

# HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

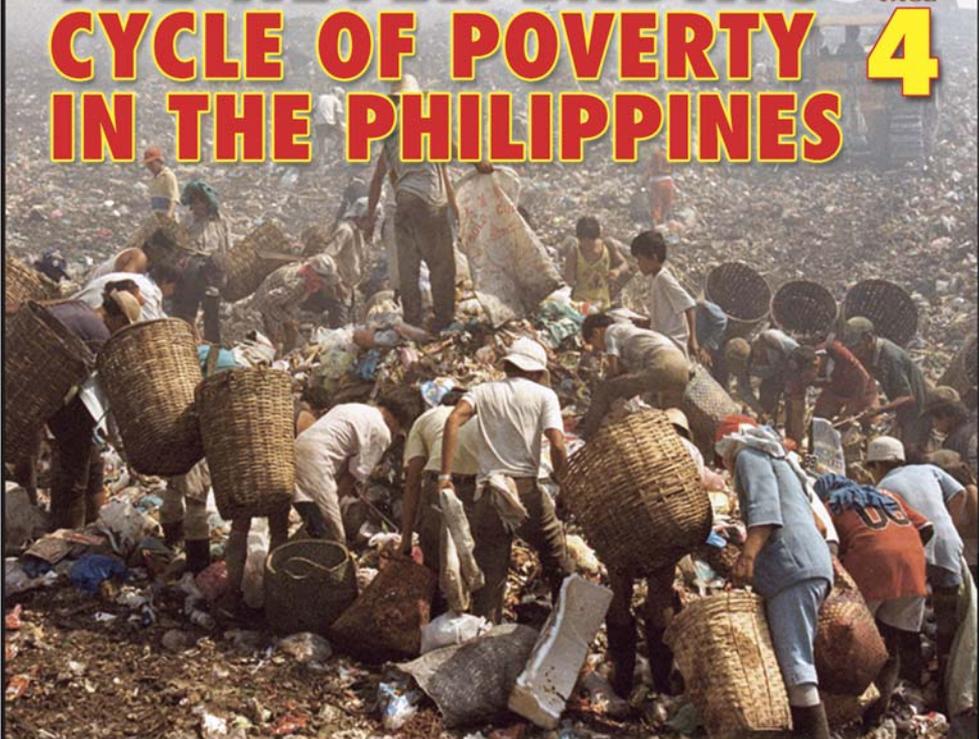
HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ WEEKLY ◆ MAY 30, 2009 ◆

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## EDITORIAL

## No Easy Solutions to Ending Poverty

**O**ft has been said that poverty has many faces. In the Philippines, these faces number in the millions. Those who have never before seen the level of poverty in a Third World country are in for a rude awakening. In a vivid description, a first time visitor to the Philippines says the poverty there "hits you in the face unapologetically the very moment you step in."

Philippine leaders for decades have wrestled with the problem of poverty with limited success. Efforts to emphasize education, limit family size, generate more jobs, enhance social services and improve agricultural productivity have barely scratched the surface. Observers say that poverty will continue to plague the Philippines as long as there is graft in government and politicians in office who perpetuate cycles of corruption and inequality that exacerbate poverty.

Consequently, poverty may be too well-entrenched in Philippine society and far too encompassing to resolve—unless there is first a drastic reform of the country's political system. But with a government so accustomed to corruption, reform would require nothing less than another social revolution, particularly since there appears to be no political will for a charter change.

The bottom line is that true impetus for change will not come from government, but from the average citizen with a sensitive heart for the poor and true desire to help others. Non-government organizations and the influential Catholic Church should put aside differences and partner together on programs that feed the hungry and provide quality education to more young people. Focusing on these two areas won't eliminate poverty entirely, but would be a good start.

## Take Advantage of State's Tax Amnesty Offer

**F**eeeling a bit guilty about owing unpaid state taxes? Under the state's Tax Fresh Start program, delinquent taxpayers can come clean on back taxes they owe, pay the amount and receive exoneration for penalties and interest.

It is a sweet deal for the state, which faces shrinking tax revenues and an uncertain economic future. State tax officials hope to bring in millions of dollars that otherwise would have gone uncollected and to mirror the success of other states that have implemented similar tax amnesty programs. Oklahoma, for example, received \$82 million in unpaid taxes from its tax amnesty offer last year, which was twice the amount that officials there had hoped to collect.

By choosing a quick fix to replenish its tax coffers, the State is willing to forego over \$1 billion in unpaid taxes from individuals and businesses. Rather than pursue lengthy audits and lawsuits to collect back taxes it is owed, it would be less expensive in the short run for the state to administer a voluntary, one-time tax amnesty program.

On the downside, it could very well undermine the public's confidence in the tax system, especially since tax cheaters don't have to pay a price for non-compliance. Furthermore, some taxpayers could simply hold onto their money to invest or spend and then take advantage of the next time the state offers amnesty. This explains why an amnesty program is unsound tax policy for the long term and why the state is unlikely to ever make the offer again.

In the meantime, it would be wise for delinquent taxpayers to make good on the state's amnesty program which ends on June 26, 2009. After that, the situation could become more hostile, as a bill pending before Gov. Lingle would lengthen the statute of limitations for tax offenses, impose stiffer penalties and add more resources to go after tax cheaters.

## FROM THE PUBLISHER



loha and welcome to the latest issue of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle! As the school year draws to an end, thousands of high school students will soon be receiving their diplomas. Many families are looking forward and preparing to celebrate their accomplishments. We at the Chronicle extend our congratulations to all of you graduates—both college and high school—and wish you all the very best in your continued endeavors.

Our cover story for this issue is written by Dr. Belinda Aquino from the University of Hawaii-Manoa's Center For Philippine Studies. Dr. Aquino takes an in-depth look at the problem of poverty in the Philippines. She examines the impacts that political events in the Philippines have had on current poverty levels, factors that contribute to poverty and possible solutions to the problem. The fact of the matter is that there are no easy solutions. Those of you who have been to the Philippines have seen for yourself first-hand the poverty there and know how bad the problem is. Please read more on Dr. Aquino's analysis on pages 4-5.

Also in this issue, contributing writer Caroline Julian profiles Angel Ramos, a Kahuku resident who has taken a liking for the Sanseveria, or snake plant, as it's more commonly known. Ramos, who is originally from Ilocos Norte, has collected and raised the plant for the past 30 years. Ramos, 80, retired from the Kahuku Sugar Mill and was designated as a living treasure by the Honolulu City Council. More on this interesting individual is available on page 7.

Speaking of interesting, in a recent appearance on the David Letterman Show, actor Alex Baldwin angered many Filipinos with a comment about Filipina mail order brides. Baldwin's "joke" did not result in the level of controversy that ABC's "Desperate Housewives" generated, yet he did enough damage that the Philippine officials have banned him from entering the country. To his credit, Baldwin has apologized. Please read more on page 13.

In closing, we hope that you will enjoy reading the other articles and columns of interest in this issue, particularly the "Legislative Connection" on page 3, "Governor's Column" on page 6, "Legal Notes" on page 13 and "Philippine Language" on page 14.

