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JULY 21, 2012

NEWS EDITION

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

COVO TO HOST 25TH ANNUAL CONVENTION, 6TH LAPU-LAPU AWARDS

By Serafin Colmenares Jr., Ph.D.



Members of COVO during last year's convention on Maui

The Congress of Visayan Organizations (COVO), the umbrella of Visayan organizations in Hawaii, will hold its 25th Annual Statewide Convention and 6th Biennial Lapu-Lapu Awards Gala on Sunday, August 12, 2012.

The convention is scheduled from 8 am to 4 pm at the Philippine Consulate General Iana'i, while the awards gala will be held later in the evening from 6 pm to 11 pm at the Ala Moana Hotel Hibiscus ballroom. The year's convention theme is "COVO: Working with the Community."

CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS

COVO was founded in 1985 and has about 15 member organizations representing the Visayas and

Mindanao. Delegates from member organizations across Oahu, Kauai, Maui, Lanai and the Big Island will congregate in Honolulu to discuss issues facing the organization and to consider short and long term projects and activities for the group to undertake. Conventions are held on a rotating basis between Oahu and the neighbor islands.

COVO's goals are to unite all Visayan organizations in Hawaii, preserve and promote Visayan language and culture, and assist in the socio-economic uplift of Filipinos, particularly

those of Visayan ancestry.

According to president Jane Clement, COVO has been, since its inception, one of the most active organizations in the state and has partnered with other organizations, including the Filipino Community Center, the Philippine Consulate, the UH Center for Philippine Studies, the City & County of Honolulu and the State of Hawaii, in various projects, including humanitarian assistance to the Philippines.

COVO's annual events include the Santo Niño fiesta in

(continued on page 4)

OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS TO HOST 5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

by Serafin Colmenares Jr., Ph.D.

THE 5TH ANNUAL HAWAII CONFERENCE on Language Access will be held August 22-23, 2012 at the East-West Center on the University of Hawaii-Manoa



Last year's conference attracted a sizeable audience

campus. The theme of the conference is "Translation: Maximizing Quality & Minimizing Costs."

The conference is spon-

sored by the Office of Language Access (OLA), the state entity in charge of providing education, over-

(continued on page 5)

INDONESIA SCRAMBLES TO END ASEAN RIFT

by Pia Lee-Brago

MANILA, Philippines - Indonesia's top diplomat embarked on an emergency swing through Southeast Asia yesterday to try to end disagreements over territorial rifts in the South China Sea

and push for a new pact aimed at avoiding future clashes in the volatile region.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa said he



Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa (left) is joined by Indonesian ambassador Yohanes Kristiarto Soeryo Legowo | Rudy Santos

met his Philippine counterpart in Manila yesterday and would fly to other Southeast Asian nations to

(continued on page 6)

LEGAL NOTES
H-1B Petitions Under Increased Scrutiny

13

MAINLAND NEWS
U.S. Pinoy For Good Governance Calls for Boycott on Chinese-Made Goods

14

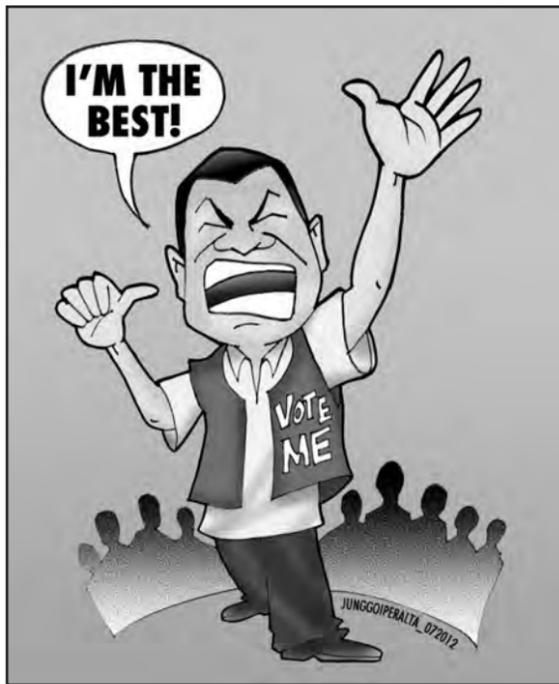
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EDITORIALS

Why Not Run a Clean Election?

Negative campaigning has sadly become a part of every election. Like clockwork, the public is bombarded with a slew of campaign advertisements in each election. When the stakes are high, some campaigns unfortunately choose to hit below the belt. Gone are the days when accusations were spread via mass mailings or through the grapevine. Tech-savvy campaigns nowadays attack one another via blogs, email blasts, video clips and other forms of social media. Much of these attacks are baseless accusations and distorted half-truths that support a candidate's self-serving political agenda. Not surprisingly, the negative campaigning has led more than one political observer to conclude that "politics is indeed a contact sport."

Even a state like Hawaii, for all of its aloha spirit, is not immune. Some voters may recall the 1986 gubernatorial race when a smear campaign torpedoed Cec Heftel. In the 2004 Honolulu mayoral race, malicious rumors involving the leading candidate's wife surfaced during the final days of the election. The story spread quickly over the internet. The leading candidate's once strong lead evaporated, allowing his opponent to eek out an 11th hour victory. Yet again, in 2010, candidates for governor resorted to personal attacks and comparisons of their character, ethnicity and backgrounds.



The trend has continued in 2012 where a certain mayoral candidate found himself the target of a pro-union group for his anti-rail stance. That group launched a series of TV and radio ads accusing him of illegal campaign contributions during his 1998 gubernatorial campaign.

Fortunately, past elections in Hawaii have shown that the majority of voters are turned off by negative campaigning tactics. In fact, the mud-slinger's attack ads often damage his or her own chance of success at the polls. We hope that Hawaii's voters have had enough of politicians who "talk stink" about each other, when they should instead stick to the issues and their platforms. While politicians cannot control the actions of their opponents, they can still control their own actions and how they respond.

As the Primary and General elections near, we can expect the rhetoric, character assassinations and name-calling to heat up. We therefore encourage voters to give a second thought to candidates who courageously choose to take the road less traveled when attacked. Doing so speaks volumes to the testament of their character and who they really are inside. Those are the type of people we need in office—not those who tear down others for their own personal gain. ■

World-Class

While the country's airports continue to be panned by travelers, high-end magazines are heaping praise on Philippine travel destinations. Recently, Travel + Leisure Magazine picked Boracay as the world's best island getaway in its 2012 awards. Discovery Shores, also in Boracay, was chosen as the best hotel spa in Asia and the second best hotel resort in the world.

The latest accolade came from Vogue magazine, bible of the world of high fashion. In its UK edition to be released next month, Vogue picked Ariara Island in the Calamian group in Palawan as the Number One travel destination. Tourism Secretary Ramon Jimenez said another UK-based publication, Times Magazine, also picked Ariara as the "Best Private Island Resort." Jimenez said the island also received good reviews from other British publications. The recognition comes on the heels of the se-

lection of the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River in Palawan as one of the New7Wonders of Nature.

Palawan and Boracay have long been popular travel destinations for Filipinos, and the recent international accolades validate the locals' preferences. Tourism officials and industry players can study how the sites attracted international attention. There are many other destinations around the country that are popular among Filipinos, from the traditional ones such as the Ifugao Rice Terraces to emerging tourist spots such as Mt. Kitanglad in Mindanao. Communities in these areas will benefit from tourism, particularly the type that promotes environmental protection.

So far the sites that have attracted international recognition are geared toward the high-end market and developed by the private sector. The government can do its part by improving tourism infrastructure in other destinations. The recent honors for Philippine destinations show that the country has world-class sites. More Philippine destinations can be added to the list. (www.philstar.com) ■



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The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle is published weekly by the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle Inc. It is mailed directly to subscribers and distributed at various outlets around Oahu and the neighbor islands. Editorial and advertising deadlines are three weeks prior to publication date. Subscriptions are available at \$75 per year for Oahu and the neighbor islands, continental U.S. \$85, foreign country \$95. Copyright 2007-2012. The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle Inc. is located at 94-356 Waipahu Depot, Waipahu, HI 96797. Telephone: (808) 678-8930. Facsimile: (808) 678-1829. E-mail: filipinochronicle@gmail.com. Opinions expressed by the columnists and contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle management. Reproduction of the contents in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission from the management. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

China Misreads Manila's Silence Over Stuck Frigate

GOTCHA

by Jarius BONDOC

China showed no gratitude, though. Instead it flaunted how it got Cambodia to do its bidding against the Philippines last week. Such boorishness displays anew China's true nature as neighborhood bully.

Beijing should not misread Manila's silence as timidity. Diplomacy is thinking twice before saying nothing. By not filing a diplomatic note, Manila spared China's military from shame. The Chinese frigate No. 560 boastfully has been leading patrols in the West Philippine (South China) Sea. In beaching at Hasa-Hasa Shoal 60 miles off Palawan, it revealed China's unfamiliarity with waters it baselessly claims as its. Too China's vaunted navy appears to not possess reliable depth-perception gear. And the frigate captain's incompetence showed in navigating an area without studying first. It had to take six rescue vessels to un-wedge his mighty warship.

By keeping quiet Manila refrained from rubbing in all this. Does it have to point up what the world's navies already are noting? What is to be gained from further humiliating the bully neighbor who climbed over the fence to steal fruits, only to get his breeches caught on a tree branch?

But Beijing's Communist Party jingoists couldn't help themselves. As Frigate 560 double-timed for home, they gloated over Manila's setback in last week's annual ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting. The English-language party mouthpiece Global Times made it look like the ASEAN does not heed the Philippines' rants against Chinese intrusions. Since it does not have the diplomatic or military influence to back up its cries, the paper said, Manila should shut up.

The Philippines had brought up with ASEAN its two-month standoff at Panatag Shoal, which China is claiming as well. This should have been stated in a joint communiqué, as all agenda are, at the close of ASEAN confabs. But host Cambodia, a beneficiary of accel-

erated Chinese trade and aid, refused to include it. Supposedly ASEAN by policy sidesteps bilateral feuds. Not even Manila's pointing out that an ASEAN statement once mentioned Cambodia's border tiffs with Thailand could make Phnom Penh budge. For the first time in its 45-year history, the ASEAN failed to issue a closing bulletin. The Philippines looked isolated, although majority of the ten members had wanted the Panatag row written in.

