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May You Have the Merriest Christmas and a Safe and Blessed New Year!!!

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EDITORIAL

Put Your Worries Aside; Be Happy, the Holiday Season Is Here

Of one thing is certain, particularly during the past few years, it is uncertainty. The lingering economic maelstrom has angered Americans so profoundly to a point where taking massive protest to the streets seemed like the only option to get the powers that be to pay attention that so much is so wrong with the status quo: high unemployment, low wages, rising inflation, enormous income inequities, and most importantly, a general belief that our economic system can no longer endure the repeated cyclic recessions of the past century with band-aid fixes.

For many of us, we are not versed in political or economic theories that may or may not bring about solutions to our problems, but we do have a sense of knowing deep down that something is wrong based on our own personal hardships. Our bills keep mounting but we are making do with much less; our time away from home to take on multiple odd jobs means less time to spend with our spouse; our blessings of a house and fulfillment of the American dream rich with opportunities are a shrinking reality for our children. Given the conditions of our time, we are all too aware how simple it is to lose hope. But what keeps us moving forward is something that no economic adversity can take away -- our love for and bond with our family. This is the one thing that we can be certain of and rely upon through all the days of the year. Our family is our inspiration for living the best we can.

During the holiday season, we give thanks to our God and creator for all our blessings; and we celebrate our relationships with our family and loved ones.

As Filipino Catholics, we remember midnight Christmas masses holding on to our mother's hand as a young child while listening to the Christmas liturgy of the Holy Mother giving birth to our Savior Jesus. Her hand felt warm and strong. We felt protected. Years later as adults, we remember our mother beside us once again listening to the same liturgy; her hands now softer and wrinkled. We now feel like her protector. Our hands strong and warm. Then as older adults and our mother already passed on, we still keep imprinted in our hearts and minds her memory, and reach

out to an invisible hand, saddened, but taking comfort in the belief that she is now joined in the presence of the main characters in that same liturgy we've heard every year during Christmas mass.

We also remember as Filipinos the tradition of fiesta during the holidays. All our uncles, aunties and cousins coming together to welcome in the New Year. As children all that mattered was having as much fun as possible before it was time to go home, jumping from one game to another, playing with those favorite cousins and not-so favorite, other cousin. Our fathers worked tirelessly on that spinning, impaled lechon over a spit of fire. It slowly roasting for hours.

The lechon was the main course at any Filipino dinner, but the roasting actually meant more than a delicious meal: it was a perfect setting for grown men who immigrated from the Philippines to talk about their new life in America, adjusting to the new, often times strange, local culture while contrasting it to the good old days of the motherland, all the struggles and triumphs of past and present. It was a kind of macho therapy of sorts enhanced by

Primo beer, the crackling noise of fat dripping on white charcoal, orange fire, and incessant calls in the background from the mothers asking: "Is the pig crispy yet?" The preparation and roasting of lechon would start in the wee hours of the morning until sunset, not dusk to dawn as some American parties would take place, but the reverse of that, from dawn to dusk. The entire process required much more time; and unfortunately as busy, second-third generation Filipinos, it is a culinary practice quickly fading.

But just as the memories of our departed can easily be recalled especially during the holidays, when Filipinos see perfectly crispy lechon skin, we can almost visualize in HD our parents, grandparents, uncles, aunties and cousins many years ago taking delight in with full smiles, and collectively raving over the finished masterpiece of lechon prepared in the old style of open fire by our very proud fathers.

Time goes by so quickly. Check that, life zips by. But the memories do last.

During this holiday season, let us really take pleasure in our own equally special traditions we share as a family and put our nagging troubles, financial woes and political discontentment aside. The holiday season should be a retreat from the seemingly towering obstacles we face the rest of the year. Again, if peace of mind could be a vacation destination, there's no better time to take a trip there during Christmas and the New Year's festivities. Let's return to our truer, simpler nature -- one of happiness and communion with God, family and loved ones. It is in this blessed state of being that we are able to build memories that last a lifetime.

From the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle staff, we wish all our readers, supporters and their families a very happy holiday season.



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OPINION

Unbelievable!

AS I WRECK THIS CHAIR By William M. Esposito

Unbelievable is the best word to describe many of the recent pronouncements of impeached Supreme Court (SC) Chief Justice (CJ) Rene Corona's supporters. Likewise unbelievable are many of the statements of CJ Corona, especially those that he made in his December 14 speech — which has all the smell and looks of an engineered political event.

Malabon Representative Toby Tiangco had asserted that President Noyoy Aquino (P-Noy) got 188 congressmen to sign the impeachment complaint against CJ Corona after the House leadership allegedly enforced a "sign with no question asked" tactic. Tiangco added drama to his assertions by resigning from the House majority.

Even if you don't know the ins and outs of the congressional process that led to Corona's impeachment, you can easily see that the congressmen were nei-

ther forced to sign nor disallowed to ask questions by looking at the roster of those who voted to impeach Corona. Bayan, whose associates in many front organizations of the Left have been P-Noy's most unrelenting critics, supported the Corona impeachment.

The Bayan congressmen signed the impeachment complaint. One Bayan congressman, a very able lawyer — Neri Colmenares, was nominated to be one of the prosecutors in the Senate impeachment trial. There is no way P-Noy or his allies in Congress could coerce Bayan congressmen to sign the impeachment complaint, as alleged by Tiangco. If there was coercion, Bayan would have made a big issue out of it and it would have generated a more dramatic political theatre than what Tiangco demonstrated.

After making the biggest blunder of his life — leaving his lofty perch and rabble rousing like a traditional politician — CJ

Corona stated many things that were simply unbelievable. The most unbelievable was the CJ's claim that P-Noy was out to control the Judiciary and rule like a dictator.

Son of a martyr of democracy — Ninoy Aquino — and a champion of democracy — Cory — P-Noy's every breath is dedicated towards strengthening Philippine democracy. Securing an honest Supreme Court that will serve the people with fair judgments is a vital cog in attaining P-Noy's vision.

In his December 14 coming out party as a traditional politician, CJ Corona made it appear that his impeachment was a diversionary tactic to hide from the Filipino people P-Noy's "mismanagement" of the economy and the government. The Pulse Asia survey on 2012 optimism debunks CJ Corona. The drop in unemployment (from 7.1 percent to 6.3 percent) to the lowest level in 4 years debunks Corona. The S & P credit upgrade (from stable to positive) debunks Corona. The attainment of rice sufficiency by 2013 debunks CJ Corona.

The fact that P-Noy's highest poll approval rating comes from the Class E debunks CJ Corona. The Class E would be the hardest hit and would suffer the most if the economy

plunged. For the Class E to be P-Noy's biggest support base means that they're feeling improvements in their lives and they like what he is doing.

Since CJ Corona has joined P-Noy on the political stage, he must now figure out how to earn the sympathy of the Classes D and E. After the Class E, the Class D are P-Noy's biggest supporters. The Classes D and E are also the most disillusioned when it comes to getting justice. They do not have the money to hire the top caliber lawyers that can get a case moving and win it.

It's doubtful if even the likes of Ronnie Puno et al, GMA's top operators, could even swing these folks to sympathize with CJ Corona. GMA's media hacks will remain "loyal" for as long as the incentives are there but their inputs — tirades against P-Noy — to the public mind will be insignificant. Once you've earned the esteem, trust and confidence of those from the Class D and Class E, they tend to be the most loyal. Their loyalty to former president Joseph "Erap" Estrada is a good example.

Unbelievable too is this tale of detained former Comelec (Commission on Elections) Chairman Ben Abalos that Judge Jesus Mupas of the Pasay City RTC (Regional Trial Court),

who is trying his case, sent emissaries in order to extort P100 million from him. This tale of Abalos received the same level of doubt Filipinos had when Elena B. Horn, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA) spokesperson, announced a plot to put GMA to sleep.

