

HAWAII



FILIPINO CHRONICLE

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◆ DECEMBER 7, 2013 ◆

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EDITORIALS

Hawaii Legalizes Gay Marriages—Now What?

With a stroke of a pen, Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed SB1 HD1, the controversial gay marriage bill, into law on November 14, 2013. He didn't do it all by himself of course. The 51-member State House of Representatives and 25-member Senate passed the bill by votes of 30-19-2 and 19-4-2, respectively. Each legislative body had two members excused. As expected, the gay marriage debate sharply divided the community. It was interesting to note during the seemingly endless hours of emotional testimony that traditional marriage supporters tended to emphasize the negative impacts that legalizing gay marriages would have for Hawaii, while supporters of the measure downplayed any such effects.

Nevertheless, all of the euphoria and disappointment of the past few weeks will soon die down, and life will go on. There are bills to be paid, phone calls that need returning and errands to be run. But now that the landmark bill has been passed and enacted into law, the question begs—how then shall we live? For Christians and the “religiously-inclined,” they would do well to live out their faith, talk less and do more acts of random acts of kindness. Such heart-felt action truly speaks volumes and would do way more to help their cause of reaching the lost—instead of a sharp, judgmental tongue.

On the flip side, the gay community needs to also understand that not everyone who speaks against them is a bigot or hater. Some gay rights supporters are all-too-quick to vilify others who take an opposing viewpoint. These activists demand tolerance and acceptance for their lifestyle, yet they themselves are unable to tolerate the opinions of others.

Let's not forget that Hawaii is the most diverse state in the nation and a melting pot of many races, cultures and backgrounds. Surely the good people of Hawaii can and should extend more aloha for each other's differences. Tolerance and respect must go both ways if we are to continue living peacefully in this land of aloha.

Join Relief Efforts To Help Victims of Typhoon Haiyan This Holiday Season

We've all saw heart-wrenching, graphic images and read articles of Typhoon Haiyan that tore through the Philippines, leaving towns ravaged, and homes flattened to rubble. One of the mightiest typhoons to hit land in recorded history, Typhoon Haiyan has left millions of Filipinos homeless and killed thousands. The devastation was biblical tragedy to many Filipinos on the islands of Leyte and Samar, with Tacloban city hardest hit and almost completely washed away.

Sustained Media Coverage

While the international and national media deserve kudos for excellent reporting of the Philippines' natural disaster and helped to raise massive awareness for aid, we are all too aware how national news attention on natural disasters quickly washes away.

It is imperative that media around the world that focus on the Filipino community such as ours, the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle, and larger local media that serve communities where

FROM THE PUBLISHER

On case you've forgotten, the 29th Annual Honolulu City Lights celebration is this Saturday, December 7, at Honolulu Hale. The ever-popular event ushers in the Christmas season and will include the lighting of a 60-foot tall Norfolk Pine on the front lawn of Honolulu Hale, followed by the spectacular Electric Light Parade. After the parade, make sure to see all of the uniquely-decorated Christmas trees created by city employees in the courtyard of Honolulu Hale. The free event starts at 7 pm, so come early and find a good seat!

Speaking of Christmas celebrations, don't miss the *Pasko! sa FilCom* on Sunday, December 15, 2013 from 3:30 pm to 7:30 pm. The free event will feature Filipino food and holiday treats; handicrafts and ornaments for sale; and traditional music and dance. *Pasko! sa FilCom* is a Filipino-style Christmas celebration in Hawaii. Please turn to page 9 for more details.

For this issue, the Chronicle delves into the controversial and newly-enacted same sex marriage law which has dominated local news headlines for the past several weeks. Supporters from both sides of the aisle cheered and bemoaned the passage of SB1 HD1 which recognizes marriages between individuals of the same sex and extends the same rights, benefits, protections and responsibilities of marriage that opposite-sex couples receive. Filipinos have differing opinions on the issue—some truly respect gays and lesbians in the community, while others feel that same sex marriages do not conform to family values. For more on SB1 HD1, the special legislative session and the impacts that legalizing gay marriages may have on Hawaii, please turn to page 4 for our cover story. If you also want to know how your state representative or senator voted on SB1 HD1, see page 5. We could have stopped our coverage there, but we didn't! To further enlighten our readers, we have provided viewpoints from key individuals in support and/or opposition of gay marriages. Please take time to read the four columns on pages 6-7 and see if you agree with them.

There are other stories and columns in this issue that we hope you will enjoy reading. As always, we invite our readers to contact us at: filiplinochronicle@gmail.com if you have story ideas, tips or concerns regarding Hawaii's dynamic and vibrant Filipino community. Our sincerest thanks to all of you for reading and faithfully supporting the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle—the state's leading Filipino newspaper!

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

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

Filipinos have a large presence such as those in Hawaii, Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco, Las Vegas, New Jersey, to name a few, will continue sustained coverage on the rebuilding process in the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan.

The longer media devotes coverage on relief efforts in the Philippines, the longer much needed aid will continue to benefit the families affected by the deadly storm.

Holiday Charity

In the spirit of giving this holiday season, here are some suggestions to help victims of Typhoon Haiyan:

- 1) The easiest and perhaps most reliable way to directly help is to make a monetary donation. Call the Hawaii Red Cross at 1-800-REDCROSS or go to redcross.org. If want to send a check, indicate in the memo line "Philippine Typhoon Haiyan" and send it to 4155 Diamond Head Road, Honolulu, HI 96816.
- 2) Organize your own mini-fundraiser among family and friends

(continued on page 3)



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OPINION

Why Can't Congress Aim Higher?

By Lee H. Hamilton

Congressional budget negotiators are moving to meet a December 13 deadline to produce, well, something. For weeks, we've been told to keep expectations low. There'll be no "grand bargain," negotiators say. Commentators believe that even the narrowest agreement will be a signal achievement. So here's my question: Doesn't that seem like an awfully low bar to you?

Yes, I know. The atmosphere on Capitol Hill is poisonous. The two parties — even the various factions within the parties — can barely stand to be in a room with each other. Expecting a sizable budget accomplishment from Congress right now is like expecting water from a rock. It would take a miracle.

Yet there are consequences to not producing an agreement

capable of clarifying fiscal affairs. Right now, government agencies cannot plan ahead; they can't consider long-term projects; they have trouble with staffing; they can't set priorities; they're forced to fund programs that have outlived their usefulness and cannot fund programs they know are necessary. And that's just the federal bureaucracy. Contractors and people who depend on federal spending can't plan, either. Our economy can't achieve liftoff, and millions of ordinary Americans remain mired by its slow growth. Washington faces tough choices about spending, taxes, and entitlements, and Congress isn't making them.

Things are not wholly bleak. Republican Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, the lead House negotiator, and Democrat Patty Murray of Washington, who heads up the Senate team, have been working at least to address the sequester. As you'll recall, this is the draconian set of across-the-

board budget cuts put in place in 2011. At first, many agencies were able to defer maintenance, spend money they'd squirreled away, and cut staff by attrition. This next year will be much tougher: agencies are out of easy options, and defense spending faces an immense, \$21 billion cut. That will be felt in every congressional district in the country, given how adept the Defense Department has been at spreading its largesse around. Not surprisingly, pressure is coming from both sides of the aisle to ease the impact.

The sequester is a clever, cutting good and bad government spending without rhyme or reason. If congressional negotiators can take a smarter approach, that's all to the good.

But if they're going to do that, shouldn't they address the real problems? The country needs gradual deficit reduction that avoids disrupting the economy or harming the vulnerable. It needs reforms to Social Security and

Medicare that put them on a solid footing for decades to come.

These are daunting challenges, but Congress's toolbox is hardly empty. It could limit itemized tax deductions, increase Medicare premiums for the well-to-do, place caps on spending, shave federal employee benefits to bring them in line with the private sector, increase government fees, sell public assets, put more of the wireless spectrum up for bid, increase the Social Security contributions of higher-income earners, change the consumer price index.... There are literally scores of possibilities, none of them easy, but all of them offering adroit negotiators the chance to craft a long-term solution to problems that have beset Capitol Hill for years and held economic growth far below its potential.

By addressing these issues head on, Congress could move beyond the political machinations that have deeply frustrated so many Americans, and play a constructive role in the econ-

omy: promoting growth by investment in infrastructure and basic research, providing incentives for entrepreneurship and job creation. It could create a responsible framework for reducing spending as the economy grows. It could reform a tax code that everyone agrees is broken.

At some point, Congress will have to put the federal budget on "a sustainable path for the long term," in the words of the CBO. So long as it does not, the economic consequences hurt everyone. Congressional leaders seem blissfully unconcerned about this and aim only for low-hanging fruit, but Americans know that Congress can and should do better, and are rightly tired of careening from crisis to crisis. As members of Congress continue to make politically attractive suggestions that don't come close to achieving a lasting solution, let's urge them to get real. It's time for Congress to go big.

LEE HAMILTON is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

EDITORIALS (from page 2, JOIN...)

this holiday season. If you are part of an organization or church, encourage members to start a special fundraiser for victims of Typhoon Haiyan. Some fundraising ideas for your organization: do a car wash, have a holiday bake sale, or organize a mini-walk/run.

- 3) Contact the Philippine Consulate in Hawaii. It is the best place to find out exactly what is needed.
- 4) Help existing fund-drives already in progress that are run by Filipino organizations such as the Fil-Com Center, Filipino Chamber of Commerce, Oahu Filipino Community Council (OFCC), or Congress of Visayan Organizations (COVO).

Kokua from Hawaii

Since the news of the deadly storm hit our island shore, many private companies, civic groups, and schools locally have risen to the challenge of helping to raise funds for the Philippines, have offered free temporary services

to help Filipinos here get in contact with their families in the Philippines, or have conducted drives for donations that include canned goods, blankets, toiletries, towels, clothes, and rice.

Just to name a few of the organizations active in relief efforts: Aloha United Way, Foodland, Starbucks, the University of Hawaii and UH Athletics, Oceanic Time Warner Cable, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Verizon Wireless, Hawaiian Telcom, Hawaiian Electric Industries, Panda Express, LBC Remittance, the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Pacific Command, St. Joseph's Catholic School, Damien Memorial School, St. Anthony's Church in Kalihi, L&L Hawaiian Barbecue, and Prudential Locations.

The Consuelo Foundation will match contributions up to \$2 million.

AARP will match contributions up to \$500,000.

JCB is donating \$500,000 worth of heavy machinery and generators.

Hawaii banks are also teaming up to accept contribu-

tions for disaster victims of Typhoon Haiyan. From now until December 31, customers will be able to donate money at any branch of every bank on every island. Participating banks include: American Savings Bank, Bank of Hawaii, Bank of the Orient, Central Pacific Bank, Finance Factors, First Hawaiian Bank, Hawaii National Bank, HomeStreet Bank, Ohana Pacific Bank, Pacific Rim Bank, and Territorial Savings Bank.

These organizations, hundreds of private individuals, as well as many other Hawaii-based groups currently working to help victims, deserve a big mahalo for their humanitarian efforts.

The affected areas in the Philippines will require long-term rebuilding of infrastructure and long-term social services, besides the immediate shelter and current financial assistance.

We can all do our part in the effort and share our unique talents. Filipino doctors are making mission trips, entertainers such as Fil-Am Bruno Mars and other artists have donated songs for a special

album aimed at raising funds for the Philippines, parents are showing their children by example the value of humanitarianism, and children making their communities proud with their school fundraising.