By rubbing this in, bully China is bragging that it can get its way with sovereign member-states of ASEAN. It thinks nothing of disconcerting Cambodia by picturing the latter as an obedient vassal. It also forgets that Phnom Penh will not be the ASEAN venue next year. Till then, the Philippines can build up strength. For, diplomacy is also the art of saying "Nice doggie!" till you can pick up a rock.

Congress will investigate the production of substandard e-passports by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. In seeking the probe, Agham party Rep. Angelo Palmones fears a national security breach. Terrorists may be using the defective travel documents to conceal their true identities.

Valenzuela City Rep. Magi Gunigundo and Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares reportedly want the inquiry to include the cost of the e-passports. BSP bids and awards committee chairman Enrique Domingo and vice Vincent Solido will be called to explain the flaws.

The BSP makes the e-passport inside pages for the Department of Foreign Affairs. The covers, embedded with microchips containing the holders' basic information, are subcontracted to Oberthur of France for P900 million.

Overseas workers and frequent travelers complained about the low quality. Allegedly the cover disintegrates when removed from the plastic case commonly sold outside the DFA consular offices. Inside pages fall off when immigration officers swipe the e-passport in validation machines. (See Gotcha, 9 July 2012) Holders are subjected to questioning and delayed from flights. The BSP

takes two weeks to repair e-passports returned to the DFA.

The DFA has acknowledged the reports but calls them isolated. Still Alagad Rep. Rodante Marcoleta says it merits examination.

Oberthur, through local partner Sinophil, bagged a P900-million contract in 2008 to produce the e-covers at \$5.72 apiece. With the deal expiring late this year, the BSP held a bidding last February in which Oberthur-Sinophil quoted only \$2.59 apiece, or less than half.

The BSP did not flinch that the subcontractor had been making a killing from 10,000 passports a month in the past four years. Or that the company had a three-month delivery backlog.

Oberthur-Sinophil was disqualified in April only after failing twice to submit samples that complied with the BSP's standards. Its cloth-paper material and gold-ink printing were deemed below par.

Still, last month the BSP placed an "emergency order" of 300,000 e-covers from Oberthur-Sinophil. The price: \$1,716,000, or the old price of \$5.72 each.

Just off the press is the book, *The Four Chambers of My Heart*, by Camilo I. Porciuncula, the oldest cardiologist at the Philippine Heart Center.

The autobiography dwells on Porciuncula's four devotions: as heart doctor, educator, artist and gentleman farmer. Turning 80 today, Porciuncula is called "Doctor Doctor" because of his two degrees. He is a Doctor of

Medicine and has a PhD in Physiology and Biomedical Engineering. He teaches both medicine and engineering. He paints, plays the violin and piano, and acts on stage. Weekends he plants medicinal herbs. He once served as head of the PHC management committee.

There must be a lesson somewhere there about longevity. (www.philstar.com) ■

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Left to right: Marsha Kamanao, VP-Operations; Matthew Casamina, VP-Productions; Jenny Castro, Loan Processing Manager; Joanne Mariano, Underwriter/Processor; Michelle Lestino, Admin. Asst.; Shandy Andrews, Loan Asst.; Roland Casamina, President/CEO; Evelyn Casamina, Chief Financial Officer

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

January, its anniversary celebration in February, the Filipino Fiesta and Parade in May, the annual statewide convention in August and Pasko in December. In addition, special projects include the annual scholarship program, sister-city projects, the Visayan Hour radio program, the Visayan centennial celebration, the Florentino Das book project, disaster fundraising drives and others. COVO also participates in various events organized by other community groups.

"Because of its active involvement in the community and the importance and quality of its projects and activities, COVO received the Philippine Presidential (Banaag) Award for outstanding Filipino organizations overseas in 2010," says Clement.

COVO's past presidents include: Firmo Dayao, Atty. Bernaldo Bicoy, Rudolph Pacarro, Nicanor Musico, Cora-

zon Roa, Gerry Miñoza, Dr. Danelo Cañete, Dr. Serafin Colmenares Jr., Benjamin Sanchez Jr., and Margarita Hopkins. Recently, the COVO Foundation was organized as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization and will serve as COVO's fundraising arm for its various projects.

ANNUAL STATEWIDE CONVENTION

This year, the focus of the convention will be on COVO's continuing work and collaboration with the community. Convention speakers are Dr. Danelo Cañete, well-known cardiologist and former COVO president, who will propose a project to "light up" rural communities in the Visayas using solar power, and Rose Churma, new president of the Filipino Community Center, who will discuss possible collaboration and partnership between the FilCom Center and COVO.

The convention fee is \$20



(Left to right) COVO executive director Jun Colmenares, Dr. Letty Colmenares, past COVO president Dayday Hopkins, Dr. Lindy Aquino, COVO president Jane Clement, Consul Lolit Capco, Maui Santo Niño Club president Liezl Oandasan.

per delegate which includes breakfast and lunch. The convention will open with registration and breakfast at 7:30 am. The program officially starts at 9 am. After the invocation and singing of the national anthems, Clement will deliver the opening remarks.

Delegates will be welcomed by Richard Ancog, president of the Oahu Visayan Council and convention host. Speakers will be introduced by Jun Colmenares, COVO executive director, who will also moderate the discussion. An open forum will follow the presentations, after which lunch will be served.

At 1 pm, the business portion of the convention will take place with Clement presiding. Reports from the COVO president, various island councils, and standing and special committees will be given. Resolutions will be presented and discussed for proper action. The convention ends as soon as the venue and host for next year's convention are identified.

THE LAPU-LAPU AWARDS

The 6th Lapu-Lapu Awards Gala will be held in the evening of the same day. Given every two years, the Lapu-Lapu Awards was instituted as a means to recognize Filipinos of Visayan ancestry who have distinguished themselves in their fields of endeavor or who have contributed to the growth and success of Visayan organizations in Hawaii. COVO hopes that by recognizing such achievements, the awardees would serve as role models for the younger generation.

The Awards are named after Datu Lapu-Lapu, the chieftain of Mactan Island who refused to give homage to the Spanish Crown and was credited with defeating the Spanish colonizer

Ferdinand Magellan and his men in the Battle of Mactan on April 27, 1521. Lapu-Lapu's victory delayed the Spanish colonization of the Philippines by almost 40 years.

At the time of Magellan's arrival, Lapu-Lapu was in his prime in terms of age and physical prowess, and was also the head chieftain of an alliance or confederation of seven tribes on the island of Mactan. For his feat in conquering Magellan, Lapu-Lapu was hailed as the first Filipino to repel foreign aggression, the first defender of Filipino freedom and, most of all, the first Filipino hero.

The biennial Awards are given under four categories—the Outstanding Member Awards, given to members of COVO's unit organizations who have provided outstanding contributions to their respective organizations; the Individual Achievement Awards, awarded to any Filipino of Visayan ancestry who have distinguished themselves in a particular area of endeavor; the Lifetime Achievement or Service Awards, bestowed on any Filipino of Visayan ancestry who have given outstanding lifelong contributions and service to the community; and the Young Achievers Award, which is given to young adults who show promise in their chosen fields.

The Kaabay Award is also given to non-Visayans who have given strong and sustained support to COVO and the Visayan community.

Past awardees include former Gov. Ben Cayetano; former State Senate president Robert Bunda; former State representative Bernaldo Bicoy; city council chairs Rudolph Pacarro and Nestor Garcia; television personality Emme Tomimbang; business leaders Violeta Arnobit,

William Caliedo and Aldrin Villahermosa; pop singer Kristian Lei; cultural icon Cha Thompson; cardiologist Dr. Danelo Cañete; scientists Dr. Sandra Chang, Dr. Tess Amore and Dr. Leticia Colmenares; musicians Ruth Pfeiffer, Fani Tedios and Robert Mondoy; engineers Don Manuel and Manuel Lanuevo; educators Dr. Virgie Chattergy, Dr. Patricia Ramos and Ernest Libarios; civil rights activists Mila Medallion Kaahanui and Nic Musico; union leader Hernando Tan; journalists Zach Labez and Mary Cordero; veteran Ben Acchido; community leaders Ben Junasa, Ben Sanchez, Margarita Hopkins, Alan Villaflor and Erwin Gabrillo; sportsmen Ben Villaflor and Greg Lontayao; and others.

Two years ago, COVO officials decided that the awards would be given by island/county. Awardees from Kauai were honored that year. This year, awardees from the Big Island will be recognized. Dayday Hopkins, past COVO president who hails from Hilo, is happy that Visayans from the Big Island are being honored.

"Visayans have a long history on the Big Island. In fact, the precursor of COVO, the Visayan League, actually started there. Two of COVO's most active member organizations are the Hilo Visayan Club and the Kona Visayan Club," she says.

In addition to the Lapu-Lapu awards, COVO will be presenting organizational awards which recognize one outstanding member from each COVO member organization.

The event will start at 6 pm with no-host cocktails. The program starts at 6:45 pm with a welcome by COVO president Jane Clement. The national and state anthems will be sung by the Silangan Singers, with Ruth Pfeiffer conducting. A buffet dinner follows during which attendees will be serenaded by saxophonist Fani Tedios. Guest speaker Dr. Patricio "Jojo" Abinales, professor of political science at UH-Manoa, will be introduced and give his speech.

Entertainment will follow, after which the Lapu-Lapu Awards will be presented. After the awards, attendees will be treated to more entertainment and dancing. Tickets to the gala are \$60 per person. For more information, please call Jun Colmenares at 510-734-4491. ■



COVO's previous honorees pose with their Lapu-Lapu Awards

Joseph M. Zobian, M.D.



Board-certified ophthalmologist
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(cont. from page 1; OFFICE...)

sight, central coordination and technical assistance to state and other organizations that receive state funds in their respective implementation of Hawaii's Language Access Law. The purpose of the law is to affirmatively address the language access needs of limited English proficient (LEP) persons in Hawaii.

OLA's vision is "Language Access for All." Its mission is to promote equal access to and full participation in government services and programs by LEP persons. Established in 2007, the office is mandated by law to ensure that state and state-funded agencies provide language services—interpretation (oral) and translation (written)—to LEP individuals.

