

HAWAII-PHILIPPINE NEWS EDITION

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HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

ARAW NG KAGITINGAN: ALL FOR DUTY, HONOR, AND COUNTRY

By Danny DE GRACIA, II

"Bataan has fallen ... The world will long remember the epic struggle that Filipino and American soldiers put up in the jungle fastness and along the rugged coast of Bataan. They have stood up uncomplaining under the constant and grueling fire of the enemy for more than three months. Besieged on land and blockaded by sea, cut off from all sources of help in the Philippines and in America, the intrepid fighters have done all that human endurance could bear." — Voice of Freedom Radio Broadcast, April 9, 1942

Sixty seven years ago, the world was enveloped in fire as Nazi Germany's Third Reich seemed unstoppable in its conquest of Europe. While European and American forces were fixated on defeating Adolph Hitler, half a world away, the Japanese exploited the attention deficit of the West and seized colony after colony and island after island across Asia and the Pacific in their attempt to establish what

they called the Dai-to-a Kyoelken — the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere.

On December 8, 1941 while American forces were still coping with the blow dealt to their Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Japan struck again with an invasion of the Philippines, and the Philippine Army was integrated into the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) under the command of

(continued on page 4)



Commander of the Hawaii National Guard, Gen. Robert Lee stands with Filipino WWII survivors and salutes, bringing together the present and the past

GOP Lawmakers Oppose Anti-Business, Excessive Tax Hike Bills

By HFC Staff

State House Representatives Lynn Finnegan and Kymberly Pine were among lawmakers who voiced their concerns over what they say are overly-excessive tax hikes and anti-business legislation that will hurt, rather than help, the state's economy.

The handful of House Republicans disagreed with the sentiments of the majority Democrats who say that the bills will impact higher-income households only.

"This is simply not true," says Rep. Finnegan, minority floor leader. "The proposed tax increases will hurt anyone who has a car in their garage or puts gas in their tank. It will hurt anyone who orders a book on the internet or visits family interisland. In short, it hurts everyone."

Included among the potentially detrimental tax increase bills are Senate Bill 1611 and House Bill 1271, which add a 10 cent tax to liquid fuel and an increase of the tax on barrels



of petroleum sold by distributors, respectively. In addition to higher vehicle registration fees already included in Senate Bill 1611, Republicans say these increases place a tremendous burden on Hawaii motorists.

Similarly, Senate Bills 1678 and 1111 discourage any potential increases in spending that could stimulate the economy by taxing all goods purchased over the internet or through mail-order catalogues, in addition to any spending on airfare, hotels, etc.

*Raising the transient accommodations

(continued on page 4)

Filipino Groups Lobby to Save Programs for Low Income, Immigrants

By Carlota ADER

While a crowd numbering into the hundreds held a boisterous tea party rally at the State Capitol last week to protest increased government spending and taxes, a coalition of Filipino community groups began to quietly lobby lawmakers to save programs for the low income and immigrants from the chopping block.

The groups are calling upon

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Community leaders at the legislature. L-R: Edmund Aczon, Jan Colmenares, Baybee Hofana Abitan and Mito Iblan, Tony Sagayadoro, Helena Manzano, and Amy Agbayani

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EDITORIAL

Teachers As Targets

Overworked and underpaid, teachers in certain areas of Mindanao must contend with another, more serious problem: kidnapping for ransom. While national attention is focused on two foreign volunteers of the International Committee of the Red Cross who are being held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu, six public school teachers from the Zamboanga peninsula are still in the hands of two different bands of kidnapers.

The first three victims – teachers in a public high school and an elementary school – were on a motorized boat half a mile from Zamboanga City when they were waylaid on Jan. 23 by suspected members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, who demanded a P5-million ransom. On March 13, pirates kidnapped three more public school teachers on their way home in Zamboanga Sibugay and demanded a ransom of P10 million.

For years education has been disrupted in Basilan because of raids on public schools mostly by the Abu Sayyaf, with teachers and students seized as hostages. In several cases, the kidnapers freed Muslim hostages and held on to the Christians, killing and even mutilating a number of them. Such attacks have scared away teachers from being assigned to Basilan, worsening the state of public education in one of the country's least developed provinces. This year during the Holy Week, Abu Sayyaf bandits beheaded two of three civilian hostages following the refusal of the local government to pay a monthly "revolutionary fee."

In the lawless areas of Mindanao, the crisis in public safety is also creating a crisis in education. If the peace and order situation does not improve, the government may soon have to assign soldiers or cops to double as teachers in certain areas. Though teaching is a noble



profession, there are limits to the risks teachers are willing to take to provide education, especially on salaries that are barely above the minimum wage. This crisis in education can only worsen poverty and underdevelopment in the affected areas. (www.phlistarc.com) ■

Stranded in Dubai

Frequent flyers to Dubai may be trumpeting rosy job prospects for Filipinos in the Middle East, but an ounce of caution could save prospective workers from a lot of grief.

Labor officials reported that 137 Filipinos are now stranded in Dubai after they paid P150,000 each for jobs that did not exist. Only 15 are set for repatriation; the rest must continue to endure living conditions in a shelter with poor water supply and electricity for only three or four hours a day. The shelter faces a dump where the workers have turned to scavenging for scrap metal that they can sell so they can have money for food.

The 137, mostly bus drivers, had read flyers distributed in several bus terminals in Central Luzon, announcing the availability of 4,000 jobs for bus drivers in Dubai. They applied with the recruiter, CYM International Services, for jobs with Dubai's Road and Transport Authority. Though the P150,000 placement fee was steep, the drivers believed the promised salary would enable them to recoup the amount.

The wives of several of the workers, who sued CYM International this week for illegal recruitment, said they had to borrow money to pay the recruitment and travel fees.

During President Arroyo's latest trip to Dubai, Malacañang announced that over 220,000 jobs were available for Filipinos in the Middle East. At best, only a handful of those jobs would be in Dubai, whose real estate and construction boom ground to a halt amid the global financial crisis and the steep plunge in oil prices. Tourism, another revenue earner, has also suffered. The other major economic activity, financial services, won't be needing 137 drivers any time soon. When the drivers arrived in Dubai, the Road and Transport Authority was unaware of the supposed job vacancies and said it was not hiring.

The government will have to intensify its crackdown on illegal recruiters amid the global downturn. There are also reports of Filipinos paying a fortune in placement fees for nursing jobs in the United States that turn out to be non-existent. Such stories are likely to increase as the international job market shrinks. The government should be ready to protect workers from predators. (www.phlistarc.com) ■

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OPEN FORUM

Reflections on "Araw ng Kagitingan"



by **Romy M. CACHOLA**
Honolulu City Councilmember
District VII

On April 6, 2009, I attended the "Araw ng Kagitingan" (Day of Valor) ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. The event paid tribute to our gallant and brave Filipino-American veterans who fought side-by-side with the U.S. for the sake of freedom during World War II. On behalf of the City Council, my colleague Donovan Dela Cruz and I presented an Honorary Certificate in thankful recognition of their services.

