

HAWAII-PHILIPPINE NEWS EDITION



FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

FILIPINO ENTREPRENEURS SHOWCASE PRODUCTS AT 2008 MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL

By HFC STAFF



Nikki Battad of Little Dragon Girls (right), which specializes in Asian-inspired graphic tees and clothes for girls. Battad is one of hundreds of exhibitors at the upcoming Made in Hawaii Festival.

If you enjoy locally-made products, good food and entertainment, then the 13th Annual Made in Hawaii Festival may be just for you.

Scheduled for August 15-17, 2008 at the Blaisdell Center Exhibition Hall, the Made in Hawaii Festival will feature more than 420 booths of exhibitors from all over Hawaii, each offering an assortment of locally-made products such as food, books, gifts, fashions, plans, art, crafts and more of the latest and greatest finds, as well as old favorites.

"We are proud to support all of these small businesses, our long time veterans and our new exhibitors," says Richard Botti, president of the Hawaii Food Industry Association.

FILIPINO EXHIBITORS

There are several Filipino entrepreneurs who are participating in this year's Festival. Among them are Ken Enriques and his wife Lynne, owners of Uncle Louie's Sausages (Booth #324-325).

The couple, who hails from Kahului, Maui, began the business in 1991. Since then, business has grown to a point where they now produce about 50,000 pounds of sausages every month. Approximately 95 percent of Uncle Louie's products are sold to food service distributors.

Enriques has been a fixture at the Made in Hawaii Festival. His booth is very popular and his sausage is a hit among festival goers, many of whom line-up to taste his delicious product.

In fact, his products are a hit everywhere—from Las Vegas to Honolulu and all over Maui. Businesses such as Old Lahaina Luau, Embassy Suites, Jack's, L&L Drive-In in Wailuku and the Golden Nugget in Nevada use his products. As a testament to Enriques' quality, local chef and restaurateur Sam Choy actually specifies Uncle

(continued on page 4)

Typhoon Death Toll Nears 500



By Jaime LAUDE

Land-based casualties from typhoon "Frank" reached 490 persons killed, 288 injured and 268 still missing, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) reported yesterday.

The typhoon also displaced 487,412 families or 2,443,646 persons, a majority of them coming from Western Visayas which has the highest number of casualties: 264 dead, 252 missing and 156 injured.

The number of fatalities in Western Visayas is expected to increase as there are still a number of other municipalities that have yet to report the damage left by typhoon Frank.

NDCC executive director Glenn Rabonza said that out of 498 dead, 221 have already been identified.

The estimated cost of damage to in-

(continued on page 4)

PGMA Goes to Bat For Filipino World War II Veterans

By Carlota ADER

Washington—Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo argued strongly for equity for Filipino veterans who had fought and suffered alongside American forces in World War II, including the infamous Bataan Death March.

The recurring theme of the President's speech was equity for the Filipino veterans who fought and died under the banner of the Stars and Stripes in WWII.

At a reception for the

(continued on page 4)



Left to Right: American Coalition for Filipino Veterans leaders Ray Cabacar, Pascualino Dee, Guillermo Ruminaga, Tomas Cutang are thanked by Philippine President Gloria Arroyo during the Philippine Friendship Congressional Caucus reception for their efforts to win full recognition and VA benefits for their comrades.

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EDITORIAL**Shameless**

With price surges in food and fuel, and taxpayers' money being used to subsidize rice, fuel and electricity for the poorest of the poor, public officials should be setting the example in austerity. Instead they are jetting off to the United States as part of President Arroyo's official delegation in the working visit that Malacanang finally managed to arrange with the White House.

In contrast to a state visit, which generally includes a White House state dinner and, for visiting VIPs, a long chat with the US president at the Bush family's Crawford ranch in Texas, a working visit means Filipino taxpayers are bankrolling the entire trip.

Already oppressed by soaring fuel and power rates and a looming double-digit rise in consumer prices, the Filipino taxpayer needs a reprieve. The public will not begrudge President Arroyo her farewell call on US President George W. Bush, who has only half a year left in power. In these hard times, however, the leader of a developing country that remains dependent on foreign aid should have brought along the leanest delegation ever. But sensitivity to public opinion, especially in the way public funds are spent, has never been a strong point of this administration and its congressional allies.

For sure the 59 congressmen, two senators and 10 Cabinet members as well as their relatives and aides in the presidential entourage will either claim that they are spending their own money or else are indispensable in the trip. An official audit of the expenditures could show the true picture, but Congress has never been keen on making a public accounting of the way it uses public funds.

The 59-member contingent is even bigger than the 40 who joined the President in her recent European trip. In that visit, the joke was that Spain nearly ran out of jamon Serrano, which was bought up by the congressional delegation led by House Assistant Majority Leader Amelita



Villarosa, and that their plane nearly crashed from the excess weight, which must have become even heavier after the delegation had descended on Harrod's in London.

Back then there were still no long lines for cheap rice and power subsidies in the Philippines. Today the times call for frugality. Where is leadership by example in this country? (www.philstar.com) ■

A System to Respond to Disaster Needed

Everybody involved in the latest maritime tragedy that saw the Princess of the Stars capsized in stormy waters -- from relatives of victims to operators of the ill-starred vessel to authorities who have jurisdiction on the matter -- is tripping over each other.

The confusion that ensued as a result of the accident only shows this country has never learned to prepare to handle a situation such as what we see now despite the fact that it is an archipelago and, therefore, its primary means of moving people and cargo is by boat.

Because of the lack of any system, we see tired but angry relatives herded in cramped places waiting for something that is not about to happen, and company officials wishing to please and placate but unable to do so because the situation is not in their hands.

Then we see officials caught in the middle, unable to do anything sig-

nificant in either direction because they simply do not know what to do or have been rendered too timid to do anything lest they exacerbate an already tenuous and highly-charged situation.

Relatives of the victims, while it is easy to understand and sympathize with their plight, must also see that things cannot move in every direction and at every pace that they wish. A terrible loss does not bestow on anyone any god-like power to command events.

Company officials, while it is apparent they are doing everything they can to move things along and get this latest terrible episode over with, must from now on see that it is imperative to make it a corporate strategy to instill a quick reaction system immediately.

Government officials, on the other hand, while it is easy to see their limitations and constraints, are not exactly helpless to deal with situations that require prompt and coordinated reactions.

Every local government has a police, fire and disaster unit that can swiftly kick into action whenever they are required to do so. And it is presumed that each has the capability to communicate with the rest of the nation to ensure information is at hand all the time. (www.philstar.com) ■



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by Senator Will
ESPERO

The local newspapers have reported on Maui couples flying to California to get married now that same-sex marriage is legal there. Some constituents have called to ask whether Hawaii will recognize these California marriages when the couples return.

It's a constitutional issue revolving around a provision referred to as the Full Faith and Credit Clause. The basic principle here is that one state should honor court judgments entered in another state, giving the same credit, validity, and effect to the judgment that it had in the issuing state. The same recognition, however, does not apply to laws made by state legislatures. Every state is its own sovereign and is entitled to its own statutes. Hawaii laws govern Hawaii; California's laws govern California, and as one professor put it, "never the twain shall meet."

So where does marriage fit? The basic expectation under our government structure is that marriages performed in one state will be recognized in another. This is called the "celebration" rule: a marriage is valid in all states if it was valid in the state where the marriage was performed, with two exceptions. One is if a state has a specific statute denying the validity of the marriage in question, or two, if the state's public policy is strongly against such recognition.

One example of these two exceptions is "marriage evasion statutes." If a state prohibits a marriage and the couple goes to another state which permits it and gets married there, upon returning home, their marriage is void and will not be recognized in their home state. For example, if a state prohibits marriage of a girl under the age of 16, and a 15 year old girl elopes in another state, upon returning home, that marriage is void, and the husband can be prosecuted for statutory rape.

A second type of law is a state version of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which reserves the right to refuse to recognize a same-sex marriage of another state.

The marital exception to the Full Faith and Credit Clause has repeatedly been upheld in courts throughout the nation, confirming and protecting states' rights both

LEGISLATIVE CONNECTION

To Be Or Not To Be: Married, That Is

to set out their own rules regarding what constitutes a valid marriage and to refuse to recognize marriages performed legally elsewhere that do not conform to their own requirements. Court rulings have not been limited to the same sex marriage issue. Other objections include marriage between relatives, minimum age requirements, and marriages that followed too soon after a prior divorce.

