

HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

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PHILIPPINES: ARE WE TRULY FREE AND INDEPENDENT?

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EDITORIAL

Freedom is Not Exclusive

This week, Filipinos worldwide will celebrate the 113th anniversary of the Declaration of Philippine Independence.

That fateful day in Kawit, Cavite, was an important turning point in the history of the Philippines. It was the first time when Filipinos proclaimed themselves a nation, as a people with a purpose and a direction. One can only imagine the bliss of those present when Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo unfurled the first Three Stars and a Sun, and when the Marcha Nacional Filipina — a vibrant, poetic paean extolling the valor of Filipinos and declaring love for the Motherland — was first played. There, on June 12, 1898, the people witnessed the birth of the First Philippine Republic.

Throughout the next century, the people would be held hostage by forces and events beyond their control. First to challenge the Filipino people's freedom were the Americans, followed by Japanese Imperial Forces during the Second World War. Last was the government of President Ferdinand Marcos, whose authoritarian rule lasted over two decades. But war and the iron fist of tyrants could not quell the hope and courage of Filipinos. In the end, they always emerged triumphant and filled with optimism for the future.

Today, the Philippines is a country on the brink of modernity, but it is still beset by the ills of the past. The legacy of economic mismanagement, apathy and corruption remains and holds back its progress. Nevertheless, the Philippines has risen from its downhill ride during the second half of the past century. Its economy is the 33rd largest in the world and among the fastest-growing. But one should not celebrate these figures and statistics. Millions of Filipinos today still live on less than US\$1.00 a day. Millions of Filipino children still have no access to good education. Millions of sick people still die from preventable illnesses. These social ills cannot be ignored.

As long as there are politicians who have no qualms about being caught with their hands in the till, Filipinos are not totally free. As long as many country folks remain poor and as long as young people are left with no choice but to seek employment outside the Philippines, they are not totally free. As long as freedom of speech is curtailed and people are threatened with violence, they are not totally free. As long as there are Filipinos who go hungry or who are forced into unlawful deeds just to keep their heads above water, one can't really call the Philippines a free country. Freedom should not be exclusive but all-encompassing.

Today, hope is very palpable in the Philippines. If an appropriation can be made of President Benigno Aquino III's government, it is for not being an antagonistic one. Many Filipinos see the sincerity behind the projects and reforms he is pushing, and hope that this time around, change will be possible.

Filipinos should take up the gauntlet and work together towards the common goal of improving their economic and political freedoms. When this objective has been achieved, Independence Day celebrations will no longer be as vacuous; they will be living testimonies of the freedom and liberty being enjoyed by the people.

Honeymoon Over Between Council, Mayor

In his first State-of-the-City address, Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle promised professionalism and transparency with his new administration. He vowed to cooperate with the City Council and its five new members, and that political agendas would be put aside "to get things done."

But six months into his term and after a contentious budget cycle, the mayor and the Council are at polar opposites on several crucial areas. Two in particular, were front and center during discussion at the Council's June 3rd meeting—the Honolulu Rapid Transit Authority (HART) and a proposed \$26 million biosolids digester.

The Council passed bills approving HART's budget but with

FROM THE PUBLISHER

O it just occurred to me that the year is nearly half over. It seems only yesterday that we were toasting the New Year and making those impossible-to-keep resolutions. While most forget their New Year's goals, a handful of us do manage to follow through. If that's you, then we absolutely hate you. All kidding aside, congratulations on your achievements and keep up the good work!

Speaking of good work, our cover story for this issue was submitted by contributing writer Gregory Bren Garcia in time for the 113th Anniversary of the Philippine Declaration of Independence. In keeping with the theme of freedom, Gregory asks the question 'Are Filipinos Truly Free?' While modern day Filipinos are fortunate to live in a democracy where they can freely speak for themselves, organize rallies, etc., there are still a host of social ills plaguing the country such as abject poverty, corruption and a lack of basic services like education. Gregory writes that as long as these conditions exist in the Philippines, then the Filipino is not truly free. Please read more of Gregory's story which begins on page 4.

To commemorate Philippine Independence Day, we have a special message on page 3 from Consul General Leoncio Cardenas. He also bids farewell to Hawaii's Filipino community and thanks everyone for their support. We also bid him a fond aloha and best wishes as he ends his distinguished career as a Foreign Service officer for the Philippine government.

If you have no plans for this month, you may want to consider an evening in Waikiki to watch the Classic Society of Seven (SOS) which will be joined by Martin Nievera—the Concert King of the Philippines—in a special "Homecoming Concert" performance from June 14-July 2, 2011 at the Outrigger Waikiki. If you have never been to an SOS show, you are in for a special treat! For more details or for ticket information, see our article on page 6.

There are other articles of interest in this issue, including Immigration Guide (page 7), Food & Leisure (page 12) and Legal Notes (page 13). In closing, thank you for faithfully supporting the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle. Please feel free to contact us at: filipinochronicle@gmail.com if you have story suggestions or concerns regarding Hawaii's Filipino community.

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

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

provisions that would give it oversight over the transit authority's finances. Councilmembers insist that HART will be allowed to manage the daily operations of the transit system. Carlisle supports semi-autonomy for HART and vowed to veto bills that give budgetary oversight to the Council. Both sides are prepared to go to court over the issue. The Council also deleted \$26 million for the proposed biosolids digester—a decision frowned upon by the administration which insisted that a new unit is needed to adequately address the volume of Honolulu's solid waste stream.

A council and a mayor at odds is nothing new. But what is disturbing to some observers is the mayor's decision to send threatening letters to the Council when push came to shove and he could not get his way. In the case of the biosolids digester, Carlisle threatened a moratorium on new sewer connections that could commence as early as this year. His threat did not go unnoticed or unappreciated by the Council, particularly Councilmembers Ikaika Anderson and Romy Cachola.

Continued clashes with the Council could lead to gridlock and worse for the mayor, a drop in his popularity, which, as indicated by a recent TV news poll, stood at a rather favorable 64 percent approval rating. We hope that the mayor will stick to his promise of cooperation and extend an olive branch to Council—while the dividing lines have not been dug as deep. Doing so could win points with voters, many of whom are tired of the political rhetoric and wrangling. Let it be the mayor's leadership and conciliatory skills, not "politics as usual" at City Hall that voters will remember when casting their ballots in 2012.



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INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE

KONSULADO PANLAHAT NG PILIPINAS



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE PHILIPPINES

HONOLULU



My warmest greetings to all Kababayans in Hawaii on the occasion of the celebration of the 113th Anniversary of Philippine Independence

This year's theme, "Kalayaan: Paninindigan ng Bayan", allows us to reflect once more on the sacrifices that our forebears have made and which our heroes and leaders of today are committed to offer so that we may continue to enjoy the blessings of peace and freedom that an independent nation provides.

We know that the road ahead is still strewn with difficulties as we struggle against hunger, injustice and corruption, elements of a crusade that is currently waged by the government under the leadership of President Benigno S. Aquino III. But we also know that our Kababayans in these beautiful isles of Hawaii share the same vision as vividly manifested in the countless projects that the Filipino Community has undertaken all these years. The community has been a steady partner and has consistently extended that helping hand as we endeavor to attain a better quality of life for our people.

As I close my profession as a Philippine Foreign Service Officer and end my tour of duty, I wish to take this opportunity to convey my most profound appreciation to the Filipino Community most especially to the Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Council of Hawaii. My professional career has been most productive, meaningful and enjoyable because of your kind understanding and generous support.

Mabuhay!

Leoncio Cardenas
LEONCIO R. CARDENAS
Consul General

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Prof. Trimillos to Lecture on Asian-Pacific Music

As part of its Summer Session 2011 program, the Outreach College will host a special lecture by Ricardo D. Trimillos, an ethnomusicologist and director of the UH Center for Philippine Studies.