U.S. Senators Daniel Inouye and Akaka were among the dignitaries in attendance. While U.S. Representatives Neil Abercrombie and Mazie Hirono were unable to attend, we owe them a debt of gratitude for their support during the veterans' struggle for benefits.

A special guest was Gilberto Cojuangco Teodoro Jr.,

the Philippines' Secretary of National Defense. I can envision him running for president one day, considering his impressive credentials and experience. Incidentally, I worked for his father when I was still a young man in the Philippines.

"Araw ng Kagitingan" holds special meaning for my family and me. My father, Mariano Manzano Cachola, fought in World War II as a guerrilla—as did my uncle, Jesus Cachola. Both lived to ripe, old ages and were able to come home. However, they passed away before the approval of veterans' benefits recently approved by Congress.

Since my father was a veteran, I qualified for educational benefits under a program administered by the Philippine Veterans Administration. This enabled me to attend college and receive my law degree; otherwise it would have been financially difficult to do so.

The same holds true for my wife Erlinda, whose dad, Rufino Magsalin, was a P.O.W. during the war. Unfortunately, he died without the family ever knowing where he was buried. She was only two at the time. Triumph arose from the ashes of this

tragedy, as she also attended and graduated from medical school under the same educational benefits program for veterans' dependents.

When we moved to Hawaii, we did not forget our veterans. My wife provided free medical services and medicine for those veterans who were new arrivals in Hawaii. Many of them did not have medical insurance nor the means to pay. Throughout the years, she has worked with the Philippine Medical Association, Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls and the Aloha Medical Mission to see that our veterans received proper medical care.

I also did what I could as a member of the State House of Representatives to help our veterans. I introduced and supported many bills on their behalf, including legislation for burial assistance and for the privilege to be buried in a U.S. veterans cemetery.

I continued lobbying for our veterans when I joined the Honolulu City Council. I introduced several resolutions that urged the U.S. Congress to support the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act, which expanded the eligibility for Filipino Veterans benefits provided by the U.S. Department

of Federal Affairs.

As I stated earlier, "Araw ng Kagitingan" is a tribute for all Filipino veterans and their families. We also owe our veterans, just like our earlier Filipino pioneers, since they contributed greatly for the freedom and privileges

we currently enjoy. Let us honor our veterans' memory by helping others who are less fortunate, thereby creating a better world for all of us to live in. Most importantly, let us never, ever forget our Fil-Am veterans and what they stood for. ■

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HEADLINE NEWS (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1; Araw ng ...)

Major General Douglas MacArthur.

Despite the fact that the Philippines had been equipped with the newest and most advanced weaponry in the American arsenal, a combination of indecision and command errors by defending forces during the early stages of the invasion resulted in the Japanese spreading quickly through the Philippines.

On January 2, 1942, Manila fell to the Japanese, yet in isolated pockets all across the islands and especially in Bataan, both U.S. and Philippine forces fought bravely to resist occupation.

On April 9, 1942, some 75,000 starving U.S. and Philippine troops surrendered to the Japanese, having lost what we now call the Battle of Bataan. That day of infamy has since been commemorated as the Day of Valor, or Araw ng Kagitingan.

(cont. from page 1; GOP Lawmakers ...)

tax will directly oppose efforts to stimulate our State's biggest source of income," says Rep. Gene Ward. "Our tourism industry is scrambling for visitors who stay longer and spend more money in local businesses. Yet, as hotels lower their rates, we raise taxes to make up the difference."

Joe Pandolfo, organizer of the Honolulu Tax Day Tea Party, says that raising the transient accommo-

Here in Hawaii, a small gathering of WWII survivors, military leaders, elected officials, dignitaries and students gathered at the National Cemetery of the Pacific in the Punchbowl crater to honor those who fell in the war with Japan and to remember Araw ng Kagitingan.

Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilbert Teodoro was among those who came to pay tribute, saying with solemn devotion that the sacrifices of heroes must never be forgotten and that Araw ng Kagitingan meant more than just valor to him, it meant "duty with a purpose."

As flower wreaths laid by Secretary Teodoro and others to honor both U.S. and Philippine forces, a bugler sounded taps and tears were seen on the eyes of both the young and old alike.

"I'm so glad to be here, because this Day of Valor means so much to all of us who fought in

World War II and in the Philippines," says Domingo Los Banos, a Filipino-American veteran and historian present at the ceremony. "We were there when the Philippines got their independence, and I remember taking my picture with MacArthur and the General of the Philippine Army."

State Sen. Clarence Nishihara who represents a large Filipino constituency in Waipahu was also one of several dignitaries at Araw ng Kagitingan.

"The contributions of the Filipino veterans were tremendous during the invasion of the Philippines by the Japanese," he says. "If it wasn't for their steadfastness and their complete dedication in support of freedom for their country and the support of the Americans, we'd certainly have a different history today. I think that it's good that they finally did receive some compensation for their



Secretary Teodoro stands alongside Sen. Dan Akaka (left) and Sen. Dan Inouye (right) in a show of respect and solidarity with America

efforts, fighting alongside their American counterparts."

Perhaps the greatest and most obvious legacy of the sacrifice of those who died not only at the Battle of Bataan but throughout all of the Second World War is our freedom today.

One high ranking Philippine

officer who was present at the event serves on active duty as a liaison to the U.S. Pacific Command. He says he was extremely honored by the service of his predecessors because they "fought the enemies of [freedom] and the invaders of the Philippines." ■

licans say,

"This bill suggests a two-year repeal of all tax credits, including the high tech and film industry credits," Rep. Barbara Marumoto says. "This bill alone would destroy any sense of entrepreneurship or innovation that could bring revenue to our State. No one will want to do business in Hawaii."

According to Rep. Pine, an anti-business climate will only plunge the State

"These bills do not simply affect high-income families. Rather, they directly tax average citizens, who are already struggling to pay their bills. Indirectly, citizens of Hawaii will suffer through job losses and pay cuts as businesses fight to survive or just shut down and die in Hawaii's anti-business environment."

In response, Rep. Joey Manahan says that it's easy for the Republicans to point fingers. He says they have proposed little in the way of balancing the State's budget.

"We are in this situation, precisely because the Republicans in Washington D.C., who were in control for the past eight years, had loosely regulated the U.S. market and let businesses and the market run their course," he says. "In the end, we the taxpayers on Main Street, are the ones bailing out the billionaires on Wall Street."

"The fact of the matter is that lawmakers are faced with balancing the state's budget—an unenviable task given our dire economic condi-

tions and \$14 billion budget deficit. Manahan says there are basically two ways to do so. The first is budget cuts—cut spending, programs, positions, salaries, benefits, pensions, etc. The second option is revenue enhancements—raise taxes and fees imposed by government.

"While neither one is popular, they are necessary at this point," he says. "And in order to minimize either of the two options, we have to consider both."

Manahan stressed that the bills are at this point only proposals. However, lawmakers need to have as many options on the table as possible as the House and Senate convene into conference committee to hammer out their differences on the State's budget.

"We know that we would be faced with serious challenges this session. What we didn't know was how hard hit we would be with the collapse of the banking and lending systems which has caused a global recession," Rep. Manahan says. ■

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(cont. from page 1; Filipino Groups ...)

state lawmakers to maintain funding for the Office of Community Services, including \$1.8 million for employment core services programs for low income residents and immigrants. They oppose a provision in House Bill 200 HD1 SD1 that eliminates these programs.

