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HAWAII



# FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ JULY 12, 2014 ◆

## PHILIPPINES WRESTLES WITH SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT CRISIS

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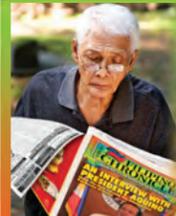
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## EDITORIALS

## Addressing the Philippines' Waste Disposal Crisis

**T**he accumulation of waste has been a constant problem in the Philippines due to its burgeoning population, increasing urbanization and record economic growth. Garbage is all too often left on the streets and vacant lots, thrown in drainage and canals which block the sewer system or simply burned, resulting in air pollution.

Thankfully, action has been undertaken, albeit slowly, by local municipalities which have patterned their efforts after the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act 9003). RA 9003 is sweeping legislation that empowers local governments to take primary responsibility for and enforcement of their solid waste management systems. Under RA 9003, local governments are required to formulate 10-year solid waste management plans; divert 25 percent of all solid waste through reuse, recycling, and composting by 2006; and establish reclamation and buy-back centers for recyclables. At the barangay level, materials recovery facilities are to be established for sorting, segregation, composting, and recycling, with residual wastes to be transferred to a sanitary landfill or other long-term facility.

What has helped tremendously are informational campaigns aimed to educate the public, businesses and youth and increase awareness of the need to properly dispose of trash. While progress has been made, much work still remains to be done. What is sorely needed is a change in attitude wherein waste segregation is a daily route of people's lives. More households are learning to properly segregate their waste which lessens the workload of municipal garbage collectors. Recycling teams also visit households once a month to check for compliance. Even better, the people have stopped openly burning their garbage and are learning how to properly dispose of solid waste.

The Philippines' garbage crisis is a serious threat to public health and the environment if it continues to remain unresolved. The root cause is related to good governance and political will. The government must continue to make solving the garbage crisis and developing long-term, sustainable solutions a key priority. The government and its people owe it to the next generation to resolve this crisis now.

## Rail to Rapidly Change Oahu's Landscape

**H**onolulu's rail transit system is slowly taking shape before our very eyes. Just last month, crews completed work in East Kapolei on the 100th support column, each about 23 feet tall. HART officials hope to construct some 220 columns by the end of this year. Of particular note is the first column that will cross over the H-1/H-2 freeway merge between Waipahu and Pearl City. For many motorists, this column will be their first glimpse of the rail project. As rail becomes more visible, the public will see how the enormity of the project and how it will forever alter Oahu's landscape.

The column at the H-1/H2 merge will rise about four stories tall. Its towering height is bound to surprise many members of the public whose previous notions of the rail project were provided courtesy of artists' sketches and drawings, as well as video renderings. Rail officials say this particular column's height is taller than the others because there needs to be sufficient clearance over Farrington and Kamehameha highways. A similarly taller column is being erected at the intersection of Farrington Highway and Fort Weaver Road to clear the overpass.

So far, HART officials have collected \$1.25 billion in rev-

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**A**

loha and welcome to the latest issue of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle! Our editors and writers take great pride in each issue of the Chronicle and diligently work to provide our readers with news of importance to Hawaii's Filipinos. As many of you already know, the Chronicle covers issues that are typically not reported by the mainstream media. So if you want to read news about the latest and important goings-on back home in the Philippines or want a unique Filipino angle, you've come to the right place!

At long last, pedestrians in Kalihi are getting help from the City, which will be implementing safety improvements along a dangerous stretch of North King Street, particularly near the intersection with Gulick Avenue where there have been several fatalities involving pedestrians. Kudos to Kalihi resident and area City Councilmember Joey Manahan for going to bat for his constituents and getting into the ear of Mayor Kirk Caldwell. Read "City to Expedite Road Safety Improvements" on page 6 to find out what's in store for not only streets in Kalihi but islandwide.

Also in this issue, we welcome our newest contributing writer, Julia Crowley, who earned her master's degree in regional planning from Cornell, where she conducted research into solid waste management practices in Ilocos Norte, the Philippines. Julia will begin her PhD in urban planning at the University of Hawaii-Manoa this August. She wrote this issue's cover story entitled "Addressing the Philippines' Solid Waste Management Crisis." If you've ever visited the Philippines, you've seen first-hand how serious of an environmental problem waste management has been for the government. Fortunately, officials remain optimistic and have integrated solid waste management into the school curriculum, targeted the adults to be more environmentally-responsible and encouraged more recycling. For more on what the Philippines is doing, turn to page 4.

That's all for now. We encourage you to take time to read the columns, features and other news articles in this issue. And as always, we encourage you to contact us at: [fipinochronicle@gmail.com](mailto:fipinochronicle@gmail.com) with 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!

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

*Chona A. Montesines-Sonido*

enues from the General Excise and Use tax (GET) surcharge that will be used exclusively to pay for the \$5 billion rail project. Collection of the GET began in 2007 and will sunset in 2022. There has been whispers in some circles of extending the GET beyond 2022 to fund extensions of the rail project. Such talk is way too early. Since public support is crucial for the project's long term success, it would be to HART's advantage to allow construction to proceed further along and into the Downtown corridor before any formal discussions are held about extending the GET collection. The Downtown area is where many ancient Hawaiian remains are located and could significantly slow down construction and impact traffic flow.

The City Council also needs to continue monitoring the project closely, particularly construction activity, and see to it that contracts are awarded timely and its budget managed carefully. Realistically, the rail project is still years away. The first 10 miles from East Kapolei to Aloha Stadium is expected to open in 2017, with the full 20-mile line ready for service in 2019. With the finish line still a ways off and the impact of construction to be felt by an ever-growing number of residents, it is imperative that HART continue providing good outreach to the community.



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CANDID PERSPECTIVES



By Emil Guillermo

# Who Wants an Obama Library for Hawaii?

rent polls as the worst president in 70 years?

I wasn't a huge Obama supporter in the early days. I didn't know him. I was more neutral and not a wild aloha cheerleader. I do recall writing many anti-Bush editorials, especially on the eavesdropping FISA court and on the appointment of Justice Alito. In the end, my writings will show that my commentaries during the Obama candidacies, produced many more positive opinions—about Hillary Clinton.

That is not to say I was anti-Obama. Far from it. I froze my butt off standing outside in Washington, D.C. on Inaugural Day 2009, and was ready for the great hope and change to come.

I'm still waiting.

Just before the long Independence Day holiday, I attended a journalism conference in San Francisco and listened to keynote speaker Lowell Bergman, the former "60 Minutes" investigative producer

and New York Times reporter, who was the man Al Pacino played on the investigation on Big Tobacco in "The Insider."

In a speech that was a perfect prelude to the Fourth, Bergman talked about the erosion of press freedom. As an indicator of how we've backslided in terms of freedoms, particularly the First Amendment, just look at how reporters and their sources are treated today. Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange? Whistleblowers and leakers are on the run. And for many, they are considered traitors, not heroes.

Meanwhile, James Risen of the New York Times is facing jail for his story on a bungled CIA operation in Iran. Some believe Risen is the first to break the story of the NSA's surveillance of Americans.

In his address to more than 1,600 attendees, Bergman was bold in his frankness.

"We have to talk about the illusion we have gone along with in the past six to seven

years," Bergman said. "That in some way the Bush/Gonzales years were bad years for journalism, when in fact Barack Obama and Eric Holder are not our friends."