Your Chair Wrecker sees two possible angles in this extortion claim. One: Abalos is forum shopping, hoping that his case will land in the sala of a sympathetic judge. The other angle is that this extortion claim is aimed at discrediting Judge Mupas (The only bad mark on Judge Mupas' record was a delayed submission of a document.) for the benefit of both Abalos and GMA. If the extortion claim resonates, GMA can also ask for a "better" judge to try her case. Abalos' tale was so ridiculous that the DoJ (Department of Justice) will not even bother to look into it.

Because of the big distrust for GMA — the problem of her allies, protectors, defenders and spokespersons is that most Filipinos consider everything they say as unbelievable. They made the mistake of confronting one of the most trusted presidents the country has ever had. P-Noy even topped his mother's trust ratings when she was president. (www.philstar.com)

COMMENTARY

The Loyalty of Chief Justice Corona

By Rodel Rodis

Friends and foes may not agree on much about recently impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona except that that his most notable quality is loyalty. As his detractors will point out, the Encyclopedia Britannica's definition of loyalty is "allegiance, personal devotion and reverence to the sovereign" and further expounds that "one who is loyal, in the feudal sense of fealty, is one who has full legal rights as a consequence of faithful allegiance."

Loyalty is sometimes viewed as a virtue on par with honesty and integrity. Others may even argue, as Josiah Royce did in his 1908 book, *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, that it is even more valued. Royce considers loyalty "the heart of all the virtues, the central duty amongst all the duties...the basic moral principle from which all other principles can be derived."

In her book, "Shadow of Doubt: Probing the Supreme Court", Maritess Danguilan Vitug wrote that in all his years on the Supreme Court, "Corona's loyalty to the appointing power was indisputable. He consistently voted for President Arroyo in a number of politically consequential cases."

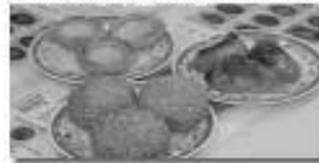
President Noyoy Aquino expressed his frustration at Corona's loyalty to his "sovereign" in a speech at a Criminal Justice Summit held in Manila on December 5 where he listed 19 cases involving Arroyo where Corona supported her position in all them.

One example he cited was his plan to set up a Truth Commission, modeled after what Nelson Mandela did in South Africa, to investigate charges of corruption against the Arroyo administration. Because Arroyo had appointed Merceditas Gutierrez as Om-

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COVER STORY

New Consul General Takes Over Reins at Philippine Consulate

By Carlota Ader

For many adventurous young Filipino men who dream of traveling around the world, joining the military or working as an able-bodied seaman would seem the best bet. For young women with similar dreams, it would be working as a flight stewardess.

Then there is a select group of young Filipinos who join the Philippine Consular Services to fulfill their dreams of seeing the world. One of these is Julius D. Torres, who after three decades of service, has been tapped to replace former Consul General Leoncio R. Cardenas, Jr. who recently retired.

During the course of his diplomatic career, Consul General Torres has been assigned to posts all over the world, including Europe, the Middle East, the Pacific and Canada. He assumed his duties just this month and will be spending his first Christmas in Hawaii.

Consul General Torres granted the Chronicle an exclusive interview and spoke candidly of his credentials, priorities and outreach projects for Hawaii's Filipino community. The following interview has been edited for space and clarity.

Q: Welcome to Hawaii! Have you been here before? What do you know about the history of Hawaii's Filipinos?

A: This is my first time in Hawaii. Hawaii's Filipinos are a source of pride for the Philippines. Many of them have success stories. Filipinos are a viable, very important sector of the Hawaiian community. Most

are hard working and very commendable.

Q: As new consul general, what will be your priorities?

A: Part of our job is maintaining the goodwill that has been established by my predecessors. My priorities will be very practical and beneficial to the Philippines and the local community. My priorities would be to increase trade with Hawaii, look for joint ventures with entrepreneurs in the Philippines and with Hawaiian businessmen, and to preserve our cultural heritage. I was in Washington, DC recently for a meeting and we agreed that we should also focus on encouraging young Filipino-Americans to be more active in political governance and to be aware of their large numbers, which could make a positive impact in Hawaii.

For myself, I'm into core endeavors—the preservation of our cultural heritage and the environment. In the Philippines, we have felt climate change with frequent floods and devastating landslides. Hawaii is prepared better for these disasters. I also want the next generation of Filipinos to remember what it's like to be a Filipino. That's one of the benefits of living in

the U.S. The government does not suppress cultural expressions or the richness and diversity of other ethnicities. For me, this is very important.

Q: Will you continue much of the work that your predecessor carried out or will you focus on other areas that may need to be addressed?

A: All of us who have served here have been from the career service, except for Buddy Gomez. We are all familiar with each other. I would support any unfinished projects as well as continuing projects like cultural outreaches, trade promotions and going to the neighbor islands to serve Filipino communities there. It will depend on how much weight I want to put into them. For example, should it be 60 percent for community-building efforts and 40 percent for trade promotions? It will vary depending on how much time I want to put into them.

Q: Tell us more about yourself.

A: There are 12 of us boys in the family. No girls. I was the only child born in Quezon City. The rest of my brothers were born in Zambales. I married a dermatologist who practices in Manila. Her name is Dr. Milali



New Consul General Julius D. Torres reflects on the challenges that lay ahead

Torres. We have five children—3 girls and 2 boys. We also have 4 grandchildren.

I graduated from the University of the Philippines with a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Journalism. I worked briefly as a government journalist before entering the UP College of Law. I also enjoy singing and dancing.

Q: What skills do you feel that you have that will help you with your new assignment here?

A: Unfortunately, I don't speak much Ilocano but I come from Zambales and I speak Zambal. I've been trying to speak Ilocano for a long time. In our province, you cannot win an election without speaking Ilocano. I don't intend to pursue politics anymore although I was politically ambitious before.

It's not really about skills but having the right traits. For example, I'm very easy to get along with, I don't blow my top that easily and I'm a happy person. I think that's part of the aura that you can project. I prefer to make friends instead of creating enemies. My office is open to everyone who wants to visit. Just drop by even if you just want to say 'hi.' I'm very

liberal with my time.

Q: What should be the role of the Consul General with respect to Hawaii's Filipino community? Why is it important to build a good relationship with the community?

A: The Consul General represents the Philippine government and projects the positive image of the country. So it's very important to relay this to the community.

A good relationship is essential because Filipinos should remain united and as one. In the event of a major crisis, Filipinos need to unite and make decisions to solve the problem. We need to be aware of what's going on around us, to avoid being partisan and if there's conflict, try to make peace. I have done a lot of these things in my 31 years in the foreign service.

Q: How did you become interested in working for the Philippines' foreign consular services? Where have you been assigned to previously?

A: I was recruited by my peers at the University of the Philippines. I had not yet grad-

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COVER STORY

(from page 4, A ONE-ON-ONE...)

uated but I was doing already “side jobs” like drafting speeches for Carlos P. Romulo, long-time Foreign Secretary of the Philippines and of the United Nations. When I graduated, he encouraged me to take the exam. I passed and I made it my career.

I have been assigned to eight countries prior to my assignment here. I was first in Bucharest, Romania; then I opened the consulate in Saipan, then Brussels, Belgium; Canberra, Australia; Palau; Koror; Toronto, Canada; Amman, Jordan; and now Hawaii.

Q: What do you like best about your job? What is the pay like?