Manny Pacquiao said before his latest fight which he dedicated to his countrymen devastated by the storm: "the Filipino people will rise

again."

This is what all the individuals and organizations worldwide working on relief efforts would want: that the victims of Typhoon Haiyan get a second chance at living.

This holiday season, we hope our readers and advertisers could help to make this goal become a reality for them.



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COVER STORY

Aftermath of Legalizing Gay Marriages in Hawaii

By Chona Montesines-Sonido

Six homosexual couples officially tied the knot shortly after midnight on December 2, 2013 in ceremonies held at the Sheraton Waikiki. And with that began a new era in Hawaii's history, as the Aloha State became the 15th state in the union to officially legalize gay marriages.

Gay marriage supporters hailed the historic event, saying such celebrations were long overdue.

"In Hawaii, we don't leave family behind," says State Sen. Clayton Hee, chair of the Hawaii State Senate Judiciary Committee, which approved Senate Bill 1 (SB1), the controversial marriage equality bill. "We believe, above all else, that every member of our ohana should be treated with fairness, respect and dignity. This legislation underscores the spirit of Aloha and inclusion that defines who we are as the people of Hawaii."

In September, Gov. Neil Abercrombie called for a special legislative session to move forward on a bill to legalize gay marriage. He based his decision on a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June that a portion of the Defense

of Marriage Act (DOMA) unlawfully discriminated against married same-sex couples by prohibiting the federal government from recognizing those marriages and by denying federal benefits and protections to those couples.

The special session began October 28 as Senate and the House lawmakers heard testimony on SB1 that would recognize marriages between individuals of the same sex and extends to same-sex couples the same rights, benefits, protections and responsibilities of marriage that opposite-sex couples receive. Testimony was emotional and heated as expected with both supporters and opponents claiming to represent the true aloha spirit. The measure drew tens of thousands of pages of written and online testimony and required

dozens of hours of hearings and floor sessions.

Pastors, priests, clergy and church members spoke in opposition and argued that voters approved a constitutional amendment in 1998 to prevent the courts from imposing gay marriage equality at that time.

"The people of Hawaii have already spoken on the same sex marriage issue and in 1998 overwhelmingly rejected the idea or redefining marriage," says Eva Andrade, Executive Director of the Hawaii Family Forum, a grassroots organization that represents various Christian churches and denominations in Hawaii.

Unfortunately, the amendment was written in a way that left open the possibility that the State Legislature could legalize same-sex marriage at a later time when public opinion would be more open, which is exactly what happened.

Traditional marriage supporters were also alarmed at how quickly lawmakers moved to expedite passage of the controversial bill. They argued that SB1 should have been given due process during the regular session where it could have been properly vetted and examined as all other bills. Opponents also called on lawmakers to put the issue on the ballot and let the people decide. Redefining marriage, they warned, would have unintended consequences that the Legislature had not considered.

As it appeared that SB1 would likely pass both Houses, opponents demanded



broader exemptions for churches and people with religious objections to same-sex marriage. House lawmakers agreed and added provisions for churches and affiliated non-profit groups that exempted them from renting facilities or providing services related to homosexual weddings. However, lawmakers balked at extending similar exemptions to allow private business owners to refuse their services to homosexual clients based on religious beliefs.

In the end, both the House and Senate passed the controversial bill. The outcome of allowing gays to wed in Hawaii, if any, will unveil itself in the coming months.

Christianity Under Fire?

State Sen. Will Espero voted 'yes' on SB1 under the premise that churches and religious institutions would be exempt and clergy would be protected.

"No church or religious doctrine would be changed, and no one's private faith or personal relationship with God will have to change," he writes in his monthly newsletter. "The freedom to practice one's religion is a profound right I am committed to protecting for all of our citizens."

However, traditional marriage supporters are fearing reverse discrimination as a result of the legalization of gay marriages. They say that the new law does not protect florists, photographers and other small business owners from being compelled to provide their services, even if they stand in opposition to same sex marriages.

Private businesses that offer goods, services or facilities to the public as customers, clients or visitors, are subject to Hawaii's public accommodations law. Under Chapter 489, Hawaii Revised Statutes, it is illegal to discriminate against a person in a place of public accommodation based on race, sex (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, color, religion, ancestry or disability.

Andrade from the Hawaii Family Forum cites numerous cases of bakers, photographers even a bed and breakfast right here in Hawaii facing serious legal jeopardy for their refusal to offer their services in contradiction of their deeply felt religious convictions about marriage as it is taught by the tenets of their faith.

"The number of lawsuits against people of faith is

(continued on page 5)



Michael A. McMann, M.D.

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COVER STORY

(from page 4. AFTERMATH...)

growing at an alarming rate across the country,” she wrote in testimony. “We believe that redefining marriage to include same sex couples will leave little room, if any, for those who disagree.”

Others also fear that the new law has empowered gay activists to affect public education. Michael Abagon, who pastors a Southern Baptist Church, submitted written testimony in opposition to SB1, fearing that activists will force schools to sanction extracurricular activities in which gay culture is the focus and also impose textbooks that acknowledge homosexual relationships.

Jo-Ann M. Adams, legislative liaison for the LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, says that SB 1 does not require homosexuality to be taught in schools.

“The subject of school curriculum is not addressed in this bill,” she writes in testimony. “If there are changes in the curriculum, those changes will be subject to public hearings. Objections can be raised

at that time.”

Financial Windfall for Hawaii?

In addition to Hawaii, homosexual marriages are legal in the states of Illinois, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and the District of Columbia. Such marriages are banned in other states, except for New Mexico, which has no laws banning or allowing it.

With Hawaii already a popular honeymoon destination, gay marriage supporters say that the state could see a boost in tourism from gay couples. According to University of Hawaii-Manoa economist Sumner La Croix, Hawaii stands to gain about \$217 million over the next three years.

La Croix released the results of his study in July. He said most of the boost would come from visitor arrivals and spending, along with state and county general excise tax revenues.



Hawaii’s \$14 billion a year visitor industry is already well-positioned for increased business from the fledgling gay marriage industry. Local hotels, wedding photographers, caterers, florists and other businesses already specialize in the marriage business. The Sheraton Waikiki has already launched an aggressive advertising campaign in mainland lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) publications.

Officials with the Hawaii Tourism Authority expect gay marriages to have a positive effect on tourism. However, HTA has yet to begin marketing to the LGBT community.

Some observers say the state should sell itself as an all-inclusive destination and they will come. Gay marriage supporters say local businesses are already thinking of ways to embrace the gay community.

Interestingly enough, any boost in tourism would economically benefit the tens of thousands of Filipinos who are employed by and form the backbone of the local hotel and visitor industry.

Voter Backlash?

With a majority of testifiers speaking against SB1 during the special legislative session, some observers say a backlash at the polls in 2014

could happen, especially if churches and other conservative groups target those lawmakers who voted ‘yes’ for homosexual marriages. However, one Filipino attorney doubts any such voter backlash will occur.

“Voters today seem to be more concerned with the economy, affordable housing and clean environment than with the legalization of same-sex marriage,” says Lance D. Collins, a Filipino-American attorney who also holds a Ph.D. in political science from UH-Manoa.

Collins, who is also a Resident Scholar at the Hawaii Institute for Philippine Studies, notes that church groups and other conservatives in 2010 tried to replace then-Rep. Blake Oshiro, an openly-gay legislator, with former Honolulu Councilmember Gary Okino in a House district considered largely “conservative Democrat.”

“Okino was walloped,” Collins recalls. “Conservative groups might target a vulnera-

(continued on page 13)

SENATE BILL 1: HOW THEY VOTED

STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

YES (30):

Della Au Belatti	Tom Brower	Denny Coffman	Cindy Evans
Fay Hanohano	Mark Hashem	Linda Ichiyama	Kaniela Ing
Derek Kawakami	Bertrand Kobayashi	Chris Lee	Nicole Lowen
Sylvia Luke	Angus McKelvey	John Mizuno	Dee Morikawa
Mark Nakashima	Scott Nishimoto	Takashi Ohno	Richard Onishi
Karl Rhoads	Scott Saiki	Calvin Say	Joseph Souki
K. Mark Takai	Gregg Takayama	Roy Takumi	Cynthia Thielen
Jessica Wooley	Kyle Yamashita		

NO (19):

Henry Aquino	Karen Awana	Romy Cachola	Mele Carroll
Ty Cullen	Richard Fale	Beth Fukumoto	Sharon Har
Ken Ito	Aaron Johanson	Jo Jordan	Lauren Matsumoto
Bob McDermott	Marcus Oshiro	James Tokioka	Cliff Tsuji
Gene Ward	Justin Woodson	Ryan Yamane	

EXCUSED (2):

Rida Cabanilla	Isaac Choy
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STATE SENATE

YES (19):

Rosalyn Baker	J. Kalani English	Will Espero	Brickwood Galuteria
Josh Green	Clayton Hee	David Ige	Les Ihara Jr.
Gilbert Kahele	Gilbert Keith-Agaran	Michelle Kidani	Clarence Nishihara
Russell Ruderman	Maile Shimabukuro	Malama Solomon	Laura Thielen
Jill Tokuda	Glenn Wakai	Suzanne Chun	Oakland

NO (4):

Mike Gabbard	Donna Mercado Kim	Ronald Kouchi	Sam Slom
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EXCUSED (2):

Donovan Dela Cruz	Brian Taniguchi
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POINTS OF VIEW

Same-Sex Marriage Recap

By Will Espero

The June 26th decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in *United States vs. Windsor* stated that section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act unlawfully discriminated against same-sex couples by prohibiting our federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages and by denying federal benefits, rights and protections to those couples. Since the U.S. Supreme Court is the highest court in the land, there is no appeal to its decision.

The door to same-sex marriage has been opened by the Supreme Court, and it will not close. Many people had been waiting to see where the Supreme Court would take this discussion. It is apparent that following international and national trends, same-sex marriage is inevitable in our country. Today, 16 states and 15 countries have approved same-sex marriage with more considering the matter in the near future.

With the calling of the special session in November by Gov. Neil Abercrombie, the Legislature opened with much community interest and input. While many were opposed to the special session, the governor felt the need to address this topic before the end of the year to help those who would benefit from this legislation and to begin an initiative that would also enhance our economy and tourism industry. A recent study by University of Hawaii-Manoa Professor Sumner La Croix noted the same-sex marriage industry could inject about \$217 million in spending from 2014-2016. This obviously means more tax revenue for our state.

An important element of Senate Bill 1 included the protection of churches and clergy who do not want to perform same-sex marriages. Everyone in the Legislature felt this was necessary and SB1 does have language that protects churches, religious organiza-

tions, non-profit organizations operated by religious organizations, clergy, ministers, priests, rabbis, or any officer of any religious denomination or society. SB1 clearly states that these organizations or individuals will be immune from any fine, penalty, injunction, administrative proceeding, or any other legal or administrative liability for the failure or refusal to conduct same-gender marriages. Notwithstanding the U.S. Supreme Court's decision, this was a main factor in my support of SB1. No person or entity would be forced to do something against its wishes or beliefs. No religious doctrine would be changed and religious freedom is preserved.

Some have asked why the civil union bill passed in 1998 was insufficient to deal with the LGBTQ community's needs and concerns. Civil unions are created by individual states and not recognized by federal law. Furthermore,

they will not be treated equally to a marriage under federal law.

