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NEWS EDITION

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

REFLECTIONS ON 2011 DAVAO, PAYATAS AND ILOCOS SUR MEDICAL MISSIONS



Residents of Cabugao, Ilocos Sur wait patiently to be seen by medical mission physicians and volunteers



Bernie Bernales, a volunteer from Hawaii, quietly watches over the Pediatric Pharmacy during the Cabugao Medical Mission.

By Teresita Bernales, Ed. D. | Photos by Althone BORJA

Each time a medical mission in the Philippines is conducted, two questions are asked frequently of delegates—who are the beneficiaries and why do people volunteer to join the mission? As the name implies, it is to help the sick and needy and the second one usually generates a lot of discussion.

Who are the poor of the Philippines? Dr. Belinda Aquino cited in a recent Hawaii Filipino Chronicle article that in 2010 data, approximately 28 percent of Filipinos fall within the poverty index, which is roughly equivalent to 3 million families.

A family of 5 needs

P4869 (P162/per day) to meet the monthly basic food needs alone. P162 a day is about \$3.73. However, the poorest of the poor subsists on \$1.25 a day, barely enough for one meal a day. It is this population that the Ohana Medical Mission (OMM), the UST Titan Fraternity and Ilocos Sur Association served in this mission. The pop-

ulation served is the poorest of the poor who do not see a doctor when sick because they lack money to buy medicines.

Regarding the question as to why delegates join such missions of mercy, doing so provides a sense of personal satisfaction, fulfillment and well-being. According to a medical

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FCCH PREPS FOR 22ND PHILIPPINE TRADE MISSION



Dr. Federico Macaranas of the Asian Institute of Management during the investment and business opportunities in the Philippines forum held recently at the Philippine Consulate

By Maita Millalos

The Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (FCCH) and its newly formed subsidiary the Hawaii-Philippines Business and Economic Council (HPBEC) are preparing for the 22nd Trade

Mission to the Philippines which will take place February 10-21, 2012.

HPBEC aims to identify quality programs and resources that would

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EDITORIAL

Support Companies That Keep Workers Employed

Photography industry giant Kodak joins a list of other once-mighty companies filing for bankruptcy due to an inability to compete in today's global digital economy. Kodak was a pioneering company that invented the hand-held camera. The company capitalized and dominated the photography industry through its advances in technology. Yet ironically, it is today's even faster digital technology that pushed Kodak to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Just last year about the same time, Borders Group Inc., the second largest U.S. bookstore chain, also filed for bankruptcy due to the rise of online book businesses like Amazon.com Inc. and the increased popularity of digital books. Borders rocketed in the books and music retail industry in the 1970s. It, along with other big box giants, drove countless of small books and music sellers out of business simply due to greater size of inventory and lower pricing. Yet ironically, Borders' recent demise comes at the hands of an even larger venue where the price of books and music is even more affordable through the global internet market.

Free market proponents could easily advance this example of small business being replaced by big business then being replaced yet again by another bigger business as a natural course of economic practice. But if we pause to think of what's really happening, we see a clearer picture of why the world economy is in trouble. What we see is more jobs being lost. Borders alone had 19,500 employees as of 2010. Other large booksellers that closed include Crown Books (one of the four largest book retailers), Kroch & Brentano, and Lauriat's. All of them employing thousands of workers. The music store chains suffered even greater losses. Almost all of the music chain stores left the retail business and only a few operate online. As far as all the neighborhood books and music stores these giant chains have replaced, these small businesses now have little chance of successfully reopening and competing with the online sellers.

Loss of jobs due to "consumer preference" as in this example of the books and music industry may be a sad commentary but much easier to accept than the increasing practice of replacement of workers due to technology.

TECHNOLOGY REPLACING WORKERS

On a much grander scale, today's "technology-enabled" economy



continues to replace jobs in practically all other industries across the board. From the largest to smallest companies, the practice of business survival increasingly true today revolves around how efficient can product output be achieved with the least amount of cost. In other words, while the rhetoric nationwide is how can the U.S. improve employment and job growth; in practice, the preference really for companies is finding the most optimal ways to maintain business operations with the savings cost of having less employees. Utilizing and embracing the latest technology are enabling companies to achieve this goal.

So what we see in today's "technology-enabled" economy is a lose-lose contradiction. We need more workers to stimulate our overall economy through consumer spending; but at the same time, companies rely on technology to cut jobs to operate more efficiently for lower overhead costs. Where do we draw the line is unknown because the downside of our "tech-

nology-enabled" economy is not being openly and intellectually discussed among our leaders.

Even the way we measure productivity is a statistical contradiction on this matter. For example, it is estimated that every one percent of annual productivity growth in the U.S. will cost the elimination of 1.3 million jobs. Annual productivity by and large is a positive economic indicator. The higher that percentage should mean that a greater percentage of companies are operating more efficiently. But again, at what cost. In this case, 1 percent better means an estimated 1.3 million jobs loss at the same product output. So if our companies produce more in less time with the help of advancing technology, the fact that we have less workers employed is irrelevant in measuring productivity growth.

DIFFICULT CHOICES

The rapid and constant loss of jobs due to technological advancements makes it increasingly difficult for students today to decide which career to pursue. Careers once thought to be desired, today have little appeal because of shrinking job availability, even in the high tech industry. At the moment, aside from healthcare and a few blue-collar, skilled professions, pursuing a career in education is considered a safe bet for job opportunities in the short and long term. But in another example of our "technology-enabled" economy, there is a disturbing movement in the very birth stages which has students learning lessons by watching education

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Mayor Cayetano?

by Atty. Emmanuel S. TIPON

Honolulu. – Former Hawaii Governor Benjamin J. Cayetano, whose father Bonifacio Marcos Cayetano came from Pangasinan, announced on Thursday, January 19, that he is running for mayor of Honolulu, Hawaii's beautiful and bustling capital city of 800,000 souls. He will oppose incumbent Peter Carlisle, who is serving the remaining 2 years of the term of former Mayor Mufi Hannemann who resigned to run for governor and lost, and Kirk Caldwell, a former city administrator and a Hannemann ally, who had lost to Carlisle in the special election to fill Hannemann's seat.

Why would a 72 year old man who has attained the highest position in the state seek a lesser one like Honolulu mayor? I once asked the same question of my uncle, former Ilocos Norte Governor Damaso Samonte when he was running for mayor of Laoag. His answer: "To serve the people. The city has many problems for which I have some solutions." Cayetano has the same thoughts.

Cayetano, a lawyer, has been in elective office for some 28 years until 2002, eight of which was as governor. He has never lost an election. He has been in eight. He is an indefatigable campaigner and a proven vote-getter. He is a Democrat. Carlisle is a former city prosecutor. He is a former Republican. Caldwell is also a lawyer and a former state legislator. He is a Democrat. The election is supposed

edly nonpartisan.

Cayetano and this writer contributed significantly and campaigned for Carlisle in the last election in the belief that he would have an open mind on the rail system. Once he took the oath as mayor, Carlisle became even more pro rail than Hannemann.

The first time I saw Cayetano in person was at an Obama fund raiser at the Kahala Hotel (Honolulu's 4-star equivalent of 5-star Manila Hotel). He was seated on a sofa with his wife and I was seated on another sofa with my wife. Between us was a coffee table. He was eyeing me and I was eyeing him too. Not a word was spoken. My wife whispered "Why don't you greet him." I whispered back, "The big man must always be the one to greet the small man." I saw him again at the studio of KNDI radio station when I interviewed him while he was campaigning for Ann Kobayashi for mayor. He was very nice and warm and said a few words in Ilocano. I told him of the incident at the Kahala and that I had thought he was snobbish especially with his mustache. He laughed.

Cayetano wrote his memoir simply called "Ben" which became a best-seller describing his journey as a street kid from Honolulu's Kalihi district (a blend of Manila's Tondo and Sampaloc districts) to governor and Washington Place (Hawaii's Malacanang Palace). Governor Abercrombie wrote the "Foreword". He praises the "core attributes" of Cayetano –

"honest, tough, and smart" and recalls their 30-year friendship, "both personal and political."

WILL RUN HARD

"I don't need the job, but I will run hard," declared Cayetano to the cheers of an enthusiastic multi-racial crowd of admirers, friends, and the press who were assembled at a large meeting room adjacent to the roof garden of a Harley Davidson motorcycle dealership. Whether he will ride a motorcycle on his political sorties remains to be seen. "I have not ridden on one," he confided to us.

Cayetano said that he will make a good mayor because he will be concentrating on the job instead of using the position as a springboard to the governorship like the other former mayors, since he has already been a governor. He emphasized his long friendship with Gov. Neil Abercrombie in the state legislature and expressed confidence that they would work well together because he is not aspiring for his seat. Abercrombie, however, declined to openly endorse Cayetano for the nonce, but many Abercrombie supporters were at the press conference. Abercrombie openly endorsed Cayetano when the latter ran for Governor in 1994 and Cayetano did likewise when Abercrombie ran for Governor in 2010.

