for deposits. Shoppers also have dispute rights if there are unauthorized charges on the card and many card issuers have "zero liability" policies if someone steals your card number and uses it. Never wire money.

- **Consider purchasing wedding insurance.** Wedding insurance can cover a range of prospective problems including vendor no-shows, cancellations, inclement weather, military deployment, medical emergencies, travel delays and more. Many policies start at \$200 and can potentially save you thousands of dollars.

For more consumer tips you can trust, visit www.bbb.org/us/bbb-news

Miss Hawaii Filipina Pageant Set for July 30

The 2011 Miss Hawaii Filipina Scholarship Pageant will be held on July 30, 2011 at the New Empress Restaurant.

The three candidates vying for the coveted title are Miss Oahu Filipina Leonevi Mabio, Miss Kauai Filipina Topaz Marley Fernandez, and Miss Maui Filipina Shelby Bantilan.

Mabio bested four other contestants to win Miss Oahu Filipina. She also won the swimsuit and speech categories. For the talent portion, she performed a fierce Filipino Muslim



2010 winner Margaret Pascual

Warrior Dance traditionally done only by men.

Miss Kauai Filipina Fernandez is a graduate of Kauai High School where she was a leader of the school's cheer squad. She garnered special awards in terno, speech and interview en route to her crown.

Miss Maui Filipina Bantilan won competition awards in the Lifestyle & Fitness in Swimsuit and Best in Talent

phases of the competition. She is the daughter of Melvin and Antoinette Bantilan and traces her Filipino roots to Baguio City.

The Miss Hawaii Filipina Pageant is an annual project by the United Filipino Council of Hawaii and the Oahu Filipino Community Council.

Miss Margaret Pascual of Oahu is the reigning queen. As Ambassadors of Goodwill, she will be going to the Philippines to fulfill her chosen mission for the Bantay-Bata and other community service endeavors.

Donation for the dinner program is \$35.

DOH Recommends Measles Vaccination for Summer

Officials with the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) are recommending that summer travelers keep up-to-date with their vaccinations, particularly for measles—a common disease in many countries worldwide, including Europe.

Several mainland states have experienced an increase in the number of measles cases, most of which have been linked to international travel.

"Measles is highly contagious and easily spread by direct contact with an infected person who may cough and sneeze," says state epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Y. Park. "Last year, a Hawaii family traveled to the mainland on vacation and four family members contracted measles."

Symptoms of measles include a rash, high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Some people who become sick with measles may develop ear infections, diarrhea, or pneumonia and other serious lung infections. In rare cases, measles can cause swelling of the brain and even death.

The DOH monitors and investigates cases of measles in Hawaii, in addition to over 70

other contagious diseases to prevent and control the spread of serious illness.

"Even if you aren't traveling this summer, it's always a good idea to protect yourself and your family against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases," says State-DOH director Loretta Fuddy.

Before traveling internationally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following:

- Infants ages 6 months through 11 months receive one dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine.
- Children ages 12 months or older and teens/adults without evidence of measles immunity should have documentation of two doses of MMR vaccine, separated by at least 28 days.
- Individuals see their doctor at least 4-6 weeks before traveling since it takes most vaccines time to become effective in the body.

For additional information, travelers are advised to visit the [CDC website](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) at www.cdc.gov/travel or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

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IMMIGRATION GUIDE



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

Wedding Pictures in Bag of Filipina Claiming "Single" Lead to Exclusion Proceedings

and affirmed the exclusion order. Geronima got a lawyer who filed a petition for habeas corpus in a U.S. district court which affirmed the BIA but did so on different grounds. She filed a petition for review with a U.S. Court of Appeals which stayed her exclusion. The Court reversed the district court and remanded the case to the BIA for a new evidentiary hearing because the hearing before the IJ was deficient since she did not have an attorney and translator and because the INS submitted an investigator's report to the IJ without giving Geronima a copy.

A new IJ conducted the hearing which held that she should not be deported. He determined that Geronima honestly believed that she was not married to Juan and therefore did not willfully misrepresent her marital status. He ruled that even if a marriage ceremony took place, the marriage was void because it was performed before the issuance of a marriage license. He rejected the INS evidence consisting of the testimony of the mayor who performed the ceremony who claimed that he performed it after issuing a marriage license. The IJ did not find the mayor's testimony credible.

INA SECTION 212(k) Waiver

The IJ granted a Section

212(k) waiver. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act an alien excludable from the U.S. under 1182(a)(5)(A) or 1182(a)(7)(A)(i) who is in possession of an immigrant visa may, if otherwise admissible, be admitted to the U.S. in the discretion of the Attorney General (or Immigration Judge) if he is satisfied that the exclusion was not known to, and could not have been ascertained by the exercise of reasonable diligence by, the immigrant before the time of departure. We have invoked Section 212(k) waiver on a number of occasions and are writing a book on immigration waivers.

The BIA reversed the IJ, saying that he should not have been "so quick to find the applicant credible." Instead it gave credence to the mayor's testimony.

She appealed to the Court of Appeals which held that the "mayor's affidavits bordered upon fraud" and found her credible. The court upheld the IJ's grant of waiver under Section 212(k) and ordered that she be granted citizenship. The court said: "Shutting off the opportunity to come to the United States actually is a crushing deprivation to many immigrants. Very often it destroys the hopes and aspirations of a lifetime, and it frequently operates not only against the individual immediately but

also bears heavily upon his family in and out of the United States. . . Exclusion is indeed a harsh penalty. . . No immigrant should have to live over ten years with the uncertainty as to whether she can stay in this country or not.

criminating items, send them separately by express courier to a trusted friend or relative in the U.S.

(ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. Office: 800 Bethel St., Suite 402, Honolulu, HI 96813. Tel. (808) 225-2645. E-Mail: flamlaw@yahoo.com. Websites: www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com, and www.ImmigrationServicesUSA.com. Listen to the most witty, interesting, and informative radio program in Hawaii on KNDI at 1270 AM dial every Thursday at 7:30 a.m., rebroadcast at www.tluo.com.)