Until next time...aloha and *mabuhay!*

*Chona A. Montesines-Sonido*

## LETTERS

### Concern For Philippine Collection at UH Library

*I am among many Filipinos who are concerned about the UH Hamilton Library's intent to integrate the Asia collection (including the Philippine collection) into the general repository.*

*I do hope that Belinda Aquino of the UH Philippine Studies Department and other UH Filipino academics will initiate a dialogue with officials at Hamilton Library. And I would certainly invite the Filipino Caucus of the Hawaii State legislature to be a part of this discussion.*

*As a researcher, I have found Hamilton Library's Philippine collection to be an excellent resource and helpful in making me more aware of my ethnic history and identity.*

Mel Domingo  
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## LEGISLATIVE CONNECTION

## On Freedom and Captivity (Part 2)

### On the Other End of the Spectrum – Prison Confinement



By Senator Will Espero

multiple arrests and multiple convictions.

There were several measures that were successful in helping to reform our prison system. The Senate inserted in the state budget over \$500,000 over two years to fund a pilot project in the Department of Public Safety that will utilize GPS electronic monitoring as an alternative to incarceration. These inmates would be carefully selected, non-violent offenders who would be monitored closely in the community. Drug testing, mandatory employment, skill building, and training should be elements in an electronic monitoring program.

Senate Bill 539 reorganizes a division in the Department of Public Safety (DPS)

and emphasizes reentry programs and servicing. It also creates an advisory Re-entry Commission to monitor and work with the DPS to make certain the re-entry needs of inmates are being met.

House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 199 will have the auditor conduct a private prison performance audit of the Saguaro Correctional Center in Arizona where we incarcerate almost 1900 inmates. We export over \$60 million each year to care for our inmates out of state, and the audit is intended to ensure our tax dollars are being spent wisely and efficiently and to ensure we are getting the servicing and programming the contract details. Although there are calls to return inmates from the mainland,

some offenders need to be incarcerated on the mainland so it is important to review and audit the system which has already cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars.

HCR27 supports a study to be completed by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs that would look at the criminal justice system and its disparate treatment of Native Hawaiians. Native Hawaiians are approximately 22% of our population but account for about 40% of the prison population. Some think the figure is higher. The study is intended to look at the Judicial system and its treatment of Hawaiians and other minorities to determine whether policies, procedures, or deficiencies have led to the high incarceration rate of Native Hawaiians.

Finally, House Bill 358 allows certain offenders to be placed in secure drug treatment facilities in lieu of incarceration. This bill just adds another option to be used for drug offenders in our system.

The Legislature believes these bills and resolutions will have a positive impact on our prison system and will continue the on-going efforts to reform our prison system in the future.

The fewer dollars spent on prisons means more for education, social services and other areas.

Many of our inmates must stay incarcerated due to the nature of their crimes. For others, incarceration with some rehabilitation and personal programming can improve the offender and the system.

**T**his past session, my Senate Committee continued to look at ways of improving our re-entry programs in the prison system to help inmates who will one day be released into society. Since statistics show the majority of inmates will be imprisoned for less than 10 years, it is imperative that those inmates in our custody are provided tools and assistance in order to minimize the chances of their return to prison. Too often, we read or hear about offenders who have

## OPINION

## The Freedom to Read

ROSES &amp; THORNS

By Alejandro R. Roces

**T**he man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them." – Mark

Twain

Next month is National Book Development Month, as specified by Republic Act No. 8047. How important are books? We quote Clarence Day: "The world of books is the most remarkable creation of man. Nothing else that he builds ever lasts. Monuments fall, nations perish, civilizations grow old and die out and after an era of darkness new races build others. But in the world of books are volumes that have seen this happen again and again and yet live on, still young, as fresh as the day they were written, still tell of hearts of men centuries dead."

Ignorance is a form of slavery. Wisdom begins with an awareness of ignorance. And although it is a fact that education is costly, ignorance is the only thing that is even costlier than education. And education is still the cheapest defense of any nation. It is a better defense than any army. Education should teach us not only how to work for a living, but how to live so that we will be of service to the country and our fellowmen. In

short, education should not merely be teaching people what they do not know, but more important give their lives purpose and meaning. The primary tool of education is books. And not just text books, but any book or printed material, no matter great or small, is important. There is a saying that knowledge is power. Knowledge is found in books, of any type.

In 1950, the Florence Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials was developed and approved by the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in Florence, Italy. The UNESCO was formed after World War II. In its constitution it was tasked to, "collaborate in the work of advancing mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples (...)" and to that end recommend such international agreement as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image." Their major tool was the Florence Agreement. This was a landmark international treaty. It proved that across borders in every nation, education is important.

We are a global village. Part of being a global village is the free exchange of ideas, information, thoughts and philosophies. The ease with which we can read the latest bestseller from the

United States, or read the latest news in The International Herald Tribune is thanks to the Florence Agreement. Over 100 countries became signatories, including the Philippines. At no point in our history (even during the Marcos Regime) has there been

an attempt to circumvent the Florence Agreement. To do so, we fear, will further undermine our education system. Ignorance is something to be eradicated, not encouraged.

In the Philippines, we hope that the government develops programs to encourage reading from a young age. An important aspect is making sure that books

from around the world are easily and cheaply available to the Filipino. They should build on the Florence Agreement, an agreement that the Philippines has been a signatory of for over 50 years. Our greatest enemy is ignorance. The only thing that can defeat ignorance is education. Reading is fundamental.

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# ROOT CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS TO POVERTY IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Belinda A. Aquino, Ph.D.



**S**olita C. Monsod, a well-known Professor of Economics and media personality in the Philippines, delivered the 2009 Macaulay Distinguished Lecture in Philippine Studies at the University of Hawaii-Manoa.

Monsod talked about the most fundamental problem that the Philippines can never seem to reduce to an appreciable degree—poverty. She presented a wide-ranging perspective on the nature, measurement, causes, incidence and impact of poverty on Philippine society.

## Defining & Measuring Poverty

Poverty is a difficult topic to adequately define using standard statistics and objective criteria such as income, age, family size, educational attainment, rural-urban differences, energy use, access to health facilities, and so on. Poverty is defined, of course, as all these and more. But we never really get a clear and definitive picture because of the multi-dimensional character of the phenomenon we are facing.

Monsod distinguishes between income poverty and outcome poverty. The former

officially establishes annual poverty thresholds for families of varying sizes, e.g., P15,057 for one individual; P75,288 for family of five, P120,480 for a family of eight, and so on. Outcome poverty is much harder to define because it involves qualitative conditions like illness, illiteracy, unemployment, mortality, and other negative consequences.

The statistics that Monsod cited to explore Philippine poverty are derived from the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) that is undertaken periodically to

measure the economic health of the nation. Other measures, such as those used by the Social Weather Stations (SWS), rely on “self-rated” poverty, in which respondents are asked to rate themselves compared to, say, five years ago.

Based on this “self-rating,” the SWS determined in November 2007 that the national poverty rate was 52 percent. This is much higher than the FIES findings in a comparable period, which was estimated at 27 percent. Why the discrepancy?