Trimillos' lecture, "Global Sounds/Asian & Pacific Bodies: The International Circulation of Music" is also a part of the Sakamaki Extraordinary Lectures, which are an annual summer series extending the intellectual resources of the University of Hawaii to the community. He will speak on Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at 7 pm at the UH architecture auditorium. The event is free and open to the public.

Trimillos has served as cultural consultant for the governments of Malaysia, the Philippines, the former Soviet Union and Hong Kong. His areas of interests include the music of Hawaii, the southern Philippines and Japan. Thematic interests include identity, gender and cultural advocacy.

He has also served as a liaison, bringing indigenous Filipino musicians to national folk festivals in the U.S. His publi-

cations in three languages include articles on Asian-Americans, world music in higher education, cross-cultural implications for the arts, interrelationships of the arts, Philippine ritual and Hawaiian music. As a performer whose principal medium is the Japanese koto, Trimillos has presented concerts of modern and traditional music in the U.S., Europe, Japan, the Philippines and Australia.

The 2011 lectures support the Outreach College's summer theme, "Advancing Asia-Pacific" and provide an enriching public forum for viewpoints and discussion prior to Hawaii's hosting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in November 2011.

APEC's span 21-member economies span four continents and represent 43 percent of world trade. Six extraordinary lectures explore this dynamic region's potential for peace, cooperation and sustainable growth.

More details on the Sakamaki Extraordinary Lectures are available online at: www.outreach.hawaii.edu/summer or by calling 956-3411.

INDEPENDENCE DAY PROGRAM

Part I

National Anthem Philippine Anthem
 Hot Outgoing Dinner
 Grand Floral
 Lantern Lighting

Invocation - Mrs. Maria A.F. Erma
 President, Uho Filipino Community Council

DINNER

Part II

Remarks - Mr. Benigno Misaluka
 Chairman, Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Committee of Hawaii (PCCCH)

Acknowledgments - Mrs. Midge Cardenas
 Vice-Chairperson, Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Committee of Hawaii (PCCCH)

Speech of the Guest of Honor
 Honorable Cecilia Manahan
 Member, U.S. House of Representatives

Time
 Honorable Cecilia Manahan
 Member, U.S. House of Representatives

Hon. Leoncio Cardenas
 Consul General of the Philippines

Speech & Presentation of Certificate
 Honorable Leoncio Cardenas
 Consul General
 Philippine Consulate General

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Philippines: Are We Truly Free and Independent?

By Gregory Bren Garcia

When Filipinos talk about freedom, three major events come to mind: first is General Emilio Aguinaldo's proclamation of the sovereignty and independence of the Philippines from Spanish colonial rule at Kawit, Cavite, on June 12, 1898; second is the Filipino and American campaign to liberate the Commonwealth of the Philippines from the Japanese Imperial Forces between October 1944 and August 1945 during the Second World War; and last but certainly not least dear to Filipinos is the People Power Revolution of 1986, the non-violent revolt that culminated in the departure of the dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, and restored democracy in the island nation.

On June 12 this year, the country will be celebrating the 113th anniversary of the Philippine Declaration of Independence. But in the years following Aguinaldo's unfurling of the first Three Stars and a Sun, and after many other tumultuous events in their country's history, Filipinos today still continue to fight for freedom.

Economic Freedom

While the idea of freedom has many dimensions, the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines fully encapsulates its complexity in the Bill of Rights. Section 1 of the article states that, "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws." Political freedom

comes to mind, but more so economic freedom, which is very relevant to Filipinos.

The Philippines is currently considered a newly-industrialized country (NIC) by economic experts and institutions. Polish professor Pawel Bozyk, for instance, includes the country in his list of NICs, those "traditionally less-developed countries which have made profound structural changes in their economy under conditions of fast growth rates." In other words, NICs are not yet fully-developed countries but have, macroeconomically, overtaken other developing economies.

Last month, President Benigno Aquino III announced that the Philippines' gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 7.6 percent, the biggest in the

country's history since the Marcos regime.

But a big spike in the GDP growth and a glowing label of a newly-industrialized country notwithstanding, the Philippines still faces many challenges that continue to restrain the Filipino people's economic freedom.

According to the 2011 Index of Economic Freedom published by the Wall Street Journal and The Heritage Foundation, the Philippines' present economic freedom score is 56.2, making its economy the 115th freest out of 179 in the world. A few Southeast Asian countries ranked higher than the Philippines, including Singapore (freedom score: 87.2; world rank: 2), Malaysia (freedom score: 66.3; world rank: 53) and Thailand (freedom score: 64.7; world rank: 62). Others scored worse, including Indonesia (freedom score: 56.2; world rank: 116), Vietnam (freedom score: 51.6; world rank: 139), Laos (freedom score: 51.3; world rank: 141), and Myanmar (freedom score: 37.8; world rank: 174). The U.S. scored 77.8 and ranked 9th overall, while Hong Kong topped the world index with a score of 89.7.

The Philippines scored 0.2 point lower than last year, with some gains in monetary freedom (score 76.3; gain: +3.6) and freedom from corruption (score 24.0; gain: +1.0). Despite the gains, however, the Index noted that "price ceilings are still usually imposed on basic commodities only in emergencies, and presidential authority to impose controls to check inflation or



case social tension is rarely exercised." In addition, the "inconsistent" efforts of the government to reinvigorate its anti-corruption drive have not improved public perception of pervasive corruption within the country.

The Philippines ranked 134th out of 178 countries in the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index published by Transparency International. The country scored a dismal 2.4 point out of 10, the same level as Bangladesh, Sierra Leone, Ukraine and Zimbabwe. Singapore, New Zealand and Denmark ranked first with a score of 9.3, while the U.S. ranked 22nd with a score of 7.1.

In all fairness to the Philippine government, the 2011 Index of Economic Freedom also noted that the country has initiated "a series of legislative reforms to enhance the entrepreneurial environment and develop a stronger private sector to generate broader-based job growth." However, the overall regulatory system existing in the Philippine business environment still remains burdensome for potential entrepreneurs, inhibiting the expansion of the private sector. And although existing labor regulations in the country are not as equally burdensome, the Philippines still experiences a "brain drain" phenomenon as many of its skilled workers continue to migrate to more advanced economies. For-

case social tension is rarely exercised." In addition, the "inconsistent" efforts of the government to reinvigorate its anti-corruption drive have not improved public perception of pervasive corruption within the country.

Freedom From Want

One of the most glaring proofs that many Filipinos continue to suffer from social and economic inequality is the wide chasm between the haves and have-nots. According to the 2009 Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, published by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), 22.6 percent of Filipinos still live on less than US\$1.25 a day. The Philippines' National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), on the other hand, estimates that 26.5 percent of Filipinos live on less than US\$1.00 a day.

Factors contributing to the lack of significant progress in poverty reduction include a weak agricultural sector that is failing to raise the incomes of poor people in rural areas, an economic growth that is mainly based on consumption and not on employment opportunities for the poor, incapacity of the government to afford basic services to poor people and the susceptibility of poor communi-

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COVER STORY

(from page 4, PHILIPPINES...)

ties to natural calamities and armed conflict. In addition, there is also a continuing problem in terms of income inequality and high population growth.

In a paper published by the University of the Philippines School of Statistics in 2009, Dennis Mapa et al. noted that the "majority of the provinces have income growth that is comparable with the poorest countries in the world (around 1 percent)."

The authors concluded that this inequality creates a hindrance to economic growth among many provincial and rural communities. Furthermore, they concluded that population dynamics play an important role in the income growth of provincial folks, and that the "proportion of young dependents is a robust determinant of income growth and can explain a significant portion of the growth differentials between provinces with high proportion of young dependents and those with low proportion of young dependents."