Geronima, a Filipina, attempted to enter the U.S. as the unmarried daughter of a lawful permanent resident. At her port of entry in San Francisco, an INS agent found pictures suggesting that she was married. INS conducted an investigation in the Philippines and discovered a marriage application, a marriage license, and a marriage contract with her name and that of Juan.

INS commenced exclusion proceedings, alleging that she violated immigration laws by falsely obtaining a visa by concealing her marriage. She claimed the documents constituted only a proposal of marriage, not an officially certified marriage. The Immigration Judge did not find her credible and ruled that she made a material misrepresentation by concealing her marriage. He ordered her excludable. INS detained her in jail for 22 months. She appealed to the BIA claiming for the first time that her marriage was void because her marriage ceremony took place before her marriage license was issued. Under Philippine law, this would make the marriage void. BIA refused to consider this evidence

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Consulate Conducts Orientation for Tour Participants

The Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu gave a warm welcome and briefing to the 136 participants from Hawaii for the Sixth Ambassadors/Consuls General Tourism Directors Tour on July 7, 2011.



Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu

A joint project of all Philippine embassies and consulates general in the U.S. and Canada and the Philippines' Department of Tourism and Department of Foreign Affairs, Filipinos and their friends eagerly await the annual tour which will include a comprehensive cultural immersion on the sites and sounds of Philippine hospitality with the added activities of exploring busi-

ness, investment and retirement opportunities. The tour participants will be treated to an opportunity to personally meet President Benigno S. Aquino III and to share lunch with him at the Malacanang Presidential Palace on July 19, 2011.

The Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu continues to be the

top notcher among all embassies and consulates in signing-up participants to the tour, which runs from July 17-23, 2011. This year's 136 participants is an increase of more than 23 percent from 2009 when a record 110 participants were in attendance.

The Consulate's major partners for this special tour include Philippine Airlines (Monette Trespases) and Hawaiian Airlines (Bernie Salvador). Other sponsors include the Hawaii Filipino Travel Association and its travel agent members, namely Everlasting Tour (Edith Gudoy), Noble Travel (Tess Noble), Aloha Tours (Rose Galanto), Panda Tours (Jack C.S. Tsui), Diplomat Tours (Elma Paclael), and Air & Sea (Henry Ou).

Michael A. McMann, M.D.

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Lutong Lola

FEAST WITH ME by Stephanie Zubiri

My two grandmothers were both excellent cooks. Abuelita Zubiri was married to a very demanding Basque man, who unfortunately passed away quite early yet lived in our hearts like a legend through her dishes and colorful stories. Her bacalao dish had to be the most emblematic. Flaky salty bits of cod that hail from the Atlantic swimming in an ocean of homemade Spanish tomato sauce resting on islands of soft potatoes and pimiento piqüillos. She would serve it with little melba toasts, nice and crusty in contrast to the little mashed mixture of bacalao that she would spread on top. She made amazing chipironnes en su tinta that would turn our mouths black with joy as we shoveled black mounds of rice and squid.

She would always make my two favorites when I'd come over: albondigas and chorizo de Bilbao con garbanzos. I loved those little balls of meat covered again in her famous tomato sauce that she always drilled in my head "should never be sweet."

Chorizo was my absolute favorite and I loved the tart and spice combined with the crunch and cream of little garbanzos set against a background of white fluffy rice. When I was older she would offer me a beer over lunch and have one with me, telling me stories of how she had to give up scotch because it made her stomach hurt and, well, San Mig Light was a better option. She was 98 when she passed away and rather lucid till the end. Always generous and smelling of her Van Cleef perfume and delicious kitchen treats.

My Lola Fernandez is also a wonderful cook. Back in the day she told me that she ran more than three restaurants and that if you're in the food business you will always earn because everyone needs to eat. As soon as you enter her house the first thing that she asks you is: "*Kumain ka na? Hoy! Betty, bigyan mo siyang macapuno ice cream.*" You could never escape. She would offer all kinds of sweets, pastries, assorted imported butter cookies whose boxes she'd keep for ages and ages. Her *kare-kare* is famous. She uses oxtail, so soft and tender and the best balance between that peanutty taste and the saltiness of bagoong. It was always falling off the bone and melted with that steamed Calrose rice served in this funny,



Belly good: XO46's bangus belly salpicao is fried to a crisp and tossed with so much garlic, onion, and siling sinigang

round plastic lacquer-looking dish with a cover and matching rice spatula. I always wondered, was this a "lola thing," as both my grannies had it. She also has the best tapa in town. Rufos? Tapa King? Pff... Lola's tapa could easily put them out of business. It was salty and sweet all at the same time. Those little bits of charred fat? Like juicy caramel morsels hanging on crisp strips of meat. Always served with a dried egg scramble and a spicy vinegar. Her tapa is the champion of all tapas. I always wondered how so many delicious things would come out of her kitchen that had retro

ovens and stoves, plus a refrigerator with a padlock. I loved that kitchen as it brought me back in time with those pastel pantone 1950s movies and photos I loved so much. My lolo came home every day to have lunch with her... her cooking skills honed because of these daily dates.

The common denominator? Apart from that funny plastic rice-server thing, is that eating in your lola's house is a mixture of comfort and pleasure. Eating treats and dishes too rich or too complicated to make for everyday home consumption. And yet nothing was too far-fetched. Nothing was too complex... you were lost in the historical familiarity on your plate. Service was usually impeccable. The helpers who have been there for ages who have seen you since your earliest childhood up to the day you got your first white hair. They were always the most honest about you getting fat... "Ay taba-taba mo na..." or getting thin: "Sexy mo na,day." They always saved you the yummiest piece of tapa and were more than willing to fry up a bit more if you were being gluttonous that day.

Lola's homes have a certain look and smell, a mix of old and older, then some strange, out-of-place item that they keep out of pure sentimentality. It smells of musty old books and furniture mixed with retro perfume and delicious, mouthwatering kitchen scents.