Another question posed was why the people were not allowed to vote on this issue. The governor has the constitutional power to call the Legislature in session and he utilized this power. When this occurred, the Legislature had to pass a bill or reject Senate Bill 1. The majority of the Legislature felt that if language could be crafted and supported to exempt churches and other religious stakeholders, a bill could be passed. After long and intense public hearings, this is what occurred.

There have been concerns that the State Department of Education will start to promote or teach homosexuality in our schools because of SB1. This is incorrect. If anything, children will be taught there are differences in people and families, and that we must respect and tolerate those differences. The traditional family of one father and mother has certainly

changed with divorces and single family households, and same-sex marriages will add another element to the mix.

In my humble opinion, although schools play a role in shaping young lives and minds, ultimately it is the family unit that has the single largest impact on a child. What children see and hear at home and from their parents will significantly influence a child's development.

In closing, the majority of Hawaii residents will not be impacted by same-sex marriages. Many residents will probably never attend or be a part of a same-sex marriage ceremony. For those who choose to support or partake in same-sex marriage, it is about equal and fair treatment by government and the community.

WILL ESPERO is a member of the State Senate. He represents District 19, which includes Ewa Beach, Ocean Pointe, Ewa by Gentry, Iroquois Point and portions of Ewa Villages.

Marriage Equality - It Is All About the Rights!

By Tambry R. Young

When Gov. Neil Abercrombie on November 13, 2013, signed into law Senate Bill 1 HD1, also known as the Hawaii Marriage Equality Act of 2013, and the Act became law on December 2, 2013, same gender couples who are or will be married will now receive all the rights, benefits, protections and responsibilities that other married couples have.

When a couple enters into a marriage commitment, all state and federal benefits and responsibilities are granted to them. Benefits such as Social Security, income tax savings, family medical leave benefits, and property and inheritance issues are just some of the rights gained. These rights are an essential part of life for married couples.

This same gender marriage issue, which is simply about granting benefits to

committed couples who have chosen to marry, has caused much controversy and disagreement within our state and nation. This disagreement unfortunately is based on false assumptions, misinformation and misguided intentions. Those who were not in support of this equal rights initiative cited the Bible, stated that mankind would end, believed marriage would be destroyed, compared it to 9-11, said that religious institutions would be forced to perform same gender marriages in their churches, Hawaiians would lose their land, children would become confused, and many other unsubstantiated claims.

Much of the opposition came from individuals who based their testimony on religious beliefs. I do not claim to be affiliated with any faith group nor will I debate their interpretation of their Bible. What I will say is that we do

not live in a theocracy. While some religious institutions believe that marriage is between one man and one woman, other religions believe that marriage is a lifelong commitment two individuals make to each other under the beliefs of their faith and church. Religious institutions are not responsible nor can they provide civil rights that come from the laws of our country. Once again, let me that state marriage equality is about providing all the rights, benefits, protections and responsibilities granted by the state and federal government to couples who choose to marry.

Another area that was cited dealt with the impact on education. While this law was not at all about education, many were afraid that children would be impacted negatively. If there is any impact, it would be positive. Teaching respect, understanding, diversity, acceptance and under-

standing of cultural differences should always be at the forefront of an educational institution. It should be more of a concern that many teachers who are responsible for the well-being of our children stated that they are unwilling, and in some cases incapable, of being unbiased when teaching about a subject that goes against their beliefs. The explanation to children about equal rights should focus on the fact that if one person is treated unequal, then there is not equality.

The idea that churches would have to perform same gender marriages in their own churches also drew much attention during the hearings. Unfortunately, this is where many people were misguided in what they were led to believe. If you read the law, it is clear that no church or clergy member would be forced to perform a same gender marriage if it does not follow

their religious beliefs. Those who believe anything different can look at the law and be assured that they will not have a same gender marriage performed in their church if that church is not supportive.

While many have said that our state is divided over this new Marriage Equality law, I believe time will close this division. Also, for those who testified against this law and stated that they have family, friends and co-workers who are gay and that they love them but do not believe that they should be able to marry, please take comfort in the fact that marriage will not be harmed in anyway even though the state and federal government will grant all the rights, benefits, protections and responsibilities to their gay family, friends and co-workers that they said they care about.

TAMBRY YOUNG is President of Citizens for Equal Rights.

POINTS OF VIEW

Marriage Should Remain Between a Man and a Woman

By Bob McDermott

I feel compelled to unequivocally state that I am writing neither a bigot nor hater but simply doing my job as a legislator and on behalf of my constituents. Contrary to what some may think, I love my homosexual brothers and sisters. Almost 30 years ago, my wife and I opened our home to a transvestite who had no place else to go. Further, I hired an openly homosexual employee back in 2000. He was the best speech writer I ever had!

During the last legislative session, I had an openly homosexual, HIV positive male working in my office. He is a friend as well.

For clarity, we must remember that this is a chosen behavior, not an immutable benign genetic characteristic like skin color or ear size. To wit, the human genome has

been mapped, there is no gay gene. Therefore, you are left with a behavior issue. For example, I have met ex-gays, but never an ex-African-American, or ex-Samoan for that matter.

Men and women have genetic, biological, physiological and psychological differences that are remarkable. They are different animals of the same species so that when they mate, they have a high probability of procreation and the propagation of humanity among young healthy couples. This goes to the core of the argument in preserving marriage—the care, love and nurturing that is required by a mother and father to optimally raise children.

The State has a compelling interest in marriage by providing a healthy, wholesome and nurturing environment for children placed in its custody due to parental abuse.

When those children, who are damaged both literally and figuratively, are placed into the foster/adoption pool, the state has a moral obligation, a responsibility and a duty to ensure that they are placed in the most optimal situation possible. Clearly, that is with a loving mom and dad. This has been proved by University of Texas-Austin professor Dr. Mark Regnerus' New Family Structure Study. Using a large, population-based sample, Dr. Regnerus found that children whose parents had a same-sex romantic relationship while the child was growing up suffered deficits compared to children raised by their own married biological mother and father. Dr. Regnerus' study is "peer reviewed" and the only large population based study done in the U.S. All others have been self-selected or used small conven-

ience samples rendering them inaccurate at best.

These children are already at a disadvantage and deserve the highest degree of normalcy and order possible. It is beyond dispute that a loving mother and father provide the best chance for children to be successful. I speak not from idle chatter heard in the faculty lounge, but from real life experience in these issues.

Despite the dictates of the PC police, there is absolutely a difference between the nurturing, love and tenderness that a mom and dad can deliver and that of two men who practice homosexuality. In fact, science tells us that a child cannot be created without a male and female. So why would we ever obligate a child to an artificial situation where they will never ever have a mother or father to speak of? Who speaks for the child? Do they have a choice in the matter? Despite the best intentions of some same sex couples, children long and yearn for a mother and father. Same sex

relationships purposely and intentionally deny that in order to satisfy the wants of adults who have chosen their particular behavior in life.

Imagine for a moment, that a loving husband and wife go into to adopt a child. Next to them are two men who practice homosexuality. All things being equal, the judge says, "I think the child would do better with a mom and dad." According to the political correct thinking, he is now a bigot. In my view, he is exercising science and common sense.

Adults pushing this issue have overlooked the impact upon children. This should be a child-centered issue, not an adult-centered issue based on a lifestyle governed by psychological behavior and not genetics. This entire debate misses the question—who speaks for these children? I will.

BOB MCDERMOTT is a member of the State House of Representatives. He represents District 41, which includes Ewa, Ewa Beach and Iroquois Point.

In Favor of Marriage As It Always Was

One Filipino Pastor's Point of View

By Pastor Mike Palompo

My parents were married in our Catholic Church, San Francisco de Malabon, in our hometown of Gen. Trias, Cavite. They didn't send out invitations back in 1957—didn't have to. Once the church bells rang signifying they had become man and wife, practically the whole town just showed up at the house to celebrate and give their blessings. There was no headcount. Everyone was so happy—everyone except all the manok they had to kill to feed all the people who kept showing up. Obviously, I wasn't there. But I love hearing them retell the story again and again on their anniversary. Contrast that with how Gov. Abercrombie and his fellow liberals in the Hawaii State Legislature have redefined marriage. All the kababayans I know look at that with a strained expres-

sion on their faces—like they just ate something "napaka asim."

My argument against Hawaii's gay Marriage Law is unashamedly moral. I appeal to our highest ideals as Filipinos—ideals we were taught in church from birth. Although homosexuality has always been with us, it was regarded as unnatural...until now. But the passage of SB1 will never make it right for Filipinos—never! For true Filipinos get our values from God, not the legislature. Even a common-sense observation of human anatomy persuades us that this is not the way we were designed to live by our Creator...and we all know it.

This does not mean we are unkind to somebody because he is bakla. Consenting adults do things we don't agree with all the time. I get that. But this is something different.

SB1 is forcing everyone to accept this as normative. It is forcing us to accept a definition of marriage unfamiliar to every Filipino, indeed unfamiliar to mankind since the dawn of humanity in the Garden of Eden.

Imagine being forced to accept adultery as normal in society. You'll say, "But people commit adultery all the time (especially Filipino politicians!)." True. But it is not viewed as acceptable. And that's the difference. Our correct response before God is, "That's not the way it's supposed to be." We do not say, "Well, people commit adultery all the time, let's make it legal." Just because homosexuality has become seemingly commonplace does not make it normal, and it certainly does not make it right.

The Filipino community believed homosexuals would be content when Hawaii sanctioned "civil unions." We were duped into thinking this would appease their feigned

feelings of victimization. But soon afterward the pressure was on to pass gay marriage. Why? Because the homosexual agenda is being driven by gay activists. These are not people who are casual about being gay. Their very identity is rooted in their sexuality. And they use political power to bend society to their will.

What are the unforeseen ramifications of SB1?

First, we will see the gay lifestyle taught to our children in public schools. Yes, mark my words. They're going after our children next. Remember, these are activists with an agenda. If you do not agree with this you will be called prejudiced, bigoted—a "hater." Why children? Remember, the gay agenda is founded on lust not love. They see nothing wrong with the early sexualization of our children. They will go after our children just like they do in Canada and Massachusetts. You need to pay close atten-

tion to the school curriculum, and let the BOE know how you feel.

Second, they will go after churches. Pastors and priests will be targeted to perform gay marriages against their religious convictions. You'll say, "What about freedom of religion?" That is the battle being waged right now in our society. Gay activists will argue that "equality" trumps religious freedom. Watch out for lawsuits against churches that refuse to perform gay marriage.

Sadly, I see less resemblance to the good ol' days when my parents were married. I long for the day when men were men and women were women; when we sent our children to school to get a good education not be corrupted by activists; when we got married in a church to honor God, not make a political statement.

MIKE PALOMPO is Senior Pastor of New Hope Central Oahu.

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Consulate Hosts 2nd Parol Festival

By Carolyn W. Hildebrand

The Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu kicked off the 2nd Annual Parol Festival on November 30, 2013 with the lighting of a giant parol and messages of hope and joy.

Officials lit the giant parol in a simple ceremony shortly after sunset. Consul General Julius Torres delivered a brief welcoming speech and later led the audience of over 100 guests in a candlelight vigil in memory of the victims of recent disasters in the Visayas.

Torres thanked the international community for the outpouring of support for victims of Super Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and encouraged the audience to be reminded of hope as they enjoyed the many brightly-lit parol lanterns.

Mayor Kirk Caldwell also expressed the City & County of Honolulu's solidarity with the Filipino-American community in providing hope to those suffering because of Haiyan. The City was presented a parol during last year's Parol Festival which will be a part of this year's Honolulu City Lights Display.

