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MORATO: 7 COMELEC EXECUTIVES INVOLVED IN POLL FRAUD

By Delon PORCALLA

MANILA, Philippines - Former Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) chairman Manuel Morato yesterday claimed a group of men that included officials of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) had approached him to ensure the victory of administration presidential candidate Gilberto Teodoro for P1 billion.

Morato made the statement before the House committee on suffrage and electoral reforms led by Makati City Rep. Teodoro "Teddyboy" Locsin and said he turned down the offer on behalf of Teodoro.

Claiming that he is "completely ignorant" of computers, Morato testified before the committee that he is "convinced" that technical irregularities were indeed committed in the automated May 10 elections.

Locsin initially wanted to hear the former PCSO chief in executive session on what could be hearsay testimony.

But Morato insisted he had first-hand information since he was personally approached by seven people who offered to ensure the poll victory of Teodoro.

Morato confirmed the earlier claims of lawyer Homobono Adaza that seven people, four of them Comelec regional directors, were involved in the cheating operation.

"I would like to clarify that it is not my intention to malign any candidate here. There is nothing scandalous in what I will be telling. It (cheating operation) was offered to Gibo (Teodoro) through me. I was supposed to be the conduit," he said.

Morato clarified though that he turned down the offer, telling the group that it was "out of character for Gibo" to avail of such services.

Morato said he initially allowed the group to explain to him how the cheating operation could work "profiting from the information I was getting from them"



Former Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office chairman Manuel Morato testifies on alleged fraud in the May 10 polls at the hearing of the House Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reform

(continued on page <None>)

OFWs, Beneficiaries to Enjoy Lower Remittance Fees Starting 3rd Quarter

By Lawrence AGCAOLLI

MANILA, Philippines - Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their beneficiaries are expected to enjoy lower remittance fees starting the third quarter of the year once the Philippine Payments and Settlements System (Philpass) Remit System becomes fully operational, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) announced yesterday.

The BSP said the settlement of OFW remittances through the Philpass Remit System would result in savings of between P100 and P500 per transaction as current system charges between P150 and P550 per transaction.

"This will reduce the cost of remitting money from the OFW remitter to the beneficiary. Under the existing system, beneficiaries pay from P150 to P550 as



back-end processing fee. With the migration to the new system, the fee will be reduced to P50 for each remittance transaction as the BSP will be charging banks a minimal amount for the settlement of transactions," the BSP explained.

(continued on page 4)

ZTE deal: First Gentleman Cleared; Abalos, Neri Face Raps

By Michael PUNONGBAYAN

MANILA, Philippines - Former elections chairman Benjamin Abalos and Social Security System president Romulo Neri will be charged with graft before the Sandiganbayan for their alleged part in the controversy-ridden contract between the government and Chinese firm ZTE Corp. for the national broadband network (NBN) project.

However, the Office of the Ombudsman absolved First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo of the same charges.

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Former COMELEC Chairman Benjamin Abalos

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EDITORIAL

No Sweeping Under the Rug

Not too long ago, the Commission on Elections faced a string of scandals, with one of them not even related to the conduct of elections. By most assessments, the Comelec has managed to redeem itself following the success of the country's venture into poll automation, although losing candidates and their relatives will disagree.

The Comelec should sustain its momentum in regaining public trust by confronting questions regarding its supply procurement. Those questions led to the scrapping of a deal that would have made the Comelec buy 1.8 million ballot secrecy folders at a cost of P690 million, or P380 each. The contract was initially awarded to a company that applied for a patent to its folder design 17 days before submitting its bid to the Comelec. One Time Carbon or OTC Paper Supply, which has reportedly won other supply contracts at the Comelec, offered to produce folders made of polypropylene or hard plastic and as long as the new ballots.

Comelec commissioners were about to approve the bid when an em-



ployee who used to be assigned at the chairman's office, Melchor Magdamo, and a volunteer of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, Arwin Serrano, questioned the deal. The commissioners decided that the folders were too extravagant and that the contract called for 135,520 more folders than what was needed. The deal was then scrapped.

Did someone try to pull a fast one on the Comelec? The other day, the commissioners summoned Magdamo and Serrano, who thought they would be commended for blowing the whistle on the deal. Instead the two were berated for casting doubt on the Comelec Bids and Awards Committee, and Serrano ended up in a shouting match with Commissioner Nicodem Ferrer.

This is a fight the Comelec cannot win in the court of public opinion. Magdamo found public sympathy in lamenting that he thought they had saved taxpayers nearly P700 million. The elections survived without the plastic folders, with the Comelec using ordinary, cheaper ones instead. If

Good as Dead

As members of the 14th Congress rushed legislative work in the final weeks before they adjourned for the campaign period, they made all the right noises about their commitment to freedom of access to information. Congressional leaders assured the nation, particularly media groups that have been pressing for it, that the proposed Freedom of Information Act would be passed into law.

The bicameral conference committee did its job and so did the Senate, ratifying the consolidated version of the bill. The one that dropped the ball was the House of Representatives. The House failure was not surprising, coming from the chamber that has long been perceived as a rubberstamp of Malacañang. Legislative allies of President Arroyo were expected to continue shielding her and her administration from attempts to extract sensitive information from government agencies — the kind of information that Malacañang wants protected with executive privilege.

As Congress resumed session in the final days before a new government comes in, the House became preoccupied with fishing for evidence of electronic poll fraud, with a parade of losing candidates, or relatives of losers, as resource persons. When the search for the source of the distraction started pointing in the direction of Malacañang, House leaders finally got down to the main business of Congress: national canvassing and the procla-

mation of a new president and vice president.

Media groups are still pushing for ratification of the proposed law within the next two weeks. But Speaker Prospero Nograles has pointed out that the two congressional chambers convened in joint session starting yesterday not for legislation but to serve as a canvassing body. Like all other bills that were not acted upon, House leaders said the proposed Freedom of Information Act would simply be referred by the current Congress to the next one. The proposal will then have to go through the regular legislative mill in the 15th Congress, and there is no certainty that it will ever reach this far.

This proposal has been tossed around in the halls of Congress for 14 years. What stymied the effort this time? The lack of a quorum, which on the final legislative session day in February was blamed on the fight over who should serve as representative of Cebu: Benhur Salimbangon, who was unseated at the last minute by the Supreme Court, or Celestino Martinez III. In keeping with the opaqueness that has characterized governance in the past years, the House is proving to be good to the last drop.

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Creative Designer

Junggoi Peralta

Philippine Correspondent

Guil Franco

Photographer

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HEADLINES (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1; ZTE Deal...)

"Quite interestingly, the only memory that stands out during this meeting (at Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong) was (Mr.) Arroyo's statement that (Jose) de Venecia (III) was told to back off from the project," read the resolution.

"There is no other independent statement or source of evidence that the meeting was purposely avoided of to allow (Mr.) Arroyo to influence the project.

"Thus, the panel continues to maintain the position that only surmises and conjectures have been presented to this panel for assessment. To be certain, this presumption cannot be given any weight."

The Ombudsman stood firm on Neri's six-month suspension. At Malacañang, deputy presidential spokesman Gary Olivar said proceedings in a court of law would be of a higher standard of due process than an inquiry in the Senate.

"We hope that everyone involved will remember to conduct themselves according to the rules," he said.

Ruy Rondain, Mr. Arroyo's lawyer, said several months ago Ombudsman Mercedes Gutierrez issued a resolution clearing his client of any culpability.

