

HAWAII-PHILIPPINE NEWS EDITION

FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER IS FILIPINO-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

By Lynda BURIAN

In commemoration of Filipino-American History Month, the Filipino-American Historical Society of Hawaii, together with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1572 and the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army, are co-sponsoring several events at the Honolulu Hale and the Hawaii State Library during the month of October.

Last year's inaugural celebration of Filipino-American History Month was made possible by the passage of HB 3342 HD1, which was introduced by State Rep Joey Manahan. The bill—which designated October as Filipino-American History Month in Hawaii—was unanimously approved by the 2008 State Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Linda Lingle on April 15, 2008.

Filipino-American History Month has been widely celebrated by Filipino communities across the U.S. since 1988. However, it took decisive action by the Hawaii State Legislature to make it official.

Interestingly, the Legislature holds the

distinction of being the first governing body in the U.S. to officially recognize October as Filipino-American History Month.

Kicking off last year's festivities was the well-received photo exhibit "Singgalot: Ties That Bind" which went on display at the Hawaii State Library. The exhibit was first shown at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. and at the Bishop Museum in 2006 in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Filipino migration to the U.S.

Organizers have planned a myriad of activities for 2009, which includes the following events:

(continued on page 4)

Senate: Abrogate Visiting Forces Agreement

By Aureo CALICA

MANILA, Philippines - Senators approved on second reading last night a resolution urging Malacáñang to abrogate the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the Philippines and the United States if the Americans would object to a renegotiation of the controversial accord.

Senate Resolution No. 1356 authored by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago asked the administration to give a notice of termination of the agreement in case there is an objection from the US to the renegotiation.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney had earlier said Washington was happy with the VFA and saw no need to renegotiate it. The Americans treat the VFA as an executive agreement that requires no ratification by their Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri and Sen. Edgardo Angara said there was no roll call voting after the period of interpellation where the amendments of Sen.



Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago

Rodolfo Biazon were approved.

"It's an approved resolution, viva voce," Zubiri said. Malacáñang could implement the actual abrogation of the treaty even though treaties are approved by the Senate.

The senators present yesterday who did not pose any objection to the resolution were Santiago, Zubiri, Angara, Biazon, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggo Estrada, Senators Benigno Aquino III, Joker Arroyo, Alan Peter Cayetano, Francis Escudero,

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Mahalohalo Kolintang Ensemble (left to right) Mayo Santaella, Leila Lagundino, Bernard Ellorin, Desire Seguritan, and Wayland Quintero

Hawaii's Plantation Village to Host Keiki Festival

By HFC Staff

For parents who may want to give their children an up-close-and-personal look at traditional plantation life, an upcoming event sponsored by Hawaii's Plantation Village (HPV) may be just the ticket.

HPV will be hosting "Relive the Plantation Days - Keiki Festival" on Saturday, October 3, 2009—an event that's bound to interest as well as educate children about the hardships of plantation life.

According to Jeffrey Higa, HPV executive director, the Keiki Festival is part of the on-going "Relive the Plantation Days Series."

"Children were a very important part



Waipahu High School volunteers preparing foods to sell at last year's event

of everyday life on the plantation," Higa says. "During the Festival, we will celebrate

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EDITORIAL

Looking the Other Way

Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Panfilo Lacson continued yesterday what another colleague has described as their MAD attacks against each other — or mutually assured destruction. Alongside the amusement felt by those following this battle is the question of why the two senators, both sworn to serve the public, have kept these stories of serious crimes to themselves all these years. Were they directly complicit in the crimes, or did they simply live and let live?

Lacson cast the first stone by accusing Estrada's father, former President Joseph Estrada, of receiving gambling payoffs, twisting the arm of taipan Alfonso Yuchengco and dealing directly with the special police unit whose top officials have been implicated in the murders of publicist Salvador Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito. Lacson followed this up with accusations that the former president was behind the disappearance and murder of casino worker Edgar Bentain. Lacson also accused Senator Estrada of corruption.

Yesterday Senator Estrada slammed what he described as Lacson's "Fiction Part II," accusing the former national police chief of "wiretapping," with emphasis on the last syllable. Estrada said it was not his father but Lacson who was behind the murder of Dacer and the disappearance of Bentain, whose death has not been confirmed. Estrada also revived old accusations against Lacson regarding the executions of members of notorious kidnapping and robbery gangs, the murders of a woman and an eight-year-old girl related to one of those executed, and the assassination of a Manila police officer.

Those who have been seeking justice for murdered loved ones or who want to see the corrupt sent to prison welcome the exchange of accusations. But what would be more welcome is if formal complaints are filed so that the truth can be established and anyone guilty of kidnapping, murder and corruption can be sent behind bars.

A common question is why it took the two senators a decade to talk about each other's purported crimes. If they knew such serious crimes had been committed, why did they look the other way? What else do they know, and what other dark secrets are they hiding? (www.philstar.com) ■



Cutting Classes

As the population continues to grow with no corresponding increase in resources for basic services, the Department of Education has reduced class hours to ease congestion in public schools. The DepEd's move is on top of previous efforts to accommodate the booming student population, including the adoption of three shifts per day.

Those three shifts already meant shorter class hours. Last month the DepEd ordered class hours further shortened to just four hours for Grades 1 and 2, four hours and 30 minutes for Grade 3 and five hours for Grades 4 to 6. Compare those learning hours with those in exclusive private schools, where students start whole-day classes by fourth grade.

DepEd officials managed to further cut class hours by collapsing certain subjects into others. Social Studies and Culture, for example, were integrated into Filipino from Grades 1 to 3. Music, Arts and Physical Education, already taught in combination, were integrated into Geography, History and Social Studies from Grades 4 to 6.

Education officials explained that reducing class hours was in response

to "the alarming size or population of learners in a class or crowded classrooms," concerns for the safety of young pupils and "public clamor for lesser learning loads." Critics countered that as things stand, elementary students in public schools are already learning a lot less than their counterparts in many private schools. Critics also pointed out that further integration of school subjects could confuse students.

What the critics cannot dispute is the "alarming size" of the student population, which grows steadily each school opening. Without a corresponding increase in the annual funding for education — already the second largest in the national budget after the allocation for debt service — school congestion is certain to get worse.

While the DepEd may simply be trying to cope with a bad situation, the government must do more to deal with the problem. Other countries are pouring resources into improving basic education, which builds a solid foundation for learning the skills needed for national development. The poor quality of education is showing in tests and international competitions. It is manifested in the lack of qualified workers to meet the needs of investors and the requirements of national development, and in the continuing slide in the country's competitiveness. Reforms must start in the earliest stages of life. Shortening the time for learning is not a good start. (www.philstar.com) ■



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MAYOR'S COLUMN

Moving Forward Together and Protecting Our Environment

AROUND THE ISLAND

by Mayor Mufi HANNEMANN

I was very pleased to join in a community birthday celebration for Magdalena "Maggie" Pasion Domingo on September 12. She is one of Honolulu's living treasures, and we all appreciate her hard work for the Filipino community and the entire state of Hawaii through the years. Congratulations again on your 77th birthday, Maggie!

The planning work on our rail transit project continues to move forward on schedule, and the latest great news is that the U.S. Senate has approved \$30 million in federal funding to help pay for the next big step, known as preliminary engineering. Senator Daniel Inouye, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has worked long and hard to secure the financial resources that

are making this project successful.

In a related development, we recently learned that the local funding stream for our rail project has been healthier than was earlier expected. In fact, revenue from the General Excise Tax surcharge on Oahu for fiscal year 2009 was eight percent higher than estimates had forecast. And over the next 13 years, the surcharge could generate \$150 million more for the project than had been expected.

