

INTERRACIAL MARRIAGES- THE FACE OF TODAY'S NEWLYWEDS

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EDITORIALS

Public Acceptance for Interracial Marriages

It's hard to believe that a little less than 50 years ago, interracial marriages were illegal across much of the U.S. In fact, for much of the history of our beloved nation, from 1662 to 1967, marriages involving two people from different ethnicities were basically prohibited until the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia* struck down state laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

Fast-forward, if you would, to the second decade of the 21st Century, where tremendous progress has been made. The rate of marriage across racial and ethnic lines in the U.S. is on the rise, as is public acceptance of such unions. In 2010, about 15 percent of all newlyweds were from different races or ethnicities, compared to the 1980 level of 6.7 percent. Interracial dating services online have certainly helped, offering those looking for love an opportunity to find preferred matches.

Not surprisingly, Hawaii—which is known for a diverse population and melting pot attitude, led the way for most intermarriages with 42.4 percent. The next highest percentages of interracial marriages were in Oklahoma, Nevada and New Mexico, with 26.3 percent, 25.6 percent and 25.4 percent respectively. For Hawaii, interracial couples are so common that it's something locals almost don't notice anymore. However, people from older generations like our grandparents or new immigrants have been known to frown upon interracial marriage, so everything isn't always "hunky-dory" in the land of aloha.

Nevertheless, we join a growing number of Americans who believe more intermarriages is a change for the better. As we inch towards greater equality and access for all, we should always remind ourselves that a glance at the past and where we were is almost always a story about the present and where we can go. In fact, we should be looking forward to the day when news reports about interracial marriages are no longer newsworthy. One day hopefully soon we will be referring to married partners not as an 'interracial couple,' but an 'American couple.'

Kudos to Living Well Hawaii Project

The recent opening of the Living Well Hawaii Project at the new Kalihi-Palama Community Mental Health Center is welcomed news for the state's healthcare advocates. A first-of-its kind project, Living Well Hawaii combines medical care with mental health services under one roof for adults living with serious mental illness and chronic disease. The project's goal is to improve the physical health status of people with mental illness and chronic, co-morbid medical conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular and pulmonary disease by fully integrating physical and mental health services. The result is more effective, patient-centered, integrated services that support health equity.

Prior to its opening, individuals had to go to separate locations and different doctors for their physical and mental health needs. Integration between these health care services did not occur. Under the Living Well Project, individuals will receive integrated services from a team of doctors, psychiatrists, case managers and other health professionals who will meet and talk with each other and the client to determine the best combination of services.

Adults with severe mental illness who participate in the Living Well Hawaii project will have access to a comprehensive

FROM THE PUBLISHER

If you're like most young people, you may be wondering what to do now that summer's in full force. Rather than waste your time during the next few months, we suggest that you start brainstorming a list of fun activities to do. You can start a new hobby, take up a new sport, get a summer job, volunteer for a charitable or non-profit group, write a novel, learn a new language...the possibilities are endless! Whatever you decide to do this summer, make sure to get out there and have a blast!



Speaking of summer, these next few months are a perfect time for singles to kindle a new romance. What better place than in cosmopolitan Hawaii, where the many ethnicities have resulted in a beautiful blend? For this issue's cover story, contributing writer Fiedes Doctor enlightens us on the growing numbers of newlywed couples nationwide (Filipinos included) who are from different ethnic backgrounds. While it's easy for opposites to attract, staying committed for the long term is usually the problem, given the many differences an interracial couple brings to the relationship. Please turn to page 4 and read more on this rather interesting trend and how interracial couples manage to fall for and remain madly in love with each other.

In other news, University of Hawaii-Manoa officials recently hosted a delegation of presidents from various universities in the Philippines who were in town to observe the intricacies of a U.S.-based educational system (see page 6). The distinguished guests toured the various campuses in the UH system and were given a warm aloha at a welcome reception hosted by the Philippine Consulate General of Honolulu and well-wishers from Hawaii's Filipino community. Mahalo to all of those who had a hand in making these special visitors feel welcomed and appreciated.

Lastly, if you're looking for fun things to do with the little ones, why not take them to an upcoming musical production of "Robin Hood" by the Children's Theatre of Oahu? It's not only entertaining for the entire family but also a great way to support the local arts in Hawaii. Tickets are \$7 each and free for keiki two years and younger. If you're interested, please turn to page 11 for more details.

In closing, the Chronicle sends its sincerest mahalo to our readers and advertisers for their faithful support. It is truly a blessing to have them as partners as we continue our mission to serve Hawaii's vibrant and dynamic Filipino community. As always, we encourage you to share any story ideas, suggestions or concerns you may have by sending an email to: filipinochronicle@gmail.com. Until next time... aloha and mabuhay!

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

and culturally informed array of health services delivered in a manner that's consistent with patient-centered medical home standards and expectations. The project is expected serve up to 250 patients who qualify because of their chronic conditions depending upon enrollment.

Living Well Hawaii is a good example of how integration of health services can be done cost-effectively when dedicated and determined individuals, organizations including state government, health care providers, consumers and advocates work together for the common good. The project took two years to plan and implement. It was developed with less than \$20,000—half of which was spent to convert a room at the Kalihi-Palama Community Mental Health Center into a fully equipped medical examination room.

Kudos especially to the Kalihi-Palama Health Center and the State Department of Health for supporting the project and providing expert staffing, medical supplies and resources. Their generosity will mean a better quality of life and improved health for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.

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CANDID PERSPECTIVES



By Emil Guillermo

Mazie Leads on Family Reunification in Immigration Reform

The retirement of Sen. Daniel Akaka and the death of Sen. Dan Inouye left not just Hawaii, but all of Asian America wondering who would be our advocate in the Senate.

But with the Senate taking on immigration this year, a new leader has emerged to fill the void: Mazie Hirono.

If you haven't noticed, the major holes in that Gang of Eight immigration compromise that has been in mark-up the last week, are the provisions on family unification.

In the proposal, there's no more visas for older married children. No more visas for brothers and sisters.

What? Manong Boy and Ate Baby have to stay "home," as in the RP? If the current bill passes without amendment there will be no

more petitions just because of blood. You won't be able to bring them over. Not unless they have some value to the country, which is to say, they provide work or skill or make money for some corporate concern that's been able to lobby for more visas. Family? That was old think. The new think: Don't come here expecting welfare. And don't come here unless you're also good for the U.S. of A.

And to think, immigration used to be so humanistic.

But under this compromise, it's fairly cut and dry. You want to immigrate, what do you bring to the table? Nothing? We already have lots of nothing. Stay home. Save the paperwork. You don't want this America.

It's really the least attractive face we're putting on the Statue of Liberty. She's no longer shining that glorious path to citizenship. She's got the soul of an elite college admissions officer now, with the scowl of the border patrol.

So who is the senator championing family unification?

Who's out front to put those provisions back in this surly compromise?

Mazie Hirono.

Hirono has filed nearly a dozen amendments that would make the proposal a lot more family friendly.

By time you read this, it's unclear whether Hirono was successful with her amendments or not.

But when she won Akaka's seat last November, nobody would have said Hirono would be out front with major amendments on anything.

