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FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ JANUARY 21, 2012 ◆

FILIPINO FARMERS CULTIVATE A GROWING INDUSTRY IN HAWAII

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Photography by Tim LLENA



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HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE
94-356 WAIPAHU DEPOT RD., 2ND FLR.
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EDITORIAL

Agriculture's Role in Hawaii's Future

Agriculture has played an historic and important role in Hawaii, beginning with its two most lucrative crops—sugarcane and pineapple. In the mid-1950s, the state's main economic activities were defense, sugar and pineapple, all of which accounted for 40 percent of the gross state product (GSP). Today, sugar and pineapple constitute less than 1 percent of GSP. Fields that once grew sugarcane now feature a variety of crops like coffee, macadamia nuts, specialty exotic fruits and flowers that are exported to destinations worldwide.

Oahu has become increasingly urban but we cannot and should not abandon our agricultural heritage. Not only does a vibrant agriculture industry help preserve green space, it also complements tourism, the state's number one industry. Visitors come to Hawaii expecting to view lush fields of green vegetation—not urban sprawl. Local businesses have also benefited from visitor industry trends such as eco-tourism, farm tours and other agriculture-based attractions. A thriving local agriculture industry can also serve as a buffer in the event of shipping strikes, rising fuel costs and other external factors beyond our control. Often overlooked is the added benefit of fresh and healthy foods that can boost the local economy.

A challenge facing many farmers is the availability of land, which they almost always lease from large landowners. Assistance for farmers could also come in the form of tax credits, loan guarantees, lending at below-market rates and a range of tax-credits for investment in agricultural infrastructure—all of which can help make farming more viable in the islands. Perhaps the most significant piece of ag-related legislation was Act 233, which was passed in 2008. The law set up a detailed process of compensation for landowners and established a timeline for landowners to voluntarily designate 85 percent of their holdings as important agriculture lands in exchange for what amounts to a fast-tracked development process on the remaining 15 percent. Such valuable land would be set aside in perpetuity and no longer subject to the pressures of urbanization.

To ensure a viable agricultural future for Hawaii, we urge State lawmakers to continue to support agriculture-related legislation this legislative session. There is much we can do to reverse the decline in this sector of our agriculture industry, if we have the political will.

Gov. Abercrombie's Budget Proposals for 2012

Last month, Gov. Neil Abercrombie unveiled a \$188 million supplemental budget request for Fiscal Year 2013. The State's annual operating budget, including the governor's supplemental budget, amounts to \$11.1 billion.

Abercrombie wants to spend some \$1.2 billion on capital improvement projects for FY 2013. Part of the amount will be funded by \$300 million in bond sales, in addition to another \$800 million in General Obligation (GO) bonds for more capital projects. While these capital construction projects would be used for roads and other improvements that would increase economic activity, some critics, including former Linda Lingle cabinet members, are questioning whether taking on more debt is a good idea. They are also second-guessing the governor's decision to replenish the Hurricane Relief Fund, which lawmakers raided in 2011 to balance the State budget, using money borrowed from the state's GO bonds sale. Essentially, the Abercrombie administration will be placing borrowed money into an

FROM THE PUBLISHER

The Hawaii State Legislature opened this past Wednesday on a somber note. Much like opening day 2011, gone were the festivities, entertainment, catered food, pomp and circumstance. Lawmakers instead held "after session" get-togethers complete with soft drinks, snacks and conversation. Our elected officials certainly have a tough session ahead. The economy will once again be the priority, along with funding programs like preventative health care, early childhood education and long-term care for the elderly. For the coming year, any economic recovery is expected to be gradual. Visitor arrivals are looking good but economists expect the job market to remain flat, along with the construction industry.

Our cover story for this second issue of 2012 is entitled "Fertilizing a Growing Industry in Hawaii." It was written by State Sen. Glenn Wakai, who delves into the local agriculture industry, which has managed to survive despite the sluggish economy. The history of Filipinos in Hawaii is tied to agriculture, where thousands of sakada toiled under the hot sun for low wages. Glenn also discusses the results of a study conducted by the Ulupono Initiative which showed support by many residents for Hawaii's agriculture industry and a willingness to pay more for locally-grown products. What's important is the need to "buy local" and support local farmers. Please read more beginning on page 4.

Speaking of support, the City's \$5.4 billion rail project seems to be lacking it as more and more people are bemoaning its high cost. An Open Forum article on page 3 has been submitted by Panos Prevedouros. Although he has decided not to run once again for Honolulu mayor, Panos is continuing his personal crusade against the rail project. We hope you will enjoy his article entitled "The Obama Effect on the Rail Vote?"

Also in this issue is a Top 10 list from the Better Business Bureau of Hawaii (BBB). The BBB has listed the top 10 scams based on the number of complaints it received in 2011. We encourage you to carefully read the BBB's article on page 6 and take their advice to heart. Doing so could protect you and your family from identity theft and financial loss in the coming year!

In closing, thank you once again for supporting the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle. As always, we encourage our readers to provide feedback, story ideas, tips or concerns regarding Hawaii's dynamic and vibrant Filipino community. Please drop us an email at: filipinochronicle@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you!

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

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

account only to pay interest on it—interest that taxpayers will end up paying for. Naysayers liken it to a family setting up a savings account by using a credit card. When it comes due, there is more debt to repay.

In December, the Council on Revenues predicted that Hawaii's economy would grow by 14.5 percent in FY 2012 and 6.5 percent in FY 2013. A month later, the Council lowered its projections to 11.5 percent. By law, the governor and lawmakers must consider the Council's projections in determining the State's budget. The governor's budget chief says that the downgraded projection will have little effect on the current biennial budget but could be significant in future years. Tax hikes may be needed, something which the governor is open to but lawmakers hesitant to approve given that 2012 is an election year.

The governor's budget will face intense scrutiny by the state legislature, which opens January 18 and adjourns in May. The governor touted his budget, saying it has no furloughs, employee cutbacks or cuts to social service and welfare programs. However, one or more or a combination of the above may be needed if projections from the Council on Revenues dip any further. Let's hope that's not the case.