Charlene Cuaresma, president of the Filipino Coalition For Solidarity, has sent testimony to Senate and House conferees in an effort to reinstate funds for the programs.

"If not, this jeopardizes the self-sufficiency of immigrants and low income populations throughout the State," she says.

The groups also want the Office of Community Service transferred from the State Department of Labor & Industrial Relations to the State Department of Human Services (DHS). Doing so, they say, will strengthen and improve the delivery of human services programs.

Observers say that DHS is the appropriate placement for the Office of Community Services since it offers programs that give low-income persons, disadvantage

persons, refugees, immigrants, and homeless individuals the tools to attain self-sufficiency, such as employment and job training, child care, and general assistance.

"These two measures will help streamline job training service delivery and leverage existing initiatives to efficiently manage limited resources," Cuaresma says. "As we all tighten our belts to sacrifice and ride through these turbulent economic times, capacity building services to these groups—many of whom are our constituents, diverse neighbors and families—must be saved, not cut. The consequences will be catastrophic."

Since its inception in 1990, the Filipino Coalition For Solidarity has represented more than 50 leaders in the Filipino community whose aim is to work for social justice issues to empower Filipinos to make socially-responsible contributions to Hawaii.

Another group that is lobbying lawmakers is the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH), a statewide umbrella or-

(continued on page 5)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Visiting Professor to Lecture at UH

SOLITA COLLAS MONSOD, professor of economics from the University of the Philippines and former Philippine Secretary of Socio-Economic Planning, will present a lecture entitled "Poverty in the Philippines: It's Not the Economy Stupid!" on April 20, 2009 from 2-4 pm at the Center for Korean Studies auditorium on the University of Hawaii-Manoa campus.



as Winnie Monsod, is an icon in contemporary Philippine society—professor, economist, writer, columnist, TV program host, broadcaster, social critic, political commentator, international figure and public intellectual. She is best remembered as Socio-Economic Planning Secretary and NEDA director-general during President Cory Aquino's administration.

The lecture will address historical continuities in Philippine society that persist in modern times as the "cultures of poverty and under-development"—the way of life for the vast majority of Filipinos outside the modern economic sector.

Currently, she co-hosts a TV program, Palaban, with journalist Malou Mangahas and television personality Miriam Quiambao. She writes a biweekly column (Get Real) in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the country's largest newspaper.

She graduated cum laude in economics from the UP and has been a faculty member there since 1963. She also attended the University of Pennsylvania for her M.A. and doctoral studies.

Dr. Monsod was nominated as President of UP and as candidate for Senator of the Philippines in 2001. In 2005, she became an outspoken critic of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo following alleged election cheating, graft and corruption.

She has won numerous awards and distinctions, including Best TV Program Host, Broadcaster of the Year, Cabinet Secretary of the Year, Economics Professional Award, Woman of the Year and Woman of Distinction.

Dr. Monsod's lecture, which is

free and open to the public, is part of the 2009 Macaulay Distinguished Lecture in Philippine

Studies. Please contact Dr. Lindy Aquino at 956-2682 for more details. ■

Consulate Accepting Nominations For 18 December Awards

IN CELEBRATION OF THE MONTH of Overseas Filipinos, the Inter-Agency Committee of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch and the Commission on Filipinos Overseas is now accepting nominations for the 1st 18 December Awards to honor individuals and associations in the Philippines and abroad for significantly contributing to the protection of rights and the welfare of Filipino migrants and their families.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the official web-

sites of the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch at <http://www.pmrw.org> and Commission on Filipinos Overseas at <http://www.cfo.gov.ph>.

Completed nomination forms with supporting documents can be mailed to the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu. The address is: 2433 Pali Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96817.

The submission deadline is July 15, 2009. More information on the awards is available by calling 595-6316. ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS FEATURE

From Exiled Activist to Veteran China-hand, Filipino Journalist Tells Story of Changes

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) — **THE IMPOSITION OF A MARTIAL LAW IN 1972** was widely considered the start of a dark era in modern Philippine history. It closed the door of home coming for young Jaime FlorCruz who was on a study tour to China. But 37 years on as the former student activist recalled, a door might have opened for him to grow with China into becoming one of the country's most senior foreign journalists.

Now, as the CNN Beijing Bureau chief, 58-year-old FlorCruz said back then he was left with virtually no choice but to stay, especially after Filipino strongman president Ferdinand Marcos barred him, a vocal critic to the regime, from returning while jail-

ing up other political dissidents at home.

At the age of 20, FlorCruz found himself locked in an unfamiliar place with different climate, food and culture. And like millions of young Chinese intellectuals at the time, he was sent to a rural farm in central China to harvest rice, pick tea leaves and feed pigs, under the Chairman Mao's "Go to Countryside" campaign.

"It was tough at the beginning. Physically, it was challenging because I was not used to the farm work, but the worst part was the constant feel of uncertainty toward the future," FlorCruz told Xinhua over a casual afternoon chat in the bustling business center of Metro Manila during his recent trip home.

That was during the height of China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the decade marked by endless political campaigns and clique infightings that put the infant republic at risk of collapse.

Though he was relatively well taken care of by officials from the Foreign Ministry, FlorCruz said he knew it was a difficult time for most Chinese and he shared the sorrows of those who suffered.

FlorCruz said it was not until the year of 1974 that he firmly forwent the idea of coming home as a revolutionary but to stay in China for a long time.

After the chaotic decade passed, FlorCruz studied for a degree in Chinese history from Peking University with, as he termed it, the country's best minds at the time. Indeed, the year of 1977 saw the restoration of China's university system that enrolled students for their academic merits rather than for political correctness as it was during the Cultural Revolution.

Gradually FlorCruz managed to perfect his Mandarin Chi-

nese and this newly acquired skill somehow helped him realize his long-lost dream of becoming a journalist.

"I wanted to become a journalist even when I was in high school, but I was not so sure then because I also wanted to be a revolutionary," FlorCruz laughed.

In 1980, he started by part-timing for Newsweek Magazine as the news organization opened up its Beijing bureau and needed someone who was fluent in both Chinese and English. FlorCruz later joined the Times Magazine in 1982 as a full-timer and ran the bureau from 1990 to 2000.

He was elected twice as the president of the 200-member Foreign Correspondents' Club of China and is also the current Edward R. Murrow Press Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

FlorCruz said the past 37 years has been "an exciting time" to be in China. And he was able to witness how China evolved from a chaotic state at the crossroads in 1970s to today's rising

power in the world.

The Filipino said he remembered when Coca Cola was first sold in Beijing, tea-drinking Chinese complained of the American brand's medicine-like taste. "At first I thought no way Chinese would like Coke but things changed," said FlorCruz with a chuckle. "In early 1980s, new things began to arrive and it was exciting to watch it happen."

By then China was still at the crossroads as the end of Cultural Revolution unofficially declared the failure of Mao Zedong's ideology-charged governance. Deng Xiaoping, the country's top brass after Mao's death, managed to brush off oppositions and lashed out a series of market reforms to phrase out the ill-fated planned economy model institutionalized since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949.