The biggest issue in the Honolulu mayoral race is building a railroad with an estimated cost of \$ 5.2 billion. All former mayors were for a rail system. Cayetano is firmly opposed to it because he believes that it will not solve the traffic problems in Oahu (it is extremely difficult to get peo-

ple divorced from their cars), it is too expensive and will bankrupt the city, and the city will be forced to raise taxes to finance it because its cost has been understated and it will not be self-supporting. He said that he will work with others to look for a solution to the traffic situation and achieve the same result as rail at less cost, including increasing the number of buses and establishing dedicated express bus lanes. He indicated that such a system will not cost more than \$1 billion. Cayetano has spearheaded a lawsuit in federal court to stop the construction of the railroad for noncompliance with certain environmental and other requirements. If we have to build a railroad, "we have to do it right," he said. We asked what he thought about a double decked freeway similar to one in the Philippines (from Quirino Avenue going south to Sucat Road). He answered that he has not considered it.

"What's going to happen to all the money spent on the rail?" asked a member of the press corps. He accused the people who spent it of being "irresponsible" because there were unresolved legal and environmental issues and yet they went ahead and continued spending money. He said that these people have "no accountability".

NOT "SINGLE ISSUE" CANDIDATE

Asked whether he was a single issue candidate, he shot back that his opponents were the ones who were single issue candidates – "they talk nothing but rail." He indicated that he wants to fix the century old sewer system and storm drains which have burst on various occasions, to repave the roads which develop potholes every time it rains, improve the parks and attend to other public works projects, and provide for

greater public safety.

WHO WILL WIN

In the final analysis, rail will be the principal issue. Polls indicate that the people are about evenly divided with the anti-rail voice growing louder. If voting is based solely on the rail, Cayetano will win because the pro-rail vote will be split between Carlisle and Caldwell, while he will be the only anti-rail candidate. Panos Prevedorous, an engineer, who is the original anti-rail guy and ran for mayor twice but lost, announced that he will not run this time and has endorsed Cayetano. In terms of money, Cayetano will be the underdog as tons of money have been poured or will be poured on his opponents by certain banks, railroad contractors, unions, and property owners along the proposed railroad line. However, money is not the deciding factor in an election. Witness the latest California election where two well-heeled women lost their heels in the race for Governor and the U.S. Senate.

If voting will be along racial lines, Cayetano has a formidable advantage over the two Caucasians who will divide the white vote which is about 50% of the total vote. Cayetano can expect about 99% of the Filipino vote (oh yes, there will be at least 1% contra partido), majority of the Chinese vote (his lovely and wealthy wife Vicky is of Chinese ancestry although she was born in the Philippines), and much of the Japanese, Korean, and native Hawaiian vote.

The primary election will be on August 11 and the candidate who wins 50 percent plus one vote wins outright. If no one wins outright, the two top vote getters will advance to the general election in November. Under that scenario, Cayetano would be one of the two. ■

EDITORIAL (CONT.)

(cont. from page 2; SUPPORT...)

lessons on the computer. Various subjects such as algebra are tape recorded for students to review during class time or on their own. The teacher, who may or may not be highly credentialed, acts as a facilitator of tests and tutor for additional instruction. It's already conceivable in the distant future how even education may not be immune to the out-of-control practice of job replacement should such an instructional system become widely adopted.

But ultimately technology

and a desire for efficiency not to blame for job loss. Perhaps as a community and country, we need to engage more in discussions about limitations to cost-savings measures from a moral perspective, talk about our priorities for our companies and the value of our workers not just in terms of product output. We are fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters first, who happened to work for a living for our families, loved ones and community. Seeing each other in these lenses just may be what it will take to save a job from being eliminated, and hopefully be a start to im-

prove our country's joblessness in spite of technology's ability to replace workers. Although it may cost more, as consumers perhaps we should patron companies that support workers. At least once in a while buy through a travel agent, buy your favorite books and music at a store, send your mail using a postal service, buy your clothes and other products in person, touch that newspaper or magazine, avoid automation, demand that companies have live representatives, and support companies with a solid reputation for taking care of their employees with good benefits and pay. ■

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mission volunteer who requested anonymity, participating in medical missions helps not only the sick and the needy but benefits the Philippines as a whole.

"Civic engagement builds social capital and creates social cohesiveness," she says. "It can also motivate and inspire others to participate and it grows exponentially. While we may not experience the fruits of our labor in our lifetime, the outcome will be a world that is enjoying peace and goodwill".

DAVAO MEDICAL MISSION (DECEMBER 12-16)

Once the permit from the Philippine Department of Health was approved, volunteers launched fundraisers and solicited medicines and other in-kind donations. Medicines and vitamins were acquired through donations from the people of Hawaii. The amount included at least 240,000 multivitamin tablets, 100,000 ibuprofen tablets, antibiotics, antihistamines, analgesics and antipyretics, medicines for scabies, lice, parasites, eardrops, and decongestants, among others. Blood sugar (diabetic) testing was also included, with Dr. Jose DeLeon serving as pharmacy coordinator.

Minor surgeries, a Dental Health Fair and Vision Care check-ups were also included. Financial contributors include many Hawaii civic organizations, physicians, friends and relatives of Dabawenyos, and the community-at-large. Additionally, the medical mission committee also prepared gift zbags of foodstuff and personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpastes and soaps for the poor and needy.

The volunteers' daily schedule typically began with an early wake-up call at 5 am, breakfast at 6 am and then out the door at 7 am. At 8:30 am, medicines and supplies were unloaded at the site and desks set-up for adult and pedia doctors, minor surgery, pharmacy, medical records, registration, vitamins, paracetamol, glucose testing and food give-aways.

At a few sites, the mission began as early as 6:30 am. All registered patients were seen and no one was refused. The mission was usually done by 5 pm. By then, the volunteers were exhausted to the bone.

While traveling to the various mission sites, volunteers were given a police escort. Security was also very visible for the duration of the mission.

An Aloha Night in Davao and Ilocos Sur was included in the schedule as appreciation to all the local Dabawenyos and Ilocos Surians who assisted volunteers. In Davao, volunteer Marissa Munda-Tay invited the delegation to a dinner at her house and to watch the world renowned Bayanihan dancers perform at the dedication of the Events Center of The Philippine Women's College.

In Ilocos Sur, lunches and dinners were provided at all four sites. In Cabugao, dinner at the Mayor Edgardo Cobangbang Jr. home was a feast to remember. The much-anticipated Ilocos Sur Idol was held after the Cabugao mission at Bonifacio Park. Prizes given were (1) P5000, (5) P1 000 and (10) P500. Several door prizes were handed throughout the event including one for P1000.

Mission sites in Davao included the first ever medical mission to Panabo City, Marilog, Toril and Babak on Samal Island which has no hospital for residents. The total number of patients assisted on Davao was 4,815.

Dr. Elenita Alvarez, OMM president described the Davao mission as "well planned and done professionally."

"It could very well serve as a learning model for future medical missions since the rules on Philippine missions have been implemented," she says. "Aside from medical care, we had cultural, humanitarian gift giving as well as plans for future missions in Davao and other areas in Philippines. We learned a lot from the doctors, nurses, leaders and people of Davao."

Dr. Arnold Villafuerte says the mission was very tiring yet also gratifying.

"I had never been so stressed in my life but it was all worth it," he says. "We scheduled the mission close to Christmas, so it was more meaningful especially to the people. We put smiles on many faces."

PAYATAS MISSION (DECEMBER 17)

The Payatas community surrounds the mountainous garbage dump in Quezon City. The huge Payatas dump con-



tinues to be Manila's main garbage dump piled as high as seven stories in some areas and the chief source of livelihood for squatters. Many Payatas residents make their living by digging through the trash, scavenging for plastic, cardboard, paper, wood, glass, metal and other items that can be sold to recycling agents. The earnings made by one person are not enough to buy food for even for a day. Entire families are forced to climb the mountain each day, hoping that together they can earn enough to feed everyone. For a family to survive daily, children as young as three years old must work. They typically pick up anything that looks edible and if it passes the smell test, eat it right there and then. Malnutrition and infections are common among children and chronic diseases for the adult population.

Volunteers did not know the conditions they would encounter in Payatas. All they knew was that a medical mission here was much-needed. A near riot in the food distribution was very telling of the plight of Payatas residents. Siloam Christian Academy staff and the church community provided volunteers in the different areas needed. After the mission, hosts Reverend and Mrs. Nam and Dr. Bora Nam prepared a very sumptuous luncheon.

"There are so many disadvantaged who often have no easy access to medical care," says Dr. Nam. "In a shantytown like Payatas, medical missions are a much-needed and a much-awaited event. Most patients come in only at advanced stages of their illnesses or when local faith healers concoctions have been given out to them for free."