Not too long ago I was invited to eat in a recently opened restaurant, XO46. Owned by Andrew and Sandy Masigan, inspired, true-blue entrepreneurs who just love to eat. The menu is what they baptized heritage cuisine. A mishmash of



Tripe mo?: The tripe in callos is clean-tasting and so pleasant

Spanish-Filipino favorites and more local, notably Bicolano dishes. Absolutely nothing pretentious and 100-percent tasty and comforting. In a flash they had ordered half of the menu for us. We had gambas, chorizo, rabo de toro, sopa de mariscos, callos, molo soup, lechon kawali, binagoongan, Bicol express, fried calamari, bangus salpicao... we were only four. The adorable waitress wearing a simple Filipiniana costume was addressing us sweetly and kindly in perfect Tagalog: "Señorito, señorita... ano pong gusto niyong imumin?" It was almost comical and yet endearing.

The tapas were nicely done, fresh ingredients and fresh herb garnishes. The molo soup was like a perfect cure for the snif-



Just pork you: The binagoongan sa gata is soft, succulent, and savory. The spice and heat are balanced by the sweet rice taste of coconut.

fler, hot and rich with those floaty little bits of spring onions and dumpling wrappers. The dumplings had a nice twist, a little chicken liver added a nice creamy touch. The rabo de toro was really tender, the black gravy felt like it had been cooking for a long time. Calamari? Fluffy and far from gummy. They used fresh squid and despite the fact that half the menu was on the table... I ate practically the entire bowl. Lechon kawali was cut really thin, fried really crispy and not oily at

all. Callos were a surprise because it was always something I ignored in my Lola Zubiri's house. I'm not one for tripe... but out of politeness I tried it. It was clean-tasting and so pleasant that even Jonathan, another tripe hater, had several servings.

There were two dishes, however, that I must say were truly stand out. The binagoongan was soft, succulent and savory. It broke apart like feathery wisps or pork. So much spice and heat balanced by a sweet, rich taste of coconut. My personal favorite? Bangus salpicao. Little pieces of bangus belly floured and fried to a crisp tossed with so much garlic, onion, and siling sinigang. It was crispy on the outside and that merry black belly fat gushed out

like those funky candy Goobers as you bit into it. I went all out and ordered the salted egg and aligue fried rice. Bright orange with crab fat, dotted with bright green minced spring onions, it was flecked white and yellow with salty velvety egg...

There's a party in my mouth and the party don't stop! A barrio fiesta of local flavors, kundiman songs and tinkling beats, as I chomp-chomped my way through this truly hit-the-spot meal.

When you eat great Filipino food it really makes my mouth salivate. You drop the knife and pick up the spoon, all sense of European etiquette disappears as you raise your elbows to shovel in your mouth... fond childhood memories accompanied by an older and more adventurous palate. To be embraced by the most comforting food in the world... (Sigh) *Lutong lola...* isn't that what we all want?

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

China May Not Be Able to Validate Territorial Claims - DFA

by Pia Lee-Brago
Thursday, July 14, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - China's rejection of Manila's suggestion that both countries elevate their dispute in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) is an indication that Beijing may not be able to validate its territorial claims, Foreign Secretary Albert Del Rosario said.

"China's hesitation to accept the Philippine suggestion to elevate their dispute to ITLOS could lead to conclusion that China may not be able to validate their stated positions in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)," Del Rosario said in a statement yesterday.

He said the Philippines articulated to China on Monday that it is prepared to defend its position on the West Philippine Sea even as Manila "suggested" that both countries go to the ITLOS to resolve the dispute,

but China rejected it the next day.

"China always maintains that the South China Sea dispute should be resolved . . . through direct negotiations between directly concerned countries," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei said, adding that the matter should also be dealt with according to "recognized international laws."

Del Rosario said the exchange of views with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi on a very wide bilateral agenda, including the discussion on the West Philippine Sea during his visit to Beijing last week upon the invitation of his counterpart, was very straightforward.

Although he described his visit as successful, Del Rosario said there was no change in the Philippine position and its position of multilateral resolution of the dispute. China maintained that the territorial claim should be dealt with a bilateral approach with claimant countries.

"In the exchange of views



DFA Sec. Albert del Rosario

that we had we said the Philippines is prepared to defend its position in accordance with international law consistent with UNCLOS and we asked them if they would be willing to do the same," Del Rosario said in a press conference on Monday. "And we also suggested that the proper forum would be the ITLOS."

to adjudicate disputes arising out of the interpretation and application of the Convention. The ITLOS is an independent judicial body established by UNCLOS

When asked about China's response to the Philippines'

suggestion for the two nations to raise the sea dispute to the ITLOS for resolution, Del Rosario said, "I'm not sure if there was a response."

He, however, said the exchange of views was useful in terms of being able to clearly state the position of the two countries.

Del Rosario and his Chinese counterpart also had an extensive discussion on historic rights used by China as the basis for the validity of their 9-dash claim, which the Philippines rejected since it is not applicable to the situation.

"We brought to their attention the fact that under the UNCLOS this is not validated. They had actually pointed to a section of UNCLOS concerning historical basis and we said if they would like to revisit that provision it seems to us it is not applicable to the situation, to the circumstance and the position they have taken," he added.

The Philippines lodged last April a diplomatic protest against China's 9-dash line ter-

ritorial claim over the whole of South China Sea.

The protest came in the form of a note verbale submitted through its Permanent Mission to the UN. The Philippines made three assertions related to the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) situated within the Spratlys.

The map is called "9-dash line" or "9-dotted line" because it shows a series of nine dashes or dotted lines forming a ring around the South China Sea area, which China claims is part of its territory. The area includes the Spratlys group, a cluster of oil-rich islands disputed by five other countries, including the Philippines.

China has been using the map with nine dashes in asserting its territorial claim over the whole of the South Sea. But the map first made its way to the UN body, when China used it to challenge the claim made by Vietnam and Malaysia over their extended continental shelves in the South China Sea.