It was the first vigorous ovation Bergman received that day. The administration isn't a friend of journalists and the public's right to know, and neither is the Supreme Court, according to Bergman, who pointed out how different things are today.

Bergman said that 50 years ago in *New York Times v. Sullivan*, the Supreme Court, with a Republican leading the way in a 9-0 decision, gave real backing to reporters.

"It meant you can report on a public figure without fear of being dragged into court and have to prove factually to the standards of the court that what you report is in fact true," said Bergman.

He also pointed out that Sullivan didn't involve a story, but an advertisement in the *New York Times* taken out by a civil rights organization.

"And we [journalists] prof-

ited from that," he said. "I think it's important to remember, we don't have the civil rights movement [anymore]."

Surely, it's not the same as when the Civil Rights Act was signed into law 50 years ago July 2.

Balancing SCOTUS is one positive thing Obama has done. But it's still a 5-4 court, and generally, not in the good way.

Obama does have more than two years to change the state of the country he leaves us with. But he seems to be coasting now. Sure, he's made a difference with health care, but it's unclear if that will cover a sick presidency. The NSA started under Bush, but continues to flourish under Obama. So has Guantanamo. Mass deportations. The never-ending war, now with advisors!

Does Hawaii really want a library that may seem more like an annex of the Bush library in Texas?

*EMIL GUILLERMO, an award-winning journalist and winner of an American Book Award, was an editorial board member of the Honolulu Advertiser.*

**W**hen I was on the editorial board at the somewhat late and semi-lamented Advertiser (it is still sort of half-alive), there was a lot of clamoring for an upstart politician with Hawaii roots.

After spending his youth on beaches staring at the ocean, Barack Obama must have gained an unlimited sense of confidence. Because when he stood on Chicago's puny beaches staring at that well-contained, albeit great lake, he knew he could be president.

And, as they say, the rest is history.

But does Hawaii really want to be the home site of the presidential library of the man who has been deemed by cur-

OPINION

## Are We Doomed to Polarization?

By Lee H. Hamilton

**W**e Americans are trapped in a political dilemma. We all like representative democracy, but we don't much like the way it's performing.

The reason for this dissatisfaction is clear. Polls in recent years detail a polarized nation, divided both ideologically and politically. This is, as the Pew Research Center put it recently, "a defining feature of politics today." In the public's eye, Washington gets most of the blame for this.

Yet Congress and the political world around it reflect the rest of the country more than we'd like to believe. Our nation is divided ideologically,

It's also segregated politically, with many Americans preferring to associate with and live near people who share their views; gerrymandered districts and closed primaries intensify the effect. Our media is more partisan than it used to be. Interest groups — many of them funded by ordinary Americans who want their voices magnified — are more engaged than they were a generation ago. And though we deplore negative politics, we respond to it and even encourage our favorite partisans to engage in it.

Anyone who becomes President today does so with nearly half the country opposed to him the day he takes office. Moreover, we face a long list of issues where decisive action may be impossible: abortion, gun control, climate change, a host of budgetary and economic problems, the

death penalty, tax reform, immigration, drug laws. These issues don't just divide Congress; they divide the nation, with no clear path forward.

Our admired political system, in other words, is not working well. In Pew's survey, the extremes make up just over a third of the American public, but because they're disproportionately active they drive our politics. The larger, more diverse center can't agree on a direction for the country, but its members are united by their distaste for the tone of politics and the unwillingness of politicians to compromise and break the stalemate. We are not getting the politics we want.

So how do we resolve our dilemma?

There are many procedural steps that can ease the gridlock on Capitol Hill. Among them, the House and Senate could schedule themselves so that they're in ses-

*(continued on page 5)*

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## COVER STORY

# Addressing the Philippines' Solid Waste Management Crisis

By Julia Crowley, M.A.

**T**he abundant and often tragic typhoons that frequent the Philippines each year are accompanied by heavy floods that cannot withstand the myriad of plastic bags that are clogging the drainage. The problem with plastics is that they do not bio-degrade and improper methods of their disposal can result in hazardous effects to the environment. In June 2013, Manila's financial district of Makati implemented a plastic ban after a widespread publicity campaign. Paper bags are now distributed in lieu of plastics and reusable cloth bags are also sold for around 10 pesos each.



A government worker from Solsona, Ilocos Norte shows off African Nightcrawler worms which are used to convert food waste into fertilizer

However, many of the provinces lag behind in implementing policies to alleviate the grim effects of plastic wastes. A major difficulty in these areas has to do with the fact that many of the municipalities lack formal solid waste management systems. The negative consequences of this are further exacerbated by the abundant distribution of plastic bags in the markets and sari-sari stores. It's all too common to see residents of rural municipalities resort to burning their solid waste.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "Backyard burning [of plastics and other common wastes] is far more harmful to our health than previously thought. It can increase the risk of heart disease, aggravate respiratory ailments such as asthma and emphysema, and cause rashes, nausea, or headaches. Backyard burning also produces harmful quantities of dioxins, a group of highly toxic chemicals that settle on crops and in our waterways where they eventually wind up in our food and affect our health."

Many of the large chain stores of the Philippines are providing biodegradable plastic bags and while there is no fee for the first bag, they will charge between 3 and 5 pesos for each additional bag that is

requested by the customer. In spite of these apparent efforts on the part of the big chain stores, their effectiveness in promoting a clean environment is questionable. The feasibility of biodegradable plastic bags has long been debated as it has not been proven that such bags can biodegrade in landfills.

## Tragedy at Payatas

The Philippines' wakeup call on the effects of improper solid waste management occurred in July of 2000 when an open dumpsite called Payatas, located near Manila, overflowed. The garbage fell on a slum community, killing almost 300 people and leaving hundreds of families without homes. The tragedy at Payatas influenced the subsequent passing of RA 9003, a national law that designates local governments with the responsibility of collecting non-recyclable materials and special wastes.

In spite of the passing of RA 9003, many areas of the Philippines continue to struggle with providing clean solid waste management systems almost 14 years after the tragedy at Payatas. Rico Ancog, assistant professor of Environmental Science and Management at UP-Los Baños, Nestor Archival, City Councilor of Cebu City, and Carmelita Rebanco, Professor of Environmental Science and

Management at UPLB, addressed the shortcomings of the law in a publication through the *Journal of Environmental Science and Management*.

"[Even though] the enactment of RA 9003 sets guidelines on solid waste avoidance and volume reduction, local government units remain uncertain particularly with regard to enforcement and financing the solid waste management program," they indicate.

Yet with increases in businesses and consumer spending from remittances to the Philippines, the volume of solid waste is growing. Furthermore, the increasing number and strength in typhoons that have hit the insular nation call for urgent policy implementations to alleviate the effects of improper solid waste disposal and abundant plastic distribution.

The following policy recommendations for the Philippines' solid waste management systems would certainly be of help.

## Proactive Planning on the Part of Local Governments

The role of local governments in ensuring clean solid waste management systems for their respective municipalities is crucial. Many of the residents of the Philippines are dealing with the immediate effects of poverty, like having enough food and clean water to

get through the day. This scenario makes it difficult for them to be expected to prioritize and efficiently manage their solid waste on their own. Yet as explained above, the long-term effects of improper solid waste management can be detrimental, especially to the poor who are the most vulnerable population. With that said, it is in the best interest of local governments to establish clean solid waste management systems for their municipalities before the long term effects present them with larger scale tragedies.