He said it took years before China was finally placed on the right track and there are always backlashes and pull-back forces along the way. (www.philsar.com) ■

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IMMIGRATION UPDATE

Obama's Immigration Reform Plan— Something for Everybody Including Auntie



by Atty. Emmanuel Samonte TIPON

Here is President Obama's immigration reform plan announced in Costa Mesa, CA on March 18.

"We have to have comprehensive immigration reform.

Now, I know this is an emotional issue, it is a controversial issue. People get riled up politically about this.

But ultimately, here is what I believe:

1. We are a nation of immigrants.
2. We have to have control of our borders.
3. People who have been here for a long time and have put down roots here have to have some mechanism over time to get out of the shadows because if they stay in the shadows in the underground economy, oftentimes they are pitted against American workers, they cannot join a union, and they end up being abused. That depresses the wages of everybody, all Americans.

We cannot do this piecemeal. We have to come together and say: We got to strengthen our borders. We have to figure out how to control our borders that have become more violent over the drug trade.

We have to crack down on employers who are exploiting undocumented workers. We have to



PRES. OBAMA'S AUNT

make sure that we have a verification system to find out whether somebody is able to work here or not. But we have to make sure that the verification system does not discriminate because you have a Spanish surname.

We must say to the undocumented: Look you have broken the law. You did not come here the way you were supposed to. This is not going to be a free ride. You are going to pay a fine. You are going to learn English. You are going back to the end of the line so you do not get ahead of somebody who is in Mexico City applying legally. But after you have done these things over a certain period of time you have earned your citizenship. It is not something that is guaranteed or automatic. You got to earn it. Over time we give people an opportunity.

We must also deal in a humane fashion with folks who have been here for a long time.

That is the kind of comprehensive approach that we have to take."

Immigration stakeholders took parts of his speech out of context to suit their particular objectives.

ahead of somebody who is in Mexico City applying legally."

ILLEGAL ALIEN EMPLOYERS SMIRKING

Employers of illegal aliens who pay them about \$6 an hour without benefits compared to about \$20 an hour with benefits to citizens or green card holders seem undaunted by Obama's words: "We have to crack down on employers who are exploiting undocumented workers." They have heard this before.

OBAMA'S AUNT SMILIN

How about Obama's aunt, Zeituni Onyango? She has a final order of deportation since 2004 that has not been enforced. As we told you in previous issues, when Obama won the election, an Immigration Judge in Boston where she is hiding reopened the case even after the 90-day deadline for reopening, without announcing the reason and set the case for hearing on April Fool's Day. It was continued to February 4, 2010, giving Auntie a 10-month reprieve. "If the rule of law were applied in this case, Zeituni Onyango should have been deported a long time ago," said the head of Americans for Legal Immigration (Washington Post, 04/01/2009)

AMNESTY WITHOUT A NEW LAW

ILLEGAL ALIEN LOVERS REJOICE

"Halleluiah! Obama is with us," cry illegal alien lovers. He said "We are a nation of immigrants." Those are buzzwords for open borders. He also said: "People who have been here for a long time and have put down roots here have to have some mechanism over time to get out of the shadows." That's amnesty.

IMMIGRATION LAW ENFORCERS HOPEFUL

"Not so," argue the law and order advocates: He said "We have to have control of our borders." And: "We must say to the undocumented: Look you have broken the law. You did not come here the way you were supposed to. . . . You are going back to the end of the line so you do not get

President Obama can give amnesty to illegal aliens without a new immigration reform law. How? He can direct the Attorney General (AG), who is under him, to use the Immigration Courts who are controlled by the AG to grant immigration benefits to illegal aliens. Watch what happens in the case of Auntie. Who is going to complain? Even if somebody complains, do you think the complainant will go anywhere?

WHATEVER OBAMA WANTS

Whatever Obama wants, Obama gets. He wants to bail out the incompetent and greedy and appoint tax evaders to his cabinet, he gets it. The hapless opposition can do nothing. And if he wants amnesty for illegal aliens, he will get it. "Life is not fair." Especially for the honest and hardworking. ■

(Atty. Tipon is from Laang City, Philippines. He holds a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from U.P. He is admitted to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court, other U.S. Courts, and Philippine courts. He handles cases throughout the U.S. and the Philippines. He specializes in immigration law and criminal defense. Office: 905 Uni St., Suite 201, Honolulu, HI 96819. Tel. (808) 847-1601. E-mail: filamlaw@yahoo.com. Website: www.immigrationServicesUSA.com. Listen to his very interesting, useful, and humorous program "Immigration X-Files" on KN2H Hawaii radio 1270 AM on the dial every Friday 7:30-8:00 a.m. This article is for general information only. It is not legal advice. It may not be cited as an authority.)

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Senate President Enrile



MANILA, Philippines - **SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO YESTERDAY SAID** the Senate is ready for a showdown with the House of Representatives before the Supreme Court if the lower chamber passes a resolution for Charter change (Cha-cha) without the senators voting separately on the proposed amendments.

She said the Senate must file a petition to compel a separate Senate vote on the resolution.

"The Constitution requires a vote of three-fourths of all the members of Congress. The two chambers should vote at the same time, but should vote separately. This is the doctrine of necessary implication, because Congress is a bicameral body," she said, adding that the time left for Cha-

cha was too short.

"Once the case reaches the Supreme Court, we would all have to wait. At this time, Charter change is not a political but a judicial question," Santiago said.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said the Palace, through the House, could still push for Cha-cha if it wanted to despite lack of time and opposition from the people.

"If the Palace wants it, it can," he said.

However, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said the move is hopeless at this time, while Sen. Manuel Roxas III said Cha-cha would be a divisive instrument.

"Why still bother with that? I told you it's not going to pass here. That is nothing new," Enrile said.

At the House, four allies of President Arroyo cried foul over what they perceived as the malicious framing of questions on the part of pollster Social Weather Stations (SWS), which would logically elicit negative feedback from respondents.

"It is very clear from the survey results that the public opposes Charter change only if it would allow the extension of the term of President Arroyo beyond June 30,

2010," said Camiguin Rep. Pedro Romualdo.

He insisted that no one among them, Malacañang included, wants an extended term of office.

"The hullabaloo about President Arroyo's term extension has no basis in fact," he said.

Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan explained that the way the question was formed - "Are you for or against Charter change that will allow GMA to stay beyond 2010?" - would only mean that the Filipino masses are open to amending the 1987 Constitution.

"This means the people are not against Charter change per se," said Domogan, vice chairman of the House committee on justice.

Quezon City Rep. Matias Defensor said the questionnaire is unfair in that the people seem to have been conditioned that "when you talk of Cha-cha, term extension is already included."

Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. likewise expressed belief that the public would agree to Cha-cha if the survey question would not discuss or touch on term extension.

"If we change the question we can have a different answer. If you

don't include term extension, the results of the survey will change," the son and namesake of the justice secretary said.

But the administration lawmakers' effort to change the Charter is facing stiff opposition from several quarters.