In addition to free medical care, volunteers also gave away 300 "care bags" containing rice, canned goods, and noodles were distributed among the poorest of the poor.

The half day mission was sponsored by Titans USA Foundation, Bayanihan Clinic Without Walls, Ilocos Sur Association and the UST Alumni Association of Hawaii and Simloan Christian Academy, Dr. Charlie Sonido, and Nelson and Aurora Sonido. A total of 651 patients were served

in a span of roughly four hours.

ILOCOS SUR (DECEMBER 18-22)

Newly retired Hawaii Consul General Leoncio Cardenas Jr. hosted a dinner for the mission delegates before traveling to Ilocos Sur on the evening of December 17.

Volunteers arrived at Santiago Cove Resort the following morning after a nine hour bus trip from Manila to Ilocos Sur. A beautiful surprise awaited them in the evening—volunteers Caesar and Bernadette Fajardo invited the entire delegation to an elegant dinner and renewal of vows for their 40th wedding anniversary. *(continued on page 5)*

(cont. from page 1; FCCH...)

strengthen business links between the Philippines and Hawaii and to plan the Chamber's biennial trade mission to the Philippines and other major activities.

According to chair Paul Alimbuyao, the mission is geared towards entrepreneurs in Hawaii who are interested in conducting trade and business relations in the Philippines. Its goals include promoting investment and tourism destinations between Hawaii and the Philippines as well as encouraging trade and economic activities, particularly in the development of renewable and green technology.

The trade mission will visit Metro Manila, Cebu, Baguio, and Olongapo/ Subic, including the former Clark Air Base in Angeles City. Alimbuyao explained during an FCCH meeting at the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu on January 19th that the cities were chosen for their "tremendous economic activities."

"This mission also aims to strengthen sister-city relationships between Honolulu and Manila, Baguio and Cebu with Mayor Peter Carlisle leading the delegation," Alimbuyao says.

At least 30 delegates from Hawaii are expected to join the mission and 100 more will be coming from the Philippines. A final list of delegates will be released this week.

MANILA FOR INVESTMENT, BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Rose Aquino, mission co-chair and coordinator for the Manila trip on February 13, 14, and 18 says, "Manila is the business center of the country and we are looking for opportunities to link Hawaii and Manila in outsourcing, investments, and business."

Aquino further added, "Our itinerary includes tapping high network clients such as the Makati Business Club, insurance companies, international banking and finance, law firms, architecture and engineering, television stations and export business. There will be a workshop to explore these markets to be followed by a business matching."

Other activities include an Aloha Night hosted by FCCH/ HPBEC that coincides with a meeting with the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Delegates will visit the Philippine Congress which is coordinated by the Office of Rizal Rep. Joel Roy Duavit. A visit to the GMA Pinoy television studio and the taping of the popular noon time show "Eat Bulaga" are also part of the itinerary.

OPPORTUNITIES IN CEBU, BAGUIO, SUBIC

The Cebu group will meet with Mayor Michael Rama and the Cebu Chamber of Commerce on February 12 to discuss investment opportunities in Cebu. George Carpenter, FCCH committee member and coordinator for the Cebu trip says, "Among opportunities that will be explored range from small businesses such as cottage industries to the technologically advanced to include outsourcing, local film industry, agri-business, and bio-diesel. Opportunities for the 300-hectare Cebu South Reclamation Project will also be discussed."

The Baguio trip on February 14-15 is coordinated by Alimbuyao and includes a dinner reception hosted by the Baguio Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and a sister-city and business partnership luncheon between Baguio and Honolulu, followed by a business matching.

(continued on page 5)

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Mission sites included Santiago, Sinait, Cabugao and Santa. A total of 8,842 patients were seen by mission volunteers.

By the end of the mission, a total of 8,842 patients received free medical services, surgeries as well as medicines. The number of patients is undoubtedly higher since some went uncounted.

VOLUNTEERS' REFLECTIONS

Rather than pack his bags for a short trip home to the Philippines for Christmas with his family, New York City physician Dr. Robert G. Bernales accepted an invitation from colleague Dr. Charlie Sonido to participate in the mission. It turned out to be an adventure unlike anything he had



experienced. One thing that surprised him was the sheer volume of patients.

"We saw anywhere from 700 to 1,500 patients each day. The idea of seeing that many patients was at first daunting, but somehow we made it through," he says.

Volunteer Marissa Tay jumped at the opportunity to participate in a medical mission to her hometown of Davao City.

Her skills as a licensed social worker came in quite handy in one of her assignments as admission/receptionist a.k.a. "traffic enforcer" to get the thousands of patients to "pila" to achieve the efficient flow of registration before they see the doctors awaiting to examine or treat them.

"The interesting part of the job was the many roles I juggled to accomplish the task. There

was also the enforcer role, where with the help of the army soldier guarding the peace process, I got the people to submit to lining up for registration versus crowding around the staff which was the usual practice."

Tay also served as an interviewer to find out brief social histories of patients and to get a perspective on their lives while waiting their turn in the registration line.

"I also found myself in a counselor role, especially for young mothers and some elderly who found negotiating their health care needs and available resources lacking. However, the most frustrating role was that of an interpreter of a dialect that I understand more than I speak fluently. I slowly remembered words I have not uttered in years. Somehow I managed, though barely, much to the clients' amusement as I struggled making myself understood in Visayan."

For Dr. Marvin Louis Roy Lu, the large number of patients was a bit overwhelming at first.

"We expected to serve a thousand patients but actually

got much more than we bargained for. It was an almost surreal and overwhelming experience to see hordes of people who needed medical aid," Dr. Lu says.

He was in disbelief upon hearing a patient say that the mission to Davao provided him the first opportunity see a doctor for the first time ever. By mission's end, the fulfillment he enjoyed was beyond description.

"It was like giving back to a community who so needed me. It was exhausting but nonetheless the most gratifying. In my case, it was a bittersweet farewell for I know I shall be back—each time craving to serve more," he says.

Mission president Dr. Alvarez extended a sincere 'thank you' to the many medical and non-medical volunteers from Hawaii and the Philippines.

"I am so grateful for all your assistance. To me, it felt like I was in a parade with all you dedicated men and women—doing things for a great cause. It's a great honor to be part of our Ohana. I look forward to many more missions in the coming years," she says. ■

(cont. from page 4; FCCH...)

Meanwhile, Rose Churma, HPBEC executive director and coordinator for the February 16th Subic trip says, "There is a need to identify options for retirement for Filipino-Americans. One particular aspect is for Hawaii to bring to Subic its expertise on the healthcare industry for those belonging to this age group."

Churma added that her group will also look into prospects for Filipino-Americans holding dual citizenship to invest in Subic and Hawaii. The Subic trip coincides with the outreach activity of the U.S. embassy. An all-day workshop at the Subic Freeport Convention and Exhibition Center entitled "Global Citizenship, the Filipino American Experience" will be held on February 17. U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Harry Thomas Jr. will grace the event.

FORUM ON ECONOMIC PROSPECTS IN 2012

After the January 19th FCCH meeting, a forum on investment and business opportunities in the Philippines was presented by Dr. Federico Macaranas of the Asian Institute of Management. His presentation followed up on the "Diaspora to Development" conference held last October in Manila.

In his introductory speech, FCCH president Harry Alonso noted the timely presentation in light of the preparations for the trade mission. Alonso says Dr. Macaranas did an excellent job in promoting the positive prospects of investing in the Philippines.

Macaranas, who holds a PhD in economics from Purdue University, was appointed Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Science and Technology during the presidency of Fidel Ramos. He says that the Philippines is a good investment destination for Filipino-Americans.

"The Philippines has experienced a resilient and stable economic growth that is driven by strong domestic consumer base and growing investment," he says. "There is credible and effective monetary policy, prudent fiscal management and a stable banking system resilient to external shocks due in part to stable domestic funding sources. The

current administration is reform-oriented and the pay-off will be even more pronounced in the long-term."

Macaranas referred to a study by the international bank HSBC showing the Philippines to be among the emerging economies by 2050 due to its demographics and education standards.

Among the areas of investment recommended include real property, business process outsourcing, tourism, agribusiness and personal equity and retirement accounts.

During the forum, Dr. Belinda Aquino, University of Hawaii-Manoa professor emeritus, described Macaranas' enthusiasm and optimism about the current state of affairs in the Philippines as "quite refreshing."

"You don't see that kind of optimism about the Philippines, which is always bashed by the international media. There are indeed areas in various sectors of the economy that have made tremendous gains in recent years, which can compete internationally," Aquino says.

Aquino, however, noted that there are still major fundamental roadblocks to full national development in the Philippines, such as the ongoing corruption trial of Supreme Court Chief Justice Corona and various unresolved cases of official corruption dating back to the Marcos era.

There are also continuing concerns about widespread poverty, which hinders the country from moving forward. Aquino added that the country could improve its record in punishing corrupt activities by strengthening the judicial system and institutional mechanisms for justice.