A: For a senior officer in the foreign service, the pay is

not very big. But we have the privilege of enjoying many things like riding in a Mercedes Benz with the Philippine flag. We also have the satisfaction of serving our fellow Filipinos abroad and helping them. We also sometimes even save their lives, especially when they are faced with critical problems such as making serious mistakes that carry maximum punishments like the death penalty. Or sometimes, overseas workers are sent back home to Manila for various reasons. This happens usually in areas like the Middle East.

Q: Besides Hawaii, where in the world would you most want to be assigned to?

A: I’ve always been partial to Australia. I’ve been in Canberra before and I like it.



Consul General Torres speaks candidly with the Chronicle's Carlota Ader

New Zealand is also nice. I don’t mind going to any Asian countries because I believe in the potential of Asian country like the Philippines. But it would be either Australia or

New Zealand because I just love these two places.

Q: What’s the difference between an embassy and a consulate? How many staff

members are assigned to the consulate here in Hawaii?

A: There’s a big difference between an embassy and a consulate. An embassy is located in a country that has a relationship with another country. The U.S. has an embassy in the Philippines. A consulate is located within a state like here in Hawaii. An embassy helps to solve problems in the country, while a consulate is geared only to solve and assist problems within that state.

An embassy also focuses on expanding economic cooperation between countries, investments, security, trade etc. on a larger scale unlike a consulate that can render and assist in matters like authentications, passports, etc. but only within that state.

COMMENTARY (cont.) (from page 3, THE LOYALTY...)

budsman and she had made it clear that no criminal investigation of the Arroyos would prosper during her watch (which would cover much of Aquino’s presidential term), this was the most that Aquino could hope for. Even though it would be a “toothless” body without the power to even subpoena witnesses, it would have been an annoyance to Arroyo.

No problem. Corona’s Supreme Court immediately ruled that Aquino’s creation of a Truth Commission was unconstitutional.

When Aquino’s Secretary of Justice, Leila De Lima, issued a hold order to prevent the departure of Arroyo because criminal charges were about to be filed against her, Corona’s Supreme Court immediately issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) to void the hold order of De Lima.

What was especially galling to Aquino was that the Supreme Court had scheduled a full hearing on the legality of De Lima’s hold departure order against Arroyo for November 22. Corona had reportedly traveled to San Francisco for a vacation and was to return in time for the 22 hearing. But when Arroyo could not wait until November 22 as the Aquino government would have filed the charges against her by then, an emergency “ex parte” TRO application was made to the Supreme Court for immediate action on November 15.

Corona immediately cut his vacation short to accommodate Arroyo’s request for a special hearing. Without bothering to hear the government’s position on the Arroyo motion, Corona and 7 other Arroyo appointed justices granted the TRO requested by Arroyo.

The Supreme Court majority imposed three conditions before the TRO could be effective. Before she met the conditions, Arroyo was already at the airport ready to leave Manila barely hours after Corona’s court had issued the TRO. De Lima refused to accept the legality of the TRO because the conditions imposed by the Court had not yet been met by Arroyo. Corona’s spokesman, Midas Marquez, announced that for the first time in the history of legal jurisprudence, the TRO was effective even if the conditions required for it to be issued had not yet been met.

Fierce Loyalty

In her book about the Supreme Court, Vitug wrote: “Among Justices, when he is relaxed, Corona can be quite open. He once told some of his colleagues that President Arroyo took care of his hospital bill when he underwent an operation to ease his bad back. He was already on the Court then.”

After Arroyo appointed him to the Supreme Court in 2002, he told Newsbreak in a taped interview about the rewards he reaped as Arroyo’s chief of staff



Chief Justice Renato Corona

when she assumed the presidency. “When you’re a Malacanang official, it just takes one call. If there’s an emergency case and you really need an operation, you can call the Heart Center and you’re really prioritized.” Corona had a coronary bypass in 1995.

Corona has another reason to be grateful. On March 23, 2007, Arroyo appointed his wife as a member of the Board of the John Hay Management Corporation (JHMC) which she created by Executive Order in 2002. According to a Baguio Sun Star news report on June 6, 2011, the John Hay firm incurred a P2.6 billion (\$60 million) debt for a 2008 lease of 247 hectares in the John Hay Special Economic Zone in Baguio City.

Mrs. Corona was appointed to the John Hay Board over the objections of JHMC board members, management and rank-and-file employees who accused her of misconduct and negligence. According to Rep. Jesus Remulla, instead of acting

on the complaints, President Arroyo “instructed all members of the JHMC to tender their courtesy resignations immediately. After the resignations, Mrs. Corona was retained and even promoted after President Arroyo expressed her desire for Mrs. Corona’s election as OIC Chairman of the JHMC Board.”

But Corona is not the only Arroyo appointee to the Supreme Court to express gratitude to the “feudal lord.” Justice Mariano Del Castillo, the justice known for plagiarism who was appointed by Arroyo in 2009, has also expressed his deep gratitude to Arroyo.

After he went through a

quintuple bypass in 2007, Del Castillo needed a second opinion. To accommodate him, Pres. Arroyo flew in noted heart surgeon Dr. Alex Yap from San Francisco. In gratitude, Del Castillo wrote a letter to the Philippine Star praising Arroyo: “Her single indiscriminate act of kindness in my momentary blow is something of eternal value, let alone something that highlights how admirable she is. She may be marred by shrill criticisms and accusations because of some unpopular decisions and boo-boos, but as we all are, she is only human prone to mistakes.”

(continued on page 6)

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

City Releases 2012 Real Property Assessments

The City recently mailed approximately 290,000 real property assessment notices for 2012 to Oahu property owners. The 2012 assessed valuations were set as of October 1, 2011 and based on sales of similar properties in each neighborhood through June 30, 2011.

The total gross assessed valuation of all taxable real property on Oahu increased from \$178.26 billion to \$180.15 billion—an overall increase of

1.01 percent. New developments, including residential subdivisions, condominiums, commercial and industrial projects, and construction of new buildings and improvements to existing parcels, were the primary contributing factors for the overall increase.

The assessment notice is not a tax bill but a statement of what the City has determined to be the property's value. The notice includes property assessment information, including

any exemption which the owner has been granted in accordance with a City ordinance. The standard owner-occupied homeowner's exemption is \$80,000 and increases to \$120,000 for homeowners 65 years of age or older.

The net taxable or net assessed value is one of the two components used to calculate the real property taxes for next fiscal year of July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. The other component is the tax rate. The tax

rate will be set by the City Council during June 2012 as it finalizes the City budget for fiscal year 2013. The real property tax bill of an individual property is determined by multiplying the net assessed valuation by the appropriate tax rate and the application of any tax credits.

Property owners who do not receive their 2012 Assessment Notice by December 31, 2011, are advised to contact the Real Property Assessment Division at 768-3799 or 768-3169.

Those wishing to dispute their real property assessments may file appeals from December 15, 2011 to January 17, 2012. For more information, visit the Real Property Assessment Division's website at www.realpropertyhonolulu.com and click the "Assessment Appeals" link.

Questions may also be directed to the Real Property Assessment Division via email to: bfsrmailbox@honolulu.gov.

HFD to Host Workshops for Prospective Female Firefighters

The Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) will hold a series of three "Can You Take the Heat?" workshops on Saturday, January 21, 2012 at the Charles H. Thurston Training Center at 8 am, 10:30 am and 2 p.m. Each session is free and expected to last approximately 90 minutes. Parking will be available at the rear of the building.

The workshop is part of the City's recruitment initiative designed to increase awareness of fire fighting careers for women. Topics will include the online application process, HFD career opportunities and the firehouse culture from a woman's perspective. Women are encouraged to learn more about a

career with HFD by registering for one of the sessions.

To register, visit www.honolulu.gov/hr between January 6-13, 2012. Registration is free and will close at 11:59 p.m. on January 13. Seating is limited and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. Attendees for each session will be limited to the first 95 registered individuals only.