Lawyer Ernesto Francisco Jr., one of the complainants in the case, said the anti-graft agency's action was designed to ensure that

Mr. Arroyo and several others charged would be absolved while President Arroyo is in office.

"This also proves that we cannot trust the present Ombudsman to really go after those charged with corruption," Francisco said.

He will study the possibility of having the investigation reopened in the next administration to include Mrs. Arroyo among those to be investigated, Francisco said.

In a telephone interview, Abalos said the graft charges against him would not stand in court.

"It is really the court that is the final arbiter," he said.

"I think it is better this way, so that we can put an end to all of this. Ultimately, I know I will be cleared."

On the other hand, Neri said he has not yet received a copy of the Ombudsman's resolution.

"I'm asking my lawyers to read it first before I comment on it," he said.

Whistle-blower Joey de Venecia III said Neri's suspension is "better late than never."

"I hope also that the prosecutors would be active prosecutors to prove the truth," he said.

"I hope the senators would be able to craft legislation to prevent the ZTE-NBN anomalous transactions from happening again."

In finding probable cause to charge Abalos and Neri, prosecutors based their decision on the Senate hearings on the NBN-ZTE

controversy, De Venecia said. In denying their motions for reconsideration, the Office of the Ombudsman said Abalos and Neri should be charged with violation of Section 3(h) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

Abalos will also be charged with corruption of a public official before the Mandaluyong Metropolitan Trial Court.

Abalos is accused of offering a P200-million bribe to Neri, who was then National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) director-general, to approve the NBN-ZTE contract.

In his motion for reconsideration, Abalos said he is being indicted based on incredible, uncorroborated and baseless testimonies of a witness who presented false statements before the Senate.

"Surely, there is nothing unlawful, much less condemnable, in herein respondent assisting in the realization of a potential investment which would not only spur the economy but will also create jobs for his countrymen," he said.

"Hereafter, it was a matter of maintaining a friendship borne by a common love for golf that kept herein respondent in touch with ZTE and its officials."

However, the anti-graft agency said that Abalos's and Neri's motions for reconsideration failed to adduce sufficient evidence to warrant the reversal of the August 2009

Joint Resolution. "All factors and arguments considered, respondents Abalos and Neri have failed to convince the undersigned panel that its findings should be reversed," read the decision.

As to the administrative case against Neri who was suspended for six months as he is still in government as SSS president, the Office of the Ombudsman denied his motion for the decision to be reversed for lack of merit.

In a separate order, the panel said he "miserably failed to present new evidence or argument to support his claim" of innocence as the director general of NEDA at the time the NBN-ZTE deal was approved.

The investigating panel was comprised of Mindanao-based Assistant Ombudsman Rodolfo Elman, Director Cesar Asuncion, and Deputy Special Prosecutors Jesus Micael and Robert Kallos. (www.phlistar.com) ■

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LEGISLATIVE CONNECTION

Teacher in Space – 25th Anniversary



by Senator Will
ESPERO

The Teacher in Space Program was announced in 1984, with Christa McAuliffe selected in 1985. Art Kimura, who directs the Future Flight program, and Joe Ciotti of Windward Community College were Hawaii's two candidates. Here are excerpts from interviews with both. You can read the entire interviews on my website, www.esperowill.com.

What got you interested in space long ago?

AK: As a child, I loved the old Buck Rogers movies and have been a science fiction fan for many years including the more recent Star Trek and Star Wars...I have gray black and white photos of my black and white TV screen during the 1st moon landing of Apollo 11, while serving on active duty in the United States Air Force at Gunter Air Force Base, Alabama, and like many others throughout the world, I was awed by the idea that humans could step foot on another world.

AK: When I was in elementary school, I got caught up in the fever of the Sputnik era. [In high school] I was fortunate enough to be selected for a summer internship at the American Museum-Hayden Planetarium. I've essentially been in the planetarium field ever since.

Please describe the intellectual/social environment that led to the Teacher-in-Space concept.

AK: The selection of a teacher

to be the first private citizen in space would have emphasized the importance of classroom teachers to the fundamental goals of education and to our nation's future along with the inspiration it would bring to teachers and students around the world...I felt just the opportunity to apply was a privilege...I believe we knew that this was a flight of a representative of all of the millions of hard working teachers who daily try to take students on flights of imagination, to make them reach for a dream and a larger goal in life...[I] wrote... that the unique perspective of Earth from space, would be one that world leaders should experience and see...to know that there are no boundaries seen from space, that all parts of the planet are connected, that the fragility of the earth could be seen through the relatively small layer of air that kept Planet Earth alive.

JC: After the race for the moon was won and with the last manned mission to its surface in 1972, public and governmental interest in NASA began to wane. The space stations of the USSR (Mir) and USA (Sky Lab) didn't evoke the same excitement for exploration that the lunar missions did. By the time the first Space Shuttle was launched in 1981, the world was getting complacent with space travel. It was as if space flight had become common place. To rejuvenate interest in NASA, it was decided that the shuttle would carry common citizens into earth orbit. The first would be a teacher — to be followed by a journalist, musician and others. In fact, several U.S. congressmen had already used their clout to ride the shuttle before this program got off the ground. The idea was to show that space was accessible to everyone—the common man.

Please describe your experience of the



Art Kimura and Joe Ciotti

inaugural flight.

AK: Like everyone, we were excited and in awe of what we hoped would take place...We convened in Orlando/Kennedy Space Center with the other state TIS finalists anticipating the launch. After several delays, we were taken to the viewing area for the launch on Monday; with the countdown frozen several times and finally cancelled due to cross winds, we left thinking that they would not be launching the next day. Already late in reporting back to work, we decided along with many others, to return home. My family and I did not see the launch live; we were on a flight from Orlando to Chicago and while flying thinking that they had launched, there were in space, etc. Upon exiting the plane in Chicago, by coincidence, the pilot came out in the corridor and exclaimed that the Challenger had exploded; we rushed into the airport to look for a television and by then, they were playing and re-playing the accident/disaster time and time again. Our first thoughts were for the families of the crew members who were part of the launch. Like everyone else, we were stunned and saddened by the outcome of what promised to be a flight for education and for educators.

JC: Florida was usually closed for the launch that January of 1986. Delays pushed back the launch date to a point where I was forced to return to Hawaii. I immediately began visiting schools across the State to talk about the dreams and aspirations of the crew aboard Shuttle 51L who perished that January morning. It was a teachable moment. It was important for focus on two important things: how these astronauts lived... not how they died [and] exploration — and for that matter, all meaningful endeavors undertaken in life — involve risks.

What led to your developing the educational programs that you now direct?

AK: All that we have done since 1986 is an outgrowth of the Challenger mission which we regarded as an educational mission...the (DoE) allowed me to do programs statewide for two years. (DBEDT) created an Office of Space Industry, charged with looking into space related activities that

included a launch capability from the Big Island as well as a space camp...starting in 1987...taking 500 students and teachers there. I...help[ed] initiate a space camp...that we started in 1991 using the lava fields of the big island as a simulated lunar terrain. We are celebrating the 20th anniversary of Future Flight Hawaii in June 2010.

JC: After being selected as one of Hawaii's Teacher-in-Space candidates, I wanted to give back to the community. In the Fall of 1985, I established the blueprints for...the Center for Aerospace Education (CAE)...The plan was ambitious in calling for various outreach facilities, such as a planetarium, observatory, exploratorium and flight training simulator.

Please tell about your programs.