"Something has to be done about this 'culture of impunity' in the Philippines," she says. "Unfortunately, it's now the judiciary, which is supposed to be the final arbiter of justice in the country with the ongoing post-impeachment proceedings against Corona, the Supreme Court Chief Justice of the Supreme Court no less, in the Philippine Senate."

Aquino is joining the Trade Mission to the Philippines in February.

The forum was also attended by Consul General Julius Torres, Consulate officers and staff, Dr. Amy Agbayani and Dr. Teresita Ramos from UH-Manoa, Maria Etrata and FCCH members. ■

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What Are Your Personal Perspectives on the Recent Medical Missions You Participated In?

by HFC Staff

DR. ROBERT G. BERNALES:

I looked forward to this mission as an opportunity to enhance my medical training and to learn more about the country of my heritage. We treated hundreds of patients at each makeshift clinic we set up. Seeing all those faces—each with their own hopes, dreams and concerns for a chance at better health—was a sobering look at the widespread poverty of the Philippines. It was also a tangible lesson that the need for health care in underserved populations is one of the most pressing problems facing the world today.

For many patients, our visit was all the medical care they would receive for months, years or maybe ever. So it was no surprise that all were grateful for anything we offered them, even if in some cases it was just a month's supply of Tylenol and multivitamins.

I found it most rewarding to be able to treat patients in an atmosphere in which nothing stood in the way of the delivery of medical care. Although we could not help everyone, we performed an important service. Whether diagnosing diabetes, giving a newly pregnant mother a supply of prenatal vitamins, or simply performing a physical—in the larger scheme of things, we were promoting a healthy lifestyle. We may or may not have changed the lives of the

people we treated, but I do believe that by volunteering our time, talents and resources, we at least raised awareness to the fact that good health is something we should all be able to pursue.

I will never forget this experience and try each day to put what I have learned into practice. I anxiously look forward to the years ahead and hope that my training will be of use on future medical missions.

DR. BO RA NAM

Twenty-one years ago, my parents made a decision to be Baptist missionaries in the Philippines where they organized medical missions. Over the years, they branched out and built a church and a school that offered classes from nursery through high school. I saw my father set up medical missions for the poor, the first of many that were to come. He hired a team of doctors and set off for Payatas—the country's infamous dumpsite.

I will never forget the first time I saw the 150-foot man-made environmental disaster euphemistically referred to as Magic Mountain right in the middle of town. Everyday, garbage trucks from surrounding cities would make their way to the dumping area and empty their loads. In a span of 30 years, the site became a gigantic mountain of trash.

We were honored to serve

as a host for the Payatas Medical Mission. It was a success with 70 doctors, nurses and volunteers serving around 611 patients and providing 40 minor surgeries in just half a day.

DR. MARVIN LOUIS ROY LU

I responded to an invitation from Dr. Charlie Sonido to join the medical mission to my hometown. It did not take long for me to agree and join a noble cause. I had been in about 100 medical missions mostly organized by my Titan fraternity, but as we were preparing for our first location in Panabo City, I knew that this would be different. And it was indeed different in so many ways. The fulfillment I felt was beyond what words can describe.

We had volunteers from the local health office and medical students from the Davao Medical School Foundation, some of whom I knew way back when I was still taking pre-medicine courses in Davao. Communication was a challenge for most of my fellow doctors who did not know how to speak the local vernacular, which was bisaya. Most of them needed an interpreter, while I was on my own. Patients seemed more at ease with me, probably because there was no interpreter standing in-between.

They were able to relay their concerns to me and considered me as one of their own, just by my familiarity with bisaya. In medical school, we were taught to secure patients' privacy. In a way, having an interpreter diminishes the level of privacy between doctor and patient. I'm just glad I did not have to deal with that, even if it came to discussing non-medical issues with patients.

FELY RICARDO

I was first introduced to this medical mission by my sister Maria two years ago. It was an opportunity to return home, visit family and participate in a medical mission to help others. I can say without hesitation that it was one of the most gratifying experiences I have ever had. My husband Rick and I were overwhelmed emotionally by the

appreciation of our kababayans who are less fortunate and in need of humanitarian services.

We are blessed and thankful to God for allowing us to be a part of the Ohana and Ilocos Surian Association Medical Missions. We are most grateful that the Lord has given this organization wonderful leaders. It is a testimony to the work of God and the success of each mission because His hand is upon the lives of all involved.

We served alongside our fellow brothers and sisters in a place where we all came from and reminds us of where we all once were. We are eternally grateful to the Lord who continues to love and bless us financially, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

We are already looking forward to being a part of the next medical mission!

JOSE C DE LEON, M.D.

The Davao Medical Mission gave me a feeling that I have helped my fellow man. I believe that the world would be a better place if more people would choose to do good things without expecting anything in return.

I have heard some comments that medical mission volunteers are only providing "band aid" service for patients. Others question how we can possibly treat so many patients in such short a time. Still others say that we take away patients from local practitioners.

To these critics, I reply with a story of a boy who was throwing stones back to the ocean. I asked him why he was doing that, since there were so many stones laying around. I told him that it was a waste of his time and effort. He responded, 'At least I threw a stone back to where it belongs.' We saw over 1,500 patients in four days. Boy, that was a lot of stones we threw back to the ocean!

The mission required personal sacrifice from all who participated but no one made any negative comments and won't hesitate to join future missions. Personally, I have gained many new friends. If given a chance, I will again join a medical mission to the Philippines.

ERLINDA CACHOLA, M.D.

When we participate in medical missions, more than curing patients, we give hope to the needy. We show them that we care.

After our medical missions to Davao and Ilocos Sur last December, Typhoon Sendong struck Mindanao. I felt helpless and frustrated that our schedule did not allow us to help out there. However, we saw how others stepped up to the plate and gave aid to typhoon victims. This shows how enormous calamities can happen anytime, anywhere. But if we all help, it will make a difference in the lives of people who have been affected.

Let's give thanks to God for our blessings by unselfishly giving back to the needy and the suffering in our community and the world at large.

KATHY ADAOAG

I join medical missions every two years. I would do more if my resources would allow it. My heart breaks whenever I see people in dire need of help. Joining missions is my humble way of being able to help. One feels the rush of adrenaline when you get to the mission site early and see hundreds of people already waiting to be attended to.

I found out that the Davao Medical Mission needed volunteers so I decided to join them and see Davao again. It has been several years since my last visit there.

RUSSELL TACATA, M.D.

This is the first time that I joined a medical mission. It was so exciting to be able to help people who would otherwise not have any access to free medical treatment. Some of them walked miles to come to the mission site with their children. They understood the value of good health but did not have access to proper medical care.

I want to go back to places which really need the kind of medical missions that we do and give out vitamins and medicines for those who are ailing. We should consider going to the victims of Typhoon Sendong in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. ■

Joseph M. Zobian, M.D.



Board-certified ophthalmologist
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 Philippines
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by Atty. Emmanuel Samonte TIPON

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.’ . . . I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” - Martin Luther King

Tell that to the Filipinos, Mr. King. Google “Filipino racist” and 22,500,000 results show up. Yes 22 million.

Those in America need not look any farther. Most Filipinos, whether in Hawaii or in the mainland (continental U.S.A.) whenever they have immigration problems, rush to a white lawyer. When I attended a din-

Martin Luther King and Filipino Racists

ner of young Filipino lawyers in Honolulu and I went from table to table asking them what area of the law they were practicing in, none answered “immigration law”. They are aware of this “racist” tendency among their kababayans.

I asked a well-known white immigration lawyer in Hawaii whose clientele is mostly Filipinos why Filipinos preferred to go to white lawyers, and he answered that Filipinos believe that when a white lawyer handles their case, their case will be resolved in their favor. Yet if you look at the more than 2,000 cases that I read while writing my book on “Ineffective assistance of counsel in removal proceedings,” about 99% of those charged as being ineffective were white. No Filipino was accused of being ineffective.

ROOT OF FILIPINO RACISM

‘Filipino racism of course is rooted in an inferiority complex we inherited from being treated like inferiors by pale Spaniards for four centuries. Yet one would expect educated Filipinos to overcome this weakness and not act like the least educated

white Americans,” writes Howie Severino in his blog Sidetrip.

“The truth hurts, and it hurts as much as anyone else to see Filipino racism both in the Philippines and abroad, and to have to admit that many, but not all, Filipinos are racists,” wrote a commentator.

When the English sailor Captain Cooke came to the Hawaiian Islands, the natives thought that he was God because of his white complexion. That is the same attitude that many Filipinos have, especially among the least educated. But when Captain Cooke did something ungod like, the natives killed him. What did he do? According to some anecdotes he was “flirting” with the beautiful native ladies. God is not supposed to be “flirting”. Look at Jesus Christ, the son of God. When Mary Magdalene bared her throbbing breasts in their tent, Jesus turned his face away, resulting in an unprecedented temper tantrum by Mary.