Hawaii's laws satisfy both the specific statute and public policy exceptions to the celebration rule. Hawaii's statutes declared the state's public policy that marriage is between a man and a woman. When the law was challenged in court, opponents of same-sex marriage led the successful effort



to get a constitutional amendment declaring that the Legislature had the power to reserve marriage to opposite-sex couples. The Hawaii Supreme Court upheld the statute limiting marriage to unions between a man and a woman in light of the marriage amendment, saying the amendment took the statute "out of the ambit of the

equal protection clause."

For those of you who enjoy scholarly discussions on the Constitution, here it is. The preferred method for determining the applicable law is to ask the extent of contact between the forum (home) state and the parties, and the parties with the other state (where the marriage was performed). Under

this means for determining which state's law prevails, the state with the most contacts is the state whose laws govern the situation. Since the Hawaii couple resides in Hawaii but only got married in California, California has nominal contact, Hawaii has greater contact, and Hawaii's law governs. Even under this analysis, the outcome is the same: the same-sex couple's marriage is invalid once they return to Hawaii because our state does not recognize same-sex marriage. ■

The tremendous assistance of Dr. Howard H. Schweber, Professor of Constitutional Law and Professor of Government and Political Science, University of Wisconsin, in preparing this article is gratefully appreciated.

**The Bus * C & C Department of Transportation Services
Ti Bus * City & County of Honolulu, Departamento Serbisio ti Transportasion**

Bus Stop Realignment Project

PROYEKTO A PANANGBALIW TI PAGSARDENGAN TI BUS

The City is realigning bus stop placement for safer streets and more efficient bus service. As a result, the following bus stops will be discontinued on:

Wednesday, July 2, 2008

Ti Siudad ket itunos wenco baliwanna ti panaglugar dagiti pagsardengan ti Bus para iti natalalged a kalsada ken nasaysayaat a serbisio ti Bus. Kas resulta, dagiti sumaganad a pagsardengan ti Bus ket maisardeng wenco marikpanda no:

Mierkoles Hulio 2, 2008

Proposed Bus Stops To Be Discontinued: PAGSARDENGAN TI BUS A MAISINGASING A MASERRAAN:

Eastbound Bus Stop

On Middle Street, mid-block between Haumana Place and Kam IV Road
Agpadaya Iti Middle Street, iti nagbaetan iti Haumana Place ken Kam IV Road

Westbound Bus Stop

On Middle Street, mid-block between Kam IV Road and Notley Street
Iti Middle Street, iti nagbaetan ti Kam IV Road ken Notley Street

Note: Only bus stops in the affected area are shown.
Bus stops not shown are not affected.

Dagiti laeng maapektaran a bus stop ti maiparang. Saan a maiparang dagiti saan a maapektaran a bus stop.



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(cont. from page 1; *Mark Your...*)

Louie's Portuguese Sausage is one of his turkey stuffing recipes.

A major portion of Uncle Louie's products goes to hotels in Waikiki. Besides sausages, other products are popular with the hotels, including pre-sliced teri beef and ground meats. Enriques also features a variety of sausages, including hot dogs, pipi kaula, pineapple sausages and sausages made with Maui onions and mac nuts.

Making his first appearance at the Made in Hawaii Festival is Billy Luat, who makes delicious and tasty fish jerky sold under the brand name Hawaiian Fish Bites (Booth #349).

Luat's fresh Hawaiian ahi is seasoned and dried to a tender, chewy snack. It makes a great, healthy alternative to dried beef jerky. It comes in 4 oz. bags and a variety of flavors, including pepper, sweet chili pepper and

teriyaki.

Hawaiian Fish Bites can be bought on Oahu at Menehune Mac—the oldest manufacturer of chocolate covered macadamia nut candies in Hawaii and one of the Honolulu Advertiser's best Hawaiian Gift Shops on Oahu for 2008. Located in Wailuku, the Menehune Mac Factory Gift Center sells exclusive, made in Hawaii products at factory direct prices.

A third Filipino exhibitor is Nikki Battad of Little Dragon Girls (Booth #47), which specializes in a cute line of tops for girls of all ages, including women, teens, girls and kids. Other than clothing, Little Dragon Girls also features stationary (cards, stickers and posters) and accessories (such as bags, purses and jewelry).

Battad has drawn a steady following, having her products

shown on the popular Disney Channel TV series for kids "The Wizards of Waverly Place." Little Dragon Girls products have also been seen in the Honolulu Advertiser and featured in Transition magazine. The 2008 Made in Hawaii Festival is Battad's first.

A fourth exhibitor is Leilani Lee Lahue, owner of BGS of Hawaii (Booth #316). Lahue is a new exhibitor who specializes in surfboard slings or carriers. Lahue's products are available only in Hawaii and nowhere else. Lahue is also making her first appearance at the Festival.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Grammy Na Hoku Hanohano and Hawaii Music Award winners will also perform live on stage. The list includes Pomaik Keawe-Lyman, Jerry Santos, Eddie Kamae, Darren Benitez, KUUmZ (Michael Casupang



Kenneth Enriques (left) and his son David. Kenneth is the owner of Uncle Louie's Sausage Co. which produces "omelicious" Maui-made sausages. Enriques is a regular fixture at the Made in Hawaii Festival and his products a favorite among Festival goers.

and Karl "Veto" Baker of Halau I Ka Wekiu), and local comedian Frank De Lima.

There will also be guest ap-

pearances from Hawaii's talented chefs and cooks who will prepare Hawaii-grown produce and products.

(continued on page 6)

THE QUALITY OF OUR DRINKING WATER

If you are a Board of Water Supply customer, you will receive by mail a Water Quality Report informing you about the quality, contents, and treatment of your drinking water. Please have someone translate it for you so you know about your water supply. Thank you!

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No kustomernaka [parokiano] iti Board of Water Supply, makaawatkawin babaen iti koreo ti reporti ti kalidad ti danum a mangipakaammo kenka maipapan iti kalidad, linao ken pannakatariapito ti in-umentayo a danum. Pangasiyo ta adda mangipatarito iyoy para kadaikayo tapno maamumanyo na nalaing maipapan iti suplayyo a danum. Agyamankami.

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frustration and agriculture in Southern Tagalog, Western Visayas, Central and Eastern Visayas, Western Mindanao and Northern Mindanao was pegged at P5.5 billion.

Again, Western Visayas suffered the most damage in infrastructure and agriculture at more than P2 billion.

A total of 178,467 houses in 14 regions were damaged by the typhoon, 69,616 of which were totally destroyed.

Rabonza said that as of yesterday, the estimated cost of assistance provided by the agency has already amounted to P22,388,369.

Meanwhile, several hospitals in Western Visayas, especially in Iloilo, remain crowded due to the influx of those injured in massive flooding and other storm-related incidents over the weekend.

"Loaded lahat ang mga hospital dito," said Carreon, adding that 304,578 individuals are still

staying at various evacuation centers, mostly schools.

The military's C-130 cargo planes have already flown relief goods to Western Visayas like food, medicine and bottled drinking water.

Meanwhile, President Arroyo will go straight to the victims of typhoon Frank upon her arrival from the United States.

Mrs. Arroyo, scheduled to arrive early Monday morning from San Francisco, will proceed to the Philippine Air Force (PAF) headquarters at Villamor Air Base to send off planes-load of relief goods for the typhoon victims.

The PAF's planes on mercy missions will take off from the PAF's 505th Wing.

A day after her arrival from the US 10-day visit to the US, Mrs. Arroyo is also set to fly to Iloilo City where she will not only preside over the regular Tuesday Cabinet meeting, but also meet with the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC).

The NDCC will update the President on the government's search and rescue/retrieval (SAR) operations for the victims of typhoon Frank, especially the victims of the ill-fated MV Princess of the Stars of Suplicio Lines whose ships have been grounded to determine their sea-worthiness.

The President is also expected to go around the areas devastated by the typhoon which has early far left some 1,100 people dead.

Even while in the US, the President had been issuing directives via video teleconferences with her Cabinet members and with NDCC officials to get to the bottom of the Princess of the Stars tragedy.

Mrs. Arroyo's directives include giving government aid for ferry disaster victims and their families; and that pending review of Philippine Coast Guard protocol, "no vessel shall it if would pass possible typhoon path." (www.philstar.com) ■

(cont. from page 1; *PGMA Goes...*) Philippines-U.S. Friendship Caucus at the Veterans Committee Hearing Room, she said that the history of the Filipino veterans' role in WWII "remains incomplete—the last chapter is yet to be written."