It is important to note that according to the NSCB, poverty incidence goes as low as 5 percent in districts located in or near Metro Manila, and as high as 60 percent in provinces within the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Millennium Development Goals

The Philippines is a signatory of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which asserts that "every individual has the right to dignity, freedom, equality, a basic standard of living that includes freedom from hunger and violence, and encourages tolerance and solidarity." Thus, the Philippines is one of the countries that have agreed to achieve several Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

One of these is eradicating poverty and hunger, and halving the percentage of people whose income is less than US\$1.00 a day. As mentioned earlier, current estimates by the NSCB put the percentage at 26.5 percent, a moderate improvement from the 33.1 percent rate in 1990.

Another MDG is improving maternal health in the country. Based on current trends, there is also only moderate likelihood that the Philippines will achieve

this goal. Maternal mortality ratio stood at 180 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 and improved only fairly in 18 years, with 94 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008. More has to be done if the country is ever to achieve its goal of only 30 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015.

On the other hand, the NSCB noted that the Philippines has a high likelihood of achieving the other Millennium Development Goals—promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; and ensuring environmental sustainability.

The country scored very high in international gender equality indicators, including the 2011 Mastercard Worldwide Index of Woman's Advancement, ranking second only to Australia in an index that comprises 14 Asia Pacific economies. To meet the MDG on gender equality and women empowerment, however, the Philippines should ensure that measures are in place so that women will have equal share (50 percent) in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, as well as in seats held by women in the national parliament. The rates were 41.9 percent and 17.6 percent respectively in 2009.

The Philippines has also made significant progress in the reduction of child mortality. Infant mortality rate has been reduced from 57 in 1990 to just 20.56 per 1,000 live births in 2009. The mortality rate of children under five years of age has also declined significantly since 1990. Malaria cases are likewise on the decline in the Philippines, although cases of HIV/AIDS are increasing slowly.

In terms of environmental stability, notable achievements include the increasing proportion of land covered in rainforests, a decreasing consumption rate of ozone-depleting substances and the increasing number of areas protected to maintain biological diversity. In addition, there is also a marked improvement in the proportion of population with access to safe water supply (86 percent) and in the proportion of households with sanitary toilet facility (89 percent). The figures were 73 percent and 67.6 percent respectively in 1990.



"A shanty town (bottom) mars the gleaming skyline of the Makati financial district. The Aquino administration should put all its efforts in eliminating income inequality in the Philippines, a problem which creates a quasi-apartheid condition in Filipino society.

The Philippines, however, is currently likely to fail in attaining a particular MDG: achieving universal primary education. Although net primary education enrollment in 2008 was fairly high at 85.1 percent and completion rate stood at 73.3 percent, the government's inadequate investment in education infrastructure and manpower has gravely affected the population's access to education, as well as the system's overall quality.

Focus on Reforms

The Aquino administration is pushing for a number of reforms to meet these Millennium Development Goals and achieve the goal of transforming the Philippines into a truly free country with a rapid, sustained and broad-based economic growth that keeps poverty levels at bay and offers employment opportunities to people.

One of these is the intensification of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program for the country's poorest of the poor. Launched in 2008, the project affords conditional cash grants to indigent families, including a P500 (US\$11.57) monthly health and nutrition allowance and a P300 (US\$6.94) monthly educational grant per child. A maximum of three children per household are eligible to receive the monthly allowances.

According to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the project aims to cut the intergenerational cycle of poverty among poor families by ensuring that 3- to 14-year-old children go to school and maintain an 85 percent minimum attendance. It also ensures that pregnant women and 14-year-old and

welfare, and creating more opportunities for science and technology research development in the country.

The Aquino administration also recognizes the big role of population growth in the underdevelopment of education and many other sectors of Philippine society; thus, it is adamant on its position to promote contraceptives for artificial birth control and to support the passage of the Reproductive Health Bill. This was despite unrelenting opposition from the closed-minded Roman Catholic clergy in the Philippines and occasional threats of excommunication.

The most important reform that Aquino is pushing for, however, is the initiation of the Public-Private Partnership Program (PPP). Under this program, the government will provide incentives to stimulate private resources for the purpose of financing the construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure and development projects normally undertaken by the state.

According to the website of the Public-Private Partnership Center, the selection of private investors will be done through open competition under fair and transparent conditions.

"All interested investors will be given a level playing field with reasonable returns and appropriate sharing of risks without compromising the protection of public interests. Through this program, end-users will be provided with adequate, safe, effi-

(continued on page 6)



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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Martin Nievera to Perform with SOS This Summer

Concertgoers are waiting with bated breath as Martin Nievera, hailed as the Concert King of the Philippines, joins the classic Society of Seven from June 14-July 2, 2011 at the Main Showroom of the Outrigger Waikiki Hotel.

Aptly billed "Homecoming with Martin Nievera," the concert series will feature highly-entertaining and stylized production numbers that only the caliber of Nievera and the SOS can deliver.

Nievera's presence is expected to be a bonanza for the original troupe's Filipino following. For those who may not know, Nievera practically grew

up with the SOS since his father, Roberto "Bert" Nievera was one of the Society's original singers, along with Tony Ruivivar and Bert Sagum.

As a youngster, Nievera hung around with SOS members whom he considers "uncles" to this day. He remained on the sidelines as his dad Bert continued to enthral audiences around the world who came to visit Hawaii. For years, SOS and Roberto Nievera were household names in Hawaii.

Several decades later, Martin Nievera was given the opportunity to perform with the SOS. He gamely obliged when asked to do the gig—both for senti-



Martin Nievera

mental reasons as well as the excitement of doing the series as a co-star.

This is not the first time that he will be performing with the group. He sang with them in shows in Los Angeles and Las

Vegas. But this summer marks the first time that Nievera will be featured in a co-stellar performance with the band. And in this rare gathering of Nievera and SOS, the show is being touted as one of the "must-sees" in Hawaii.

Nievera is a good fit for the band with his wide vocal range that easily shifts to different genre of music which the SOS band offers in all their nightly shows at the Main Showroom of the Outrigger Hotel. The show promises to be a delightful round of one popular song to the next. Also featured is the young and talented Arshiel.

In an online review, Ray

Shillaci describes SOS's show as "more than worth the price of admission."

"It's rare to see this much talent on stage and not break your pocketbook," he writes. "The Society of Seven is more of an event than an actual variety show. They have the uncanny ability to make a small venue seem huge. Every member of the troupe displays a variety of talent for our enjoyment.

The SOS Homecoming Concert with Martin Nievera series is produced by World Class Entertainment in cooperation with Uetzu Investments. For concert info, please call 923-SHOW (7469).

Latest Poll Shows Oahu Residents Support Rail Project

Oahu residents clearly support the City's rail transit project and supporters outnumber opponents in all nine City Council districts, according to the results of a new poll released by Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle and Brene Harimoto, chair of the City Council's Transportation and Transit Planning Committee.

The scientific survey conducted by QMark Research for PB Americas, Inc., the project's general engineering consultant, showed that 57 percent of residents polled support rail transit, while 40 percent were opposed.

"These results show sound support for the rail project," says Carlisle. "Taking this snapshot in time is important as we prepare to transition to the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation. It provides useful information for the HART board of directors as its members prepare to make major decisions that will guide the rail project. The poll will also be helpful for HART members in determining how best to keep

the public informed."

HART, which was created after 63 percent of voters approved an amendment to the City Charter last November 2010, will begin overseeing the rail project on July 1, 2011.