Indeed, the invaluable public watchdog, Honolulu Civil Beat, pretty much dismissed Mazie's previous role in the House as a rubber stamp for Democratic issues, and without any real substance.

Here's a passage on Hirono from HCB: "For example, Hirono supported a resolution calling for the use of Emancipation Hall in the

Capitol Visitor Center for a birthday party for King Kamehameha. Another resolution commemorates the canonization of Father Damien to sainthood, while a third recognizes the contributions of a Hawaii-born former sumo wrestler. There are also several bills asking for studies of sections of Hawaii land that might be added to the National Park Service."

Not exactly what you'd a heavy hitter.

But on immigration reform, Hirono has stepped up her game. She's our champion. And if she's shrewd, she can

use this to define the rest of her political career.

It's that important for her, because it's that important for all of us.

EMIL GUILLERMO is an award-winning journalist and commentator who has written on Filipino and Asian-American issues for many years. For two years, he served on the editorial board of the Honolulu Advertiser. Guillermo was the first Filipino-American to host a national news program when he hosted NPR's "All Things Considered."

He later served as press secretary to then Congressman Norman Mineta in the 103rd Congress in Washington. Based in Northern California, Guillermo, won an American Book Award in 2000 for his book "Amok: Essays from an Asian American Perspective."

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Lanakila Health Center Reopens TB Program

The State Department of Health's (DOH) Tuberculosis Control Program returned to the ground floor at Lanakila Health Center on May 28, 2013 after a seven-month temporary relocation.

The program's return to its permanent home follows the completion of construction work for renovations, remodeling the air conditioning system and upgrading the facility's internet and telephone communication systems.

"Mahalo to the people of Hawaii for their understanding, patience and aloha for both the inconvenience of the TB Control Program's relocation and the temporary suspension of TB clearance requirements," says Dr. Glenn

Wasserman, chief of DOH's Communicable Disease Division.

The temporary suspension of tuberculosis clearance requirements for school personnel, students, food handlers and workers in health care, domiciliary care, daycare, and residential care facilities remains in effect. The statewide temporary suspension of clearance requirements, which began April 11, 2013, is in response to a nationwide shortage of testing solution required for tuberculin skin testing.

The TB Control Program continues to provide guidance to schools, universities and colleges and partners in the medical community on how best to use available testing solution with a focus on testing specific



high-risk groups. To date, there have been no negative impacts resulting from the suspension of the state TB screening requirements.

"The department appreciates the positive collaboration we have had with the healthcare community to prioritize the limited supplies of TB test solution for those most at risk," says Dr. Wasserman. "We will issue a public notice when the suspension of the TB clearance requirement is lifted and a grace period or catch-up date will be announced for individuals whose TB clearance was postponed."

For more information about the TB Program or TB testing, please call 832-5731 or go online to www.hawaii.gov/health/tb.

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COVER STORY

Love in the Time of Interracial Relationships

By Fiedes Doctor

Y

es, love. It's the one abstract thing that has inspired poets, artists and dreamers. The persistent question: "How will you know?" is almost always answered cryptically: "You will."

The first time Jeff saw May in church, he was smitten. He knew right away that she was the one for him. Her glowing brown skin and petite frame stood out among a sea of black and white in Chicago, Illinois where she arrived as a new immigrant five years ago.

"She was very beautiful," he said as he remembered that moment. "She is also a strong, independent, and God-fearing woman."

Two years after that momentous day, the couple flew to Maui for an intimate beachside wedding surrounded by friends and relatives with skin colors ranging from shades of yellow, brown, black and white. Nobody noticed the spectrum as the colors and languages blended together to celebrate one happy event.

Marriages

Jeff and May are part of the rising trend of interracial or inter-ethnic marriages across the country and the world, as people aggressively integrate with each other, thanks to immigration, online dating and a broader worldview. It has come a long way since the famous case of Loving vs Virginia in the 1960s, which opened the door for people to unapologetically seek out and marry others from other races and ethnic groups.

"Almighty God created the races, white, black, yellow, Malay, and red and placed them on separate continents, and but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause of such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend the races to mix," the judge said when



he sentenced Richard and Mildred Loving in 1959 to one year of jail or banishment from their hometown of Virginia for "the crime of being an interracial couple."

He was white, she was black and never the two shall mix was the verdict.

The couple sought the help of Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General of the U.S., in Washington, D.C. eventually winning the case and ending an era that banned interracial couples. Forty-two states had laws that restricted marriages not only between black and white people but among Asians, Native Americans, Indians, Hispanics and other ethnic groups.

"Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State," the decision said.

Fifty years later, according to a 2010 study by the Pew Research Center, about 15 percent of new marriages in the U.S. were interracial or inter-ethnic, a big jump from 6.7 percent in the 1980s. People are now marrying outside of their races, with Asians the mostly likely, comprising 27.7 percent of the population of newlyweds. Hispanics were second at 25.5 percent,

followed by blacks at 17.1 percent. Whites were the least likely to marry out with only 9 percent of newlyweds in 2010 belonging to this group.

Among all the states, Hawaii not surprisingly has the highest number of interracial married couples at 42.4 percent primarily due to immigration and military presence. The population is so diverse that it is not uncommon to hear local children blurt out more than five racial make-ups. Major ones include white, black, American Indian/Alaskan native, Asian and native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Oklahoma is next in line at 26.3 percent, followed by Nevada at 25.6 percent and New Mexico at 25.4 percent. Vermont is the state with the least mix with only 4 percent of all marriages being interracial or inter-ethnic.

When Love Happens

Some people know what they want and pursue it. Others are less aware but what they want happens to them. And they just know it.

A 36-year-old Filipino nurse who did not want her name used has dated only white men since she was in her 20s. Most of her dates have been military personnel stationed on Oahu.

"I am more attracted to them than Filipino men or other races. Maybe because I was born here and I think more like an American than a Filipino," she says. "I want someone who is culturally different from me and my family. I guess you can say I think they are 'exotic' in the same way they think we are."

The short-lived nature of her relationships with men in uniform, however, has made "The One" very elusive. She is now presently expanding the possibility of meeting a "blond and blue-eyed hunk" through networking with friends, meet-ups and an via online dating websites.

For Jonathon Lyon, a 51-year-old Jewish man, meeting his wife was initially more work-induced than romantic. He was in Boston in his late 20s laboring on his master's thesis on domestic violence among Southeast Asian refugees and was introduced to someone who was also working on domestic violence. She was Chemrath, (English name, Sarah), his future wife.

"We started meeting a few times and after maybe the third date, even though I hardly knew her, I kept thinking she was perfect for me,"

(continued on page 5)

The Rise of Interracial



Michael A. McMann, M.D.

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COVER STORY

(from page 4, LOVE...)

he says. "It was most of what I sensed about her. I felt that she was a strong, trustworthy and reliable person."

Being Cambodian, Chemrath's culture has strict regulations on courtship and dating, especially since the culture is known for parental imposition and arranged marriages. Casual dating did not exist in her vocabulary and by the third date, Jonathon was quickly informed about it.

"If you want to see me, the expectation was that we would get married," Jonathon remembers the straightforward FYI. Without a second thought, he said, "Okay."

One year later, they were engaged. They've since relocated to Honolulu and have been married for 22 years.