This is wonderful news, particularly in this struggling economy. And preliminary indications for the first construction phase show significant potential savings in the project's overall cost.

The combination of the additional funds, lower construction cost and the Council on Revenues' forecast for a long-term economic recovery starting in fiscal year 2011 reinforces our confidence that the rail project is financially sound. And the timing of the rail transit project is perfect – rail construction will start generate thousands of new jobs once we break ground in December, the federal government is



Mayor Mufi Hannemann congratulated Maggie Domingo on her 77th birthday and presented her with a proclamation.

poised to contribute more than \$1 billion to build the rail system, and people want a "green" and efficient alternative to traffic congestion.

We're very committed to protecting our environment, and we have been very successful in reducing electricity usage in a long list of city facilities; we targeted in 2005, in which we have installed energy-saving technologies. Our 28 "goal" facilities have steadily reduced their energy usage and are

now 12.52 percent below their 2005 baseline.

But like any growing city, we have added new buildings and operations that provide needed services for the public. They all require electricity. And some facilities, such as the new Ultraviolet Disinfection unit at the Sand Island Waste Water Treatment Plant, use enormous amounts of electricity. The disinfection unit, which destroys pathogens in treated wastewater, was mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and State Department of Health, and uses one million kilowatt hours per month at a cost of \$3.9 million per year. This facility is responsible for the largest single part of our increased energy consumption, but it is necessary to protect public health and safety.

We must continue to become more efficient, and at the same time add electrical energy conservation when planned expansion and public protection require it. We're accomplishing those goals. In fact, seven City agencies or operations trimmed energy consumption by 6 million kilowatt hours since 2007, while

the remaining agencies posted minimal increases.

The Department of Environmental Services—which is responsible for the Sand Island disinfection unit and other facilities that protect public health—accounted for nearly all the increase in power consumption during the two-year period. When excluding this agency's usage increase, overall City electricity consumption would actually have decreased by nearly 5.3 million kilowatt hours since fiscal year 2007.

The City is also using more biodiesel—1,416 million gallons last fiscal year alone; has installed energy-efficient air-conditioning in the Fasi Municipal Building and Blaisdell Arena; turns off the air-conditioning in City buildings after designated hours; participates in the Honolulu Lights Out campaign every third Saturday of the month; has purchased more hybrid vehicles; and has expanded the use of fluorescent lighting at public facilities.

We have a shared goal and a well-defined destination. To get there, we need in-depth understanding, cooperation and constructive contributions to the continuing discussion about our future. ■

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HEALTHLINE NEWS**Prostate Cancer Treatment May Spark Heart Problems**

LONDON (AP) — A common treatment for prostate cancer may slightly increase patients' risk of heart problems, new research says.

Experts said the findings could make doctors think twice before prescribing the standard hormone treatment to men with prostate cancer, particularly if they are at risk of heart disease. The research was announced Tuesday at a joint meeting of the European Cancer Organisation and the European Society for Medical Oncology in Berlin.

"What we can do with these results is to raise a flag with hormone treatments," said Mieke Van Hemelrijck, a cancer epidemiologist at King's College in London and the study's lead researcher.

More than 670,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer globally every year, making it the second-most common cancer in men after lung cancer. In the U.S., about 600,000 men are being treated with endocrine therapies for prostate cancer.

Van Hemelrijck and colleagues studied more than 30,000 men in Sweden with prostate cancer who got hormone therapy between 1997 and 2006, for about three years. They compared the rate of heart problems in those patients to the rate in the general Swedish population.



Prostate cancer patients had a 28 percent higher relative chance of having a fatal heart attack and a 21 percent increased chance of dying from heart disease. Still, these risks were low in absolute terms: researchers estimated the hormone therapies would cause an extra 10 heart

problems — like chest pain or a heart attack — a year for every 1,000 prostate cancer patients.

"What patients should do is talk about this with their doctor," said Michael Thun, a vice president emeritus at the American Cancer Society, who was not connected to the research. "It makes a lot of sense and could one day change treatment guidelines."

Prior studies have found hormone therapy given to prostate cancer patients with a history of heart disease increases their chances of dying.

Van Hemelrijck hypothesized that hormone therapy disrupts the normal circulation of testosterone in the body. Scientists think testosterone has some protective effect on the heart. Thus, hormones that interfere with testos-

terone could be deadly.

"There is no definitive evidence, though the risk of heart problems is definitely something doctors should consider when prescribing hormone treatment," Thun said.

Helen Rippon, head of research management at Britain's Prostate Cancer Charity, said the benefits of hormone therapy ultimately outweighed the increased risk of heart problems. "This is not a colossal risk," Rippon said.

"For the vast majority of men, the benefits of hormone therapy are absolutely clear: it can halt the disease or stop it for years," she said. "Clinicians always make decisions on a case-by-case basis, and this is one more piece of information for them to consider." (www.philstar.com) ■

SOCIAL SECURITY UPDATE**Q & A: Retirement**

by Jane YAMAMOTO-BURGESS

QUESTION:

How much can I earn and still get Social Security retirement benefits?

ANSWER:

Starting with the month you reach your full retirement age, you will get your full benefits with

no limit on your earnings. Social Security uses the formulas below, based on your age, to determine how much your benefit may be reduced:

- If you are under your full retirement age: when you start getting your Social Security payments, \$1 in benefits will be deducted for each \$2 you earn above the annual limit. For 2009, that

limit is \$14,160. The earliest age you can receive Social Security retirement benefits remains 62, even though the full retirement age is rising.

- In the year you reach your full retirement age: \$1 in benefits will be deducted for each \$3 you earn above a different limit, but only counting earnings before the month you reach full retirement age. For 2009, that

limit is \$37,680.

Keep in mind that although your benefits may be reduced due to earnings, you may receive a higher benefit later. After you reach full retirement age, we will recalculate your benefit amount to give you credit for any months in which you did not receive a benefit because of your earnings. In addition, as long as you continue to work and receive benefits, we will check your record every year to see whether the additional earnings will increase your monthly benefit. Find out your full retirement age at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/ageincrease.htm. Learn more by reading our publication, How Work Affects Your Benefits, at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10069.html.

(cont. from page 1; Hawaii's)

brave aspects of plantation life seen through the eyes of keiki growing up in those simpler times."

Founded in 1992, HPV is a living history museum and ethno-botanical garden located near the old sugar mill in historic Waipahu town. Its mission is to ensure that the struggles, sacrifices, innovations and contributions of Hawaii's sugar plantation forebears are preserved and acknowledged as the cornerstone of Hawaii's multi-ethnic society.

FUN FILLED EVENTS

Throughout the day, adults and keiki can wander throughout the Village, participate in food tastings, soak in the entertainment and play games.

The various events during the day-long event are as follows:

- 11:00 am Keiki hula performances by Kaho'olana Aloha Halau. During the 1950s, children who grew up on the Ewa Plantation had the opportunity to take weekly hula lessons from kumu hula Ku'ulei Clark at the Social Hall.
- 11:30 am Tekniglingz Crew (hip hop meets traditional Fil-



Show here are some of the food vendors that participated in last year's festival

- ipino dance).
- 12:30 pm Portuguese dance by adults and keiki from the Josephine Carrera Dance Group.
- 1:00 pm Okinawan Dance and Music by Allison Yanagi.

goose, Slingshot, Marble Pachinko, Rubber Band Gun, Korean traditional games and Malasada Throw, catch-and-release fishing, and arts and crafts such as origami, Japanese calligraphy, Keiki ID, headband crafts, kite-making and mask painting.