An exemplary municipality in terms of its solid waste management practices is Solsona, Ilocos Norte. Solsona's local government, led by the De Lara family, has established notable practices and policies to function as a zero-waste municipality. All food wastes from the market and slaughter house go to vermiculture. This is a composting process where the African Night Crawler worm is used to convert food wastes into organic fertilizer. As for plastics, the local government of Solsona has invested in a number of plastic shredders. After plastics go through the shredder, they are molded into other uses, including paving blocks, pillows, and mattresses.

Furthermore, the residents of the municipality appear to be complying with the local government's objectives as visual observations suggest that the area is remarkably clean. Signs surround Solsona that warn passersby of the 1,000 peso fine for littering. The absence of burning is also evident.

## Conduct Provincial Solid Waste Management Education Programs for Mayors

Given the importance of local governments in providing clean solid waste management systems for their municipalities, it would be most effective for provincial governments to implement continual solid waste management education programs for mayors to pass on to their respective municipalities. Seminars could be led by environmentalists and city planners in order to share clean solid waste management techniques. Prizes could also be given by the provincial government to award the municipality with the cleanest solid waste management program.

## Reduce Plastic Distribution

Preventing the consumption of plastics could greatly reduce the hazardous effects of improper plastic waste dis-

(continued on page 5)

COVER STORY



(from page 4, ADDRESSING...)

posal. Local governments could discourage plastic bag distribution by requiring consumers to pay for the bags. It would also be useful for local governments to encourage the use of cloth shopping bags or native bayong bags for wet market purchases.

**Implement Mandated Solid Waste Management Programs in the Schools**

In order to develop positive solid waste management habits among the youth, it would appear to be effective for the Philippine Department of Education to mandate recycling and clean disposal programs in the public school

curriculums. This might include covering content on solid waste management in science courses, or establishing recycling programs at the schools for students to participate in. It is also important to get the parents involved. Some teachers have expressed their frustrations of educating youth on the importance of clean solid waste management, only to have them go home and engage in unsanitary disposal methods with their parents. Therefore, such solid waste education programs are an ongoing and collaborative learning process.

**Implement Manufacturer Responsibility Mandates for the**

**Disposal of Packaging**

The Philippine government should consider implementing manufacturer responsibility mandates for the disposal of packaging. This means that manufacturers would be required to collect all the packaging wastes from their products, and find a feasible way to recycle them. Such a policy was developed in Germany in the 1990s. These manufacturer responsibility mandates would require packaging to be made with recyclable products and proper labeling practices to allow for identification and recovery by manufacturers. Such a process could help discourage pack-



Solsona Mayor Joseph Espiritu De Lara (left) displays a vase made out of recycled plastics

aging wastes from being burned and dumped in open waterways in the Philippines.

JULIA CROWLEY will start her PhD in urban planning at the University of Hawaii-Manoa this August. She recently completed a Master's degree in Regional Planning at Cornell University where

she conducted research on solid waste management in Ilocos Norte, Philippines. Prior to her matriculation at Cornell, Crowley served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sarrat, Ilocos Norte for 2.5 years where she implemented a plastic reduction project. For further questions about this article, please email her at [juliacrowley88@gmail.com](mailto:juliacrowley88@gmail.com).

**OPINION (from page 3, ARE WE...)**

sion at the same time. Congressional leaders and the President ought to meet at least once a month. Congress needs to work the same five-day week that the rest of us do, and reduce its centralized leadership by empowering committees. Open primaries would help moderate the nation's politics, as would bipartisan redistricting commissions capable of doing away with gerrymandered districts. Increasing voter participation and improving the integrity of our elections would also help. Limiting the Senate filibuster and allowing minority parties in both chambers more of an opportunity to offer amendments, would open up debate and forestall endless stalemates.

But resolving our dilemma is unlikely to happen quickly. It's hard to see either side in this partisan divide winning or losing decisively in the elections immediately ahead. Even if one party wins both houses in Congress, it's not easy to move when the White House is in the control of another party. With the need for 60 votes in the Senate, the minority party can always find ways to slow things down.

Still, it's worth remembering that American politics is dynamic, not static. Change occurs, sometimes

quickly, but more often slowly. We won't forever be this evenly divided, because public opinion will eventually evolve and the system will respond.

Which raises my final point. Even when our frustration with division and discord spills over into impatience with the system itself, our obligations as American citizens remain the same. We face complex problems that don't have simple solutions. They demand a willingness to exercise the values of representative democracy: tolerance, mutual respect, accepting ideological differences, working to build consensus.

Our core values accept that the differences in opinions among us will continue, but also compel us to find a way through them so the country can move forward. By accepting the challenges that come with living in a representative democracy and renewing our confidence in it, we can lay the groundwork for change. In the end, we created our political dilemma and are responsible for working our way through it.

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.

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## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

## City to Expedite Road Safety Improvements

City crews are installing new and additional streetlights on North King Street in Kalihi to bring improved visibility to a corridor frequented by pedestrians, the elderly and a high volume of vehicle traffic.

City Councilmember and Kalihi resident Joey Manahan has long been concerned with pedestrian safety along that particular corridor of North King Street.

"I'm grateful for the administration's response to install new lights to address residents' pleas for increased lighting," Manahan says. "The



additional lights will make the area brighter and safer for both pedestrians and motorists. For months we have been working to address pedestrian safety issues along this corridor of North King Street, and the new lights are going to make a huge difference for pedestrians and motorists traveling this route."

Existing streetlights along North King Street will be replaced with high pressure sodium lights and additional streetlights will be installed. The new lights will point down toward the road, rather than up, to provide increased visibility. The lights will be replaced with LEDs and retrofitted as part of

the LED program which begins next year.

City officials launched a Complete Streets Initiative in 2012 and began work to join the World Health Organization/AARP's Age-Friendly Cities network. Both programs focus on making roadways safer and accessible for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, public transportation and people with disabilities.

A Complete Streets meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 15, 2014 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Neal Blaisdell Center, Pikake Room. Members of the public are welcome

to participate and provide input on how to make our streets safer for all.

The City is preparing a Request for Proposal to form a public-private-partnership that will replace all 51,700 city streetlights with LEDs that use 40-60 percent less energy while providing brighter, more direct light.

"Complete Streets, Age-Friendly Cities and the LED replacement program will begin next year and make a profound impact on the way we use our roads," says Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell. "In the interim, we are looking at areas that we can improve now and that begins on North King Street in Kalihi." ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

## New Report Details Insurance Coverage for Hawaii

A new report by Wallethub shows that 6.35 percent of Hawaii residents lack health insurance, which is the fourth

lowest rate in the country.

Wallethub's 2014 Health Insurance Coverage Report offers consumers an initial projection of uninsured rates by

state post-Obamacare. Rates of uninsured vary dramatically across states. There has been a lack of information to compare states by insurance coverage rates following the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)/Obamacare.

The report also shows the following for Hawaii:

- Obamacare reduced the uninsured rate by 2.75 percentage points in one year.
- 28.01 percent of Hawaii residents under age 64 is on Medicaid.
- 8,592 individuals enrolled in private health insurance plans under Obamacare.
- 26,010 individuals enrolled in Medicaid between Summer 2013 and April 2014.