"I like her strength, her honesty and sense of humor," he says. "She helps keep me balanced. I am good with reading books, she's good with reading people. She helps me to be stronger."

He Said, She Said

Despite their inner strength and resolve, during the first years of marriage, something got lost in translation between Jonathon and Chemrath, for whom English isn't her first language. Quiet and laid-back, she experienced the trauma of the Pol Pot regime and the Khmer Rouge—making her upset with shouting or loud voices.

"Jewish people tend to get excitable," Jonathon says. "So I had to teach myself to remain calm and to talk in a low voice. Yelling does not work; I had to learn to stop doing that."

His communication arsenal included being more supportive and understanding, asking rather than accusing, and to avoid being confrontational.

"I had to learn to be more patient and wait for her to express herself in her own way. I would approach her in a more understanding way so she would be more open," he says.

With the adjustment pe-

riod now over, Chemrath, who works as a nurse, is more assertive and verbal. She watches "Dancing with the Stars" and loves football.

Lawrence Mangindin, 46, remembers a period of frustration and adjustment during the first few years of marriage with his non-Filipino wife. Being Filipino, he was more reticent while wife Valeri, being German-Irish, was more vocal.

"I knew that we had cultural differences but felt helpless because that's how I was brought up. Our culture tends to keep stuff in," he says. "When I was annoyed because she did something, I did not always tell her how I felt."

The challenges included simple habits such as opening refrigerator doors, to major issues like how to discipline their children. Over time, Lawrence learned to better express himself, while his wife began to understand how he communicates. They live in Michigan and have been married for 21 years.

"The thing with interracial relationships is that in the beginning, it is more of a hindrance because each one has a preconceived idea of the other," Lawrence says. "We have stereotypical ideas of each other. Until that gets broken, you can't begin to understand each other's culture or being open to it and receiving."

The key is to want to resolve the conflict, which is true for any relationship whether interracial or not, Lawrence says.

"We all are individuals with own uniqueness. It all boils down to whether you want to work together or not. There has to be some compromise to make it work. You have to make a conscious effort."

Staying Together

Yvonne Jackson, 28, a Filipina who is happily married to her African-American husband, says they always try to reach a compromise.

"He doesn't like to spend hours shopping like I do. To

solve the problem, we compromise," she says. "Instead of getting frustrated while waiting for me, he drops me off and picks me up when I'm done. Problem solved."

For she and her husband James of five years, open communication is the key to staying "happy together."

"We always sit and talk and reflect on what we did. We present solutions to problems. We try to meet somewhere in the middle and there's always an exchange," she says. "Because it takes two to argue, one of us would calm down and find a way to de-escalate the tension."

Yvonne has learned to be independent and to think for herself, thanks to her husband's constant encouragement.

"I've learned how to budget and keep track of my finances, and to be responsible for my actions. If I make a mistake, I cannot blame anybody but myself," she says. "What he has taught me is this—you cannot depend on anybody but yourself."

Genuine interest in the other person's culture, not just for a few weeks but for the long haul, also helps keep the relationship positive, says Jonathon who works to maintain his interest in Cambodian culture. They participate in both Jewish and Cambodian activities and holidays. Chemrath has learned how to make matzah balls.

Valeri, who likes everything Filipino ex-

cept kalding (goat) and dinuguan, has learned to cook adobo, apriteada and pancit and has tried most Filipino dishes. Lawrence says she has learned to embrace the Filipino culture.

"In fact, she knows enough of the culture to write a draft for a children's book about a Filipino kid visiting a town fiesta in the Philippines," he says.

Lawrence has read it and gave his nod of approval for cultural integrity.

Like any relationship, interracial or not, another key to staying together is mutual support.

Jonathon recalls a time in Boston when his wife would come home and report rude and condescending treatment from other people. Being from the majority race, the tendency was to simply brush off the incident, he says.

"If your spouse is being treated unfairly, you have to take it seriously," he says. "You have to be supportive

especially when it comes to racism because it is very hurtful. If there is no support from your partner, you would feel alone."

Jonathon also supported his wife while she was in school because she was unfamiliar with the American university system. He helped look up sources in the library, research books and articles and write her paper.

"You have to see each other as being on the same side and not against each other. Remember, you are on the same side," he says.

Similarly, Lawrence receives support from his wife especially in his career as a businessman.

"She has not discouraged me. She is there with me and always encouraging me to be positive. That is very important."

More Similar Than Different

Racial differences are less distinct with couples who

(continued on page 6)

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NEWS FEATURE

Philippine State University Presidents Visit Hawaii

By Belinda A. Aquino, Ph.D.

Twelve presidents of State Universities and Colleges and two senior executives of the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) visited Hawaii from May 20-25, 2013 to participate in a short-term training program and Executive Course in Education Management and Leadership.

The group was hosted by University of Hawaii President M.R.C. Greenwood, who said that the program was designed to develop leadership skills and explore a range of topics and themes ranging from research to academic-industry partnerships, community service/extension, quality assurance, and national/international standards on higher education.

Greenwood added that the Philippine academic delegation selected the UH as a "learning site" because of the university's system approach involving several campuses and community colleges, as well as its key strengths in medicine, agriculture, education, business, marine sciences, Asian studies and other fields in higher education.

The visitors were interested in learning more of UH's contributions to the state's economy through research, delivery of student and education services to the



▲ University of Hawaii President M.R.C. Greenwood with Dr. Perfecto Alibin, President of the University of Southeastern Philippines in Davao City | Photo: UH System

◀ Participants in the Mgt. & Leadership Training at UH Manoa with Consul General Torres, Phil Consulate staff and guests

neighbor islands, its community college innovations, major areas like agriculture and marine sciences, and its international partnerships with foreign institutions.

The visitors' program is part of an "implementation strategy" of the DAP and the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) headed by Dr. Patricia Licuanan. The program is designed to develop and enhance management leadership skills among senior leaders of 110 Philippine State Universities and Colleges throughout the Philippines.

The delegation visited UH-Manoa, UH-West Oahu, Kapiolani Community College and Windward Community College. Because of the short duration of their visit, there was not enough time to observe campuses on the

neighbor islands.

On Oahu, they also visited the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology and the College of Tropical Agriculture Magoon Agricultural Research Center. They later attended a reception hosted by Philippine Consul General Julius D. Torres, who invited Filipino community leaders and members of the university's academic community to participate in a forum with the visitors. Consul Joyleen Santos gave a briefing on the Consulate's functions and role in the community.

The delegation was composed of the following presidents and senior executives:

- Dr. Irwin Generalao, Southern Agri-Business and Marine Aquatic School of Technology
- Dr. Milavel Nazario, Zamboanga State College

- of Marine Sciences and Technology
- Rear Adm. Richard Ritual, Philippine Merchant Marine Academy
- Dr. Perfecto Alibin, University of Southeastern Philippines (Davao City)
- Dr. Marita Canapi, University of Rizal System (Rizal Province)
- Dr. Carlicita Sanie, J.H. Cerilles State College (Zamboanga del Sur)
- Dr. Nora Magnate, Batangas State University
- Dr. Divinia Chavez, Cavite State University
- Atty. Marito T. Bernales, Central Bicol State University of Agriculture
- Dr. Joanna Cuenca, Caraga State University (Agusan del Norte)
- Atty. Lorenzo R. Reyes, Chancellor, Mindanao State University, Tawi-

Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography

- Dr. Elsa Manarpaac, Western Philippine University (Palawan)
- Rodney Jagolino, Director, Development Academy of the Philippines
- Carolyn Ruby Pilar Rivera, Development Academy of the Philippines

Speaking on behalf of the group, Dr. Alibin said that their UH training, brief as it was, gave them a "real opportunity to observe, understand and appreciate the best modern practices of the University of Hawaii, particularly on tropical agriculture, the relationship of the UH system with the community colleges, and the various international agreements with foreign universities."