"Relive the Plantation Days - Keiki Festival" is supported in part by the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts through appropriations from the Hawaii State Legislature and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Gates open at 10 a.m. Admission and parking are free. For more information, please contact HPV at 677-0110 or go online to: www.hawaiiplantationvillage.org. ■

QUESTION:

Do I have to pay income tax on my Social Security benefits?

ANSWER:

You will have to pay federal taxes on your benefits if you file an individual federal tax return and your total income is more than \$25,000. If you file a joint return, you will have to pay taxes if you and your spouse have a total income that is more than \$32,000. For more information, call the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) toll-free at 1-800-829-3676 (TTY 1-800-829-4059) and ask for IRS Publication 915, Social Security and Equivalent Railroad Retirement Benefits, available online at www.irs.gov/publications/p915/index.html. ■

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Councilmember Cachola Honors Kalihi Educator

by Dennis GALO

KALAKAUA MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH TEACHER

Seanyelle Yagi was recognized for receiving the 2009 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

In recognition of her award, Councilmember Cachola presented Yagi with an Honorary Certificate at the Council meeting on September 16, 2009.

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is awarded annually to the best pre-college-level science and math teachers from

across the country. Yagi is one of two public school teachers from Hawaii to receive the award, and among over 100 others nationwide.

Yagi also received a \$10,000 cash award and a free trip to Washington, D.C. where she and the nation's best math and science teachers were honored by President Barack Obama for their exemplary teaching skills.

Earlier this year when she first received the prestigious award, Yagi taught at Kaewai Elementary. But over the summer, she transferred to Kalakaua Mid-

dle School to concentrate on teaching mathematics.

"As the Councilmember of the district, I am extremely proud of her accomplishments and of the tremendous job she has done at both Kaewai Elementary and Kalakaua Middle School," says Councilmember Cachola. "In the few years she has worked in Council District 7, she has developed a close connection with children from the Kalihi area."

For Yagi, few things are as fulfilling as seeing the excitement on her students' faces when they have accomplished their assign-

ments or have learned something new. Her goal as a teacher is for her students to develop into independent, positive thinkers and problem solvers.

"Her hard work, sacrifices and commitment to excellence are an inspiration to her colleagues and to those many children who are fortunate enough to call her 'teacher.' We wish her continued success and all the very best in her future endeavors." ■



Councilmember Cachola and Kalakaua Middle School teacher Seanyelle Yagi (front left holding certificate) pose with members of the Honolulu City Council.

Waipahu Library to Hold Book Sale, Children's Program

THE FRIENDS OF WAIPAHU PUBLIC LIBRARY

will conduct their semi-annual Book Sale on Saturday, October 3 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Adult Reading Section.

The library, which is usually closed on Saturdays, will be open only for the book sale, which will have pre-owned books, CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes for sale at bargain prices. Proceeds from the sale will benefit the library. If you have used items to donate, please drop them off at the library one week prior to the book sale.

On Thursday, October 8, 2009, the library will host "Music-

garten-Family Music for Toddlers," at 10:30 a.m. in the C. O. Andy Anderson Room. Presented by Musikgarten Hawaii, the program will be conducted by Aki Miyashiro and will introduce the benefits that can be acquired through early childhood music education. Parents will be able to participate in singing, dancing, listening and playing simple instruments while developing a strong musical bond with their child.

The 45-minute program is designed for toddlers ages 1½ to 3 years and their parents. Registration is required because of limited space availability.

For more information or to register for the program, please call the library at 675-0358. ■

IMMIGRATION GUIDE



by Atty. Emmanuel Samonte TIPON

Where an alien has departed from the U.S. following removal proceedings, may the alien file a motion to reopen or reconsider?

If you say "yes," you may be correct. If you say "no," you may also be correct. It depends on where the alien resided before leaving the U.S. The various United States Circuit Court of Appeals are split on the answer. Until the U.S. Supreme Court decides, the answer will remain a matter of geography.

THE LAW

"An order of deportation or of exclusion shall not be reviewed by any court if the alien . . . has departed from the United States after the issuance of the order." 8 U.S.C. § 1105(a)(1962).

The Attorney General issued implementing regulations 8 CFR § 3.2 providing:

"[A] motion to reopen or a motion to reconsider shall not be made by or on behalf of a person who is the subject of deportation proceedings subsequent to his or her departure from the United States."

In September 1996, Congress enacted the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) which repealed the statutory bar to judicial review of deportation orders

Can Alien Who Left U.S. File Motion to Reopen?

when the alien had departed the country.

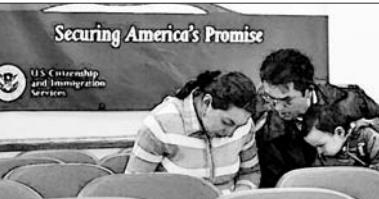
The statute provided that "[t]he alien may file one motion to reconsider a decision that the alien is removable from the United States." 8 USC § 1229a(c)(6)(A), and that such motion must be filed "within 30 days of the date of entry of a final administrative order of removal." 8 USC § 1229a(c)(6)(B). Furthermore, "[a]n alien may file one motion to reopen proceedings, 8 USC § 1229a(c)(7)(A), which motion, in general, must be filed "within 90 days of the date of entry of a final administrative order of removal" 8 USC § 1229a(c)(7)(C)(1), subject to certain exceptions. The statute, however, does not contain any explicit post-departure bar to review, which had previously existed under 8 U.S.C. § 1105(a).

On March 6, 1997, the Attorney General promulgated regulations implementing IIRIRA. 8 CFR § 1003.2(d), provides:

"A motion to reopen or . . . reconsider shall not be made by or on behalf of a person who is the subject of exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings, subsequent to his or her departure from the United States."

FACTS

Martin, a Mexican was admitted to the U.S. in Indiana as a conditional permanent resident. He was convicted of battery by an Indiana court. DHS commenced removal proceedings against him as being removable because he was convicted of aggravated felony (the battery conviction) and



because of a crime of domestic violence (the same battery conviction involving his wife).

He admitted the allegations of the Notice to Appear, did not apply for relief, and waived his right to appeal the removal order. In 2003 he was removed to Mexico. Three months after his removal, the Seventh Circuit held that a conviction for battery under Indiana law was not an aggravated felony or a crime of domestic violence for immigration purposes.

On May 2007, some 3 1/2 years after his removal, Martin filed with the Immigration Court in Colorado a Motion to Reconsider and Rescind Removal Order, or in the Alternative to Reopen Proceedings. He invoked 8 CFR § 1003.23(b)(1) providing that "An immigration Judge may upon his or her own motion at any time, . . . reopen or reconsider any case in which he or she has made a

decision."

However, the government cited 8 CFR § 1003.23(b)(1) providing that "A motion to reopen or to reconsider shall not be made by or on behalf of a person who is the subject of exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings, subsequent to his or her departure from the United States."

HELD

The court held that the general "at any time" language of the regulations is limited by the more specific prohibition against motions on behalf of persons who have departed after an order of removal, hence Martin was not entitled to file a motion to reopen since he had departed from the U.S. The regulations barring post-departure motions to reopen are a valid exercise of the Attorney General's rule-making authority and does not contravene 8 USC § 1229a(c)(6)(A) or 8 USC §

1229a(c)(7)(A), since the statute is silent on whether Congress meant to repeal the post-departure bars contained in the Attorney General's regulations. Martin's motion to reopen was time-barred since it was filed 3 1/2 years after his removal. Rosillo-Puga, No. 07-9564, Court of Appeals (09/15/09 CA10). The same position was taken by the Fifth Circuit in Ovalles v. Holder, No. 07-60836, Court of Appeals (08/12/09).