(continued on page 13)

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PHILIPPINE NEWS



Archbishop Orlando Quevedo of the Archdiocese of Cotabato (left) issues a statement beside Archbishop Romulo Valles of the Zamboanga Social Action Apostolate at the Senate blue ribbon committee's third public hearing.

Photography by LYN BELLON/www.inquire.net

Bishops Attend Senate Hearing; Return All PCSO Cars

by Angelo L. Gutierrez
 Wednesday, July 13, 2011

MANILA, Philippines – The seven bishops, who received donations for the purchase of sport utility vehicles (SUVs) from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), today declared at the Senate that they are returning the vehicles to the government's lottery agency.

Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, who received a Toyota Grandia Hi-Ace from the PCSO, told the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee that they are returning the vehicles "to heal" the wounds inflicted by the PCSO fund controversy on the Catholic Church and for everybody to already "move forward."

Quevedo said that all vehicles donated by the PCSO to dioceses in Luzon were parked outside the legislative building in Pasay City, ready for turnover to an authorized representative of the government's lottery agency. He added that service vehicles donated by the PCSO to Mindanao dioceses have also been prepared for turnover.

Reading the letter of the seven bishops cited in the 2009 Commission on Audit (COA) report, the bishop from Cotabato defended why they had to ask for government funds for the purchase of the service vehicles.

"We are from the provinces that have some of the most difficult areas that we, as bishop, have to reach. Most of us are from calamity- or conflict-stricken areas. We serve communities with some of the poorest of the poor. Our vocation is to help them in so far as we can with our resources. When we lack resources, we seek the assistance from others," Quevedo said.

The bishop insisted that they did not commit any crime or violated laws when they asked and accepted funds for the purchase of the service vehicles.

However, he admitted, that they failed to foresee the possibility of the Catholic Church being dragged into a controversy by accepting such donations.

All vehicles granted by the PCSO to

the seven bishops, including Quevedo, were given during the time of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

"We honestly failed to consider the pitfalls to which these grants could possibly lead," he said, adding that the bishops are prepared to face the consequences if they have been found to have violated any law.

Five more bishops who were cited in the 2009 COA report as recipients of PCSO funds were also present at the Senate hearing. They were Butuan Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos, who received a Mitsubishi Montero, Bontoc-Lagawe Bishop Rodolfo Beltran (Nissan Pathfinder), Abra Bishop Leopoldo Jaucian (Mitsubishi Strada) and Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad (Mitsubishi Strada).

Zamboanga Archbishop Romulo Valles, who also received a Toyota Grandia Hi-Ace, was represented by Bishop David William Antonio.

Money from The Devil

Pueblos, in his opening statement, admitted that sending a letter to then President Arroyo, where he asked for an SUV for his birthday, "was a lapse in judgment as to the propriety of the procurement of such vehicle."

He said he is "willing to accept responsibility on this personal action," but declined to admit that he did something wrong when he asked for a vehicle which he intends to use for "spiritual and social services."

Pueblos said that "after prayerful discernment" he has decided to return the vehicle to the PCSO.

At the grilling of Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, Pueblos said that he may be willing to accept money "from the devil" if it would be used for the welfare of his flock in Butuan.

"I do believe that there is a possibility... I'd rather discern on it than accept it at once [from the devil]," Pueblos said.

Meanwhile, Pueblos admitted that he used the Mitsubishi Montero for some religious purposes, particularly as service for prelates giving catechism lessons to

(continued on page 11)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Villar Seeks 15-day Leave for OFWs' Spouses

by Christina Mendez
Monday, July 11, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - Sen. Manny Villar has filed a bill that will grant special leave credits to spouses of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and allow them to spent about 15 days a year with their legal partners.

Senate Bill 2588 seeks to allow all legitimate spouses who are employees in the private and public sector to avail of an additional 15-day special leave credit yearly with full pay.

This leave credit may be used to attend to the needs of the OFW's family.

"Families of OFWs suffer the loneliness of being apart from their loved ones while the OFW endures the pain of solitude and isolation in distant lands just to give their families a decent living," said Villar, who founded the Sagip OFW Helpline to help distressed Filipino workers abroad.

"This leave credit can be a means for them to reconnect and enjoy the many things they are blessed with as a family," he

added.

Under the bill, employees availing of this leave privilege are required to submit to their employer the name of their spouse, a copy of their marriage contract, information on the nature and place of work of the OFW and a copy of the OFW's passport.

The proposal was first filed by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. in the 14th Congress. Villar filed this bill again in the hope that this will be passed in the new Congress.

Employees not allowed to

avail of this leave are those who are absent from work without official leave; those who are on vacation, sick, forced or study leave, or those who have already availed of other forms of leave availed by law; and those whose services are necessary to prevent loss of life or damage to property brought about by serious accidents, fires, floods, typhoons, earthquake, epidemic or other disasters.

The bill also seeks to give income tax deduction from the employer's gross income for each taxable year, based on the



Sen. Manny Villar

actual cost paid by the private firm in granting this leave to its qualified employees.

Once enacted into law, any employer found violating this act will be punished with a fine not exceeding P25,000 or imprisonment of 30 days to six months. (www.philstar.com)



President Noyonoy Aquino

Aquino to Push for Economic Measures that will Provide Safety Nets to Vulnerable Sectors

from www.philstar.com
Monday, July 11, 2011

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - President Benigno Aquino III may push for economic measures that aim to provide safety nets to the vulnerable sectors when he convenes the Legisla-

tive- Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) after his State of the Nation Address (SONA) this month, a senior official said today.

Presidential adviser on political affairs Ronald Llamas told reporters that there were talks on the possibility of

tax reform, but not meant to increase taxes.

He said the purpose of the tax reform would be to "increase collections, make it more efficient and give breathing space to the vulnerable sectors."

Aquino will convene

LEDAC after his SONA on July 25 where leaders of both Houses of Congress, Cabinet members, and representatives from the local government units and private sector are expected to attend. (www.philstar.com)

(from page 10, BISHOPS...)

poor communities in far-flung areas.