AK: We have been privileged to have been a part of this amazing journey in which our goal has been to inspire the next generation of explorers. Working with NASA over the past 26 years has brought space related activities to thousands of children and teachers in Hawaii. [Over 8500 have participated in] our Hawaii version of a space camp called Future Flight...experiencing themes of returning to the moon, a mission to Mars, Earth...[I've also coordinated]...statewide DoE space conferences...classroom and school presentations...[and] workshops and courses for hundreds of teachers, [in]labeled the Astronaut Ellison Onizuka Science Day and Astronaut Lacy Veach Day...[and helped] initiate scholastic robotics in Hawaii some 11 years ago...helping expand these programs to now over 400 teams in more than 100 schools statewide, and created international partnerships and exchanges with a STEM focus. [The opportunities to meet and support teachers, students and parents has been a joy to have been a part of (<http://www.spacegrant.hawaii.edu/Newsletter-Fall2008-forWeb.pdf>).

JC: Each year approximately, over 12,000 visitors take advantage of our aerospace outreach facilities. [These are] the Hokulani Imaginationarium...the first full dome planetarium on Oahu with the installation of a state-of-the-art projector system this September 2010; Aero-

space Exploration Laboratory...the flagship of the CAE...a...hands-on science exploratorium assisting K-12 students and teachers in discovering scientific principles through low-tech experiential activities; NASA Flight Training Aerospace Education Laboratory...[a] flight-simulator training facility [with] a zero-g Drop Tower, wind tunnel and flight simulator; Lanihuli Observatory [with] a NOAA weather satellite tracking station, a heliostat (solar telescope), a 16-inch optical telescope, a cosmic ray telescope and a radio astronomy telescope...[and]...a Magic Planet interactive display; [and] the Hawaii Space Grant Consortium [that gives]WCC students the opportunities to conduct aerospace science-related projects, such as zero-g research through our participation in the NASA Reduced Gravity Student Flight Opportunities Program on-board its KC-135A aircraft. Currently, WCC Space Grant students are engaged in high-powered rocketry and preparing for competition at both national and international rocketry events...Over the years, the CAE has sponsored numerous teacher training workshops—providing support for hundreds of teachers in public and private schools...The CAE's slogan is: "The sky is not the limit. Let your imagination take flight."

Anything else you'd like to say regarding STEM or astronomy.

AK: Investing in STEM education is critical to our state and nation's economic future well being, national security, and maintaining our way of life. We are trying to educate students today, not even knowing the kinds of jobs that will be created in the future; as technology evolves, we need students who have those critical life skills of problem solving, effective team work, responsible decision making and time management with innovation and adaptability to changing technologies and global opportunities. We need our students to be measured against global and national criteria, and to set the bar very high for them. Most importantly, we need to invest in gaining the public's understanding and support for STEM; why is it that hundreds wrote letters in protest against traffic cameras...and yet when news about the deplorable performance of our students in science, there are not protests and call for action? As much as we honor athletes and entertainers, we need to honor those who excel academically and the "coaches" and "managers" who make the opportunities available to students to excel in programs that will one day lead to one of them finding the cure for cancer, or a new polluting sustainable energy source, or new industries for Hawaii. We need to have advanced STEM academies throughout our state. ■

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OPINION

Obama: Kiss of Death in Hawaii



by Atty. Emmanuel Samonte TIPON

HONOLULU. - It appears that an endorsement by President Obama is a "kiss of death" for a candidate in the United States, like an endorsement by President Arroyo is a "kiss of death" in the Philippines. This was true in Massachusetts, in Pennsylvania, and now, the unkindest cut of all, in Hawaii, Obama's home state.

The people of Hawaii rejected the Democratic candidates—Colleen Hanabusa and Ed Case—whom Obama endorsed in a robo phone call. They voted for Charles Djou, a Republican, the underdog, who said he would be the exact opposite of Obama, a fellow Punahou School graduate and Ivy Leaguer (University of Pennsylvania).

"NO" TO PROFLIGATE SPENDING

The vote is an expression of frustration with Obama and the Democrats and their profligate spending. Djou said: "I will never forget that every single dollar the government spends comes from a family like yours."

Djou, a lawyer and current member of the Honolulu City Council, said that he would not have voted for the health care reform bill but supports individual choice health care reform and inter-state sale of health insurance policies. His father being an immigrant, he favors legal immigration but opposes amnesty for illegal

aliens. He is a member of the Army Reserve and supports a strong defense and a key role for Hawaii in American strategic military operations. He is for "don't ask, don't tell" and against gay marriage. He is for lower taxes and against earmarks. His educational reform plan is to put children first, not teachers union first. This much we gathered when we interviewed Djou on our radio program in Hawaii before the elections.

This election was to fill the first congressional district seat in Hawaii vacated by Neil Abercrombie, a Democrat, who resigned to run for governor. Djou may be called the "Scott Brown of the Pacific." (Republican Sen. Scott Brown won the seat of the late Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy in Massachusetts)

Djou is of Chinese ancestry whose original name was Zhou but was misspelled Djou by an immigration officer, apparently of French ancestry, when his parents fled to Hong Kong during the communist revolution. His father took this name when he immigrated to the United States.

The complete results in the March 23 voting: Charles Djou (R) 67,610 (39.4%), Colleen Hanabusa (D) 52,802 (30.8%), Ed Case (D) 47,391 (27.6%).

FILIPINO VOTE

How did Hawaii Filipinos vote? Divided, as usual. A pre-election survey conducted by this writer showed Filipinos almost evenly divided among the three. After the elections, every Filipino we met said he/she was for Djou - like the Wednesday morning Nationalists. When Marcos, a Nacionalista, defeated Macapagal, a Liberal, everyone said, the day after the elections (which was a Tuesday), that he/she voted for Marcos.

OBAMA CRITICIZED

Scores of people were openly critical of Obama and his robo calls. Typical comments posted on the Honolulu Star Bulletin website: "Shut up with your attack dog calls. I am fed up. The more you call the more I am resolved to vote for Djou. He is an honorable man, he is worth our votes. Just say no to the attack dog BO." "Suckers better not call me." "Djou listens to the people, so Obama and the Democrats are panicking." "No more bailouts, no more corporate welfare, no more insurance companies to make bank on health reform."

As for Ed Case, whose forefathers came on the Mayflower, who placed a poor third, perhaps he should have listened to this writer's suggestion, during a meeting at the Philippine consulate early this year, to skip this special election and run in the second district which he had previously represented. This writer

told him that it would be harder to beat Hanabusa than Mazie Hirono, the incumbent congresswoman of the second district. It's not too late for Ed to run in the second district in November -- this time as a Republican.

FRESH POLITICAL WIND BLOWS IN

The election ushered the end of political godfatherism and plantation-style politics. Voters didn't listen to Hawaii's political "godfather," Democratic Sen. Daniel Inouye, and Sen. Daniel Akaka, who openly campaigned for Colleen Hanabusa, a Japanese, who is the state legislature's Senate President. Inouye reportedly transferred over \$100,000 of his campaign funds to the Democratic National Committee which is believed to have been used against Djou. Voters ignored the appeal to vote for a solid Democratic

congregation delegation by three former governors, also known as "the three amigos," or "the three contrarios," depending on whose side you are. Voters defied union bosses and workplace foremen who endorsed Hanabusa.