Obviously, there’s a huge difference between how people

perceive how poor they are based on their own assessment and how outside institutions measure their “poverty” on the basis of surveys and generated statistics. A more comprehensive methodology is needed to yield a much closer “fit” between perception and reality. A more accurate picture will probably emerge somewhere in between.

## Poverty Over Time

The poverty index in 1985, one year before the Marcos dictatorship was overthrown, reached an all time high of 36.5 percent, which means martial law from 1972-1986 impoverished the country to a pronounced degree. Despite the much-touted “New Society” pronouncements, unprecedented corruption, cronyism, governmental mismanagement, raiding of the public treasury, siphoning of foreign exchange, bliking international loans, smuggling and other fraudulent practices brought the economy to its knees. The country got deeper and deeper in debt, presaging the final collapse of the regime in the 1986 “People Power Revolution.”

By 1991, towards the end of President Cory Aquino’s term, poverty dropped to 30 percent, undoubtedly aided by economic reinvigoration and restored political freedoms. This index was further reduced to 20.5 percent in 1997, one year before Aquino’s successor, Fidel Ramos, ended his term.

In retrospect, Ramos is generally considered the best economic manager of the country among the post-Marcos presidents. Although Ramos did not succeed entirely, his political-economic philosophy revolving around the 4 D’s (democratization, deregulation, decentralization and development) moved the economy forward and reduced poverty levels.

Poverty shot up again during the short-lived Estrada term. By 2000, one year before Estrada was ousted in “People Power 2,” poverty increased to 22.3 percent. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took over Estrada’s unexpired term starting in 2001.

In 2006, poverty held steady at 22 percent, although it should

have declined significantly because the Philippine economy grew by 7 percent under Arroyo’s watch. The reasons for this discrepancy can be attributed in large measure to previous government policies that retarded economic growth by discriminating against agriculture and discouraging human capital investment. These policies in turn were sustained and continue to be sustained by powerful interests that have historically blocked meaningful economic reform.

## Who and Where Are the Poor?

Luzon has 57 percent of the population and carries 44 percent of the nation’s poor. The Visayas has 20 percent of the population and a 20.5 percent poverty rating. And Mindanao, whose population is 23 percent of the country’s total, suffers from a 35.4 percent poverty index.

Mindanao, with less than half of the Luzon population, is only about 9 points below the latter’s index, making it the poorest region in the country. In terms of extreme poverty, Metro Manila is listed with a 7 percent rating, compared to the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which is the poorest at 60 percent. Rizal province, which adjoins Metro Manila, is the least poor at 6.4 percent. By contrast, Tawi-Tawi in the southernmost Philippines, suffers from 79 percent poverty.

As for municipalities, Binondo in the heart of Manila has only 1 percent of its residents considered poor, whereas Siayan in Zamboanga del Norte has a staggering 98 percent poverty index.

These figures are at best inadequate, though not unreliable, when measuring the extent of poverty nationwide. Some critics have complained that “official” poverty statistics do not reveal the “invisible poor,” such as ambulant transient or homeless poor, as well as indigenous people living in remote areas. Therefore, according to this critique, the extent of poverty is much more severe than can be apprehended by limited facts and statistics.

## Income, Family Size & Education

In terms of the overall population, the income picture is terribly lopsided indicating intense continuing social and economic inequality. The richest 20

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## COVER STORY

percent controls 53 percent of the Philippines' total income. This would include the wealthiest families headed by Lucio Tan, John Gokongwei, Henry Sy and other "taipans."

Conversely, the bottom 20 percent consisting of the poorest sectors in the society controls only 4.6 percent of total income. This skewed income distribution is one of the worst in the developing world. There is no significant middle class that could contribute to poverty alleviation. This explains why poverty persists, despite consistent economic growth from 2003-2006. Positive economic growth is unequally distributed because of the class inequality to begin with. Consequently, the rich get richer and the poor poorer.

In terms of family size, poverty increases exponentially with numbers. A family comprised of 3 members constitutes only 13 percent of the poor, whereas 9-member families make up an overwhelming 54 percent of the country's poor. It's axiomatic—the more there are in a family, the poorer you are.

Education is another major index. Monsod cited statistics that show two-thirds of poor households are headed by those who only had a primary schooling. Someone who did not reach elementary school earns only P90,326 a year, compared with a college graduate whose annual income is P525,823. A high school graduate earns an average P213,322.

#### What to Do?

Monsod pointed out that obtaining a higher level of education is the main avenue out of poverty. But she noted that this has not been achieved. Instead, dropout rates in elementary education increased between 2001-2005. It is imperative that education be pursued vigorously by the government, but this is not happening because there are



other priorities like regional infrastructure development.

Population control is another major way out, but this has fared even worse. Several national population programs that promoted family planning have disappeared. Instead, there is a National Anti-Poverty Commission, which appears to be more of a palliative rather than a real cure. The responsibility for advocating reproductive rights has fallen on a few non-government organizations (NGOs) which face powerful forces opposing abortion rights and contraception. The Catholic Church is relentless in its crusade to block population planning.

It goes without saying that the government should pursue agricultural productivity much more vigorously. Poor agricultural productivity, underinvestment in rural infrastructure, high population growth, low quality of social services—combined with the unequal land and income distribution—keep the country mired in much higher levels of poverty than its counterparts in developing regions.

Graft and corruption have been repeatedly studied as root causes of poverty, yet these twin cancers have not been dealt with seriously. Various studies

have estimated that official corruption costs the government billions of pesos annually. The continuing vicious cycle of corruption increases the gap between rich and poor and intensifies basic inequality.

It is easy to prescribe the usual remedies that have been repeated over the years: the need for political will, if not a social revolution. While this is highly improbable in a country so used to a corrupt political system, it is not an impossible goal.

A drastic overhaul of the system can be initiated by the country's leaders, short of a charter change.

Electoral reform should be undertaken so that the "usual suspects" do not get elected over and over to perpetuate cycles of corruption and inequality. A much more disciplined political party system needs to be developed. Parties and politicians should run on the basis of hard issues rather than on tenuous personal connections or alliances.

Unfortunately, the "balimbing" system (turncoatism) continues to dominate decision-making perpetuating the worst features of Philippine politics.

ture and less on their own vested interests.

Some hope may be coming in the growing civil society movement that emerged in the post-Marcos era. Though still relatively young, the movement has to explore viable alternatives that lie between the state and the market.

What is needed is a core of strong NGOs focused on the fundamental problem of social inequality, which exacerbates poverty. The project-by-project approach funded by foreign foundations can only do so much. Until the structural problem of inequality is addressed, no amount of government or outside aid to alleviate poverty will work effectively.

Thus, both short-run and long-term solutions are needed, but at the very least, the root causes of Philippine poverty have to be resolved first. That's the bottom line.