The lighting ceremony also included a short program with entertainment and dinner made possible by the Philippine Consulate, Friends of the

Philippine Consulate, and various business and civic sponsors.

The 2nd Annual Parol Festival showcases not only the local Filipino community's festive Christmas celebration but also the Giant Lantern Festival of San Fernando, the capital of the province of Pampanga in the Philippines, and its lantern-making trade industry. Several of San Fernando's finest craftsmen were again present this year to install the giant parol. They also brought smaller parols that showcase the evolving traditional lanterns from the center of lantern-making in the Philippines.

San Fernando Vice Mayor Jaime Lazatin delivered the evening's keynote message. He reflected on how San Fernando and its residents were able to reconcile the annual lantern festivities and the tragedy that resulted after the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991. After much discussion, they decided to push through with the festival. The following are Vice Mayor Lazatin's comments.

Message From San Fernando Vice Mayor

"I am very honored to be here today to take part in the celebration of the 2nd Parol Festival in Honolulu. It feels so heart-warming to see Fil-



ipinos enjoying a Filipino product in a welcoming community like Honolulu.

As the world busily prepares to celebrate the Yuletide Season, it is public knowledge that the Philippines, especially the Eastern Visayas, was devastated by Typhoon Yolanda.

In 1991, the Municipality of San Fernando, Pampanga was similarly struck by a calamity only a few places in the Philippines have experienced—the eruption of Mount Pinatubo which brought earthquakes, lahar flows, and flooding which displaced thousands and killed many.

A big dilemma faced the municipality then. Should we continue our annual lantern festival while nearly the entire province of Pampanga was

still in mourning and trying to recover from the devastation brought about by the eruption?

Although it was an unpopular decision, we pushed through with the festival. We were asked: "Wouldn't that be insensitive?" Certainly, not! Because the *Ligligan Parul*, the lanterns, the lights of these parol bring more just Christmas festivity. More so, it symbolizes the hope that Christmas brings to the souls of every Filipino and every Filipino family. That is why in every Filipino home, there are always symbols of light during the Christmas season. These lanterns may be LED or it may simply be a shaped into a star, made out of bamboo sticks and wrapped in colorful plastic.

Our country faces another devastating catastrophe. In my heart, I still believe that celebrating the lantern festival is symbolic. We can tell the whole world that there is still light and that there is still hope for the Philippines and its people.

For us Fernandinos, we see

the lanterns not just as a commercial product or an industry, but as a product of our culture and tradition. It is a symbol not just of the artistic prowess of our people but as a resilient trait of all Fernandinos. In times of trials or in times of triumph, there is always light, no matter how faint or bright to see beyond our situation. It is a trait of hopefulness inherent in all Filipinos.

Here in Honolulu as we witness the 2nd Parol Festival, may these gigantic lanterns from the City of San Fernando reminds us that this Christmas season brings in our midst hope and peace for us to embrace no matter what circumstances we face. As we see these lights, may we be reminded that Filipinos are strong, courageous and guided by God Almighty.

May this season of hope and love unite us closer together as a nation and may Christmas rekindle hope and joy in every Filipino. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you and to our beloved country, the Philippines!"

Consulate Announces Culinary Contest Winners

The Philippine Consulate General, in partnership with the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH) and the Friends of the Philippine Consulate, successfully held the "1st Kampeon sa Kusina: A Filipino Culinary Show-down" on November 30, 2013.

The contest was held in commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of Filipino hero Andres Bonifacio and in conjunction with the 2nd Christmas Lanterns (Parol) Festival.

Kampeon sa Kusina featured five amateur cooks of Filipino ancestry from Hawaii who showcased their cooking prowess and expertise in this first-of-its-kind Filipino culinary cook-off. These cooks were tasked to prepare bite-sized portions of their dishes for almost 100 participants who tasted and voted for the

best entry dish in terms of overall taste and presentation.

"Filipino chefs and culinary enthusiasts are often-times faced with the challenge of breaking through the gastronomic field of a city like Honolulu which is a melting pot of cultures," says Vice Consul Joyleen Santos. "My hope is that the Kampeon sa Kusina will pave the way for the world to know and to appreciate Filipino cuisine, and to consider the Philippines as one of the top culinary destinations in the world."

Contestant Cherrie Cruz prepared a special dish called



Consul General Julius D. Torres (center) poses with the Kampeon sa Kusina contestants. Photo shows from L-R: Ramon Sumibcay, emcee; Ms. Maria Jo Farina, finalist; 1st Runner-up Kit Zulueta; Kampeon sa Kusina Grand Prize Winner Cherrie Cruz; Ms. Jenny Quezon, President of the United Filipino Council of Hawaii; 2nd Runner-up Oscar Querido; Desiree de Mesa, finalist; and Vice Consul Joyleen E. Santos.

"calderetang morcon" which garnered the highest number of votes. She was named as the 2013 Kampeon sa Kusina and received a \$1,000 cash prize. The runners-up were Kit Zulueta and Oscar Querido for their versions of mango adobo and pata tim, respectively.

The event drew about 350 individuals representing state government, business organizations, the media and various Filipino community organizations.

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

'Night of Hope' Concert a Resounding Success

By Jun Colmenares

The heavy rains that hit Oahu last Sunday, December 1, did not deter the hundreds who attended the Night of Hope Concert held at the McKinley High School Auditorium in support of the victims of the 7.2 magnitude earthquake and Super Typhoon Haiyan that recently hit the Central Philippines.

As stated in the event's program, the benefit concert was aimed at bringing "everyone in the Filipino community to a space where love and comfort can be shared. Our dream is to make sure that the houses that are gone will return, and that homes are filled with songs, laughter and hope."

Organizers say that the evening was a resounding success. The event was sponsored by the Congress of Visayan Organizations (COVO) in partnership with Kokua Philippines, the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of



Hawaii and the Filipino Community Center. Many other organizations and individuals gave their support to the effort.

Audience feedback after the show included comments ranging from "what a great show" to "never a dull moment" to "I loved the way the numbers flowed" to "sulit-na-sulit" (worth more than the price) to "the performers were superb" to "it was very well produced and directed."

Credits go to artistic director Dr. Eva Rose Washburn-Repollo, technical director Hernando Tan and a superb

line-up of artists. Interestingly, the event was headlined by performers who have Visayan roots—Kristian Lei, an internationally-acclaimed singer who was born in Cebu; Augie T., well-known local comedian who traces his roots to Siquijor Island; and Brother Noland, a Hawaiian icon who also has roots in Siquijor.

Other performers included Gavin Vinta, Colby Benson, Taliya Hegwood, Haley Kagimoto, Nick La'a, Brianna Heresa, Tristen Hegwood, Julius Mina, the Dynamic Trio, and Kaipo and Nina Ki.

Augie T. brought the house down with his ethnic jokes, particularly about Filipinos in Hawaii. While he understands that his jokes may have been inappropriate given the situation back in the Philippines, he believes that it is important to smile and laugh their heartaches away. Brother Noland with his guitar gave vintage renditions of "Visions" and "Coconut Girl." Kristian Lei was superb, belting out well-loved favorites such as "The Man from La Mancha" and "You'll Never Walk Alone." She also pulled at the heartstrings of Filipinos with the classics "Bayan Ko" and "Anak," and captured the audience's hearts with duets with husband Gavin Vinta from "The Phantom of the Opera" and the finale "The Prayer."

Two short videos were shown. The first, produced by Dr. Raymund Liongson, was entitled "A Country in a Crucible" and showed before-and-after scenes of the areas hit by the earthquake and the ty-

phoon. The second was "Bayanihan" by Imelda Fines Gasmen which featured various community events being held in support of the disaster victims. Both films were a numbing reality check and a wake-up call to Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike to open their hearts to the victims of the twin disasters.

Fundraising Success

The event's financials were still being finalized at press time but according to COVO president May Mizuno, there were about 800 tickets that were pre-sold at \$25 each. In addition, the event was supported by three diamond sponsors at \$3,000 each—the Renato and Maria A.F. Etrata Foundation, Filipino Nurses Organization of Hawaii and The Nurse Alliance of SEIU); eight gold sponsors at \$2,000 each—Chad & Stephanie Buck, Plantation Town Apartments, Kyo-Ya Hotels & Resorts,

*(continued on page 13)***FilCom to Host Pasko! A Filipino Christmas Celebration**

The sights and sounds of the festive Filipino Christmas season will once more fill the halls of the Filipino Community Center in Waipahu for the annual *Pasko! sa FilCom* on Sunday, December 15, 2013 from 3:30pm to 7:30 pm.

The free event will feature Filipino food and holiday treats; a Children's Christmas Store with everything at \$1 or less, and traditional Christmas carols, music and dance. DJ Lanai Boy will emcee the program.

Those who want to have a parol shining from their windows can make their own with recycled materials supplied by the University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Hawaii. A parol making demonstration for and by kids is also on the agenda. The parol is a Christmas star lantern which is traditionally hung in Filipino homes during the Christmas season.

Children can go holiday shopping at

the Children's Christmas Store with gifts of \$1. For adults, special gift items will be offered at the Christmas Bazaar organized by Punahou's Filipino Club. For Filipino treats and local delicacies, visit the Crave Okay food truck and RAMAR Food's Magnolia ice cream stand (\$1 a scoop). Aloha Plate, winner of the National Food Truck Network Competition, will be a special guest. Proceeds of all sales will go to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda victims.

Entertainment will be provided by FilCom's resident bamboo instrument band, the Banda Kawayan, its choral and dance group Himig at Indak, the Royal Hawaiian Band and other musical performers. There will also be a fashion show highlighting Filipino materials and designs.

"Filipinos always look forward to the *Pasko!* celebration" says Rose Churma, FilCom president and chief operating officer. "It's a good way to be together, share the spirit of the season and celebrate our culture."

The annual *Pasko! sa FilCom* is sponsored by the Filipino Association of University Women, with support from the Great Aloha Run/Carole Kai Charities. For more information on the *Pasko!* Christmas celebration, visit www.filcom.org. or call 680-0451.

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A Tale of Two Churches

TEACHABLEMOMENTS by Jose Claro

GBCP president and Lingayen Archbishop Socrates Villegas made headlines a few days ago when he mentioned in an article that long and boring sermons are unfair to God and the people.

Amen!

Priests who bore churchgoers with their dull and redundant homilies are easily one of the reasons why many Filipino Catholics feel that the age-old Church is no longer relevant in today's modern world.

But is the Catholic Church really as stagnant as it seems?

I pondered on this while vacationing in the beautiful island of Santorini, Greece. Santorini has hundreds of churches that all look alike, painted with the same clean blue and white. The predominant religion there is Eastern Orthodox and because of their uniform exteri-



Archbishop Soc Villegas



Roman Catholic Church



Eastern Orthodox Church

ors, it is impossible to tell from the outside if a church is Catholic or Orthodox.

The way I understand it, the Eastern Orthodox Church is essentially similar to Roman Catholicism in the sense that the two were the same until doctrinal differences resulted into the Great Schism.

The chance to observe a different version of Catholicism certainly piqued my curiosity. I sheepishly pushed the large wooden church doors and was wary of guards who might inquire what I was doing in-

side. Fortunately, there was a Mass going on, and everybody was focused on the services.

Observing the Orthodox faithful was like going back to the medieval times. Bearded priests wore long black robes. Female worshippers were veiled and clothed head to toe. What sounded like Gregorian chants echoed in the hallways and the smell of incense pervaded the place of worship. I went around the church and noticed the same statues of Christ and the Blessed Virgin along with their many saints. Compared to ours, their statues looked sad and stern, contributing to the reverent gloom one feels inside.