Ah Hawaii! A fresh political wind has blown into the islands. ■

(ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. He is based in Hawaii, specializing in immigration law and criminal defense. Tel. (808) 225-2645. E-Mail: filamlaw@yahoo.com. Website: www.ImmigrationServicesUSA.com. He is from Losag City and Magalang, Pinar del Rio. He served as an Immigration Officer. Hear his radio program at www.ihilo.com. Click on Mr. Parbangon. This article is a general overview of the subject matter discussed and is not intended as legal advice. No warranty is made by the writer or publisher as to its completeness or correctness at the time of publication.)

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Ilocos Surians Induct 2010-2012 Officers

MEMBERS OF THE ILOCOS SURIAN ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII (ISAH) held their installation banquet last May 21, 2010 at the Hale Koa Hotel for its 2010-2012 officers, directors and advisors.

The officers include: Danny Villaruz; Maria Etrata, 1st vice president; Estrella Pada-Taong, 2nd vice president; Loida Alimboyoguen Yamamoto, recording secretary; Davelyn Ancheta Quijano, corresponding secretary; Rose Sabangan, treasurer; Lina Mercado, assistant treasurer; Lynne Gutierrez, auditor; and Alice Castaneda, assistant auditor. The public relations officers (PROs) are Bernadette Fajardo and Antonio Ipalan.

ISAH's advisors are Felipe "Jun" Abinsay, Ben Cabreros, Remy Cachola, Pio Enrico, Louie

Funtanilla, Ted Saribay, Dr. Charlie Sonido, Carlito Soria, Dr. Ignacio Torres and Amado Yoro.

ISAH was founded in February 1977 by a handful of the sons and daughters of Ilocos Sur, led by Paclia Saludes, Amado Yoro and the late Mario Albalos. The group's very first president, attorney Peter Aduja, laid the foundation for ISAH's direction and vision during his five-year term. He was succeeded by a long line of equally passionate and visionary leaders who have continued the group's missions which is to rebuild communities locally and in their homeland.

Today, ISAH serves as the umbrella organization for all 11 Ilocos Sur unit organizations on Oahu. In total, ISAH has approximately 1,600 members. Its president, Danny Villaruz, has headed ISAH since 2002 and was recently

elected to his fourth consecutive term as president. Over the years, ISAH members have stayed true to their mission and have undertaken many projects and given selflessly of themselves, their time and their money on numerous humanitarian, educational and cultural projects—thanks to his leadership and vision.

ISAH's flagship project is the bi-annual Homecoming Missions, undertaken in 2005, 2007 and 2009. Dozens of volunteers have participated in the three homecoming missions, which covered dozens of towns and cities in Ilocos Sur during a two-week period. The three missions have provided free medical consultation, minor surgery and dental services for an estimated 40,000 patients, as well as an Educational Olympiad for math, science and general knowledge for both elementary and high school



Several members of the Ilocos Surian Association of Hawaii (ISAH) pose for a group photo at their recent Installation of Officers Banquet (Photo by Nicole Alimboyoguen)

students; sports and other cultural events; and a singing contest Ilocos Sur Idol.

ISAH also provides scholarships to students in Hawaii and Ilocos Sur and donates medical and

hospital equipment to public clinics in Ilocos Sur. Members have actively participated in the GILAS Program, which aims to connect all public high schools in the Philippines to the world wide web. ■

'Mabuhay With Aloha' to Screen in Makati City

THE FILIPINAS HERITAGE LIBRARY (FHL), in cooperation with Hawaii-based production company Emme Inc., will present "Mabuhay with Aloha: The Hawaii-Filipino Experience," a documentary on the 100-year history of Filipinos in Hawaii.

The film screening will be held on June 4, 2010 in Makati City and is open to the public.

Produced by Emme Tomimang, an award-winning television personality in Hawaii, "Mabuhay with Aloha: the Hawaii-Filipino Experience," is a 90-minute documentary featuring never-before-seen archival photographs and over 50 interviews, recounting the struggles, perseverance and eventual successes of Filipinos in Hawaii.

"Mabuhay with Aloha" is dedicated to the sakada, Hawaii's Filipino plantation workers, one of whom was my father," says Tomimang, who traces her roots to Siqijour. "I am excited to bring the documentary to the Philippines and honored to bridge ties between Hawaii and Philippines."

In 1906, the first wave of overseas Filipino workers to arrive in Hawaii was composed of sugarcane field workers called sakada. A hundred years later, as many as 275,000 residents in Hawaii are of Filipino ancestry—approximately 23 percent of the state's population.

Commissioned by the Hawaii Filipino Centennial Commission, "Mabuhay with Aloha" was writ-



ten and co-produced by Hawaii resident and Manila native Pepi Nleva. The documentary premiered in the Philippines in November 2009 at the University of San Carlos in Cebu.

A special commemorative edition of "Mabuhay with Aloha" is available in a two-disc DVD package, which includes additional features, behind-the-scenes footage and a bonus cut of the Honolulu television special

Emme's "Mabuhay Moments."

A division of the Ayala Foundation Inc., the Filipinas Heritage Library is a one-stop electronic research center on the Philippines. The Library houses over 10,000 contemporary volumes on Philippine history, art, language, religion and the social sciences, and over 2,000 rare titles, rare books on microfiche and an extensive library of slides and photographs. ■

Bicol Club of Hawaii Installs New Officers

MEMBERS OF THE BICOL CLUB OF HAWAII held their gala Installation of Officers and Awards Night at the Pagoda Hotel & Restaurant on May 22, 2010. Over 150 watched the installation of the following officers:

- President: J.P. Orias
- President-elect: Nino Oliveros
- Treasurer: Dion Cortel
- Secretary: Bebot Cruzata
- Asst. Treasurer: Abe Lagrimas, Sr.
- Asst. Secretary: Carmen Bearis
- PRO: Charo Feliciano
- Auditor: Henry Imperial
- Business Manager: Jerry Pesebre
- Sergeant-at-Arms: Ben Bearis

The club's advisors are Rick Lopez, Virgel Nagrampa, Frank Cruzata and Noni Panen. The directors include Mila Banares, Pas Celebrado, Emilee Chang, Minnie Corpuz, Beth Lazo, Rose Mills and Gerry Nuestro. The legal adviser is Ed Zabanal, Esq. and the spiritual advisers are Fr. Mark Del Rosario and Fr. Marino Angostura.

Among the awards given that

night were the Parents of the Year Award—given to Abe & Lisa Lagrimas—and the Sarung Banggi Award, which is given to an individual or organization who in time of crisis, sparks the flame of hope and friendship among all Bicolanos.

For 2010, the Sarung Banggi award was given to Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls for generously caring for the victims of the recent typhoon in the region and for the many Bicolano immigrants to Hawaii that the organization has helped throughout the years.

The original founder of the Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls was Dr. Charlie Y. Sonido. Its current president is Dr. Nicanor Joaquin.

The Bicol Club of Hawaii, a social, cultural and charitable organization, is dedicated to encouraging dynamic and compassionate relationships among its members, promoting fellowship and empowerment of the people in the community, fostering respect for cultural diversity and creating a nurturing, stable and inspiring family environment which encourages the youth of Bicolano ancestry to become effective, contributing adults. ■

Hawaii Medical Center Observes National Nurses Week

by Morichris DIGA

AT THIS MOMENT, THERE IS A NURSE SOMEWHERE who is comforting someone in their time of need...a nurse listening to a grieving family...or a nurse helping save a stranger's life.