More than 200 farmers of the southern group Anakpawis from Miltiam Luzon have set up camp at the gates of the Batasan to dramatize their protest against Cha-cha and to press for genuine land reform.

Rep. Rafael Mariano said the farmers' camp-out would last until June 6, when lawmakers end their second regular session.

The group will resume their protest in July, when the 14th Congress opens its third and last regular session, and would pursue it "until the House leadership scraps this Cha-cha foolishness with finality."

Mariano, his militant House colleagues and members of their organizations are against Resolution 737, authored by Speaker Prospero Nograles, and the still-to-be-filed proposal of Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte for Cha-cha via a constituent assembly

Pacquiao Down to Last Few Days of Sparring

by Abac CORDERO
/Thursday, April 16, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - **MANNY PACQUIAO SPARRED FOR 10 ROUNDS** against three separate boxers Tuesday at the Wild Card Gym as he neared the last few days of sparring for his May 2

battle with Ricky Hatton.

David Rodea, Raymond Serrano and Urbano Antillon alternated on Pacquiao who has gone over a hundred rounds now, with five more days of sparring before heading to Vegas.

Pacquiao and his huge entourage leave for Sin City on April 27 or five days before the fight. Once he gets there, it'll be a matter

of staying in shape, light drills and watching his weight.

Pacquiao will be back sparring on Thursday (Friday in Manila). The following day, his chief trainer, Freddie Roach, will leave for Puerto Rico to be in the corner of Gerry Peñafloza.

The 36-year-old Peñafloza, probably the oldest Pinoy boxing champion ever, will climb a notch higher to challenge the undefeated Juan Manuel Lopez for the WBO super-bantamweight crown.

The fight is set April 25 at the Coliseo Ruben Rodriguez in

Puerto Rico, and the day after the fight Roach should again board the plane to re-join Pacquiao for his last week of sparring.

Pacquiao may do 12 rounds on Thursday, and then should start tapering off by going down to 10, eight, six and four rounds until they call it off. He normally logs around 150 of sparring in training.

It will be the second time Roach will leave the training camp for the Hatton fight. Last March, he was away for a week to attend to Amir Khan who fought and crushed Marco Antonio Barrera in England.

In Roach's absence, Bubby

Fernandez puts on the mitts, while ex-heavyweight champion Michael Moorer and fellow trainers Alex Ariza, Eric Brown and Nonoy Neri lead a hand.

Hatton has been in Vegas for more than two weeks now, training under Floyd Mayweather Sr. at the IBA Gym, the same gym being used by Pacquiao when he's in town.

Hatton was a couple of weeks ahead in training but brushed off insinuations that he may be over-doing things leading to his defense of his 140 lb title against the reigning pound for pound champ. (www.phlistar.com) ■

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Pinoy Lawyer Wins Award in US

by Paolo ROMERO
/Thursday, April 16, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - **ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYER TONY OPOSA WILL RECEIVE** the International Environmental Law Award from the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) at a luncheon ceremony in Washington on April 21.

Oposa is cited as "one of Asia's leading voices in the global arena of environmental law."

"His work is internationally known for establishing at the highest Philippine Court of Law the principle of inter-generational responsibility - the right to sue governments on behalf of future generations to stop environmental damage," an announcement from

CIEL said.

An activist working on local, national, and international levels, he has worked tirelessly to protect the country's natural resources. His work includes a decade-long fight with the government to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay, curb over-fishing in the Visayan Sea, fight the misappropriation of the country's forest resources, and establish the School of the Seas, a learning center for sustainable living.

Oposa said the award "belongs to us all - the Filipino... It is my dream that one day, our collective efforts and passions will 'infect' the rest of our people and that one

day, we - all the Filipinos, with our native genius for Nature and the natural sciences and arts - will be the beacons of light for the rest of the world."

The CIEL award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the effort to achieve solutions to environmental problems through international law and institutions.

CIEL is a nonprofit organization working to use international law and institutions to protect the environment, promote human health, and ensure a just and sustainable society. It was founded in 1989 and is based in Washington. (www.phlistar.com) ■

Speaker Nograles



(con-ass).

The Nograles resolution seeks to amend certain economic provisions of the Constitution to allow foreign ownership of land to entice more foreigners to invest there.

Mariano said landless farmers, instead of foreigners, should be given preference in the acquisition and distribution of land.

Anti-Cha-cha protesters have been taking advantage of every forum available to them.

On Tuesday, during the hearing of the House committee on constitutional amendments, some 10 new college graduates created a minor commotion when they rose from their seats, put on their togas and graduation caps on which were written anti-Cha-cha slogans. (www.phlistar.com) ■

APRIL 18, 2009

■ PHILIPPINE NEWS

POEA Probes Case of Stranded OFWs in Dubai

by Mayen JAYMALIN /
Thursday, April 16, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - THE PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT AGENCY (POEA) will look into the case of 137 Filipino bus drivers who were recruited by a licensed agency but ended up jobless in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

POEA anti-illegal recruitment division chief Rosemarie Duquez said the agency would call the owners of CYM International Services and ask them to explain why the bus drivers were left jobless in Dubai.

Yesterday, the wives of the stranded bus drivers filed a case of illegal recruitment against CYM International.

They also went to the Department of Foreign Affairs to seek help for their husbands and the immediate release of the drivers' passports by the agency's counterpart in Dubai.

Also yesterday, former labor undersecretary and Blas Ople Center head Susan Ople warned aspiring overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) against accepting offers to work as bus or taxi drivers in Dubai.

She noted that the stranded bus drivers applied with CYM International after receiving flyers distributed at various terminals announcing the availability of 4,000 jobs for bus drivers in Dubai.

Upon arriving in Dubai, however, the workers learned that their supposed employer was not aware of such recruitment efforts and is not hiring workers at this time.

"It is outrageous that a licensed recruitment agency would resort to illegal recruitment practices to dupe these bus drivers out of their hard-earned money. We would also like to ask the government to assign a specific agency that would be in charge of monitoring and regulating lending companies that offer loans specifically to OFWs," Ople said.

The bus drivers, most of whom come from Central Luzon, were promised good-paying jobs in exchange for a placement fee of P150,000.

Ople said the drivers and their families are deeply worried about the outstanding loans they have to pay to the lending agency referred to them by CYM International Services. She urged the government to allot part of the 220,000 job commitments obtained by

President Arroyo for the stranded bus drivers.

"This is a good test case for the commitments obtained. The drivers are highly professional and well-experienced, and most of them really prefer to work in the Emirates so they can pay back their loans," she said.

Due to lack of funds, the drivers have resorted to raiding the dumpsite near their living quarters for tin cans and metal scraps that they can sell so they could have money to buy food.

The living conditions of the drivers are also horrible – their building relies on a generator set that delivers electricity only three to four hours a day; water supply is scarce; and it is located in front of a smelly garbage dumpsite, Ople said.

'EXTEND ASSISTANCE'

President Arroyo has ordered Labor Secretary Mariano Roque to immediately extend assistance to Filipino workers stranded in Dubai and other concerned agencies to file criminal charges against their recruiter.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said Mrs. Arroyo directed Roque "to process them (Filipino workers) for employment in Dubai or elsewhere in the Middle East."