"Filipinos served as U.S. soldiers, fought side-by-side with Americans and died under the banner of the Star and Stripes. They suffered through some of the most brutal acts of World War II, including the notorious Bataan Death March. Yet they prevailed, and together we vanquished the enemy and brought freedom and human dignity back to Asia and the world," Macapagal-Arroyo said.

She thanked US Congressmen Bob Filner and Darrell Issa, two stalwarts in the Filipino veterans equity movement, members of the Philippine-U.S. Friendship Caucus for their support, and the remaining Filipino WWII veterans.

At a reception with members



President Arroyo with Filipino veterans in the US

of the Filipino community held at the Willard Hotel, Macapagal-Arroyo called on all Filipinos in the U.S. to keep the fight for equity for Filipino veterans going.

She said that during her meetings with President Bush and members of Congress, the interest of the Filipino veterans was foremost on the agenda.

The U.S. Senate has passed its version of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007 by a vote of 96-1. The measure would provide pension to 18,000 Filipino

veterans who fought alongside the US forces in the Philippines in World War II.

Under the bill, surviving members of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East and Filipino scouts living in the Philippines would receive a special monthly non-service disability pension of \$300.

Filipino World War II veterans living in the U.S. would receive the same range as their American counterparts, whose monthly pensions range from \$900-\$1,400. ■

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Hawaii Students to Showcase Robotics Expertise

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE and high school students from all over Hawaii will showcase their technical expertise and innovative talents at the Hawaii State Robotics Competition on July 2, 2008 at the State Capitol Rotunda.

The students, along with their mentors and teachers, will display robots of all shapes and sizes, ranging from three feet to one cubic centimeter in size. There will be underwater robots powered by propulsion, robots built out of Legos, as well as racing robots.

The exhibit will feature about 30 teams from over a dozen schools. Students and teachers will be able to learn more about starting or expanding robotics programs in their schools.

The event will highlight six major student robotics programs: FIRST Robotics, FIRST LEGO League, Botball, Underwater Remote Operating Vehicle, VEX Robotics, and Micro Robotics. A common denominator among the robotics programs is the use of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education to teach students how to solve real-world problems.

Recognizing the importance of promoting robotics at an early age,



and sustaining students' interest in STEM education throughout their schooling, the six robotics programs have formed the Hawaii Robotics Organizing Committee. This is the first time all six of the robotics programs are coordinating efforts to promote robotics education in elementary, middle and high schools statewide.

"This exhibit supports our continuing effort to ensure every elementary, middle and high school in Hawaii has a robotics program as a means to foster STEM education," said Gov. Linda Lingle. "Each program represents a unique learning opportunity for students of various ages. By joining together in their work to ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts, the future success of our students will

Maui Writers Offer Scholarships For Students to Attend Conference

THE MAUI WRITERS Conference is offering scholarships to high school and college students as well as for writers with hardships that have affected their financial ability to attend the upcoming Maui Writers Conference on Oahu from August 29-September 1, 2008.

"We are excited about our scholarship program and we hope it will make it possible for Oahu's many aspiring writers to attend the Conference in August," said Maui Writers Conference Director John Tullius. "This is a golden opportunity for writers to improve their writing techniques by listening to and learning from some of the best writers in the country."

Events will be held at the Ala Moana Hotel and the Hawaii Convention Center. The conference will offer more than 100 different workshops, lectures, one-on-one consultations and casual gatherings where students can interact with award-winning



and best-selling writers and screenwriters.

The Conference highlights the fields of fiction, nonfiction, and screenwriting, but also provides insightful specialty workshops on the business of writing, children's and young adult books, journalism, magazine writing, food and cookbook writing, and poetry.

The scholarships are available to all Hawaii high school and university students, who will also be given 50 percent off the registration fee. Applications must be accompanied by a 3-5 page writing sample and proof of your enrollment in a qualified school. For those applying due to financial hardship, an explanation of your financial situation is required.

Applicants can apply online at: www.mauiwriters.com, or by calling 879-0061. ■

Hirono Announces Federal Funding for Homeless Veterans Program

CONGRESSWOMAN MAZIE

Hirono recently announced that a grant totaling \$200,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor will be used to help fund the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program at Kalaehoa.

The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program provides

pre-employment training, job placement, and job retention services to qualified applicants. In an on-going effort to get homeless veterans back into the labor force to stay.

The program is run by the non-profit group U.S. Veterans Initiative-Hawaii, which enrolls some 400 homeless veterans annually in programs that involve transitional and permanent shelters, sub-

stance abuse counseling and treatment, job counseling and referral, employment assistance, transportation, housing and clothing.

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that veterans comprise about 23 percent of all homeless persons and one-third of the male homeless population. Roughly 3 out of every 4 homeless veterans suffer from alcohol, drug, or mental health problems. ■

be taken to a new level."

Robotics is a critical component of the Hawaii Innovation Initiative because it engages students in science, technology, engineering and math education and provides them with the teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving skills they need to continue their education and succeed in the global economy. Strengthening these aptitudes and abilities in Hawaii's youth is key to building a brighter future for our state.

Currently, 136 public, private and charter schools statewide are involved with a robotics program.

Participating schools include McKinley High School, Sacred Hearts Academy, Radford High School, Punahoa, Farrington High School, Nanakuli High School, Iolani, Moanalua High School, Wahiawa Middle School, Highlands Intermediate, Calvary Chapel Christian School, Waiakea High School, Hilo High School, Campbell High School and Kamehameha Schools. ■

Filipino Community Raises Funds for Flood Victims

VOLUNTEERS FROM THE

Hawai'i International Relief Organization (HIRO), Congress of Visayan Organizations (COVO)

and FilCom Center co-sponsored

a relief drive on June 28, 2008 from 10 am to 1 pm for Philippine flood/typhoon victims, as well as for those families who lost loved ones in the fury tragedy.

Organizers set up a broadcasting and collection center at the FilCom Center foyer fronting the parking lot. KNDI broadcasted the telethon live.

"I congratulate and commend everyone involved in the effort," says Toy Arre, FilCom president. "You're undertaking a needed humanitarian service to our kababayans who were adversely affected by Typhoon Frank." ■

According to news reports, the typhoon killed 361 people and injured 166 others as of June 25. It battered the Western Visayas, where most of the deaths occurred, before heading towards Southern Luzon and Metro Manila. About 200,000 families in 38 provinces across the Philippines were affected by the typhoon.

Typhoon Frank's strong winds and high surf led to the capsizing of a ferry that carried nearly 800 passengers, many of whom were trapped inside the ship. Philippine and foreign emergency response teams are currently undertaking recovery and clean-up efforts. ■

DONATIONS can be made at FilCom Center c/o Mr.Toy Arre 94-428 Mokuba St., Suite 302 Waipahu, HI 96797 Phone: 680-0451

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Honolulu (520-1111)

Waimoku Plaza (520-1100)

Waimoku Ave. (520-1100)

Waimoku Plaza (520-1100)

WAIAHALA

141-1401 Farrington Hwy. (Waipahu) (677-3099)

Windward Mall, Center Court (Kaneohe) (275-0287)

ROTAL CASH WAIAHALA

755 Kamahameha Hwy. (Waipahu) (677-9000)

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Trade Deficit Seen to Swell to \$11.5B

by Des. FERRIOS

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas (BSP) expects the country's trade deficit to hit \$11.5 billion this year because of surging oil prices and the projected increase in food imports, particularly grains.

In 2007, the country incurred a deficit of \$8.2 billion.

"It's both because of volume and value of imports which we expect to increase this year," said Iluminada Sicat, director of the BSP's Department of Economic Statistics (DES).

According to Sicat, the BSP expects exports growth to slow down to five percent this year but imports are projected to surge by 10 percent, creating a larger gap than last year.

Sicat said the BSP had originally projected the trade deficit to reach only \$8.7 billion this year, inching up only marginally from last year's deficit level.

But she said the increase in petroleum prices would push this gap wider.

For the first four months of the year, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said the trade deficit stood at \$2.6 billion compared to a deficit of \$17.9 million in the same period last year.

Sicat said the slowdown in exports would be due to the 3.2 percent decline expected in the electronics sector which accounted for over two

thirds of the country's total exports.

The NSO also reported that electronics imports, which accounted for a third of the import bill in April, fell 10.7 percent to \$1.594 billion.

The decline in electronics imports—an import-dependent industry—was also indicative of future output and exports that Sicat said had been dampened by softer demand in developed market.

Sicat said the increase in imports in general would be due to higher oil and petrol imports as well as food, with the government stockpiling grains to avert the expected supply shortage during the lean season.