In observance of National Nurses Week, Hawaii Medical Center held a weeklong celebration at its East and West campuses from May 7-12, 2010. Nurses enjoyed refreshments, games, karaoke contests and an appreciation picnic.

National Nurses Week is typically observed each year on May 6, which is RN Recognition Day, and ends on May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, founder of nursing as a modern profession. It started in 1974 as a way to honor the many nurses who provide care to millions of patients each day of the year.



"National Nurses Week is a very special time for the hospital," says Rebecca Klungreseter, R.N., and Chief Nursing Officer of Hawaii Medical Center West. "Often times we fail to acknowledge the work that we as nurses do, so with Nurses Week, it allows us to stop

and take the time to show our appreciation for one another."

Hawaii Medical Center employs 336 nurses. In Hawaii, there are about 21,178 nurses according to the State of Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. ■



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RAIL TRANSIT UPDATE
City to Conduct Soil Tests
on Farrington Highway

THE CITY HAS BEGUN CONDUCTING SOIL SAMPLE TESTS along on a portion of Farrington Highway between East Kapolei to Waipahu.

The soil sampling is part of preliminary design work for the first portion of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project, which runs approximately 6.5 miles. Kiewit Pacific will conduct the preliminary testing work. The company was also selected by the City to design and construct the first segment of the rail transit route.

Work in residential areas will be done at night primarily along the Farrington Highway median between Waipahu High School and Fort Weaver Road. Night work along Farrington Highway will run from May 27 through September 2010.

"We continue to move forward with the Honolulu Rail Transit Project," says Department of Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka. "Testing the soil stability

along the route will help us refine the design and location of concrete pillars that will support the elevated guideway."

Work will require some evening lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays from 7 pm - 6 am westbound and 6 pm - 5 am eastbound. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the night work.

Work crews or special duty police officers may be present to direct traffic at affected intersections during the night work. Closures of side streets are not anticipated and local access to driveways will be maintained.

City officials are advising motorists who use Farrington Highway at night to anticipate possible traffic delays or take alternative routes during work hours. For updates on work days and times, check the project website at www.honolulutransit.org or contact the City's hotline at 566-2299. ■

PICTORIAL NEWS

**PAL'S "SOARING TO 70"
ANNIVERSARY COCKTAIL PARTY**



Philippine Air Lines (PAL) kicked off its 70th Anniversary in high gear with a cocktail party and reception at the Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa last April 2010. Attendees included (from left) Joanne Sarmiento, PAL's Regional Director for the U.S.; Richard Miller, head of PAL's Commercial Department; Philippine Consul General Paul Cortes and his wife Yasmin; and Monet Trespases, PAL's new District Sales Manager for Hawaii. During the evening, PAL gave away two free business class tickets to the Philippines. The winning raffle numbers belonged to Erlinda Bustamante of Noble Travel on Maui and Brenna Gushikuma of Royal Adventure Travel. (Tin Lena Photography)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

**Chinese Top Diplomat to RP
Meets with Aquino**

by Paolo ROMERO /
Thursday, May 27, 2010

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) — **CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO THE PHILIPPINES LIU JIANCHAO** held a meeting with Philippine President-apparent Benigno Aquino III today, discussing promotion of bilateral relations under a new government.

During the meeting at Aquino's residence in Quezon City, Aquino and Liu discussed a wide range of issues.

Liu, the second foreign dignitary to pay a courtesy call to Aquino after US Ambassador Harry Thomas, said he told Aquino that Beijing is "very much looking forward to working with the new administration" and that the Chinese government expects a "very comprehensive and fruitful cooperation" between the two countries.

With the new government to take over on June 30, Liu said he hopes that China-Philippine



Amb. Liu Jianchao

relations will enter "a new stage."

"We are very much ready to offer a helping hand to the construction in the Philippines. We know that is what this country badly needed," he said.

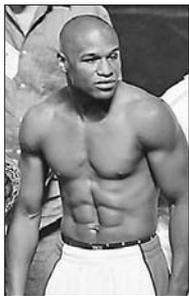
Aquino described his meeting with Liu as "very amiable, efficient and very progressive."

"We had a very good brief- ing about China's perspective of current international issues. Second, we hope there will be increased bilateral trade among other things, between our two countries, greater cooperation, and then in the common fight against drug trafficking," Aquino said.

Aquino won more than 13 million votes during the May 10 presidential election, almost 5 million more votes than his major rival Joseph Estrada. The final results will be proclaimed by the Congress next month. (www.philstar.com) ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Mayweather Eyes Bigger Purse than Pacman



by Abac **CORDERO** /
Wednesday, May 26, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. IS USING THE PAY-PER-VIEW SALES of his recent fight against Shane Mosley as leverage as he seeks a bigger share of the purse against Manny Pacquiao.

Team Pacquiao said yesterday that there were reports the undefeated American has demanded a bigger share of the purse for the showdown being planned for Nov. 13.

"We just got word that it seems to be that way," said Pacquiao's lawyer, Franklin Gacal, yesterday, just hours after Pacquiao was discharged from the hospital after a second bout with acid reflux.

"But we will never agree to that," said Gacal, who added that Mayweather now believes he deserves a bigger share than Pacquiao based on the pay-per-view sales of their most recent fights.

Mayweather and Mosley sold 1.4 million PPV hits last May 1 while Pacquiao did around 700,000 in his fight with Joshua Clottey last March.

However, Gacal said the fight with Clottey should not be used as a gauge of Pacquiao's drawing power, but the one he had against Miguel Cotto late last year, a 12-round contest that sold 1.25 million

hits in PPV.

"It's the Cotto fight they should look at and not the Clottey fight. And it's pretty even, so we're sticking to the fifty-fifty percent split between Manny and Floyd if they ever fight," said Gacal.

The lawyer did not confirm if it was Bob Arum, in the US quietly trying to make the superfight happen, who told them that Mayweather is now demanding for a bigger purse.

But Pacquiao's business manager, Eric Pineda, said word indeed reached the Pacquiao camp yesterday that Mayweather now wants a bigger share of the purse. In case of a 50-50 sharing, the two fighters can earn around \$40 million each.

"Yes, we were told that Floyd now wants a bigger share. And if that's the case, we now feel that he really doesn't want to fight Manny because Floyd knows we will never agree on that," said Pineda.

Apparently, Pacquiao was not happy with the news because it could mean that the fight will never

take place.

Pacquiao said a few days ago he was giving in to Mayweather's demand to have blood tests taken 14 days before the fight, or even closer than that as long as it's not on the day of the fight itself.

But Pacquiao's willingness to do more blood tests were met by reports that Mayweather, as of February, had renewed his demand. From 14 days, he said he wants it done "all the way to the fight."

Meanwhile, even while he was confined at the Cardinal Santos Hospital due to acid reflux, Pacquiao, who was elected Congressman of Sarangani during the May 10 elections, always had his constituents in mind.

"The last thing I wanted was for me to fall sick because I have things to do for my constituents," said Pacquiao, who was discharged from the hospital yesterday morning after a thorough check-up yielded negative results.

He assured everyone he's up and about, and as of yesterday he



was at the GMA-7 headquarters taping episodes for his sitcoms.

"Everything is okay. To my constituents in Sarangani don't worry, we will do everything to serve you well," he said.

He also said he had sent medical facilities to Sarangani because medical assistance is badly needed in the area. (www.philstar.com) ■



RP Expects Surge in Tourist Arrivals

by Mayen **JAYMAUN** /
Thursday, May 27, 2010

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - THE PHILIPPINES MIGHT SEE AN INCREASE IN TOURIST ARRIVALS this year as the political turmoil in neighboring Thailand is driving travelers away, an official of Philippines' Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) said today.