With its large immigrant population, Hawaii has one of the largest percentages of LEP individuals in the nation. According to the latest data, out of Hawaii's total population, 24.4 percent or about 311,000 speak a language other than English at home. Of these, 45 percent or about 141,000 are limited English proficient.

This year's annual gathering features speakers who will discuss issues related to the translation of vital documents, one of the major language access issues faced by agencies across the country. Attendees will learn about federal and state requirements and guidelines, understand the role of the translator, hear what other states are doing, exchange ideas and stories about implementing and managing the document translation process, and learn about recent developments and challenges associated with the translation of vital documents.

CONFERENCE TOPICS AND SPEAKERS

Confirmed keynote speakers from the mainland are Ms. Deanna Jang, Chief, Coordination and Compliance Section, Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., who will talk about "Federal Guidelines on Translation of Vital Documents;" Mr. Michael Leoz, Acting Regional Manager, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region IX in San Francisco, who will discuss the "Implementation of Federal



First responder panelists from last year's conference enjoy a brief respite

Guidelines Among DHHS Recipients in Region IX;" Mr. Kleber Palma, Director, Translation and Interpretation Unit, New York City Department of Education in Long Island, whose topic will be on "Translation of Vital Documents: The New York City DOE Experience;" and Mr. Jason Reed, LEP Program Manager, Department of Social Services for Washington State, who will also talk about "Translation of Vital Documents: The Washington State Experience."

In addition, plenary speakers will include Dr. Serafin Colmenares Jr., executive director of the Office of Language Access, who will talk about "Translation of Vital Documents in Hawaii;" Dr. Suzanne Zeng of the UH Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies, who will discuss the "Basics of Translation;" Dr. Puakea Nongelmeir, Dr. Aurelio Agcaoili and Dr. Byron Bender, all from the University of Hawaii, to give a panel discussion on "Cultural Issues in Translation;" and Kleber Palma and Jason Reed to talk about "Ensuring Accuracy in Translation."

Luncheon speakers are Dr. Laiana Wong of the UH Center for Hawaiian Knowledge, to present his views on "Hawaiian as an Official Language: Issues and Challenges;" and Dr. Jungying Lu-Chen of the UH School of Languages, to talk about "Advances in Translation Technology."

On the second day, the conference will be split into two tracks: one for translators and one for users. In track 1 (for translators), speakers and panelists include: Alohalani Boido, president of the Hawaiian Interpreter Action Network (HIAN), who will talk about "Ethical Issues in Translation;" Tom Steele, Mindy Emmons of Kauai and Steven Silver of Silver Bridges, to give a panel discussion on

"Careers in Translation;" Pat Harpstrite, to discuss "Internet Resources for Translators;" Dr. Ruth Mabanglo of UH, to do a presentation on "Translation Techniques;" and Steven Silver to talk about "Running a Translation Business." Moderating this track are Mindy Emmons and Alohalani Boido of HIAN.

In Track 2 (for users), speakers include the following: Kleber Palma of New York who will present "Identifying Vital Documents and Languages for Translation;" former UH law school dean Larry Foster, who will talk about "The Use of Plain English;" Jason Reed (with Kleber Palma) who will discuss "Contracting and the Cost of Translation;" followed by Deena Jang of USDOJ, Bill Hoshijo of the Hawaii Civil

Rights Commission and Sandra Abelaye of the City & County of Honolulu, who will talk about "Funding Resources for Translation;" Jason Reed on "Tracking and Managing the Translation Process;" and Mindy Emmons, who will present "A Translator's Top Ten Pet Peeves." Moderators for this track will be Rebecca Gardner of OLA and Gerald Ohta of the Hawaii Department of Health.

The conference is free but limited to 300 persons. Registration is required. Forms can be downloaded at www.hawaii.gov/labor/ola. The deadline for registration is August 7, 2012. Sponsorship and exhibit opportunities are available. For more information on the conference, please contact Gail McGarvey at 586-8732 or email her at gail.p.mcgarvey@hawaii.gov. ■

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City to Implement New Electronic Permit Review Process

CITY OFFICIALS WILL BEGIN IMPLEMENTING "EPLANS," an electronic review process of building permit plans that they say will save time and money, reduce paper consumption and result in a more transparent and efficient permitting process.

"The ePlans system will eliminate the need to visit the permit counter, which will save applicants time, parking and gasoline," says Mayor Peter Carlisle. "It will also eliminate the need to provide multiple sets of plans and make this process much more environmentally sus-

tainable."

The City's Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) launched the ePlans program as part of on-going efforts to improve the permit and plan review process. The program is expected to transform a century-old process of hard copy plan review with a set of computer-based tools and services using web-based computer systems for electronic file submission and plan review mark-up process. Comments and mark-ups of plans will be accessible and stored online to allow applicants and contractors to interact with City officials electronically.

According to DPP director David Tanoue, ePlans is the "next big step" in making the permitting process more efficient



DPP Director David Tanoue

and transparent.

"Plus, it's much greener and eliminates the need for the department to manage and store thousands of sets of plans," Tanoue says.

The City is in the final stages of testing the system by processing permit applications and plans with a handful of engineering, planning and architec-

tural firms. Companies participating in the testing include Structural Hawaii Inc., Arthur Mori & Associates Inc., Group 70 International and Walter P. Thompson Inc.

The ePlans system is being used for residential and commercial building permits and for subdivision permits. Other permit types will be added later this year.

Companies interested in submitting permit plans electronically can contact DPP at info@honoluluapp.org to be added as a participant. Starting in September 2012, the ePlans program will be opened to all applicants and the public. Customers can still use the existing paper system but DPP will transition to electronic filing in the near future. ■



City Officials to Detour Traffic on Old Farrington Highway

THE HONOLULU AUTHORITY FOR RAPID TRANSPORTATION (HART) will close a portion of Old Farrington Highway between Kualakai Parkway (North-South Road) and Old Fort Weaver Road Loop from July 18, 2012 to August 2, 2012 as part of utility relocation work for the rail project.

Traffic in both directions of Old Farrington Highway will be detoured to either the H-1 Freeway or other nearby roadways. Drivers traveling between East Kapolei and the Ewa/Waipahu region will be allowed to access either side by using Kapolei Parkway or Geiger Road on the south end of Kualakai Parkway,

or the H-1 Freeway on the north end.

Roadside electronic message boards will notify drivers about the road closure. Contractor Kiewit Infrastructure West is coordinating with The-Bus in relocating bus stops along the affected section of Old Farrington Highway and in ensuring local employees and business traffic can continue to access the area.

Motorists who routinely use Old Farrington Highway should allow for extra time for their commute. For updates on construction work days and times, visit the project website at www.honolulutransit.org or call 566-2299. ■

NEWS FEATURE

Envoy's Wife Fights Off Thief

by **Non ALQUITRAN**
Tuesday, July 17, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **THE WIFE OF ITALY'S AMBASSADOR** foiled an attempt to steal her wallet in Mandaluyong City the other day.

Silvana Novelli Fornari, 60, wife of Italian Ambassador Luca Fornari, grabbed her bag and held on to it when it was slashed by Molly Fuentes, 54, a cross-dressing hairdresser from San Pedro, Laguna.

In the scuffle, Fornari's wallet with cash and documents fell out. Fuentes grabbed it and ran, but Fornari shouted, "She took my wallet," pointing to the fleeing Fuentes.

The suspect was apprehended by security guard Rodel



Silvana Fornari

Silverio.

Fornari's lawyer yesterday filed charges of robbery against Fuentes, who is now in jail.

Case officer PO3 Edison Plarison said Fornari, of Dasmariñas Village, Makati City, was inside the Harris Metal Recycler, a surplus depot store at the corner of Pioneer and Reliance streets,

looking at solar lamps when the incident occurred.

Plarison said Fuentes, who was dressed in a black cloak and had a scarf around his neck, bumped Fornari from behind and slashed her shoulder bag.

Apparently aware of the modus operandi of robbers, Fornari grabbed her bag.

Silverio intercepted Fuentes and seized from him Fornari's wallet containing P7,000 in cash and important documents.

Fuentes lamented that he thought Fornari was carrying a large sum of money.

Senior Superintendent Armando Bolalin, Mandaluyong City police chief, ordered Fuentes locked up in jail.

(www.philstar.com) ■

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HEADLINES

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

try to ease the discord and prevent further damage to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Foreign ministers of the 10-nation bloc failed to publicly issue a concluding joint statement after their annual summit in Phnom Penh last week when host Cambodia rejected a proposal by the Philippines and Vietnam to mention their separate territorial disputes with China in the statement.

The absence of a post-conference statement was unprecedented in ASEAN's 45-year

history and underscored the divisions within the regional group over the handling of the South China Sea disputes, which involve four of its members – Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. The four, along with China and Taiwan, have been contesting ownership of potentially oil- and gas-rich territories for years and recent spats have raised new tensions and alarm in the region.

Cambodia, a close China ally, has followed Beijing's stance that the disputes should not be brought to a multinational forum like ASEAN but instead should be negotiated by rival

claimants one on one.

The Philippines and Vietnam, in contrast, have sought to draw international attention to the disputes, warning that China's aggression in the South China Sea could potentially block freedom of navigation in the strategic and busy waters, which Beijing claims virtually in their entirety.

Washington has said the peaceful resolution of the territorial conflicts and freedom of navigation in the contested waters are in the US national interest. China, however, has warned the US not to interfere. (www.philstar.com) ■



by Atty. Emmanuel Samonte TIPON

Filipinos Topnotchers in Pretending to Be Single Although Married

We completed a book yesterday on immigration frauds and the relief of waiver from deportation under § 237(a)(1)(H) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and sent it to our publisher Thomson-Reuters. The book covers all reported federal cases in the U.S. Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, District Courts, and Board of Immigration Appeals. There were also a number of unreported cases covered.

Under the INA, persons who seek to procure (or have sought to procure or have procured) by fraud or willfully misrepresenting a material fact a visa, other documentation, or admission to the

United States or other benefit are deportable under INA § 212(a)(6)(C)(i).