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The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle is published weekly by The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle Inc. It is mailed directly to subscribers and distributed at various outlets around Oahu and the neighbor islands. Editorial and advertising deadlines are three weeks prior to publication date. Subscriptions are available at \$75 per year for Oahu and the neighbor islands, continental U.S. \$80, foreign country \$90. Copyright 2006-2012. The Hawaii Filipino Chronicle Inc. is located at 94-356 Waipahu Depot, Waipahu, HI 96797. Telephone (808) 678-8930 Facsimile (808) 678-1829. E-mail filipinochronicle@gmail.com. Website: www.thefilipinochronicle.com. Opinions expressed by the columnists and contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle management. Reproduction of the contents in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission from the management. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

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OPINION

It's the Truth, Liar

AS I WRECK THIS CHAIR By William M. Esposito

What's interesting in the recently released essay of deposed former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA) titled "It's the economy, student" is not what it said but what it inadvertently reveals about her. Her chosen title takes off from candidate Bill Clinton's campaign line against President George H. Bush — It's the economy, stupid.

Pretending to be a comparative review between the country's economic performance under her and President Noynoy Aquino (P-Noy) - GMA's paper is more of a summary of the unsubstantiated issues that P-Noy

haters and critics have been spreading. One wonders if they inspired her to use these issues or it was she who fed them these.

She wrote: "It is in poverty that we find the material roots of the problem of corruption — because the political system based on patronage — and ultimately, corruption to support patronage — is made possible only by the large gap between the rich and the poor." Never mind the awful syntax — GMA has some nerve to talk about corruption as if it did not flourish during her 9 years in office, as if her tenure didn't rank as one of the most corrupt in the perception of majority of Filipinos.

She added: "This will per-

sist until and unless we enlarge the economic pie. Unfortunately, the present Administration has chosen to turn the problem upside down, anchoring their entire development strategy on one simplistic slogan: "Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap." If there is no corruption, there is no poverty — this is a proposition that also tells us that the undeniable persistence of poverty to this day therefore means the continuation of corruption under this Administration"

If GMA was aiming to erode P-Noy's over 70 percent support base, especially those who are supporting his initiatives to impeach Supreme Court Chief Justice Rene Corona and hold the GMA regime accountable for all its sins — then she should write a better paper that Filipinos will believe. What she wrote is so far removed from

what Filipinos and the world think of the Philippines under P-Noy.

On the very first month of her administration, there were already corruption scandals rocking it. In the 19 months that P-Noy has been in Malacañang, he and his cabinet have not been linked to a corruption scandal. It was during her term when the biggest scandals rocked the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), even forcing one of her favorite generals - Angelo Reyes - to commit suicide. Under P-Noy, an AFP Chief of Staff named Oban retired after setting in place system reforms that will prevent future shenanigans and went home without any baon (retiree's big cash windfall culled illegally). GMA's generals who didn't have the inclination to commit suicide are now facing prosecution.

GMA's paper reflects the lies that many of us have come to associate with her. She talks about economic conditions by highlighting figures out of context, like our slower economic growth under the P-Noy administration. If she's a capable economist, then how come she didn't clarify that our present economic track is largely influenced by external developments beyond our control as well as effects of the forces of nature — the economic turmoil in the US and Europe, the Middle East crisis that's causing higher oil prices, the drop in OFW (overseas Filipino worker) remittances, and severe weather disasters related to climate change that undermine agriculture productivity.

The P-Noy administration is being hit for its supposed poor track record in bringing

(continued on page 5)

OPEN FORUM

The Obama Effect on the Rail Vote?

By Panos Prevedouros

Public apathy is one of the major boosters of the ridiculous Honolulu rail, according to award-winning journalist and author John Fund of the Wall Street Journal. He recently spoke about rail at the 36th annual Business and Investment Conference organized by Smart Business Hawaii at the Ala Moana Hotel.

The cost is ridiculous, environmental impact is horrendous and federal monies are no more. Yet Honolulu rail rolls along. Why? Because too few local citizens participate in protests, contact and pressure elected officials, contribute money and time, etc. Fund also acknowledged that in most cases, major successes are achieved by a few, so those of us really working on stopping the rail are not the exception.

If rail happens, Abraham Lincoln will be correct once again. In a moment of disappointment, Lincoln said 'People get who (or what) they deserve.'

Another H-3?

Fund also quoted former

Mayor Mufi Hannemann who after the marginal 50.6 percent "yes to steel on steel rail" vote proclaimed that "this is not going to be another H-3." Yet, the cost of rail was predicted in late 2010 to be at least 40 percent higher compared with cost estimates during the 2008 campaign. Project construction is 3.5 years late.

Rail has already faced one lawsuit in state court on Hawaiian issues and is facing a major one in federal court for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) violations. But this is only the beginning. There will be lawsuits for illegal agricultural land conversions and usage. Noise impacts in the proximity of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)-financed homes and apartments because rail noise violates HUD nighttime noise levels. A challenge for the misuse of the Bus funds to shore-up rail finances is also in consideration. And of course dozens of eminent domain lawsuits.

H-3 was built in the middle of nowhere, whereas rail steps on the toes of thousands of citizens. We have not seen anything yet in terms of legal challenges.

The Obama Effect

Fund provided statistical evidence that in the 2008 election, "island son" and presidential candidate Barack Obama drew thousands of new voters to the polls, particularly

younger ones who overwhelmingly voted in favor of rail.

I have noted this attitude in young people. They feel rail is a government project for their future which will cost

them next to nothing because it is the government's money and not theirs.

John argued that if 2008 was a more typical election without the prominent "Obama effect" in the local polls, the rail question would have been a solid "No!"