The City will be accepting applications for fire fighter recruits in early 2012. Applications must be completed online during the recruitment period. Interested applicants can prepare for the recruitment by visiting www.honolulu.gov/hr and creating a job applicant profile. In addition, potential applicants may submit an electronic Job Interest Card.

Care Home Operators Sentenced for Financial Exploitation

Care home operators Joel Tacras and Nora Bell were sentenced for their roles in a scam that cost an 84-year old Oahu man more than \$200,000.

Tacras and Bell ran the "Classic Residential Care Home" in Waianae. The victim, who suffers from sustained age-related dementia, entered the care home in 2004. In April 2007, Tacras and Bell began to systematically withdraw cash from the victim's bank accounts and redeem his treasury bonds,

all without his knowledge. By July 2008, they had taken nearly all of the victim's savings and treasury bonds.

Wire transfers made by Bell caught the attention of American Savings Bank personnel, where the victim held his accounts. The bank personnel notified Adult Protective Services, which reported the suspicious activity to the Department of the Attorney General.

Tacras and Bell were indicted last May. In addition to his six month prison term,

Tacras was sentenced to 200 hours of community service and must repay the victim \$66,000. Bell faces sentencing for two counts of Theft in the First Degree and money laundering. She will be sentenced on January 18, 2012.

"Criminals who prey on our most vulnerable populations will be held accountable for their actions," says Attorney General David Louie.

The case was investigated by Terrence Miyasato and Prosecuted by Deputy Attorney General Gary Senaga of the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit.

Trash Pick Up Suspended for Christmas, New Year's Day

The City's Department of Environmental Services is reminding the public that trash, recyclables and green waste will not be collected on December 26, 2011 and January 2, 2012 in observance of Christmas and New Year's Day.

Communities that use the three-cart collection system, with once-a-week refuse and once-a-week recycling pick-up on Mondays, are asked to leave their gray carts curbside until



served.

Recycling days that fall on these holidays will not be made up. Residents are asked to hold mixed their recyclables (blue cart) and green waste (green

cart) until the next scheduled pickup date.

Those residents on a twice-a-week manual refuse collection are asked to hold items for the next scheduled pickup.

Also, all City Convenience Centers, Transfer Stations, H-POWER and Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. However, all refuse facilities will be open on December 26 and January 2.

OPINIONS (cont.) (from page 5, THE LOYALTY...)

Knowing what Arroyo also did for his fellow justice Corona, Del Castillo added: "I can bravely say that surely I am not the only one who had been directly benefited by the personal intervention of the President."

When Arroyo was seeking candidates to appoint as justices to the Philippine Supreme Court, she wanted only those

who possessed qualities she admired most. At least eight of her appointees have proven the wisdom of her choices.

In his 1987 essay "A Damaged Culture," James Fallows wrote about how Filipinos pride themselves about their lifelong loyalty. "When observing Filipino friendships, I thought often of the Mafia families por-

trayed in The Godfather: total devotion to those within the circle, total war on those outside."

Chief Justice Corona has exhibited total devotion to former Pres. Arroyo and those within his circle and total war on Pres. Aquino and those outside of it. The Godmother is quite pleased.



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LEGAL MATTERS



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon



Thou shall not get caught.

– Emmanuel Samonte Tipon's 11th Commandment.

In the Record of Deportable/Inadmissible Alien (Form I-213) that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) writes up for every alien caught, there is an indication of how the alien came to its attention. Here are the 7 most common ways:

1. The alien applies for naturalization with USCIS. It is denied because of an immigration violation, such as conviction of a deportable offense. USCIS will then refer the alien to ICE. Form I-213 will state that the

How to Avoid Deportation Without Really Trying

alien came to the attention of ICE pursuant to a referral by USCIS.

2. The alien applies for adjustment of status with USCIS. It is denied. USCIS will then refer the alien to ICE.

3. An alien in conditional resident status fails to file a petition to remove the condition within the statutory time limit, or files a timely petition with USCIS but it is denied. USCIS will then refer the alien to ICE.

4. An alien files a petition for an alien relative, such as a spouse or children. USCIS will check the alien's background through the U.S. Embassy of the alien's native country. If it finds out that the petitioning alien had committed fraud in obtaining a visa by claiming, for instance, that the alien was single which was a qualification for the visa,

although the alien was married, USCIS will then refer the alien to ICE.

5. An alien is apprehended by the police for a suspected criminal law violation. When the police ask for the alien's place of birth and it is a foreign country, the police will then investigate whether the alien is in lawful status. The police do not do the checking.

6. An alien travels abroad and upon returning to the United States his/her name is checked against various data bases by the Customs and Border Protection. If there is a "hit," like a prior conviction for a deportable offense, CBP will hold the alien and place him/her in removal proceedings. Sometimes CBP asks the alien if he/she wishes to withdraw his/her applica-

tion for admission to the U.S., telling the alien that he/she will have a better chance of returning to the U.S. than if the alien were placed in removal proceedings. Oftentimes, the alien takes the bait. The alien should ask for a lawyer instead.

7. A loquacious alien narrates to every Pepe and Pilar (not their real names) about his immigration law violation expecting to be given free but usually stupid advice, instead of going to a lawyer who could have given proper advice and kept his violation confidential. Pepe and Pilar will spread the alien's misfortune to others until it reaches the ears of ICE. Form I-213 will show that the arrested alien came to the attention of ICE from a tip. The person who gave the tip to ICE becomes known as a "civic spirited citizen." There is no fi-

nancial reward given to the tipster, contrary to popular belief.

Best Advice

Our best advice to an alien with an immigration law violation that could lead to removal proceedings is to follow our 11th commandment – "Thou shall not get caught." An alien will not be caught if the alien totally avoids encounters with immigration authorities and with the police, and stops asking advice about his/her immigration law violation from people who are not lawyers. Better still – become a U.S. citizen while you are still clean.

(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: filamlaw@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.iluko.com.)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Farmers Set on Fire 300 Hectares of Luisita

by Ric Sapnu
Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2011

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga, Philippines – Local farmers allegedly set fire to a portion of the sugarcane field at Hacienda Luisita that is owned by the family of President Aquino in Barangay Balete, Tarlac City where P1-million worth of crops were destroyed last Friday morning.

Police are investigating the alleged involvement of Barangay Balete councilmen Pual Mallari and Hilario Hipolito, Leonila Halili, Dominador Salian, all of Barangay Balete and Felix Nacpil of Barangay Mabilog, Concepcion, Tarlac. The suspects reportedly led at least 30 farmers that started the blaze.

Investigators said 300 hectares of sugarcane were burned out of the 6,000-hectare plantation owned by Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI), which is owned by the Aquinos and Cojuangcos.

Hacienda Luisita Independent Planters Association, Azucal Inc. and other farmers from Sugarcane Farming Agricultural Corp. are currently renting the sugar plantation from HLI.

The police is also investigating the participation of some members of local

farmers' associations.

The Tarlac police and HLI fire trucks responded to the fire that started at 10:30 a.m. and firefighters were able to put out the blaze after five hours.

Felix Nacpil Jr., chairman of the Alyansang Magbubukid ng Asyenda Luisita (Ambala), said the group had celebrated the ruling of the Supreme Court (SC) that nullified last month the stock distribution plan and ordered the distribution of land to the farmers.

Nacpil said the Hacienda Luisita farmers were jubilant after the SC ordered HLI to distribute the more than 6,000 hectares of land to some 5,000 peasant farmers of the plantation.

He called on the Cojuangco family to distribute the land to the legitimate beneficiaries as soon as possible.

"We are very hopeful that they (HLI owners) would respect the SC's decision," Nacpil said.