OTHER CAUSES OF RACISM

Not all racism is rooted in inferiority. There is another form of racism based on superiority.

The Filipinos mock fellow Asians, especially the Chinese. They call them ridiculous names. Fearing the Chinese traders, the Philippine Congress enacted the retail trade nationalization law which limited retailing to Filipinos. So the Chinese engaged in wholesaling, leaving the “pitsy pitsy” retailing business to Filipinos. The Chinese taipans now control the Philippine economy. Who has the last laugh? It is said that there is no racism in China. That’s because they all look alike. Or all sound alike?

DISCRIMINATION AMONG FILIPINOS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The worst kind of racism is that practiced among Filipinos in the Philippines. Maybe because Filipinos don’t all look alike or don’t all sound alike. Tagalogs look down on Visayans, especially because of their accent. (They pronounce San Jose as San Hosee). Tagalogs also look down on Ilocanos calling them “kuripot” (stingy). In Hawaii, Ilocanos comprise about 90% of the more than 250,000 Filipinos in the islands. One dare not call

them “kuripot”. They are partying every weekend – not only in their homes but in the hotels in Waikiki. They fly to the Philippines every year bringing boxes of “pasalubong”. Which can get them into trouble at the airport when they return and immigration checks their data base and discover a long forgotten criminal conviction or immigration violation that leads to deportation proceedings. And what do they do? They go to the white immigration lawyers. Why? Because of the color of their skin, not because of the content of their character nor the content of their brains. ■

(ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. Office: 800 Bethel St., Suite 402, Honolulu, HI 96813. Tel. (808) 225-2645. E-Mail: filam-law@yahoo.com. Websites: www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com, and www.ImmigrationServiceUSA.com. Listen to the most witty, interesting, and informative radio program in Hawaii on KNDI at 1270, AM dial every Thursday at 7:30 a.m., rebroadcast at www.iluko.com.)

MAINLAND NEWS

Fil-Am Lincecum, Giants Agree to \$40.5M, 2-Year Deal

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Two-time NL Cy Young Award winner Tim Lincecum and the San Francisco Giants reached a verbal agreement Tuesday on a two-year contract worth \$40.5 million.

The deal includes a \$500,000 signing bonus and salaries of \$18 million this year and \$22 million in 2013, a person familiar with the agreement said Tuesday, speaking on condition of anonymity because the terms were not announced. Lincecum still must take a physical, which the Giants hope will happen early next week to complete the deal.

Lincecum, a Filipino-American, had asked for a near-record \$21.5 million in salary arbitration and had been offered \$17 million by the club. He remains eligible for free agency following the 2013 season.

The 27-year-old right-hander, the winning pitcher in the



Game 5 World Series clincher at Texas in 2010, earned \$13.1 million last season when he finished a two-year deal worth \$23.2 million.

When the sides exchanged numbers last Tuesday, Lincecum’s request neared the record amount sought in arbitration. Houston pitcher Roger Clemens asked for \$22 million in 2005.

San Francisco’s offer was the highest in arbitration history, topping the \$14.25 million the New York Yankees proposed for shortstop Derek Jeter in 2001.

As Giants vice president Bobby Evans expected, they found common ground around the midpoint of the figures — and did so in only a week.

San Francisco’s front office had hoped to lock up Lincecum and fellow starter Matt Cain with long-term deals, though Lincecum seemed set on keeping his options open in the near future on a shorter contract. A call to the pitcher was not immediately returned and his agent declined to comment.

With Lincecum earning a hefty contract, Evans joked last week, “I usually leave off the final three zeroes because it’s easier to calculate.”

In February 2010, Lincecum agreed to a \$23 million, two-year contract ahead of the scheduled hearing. He had been set at that time to ask for \$13 million.

That last contract was quite a raise for the undersized, hard-throwing pitcher his teammates call “Franchise”

and “Freak” after he earned \$650,000 in 2009.

Lincecum — the 10th overall draft pick out of Washington in 2006 — has been an All-Star in each of the past four seasons. He went 13-14 with a 2.74 ERA last year for his first losing record. The Giants

scored no runs while he was in the game in seven of 33 starts, had one run six times and two runs five times, according to STATS LLC.

San Francisco, which sold out every game in 2011 but missed the playoffs, will have a payroll of around \$130 million. ■

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COVO to Celebrate 27th Anniversary

THE CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS (COVO) will mark its 27th Anniversary with a lecture and panel discussion on Florentino Das' solo trans-Pacific voyage from Hawaii to the Philippines.

The lecture will be delivered by Cecilia Noble, a PhD candidate in sociology. Panelists will include Sylvia Day, Dr. Jun Colmenares and Dr. Patricia Halagao. The event is co-sponsored by the University of Hawaii Center for Philippine Studies and begins at 4:15 pm at the Philippine Consulate General of Hawaii.

On May 14, 1955, Das left Kewalo Basin aboard his homemade 24-foot wooden boat Lady Timarau, powered only by two 25-hp outboard motors and a canvas sail and with no modern communication or navigational instruments except a simple compass and the stars. His goal was to cross the Pacific Ocean and reach

his native Philippines.

Das encountered several storms along the way and was forced to land in Ponapei, Micronesia for several months to repair his boat. Urged by his sponsors to abort the journey, Das refused because he felt that Filipino national pride was on the line. He finally reached Siargao, Mindanao on April 25, 1956.

For his formidable feat and patriotic zeal, he was received and honored by Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay who bestowed on him the Legion of Honor and the honorary title of Commodore of the Philippine Navy. After his newfound fame, Das unfortunately slipped into obscurity. Unable to return to Hawaii, he became ill and died a poor man on October 7, 1964 in Manila. He was 46 years old.

COVO will host an awards ceremony, dinner and entertainment following the lecture and panel discussion. For RSVP and inquiries, please call Jun Colmenares at 510-734-4491. ■

City Suspends Spay, Neuter Program

DISCOUNT CERTIFICATES FOR THE CITY'S SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAM are no longer available because the \$330,000 appropriated for the program has been exhausted. Those interested in participating in the program will be forced to wait until the City's next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2012.

The certificates are sold to the public and redeemed with participating Spay/Neuter Program veterinarians, who

then redeem the certificates with the Hawaiian Humane Society. Certificates that have already been purchased may still be redeemed but no new certificates will be sold.

The Spay/Neuter program includes 16 clinics throughout the island. The veterinarians involved in the program voluntarily perform the surgeries at significantly reduced rates, resulting in tremendous cost savings to pet owners while addressing pet overpopulation on Oahu. ■

Applicants Wanted for State Boards and Commissions

WITH THE START OF THE 2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION, the Office of the Governor is urging interested individuals to consider serving the public as a member of a state board or commission.

The Office of the Governor is accepting applications for service on the Hawaii Tourism Authority, Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee, the Island Burial Councils and numerous other boards and commissions.

"Each of these seats fulfills a unique need in the oversight and leadership of some of the State's most important interests and industries," says Gov. Neil Abercrombie. "We are seeking leaders of diverse backgrounds who have the foresight and will to continue the forward momentum that Hawai'i has achieved over the past year toward a revitalized economy and unified, statewide community."

The Office of the Governor oversees more than 160 boards and commissions established by the state constitution, statutes or executive orders.

Vacancies include seats on boards and commissions focusing on a cross-section of interests and industries, including aerospace, alternative medicine, environment, cosmetology, civil defense, economic development, corrections, culture and the arts, education, festivals, health and human services, medical education, pest control, physical therapy, private detectives, public housing, small business, state parks, taxation, technology, tourism, voter registration, and wastewater treatment.

A complete list of vacancies, application instructions and other information are posted online at <http://hawaii.gov/gov/about/boards-commissions.html>. ■

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by Senator Will ESPERO

The Cost of War

President Barack Obama deserves much credit for ending the Iraqi War. His leadership was instrumental in returning the majority of soldiers deployed in Iraq by Christmas 2011. What a wonderful gift for the families of our troops.

In the decade following the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, the racial profiling, increase in hate crimes targeted toward specific ethnic and religious groups, and detention without trial, all resound of past eras of injustice.

Before 9/11, Pearl Harbor was the last time American soil was attacked by foreign enemies. More from prejudice than actual evidence or military necessity, and without judicial process, 110,000-120,000 Japanese, 67% of them American citizens, were removed their homes and sent to internment camps. The Census Bureau secretly provided confidential infor-

mation in the relocation effort. Many Japanese-Americans were held for the duration of the war without charge, hearing, or trial. The only basis for the unconstitutional deprivation was Japanese ancestry. In Hawaii, Japanese were largely spared the drastic measures partly because removing 35% (150,000) of our island population would have crippled the economy. Nevertheless, 1,200 to 1,800 were interned.