*(DR. BELINDA A. AQUINO, an internationally recognized expert on contemporary Philippine affairs, has been professor of Asian Studies and Political Science for more than 30 years at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, where she is also director of the Center for Philippine Studies).*

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Prof. Solita "Winnie" Monsod with Prof. Belinda A. Aquino

## GOVERNOR'S COLUMN

# The Challenging Times For Our State



By Gov. Linda Lingie

**S**ince the legislative session ended on May 8, my Administration has been carefully analyzing the 250 bills passed by the State Legislature. As Governor, I have until July 15 to sign the bills into law, veto them or let them become law without my signature. We encourage the public to provide input on the bills that are still under consideration by e-mailing gov.policy@hawaii.gov, faxing 808-586-0006 or calling 808-586-0034.

A major focus for my Administration this legislative session was dealing with the immediate economic crisis in front of us by implementing measures to boost our economy and create jobs. At the same, we felt it was important to address the long-term future of our state, and introduced a series of measures that planned for the future and were in synch with major federal initiatives.

Despite the serious nature of the challenges we face, this legislative session was marked by missed opportunities. Instead of supporting agreements with our public employee unions that reflect a sense of shared sacrifice during these historically difficult times, Democrat legislators chose to increase taxes that will further

erode our economy and discourage visitors from coming to Hawai'i — in essence hurting all of Hawai'i's taxpayers in their effort to protect one constituency.

In addition to pursuing fair and necessary measures to close the projected gap in our state budget, my Administration also introduced a series of innovative and forward-looking measures this session that laid the foundation for a stronger economic future, and which also would have created jobs and injected money into our economy in the near-term. These measures, including the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Highways Modernization Plan, the Department of Land and Natural Resources' (DLNR) Recreational Renaissance to restore our state parks,

trails and ocean recreation areas, and the Hawai'i Broadband Initiative, which would have accelerated our transformation into a true information economy, all died mysteriously in the final days of session, even though they started out with broad bipartisan support.

Despite the failure of the Legislature to pass these measures, I want to reassure Filipino Chronicle readers that my Administration continues to do everything in its power to push ahead with our economic recovery efforts. DOT will move forward on highway projects already in progress, including the PM contraflow lane starting at Radford Drive overpass and the widening of the Middle Street merge. DLNR will move forward with the repair and maintenance of our outdoor

land and ocean recreational facilities, and the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs will take the lead in competing for \$200 million in federal stimulus funds for broadband infrastructure projects.

I'd like to thank all of you who participated in the 2009 legislative session by submitting testimony or contacting your legislators, as well as those of you who took time out of your busy schedules to attend my tax measure veto ceremony on May 7. Your input remains critical as we continue to review bills passed by the Legislature over the next few weeks. Please visit my website at [www.hawaii.gov/gov](http://www.hawaii.gov/gov) to track detailed results from the 2009 session, including new laws enacted and vetoed bills.

## HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

## Filipina Businessowner Nets Two Awards

**A**gnes Reyes, president of Case Management Professionals, Inc. (CMP) has received two awards honoring her outstanding business achievements. In early May, Reyes received the 2009 Filipino Entrepreneur of the Year Award given by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii.

She was selected for the prestigious award among five other very deserving nominees, including Edward and Juliet Nix of Nix Performing Arts Center; chef Elmer Guzman of the Poke Stop; Joey Alcantra Jr. from Group Builders Inc.; Lucy Pascual of Pascual Imports



Kapolei, Inc.; and Roberto M. Rongcal of Index Builders, Inc.

Reyes was also awarded with the State of Hawaii 2009 Home-Based Business Champion of the Year Award, given by the U.S. Small Business Admin-

istration. The award is given to entrepreneurs who demonstrate the tenacity and skills needed to thrive in business and in today's economic fluctuations.

A registered nurse by training, Reyes is one of the pioneers who assisted the State in building its home and community-based alternative long-term care program for the elderly and disabled. She recruited, trained and certified the first several hundred community care foster family homes in the State.

Her company is a licensed home and community-based case management agency that refers individual clients to the appropriate certified community foster family home and assures that the homes and caregivers' skills are appropriate for clients.

CMP is subcontracted by the State Department of Human Services to provide case management services to elderly and disabled Medicaid recipients who are at nursing home level of care, but reside

in their own homes or residential care facilities.

Within the last five years, Reyes expanded her business to Kauai and added new services such as billing, caregiving in-service education and training, and other individualized service assistance to clients. Thanks to her hard-working staff of highly-skilled and qualified professional nurses, social workers and administrative staff, the company has enjoyed an increase in profits and in the number of clients, despite the slumping economy.

## Fil Chamber of Commerce Awards Scholarships

**F**our students from the Class of 2009 have received scholarships from the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii Foundation. The scholarships are awarded annually to students pursuing higher education and who are involved with or seek to perpetuate the Filipino culture.

The students are Chelsie Neves, Benjie Allan Sevilleja Bacilig, Celina J.K. Macadang-dang Hayashi and Charisse Ongie.

Neves is the daughter of Manuel and Sheryl Neves. She is from Sacred Hearts Academy and has a 4.0 grade point average. She plans to major in chemistry/pharmacy at Creighton University.

"I will act as an example of good citizenship for the community by volunteering for non-

profit organizations, donating my time and money to my church, and by just being a compassionate person," she says.

Bacilig attended Waimea High School, where he ranked first in his class and carried a 4.14 GPA. Benjie is the son of Benigno and Inocencia Bacilig. He plans to major in economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

"I developed an appreciation of what it takes to become a successful leader, role model and community leader," he says.

Hayashi went to King Kekaulike High School, where she ranked first in her class and earned a 4.077 GPA. She will attend Scripps College and major in biology or biomedical engineering. She is the daughter

of Duane and Agnes Hayashi. As student government president, she learned the importance of taking responsibility for yourself and the community.

"My extensive experience in student government affairs has helped me to recognize the importance of engaging in civic and government affairs to effectively and purposefully effectuate change for the well-being of our community," she says.

Ongie graduated from Hawaii Baptist Academy with a 4.102 GPA. She is the daughter of Ryan and Sandra Ongie. She will be attending Colorado State University and major in biochemistry. Her dream is to become a successful veterinarian.

"Along with the ability to provide quality health care for animals, my career will allow me to affect many people's lives because animals play an important role," she says.

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## FEATURE

# Sakada Finds Joy in SANSEVERIA

By Caroline Julian



Sanseveria "Ed" "Eby" looks like Marunggay fruit. The variegated "Ed Eby" is still not found in many collections.

**Y**ou don't need a green thumb to master growing Sanseveria, which is commonly known as the snake plant.

That's according to Sanseveria collector Angel Ramos.

"Any kind color (thumb) will do," he said with his quick wit.

"It's not choosy with soil. You can put your cigarette butt (in the soil) and it's still okay," he laughingly added.

"(It) Looks like a pineapple, comes in many sizes, some grow to six feet," Ramos described.

But he's been able to grow one big prized snake plant that is

7 feet, one inch tall.

Ramos said it is not a thirsty plant. It can go without water for about two weeks. Perhaps, it's because the Sanseveria is part of a group of 60 Agave related species from India, Indonesia and tropical Africa.

A resilient plant, it can survive through a variety of elements.

"It is the easiest to grow. You can't kill it. It's hard to kill. Too much water will kill it...because it can't swim!"

"I don't think it's affected by disease at all, don't have to spray it," he added.