On the other hand, the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in William v. Gonzales, 499 F.3d 329 (4th Cir. 2007) held that 8 USC § 1229a(c)(7)(A) gives an alien the right to file one motion to reopen, regardless of whether he is within or without the country. The post-departure bar to a motion to reopen conflicts with the statute. ■

(ATTY. TIPON is from Laog City, Philippines. He holds a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from UP. 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 KNDI 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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▲ Charles Sonido (right) with cousins Theodore Madla (left) and Rowena Madla-Ricalde (middle) during a night out at Roy's Restaurant in Pasadena, California. Charles graduated with honors at Punahoa last June and is now attending college on the mainland.



▲ Mayor Tomas Torralba of Badoc, Ilocos Norte, Gov. Michael Marcos Keon of Ilocos Norte with Emmie Tomimbang distributing her documentary CD

(L-R) Drs. Nestor Herana, Iandine Hans Paras and Joanna Paras were also spotted at retirement party ►



◀
Drs. Jose Leonardo Stoico, Ria Monica Valencia, Katrina Abadilla and Markus Angelo Agito at the retirement party of Dr. Angelita Catalán



◀
L-R (standing) Nellie Somera, Tina Aghibot, Chona Montesinges-Somero, Ofelia Lagat. Seated (L-R) Erlinda Sonido, Dr. Angelita Catalán and Aida Aquino at a recent party



▲ Congratulations to newlyweds Ryndell and Rhea Aguinaldo with Pasquiniusos of Hawaii guests in Waikiki



▲ Happy Baptismal celebration to Baby Jessica Tibaldo with mom Lilia and her godparents at a party held at Hale Koa Hotel



▲ Mayor Muji Hannemann, UFCH pres. Eddie Agas, OFCC pres. Danny Villaruz together with the Island Queens and Miss Hawaii Filipina, Celina Macadangdang Hayashi of Maui



▲ Congratulations to Rina Agsalda, candidate for Mrs. Vintar Ohana, Hawaii shown here with her children



▲ The lovely ladies of Waipahu performing at the Phil. consulate during a community event

Peso Touches Fresh 3-Month High

by Iris C. GONZALES /
Tuesday, September 24, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - THE PESO REACHED A FRESH THREE-MONTH HIGH yesterday, closing at 47.44 against the dollar or breaching the 47.50 trading level, buoyed by hefty dollar inflows from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and improving investor sentiment in the country.

The last time the peso

breached the 47.50 level was last June 5 when it hit 47.24 against the greenback.

During yesterday's trading, the peso ranged from 47.32 to 47.50 against the dollar with total volume at P857.9 million.

On Tuesday, the peso closed at P47.56 against the dollar.

Traders said dollar remittances from OFWs and improving investor confidence helped prop up the peso.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Armando M. Tetangco Jr.

has said that dollar remittances from overseas Filipinos may grow by more than three percent this year following the hefty dollar inflows that poured into the country in July.

The latest estimate is higher than the previous projection of a two- to three- percent growth for 2009 and the original forecast of a zero percent growth. In 2008, remittances hit \$16.4 billion.

Remittances from overseas Filipinos rose to \$1.5 billion in July from \$1.4 billion in the same



month last year, posting the highest year-on-year growth for 2009 at 9.3 percent, latest data from the BSP showed.

The July figures brought remittances in the first seven

months of the year to \$10 billion, up by 3.8 percent from the year-ago level, data from the central bank also showed.

The BSP said remittances are expected to stay robust due to the efforts of banks and remittance centers.

Tetangco said monetary authorities would continue to review developments including those that would impact on inflation and the peso. He said the BSP would keep a close watch on any price pressures that could arise from improvements in global demand as sentiment continues to turn positive. (www.philstar.com) ■

House Panel Recalls Text Tax

by Iris C. GONZALES /
Wednesday, September 23, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE recalled yesterday its approval of the proposed five-centavo tax on text messages after telecommunications companies (telcos) and consumer groups raised howls of protest.

Opposition Rep. Rufus Rodriguez moved for the recall of the measure "for the purpose of more public hearings so we can hear even representatives of our overseas workers who will be burdened by this proposed text tax."

"Let us hear consumer groups with members both here and abroad.

Let us hear the telcos, which are complaining of alleged lack of due process," he said.

The committee, chaired by Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier, then proceeded to listen to representatives of telcos, consumer groups and concerned government agencies.

Speaker Prospero Nogales' objection to the committee-approved pass-on provision might have also prompted the committee to agree to the bill's recall.

Globe Telecom legal counsel Rodolfo Salalima told the panel that he and other telco representatives were surprised to read in the committee's "substituted bill" that their companies would be prohib-

ited from passing on the proposed tax to their subscribers.

He said Javier has told journalists that the tax would be a business cost that mobile phone companies would be allowed to include in their subscribers' monthly bills.

He said telcos would surely pass the levy on to the public if Congress imposes it.

"Let us not deceive the public on this no-pass-through provision. Why are we testing the nerves and sensitivity of our people?" a visibly angry Salalima asked, stunning some members of the panel when he raised his voice.

Rodriguez supported Salalima's account of how the Javier committee made a complete turn-

around on the no-pass on provision.

"I was the only one who voted against this bill in our Sept. 8 meeting because of your decision to let subscribers absorb the proposed five-centavo tax," Rodriguez said, addressing Javier.

He said he had also raised concerns about possible violation of privacy laws, as well as about unequal taxation.

He said under the metering proposal, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the National Telecommunications Commission would have data on text messages and voice calls.

Javier clarified that the two agencies would only monitor the number of calls and messages for taxation purposes, and not their contents.

"Besides, under the Anti-Wiretapping Law, these agencies and even telcos are prohibited from releasing information about private communications like text messages and voice calls," he said.

Anthony Cruz, who heads a group of mobile phone users called Textpower, told the committee that messages and calls are now levied two kinds of taxes.

"These are the value added tax, which you increased from 10 percent to 12 percent, and the 10-percent overseas communications tax. The proposed five-percent impost would be a third levy," he said.

He said his group believes more the telcos' statement that they would pass on the tax to their subscribers than the lawmakers' no-pass on assurance. (www.philstar.com) ■

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Enrile Defends Estrada vs Lacson's Attacks

by Cristina MENDEZ /
Wednesday, September 23, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - Senator President Juan Ponce Enrile took the floor at the plenary yesterday and disputed the accusations of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who has portrayed former president Joseph Estrada as a crook involved in criminal and corruption activities.

"Enrile surprised everyone by taking the floor ahead of Lacson and delivering a privilege speech to defend Estrada, whom he described as a sincere leader and a true friend.

"If his accusations should amount to the imputation of crimes for which Erap has not been charged or tried, then I sincerely hope that the good senator, sooner than later, will see to it that the proper case or even cases will be immediately filed in our courts, where the former president can be given a fair, impartial, and equal opportunity to defend himself," he said.

Despite the various accusations hurled by Lacson against the former president, Enrile vouched for Estrada's integrity and said he would remain his true friend.

He stressed that he cannot easily believe that the former president is a killer.

"A lot of accusations have been thrown at him in the past but it is hard and painful for me to think that he is a scoundrel," he said. "Despite the grave accusations, President Estrada can defend himself and will clear his name not only as a person but as a leader who is trusted, adored and loved by the Filipino people."

Enrile said he will not cover up Estrada for any of his wrongdoings if there is enough evidence to pin him before the court of law. But he vowed never to abandon him as a friend amid these new challenges in his life and political career.

He said he cannot let the privilege speech of Sen. Lacson pass due to his portrayal of the former president.

"Last week, I sat at that ex-

alted seat of the Senate President and listened with deep pain, a heavy heart and a troubled mind as I presided over the session when my friend and colleague, the Honorable Panfilo Lacson, delivered his searing privilege speech. He rendered his own personal account and portrayal of the person and character of former president Joseph Ejercito Estrada, the founder and leader of my party, the PMP," he said.