For humanitarian reasons and in order to preserve families comprised in part of U.S. citizens and green card holders, INA § 237(a)(1)(H) provides a waiver of removability for aliens with a qualifying relative (spouse, parent, son, or daughter) who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident (green card holder). The Attorney General (and his designees, the immigration judge and the Board of Immigration Appeals) decides whether the waiver should be granted. It is discretionary and the courts have no jurisdiction to review the proper exercise of discretion.

The following are the immigration law violations for fraud or misrepresentation in procuring a visa or admission to the United States for which a waiver was sought:

- (1) falsely stating marital status as single although married;

- (2) falsely stating number of children;
- (3) falsely stating petitioning relative is alive although dead;
- (4) falsely stating possession of particular qualifications for employment visa;
- (5) falsely stating no arrest or conviction;
- (6) falsely claiming United States citizenship;
- (7) sham marriage;
- (8) using a false name; and
- (9) using a fraudulent passport.

The following are the immigration law violations, other than fraud, for which a waiver was sought:

- (1) criminal convictions;
- (2) entry without inspection;
- (3) conditional resident status terminated for marriage fraud; and
- (4) conditional resident status terminated for failure to file joint petition with spouse within the required 2-year period.

The most interesting finding in this endeavor was that Filipinos are the topnotchers in pretending to be single although married in order to procure a visa. *Nakakahiya*. Why do these Filipinos do it? In order to immigrate to the U.S. sooner – by about 3 years. Is it worth it?

During the deportation hearing, the government attorney usually asks: “There is a line of people with tickets waiting to be admitted to a movie theater. You were not even in line because you did not have a ticket. You bought a ticket fraudulently and now seek to be ahead of the line. Do you think that is right?”

Your answer will generally determine whether the immigration judge will grant you a waiver.

All the Filipinos in the reported cases lost and were ordered deported. Many were from Hawaii. You can read their names and their well-known attorneys in the reported decisions. There are hundreds of Filipinos who lost before the immigration judge and did not even bother to appeal because of lack of funds.

We have won all cases involving Filipinos who were charged with fraud.

The facts were similar: The Filipino is petitioned as “unmarried” although married by a parent who is a U.S. citizen or green

card holder. The Filipino obtains a visa and is admitted to the U.S. The Filipino goes home and remarries his/her spouse. The Filipino returns to the U.S. and petitions the spouse using the date of their remarriage as the date of marriage without disclosing that they were married before the Filipino was admitted to the U.S. Sometimes the fraud is discovered by U.S. consular authorities when the remarried spouse applies for a visa. The visa is denied and a report is made to immigration authorities in the U.S. who then initiate deportation proceedings against the Filipino. In a number of cases the Filipino applies for naturalization after “remarrying” his/her spouse and naturalization officers catch the Filipino who is then placed in deportation proceedings. In other cases, friends, neighbors, and relatives report the fraudster.

How did we win while others lost? That is a “military secret”. ■

(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: filmlaw@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.)

SOCIAL SECURITY UPDATE

Social Security and Women

by Shona BARNES

August 26 is known as Women's Equality Day. On that date in 1920, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was signed, giving women the right to vote.

Social Security treats men and women equally. Men and women with identical earnings histories are treated exactly the same. However, there are things women in particular should know about Social Security. Although treated equally by Social Security, there are trends and differences in lifestyle that can affect benefits.

For example, women tend to care for many people: spouses, children, and par-

ents. Taking time away from the workplace to care for a newborn child or aging parent can have an impact on your future Social Security benefits.

Also, despite significant strides through the years, women are more likely to earn less over a lifetime than men. Women are less often covered by private retirement plans, and they are more dependent on Social Security in their retirement years.

And, women tend to live about five years longer than men, which means more years depending on Social Security and other retirement income or savings.

If a woman is married to a man who earns significantly more than she does, it is likely

she will qualify for a larger benefit amount on his record than on her own.

Want to learn more? Visit our Women's page at www.socialsecurity.gov/women. Follow the link on that page to our publication, What Every Woman Should Know. You can read it online, print a copy, or listen to it on audio. We provide alternate media as well to reach as many women as possible and to provide the information the way you'd like to receive it.

Learning about your future Social Security benefits and how men and women are treated just the same in the eyes of Social Security: what better way to celebrate Women's Equality Day? ■

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"Nakakapagsalita Po Kami ng Tagalog"

A Filipino Couple's American Dream Story

by Ted LAGUATAN

Vic and Guia (not their real names) – entered the United States on B-2 tourist visas with their daughter Violet who was then 2 years old. Because of a lack of job opportunities in the Philippines and low wages, Vic and Guia felt that the only chance that they had for a decent future was to live and work in the United States.

Placing their fate in God's hands, they overstayed on their tourist visas and worked illegally courageously taking on a "*Bahala na ang Diyos*" ("God will take care of us.") attitude.

Take care of them the Almighty did. Both were bright college graduates. Vic had a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology. Guia majored in Accounting. Initially, the hardworking couple struggled, taking on whatever jobs were available.

After a couple of years, they began to get used to their surroundings, became more confident of themselves in the American work environment and summoned the courage to apply for jobs that they were trained for. As it often happens, intent on getting qualified employees, their employers somehow were not focused on their immigration status and proceeded to hire them.

Vic got a good job as a computer programmer. Guia likewise did well and was hired by an accounting office to do basic income tax returns for individuals.

Fast forward 16 years later from the time they arrived in the United States: Vic's company grew. Continuously learning the latest developments in his field and working hard, he now headed a team of software engineers and had the salary of a high ranking executive together with all the perks.

He had a major problem 4 years ago. Because of his illegal immigration status, he could not attend an important meeting in Brazil where his company had branched out and he was expected to attend. He was really

panicky and consulted with his lawyer: "What do I do? I might have to resign. Definitely I can't go. If I don't, my boss might get suspicious about my immigration status."

It was a problem that could repeat itself continually as the company was expected to open up more branches overseas.

His lawyer told him: "Your company's president trusts and respects you. You are a key factor in helping the company grow. Just tell him the truth."

"You want me to tell him I'm in the US illegally?"

His lawyer replied: "If I advised you to do that, I would not be doing my job as a lawyer which is to protect you and your family – but I must always do so within the bounds of legality and propriety. Because of your honesty, talent and industry, so many new jobs were created for Americans with the company's growth. You are performing a great service not only for the company but also for America.

Now if you were to board a plane headed overseas knowing you wouldn't be able to return to the US and to your family and your job – you would be really sick inside that plane and would feel like dying, is that correct?"

"Of course, that's exactly how I would feel!" said Vic.

His lawyer continued: "All right then, tell your boss the truth about your deadly fear of flying on long flights overseas and how terribly sick you would get and as such, you cannot attend the conference."

The company president accepted his excuse and sent another man instead. It's now understood by the company executives that Vic cannot attend foreign conferences because of his fear of flying overseas.

Guia also did well. She now handles the accounts of wealthy individuals as well as corporate accounts.

Vic and Guia have really done well for themselves. They have: a big house in an upscale neighborhood, a couple of luxury cars, a vacation house in Lake



Tahoe, considerable savings and a good portfolio of well selected stocks and bonds. They have achieved the American dream of a nice house and financial stability.

But the dream is still incomplete. Their main problem is that they still do not have legal immigration status. Violet, now 17 and about to graduate from a Catholic High School with honors – found it hard to accept what her parents recently revealed to her: They are in the US illegally.

She had been complaining to her parents about not having her own car unlike many of her friends when clearly, they could afford it. They finally explained to her why she could not get a driver's license. When they first arrived in the US sixteen years ago, it was fairly easy for anyone to get a drivers' licenses. This is no longer true today for most states.

In California where they live, a new applicant now has to show legal immigration status and a social security number.

Will an employment based immigrant visa petition filed by an employer help in their situation? Unfortunately, even if this is approved, it cannot really help them because employment based petitions will not enable overstaying aliens to adjust their status in the US. A petition by a US citizen son, daughter or spouse would.

Their second child, Andrew, a US citizen who was born a year after they arrived – can file immigrant visa petitions for them when he turns 21. This will enable them to acquire their immigrant visas but that is still six years from now.

Nevertheless, even if that is the case, in the unlikely event that they are apprehended before that time, different effective affirmative defenses in Immigration Court can be utilized to enable them to stay.

One important law that they

can utilize in Court is Cancellation of Removal. The elements for this relief are as follows: 1) The applicant (or respondent) must have been in the US for ten years or more. 2) The applicant must have either a US citizen or Lawful Permanent Resident child or parent. 3) The applicant must be a person of good moral character with no record of serious crimes. 4) The applicant must not be a public charge – that is, he or she must not be on welfare or potentially, be a candidate for welfare. 5) The applicant must demonstrate that his or her US citizen relative will suffer extreme and unusual hardship if the applicant is forced to leave the US

Caution: Not all immigration lawyers do trials in Immigration Court. Most are limited to doing only immigrant and non-immigrant visa petitions. For deportation (removal) defense cases in court, make certain the lawyer is competent to do trials.

Do not automatically assume that lawyers who advertise heavily or charge hefty fees or have visible public personas – are necessarily good lawyers. They may be good in marketing but may not actually be good lawyers. Ads showing endorsements by celebrities do not prove a lawyer's competence.

Many lawyers are competent and honest but to be certain, a client's best assurance of getting a competent honest lawyer is to check with the State Bar if the lawyer is officially certified as an Immigration Law Specialist (Expert). To be certified as such, one must pass a series of tests, must have considerable experience in handling a wide variety of immigration cases and has an impeccable record of honesty.

For Vic and Guia, it is just a matter of time before they can have Legal Permanent Resident status. At this point, there's not much for them to worry about.

But how about Violet? Prior to President Barack Obama is-

suing an Executive Order on June 14, 2012 granting immigration relief for young people like her, only a few limited immigration reliefs were available for most which included getting married to a US citizen for those who entered legally and then overstayed.

Those who crossed the US border illegally without proper inspection from Mexico or Canada – cannot adjust status in the US – even if they marry US citizens.

Various bills had been introduced to provide immigration relief for an estimated 1.5 to 2 million and maybe more young people similarly situated like Violet – including what was known as the Dream Act. All encompassing amnesty bills for all illegal immigrants estimated roughly to be 12 to 20 million were likewise introduced. (It is difficult to have really accurate numbers because of the unrecorded hundreds of thousands who enter the US illegally from Mexico or Canada.)