A collector of the plant for more than 30 years, Ramos hardly calls himself a botanist.

In fact, he has never studied

plants or obtained a degree in the area. The closest he's gotten to becoming a botanist was during a short stint working on a plantation while testing sugar cane for its taste, etc.

"But plants are my hobby. I'm really into it. I'm doing everything I can, but I'm learning it on my own and I'm also sharing it."

Ramos is invited to share his knowledge about Sanseveria about twice a year with other plant enthusiasts.

His most recent talk was held at the Kahuku Library.

He has also been a published contributor to the International Sanseveria Society's Journal and a member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Hawaii.

Ramos began his hobby when a friend who had a collection was moving to the mainland in 1995.

"He told me take whatever you want. And I took advantage of it."

And since then, Ramos has been able to maintain and add to the collection. He now has an impressive assortment of a several hundred Sanseveria.

"And that is 'wow.' Perhaps (I have) the biggest collection in this specific area," he said.

"It's hard to believe, but I rarely buy. My friends give them to me."

"I got into the plant because it was interesting looking and different. It varies in shape and the way it grows," he said.

It's never been popular but it's been around for 200 years, he explained. "It only recently got popular in the last 5 years. (It's

Getting big especially in Thailand."

Ramos has devoted its time to the Sanseveria since his retirement from a sugar mill in Kahuku about 28 years ago.

"I was a machinist when the plantation liquidated in 1971, after (I served) nearly 22 years. If the plantation did not close I would still be there," said the 80 year old, who has been designated as a living treasure by the Honolulu City Council.

Like the Sanseveria, Ramos is resilient in his own way.

In 1946 he traveled from Ilocos Norte, Philippines to Maui, as a 17-year-old to work at the pineapple camp. Ramos was part of the last big wave of workers recruited from the Philippines, called the *sakadas*,

which was part of the final wave of plantation workers to the islands. They became a significant part of Hawaii's agricultural history, by being recruited to bust a strike by union plantation workers.

After nine months on Maui, he ended up working in Honolulu, then onto a plantation in Kahuku where he and his wife Rose raised 13 children. Ramos has remained in Kahuku since, enjoying retirement and his vast plant collection.

He's recently taken up another hobby, photography. And he's found a way to blend his two loves - photography and Sanseveria.

"I take picture of my plants every day. That's part of my life."



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SOCIETY PAGE

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

DOH: 4 More Test Positive for H1N1 virus

By Sheila Crisostomo /  
Saturday, May 30, 2009



MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Health (DOH) said yesterday that four more individuals have been found infected with Influenza A(H1N1), bringing to 14 the total number of confirmed cases in the country.

The latest cases include two guests at a wedding party held on May 17 in Zambales, which was attended by the Taiwanese tourists who had earlier tested positive for the flu.

The two are a 42-year-old woman and a 24-year-old man.

The wedding had around 50 guests and eight of them have so far tested positive for the virus.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said the two other patients – a 19-year-old woman and a four-year-old girl – had traveled to the United States where the virus has spread in many cities.

"All four cases have been started on Oseltamivir and have mild respiratory symptoms. All are Filipinos," Duque said at a press briefing.

Health officials have started tracking down those who came in contact with the four patients so they could be asked to observe a 10-day self-quarantine.

Duque said the DOH is expecting A(H1N1) cases to rise, "as is happening in many countries" but maintained that there "should not be any cause for alarm."

"The rapid increase in the number of cases worldwide can be attributed to the relative ease of transmission of the virus and the unrestricted flow of international travelers," he added.

In San Fernando, Pampanga, health officials said eight of the 50 wedding partygoers called up and volunteered to undergo examination, DOH Central Luzon director Dr. Rio Magpantay told The STAR.

Magpantay said six of the callers submitted themselves to tests at the Jose B. Lingad Memorial Hospital while the two were at a regional hospital.

"We expect the number of callers to rise, as people now seem to be encouraged by the government's sincerity to help them and prevent the spread of A(H1N1)," he said.

Duque revealed DOH plans to shift its control strategy "from hospitalization of all cases of H1N1 to outpatient and home management of mild confirmed cases, including cases under observation."

But a change in approach, Duque said, "is not in any way meant to underestimate the threat of this virus."

"The threat remains. We have to be vigilant, we have to be in-the-know insofar as developments are concerned vis-a-vis this virus and hopefully the mild illness that it causes will remain for everybody's benefit," he said.

"The most important thing is that we still do not have any severe case or any death. There is no indication that there is already sustained community transmission in the Philippines," he added.

The health chief reiterated his advice to anyone with fever, cough or sore throat after traveling to affected countries or being exposed to confirmed cases to see a doctor.

"Proper handwashing, appropriate cough manners and good hygienic practices will be your best defense. Boosting your immune system and taking care of your health will also protect you against the virus," Duque maintained.

Duque convened yesterday the 3rd National Disaster Coordinating Center (NDCC) meeting at the DOH office in Manila to discuss A(H1N1).

As NDCC chair, Duque said they would be tackling the preparation plans of the Department of Education for the opening of classes next week and what the Department of the Interior and Local Government is doing to prevent the spread of the virus. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

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## PHILIPPINE NEWS

## Only 4 of 238 House Members Are Non-millionaires

By Delon Porcalla /  
Thursday, May 28, 2009

**M**ANILA, Philippines - Except for the 32 new lawmakers, only four out of the 238 members of the House of Representatives are non-millionaires. The rest are multi-millionaires, with Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar joining the Billionaires Club.

Of the four, 30-year-old Bohol Rep. Adam Relson Jala - a neophyte and a new lawyer - was the only administration lawmaker to join the ranks of non-millionaire opposition Reps. Satur Ocampo and Teddy Casioño of Bayan Muna and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis.

Ocampo ranked 235th with

P895,145 in assets with no liabilities; followed by Jala, P782,000 with no liabilities; Casioño with P118,900; and Mariano with only P55,501 in assets, and no liabilities.

Other militant lawmakers from the opposition bloc have made it to millionaires' row, notably Gabriela party-list Reps. Liza Maza (P1.5 million) and Luzviminda Ilagan (P4.6 million), and Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros who is worth P6.2 million.

The youngest House member, 27-year-old Sharee Ann Tan of Western Samar, is worth P2.1 million. The oldest legislator, 83-year-old Rep. Pablo Garcia of Cebu, has P31.5 million in assets with no liabilities.

Compostela Valley Rep. Manuel "Way Kurat" Zamora, who famously rode his bicycle that carried a special "8" protocol plate and who listed farming as his profession, is worth P9.7 million. He authored bills on the lemon law, or against carmakers who issue defective cars.

Thirty-five-year-old lawyer Abigail Binay of Makati City, daughter of Mayor Jejomar Binay, has a net worth of P29.4 million.

It was reported earlier that the two lawmakers-sons of President Arroyo have also grown richer, although none of them were in the Top 10, which was led by Hall of Famer Villar, who has held the distinction of being the "richest" House member for



Sen. Manny Villar with wife Rep. Cynthia Villar

nine long years.

As per the statement of assets and liabilities provided by the House of Representatives, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo's P96.7-million

net worth in 2007 rose by P2.5 million in 2008, or P99.2 million.