"There has really been a decline in

tourist arrivals to Bangkok. In fact, hotels there have closed down temporarily due to occupancy rates as low as 15 percent. The possible effect of that is the spillover of tourists which will benefit the Philippines and some other regional destinations," CAB Executive Director Carmelo Arcilla said.

Bangkok has recently become the battleground between the Thai government and anti-government demonstrators

leaving more than 80 people dead and hundreds injured.

"Thailand usually has an ability to bounce back from situations like this," Arcilla said, noting that Bangkok has the necessary infrastructures in place to attract the tourists back once the tension died down.

The Philippines last year fell short of achieving its target of attracting 5 million tourists, who opted to go to countries like Singapore which Arcilla said is "very aggressive in becoming a tourism hub in the region." (www.philstar.com) ■

Tuition Hike Assailed

by Mayen **JAYMAUN** /
Wednesday, May 26, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - FILIPINO WORKERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST yesterday protested the tuition fee increase in various schools nationwide.

Members of Migrant Middle East said further increases in school fees would force lowly paid Filipino workers abroad to stop sending their children to school.

John Leonard Monterona of Migrant Middle East said many OFWs abroad are encouraging their children to join the anti-tuition fee increase campaign led by the National Union of Students in the Philippines.

Monterona said domestic helpers and construction workers only receive monthly salaries ranging from P11, 000 to P19,800 based on the current dollar-peso exchange rate of \$1 to P44.

"Our meager monthly income is not even enough to compensate for the P780 daily cost of living in Metro Manila so what will happen if colleges and universities will implement a 7 percent to 15 percent or even higher tuition fee increase at the opening of classes in June?" Monterona said.

He said the next administration faces the challenge of creating more jobs in the country because the labor market abroad is shrinking. (www.philstar.com) ■

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Biggest Original Filipino Musical to Pay Tribute to Nannies

by Paolo ROMERO /
Thursday, May 27, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR CHITO ROÑO** is putting the final touches on what is dubbed as the biggest original Filipino musical to pay tribute to Filipino nannies abroad.

Director Lupita Kashiwahara, President Arroyo's image consultant, said the landmark film "Emir" will premiere on June 7. The film is Mrs. Arroyo's latest tribute to overseas Filipino workers, she added.

Kashiwahara said the idea for a movie about OFWs came out after a lunch in the Persian Gulf Kingdom of Bahrain hosted by Prime Minister Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa in February last year.

At the table was the King's 16-year-old grandson, Sheik Khalifa

Bin Ali Al Khalifa, who amazed his Filipino guests by speaking Tagalog.

"To say the President and the Philippine delegation were impressed would be an understatement," she said.

Kashiwahara said the King's grandson told visitors he learned Tagalog and Ilocano from his nanny.

"That night, President Arroyo remarked, 'Why don't we make a movie about the influence of yayas?'" she said.

It can be "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," so Emir was born.

"With that germ of an idea, award winning director Chito S. Roño decided to turn it into a musical on a scale never before seen in Philippine movie history."

Kashiwahara said Roño gathered talents from the film, TV, theater and music industries.

"It is a landmark movie that

raises the bar for Philippine filmmaking. It would not have been possible without the support of President Arroyo," she said.

Emir is a production of the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP), in association with the Cultural Center of the Philip-

pines (CCP), and supported by the Office of the President-President's Social Fund.

Mrs. Arroyo is donating the proceeds of the movie to a new film fund of the FDCP that should fuel the production of even more quality films.

The new film fund will have more liberal terms in the grant of financial assistance to movie producers and hopefully, will encourage the production of better films and assure sustainable growth for the film industry for years to come, Kashiwahara said. (www.philstar.com) ■

Temperature Hits 38°C in Metro Manila

by Paolo ROMERO /
Thursday, May 27, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **METRO MANILA SIZZLED** yesterday as the temperature rose to a sweltering 38 degrees Celsius, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

Pagasa weather forecaster Joel Jesusa said yesterday's temperature was the hottest recorded so far this year, surpassing the 37.5

degrees Celsius recorded last May 19.

Jesusa said the temperature was recorded at the weather bureau's Science Garden in Quezon City at 2:10 p.m.

He said Filipinos would continue to feel the sweltering heat in the next few days since rains are not expected until next month.

"Rains will likely come in June. We no longer expect a temperature higher than 38.0 degrees Celsius for Metro Manila," Jesusa said.

However, he said convective clouds have brought light rains over some parts of the metropolis in the past few days, giving residents a break from the summer heat.

The weather bureau recorded the warmest temperature in Metro Manila at 38.5 degrees Celsius in Quezon City on May 14, 1987.

Pagasa said the highest temperature recorded in the Philippines was at 42.2 degrees Celsius in Tuguegarao City on May 11, 1969. (www.philstar.com) ■

Noynoy's Inauguration to Highlight His Role as 'People's President'

by Aurea CALICA /
Wednesday, May 26, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **PRESIDENT-APPARENT SEN. BENIGNO "NOYNOY" AQUINO III** said his inauguration would highlight his being the people's president.

Aquino said he did not want to sound too eager or presumptuous by talking about his inauguration even before his proclamation by Congress. But when asked about it,

he admitted preparations were underway.

There is no definite place yet but Aquino said, "We're going through different scenarios."

"There are those who helped my mother (the late President Corazon Aquino) with the protocol before. There is a historian in our group who will tell us all the traditions that we have to observe (during the rites). I want to highlight the people's campaign and in the end, it should be a people's celebration before we begin the hard work,"

Aquino said.

"The inauguration is just a culmination of the entire campaign and the campaign was made possible primarily by the volunteers of the people's campaign," he said.

"So there has to be a lot of recognition of their efforts. This marks a difference in the campaign and therefore a difference in governance brought about because of the solid mandate of the people. Therefore they have to be given prominence," Aquino said.

He said he would like to give

his volunteers and supporters recognition and celebration because all the problems of the Arroyo administration were "passed on to us."

He maintained there would be no new taxes or increase in taxes at the start of his administration, as proposed by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves.

"I understand Secretary Teves because he has to work under the present setup," Aquino said.

"We don't envision continuing the setup that has so much leakages within our tax efforts. He might need it because of the leakages. We intend to plug the leakages, hopefully we will not have to raise any taxes," he said.

DIPLOMATIC VISITS

The Chinese and Japanese ambassadors are set to visit Aquino separately tomorrow in his Times street home in Quezon City for closed door meetings.

Aquino is expected to meet Chinese Ambassador Liu Jianchao in the morning and Japanese Ambassador Makoto Katsura in the afternoon.

US Ambassador Harry Thomas had earlier met with Aquino to extend his best wishes and assure close cooperation with the incoming administration.

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Spanish President Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero through Ambassador Luis Arias-Romero, Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara and Hannam University president Hyungtae Kim of Korea had also greeted Aquino ahead of his formal proclamation.



'LUCKY' SENATE OFFICE

With the presidency just a breath away, Aquino waxed nostalgic as he talked about Room 526 at the GSIS Building — the Senate office that he will soon vacate.

"I like it here, relaxing isn't it?" he said, citing the room's natural light as well as its majestic view of Manila Bay.

The room's interior design was simple, adorned only with a portrait of his late mother, former President Corazon Aquino, and framed photos of his namesake and martyred father.