'Pajero 7'

Senators also grilled PCSO Chairman Margie Juico on how the tag "Pajero 7" came about since no Mitsubishi Pajeros were given to the seven bishops.

Juico denied that the "Pajero" term came from her, and told senators that it could have come from an anonymous PCSO employee who was interviewed by journalists.

Several newspapers and online news sites have been describing the seven bishops as the "Pajero 7," indicating that they all received Pajero from the PCSO.

The seven bishops were later called the "SUV-shops" and "Mitsubishishops."

Juico said that she had repeatedly made clarifications that there were no Pajeros donated to the Catholic Church.

Bishops can sleep well

Sen. Teofisto Guingona, chairman of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee, said in an interview after the hearing that there may be no need to call bishops again to attend the inquiry.

"I suppose so," Guingona said when asked if he think the bishop can already sleep tight against without worrying to be called to the hearings again.

He said that based on the statements of the bishops, the vehicles donated by

the PCSO were used in secular activities, which he said is not a violation of the law.

However, he said that using vehicle donations from PCSO may be a "litmus test to the Constitution" since it prohibits the government from giving out donations that may be used to favor a religious sector.

"Sa nakita namin, walang mali sa paggamit ng sasakyan sapagkat lahat nagsabi na ginamit nila para sa secular (There was nothing wrong with how the vehicles were used because all of [the bishops] said they used the vehicles for secular [activities])," Guingona said.

The bishops were also absolved by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile who said that if ever there was fault in the vehicle donations to the bishops, it should be blamed on the old PCSO leadership.

"*Walang nilabag na batas. Ang may responsibilidad diyán sa bagay na 'yan na pag-iingatang 'yung kaban ng bayan ay ang gobyerno* (The bishops did not violate any law. The responsibility in taking care of the funds is the government)," Enrile said.

Both senators said that what was achieved in today's hearing was the closure on the type of vehicles given to the bishops.

Enrile said that the bishops "were unfairly accused of receiving expensive vehicles which was rather incorrect." (www.philstar.com)

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

GMA Faces Plunder Rap Over PCSO Fund Mess

by Michael Punongbayan
Wednesday, July 13, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - A plunder case was filed yesterday against former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and former Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office general manager Rosario Uriarte before the Office of the Ombudsman in connection with the alleged misuse of P325 million in PCSO intelligence funds.

In a complaint prefaced with a Biblical passage, Bayan Muna party-list Representatives Teddy Casinò and Neri Javier Colmenares said that in their alleged misuse of the funds, Arroyo and Uriarte had actually stolen from the poor and not just from ordinary Filipinos.

"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap," they said quoting Galatians Chapter 6 Verse 7. An anomaly qualifies as plunder if it involves more than P50 million and is committed in a series of overt acts as defined by Article 217 of the Revised Penal Code.

Arroyo, now a Pangpanga congresswoman, is in Europe and is expected to be back anytime this week.

They said in the complaint that the funds "may have been used for political largesse, partly to retain the loyalty of public officers to the President."

"Some were most likely used for partisan electoral purposes, and some were amassed as ill-gotten wealth. These disbursements came from illegally diverted and malversed intelligence funds," their complaint read.

Uriarte said on national television during a recent Senate hearing on PCSO fund anomalies that she was "close" to then President Arroyo and had

worked for her in various capacities since the 1990s when Arroyo was still trade undersecretary. She said it was Arroyo who approved of the release of funds.

Colmenares said that on May 30, he had already exposed in a privilege speech a number of PCSO irregularities and anomalies during the Arroyo administration.

"These include PCSO entering into contracts with the Philippine Gaming and Management Corporation (PGMC) on the rent of overpriced lotto machines and a 50-year contract on thermal paper production both of which are highly disadvantageous to the Philippine government," he said.

Colmenares said he had also exposed the realignment, without any PCSO board resolution, of the media fund to the intelligence fund.

His revelations reportedly led to a Senate inquiry into PCSO's alleged use of intelligence funds to buy and donate ambulances and expensive cars to seven Roman Catholic bishops.

Uriarte admitted under oath during the July 7 Senate Blue Ribbon committee hearing that Arroyo was aware that the intelligence fund would be used for something else.

"However, despite such knowledge, President Arroyo still approved the realignment of funds. The illegal motivation of President Arroyo is clear. Despite knowledge that said intelligence fund will not be used for intelligence work, she kept on approving the various requests of Ms. Uriarte for the grant and realignment of funds to this phantom intelligence fund project for years," the complainants said.



Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

"In view of the foregoing, it is very clear that President Arroyo and Uriarte conspired in using the intelligence fund for purposes other than intelligence work," they said.

They also asked the Office of the Ombudsman to conduct a lifestyle check on Arroyo and Uriarte.

The two party-list lawmakers also said Arroyo and Uriarte should also face graft charges for "causing any undue injury to any party, including the government, or giving any private party any unwarranted benefits, advantage or preference in the discharge of his official, administrative or judicial functions through manifest partiality, evident bad faith or gross inexcusable negligence."

They said the misuse of PCSO funds "took away from what would have been spent for charity and very necessary assistance to the needy and the poor."

They added that the respondents "also bismirched the reputation of PCSO as an institution for the poor and the needy into an institution for the rich and the greedy."

They said information "ex-

posed in both houses of Congress have revealed a level of corruption and abuse that puts to shame even the most heartless of thieves."

"We run to the Ombudsman to complain, expecting it to use all its powers and resources to unearth the evil whose surface we have barely scratched. There are, no doubt, many more pieces of evidence that are beyond the access of ordinary citizens or even legislators like herein complainants," their complaint read. "We trust that this complaint will be appreciated not only for the substance that it already contains, but the potential avenues that it opens for investigation and prosecution of those who would steal from the poor," they added.

Acting Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro personally made Casinò and Colmenares swear to the veracity of their affidavit.