The poll of about 900 Oahu residents included surveys of 100 residents from each of the nine City Council districts and found that supporters outnumbered opponents in all districts. Support ranged from a high of 68 percent in District 8 (Aiea-Pearl City-Moanala) to 50 percent support in District 5 (Kaimuki-Manoa-McCully-Kakaako-Ala Moana).

Respondents who support the project cited concerns over traffic, the need for reliable and convenient transportation, helping the environment and rail's benefit to the economy.

Top reasons for opposition included concerns about cost, the fact that rail will not service their area, not enough people will use it and a preference for other transportation options, such as the bus.



"Concerns over cost underscore the importance of bringing the project in on time and on budget," says Carlisle. "Seventy percent said they felt rail would bring much-needed jobs to Oahu and help the overall economy and 58 percent said they believe rail is a good investment in our

island's future."

The poll also found residents felt the most important net benefits of HART were that it would have a singular mission to manage the rail system, that it would have the authority to prepare and manage its own budget separate and apart from the

City's budget, and because it would have the sole focus of transit, the semi-autonomous authority would make decisions more efficiently.

The scientific survey was conducted from May 9-20, 2011. The sample was derived using QMark's random digit dialing software with the targeted goal of 45 percent wireless phones and 55 percent landline users. Respondents were screened to ensure they were at least 18 years old and full-time Oahu residents. The poll's margin of error is plus or minus 3.27 percent.

(from page 5, PHILIPPINES...)

cient, reliable, and reasonably-priced infrastructure services," the Center said.

Political and Press Freedom

People are not only keeping a close watch on the Aquino administration's efforts on improving economic freedom in the Philippines. Think tanks and common individuals are also examining how the president will improve the state of political freedom in the Philippines.

In March 2011, The Center for Public Policy Analysis, an organization based in Washington D.C., issued an international appeal calling on President Aquino and the Philippine government to address violence against journalists in the Philippines.

Attacks on press and political freedom were rampant dur-

ing the term of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. It was during her administration when 33 journalists died in the politically-motivated Ampatuan Massacre in Maguindanao in 2009. Even in the last month of her term, three more journalists were murdered.

While the number of journalists murdered in the country has declined since Arroyo stepped down from office, the killings continued even after Aquino took his oath of office on June 30, 2010. At least five journalists have been killed since he assumed the presidency.

The National Press Club of the Philippines previously proposed that the Aquino administration create a "super committee" that will address violence against journalists, but it has yet to come to fruition.

The presence of oppres-

sion and coercion against journalists in the Philippines is symptomatic of a flawed larger system that does not allow for political freedom to fully thrive. Disabling conditions exist for people belonging to many other marginalized groups aside from journalists, including laborers, the sick and the disabled, the victims of drug and human trafficking and the poor at large.

Deeper institutional reforms that allow for greater political and economic freedom are necessary if Filipinos are to have full ability to positively exercise their rights and capacities, and if they are to have complete wherewithal to provide for the things they need and want and to have access to an adequate standard of living. Only then can we truly say that Filipinos are finally truly free and independent.

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IMMIGRATION GUIDE



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

"God helps those who help themselves"—Not from the Bible or Donald Trump but from Algernon Sydney in *Discourses Concerning Government* (1698) as quoted by Benjamin Franklin in Poor Richard's Almanac (1757).

"You [God] have been a defense for the helpless, a defense for the needy in his distress." Isaiah 25:4.

Conflicting sayings? Apparently. In one of the examples given "if you are in need of a job, ask the Lord to help you find a job - but then be active in actually looking for a job. While it is in His power to do so, it is highly unlikely that God will cause employers to come looking for you!" www.gotquestions.org

Similarly, when you are in deportation proceedings, it is not

God + Excellent Lawyer = Deportation Salvation for 2 Iglesia Couples

sufficient to ask the Lord to save you from deportation. You must look for an excellent lawyer to help you.

Two couples who are members of the Church of Christ (Iglesia Ni Cristo) faith were placed in deportation proceedings for fraud. The husbands (brothers) had filed visa applications stating that they were coming to the United States to join their father who was living in Hawaii. Actually, their father had died six years earlier. Without asking whether their father was still alive, the consul granted them and their spouses immigrant visas. This was before 9/11 when consular and immigration authorities were not so strict.

They subsequently brought their children who are now employed or in school. For ten years they lived peacefully, going about their Christian ways of going to church twice a week, helping in church and neighborhood activities, giving to the victims of calamities, donating blood and giving to charitable organizations. They became em-

ployed within months of their arrival. They paid taxes, did not violate any other immigration law or criminal laws, rarely traveled, if at all, back to the Philippines. They all had cars and one of the couples bought a home.

They had lived in fear that their fraud would eventually be found. Bang, one day in October 2010, their fraud was discovered, courtesy of another Filipino who obviously knew their circumstances and reported them to immigration authorities. Envy? Crab mentality?

Instead of simply praying for or relying on God's help or rushing to a Caucasian lawyer as many Filipinos suffering from colonial mentality generally do, they relied on the recommendation of fellow church members and retained a Filipino lawyer who had a successful track record in deportation proceedings, wrote law books, graduated from an Ivy League law school, and was not part of the band of highway robbers who prey on poor and ig-

norant immigrants by charging exorbitant fees for ineffective service. Coincidentally, the lawyer they retained was also a member of the Church of Christ.

Immigration fraud, in the eyes of Immigration Judges, is about the worse offense that an alien can commit. The alien is actually fooling immigration and consular authorities. Fortunately for these aliens, immigration law is benevolent by providing for a waiver for fraud for the sake of family unity. We are writing a book discussing all the available immigration waivers and how to use them successfully. An alien seeking a fraud waiver must have a qualifying family member (alien must be the spouse, parent, son or daughter of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident). This is a statutory requirement.

Their lawyer met the couples a number of times to prepare them for their hearing, properly packaged the documen-

tary evidence to support the waiver, and established their eligibility for the waiver. Since granting a waiver is discretionary with the Attorney General (or the Immigration Judge), the lawyer also established that the couples warranted a favorable exercise of discretion by showing that their positive qualities outweighed their negative ones.

Without much ado, the Immigration Judge granted their request for fraud waiver. Now, they are living happily ever after. God, indeed, helps those who help themselves.

(ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. Office: 800 Bethel St., Suite 402, Honolulu, HI 96813. Tel. (808) 225-2645. E-Mail: filam-law@yahoo.com. Websites: www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com, and www.ImmigrationServicesUSA.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.)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

'Filipino for Kids' Summer Program Offers Fun Cultural Activities



folding/coloring jeepney and dancing the *malong* dance.

The program was started through a multi-diversity grant from the UH SEED office in 2005. Filipino for Kids Summer Program has now become an annual summer collaborative project of the Fil-Com Center, University of the Philippines Alumni Association-Hawaii Chapter, UH Filipino and Philippine Literature program, the UH Katipunan Club, Alumni and Friends and community organizations and volunteers. Partial funding for this year also comes from the Hawaii Filipino Heritage Fund.

Registration is \$25 per student for all five Saturdays, with an additional \$10 for a t-shirt. Registration is limited to the first 25 students who sign-up.

For more information, please check out <http://filipinoforkids.blogspot.com/> or to reserve a spot, email Imelda F. Gasmen or Cheryl Ageaolli, Filipino for Kids Hawaii at: fil4kidsHI@gmail.com.

Filipino for Kids, an annual summer cultural enrichment program, will once again be offered for five consecutive Saturdays starting June 18, 2011 from 8:30 am to 12 noon at the Filipino Community Center in Waipahu.

Now in its sixth year, "Filipino for Kids" is a summer program designed to provide elementary school-age children of all ethnic backgrounds an opportunity to learn about the Philippines' rich culture and heritage.