I noticed some devout people approaching each of the 20 or more statues, kissing the hands, knees, and feet of the images. They then kneel and gesture what looks like the sign of the cross for several times. All this ritual is repeated for each and every statue inside the church. The sense of piety inside was, in my opinion only, very admirable but not to my liking.

Contrast this to the Sunday Mass I attended in Greece. Upon entering, we were welcomed with a

smile by one of the choir members and though unable to speak English, he was insistent in handing out a piece of paper that turned out to be an English missalette. The priest came in smiling and looked keenly at everyone. He couldn't speak English as well, but he was confident he'd make us understand what he was about to say. He called out two people in their 20s, a man and a woman, to the altar. The man translated the message of the priest in English while the woman translated it in Italian. The two volunteers seemed to enjoy being of service to the congregation. At times, they'd find the priest speaking too much that they'd end up translating a lengthy sentence to "what?" The parishioners laughed every so often at the dynamics of the three people in front of the altar.

The homily, as translated by the young man, was about love and acceptance. We couldn't really understand most of the words as the young man had a very thick Greek accent. But the aura we felt inside the parish was more than enough to communicate the gospel's message that in this church, everybody is welcome and united in God's love.

With two translations of three sermons (one at the start, one during the homily and one at the end), the Mass lasted a little more than an hour. But nobody seemed to mind. My aunt, who doesn't go to Mass anymore, said she appreciated how the priest was able to make the Holy Eucharist very personal.

Right then and there was

God's teachable moment for me. Having had the experience of observing two twin religions, I was amazed at how much change our Church has underwent over the centuries. From what I observed, it was clear how our Church has stressed inclusivity. How they have relaxed the rules to make parishioners feel more welcome and at ease while worshipping and praying to God. How they have embraced the laity's role in the Mass and set aside for the most part gender biases. How they have shifted their attention from worshipping sacred statues and images to focusing on expressing love and acceptance towards one's neighbor. Our priests have sacrificed the high pulpits and the reverence and awe that came with it in order to be closer (but more vulnerable!) to the needs and worries of the flock they serve.

"Upon this rock I build my Church." To many who have become jaded and disillusioned, this rock has been an obstinate stumbling block to many people living in the modern times. What is clear to me, however, is that like pebbles in a gentle stream, the Church has patiently let itself be formed and honed by the constant ebb and flow of modern times, but without sacrificing the foundations that constitute its very essence: the doctrine and traditions that have been handed over by Christ and His apostles.

How much has the Catholic Church changed over the years?

Stop looking at the edifice. Be attuned to what has changed by going inside one.

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CANDID PERSPECTIVES



By Emil Guillermo

I just came back from Asia, where I felt like a white guy. And I am not.

I'm an Asian American of Filipino descent, but when I was over there, it was clear I was the foreigner. Most of the people were in Western business dress, so on one level there was a "We Are The World" sameness. But a line was drawn when I saw people on TV or in real life appearing in native dress. That was their life and style, not mine.

So you can imagine what I was thinking as I saw Katy Perry show off her Japanese fetish on the recent American Music Awards.

Frankly, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Was it just in time for Pearl Harbor Day? A reverse surprise attack?

This wasn't just innocent clothes horseplay.

It was one of those acts of ignorance that when played up in primetime stuns people into thinking it's all right.

It's not all right.

When I was in Asia last week, no matter how much I admired any bit of native garb I saw, I knew my place. It wasn't my garb. When I went into a store in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, I didn't go overboard and buy an Islamic man's songkok to wear as a souvenir back in the U.S.

It looked kind of cool. But I came to my senses quickly after trying it on.

It just didn't fit. And it was one size fits all.

Ethnic clothing fetishes really aren't very becoming in this day and age—unless it's your culture and you're showing some pride during heritage month. (Does anyone really ever do that?)

How would I look in a Native American headdress of feathers? Or a Sikh's turban? Ridiculous—even on Hal-

Katy Perry's Surprise Attack --Just in Time for Pearl Harbor Day?

loween.

Unless you have a clear purpose or reason, there's no reason for ethnic drag. Fashionista solidarity? Get real.

I'm not being PC. But as a professional ethnicist, I just have a sense of these things.

When it comes to racial appropriation, there's a thin line between an honest cultural appreciation and racism.

When do you know you've crossed it? Something just feels wrong. Katy Perry wasn't wearing a songkok to

kick off Sunday's American Music Awards on ABC. If she were, her people would have just said, "Uh, Katy, lose the hat."

Instead, Perry wore a Japanese kimono (with a touch of Chinese qipao) and was in full cultural regalia, with backup dancers holding parasols and fans, drummers, and rice paper screens. The whole segment was Asianed-up.

For what reason exactly, it's unclear. Perry had just been to Japan and reportedly

was so enthralled with the culture, she decided to appropriate it for her act.

There are better ways to show your appreciation. Like leaving it alone as you found it, without trying to ape or mimic it.

Why risk being offensive with a bit of cultural costume imperialism?

Katy Perry in schoolgirl drag singing of teenage love, or dressed as a star-spangled gal to sing "Firework" is one thing.

But the racial element adds another dimension to this dress up game.

Was it really anything but another form of blackface? Blackface has no place in modern showbiz. Perry doing her Asian thing in costumed yellowface isn't much different and is just as offensive.

Unfortunately, these kinds of cultural games have been played for years in Hollywood, as if race were a function of hair and makeup.

(continued on page 13)

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What kind of health plans will the Connector offer?

The Connector will offer quality health insurance plans from companies you know and trust—all of whom are guaranteed to provide the essential levels of coverage and consumer protections required by state and federal laws—including preventive services, doctor visit, maternity care, pediatric dental and vision, emergency care and drug prescriptions.

When does coverage purchased through the Connector begin?

Applications for enrollment in health plans are available now and will continue through March 2014.

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'My Dog Saved Me'

by Celso Amo

Sunday, December 1, 2013

LEGAZPI CITY, Philippines – Nine months' pregnant Rose Ann Alberto thought the end was at hand when an eight-meter-high storm surge destroyed her house in Barangay 37 in Tacloban City at the height of Typhoon Yolanda last Nov. 8.

The family of the 19-year-old was able to evacuate to a second floor of a neighbor's house, but the strong winds and torrential rains forced the water to rise up quickly to the second floor, trapping all of them on the ceiling.

Her father urged them to pray because if the water con-

tinued to rise, they would all drown.

But the strong winds lashed the house for hours starting at 5 a.m., and tore off the roof, forcing Rose Ann and her parents, siblings and their brown dog "Lea" to cling on to the roof as it floated on water. There was zero visibility.

"I clung on to a broken wooden beam for two hours until our dog, Lea, appeared from nowhere," Rose Ann said in the Waray dialect.

"As the current carried me toward the sea, Lea swam around me as if looking for something to help me with. She finally managed to get my collar into her mouth and pulled me back toward the shore where I found a large broken wood beam until papa

(father) saw me," she said.

Her father Ronnie brought her to where her mother Riza and brother Rensy were clinging to debris floating on the water.

As the onslaught of Yolanda subsided at about 9:30 a.m., Ronnie was still looking for his three missing children who luckily were able to seek shelter at another house.

After the typhoon, the Alberto family along with other survivors stayed at the city port where Ronnie works as a helper.

Although his family was already safe, Ronnie was worried about their dog Lea, which had been with them for the past three years. He could not accept the possibility that their dog was gone.

Ronnie could not help but cry after seeing cadavers floating on the water and his heavily destroyed neighborhood in the aftermath of the storm.

Luckily, amid the ruins of their town, another survivor told the Alberto family that the dog Lea was seen inside the chapel of San Roque, patron saint of the community.

As Ronnie arrived at the chapel, he started to call out Lea. To his great joy, the hero dog slowly crawled out of the chapel, making crying sounds until she found him.

Ronnie carried the dog through the road strewn with debris until they reached his family's temporary shelter at the city fish port.

Six days later, Ronnie again had to walk through the road from the port to Rizal Street where decomposing cadavers lay, just to reach the command post of a rescue team because Rose Ann complained of birth pains.

Paramedics brought Rose Ann to the East Visayas Regional Medical Center. The following day she gave birth to a baby girl.

Rose Ann said she likes the baby's name "Yolanda." "I thanked God for help-



ing us survive this typhoon but above all for giving back Lea to us," Rose Ann added.

"It was a miracle we survived," Ronnie said.

Armless Fil-Am Pilot Sends Condolences

The story of the Alberto family is a tale about the resiliency and strength of Filipinos.

Filipino-American pilot Jessica Cox – who holds the Guinness world record for being the first armless person in aviation history to earn a pilot's certificate – said the same resilience and strength which she is fortunate to have from her Filipino roots would help Yolanda victims get through the challenges ahead.

Cox sent her condolences to all the typhoon victims that include some of her family.

Cox's mother is from Guiuan in Eastern Samar, where Typhoon Yolanda first made landfall. One of her grandaunts was among the more than 5,000 people who lost their lives during the typhoon that also displaced some other family members.

Cox said she last saw her relatives in Samar when she and her husband, Patrick, visited in February.

"We visited Samar before and it was gorgeous," said Cox, showing Philippine Ambassador to Washington Jose Cuisia Jr. a photo she and her husband took on their last trip to the Philippines.

Cox wrote in the Book of Condolences for those who lost their lives in the typhoon,

saying she believes her fellow Filipinos can transcend challenges brought about by Yolanda.

Cuisia, for his part, said the typhoon victims, particularly those who lost arms or legs as a result of their injuries, should draw strength and inspiration from Cox.

"Jessica has risen from adversity and can definitely inspire our people, especially those who are experiencing adversity as a result of the devastation wrought by Typhoon Haiyan in the Central Philippines," Cuisia said after Cox offered to help typhoon victims during a recent visit to the Philippine embassy in Washington.

"Although she was born without arms, Jessica never allowed her condition to limit her – she attained a college degree in psychology, earned a black belt in taekwondo and learned to drive with her feet, play the piano with her toes and fly an airplane," he added.

The Arizona-based Cox, who was in Washington to attend a Senate committee hearing on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, has delivered numerous inspirational speeches around the world and is an advocate for rights of persons with disabilities.

Cox has been working with Handicap International, a non-government organization that supports people with disabilities and vulnerable populations and has been present in the Philippines since 1985. (www.philstar.com)

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COVER STORY (from page 5. AFTERMATH...)

ble legislator who voted yes for a symbolic win but it would be expensive and not have much long-term impact.”

Sen. Espero based his ‘yes’ vote on equality, fairness and love, saying that heterosexuals should not have a monopoly on those basic rights.

“In a few years, we will all look back on the legalization of same-sex marriage as one of the pinnacles of the ongoing rights movement that has helped to shape the U.S.,” he says. “It was time for the Hawaii Legislature to address the issue of marriage equality as a matter of public policy and to pass a law to recognize same-sex marriage at the government level.”

One House lawmaker who has not yet given up the fight is Rep. Bob McDermott who recently filed a new motion asking the court to reconsider the issue. According to McDermott, the plain language and the people’s intent in the 1998 Constitutional Amendment forbid the Legislature from expanding the definition of marriage under

the “General Powers” clause of the State constitution.

The motion is set for a hearing with State Circuit Court Judge Karl Sakamoto on Monday, January 13, 2014 at 10 am. McDermott also asked for a delay in the issuance of the marriage licenses but was opposed by the State Attorney General.