Not bothered

Arroyo's allies, meanwhile, said they don't expect the plunder case to prosper.

House Senior Deputy Minority Leader and Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez said he finds the filing of the case "unusual" but not surprising.

"Normally, other parties would do that but I'm not surprised," Suarez said. "But I guess, they're really good at getting media mileage, getting public attention and this is really all for the 2013 elections," he said.

"I hope all the elements of plunder as provided by law are

present or else they're just filing for the sake of media mileage and that would be dishonest to the people," Davao del Sur Rep. Marc Douglas Cagas said.

He said the militant lawmakers filed the complaint against Arroyo because of her alleged misdeeds while president.

"It's very clear that they had always wanted to go after the former president. I think it's becoming to be personal thing," Cagas said. "But it's been a year, all we have are exposés, we must move on because we have so many urgent problems that we all must collectively solve."

"Whether or not there were irregularities committed in the PCSO, all past transactions should be reviewed with the end view of helping the agency deliver more assistance to the poor," he said.

"They rampage up and down just to run after GMA. But that is understandable because they are grandstanding at the same time," former justice secretary Raul Gonzalez said.

"These are the people who have no qualms of doing anything just to get public attention and make it appear that they are against corruption. All these are connected to 2013. Because they want to become senators and dominate Congress," he said.

He described the militant lawmakers as "double-bladed" because they "take advantage of our democratic processes while at the same time undermining them." (www.philstar.com)

Aquino Hails Private Sector's Efforts to Provide Long-term Jobs

from www.philstar.com
Tuesday, July 12, 2011

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - President Benigno Aquino III hailed today the private sector's efforts to provide more long-term jobs for Filipinos.

From April last year to April this year, the number of employed Filipinos increased by 1.4 million to 36.821 million, said Aquino.

"What is good about it, of the 1.4 million, only 400,000 came from the government. That means, one million came from



the private sector," he said, adding that means the jobs created by the private sector were long-term in nature contrary to the work created by the government, which are more on per project basis, meaning temporary.

Despite the additional jobs made for the past year, Aquino said, his administration would push for the creation of more jobs, noting unemployment rate still stood at 7.2 percent in April. (www.philstar.com)

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LEGAL NOTES

High Skill Immigration Bill Proposed



By Reuben S. Seguritan

A Democratic Senator from California recently introduced a bill that would speed up the immigration of skilled professionals with advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and job-creating investors in the U.S.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, whose district encompasses Silicon Valley, introduced the Immigration Driving Entrepreneurship in America (IDEA) Act of 2011 (HR 2161). The bill's key provisions affect procedures for

permanent residence and non-immigrant processing alike.

HR 2161 would allow STEM advanced degree graduates from designated universities and who have job offers from U.S. employers to receive their green cards faster by creating an EB-1 category for these individuals. These advanced degree graduates, as well as outstanding professors and researchers already under the EB-1 category, would be exempt from numerical visa limits, making this category a fast track to a green card.

If passed, the bill would also greatly reduce the immigrant visa backlog by allowing for the recapture of unused employment- and family-based visa numbers from 1992, exempting spouses and minor children from the numerical limits, and eliminating current

per country limits for employment-based cases.

Changes to the labor certification process were also proposed. Employers would be required to pay a \$295 fee and the DOL must adjudicate the case in 120 days or 180 days if there is an audit.

Furthermore, the standard for retaining the alien worker would change. Under current rules an employer must consider any "minimally qualified" U.S. worker, while under HR 2161, the employer may retain the foreign national employee if there are no available "equally qualified" U.S. workers.

The bill also makes permanent the EB-5 regional center pilot program, which gives permanent residence to investors in designated regional centers. A new EB-6 visa program would also be created for entrepreneurs

who establish self-sponsored or venture capital-backed start-up businesses that create jobs for U.S. workers.

A pre-certification process would be created for trusted employers that are high-volume filers in order to streamline the processing of multiple petitions with similar information.

Compared to skilled immigration bills introduced in the past, Lofgren's proposal is aimed at allowing highly skilled foreign nationals to become permanent residents faster, instead of improving the H-1B program by raising visa caps. Focusing on job creation, Lofgren reasoned that temporary H-1B workers leave the country after their work contracts and so have little incentive to remain in the U.S. and start businesses.

If the bill is passed, H-1B employers would be required to

conduct recruitment before hiring nonimmigrant workers, and H-1B employment would be limited to three years only unless the employee is applying for a green card.

HR 2161 would also collapse the existing four-level prevailing wage system into a three-level system, effectively raising the entry-level wages.

As might be expected, this bill has the support of technology companies that hire a lot of scientists, engineers and other highly skilled individuals. However, its provisions affecting the H-1B program are quite restrictive on employers and may end up defeating some of the bill's objectives.

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

PHILIPPINE NEWS (cont.) *(from page 9, CHINA...)*

China had taken the position that no Chinese ship intrusions took place in the West Philippine Sea because Beijing claims territorial sovereignty belongs to them.

"Of course we disputed this position. Our stand and position is fully supported by international law in particular the UNCLOS and we asked them to define and to be able to explain their own position," Del Rosario said.

The Philippines protested the actions of China in the West Philippine Sea and sightings of China Marine Surveillance (CMS) vessel and other People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) ships unloading building materials and erecting an undetermined number of posts.

Although China made no assurance that it would not engage in activities that would contribute to tension in the West Philippine Sea, Del Rosario

said he expected things to become "normal."

The secretary and his counterpart expressed that both countries want a peaceful resolution of the issue but he stressed that it should be resolved on the basis of the application of international law, a multilateral approach, and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties (DOC) in the South China Sea.

Institute of maritime affairs pushed

Meanwhile, Sen. Edgardo Angara said an institute on maritime affairs that will train a pool of diplomatic, economic, maritime and legal experts on territorial disputes will provide the solution to the Spratlys dispute.

He said the creation of the institute he is proposing will enable the country to have experts who can competently uphold the country's interests in international dialogues, including territorial disputes such as the Spratlys.