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COVER STORY

Fertilizing a Growing Industry in Hawaii

By Glenn Wakai | Photography by Tim Llana

Albert Jornacion has cultivated a good life in Hawaii. The 42-year-old from Ilocos Sur is a field supervisor at Aloun Farms in Kapolei. He is in charge of harvesting crops for the second largest farm in the state.

Jornacion came to Hawaii in 1991 and joined 8 family members in Hawaii. His mom worked at Aloun Farms and paved the way for him and his brother to follow in her footsteps. "If you get a chance to come to Hawaii, of course you're going to come," says Jornacion, "I like to work. You get money. Over there (Philippines) you work and you cannot support your family."

Jornacion and the *sakadas*, the first wave of Filipino farmers who arrived in Hawaii more than 100 years ago, have created an industry that the latest US Department of Agricul-

ture statistics show brought in a total of \$631.2 million in 2009. That figure is up from \$605.6 million a year earlier.

Nearly a third of Hawaii's current agriculture revenue comes from corn seed crops, which is fueled by a worldwide demand for ethanol production. During this period, demand grew for locally produced cattle and fruits. However demand for flowers dropped by 15 percent, due to crop losses attributable to drought and volcanic ash on the Big Island.

State Department of Agriculture Chairman, Russell Kokubun says, "Hawaii's tran-

sition from mono-crop plantations, such as pineapple and sugarcane, to diversified agriculture, including nursery products, seed crops and other vegetable and fruit crops, is important to the state's economy, environment and lifestyle."

During the start of the last century, large farms drove our economy – sugarcane and pineapple were kings. Over the decades the higher cost of doing business along with lower prices for produce have prompted a deterioration of farming in our community. A US Department of Agriculture study in 2010 found there were 7,500 farms throughout Hawaii that covered 1,110,000 acres. That acreage is down from 1,300,000 in 2005. During this five year period, all crops saw a decline in production, with the exception of coffee, taro, and seed crops.

Filipinos in today's Fields

Out of the 630,000 people in Hawaii's labor force, the latest numbers show about 40,000 were out of a job, or about 6.4 percent. Molokai reports the highest unemployment at 17 percent, with Honolulu hovering at around 5.7 percent

Statistics from the State's Department of Labor indicate there is a thinning of the agricultural workforce. (The industry includes those who work on farms, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining.) In 2000 2.3 percent of the population, or 12,000 people got their paychecks from the agriculture industry. In 2005, that percentage dropped to 1.3 and then inched up in 2010 to 1.6 percent. Workers of Filipino descent constitute the largest ethnic group employed in the agricultural industry throughout the ten year period.



Jornacion is proud to be working in the fields. He enjoys toiling in the sun and estimates 80 percent of his colleagues at Aloun Farms are from the Philippines. He has worked alongside Isidra Somora for the past 16 years. On this day, the spry woman originally from Pangansina is pulling drip irrigation tubes in a field which will be home to ewa sweet corn. She came to Hawaii in 1977 and never complains about her grueling responsibilities, "I like being in the field. It is good fun because you're sweating. All the cholesterol gets carried out and you are healthy."

Somora, like so many of her colleagues, sends money back to the Philippines every month. She has no children of her own but proudly says that she has helped her niece to finish nursing school.

Sea of Opportunity in Aquaculture

One sector of agriculture that shows much potential for growth is aquaculture. The 75 farmers in this sector generated \$30.0 million in revenue last year, up from \$21-million in 2006. Today, more than half that production came from algae sales (\$16.7 million), which is valued for its food and energy bi-products.

"Hawaii is a recognized world leader in aquaculture, producing the finest seafood products for Hawaii consumers and export markets." Kokubun says, "The early fishponds have evolved into high-tech aquaculture ventures, farming from the sea sumptuous varieties of fish, shrimp, lobster, abalone, and seaweed."

Other commodities with promising returns in aquaculture include brood stock, fingerlings, shellfish, and ornamental fish for aquarium sales.

Consumers willing to drive Agriculture growth

An overwhelming majority or kama'aina believe buying local is very important, and many are willing to pay more for some local products. Those were the highlights of a study released earlier this month by the Ulupono Initiative, which surveyed nearly 1,200 Oahu residents.

Some of the key findings include:

- When asked if the amount of food produced in Hawaii is too little, about right or too much, 81 percent said too little.
- Hawaii consumers spend only about 8 percent of their food budget on locally

(continued on page 5)



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COVER STORY



Hard-working Filipino farmers show off newly-harvested sweet corn

(from page 4, FERTILIZING...)

grown food, while they spend the rest on imports, (Source: 2005/2008 U.S. Department of Agriculture). - Nearly 74 percent of consumers believe that it is very important that Hawaii grow its own local foods.

A smaller group of those surveyed indicated they would be willing to pay more for local products, but often have trouble distinguishing what was produced in Hawaii. Consumers said that when it comes to local foods, they:

- Value quality (especially freshness and taste);
- Trust local farmers to grow foods that are fresher and safer to eat, and;
- Want meats free of antibiotics or hormones.

A PowerPoint presentation about the study is available at www.uluponoinitiative.com

Robbie Dingman who spearheaded the survey for the Ulupono Initiative says, "Despite the increasing prevalence of big-box stores, the study showed that shoppers still prefer supermarkets due to their neighborhood convenience and availability of desired brands. Farmers markets also emerged as a significant place to purchase local produce."

Those that monitor the industry are excited about the survey results. "While we know there is consumer demand and that people are willing to pay a premium for local produce, it's going to take the cooperative efforts of farmers, food wholesalers and retailers to really make a difference," says Janelle Saneishi, Spokesperson for the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, "Hopefully, the wholesalers and retailers see that they may be actually losing business by not buying local."

OPINION (cont.) (from page 3, IT'S THE TRUTH...)

foreign investors. The lack of foreign investors is not due to lack of interest in us but the effects of the economic problems in the US and Europe, which are causing many big multinational firms to consolidate. Companies in the process of consolidating would normally defer their expansion plans. Unappreciated are the investments made by local businessmen that more than made up for the lack of foreign investors — even better because local businessmen keep their profits here, not so with the multinational firms.