Aquino said he first occupied the room on July 1, 2007 when he was elected senator.

A visitor, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, noted that the room could be lucky for senators.

"Those who occupied this room all got promoted. I became majority leader as well as (Sen.) Loren (Legarda), Jinggoy (Estrada) became Senate president pro tempore," Pangilinan said.

"And, of course, Noynoy became president," he added, drawing laughter from Aquino.

Aquino disclosed the senators draw lots for their room assignments. He said he was eager to find out who would be the next occupant of the room.

Asked whether he had ever imagined leaving his office three years before the end of his term as senator, Aquino said it was obvious that he hadn't.

An outpouring of grief over the death of his mother in August had convinced Aquino to give in to a massive call for him to run for president on the platform of change. (www.philstar.com) ■

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LEGAL NOTES

Heavy Visa Demand Puts Nurses in U.S. in Tight Spot



by Reuben S. SEGURTAN

manent residency. They usually fall under one of three situations.

There are those who were able to file their adjustment applications before the retrogression but their applications were denied because they could not submit their Visa Screen certificates before the deadline set by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). These nurses cannot lawfully remain in the U.S. and the employment authorization granted to them when they filed their adjustment applications is no longer valid.

There are those who have passed their licensure exams and have found employers willing to sponsor them for I-140 petition. Their I-140 approval will register them on the waiting list but once their nonimmigrant visa status expires, their presence in the U.S. becomes unlawful.

Then, there are those who have just arrived on a nonimmigrant visa, usually B-2, that is still valid. They may change to another nonimmigrant visa status such as F-1 student which is valid for the duration of their studies. They may also change to H-1B if they are certified as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses or are upper level Nurse Managers, and they may be able to stay here for another six (6) years, or longer if they have an approved I-140 petition and a visa number is not available.

Unfortunately for those who have overstayed their temporary visas, if they leave the U.S. because they cannot file their adjustment of status application, the 3-year/10-year bar will kick in and they can kiss their dreams of getting a job in the U.S. goodbye.

Under immigration laws, those who have overstayed their temporary visa for over six months but less than a year will be barred from reentering the U.S. for three years, while those who have over-

stayed for more than a year will be barred from reentering for ten years.

No one can determine how long nurses will have to wait for visa numbers. The formula for allocation of visa numbers is rather complex. We can only make an estimate. Nurses fall under the EB-3 category but this category also includes other professionals and skilled workers. EB-3 is allotted 28.6% of the 140,000 annual worldwide quota for all employment-based preferences.

There is also a per country limit of 7% of the 140,000 visa numbers. A country's yearly allotment is increased if other countries do not use up their numbers. Each country is allotted 2,800 visas per year.

It is still hard to say at this point when Congress will get around to passing the immigration reform law that would ease the visa backlog. The Nursing Relief Act that has been introduced every year in the last several years and which would create a separate nonimmigrant visa category for RNs engaged in temporary work has not garnered enough legislative support. And the comprehensive immigration reform bill that would exempt nurses from the immigrant visa quota is still bottled up in the Judiciary committee. ■

REUBEN S. SEGURTAN 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

The heavy demand for visa numbers in the employment-based 3rd preference category (EB-3) has resulted in the slow movement of its cutoff date. The June 2010 cutoff date is June 22, 2003. This means that only those beneficiaries whose priority date is before that date may be scheduled for an immigrant visa interview at a US Consulate abroad or may file for adjustment of status in the U.S.

The slow movement has created difficulties particularly for nurses currently in the U.S. who wish to adjust their status to per-

PHILIPPINE NEWS

120 Children Languishing in Jails

by Michael PUNONGBAYAN / Wednesday, May 26, 2010



MANILA, Philippines - FROM JANUARY 2007 TO MARCH 2009, the Commission on Human Rights found 120 children aged 12 to 17 detained in 11 different police precincts nationwide.

And in separate visits to city and municipal jails along with the national penitentiary from January 2008 to March 2009, 80 more teenagers were found languishing behind bars.

In total, the CHR found 200 minors whose rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 are being violated.

Of the 120 children found detained in various police precincts, 80 of them were 17 years old, 23 were 16, 14 of them were 15, two were only 14, and one was 12 years old.

In a Human Rights Advisory released yesterday, the CHR said it "expresses alarm over the continuing detention in jails and police precincts of children in conflict with the law and the subhuman conditions in detention places that these

children are subjected to."

The Human Rights Advisory signed by chairperson Leila de Lima and Commissioners Cecilia Rachel Quisumbing, Ma. Victoria Cardona, Norberto de la Cruz, and Jose Manuel Mamaug, noted that in its nationwide visits on jails and police precincts, domestic practices on children's detention continue to violate the CRC and other laws.

The CHR found that children who had been arrested were not immediately turned over to the custody of the social worker but remained under police custody beyond the required eight-hour period, which even lasts for several days even for children who are below the age of criminal responsibility.

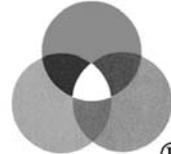
"The Commission also found children in jails and the national penitentiary pending the trial of their cases during visits conducted from January 2008 to March 2009. Some courts are still exhibiting reluctance in ordering the release of CICL from detention despite the fact that the JWW Act of 2006 specifically prohibits the detention of a child in jail pending trial or the hearing of his or her case," the Human Rights Advisory read. (www.philstar.com) ■

children are subjected to."

"The Commission implores the government to comply with its obligations under the CRC on the promotion and protection of the rights of CICL. It also urges the relevant government agencies to comply with their mandate under the JWW Act of 2006," it added.

The CHR said it recognizes the obvious link between the continuing violation against the rights of children and the failure of several government agencies to effectively implement their mandate under the law.

It stressed that the CRC requires the detention or imprisonment of a child should "be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period



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MAINLAND NEWS

Filipina Named API Heritage Awardee for Excellence in Civil Rights

MARILY MONDEJAR, PRESIDENT OF THE FILIPINA WOMEN'S NETWORK (FWN), has been selected by the Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legislative Caucus to receive the API Heritage Award for Excellence in Civil Rights for 2010.

Mondejar was nominated by California assemblywoman Fiona Ma for her work in domestic violence and women's rights and empowerment with her organization. She has decided to dedicate her award to the Filipino community in

the U.S.

"The API Heritage Civil Rights Award is recognition of the Filipino voice in California," she says. "My advocacy work through the FWN is about advancing Filipino women in the workplace, ensuring that Filipino women are able to participate in civil and political life without fear of discrimination or repression and are protected from unwarranted action by government and private organization."

Mondejar will continue to raise awareness among FWN members



to exercise their individual rights and freedoms of thought, expression and movement.
Marciano A. Paynor, Jr., San

Francisco Consulate General, congratulated Mondejar on her award.

"Ms. Mondejar truly deserves such honor and I hope that she and the phenomenal women of the Filipino Women's Network will continue to bring pride to the Filipino American community and the Filipino nation," Consul General Paynor remarked.

The California API Legislative Caucus represents and advocates for the interests of the diverse API communities throughout California and seeks to increase Asian Pacific Islander participation and rep-

resentation in all levels of government.

Every year, it observes API Heritage Month by honoring prominent APIs who have achieved in their respective fields and contributed to the API community.