The "Cost of War" report is astounding. Over 6,000 Americans in uniform died in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. In Iraq alone, over 100,000 were sent through American detention centers. Held for years without a trial, many were subjected to torture and abuse, even though 2/3 were innocent of wrongdoing. The Veterans Administration reports over 170,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have been diagnosed with PTSD. Conservative estimates put the total number of injured U.S. and allied forces at 218,000. Over 2,000,000 million service members have been deployed. When soldiers come home, the wars return with them. Many of those who come home alive bear the emotional and physical scars of war. Families cope with

their loved ones' absence and worry about their safety, struggle with the instability and economic impact of their deployment, then deal with the changed person who comes home from the battlefield. Child abuse is three times higher and spouse/partner abuse is up 177% in homes with a deployed parent.

The war touched families on both sides of the world. Evander Andrews, just 36, was the first US soldier to die in the military response to 9/11, far from their family farm in Maine. His 9-year-old son Ethan stood near his father's wooden casket at Evander's funeral in Arlington National Cemetery. Evander's daughters, Leah, Courtney, and Mackenzie, were only 6, 4, and 2 when he died. On the other side of the world, in Afghanistan, five families grieved when a US bomb that failed to explode on impact was instead detonated by accident by five boys on their way to a picnic. Ramin, 15, died instantly. Both legs were blown off 12-year-old Soraj. Ismaeel, 16 and Farhad, 18, were injured, and 5 year old Waheed was wounded in the chest and head.

The war even intruded into ordinary Americans' daily lives. Under "Patriot Act" information gathering, for example, airline

records of ordinary travelers were turned over to the FBI not just for particular suspects, but for masses of customers to "identify suspicious travel patterns." Businesses turned over private information to the FBI and were banned from notifying their customers.

The Rand Report, discussed in the section on "Alternatives to Military Response," compared approaches from 1968-2006 to 268 groups that used terror tactics. Military response was the least effective method, resolving only 7% of the episodes of violence. Peaceful political accommodation (43%) and intelligence and policing methods (40%) were more effective and far less costly in terms of human life and treasury in eliminating terrorist groups. Ten percent stopped their violence because the acts itself achieved the groups' objective.

There is wisdom in the adage that those who fail to learn the lessons of history are bound to repeat its mistakes. I am introducing legislation in support of an education center on the site of the Honouliuli WWII internment camp to preserve its lessons for future generations. The Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii has taken the lead in preserving

this site, and their efforts have received Congressional support as well. Decades after being released from the internment camp, "Farewell to Manzanar" author Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, visited Manzanar to prove to herself that she had not imagined that period in her young life. As those who underwent the experiences pass away, the pain from actions taken out of fear and racism die with them. The lessons are too important to forget. Yes, we must defend and protect ourselves, but it is imperative that we act on evidence and reason and respect civil rights, as befits a nation known around the globe as the great defender of those rights.

"CostsofWar.org" contains an in-depth, comprehensive report by an international team of well-respected scholars, on the impact of the war on Iraq and Afghanistan. The in-depth, comprehensive study on how our American way of life has changed because of our military response to 9/11, was done by scholars from well respected institutes such as the Universities of Toronto, London, Warwick, Manchester, Massachusetts; the Harvard Kennedy School; Center for Defense Information; and New America Foundation. ■

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

HART Reports GET Collections Up

THE HONOLULU AUTHORITY FOR RAPID TRANSIT (HART) says collections for the general excise and use tax (GET) surcharge for the fourth quarter of 2011 has surpassed projections.



From October 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, the State collected \$49.02 million, or more than \$12.08 million than estimated. The amount marked the third consecutive quarter that revenue has surpassed projections.

Collection of the GET for Honolulu's rail project began in January 2007. To date, a total of \$810.4 million has been collected. HART's interim executive director and CEO Toru Hamayasu says the additional revenue is "good news" for the rail project, which has faced mounting public opposition due to concerns of rising costs.

"This strong revenue pat-

tern positions us well to bring the project in on time and on budget, and shows we will be able to pay for the project with the GET surcharge and federal funds," Hamayasu says.

HART's finance committee chair Don Horner says that the City remains ahead of projected revenues. To date, HART has contracted 50 of total construction costs and is \$300 million below planned expenses.

"HART has already collected about 25 percent of the GET revenues that is estimated without our financial plan," Horner says. "HART remains on track in terms of both revenues and costs." ■

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HONOLULU CAMPUS

PMAH Installs 34th Anniversary Officers and Board

by JP Orias

Hilton Hawaiian Village Coral Ballrooms I & II elicited "Ohs and Ahs" from the guests as they started entering the wide, white-accented venue of the Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii 34th Anniversary and General membership meeting.

Out-going president Joseph Zobian set the mood with the gavel sounding off the call-to-order. This was followed by official business reports of PMAH affiliates and invitational remarks from Dr. Christopher Flanders of Hawaii Medical Association.

Dinner entertainment featured love songs interpreted by Dr. Cielo Guillermo, Jay Flores, PT, and Dr. Cheryl Udani with Miss Monnette Forte adding a flair of Filipiniana with Mutya ng Pasig, a classic kundiman. Plaques of appreciation were given to Dr. May Ablan for her outstanding six-year service to PMAH from 2007 to 2011.

Plaques of Recognition were given to Drs. Sorbella Guillermo, Elizabeth Abinsay, Millette Oliveros and Antonio Cordero for their services to PMAH. The State House of Representatives via Reps. John Aquino, Rida Cabanilla and Joey Manahan presented Drs. Zobian and Villafuerte certificates of appreciation. The City and County of Honolulu through Councilmember Romy Cachola did likewise.

New Philippine Consul General Julius D. Torres installed the PMAH Officers and Board of Governors for 2012 headed by President Arnold Villafuerte, MD; Immediate Past President Joseph Zobian, MD; President-Elect Jose De Leon, MD; Secretary Russell Kelly, MD; and Treasurer Jerald Garcia, MD. Members of the Board of Governors include Edward Alquero, MD; Melvin Paul Palalay, MD; Reuben Guerrero, MD; Carolina Davide, MD; and Ray Romero, MD. Representatives of Affiliates were Bayanihan



PMAH's 2012 Officers and Board of Governors after oath taking (from left): Consul General Julius Torres; Carol Davide, MD; Ray Romero, MD; Leni Alvarez, MD; Jerry Garcia, MD (Treasurer); Nicanor Joaquin, MD; Russell Kelly, MD (Secretary); Joseph Zobian, MD (IPP) and Arnold Villafuerte, MD (President)

Clinic Without Walls' Nicanor Joaquin, MD; PAMH Foundation's Mary May Z. Ablan, MD; and Ohana Medical Missions Inc.'s Elenita Alvarez, MD.

This was followed by the ceremonial passing of the gavel and acceptance speech of the new president who talked about the theme for his term: "Partnering to Improve Care—a reminder that we can and should work together and start communicating and sharing our resources, especially during this time of economic challenges."

Dr. Villafuerte also unveiled his plans for 2012, which includes the presentation of the Ety Bautista, MD Award. Dr. Bautista, who has since retired in the Philippines, is the founding father and first president of PMAH which was established on August 30, 1978.

The dance floor was formally opened with Filipino traditional dances with performers from the PMAH membership, nurses and friends from the community.

"The line-up was all about

partnering" quipped impresario Leo Rojas Gozar.

First to enter from center stage were the Los Bailes de Ante Año dancers Dr. Carolina Davide and Jimmy Adaoag, Drs. Glorifin Belmonte and Joseph Zobian, Dr. Sorbella Guillermo and Mr. Diony Guillermo, Dr. & Mrs. Nick (Imelda) Joaquin, Dr. and Mrs. Fortunato (Nieva) Elizaga, Dr. Jose De Leon & Ms. Ceres Yanong, Dr. Iris Meily and Atty. Kevin Chee and Dr. & Mrs. Arnold (Dory) Villafuerte. They were then joined for the Gran Rigodon de Honor by Mr. & Mrs. Gerhart (Nancy) Walch, Mr. & Mrs. Edgar (Elsa) Talavera, Drs. Russell & Cynthia Kelly, Drs. Vernon and Jojie Waite Ansdell, Mr. & Mrs. Alfred (Emie) Alcain, Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy (Kathy) Adaoag and Leo Gozar partnering with Dr. Davide.

Expect more partnering to improve care during the term of the new PMAH president Dr. Arnold Villafuerte. ■

Abercrombie Proposes Initiatives for Economic Recovery

GOV. NEIL ABERCROMBIE DELIVERED HIS SECOND STATE OF THE STATE address before the state Legislature, laying out investment goals that build upon the economic progress made during the last year.

"There was no way for us to have balanced our budget and achieved today's fiscally favorable outlook without the commitment of everyone," says Abercrombie, who thanked state employees and recognized the Legislature for their support.

Abercrombie's administration will continue to press for a resolution to the state teachers' contract stalemate. He called on

the Hawaii State Teachers Association to provide a proposal as soon as possible.

"We must continue our focus on our children and students' performance. We wanted to cross the Race to the Top finish line side-by-side with the HSTA. Make no mistake we will cross that finish line," he says.