The NSO said that in April alone, food imports jumped sharply, with cereals and cereal preparations registering a 222.9 percent increase to \$239.5 million or 4.9 percent of the bill.

Because of the slowdown in exports and increase in imports, together with the slowdown in investments, the BSP had earlier trimmed its projected balance of payments for the year from a \$4.6 billion surplus to a more modest \$2.5-billion surplus.

The balance of payments reflects the country's transactions with the rest of the world paid out of the gross international reserves or the biggest buyer. (www.philstar.com) ■

GIR which was projected to reach record levels of \$35 billion to \$37 billion this year.

The size of the country's BOP surplus is also an indication of the BSP's comfort level in shielding the peso from excess volatility in the market.

Although still a surplus, however, the emerging 2008 BOP projection would be 26.4 percent lower than originally expected and about 70 percent lower than the actual 2007 surplus.

The BSP's original BOP projection was already conservative but officials said estimates needed to be adjusted further to account for the impact of the turmoil in the financial markets and the rapid increase in food and oil prices.

Although the BSP expected oil prices to continue going up this year, no one expected that prices would even touch \$130 per barrel, let alone the \$137 per barrel level that it eventually reached last month.

Moreover, an unexpected turn in the food sector had the government importing rice amid criticism that the surge in prices were largely self-inflicted when agriculture officials announced they were importing large quantities from a very thin market where the Philippines was the single biggest buyer. (www.philstar.com) ■

PGMA to Push for Sustainable Management of Coral Triangle

PRESIDENT GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo will make a strong push for the sustainable management of the Coral Triangle—the world's epicenter of abundant marine life and diversity.

She met with public and private sector officials at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. in a multi-nation effort to enhance and preserve the Coral Triangle that spans across Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. This extraordinary area holds the richest concentration of iridescent corals, fish, crustaceans, mollusks and marine plants in the world.

The President is expected to call for stronger cooperation among the stakeholders to ensure the sustainable management and conservation of the Coral Triangle. She has pointed out the "policy of the state to protect, conserve the sustainable use of biological diversity to ensure and secure the well-being of present and future generations of Filipinos."

The Coral Triangle covers 5.7 million kilometers of ocean and matches the richness of the Amaz-

zon rainforest. It is home to 75 percent of all coral species known to science, among them are yellowfin tuna, skipjack tuna, big eye tuna, bumphead parrotfish, needlefish, Napoleon wrasse, and barracuda; six of the seven species of marine turtles including green, hawksbill, olive ridley, leatherback, loggerhead and flatback; migrating populations of whale sharks and massive manta rays; abundant plankton, more than 3,000 species of reef fish, 22 species of dolphin (including spinner, spotted, bottlenose, and the endangered Irrawaddy dolphin), the endangered seacow, rare Bryde's whale, short-finned pilot whale, sperm and dwarf sperm whale, humpback and Cuvier's beaked whale.

In the Philippines, coral reefs generate an estimated \$1.6 billion per year in revenues. The Philippines Initiative calls for concerted action among countries within the Coral Triangle to conserve marine biodiversity, stop habitat destruction and effectively manage their marine resources. (*Philippine Consulate General*) ■

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(cont. from page 4 Mark Your...)

ucts in culinary demonstrations sponsored by HUMSA. The list includes Derek Kurisu of KTA Superstores, Mark Elman of Maui Tacos, Andy Nelson of Neptune's Garden Restaurant, Dr. Terry Shintani, Ed Kennedy of TOWN, Elmer Guzman of The Poke Stop, and Grant Sato of Kapiolani Community College are among those scheduled to appear at the Festival.

Last year, over 35,000 people attended the three-day event. A new feature for this year is that shoppers will be able to ship their purchases directly from the Festival to their friends and families on the neighbor islands and the Mainland via a U.S. Post Office booth, which will be on-site.

This year's theme of "Buy Hawaii, For Hawaii" has taken on a new meaning, as the local economy has cooled off. Yet, festival organizers remain hopeful and are encouraging exhibitors to submit their



Tees and clothing apparel from Little Dragon Girls.



Made In Hawaii Festival Product to be showcased at the event on August 15 - 17, 2008 at Neal Blaiddell

application for a booth as soon as possible, since space is limited. Standard booth rates are \$560. A \$200 deposit must be submitted along with the completed application form. More information is available online at: www.madeinhawaiifestival.com.

To qualify for the Festival, a product must have at least 51 percent of its whole value added by manufacture, assembly, fabrication or production within the State of Hawaii.

Admission is \$3 per person and free for children six years old and under. The Made in Hawaii Festival is produced by the Hawaii Food Industry Association and sponsored by First Hawaiian Bank.

More details about the event is available by calling 533-1292 or going online to: www.madeinhawaiifestival.com. ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

US, China Commit Aid for Typhoon Victims

by Paolo ROMERO

WASHINGTON (via PLDT) – The US government sent \$100,000 in emergency aid as President George W. Bush expressed condolences to the Philippine government over the devastation left by typhoon "Frank."

US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte relayed the condolences to President Arroyo in a courtesy call at the Intercon Willard Hotel here Monday morning (10 p.m. Manila time).

Negroponte noted the devastation wreaked by the typhoon in the Philippines over the weekend, including the sinking of a ferry that left hundreds of passengers still missing.

"We want to express our condolences to the government and the people of the Philippines, particularly the family members of those who have been affected by this tragedy," Negroponte said.

"On behalf of the United States government, our hearts go out to the government and people of the Philippines, particularly the victims of this terrible tragedy which has just occurred," he said.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristin Kenney said Bush would personally convey his sympathies during his meeting with Mrs. Arroyo today at the White House.

Kenney also expressed her "deep sense of sorrow" over the tragedy in the sinking of MV Princess of the Stars.

The US government sent the

emergency aid, coursed through the US Embassy in Manila. The \$100,000 donation is the maximum amount that can be sent to the embassy without prior authorization from the US Congress.

State Department spokesman Tom Casey said the money was forwarded to the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC).

China also sent \$100,000 emergency cash assistance coursed through the Chinese Embassy in Manila.

Chinese Ambassador Song Tao will personally hand over the donation to acting Foreign Affairs Secretary Francisco Benedicto.

"The Chinese government and people wish to express deep condolences and sincere sympathies to the Philippine people and the families of the victims. As close neighbor and good friend to the Philippines, we share the sufferings of the victims and their families," the Chinese embassy said in a statement.

The embassy said Chinese President Hu Jintao immediately sent a condolence message to President Arroyo.

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi also sent a letter of condolence to his counterpart, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo.

In Washington, Mrs. Arroyo said she was grateful for the US government's "emergency aid and assistance to help the Philippines in this hour of need."

She pointed out that since she arrived in the US on Saturday, "we



The USS Ronald Reagan to the rescue

have been in constant contact in Manila as we track and direct rescue and recovery operations."

Negroponte and Press Secretary Jesus Dureza said USNS Stockholm, a roll-on roll-off vessel of the Honolulu-based US Pacific Command, was expected to reach the site near Sibuyan Island where the ship capsized at 3 a.m. Philippine time.

The Stockholm carried HH-60 Pave Hawk combat search and rescue helicopters, Dureza said.

US officials also announced that a P-3 Orion aircraft from Okinawa, Japan would now be operating from Clark in Pampanga to scan the areas around the ship.

Kenney explained the aircraft has the capability to scan a wide area and look several meters under water.

She said the US Navy ship and the aircraft would be in the country for as long as needed.

Philippine rescue teams were battling furious seas and high winds Monday in a desperate hunt

for more survivors of the 24,000-ton Princess of the Stars that sank with 862 people aboard.

So far, 48 people from the ferry have turned up alive, raising hopes that more will be found on the many tiny islands nearby.

"We're deeply grateful for the response by the US government, including the US Navy," Mrs. Arroyo told reporters here after the meeting with Negroponte.

Negroponte and Kenney also said the US government is willing to increase its assistance in the rescue and recovery efforts if requested by the Philippine government.

"In addition, we have been talking with our naval authorities and they are looking at other ways which they might also be of assistance," said Negroponte, who served as US ambassador to Manila.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, chairman of the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) who was in the meeting,

told Negroponte that they are still on rescue operation mode, in the hope that more survivors would be found.

Teodoro later told reporters that there was an "open offer" from the US government for more help during calamities.

The Catholic Church in the US also announced its plans to donate up to \$55,000 in assistance to typhoon victims, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said.

In a statement posted on its website yesterday, the CBCP said the donation will be coursed through the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the humanitarian agency of the United States Catholic Bishops' Conference.