Remonde said the labor official should also repatriate those who want to come home.

The President also ordered an investigation and filing of charges, "if warranted," against government officials found to have connived with the recruiter.

Roque assured the wives of the stranded drivers that their husbands would be transferred to Qatar and hired as bus drivers there.

Ople said Roque called her yesterday noon and informed her that the government would pursue the case against CYM International and that he had already given instructions to suspend the agency's license.

POEA director Melchor Dizon said the preventive suspension order against CYM is now awaiting the signature of the administrator.

"A preventive suspension is being issued pending the investigation of the case against CYM which means that the agency will be closed down at this time and will not be able to recruit workers," Dizon said in an interview.

(www.philstar.com) ■

Pollution, Noise-Free Tricycles in Taguig

HEALTH-FRIENDLY TRANSPORT is now available in Taguig City with the recent introduction of emission and noise free tricycles.

Taguig City, a residential and industrial suburb of Manila, acquired 178 units of battery-operated fiberglass tricycles, each capable of transporting four to eight passengers per load.

The Philippine-made, fiberglass-bodied E-3s resemble huge golf carts powered by five 12V batteries, which need six to 10 hours of charging for a range of 100 to 120 kilometers at speeds of 30 to 45 kilometers per hour.

Sean Gerard Villoria, president and CEO of Electric Vehicle Solutions, says the e-vehicles have zero gas emissions, are noise free and health-friendly. As an alternative mode of

transportation, the tricycles are easy to use, stable and safe for road travel.

"With only eight hours of charging, the e-tricycle can run up to 120 kilometers costing only 38 pesos. This way, income of operators can increase by up to 200 percent and operation costs are decreased by as much as 70 percent," Villoria said.

Villoria says the design and noiseless features of the E-3 make it more suitable for use in business districts, private subdivisions, resorts and even military camps.

The Air Force has been using E-3s to ferry personnel in its airbases in Villamor, Mactan in Cebu, and Clark in Pampanga. Other local government units such as Makati, Pasay, Bacolod and Boracay have also expressed interest in acquiring the battery-powered trikes, according to Villoria. (Good News Philippines) ■



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FEATURE

Can Defense Chief Teodoro Win the Presidency?

By Atty. Emmanuel S. TIPON

HONOLULU. "If you really want something, you must just for it," exclaimed Bill Clinton. No, he was not talking about Monica Lewinsky. He was talking about how he won the presidency, despite being a relative unknown from the small state of Arkansas. He added: "If you don't toot your own horn, who will toot it for you?" He was mouthing something we all learned at Yale Law School.

When we asked Secretary of National Defense Gilberto C. Teodoro, Jr. who came to Hawaii to meet with Admiral Timothy Keating, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, whether we could address him as "Mr. Future President," he smiled and replied that he was a member of a coalition which will decide who will run for president.

We had expected him to say something quotable or humorous. But then, he is from Harvard not Yale.

If he had said "Yes," we would have asked: Will you run with the opposition or the administration? Would you rather be a savior of your countrymen from perdition or a protector of the Arroyos from prosecution?

Former Defense secretaries who have successfully won the presidency, like Ramon Magsaysay and Fidel Ramos, did not wait for coalitions to endorse



Secretary Gilberto Teodoro in Hawaii, with (l to r) John de los Santos, Emmanuel Samonte Tipon, and Art Caleda.

them. They just quit their posts and ran. In the case of Ramos, he was even rejected by the coalition but ran anyway.

3 Gs VERSUS 5 Cs

We consulted the Oracle of Waikiki on what it takes to become President of the Philippines. We learned that in the olden days, a candidate needed the 3 Gs -- goons, guns, and gold.

Today, one needs the 5 Cs -- (1) cash, (2) constituency, (3) charisma, (4) competence, and (5) capability to combat cheating or capability to cheat, depending on which side you belong.

DOES TEODORO HAVE THE 5 Cs?

1. Cash. He belongs to the

wealthy Cojuangco clan. His mother, Mercedita, is Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco's sister. He can easily raise the cash necessary to win. The Chinese businessmen will rain money on him. He can always ask Uncle Danding to "lend" him some money if necessary. He might not even have to ask.

2. Constituency. Being an Ilocano from Tarlac who speaks the language fluently which he demonstrated when he visited Hawaii, he has the "Solid North" to start with. He will also take the Capampangan vote nearby. Furthermore, he can get Western Visayas voters, thanks to his Uncle Danding who has established roots there. And if he selects Senator Chiz Escudero of Sorsogon as his running mate,

they win the Bicol bloc. The young voters will be a significant bloc, and they will more likely gravitate towards him rather than his much older competitors. Most importantly, he could get the Iglesia Ni Cristo that solidly backed Danding in 1992. And there is the Erap group, to boot.

3. Charisma. When you look at him from a distance or listen to him deliver a speech, he may not exude the kind of charisma of a Barack Obama until you have a conversation with him. He can be very funny too, as when we asked him privately whether he would take Manny Villar as a running mate to form the most formidable team. We will not reveal what he said in Ilocano which had a tinge of gallos humor. We regard Manny as a friend). He is very accessible and chats with everybody who approaches him. People flocked to him eager to have their picture taken with a "future president". He fielded all questions at an open forum, sometimes going into detail instead of just dishing out sound bites.

4. Competence. Undoubtedly he has the competence to run for President. His resume includes: bar toptoucher with law degrees from the University of the Philippines and Harvard, a successful law practice with a very prominent law firm, three terms as congressman from the first district of Tarlac, and Defense Secretary for two years. He is more competent than some *bobos* who have aspired to be or become president.

5. Capability to combat cheating or capability to cheat, depending on which side you belong. If

he is going to run as the opposition candidate, he has the tools to combat cheating by the administration. As defense boss he has cultivated strong ties with the military and they will be behind him or at least not work against him. Remember Magsaysay? Quirino could not use the army to fight him. In fact it was Magsaysay who used the army. Remember Ramos? Do you think he would have won without the military? If Teodoro is going to run as the administration candidate, he will have all the cheating equipment available if he wants to use them.

POPULARITY

Many Filipinos suffer a serious character flaw. They believe that one must be popular to become President and that Teodoro is not yet popular. Look what happened to the last "popular" President. To the extent that popularity is a factor, Sec. Teodoro can easily become popular with a media blitz six months before the elections, just like what the liberal American media did with Obama. He has nowhere to go but become popular.

NO BRAINER

For the 44-year old Teodoro, running for president should not be a brain teaser but a "no brainer," as Danding once told this writer about his own presidential bid. He does not need Obama's "audacity of hope" -- just audacity. ■

E.S. TIPON is a lawyer practicing in Hawaii. He wrote the best-seller "Winning by Knowing Your Election Laws". E-mail: filamlaw@yahoo.com

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LEGAL NOTES

Waiver of Fraud or Misrepresentation



by Reuben S.
SEGURITAN

Under the U.S. immigration laws, an individual cannot get his/her permanent resident status if he/she is inadmissible. A common ground of inadmissibility is the procurement of a visa, other documents, or admission to the U.S. by fraud or willful misrepresentation.