The program includes language and culture components and interactive activities such as games, dances, songs and a summer reading program. During previous summer programs, students learned about the Philippine martial art of escrima, the national dance carinosa, the national sport called sipa and the ancient Philippine script of alibata.

Participants also enjoyed other activities, including making *halo-halo*,

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COMMUNITY PARADE

PMAH Fashion Show

IHLANI HOTEL & RESORT,
May 28, 2011

Tim Llena Photography

The Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii held a fashion show event as part of their social gathering at Ihilani Hotel at Ko Olina last May 28. Fashion show participants were PMAH physician members, their spouses and friends.



COMMUNITY PARADE

PMAH DINNER MEETING/PARTY AT IHILANI HOTEL & RESORT

Photos by Ray Romero, M.D



Tim Lelan Photography

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

**PMAH Holds Medical Training
 at Ko Olina**

by HFC Staff

Members of the Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii (PMAH) held Continuing Medical Education (CME) courses at the Ko Olina Hotel & Resort from May 28-29, 2011 during the Memorial Day weekend.

The theme of the two-day CME was "Healthy in Hawaii."

Topics covered include:

- Hepatitis B and C
- Thyroid Cancer in the 21st Century
- Complementary Non-Pharmacological Therapies for Osteoarthritis
- Menopause and Osteoporosis
- Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension
- Basal Insulin in the Primary Care Setting

- Cardiorenal Syndrome
- Immunizations and Infectious Disease for Travelers
- Pediatric Obesity
- Lifestyle Interventions in Heart Disease



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Participating physicians included Drs. Lyla Cachola-Prather, Jane Cases, Lawrence J. Derbes, Anthony Guerrero, Amy Jacang, Bruce Kessel, Nick Kim, Shane Morita, Fernando Ona, Nancy K. Ostrom, Francis D. Pien, Ray Romero, Alberto Santos-Ocampo, Walton K.T. Shim, Elic Singson Tan and Joseph Zobian.

The last lecture of the weekend was a dinner lecture by Dr. Nancy Ostrom on May 29.

**City to Hold TOD Workshop
 for Kalihi**

The City's Department of Planning & Permitting (DPP) will hold the first in a series of community workshops for the Kalihi Neighborhood Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan on June 27, 2011 at 6 pm at Kalakaua Middle School's cafeteria.

DPP officials urge Kalihi residents to come and learn about the benefits of rail and to share their visions for TOD in Kalihi. Participants' ideas and perspectives will be crucial to the new TOD plan and integrating rail transit into Kalihi.

Three rail transit stations are planned in the Kalihi area, bringing exciting opportunities for TOD. The Kalihi Neighborhood TOD Plan will address land use, transportation, economic and infrastructure plans around three planned stations—Middle Street, Kalihi and Kapalama.

DPP's outreach efforts will include stakeholder interviews, community workshops, a community needs assessment survey, an advisory committee and ongoing updates to the City's website.

For more details on the workshop, contact Renee Espiau at 768-8050.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

**Philippine Forex Reserves
 Rise to 68.8B USD in May**

by **Mayen Jaymalin**
Tuesday, June 7, 2011

MANILA (Xinhua) — The Philippine gross international reserves (GIR) rose to 68.8 billion U.S. dollars in May on sustained foreign exchange operations and income from investments abroad, the central bank reported Tuesday.

These inflows were offset by payments of the National Government for its maturing foreign exchange obligations and revaluation losses on the central bank's gold holdings.

May's GIR level could cover 10.6 months worth of imports of goods and payments of services and income, and is equivalent to 10.9 times the country's short-term external debt based on original



maturity and 6 times based on residual maturity.

The level of net international reserves (NIR), which includes revaluation of reserve assets and reserve-related liabilities, rose to 68.7 billion U.S. dollars in May, compared with previous month's level of 68.5 billion U.S. dollars. (www.philstar.com)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Mar is New DOTC Chief

by Dennis Garcamo
Tuesday, June 7, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - President Benigno Aquino III announced today the appointment of former senator Mar Roxas as secretary of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC).

"Isa si Mar sa dahilan para mapigil ang maanomalyang NBN-ZTE contract... Kailangan ko ng isang kaibigang reresponde na mabilis sa ating mga pangangailangan sa DOTC," President Aquino announced in

a briefing in Malacañang before 3 p.m. today.

The President said that while he preferred Roxas his chief-of-staff, he said he personally asked the former senator to head the agency to implement much needed reforms.

Malacañang had announced that Roxas has been chosen to sit as presidential chief-of-staff and that his position's responsibilities are just being finalized to make sure that it will not overlap with the functions of the Office of the Executive Secretary.

President Aquino said that he has asked Roxas to review the



Sec. Mar Roxas

DOTC's current situation. He added that he is giving the former senator a free hand in choosing his own people.

"Binigyan ko rin siya ng kalyaang mamili ng magiging

mga kasamahan niya sa DOTC upang magkaroon ng reporma," he said.

Meanwhile, Aquino clarified that Roxas will continue to act as his trouble-shooter.

In a brief statement, Roxas expressed gratitude to President Aquino for giving him a chance to serve again in the government.

"Nagpapasalamat po ako kay Pangulong Noy noy sa tiwala na ipinakinla niya sa pagtalaga po sa atin sa DOTC, na bigyan ang pagkakataon na maglabihin serbisyo," he said. "Maasahan po na gagawin ko ang lahat na hindi bibigyan ang tiwala na pinagkaloob sa akin ni Pangu-

long Noy noy at ng tao."

Roxas said that he took President Aquino's offer during a one-on-one meeting on Monday.

Roxas will replace DOTC Secretary Jose "Ping" de Jesus, whose resignation will take effect on June 30.

Earlier reports said that Energy Secretary Jose Almendras was also considered to take the place of De Jesus, but he reportedly declined.

Roxas was the running-mate of President Aquino during May 10, 2010 polls. He lost the vice presidential race to former Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay. (www.philstar.com)

'GOCC Act a Milestone Law Under Noy Government'

by Delon Porcalla
Tuesday, June 7, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - Malacañang said yesterday that the Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation Governance Act of 2011 that President Aquino signed into law was a "milestone and the first important law" under the current administration.

The law is a reform measure that ensures a level playing field for all government institutions.

"This is a milestone bill that the President personally considers as the first important law to be signed during his administration," presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said, in reference to the newly signed Republic Act 10149.

The new law – the second law that Aquino signed after the General Appropriations Act of 2011 – provides for the rationalization of salaries and benefits of officials and employees of government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs).

"The President has already indicated that the often bloated compensations of those at the helm of GOCCs is a major factor in the unwieldiness of such institutions," Lacierda said in a statement.

"Worse, it contributes to a culture of political transactionalism, deeming such positions as mere political currency – to be granted based on expediency and proximity to those in power, rather than on character and competence," he added.

Lacierda said the law effectively paves the way for wider-ranging reforms in public corporations.

"From now on, there will be no more excessive, unreasonable and unnecessary perks for GOCC and GFI executives, unlike in the past," he said.

The objective of the GOCC law is to "promote financial viability and fiscal discipline in GOCCs and strengthen the role of the state in its governance and management to make the GOCCs more responsive to the needs of public interest."

RA 10149 covers all GOCCs, GFIs and its subsidiaries, but "excludes the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, state universities and colleges, cooperatives, local water districts, economic zone authorities and research institutions."

The law also provides for the creation of a Governance Commission for GOCCs (GCG), which shall be attached to the Office of the President and will be the "central advisory, monitoring and oversight body with authority to formulate, implement and coordinate policies." The GCG will be composed of five members to be headed by a chairman with the rank of Cabinet secretary and two members with the rank of undersecretary who shall all be appointed by the President.