"CRS is working closely with the National Secretariat for Social Action (Nassa) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, in assessing damages, meeting immediate needs and planning for longer term aid," the CBCP said.

The European Commission (EC) also expressed condolences over the tragedy and devastation left by Frank.

In a message to President Arroyo, EC President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso said the European Union was saddened to learn that so many people lost their lives in the ferry sinking.

"On behalf of the European Commission and on my own behalf, allow me to offer you and the people of the Republic of the Philippines our sincere condolences and the expression of our deepest sympathy and solidarity with the families of the victims," Barroso said.

(www.philstar.com) ■

Crop Damage Reaches P3.3 B

by Marianne GO

CROP DAMAGE CAUSED by typhoon "Frank" in Western Visayas and eight other regions has trebled from P1.0 billion to P3.3 billion, based on additional field reports gathered yesterday by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In its latest report to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, the DA Central Action Center (DACC) based that aside from Western Visayas and the two provinces earlier found to have been affected by the typhoon, the MIMAROPA provinces of Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque and Romblon have also suffered damage to their standing agricultural crops.

But the DA still insists that the total palay damage as of June 24 will not make a substantial dent on 2008 production.

The losses, the DA said, represent just 0.95 percent of the production target of 3.44 million metric tons for the July-September crop period.

Corn losses also represent 0.562 percent of the target of 2.51 million MT for the same period.

Typhoon Frank affected rice, corn and high-value commercial



for corn, agricultural facilities of P29 million and fisheries worth P2.25 billion.

Damage to the fisheries sector is further broken down to P1.25 billion for bangus and P1 billion for shrimp.

Some 37,825 hectares planted with palay were either totally or partially damaged.

The DA said the affected areas were 52,825 hectares from the entire Western Visayas and the rest of the affected provinces.

The damage to corn crops reached P166 million, with the volume lost estimated at 14,132 MT from a total affected area of 16,064 hectares in Regions 3 and 6 and the provinces of Batangas, Cavite, Quezon, Masbate and Cebu.

Damage to HVCCs covering 5,574 hectares was valued at P194.16 million, representing a production loss of 19,303 MT. Initial field reports showed that damage to DA facilities in Western Visayas reached P29 million.

The DA estimated direct losses from all crop-production inputs used by the farmers in the storm-battered provinces at P665 million, and indirect losses from the combined value of the standing

crops that were damaged at another P850.07 million.

Of the damaged areas, crops in 19,508 hectares were totally destroyed with no chance of recovery, while those planted in another 63,186 hectares still have a chance

of recovery.

About 9,248 hectares of rice land that were damaged beyond recovery were in the mature phase of production, while 1,654 hectares were in the vegetative stage.

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Helicopters from US Carrier Deliver Aid to Iloilo

by Pia LEE-BRAGO

AMERICAN MILITARY personnel from the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier group were deployed yesterday to distribute relief goods and provide assistance to typhoon victims.

The US Embassy in Manila announced the arrival of the carrier group, which started the relief and rehabilitation work with local officials in the areas worst hit by the storm.

Local officials helped American troops in unloading boxes of rice and bottled water at the Iloilo International Airport as part of a joint US-Philippine humanitarian

relief effort.

Two planes and three helicopters from USS Ronald Reagan delivered a total of 11,000 pounds of rice and over 20,000 bottles of water and turned them over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for distribution to communities severely affected by the typhoon.

Six US Navy Seahawk helicopters from the aircraft carrier arrived in Iloilo City, which bore the brunt of typhoon "Frank" (international codename Fengshen) when it slammed into the Philippines on Saturday.

"We will use our air assets to transport relief goods into inaccessible areas," said Captain Thomas Lalor, deputy commander

of the helicopter group.

"We are here to give the local officials whatever help they require."

More than 490 people died and more than a million have been left homeless by the typhoon, according to civil defense estimates.

The number does not include the hundreds presumed killed when the Princess of the Stars, battered by extreme weather, sank carrying more than 850 people.

US President George W. Bush ordered the carrier group to proceed to the Philippines during talks on Tuesday with President Arroyo in Washington.

"We want to help our friends in a time of need," Bush told Mrs. Arroyo as they met in the White House.

A US Navy supply ship, divers and a maritime patrol aircraft arrived earlier and helped local officials in finding victims of the ferry disaster.

"The arrival of the aircraft carrier group in the Republic of the Philippines exemplifies the long-standing ties between the United States and the Philippines and the US commitment to assisting the Philippines, in keeping with our mutual commitments under the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Mutual Defense Treaty," the embassy said.

Rescue officials led by Sen. Richard Gordon, chairman of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), said the US government's help in sending the carrier group to the relief efforts showed the good results of President Arroyo's trip to

the Philippines.



US Navy Seahawk helicopter

the US while the Philippines was being battered by the typhoon.

Gordon said the decision to send USS Ronald Reagan, among other assistance, would be of great help in retrieving the bodies of the victims of the ferry sinking.

"I saw ships, for commercial and fishing, just passing by the bodies, they will not stop because it's a waste of time for them to retrieve the bodies so we need all the assistance we can get," Gordon said.

He said Mrs. Arroyo was able to expand US help with her visit, among other benefits of personally meeting US officials and businessmen.

According to Gordon, the congressmen who went with Mrs. Arroyo in the US should be criticized.

"Maybe those from the Visayas should come home because they are badly needed by their constituents," Gordon said.

Gordon said he was supposed to join the trip to lobby for the bill pending in the US Congress granting benefits to Filipino

war veterans but decided to stay to lead the PNRC in relief and other efforts to help the victims displaced by the typhoon.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., for his part, joined Sen. Francis Pangilinan in urging Mrs. Arroyo to return to the country and attend to the victims of the typhoon.

"Her meeting with (US President George W.) Bush is done. She must come home and exercise leadership. As for the congressmen, perhaps only those whose districts were damaged by the typhoon (should return)," Pimentel said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, for his part, clarified he did not see any violation of the Constitution in allowing USS Ronald Reagan to enter the country.

Biazon stressed he was not against any assistance being sent by the US.

"The only concern I am raising is that maybe it is better if the United States send salvage ships which are better equipped to do what has to be done relative to the sinking of the MV Princess of the Stars. I am not against USS Ronald Reagan coming in with other ships," Biazon said.

(www.philstar.com) ■

GMA Seeks Long-Term, Hard Investments from US Firms

by Paolo ROMERO

WASHINGTON (via PLDT) — President Arroyo urged American business leaders to put in hard and long-term investments in the Philippines and not just "quick buck" ventures that could weaken the economy.

In her address during cocktails with the US-ASEAN Business Council and the US Chamber of Commerce at the Willard Hotel along Pennsylvania Avenue, the President said that as an investment destination, the Philippines is a "good, long-term bet."

"We don't sell hype, no quick bucks, no false gains. Just strong fundamentals, good economic stewardship and excellent returns on your investment. We are the smart, prudent place to place your money," Mrs. Arroyo said.

Last year, the Philippine economy registered its highest growth, "the peso is strong, approved investments doubled in the first quarter. Last year seven million jobs were created in seven years, while the government is close to balanc-

ing the budget."

These are factors, she said, that will help the Philippines weather the economic storm.

She said some investors are attracted to opportunities to make a quick buck in a country "that is still to institutionalize good, sound fundamentals."

"Too many quick buck investments coming at the same time can push a country's inflation up, weaken its currency and force it to drastically cut spending on infrastructure," Mrs. Arroyo said.

"Not the Philippines, we are on a permanent path to economic growth, stability and modernization. We are the best value in Asia," she said.

"We are hopeful that we remain poised for growth in 2008 as well. Of course, the global clouds are clearly visible on the horizon and will impact on most nations. But we are confident that our reforms provide a significant firewall against dramatic economic swings at home," she said.

Reports said there was signifi-



President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

cant outflow in "hot money" from the Philippines due to economic uncertainties.

"We remain bullish on our economy, optimistic about our future and deeply committed to being a force for good," the President said.

The President pointed out that her key priorities in visiting the US are to showcase Philippine economic and investment opportunities with business leaders and investors like the members of the US-ASEAN Business Council and the US Chamber of Commerce. (www.philstar.com) ■

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Beijing Clears ZTE in NBN Deal

by Marichu VILLANUEVA

BEIJING — Ranking Chinese officials have cleared telecommunications giant ZTE Corp. of overpricing and kickbacks in the Chinese company's \$329-million national broadband network (NBN) project entered into with the Philippine government.