The governor also proposed a number of initiatives that he will introduce this session to strengthen the economic recovery that began in 2011.

These proposals include:



Gov. Abercrombie

- Working with the Legislature to identify and approve Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), which will result in construction jobs and address critical infrastructure needs.

- Investing \$5 million towards the preservation and protection of the state's watersheds.
- Making the TV and Film Tax Credit permanent.
- Investing \$1 million towards early childhood education and health initiatives.
- Investing \$1.4 million to establish Aging and Disabilities

Resource Centers to assist kupuna who face the challenges of aging and restricted mobility.

- An emergency appropriation for a grant of \$1.8 million to support the National Kidney Foundation of Hawaii in light of the closure of two Hawaii Medical Center hospitals.
- Improvements to the criminal justice system as proposed by the Justice Reinvestment Initiative.
- Support for an undersea cable connecting the islands' grids to provide stable, reliable electricity between islands.

"I know for many it is hard to

see beyond today's needs when today's needs loom so large and immediate," says Abercrombie. "But unless dealt with now, today's challenges can only multiply in difficulty. We have an obligation to make a better future for our children. We live in paradise and taking care of each other is a value that is fundamental to the aloha spirit."

Abercrombie will submit measures that were mentioned in his speech as well as other proposals such as a bill to make appropriations for fiscal years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 to recapitalize the Emergency and Budget Reserve Fund and the Hawaii Hurricane Relief Fund. ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

PNoy Orders Strengthening of Security Following Makati Explosion

ILIGAN CITY, Philippines (Xinhua) -- **PRESIDENT BENIGNO AQUINO III SAID** on Wednesday that he ordered the strengthening of security of possible targets of terrorists following the explosion that rocked Makati City on Monday.

Aquino also called on the public to be vigilant to ensure everybody's safety.

"I have ordered our security forces to increase what we call as hardening aspects in urban, potential areas, which could be



targets of those who want to sow terror," he told reporters during his visit in Iligan City.

The President said that the police, along with the village guards, will conduct more visibility foot patrols.

He said that the police were still determining who were re-

sponsible in the recent explosion in a vacant lot in Makati City.

Aquino refused to say whether the recent incident was part of the plot that was earlier uncovered for the Feast of the Black Nazarene earlier this month. (www.philstar.com) ■

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by Reuben S. SEGURITAN

Opting-Out to Prevent Longer Wait for Visa

naturalization of the parent.

The automatic conversion is good if you're a national of any country – except for the Philippines. Based on the latest visa bulletin, for other countries a conversion from F2B to F1 is advantageous because the waiting time would be cut short by over one year (about 4 months for Mexico).

But for the Philippines, the cut-off date for F2B beneficiaries is September 1, 2001, while for F1 it is April 15, 1997. In other words, for Philippine nationals the conversion actually adds more than 4 years to the wait since the F1 category is more backlogged than F2B.

Section 6 of the CSPA remedies this inequity by allowing the F2B beneficiary to "opt-out" of the conversion by electing to remain an F2B beneficiary. This is done through a

written request to the officer in charge of the appropriate U.S. embassy, who then issues a decision and sends it to the beneficiary and the Department of State's visa issuance unit.

If the opt-out request is approved, the beneficiary's eligibility will be determined as if the parent had never naturalized and the beneficiary will remain in F2B.

To illustrate, let's say X is the 33-year old son of a Filipino mother who recently became a naturalized U.S. citizen. On August 30, 2001, the mother filed an I-130 petition on X's behalf when X was only 23 years old. The F2B priority date is already current, but since his mother recently naturalized, X automatically moved to the F1 category where the waiting time is longer by over 4 years compared to F2B. X can avoid the backlog in F1 by opting out of the conversion by sending a formal request to the USCIS in Manila.

This provision of the CSPA applies retroactively, that is, even to those F2B preference petitions filed before the law was passed on August 6, 2002, and regardless of the age of the beneficiary. Note that the opting-out can be done even after the conversion takes place because the law specifically allows a conversion to be revoked.

It used to be that only beneficiaries of petitions initially filed in F2B could benefit from opting out, and not those who started out in F2A and later moved to F2B when they turned 21 years old. This interpretation resulted in older brothers and sisters being able to immigrate under F2B much earlier than their younger siblings who had to wait longer under F1.

To illustrate, say X in the example above was under 21 when his mother filed the I-130. Since he started out in the F2A category and converted to the F1 category when his mother

naturalized, under the old interpretation of Section 6 he could not opt out of the conversion. He would have to remain under F1 and wait until a visa becomes available.

Because of the unfairness that resulted, in 2006 the USCIS reevaluated its reading of Section 6 and later allowed it to be applied to all beneficiaries 21 years and over in the F2B category, regardless of whether they started out as F2A or F2B.

In the example above, this means that it does not matter if X was under 21 or over 21 at the time the I-130 was filed by his mother. If he turns 21 before his mother naturalizes, his petition would be automatically transferred to F1 category, but he can then opt-out if it is more beneficial to remain in F2B. ■

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

Palace Hails Pinoy Crewmen Who Helped Save Passengers of Italian Cruise Ship

by Aurea CALICA
Sunday, January 22, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY HAILED THE FILIPINO CREWMEMBERS** of the Italian cruise ship Costa Concordia for the heroism displayed in saving the passengers of the ill-fated luxury liner.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Abigail Valte assured the crew that the government would provide them with benefits and other assistance through the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

"We want to join (in expressing) admiration for the seafarers," Valte said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) also hailed the Filipino crew for their heroism and dedication to their work.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario assured the crew of the government's continued support and assistance.

"You are men and women of courage, heroism and dedication. We commend you for showing to the world the best traits of the Filipino seafarers. In the words of President Aquino, you are our 'sailing ambassadors,'" Del Rosario said.

Del Rosario said the Philip-

pine embassy in Rome had received positive feedback from other crewmembers and passengers about the Filipino crew's brave acts manifesting competence, professionalism and humanity, even under extreme pressure.

Del Rosario said the DFA recognizes and appreciates all the assistance provided by the embassy in Rome, the Filipino community in Italy, the local residents of Giglio Island, and the Italian authorities.

Costa Crociere S.p.A, the company that owns the cruise ship, has given assurance that it will give full compensation to the Filipino crewmembers who lost their belongings during the tragedy.

Costa Crociere said they would issue a formal letter of undertaking detailing the company's firm commitment to the Filipino crew.

On Thursday, the first batch of 108 Filipino crewmembers of the shipwrecked Costa Concordia arrived in Manila on board Cathay Pacific and Thai Airways flights from Rome.

Philippine Ambassador to Italy Virgilio Reyes Jr. personally assisted the Filipino crewmembers when they boarded their flight home.

Out of the 296 Filipino

crewmembers of the Concordia, 182 came home, while three others are scheduled to leave Italy yesterday.

Before their flight home, the Filipino crew was offered a Thanksgiving Mass organized by Filipino priests at a local church in Rome near the Hilton Hotel where they were staying.

In his message after the mass, Reyes commended the Filipino crew for their courage, perseverance and professionalism.

He also thanked the members of the Filipino community for helping the embassy in providing basic necessities to the crew.

Embassy officials and concerned members of the Filipino community joined the Filipino seafarers in a simple dinner, during which they were given winter clothes, shoes, bags and other necessities.

The Filipino seafarers were commended for staying on to help evacuate other passengers from the cruise ship after its captain allegedly abandoned ship and fled to safety.

The 17-deck liner crashed into rocks off Giglio on the night of Jan. 13 with 4,229 passengers and crew from 60 countries on board and began to keel just as passengers were sitting down to supper at the start of their cruise. (www.philstar.com)■



Filipino crewmembers of the stricken ship MV Costa Concordia arrived home to heroes' welcome a week after their ordeal off the coast of Grosseto, Tuscany, Italy.



Michael A. McMann, M.D.

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Pasay Court Rejects GMA Petition to Withdraw Arrest Warrant

by **Perseus ECHIMINADA**
 Thursday, January 26, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - A PASAY CITY REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC) JUDGE JUNKED yesterday the motion of former President and Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to recall the arrest warrant issued against her.

RTC branch 112 Judge Jesus Mupas, in a three-page order, said there was no compelling reason for the court to recall the arrest warrant issued last Nov. 12, clearing the way for the arraignment of Arroyo and her co-accused, former Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr. and former Maguindanao election officer Lintang Bedol on Feb. 13.

An electoral sabotage case had been filed against Arroyo by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in relation to alleged cheating in Maguindanao during the 2007 midterm election.

"Considering the absence of counter-affidavit of Arroyo in the information filed by Comelec despite notice, the court believes that there were reasonable grounds to issue the arrest warrant," the order reads.

Comelec Chairman Sixto Brillantes welcomed the decision of the court, saying it was a pos-

itive development in the poll body's effort to prosecute the former leader for manipulating the results of the 2007 senatorial elections.