So did neophyte Rep. Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo of Camarines Sur whose P83.7 million in 2007 increased by P5.3 million the following year, or P89 million.

Only the net worth of President Arroyo's brother-in-law, Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio "Icay" Arroyo, has dropped, from P145.8 million in 2007 to P140.3 million in 2008, or a decrease of P5.5 million.

A fourth Arroyo, Ma. Lourdes Arroyo, younger sister of First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, is a representative of party-list Kasangang. She, along with 31 other new sectoral representatives, have not filed their SALN yet since they came in only last April. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

## Binay Welcomes Puno as Rival in 2010

By Jose Rodol Clapano /  
Thursday, May 28, 2009

**M**ANILA, Philippines - Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay welcomed yesterday the declaration of Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno that he will run for vice president in the 2010 national elections.

Binay said the tandem of Vice President Noli de Castro and Puno that was proposed by the Kabalikang ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) is a welcome development.

"Whether it's Secretary Puno or any other administration personality running for vice president, and regardless of whom President Arroyo will anoint as her presidential bet, they will have to contend with the people's dissatisfaction with the Arroyo administration," Binay said.

Binay said the 2010 elections would be a referendum on the Arroyo administration.

"What matters to the people in 2010 is whether or not a candidate can offer them a better government than what we have now and could assure that the government will work to put food on their table and provide jobs," Binay said.

He said the country reached record poverty and hunger levels under the administration of Mrs. Arroyo.

A majority of the people do not believe the Arroyo administration's claim that the economy is growing.

"The number of Filipinos suffering from hunger and

poverty has increased and they did not benefit from the claims of economic growth of this administration," Binay said.

Under the Arroyo administration, government funds have not been used wisely and millions have been lost to large-scale corruption.

"Under Mrs. Arroyo, our national agencies have become notoriously injudicious in undertaking projects and implementing programs; and that's the kindest word I can think of. Worse, national funds are being allocated and disbursed as if they were the personal kitty of Mrs. Arroyo. This is the record that the administration candidates will defend before the people. Good luck to them," Binay said.

## Teodoro open to tandem with Puno

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., hailed Puno's decision to announce his intention to run for vice president.

He said Puno is a veteran public servant and has vast experience in running the affairs of local governments and handling the country's security.

"This makes him the most qualified vice presidential candidate in next year's elections," Teodoro said during the graduation rites of the Naval Officers' Candidate Course (NOCC) held at the Navy base in San Antonio, Zambales.

On the possibility of a Teodoro-Puno tandem, the defense chief said this is very much welcome to him but stressed that this must first pass through the

administration's political coalition selection process.

In the event he is chosen as the administration standard-bearer and Puno would be his running mate, Teodoro said the team will be very strong.

However, if he is not selected, Teodoro said he would abide by the decision of the majority.

Teodoro said that his decision to seek the presidential nomination was not solely his own but also the prodding of supporters from various political groups.

Asked if he is willing to slide down as the vice presidential candidate of De Castro, Teodoro said this matter should also be decided during the selection process. ([www.philstar.com](http://www.philstar.com))

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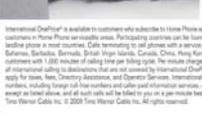
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## PHILIPPINE NEWS

# 10 Years of VFA Marked with Protests

By Katherine Adraneta /  
Thursday, May 28, 2009

**M**ANILA, Philippines – Militant organizations opposed to the presence of American soldiers in the country yesterday marked the 10th anniversary of the controversial Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with protests deploring US intervention in the Philippines.

The Junk VFA Movement, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), Gabriela, and other cause-oriented groups burned an American flag and marched from Plaza Salamanca in Kalaw and Taft Ave. to Rajah Sulayman Plaza in Roxas Boulevard in Manila to denounce the VFA.

The protesters wore masks with the words "VFA kills" and "Junk VFA."

The group also read a solidarity message from former Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. and former senator Serge Osmeña III affirming their adherence to "national sovereignty, genuine independence and human rights."

The militant groups staged the rally three days before the reported visit of United States Defense Secretary Robert Gates to the Philippines.

"Ten years after the VFA was ratified, the Philippines is no better nor safer. What has happened is that our sovereignty has been constantly undermined by the permanent presence of foreign troops. What happened were cases of rape, human rights abuses and even corruption," said Bayan secretary-general Renato Reyes Jr.

Reyes said President Arroyo's regime has shown its "utter subservience" to US interests when it allegedly caused the acquittal of a previously convicted US soldier in the supposed rape of a Filipina, referring to US Marine Daniel Smith.

"President Arroyo is now hoping to reap the rewards of her subservience when she meets Gates on May 31. She's banking on increased military aid for her repressive regime," Reyes added.

Bayan also slammed the refusal of US soldiers to be subjected to health inspections for possible A(H1N1) infection before entering the Philippines.

The Department of Health's Bureau of Quarantine has complained that they are not allowed to conduct quarantine

inspections and thermal scans on US forces. Under the VFA, it is the US commander who issues a health status report for US soldiers.

## Crimes against women

Women's group Gabriela also denounced the crimes of US troops against women and reiterated the immediate abrogation of the VFA.

"Barely six months into the year, we have witnessed several violations of the US troops on women and children," noted Gabriela spokesperson Joms Salvador, citing cases like the killing of a child in Bicol, acquittal of L/Cpl. Smith in the Subic rape case, and the alleged rape of another Filipina by another US serviceman.

"Worse, the Arroyo government, time and again, treacherously colludes with the US government to cover up the crimes committed by US troops against our people," Salvador also said.

In the first place, Salvador said US troops have no right to be in the Philippines since they were kicked out in 1991 after the Senate voted against the extension of the bases' lease.

(www.philstar.com)

# US Offers \$2.5 Million for Arrest of 3 Abus

By Pia Lee Brago /  
Thursday, May 28, 2009

**M**ANILA, Philippines – The US government has offered a total of \$2.5 million as reward for information leading to the location, arrest or conviction of three Filipino terrorists belonging to the Abu Sayyaf Group.

The US embassy said the State Department announced a reward of up to \$1 million for information on Abu Sayyaf senior leader Radullan Sahiron.

State Department spokesman Ian Kelly also announced a reward offer of up to \$1 million for Abdul Basit Usman, a bomb-making expert with links to the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Abu Sayyaf, and another \$500,000 bounty for Khair Mundos, a key Abu Sayyaf leader and financier.

The State Department said many innocent men, women and children have been killed or seriously injured as a result of Sahiron's activities.

Sahiron played a role in the May 2001 kidnapping of three US citizens and 17 Filipinos from a tourist resort in Palawan. Several of the hostages, including American Guillermo Sobero, were murdered.

According to the State Department, Sahiron continues to plot terror schemes that affect many communities in Mindanao. Because of his leadership position in the ASG, whose attacks have resulted in the deaths

of US and Filipino citizens, US authorities consider Sahiron to be a threat.

Sahiron is believed to be hiding in southern Mindanao. Because of his association with US-tagged international terrorist organizations, Basit is considered by American authorities to be a threat to US and Filipino citizens and interests.