Tito Joaquin Bernas and the others supporting GMA have tried to peddle the simplistic notion that the economy is de-

teriorating because P-Noy is allocating too much time, political will and capital to jail the big crooks and reform the judiciary into being an independent and clean judiciary. They sounded as if Secretaries Cesar Purisima, Babes Singson, Rene Almendras and Greg Domingo have ceased meeting with P-Noy on their respective programs for stimulating economic growth.

That we're still tracking growth should be appreciated in the light of how other economies, stock markets and currencies in Europe have been very unstable. Our peso has been stable at P43 to P 44 to a US dollar — no doubt supported by the fiscal planning

AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT IN HAWAII

Agricultural employment fell by about 37 percent from 2000 to 2005 and then increased by 35 percent in 2010. In 2010, 2.6 percent of the workforce was employed in agriculture, up slightly from 1.3 percent in 2005 but lower than the 2.3 percent in 2000. Workers of Filipino descent constitute the largest ethnic group employed in the agricultural industry throughout the 10-year period.

2000 Employment

Subject	Hawaii Total population		Chinese alone or in any combination		Filipino alone or in any combination		Japanese alone or in any combination		Polynesian alone or in any combination		Native Hawaiian alone or in any combination	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
INDUSTRY												
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	557,804		72,329		118,387		138,647		102,381		83,893	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	12,119		809		3,820		2,204		2,167		2,015	
Percent of workers employed in agriculture	2.3%		1.2%		3.3%		1.6%		2.1%		2.2%	

2005 Employment

Subject	Hawaii Total population		Chinese alone or in any combination		Filipino alone or in any combination		Japanese alone or in any combination		Polynesian alone or in any combination		Native Hawaiian alone or in any combination	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
INDUSTRY												
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	582,791	+/-6,807	77,887	+/-5,221	135,437	+/-8,839	139,059	+/-6,368	110,859	+/-5,485	101,727	+/-5,401
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	7,575		309		2,058		1,112		1,439		1,424	
Percent of workers employed in agriculture	1.3%	+/-0.2	0.5%	+/-0.4	2.0%	+/-0.6	0.8%	+/-0.3	1.3%	+/-0.6	1.4%	+/-0.7

2010 Employment

Subject	Hawaii Total population		Chinese alone or in any combination		Filipino alone or in any combination		Japanese alone or in any combination		Polynesian alone or in any combination		Native Hawaiian alone or in any combination	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
INDUSTRY												
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	638,191	+/-8,692	88,039	+/-8,041	160,402	+/-8,352	159,402	+/-6,529	122,482	+/-6,598	108,093	+/-6,800
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	10,211		688		3,669		1,256		1,869		1,846	
Percent of workers employed in agriculture	1.6%	+/-0.3	0.8%	+/-0.4	2.3%	+/-0.6	0.8%	+/-0.3	1.6%	+/-0.6	1.8%	+/-0.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder Survey

Note: Data up until 2005 contained only household population data. From 2006 onward, the data included both household and group quarters data. Group quarters are living quarters such as nursing homes, college dormitories and prisons.

Prepared by: Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Research and Statistics Office, October 27, 2011

At the base of the food chain are local farm workers like Jornacion and Somora who are depending on consumers backing up their opinion with their wallets. "I don't mind being at the farm at 7 every morning," says Somora, "Planting and harvesting is all I know. I can't think of a better job in Hawaii."

GLENN WAKAI is a State Senator (Kalihi-Salt Lake-Aiea) and former television news reporter.

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BBB Names Top Ten Scams of 2011

By Timothy Caminos

Bhe Better Business Bureau (BBB) investigates thousands of scams every year, from the latest gimmicks to schemes as old as the hills. Our new Scam Source (www.bbb.org/scam) is a comprehensive resource on scam investigations from BBBs around the country. It also offers tips from the BBB, law enforcement and other agencies.

BBB officials have divided the scams up into nine major categories and picked the top scam in each, plus the Scam of the Year.

Top Job Scam

The BBB sees lots of secret shopper schemes, work-from-home scams, and other phony job offers, but the worst job-related scam can dash your hopes and steal your identity. Emails, websites and online applications all look very professional and the candidate is even interviewed for the job, usually over the phone, and then receives an offer. In order to start the job, the candidate is asked to fill out a "credit report" or provide bank information for direct deposit of their "paychecks." The online forms are nothing more than a way to capture sensitive personal data that can easily be used for identity theft. And, of course, there is no job, either.

Top Sweepstakes and Lottery Scam

Sweepstakes and lottery scams come in all shapes and sizes, but the bottom line is almost always: You've won a whole lot of money, and in order to claim it you have to send us a smaller amount of money! Oh, and keep this confidential until we're ready to announce your big winnings.

This year's top sweepstakes scam was undoubtedly an email claiming to be from Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg announcing that the recipient was the winner of \$1 million from the popular social networking site. These kinds of scams often use celebrities or other famous names to make their offer seem more genuine. If you aren't sure, don't click on the link but instead go directly to the homepage of the company mentioned. If they are really giving away \$1 million, there will be some kind of announcement on their website. But don't waste too much time looking.

Top Social Media/Online Dating Scam

Online, it's easy to pretend to be someone you are not. Are you really friends with all of your "Friends" on Facebook? Do you have a lot of personal information on a dating site?



With so much information about us online, a scammer can sound like they know you. There are tons of ways to use social media for scams, but one this year really stands out because it appeals to our natural curiosity and it sounds like it's coming from a friend. Viral videos claiming to show everything from grisly footage of Osama bin Laden's death to the latest celebrity hijinks have shown up on social media sites, often looking as if they have been shared by a friend. When you click on the link, you are prompted to "upgrade your Flash player" but the file you end up downloading contains a worm that logs into your social media account, sends similar messages to your friends and searches for your personal data. Resist the urge to peek the next time you see a sensational headline for the latest viral video.