Previous Filipino API Heritage Awardees were: Ruthe Catolico Ashley, Excellence in Public Service (2005); Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, Judicial Excellence (2006); Hon. Alice Bulos, Excellence in Community Service (2007) and Mr. Joey Quinto, Excellence in Journalism (2008). (DFA) ■

Civil Rights Groups Sue to Stop Arizona Immigration Law

THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LEGAL CENTER (APALC) and Asian American Justice Center (AAJC) jointly filed a federal lawsuit with other civil rights groups to challenge SB 1070, Arizona's controversial immigration law that requires police to demand "papers" from people they stop whom they "reasonably suspect" are undocumented.

"Arizona's actions not only interfere with federal law, but will invite widespread racial profiling in violation of the U.S. Constitution," says AAJC staff attorney Ronald Lee. The precedent it sets, with numerous states have already introduced similar legislation, underscores the need for comprehensive immigration reform at the national level."

The coalition of civil rights lawyers represents more than 20 plaintiffs, including Arizona South Asians for Safe Families, the Asian Chamber of Commerce, Japanese

American Citizens League (JACL), Muslim American Society and individuals such as Jim Shee, a 70-year-old American-born citizen of Chinese and Spanish descent who has been stopped twice by Arizona law enforcement for his "papers."

"Arizona's new law echoes one of the worst chapters in U.S. immigration history," says Julie Su, litigation director at APALC. "In the 19th century, the U.S. required Chinese immigrants to carry 'residence certificates' at all times or risk deportation. As was true a century ago, the criminalization of an entire race and fear driven by economic insecurity make for bad public policy."

Asian Americans are frequent victims of racial profiling—from Dr. Wen Ho Lee, a U.S. citizen accused of spying because of his Chinese ethnicity, to South Asian and Arab Americans being profiled as threats to national security—even though such policies have

proven completely ineffective.

"For JACL, many of our members and their families were unjustly imprisoned during World War II," says Kathy Nakagawa, president of JACL's Arizona chapter. "We know firsthand what it means to have our civil rights stripped because of bigotry and ignorance."

Parties to the lawsuit, such as Arizona South Asians for Safe

Families, worry that crime victims from immigrant communities, especially victims of domestic violence, will be even more afraid to seek help as a result of this law. Others worry that just being associated with or helping immigrants will make someone a police target.

"Our members are afraid that this new immigration law will hamper any possibility of an economic

recovery, a very real fear given the enormous consumer power of Asian American residents in Arizona," says Ted Namba, president of the Asian Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to APALC and AAJC, other legal organizations in the lawsuit include the Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund, American Civil Liberties Union, National Immigration Law Center, National Day Laborer Organizing Network, and NAAACP. ■

Obama Says He'll Keep Fighting for Immigration Reform

by Jose KATIGBAK /
Wednesday, May 26, 2010

WASHINGTON — PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA SAID it may not be the easiest thing to do politically but he will keep on fighting for comprehensive immigration reform and work with Democrats and Republicans to get it done.

There are about 12 million people living in the US illegally, including 150,000 to 200,000 overstaying Filipinos, and they could be eligible for permanent resident cards, more popularly known as "Green cards," under the proposed immigration reform.

"We have to respect our heritage as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants and that means that everybody is going to have to take responsibility," he said at a White House reception on Monday celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage month.

Business has to be held accountable when they exploit undocumented workers and individuals who are here illegally have to take responsibility by paying a fine and back taxes, learning English, and going to the back of the line so that they take a legal path towards citizenship, he said.

President Obama said the government has a responsibility to secure the border and enforce laws but at the same time it has an obligation to set clear, commonsense rules, including rules that no longer punish and divide families that are doing the right thing and following the law.

"Many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have known tremendous unfairness and injustice during our history. But we also know that generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders helped to build this country, defend this country, and make America



what it is today," he said.

Obama is committed to working with Congress on a comprehensive bill to fix a "broken immigration system" but the odds that he'll get everyone on board to solve the contentious issue this year don't look too good with midterm elections in November looming.

Arizona recently passed a new state law that authorizes police to question the immigration status of anyone they suspect of being in the country illegally. (www.phlstar.com) ■

Fil-Am to Head San Francisco Art Museum

SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR GAVIN NEWSOM has appointed Filipino-American Carmen Colet to head the Asian Art Museum.

Colet, who is chairwoman of the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco, is the first Filipino to be appointed commissioner of the world-

renowned repository of Asian Art in America.

The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco is one of the largest museums in the Western world devoted exclusively to Asian Art, with a collection of over 17,000 artworks spanning 6,000 years of history. (Good News Filipinas) ■



Carmen Colet

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GLOBAL NEWS

Demand for RP Products Seen to Weaken in Europe

by Iris GONZALES / Wednesday, May 26, 2010

MANILA, Philippines - **THE PHILIPPINES MAY EXPERIENCE WEAKER** demand for its products exported to Europe because of the weakening of the financial markets in the euro area but this is not expected to affect the economy in general, the Union Bank of Switzerland said in its latest report on Asia.

The Switzerland-based investment bank said that with the tumbling value of the euro on the foreign exchanges, there are implications for ASEAN-5 economies including the Philippines.

"The trade implications are straightforward. A weaker euro, all else equal, implies a loss of competitiveness for ASEAN producers in European, domestic and third

markets. This in turn points to a weaker growth outcome for the ASEAN economies most exposed to global trade - Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Indonesia and Philippines should still see reduced demand for their exports, but with less impact on the economy as a whole," it said.

UBS expects a general weakness in the ASEAN currency against the dollar this year. It expects the local currency to hit P46 against the greenback by yearend from the current trading level of 45-to-the dollar.

There will be funding constraints, too, UBS said.

"Additionally, the troubles in Europe also raise the possibility of funding constraints or a higher cost of capital in international markets. And here we note that Indonesia and to a lesser extent Philippines continue to look more sensitive to

external financial developments than Malaysia, Thailand or Singapore," the investment bank noted.

Nonetheless, UBS said that with the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank showing willingness to provide a "liquidity backstop," this would help countries such as the Philippines.

"As such, our concern that an external liquidity shock will derail the domestic growth dynamics in Indonesia or the Philippines has been greatly reduced," it said.

UBS also noted that the Philippine central bank's actions to prevent contagion "will be important."

UBS said when foreign investors will pull back from emerging markets such as the Philippines because of uncertainties, the private sector can help boost liquidity by extending credit. (www.phstar.com) ■

TUCP Warns of Displacement among Seafarers

MANILA, Philippines - **FILIPINO SEAFARERS** could be displaced by the debt crisis in Greece.

Ernesto Herrera, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) secretary-general, said the economic slump in Greece might adversely affect shipping activities in Greece and other European countries.

"We are also deeply worried about Greece's lingering debt crisis, which could

depress economic conditions as well as shipping activity in Europe," he said.

However, the economic crisis has not affected the remittances from Filipino seafarers, he added.

Herrera said seafarers on ocean-going vessels wired home a total of \$888 million in the first quarter.

The figure was 11 percent higher than the money they remitted during the same period last year, he added.

Herrera said the 11.04 percent growth in money from Filipino seafarers was nearly double the 5.96 percent increase in

remittances from land-based Filipino workers.

Of the 10 biggest sources of remittances from Filipino seamen, six are European countries, he added.

Herrera said the top 10 sources of remittances from Filipino seamen are the United States, Japan, Norway, Germany, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Greece, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, and Cyprus.

Money from Filipino seamen in Norway, the Netherlands, Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland and Sweden went down an average of 20.81 percent, Herrera said. ■

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