These sensible immigration amnesty and reform bills were turned down repeatedly by the majority House Republicans for political reasons. The last general immigration amnesty law was passed by Congress in 1986. That was 26 years ago.

Young people like Violet were brought by their parents or by other relatives to the US when they were young and are illegal immigrants through no fault of their own. They grew up and went to school in the US and for all practical purposes are American in terms of culture and outlook.

Many, like Violet, are outstanding students and can contribute much to America. For them to be deported to countries that they hardly know anything about nor whose languages they do not speak amounts to cruel and unusual punishment.

Still, there are a great number of Americans with small minds and hard hearts who cannot relate to new immigrants and feel threatened fearing they might lose their jobs to the newcomers. Many openly display anti-immigrant racist behavior particularly in certain states. They forget that they too came from immigrant parents or

(continued on page 9)

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Eating My Words

.....
TURO-TURO by Claude TAYAG

I received this e-mail from Clint, a Filipino doctoral candidate in food anthropology in London.

Of the many things you're doing, what do you think is the most important aspect of your advocacy, and what can other people (including other food writers, chefs, and ordinary Pinoy living in the Philippines or abroad) do? Does our cuisine need a facelift, repackaging, better PR?

CLINT

It's like I'm a food missionary spreading the good word on our cuisine, *sa salita at sa diwa*. One can say I'm literally eating my words (pun intended), practicing what I preach, in both my cooking and writing. Filipino restaurateurs, entrepreneurs, and even just ordinary citizens out there should pick it up and start the (culinary) revolution.

If charity begins at home, let the makeover begin at home, too. Let's start in our own small, private way. Serve our daily meals at home just a little better, make that extra effort. Invite friends over for dinner by serving your everyday Filipino food but in a well-thought-of presentation, using nicer dishes (not necessarily expensive), just different from the ordinary.

The OFW, who is practically in every part of the world, can start a quiet revolution as well. Invite your employer to your home, no matter how humble. And never be apologetic. It's the sincerity of sharing that

counts in the end.

Practically every other kid in the world has a "Filipino connection" somehow. These are the future generations of world leaders, captains of industry, and ordinary citizens alike who have shared Filipino taste buds and memories in them, if not compassion and demeanor. The latest addition attesting to this phenomenon is the appointment of Cristeta Pasia Comerford as executive chef to the US White House, the first woman and first of Filipino descent to be selected for the post.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Filipina Araceli "Lillie" Piccio served as nanny to Prince William and Prince Harry for 14 years. It is not so farfetched to think that *adobo*, *pancit* and fried *lumpia* might someday replace the hot-dog, spaghetti and pizza as the world's comfort foods. It is my fervent hope, though, that the world will discover that there's more to Philippine cuisine beyond *adobo*, *pancit*, and fried *lumpia*.

Taste-wise, there's nothing to change or "upgrade" (I hate the use of this word). Don't alter it for foreigners' consumption. Had the Japanese cooked their sashimi just to please those who don't eat raw food, would we have such gastronomic delights from the land of the rising sun? Likewise, did the Koreans lessen the garlic and chili in their *kimchi*? Our cuisine is *masarap* and *malinamnam* as it

is. Just make it presentable. And do away with the *balut*. It's what turns off and scares away foreigners from trying our cuisine. It's not even uniquely ours. They have it in Thailand and Vietnam.

Our cuisine has extreme tastes of sour, bitter, salty and sweet. But is the lack of a standardized version of dishes (i.e., *adobo* is a technique, rather than a recipe) a boon or bane?

In the Filipino context, *adobo* generally refers to the chicken/pork stew simmered in vinegar and garlic. It is perhaps the country's most popular dish, spawning so many variants that it is inaccurate to call it a singular dish. To say there are 7,100 recipes of our *adobo* is an understatement — there are as many kinds of *adobo* as there are households. Treating *adobo* as a cooking technique will give us a better understanding of its nature. It is the braising of any meat (chicken, pork, beef, quail, duck, venison, seafood, etc.) or vegetable in vinegar, garlic, black peppercorns and bay leaf, with regional variations or personal preferences of adding soy sauce (from the Chinese), atsüete (Mexican achiote or annatto), onion, coconut cream, lemongrass or turmeric. It can be made like a saucy stew, or thickened with chicken liver, or the cooked *adobo* meat pulled apart to be deep-fried into crispy flakes. It is this versatility that makes it the most popular and well-loved Filipino comfort food. Ergo with *sinigang*, a clear-broth soup dish made with a sour fruit, again depend-



A Pinoy connection: Cristeta Pasia Comerford, with US First Lady Michelle Obama, is the first Pinay executive chef to the US White House.

ing on the maker's personal preference, region and season in which fruit is available, or what seafood, meat or vegetable is available or afforded. Both *adobo* and *sinigang* are the great levelers — the cooking method and cooked dish that cross all economic boundaries.

I see the lack of standardized versions of certain dishes as a healthy sign — it clearly shows the sheer variety and plurality/regionalism of our cuisine, or cuisines, I should emphasize. For crying out loud, we're an archipelago of more than 7,100 islands. To call it "Filipino cuisine" is too limiting; it should be "the cuisines of the Philippines" (just like asking what Chinese, French, Spanish cuisine, etc., are). How boring it would be if we all ate the same chicken/pork *adobo* or the same *sinigang* (how can that be possible? There's pork, beef or seafood, soured with tamarind, *kamias*, calamansi, *batuan*, *alibangbang* or guava.) It is but natural — imperative even — that we would have different versions of certain dishes in different regions.

Speaking of standardizing, look what's happening to the *sinigang* — the popularity of instant *sinigang* mixes (due to convenience and economics) has standardized the dish to the point that it has fast become this generation's standard of what a *sinigang* should be. A culinary school in Manila did a blind tasting of *sinigang* with real *sampalok* and the *sinigang* mix among its students. Ninety percent favored the latter, with many not even having tasted fresh green tamarind before. Lamentable it may be, but it's the reality of things.

If at all, Filipino dishes are nuanced: neither too sweet, sour, bitter or salty. Why do you think the *sawsawan* is ever present in every home and commercial establishment, humble or upscale? Doreen Fernandez ascribes it as a way of fine-tuning the taste of the dish to that of the individual diner, unlike in western cooking, particularly French, where there's the ego of the chef to contend with (thank God for our great, unnamed *kusineros*!) *Sawsawan* is one of those things that make our cuisine truly so Pinoy! (www.philstar.com) ■

IMMIGRATION FEATURE

(cont. from page 8; A FILIPINO..)

grandparents.

It is these very large voting bloc which many anti-immigrant Republican lawmakers cater to. They cite various reasons to justify their anti-human position — ranging from economic to national security reasons — and everything else in between that they can think of.

Very fortunately, President Obama's humanitarian Executive Order allows a form of relief referred to as "deferred status" for young people like Violet. With it, not only will qualified applicants avoid deportation (re-

moval) proceedings — he (or she) will also be given a work permit. This means he can obtain a social security number and a driver's license.

This is the kind of far reaching visionary humane policy that keeps America great.

To qualify, the applicant must have arrived in the US before the age of 16 and must be below 30; must be a person of good moral character (no felonies, no serious multiple misdemeanors, no drug convictions); must have been in the US at least five straight years; must be in school or have graduated from High School or ob-

tained a GED or discharged from the military.

Qualified applicants will be given two year renewable periods of "deferred status". Having this status by itself does not lead to eventual citizenship. However, it provides: relief from deportation, education and job opportunities as well as the ability to utilize other immigration laws in the future. In a de facto way, the availability of future immigration relief laws will lead to eventual Lawful Permanent Resident status followed by US citizenship.

Now, Vic and Guia's American dream of a good life is prac-

tically complete. Their courage to find the good life in a foreign land, their hard honest work and their sacrifices for themselves and their children — have paid off so much more than they can imagine.

The story of this Filipino family is not unusual. It is the inspiring story of thousands of brave industrious immigrant families who came to the US with nothing much more than the clothes on their back and did well. It is also my own story.

I arrived in the US as a single young man with fifty dollars in my pocket, worked at various odd

jobs, had my share of heartaches (but also much joy), somehow managed to go to law school, became a lawyer and raised a wonderful family. I too placed my fate in God's hands. He delivered. ■

(Note: The California State Bar honors ATTY. TED LAGUATAN as one of only 29 lawyers officially certified as Specialists (Experts) in Immigration Law continuously for more than 20 years. He also does accident injuries, wrongful death and complex litigation cases. For communications (San Francisco area): 455 Hickey Blvd. Suite 516, Daly City, Ca94015; Tel 650-991-1154 Fax 650-991-1186; email laguatanlaw@gmail.com)



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**MMDA to Deploy 900 Personnel
for SONA**

by **Mike FRIALDE**/
Tuesday, July 17, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **THE METROPOLITAN MANILA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MMDA)** on Tuesday expressed its full readiness in handling any possible contingency when President Aquino delivers his State of the Nation Address (SONA) at the Batasan Pambansa on July 23.

MMDA Assistant General Manager for Operations Emerson Carlos said the agency would be deploying 900 personnel along Commonwealth Avenue from Philcoa to the Batasan Pambansa area to manage both vehicular traffic as well as the protesting crowds that are expected to gather.

"We are prepared and we expect that everything will go smoothly," said Carlos.

Carlos said the MMDA's crowd control and management teams under its "Task Force Kalasag" will be under the operational control of the Philippine National Police.

He added that the traffic enforcers will augment the traffic enforcers to be deployed in the area by the Quezon City gov-

ernment.

Carlos said the 900-strong MMDA group would already be at their posts at midnight of Sunday. He said vehicles that would pass through the portion of Commonwealth Avenue near the Batasan Pambansa complex would be rerouted starting at 6 a.m. on Monday.

Meanwhile, the MMDA released its rerouting scheme for the SONA.

Motorists coming from Fairview going to EDSA are advised by the MMDA to turn right to Regalado Avenue, make a right to Dahlia St., turn left to Chestnut St., turn right to Old Sauyo Road, turn left to Mindanao Avenue and then turn right to EDSA.

Private vehicles coming from EDSA and Congressional Avenue are meanwhile advised to turn right to Congressional, turn left to Mindanao Avenue, make a right to Old Sauyo Road, turn left to Chestnut St., turn right to Dahlia, make a left to Regalado and then proceed to Commonwealth.