Top Home Improvement Scam

Always near the top of the BBB's complaint list are home improvement contractors who often leave your home worse than they found it. They usually knock on your door with a story or a deal—the roofer who can spot some missing shingles on your roof, the paver with some leftover asphalt who can give you a great deal on driveway resealing. Itinerant contractors move around, keeping a step ahead of the law. The worst are those who move in after a natural disaster, taking advantage of desperate homeowners who need immediate help and may not be as suspi-

cious as they would be under normal circumstances. A large percentage of the BBB's Accredited Businesses are home contractors who want to make sure you know they are legitimate, trustworthy and dependable.

Top Check Cashing Scam

Two legitimate companies—Craig's List and Western Union—are used for an inordinate amount of scamming these days and especially check cashing scams. Here's how it works: Someone contacts you via a Craig's List posting, maybe for a legitimate reason like buying your old couch or perhaps through a scam like hiring you as a secret shopper. Either way, they send you a check for more than the amount they owe you and they ask you to deposit it into your bank account and then send them the difference via Western Union. A deposited check takes a couple of days to clear, whereas wired money is gone instantly. When the original check bounces, you are out whatever money you wired...and you're still stuck with the old couch.

Top Phishing Scam

"Phishing" is when you receive a suspicious phone call asking for personal information or an email that puts a virus on your computer to hunt for your data. It's almost impossible to avoid them if you have a telephone or an email account. But the most pernicious phishing scam this year disguised itself as official communication from the National

Automated Clearing House Association (NACHA) which facilitates the secure transfer of billions of electronic transactions every year. The email claims one of your transactions did not go through and it hopes you react quickly and click on the link before thinking it through. It may take you to a fake banking site to "verify" your account information or it may download malware to infiltrate your computer.

Top Identity Theft Scam

There are a million ways to steal someone's identity. This one has gotten so prevalent that many hotels are posting warnings in their lobby. Here's how it works: You get a call in your hotel room in the middle of the night. It's the front desk clerk, very apologetic, saying their computer has crashed and they need to get your credit card number again, or they must have gotten the number wrong because the transaction won't go through, and could you please read the number back so they can fix the problem? Scammers are counting on you being too sleepy to catch on that the call isn't from the hotel at all, but from someone outside who knows the direct-dial numbers for the guest rooms. By the time morning comes and you are clear-headed, your credit card has been on a major shopping spree.

Top Financial Scam

In challenging economic times, many people are looking for help to get out of debt or hang on to their home. Almost as many scammers take advantage of desperate situations. When the federal government announced or expanded several mortgage relief programs this year, many "sound-alike" websites have popped up to try to fool consumers into parting with their money. Some sound like a government agency, or even part of the BBB or other nonprofit consumer organization. Most ask for an upfront fee to help you deal with your mortgage company or the government (services you could easily do yourself for free) and leave you in more debt than when you started.

(continued on page 7)



Michael A. McMann, M.D.

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IMMIGRATION GUIDE



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

Another Alien "Amnesty" Hoax?

We received two calls yesterday one from Southern California and the other from Northern California about a proposed "amnesty" by the Obama administration for illegal aliens. They wanted to know whether a "friend" of theirs one being the son of a deceased U.S. citizen and the other being the parent of a U.S. resident were covered by the "amnesty". They said there were people saying that they could help obtain "amnesty".

We told these folks that this is just another "hoax" or "palabas" of the Obama administration like the one we wrote about last year regarding a new policy of the Obama administration to review the deportation cases of innocent young children who were brought illegally to the U.S. in order to concentrate resources on criminal aliens. Only last week an innocent young son of an alien who was brought illegally to the U.S. was arrested by immigration officers and placed in detention. "Review," indeed.

The news articles we read on the subject were in pro-Obama newspapers and the thrust was that Obama was seeking to "repair relations with a crucial voting bloc" obviously the Latino bloc to aid his re-election efforts. As we mentioned in a previous article, Obama is the president who has deported the most aliens in history apparently to show that he is not "soft" on illegal immigration which the Republicans are charging him with. Is he getting "soft" or is this just for election purposes?

Who are covered

The reported proposal by Obama subalterns in the Department of Homeland Security would allow undocumented aliens who entered the U.S. illegally and who have parents or spouses in the United States to obtain waivers without having to leave the country. If a waiver is granted, the alien can apply for a green card. According to the report under current law the undocumented alien must go back to his home country to apply for a waiver and suffer long delays and the possibility of rejection. Most of them are Mexicans and they go to the border town of Ciudad Juarez to apply for a waiver at the U.S. Consulate there. Many re-

portedly get a waiver. Have you heard anybody obtaining a waiver in Manila who entered the U.S. illegally previously?

What is a waiver

In the immigration context, to ask for a waiver is to ask forgiveness for an immigration violation, like having entered the country illegally. To obtain a waiver for lack of an immigrant visa, you must have a qualifying relative, such as a parent or spouse who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. INA Section 212(i).

Extreme hardship

Additionally, you must show by clear and convincing evidence that your parent or spouse will suffer "extreme hardship" if you are removed or excluded from the U.S. Your hardship as an illegal alien is immaterial. "Extreme hardship" is a very high standard and is extremely hard to prove. I have read more than 500 cases on this issue in connection with a book I am writing on waivers and less than five percent were able to show extreme hardship. Not every hardship

or the usual inconvenience suffered as a result of deportation and separation from family constitute "extreme hardship". Remember, it must be "extreme". Economic suffering is generally not recognized as "extreme hardship".

In addition, you must show that your positive equities outweigh your negative ones. Even if you meet all the qualifications, granting a waiver is discretionary with the Attorney General.

When to get a waiver

There are three situations in which a waiver for an immigration violation may be obtained: (1) when you are abroad and are seeking to be admitted to the U.S. and you apply for a waiver in the U.S. Consulate; (2) when you are in the U.S. and you are applying for some benefit, like adjustment of status, before the USCIS; or (3) when you are in the U.S. and are being deported

and you ask for a waiver from the Immigration Judge to avoid deportation. If you fall under any of the last two categories, you remain in the U.S. while fighting for your waiver.