The investigation by Filipino senators into the NBN-ZTE scandal that led to the cancellation of the deal late last year has yet to officially close.

Government officials here said this has caused a loss of confidence on the part of Chinese investors, some of whom are reportedly planning to pull out of the Philippines.

The STAR gathered these official statements from Beijing authorities from the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce in their separate briefings here for the journalists participating in this year's Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)-China Joint Press Delegation.

Speaking in English before ASEAN journalists, Wu Zhengping, deputy director-general of the Department of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce, disclosed yesterday here that Beijing has discreetly looked into these allegations hurled against ZTE Corp., a privately owned company.

"We have guarantees from ZTE their activities in the Philippines have been appropriate. It did not commit any violation of laws and rules in the Philippines," Wu said.

The allegations of overpriced

contract and kickbacks reportedly distributed to Philippine government officials and other personalities involved in the NBN-ZTE project were first revealed in media last year by Filipino businessman Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, namesake and son of former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

The erstwhile speaker himself figured prominently in a much earlier controversy involving the Chinese-funded North Rail project for Luzon.

De Venecia III claimed the alleged anomalies in the NBN-ZTE contract after his own company, Amsterdam Holdings Inc. lost in the bidding of the project of the Department of Transportations and Communications.

Wu lamented that the broadband issue became a "hot topic" sealed during President Arroyo's visit to Manila in April 2006.

The President's husband, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, was subsequently linked to the alleged kickbacks in this contract.

Earlier this year, no less than Mrs. Arroyo was being accused of impropriety when she visited the ZTE headquarters in Shanghai during her official visit to China last year.

In his separate press briefing to ASEAN journalists last Tuesday, Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei admitted the NBN-ZTE scandal had seriously affected efforts by both the Philippines and Chinese governments to increase trade and economic ties between the two countries, especially after Mrs. Arroyo decided to scrap this project due to this scandal while it was still being investigated by the Senate Blue Ribbon committee.

"We must admit because of the broadband issue, there has been setback."

Nonetheless, Wu noted from Ministry of Commerce statistics that Chinese investments to the Philippines have reached \$25 mil-

lion for the past 10 years.

But for the last 10 years, of China's total investments that went to the 10-member ASEAN countries, Singapore got the bulk at \$1.2 billion; \$430 million went to Vietnam; \$317 million to Indonesia; \$311 million to Thailand; and \$205 million to Malaysia.

Wu, who is due to be assigned to the Chinese embassy in Manila later this year, said that ZTE and rival telecom giant Huawei of China, are the biggest investors in ASEAN.

He explained Chinese investors respond to a country's utilization of foreign direct investments as basis of their decision what country to do business in.

The NBN-ZTE contract was sealed during President Arroyo's visit to Boao, China in April 2006.

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"We have our companies lose interest because they will be afraid to step up their investments but

also to continue their presence in the Philippines," he said in English.

"My government is doing all it can to encourage these various companies to stay there and if possible to increase their investments wherever they can.

"Of course, within the confines of Philippine laws. There is no doubt about it. We do not want a situation where Chinese companies are in violation of the laws and regulations in both countries, it's not our policy."

Despite this, he expressed satisfaction that the bilateral relations of China with the Philippines remain stable and friendly.

"There were some difficulties that we're encountering, mainly because of domestic politics in the Philippines," he said.

These are problems. We are hoping, we're crossing our fingers that all of these will be over and we would start with earnest our economic cooperation because there are projects, all of those projects have been delayed, put on hold. It's not good."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry official, though, did not identify these Chinese companies.

But aside from the NBN project, the ZTE Corp. has also a mining project in Diwalibat that has been stalled also due to legal problems pending in a lower court in the Philippines.

The North Rail project, on the other hand, has dragged slowly due to legal problems posed by Filipino squatter families, who were removed and were being relocated elsewhere to give way to the new rail track system.

"But we certainly want to see a cessation of the unfortunate situation," he said.

"Nobody is to blame. I believe in the wisdom and courage of the political leaders in the Philippines and the people in the whole Philippines." (www.philstar.com) ■

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■ MAINLAND NEWS

Filipina Receives New York Women of Excellence Award

by Momar G. VISAYA

NONETTE TEODORO, CEO of Juno Healthcare Staffing, was among 10 recipients of the New York Women of Excellence awards—an annual award given by the New York Women's Chamber of Commerce.

Teodoro and her husband founded Juno Healthcare Staffing in 2000. The company provides U.S. hospitals and healthcare facilities with full-time, travel and per diem nurses and physical therapists to augment their needs during shortages and fluctuations in their staffing.

The company began with three employees in 2000 and has since grown to approximately 400. In seven years, Juno grew to six offices in the U.S. with locations in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Los Angeles, San

Diego and Arizona.

"At first, it was just a thought. The thought became action and now we're here today," Teodoro says.

This year, Entrepreneur Magazine chose Juno out of nearly 21 million companies to be in the magazine's Hot 100 list of the fastest-growing new businesses in America. Also this year, one of Juno's companies, Juno Healthcare Registry earned the Joint Commission gold seal of approval. The Joint Commission is designed to help companies like Juno continuously provide safe, high-quality care and services.

Every year, the New York Women's Chamber of Commerce honors outstanding women for their accomplishments, which fos-

ters business and professional advancement of women and minorities. The Chamber's objective is to provide networking opportunities, representation and advocacy for New York women in business. The Chamber also offers its members technical assistance, mentoring and coaching, training and financial assistance.

The Chamber's current chairwoman, Suzie David, is proud that another Filipino has made it to the list of awardees.

"I am so happy that Nonette is receiving the award this year. More and more Filipinas should consider putting up their own businesses. We're here to help," David said. (Asian Journal Online) ■

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■ MAINLAND NEWS —

Pinay Kickboxer Wins Hard Fought Match

AFTER ALMOST A TWO-YEAR hiatus, Muay Thai kickboxing champion Christine Toledo beat Emily Bearden by majority decision in New York earlier this month.

Despite the long layoff, Toledo won in a close, five round match. Coming into the fight, the odds were against her. Toledo was not only rusty but she was fighting Bearden, a former Muay Thai Champion, in Bearden's hometown.

"For me to get that victory is a big deal because everybody there was her crowd," said Toledo who needed three rounds to shake off the ring rust.

The win brings Toledo's record to 12 wins, 2 losses with 4 KOs. Toledo said the fight with Bearden was a good precursor to a more difficult match up with current British Muay Thai champion Ruth Ashdown. Toledo is the current World Kickboxing Association (WKA) U.S. champion and the Muay Thai International Association (MTIA) world titleholder.



Muay Thai champion Christine Toledo

Toledo, 30, resides in Las Vegas. She will face Ashdown in a five round match at the Las Vegas Hilton on July 26.

"She's beaten the top people in the UK and Europe," said Toledo of Ashdown. "But I think I have the right training and trainers to beat her." (www.philfortune.com) ■

Fil-Ams Begin Donation for 'Frank' Victims

by Paolo ROMERO

WASHINGTON (via PLDT) — Filipino-American groups have initiated a donation drive for the victims and families of typhoon "Frank."

The Filipino community here told President Arroyo that they have started a donation drive to help bring relief to their compatriots back home.

Filipino World War II veterans started the donation drive by passing the hat during the event at the Crystal Ballroom at the Willard Hotel. The effort netted \$1,000 while another Filipino-American group contributed P120,000 in cash.

The President witnessed the donation as she gave the gathering the latest updates in rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

Mrs. Arroyo said the latest figures showed the total number of affected population at 400,000 families from 3,000 barangays, 200 municipalities and 38 cities in 38 provinces, including those in Ilocos, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Visayas, Northern, Central and Southern Mindanao, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Metro Manila.

"Who among you has from those provinces? I hope and pray that none of your relatives have been killed. The good news is that the typhoon spared Cordillera, Cagayan Valley and Western Mindanao," Mrs. Arroyo told the gathering.

She led a silent prayer for the victims and families hit by typhoon Frank and the tragic sinking of MV Princess of the Stars that left hundreds of passengers presumed dead.

Mrs. Arroyo told the gathering of the government's efforts in providing disaster relief and bringing comfort to the families of the victims.

Upon arriving here last week for a 10-day visit, Mrs. Arroyo immediately sought international aid to assist victims and communities affected by the typhoon.

The President ordered the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to open disaster relief donation accounts for international and local assistance for the relief and rehabilitation of devastated communities.