(continued on page 10)

COVER STORY (from page 5, LOVE...)

were both raised in the U.S., especially in Hawaii where everybody is identified as "local."

"Since we both grew up in Hawaii, it's hard to distinguish culturally what is Okinawan/Japanese or Filipino. It just seems local," says Tom Landeza who has been married to his Okinawan/Japanese wife Grace for 5 years. They met at a singles worship night at church and were both attracted to each other's passion for God, heart for ministry and love of surfing.

David and Cynthia Parker also do not identify their mar-

riage as traditionally interracial even if outward appearances show a white man and a Filipino woman. Cynthia came to Oahu when she was two, practically growing up local and American. She does not see herself being any different from David.

"I relate to being an American so, in some ways, we are from the same place," she says. "I entered our marriage as an American with a Filipino cultural background."

Her husband David agrees and does not perceive their relationship as being in-

terracial.

"Race plays a small part," he says. "The things we have in common often outweigh differences. We have similar education. In different ways, we are obsessive and stubborn but we share many common values."

With these couples, their racial or cultural differences become more evident during extended family gatherings and parties. The contrast readily becomes recognizable with the Filipino family showing extra hospitality through stories and entertainment or offering "unusual" food to the foreigner, while

the non-Filipinos are more laid-back and autonomous.

"One of the big differences I see in our families is that that my family is a lot more boisterous, loud and showy," says Tom. "Her family on the other hand seems more quiet, reserved and they don't attract too much attention. It gets interesting when the two families get together. You can immediately tell who is related to who."

"When I'm with Cynthia's family, we talk about engineering, sports, food and family occurrences. With my own family, we probably bring up politics, current

events and books more often," says David. "My family, in their professions, habits and inclinations, tend to hibernate into small units, uproot often and seldom assemble together. Cynthia's family seems to make a significant effort for several days of feasting and large family gatherings whenever a relative arrives from out of town."

At the end of the day, however, it boils down to dealing with, not forsaking, their differences that make the marriage work.

"Our differences in up- (continued on page 7)

IMMIGRATION GUIDE

Deportation Relief is Discretionary



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

On the criminal justice system, when the accused establishes that the prosecution has failed to prove his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, the accused is entitled to be acquitted and released from jail if in custody. The judge cannot say “You may be entitled to an acquittal, but I will deny you acquittal and send you back to jail as a matter of discretion.”

But in deportation proceedings, the alien may have established that such alien is statutorily eligible for relief from deportation such as cancellation of removal or waiver, meaning the alien has met all the requirements of the statute for the particular relief sought, but the Immigration Judge can still tell the alien “You may be eligible for relief but will I deny you relief as a matter of discretion and order you deported.”

It is this “discretion” thing that is the bane of all aliens in deportation proceedings. As we have been saying, once you

give an adjudicator discretion, it is susceptible to abuse.

We recently won three deportation cases in a row before the Board of Immigration Appeals which reversed an Immigration Judge’s decision ordering the deportation of three Filipinos because the Board agreed with our argument that the Judge abused his discretion.

This “discretion” thing is not in the immigration law itself. The Board promulgated it. The Board, which reviews all decisions of Immigration Judges brought to it on appeal, held that in determining eligibility for deportation relief, the Immigration Judge should consider the positive and negative factors in the alien’s case and make a complete review of all the factors and balance them.

Positive and Negative Factors

The positive factors to be considered are: (1) family ties within the U.S., (2) residency of long duration in this country, (3) evidence of hardship to the respondent and family if deportation occurs, (4) service in the Armed Forces, (5) history of employment, (6) existence of property or business ties, (7) existence of value and service to the community, (8) proof of genuine rehabilitation if a criminal record exists, and (9) evidence attesting to the

alien’s good character.

The negative factors to be considered are: (1) nature and underlying circumstances of exclusion or deportation grounds, (2) additional significant violations of the immigration laws, (3) existence of criminal record, and (4) other evidence of bad character or undesirability. Matter of Marin, 16 I&N Dec. 581 (BIA 1978); Matter of C-V-T, 22 I&N Dec. 7 (BIA 1998).

Oftentimes, the IJ does not balance these positive and negative factors. The IJ simply focuses on the negative factors and declares: Voila, the negative factors outweigh the positive factors, and the alien should be removed from the United States. That is what happened in the cases that we won on appeal. We have another case we brought a few weeks ago to the Board that was lost by another attorney in the Immigration Court. The alien possessed eight of the nine positive factors, while he had only one negative factor. The IJ held that the one negative factor outweighed the eight positive factors. How can one outweigh eight?

That is the kind of abuse of discretion that exists in the deportation system. Unfortunately, many aliens cannot afford to appeal to the Board in order to review the abuse of

discretion of Immigration Judges and thus they suffer deportation and in many cases permanent separation from their families. This aspect of deportation proceedings cries for reformation. That ought to be the subject of immigration reform – abolish the discretion of Immigration Judges in deportation proceedings – not give wholesale amnesty to those who entered the country illegally who in all likelihood may be less deserving of immigration relief than the poor aliens lawfully in this country who cannot afford to fight the

abuses of Immigration Judges. Let us help the victims of abusive Immigration Judges.

(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: filam-law@yahoo.com. Websites: www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com, and www.ImmigrationServiceUSA.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.

COVER STORY (from page 6, LOVE...)

bringing, attitudes, values and expectations require a little more work than same race marriages just because it’s not what you are used to,” says Tom. “But the key, just like any marriage, is to adjust and make room for the differences.”

Race is definitely a non-issue but more jarring would be cultural and economic expectations, says David, such as dividing family and work time and defining financial responsibilities.

“Humor and forgiveness would be the keys to a successful marriage. Much else can be endured or subordinated when the couple can



enjoy each other’s company.”

THE BEAUTY OF DIVERSITY

The cliché “opposites attract” certainly becomes true in most interracial/inter-ethnic marriages, especially when each culture is distinct and has a different set of values, traditions and beliefs. But in the

end, it is the same as any other relationship with its own set of joys and challenges.

The key is to work together and enjoy what makes each other unique and different.

“With Valeri, my experience is more enriched. I have experienced another culture other than my own. It opens up a different perspective,” says Lawrence.

“Definitely, there is more to learn about each other’s culture. It is not like we are doing the same thing all the time. We don’t get bored,” says Jonathon.

“I have no regrets at all,” says Yvonne.