But this ground of inadmissibility may be waived if the applicant can prove that the refusal of admission to the U.S. of such individual would result in extreme hardship to the citizen or lawful resident spouse or parent of such

an alien.

The term "exceptional hardship" is not exactly defined in the law. But there are factors that can be presented to a judge for his/her evaluation.

These factors include: the ties to the home country of the qualifying relative; the ties outside the U.S. of the qualifying relative; the conditions in the country to which the qualifying relative would have to relocate and the extent of his/her ties in such country; the financial impact of departure from such country; and the unavailability of suitable medical care in the country of relocation when the health condition of the qualifying relative is raised.

This is what a Chinese national did in a recent case. He sought a waiver of the ground of inadmissibility citing extreme hardship to his father who was already a U.S. citizen. The District Director denied the waiver. He appealed the case to the Admin-

istrative Appeals Office and the appeal was sustained.

The applicant entered the U.S. through Honolulu, Hawaii in 1991 using a false passport from another country.

When he applied for adjustment of status on the basis of a relative petition, he was found inadmissible on the ground of fraud or willful misrepresentation.

In his waiver application, he presented extensive documentation to prove extreme hardship on the part of his U.S. citizen father if they were separated.

First, the applicant showed that while his father was born in China and left in 1988, he no longer had relatives in China with whom he maintained communication and contact. He showed that his father was 57 years old and would have no employment prospects in China, being uneducated and ailing. Also, most people retire at 50 years old in China.

Medical records were presented to show the physical and

mental health ailments of his father, including an evaluation conducted by a clinical social worker showing anxiety and depression that would be exacerbated if he would be separated from his son or relocated to China. Aside from this, he had multiple and chronic physical illnesses such as high blood pressure, post-surgical intestinal and abdominal problems, rectal bleeding and inability to walk long distances.

The documents submitted showed that the son was the main caregiver of the father and that even though he lived in Atlanta while his father lived in New York, he made himself readily available and traveled to New York whenever his father was ill or needed emotional or psychological support. The other son who lived in California was no longer in contact with them.

The father, on the other hand, could not readily travel to China or stay there for extended periods if the son relocated to

China.

They also showed that because the applicant and his wife had exceeded the one-child policy in China since they have four children, they ran the risk of being sterilized upon their return and presented an expert's affidavit on China's policy and practice to this effect.

After reviewing the evidence presented and weighing all the factors, the Administrative Appeals Office ruled that applicant met the burden of proof and granted the waiver of the grounds of inadmissibility on account of the extreme hardship on his U.S. citizen father if the applicant is removed from the U.S. and deported back to China. ■

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

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Supreme Court Affirms Sandiganbayan Ruling Acquitting Erap of Illegal Use of Alias

by Edu PUNAY /
Thursday, April 16, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - **FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA** was cleared yesterday of charges of illegal use of alias after the Supreme Court ruled that his use of the name "Jose Velarde" was a private bank transaction protected under Republic Act 1405, the Secrecy of Bank Deposits Law.

In affirming the Sandiganbayan's decision, the SC said illegal use of alias within the context of Commonwealth Act 142 occurs if the use of the alias is "public and habitual."

"As with any other accused, his guilt must be based on the evidence and proof beyond reasonable doubt that a finding of criminal

liability requires," read the SC decision.

"If the people fail to discharge this burden, as they did in this case, the rule of law required that we do so declare. We do so now in this review and accordingly find no reversible error of law in the assailed Sandiganbayan ruling."

A manifest intention to be publicly known under another name was not evident in the case of Estrada, the SC added.

Meanwhile, Estrada said in a phone interview the SC decision has proven that he is not Jose Velarde as the government had alleged.

"Of course, it is a vindication for me," he said.

Ruling from Baguio City, the SC said the presence of Estrada's aides, Aprodicio Lacuian and Fer-

nando Chua, and Equitable-PCI Bank officials Clarissa Ocampo and Manuel Curato when he opened the trust account is not indicative of his intention to be publicly known as "Jose Velarde."

Estrada's use of the alias was not designed to cause fraud in business transactions as the Office of the Ombudsman had argued, the SC added.

However, the SC said it did not decide on whether Estrada's use of an alias when he was president was valid and legal.

It simply ruled on whether he may be held liable for violation of CA No. 142 based on the evidence presented by the government, the SC added.

The SC decision was written by Associate Justice Arturo Brion. Concurring were Chief Jus-

tice Reynato Puno and Associate Justices Leonardo Quisumbing, Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Renato Corona, Conchita Carpio-Morales, Dante Tinga, Presbitero Velasco Jr., and Antonio Eduardo Nachura.

Associate Justices Antonio Carpio, Minita Chico-Nazario and Teresita Leonardo-de Castro did not take part in the deliberations.

Associate Justice Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez is on official leave.

During Estrada's trial for illegal use of alias before the anti-graft

court, the Office of the Ombudsman presented the testimonies of Ocampo and Curato and Equitable-PCIB Greenhills manager Teresa Barcelan, who claimed that a certain Baby Ortaliza deposited several checks in separate occasions under the account name Jose Velarde.

After the Office of the Ombudsman presented all its evidence, Estrada's lawyers filed a "demurrer to evidence" seeking the dismissal of the charges on grounds of insufficiency of evidence. (www.philstar.com) ■



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IFS-A107534 Ed. 12/2006

MAINLAND NEWS

First Fil-Am Vet Receives Equity Check

ALBERTO BACANI, 98, WAS THE FIRST FILIPINO-AMERICAN VETERAN to receive a lump-sum payment from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in recognition of his U.S. military service during World War II.

Bacani, who resides in Alexandria, Virginia, received a \$15,000 payment from U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba, during a presentation ceremony on April 8, 2009 at the Philippine embassy in Washington, D.C.

Bacani was born in Isabela province in the Philippines. After the fall of Corregidor in World War II, he was a P.O.W. for 10-days. He retired in 1976 as a teacher and a registrar at the University of the East in the Philippines. He later moved to the U.S. and retired in 2008 as a librarian



Alberto Bacani with Amb. Kenney

and federal employee for the Environmental Protection Agency in Crystal City, Virginia.

The one-time payments to surviving Filipino veterans were authorized as part of the stimulus budget in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009.

The Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund in the Public Law 111-5 Title X, Sec. 1002 restores the honorable "active service" designation of former Filipino soldiers who were stripped of their U.S. veterans' status by an act of Congress in 1946. About 250,000 Filipino soldiers fought under American command from 1941-46.

Less than 15,000 Filipino veterans now survive and are eligible for the compensation benefits.

The presentation ceremony also included the laying of a wreath at the Bataan-Corregidor marker at the National World War II Memorial. The wreath laying honored the 67th anniversary of the fall of Bataan when about 10,000 American and 60,000 Filipino soldiers surrendered after three months defending the U.S. territory in the Philippines and began the 55-mile "Death March" to prison camps in April 1942. ■

Charice Brings Down Dodger Stadium

WHEN FILIPINO SINGING sensation Charice sang the national anthem at a major league baseball game, she didn't just bring down the house—she brought down the entire stadium. Dodger Stadium, that is—home to the Los Angeles Dodgers and on opening day for the 2009 season.