Public utility vehicles are meanwhile being advised by the MMDA to make use of the counter-flow lanes that will be implemented from the Superstar KTV U-turn slot to the San Simon U-turn slot.

(www.philstar.com) ■

**Noy Thanks China for Dam
Project**

by **Delon PORCALLA**/
Wednesday, July 18, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **PRESIDENT AQUINO YESTERDAY THANKED CHINA** for providing the Philippine government with a P5.2-billion loan that funded the construction and completion of a La Mesa Dam project.

"I thank the Chinese government for making this vital project a reality. This funding only indicates how neighbors in the region help each other to address problems and better serve the people," he said.

Aquino though evaded questions from media on reports that around 30 Chinese ships have been spotted in the disputed Spratly islands.

Aquino said the second phase of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System's Angat Water Utilization and Aqueduct Improvement Project (AWUAIP) in Quezon City was financed through the Preferential Buyer's Credit of China Export-Import Bank.

The project was finished eight months ahead of schedule as a result of efficient contract management by the MWSS and the improved construction methodology of the contractor, China International Water and Electric Co.

Chinese Ambassador Ma Keqing attended the event, along with executives of Manila Water and Maynilad. The Chinese envoy also refused to be interviewed by re-



President Aquino talks with Chinese Ambassador Ma Keqing during the inauguration of the Angat Water Utilization and Aqueduct Improvement Project in Quezon City. WILLY PEREZ

porters.

"I'm not prepared. Give me a next time," she said.

Aquino said the Philippines joins the whole world in its quest to unite all nations in bringing to all individuals, communities and nations the respect and dignity that they deserve.

In his speech during yesterday's inauguration of the AWUAIP at the La Mesa Dam portal in Lagro, Quezon City, Aquino vowed to provide Filipinos with clean potable water.

Aquino said this dream would not have been possible if not for the unrelent-

(continued on page 11)

SC Clips Congress' Role in JBC Panel

by **Edu PUNAY**/
Wednesday, July 18, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **CONGRESS WILL REPRESENT JUST ONE VOTE** instead of two in the selection of chief justice by the Judicial and Bar Council, the Supreme Court (SC) ruled yesterday.

The decision was not immediately made public, but an SC insider said a majority of the justices voted in full court session to grant a petition filed by former solicitor general Frank Chavez.

In his petition, Chavez said the Senate and the House of Representatives should vote as one body in the JBC representing Congress.

Under the current setup, the Senate and the House vote separately in deliberations on qualifications of candidates for judicial posts.

In the ruling penned by Associate Justice Jose Mendoza, the justices agreed with the petitioner's argument that there should only be "a representative of the Congress" in the JBC as provided for in Article VIII Section 8 (1) of the Constitution.

This means Congress – although bicameral – should only be entitled to one of seven votes in the JBC, and not two as had

been the case since 2001. The executive branch represents only one vote.

SC spokesperson Ma. Victoria Gleoresty Guerra said a promulgated decision would be released tomorrow along with a dissenting opinion.

In a press conference, Guerra confirmed that six justices vying for the top judicial post – acting Chief Justice Antonio Carpio and Associate Justices Presbitero Velasco Jr., Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, Arturo Brion, Roberto Abad and Ma. Lourdes Sereno – inhibited from deliberations and abstained from voting.

Guerra said the high court took into consideration the separate comments filed by the JBC and by Sen. Francis Escudero and Iloilo Rep. Niel Tupas Jr.

Escudero and Tupas had argued in their comment filed through the Office of the Solicitor General last week that the phrase being cited by Chavez in questioning their separate voting rights in the JBC "was case of plain oversight" on the part of the framers of the Constitution, who may have failed to realize that the legislative branch of government was bicameral.

"When section 8(1) article



(L-R) Petitioner Frank Chavez, Sen. Chiz Escudero and Rep. Niel Tupas Jr.

VIII of the Constitution speaks of 'a representative from Congress,' it should mean one representative each from both houses which comprise the entire Congress," they stressed.

But the SC agreed with Chavez that the current practice of allowing separate votes for the two members of JBC from Congress violates the constitutional provision, which provides only for seven votes in the council.

Guerra explained that the high court deferred the release of the voting results and opted to release first the promulgated decision so as to avoid confusion should there be changes in the votes cast by justices.

This was unlike the high court's usual practice of announcing the results of voting on big cases ahead of the release of copies of rulings.

Asked if such procedure

now constitutes the new rule, she replied: "It would depend on circumstances. But as I said, it would be more official if the hard copies are already available."

This development came into focus a week after the high court took back its order stopping the implementation of government's new scheme fixing the salaries of bus drivers and conductors, just a day after the order was issued.

The SC spokesperson explained that decisions of the court, including those on when to release rulings to the media, are made on a case-to-case basis.

Guerra admitted earlier that any change in action of justices is not unusual in the high court. She revealed that justices would, in some cases, change their mind and issue different opinions.

When asked if the high court was being more careful in announcing its decisions following a recall of the status quo ante order on the new salary schemes for bus drivers and conductors, she only said: "I cannot speculate."

The JBC, through its most senior member, retired SC justice Regino Hermosisima, earlier filed a separate comment deferring to the high court the issuance of a resolution on the issue of the council's eight-member composition.

Justice Hermosisima, Sen. Escudero, Rep. Tupas, Milagros Fernan-Cayosa from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Jose Mejia from academe, and retired Court of Appeals justice Aurora Lagman from the private sector will sit in deliberations of JBC on the selection of chief justice.

Recently, the high court appointed Associate Justice Diosdado Peralta as its representative in the JBC following the nomination of Carpio and his inhibition as chair of the council.

Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, ex-officio vice chair of JBC, also inhibited from the proceedings after accepting her nomination for the top SC post.

(www.philstar.com) ■

(cont. from page 10; NOY...)

ing efforts of the concerned government agencies and stakeholders to plug the "leaks" plaguing the water industry.

He also thanked Public Works and Highways Secretary Rogelio Singson, MWSS chairman Ramon Alikpala and MWSS administrator Gerardo Esquivel for being instrumental in implementing clear-cut and decisive reforms in the water sector.

Aquino credited them for being very helpful in uplifting the MWSS situation, from being mired in P34-million debt in 2010 to earning a P330-million profit in 2011.

He also pointed out the agency was able to pay its obligation of P236 million to more than 1,000 MWSS retirees as well as a P150-million dividend to government coffers.

"The people would get the benefit from the MWSS and DPWH for these projects. Unlike before, the government would only take initiative if there's a problem, but now we

are ready to take on the challenges," he said.

Aquino said the government remains committed to provide the people with the basic necessities.

Built at a cost of P1.3 billion, the AWUAIP Phase 2 involves the construction of a new 9.9-kilometer aqueduct (Aqueduct No. 6) and the rehabilitation of the deteriorated section of Aqueduct No. 5 that will allow the more efficient conveyance of raw water from Angat Dam to the La Mesa and Balara water treatment plants.

The AWUAIP, which consists of three development project phases, aims to recoup losses of 394 million liters of water a day due to leakages.

The first phase, which was completed in February 2006, involved the construction of a 5.5-kilometer bypass of the deteriorated section of the existing Aqueduct No. 5.

The amount of P1.5 billion was invested for Phase 1 that was financed by the Philippine

government.

The second and third phases include the construction of the 9.9-km section of Aqueduct No. 6, the rehabilitation of Aqueduct No. 5 and the construction of interconnection facilities.

The total investment of P5.2 billion for the AWUAIP was financed through the Preferential Buyer's Credit of China Export-Import Bank.

Once completed, the AWUAIP will ensure the safety

and integrity of raw water conveyance from Angat Dam to the La Mesa and Balara treatment plants, thus maintaining secu-

rity of water supply for the MWSS service area covering 12- to 14-million people.

(www.philstar.com) ■

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GMA to Bishops: Pray for Me

by Evelyn MACAIRAN/
Wednesday, July 18, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - **FORMER PRESIDENT AND NOW PAMPANGA REP. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO** is seeking prayer from the country's prelates.

"I was asked by the President to attend this forum to make a plea to the bishops to please help her pray for courage. Courage to accept the things she could no longer change," Arroyo's counsel Anacleto Diaz told yesterday's forum of the Catholic Media Network (CMN) held in Intramuros.

Diaz said Arroyo is also asking the bishops for divine guidance in the face of the spate of lawsuits filed against her.

The former president is now facing plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan over her involvement in the fund mess of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

Arroyo is under hospital detention while facing a non-bailable offense of electoral sabotage before the Pasay City regional trial court.

Diaz admitted the challenges that Arroyo is facing are "way beyond the task" of lawyers defending her and the doctors overseeing her medical condition.

"This is no longer a legal problem. It is not even a political problem or a public relations problem because no matter what we say or do we come out

as a demon. We have been demonized," he said.

Diaz clarified their request for prayers are not for an immediate acquittal of Arroyo's cases.

"All we are saying is that for your help (to pray) that the Ombudsman and the courts decide cases solely and purely on the basis of evidence," he said.

Former Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, an Arroyo critic, told Diaz that he would pray for her.

"Justice is different from vengeance. Please tell the former president that I was not known as a GMA (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) admirer during her term and she knows this, but when she was down I did not step on her anymore," Cruz told Diaz during the forum.

When asked if he would send a letter to the bishops to relay Arroyo's request, Diaz said, "I would leave it to her judgment. I'm just a lawyer."

Former senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said that while the judicial process should still be observed, he believed Arroyo should receive justice and compassion.

"I think that since former president Arroyo is sick she deserves compassion... Arroyo is not convicted. She is only charged and she has to clear (her name). But as much as possible they would allow her to seek medical treatment," Pimentel added.



File photo of former President now Representative Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in prayers

While there had been several instances when the prelates criticized the Arroyo administration, Diaz said he is hoping that in the end, their being men of God would prevail.

"I don't know if it is strained but they are bishops and they are men of the cloth, they are men of God. If I ask a bishop to help me pray to God for guidance for courage, for help, I think any bishop would grant me that on that basis," he said.