'MYTHICAL ERAP'

Reacting to his speech, The STAR columnist William Esposo, former chairman of the Council for Philippine Affairs (COPA), expressed disbelief over the Senate President's act of absolving Estrada of any wrongdoing.

"JPE delivered an elaborate PR speech extolling a mythical Erap which in several instances attempted to rewrite history. JPE will make a good fiction writer," Esposo said.

In his speech, Enrile narrated how he and Estrada became close, even recalling the time when he was arrested by then National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) director and now Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim over charges for rebellion complex with murder during the Aquino administration.

"Erap was the only one among my colleagues who dared and offered to accompany me as I rode the van with the arresting officers on the way to the NBI compound where I was booked and temporarily detained," he recalled.

But while Estrada was not a perfect man, Enrile believes that "some of his best traits" have been the very ones that worked against him.

"Joseph Ejercito Estrada is by no means a perfect man. He has his own flaws, just like all of us. To be honest, I believe some of his best traits may have been the very ones that eventually worked against him. For one, he was too trusting. It is good to trust, but perhaps he trusted the wrong people," he said.

Enrile added that Estrada



Senate President Ponce-Enrile

was carefree in his ways, but this otherwise desirable trait did not serve him well because he occupied no less than the highest position in the land.

"He was generous with his friends, but his generosity was exploited by those who were never really his friends in the first place. In many ways, he had a simplistic view of things and he did not grasp the complications and nuances of his conduct in relation to the sensitivity of his position as President of the land," the Senate president said.

According to Enrile, the former president was also "very transparent, many times to a fault."

"Against all well-meaning advice, he openly showed his anger and he answered questions from the media frankly and candidly. His show of indignation, whether righteous or out of his sensitive nature, earned him the ire of the powerful and influential media," he said.

A COLORFUL CHARACTER

"But that is Erap. What you see is what you get. He was unpretentious and spontaneous with his reactions. Being the colorful character that he is, he made good copy for the press, but he was, for the most part, harshly criticized and ridiculed," Enrile added.

As senator, Enrile recalled that Estrada proved to be a "true nationalist."

"He, along with eleven senators, myself included, voted for the abrogation of the US Bases

agreement despite the strong lobby for its extension led by no less than President Aquino. While others praised by many as "the Magnificent Twelve" and the former president were branded as the "dirty dozen" by those who maintain America's military presence in the Philippines," he said.

"In hindsight, if not for that bold and historic vote, we would not have seen the rise of Subic and Clark as living examples of what we can, on our own, achieve as a sovereign nation," Enrile said.

The Senate President also emphasized that Estrada "did not use the vast resources available to him as President" to thwart the impeachment against him in Congress.

"He readily submitted himself to the legal process. The humiliation that the former president and his family have suffered are unimaginable for any ordinary person to endure," he said.

'HE FORGIVES AND FORGETS'

"For a man who they portrayed as a scoundrel who lacked 'education,' he never ceased to

amaze me with his genuine gentleness and respectful ways, his willingness to forgive, and his kind-heartedness," Enrile said, adding that his friend could have used the outrage of thousands of his supporters in the May 1, 2001 Macatangay siege, but did not.

To paint Estrada as a forgiving person, Enrile recalled how the former president told him to help former chief of staff Angelo Reyes, who was then seeking confirmation as energy chief in the Commission on Appointments, where he was sitting as a member.

Reyes was among the first Estrada appointees who abandoned him during EDSA II.

Enrile also noted that the senators who were responsible for his impeachment as president are now his allies in the opposition.

"In fact, even those who impeached him and voted against him during the trial were welcomed by Erap as friends. Among them were Senator Manny Villar, Senator Nene Pimentel, Senator Serge Osmeña, and Senator Loren Legarda," he said. (www.philstar.com) ■

Online Polls Show Pacquiao Still No.1

by Dino MARAGAY /
Wednesday, September 23, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - FILIPINO BOXING ICON MANNY PACQUIAO remains the world's pound-for-pound king in an online survey of a popular sports website despite Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s impressive win in his comeback fight over the weekend.

Poll results posted by Yahoo! Sports had Pacquiao comfortably ahead of Mayweather as boxing's current pound-for-pound king. The survey was made just after Mayweather's domination of Mexican champion Juan Manuel Marquez last Saturday in Las Vegas.

In Yahoo! Sports' poll—which fielded the question "Who is boxing's pound-for-pound king?"—66 percent voted for Pacquiao, while only 31 percent went for Mayweather. Three percent, meanwhile, opted for other boxers.

Over 82,000 votes were cast at presentime.

Pacquiao inherited the mythical pound-for-pound title from Mayweather after the latter retired in 2008.

Mayweather, however, came back from a 21-month layoff to face Marquez in an attempt to reclaim the pound-for-pound throne from Pacquiao.

The Filipino sputow, on the other hand, has done his part in firming up his No. 1 status with impressive wins over David Diaz, |



De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton.

"Pacquiao solidified his claim on the top spot after stopping David Diaz, Oscar De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton in spectacular fashions. Mayweather couldn't simply return to boxing after 21 months and overthrow the true king — no matter what happened on Saturday night." The Ring, a partner of Yahoo! Sports, said in a brief commentary.

"Mayweather might very well be the best fighter in the world. The pound-for-pound title must be earned, though. And, hopefully, Mayweather will get his chance or chances to do that," it said.

Pacquiao, meanwhile, has started training in Baguio City for his megafight with Miguel Cotto on Nov. 14 in Las Vegas. A victory over the Puerto Rican will likely set up the General Santos City-based fighter against Mayweather early or midway next year. (www.philstar.com) ■

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Erap: On With My Candidacy

by Marichu VILLANUEVA /

Saturday, September 19, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA SAID YESTERDAY

no amount of "trumped-up charges" against him would make him back down from his bid to return to the presidency in the elections next year.

Estrada denounced yesterday as "orchestrated" and "manufactured" the latest attempt to pin him down as the brains behind the killing of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer, saying these were meant to derail his planned bid in the May 2010 presidential elections.

"I'm more determined now than ever. The mesa won't believe them," Estrada told The STAR, referring to the masses whose cause he had championed in his political campaign slogan "Erap para sa Mahirap (Erap for the Poor)."

Estrada said he is still proceeding with his scheduled meeting next week with Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, the presidential candidate of the Liberal Party (LP), to discuss how opposition groups could join forces to prevent cheating in next year's general elections.

"It will be a friendly fight. We'll just talk about how we can guard against election fraud and cheating," Estrada disclosed.

Aside from Aquino, Estrada is also set to sit down with the other non-administration presidential aspirants: Senators Manny Villar, Francis Escudero and Loren Legarda.

Estrada will be the standard bearer of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP), which he founded and is headed by Senate President Juan Ponce-Enrile.

The former president has often said he will run if opposition parties will not agree to support a common candidate to face the administration beat.

Estrada said he is "99.9 percent" sure he "would run even as he is now being implicated in the Dacer-Corito double murder case."

Estrada deplored in particular allegations made against him by former police senior superintendent Glenn Dumlaio aired in an interview on the ABS-CBN news program last Wednesday night.

In that interview, Dumlaio directly implicated Estrada in the murder of Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corito in November 2000. The two were abducted and later killed and their bodies burned by elements of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).

The PAOCTF at that time was headed by then Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Panfilo Lacson who, in a privilege speech at the Senate last Monday, also linked Estrada to the double murder case. "Desperate na liyang si Ping, kaya naghaharap na ng damay siya (Ping's desperate, that's why he's looking to implicate others)," Estrada rued, referring to Lacson.