“If we prevail, there will be quite a mess for the AG to clean up after the issuances of licenses on December 2nd,” McDermott said. “At some point, the court is going to have to deal with the intent of the voter as gleaned from the publicly funded Voter information guides that were mailed to every voter and advertised in the papers. The State of Hawaii is responsible for this and it is an issue than cannot be swept under the rug.”

Points of View

For Lilia Q. Santiago, an assistant professor at the UH-Manoa’s Ilokano Language & Literature Program, the gay marriage debate is all about equal rights and human rights. She says that gays, les-

bians, transgenders and bisexuals have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as provided for in the Constitution.

“Being gay and lesbian, bisexual or transgender is a choice and violates no one’s rights to the same life, liberty and pursuit of happiness,” she says. “The insistence of the religious to hang on to principles of morality based on tradition, custom and belief will have to be tempered when these very traditions and customs become burdens for society to move forward. By moving forward, I mean people becoming kinder and more compassionate human beings in relation to others.”

For Mike Palompo, senior pastor of New Hope Central Oahu, his position against gay marriages is unashamedly based on morals.

“Since the dawn of humanity in the Garden of Eden, marriage was always understood as one man and one woman,” he says. “Just because homosexuality has become more commonplace, it does not make it natural and it certainly does not make it right.”

As for Santiago, she recalls a friend in the Philippines who took part in a gay marriage ritual shortly before leaving for the U.S. in 2007. The ritual was not legal or sanctioned by the church. Santiago doubts if gay marriages will ever be allowed in the Philippines, considering the influence of the Catholic Church and the fact that divorce is illegal. She chastised the Filipino people and their government for circumventing their own “morally-rigid canonical laws.”

“There is no divorce but there is annulment,” Santiago says. “Multiple marriages are taboo, but people, including high profile celebrities and politicians have several spouses and families. Priests are supposed to be chaste and should not have children, but many priests have children and openly support them.

“I can go on citing a lot of contradictions in a supposedly deeply Catholic country. The point is, the clash between civil and church law has been there for ages, aggravated by layers of colonization and bad governance.”

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS (from page 9. NIGHT...)

Unite HERE Local 5 Hawaii, Hawaii Gastroenterology Specialists, San Esteban Aloha Mission, Blaseinc Image, and an anonymous donor; five silver sponsors at \$1,000 each—CJ Leong, First Hawaiian Bank, Pearl Harbor Masonic Lodge, ACE Medical Inc., and Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa Marriott; and 16 bronze sponsors at \$500 each—Mufi Hanemann, Case Management Professionals, Lily’s Nail Spa and Hair Salon, Everlasting Services Inc., Advantage Healthcare Provider Inc., Ledcor Construction Hawaii, Dr. Danelo Canete, All Island Case Management, Arlene Alquero, State Rep. Romy Cachola and

wife Dr. Erlinda Cachola, Sanchez Mira Association of Hawaii, Benefit & Risk Management Services, Grand Cafe & Bakery, The Cab, Darwin Abenoja and Jocelyn Tan-Connell. All the performers provided their talent for free, while the production crew and support staff were all volunteers.

Dr. Washburn-Repollo pinned the success of the show to good leadership, a hard-working management team, an inclusive approach which enabled many community groups to be involved, the artists and the volunteers who gave their hearts and souls to the project, and the generosity of sponsors and donors.

“When a common goal is good for everyone, there is a synergy that brings ideas to reality,” she says. “The promise to be transparent with the proceeds—that the money will arrive to the victims of the earthquake and the typhoon—was the driving force that created my commitment to do this work.”

The donations are being passed through the COVO Foundation, a Hawaii-based 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization. One hundred percent of the donations will be sent to a reputable non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Philippines with a track record in disaster management work. The monies

raised will be used for rehabilitation projects in affected areas. A memorandum of agreement will be signed by the COVO Foundation and the recipient NGO detailing their respective responsibilities and the requirements for transparency and accountability.

This concert is one in a series of events that the COVO is holding to raise funds for the Visayas disaster victims. Next up is the Pineapple Moon Hawaiian Clothing Fundraiser on Saturday, December 7, 2013 from 10 am to 3 pm at 212 MoHonua Place, Honolulu, Hawaii 96819. Twenty-five percent of the gross proceeds will benefit the earthquake and typhoon victims.

CANDID PERSPECTIVES (from page 11. KATY...)

Mickey Rooney in “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” is perhaps the most famous example. Done for comic effect in the Truman Capote tale, it’s all based on stereotypes (buck teeth, glasses, and more) and passed

off as real. Katy Perry on the AMAs was just one cultural stereotype after another, with none of it in the end adding up to a full-blooded 100 percent person.

And if you think Perry’s

use of Japanese culture is so benign, Jon Funabiki, the executive director at the Center for the Study of Japan and Japanese Culture, has a few choice words for you.

On his Facebook page, he was pretty plain. “Katy Perry,”

Funabiki wrote, “awful, awful, awful Asian stereotypes.”

When I read that, I knew I was in the right key, and Perry was not.

.....
EMIL GUILLERMO is an award winning journalist and commentator.

LEGAL AD

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

**Phil Govt Urges Caution
 Against Human Trafficking
 of Typhoon Victims**

The Philippine government's Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) is urging local government units of calamity-ravaged areas to protect their constituents from human traffickers taking advantage of the resulting economic hardships in their areas.

IACAT chair Leila M. De Lima said that poverty, hunger, death and economic collapse in these areas make typhoon survivors especially vulnerable and exposed to syndicates engaged in trafficking. Survivors are promised high paying jobs but instead end up working in sweatshops or brothels.

De Lima also encouraged local government officials to be vigilant in guarding the displaced and vulnerable from those who dangle false hopes of fast cash and new employment, both locally and abroad.

"Threats to those who have lost their

spouses and those who have lost their parents from the onslaught of Yolanda are imminent," De Lima said. She emphasized that special attention should be given to children who have been recently orphaned and to protect them from child trafficking organizations.

Cases of domestic trafficking have been recorded from the general Visayas area, which was severely hit by Typhoon Yolanda. The deplorable situation of these areas triggers a natural response of individuals to escape and find better areas to settle in.

"The challenge for local government units is to implement identity checks on the individuals exiting these areas, especially those adults with children in tow," De Lima said. "As we rebuild from the ruins left by that massive storm, we must remain cautious against dodgy characters who seek to exploit the vulnerabilities of those who survived."

**Swine Scam: Sandigan
 Orders Arrest of ex-DA Chief**

by Michael Punongbayan
 Friday, December 6, 2013

MANILA, Philippines - Former agriculture secretary Luis "Cito" Lorenzo Jr. and three others were ordered arrested yesterday for their alleged role in the anomalous implementation of a swine program in 2004.

The Sandiganbayan's First Division issued the arrest warrants after finding enough reason to proceed with the graft case that the Office of the Ombudsman had filed last July.

Two of Lorenzo's co-accused, former Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corp. (Quedancor) board members Wilfredo Domo-Ong and Nellie Ilas, each posted P30,000 bail shortly after learning about the arrest warrants.

Also indicted were Quedancor president Nelson Buenaflor; board members and representatives Romeo Lanciola and Jesus Simon.

The Office of the Ombudsman said: "Input supplies amounting to P47,465,614 were not delivered to the borrowers as of year-end 2005 despite the advance payment therefor by the Quedancor to the Input Suppliers."

The 2004 swine program was a credit project for swine raisers to help them breed more swine.



Former agriculture secretary Luis "Cito" Lorenzo Jr.

They were supposed to be given swine, food, equipment and technical assistance.

Metro Livestock was allegedly allowed to help implement the program without a public bidding and despite failing to pass accreditation and eligibility requirements and lack of license from the Livestock Development Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry while having a paid-up capital of only P62,500 for a P48.6-million project.

Lorenzo is also facing plunder charges along with former agriculture undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante before the Sandiganbayan Second Division for his alleged role in the fertilizer fund scam. (www.philstar.com)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

'JPE is Heart of Darkness'

by Christina Mendez
Thursday, December 5, 2013

Miriam Defensor-Santiago struck back yesterday, calling the Senate minority leader "the very heart of darkness" and accusing him of numerous transgressions including plunder, the killing of activists during martial law, and even "sexual addiction."

Santiago's blistering privilege speech was in retaliation for Enrile's own delivered last week, accusing her of being a "bitter and obsessive hater" who almost flunked the Bar exams.

In her speech, Santiago said the enormity of the amount involved in the pork barrel scam indicated that it was masterminded by Enrile himself.

"Guided by faith in a just God and in the rule of law, dozens of whistle-blowers have testified in writing and provided supporting documents to prove that the very heart of darkness is the leadership of the Senate itself," she said.

"Notably, the Ombudsman has admitted receiving a memorandum of over 200 pages pinpointing Enrile as the mastermind of plunder," Santiago said. "That official memorandum validates the charge I aired in the latest hearing of the Blue Ribbon committee,

where I first made that very same accusation, based on the lawyer's thought process of enlightened skepticism," she said.

Santiago also called Enrile "the icon of shameless lying" for his role in the martial law years. She cited his earlier admission that he had faked his ambush to justify the declaration of martial law.

Enrile, she said, earned the notoriety of being "king of a smuggling empire" after his creation of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority or CEZA in 1995 when he was still congressman.

Santiago also lashed out at Enrile for committing "verbal violence" against her when he delivered a privilege speech degrading her credentials and mental capacity.

Santiago, who had barely attended Senate session in the past few years due to her chronic fatigue syndrome, arrived fully made up at past 3 p.m. yesterday, clad in blue.

Her 12-page speech was titled "Navigating the Crimes of Plunder Mastermind."

"Instead of presenting evidence to the public of his hypocritical protestations of innocence, Enrile once again chose to steer public attention to what he hopes will be a diversion: the lies and black propaganda hurled against me during the 1992 presidential



Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago

campaign," Santiago said.

"This man, contrary to logic and common sense, hopes to evade criminal prosecution and public outrage over his plunder, by resurrecting campaign dirt against me which are over 21 years old! Dream on, old man, aka Tanda," she added.

She said Enrile had chosen to be silent when he could have requested for an additional hearing and personally interpellate alleged pork barrel scam mastermind Janet Napoles, "who appears to be his BFF or Best Friend Forever."

While Santiago was delivering her speech, Enrile could be seen tinkering with his Ipad tablet seemingly unmindful.

Enrile is seated in front, or directly across the podium where Santiago delivered her speech.

'Blackest terms'

Santiago said she was enraged by Enrile's portraying

her in the "blackest terms" in his speech last week. She reminded Enrile of her exemplary background as winner of the 1998 Magsaysay Award for government service.

She accused Enrile of violating Senate rules when he personally attacked her character last week "by appealing to personal prejudices rather than to reason."

"I shall charge him with disorderly behavior with the ethics or the rules committee, punishable by suspension for 60 days," she said.

Santiago said Enrile had long lost his credibility for reversing his own statements in the past.

After admitting having faked his ambush, Enrile did a volte-face and claimed that the ambush was real after all.

"He eats his own words for breakfast. In the law of evidence, he has absolutely no credibility," she said.

Sen. JV Ejercito tweeted from his side, saying he felt "very tense" as Santiago was delivering her spiel.

Ejercito said he was literally caught in the crossfire because he was seated very near the two feuding senators.

Santiago said there was no basis for Enrile to question her mental health considering her credentials. She called the 89-year-old Senate minority leader "Mr. Dementia."