Secretaries Florencio Abad of the Department of Budget and Management and Cesar Purisima of the Department of Finance will be sitting as ex-officio members in the five-man GCG.

The GCG is authorized to



Photos by Willy Perez

evaluate the performance and determine the relevance of a GOCC, implement the reorganization, merger or streamlining of a GOCC, unless otherwise directed by the President.

The five-man supervising body will also recommend to the President the abolition or privatization of a GOCC and, upon approval, will carry out the same, "unless the President designates another agency to implement such abolition or privatization."

Under the law, the "term of office of all incumbent chief executive officers and appointive members of the board of GOCCs will end by June 30 (2011), unless sooner replaced by the President."

"However, they shall continue in office until the successors have been appointed by the President," the law stated. (www.philstar.com)

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Matutina's, Our Must Stop on the Way to Baguio

FOOD FOR THOUGHT By Millie & Karla Reyes

MILLIE: The long drive from Manila to Baguio and back would always give us a reason to stop over at Matutina's, along MacArthur Highway in Nancayasan, Urdaneta, Pangasinan.

I remember three years ago, we stopped for lunch on the way up to Baguio with my late Dad and Karla, of course. It is known for its *sinigang na Malaga* and my friend Wawi kept nagging me to stop for a taste. The trouble is there were other dishes on the menu that I also cared to have and it was difficult to make a choice. So, as usual, we ordered food for a whole battalion.

KARLA: As soon as I settled myself at our table, my eye scanned the restaurant and set on a tarpaulin of one of Matutina's specialties, the buttered crab. Immediately, I tapped mom on the shoulder and used my lips to point at it. Mom got the signal and ordered it for us. We were hungry as it was past 3 p.m. and the resto was still at its lunch peak with travelers and big family groups, but service was brisk and good. We were served hot *sinigang* broth to warm our hungry tummies as we waited for our orders.

Although small, the crab was very tasty and full of crab fat roe, which all went to my mom since I don't enjoy eating it. It was a struggle to eat the

claws because it took forever for the crab crackers to come, but mom struggled with the crabmeat using her bare hands and made *himay* for me. The crispy hipon was crunchy and delicious with garlic fried rice. We dipped it in vinegar but the shrimps were so sweet and fresh.

Just like on our last trip with Lolo, we ordered the *inhaw na bangus*, which was also fresh catch from the pond. Our driver Danny ordered the sizzling *bangus sisig* and I pinched a few spoonfuls to try and it earned my seal of approval. We ordered the eternal favorite *inhaw na liempo* but just this once, didn't really care for it that much as we were enjoying the other dishes. The *pinakbet* was a good match for all the other dishes we ordered. They also serve fresh buttered oysters or cooked *adobo*-style with lots of garlic. Their oyster cake reminded me of Singapore hawkler food and also on the menu is *pusit* cooked a la *pobre* with lots of garlic.

MILLIE: We learned that Matutina's was owned by Gerry Austria and that the original resto started in Dagupan. One of the specialties is the *Malaga* fish (*siganid*), a cultured fish that comes from Binnalee, the fish bowl of Pangasinan. It is also known as rabbit fish and sells for P220/kilo. It is perfect in *sinigang*



Author Millie Reyes with her dad Joe in front of Matutina's Seafoods in Pangasinan

gang broth cooked with *kamias* as a souring element with tomatoes, *kangkang* leaves, radish, eggplant, *okra* and vegetables of one's choice. My Lola Asiang taught me that the best *sinigang* broth is boiled wash water from rinsed, uncooked rice, using the second washing. Her secret is to cook the fish with ginger to remove the fishy taste.

Sinigang is one of my favorite Sunday dishes. Dad liked all kinds of *sinigang*: shrimp, fish head, or prawn, pork and beef. He used to always tell our *kusinera* at home to first make sure the beef was tender and to cook it whole, the way my Lola used to do. When tender, that's the only time Lola Asiang would cut the beef in cubes. Dad would always specify to put in *gabi*



Shrimply good: Matutina's crispy hipon is tasty and crunchy to the bite

(taro) to thicken the soup.

Karla adores the pork *sparerib sinigang*. I like beef most of all. It's a meal in itself for me. I like eating it in a bowl with a bit of rice with lots and lots of *kangkang*.

KARLA: This recent trip, we came with my cousin Vada and her 22-kilo, terrible two-year-old son, Zach, who could barely fit the high chair. It took him five minutes to enter the restaurant from the steps because he immediately recognized the logo of the Nestlé chest freezer. He insisted on having ice cream but, of course, we promised him he could have some after lunch. Being a good boy, he sat down and ate his rice with *sinigang* soup all by himself, which made him a very messy baby. He liked the soup so much he literally poured the soup onto his plate instead of putting the rice in the bowl. After finishing his bowl of soup and rice, the little monster de-

manded his favorite, ice cream. Vada ordered ube and Zach had mango, but Zach ended up eating both cups of ice cream.

As we were leaving the restaurant, I told my mom that I remembered taking a picture of her and Lolo at the entrance of the restaurant. Although it was three years ago, I specifically remember mom insisting on having a picture with him. This was also the time that I had just gotten a new camera and Lolo was already getting impatient; thus his *sungit* reaction. In most of the pictures I have of him that afternoon, he either wasn't looking or was putting out his tongue at me. I guess that's one thing we all miss about Lolo aside from his passion for food, eating and business. We miss his jokes, both the good ones and the corny ones; cravings for random food, mostly the simplest food (like sardines); and his mood swings that could always be cured with food.

(www.philstar.com)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Philippine BPO Revenue to Hit Over 50B USD by 2020

by Mayen Jaymalin
Tuesday, June 7, 2011

MANILA (Xinhua) – The Philippine outsourcing industry can pull in over 50 billion U.S. dollars by 2020 if the national government is able to develop the information technology-business process outsourcing (IT-BPO) services industry, according to a study by World Bank consultant Raja Mitra.

Mitra said in Tuesday's

briefing that medium-term export revenues from the sector could reach far more than 9 billion U.S. dollars revenues posted in 2010. He expects the IT-BPO services industry to contribute as much as 11 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) by 2020. In 2010, the industry contributed around 5 percent of GDP.



Mitra said the Philippine potential in the industry has not been met as it lags behind in providing IT-related services and the use of high technology in all

(continued on page 13)

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LEGAL NOTES

Determining Age of Child Under CSPA



By Reuben S. Seguritan

For many years, families with children who were beneficiaries of immigrant visa petitions often worried that the children would “age out” or turn 21 years old before the immigration processing could be completed.

This changed in 2002 when Congress enacted the Child Status Protection Act (CSPA). This law was intended to mitigate the harsh impact that reaching the age of 21 had on the children’s eligibility for an immigrant visa. Under the CSPA, a child’s age can be fixed or locked according to certain rules. It is the CSPA age, and not the

chronological age, that is used to determine whether the person remains a “child” for immigration purposes.

In a recent public teleconference the USCIS Ombudsman explained the different formulas on how the age is calculated depending on whether the person is the child of a U.S. citizen, the child of a green card holder, a derivative in the family- or employment-based categories, an asylum/refugee derivative, or a derivative based on the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

If the parent is a U.S. citizen, the child who is unmarried and under 21, as of the date of the filing of a Form I-130 relative petition by the parent, is considered an immediate relative and his/her age is “frozen”. As a result, the child does not age out and remains eligible for the immigration benefit applied for. Before the CSPA, the child would have lost immediate

relative status and automatically moved to the first family preference category (F2A).

If the child under 21 is married at the time of the filing of the I-130 by the U.S. citizen parent, a subsequent divorce before turning 21 converts this child to immediate relative status which is preserved when he/she reaches 21.