According to David Hogberg of National Center for Public Policy Research, Obamacare appears to be having very modest success so far in reducing the number of uninsured adults?

"By my rough calculations it has, at best, reduced the number of uninsured in the private market by about 1.8 million to 3.1 million, far short of 6 to 7 million predicted by the Congressional Budget Office and White House," Hog-

berg says. "As for Medicaid, there is probably some reduction there as well, but at this point we do not have accurate numbers on that."

Wallethub is an online personal finance resource that helps consumers make better financial decisions and save money. To view the full report, please visit: <http://wallethub.com/edu/rates-of-uninsured-by-state-before-after-obamacare/4800/>.

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## Column Work Begins Along H-1 Waiawa Interchange

Crews have begun column work for the section of Honolulu's elevated rail line that will cross over the H-1/H-2 freeway merge between Waipahu and Pearl City.

In July, crews are scheduled to pour concrete for the first column located in the freeway medians at the H-1 Waiawa Interchange. Several support columns need to be erected before guideway construction can begin later this fall, connecting

the rail line between the rail stations at Leeward Community College and Pearl Highlands shopping center.

"Rail construction continues near the H-1/H-2 Freeway area with the first support column going up for the planned rail guideway," says Dan Grabauskas, CEO and executive director of the Honolulu Authority For Rapid Transportation (HART). "We ask drivers for their continued patience and understanding dur-

ing the work and to be mindful of our crews stationed along the freeway."

For the safety of both the work crews and motorists, the public is advised to proceed with caution through the construction area. Drivers should provide a safe distance between their vehicles and workers and equipment.

The first 10 miles of the rail system from East Kapolei to Aloha Stadium is expected to open in 2017, with the full 20-mile line ready for service in 2019.

LEGAL GUIDE



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

# Five Things You Should Know Before Pleading Guilty



Why should I plead guilty when I'm not guilty," retorted former First Lady Imelda Marcos, when her first lawyer advised her to plead guilty to charges of racketeering, conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and mail fraud for allegedly purchasing four buildings in New York with Philippine government money. Her lawyer reportedly told her that he could negotiate a plea bargain agreement so that she would get not more than five years in jail rather than twenty years if she went to trial and lost. Mrs. Marcos, incidentally, is celebrating her 85th

birthday today, July 3, 2014. She was acquitted on her 61st birthday, July 3, 1990.

Mrs. Marcos' friend Doris Duke, a multimillionaire heiress, called Honolulu attorney Ron Oldenburg to look for another lawyer. Oldenburg talked with and recommended Gerry Spence, a well-known criminal defense attorney. Mrs. Marcos retained him. Spence hired private investigators to look into the background of the potential government witnesses to be used in cross-examining them. When certain witnesses learned that derogatory information about them had been discovered, they quickly fled back to Manila.

"There was no evidence," said the jury forewoman, Catherine Balton. "It was a totally silly case," said Thomas O'Rourke, another juror. New

York Times, July 3, 1990. "Jurors called the government's case inadequate, and some were apparently convinced that political factors influenced the prosecution." Los Angeles Times, July 3, 1990. After the verdict, Gerry Spence, who did not present a single witness for the defense, said, "This just proves that a single juror has more power than the United States Government itself." New York Times, July 3, 1990.

Can you imagine the injustice that Mrs. Marcos would have suffered if she had followed the advice of her first lawyer to plead guilty? Unfortunately, thousands of innocent defendants charged with criminal offenses plead guilty because they are victims of incompetent and lazy lawyers who simply tell them to plead guilty otherwise they will suf-

fer long jail terms if they go to trial and lose. These poor defendants are not like Mrs. Marcos who does not listen to stupid advice.

My son Noel and I recently won a case in the U.S. Court of Appeals where we sought to set aside a guilty plea by a Filipino defendant on the ground that he was a victim of ineffective assistance of counsel who advised him to plead guilty to drug distribution charges in exchange for a one year prison term otherwise he would face 20-40 years if he went to trial and lost, without telling him that the offense would result in mandatory deportation. A judge said he would have suffered only 18 months in jail if he went to trial and lost. U.S. v. Ramiro.

We asked Noel Tipon and Tim Bilecki, partners in the Bilecki and Tipon law firm in Honolulu, the Premier Law Firm defending military service members in the Pacific

Rim, and who also defend civilians, what a person charged with a criminal offense should do when the first lawyer contacted says "just plead guilty".

According to them, these are "The Top 5 Things Every Defendant Should Know Before Pleading Guilty."

1. Know and review all of the evidence against you with your lawyer.
2. Know for sure that the government can prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt.
3. Know you are really getting some kind of benefit for pleading guilty and making it easy on the government.
4. Know that you are pleading guilty for yourself, not for your lawyer or anybody else.
5. Know and explore all possible defenses with your lawyer.

(continued on page 12)

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## TRAVEL &amp; TOURISM

## HAPPINESS IN VIGAN

by Lester Gopela Hallig

**M**ANILA, Philippines - Anything that speaks of happiness, we are sold on it. So when we experienced Hotel Felicidad, we knew that its name was no fluke. In fact, it has become quite the landmark in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur. Everybody knows it because it is a happy place to spend one's vacation. If we were to go by the many loyal travelers who always insist on Hotel Felicidad, as well

as the newbies who have heard — and tried — the hotel, then the happiness it trumpets is well justified.

Hotel Felicidad consultant Bonito Singson says that it all boils down to the establishment's distinct traits and qualities. For starters, it is their unique architectural design. Singson shares: "The features were preserved from the original structure and faithfully adopted in the restoration process of the building."

He's referring to the hotel's building, built by spouses Dr.



Filadelfo Rosario de Leon Sr. and Doña Primitiva Encarnacion Donato after their wedding on June 19, 1918 and

became the ancestral house of the Donato-De Leon family.

Hotel Felicidad has kept its various interior spaces, preserving the entrance hall, the original staircase, the grand sala, azotea, and the spacious bedrooms. All these are the products of painstaking research in remaining true to the original architecture and design.

Singson relates: "The ancestral house features one meter-thick walls made of old oven-baked bricks, wide and tall wooden window casings with unique smoked glass panels on the window panes slid-

ing on tongue and groove railings, high ceilings, decoratively plastered walls and posts, big spacious rooms and widenarra planks for flooring."

"New and modern plumbing, sanitation, mechanical, electrical, and air-conditioning features and accessories were installed but almost all are hidden to maintain the old and antique ambiance of the building," he informs us.

Lifestyle Feature - Travel (Article MRec ), pagematch: 1, sectionmatch: 1

He adds that original, restored or inspired reproductions of 18th and early 19th century furniture and fixtures complete the charming and grandiose character of Hotel Felicidad.

"Guests can best experience this in most of our rooms that feature four-poster beds in the style of master craftsman Ah-Tay, made of solid kamagong and molave, each uniquely designed and adorned by traditional Vigan mosquito nets with mattresses dressed in 300-thread count premium linens and duvet covers," he says.

All 21 rooms are accessorized by uniquely Vigan Abel bed runners, old baol as luggage racks, tall and mirrored aparador, Tres Lunas dressers with matching stool, all traditionally laid out. Bathrooms are also oversized and equipped with top-of-the-line fixtures and accessorized with 100-percent cotton towels proudly embossed with the Hotel Felicidad logo.