"Embassies in the US, Europe, Middle East and Asia should open disaster relief donation accounts, plus the NDCC (National Disaster Coordinating Council) donation account, website and text number," Mrs. Arroyo said.

"Now we have urgent needs again. A storm hit the Philippines and we are banking on the help of those willing to help, especially Filipinos," Mrs. Arroyo said.

The President assured the public the government would give aid to the ferry disaster victims and their families.

"And I hope that our congressmen will also partly give this, especially those whose constituents were passengers or crew members of that boat," Mrs. Arroyo said, referring to the scores of lawmakers who accompanied her on the trip.

Spain joined the host of nations giving aid to the typhoon victims in the Philippines.

In a statement, the Spanish embassy in Manila said they are also sending an aircraft to Iloilo with medical supplies, water purification plants, shelters and medicine.

"With the purpose of alleviating the suffering caused by typhoon Frank, Spain, through its International Cooperation for Development Agency and its embassy, is offering its assistance to the Republic of the Philippines," the Spanish embassy said.

The British embassy in Manila also conveyed the message of sympathy of Queen Elizabeth to the Philippines.

"I have been deeply saddened by the tragic loss in the Visayas and Luzon regions and on the MV Princess of the Stars. Please accept my sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who have lost their lives in the devastating typhoon," Queen Elizabeth said.

The sympathies and donation came a day after South Korea announced that they are donating \$300,000 cash.

The French government and the European Union also pledged to help the Philippines and provide assistance to the typhoon victims.

Germany and Japan also sympathized with the Philippines and sent relief assistance to the victims.

Earlier, the US government and China each donated \$100,000 in cash. (www.philstar.com) ■



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by Dr. Russell
TACATA, M.D.
Bayanhan Clinic
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What is gout? Gout is a disease arising from an abnormal purine metabolism. Purines are found naturally in body cells, but a large part comes

ASK A DOCTOR

Treating and Preventing Gout

from the food that we eat. Uric acid is a byproduct of purine breakdown. Normally uric acid is eliminated from the body through the urine but when too much is produced or too little is excreted, it accumulates in the body leading to hyperuricemia or high blood uric acid level.

It is not always clear why some people are overproducers and others are underexcretors. Kidney problems can lead to uric acid underexcretion and some rare genetic diseases with certain enzyme deficiencies can cause uric acid overproduction. How-

ever, not everyone with abnormal uric acid levels develops gout.

WHAT CAUSES ACUTE GOUT?

An attack of gout is triggered by rapid changes of uric acid levels in the body either upwards or downwards. Eating too much purine-rich foods such as organ meats (kidney, liver, brain, sweetbreads) and shellfish, excessive alcohol intake especially beer, and use of medications such as water pills for high blood pressure can increase uric acid levels. Weight gain, obesity, dehydration, injuries, recent surgery and cancer chemotherapy can also cause gout.

Interestingly, consumption of protein-rich vegetables like beans, green peas, cauliflower and asparagus is no longer considered to be associated with gout and consumption of dairy products seems to reduce the risk.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF GOUT?

The most common and dramatic manifestation of gout is the sudden onset of monoarticular (single joint) pain and swelling—usually the base of the big toe—that may last hours or days. It can also affect the ankles, knees, wrists, elbows and fingers. What causes the inflammation and pain? Joints of people with gout are oversaturated with uric acid crystals. When these crystals are ingested by white blood cells,

these cells rupture and release chemicals that trigger inflammation causing pain, tenderness, swelling, redness and warmth of the joint.

A reasonable assumption of gout can be made based on the presenting symptoms and signs but the gold standard for diagnosis is aspiration of joint fluid to show the presence of uric acid crystals. It is very important for your physician to distinguish gouty arthritis from other disorders like infectious arthritis or pseudogout. Complications of gout include recurrent attacks affecting several joints, joint deformities and loss of function, tophus formation and kidney stones. Tophi are deposits of hard lumps of uric acid in the skin, ear, and in or around joints.

HOW DO YOU TREAT GOUT?

There are two equally important aspects in the management of gout—prevention and medical treatment.

Avoiding foods high in purine content, weight reduction, maintaining adequate hydration by drinking plenty of water everyday, and reducing alcohol consumption are good preventive measures. Alcohol increases urine production and slows down the excretion of uric acid by the kidneys.

The medical management involves several strategies: (1) treating the acute attack, (2) preventing acute flares, and (3) lowering excess stores of uric acid to prevent acute attacks and long term complications. Control of an acute attack of gout involves the use of analgesics like Tylenol, anti-inflammatory agents called NSAIDs (Indomethacin, Naproxen, Sulindac) and corticosteroids (Prednisone) which can be given orally or injected directly into the inflamed joint.

Colchicine is an anti-inflammatory drug used both for an acute attack and as prophylaxis against acute flares of gouty arthritis but at different dosages. Its common side effects are diarrhea, nausea and vomiting and like NSAIDs is not appropriate for those with peptic ulcer, liver and renal problems.

After the pain and inflammation of an acute attack have subsided, medications that address the abnormal uric acid metabolism are given.

HOW DO YOU PREVENT GOUT?

Most physicians prescribe Colchicine once a day for several months after an acute gout attack to prevent recurrences while taking measures to lower uric acid levels.

At this time there are only two drugs available to lower uric acid. Allopurinol prevents the conversion of purine in foods into uric acid. It should not be given during an acute attack because it can intensify or prolong the inflammation. However, if it is already being taken when an attack occurs, then it should be continued at the same dose. Side effects can include rash, delayed allergic reactions and severe liver damage.

Another drug to lower uric acid levels is Probenecid, a uricosuric agent that lowers uric acid levels by increasing urinary excretion. Those taking it should always be well hydrated by drinking lots of water to promote passage of uric acid and to prevent the formation of kidney stones. Keeping the blood uric acid level to less than 6mg% is the goal of therapy and may require a lifetime intake of medication. ■

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by Reuben S.
SEGURITAN

The age of a child being petitioned by a U.S. citizen or permanent resident determines the length of time it takes him/her to become an immigrant.

If the child being petitioned by a U.S. citizen is under 21 and unmarried, a visa number is immediately available as he/she is classified as an immediate relative.

But when he/she turns 21, he/she is classified under the family-based first preference and a visa number will not be available until about fifteen years later in the

case of a Filipino.

If the child's parent is a permanent resident, he/she falls under the F2A category which has a waiting time of five years, but when he/she turns 21, he/she is moved to F2B category with a waiting time of about eleven years.

The aging out is often caused by the processing delays. To address the problem, the Child Status Protection Act (CSPA) was signed into law on August 6, 2008.

Under this law, the age of a child of a U.S. citizen is determined at the time of the filing of an alien relative petition (I-130) for the purpose of obtaining immigration benefits. So that if he/she was under 21 when the petition was filed, he/she is still considered as an immediate relative even if the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) does not adjudicate the petition until after the child turns 21.

■ GLOBAL NEWS

\$15 Billion Guam Project Needs 30,000 Pinoy Workers

FOR THEIR WORK ETHIC and English proficiency, Filipino construction workers are preferred by Guam companies to work in the \$15 billion relocation project of the U.S. marine base from Okinawa, Japan to Guam, according to an organization of licensed recruitment firms.

The Philippine Association of Service Exporters, Inc. (PASEI) says about 20,000 to 30,000 Filipino workers are expected to fill up the vacancies for the military relocation program.

Filipino workers are expected to earn a minimum of \$750 dollars net per month, while other higher positions will receive the same pay as their U.S. counterparts. Japanese workers are also applying for the same jobs since the Japanese government will be shouldering 60 percent of the costs of transferring to Guam.

To avoid irregular migrants and overstayers, the U.S. Senate has passed a law exempting Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands from

In the case of a child of a permanent resident, his/her age is determined on the date that a visa number becomes available, reduced by the number of days that the petition was pending.

The CSPA has up to now been confusing in its implementation primarily because the USCIS did not release adequate guidance on how to interpret its provisions.

On May 6, 2008, the USCIS finally came out with a memo that would modify prior interpretations of certain provisions.

The new guidance now benefits aliens with approved immigrant visa petitions before the effective dates of the CSPA but who failed to apply for permanent residence on the date of its enactment. Under a prior USCIS memo, these aliens did not benefit from the new law.

The law, however, does not benefit those who had received a final decision of their applications for permanent residence prior to

August 6, 2002.

If the petition was filed by a U.S. citizen, the child would be eligible for permanent residence as an immediate relative provided there was no final decision before August 6, 2002.