Meanwhile, HLI asked the SC yesterday to reconsider the court's ruling issued last Nov. 22 that fixed the payment for the 4,915.75-hectare plantation on the valuation of the land in 1989, when the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) approved its stock distribution plan. (www.philstar.com)

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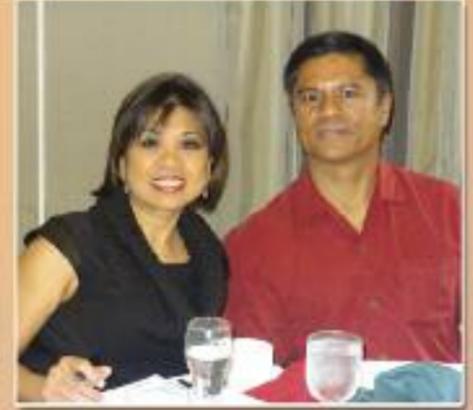
SOCIETY PAGE

Christmas Is Around Us!

Photography by Roy De Leon



Dr. Charlie Sonido (standing, 6th from left) and his hard-working office staff pose for a group photo at their 2011 Christmas party held at the Hale Koa Hotel on December 4.



Ofelia and Ben Lagat



Frelyn and Agnes Siruno



Kevin Fajardo and Allyson Baltazar



Teresa Velasco and Irene Alabanza



Gizelle Siruno, Nikka and Jason Sonido and Maia Mendigorin



Louie Corpuz with son Gerald and Nathaniel



Mary Ann and James Castillo with son Lawrence



Dr. Nestor Herana with wife Andrea and son Toby



Somera, Mendigorin, Beniek and Sarmiento families



Standing L-R, Erlinda Sonido, JhayAnn Yadao, Shalimar Pagulayan and Karen Caoagas
Seated L-R, Roy De Leon, Cristina and Chester Aglibot

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PHILIPPINE NEWS



Palace: Sufficient Funds to Assist Storm Victims

by Aurea Calica
 Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - Malacañang assured yesterday the victims of tropical storm "Sendong" that there are enough funds to assist them even as officials appealed to various sectors not to politicize the issue.

Budget Secretary Florencio Abad announced that the Aquino administration was ready to use P1.297 billion in calamity-response funds to help victims of the typhoon.

Presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said in a press briefing that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) also has enough funds to provide relief to the victims.

"They still have P300 million in their coffers," Lacierda said.

Lacierda said the government has specific funds for disaster preparedness and the supposed veto of the P5-billion allocation for this in the 2011 budget should not be used to mislead the public at this time so they would blame President Aquino.

Kabataan party-list Rep. Raymond Palatino said relief agencies were ill-equipped to deal with the latest typhoon because Aquino had vetoed the use of calamity funds for disaster training and to prepare relocation sites.

"We have always maintained that we need to clear the esteros and waterways of people there and that's the danger zone that we have always been emphasizing and that's the reason why we're also providing for housing for people in those areas," Lacierda said.

"And, like I said, specific agencies have funds for that so we can address those situations. So I would like to ask Congressman Palatino, now is not the time to point fingers. Now is the time to help out in the tragic incident in Mindanao," he said.

Abad said with the calamity fund, the government is ably equipped to mobilize and support disaster relief efforts in Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, and other storm-affected areas.

"We are ensuring the quick release of these funds so that victims will receive swift and proper assistance," Abad said.

The P1.297-billion calamity fund under the 2011 budget would be released immediately, Abad said, as he also noted that the 2012 budget allocated P7.5 billion to the calamity fund, up by P2.5 billion or 50 percent from this year's budget.

Abad added that the DSWD, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of National Defense (DND), and the Department of Education (DepEd) were also adequately supported by separate Quick Response Funds (QRFs), which would guarantee direct and immediate support to Sendong-stricken areas.

"In addition to the Calamity Fund and the QRFs, we also have the Local Government Support Fund shares of all affected local government units, for whom President Aquino will provide Special Allotment Release Orders (SAROs) and Notices of Allocation (NCAs) tomorrow," Abad said. (www.philstar.com)

Arrivals of Tourists in Philippines Increased

MANILA, Philippines - The Department of Tourism announced today that the country has gained an 11 percent growth rate in visitors' arrival compared to last year.

From January to October this year, DOT recorded 3,185,866 foreign visitors in the country as compared to the 2,845,573 for the same period in 2010.

The month of July marked the biggest arrivals with 360,784 while February posted the highest growth at 18.52 percent.

The East Asian region accounted 1,511,389 total arrivals in the country; North American has 604,226; South East Asian has 270,409 arrivals.

The fourth biggest source was Australasia/Pacific with 179,874 arrivals while Northern European region has 129,346.

The Korean market continued to be the top tourist market for the Philippines. It shared 23.76 percent of the total arrivals. (www.philstar.com)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Yearender: Peace with MILF, NPA Still Elusive

by Jose Rodel Clapano
Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - After almost two years in Malacañang, President Aquino's efforts to end the armed conflict with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the communist New People's Army (NPA) have remained an elusive dream.

Some government officials blame the stalled peace process on the lack of sincerity from the MILF and NPA to negotiate a lasting peace.

The MILF had failed to show that the group is in full control of its own territories and field commanders. The NPA, the armed wing of the National Democratic Front-Communist Party of the Philippines, is taking a hard line position on their demand that government release so-called rebel consultants who are detained in various government jails before peace talks resume.

Rogue MILF commanders have attacked government forces in several areas in Mindanao despite the existing ceasefire agreement between the government and Muslim rebels.

MILF guerrillas killed 19 young Army soldiers and wounded 12 others in Al Barka, Basilan last Oct. 18. The soldiers were conducting an operation against local criminals when they were attacked by the rebels.

The nation was shocked by the attack that came after President Aquino had met MILF chairman Al Haj Murad Ibrahim in a hotel in Tokyo, Japan last August.

Aquino, met Murad to jump start the peace talks with the MILF and the administration had also admitted the release of P5 million for the proposed Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute (BLMI) that would train future leaders of the rebel group.

Marvic Leonen, chairman government peace panel with the MILF, explained that the rebels would use the P5 million solely for the BLMI and not to purchase weapons.

Leonen admitted handing over to Murad the money during the MILF-government panel formal exploratory talks from Aug. 22-23 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to establish the BLMI.

He said the P5 million is a commitment made by the previous administration of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Presidential Peace Adviser Teresita Deles also defended Malacañang's release of P5 million to the MILF, saying that it was given to a duly registered body that was created in 2008 during the talks following an agreement between the government and the MILF.

Deles said the BLMI fund has been properly liquidated and its main purpose is to mold future leaders of the MILF to responsibly take over governance functions in their areas of jurisdiction.

'Disservice'

Rep. Pastor Alcover of the party-list group Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (ANAD) said the cash given to the MILF could be used as a basis for Aquino's impeachment after the President committed a disservice to the Filipino people with utmost irresponsibility and disloyalty and gross manifestation of the inefficiency and lack of patriotism of his administration.

He said cash given to the MILF is a violation of Article VI Section 29(1) of the Constitution, which states that "no money shall be paid out of the treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation made by law."

Aside from the cash donation to the MILF, the government also released P31 million to the NPAs' breakaway group, the Alex Bongcayao Brigade (ABB) for its livelihood and other aid to the communities where former insurgents and their families live.

Presidential deputy spokesperson Abegail Valte said the Aquino government is merely pursuing the agreement forged by the administration of former President Joseph Estrada in December 2000 with ABB.

Undersecretary Luisito Montalbo of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) explained that the P31 million came from the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA), a government program and framework for peace and development in conflict-affected areas.

Montalbo said the P31 million is part of PAMANA's funds for 2011 amounting to P568 million.

Former President Estrada denied that his administration forged a deal to give a P31-million aid to the ABB.