The rooms are classified into dormitory, standard, superior, deluxe, and Grand Suites. The latter is further categorized into Niños Suite, Maestra Suite, Maestro Suite, La Casa Rosa, and La Casa Verde. These come with individually controlled room air-conditioning systems, flat-screen LED television with premium cable programming, free Internet access, personal safety deposit box, hot and cold water system, and daily newspapers.

The location is also a winning come-on: Hotel Felicidad is right in the center of Vigan, near the historic Plaza Burgos,

(continued on page 10)

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**NEWS FEATURE**

**Naming Philippine Typhoons**

by **Alixandra Caole Vila**  
 Tuesday, July 8, 2014

**M**ANILA, Philippines - Years from now, you would probably tell your sons and daughters how Ondoy tore houses down to pieces, how Reming wiped out assets and properties, and how Yolanda took the lives of thousands of people. Ever wonder why and how these tropical storms are named?

Since 1963, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has been assigning local storm names for everything from a typhoon to a tropical depression in the monitored area from 115E to 135E and from 5N to 25N. PAGASA is also the entity that raises public storm signal warnings as deemed necessary.

Despite the naming system used by the World Meteorological Organization's Typhoon Committee, which uses numbers instead of names, Philippines' weather bureau has continued their tradition of naming storms, following the American practice. This is because it is presumed that local names are easily remembered and noticed by the local islanders of the Philippines.

The names are arranged according to



the 19-letter local alphabet that starts with A and ends in Y. The first tropical cyclone of the season takes a name that starts with A. Currently, the list has 25 names plus 10 auxiliary names in case more storms enter the country. Four groups of names are listed to make sure none is repeated over a four-year cycle.

Here is the list of names of the typhoon that will land on the Philippine territory this year.

Agaton	Basyang	Caloy
Domeng	Ester	Florita
Glenda	Henry	Inday
Jose	Katring	Luis
Mario	Neneng	Ompong
Paeng	Queenie	Ruby
Seniang	Tomas	Usman
Venus	Waldo	Yayang

Zeny. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

**TRAVEL & TOURISM (from page 8, HAPPINESS...)**

Plaza Salcedo with its amazing dancing waters, and the majestic St. Paul's Cathedral, but neatly tucked in a corner of the back street parallel to the famous Calle Crisologo where a lot of activities and shops are concentrated.

"The decision to open the hotel in this district was part of the corporate vision of a local group of private investors who are deeply passionate about their love for the heritage city of Vigan. It is meant to showcase the rich cultural heritage of Vigan and the comfortably exquisite lifestyle of the ilustrados back then," Singson says.

He is just as proud, as he rightfully should be, of their tagline "Ilocano Heritage Hospitality at its best." The main idea really is to ensure that guests are well taken care of and that they are always happy and satisfied whatever the circumstance. It is no wonder then that guests rave about the Ilocano hospitality so genuinely extended to them by the hotel staff.

"Consistent with our philosophy and guided by the Ilocano heritage hospitality, our staff has been trained to consistently and passionately provide the best hospitality service and care to all our guests, prioritizing guests' well being, so much so that it has become a culture and way of life to them. Hotel Felicidad offers Ilocano heritage hospitality par excellence," Singson declares.

Despite having only begun operations

in December 2012 and with no hotel business experience to begin with, the group behind Hotel Felicidad reports that the excellent guest feedback and very satisfying hotel occupancy exceeded their expectations.

"We truly believe that once our guests experience traveling through time in Hotel Felicidad, our quality of service and the unique features of our hotel will, by word of mouth, simply bring us success," Singson explains.

The best affirmation yet was the awarding of the 2014 Certificate of Excellence by Trip Advisor and the unsolicited certification of the Department of Tourism. Singson happily states: "We are now rated as the number one BnB (bed and breakfast) hotel in Vigan with a four-and-a-half star rating."

Vigan's most sought-after destination boutique hotel is not resting on its proverbial laurels. Soon it will open the annex with 15 rooms, and expand its capacity to accommodate convention-size contingents or groups of 300 guests and more. Its present offerings and wonderful tour packages have, thus far, gained for itself the trust of Vigan travelers.

Singson confidently concludes: "We will continue to make our guests happy with our one-of-a-kind time travel experience." After all, the name says it all — felicidad is happiness in Spanish.

([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

PHILIPPINE NEWS

# Lawmakers to Scrutinize SC's 'Pork' Anew

by Jess Diaz  
Friday, July 4, 2014

**M**ANILA, Philippines - Congressmen yesterday vowed to scrutinize the multi-billion-peso Judiciary Development Fund (JDF), which they labeled as the Supreme Court's pork barrel.

The lawmakers made the promise two days after the high court declared parts of the administration's Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) unconstitutional.

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III said he would ask the committee on appropriations of the House of Representatives to examine in detail the proposed budget for the judiciary and the JDF during the budget deliberation process expected to start next month.

"I myself will sit there to ask questions about the JDF, which is the Supreme Court's pork barrel. They have billions in collections that are not audited and which they can spend the way they want to," he said.

Albano recalled the House nearly impeached former chief justice Hilario Davide Jr. on allegations that his office misused JDF collections.



Albano said the SC decisions declaring DAP and the congressional Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) as unconstitutional should also apply to the judiciary fund.

"The JDF should also be deemed as unconstitutional because it is a pork barrel. What is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander," he said.

Albano pointed out the JDF "is even worse than the DAP and the PDAF."

"The DAP and PDAF were funds appropriated by the elected representatives of the people who, under the Constitution, have the exclusive power to determine the uses of public funds. The judiciary fund comes from taxpayers' money, and yet, it does not pass

through Congress. The SC has the exclusive say on it," he stressed.

Albano said he would insist on a detailed examination by the Commission on Audit (COA) of JDF collections and disbursements.

"The SC should not resist a COA examination. All public funds are subject to COA audit," he said.

Albano said he would ask for the COA report on the JDF before the proposed judiciary budget is tackled during the coming budget enactment process.

President Aquino is expected to submit to Congress the proposed 2015 budget on July 29, a day after his fifth State of the Nation Address. Hearings would start toward

the latter part of next month.

Eastern Samar Rep. Ben Evardone, appropriations committee vice chairman, said he would support Albano's proposal for a closer scrutiny of the JDF.

"JDF collections have reached at least P5 billion. The funds are used for additional allowances, vehicles, furniture and similar luxuries. No wonder SC justices are among the highest-paid public officials, getting as much as P5 million a year," he said.

Evardone said he would like to find out if the Supreme Court is complying with the periodic reportorial requirement on the use of funds as contained in the 2014 budget law.

Ilocos Norte Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas said aside from the budget deliberation process, the House could inquire into the uses of the JDF by reviewing the law creating the fund.

"The JDF was created and institutionalized through a presidential decree, which has the force and effect of a law. Being a law, Congress may repeal or amend it anytime. Congress should now review it," he said. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

LEGAL AD

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# Dream on: Marcoses Out to Return Home to Malacañang

Agence France-Press  
Thursday, July 3, 2014

**B**ATAC, Ilocos Norte—Some dreams just never die.

Imelda Marcos, the dictator's widow who now represents Ilocos Norte province in Congress, offered a toast on her 85th birthday on Wednesday as she made plans for a triumphal return to Malacañang.