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TRAVEL

Excursions in History, Culture and Nature with Naga X

By Dandi Galvez

MANILA, Philippines - Naga City is, without a doubt, one of the fastest emerging cities in the country today. It has a rich history dating back to when it was called Ciudad de Nueva Caceres by the Spaniards who established it as the third Royal City of the Philippines, after Manila and Cebu. In 2010, President Aquino declared Naga a "Pilgrim City" — the only one in the country — with its over 300 years of religious history with Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Aside from that, the city and its surrounding areas are abundant in natural resources, sites and rich local culture. Making all of these easy to access and enjoy is Naga eXcursions.

Also known as Naga X, this exciting development is a

new tourism product of Metro Naga, composed of 16 local government units (LGUs), 15 of them municipalities with Naga at the center. Alec Francis Santos, chief of office for arts, culture and tourism and city publications and external relations chief, says, "Naga X does not just assist tour operators, we are more inclusive. We include hotels, transport providers, restaurants, and tour guides. We group them under one organization — we call it a tourism consortium acknowledged by Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Ramon Jimenez Jr., as the only consortium created by an LGU."

Santos invited a number of journalists to a familiarization tour of Naga recently to sample a taste of what Naga X has to offer. And for a good part of the tour, it was literally our taste buds that enjoyed the most.



Mt. Isarog National Park | Photo by Fernan Nebres

During our time there we stayed at the Avenue Hotel along Magsaysay Avenue in Naga City, a street lined with numerous restaurants and entertainment venues, making it the *de facto gimik* spot of the area. Santos and a group of guides, composed of student interns from different colleges in the area, greeted us at the

hotel's posh lobby as we arrived.

Just in time for lunch, we were led to one of the well-known local restaurants along Magsaysay called Bob Marlin. As the pun implies, you can have great seafood here. However, the highlight of the table were the plates of *pinangat* — a mixture of chili peppers, and

cream of grated coconut (*gata*) wrapped in *gabi* (taro) leaves and stuffed with shrimp and pork. Alongside it was the *natonong*, similar to *pinangat* and is made of shredded *gabi* leaves, simmered in *gata* with pork and shrimp bits and diced chili. A dialled-down Bicol Express was served with pineapple

(continued on page 12)



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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

**Auditions for Upcoming Show
 at Kumu Kahua Theatre**



Kumu Kahua Theatre will be holding auditions for several roles in an upcoming stage production entitled "Will the Real Charlie Chan Please Stand Up?"

Auditions are scheduled for Saturday, June 15 from 12 noon to 3 pm, and on Sunday, June 16 from 6 pm to 9 pm at Kumu Kahua Theatre, located at 46 Merchant Street in Downtown Honolulu.

Director Reiko Ho is seeking 8 to 10 actors to play the following roles:

- Detective Chang Apana—Chinese, 40s, 5'2" or so
- Detective Sergeant Charlie Chan—Chinese
- Sergeant Lee Fook—20s to 30s
- Joseph—20s, Filipino, receptionist at the police station

- Chief Detective Evan Flaherty—40s or 50s.
- Kanoe—early 20's
- Mei Lai—40's

Auditions will consist of readings from the script and some movement exercises. Auditioners are asked to dress accordingly, arrive early and be prepared to stay for the entire time.

Scripts are available for loan with a \$10 cash deposit at the Kumu Kahua Theatre office weekdays between 11am and 3pm. Please call 536-4222 before coming to the theatre.

Rehearsals for "Will the Real Charlie Chan Please Stand Up?" begin as early as July 1st. Performances are scheduled for August 22 to September 22, 2013.

NEWS FEATURE (from page 6, PHILIPPINE...)

He added that the exposure and experience from their visit were "good inputs for educational reforms in the Philippine system of higher education." He also stressed that there is currently a Philippine Higher Education Reform Agenda initiative in CHED under the leadership of Dr. Licuanan.

Another member of the delegation, Chancellor Reyes of the MSU Tawi-Tawi campus, talked about the strengths of his college in Mindanao, especially in the area of Islamic Studies, which provides the Muslim and cultural communities with substantive knowledge and experience on sustainable utilization and rational management of the region's extensive marine and fisheries resources, especially around the Sulu Sea and nearby bodies of water. He envisions his institution as a Center of Excellence in fisheries, oceanography and related disciplines, which he expects will contribute to lasting peace and development in an area that has been in turmoil in recent years.

The participants were unanimous in expressing their gratitude to UH-Manoa officials, particularly President Greenwood and Joanne Taira, UH senior executive for International Programs and

Initiatives. Their visit was a "rare opportunity" that provided significant information and insight into the dynamics of higher education in Hawaii, a state that has had long historical, cultural, and academic ties with the Philippines.

They look forward to similar visits in the future and hope that UH, which has trained many academics and scholars from the Philippines over the decades, would establish more productive relationships and partnerships with Philippine institutions.

DR. AQUINO is professor emerita at the UH-Manoa where she was professor of political science and Asian studies and founding director of the Center for Philippine Studies. She was also vice president of UP for public affairs (1989-91) and was given the UPAA Lifetime Achievement Award during UP's Centennial in 2008. Originally from San Fernando, La Union, she got her BA (English) from UP, MA (Political Science) from UH as an East-West Center Scholar, and Ph.D. (Political Science and Southeast Asian Studies) from Cornell University as a Ford Foundation Fellow. She has been a visiting professor or research fellow in various international institutions including Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Kansai University (Japan), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore and University of the Philippines. She is also a journalist who writes commentary columns for the Philippine Daily Inquirer and other international publications.

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

FilCom Center Offers Citizenship Prep Courses

If you've always wanted to apply for U.S. citizenship but never got around to doing so, now may be the time as the Filipino Community Center (FilCom) in Waipahu will be offering citizenship readiness classes on five consecutive Saturdays, from 1 pm to 3 pm beginning June 1, 2013.

The FilCom's U.S. Naturalization Preparation course will be conducted by an attorney

from the Hawaii Immigrant Justice Center at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii. Registration is \$25 to cover the cost of hand-outs and other expenses. A Certificate of Completion will be awarded to all attendees who complete all five sessions.

The sessions will include instructions in filling out the most current forms required by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



(USCIS); a review of questions that will be asked; writing exercises and mock

interviews designed to help applicants gain confidence in taking the naturalization tests and interviews.

Ilocano and Tagalog volunteer-interpreters will be available. After the citizenship classes, USCIS community outreach workers will be at the FilCom Center from 3 pm to 4 pm to assist those with questions on immigration, application for U.S. passports and other related issues.

FilCom officials say that several graduates of the 2012 citizenship course attained citizenship earlier this year. They encourage interested persons to apply in person at the FilCom Center, located at 94-428 Mokuola Street, Suite 302 in Waipahu.

Register early since space is limited. For more information, please call 680-0451 or send at email to: filcom@filcom.org.

Children's Theatre of Oahu to Present 'Robin Hood'

If you or your children love theatre productions, "Robin Hood" by the Children's Theatre of Oahu may be just for you.

"Robin Hood" will run June 5-8, 2013 at Paliku Theatre at Windward Community College. Tickets are available only for the June 7 and 8 performances. For tickets and showtimes, go online to: www.ctotheatre.com or call



291-5442.

Launched 10 years ago, the Children's Theatre of Oahu (CTO) is a not-for-profit organization for children and young adults. Its goal is to

provide high quality affordable and accessible theatrical performances for Oahu's youth. The organization is run by a family of volunteers who believe in the invaluable opportunities that theatre provides for children.