Basit, reportedly hiding in central Mindanao, is believed to have orchestrated several bombings that have killed, injured, and maimed many civilians.

Mundos, who is suspected to be hiding in southern Mindanao, has confessed to having arranged the transfer of funds from al-Qaeda to ASG leader Khadaffi Janjalani to be used in bombings and other criminal acts throughout the island of Mindanao.

Since its inception in 1984, the Rewards for Justice program has paid more than \$80 million to more than 50 persons for information that prevented international terrorist attacks or helped bring to justice those involved in prior attacks.

Malacañang and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) welcomed the \$2.5 million in rewards offered by the US

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that the program of the US government has proven to be effective in the campaign against terrorists, including bandits engaged in kidnapping. (www.philstar.com)

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## LEGAL NOTES

## 2nd Preference Option for Professionals



By Reuben S. Seguritan

**W**ith the unavailability of visa numbers in the employment-based third preference (EB3) category, which means a wait for green card of about seven years, a viable option for qualified professionals from all countries, except India and China, is the second preference (EB2) category.

The EB2 category has a yearly worldwide allocation of 40,000 visa numbers, plus any unused visas in the first preference category. Visa numbers are currently available for all countries for this category, except China and India.

These visas are open to qualified beneficiaries in two subgroups: foreign nationals of exceptional ability in the sciences, arts or business and professionals with advanced degrees.

To qualify as advanced degree professionals, two critical requirements must be satisfied: first, the alien beneficiary must be a member of the professions holding an advanced degree or its foreign equivalent; and second, the position must require, at a minimum, an advanced degree.

The advanced degree requirement is satisfied if the beneficiary has a U.S. master's degree or higher, or a foreign degree evaluated to be the equivalent of a U.S. master's degree or higher. Lawyers and medical doctors may qualify as advanced degree professionals.

For those without a master's degree, they may prove el-

igibility under the EB2 category, if they have a combination of a bachelor's degree plus five years of progressive experience in the profession. This is considered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as having the equivalency of a master's degree.

A bachelor's degree is a threshold requirement. Work experience cannot be considered in evaluating attainment of a bachelor's degree. Moreover, the USCIS would consider one foreign degree equivalent and not a combination of degrees or a combination of education or experience to equate to a bachelor's degree for professional positions.

"Progressive experience" is not defined by statute or regulation. The USCIS memo issued in 2000 interpreted it as, "employment experience that reveals progress, moves forward, and advances toward increas-

ingly complex and responsible duties demonstrating advancing levels of responsibility and knowledge in the specialty."

For those under the EB-2 sub-group of Exceptional Ability Workers, they need to show a degree of expertise in their field that is "significantly above the ordinary". This is proven by any three of the following: degree relating to an area of exceptional ability, letter/s from current or former employer/s showing at least 10 years experience; license to practice profession; a salary or remuneration history demonstrating exceptional ability; membership in professional association; or recognition of achievements and significant contributions to the industry or field by peers, governmental entities, or professional or business organization.

Prior to applying for the EB-2 immigrant visa, a labor certification is required, but this

requirement may be waived if the employment of the applicant will be in the national interest. To support a national interest waiver, the employer or the applicant may submit with the ETA 9089 form documents to show that the benefit to be provided by the alien will be national in scope, such as the improvement of the U.S. economy, improvement of wages and working conditions for U.S. workers, improvement of education and programs for U.S. children, improvement of health care and environment.

In one of our cases, we were able to obtain a national interest waiver for our physician client upon showing that he would be practicing in an underserved area.

*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](http://www.seguritan.com)*

## MAINLAND NEWS

## Actor Alec Baldwin Apologizes For Mail Order Bride Joke

American actor Alec Baldwin has apologized for statements he made during a recent guest appearance on the "Late Show With David Letterman" that critics say disparaged Filipino women.

Asked by Letterman if he thought about adding to his family, Baldwin replied "I'm

thinking about getting a Filipino mail-order bride at this point... or a Russian one."

The comment sparked outrage and protests in the Philippines, where Baldwin has been banned and labeled as an "undesirable alien." Many Philippine officials say Baldwin's comment stereotypes Filipino women as easy

commodities for sale. Despite his apology, Baldwin is still not welcome in the Philippines.

"I believe that most people understood that this was a joke and took it as such," Baldwin said in an online blog. "However, I do apologize to anyone who took offense. Such anger and frustration about the issue of sex trafficking is understandable."

Philippine Ambassador to the U.S. Willy C. Gaa thanked Baldwin for his public apology and for recognizing the serious challenges the Philippines faces in actively ad-



Actor Alec Baldwin (left) and the talk show host, David Letterman

dressing the problem of the trafficking of women and children.

Gaa says it was a positive

reflection on Baldwin's character to acknowledge the sentiments of those who took offense over his joke. (DFA)

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## BAHAGHARI



ni Ruth Elynia S. Mabanglo, Ph.D.

**M**agbubukang-lawayway. Isang lamok ang nagpapahinga sa ibabaw ng isang patak na hamog. Masaya siya. Tiwasay ang loob. Malamig lamang ang hamog. Di-kaginsa-ginsa, sumilay ang araw. Lingid sa lamok, unti-unti nitong hinihigop ang hamog. Samakatwid, naglaho ang hamog at nahulog sa lupa ang lamok. Napilay ang isang paa nito.

Galit na galit ang lamok. Sinigawan niya ang hamog. "Hinamhon kita, matapang ka ba?"

"Aba, hindi... hindi ako matapang," imik ng lamok. "Pero sigurado, matapang ang araw. Nahigop niya ako e..."

# Kuwentong Maranao: Bakit Nangangagat ng Tao ang Lamok

Pinuntahan ng lamok ang araw. Sa halos mapaos na boses, tinawag niya ang pansin nito: "Araw! Ikaw na humigop sa hamog at naging dahilan para mapilay ang paa ko! Matapang ka ba?"

Bagaman matindi ang sikat ang araw, sumagot ito ng "Hindi... hindi ako matapang. Siguro ang mga ulap kasi kaya nila akong tabingan. Kukulimlim ang sikat ko kapag natabinghan ako ng ulap. Sila ang tanungin mo!"

Papilay-pilay na hinanap ng lamok ang ulap. Nang makita niya ito, agad niyang tinanong. "Hoy, ulap na nakakatabing sa araw na humigop sa hamog at naging dahilan ng pagkapilay ko, matapang ka ba?"

"Naku, hindi!" sagot ng mga ulap. "Ang alam kong matapang ay ang hangin kasi kaya niya kaming paghiwa-hiwalayin!"

Lumakad na naman ang lamok at hinanap ang hangin. "Hangin," anang lamok mata-

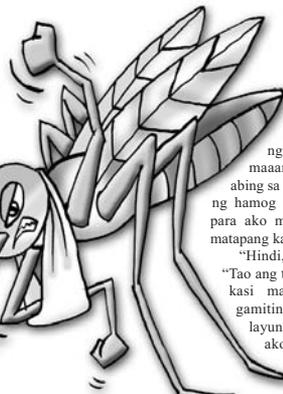
pos masabat ang hangin, "ikaw na nagpapahiwa-hiwalay ng ulap na nakatatabing ng araw na nakahihigop ng hamog na naging dahilan ng pagkapilay ko, matapang ka ba?" "Ay, hindi po, hindi ako matapang." sagot ng hangin. "Pero para sa akin ang mga higanteng bato ang matapang kasi kaya akong patigilin sa pagsalpok o pagsimoy."