Diaz said the recent turn of events, particularly the Ombudsman on Monday filing a P365.9-million plunder case against Arroyo and some officials of the PCSO before the Sandiganbayan, raises questions if this was connected to the upcoming State of the Nation Address (SONA) of President Aquino.

Diaz questioned the timing of the filing of the case, a week ahead of the President's SONA.

"It cannot take away from us the suspicion that this resolution was released to time with the coming SONA of the President. You and I are aware that every time the President goes on his SONA he does not fail to say a thing or two about the former president. This gives him another opportunity to demonize the former president, and worse... it enables the government to continue the president's detention without bail," he said.

Diaz said they received information that apart from the election sabotage case and newly filed plunder case, there would be four other cases that will be lodged against Arroyo as a ploy to keep her in prison.

Diaz, however, refused to identify the four other cases.

Laurence Arroyo, one of the former president's legal counsels defending her in a separate

graft case involving the national broadband network (NBN) deal anomaly, also said the filing of the case was obviously timed to coincide with Aquino's SONA.

Arroyo's lawyers yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to suspend the proceedings on the P365.9-million plunder case filed against the former president.

The lawyers also urged the Sandiganbayan to defer the issuance of a warrant of arrest. They argued Arroyo has not even received a copy of the Review Resolution that found probable cause to indict her.

"Accused GMA (Arroyo) desires to avail herself of her remedies under the law, foremost of which is the filing of a motion for reconsideration from the adverse Resolution of the Office of the Ombudsman," the defense lawyers said in their motion.

"For this purpose, accused GMA will need a copy of the said Resolution of the Office of the Ombudsman finding the existence of probable cause against her for plunder," they said.

Arroyo's lawyers argued that any person under preliminary investigation by the Ombudsman is entitled to file a motion for reconsideration under its rules of procedure.

"The Supreme Court has held that the filing of a motion for reconsideration is an integral part of the preliminary investigation proper. The denial thereof is tantamount to a denial of the right itself to a preliminary investigation and would render the preliminary investigation conducted in a case incomplete," they added.

"A denial of the right to file a motion for reconsideration would also amount to a deprivation of an accused's right to a full preliminary investigation preparatory to the filing of the information against him."

DISTRAUGHT

Lawyer Christian Bautista, Arroyo's counsel, told The STAR the former leader was visibly distraught at the news that she was charged with plunder.

"She is deeply saddened. There is absolutely nothing to support the complaint," he said.

Bautista said he was disappointed with the reaction of some people over Arroyo's plea for prayers. "Some asked me 'so she's already desperate because she is turning to prayers?'" he said.

"How do you answer a question like that? Is it a sin to pray? Is it wrong to turn to God? So who do we turn to?"

Arroyo has always been known to be prayerful, he added.

Bautista said there is no evidence to show that Arroyo pocketed P50 million – the minimum amount for one to be charged with plunder – much less P365 million as the Office of the Ombudsman had alleged in the charge sheet.

"She is not an official of the PCSO," he said. "All the confidential and intelligence funds (CIF) of the PCSO were liquidated and the COA approved the liquidation as regular."

Bautista and Ferdinand Topacio, Arroyo's legal adviser, said the plunder complaint was obviously meant to ensure that she remains under detention even if the Pasay Regional Trial Court grants her bail.

"Sadly, the Constitution is but selectively applied by the present government: swift exoneration for its allies, while strict and excruciating bending of the rules against its political opponents, is the order of the day," Topacio said.

"We are no longer in danger of dictatorship; it is now wholly upon us."

At Malacañang, presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said yesterday the charges against Arroyo were not "props" for the SONA of Aquino.

"Various Cabinet clusters had presented their reports and we're just going to go through several drafts right now," he said. "Unfortunately, we are not allowed to disclose any of the details. But certainly there will be an enunciation of what the President has done during the past year and what we look forward to. And it's still a fluid SONA, still being drafted as we speak, still being improved on as we speak."

The public will not be disappointed at Aquino's SONA, he added.

Lacierda said the executive has no control or influence over the Office of the Ombudsman.

Lacierda said "this is not political" as the Office of the Ombudsman had taken on an objective evaluation of the cases filed before them and "it is up to them to determine whether a case can be filed."

(www.philstar.com) ■

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by Reuben S. SEGURITAN

H-1B Petitions Under Increased Scrutiny

soon to ensure that their H-1B hiring needs are met. Otherwise, new H-1B workers would have to wait until October 1, 2013. Employees who already hold H-1B status are generally not counted against the cap and a petition to extend their status can be filed anytime.

A USCIS memorandum released to the public recently serves as a reminder to employers to be careful in completing the requirements for their H-1B petitions.

In the Memorandum dated October 21, 2008, adjudication officers are instructed to review more closely the H-1B filings of certain types of petitioners for possible fraud or violation of law. Petitioners with a gross annual income of less than \$10 million, or which employ 25 employees or less, or whose business was established within the

last 10 years, have been found to be more likely to have engaged in fraud or technical violations (also referred to as the "10/25/10" formula).

If a petitioner has two out of three attributes in 10/25/10 formula, the adjudication officer is directed to refer the petition to the fraud detection unit if there is at least one other misrepresentation in the petition, such as: fraudulent information or forged documents; if the business is found to be non-existent (based on an independent review that reveals fake or inconsistent addresses, questionable organizational chart, business zoning inconsistencies, and website information); or if the evidence of the job duties or the beneficiary's qualifications is questionable (e.g., unsigned work experience letters, missing addresses and telephone numbers, and discrepancies in the beneficiary's skills, educa-

tion or age).

Regardless of the presence of any of these factors, if a petitioner has been referred to investigation by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), or if the petitioner or alien is the subject of an ongoing ICE investigation, the guidance states that the petition must be referred to the fraud detection or background check unit.

It also identifies several ways by which petitioners who meet the 10/25/10 formula commit technical violations. Among the red flags listed are the following: physical job location is not listed on the I-129 form or on the labor condition application; mismatch between the salary and the prevailing wage; and misrepresentations on the beneficiary's immigration status.

The USCIS also pays attention to any inconsistency between the offered job and the normal activities of the busi-

ness, as well as between the facility and the type of work to be performed (e.g. petitioner claims to have 100 employees but the facility is in a residential zone).

In these cases of possible technical violations, the adjudication officer cannot approve the petition until the potential violation of law is resolved through a request for evidence, intent to deny or intent to revoke.

The memorandum sheds light on the agency's review process and probably explains the increased H-1B denials despite the absence of any change in the law. It was made public as a result of a lawsuit under the Freedom of Information Act. ■

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

Phl to Pursue Sea Claims Despite Asean Setback

by Edu PUNAY/
Wednesday, July 18, 2012

WEST PHILIPPINE SEA AND WOULD NOT BE HAMPERED by the absence of the joint statement in the recent Association of Southeast Asian Nations foreign ministers meeting in Cambodia.

"We are not hampered by the absence of a joint communiqué. It certainly would have helped us but we are not hampered by the absence of a joint communiqué," presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said.

He said the country would relentlessly continue to find a peaceful solution to the dispute over the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

When asked what would be President Aquino's approach when he goes back to Cambodia this November for the ASEAN Summit, Lacierda said that the President would certainly push for ASEAN centrality.

"Number one, we will see what the developments will be from here on until the next meeting of the ASEAN leaders. But definitely, one thing that the President has emphasized and will emphasize again in the com-

ing meeting will be the ASEAN centrality," he said.

"That has always been the whole idea of ASEAN being a regional bloc – it is to emphasize the centrality of ASEAN. But between now and until the next meeting of leaders, there may be some developments and we won't be able to speculate as to what precisely the President will speak on," Lacierda noted.

As to statements saying the Philippines should give up its territorial claims in the West Philippine Sea because of the absence of a strong military, Lacierda said the country's approach was to push for a peaceful solution through diplomatic means.

"They're looking at it from a strictly military point of view. We're coming from a perspective where we believe that a diplomatic peaceful solution can be achieved. And that's what we've been hammering on and that's what we believe in, and that's the position we will continue to maintain," he explained.

Asked about possible shortcomings on the part of the Philippines as reason why a joint communiqué was not issued, Lacierda said it was Cambodia that probably had to explain why

such was not issued.

"You must remember that the joint communiqué the Philippines was asking for was to recognize that there was a discussion on the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal standoff. That was the only thing that the Philippines was requesting and, even on that point alone, the Cambodian foreign minister refused to issue a joint communiqué, that's why we are disappointed. Again, we will be hoping our diplomatic channels may be able to convince Cambodia to see the side of the Philippines that this is something that the ASEAN as a whole should look into with interest,"

Lacierda said.

Lacierda added that despite the presence of Chinese fishing vessels in the disputed Spratlys or Kalayaan Island Group, the authorities would still have to assess whether to send back Philippine vessels.

"Our policy is to de-escalate tensions," he stressed.

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) spokesperson Raul Hernandez said that the government would continue to monitor the location of the Chinese fishing vessels that arrived in Spratly Islands on Sunday.

"According to Secretary (Albert) del Rosario, he's seeing the aggressive infringement of

the Chinese in our maritime domain, territory and exclusive economic zone because of creeping imposition of their claims in the South China Sea," Hernandez said yesterday.

Hernandez earlier noted that the Philippines will file a protest against China if the Chinese ships venture inside the Philippines' EEZ.

"If they violate our sovereign rights in our EEZ, we'll file a protest," he said.

RECONNAISSANCE MONITORING

Meanwhile, the Western Command (Wescom) is con-

(continued on page 15)

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USP4GG Calls for Boycott on Chinese-Made Goods

by Ted LAGUATAN

US PINOYS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE (USP4GG) HAS SPEARHEADED a continuous boycott of Chinese products to protest China's diplomatic and military claims on the Panatag Shoal and the Kalayaan Group of Islands in the West Philippine Sea.

The U.S.-based umbrella organization of Filipino groups claims a membership of several thousand professionals. Its goal is to seek better governance for the Philippines and a better life for all Filipinos—in the Philippines and those living in other countries. USP4GG is rejecting China's claims to the Panatag Shoal and the Kalayaan Group of Islands which are both within the Philippines' 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone.

The following question-and-answer session provides more information on USP4GG's Boycott China Products Initiative campaign.

Q: Why did USP4GG initiate this campaign?