"Theatre allows opportunities for individuals to build character, increase self-confidence, meet new people and work as a team to create and

share a high-quality production," says co-producer Toni Muranaka.

'Robin Hood' cast member Koa Bayani San Luis, says memorizing her lines isn't that difficult. "I usually learn them pretty quickly when I put my mind to it," she says.

Open Auditions

CTO's productions are geared towards pre-school to elementary age youth. The

shows run about 75 minutes and have a great balance of drama, comedy and musical numbers.

Open auditions are usually held in January. The cast member fee for a production is \$50 dollars per cast member, which includes a cast T-shirt. There is a discount for additional family members.

For more details on CTO, please email Rachel Plunkett at ctohawaii@yahoo.com.

Living Well Hawaii Project Opens Doors in Kalihi-Palama

State officials held a ceremonial blessing and open house for the Living Well Hawaii Project on May 29, 2013 at the new Kalihi-Palama Community Mental Health Center located at 1700 Lanakila Avenue.

Gov. Neil Abercrombie and State Department of Health Director (DOH) Loretta Fuddy were among dozens of invited guests. Also on-hand were mental health advocates and staff from the Kalihi-Palama Health Center and Primary Care Association.



Gov. Neil Abercrombie

Living Well Hawaii is a new and innovative public and private collaborative that fully

integrates physical and mental health care services under one roof to serve individuals with serious and persistent mental illness.

"A first clinic of its kind in Hawaii, the project will lead the way to improved services for those living with serious mental illness and chronic disease," says Janice Okubo from the DOH's communications office.

The Kalihi-Palama Health Center provides much-needed services to patients who typically face significant

barriers when accessing health care. The Center serves more than 21,000 patients an-

nually, many of them from low-income and immigrant families.

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Acai: Berry Good for Overall Health

from www.philstar.com

MANILA, Philippines - "We all know that once diagnosed with cancer, patients almost always feel dread, as if a death sentence has been given them ... and it's only a matter of time. But I am a doctor who is not only here to diagnose a disease, but also to give hope that for as long as one is willing, then half the battle is won," begins Dr. Sonny Vitoria, medical director and owner of the Biovitale Health Clinic and Symbios Holistic and Wellness Sanctuary.

For the doctor who is into integrative medicine, giving up is not an option. He elaborates, "That's why I include in my patient's treatment other modalities such as diet, exercise, medicine, and a megadose of the superfruit and superfood acai. I cannot ig-

nore and overlook the effect that this Brazilian berry has on my patients. Even as I prescribe the appropriate pharmacological medications and treatment modalities, their swift recovery from various ailments is something that's almost remarkable. There is no side effect except for the patient's much improved sense of well-being."

Studies show that not only does acai berry have one of the highest contents of antioxidants known to man, it is also a source of plant sterols, essential fatty acids, dietary fiber, minerals, and amino acids. Essential fatty acids, omegas 3, 6, and 9 help slow down the effects of aging and can lower bad fats like cholesterol in the blood.

"Organique Acai Berry is rich in antioxidants that fight and get rid of cell-damaging free radicals that cause pre-



A-OK: Acai berries contain 10 times the antioxidants found in red grapes and blueberries.

ture aging and can make their way into your body through pollution, smoking, and chemicals found in our tap water and foods. Free radicals are said to eventually cause diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, and are also linked to the growth of cancer, tumors, as well as leukemia and other blood-related diseases," Vitoria adds.

Scientists have classified the acai berry as one of the world's number one super-

foods. Dr. Vitoria explains, "This is because the acai berry contains 10 times the antioxidants found in red grapes and blueberries. In my own search for the best or most effective health supplement to boost the health of my patients, I learned about the ORAC. I also learned that the recommended daily ORAC level is between 3,000 and 5,000! But most Filipinos, who are busy and always on the go, and are now

used to eating double portions of fast foods and instant noodles, are actually consuming less than 1,000 ORAC units a day!"

The good doctor points out, "This is why I advise my patients 'if you want foods with greater antioxidant properties, you look for foods with high ORAC levels. The higher the ORAC number, the stronger the antioxidant properties of the substance. Fresh acai already has an amazing 5,500 ORAC score. Even more amazing is Organique Acai as it actually has an ORAC value of over 70,000 per 100 grams. Imagine acai as your powerful crusader against any illness or infection, helping the body regain its strength. For me, it's an excellent beverage which I can make into a smoothie, sorbet, slush, or even top my green salad with for my overall health."

TRAVEL (from page 8, EXCURSIONS...)

chunks. Another standout dish was beef *dinuguan* cooked with *gata*.

For *merienda*, we traveled to nearby Barangay Dayandang to a small roadside eatery named Cordova's *Kinalasan*. The place is a simple, makeshift house which is home to, reputedly, the best *kinalas* in the city. *Kinalas* is a noodle dish made of stripped meat from cow's or pig's head which are boiled until tender. Complementing the meal was a plate of *maruya* (banana fritters).

In the evening we started our city tour. Heading toward the town center we passed by

bridges that crossed the Naga River, famous for the traditional fluvial procession for the image of Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia. The center of town, with its numerous plazas and surrounding Spanish-era churches, buzzed with activity. At Plaza Quince Martires is a monument commemorating the 15 brave martyrs of Bicol. Further on is Plaza Quezon where parades and public events are held. Adjacent to it is Plaza Rizal which has a monument that is supposedly the original winning entry for the Rizal Monument in Luneta Park in Manila.

Other nearby places of in-

terest is the Plaza de Nueva Caceres which has the monument depicting Naga's history from pre-colonial times onwards. Beside it is the Naga City People's Mall which used to be the largest single-roof structure in Asia when it was built in the 1970s.

The next day we headed for Mt. Isarog. The trip was a short 20-minute ride to the base of the 2,000-meter high mountain. As a major watershed, Mt. Isarog is filled with numerous waterfalls, streams and thousands of different plant and animal species and is one of the oldest and well-preserved natural forest parks in the Philippines. From Barangay

Panicuason, it was a short half-hour walk up a steep dirt road to the trail leading to Malabsay Falls. Along the way there were clearings where you could take in a panoramic view of the mountain. From the trail we walked down through a lush forest into the falls. The 40-foot cascade poured into a cold pool of water streaming down the mountain slope.

Nearby is Panicuason Hot Springs Resort. The resort has several natural pools with temperatures ranging from a cold 20 degrees Celsius to a relaxing 39 degrees Celsius. If you want something more adrenaline-filled, the resort has one of the fastest ziplines in the country. At 280 feet above the ground, the Tower 3 zipline is 200 meters long and takes an average of 10-12 seconds to traverse.

In the afternoon we opted for a tour of some of the churches on Naga X's Heritage and Pilgrimage itinerary. First stop was the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral, considered the largest church in the region. Beside it is the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary. A national landmark, the seminary pro-

duced the first Filipino bishop, Jorge Barlin, and national hero, Jose Ma. Panganiban. Within the structure is the Archeological Museum which showcases pre-colonial artifacts and, oddly, a set of dinosaur eggs from the Gobi Desert. Also within is the Ecclesiastical Museum with religious artifacts on display.