Caution

Before hiring somebody to help you obtain "amnesty" or waiver, determine from what we have told you if you qualify for one. If you have been hiding and hiding do you want to come out in the open and apply for "amnesty" or waiver of which you might not qualify and instead land in jail?

(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: filamlaw@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 (cont.) (from page 6, BBB...)

Top Sales Scam

Sales scams are as old as humanity, but the Internet has introduced a whole new way to rip people off. Penny auctions are very popular because it seems like you can get items like cameras and computers for way below retail. But you pay a small fee for each bid (usually .50 to \$1) and if you aren't the winner, you lose that bid money. Winners often are not even the top bidder, just the last bidder when time runs out. Although not all penny auction sites are scams, some are being investigated as online gambling. The BBB recommends you treat them the same way you would legal gambling in a casino—know exactly how the bidding works, set a limit and be prepared to walk away before you go over that limit.

Scam of the Year

Yep, it's us—the BBB phishing scam. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people have gotten emails

that very much look like an official notice from the BBB. The subject line says something like "Complaint Against Your Business" and the instructions tell the recipient to either click on a link or open an attachment to get the details.

If the recipient does either, a malicious virus is launched on their computer...a virus that can steal bank information, passwords and other critical pieces of information needed for cyber-theft. The BBB is working with security consultants and federal law enforcement to track the source of these emails and has already shut down dozens of hijacked websites. Anyone who has opened an attachment or clicked on a link should run a complete system scan using reputable anti-virus software.

For more information on these and other scams, go to BBB Scam Source at www.bbb.org/scam.

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TRAVEL & TOURISM

Cebu's Pari-an: 300 Years of History Online

By Elijah Mendoza

MANILA, Philippines - "Ang hindi maramong lumungon sa pinanggalingan ay hindi makakarating sa paroroonan (Those who don't look back whence they came won't get to their goal)." The old Filipino saying may well refer to Pari-an, a tiny district of Cebu City, for centuries a mere concept in popular history books but now surging ahead on the wings of modern telecommunications technology.

Pari-an is described by historians as the premiere center of trade during the 16th century, when it was dominated by Chinese merchants.

Today it is once again a focal point, this time, of high-tech tourism. With the help of QR (Quick Response) codes, the smartphone in your pocket, and wireless broadband, Pari-an is drawing visitors.

Pari-an is also blazing the tech-tourism trail, being the first tourist spot in the Philippines to officially use QR Code technology.

Arousing QRiosity

Through the help of Max and Marlen Limpag of MyCebu.ph, the Department of Tourism (DOT), and Smart Communications Inc., Pari-an has found a new home online. Markers scattered across its various places of interest provide brief descriptions, which can be accessed via the Internet using unique QR Codes.

Anyone with a camera-equipped smartphone or even tablet device can scan the codes using a QR Code reader which is available for free in most online app stores such as Google's Android Market, Apple's App Store, and BlackBerry's App World. Seconds after scanning the code, users are able to get additional information on the tourist spot on the MyCebu.ph website.

Though only a few street blocks large, Pari-an holds a bevy of secrets that are just waiting to be uncovered.

A deeper experience

Some examples of the sites that benefit from the technology include Colon Street, the oldest thoroughfare in the Philippines.

While the street no longer bears traces of its former glory, the simple act of scanning the QR Code assigned to the Colon Street monument can give visitors a glimpse of the original structure.

With the same tech trick, the Jesuit House dating back to 1730 can re-emerge from behind a junkshop where it has lain hidden and forgotten.

It is discoveries like these (which locals tend to take for granted) that best illustrate the value of the marriage of tourism and technology.

The other sites in Pari-an, such as the San Juan Bautista Church, the Yap-Sandiego ancestral home, the Heritage of Cebu Monument, and the Casa Gorordo residence, also have their own stories to tell — all of which can now be told simply by reaching for your trusty mobile phone.

Only the beginning

There's more to come.

Cebu City South District Councilor Roberto Cabarrubias will be sponsoring a bill proposing the use of digital media to promote other Philippine landmarks and tourist hot spots.



The Yap-Sandiego ancestral house and its QR code (inset)

Even more exciting is that QR Codes are but the prototype of micro-tourism tools. Soon, the DOT and Smart hope to tap Near Field Communications (NFC) for a more convenient transfer of information to portable devices.

NFC is a technology that allows contactless data exchange between two devices in close proximity to each other such as phones, debit cards, and even posters.

Sinulog Guidebook

In yet another effort to take advantage of the power of the Internet to help promote tourism activities, DOT, Smart, and partner bloggers have made available the Sinulog Guidebook which can be downloaded for free in .epub and .mobi formats.

The Sinulog Guidebook contains facts about the Sinulog festival and important information about the city such as accommodation and emergency contact numbers (police, hospital, tourist assistance).

Both formats can be viewed in most mobile devices using free reading applications such as Aldiko and Stanza.

Smart supports the Department of Tourism's "Pilipinas, Tara Na" program. It helps promote the agency's efforts with the help of Infoboard, a Web-based SMS broadcast service that facilitates information exchange and communication between the tourism department and the public. (www.philstar.com)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Consulate Accepting Nominations for 2012 Presidential Awards

The Philippine Consulate of Honolulu is accepting nominations for the 2012 Presidential Awards for individuals and organizations living overseas.

The biennial Presidential Awards are meant to honor individuals and organizations for their exceptional contributions to the Philippines' progress and development. The awards are given to Filipinos who have demonstrated excellence in their respective professions. Since its inception in 1991, a total of 338 individuals and organizations from 44 countries have been honored.

The four categories are:

- Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (Linkapil Award): for exceptional or significant con-

tributions to Philippine reconstruction, progress and development.

- Banaag Award: for contributions in advancing the cause or significantly benefiting overseas Filipino communities.