Estrada's former budget secretary Benjamin Diokno said the Aquino administration has the discretion to turn down or continue any government deal entered into by previous administrations.

Diokno also denied there was such a deal with the breakaway communist group during the Estrada administration.

Estrada's former agrarian reform secretary Horacio Morales, who was active in the talks with the communist rebels, said that Estrada himself canceled concessions being considered by his administration.

Morales said Estrada turned down the concessions when, in spite of talks with the ABB through the efforts of business tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., the ABB still engaged in criminal activities.

Release of consultants

Government peace negotiators and NDF officials were also debating over the communist rebels' persistent call to the government to release all its alleged consultants still in government jails.

NDF chief peace negotiator Luis Jalandoni and peace panel member Fidel Agcaoili even called on the government last June 4 to defer the peace talks until the rebel consultants have been released.

Jalandoni and Agcaoili insisted that their jailed consultants are all covered and qualified under the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the detainees should be released to enable them to meaningfully participate in the peace negotiations.

Communist party founding chairman and NDF consultant Jose Ma. Sison asked the Aquino administration to relieve Deles and cleanse the OPAPP of "military hawks, crooks and racketeers" to improve the peace process.

Sison, currently based in Utrecht in the Netherlands, said

the peace process between the government and NDF would likely be terminated if it will not remove Deles and the military hawks, crooks and racketeers in control of OPAPP.

He accused the present OPAPP leadership of undermining the Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 which stipulates the substantive agenda of human rights and international humanitarian law, socio-economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms and end of hostilities and disposition of forces.

Sison claimed Deles is conniving with the ABB and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA), another NPA breakaway group, in its "racketeering activities."

He also demanded the release of 350 political prisoners who have been tortured and imprisoned on trumped up charges of common crimes in violation of the CARHRIHL (Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law) that was completed in 1998, particularly the Hernandez political offense doctrine.

Sison also lambasted the Aquino government for supporting the "Oplan Bayanihan," saying that it is a military offensive campaign masquerading as a peace and development campaign.

Jalandoni said the NDF also wants land reform to benefit the

peasantry, who comprise 75 percent of the population of 94 million, and national industrialization to develop the backward agrarian economy and harness the country's rich natural resources.

Aside from the erratic confidence-building measures, NPA fighters attacked a police station in Lianga, Surigao del Sur and a police station in Matibog, Bukidnon and took all their firearms in June.

The communist guerrillas also attacked in Tanay, Rizal where seven people were wounded.

No obligation

Alexander Padilla, government peace panel chairman with NDF, said the government has no obligation to release all the detainees being requested by the NDF.

Padilla said that under the JASIG, the release of detainees sought by NDF should be subjected to verification.

He said that the government is firm on its intent to pursue the peace talks.

He said the talks should be based on clear terms of commitment coming not just from the government but also from the side of the CPP-NPA-NDF.

Padilla said the CPP-NPA-NDF should show sincerity in the peace process.

Padilla said he would resign from his post if the government failed to ink a peace agreement with the NDF-CPP-NPA in June next year. (www.philstar.com)

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Quezon: A True Haven

by Nicole Denise Zoleta

MA N I L A , Philippines - Imagine a place where you hear the flapping wings of birds in the morning, feel the fresh mountain breeze like a soft blanket on your cheeks, hear the peaceful waves of beaches nearby and the warmth of sand under your feet. Alongside roads, tons of coconut trees offer shade. They all have tall graceful trunks crowned by long feathery leaves that bear fruits of life.

Quezon Province is simply a silent nirvana. To the north sits Aurora province and on either side are the provinces of Laguna and Rizal. On the south end is a long train of beaches along Tayabas Bay. In the middle is a quiet respite that will lull you like a newborn enjoying his swing under the shadows of coconut trees. The rugged terrain of Banahaw and the numerous mangrove swamps harnessing the beauty of wild floras and animals are just introductions to what is in store for the visitors of the province.

A haven of cool, sacred mountains and epic mystical wonders. Mt. Banahaw in Dolores, the coconut capital of the Philippines, is not just rich in coconut trees but also in mystical attributes. Once you set foot

in one of its trails, a welcoming breath of fresh air instantly fills your lungs. The smell of mosses and clear water leads you to the silent ethereal echoes inside the Kwebang Diyos Ama (Cave of God the Father). The same spiritual journey at the foot of Mt. Banahaw could also be experienced in the Kamay ni Hesus Shrine, where one experiences inner joy, peace and warmth. It is an ideal destination for all not only during Holy Week and Simbang Gabi but also during the whole ecclesiastical year.

Quezon's beaches like those in Sariaya are spots where you can play with the waves taunting your soles in timed symphony. The Fil-Am Garden and Resort at San Antonio is where the spring has flowed continuously for over a century. Next stop is the Villa Escudero in Tiaong, Quezon, where banana leaves and carabao rides all lead to a picnic with the waterfalls spraying your table. Just the sound of water cascading can make you sigh and utter, "Oh, what a heavenly place unfolding before my very eyes!"

Quezon's finest offers more than just a place to stay in and to frolic. It also invites people to taste all of its best-known delicacies. Just by the alluring smell of the filling and saucy pansit hab-hab and longganisa from Lucban can fill your stomach. The delicious pinagong from



The rugged terrain of Banahaw and the numerous mangrove swamps harnessing the beauty of wild floras and animals are just introductions to what is in store for the visitors of the province.

Sariaya or the best cassava cakes topped with cheese from Tayabas can truly make your mouth water. Being popular for its heirloom recipes, dining in Kamayan sa Palaisdaan, Tayabas also brings a unique and wonderful experience. One has to experience eating in a nipa hut, at bamboo tables, with trees and a big fishpond around you while enjoying great food, natural breeze and eating with your bare hands. The smell of grilled seafood lingers on the tip of your

nose and the comforting music from a playing band soothe your appetite. This resto is a must-visit and will surely give you an enjoyable dining experience.

Time to boost your energy, get ready to fiesta! From the colorful banderitas and attractive costumes of street performers, one can't deny the fact that Quezon is genuinely rich in heritage. Among the most fun festivities in Quezon is the Pasayahan sa Lucena or the Chami Festival. It is a three-day

celebration featuring outlandish costumes and symbolic floats, which parade along the main street of the city. The affair is highlighted by dancing, singing, and merry-making on the street a la Mardi Gras.

The most anticipated fiesta is the Pahiyas Festival in Lucban, which is one of the country's best known, biggest, and most colorful harvest festivals. It is held on May 15 in the towns of Tayabas, Sariaya, Gumaca, Tiaong, and Lucena City, to honor San Isidro Labrador, the patron of farmers. The decorations are called kiping, leaf-shaped and multi-colored rice paste wafers hanging like chandeliers on the facades of homes along with suman, rice cakes, fruits and vegetables. This visual and culinary feast has gained national and international renown.

Let the historical, mystical, and natural wonders of Quezon Province amaze you during your visit. Immerse in this rich cultural experience, go back to simplicity and taste this authentic, once-in-a-lifetime stress-free realm. (www.philstar.com)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Gov't Sends Coffins as Toll Nears 1,000 Dead

ILIGAN, Philippines (AP) — The government shipped more than 400 coffins to two flood-stricken cities in the southern Philippines today as the death toll neared 1,000 and President Benigno Aquino III declared a state of national calamity.

The latest count listed 957 dead and 49 missing and is expected to climb further as additional bodies are recovered from

the sea and mud in Iligan and Cagayan de Oro cities.

A handful of morgues are overwhelmed and running out of coffins and formaldehyde for embalming. Aid workers appealed for bottled water, blankets, tents and clothes for many of 45,000 in crowded evacuation centers.