Angara, vice chairman of the Senate committee on foreign relations, said he is now discussing with the Law Center of the University of the Philippines, of which he was a former president, to iron out the details of the formation of an Institute of Maritime Affairs that will advance the country's ocean-related interests.

He said this institute will be instrumental in beefing up the country's capacity to protect its maritime and territorial interests, especially as the conflict over the Spratly Islands continues to simmer. (www.philstar.com)

Gov't Provides Scholarship Grants for Agricultural Courses

from www.philstar.com
Wednesday, July 13, 2011

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) -- The Philippine government is providing scholarship grants to Filipinos, especially the children of farmers, to encourage them to take up courses in agriculture, senior government official said today.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala encouraged farmers to send their children to agricultural colleges and government by availing of the government's scholarship program.

Alcala told the farmers that their children "can earn much in agriculture."

He added that government programs in agriculture are now in place to help farmers



and empower them with proper farming practices and the provision of funding support to increase their productivity in their respective communities.

Alcala noted that sending children to agricultural schools is much affordable compared to allowing them to take-up other courses, wherein some of the graduates have remained jobless up to now.

The agriculture chief said the department is working hard

to implement government programs in response to the order of President Aquino to advocate and support the productivity of farmers in the countryside.

Alcala underscored the need for farmers to undergo training in pest management, promoting the use of organic farming and other services towards sustainable management of their crops, livestock and grains. (www.philstar.com)

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TRAVEL & TOURISM

Wedding Bells in Guam

from www.philstar.com
 Sunday, July 10, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - The island of Guam is known for its exquisite white sand beaches, luxurious tax-free shopping, and delicious local cuisine. Tourists from all over the world visit the tropical island to relax, splurge and have fun. There are also those tourists who take it one step further by planning not just a vacation in Guam, but also their wedding. Whether it is an intimate or a non-conventional wedding, Guam offers many options to couples that are ready to tie the knot.

One thing that is unique to Guam is that almost all hotels have built their own chapels to accommodate romantic island-themed weddings. With its tall glass windows, the chapels provide its guests a panoramic view of the blue skies and aquamarine waters of Tumon Bay. The couple may opt to hold their wedding while the sun sets for a dramatic backdrop.

The Crystal Chapel in Hotel Nikko, St. Laguna Chapel in the Pacific Islands Club and St. Probus Holy Chapel in Hilton Guam Resort and Spa have elegant interiors and astonishing view that create a perfect setting for wedding ceremonies. If an



In Guam, almost all hotels have built their own chapels to accommodate romantic, island-themed weddings

open-air wedding is more ideal for the engaged couple, having the ceremony on Guam's most popular white sand beach, Tumon, is a favorite alternative. For more adventurous couples who prefer to hold the ceremony in a non-conventional setting, Guam's rich Chamorro culture provides unique venues where the bride and groom can exchange "I do's".

For Filipinos, the celebration after the wedding is almost as important as the ceremony itself. The reception can be held in any of Guam's top hotel ballrooms where the food, drinks and dancing are sure to create fun and lasting memories not just for the newlyweds, but also for their families and friends.



Westin Resort's chapel has tall glass windows, which provides a panoramic view of the aquamarine waters of Tumon Bay

would like to hold their wedding outside of the Philippines, but do not want to travel too far. Guam's close proximity to the Philippines makes it convenient for the couple and their guests. After the wedding, the newlyweds can opt to stay and spend their honeymoon on the island. Romantic dinners by the beach, fascinating ancient Chamorro sites, exciting shopping areas, and picturesque landscapes await to be enjoyed right after their big day," says Pilar Laguana, marketing manager, Guam Visitors Bureau.

For inquiries, call Guam Visitors Bureau at 519-6756 or visit www.facebook.com/like.guam.

MAINLAND NEWS

Racist Behavior Toward Asians Arouses Concern in L.A.

LOS ANGELES (Xinhua) -- Recent racist behavior displayed by some students at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), against Asians has aroused concern in the Asian community here.

California Assembly Member Mike Eng has sent a letter to UCLA Chancellor Gene D. Block Tuesday, expressing concern and requesting appropriate action.

The case in point is the Ching-Chong-Ling-Long Gourmet Takeout, a new Asian food delivery service catering to Westwood, where UCLA is situated. The outlet got its name from one of the most memorable lines of Alexandra Wallace's anti-Asian tirade that appeared in March.

Wallace was a former UCLA student who ranted about the "hordes of Asian people that UCLA accepts" in a three-minute video. Wallace specifically complained about students in the school library using their cellphones to call their families in Japan after the tsunami hit just days before.

At one point, Wallace -- who later withdrew from UCLA -- crudely mimics an Asian student answering the phone by saying, "Ohhh! Ching chong ling long ting tong!"

"I write this letter to express serious concern over the recent actions by a select number of UCLA students. It is my understanding that these students partnered with a local restaurant and established a delivery service by the name of 'Ching-Chong-Ling-Long Gourmet Takeout,'" Eng's letter said.

"California is home to a broad range of diverse communities. Acts

of intolerance such as these are senseless and have a profoundly negative effect on the community as a whole," the letter said.

"As a member of the California State Legislature and the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, I urge your office to look into this matter immediately and take appropriate action," Eng's letter said.

Ching-Chong-Ling-Long Gourmet Takeout was founded by Rachel Lee, owner of The Palace Restaurant in Brentwood, and four UCLA students who run the campus delivery service UCLA Munchies.

Lee told the press that she initially hesitated to use the name for the delivery service, but the students convinced her otherwise.

A statement on the delivery service's website explains: "We believe that the best way to combat intolerance is through a positive cultural experience mixed in with a healthy serving of humor, and hope that after you try us, you too will feel that way."

Lee's website uses the following wording to attract Asians: "Welcome to Ching-Chong-Ling-Long Takeout, Westwood's newest, sexiest, drop-dead delicious Asian Food Delivery. We at The Palace Restaurant Seafood & Dim Sum started CCLL Takeout in order to provide UCLA students/staff with quality, affordable Asian foods."