According to Dumlaio, someone higher up than Lacson ordered the murders of Dacer and Corito.

"It's very clear (that) Malacañang (gave) the order," a tearful Dumlaio said during the TV interview. When pressed to identify who in Malacañang, Dumlaio replied: "Eh si Rap na yan (That will be Erap)."

Dumlaio recalled his conversations with his colleague, former senior police superintendent Cesar Mancao II, when they conducted



the operations against Dacer.

Dumlaio stressed he was "morally convinced" that Estrada directed the Dacer murder to silence the publicist who was made to believe was blackmailing the former president.

"Feel lang niya yun (That's just what he feels)," Estrada fumed.

Estrada was visibly irked by Dumlaio's accusations, citing how the former subordinate of Lacson could have carelessly jumped to conclusions without any basis at all.

"They (Dumlaio and Mancao) never received orders from me," Estrada pointed out.

"I see it as all orchestrated, manufactured to destroy my image," Estrada insisted.

Estrada believed that Dumlaio and Mancao were now carrying out their respective deals with the administration after they were brought back to the country from the US where they were arrested and jailed for immigration and other offenses.

"When they (administration) got Mancao, he was pointing to Ping, but after a while, biglang

nasama na ako (I was suddenly included)," Estrada said.

Since Dumlaio and Mancao are now state witnesses being used by government prosecutors in the double murder case where Lacson is one of the accused, Estrada surmised that administration hands are behind this campaign to vilify him at this stage when he has been in the top five in mock presidential polls by various survey-takers.

Estrada though stressed he is not discouraged by these sinister plots to demonize him again before the eyes of the Filipino people to stop him from running again in the presidential race.

In the end, the deposed president said, "the truth shall prevail and the lies will be exposed." Unlike his accusers, Estrada said he has never been tainted with such a heinous crime like killing people.

Already, Estrada cited, former ambassador the US Alberto del Rosario, an appointee of President Arroyo herself, issued a statement the other day that belied the allegations of Lacson in his privilege speech on the supposed coercion brought to bear upon ex-ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco to sell his family's interest in the Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co. (PLDT).

"I do not know him (Del Rosario). All I know about him is he is an appointee of Gloria," Estrada said.

Del Rosario, in a statement,

said that he did not participate in any "fictional" coercion to force the Yuchengcos to sell their PLDT shares to First Pacific owned by Manny Pangilinan.

Estrada filed the other day a libel suit against Yuchengco, who made the same claims against the deposed President in a biography of the former ambassador.

If he wins this libel case, Estrada said he would donate what he gets to the victims of Yuchengco's Pacific Plans, who up to now have gotten payments for their children's tuition from the moribund pre-need firm.

In the meantime, Estrada revealed he would be leaving for London on Sept. 26 to attend to the graduation of his daughter Jerica Ejercito by former star Laarni Enriquez. The 23-year-old Jerica finished economics in a London college.

Meanwhile, the Parents Enabling Parents (PEP) Coalition Inc., an organization of parents who bought open-ended education plans from Pacific Plans Inc., welcomed the plan of Estrada to donate funds to the planholders should he win the libel case he filed against Yuchengco and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

"If he wins the libel case and he's donating the money to us, why not? It would be a big help to thousands of our students," PEP president Philipp Piccio told The STAR. (www.philstar.com) ■

OFW Remittances Seen to Grow by Over 3% this Year

by Iris C. GONZALES /

Wednesday, September 23, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - DOLLAR REMITTANCES FROM OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS may grow by more than three percent this year following the hefty dollar inflows that poured into the country in July, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday.

The latest estimate is higher than the previous projection of a two to three percent growth for 2009 and the original forecast of zero percent growth. In 2008, remittances hit \$16.4 billion.

"As I said before, given the recent performance of remittance flows, the forecast of zero growth is looking very conservative. Based on the latest information, it is possible that the growth rate can exceed three percent," he told reporters.

Tetangco said the level and quality of remittances are expected to improve on the back of banks' efforts to capture more inflows.

Remittances from overseas Filipinos rose to \$1.5 billion in July from \$1.4 billion |

in the same month last year, posting the highest year-on-year growth for 2009 at 9.3 percent, latest data from the BSP showed.

The July figures brought remittances in the first seven months of the year to \$10 billion, up by 3.8 percent from the year-ago level, data from the central bank also showed.

However, despite the 9.3 percent year-on-year growth in July, the latest growth figures pale in comparison compared to the 24.6 percent increase recorded in July 2008 when remittances grew to \$1.4 billion from \$1.09 billion in July 2007.

Nevertheless, the BSP said remittances are expected to stay robust due to the efforts of banks and remittance centers.

Tetangco said the increase in the number of remittance centers abroad and the establishment of more tie-ups with foreign financial institutions have resulted in greater capture of remittances.

Major sources of remittances during the seven-month period were the United States, Canada, Saudi Arabia, U.K., Japan, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Italy, and Germany. (www.philstar.com) ■

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Erap Can Still Run in 2010 Presidential Elections - Puno

by Cecille SUERTE FELIPE /

Thursday, September 24, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA can still run for president in the May 2010 polls and his grant of pardon will not be an impediment to his political plans, according to Interior and Local Government Secretary Ronald Puno.

Puno was instrumental in facilitating the pardon of Estrada in 2007 after he was convicted by the Sandiganbayan. "Personally I don't believe that the grant of clemency is going to be an impediment to his running. Notwithstanding the 'whereas' clause which explains that he did not, at that time, intend to run for president," said Puno. "I don't believe that the whereases limits the dispositive portions of the executive clemency, since it specifically returned to him his full civil and political rights. So far as that particular grant of executive clemency is concerned, I don't believe there is anything in it that will inhibit Estrada from running again," Puno told reporters during the Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC) gathering in Makati City

the other day.

"The question really is whether people will believe that he is still the correct man to run the government, he will have to prove that again," added Puno.

Estrada said he is 99.9 percent sure of running for president in the May 2010 elections unless the opposition unites and fields a single candidate. Yesterday, Estrada insisted that he is eligible to run in the 2010 presidential derby.

At the debate on whether he could run or not, Estrada maintained that there are no provisions in the Constitution that would bar him from seeking the presidency next year.

"For me, the prohibitions in running again only apply to the incumbent president because of undue advantage. She could use the fertilizer fund, the road user's tax and other government funds," Estrada said in his usual slurred speech.

Estrada also argued that he could use the Supreme Court ruling in the case of his friend, the late movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., whose citizenship issue, the High Court ruled, should depend on the people's decision to vote for him or not.



DILG Sec. Ronaldo Puno

"Ang taong bayan ang dapat mag desisyon (The people should decide)," Estrada said.

But election lawyer Romeo Macalintal said the SC's ruling on Poe's case could not apply to the case of Estrada.

He said the Poe case was about citizenship while the case of the former president is regarding re-election.

He (Estrada) has taken an oath of office to abide by the provisions of the Constitution which included that he is not eligible for re-election," Macalintal said.

He added that President Arroyo, who was then Estrada's vice-president, was only continuing the unfinished term of Estrada when

he was ousted in 2001, exempting her from being covered by the four-year clause provided in the Constitution.

CLOSE BUDDIES

Puno and Estrada are close friends and it was the former who led Estrada's strategists when he ran and won in the May 1998 presidential elections.

"Knowing him, he will run, but whether or not he will be able to convince our people is another matter. The survey showed he has a long way to go," Puno said.

When Estrada ran in 1998, the main concern was the definition of issues, particularly his concern for the poor, he said.

Puno explained that the objective of the exercise in 1998 was to really position Estrada as the champion of the poor. "Now, I don't know how you will change that, no matter what you do, Erap will always be identified with the poor, so there's no great mystery in the strategy."