"By comparison, Enrile

with his eternal philandering and unexplained wealth desperately needs a shrink, as a mental health measure. His mind is sick, sick, sick," Santiago said as she raised her three fingers just like Katniss Everdeen in the movie, *Catching Fire*. Santiago then gave a smiling Enrile dagger looks.

Under-declared net worth

Santiago also hit Enrile for his underdeclared net worth of only P118 million in 2012. Enrile had placed all his properties in the names of other individuals or corporations.

After enumerating Enrile's properties, Santiago said he could be held liable for tax evasion. "But in his SALN 2012, belying his wanton lifestyle, including corrupt minions and a private army on his payroll, he declared a net worth of only P118 million. His legal expertise is obviously tax evasion," she said.

Santiago said she was optimistic that Enrile would be punished for plunder.

Enrile is automatically suspended from the Senate once the Ombudsman files the plunder case before the Sandiganbayan, Santiago said. She said the former Senate president would likely remain in detention while the case is being heard.

"Justice should be done, through the heavens fall," Santiago said. (www.philstar.com)

Gov't Condemns Killing of Journalist

from www.philstar.com
Sunday, December 1, 2013

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - The government condemned today the killing of a radio commentator in Bukidnon and vowed to go after the perpetrators.

According to Presidential Communications Operation Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr., the Philippine National Police (PNP) is now conducting hot pursuit operations against the suspected as-

sailants who gunned down Joas Dignos, a broadcaster of station dxGT, in Valencia City on Friday night while riding in tandem along the national highway.

"Police authorities are under instructions to exert utmost efforts in bringing the assailants to the bar of justice," he said in an interview over a state-run radio station.

Coloma reiterated the government's commitment to solve the killings of journalists, broadcasters, and media practitioners through the combined efforts of all concerned government agencies.

The PNP is strengthening its investigative arms, while the Department of Justice (DOJ) is beefing up its battery of prosecutors assigned to build and file cases, as well as closely monitor the trial of accused persons, he said.

"We are determined to end the culture of impunity that has brought about these media killings and we call on the citizens to support our efforts," he said.

Dignos was the 19th journalist killed under the Aquino administration, according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.



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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Tax Court Gags Pacman, Kim

by Reinir Padilla
Friday, December 6, 2013

Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) not to disclose details of the boxer's tax case to the public.

The CTA has reset to next year the hearing on the case filed by Pacquiao questioning the freeze order on his assets by the BIR.

This came after both parties agreed to talk first before the CTA's first division starts hearing the case.

The CTA told both parties to inform the court of the outcome of their talks before the hearing on Jan. 16.

The BIR was supposed to present its evidence yesterday but it was ordered deferred by the court.

The Sarangani congressman and his wife, Sarangani vice governor Jinkee earlier filed a petition for review questioning the garnishment order of the BIR over his assets in a

bid to collect the supposedly unpaid taxes.

The BIR assessed the Pacquiao couple of having deficiency income tax for the years 2008 and 2009 in the total amount of P2,229,020,905.50 (inclusive of 50 percent surcharge and 20 percent yearly interest).

The alleged tax deficiency has increased to P3.2 billion due to additional penalties imposed by the BIR.

Pacquiao is appealing before the tax court the assessment of the BIR, which had accused him of failing to pay taxes worth P2.2 billion from his bouts in the US in 2008 and 2009.

Pacquiao maintained he had already paid the taxes in the US, but the BIR said it has not received documents that would prove that the taxes have been paid.

Pacquiao and wife Jinkee have said they were willing to



Cong. Manny Pacquiao

pay, but not the P2.2 billion the BIR claims they owe in unpaid income and value added taxes for 2008 and 2009.

Pacquiao yesterday said he was willing to sit down with the BIR and talk this over.

"Wala namang problema, puwede kaming mag-usap (There's no problem, we can talk)," Pacquiao told GMA-7 during an interview.

BIR Commissioner Kim Henares said she was amenable to meeting with Pacquiao.

The problem is that the boxing champion is talking not to the BIR but to the media on

his tax case, she said.

If Pacquiao could prove that he paid the taxes in the US, Henares said the boxer could deduct the taxes he paid there from his tax liabilities here.

However, when those are deducted, Henares said the Sarangani lawmaker would still owe the government some amount in income and value added taxes.

The House of Representatives, acting on a resolution filed by Dasmariñas City Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr., is planning to launch an inquiry into the tax case of its richest and only billionaire member.

However, Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo has filed a bill seeking to exempt Pacquiao from income tax for life.

"Manny Pacquiao doesn't know that I've filed that bill. I've never been to any of his fights, I'm content with watching him on TV... I don't think he deserves this ignominious treatment from the BIR," he said.

In filing House Bill 3521, Gunigundo said this might be the first time in the Philippines that this rare privilege of lifetime tax exemption will be conferred on an individual taxpayer.

He said Pacquiao has brought "more countless honor and pride to the Filipino people."

Gunigundo cited the case of Luz Marina Zuluaga of Colombia, who was bestowed a similar privilege after winning the Miss Universe crown in 1958. The Colombian government also printed postal stamps in her honor and declared a national holiday in her name.

"His (Pacquiao's) generosity and desire to help that extends even up to the use of his hard-earned money is noteworthy. He is an exemplar of humility, a refreshing soul in the Philippines," Gunigundo said.

He said Pacquiao always praises his opponents and "he never seemed to revel in fame." (www.philstar.com)

Senate Eyeing Creation of Relief, Rehab Agency

by Christina Mendez
Friday, December 6, 2013

MANILA, Philippines - The Senate is eyeing the creation of an agency similar to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the US government to deal with relief and rehabilitation efforts in the aftermath of calamities, Senate President Franklin Drilon said yesterday.

He said the disaster agency was among the issues he discussed with US Ambassador Philip Goldberg, who paid him a courtesy call at the Senate.

"We are looking at the Federal Emergency Management Agency and how it works," he said.

"We are looking at the possibility of having a permanent government structure instead of what we have today," he added.

Drilon noted that under the present setup, an ad hoc council - the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council - handles relief and rehabilitation efforts.

He stressed the need to improve the government's disaster management following the onslaught of Typhoon Yolanda.

"I understand a lot of improvement happened after (Hurricane) Katrina and we're looking at that to see the good practices we can adopt here so we'll be able to respond effectively to disasters that will visit us in the future. No question



Senate President Frank Drilon

about that," he said.

He noted that the lack of permanent agency to deal with disasters prompted President Aquino to appoint former senator Panfilo Lacson as rehabilitation czar.

Also during their meeting, Drilon said he thanked Goldberg for the nearly \$52-million assistance fund that the US

government gave to Yolanda victims.

Full Cooperation

Meanwhile, Vice President Jejomar Binay assured Lacson of the full cooperation of shelter agencies.

"This is an enormous challenge that cannot be done by one person. Senator Lacson can count on my full support as well as that of the National Housing Authority and other key shelter agencies," Binay, chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, said.

Lacson earlier said he would consult Binay regarding housing rehabilitation efforts.

"It is important that we get experts on board, not only from government but also from the private sector, especially in rebuilding communities," Binay said.

"We need to ensure that the new homes and communities we build for the survivors are sustainable and resilient to climate-change," he added.

New Benchmark

Sen. Loren Legarda, chair-

person of the Senate committees on climate change and environment and natural resources, said Yolanda is the new benchmark for disaster prevention and preparedness.

Legarda outlined ways for the communities to be resilient during disasters, including the need to manage risks rather than manage disasters, make every Filipino "disaster-literate," establish high reliability of disaster data, protect the environment and disaster preparation.

"Building on good risk reduction practices means going back to the very basics: protecting our ecosystems and natural buffers such as mangrove forests to mitigate floods, storm surges and other hazards," she said.

She said preparing for disaster means knowing it fully well and the dangers it brings.

"When and where a typhoon will strike, and how, are critical knowledge that will allow the community to timely seek safer ground and fully protect their homes and properties," she said. (www.philstar.com)

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LEGAL NOTES



By Reuben S. Seguritan

TPS Designation for Philippines

ever lead to permanent residence status. Once granted TPS, the beneficiary cannot be detained by the DHS on the basis of his immigration status in the US unless he becomes ineligible or the country loses the designation.

Efforts to designate the Philippines for TPS have been made. Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most powerful storms ever recorded on land, affected over 7 million people in the Philippines. Over 5,000 lives have been lost and over 4 million people displaced.

At least three U.S. Senators, namely, Senator Charles Schumer, Senator Benjamin Cardin, and Senator Bob Menendez have submitted a request to the DHS to designate the Philippines for TPS. Other groups such as the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and the NY Legal Assistance Group have also sent similar requests.

According to them, re-

quiring the Philippines to reabsorb its nationals from abroad, many of whom may have lost their homes, would impose a great burden on the rescue and restoration efforts in the country. TPS would provide a safe haven for those who are reluctant to return to potentially dangerous situations. It would also allow Filipinos in the U.S. to work and support their families in the Philippines who were impacted by the typhoon.

Eligible nationals of a country designated for TPS are also allowed to apply for nonimmigrant status, file for adjustment of status based on an immigrant petition and apply for any other immigration benefits or protection. The applicant must however still meet the basic requirements for other benefits sought.

To be eligible for TPS, the foreign national must meet the basic requirements, namely: that he is a national of a country designated for TPS, or a

person without nationality who last habitually resided in the designated country; that he files for TPS status during the initial registration period or re-registration period or he meets the requirements for late initial filing during any extension; that he has been continuously physically present in the U.S. since the effective date of the designation; and that he has been continuously residing in the U.S. since the date specified in the designation.

Those who have been convicted of any felony or two or more misdemeanors committed in the U.S., or are found to be inadmissible to the U.S. based on grounds listed in INA section 212(a), including non-waivable criminal and security-related grounds, or are subject to any of the mandatory bars to asylum are not eligible for TPS. Those who fail to meet the initial or late initial registration requirements or fail to meet the continuous physical presence and contin-

uous residence requirements are also ineligible for TPS.

Registration for TPS is made on Form I-821. It must be filed with Form I-765, application for Employment Authorization even if the applicant does not want an employment authorization document.

The decision to designate the Philippines for TPS lies with the executive branch of the federal government. Congress does not have to vote on it although members of Congress may make the request to the President. The decision ultimately rests with the President and his agencies.

Countries currently designated for TPS are El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Syria.

REUBEN S. SEGURITAN has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695 5281 or log on to his website at www.seguritan.com

MAINLAND NEWS

Obama Mourns Death of Icon Nelson Mandela

WASHINGTON — Counting himself among the millions influenced by Nelson Mandela, President Barack Obama on Thursday mourned the death of the anti-apartheid icon with whom he shares the distinction of being his nation's first black president.

"He no longer belongs to us. He belongs to the ages," Obama said in a somber appearance at the White House.

"I am one of the countless millions who drew inspiration from Nelson Mandela's life," he continued. "And like so many around the globe, I cannot fully imagine my own life without the example that Nelson Mandela set."

Mandela died earlier Thursday at 95. He had spent much of the year in and out of the hospital, and his illness prevented a meeting with Obama when the U.S. president visited South Africa this summer.

Still, the former South African president's legacy in-

fluenced nearly every aspect of Obama's trip. Obama, along with wife Michelle and daughters Malia and Sasha, made an emotional visit to Robben Island, standing quietly together in the tiny cell where Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years in prison. Obama also met privately with members of Mandela's family.

The president is likely to travel to South Africa for Mandela's funeral, though a trip has not yet been announced. Other former U.S. presidents and dignitaries are also likely to attend.