Wearing a flowing red gown and diamond rings, the self-declared "poverty-stricken" Imelda was serenaded by throngs of supporters as she emerged from her private chambers in the family mansion in their northern stronghold of Batac.

"My only wish is for God to give me a little more strength to prolong my life," she told reporters who asked about her

birthday wish.

She said she had seen "the best, best, best and the worst, worst, worst" in life, but insisted she had no plans to ride into the sunset just yet.

In the freewheeling often rambling interview, however, Imelda didn't discuss her fragile health. She was rushed to the hospital last year for extreme fatigue but later recovered.

"I still have a vision and hope to bring more help to the Filipino people," she said.

She insisted that Ferdinand Marcos Jr., her senator-son and namesake of her late husband, was "qualified" to contest the presidency in May 2016 when President Aquino, son of the Marcoses' top political foe, ends his six-year term.

"(Returning to) Mala-

cañang would be a great help" in implementing her projects, she said.

### Symbol of excess

The flamboyant matriarch became the symbol of excess during the brutal 20-year regime of her late husband, who was also accused of looting state coffers and whose martial law rule was marked by human rights abuses.

While the rest of the country wallowed in poverty and thousands of activists were killed or went missing, Imelda and her children enjoyed a jet-setting lifestyle.

She amassed a jewelry collection valued in the tens of millions of dollars and acquired hundreds of paintings by international masters like Monet and Picasso.

The government conserva-

tively estimates the dictator Marcos plundered government coffers of about \$10 billion.

The Edsa People Power Revolution in 1986 forced Marcos and his family into exile in Hawaii, where the dictator died three years later. As the people stormed the abandoned presidential palace, they discovered Imelda's 3,000 pairs of shoes that came to symbolize the extent of her extravagance.

Imelda and her three children were subsequently allowed to return home, and have since regained significant political clout in the late dictator's northern home province of Ilocos Norte.

Imelda won a second term as congresswoman representing Ilocos Norte last year, the same year her son was elected senator. He has hinted at joining the presidential race in 2016.

Her eldest daughter, Imee, is the provincial governor. ([www.inquirer.net](http://www.inquirer.net))

## FEATURE

# Filipino Is Ready to Take on World's Toughest Foot Race

By Dennis Clemente

**N**EW YORK—Five days a week, Gerald Tabios' mode of transportation to work is the feet he runs with. It allows him to be upright for a total of 40 to 50 miles a week, in stark contrast to his daily work, 10 to 12 hours hunched in a car as the professional chauffeur of a wealthy Park Avenue socialite for the past seven years.

Tabios takes both his work and running seriously. Being a chauffeur, he can't talk for long on the phone, excusing himself all the time; while the only running he knows is the long and epic variety. He has completed 24 marathons (four 100-milers, two 48-hour), including 10 years of the New York City Marathon.

He has also completed 26 ultramarathons in 12 states—the longest of which was 143 miles. He finished all these races, but there's nothing like completing the toughest, most demanding and extreme footrace of all – the Badwater 135. Tabios was accepted among 100 of the toughest athletes: runners; tri-athletes; adventure racers.

On July 21 to 23 then, Tabios, 44, hopes to become only the second Filipino to "survive" Badwater 135 after Benjamin Gaetos, 56, last year. Tabios, a resident of Elmhurst, Queens, for the past 13 years, has come a long way from his early days running in his beau-

tiful hometown of Malaybalay, Bukidnon (elevation: 2,041 feet).

This time, Tabios will be making three mountain ascents of over 17,000 feet of cumulative vertical rise (the previous year's ascent was 13,000 feet) and 12,000 feet of cumulative descent (previous year's descent was 4,700 feet), starting from Lone Pine in California and finishing at Mt. Whitney Portal at 8,360 feet. This reportedly makes the 2014 route significantly more challenging than the previous years' route.

The distance he needs to cover will be the same: 135 miles. The weather: blisteringly hot, 129F (49C), possibly even hotter as previous temperatures have reached 133F.

Tabios is up to the challenge. Recent runs this month have been encouraging. He won the ultramarathon at Lake Waramaug in New Preston, Connecticut. He also placed 10th in the Great New York 100 Mile-Times Square, where he clocked in at 21:22:34.

## Why he's running

Why is he doing it?

"Because it's there," says Tabios, borrowing the line from British mountain climber George Mallory, who said it when asked why he wanted to climb Mt. Everest in the 1920s.

People may think running in these tough conditions is crazy, but Tabios is fearless, smiling as he says nonchalantly, "I love the challenge and (going) the distance."

So how does his mind



Gerald Tabios at Badwater 50, in Cape Fear, North Carolina, last March. Photo by Donna TABIOS

function when running? Because he is not one to accessorize (no iPods, only sunglasses for sun protection), Tabios says he thinks a lot when running. "When I run, it's just me, my thoughts and nature."

He doesn't think about pain. "Your mind can play tricks on you. It tells you to think of pain, so you will stop, but pain could just be muscle pain. Pain is all in the mind. I know the difference between pain and injury," he says.

By running, the 5'8 ultra-runner says he has become a more patient person—healthier even. From 177 pounds, he's down to 148 pounds. He has also chosen a charity, a donation site for the victims of Typhoon Haiyan through UNICEF.

"I believe this (Badwater race) is of great importance as well as a chance for me to collaborate with a charity," he says. The deadliest typhoon to hit the Philippines killed over 6,000 people.

Visit <https://www.crowdrise.com/unicefphilippines/fundraiser/geraldtabios>

## Training and diet

"Only training you need is running," he explains his physical conditioning. On weekends when he's not competing, he runs 15 to 20 miles. To condition his body for the elevated temperatures at the foot race location, he goes to the sauna. He says he never runs on a treadmill.

The night before he runs, Tabios is going to eat the same way he did in other races. "Mainly carbohydrates, as I stay away from fibers, if you know what I mean."

Pacing is important. To survive this 48-hour race, he must relax his legs, elevate or oxidate his them for 10 minutes. "Yes, there will be a bathroom break."

In previous races, Tabios would take GU gels every 45

minutes or so. "I take salt caps (electrolyte pills) every hour, depending on my sweat or heat during the race." He also drinks a high protein and calorie supplement every 9 or 10 miles. "You need complex carbohydrates or foods that help you sustain and release energy over time."

Like everyone else in this epic race, Tabios will also have a crew. It will consist of his wife, Donna, older brother, Glen, who is flying in from the Philippines, friend Kat Bermudez and a registered nurse. "My parents-in-law are also coming here from the Philippines to take care of our two kids (at home in Queens)," he says.

This is not just any other run for Tabios. He is not just putting on shoes and taking off to pass Queensboro Bridge on his way to his daily work on Park Avenue. It will be his first West Coast trip as well. And to make this ambitious undertaking a reality, his shoes may not be the only items burning a hole against the unbearable heat, his pocket will as well.

Tabios is spending upwards of \$3,000. He paid nearly \$1,000 for registration and more than \$2,000 for the travel expenses, van rentals, hotels and equipment, and daily expenses. He is not even in it for the prize, a belt buckle, with no cash prize. He simply wants to finish the world's toughest foot race. Is that too much to ask for?