- Kaanib Award: for exceptional and significant contributions to Philippine reconstruction, progress and development; or for benefiting a sector or community in the Philippines; or advancing the cause of over-

seas Filipino communities.

- Pamana ng Pilipino Award: for overseas Filipinos who have demonstrated talent and brought honor to the Philippines through excellence in their work/professions.

Those who are interested in nominating individuals or organizations may download

forms online at: http://2012presidentialawards.cfo.gov/ph/pdf/2012_Presidential_Awards_Primer.pdf.

Nomination forms and supporting documents must be submitted to the Consulate before May 31, 2012. Please call the Consulate at 595-6316 ext. 105 for more information on the awards.

State Releases Final Fireworks Statistics for 2012

A total of 25 injuries were treated at emergency rooms in Hawaii, according to the State Department of Health's Injury Prevention Program, which annually collects information on fireworks-related injuries that require medical attention.

The program collected data from 22 hospitals statewide and two health centers. According

to DOH officials, the 25 injuries suffered by Hawaii residents were by far the lowest total over the 12 year period for which these injuries have been counted and about 4 times lower than annual average injury count of 96 over the past 5 years.

Most of the decrease occurred in Honolulu county,

which suffered 15 injuries compared to 79 last year. Two injuries were reported from Hawaii county, 4 from Kauai and 4 from Maui.

Other notable statistics from 2012:

- The age of the patients ranged from 3 to 55 years, with nearly half (48 percent, or 12 patients) under 18 years of age.

- 80 percent of the patients were males.

- 84 percent of the injuries were burns. Hands and fingers (11 injuries) were the most commonly injured body areas, followed by injuries to the head, face and eyes (8), or legs (4).

- 84 percent of the patients were injured while setting

(continued on page 9)

FOOD & LEISURE

Resolution No. 1: Eat Healthy

IN YOUR FACE By Marielle Santos - Po

As the holiday binge comes to an end we see ourselves making our annual checklist of things to accomplish — usually a copy/paste version of the year before with optimism brewing that we can scratch it off this time around.

Recently, I came across the top resolutions people make every year, No. 1 being to stop smoking, while working out and eating healthy was a close second, the latter being my No. 1 for the past 20 years! With great difficulty I would avoid my deep-fried faves, my carb-loaded pasta, my butter-rich desserts, and my much-loved four-legged proteins in exchange

for steamed, boiled, and zero-condiment tolerance meals. This lasts for the next few weeks, a month being impossible, as the famous resolution becomes a mainstay for the next year but this time, though, I'm convinced that I can finally pull it off!

You see, I'm a sucker for makeovers, especially when I hear their emotional story and see their amazing before-and-after photos. For me, the ultimate makeover show is The Biggest Loser, so when the local version came on, I just couldn't resist. That's where I came across the amazing products of Herb's Best, which had a stint on the show and which the contestants raved about because they couldn't believe that what they were sinfully enjoying was

actually healthy and given the thumbs-up by their trainers.

As I did my research, I found out that they have a whole line of pure, organic, healthy products, from low-carb vegetable pasta noodles called Amori made with either carrot-squash or Moringa-spinach, to Ginisa and Sinigang mixes that are all-natural and most importantly, MSG-free. They want to transform the Filipinos pantry into a "healthy pantry" with their everyday food and beverage lineup that has zero-percent trans-fat, no lye, no preservatives, and no artificial flavorings. What's great is that they also support local farmers and are working with indigenous people, the Higaonon tribe in Butuan.

Since I started to become a fan, I luckily got invited to a special lunch at Bistro Filipino with



I had a special lunch at Bistro Filipino with a menu designed by chef Roland Laudico and his wife, chef Jackie, which used all of Herb's Best products. They started with chorizo ubod spring rolls with veggie noodles and pinakurat glaze

a menu designed by chef Roland Laudico and his wife, chef Jackie, which used all of Herb's Best products. It was so good you actually forgot it was all guilt-free and healthy. They started with chorizo ubod spring rolls with veggie noodles and pinakurat glaze, then the crispy noodles squid okoy with crab roe cream, which highlighted the Amori pasta. My favorites were the grilled chicken inasal and the sinigang soup shots with taro puree, which used the Ginisa mix and the Sinigang soup base mix without the effect of MSG and other preservatives.

Chef Jackie surprised us all with to-die-for desserts, starting with a dalandan tart topped with cashew meringue using Herb's Best Dalandan Lite fruit drink, then the Moringa tea Opera cake that had chai Mori pure Moringa powder tea, and lastly, the hot chocolate mousse with peanut butter cream sauce using Herb's Best Chocacao chocolate drink. I'm not a fan of peanut butter but this one was quite the exception. Honestly, that was the best healthy meal I've ever had and now I don't mind eating healthy, even on my cheat days! (www.philstar.com)



Stock a healthy pantry: Herb's Best has a whole line of pure, organic, healthy products, from low-carb vegetable pasta noodles called Amori to Ginisa and Sinigang mixes that are all-natural and MSG-free

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Travel Guide Ranks NAIA-1 2nd Worst Terminal Worldwide

by Rudy Santos
Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - The Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 1 has once again been ranked as one of the worst airport terminals in the world.

In a USA Today article, Frommers.com editor Jason Clampet described NAIA as "very dated with little in the way of appealing dining or shopping options."

Clampet also said that most airports in the Philippines would

ask travelers to show boarding pass or other ID to prove ownership of their baggage.

"There is also a small domestic terminal. International arrival formalities are usually handled fairly quickly even if the queue for immigration can appear to be a bit of a free-for-all," Clampet said.

Frommers.com ranks the world's 10 best and worst airport terminals in terms of "four C's" — comfort, conveniences, cleanliness and customer service.

The best airport terminals in the world include Jeddah Hajj Terminal (Saudi Arabia); Leifur

Eriksson Air Terminal, Keflavik, Iceland; Seoul Incheon Airport (South Korea); Wellington "Rock" Terminal (New Zealand); New York JFK Airport Terminal 5; Singapore Changi International Airport Terminal 3; Marrakech Menara Airport Terminal 1 (Morocco); Madrid Barajas Terminal 4 (Spain); Caracas International Airport, Montevideo, Uruguay; and Bilbao Airport Main Terminal (Spain).