"I think that if he runs, he will still talk that same way, when he proposes a program, I'm sure it will also have the same substance that it did before," said Puno.

He believed Estrada's popularity would not be affected by the

latest exposé of Sen. Panfilo Lacson linking him to the Dacer-Corbito double murder and the Edgar Bantain abduction and murder cases.

"My personal belief is he (Estrada) will not be affected," said Puno, who explained that the issues raised by Lacson, particularly the sale of PLDT shares of stock, were issues among the rich. On the accusation of murder, "there was no case in court to pin down Estrada," he said.

"I DID NOT RESIGN FROM MY POST"

Estrada insisted that he did not resign from his post as President but was merely "on leave" when he left Macau in January 2001 during Edsa People Power II.

"I never resigned. I'm only on leave. I was never convicted in the impeachment trial," Estrada reiterated.

Pacifico Agabin, Estrada's legal counsel, argued that his client could still run for reelection since Estrada only served less than four years in office.

"The term 'President' refers only to the sitting president and not the former president," Agabin said. (www.philstar.com) ■

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MAINLAND NEWS

Filipino Architect is Finalist in Guggenheim Art Contest

QUEZON CITY ARCHITECT

GONZALO "JUN" RAY-MUNDO, JR. is one of the 10 finalists in the prestigious Guggenheim Art Shelter Competition, which is sponsored by the Guggenheim Museum and Google SketchUp.

The contest was open to both amateur and professional designers who were tasked with developing various 3D designs inspired from different shelters in any part of the world using Google SketchUp and Google Earth.

Entries were received from nearly 600 amateur and profes-

sional designers from 68 countries throughout the world. Ten finalists were selected for the People's Prize Award, which will be chosen through online public voting.

Raymundo holds a slim lead in the polls. His work entitled "A Bamboo Shelter in a Garbage Dump City," is a shelter built on a concrete base situated at a garbage dump in the Philippines. The bamboo wall represents a strong sense of camaraderie or "bayanihan" to signify that "where there is unity there is strength." His work also collectively symbolizes "sustainability and hope."

Willy C. Gaa, the Philippines' ambassador to the U.S., says Raymundo has "exceptional design skills."

"His work best reflects ingenuity and workmanship that the Filipino people can be proud of. I encourage members of the Filipino community to extend their support by casting their votes for his meritorious piece of art," Gaa says.

The voting period will run through October 10, 2009. To vote or to view contestants' artwork online, please visit: www.guggenheim.org. (DFA) ■

Fil-Canadian Actress Stars in The Time Traveler's Wife

JANE MCLEAN, A FILIPINO-CANADIAN ACTRESS, is one of the main characters in the new hit movie "The Time Traveler's Wife." She co-stars with Rachel McAdams and Eric Bana.

Based on a best-selling novel, the film is a romantic drama/love story about a Chicago librarian (Bana) who suffers from a rare genetic anomaly called Chrono-Displacement Disorder. The condition causes him to involuntarily travel through time, skipping back and forth through his lifespan with no

control, often leaving his wife (McAdams) alone and creating complications for their marriage. In the film, McLean plays Charisse, the best friend of the Time Traveler's Wife.

McLean was born in the Philippines and was barely a year old when she and her family moved to Toronto, Canada. In her pursuit to become a successful actress, she moved to Los Angeles to actively pursue a

show biz career.

"I'm a very proud Filipino," she says. "My parents raised us speaking Filipino, cooking Filipino and singing Filipino. I love hosting big Filipino feasts for my friends. My parents were born in Manila and still have a home in Quezon City."

McLean's next film is a comedy entitled "Running Mates," wherein she co-stars with Henry Winkler and DJ Qualls. ■



Jane McLean

LEGAL NOTES

Strategies for Coping With Visa Backlogs



by Reuben S.
SEGURITAN

The Visa Bulletin for October 2009, the start of the 2010 fiscal year shows substantial backlogs in both the family and employment preferences.

Visa numbers for the family sponsored preferences advanced only by about a month for most of the countries in all the categories.

The cut-off dates worldwide (except China, India, Mexico and Philippines) are as follows: 1st

(unmarried sons/daughter of U.S. citizens) – July 22, 2003; 2A (spouse and unmarried children below 21 of lawful permanent residents) – June 1, 2005; 2B (unmarried sons and daughters of lawful permanent residents 21 or older) – August 22, 2001; 3rd (married sons and daughters of citizens) – January 15, 2001; and 4th (brothers and sisters of adult citizens) – April 15, 1999.

The cut-off dates for the Philippines are: 1st- October 8, 1993; 2A- June 1, 2005; 2B- May 1, 1998; 3rd – October 15, 1991; and 4th December 1, 1986.

Visa number availability for the employment-based third preference category is worse than expected. The cut-off dates worldwide (except China, India, Mexico and the Philippines) are: 1st (priority workers) – current; 2nd (professionals with advanced

degree and persons of exceptional ability) – current; 3rd (skilled workers) – June 1, 2002; 3rd (other workers) – June 1, 2001; 4th (special immigrants) – current; certain religious workers – unavailable; 5th (employment creation) – current.

The cut-off dates for the Philippines are: 1st- 2nd – current; 3rd (skilled) – June 1, 2002; 3rd (other workers) – June 1, 2001; 4th – current; certain religious workers – unavailable; 5th – current.

When Charles Oppenheim of the U.S. Department of State Visa office made a grim prediction about four months ago on visa number availability, he estimated that the October 2009 EB3 world-wide cut-off date (including the Philippines) would be March 1, 2003. Based on his estimate, then it would take over a decade

to wait for visa numbers in that category.

Because of the long wait, beneficiaries should try other options. They may upgrade their category to EB-1 which shows current availability of visa numbers for all countries or EB-2 which is also current for all countries except China and India.

The first preference refers to aliens of extraordinary ability; outstanding professors and researchers; and certain managers and executives transferred to work for their foreign employers or a U.S. affiliate or subsidiary. This category does not require a labor certification.

The second preference beneficiaries must be either persons of exceptional ability in the science, arts or business or professionals with advanced degree. A bachelor's degree plus five (5)

years of progressive post degree work experience is equivalent to an advanced degree.

A labor certification is required to file for second preference unless a national interest waiver is obtained based on the following criteria: the alien's employment is in an area that has substantial inherent value; the benefit of the alien's employment is national in scope; and the national benefit outweighs national interest in requiring labor certification.

Beneficiaries may also benefit from the rule on cross-chargeability which allows them to get their visa numbers from the quota of their spouses' country of birth. ■

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

Rice Importation Without Bidding OK'd

by Jose Rodel CLAPANO /
Saturday, September 19, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) has approved the importation of rice from other countries without public bidding.

The DOJ released a four-page opinion yesterday granting the Department of Agriculture (DA) the authority to import 10,000 metric tons of rice from Vietnam to augment the country's supply during calamities.

The DOJ said the DA is allowed to execute the proposed memorandum of understanding with the Vietnamese government involving the purchase even without public bidding.

Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera said the move of Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap to purchase rice from Vietnam is not covered by the provisions of the Government Procurement Reform Act (RA 9184) that requires public bidding since it is considered an executive agreement.

Devanadera issued the legal opinion in response to the query of Yap on whether the proposed MOU can be considered as an international agreement and, as such, may not be subject to the rules and regulations provided for under RA 9184.

The Vietnamese government has committed to supply rice to the Philippines under the Tier 1 Project of the East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve (EAERR).

Devanadera said the law allows the President to forge inter-



national agreements that are temporary in nature even without the concurrence of the Senate.

Although public bidding is required for infrastructure projects, goods and consulting services regardless of source of fund under Section 4 of RA 9184, Devanadera said the law also states that "any international treaty or executive agreement" should be observed.