Navy sailors in Manila loaded a ship with 437 white wooden coffins to help local authorities handle the staggering number of dead. Also on the way

were containers with thousands of water bottles.

Most of the dead were women and children who drowned Friday night when flash floods triggered by a tropical storm gushed into homes while people were asleep.

Dozens of grieving relatives of at least 38 victims wept openly during funeral rites at the Iligan city cemetery. Many wore masks to try to block the stench of decomposing bodies. (www.philstar.com)

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LEGAL NOTES



By Reuben S. Seguritan

Filing EB-2 Now Before Visa Caps Change

and signed by Pres. Obama, it would result in longer waiting times for nationals of other countries.

One way to avoid the long wait is by immediately filing for the EB-2 category, where there is a yearly allocation of 40,000 visas.

Right now, for nationals of countries other than India and China, visa numbers are immediately available under the EB-2 category, while there is at least a six-year wait for those in the EB-3 category. If the bill becomes law, there would eventually be a visa backlog under EB-2 while that under EB-3 would worsen.

EB-2 has two subcategories: foreign nationals of “exceptional ability in the sciences, arts or business, and advanced degree professionals.

The advanced degree requirement is met if the beneficiary is a member of the

professions holding an advanced degree or its equivalent, and the position requires at a minimum an advanced degree. Professionals that may apply for EB-2 include nurses, physical therapists, engineers, teachers and accountants.

The beneficiary must have a U.S. master’s degree or its foreign equivalent degree. If the beneficiary does not have a master’s degree, EB-2 is still appropriate if the beneficiary has a bachelor’s degree plus five years of “progressive experience” in the profession. In the latter case, the USCIS deems the combination as equivalent to a master’s degree.

For purposes of the equivalency, the employment experience must be one that “progresses, moves forward, and advances toward increasingly complex and responsible duties demonstrating advancing levels of responsibility and knowledge in the specialty.”

Exceptional ability workers,

on the other hand, must show a degree of expertise that is “significantly above the ordinary”. This can be established through any three of the following: degree relating to an area of exceptional ability; employment letters showing at least 10 years of experience; having a professional license or certification; membership in a professional association; evidence that the alien commanded a high salary which demonstrates exceptional ability; and recognition of achievements and significant contribution to the industry or field by peers, government entities, and professional or business organizations.

A labor certification is required before applying for an EB-2 visa and this adds anywhere from several months to more than one year to the immigrant process.

Labor certification is not required, however, if the position is among those listed in Schedule A, such as nurses and physi-

cal therapists, as well as some exceptional ability aliens, including college and university teachers.

Another way to be exempt from the labor certification requirement is through the “national interest waiver”. The alien requesting the waiver must show that the employment is in an area of substantial intrinsic merit, the benefit of his employment is national in scope, and the national benefit outweighs the national interest in requiring labor certification.

Since the above-mentioned bill will likely become law, workers from countries other than India and China should consider all available options to try to avoid or mitigate the unfortunate effect of the law on them.

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.co

FOOD & LEISURE

A Manila Hotel Christmas: Firmly Rooted in Tradition

from www.philstar.com

MANILA, Philippines - As temperatures slightly drop and a cool breeze sweeps through the streets, Christmas arrives in Manila in a swift yet unmistakable manner. The city is transformed before our eyes as customary holiday elements start to appear: colorful parols lining the busiest thoroughfares in the city, glittering lights decorating the façade of homes, the familiar carols playing everywhere, and the mouthwatering aroma of puto bumbong and bibingka wafting through the air. Indeed, Christmas in this country is firmly rooted in tradition, and for many, Manila Hotel is an inextricable part of this.

To get the holiday festivities off to a good start, Manila Hotel opened the season with one of its much-treasured traditions on Dec. 2, the yearly Christmas tree-lighting ceremony. This year’s event included the children from Nasyon ng Kabataan. The kids trooped to the majestic



Christmas is for kids: Christmas at Manila Hotel is not complete without a gingerbread house

lobby of Manila Hotel and were greeted by 20 jolly Santa Clauses from the US and their kuyas from the Philippine Azkals, who were also billeted at the hotel during the ceremony. The tree-lighting was led by City of Manila Mayor Alfredo S. Lim and Manila Hotel president lawyer Joey Lina.

As in previous years, the tree-lighting ceremony signifies the beginning of the month-long Christmas celebration at the Grand Dame. To experience joyous Yuletide cheer,

make a beeline to the Manila Hotel this month to jumpstart your holiday mood. From solemn Christmas dawn masses at the Roma Salon to the choirs serenading guests at the Lobby, Manila Hotel has arranged an exciting lineup of activities that will make you feel the quintessence of a genuine Filipino Christmas.

Manila Hotel is the perfect destination this season with its holiday room packages. For the entire month of December, Manila Hotel is offering special room packages with a host of exclusive privileges that includes accommodation in the hotel’s luxurious rooms and suites, grand buffets on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, complimentary shuttle service to various tourist areas, and a Christmas gift from Santa.

Apart from these, Manila Hotel knows that what most defines the holiday season is great food. With this in mind, the Champagne Room, Mabuhay Palace, Café Ilang-Ilang, and the Taproom / Lobby Lounge, have each

come up with delectable menus that are fit for hearty holiday feasting. For more information on December promotions, call 527-9469.

If you’re looking for a luxurious and tasteful gift for your family and friends, Manila

Hotel’s Delicatessen is offering limited-edition signature hampers and artfully wrapped holiday treats that are perfect for adults and kids alike. For a truly authentic Filipino Christmas, one only needs to step inside Manila Hotel’s doors.

Joseph M. Zobian, M.D.



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PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE

Pussuak Iti Pampanunot Ken Pagsasao



ILOKO
By Amado I. Yoro

Sarming ti biag, maysa a pagadalan ken paganninawan, kaaduanna nga adda dagiti makaited inspirasion ken adal kadagiti babassit a bambanag ken pampanuot, uray dagiti pagsasao, naggapu man iti bukod a padas wenno nadakdakamaten ti sabali.

Kabayatan ti pannakigubal iti aginaldaw a biag, dagiti panubok, pannakapaay ken panagballigi no dadduma, adda maibunga a binatog, mainaig man iti panagsurat, pannakitra-baho, ken pannakigamulo iti komunidad, dagitoy a pampannunot, kasda la nagasagas a bagas.

Ibingayko itoy a bilang.

- Nasidap ti mata a makakita iti pintas, daeg ken buya ti nakaparsuaan, ngem nasarsarut, nasidsidap ken natartarnaw pay ti panangiladawan ti isip ken imahi-

- nasion wenno panunot
- Nasayaat a saritaen dagiti nasayaat ken makairanud a panggep nga aramiden, ngem mas amang pay a nasaysayaat no aramiden kadagiti pagpaayanna tapno adda pakakitaan ti kinapudnom iti bagim
- Agsardengen a dumakkel ti tao no agsardengen nga agsursuro, ti panagadal ken panagsursuro iti ania man a baro a banag ket paset ti biag iti inaldaw
- Ti agkuna nga isu perpekto ti aramidna, daya tay mabuteng nga mangaklon ti biddutna banag a basbassit ti magapuananna, mabuteng nga agbiddut, ti panagbiddut ket human nature – only the divine Lord God is perfect.
- Mangtedka, tiempo man, sanikua ken kapanunotan; saanka la nga agdawdawat, wenno agpannuray iti sabali
- Agsuratka latta; adda biag ti aniaman a masuratmo ita, ti pitik, pulso, ladawan, rikna ken kararua daya a sinurat - bin-i ken dawa ti kinaregget nga agsurat

Adda pagsasao a “No isang-

dermon Ti Agsussuro, Agsardengka Metten A Dumakkel” ‘Aramid ti Pakakitaan’

Kastoy ti kinuna ni Francisco Ponce, “Literary and cultural responsibility”.