Afterwards we rode across the city and its outlying barangays, visiting churches such as the St. Joseph the Worker Parish, known for its Baroque design. We ended our tour by stopping at the Peñafrancia Shrine and having a snack of toasted *siopao*. A Bicolano innovation, the meat and egg stuffed dough is oven-toasted for a longer shelf life. But it is best eaten while warm.

Whether it's the activities, religious pilgrimage, culture or food that you seek, Naga X is able to bring all of these tourism elements together for the best kind of experience for all kinds of visitors. It is a prime example of what happens when the government and the private sector work together in perfect harmony. (www.philstar.com)

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LEGAL NOTES



By Reuben S. Seguritan

Senate Bill Would Clear Employment Visa Backlog

based category.

Among the groups that would be exempted are the foreign nationals of extraordinary ability, outstanding professors and researchers and multinational executives and managers who are under the current first preference category with an annual allocation of 40,000.

Also, exempted would be those with doctorate degrees in any field; those with U.S. advanced degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) earned in the 5 years before filing an immigrant visa petition and have a job offer in a related field; and physicians who have completed their 2 year foreign residency requirement or who have received a J-1 waiver.

Spouses and children of employment-based applicants would not also be subject to the annual numerical limit. These derivative beneficiaries used up more than half of the annual quota in the past so that their noninclusion would free up about 80,000 visas yearly.

The yearly quota would be allocated under the bills as follows: 40% to advanced degree professionals and persons of exceptional ability, 40% to skilled workers, professionals and other workers, 10% to certain special immigrants, and 10% to immigrant investors.

The thousands of recaptured visa numbers that were never used due to bureaucratic and processing delays would be added in fiscal year 2015.

120,000 yearly would also

be available during the first 4 years under the new merit-based program of the bill. Immigrant visas will be granted under this program to those who can demonstrate that they have the needed number of points from their education, employment, length of residence in the U.S. and other factors.

As for temporary visas, the H-1B cap would be raised from 65,000 to 110,000 per year and the cap may be adjusted each year up to 10% with a ceiling of 180,000. The advance degree cap exemption will be raised to 25,000 but would be limited to STEM graduates. More stringent rules will apply such as nondisplacement attestations, additional recruitment steps and higher fees for H-1B dependent employers.

For lower-skilled workers, a new nonimmigrant work visa would be created. The W-1 visa will be available to foreign workers who work for a registered employer and will be valid for 3 years with extensions in 3-year increments. 20,000 W-1 visas will be allocated in the first year and this would increase to 75,000 in the fourth year. Further increases would be determined by a market-based formula but the cap would not exceed 200,000.

W-2 and W-3 nonimmigrant visa categories would also be created to replace the current H-2A visa for agricultural workers.

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Seeeking to attract highly-skilled and highly educated professionals and workers to the United States, the Senate immigration reform bill proposes a number of significant employment-based immigration reforms.

The bill would clear the huge employment-based visa backlog by exempting several groups of immigrants from the annual quota of 140,000, recapturing visa numbers that were authorized from 1992 to 2003 but were never used, eliminating the per country limit, and creating a merit-

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Pacquiao Plugs CNN Docu on Manila Prostitution

by Camille Diola
Friday, May 24, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - Boxing champion and Sarangani Rep. Manny Pacquiao promoted on Friday the encore airing of CNN's full-length documentary *The Fighters* featuring a woman's fight against sex trafficking in Manila.

The documentary, a result of two years of undercover work in the capital city's red light district, was first shown over CNN International Channel last May 17 and 18, but will return on June 1 and 2 in 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. airings.

Pacquiao, whom the film features as among the lawmakers who sought a stronger measure against sex trafficking, urged his Twitter followers to watch the 80-minute documentary made available in full online.

"Please watch. It is important," he said.

Teaser of CNN documentary 'The Fighter'

The *Fighters* looks in-



A videograb from the documentary film featuring champion boxer and congressman Manny Pacquiao (center) and Cecilia Flores-Oebanda (left)

depth at the Manila trafficking industry following the life and advocacy of Visayan Forum Foundation executive director Cecilia Flores-Oebanda, a warrior against sex slavery, and the girls and women she rescued.

Oebanda tapped Pacquiao's help to champion the cause against trafficking as "the toughest fight that he will wage in his entire life," she said, adding that unlike boxing, the war to stop sex trade especially of minors lasts "beyond 12 rounds."

Journalist Leif Coorlim, executive director CNN Free-

dom Project that produced the film, called the phenomenon of trafficking and cyber sex in the country "scary," "sickening" and "incredibly hard for law enforcement to stop."

"In a country like the Philippines, nothing ever is as it seems," Coorlim said in the video, citing a district in Makati where "many trafficking victims wind up."

The government has said that there are currently 800,000 people involved in the illegal sex industry, about 100,000 of which are children and minors. (www.philstar.com)

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MAINLAND NEWS

Boracay as World's Best? 'Hardly,' Says LA Times Travel Editor; Calls WV's Tourist Destination a Big Disappointment

By Melinda Myers / PNS

CALIFORNIA, USA – More fun in the Philippines? Maybe. Or to borrow the word of a Los Angeles (LA) Times Travel Editor, “hardly.” The reason? Boracay, the Philippines’ hyped-up tourist destination that generated a big “thumbs-down” from a renowned Travel Writer.

Located in Western Visayas Region, Boracay fell short – very short – of the expectations of Catherine Hamm who incidentally has since counted and considered the Philippines as among her 34 places called “home.”

A principal figure in LA Times Travel Section since 1999, Hamm became the paper’s Travel Editor in 2003. Interviews granted by Hamm revealed fond stories of her Manila stay during her childhood following her father’s employ with the US Federal Government.

Hamm in Sunday’s LA Times edition wrote a lengthy piece of last year’s Boracay visit entitled “The best island in the

world? Hardly.” It was to be one of the day’s main stories that had Boracay summed up by Hamm as the island that “doesn’t live up to the high expectations.”

“Can a million and a half people be wrong?...Can Travel & Leisure be wrong?...Can Trip Advisor be wrong?,” Hamm’s article began as she explained that the said figure was the expected visitors of Boracay this year and “Travel & Leisure” being the magazine that dubbed Boracay as “best island in the world.” Trip Advisor on the other hand is the popular website cum traveler’s best guide online that considered Boracay as a “Travelers’ Choice 2013 Winner.”

For Hamm, all three “could be wrong. Or misguided” followed by “Or I could be.”

And with writing style distinct to Hamm, her article continued stating that Boracay lovers may not be beach experts.

“Maybe they don’t suffer guilt about the poverty or the damage to the environment,” she quipped with her dislike for

Boracay compared to Manila’s heat and humidity. The latter even emerged as the better option for Hamm though with her piece concluding that she was better off with Manila’s smog, traffic and heat.

Such as she expressed her disappointment of not finding “the hoped-for-piece of paradise....”

“If Boracay had been a first date, there wouldn’t have been a second. We just weren’t right for each other. I should have known that from the minute I arrived at the hotel,” she wrote.

Hamm stayed at the plush Boracay Regency where she took particular note of hotel policy cum warning that charges will be made should the linens be stained. The stains being that of Henna Tatto, coconut oil or hair dye.

For Hamm, the hotel policy was a little too much saying she did not understand why she would be charged in the first place saying “What would I be doing that would cause me to damage the sheets like this?”