For more on the route, click here <http://www.badwater.com/route/index.html>. ([www.inquirer.net](http://www.inquirer.net))

## LEGAL GUIDE (from page 7, FIVE THINGS...)

Bilecki and Tipon discussed the details of these "Top 5 things" on "The Tipon Report" radio program on KNDI in Honolulu on July 3 which this writer co-hosts with son Noel. Their private investigator is Kiamalu Consulting & Investigations, headed by Nathan Moores.

ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. He is originally from Laoag City and Magsingal, Ilocos Sur. Atty. Tipon

specializes in immigration law and criminal defense. He served as an immigration officer and co-authored "Immigration Law Service, 1st ed.," an 8-volume practice guide for immigration officers and lawyers. His radio program airs Thursdays at 7:30 am on KNDI 1270 AM. He can be reached via mail at: 900 Fort St., Suite 1110 (corner Merchant) Honolulu, HI 96813, by telephone at (808) 225-2645 or by e-mail: [filam-law@yahoo.com](mailto:filam-law@yahoo.com). For more on Atty. Tipon, go online to: [www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com](http://www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com). This article is a general overview of the subject matter discussed and is not intended as legal advice.

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LEGAL NOTES



By Reuben S. Seguritan

# Time for President Obama to Act on Immigration

**O**ne year after the Senate passed the comprehensive immigration reform bill, the chances of immigration reform in Congress, according to immigrant rights activists, has slipped from slim to zero. The slow demise of immigration reform in what seemed to be the best time for it in three decades is owed to the staunch opposition of House Republicans.

When the 2013 legislative year ended, House Speaker John A. Boehner of Ohio said that immigration was top priority in 2014. The GOP even released their blueprint for immigration reform in January which adopted a step-by-step approach and conditioned the legal status being offered to the undocumented on border

security and interior enforcement. However, Speaker Boehner later on backpedaled and said that they simply did not trust the President to enforce border security laws.

Despite the growing support and the intensified pressure for immigration reform, House Republicans refused to vote on an immigration bill. Speaker Boehner said that he won't bring the Senate's immigration reform bill up for a vote in his chamber. Meantime, the House would not go forward with its own version of the bill.

House Republicans have seemed to be coming up with new excuses not to support immigration reform, from the Affordable Care Act letdown to the most recent surge of young children illegally crossing the southwestern border. Fear from losing conservative votes come midterm election year weighed in even more with Majority Leader Eric

Cantor's loss in his Republican primary election.

The unrelenting stance of House Republicans has led some immigration rights advocates to believe that a shift in control of the House from Republicans to Democrats while holding the Senate and the White House, would be the only solution. According to the executive director of America's Voice Frank Sharry, "Our biggest mistake was that we believed Republicans wanted to change course after the 2012 election. I don't believe we will make that mistake again."

President Obama, on his part, has become fed up with the GOP's inaction and announced that the time has come for him to act on immigration. The President who earlier postponed releasing the results of the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson's review of the deportation policies said that

the review will be completed soon. The President said, "If Congress won't do their job, at least we can do ours."

Meanwhile, many states are initiating their own solutions for the undocumented. According to Frank Sharry, "A number of states are stepping into the vacuum saying let's do what we can to make life more bearable for the immigrants living in our communities."

Recently the New York City Council approved the use of municipal identification cards which will allow undocumented immigrants in the city to open bank accounts, sign apartment leases and gain access to services which require photo ID. With this legislation, New York joins Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New Haven, Connecticut, with large immigrant populations which have established municipal ID programs.

Also, immigrant groups have been pushing earlier this year to allow undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's license in New York; however, Governor Cuomo said that it might not happen this year. It has been reported though that bills to change New York's policy have been introduced in the Assembly and the Senate. At present, there are eleven states that have enacted

laws providing driver's license to the undocumented, namely, California, Washington state, New Mexico, Utah, Illinois, Nevada, Maryland, Oregon, Vermont, Connecticut and Colorado.

In addition, more states are allowing undocumented immigrants to pay in-state tuition rates. California and Texas enacted the legislation way back in 2001. Today, eighteen states have enacted laws extending in-state tuition rates to the undocumented.

Meanwhile, Senator Gustavo Rivera (D-New York) also introduced a bill that would grant citizenship to New York's undocumented immigrants who can establish that they live in the State and paid taxes for the last three years. The bill did not make it in New York's legislative session, however, according to Senator Rivera, it could serve as a model for other state legislators.

House Republicans agree that the immigration system is broken and needs fixing; however, they refuse to offer a permanent legislative fix. States have already acted. With the President stepping in, it is expected that a solution to immigration may well be underway.

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](http://www.seguritan.com)

## PHILIPPINE NEWS

# Vigan Among 21 Finalists in New 7 Wonder Cities Race

by Leoncio Balbin Jr.  
Wednesday, July 9, 2014

**V**IGAN, Philippines—Residents and netizens in this Ilocos Sur capital woke up to the news that the country's only heritage city made it to the list of 21 finalists in the new Seven Wonder Cities of the World race.

But they knew that the campaign to push Vigan to the finish line had just started as the fresh round of voting starts on Monday and ends on Oct. 7.

"This is not the end of the road. We've only just Vigan (a play on the song, 'We've only just begun')," read a Facebook post on Vigan's web page.

### More boost needed

Vigan made it to the penultimate round in the search and needs a further boost over the next three

months to advance to the final round of voting.

Organizers of the New7Wonders Cities campaign earlier observed that Vigan, a trading port long before the conquering Spaniards arrived in the late 16th century, had been losing steam but got a second wind in the run-up to the July 7 cut-off.

Vigan City Mayor Eva Marie Medina, who was out of the country when the list was released, sent a text message to city employees thanking Bigueños and Filipinos around the world for helping Vigan's bid.

Vigan, known for its Spanish-era mansions, cobblestone streets and culture, is the lone Philippine candidate in the global competition initiated by the Swiss nonprofit New7Wonders Foundation. The contest aims to preserve

the world's man-made and natural heritage sites.

The foundation was behind the campaign that named Palawan's Underground River in Puerto Princesa City as one of the world's New7Wonders of Nature in 2011.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) has placed Vigan in the World Heritage list in 1999, citing the city for its "best practice in sustainable conservation and management of world heritage properties."

Vigan tourism officer Edgar de la Cruz said the city government is preparing to expand the campaign as it prepares for the next round of voting.

### Bigger platform

"Vigan will now bring the

(continued on page 15)

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MAINLAND NEWS

# Fil-Am Scientist Leads Launch of NASA's First Carbon Observation Space Lab

**V**ANDENBERG (AFB), California – After the failure of their first attempt to launch an orbiting carbon observation laboratory, NASA scientists led by project manager Dr. Ralph Basilio were ecstatic at the flawless launch of their second attempt on July 1.

“I am happy to report that from the initial health check perspective of the observatory, that we do have indeed a healthy observatory,” said Filipino American astrophysicist Basilio, the project manager of the Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2 (OCO-2) of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

The OCO-2 spacecraft is NASA’s first science satellite meant to study where carbon dioxide is moving into and out of the atmosphere.

Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas emitted through human activities, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Since it is dedicated to studying carbon dioxide, the spacecraft “is of “critical im-

portance to the scientists who are trying to understand the impact of humans on global change,” said Betsy Edwards, program executive at NASA Headquarters in Washington during the pre-launch news conference, according to Reuters.

“Roughly half of the carbon is re-absorbed by forests and the ocean, a process that is not well understood,” the report added.