The Periscope Post suggested that Lee didn't do her homework. "You might have thought that Wallace's public shaming and subsequent self-removal from school would have brought a new era of communication about race relations to the UCLA campus," the paper said. (www.philstar.com)

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81ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF BALAAN CATALINA SOCIETY / SATURDAY
 July 23, 2011, 6pm • Club House @ 94-065 D, Waipahu Depot St. • Contact:

Emma Calvo, 833-5326

FILIPINO NURSES ORGANIZATION OF HI'S 38TH ANNUAL NURSING EXCELLENCE RECOGNITION & BANQUET / SATURDAY
 August 13, 2011, 6pm • Tapa Ballroom, Hilton Hawaiian Village • Contact: Nancy Walsch, 778-3832

CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS, 24TH ANNUAL STATEWIDE CONVENTION & GALA / SATURDAY
 August 13, 2011 • Maui Beach Hotel, Maui • For details, call Jun Colmenares @ 510-734-4491

63RD ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED VISAYAN COMMUNITY OF HAWAII / SATURDAY

August 20, 2011 • Club House @ 94-833 Awane'i St., Waipahu • Contact: George Carpenter, 554-0495

ILOCOS SURIAN ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII, DINNER AWARDS AND FUNDRAISING / SATURDAY
 August 27, 2011 • Coral Ballroom, Hilton Hawaiian Village • Contact: Danny Villaruz @ 778-0233 or Maria Etrata @ 392-2962

VINTAR NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI GLOBAL NETWORK, REUNION & REAFFIRMATION OF OFFICERS / SATURDAY
 September 24, 2011, 6pm • Hibiscus Room, Ala Moana Hotel • Call Gliceria Agraan @ 676-1567 or 671-7774

MAINLAND NEWS

Pinoy Teachers in Maryland Get More Money But May Lose Jobs

by Jose Katigbak
 Saturday, July 9, 2011

WASHINGTON – It was good news and bad news for hundreds of Filipino teachers in Prince George's County in Maryland.

They received word on Thursday they will be reimbursed fees they paid in connection with their recruitment, about \$4,000 each, but now face the threat their visas will not be renewed on expiry.

Millet Panga of Task Force Bayaninan expressed shock at news the H-1B visas of Filipino teachers would not be renewed and said they were meeting lawyers, community leaders and embassy officials to plot a course of action to delay or stop implementation of the ban on visa extensions.

About 1,000 foreign teachers, the bulk of them Filipinos, were caught in a dispute between the Prince George's County Public Schools and the US

Labor Department over who should pay H-1B visa fees incurred in their recruitment.

The Labor Department said Prince George's County should have paid the fees instead of the foreign teachers.

It ruled that the county should pay the foreign teachers, about 800 of them Filipinos, \$4.2 million in back pay and fined it \$1.7 million for willful violation of a statute.

In a settlement announced on Thursday before a hearing was scheduled, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) agreed to pay the Labor Department \$4.2 million to be distributed to the foreign teachers based on the fees each was required to pay. The county also agreed to a \$100,000 penalty.

Labor Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Alexander said as part of the settlement, the school system will not be permitted to extend the visas, under which about 800 teachers will be working in the 2011-2012 school year, or petition for new visas for two years.

PGCPS spokesman Briant Coleman in an email to the Maryland Community News Online Gazette.Net said over the next seven months about 250 employees' visa would expire.

"Obviously, this is not the outcome we had hoped for as these employees have provided an exceptional service to our school district," said the Prince George's Public Schools in a statement.

"PGCPS did everything possible to retain these excellent and valued employees. However, in the final analysis of the current state of our shrinking school budget and mounting legal fees, we determined that we simply could not afford to continue to operate this program."

Filipino teachers interviewed before the ruling came out said they'd rather keep their jobs and stay long enough to become a permanent US resident than get any back pay.

Prince George's County brought Filipino teachers in by the hundreds in the past decade to comply with the No Child Left Behind federal law. (www.philstar.com)

GLOBAL NEWS

'22 OFWs Fired as New Hiring Policy in Saudi is Enforced'

by Mayen Jaymalin
 Tuesday, July 12, 2011

MANILA, Philippines – With still a month from full implementation of the "Saudiization" policy, a number of Filipinos and other foreign workers in Saudi Arabia have already been terminated from their jobs.

Migrant-Middle East yesterday reported that so far, they have recorded 22 foreign workers terminated from their jobs since Saudi reported plans to implement the policy starting September.

"Twelve of those terminated were OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) while 10 were other nationalities like Indians

and Pakistanis," Migrant Middle East regional coordinator John Leonard Monterona said.

According to Monterona, they gathered their data from the calls of OFWs and workers of other nationalities who sought the assistance and guidance of Migrant in Saudi Arabia.

"One of them, an OFW-engineer who works for a contracting company in Jeddah, sent me a copy of his termination notice he received along with two Lebanese co-workers dated June 29. The company gave them one-month notice," Monterona said.

Monterona said Saudi employers normally do not state in the termination notice the cause of termination, but generally state that both parties, the employer and the employee, as per Saudi

labor law, can terminate the employment contract providing at least one month notice is given.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), however, maintained that the reported termination of some Filipino workers in Saudi was not in any way related to the Saudization policy.

Labor officials insisted that until this time the Saudization policy has not been effected yet since the categorization of companies in the Kingdom is still ongoing and is expected to be completed by the end of August.

Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz also stressed that the Philippine government has not received an official notice from the Saudi government concerning the impending implementation of the Saudization policy. (www.philstar.com)

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tunay na mango and pineapple.*



real fruit smoothies

Sa Bagong Mango Pineapple Real Fruit Smoothie from McCafé®, napapaligiran ako ng mga prutas na love ko – ang kakaibang linamnam ng matamis na mango at refreshing pineapple. Ito ang mundong kawilihan ko.

It's one more amazing flavor along with Wild Berry and Strawberry Banana.

new