Brillantes said the Comelec was very confident that the court would dismiss the petition to recall the arrest warrant because they had filed the appropriate charges.

Defense lawyer Benjamin Santos earlier filed the motion to quash the arrest warrant on the ground that there was no evidence pointing to Arroyo as having committed the tampering of election returns or any evidence that she conspired with the person tampering the evidence.

"There was no probable cause substantiating the issuance of warrant of arrest and the issuance of the same is a blatant deprivation of the accused's constitutional right," the motion said.

The Comelec, however, filed an opposition arguing that the judge merely determines the probability and not the certainty of guilt of the accused, and in doing so, he need not conduct a hearing because the information filed alleged adequate facts to support the indictment of the former head of state of the electoral sabotage offense.

Opposition to the motion also included the testimony of former provincial administrator



Judge Jesus Mupas

Norie Unas, who directly linked Arroyo to the electoral fraud.

Felda Domingo, Branch 112 spokesperson, said the arraignment of Arroyo and her co-accused was set on Feb. 13, after which the court will tackle other pending motions filed by the lawyers of Arroyo.

Ampatuan has filed a motion to dismiss the case while Bedol has filed a motion for the determination of probable cause.

"All these motions will be resolved by the court after the arraignment," Domingo said.

Because of the tight schedule of the court, which is presently deliberating at least 400 cases, she said it is likely that the trial would be scheduled once a month.

Ferdinand Topacio, Arroyo's legal spokesman, said the former president may file a motion for reconsideration before Judge

Mupas.

"If that (motion for reconsideration) will be rejected, then the lawyers can elevate the matter to the Court of Appeals for certiorari," Topacio said in a telephone interview.

COURT WILL TACKLE GMA'S TRANSFER

The court has also set a hearing on Feb. 3 to tackle the motion of the Comelec for the transfer of Arroyo from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) to a regular jail facility.

Domingo said Arroyo's attending physician was directed to submit a medical report and make a recommendation if the patient is already fit to be discharged from the hospital.

She said there is no need for the doctor to testify on the medical certificate and recommendation will be accepted.

However, Domingo said the defense will be given time to answer the motion of the Comelec for the transfer to a jail facility before it will be submitted for resolution.

Ma. Elena Bautista-Horn, spokesperson for the former leader, said Arroyo would abide by the decision of the court as regards the motion of the Comelec to have her transferred to a regular jail.

Arroyo is currently under detention at the VMMC in Quezon City.

"We always abide by the ruling of the courts. We have always done that. So whatever decision the court will make on calls to have her transferred elsewhere, we will abide by that," Horn said. "But of course, she will avail of all available legal recourse on that issue."

MORE CASES AGAINST ABALOS

The poll body also filed yesterday 11 additional counts of electoral sabotage against former Comelec chairman Benjamin Abalos and the former chair of South Cotabato's Provincial Board of Canvasser Lilian Suan-Radam before the Pasay City RTC branch 117.

Comelec legal department head Esmeralda Ladra filed the information, which was raffled yesterday morning and ended

up in the sala of Judge Eugenio de la Cruz.

Ladra told The STAR that the case was originally filed with the RTC 114, which issued a warrant of arrest against Radam.

Radam surfaced last October at the Department of Justice (DOJ) and implicated Abalos in the alleged election cheating.

"We withdrew the case against Radam and re-filed it, this time including chairman Abalos," Ladra said.

Luithe Cabangunay, RTC 117 clerk of court, said the judge will study the case before setting the date for arraignment.

Brigido Dulay, counsel for Abalos, said they are ready to face the charges in court.

The complaint alleged that Radam and Abalos tampered, falsified and increased the votes of administration senatorial candidates in the Provincial Certificate of Canvassing during the May 24, 2007 national canvassing.

The alleged tampered results came from the city of General Santos and the towns of Polomolok, Tampakan, Tupi, Banga, Koronadal, Norala, Sto. Niño, Surrallah and Tantangan.

The alleged tampered election results were submitted to the National Board of Canvassers, which was then canvassing the senatorial election results at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) in Pasay City.

Comelec spokesman James Jimenez said that based on the additional complaint they filed, Abalos personally instructed Radam to come up with a 12-0 result in favor of administration candidates.

The votes were supposedly tampered for Senators Joker Arroyo, Edgardo Angara, Ralph Recto, Mike Defensor, Prospero Pichay Jr., Tito Sotto, Vicente Magsaysay, Tessie Aquino-Oreta, Juan Miguel Zubiri and Luis Singson.

Votes obtained by Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate Loren Legarda were also allegedly tampered.

Jimenez said the Comelec filed additional charges because Abalos was not included in the previous complaint filed against Radam. (www.philstar.com) ■

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February 4, 2012, 6pm • Pacific Beach Hotel • For more info, contact Marilyn @ 678-1482

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF SURONG VALLEY ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL, ALA MOANA HOTEL / SATURDAY

February 11, 2012, 6pm • Ala Moana Hotel • For more details, contact Felix Agraan @748-5742

58TH ANNIVERSARY OF HAWAII FILIPINO WOMEN'S CLUB & 38TH ANNUAL TERNO BALL / SATURDAY

March 3, 2012, 6pm • Ala Moana Hotel • Contact: Carmen Cabrerros @ 358-3845 or Jenny Quezon @ 840-0987

GLOBAL NEWS

More Foreign Domestic Workers Apply for Right of Abode in HK

MANILA, Philippines - **THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS** applying for right of abode in Hong Kong increased from an average of just one a month before the landmark permanent residency ruling last September to more than 200 the following month, The South China Morning Post (SCMP) reported.

In September last year, the Hong Kong High Court ruled that the exclusion of foreign domestic workers from a rule that allows foreigners to apply for the right to settle in the city after seven years of uninterrupted residency was unconstitutional.

The court ruled in favor of Evangelina Banao Vallejos, a Filipino domestic helper who has lived in Hong Kong for 25 years.

While the number is just a tiny fraction of the reported 125,000 helpers who have lived in Hong Kong for at least seven years, it is a significant rise that has caused some alarm among the local populace.

In November, a total of 334 applications were filed. Starry Lee Wai-king, vice-chair of the Democratic

Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, said she was alarmed by the "astonishing" increase in applications.

But some quarters described as "just a scare tactic" the alarmist estimates that as many as 500,000 immigrants could flood into Hong Kong - computing that each domestic helper brought in a spouse and two children.

The government has suspended the processing of right of abode applications pending a final decision on its appeal against the ruling in favor of Vallejos. The appeal on the Vallejos case will be heard on Feb. 21.

The number of applications for verification of eligibility for a permanent identity card for the months of October, November and December are 148, 334 and 149, respectively.

In August and September, before the residency ruling, the number was 16 applications a month.

Mark Daly, a human rights lawyer who represented the domestic helpers, said the number of applications filed in the past three months



Sunday break for Foreign Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

supported claims that the government's estimate was "wildly exaggerated."

Daly pointed out that the foreign domestic helpers are just seeking the right to apply for right of abode, not an automatic right to permanent residency.

He said the Immigration Department would determine who would be given permanent residence.

Eni Lestati of the Asian Migrants' Coordinating Body said "it is proven that not many of us are so excited to be Hong Kong permanent residents."

However, New People's Party chair Regina Ip Lau Suk-ye said "the real threat will only come after the final court decision." (www.philstar.com) ■

5 Pinay Victims of Illegal Recruiter Rescued in China

MANILA, Philippines - **FIVE FILIPINO WOMEN WERE RESCUED** from their employers in Shenzhen, China, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

Quoting a report from the Philippine Consulate General in Guangzhou, the DFA said the rescue was made with the assistance of the Shenzhen Public Security Bureau and the local police.

One Filipina was assisted on Dec. 29, 2011, another was rescued when police conducted a raid on Jan. 8, and three were assisted on Jan. 10.

The five women, between 22 to 41 years old, were recruited by a Fil-

ipina based in Macau to work as English tutors to wealthy families in China.

They were promised a salary of RMB4,800 (around \$800) a month and a valid visa for six months.

However, they were actually employed as household workers with a salary of only RMB3,800 a month (about \$500). The victims were informed by the agency upon arrival that they have to work for at least two months without any salary because they need to pay their visa fee amounting to RMB8,000 (\$1,300) each.

Three of the victims previously worked legally as household service workers in Hong Kong. One of the Fil-

ipinas, aged 28, had permanent employment in the province. The youngest graduated from college only last year.

The consulate assisted the Filipinos in filing their complaints before the proper authorities in Shenzhen. Two of the women were repatriated Monday, while the three other victims are being provided temporary accommodation by the consulate pending an investigation by Chinese authorities.

The DFA warned would-be overseas workers that foreign household service workers are not allowed in China. The penalty for overstaying in China is a minimum detention of one month and a fine of RMB5,000 (\$750).

(www.philstar.com) ■

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