Wearing a Dodger uniform, Charice sang before 57,000 fans and while 150 members of the Armed Services spread out the U.S. flag that covered the entire outfield. AB-2 bomber then flew over the stadium and blue and white confetti streamed down to the stands.

The fans loved her performance and gave her a standing ovation. In fact, fans in the dugout club house behind homeplate where she performed walked towards the aisle to congratulate her on a job well-done.



For her, singing at Dodger Stadium was a great opportunity. "As I was walking down to the field, I saw all these pictures of the Dodgers. I was thinking of all the people and the celebrities who sang the American National Anthem here. And here I am. They chose me. I'm not even an American citizen but they chose me to sing the National Anthem. This is really a big opportunity for me." (Asian Journal) ■

GLOBAL NEWS

European Cruise Firm to Stop in Manila

THE PHILIPPINES WILL SOON BE A DESTINATION for Costa Cruises, Europe's premier cruise company. The company recently has announced the launch of its new ship that will include the Philippines in its route.

Costa Cruises debuted the Costa Classica. According to the Philippines' Department of Tourism, Manila will be one of its key ports of call.

Costa Classica will be calling at Manila in October, which represents a 43 percent increase in scheduled port of calls to the Philippines over the last year. The ship is 14 stories high, can carry about 1,700 passengers and has about 600 crewmembers.

The Costa Classica will sail from Hong Kong on 14-night



The cruise ship Costa Classica

routes during the winter to the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam and in the spring and summer from Shanghai to Korea, Japan (including a new stop Yokohama/Tokyo) and Taiwan.

The DOT also noted they were in negotiations with another cruise company, Holland America Line, to put the country in its itiner-

ary. Philippine tourism officials are exploring proposals to increase the frequency of trips by Holland America's the MS Volendam, which carries high-spending European tourists.

The MS Volendam will dock in Manila sometime in April, as part of its 47-day Orient and Alaska voyage. (Good News Pilipinas) ■



Philippines Takes Measures to Protect Filipino Seafarers from Hijacking

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT has stepped up both preventive and remedial actions to address the increasing number of piracy incidents and hostage-taking involving Filipino crew seafarers in the Gulf of Aden and in the Indian Ocean.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has long imposed an advisory against travel to Somalia. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has also issued directives to manning agencies of ships plying the Gulf of Aden. Vice President Noli De Castro, Labor Secretary Marianne Roque, and other officials have met a number of times with agencies and representatives of the shipping industry.

"We asked them to ensure that their ships traverse the affected areas only along this 'security corridor' and preferably to do so in convoy formation," De Castro says.

Seventeen Filipino seafarers aboard the Greek-owned bulk carrier MV Titan were released on April 15, 2009. The release lowered the total number of Filipino

seafarers being held captive by Somali pirates to 105.

The DFA and DOLE will continue to coordinate and meet with the concerned manning agencies and their shipping principals on the release and repatriation of Filipino seafarers. Officials also regularly meet with the families of the Filipino crewmembers to extend social and other support.

"We have brought the matter of the menace of piracy to the attention of the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations. We welcome and fully support future actions to put this problem to an end," says Esteban Conejos, Jr., the Philippines' Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs.

According to Conejos, the Philippine government has a "no ransom" policy in dealing with pirates' demands. Instead, the Philippines coordinates with foreign governments and entities in a collective effort towards the early and safe release of Filipino crewmembers.

This peaceful approach has resulted in the release and repatriation of 227 Filipino seafarers since 2006. (DFA) ■

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SIGNIFICANT DATES in 2009 WHEN THE PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONOLULU WILL HOLD COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL EMILY AT 595-6316 EXT 242

JUNE TO AUGUST—Overseas Absentee Voting Registration for Filipino citizens who wish to vote in the presidential elections in May 2010. Registrants may come to the Consulate in person with their

Philippine passports to accomplish the application form.

JUNE 12, 8:30am, at the consulate grounds — “*Araw ng Kalayaan*” (Independence Day)

and another activity at 6:30 pm.

JULY 10-14TH — *Ambassadors and Consul Generals Tour to the Philippines*, a special package tour for the public.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DIVINE WORD COLLEGE OF LAOAG ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII (DWLCAAH) 1ST INT'L GRAND REUNION

May 2, 2009 • Hilton Hawaiian Village, Waikiki, Honolulu, Hawaii • For more information call Jesse Pascual at 225-3388 or Fe Velasco at 2227436; Amado Yoro 699-9814

FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ENTREPRENEUR

May 2, 2009 / SATURDAY • 7 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village, Coral Ballroom • Call Bernadette Fajardo-342-8090 and Jason Pascua- 386-3823

THE DIVINE WORD COLLEGE OF LAOAG PHIL. INTERNATIONAL GRAND REUNION

May 2, 2009 / SATURDAY • 7 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village, Hotel • Call Amado Yoro - 699-9814, General Chairperson-Jesse Pascual - 225-3388

UST SINGERS PERFORMANCES

May 8, 2009 / FRIDAY • 6:30 pm • Farrington Community Auditorium

May 10, 2009 / SUNDAY • 6:00 pm • Filipino Community Center • For more information, call 678-8930, 387-8297 or 671-3911.

TIMPUGONG AND ILOKANO BA SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET / FRIDAY

May 8, 2009 • Hale Koa Hotel,

Waikiki Ballroom • For tickets and more information, call Dr. Aurelio Agcaolili at 956-8405 or Julius Soria at 956-2226

FILIPINO FIESTA, PARADE AND SANTACRUZAN / SATURDAY

May 9, 2009 • All day starting at 8 am. • For inquiries, call Fil-Com Center at 680-0451

LITTLE MISS PHIL. HAWAII / SATURDAY

May 30, 2009 • Call Maggie Domingo-841-2841, Estrella Ramos-927-8188 and Janice Sevilla-595-8000

MRS. HAWAII FILIPINA PAGEANT BY UFCH / SATURDAY

June 6, 2009 • 6 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village, Tapa Room • Contact person: Eddie Agas-783-3327, Carlota Ader-688-3215

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROJECT / SATURDAY

June 13, 2009 • 9:30 am - 1:30 pm • Likelike Highway & Kalihii Street • Contact Lina Longboy at 375 0828

GOLDEN JUBILEE MISS OAHU FILIPINA PAGEANT / SATURDAY

June 13, 2009 • Pacific Beach Hotel • Contact Lina Longboy at 375 0828

OFCC GOLDEN PRESIDENT'S BALL / FRIDAY

June 26, 2009 • Hilton Hawai-

ina Village Hotel, Tapa Ballroom • Contact Lina Longboy at 375 0828

OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL (OFCC) ANNUAL CONVENTION / SATURDAY

June 27, 2009 • Hilton Hawaiian Village • Contact Lina Longboy at 375 0828 for more details

FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII INSTALLATION BANQUET / SATURDAY

July 11, 2009 • 6 pm. • Hilton Hawaiian Village • Call Rose Mendoza at 371-3902 or Bennett Evangelista at 398-5988

BATAAN CATALINA 79TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION / SATURDAY

July 25, 2009. • For more information, send email at juncolme@yahoo.com

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