On the other hand, if the parent is a legal permanent resident (LPR) who files an I-130 for an unmarried child under 21, but who subsequently naturalizes before the child turns 21, the child is converted to immediate relative status and this status is preserved when he/she turns 21.

In other cases of LPR parents, the child’s CSPA age is his/her “adjusted age” which is the biological age minus the number of days that the I-130 petition filed on the child’s behalf was pending before being approved by the USCIS.

If on the date the visa becomes

available for his/her priority date the child is under 21 using the formula for “adjusted age”, the child’s family 2A status is preserved. The child has one year from the date of visa availability to seek to acquire permanent resident status.

The computation for children of LPRs is especially useful because children who reach 21 fall into the family 2B category, where the backlog is greater than in the 2A category where they would remain had they not aged out. The difference in waiting times between 2A and 2B currently varies from 4 years to 15 years, depending on the country of chargeability.

Using the CSPA formula, derivative children in the family-based categories will retain their derivative status upon reaching 21 if their adjusted age is less than 21 on the date of availability of the principal beneficiary’s visa.

Derivative children in employment-based categories will

likewise retain their derivative status upon turning 21 if their adjusted age is below 21 on the date of the principal beneficiary’s visa availability. The time during which the I-140 petition was pending is subtracted from the child’s biological age to arrive at their adjusted age.

As in children of LPR parents who do not otherwise naturalize, family- and employment-based derivative children must seek to acquire permanent resident status within one year from the date that their priority dates become current.

This requirement of seeking to acquire LPR status has been interpreted to mean the filing of an I-485 adjustment application, DS-230 Part 1, or I-824 application.

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

GMA Given More Time to Answer Fund Misuse Raps

by Edu Punay
Tuesday, June 7, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - The Department of Justice (DOJ) has given former President and now Pampanga 2nd district Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and three former key officials more time to answer charges of misuse of Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) funds worth over P550 million in 2004.

During yesterday’s hearing, the DOJ panel conducting the preliminary investigation granted request of Arroyo’s camp for 15 more days to submit their counter-affidavit on the complaint filed by former solicitor general Frank Chavez.

Her lawyer Benjamin Santos explained to the three-person panel chaired by Senior Assistant State Prosecutor Theodore Villanueva that the former leader was not yet ready to answer the allegations since she only received copy of the complaint last

June 1, or five days before the hearing.

“It’s not that Representative Arroyo is not attending the hearing today. It’s a matter of following procedures,” Santos told reporters.

He, however, did not yet detail how the former president would answer the charges since they have yet to completely study the complaints. But he gave assurance that there would be “no admissions of the allegations.”

The lawyers of the other respondents – former executive secretary Alberto Romulo, former health secretary Francisco Duque III and former OWWA administrator Virgilio Angelo – supported the move since their clients have not yet received copies of the complaints.

Under the rules, respondents in a complaint are given 10 days to appear before the DOJ and subscribe a counter-affidavit.

Chavez also submitted an amended complaint, which included incumbent and former

members of the OWWA’s board of trustees – among them Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz and former labor secretary Patricia Santo Tomas.

Other respondents were identified as former labor undersecretary Manuel Imson, Mina Figueroa, Caroline Rogge, Victorino Balais, Gregorio Oca and Virginia Pasalo.

The additional respondents, according to Chavez, signed and approved the transfer of P530.38 million from OWWA Medicare Fund to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) for purely partisan purposes – to enhance the electoral campaign of Arroyo in the 2004 elections.

The filing of the amended complaint prompted the DOJ panel to grant the request for extension of the original respondents to also give the new ones ample time to submit their answers. The next hearing is set on June 23 at 10 a.m.

In his complaint, Chavez accused Arroyo of plunder, qual-

fied theft, graft and corruption and violations of Article VI Section 29 (3) of the Constitution, Articles 217 and 220 of Revised Penal Code and Section 261 of Omnibus Election Code.

“Respondent GMA, in conspiracy with, and with the indispensable complicity of her co-respondents herein, purposely and systematically orchestrated the diversion and/or misuse of the OWWA fund, financing questionable acquisitions by several Philippine diplomatic posts in the

Middle East, the humanitarian assistance to Iraq, and re-election bid of respondent GMA – all of which do not contribute, and could never have contributed, to the direct and exclusive benefit of the Filipino overseas workers,” Chavez alleged.

Complainant submitted as proof Executive Order 182 issued by Arroyo on Feb. 14, 2003 transferring OWWA Medicare Funds worth P530,382,446 to PhilHealth then headed by Duque. (www.philstar.com)

(from page 12, PHILIPPINE BPO.nl)

its IT-BPO services.

“(It is) important to simultaneously develop the IT, telecom, education and other knowledge economy sectors and to enhance the potential synergies between BPO and other ICT sectors and that so both in terms of external

and domestic markets. Such a development offers significant promise it can contribute importantly towards achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth,” he said.

Mitra said the outsourcing sector helped in creating more jobs in the country. Direct em-

ployment in the sector as a share of the total labor force employment has risen to more than 1 percent from less than 0.1 percent ten years ago. He forecast that Filipinos employed directly and indirectly by the industry will reach 6.8 million by 2020. (www.philstar.com)

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MAINLAND NEWS

10 Pinoy Teachers Win Case vs. Recruiters

The Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) recently ruled in favor of ten Filipino teachers working in Louisiana in a case against a Manila-based recruitment agency, PARS International Placement Agency, and its partner agency, California-based Universal Placement International (UPI). POEA Administrator Carlos S. Cao Jr. canceled the



licenses of these agencies after they were found guilty of overcharging of fees.

According to the allegations, PARS and UPI set up illegal contracts and charged exorbitant fees for teachers to come to the US on H-1B visas. The teachers were forced to pay \$16,000 up front as placement fees and were promised \$40,000 salaries. They were required to sign over 10% of their monthly salary for two years and to pay for housing provided by UPI. Teachers unable to pay the fees up front were directed to loan

companies by UPI, which charged exorbitant interest rates. The migrant teachers were also threatened with deportation if they complained.

The owners of PARS and UPI, Emilio V. Villarba and Lourdes Navarro, were put in POEA's list of people with derogatory records. UPI was prohibited from participating in the overseas placement programs of the government. Refunds amounting from \$4,583.33 to \$7,169.33 were awarded to the 10 complainants.

Other legal suits in America have been filed against Universal Placement International which include a case filed by the Louisiana Federation of Teachers (LFT). Allegations involve multiple violations of state and federal laws and were brought forward by LFT. In August 2010, UPI faced a class action lawsuit filed in federal court by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the labor union American Federation of Teachers for defrauding and illegally trafficking 350 teachers from the Philippines to teach in Louisiana public schools since 2007.

Attorneys for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and Louisiana Federation of Teachers (LFT) say the union is asking that the teachers' contracts with the California-based recruiter be voided, and that the recruiter be criminally prose-

cuted under state law.

Lourdes "Lulu" Navarro, a Filipino and president of the recruiting company, is already a convicted felon. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Navarro was convicted of ripping off the Medi-Cal program in California to the tune of \$1 million. She served a year in jail in Southern California, but turned up in New Jersey in 2003, where she pleaded guilty to money laundering.

"We welcome the victory of the brave Filipino migrant teachers of Louisiana.

This comes in the wake of earlier awards by the Louisiana Work Commission (LWC) to the teachers for violation of labor laws in the US by their US-based recruiter. Hopefully illegal recruiters will learn a lesson from the courageous fight put up by the teachers," stated Judy Ann Miranda, secretary-general of Partido ng Manggagawa (PM), which is assisting the Filipino migrant teachers.