If the petition was filed by a permanent resident, and the priority date of the approved petition became current before his/her 21st birthday, the child would not age out provided a final decision was not issued prior to August 6, 2002, and the child applied for permanent residence within a year from the date the priority date became current.

The new guidance memo allows individuals who were previously denied benefits under CSPA to file a motion to reopen or re-consider without paying a filing fee.

The motion will have to state that a visa petition was approved before August 6, 2002 and the I-485 (adjustment of status) was filed after August 6, 2002; the applicant would have been considered below 21 under the CSPA; the applicant applied for permanent residence within one year from the date a visa number was available and the application was denied solely because he/she aged out.

There is no deadline for the filing of the motion. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: 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

LEGAL NOTES

New Rules on Children Turning 21

the nationwide quota on all H-visas until 2014.

All foreign workers, including Filipinos, who enter Guam under the H-2b work visa will be issued special "Guam only" work visas. They will not be allowed to travel to Hawaii or to the U.S. mainland after their work visa expires on December 31, 2014.

Construction of the multi-billion dollar project is expected to start next year and will become home to about 10,000 US marines and 8,000 dependents. (www.philfortune.com) ■

New EU Rules May Affect 94,000 Irregular OFWs in Europe

MANILA, Philippines — Some 94,000 irregular or undocumented Filipinos workers in Europe may be affected once the European Union enacts a new immigration rule against overstaying or illegal migrants.

According to the latest Department of Foreign Affairs figures culled from reports of overseas posts, there are at least 610,102 Filipinos in Europe as of June 2007. Of the number, 189,023 are permanent residents, 189,023 are temporary residents, and 94,113 are undocumented.

The EU comes closer to enacting the so-called return directive for undocumented or irregular migrants after its parliament earlier this week passed it on first reading. The rule, which details the procedures for detention, deportation,

and re-entry ban, is expected to be enforced 24 months after the rule's final adoption.

The rule is enforced only after the national authorities have made a decision to deport an immigrant, who will then be given from seven to 30 days to voluntarily leave Europe.

The adopted legislative text allows undocumented migrants, including children, to be held in custody between six months and 18 months. However, children will be detained only as a "last resort" and will not be subject to coercive measures.

Right now, many member-states hold irregular immigrants in custody indefinitely.

The rule will not be enforced in the United Kingdom and Ireland as they have not opted into this area

of Community law. The UK allows for indefinite detention and Ireland for a maximum of eight weeks.

The overall EU migration policy, of which this return directive for irregular migrants is just one part, is still being discussed at various levels and organs of government.

In general, the EU seeks to encourage regular migration and is planning to issue a Blue Card for regular migrant workers, allowing them and their family to work and live in Europe for long periods of time. (www.inquirer.net) ■



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by Pacita SALUDES

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Rumbeng a lagipentayo met dagiti nagsasuruno a nangituryo ti pagilan ken adu a rigrigit dagiti nakibakbakal a ti pannakagunod ti Wayaway. No maligatipyo ni Emilio Aguinaldo ti immuna a nangituryo ti pagilan kalpasan li adu a bakal. Sinaruno ni Manuel Quezon ken dagiti nagsasuruno a sangapulo ket dua pay a Presidente ti pagilan a Filipinas.

NI Presidente Arroyo ti maikasangapulo ket uppat ken agadmo ita nga pangulo ti pagilan. Kaa dagaditi immuna una alata metti ti madillaw, kangrunaanna dagaditi adu ngararaw dagiti umili ti kalkalkagumanda nga lyuong. Ad-adda a pannakaluput-luput ket saan a natulubo nga iraranay, no dikelit ad-adda a kinakurapay ket kapulan dagiti umuli.

Gagappumi iday Filippines ket

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I Love Manila

FROM COFFEE TO COCKTAILS by Celine R. LOPEZ



The Malate Pensionne on Adriatico Street in Malate, Manila.

Almost a decade ago I wrote my first article for this column. It was about how much I loved Manila. It was a different Manila then. Zara was still an urban myth like Krispy Kreme; and

Wasabi was not just a hot sauce but a hot spot as well.

It was perfectly acceptable for 30-year-olds to wave glowsticks in clubs. Glorietta Sunday movie night was the seen-and-be-

TRAVEL

seen event for the nonchalant so-called. Zag was all the rage.

Manila, like other things, may have changed. My Manila, at least. Ten years ago it was all about parties. These days it's baptisms, weddings and housewarming parties. Back in the day, we all used to pick each other up at our parents' homes and sneak into the back kitchen entrance when we got home. These days we try to outfit each other by plumping out our apartments and find reasons to stay in more than concocting titles to justify us staying out. The times I do still think I'm out and go out to the hip places, I find that teenagers intimidate me with their accelerated level of poise. They smoke cigarettes like Kate Hepburn and order these exotic cocktails that look like melted Chupa Chups.

This, sadly, is not my Manila anymore. I do look back fondly on my fun days when photographs were actually printed on paper and we drank straightforward drinks like gimlets and gin and tonics. In hindsight, we were just trying to be WASPY ("Wannabe Anglos Saxon Pinoy," as my friend says).

I just came from a long world tour learning to make furniture and I must admit I missed home incredibly. Literally, the thing I missed most was my house: my humble abode that I painstakingly furnished and decorated with my best friends. That and my dog Caligula who has major abandonment issues now because of my Blind Ambition Tour.

They say that life is a lottery and where you're born is a child of chance. Manila was in my cards and, move around as I do, I always can't wait to go back home. When people ask me why I love

Manila so much I always say, "Because I can put sugar in my spaghetti and nobody judges me for it!"

Manila's charm is in its simplicity. Sure, you can say it's a small town with small minds. However, size is not what determines it; look at Switzerland. Let's face it, Manila is not cool. It's not edgy. And think heavens for that! Cool is strong. Let's face it, we're not all about Joel Robuchon, we're Pancake House!

Saturdays in Manila are the best. I wake up and go with Caligula to the Salcedo Weekend Market to buy our weekly organic stuff that we'll later on mix with Spam and corned beef. On special weekends Marcel and Miguel and I go to the flea markets in Bangkok or the antique stores in Ermita. These afternoons are particularly humbling since I such at haggling and often get duped into buying things double the price of what it's really worth. Then it's dinner in a dive that usually serves really sour sinigang or really sweet spaghetti (yes, I'm obsessed).

It's a worldwide rule that cool people never go out on Saturdays, but in Manila such icy societal edicts do not exist. People shake their booties here like it's Tuesday in London. I do still get peer-pressure to go to clubs sometimes. I decided to act my age this year, you see, and stop inflicting pain on people with my epileptic dancing. Given the choice, I would rather spend my nights eating sugared spaghetti and watching a marathon of The Hills. Okay, so I'm not exactly acting my age, but I'm keeping the embarrassment level to a minimum.

This is what is great about this charming city. Anything goes. I mean, how do you even social climb in the Philippines? It's an oxymoron—emphasis on "moron." It's

contradictory, given the personality of this special city that never weeps. The faster you accept what Manila is, the more enjoyable it becomes. People try to make it into some Babylon of cool. Our cosmopolitan inclinations are limited but that's where the charm of the city comes in. If Manila were a person it would be the girl next door: universally endearing, feckless, but still able to charm her way into people's hearts anyway.

Another thing I love about it is that around every corner comes a surprise.

A side street in Binondo will lead you to the best masseuse you will ever find in the world; a wrong turn in Ermita will lead you to the most impressive ceramist in the country; and an accidental stop in Mabini may allow you to discover the best barbecue you have ever had (coated in lots of sugar again, of course). I once bought the coolest medicine cabinets for P50 on a side street in Port Area on my way to work.

Like our local food, Manila is not for everyone. If you love it, you will always love it. If it shocks you the first time, it will surely show its softer side later on and endear itself to you. I have never heard of a foreigner saying they hated Manila. It's more often filled with stories of them dancing their asses off in some club with (always) "the most beautiful woman they have ever seen" or eating balut with a mixture of fear and fascination. Whatever the case may be, you can always sense they fell in love with the city.

Time may have changed Manila a bit. Yes, we don't party in Japanese restaurants anymore. Zara is now Pinoy as adobo. Like our spaghetti and barbecue, Manila will always be that sweet town that always could and never had to try. (www.philstar.com) ■



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR**JUNE 29, 2008 SUNDAY**

Bayanahan Without Walls Fundraiser "Butterflies and Kisses" Farrington High School Auditorium North King, Honolulu, 7pm • For details, please contact Dr. Charlie Sonido at 671-3911 or Dr. Nicanor Joaquin at 841-4195

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