“Understanding the details of those processes will give us some insight into the future and what’s likely to happen over the next decades, even if we continue to consume more and more fossil fuels and emit more and more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere,” atmospheric scientist Michael Gunson of NASA’s JPL told Reuters and other media during the pre-launch news conference.

Basilio said that the observatory separated from the launch vehicle’s second stage around 56 minutes after it blasted off from Vandenberg



Dr. Ralph Basilio

Air Force Base in California on Wednesday. The OCO-2 is already on an “initial 426-mile (690-kilometer) orbit”, according to a JPL report.

The second stage is the part of the vehicle that brings the payload (in this case, the observatory) into orbit after the first stage successfully propels it upward into space.

The first stage — usually the largest part of the rocket — falls off after its propellants are exhausted. That’s when the second stage’s engine is ignited. Once the second stage successfully brings the payload into orbit, it also falls off.

“We got great (real-time)

film footage from a forward-facing camera on the launch vehicle’s second stage. We saw the observatory separating and basically moving towards the sun,” Basilio added.

The team also established two-way communication (both ground- and spaceborne) with NASA’s Tracking and Data Relay Satellite (TDRS) system composed of nine satellites meant to provide “near continuous information relay” to service missions such as the Hubble Space Telescope and the International Space Station; and the Alaska Satellite Facility, which makes remote-sensing data available to users globally.

“We’re now on our way to completing the rest of our spacecraft check out process. We’d like to be able to do that in the next week or two so that we can begin moving the observatory into its operational orbit,” Basilio said.

This means that OCO-2 will soon be part of a “formation of earth-observing satellites that’s operating in space right now,” called the Afternoon Constellation or the A-

Train.

Basilio is the recipient of two NASA Exceptional Achievement Medals — one for leading the CloudSat spacecraft development effort and the other for leading the Deep Space 1 in-flight technology validation work.

He has also has received a NASA Space Act Award for design and development of the Mars Pathfinder ground support equipment, and more than a dozen NASA Group Achievement Awards on these and other unmanned space missions.

Basilio earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Southern California. He also earned a Master of Science degree in aerospace engineering (with an emphasis on astronautics) also from the University of Southern California, a Bachelor of Science degree in aerospace engineering from the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and is a graduate of the Engineering Management Program at the California Institute of Technology. ([www.inquirer.net](http://www.inquirer.net))

GLOBAL NEWS



## Gov't Issues Level 3 Alert for Filipinos in Afghanistan

**M**ANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - The government issued today a level-3 alert, or voluntary repatriation, for Filipinos in Afghanistan due to heightened tensions in that country, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said.

“With this announcement, Filipinos in Afghanistan are strongly encouraged to volunteer to return to the Philippines,” the statement said.

Tensions in Afghanistan

have increased following the conduct of the presidential elections there on June 14.

The DFA called on an estimated 4,000 Filipinos there to return home due to security risks.

The DFA said the Philippine government maintains a total ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Afghanistan and it continues to monitor the political and security developments there.

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**COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**FILIPINO NURSES OF HAWAII (FNOH) 41ST ANNUAL EXCELLENCE IN NURSING RECOGNITION & AWARDS • SATURDAY • July 19, 2014 • Hilton Hawaiian Coral Ballroom 4 & 5 | 6:00 PM • Contact Luane Long @ 754-0594**

**INDUCTION OF OFFICERS OF CIRCULO KAPAMPANGAN • SATURDAY • September 12, 2014 • Halekoa Hotel | 6:00 PM • Contact Arturo Luna @ 233-8498**

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**GLOBAL NEWS**

**PH Astronaut Chino Roque to Bring Rosary, Flag, Family Photo to Space in 2015**

**L**OS ANGELES – The first Filipino astronaut, Chino Roque, has said he would bring with him two items on a space flight scheduled next year: a rosary and the Philippine flag.



A third item, if allowed, would be a family photo, said Roque, who was honored at a family reunion held at a church hall in Torrance Saturday, July 5 (Sunday in Manila).

“I am proud of my pamangkin [nephew],” said Carson Mayor Pro Tempore Elito Santarina, one of the more than 200 maternal relatives of

Roque who attended the Maniquis (also spelled Maniquiz) clan reunion.

Santarina handed Roque two plaques of recognition – one from the City of Carson and another from the clan, whose members trace their

roots in Bulacan and Nueva Ecija.

The 23-year-old crossfit trainer is one of 22 people from around the world who will fly in space – and the first Filipino to do so – aboard a suborbital Lynx space plane built by the US company XCOR Aerospace.

The psychology graduate of De La Salle University won the lone slot for the Philippines after a series of grueling physical and mental challenges at the AXE Apollo Space Academy (AASA), a global contest that promised to send 22 winners to the edge of space and back aboard the private spaceship.

More than 100 candidates from 60 countries took part in the Florida camp, competing for the 22 slots on the flight.

Roque told the Philippine Daily Inquirer he planned to visit the XCOR space port in the Mojave Desert, a possible launch site. Mojave in California is the American epicenter of private spacecraft development and XCOR Aerospace is based in Mojave.

At the family reunion,

Roque autographed copies of his photo with legendary astronaut and AASA Space Camp judging committee chairman Buzz Aldrin who selected Roque and the 21 other aspiring astronauts.

Aldrin became the second person ever to walk on the moon during NASA’s 1969 Apollo 11 mission. ([www.inquirer.net](http://www.inquirer.net))

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**PHILIPPINE NEWS (from page 13, VIGAN...)**

campaign to a bigger platform. We will make Vigan’s presence felt on the national stage,” he said in a phone interview.

He said campaign materials like tarpaulins will be posted on major roads like Edsa in Metro Manila to generate more support. He said the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has allowed Vigan to use the MMDA billboards for its campaign.

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) has also approved the placement of promotional materials in all airports and seaports nationwide, he said.

Vigan has tapped social media networks to promote its campaign. It has also courted the support of private and government media to ask Filipinos around the world to vote for Vigan.

“We are counting on the support of all Filipinos here and around the world,” De la Cruz said.

**How to vote**

The New7Wonders Foun-

ation has made available various channels that allow supporters to rally more votes for their bets.

Aside from using the group’s website ([www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com)), votes may be cast through mobile applications for Apple and Android devices.

Voting may also be done through text messaging as well as dedicated international telephone lines.

The Switzerland-based foundation has also enabled international phone voting using the following numbers— +881821611990; +881921611990; +34902735471; +447589975201; +447559121023; and +447559583500.

“Anyone with a phone—mobile or landline—anywhere in the world, can call one of our dedicated phone lines and vote for their one chosen city,” New7Wonders director Jean-Paul de la Fuente said in a statement.

To vote by phone, callers need to put in a code—after listening to a short message—for the city they are supporting.

The code for Vigan is “28,” mainly because it was last in the alphabetically arranged list of finalists in the previous round.

The roster of 21 finalists will be further reduced to 14 for the final round, which will be announced on Oct. 7. The winning seven cities will be named on Dec. 17.

The other cities on the Top 21 list are Bangkok, Barcelona, Beirut, Chicago, Doha, Durban, Havana, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, La Paz, London, Mendoza, Mexico City, Mumbai, Perth, Quito, Reykjavik, Saint Petersburg, Seoul and Shenzhen.

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