Obama's political rise has drawn inevitable comparisons to the South African leader. Both are Nobel Peace Prize winners and the first black men elected to lead their countries.

However, the two men met in person only once, a hastily arranged meeting in a Washington hotel room in 2005 when Obama was a U.S. senator. A photo of the meeting hangs in Obama's personal office at the White House, showing a smile-

ing Mandela sitting on a chair, his legs outstretched, as the young senator reaches down to shake his hand. A copy of the photo also hung in Mandela's office in Johannesburg.

The two presidents did speak occasionally on the phone, including after the 2008 election, when Mandela called Obama to congratulate him on his victory. The U.S. president called Mandela in 2010 after the South African leader's young granddaughter was

killed in a car accident. Obama also wrote the introduction to Mandela's memoir, "Conversations With Myself."

Mandela had already shaped Obama's political beliefs well before their first encounter. As a student at Occidental College in Los Angeles, Obama joined protests against the school's investments during South Africa's apartheid era. In 1981, Obama focused his first public political speech on the topic.



"It's happening an ocean away," Obama said, according to a retelling of the story in his memoir "Dreams From My Father." "But it's a struggle that touches each and every one of us. Whether we know it or not. Whether we want it or not." (www.philstar.com)

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DAYASADAS
By Pacita Saludes

No Madanon Ti Paskua (In The Ilokano Way) Punganay Ti Pascua Idi Naiyanak Ni Jesus

No madanon ti bulan ti Disiembre pampapunotenen ti Paskua. No kasano a sebraran, no sadino ti pagbakasionan wenno sadino ti pagtitiponan iti rabii ti Paskua.

Idiay Ilokos awan ti di agisagana ti maaramid a linapet (sinam-it a nabungon ti bulong ti saba) kasta met tay tupig a nabungon met laeng ti bulong, wenno tay kunada a tinubong. Naitubong a kankanen. Dagita ti simbulo ti Paskua kadagiti kaadduan nga ili idiay Kailokuan. Naimas ti tupig ni Nana Baket, saan unay a nasam-it. Pagdadasingen ti imas dagiti aramid ti kada maysa. No maisangpet ditoy Hawaii dagita a tupig maipapudotda kasla kalloto manen.

Kasta met nga ugali ti

mangisagana a ti pagpapaskua ta adu met dagiti umay tumpat a maminda pinda kadagiti balbalay nga agkankanta wenno agtukar ti kanta ti Paskua, a mangkablawa ti "PASKUAYO APO!" Agdardaras metten ni Lola a mapan mangted ti sensilio ken papel de banco a saganana. Nayonanna pay ti binalkot a tupig wenno tinubong.

Isu met to isasarungkar dagiti inanak ti buniag ken kasar kadagiti Ninangda "MANO PO NINANG, NINONG". Adda met dagiti grupo wenno or-organisasion a maminda pinda a maki Paskua.

Paskua ditoy Hawaii, isu met laeng a tradision, nupay saanen nga aramid dagiti dadduma. Kaaduananna no maplano dagiti grupo ti mangselebrar ti Paskua adda daytay kunada nga "EXCHANGE GIFT". Awan ti masasaor ta adda latta bagi ti kada maysa. Maikeddeng pay ti dagup ti balor ti panagsisin-



nukat nupay saan met a matungpal no dadduma, ha! ha! ha!. Awaten ti maipapaskua, naragsak latta. Naimbag a Paskua Yo amin Apo!

Punagnay Ti Paskua, Idi Naiyanakni Apo Jesus Idiay Betlehem (Belen)

Naiyanak ni Apo JESUS idiay katalalanan iti Belen Apay? Impakitana a naiyanak a nakurapay. Nagdugmon iti garami iti kulong dagiti pagpakanan ti animal. Impamatmat ti Dios a naiyanak a nanomo. Adal kadagiti tao ano adda maiyanaken kadagitoy maisaganaan kadagiti nangina nga aramaten ken

arwat ti ubbing. Na Diosan a palagip kadagiti Tao dayta. A saan a ti kinaparammag ti ipakitana no diket kina numo. Kinapakumbabana a panag-

biag ti impakitana. Ti simple ken kina pakumbaba, imparangna a rumbeng a tuladen ti sanga lubongan. (PALAGIP TI PASKUA) kadagiti amin a naparsua ti lubong no malagip tayo "Apo kaasiannakami!" (Makita ti ladawan ti ngato tinapasayaaten a disso ti nakaiyanakan ni Jesus). Idiay katalalanan ti Belen sarsarungkan ita ti riniwriw a tatao nga aggapput naduma a disso ti Lubong. Mapaneknekan dagiti mapmapan ag Tour iti Israel a nakaikuyogan mi met iti naminsan "Tour to the Holy Land".

PASKUA A RAMRAMBAKAN

Paskua a ramrambakan segeggaan Pannakaiyanak Mesias a pagdaydayawan Impaay ti langit a mangisalakian Ditoy Lubong a pagluluaan

Paskua panawen a kanayon a segseggaan Kada Disiembre ti tawen a sumangbay Ragsak ti marikna maboas ti kaungan Manipud kankanta ti Paskua a mangngegan

Ninang, Ninong isaganam ta ipapaskuam Annakmo umaydaka kanta kantaan Mapabileg riknam pakinakemmo maandingay Makaisemka no makitam ida a maragsakan

Paskua panawen a rumbeng a panagbaliw Rikna a binalayan nakiru a gagem Puso malunag maimatangan a pagel Ta ni Apo Jesus ipalagipna ti aramiden

Paskua a kankantaan makaliwliwa a panawen Ipaltiingna ta pusom natalinaay a riknaen Ragsak ti sumangbay sandi ti dagensen Ket biag agbaliw iti ungti ti tawen

Paskua mangipaayka ket maipaayanka Il-iliwem a dumteng ta malmalday a biag Umasideg a gasat a kabulon ni talingenngen Ket bayat ti panagbiag ikutam a tagibien.

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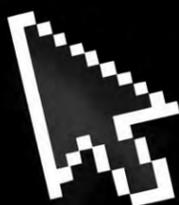
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

50TH FOUNDATION & GALA CELEBRATION DINNER & BALL OF CABUGAO SONS & DAUGHTERS OF HAWAII • SATURDAY • December 7, 2013, 6:00 PM • Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa • Contact: Mercedes Sonico, 258-9573 or 842-7149

STO. DOMINGO, ILOCOS SUR ASSOCIATION OF HI, OAHU CHAPTER, INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND CHRISTMAS BANQUET • SATURDAY • December 14, 2013, 6:30 PM • Pearl Country Club • Contact: Roger Tapat @ 294-0904

FIESTA TI KAILOKUAN BY AKA & GH • SATURDAY • January 18, 2014, 5:00 PM • August Ahrens Elem. School Cafeteria, Waipahu • Contact: Mrs. Pacita Saludes at 839-8016

JCI-HI FILIPINO JR. CHAMBER'S (JAYCEES) 4TH ANNUAL NIGHT OF HONOR & BOARD INSTALLATION BANQUET • SATURDAY • January 25, 2014, 5:30 PM • Contact: Clevan Cabuhat @ 330.2037

GLOBAL NEWS

DFA: 7 Filipinos Dead, 11 More Hurt in Yemen Attack

MANILA, Philippines (UPDATED) - Seven Filipino medical workers were among the 52 killed in a suicide bombing attack in Yemen's capital, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) confirmed on Friday.

The DFA said the Filipino fatalities were medical workers including a doctor at a hospital inside the country's Defense Ministry complex in Sanaa where the suicide blast and gun assault occurred on Thursday.

Eleven other Filipinos were also among the 167 injured in the al-Qaida-style attack.

"We condemn this senseless and barbaric act and we call on the Yemeni government to bring the mastermind to justice and take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of Filipinos and other foreigners," DFA spokesman Raul Hernandez said.

He added that the names of the victims will not be revealed until their families have been informed.

Hernandez said all survivors have been taken to a safe place and Philippine officials are visiting hospital morgues to check if there are other Filipino fatalities.

"Yemeni security forces are now in control of the complex," he said.

The incident is one of the deadliest attacks on overseas Filipino workers and happened just months after the Philippines lifted its travel and labor ban to Yemen.

The bombed hospital has about 40 Filipino employees but three are currently on vacation in the Philippines.

The Associated Press reported that there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, the deadliest in Sanaa since May 2012.

"Such suicide bombings and complex attacks are the hallmarks of al-Qaida," the report said.

The Philippines has imposed security alert level 1 all over Yemen since 2012 due to the internal dis-

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turbance in the west Asian country.

Hernandez said Filipinos are advised to take precautionary measures at this alert level.

About 1,000 Filipinos are reportedly employed as health and construction workers in the said country. (www.philstar.com)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Tutuban Center Night Market Continues to Shine in Manila

from www.philstar.com
Sunday, December 1, 2013

MANILA, Philippines - For 25 years, the country's original "night market" at the Tutuban Center in Divisoria, Manila has been an avenue of opportunities for business-minded Filipinos who wish to provide enough for their families.

The night market has been a glowing spot for many of Manila's street sellers and buyers — and it continues to shine brighter as Christmas Day draws near.

Although it has been, and continues to be, imitated by some cities in the metropolis, the Tutuban Center Night Market remains to be a vibrant choice. And for some who prefer to shop after office hours or even if the malls are already closed, people with tight schedules would certainly find the Tutuban Center Night Market a favorable option, es-

pecially during the Christmas season.

This exciting shopping alternative carries a varied array of goodies that can meet any checklist, from toys, novelty items, fun and fashionable accessories to home furnishings, gadgets and gizmos and apparel.

Credit goes to Tutuban Center Night Market's friendly tenants who continue to offer year in and year out a variety of goods that are of great quality and affordable prices compared to other street bazaars.

Take, for example, 41-year-old Rommel Sebeda, who has been a loyal Night Market tenant for 12 years. Sebeda ventured as a tenant after he discovered it during a night stroll with his wife in Divisoria.

Sebeda, who hails from Oriental Mindoro, now sells T-shirts for guys and girls and clothes for kids, all made by local manufacturers, but



sometimes, he tells them to make the designs he wants. "The designs are good but not expensive," he says.

Because of his determination to succeed, Sebeda now has four stalls in Tutuban, providing him a modest amount of income during lean months. But for peak seasons like December, especially near Christmas Day, his sales could go up in just one night. And because of this business, he is able to support his wife and two sons aged 10 and 17. The Sebedas even now have their own humble home to speak of,

and even drive a new yet modest family vehicle.

Despite his success, Sebeda still looks forward to improving his night market business in Tutuban. "As long as there's a night market, I want to keep doing business there because that is where I started," he says.

The humble tenant believes that aside from the alternative shopping experience and quality products the Tutuban Center Night Market offers, security is one main reason why people, whether buyers or tenants like him,

continue to flock to Tutuban.

There are CCTV cameras installed to monitor the area, complemented by a substantial number of mall security guards. Added to this, Tutuban Center also has its own parking space and a variety of food places for buyers and visitors to refresh and recharge after shopping.

Sebeda's story remains to be a good source of inspiration for those who may want to go into joining night markets in the metro to help improve their lives. Given his success, business-minded Filipinos can now consider the Tutuban Center Night Market as a good option to conduct business in and be a tenant of, especially during the Christmas season.

With hard work and the Tutuban Center management's support, there will definitely be more Sebedas in the future, each doing a financially rewarding business made possible only at Tutuban Center Night Market.

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