She said the agreement between the Philippines and Vietnam regarding the importation of rice is considered temporary in nature since it only covers the years 2008 to 2010.

Lawmakers led by Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano called for immediate review of the rice importation contract, which he claimed was overpriced by 45 percent.

Mariano also called on Yap to disclose the details of the contract that the DA entered into involving the purchase of 1.5 million tons of Vietnam rice last year.

Mariano cited that the Philippine government paid almost \$550 a metric ton for 1.5 million metric tons of rice it bought from Vietnam earlier this year.

The price was way above the initial price set by traders in both countries in the amount \$380 per ton, including cost and freight, he said. (www.philstar.com) ■

Government Prepares for New Peace Talks with MILF

by Jose Rodel CLAPANO /
Wednesday, September 23, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - THE GOVERNMENT PEACE PANEL IS NOW PREPARING for the re-opening of the formal peace negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, presidential adviser on the peace process Avelino Razón Jr. said yesterday.

Razon said as part of the confidence-building effort, the government is implementing an enhanced reintegration, rehabilitation and amnesty program to mainstream former rebels into the society.

"In the search for just and lasting peace in this nation, we aim to continue the peace talks and conclude the final peace agreements with various rebel groups. We also continue to implement complementary measures to minimize the level of violence arising from armed conflicts and fully implement the provisions of all existing peace accords," Razon said.

Razon said the fighting between government troops and the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) would not affect the resumption of peace talks between government and MILF.

Some 200 members of the Abu Sayyaf terrorists ambushed a convoy of Philippine Marines in Indanan, Sulu, triggering a firefight that left 19 terrorists and nine soldiers killed.

"For one, the MILF was not involved in the fighting and another is that there are no MILF rebels in Sulu," Razon said.

He said government's efforts for peace-building and conflict prevention are underway primarily in

the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

He cited that on Monday he attended the Eid'l Fitr celebration at the Green Mosque in the Islamic Center in Manila which coincided with the International Day of Peace being held every Sept. 21.

KIDS FOR PEACE

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) will be spearheading this week the "Kids for Peace" workshops at an evacuation centers in Maguindanao and at an elementary school in Davao City, as well as a peace caravan in Davao del Norte

simultaneous with a national "Trees for Peace" tree-planting program.

"We are working to transform conflict-affected communities into peace and development areas, and heal the social wounds brought about by long-drawn internal armed conflicts. In the pursuit of building peace down to the community level, our approach is to construct the structures of peace and de-construct the structures of violence," Razon said.

On the aspect of human security, Razon said the government aims more than just the end of violent conflict but the pursuit of human rights and good governance as well as better access to education and health care. (www.philstar.com) ■

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ILOKO

by Amado I. YORO

Iti nagan iti panagserbiti iti komunidad, kah, nasaksian ken naimatiraman itoy a pasken ti OFCC A naikairamanan dagiti tallo a reyna ti natilaangon itoy Setiembre 12, 2009 iti uneq ti Hawaii Prince Hotel Ballroom has kada Mrs. Illocos Surian of Hawaii Davelyn Quijano, Miss Oahu Filipina Rachelle Pacarro, ken Mrs. Jema Geromino.

Pito a pasado presidente ti OFCC dagiti naimaran iti talaangon ti nangsaksi ken napakipag-ay ti baso [toast] nga indaulan ni dati a representante Jun Abinsay (1994-

PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE

Adtoy A Sapataak Daytoy A Pang-takem.....Ngarud Tulongannak Koma Apo Dios (I do solemnly swear...to serve.....So help me God)

1996). Amado Yoro (1981-1982) Ben Cabreros (1997-1999) Eddie Agas, Sr (2001-2003) Jenny Quezon (2003-2004) Lynne Gutierrez (2005-2007), Cirvalina Longboy (2008-2009), iti nagan ti "agultuloy" a suporta ken pannaktitnulong a mangatrayan keng madapdus a kabaekal)

KAS installing officer, sangali pay ti daytoy a pasken ni Honorable Consul General Leoncio, Jr., i-Badoc, Ilocos Norte, Adda met ti singing Consul Paul Raymund Cortez, i-Baguio City, President Filipo Chamber of Commerce Rose Mendoza, Presidente ti Filipino Community Center Geminiano Toy Arre, Jr. Honolulu Council Member Romy Cachola, ken dadduma pay

ti nangsaksi ti panaginalnalawat ti ray at Longboy ken Villaruz (Sakbay a simrekamani iti ballroom, naipasabat ti saludosad a kasloy: Are you a president of any organization? Natikawakan. Awan ngamin ti uray mayasa a unit organization a madama a pagpaayannu a presidente. Iti biangko, agserbiala iti ania man a kapasidad a kabaekal)

PASET TI PROGRAMA

Inturong ni Amelia Casamina Cabatu. Imbokasion ni Maria Etrata National anthem (awan ti bandera) ti indauluan ni Rossi Patton Welcome Address ni Mario Palma Nagkanta de Angeli Callo ken Consul Cortez

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GLOBAL NEWS

New Singapore Stamps Features Philippine Bridges

THE SINGAPORE POSTAL OFFICE, in collaboration with the Philippine Postal Corporation, has launched four limited edition postal stamps in October featuring bridges in the Philippines.

The stamps were launched in commemoration of the 40th

Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Philippines and Singapore. A bridge theme was chosen because the bridges connects both countries symbolically and is a popular theme among stamp collectors.

The Singapore Philatelic Museum worked closely with the Philippine Postal Corporation in implementing the project, which took nearly a year to complete. One of the two bridges featured is the Bamban Bridge in Pampanga, which links Mabalacat to Tarlac. Destroyed by the Mt. Pinatubo eruption in 1991,

the Bamban Bridge was rebuilt in 1998 and is one of the longest bridges in the world.

The second bridge is the Marcelo Fernan Bridge in Cebu City which connects Cebu and Mactan Islands. Opened in 1991, the bridge is named after the late Chief Justice and Senator Marcelo Fernan.

Two other stamps featuring Singapore bridges complete the

commemorative issue. They depict the Henderson Waves Bridge and the Cavenagh Bridge.

The commemorative stamps can be ordered online at: <http://shop.vpost.com.sg>.

The Singapore Philatelic Museum is also preparing for a Philippine-themed stamp exhibit in October entitled "Bayanihan: Spirit of the Philippines." (DFA) ■

Cebu Governor Leads Trade Mission to Israel

CEBU GOVERNOR GWEN-DOLYN GARCIA led a trade mission to Israel in early September 2009 that promoted and enhanced trade cooperation between the Philippines and Israel.

Participants included members of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry. During her visit, Gov. Garcia met with officials of the Israeli Foreign Ministry and the Municipality of Rishon Lezion. Both sides discussed common interests and advancing RP-Israel trade relations.

As a result of the visit, both Israeli and Philippine officials signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that promotes trade and business opportunities for Cebu Province and Rishon Lezion.

Specific areas identified in the MOU for enhanced cooperation included economic contacts; tourism; technical information; trade fairs/exhibits; economic, educational, cultural and sports activities; healthcare and social facilities; and environmental protection.



Gov. Garcia also paid tribute to the Holocaust Memorial Park located in Rishon Lezion during a wreath-laying ceremony. She visited the site of the Philippines-Israel Friendship Monument, commonly known as the Open Doors Monument, which was dedicated in June 2009 by Philippine Tourism Secretary Joseph Duran.

Philippine Ambassador to Israel Petronilla P. Garcia later hosted the Cebu Governor, her entourage and trade mission delegates. He thanked the governor and the delegates for facilitating the visit and deemed it a success. (DFA) ■

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