Sama k a t w i d , lumakad na muli ang lamok na tinanong ang higanteng bato. "Higanteng bato na nagpapatigil ng hangin nagpapahiwa-hiwalay ng mga ulap, na tumatabing ng araw, na humigop ng hamog, matapang ka ba?"

Umiling ang higanteng bato kaya umiwas ang lamok at baka siya madurog. "Hindi, pero matapang ang bakal... Kaya akong durugin ng bakal." Sagot ng higanteng bato.

Lumakad uli ang lamok at nakita niyang nagpapahinga lang ang bakal. "Bakal na pwedeng dumurog ng higanteng bato na kayang magpahinto ng hangin, na maaaring magpahi-hiwalay ng mga ulap, na maaaring tumabing sa araw na humigop sa hamog at naging sanhi ng pagkapilay ng aking paa, matapang ka ba?"

"Hindi," sagot ng bakal. "Pero ang alam kong matapang



ay ang apoy, kaya akong lusawin ng apoy?"

Muling lumakad ang lamok at hinanap naman ang apoy. Pagkakita rito, sinabi niya, "Apoy na nakalulusaw ng bakal na makadudurog ng higanteng batong makapagpapahinto sa hangin makapagpapahiwa-hiwalay ng ulap na maaaring tumabing sa araw na nakahigop ng hamog at naging dahilan para mapilay ang mga paa ko, matapang ka ba?"

"Ako? Matapang?" Nagtawa ang apoy. "Hindi, oy! Baka pa ang tubig. Kaya akong patayin ng tubig."

Kaya nagpunta ang lamok sa tubig at nagtanong. "Tubig na nakapapatay ng apoy na nakalulusaw ng bakal na

m a k a d u r o g naman ng higanteng bato na kayang magpahinto ng hangin, na pwedeng magpahiwa-hiwalay ng mga ulap na maaari namang tumabing sa araw na nakahigop ng hamog at naging dahilan para ako mapilay ng paa, matapang ka ba?"

"Hindi," tugon ng tubig. "Tao ang tunay na matapang kasi maaari nila akong gamitin sa anumang layunin. Ginaagamit nila akong panghugas, panlaba, panligo, panluto, at kung ano-ano pa."

Sa wakas, nasalubong ng lamok ang isang tao at kanyang tinanong. "Tao na gumagamit ng tubig na nakapapatay ng apoy na nakalulusaw ng bakal na makadudurog ng higanteng batong makapagpapatigil ng hangin makapagpapahiwa-hiwalay ng mga ulap, na makatatabing ng araw na mahihigop ng hamog, na naging dahilan ng aking pagkapilay, matapang ka ba?"

"Oo," sagot ng tao.

May kasiyahang bumadha sa mukha ng lamok. "Mula ngayon, magkaway na tayoy."

Samakatwid, bilang paghihiganti sa pagkapilay niya, kinagat ng lamok ang tao. Iyon ang dahilan kung bakit nangangagat ng tao ang lamok

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## GLOBAL NEWS

### Israel to Dedicate Monument to Filipinos

**M**ore than a thousand Jews who fled persecution in Nazi Germany found refuge in the Philippines, thanks to the government's "open door" policy that Israel will honor next month with the unveiling of a new monument, according to Israeli officials.

"The warm hospitality of the Filipino people undoubtedly shed light on one of the darkest and most difficult periods in Jewish history," says an un-

named official from the Israeli embassy.

The "Open Doors" monument, designed by Filipino artist Jun Yee, is scheduled to be unveiled June 21, 2009 at the Risbon Lezion Holocaust Park in central Israel.

The idea came from Holocaust survivor Frank Ephraim's book "Escape to Manila," published in 2003. The book details the author's and 35 other Jewish refugees' journey to the Philippines—then a U.S. commonwealth—just before it fell to the Japanese during the early years of World War II.

Ephraim and his parents fled to the Philippines in 1939, when he was 8, taking advantage of President Manuel Quezon's decision to welcome Jewish refugees. Preparations were made to accept 10,000 Jews a year, but only 1,200 made it to Manila.

Sixty-seven Jewish refugees were among the 100,000 civilian casualties in Manila during the 1945 U.S. liberation of the capital city and the heavy bombing that preceded it. The bombing destroyed Temple Emil, Manila's only synagogue. (Good News Pilipinas)

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

Philippine passports to accomplish the application form.

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

and another activity at 6:30 pm.

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

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**LITTLE MISS PHIL. HAWAII / SATURDAY**

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

**LITTLE MISS PHILIPPINES HAWAII SCHOLARSHIP PAGEANT / SATURDAY**

May 30, 2009 • 6 - 9 pm • Empress Restaurant • For more info, call Maggie Domingo at 841-2841 or Janice Sevilla at 595-8000

**MRS. HAWAII FILIPINA PAGEANT BY UFCH / SATURDAY**

June 6, 2009 • 6 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village, Tapa Room • Contact

person: Eddie Agas-783-3327, Carlota Ader-688-3215

**11TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF PHIL. INDEPENDENCE / FRIDAY**

June 12, 2009 • 7 pm • Featuring the music of Jay Cayuca and his band • Hilton Hawaiian Village Tapa Ballroom • For more info, call Teapa Jeremiah at 387-5481 or Emily Reyes at 595-6316 x 242

**ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROJECT / SATURDAY**

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

**MISS OAHU FILIPINA PAGEANT / SATURDAY**

June 14, 2009 • 6 pm • Hawaii Prince Hotel • Contact event chair Danny Villaruz at 778-0233 or Lina Longboy at 375-0828

**OFCC GOLDEN JUBILEE PRESIDENT'S BALL / FRIDAY**

June 26, 2009 • 6 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort & SPA H • Contact event chair Leo Gozar at 230-0088 or Lina Longboy at 375 0828

**OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL (OFCC) ANNUAL CONVENTION / SATURDAY**

June 27, 2009 • 7:30 am - 4 pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort & SPA • Contact event chair Carlota Ader at 688-3215 or Lina Longboy at 375 0828 for more details

**FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII INSTALLATION BANQUET / SATURDAY**

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

**VISAYAN CENTENNIAL EVENTS**

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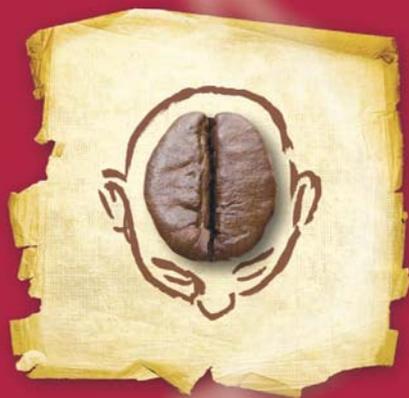
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