- Ikkam ti pilosopia ken simplicity iti suratem – mangray-awka – Francisco Ponce
- Saan a ginaganat ti agbalin a mannurat – Jose Tenoso
- Gaget ken panaganus ti kasapulan – Pelagio Alcantara
- Lasag ken piskel ti masapul iti panagdaniw – JSP Hidalgo, Jr.
- Pagrebengan met ti panagsurat, a kas met la iti pagrebengan iti pamilia, trabaho ken iti komunidad, ken panagnegosio – Rey Duque

Dadduma pay a pampanunot

- Saanka nga agparammagapu ta addakan iti saad nga inted ti tao kenka.
- Makasabidong ti bassit nga ammo ta mabalin a saanmon a mabigbig ti kinabassitmo wenno bassit a nangrugiam.
- Saanka nga aginlalaing no nagbatayka iti abaga ti sabali
- Ti pudno a lider ket mangi-

daulo, nadayaw, napakumbaba ken mapagtalkan

- No maysaka a lider ket dumgegka, naisaadka ita puestom gapu kadagiti tao – saanmo a kukua a buk-bukod ti gunglo – kukuayo amin a kameng
- Saanka nga agpasindayag; ammuen no asinoka – ken ammuem ti naggapuam
- Ti pudno a ‘gayyem’, isu ti talaga a gayyem uray mam-inribu nga agrueda ti pasamak ti biag
- Uray no kawesan ti ‘nuang’ iti nangina ken narangrang a pagan-anay, nuangto latta uray iparadam iti tengnga ti ili wenno siudad
- Ti kaganusan a rangaw wenno uggot ti mula biro-kenna latta ti alad ken pakalatkat – makilugan ken/ wenno makisakay – ket pagangayanna, kasla umet-et a parasitiko wenno kanunong, pagangayanna puera de los buenos, ibad-deknaka

Regarding serving God through Church

- Action brings results
- Serving God is love and personal and spiritual commitment

- Grow in faith: it is love and gift
- We are all unique; has something to contribute
- Everyday is a gift; use it wisely; Thanks God !
- Humbleness in spirit and deeds
- Individual Christian has a ministry and value
- Good leader must listen, flexible and loving
- Smiles bring the beauty of the universe
- Balance makes a person well rounded
- What you sow is what you reap
- Courtesy, respect, understanding
- Success must inspire us to do more; as education is a learning process in our daily life
- What inspired me most to work and grow with God is my evergrowing faith in a simple way.
- What rewards should we get from God is everything He provides us in our everyday life.

Naragsak a paskua ken Narang-ay ken Nagasat a Baro A Tawenyo !

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GLOBAL NEWS

Fil-Am Midwife Robin Lim Named CNN Hero of the Year

Robin Lim, a Filipino-American midwife who helps poor women have healthy pregnancies and births in Indonesia, has been named 2011 CNN Hero of the Year.

The daughter of an American soldier and Filipino mother, Lim decided to become a midwife after her younger sister died from pregnancy complications a few years ago. She and her husband sold their house in Hawaii and moved to Bali, Indonesia to “reinvent” their lives.

Lim noted that pregnant women in Indonesia are 300 times more likely to die than women who are not pregnant. She has been running her

free clinics Yayasan Bumi Sehat (Healthy Mother Earth) since 2003. The clinics provide prenatal and birthing services for poor Indonesian women as well as training for young midwives.

As CNN Hero of the Year, Lim’s clinics will receive a \$250,000 grant. This is in addition to the \$50,000 already given to each of the Top 10 CNN Heroes.

The CNN Heroes awarding ceremony was attended by stars such as Jerry Seinfeld, Sofia Vergara, will.i.am., Miley Cyrus and Kid Rock.



CNN Hero Robin Lim

CNN Heroes is a multi-platform campaign that “shines a spotlight on individuals who go to extraordinary lengths to serve others.” This year, the campaign reportedly received over 10,000 submissions from more than 100 coun-

tries. In 2009, Filipino Efrén Peñaflores, who started a “pushcart classroom” to bring education to poor children as an alternative to gang membership, was named CNN Hero of the Year. He was the first Filipino to win the award. *(Good News Pilipinas)*

ASEAN Extends Condolences Over Storm in Phl

JAKARTA (Xinhua) - ASEAN member states expressed their heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the government and people of the Philippines for the loss of lives and damage caused by the tropical storm Washi that struck the southern area on Dec. 17.

In a press statement, they hoped

that the bereaved families of the victims would be given strength and comfort in facing this calamity.

ASEAN member states also extend their readiness in providing the Philippines support and assistance in the efforts to help bring about swift recovery, in accordance with the spirit of ASEAN solidarity.

"In this regard, ASEAN member states request the ASEAN Secretariat

to work together with the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Center) to lend the necessary support and assistance," it said.

"ASEAN member states are confident that the people of the Republic of the Philippines will recover and rise from these unfortunate disasters with strong spirit and resilience," it said. *(www.philstar.com)*

MAINLAND NEWS

ABS CBN Launches Disaster Relief for Typhoon Victims

ABS CBN Foundation International has launched an international disaster relief effort for the victims of Typhoon Sendong on Mindanao island in the southern region of the Philippines.

Officials are accepting tax deductible monetary donations on behalf of victims. Checks can be made to: “ABS CBN Foundation International: Typhoon Sendong” and mailed to: 150 Shoreline Drive, Redwood City, California 94065. Donors can also con-

tribute online at: www.abscbnfoundation.org.

Typhoon Sendong brought over a month’s worth of rainfall within a 12-hour span to areas on Northern Mindanao, the Visayas and Palawan. Hardest hit were the southern coastal cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. At last count, 927 were killed and hundreds more missing. Most of the dead are women and children.

“Typhoon Sendong is especially devastating to all of us because it af-

ected some of our poorest families just a few days before Christmas,” says J. Robbie Fabian, president of the ABS CBN Foundation International. “We will be on the ground until more missing persons are brought to safety and all survivors given immediate attention.”

To address the numerous needs in the quickest possible way and because shipments of goods take 45 days to arrive in the Philippines, ABS CBN Foundation International is only accepting monetary donations at this time. The organization will remit 100 percent of donations within 24 hours of the donation.

Learn How to Live Healthy, Be Active and Change the Future of Diabetes

LOS ANGELES – On Saturday, March 17, 2012 the American Diabetes Association EXPO will take place at Los Angeles Convention Center from 10 am to 4 pm. Diabetes is on the rise in Los Angeles and this is your chance to become more aware of the disease and how it can affect you and your family.

The EXPO has more than 100 exhibitors and is FREE to everyone! The EXPO provides the community with a unique opportunity get health screen-

ings, participate in cooking demonstrations, talk to exhibitors and listen to leading experts about diabetes prevention and management. This is a one stop shop event where you can obtain the necessary information to prevent and control diabetes.

The EXPO is held at the Los Angeles Convention Center and contains interest for people of all ages – including a Family Fun Zone with exciting physical activities and information for the whole family. You can visit the

American Diabetes Association Experience and learn about local programs and events, advocacy activities and research being conducted in your community.

“If you or a loved one has diabetes – or is at high risk of developing the disease – EXPO provides a fun, relaxed environment to learn a great deal about the important aspects of prevention and management of diabetes and its serious complications,” said Peter Braun, Executive Director of ADA Los Angeles. “The EXPO is for all people affected by diabetes, as well as

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anyone interested in living healthy and helping to change the future of diabetes.”

For more information about diabetes or the EXPO call 1-888-DIABETES (1-323-966-2890 x 7502), or visit diabetes.org/laexpo. (<http://www.asian-journal.com>)



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