Hamm also chided Boracay’s road network from the

main port calling it “pot-holed obstacle courses” and the stream of Boracay vendors and human traffic as “a bit overwhelming.”

Hamm in the same article also made mention of a news story that wrote of damage to the island’s corals. Said recollection had her quit her “little relaxation” at a snorkel stop.

“...I remembered that the coral that I could now see clearly has been so badly damaged that the Philippine Daily Inquirer reported last year that less than a tenth of it remains in its original state. Coral is critical for marine life. I wasn’t helping. I got out of the water,” she said.

Yet it was to be sight of children begging and mothers with children in tow likewise asking for money that turned off Hamm.

“We didn’t need a henna tattoo or a coconut oil massage and we didn’t want the guilt,” she said while stressing that what she actually came for was the promise of yet another hotel, Discovery Shores, “the hotel that had started me on this Bo-

racay fever dream.”

Voted by Travel & Leisure as the Fourth Best Hotel in the world, Discovery Shores likewise was a disappointment for Hamm and chided for the failed promise of “barefoot elegance.”

“It was a bit of a hike to our room at Moorish-looking Discovery Shores, but things were looking up. Our accommodations included a living room, a bedroom and a small kitchen,” she wrote. “Our bellman explained the large bowl on the floor in which yellow flowers floated on water. Someone would be by soon to give us a welcome foot massage.” Sadly, the masseuse never came or in Hamm’s words was “MIA” or was Missing In Action.

Yet massages or not, Hamm had her enough impressions of Boracay.

“No number of spa treatments was going to change my impression of Boracay, a place for partyers or rich people, of which I am neither,” she concluded. “This wasn’t a love match – not for me. Maybe 30 years ago when Boracay and I were less overdeveloped.”

PHILIPPINE NEWS

US Issues Terrorist Kidnap Alert

MANILA, Philippines - The US embassy yesterday advised Americans to re-evaluate their personal safety and consider postponing trips to the Zamboanga peninsula, citing terrorist threats to kidnap foreigners in the area.

In an “emergency message,” the embassy alerted US citizens of a credible threat that terrorists planned to kidnap foreigners for ransom in Zamboanga.

US government personnel already in Zamboanga were directed to relocate to a secure area.

US government employees planning to travel to Zamboanga were directed to defer their trip at this time.

The military said it would continue to intensify its security

operations to prevent untoward incidents and to ensure the safety of the public.

“We respect the US embassy’s issuance of travel advisories to its people who intend to visit the Philippines, particularly to the island of Mindanao,” Armed Forces public affairs chief Maj. Ramon Zagala said.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has a commitment to protect Filipinos and foreign citizens visiting our country, he added.

Zagala said they would continue to work with the police to thwart any attempt to jeopardize peace and stability in the country.

“We are vigilant and we will continue to monitor the security situation in the country, particularly in Mindanao,” he said. (www.philstar.com)

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GLOBAL NEWS

Phi No Longer in France's Foreign Aid Blacklist

MANILA, Philippines - The Philippines is no longer included in a new list of countries that have been blacklisted by France due to foreign aid fraud, Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario said yesterday.



DFA Sec. Albert del Rosario

Del Rosario made the statement after seeking clarification from the French government.

"On the news that France blacklisted the Philippines over foreign aid fraud, I have sought clarification with the French government and have been officially advised that this information is totally inaccurate," Del Rosario said.

He said the French foreign minister made a full denial of the report.

"With relevance to the aforementioned blacklist, we have in fact been informed that there is a new list and this list does not include the Philippines," Del Rosario said.

He explained that the mistake apparently arose from an interview of a civil servant by a French newspaper.

The report said France blacklisted the Philippines and 16 other countries that do not help investigate foreign aid fraud, banning the use of

their banks to help distribute development funds.

The blacklist expanded on an already established register of eight "non-cooperative states and territories" including Botswana, Brunei, Guatemala, Nauru and the Philippines.

Other blacklisted countries are Costa Rica, Dominica, Lebanon, Liberia, Panama, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Arab Emirates and Vanuatu.

The Department of Foreign Affairs announced Del Rosario would leave last night for Paris to meet with his counterpart, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius.

During his visit, Del Rosario will reiterate President Aquino's invitation for French President Francois Hollande to visit the Philippines.

Del Rosario and Fabius would meet for the first time and discuss is-

suues of common concern, in particular enhancement of cooperation in areas of trade and investment and socio-cultural exchanges. Both sides are expected to share information about developing tourism and improvements in tourism infrastructure.

Del Rosario's visit to France follows the visit of Vice President Jejomar Binay in April this year as President Aquino's representative to the opening of the Exhibition on Philippine pre-colonial art at the Musée du Quai Branly.

French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, who visited the Philippines in October 2012, also met Binay in Paris. France is the world's fifth largest economy. It has an advanced industrial economy, with a strong base in manufacturing, particularly in automotives and aerospace.

France is one of the Philippines' partners in development assistance. It has expressed interest in cooperating with the Philippines on climate change programs and disaster risk reduction management.

Meanwhile, European Union Ambassador Guy Ledoux said the use of their aid to the Philippines had not encountered any problem. "As for the EU, we have not identified

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problems in the management of EU funds," said Ledoux, who opened yesterday the 2nd EU-Philippines Meeting on Energy at the New World Hotel in Makati.

He explained that the EU applies the same standard and conducts regular auditing of all its projects implemented by government agencies and NGOs in every country that receives assistance from the EU.

"In case there is a problem we look into that very carefully but we do regular auditing of all our projects. We hire accounting firms to do that," Ledoux said.

"You notice you have not heard about any problems in the two years I have been here regarding development," he said. (www.philstar.com)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

First Missile-firing Warship for Phi Navy Due to Arrive

MANILA, Philippines - The Philippine Navy will have its first missile-firing capable warship with the scheduled arrival of BRP Ramon Alcaraz, a decommissioned United States Coast Guard cutter the government has bought.

Defense and military sources said yesterday the Alcaraz (PF-16) is due to arrive in the country either by July or August. It has been fitted with anti-ship harpoon missiles.

"Her weapon system is heavier and more sophisticated compared to her sister ship, the BRP Gregorio del Pilar,"

sources said.

Aside from harpoon surface-to-surface missiles, Alcaraz is armed with 76mm Oto Melara automatic cannon, two 25-bushmaster guns and heavy machineguns.

The BRP Gregorio del Pilar is only armed with 76mm Oto Melara gun when it was acquired in 2011, with the defense and military leadership spending more to enhance its capabilities.

Alcaraz has already completed its three-day sea trial off South Carolina where it underwent major engine repairs and refurbishment for several

months before it was turned over to the Philippines last year.

"With the arrival of our second Hamilton-class cutter, converted into a frigate, the Navy will have its first missile-firing warship," a military official said.

Alcaraz weighs 3,250 tons, has a length of 378 feet, beam of 43 feet, and draft of 15 feet.

Its propulsion systems consist of two diesel engines and two gas turbine engines, giving it a top speed of 29 knots.

When deployed, Alcaraz, with a total of 167 officers and men complement, will have a cruising range of 14,000 miles and can stay in the high seas for 45 days. (www.philstar.com)

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