A: It is a protest against China's immoral actions in grabbing marine and energy resources of smaller nations by force knowing that smaller nations cannot stand up to its mil-

itary might.

To justify its action, China has created the fiction that some 2,000 years ago, an ancient Han Dynasty map showed that all the territory covered by the waters of the South China Sea, also known as West Philippine Sea, belonged to China.

The argument is about as valid as Italy claiming that the whole of Europe and parts of Africa and Asia are theirs because it was once a part of the Roman Empire. The Aetas can then validly counterclaim and say: "No way, your first in time claim is garbage. We were here 40,000 years ago."

It's no wonder China does not want the United Nations International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) to settle the issue regarding its claim. She knows her ridiculous argument will fail. Also, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to which China is a signatory provides that anything within 200 miles from a country's baseline is part of that country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and belongs to that country.

Q: Why is this boycott in line with USP4GG's objectives?

A: If the vast marine and energy resources in Philippine territory are properly

developed for the benefit of the Filipino people, it can drastically affect in very good ways the future lives of so many. Among other things, our people will have access to better quality nutrition, health care, shelter, education, peace and order, infrastructures, national defense and various other government services.

Families need not be fragmented because so many parents and grown up sons and daughters no longer have to go to faraway hot and cold lonely countries in order to find work to enable their families to survive. The economic windfall from the development of these vast energy resources will not only cause present companies to grow but also cause the emergence of new industries and companies that will provide new jobs and decent wages. In a very real sense, our fight to retain our vast marine and oil resources is a fight for a better future for our people.

Q: The Philippines is a small country and there are relatively only a few Filipinos in the Philippines and

abroad. Will a boycott by Filipinos of China's products make a dent on China's economic armor?

A: The Boycott China Products Initiative campaign is not limited to Filipinos. This campaign will be carried out worldwide. When other nations are made aware of China's using gorilla tactics to steal valuable oil and marine resources of the Philippines and other small victim countries, they will join in sympathy and abhor China's unethical and immoral bully tactics.

Already, we have gotten the alliance of Vietnamese-American communities. We expect alliances with the Taiwanese, the Japanese, the Malaysians and others because their countries' marine and energy resources

are also being targeted by China.

USP4GG will continue with this vigorous boycott campaign. When the thousands of workers in the U.S. and other countries who lost their jobs because of outsourcing of manufacturing of goods to China learn more about China's bully tactics, they will be inclined to join in this campaign.

At a certain point, so many people and so many countries protesting against China will translate into massive boycotts grossly affecting China's economy, then they will have no choice but to become more civilized and halt their gorilla tactics. Then the bounty given us by the Almighty will rightly go to the Filipino people. ■

More Prostate Cancer Test Advice for Some Men

WASHINGTON (AP) — **THERE'S MORE ADVICE ON THE CONTENTIOUS ISSUE** of prostate cancer screening: A leading group of cancer specialists says the decision hinges in part on a man's life expectancy.

Doctors should discuss the possible pros and cons of those PSA blood tests with men expected to live longer than another 10 years, the American Society of Clinical Oncology recommended Monday.

That's a contrast from guidelines issued this spring by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, which recommended against routine PSA screening for all men. That government advisory panel found little if any evidence that PSA testing saves lives — and said too many men suffer impotence, incontinence, heart attacks, occasionally even death from treatment of tiny tumors that never would have killed them.

In its own review, the oncologists' group ASCO concluded that doctors should discourage PSAs for men with less than 10-year life expectancy, for those very reasons.

But it didn't find the evidence as clear-cut for younger or healthier men — and released a step-by-step guide, in easy-to-understand language, to help them and their primary care physicians understand the controversy and make an informed decision. The new ad-

vice echoes guidelines from the American Cancer Society.

"This is a gray area of medicine," said Dr. Ethan Basch, a prostate cancer specialist at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center who co-chaired ASCO's review. "That's made this a very challenging discussion, and a very challenging decision."

The guide makes clear that before men decide to have the PSA test, they should think about how they'd react to a suspicious result, and all the testing and treatment decisions that would entail.

Too much PSA, or prostate-specific antigen, in the blood only sometimes signals prostate cancer is brewing. It also can mean a benign enlarged prostate or an infection. Only a biopsy can tell. Most men will get prostate cancer if they live long enough. Some 240,000 U.S. men a year are diagnosed with it, most with slow-growing tumors that carry a very low risk of morphing into the kind that can kill.

Two huge studies, one in Europe and one in the U.S., evaluated whether routine screening can save lives. Without screening, about 5 in every 1,000 men die of prostate cancer over 10 years. The European study found PSA testing might prevent one of those deaths, while the U.S. study found no difference.

ASCO's patient guide highlights the European study results. (www.philstar.com) ■

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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5TH ANNUAL HAWAII CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE ACCESS • Theme: "Translation - Maximizing Quality and Minimizing Cost" • August 22-23, 2012 • Imin International Conference Center, East West Center • Sponsored by the Office of Language Access • Free, but participants must register; registration deadline August 7, 2012 • Visit www.hawaii.gov/labor/ola or call 808-586-8730

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII BIENNIAL BANQUET DINNER AND INSTALLATION OF 2012-2014

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS / SATURDAY • August 25, 2012 • FilCom Center 94-428 Mokuola Street, Waipahu, Hawaii • 6:00PM • For more information, contact: Bea Ramos-Razon 778-6291 bramosrazon@aol.com, Divina Robillard 256-3932 or upaah@yahoo.com, Carolyn W. Hildebrand upaah2012to2014@gmail.com

4TH USA REGIONAL ASSEMBLY AND CONFERENCE, ORDER OF THE KNIGHTS OF RIZAL • September 1-3, 2012 • Hibiscus Room, Ala Moana Hotel • Delegates are expected to come from the mainland US, Canada, Europe, Philippines, and Hawaii

2ND DR. JOSE P. RIZAL AWARD / SUNDAY • September 2, 2012, • Hibiscus Room, Ala Moana Hotel • For more information, call Raymund Liongson at 381-4315 or Jun Colmenares, 510-734-4491.

GLOBAL NEWS

Filipino 'Maid for Rent' Racket Rampant in Middle East

by Dennis CARCAMO/
Tuesday, July 17, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - A MIGRANTS WORKERS' RIGHTS GROUP on Tuesday bared that the "maid for rent" racket is now prevalent in the Middle East.

Migrante-Middle East is now calling on the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and Philippine Overseas Labor offices in the Middle East to probe the "maid for rent" racket by the employers of Filipino maids.

The group's regional coordinator Leonard Monterona said that many of the "maid for rent" victims are runaway overseas Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia. He said that the OFWs were forced to work to other households through brokers.

"It is now becoming rampant that it even created a market of 'maid for rent' that is not only illegal but also de-

humanizes migrant household service workers," Monterona said.

Monterona said that under abusive and restrictive working conditions, an OFW household service worker is forced to run away from her original employer or sponsor where she is to work contractually.

"The OFW reports and seeks the assistance of the Philippine-based recruitment agency's counterpart foreign recruitment agency who will offer her to be transferred to another employer, if negotiations with the original sponsor-employer failed," he added.

Under labor laws of Gulf Cooperating Council-member countries, Monterona noted that a maid has to exclusively work for her sponsor, who is responsible for her legal and financial status during her stay in the host country.

The host government imposes fines maximum of 30,000 riyals and bans the employer or agency to hire maids for five years, and once the absconding maid is apprehended she

will be deported back to her country of origin, he said.

Last year, the Saudi labor ministry, acting on the complaints of a group of Saudi recruitment agencies, ordered to stop the hiring of maids from the Philippines and Indonesia pending resolution of the issues being raised related to salary and protection of the deployed maid amid incidents of rampant deaths and abuses.

However, Monterona added, the shortage of maids primarily due to restrictions imposed by the Saudi government on the recruitment of foreign workers especially household service workers gave rise to the "maid for rent" phenomenon.

The racket is being operated by a group of "brokers" who make each maid, most of them runaways, work in more than one household.

"Particularly during Ramadan, the services of maids are badly needed by Arab families, thus even absconders or ran away maids were hired," Monterona noted. (www.philstar.com) ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Group Sees US Hand in Chacha Push

by Dennis CARCAMO/
Thursday, July 19, 2012

MANILA, Philippines - MILITANT FISHERFOLK GROUP PAMALAKAYA on Thursday said the Aquino government has been pressured to undertake charter change to secure membership to the trans-Pacific Partnership.

Pamalakaya alleged that during the visit last March of US Deputy

Trade official Demetrios Marantis, Washington pressured Manila to undertake trade reforms through Chacha.

The group also said Chacha would eliminate economic restrictions currently enshrined in the 1987 Constitution, particularly its restriction on foreign investors acquiring 100-percent equity on profitable and major sectors of the economy.

The group also slammed the

P6.19-billion military aid the US government will provide to the Armed Forces of the Philippines modernization fund, adding that the amount is nothing but a grease money for Aquino to send the marching order for Chacha.

"The American trade official was here last March to tell Aquino administration to speed up Chacha if the country wants to gain a seat in the US-led TPP. It is a marching order from

hotly contested Spratlys archipelago.

"We have been conducting reconnaissance flights since yesterday morning," a Wescom official said, adding that the Philippine Navy ships are also conducting patrols within the

country's territorial waters in the region.

Kagitingan Reef is well within the hexagon area that includes Kalayaan town in Pag-asa Island. Kagitingan Reef is currently occupied and heavily fortified by Chinese troops.

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Washington D.C. and Aquino has no option but to proceed with the sell-out in exchange for US political and military support," Pamalakaya said.

The 1987 Constitution, as established in the National Patrimony Act, allows foreign investors to a maximum of 40 percent equity to prevent the exploitation of natural resources and give Filipinos more opportunities to enjoy benefits of investments. (www.philstar.com) ■

(cont. from page 13; PHL...)

ducting an air and maritime monitoring on the Chinese fishing fleet composed of 30 vessels that are currently fishing within the vicinity of the Kagitingan Reef (Johnson Reef) in the

Nearby are also several islets where Vietnamese troops are garrisoned. Further north but also close to Kagitingan Reef is Titu Aba, the biggest of the more than 800 islets, atolls, reefs, cays and sandbars, occupied by Taiwanese troops. (www.philstar.com) ■

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