"We encourage other teachers who have been similarly victimized by PARS and UPI, or other illegal recruiters to come out and fight for your rights. We will support you and through perseverance, you will surely win as the precedent of the Louisiana teachers have shown," Miranda added. (www.asianjournal.com)

M. Lhuillier Visits MoneyGram Intl in Dallas

MoneyGram International welcomed Philippines agent M. Lhuillier for a visit to the Dallas-based company.

One of the largest financial institutions in the Philippines, M. Lhuillier Financial Services has had a successful business relationship with MoneyGram since early 2009.

MoneyGram Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Pam Patsley met with two M. Lhuillier executives to discuss current and future business plans and joint activities for corridor promotions. Representing the

Manila-based company in Dallas were Michael Lhuillier, Vice President and Lorenzo Escaño, CFO and GM for USA Operations.

"With close to 1,400 locations throughout the Philippines, M. Lhuillier is a major MoneyGram partner," says Ivy Wisco, MoneyGram's senior marketing manager. "MoneyGram has a great business relationship with M. Lhuillier and works closely



From left: Lorenzo Escaño, CFO/GM-US Operations -M Lhuillier, Juan Aguapimbia, EVP/CMO - MoneyGram; Michael Lhuillier, VP- M Lhuillier; Pam Patsley, CEO-MoneyGram; Ivy Wisco, Senior Marketing Manager-MoneyGram

with them to develop our joint business."

During the meeting in Dallas, M. Lhuillier discussed plans to promote the company's money transfer service within Latin American where more and more Filipinos are migrating.

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

P-Noy Orders Int'l Bid for Puerto Princesa Underground River

by Angelo L. Gutierrez
Tuesday, June 7, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - President Benigno Aquino III has signed a proclamation, declaring a nationwide and international campaign for the Puerto Princesa Underground River to become one of the New Seven Wonders of World (N7WN).

"There shall be a national and international promotion campaign to encourage all Filipinos, both here and abroad, and all the friends of the Filipino people, to help in the campaign to make the Puerto Princesa Underground River be

proclaimed as one of the N7WN," President Aquino said in Proclamation No. 182 which he signed last June 3.

The President also ordered the formation of a campaign task force to be headed by Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo.

The task force is ordered to "formulate and undertake an aggressive voting campaign at the national level, focusing on students and local government units (LGUs), and at the international level, especially among overseas Filipinos and nationals of other countries."

The secretary of the Department of Tourism will sit as

(continued on page 15)

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DINNER BALL, 113TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE / SATURDAY

June 11, 2011, 6pm • Hilton Hawaiian Village, Tapa Ballroom • For details, call Maggie Domingo @783-0068 or Edna Alkippa @ 282-3669 or the Philippine Consulate @ 505-6316 ext. 241

OFFCE CONVENTION / SUNDAY

June 12, 2011, 7:30am – 4pm • Philippine Consulate • For more info, Contact: Mario Palma @ 397-8626, Maria Etrata @ 392-2962 or Amado Yoro @ 699-9814

KNIGHTS OF RIZAL-HAWAII DR. JOSE P. RIZAL 150TH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND DR. JOSE P. RIZAL

AWARD GALA NIGHT / SUNDAY

June 19, 2011, 6pm • Waikiki Ballroom, Hale Koa Hotel • For more information, please call 864-5222 or email rliorngson@gmail.com

UFCH CONVENTION IN LAS VEGAS / FRIDAY

July 15, 2011, 7:30am – 4pm • Contact: Lynne Gutierrez:728-1700

LOCOS SURIAN ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII, DINNER AWARDS AND FUNDRAISING / SATURDAY

August 27, 2011, 6pm • Coral Ballroom, Hilton Hawaiian Village • Contact: Danny Villaruz @ 778-0233 or Maria Etrata @ 392-2962

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GLOBAL NEWS

Gawad Kalinga Exec Wins 2011 Nikkei Asia Prize

Antonio Meloto, 61, chairman of Gawad Kalinga of the Philippines, received the 2011 Nikkei Asia Prize which recognizes achievements that contribute to the overall well-being of Asian people.

Meloto's award was in the category of regional growth. He was recognized for his commitment to improving the living conditions of the nation's poor. Meloto has made life better for residents in slum areas by constructing more than 200,000 homes in 2,000 communities in the Philippines and in other developing countries such as Indonesia, Cambodia and Papua New Guinea.

"No Filipino should be a squatter in his country that has enough land, and no Filipino should be hungry in his country where natural resources

are abundant," Meloto said in his acceptance speech. "The goal is simple—to transform the attitude of poor communities from survival to sufficiency, from sufficiency to abundance; and to transform the attitude of the rich from philanthropy to social enterprise.

"Gawad Kalinga is not just about homes. Our work is nation-building with a clear objective to bring the Philippines out of poverty within one generation."

Meloto says Filipinos should draw inspiration from Japan, which was the first country in Asia to rise from poverty through hard work, honor and heroism. The March 11 earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan is an example of the Japanese people's capacity of rising from



Tony Meloto

tragedy through solidarity and sacrifice.

"Our people are capable of the same heroism, based on my experience with Gawad Kalinga volunteers and beneficiaries," he says.

The Nikkei Asia Prize program honors people in Asia who have made significant contributions in three areas—regional growth; science, technology and innovation; and culture. The prizes target individuals and groups in northeastern, southeastern, southern and central Asia, excluding Japan.

The program's sponsor is Nikkei Inc., which publishes Japan's leading business newspaper. Nikkei established the awards in 1996 in commemoration of the company's 120th anniversary. (Good News Pilipinas)

HK Hikes Wage, Food Allowance for Foreign Domestic Helpers

MANILA, Philippines - Labor chief Rosalina Baldez today announced that the Hong Kong labor department has increased the minimum allowable increase (MAW) and food allowance for foreign domestic helpers.

"I see these increases in minimum wage and food allowance as a welcome development, particularly as we endeavor to advance our workers' rights through, among others, just compensation and better working

conditions," Baldez said in a statement.

Citing a report by Labor Attaché to Hong Kong Romby Salud, the secretary said that effective June 2 this year, the new MAW for foreign domestic helpers would be not less than HK\$3,740 (US\$480.75) while the food allowance would not be less than HK\$775. (US\$99.63) per month.

Baldez said that the Hong Kong labor department announced the wage and food allowance increases to rep-

resentatives of the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand on June 1.

The labor chief, meanwhile, clarified that Filipino domestic helpers who will benefit from the wage increase are those with contracts signed "on or after the effectivity date."

"The existing wage of HK\$3,580 and food allowance of HK\$750 shall still be accepted provided that the contract is signed on or before 01 June 2011 and processed by the Philippine Consulate on or before 21 June 2011," she said. (www.philstar.com)

(from page 14, P-SOJ...)

vice-chairperson of the task force. The members include the secretaries of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Transportation and Communications, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Budget and Management and

the Department of Education.

The other members of the task force are the commissioners of the Commission on Higher Education and the National Telecommunications Commission, the head of the Philippine Information Agency, the mayor of Puerto Princesa town and five private sector representatives to be ap-

pointed by the interior secretary and the mayor of Puerto Princesa.

The 8.2 kilometers long underground river is the only finalist from the Philippines. It is now in the top 14 of the 24 finalist candidates for the N7WN.

Malacañang said that it is banking on over 30 million Filipino internet users and 77 mil-

lion Filipino mobile phone subscribers to cast their vote for the underground river.

"The competition is getting stronger and there is now a greater need for the Philippines to aggressively promote and campaign for the Puerto Princesa Underground River to ensure that it is proclaimed as one of the N7WN on 11 No-

ember 2011," the proclamation said.

The government said that the underground river's inclusion in the 28 official finalist candidates have invited more tourist visits in the country and it is expecting the number to balloon once it wins a spot in the N7WN. (www.philstar.com)

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