The worst airport terminals in the world are New York JFK Airport Terminal 3; Ninoy Aquino International Airport

Terminal 1 (Manila, Philippines); Moscow Sheremetyevo Airport Terminal B/C (Russia); Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (Nairobi, Kenya); Charles de Gaulle Airport Terminal 3 (Paris); Amman Queen

Alia Airport (Jordan); New York LaGuardia Airport Terminal 5; Terminal B at Newark Liberty International Airport (New Jersey); Beauvais Airport (Paris); and Chicago Midway Airport. (www.philstar.com)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS (cont.) (from page 8, STATE...)

off or holding the firework; while 16 percent observing.

- Five injuries were caused by "firecrackers" and 1 injury each from "flowers," sparklers, an aerial "mortar," ignited gunpowder,

and a homemade pipe bomb.

DOH officials say that although fireworks-related injuries continue to be a significant cause of trauma

around the New Year period, particularly among young children, this year's low total validates the effectiveness of the Honolulu County ordinance to regulate their use.

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

Qatar Eyes Phl Partners for \$1-B Investments

by Ma. Elisa P. Osorio
 Tuesday, January 17, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - Local businessmen, including representatives from San Miguel Power Corp. met with visiting investors from Qatar to forge partnerships in line with Qatar's bid to invest \$1 billion here.

In an interview, Trade and Industry Undersecretary Cristino L. Panlilio said an investment team from Qatar visited the Philippines, led by Zayid Rashid Al, director for Asia and Africa Affairs, and Tarik Muslib, head legal counsel of the Qatar Investment Association.

The 20-man Qatari business delegation visited the Philippines early this month to assess first hand the ability of the Philippines to absorb Qatari investments.

"The investments can start from \$1 billion and could be more because Qatar has a \$300-billion fund for foreign direct investments and portfolio investments," Panlilio said.

Panlilio said the Qataris have the ability to fund the Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects of the government as well as other projects. He said the Qatar team included representatives from various industries like steel, petroleum, mining, food and real estate.

Panlilio said the Board of Investments (BOI) conducted a briefing on the various investment opportunities in the Philippines followed by an intensive business matching led by Ayala Land's Tony Aquino.

Other participating firms were SMC Power, Century Property, Marc Ventures, Steel Asia and Citibank, among others.

According to Panlilio, the potential \$1 billion investment would be spread over a number of investments. He said they are drawing up an agreement wherein 85 percent of the investment is from the Qatar fund, while the Philippines would put up the remaining 15 percent. The counterpart in-

vestment could either be from the government, or a Philippine-based company.

Panlilio said the Qatari investors would like to invest in power projects. "They have a lot of LNG fired-power plants in Qatar."

Panlilio said Qatari are very interested in investing in food and agribusiness. Some of the funds could also go to portfolio investments.

The \$1 billion fund will be from the state-owned Qatari Investment Authority. Panlilio said the \$1 billion is only a small portion of the fund earmarked by Qatar for foreign investments.

Panlilio said the Emir of Qatar is set to visit the Philippines from January 22 to 25, and the government is readying the investment agreements which is expected to be signed during the Emir's visit.

The Philippines and Qatar has been negotiating for years for an investment agreement, but negotiation stalled.

The negotiations resumed last month. Panlilio along with his team was in Qatar early this month for the third round of talks. He said they are busy drafting the agreement so that it can be signed during the Emir's visit.

He said the agreement is 95 percent completed. "We already agreed on the most important issues."

Aside from the \$1 billion investible fund, the agreement would have a mutual investment protection clause and a no double taxation agreement.

Under the mutual investment protection clause, Panlilio said that Qatar forms would like to be on equal footing with Filipino companies here. They Qataris would like preferential investment deals, but Panlilio said Qatar understands that countries where the Philippines have bilateral agreements have an advantage.

Qatar, Panlilio added is also seeking most favored nation (MFN) benefits. (www.philstar.com)

Phl Seeks Consideration in US Sanctions vs. Iran

from www.philstar.com
 Tuesday, January 17, 2011

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - President Benigno Aquino III said today that he has asked some US lawmakers to consider the Philippines' interests, in the West's imposition of economic sanctions against the Iran.

The Philippines wants to maintain non-harmful trade activities with Iran, he said in a chance interview in Tarlac province.

"We have mentioned to other foreign parties that have visited us that 30 percent

of the Philippines' banana exports goes to Iran. ... We hope that they understand that this is a very big market for Filipinos while we do not want nuclear proliferation."

He said that he had asked some US lawmakers to consider the Philippines' interests, particularly the fate of its "non-harmful" but viable trade with Iran.

Aquino said the visiting US lawmakers seem to have "understood" the Philippines' position, leading him to believe that they may take it into consideration in terms of the economic sanctions against Iran.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Gov't to Fast-Track Infrastructure Projects

from www.philstar.com
 Tuesday, January 17, 2011

MANILA (Xinhua) -- The government of Philippine President Benigno Aquino III will fast-track, starting this month, infrastructure development throughout the country through massive release of public funds as well as through the public-private partnership (PPP) program with the participation of private investors both local and foreign.

Early this month, Philippine Budget Secretary Florencio Abad announced the release of 141.8 billion pesos (3.2 billion U.S. dollars) for infrastructure projects from the recently-enacted General Appropriations Act (GAA) of 2012.

Abad said that the infrastructure projects, which will be implemented within this month, include national roads and bridges; airports, seaports and lighthouses; classrooms and other educational facilities; potable water supply systems, irrigation and post-harvest facili-

ties; and flood control and slope protection structures.

The sum is part of the 182.2 billion pesos (4.15 billion U.S. dollars) total outlay for government infrastructure under the 2012 national budget. It is 25.6 percent higher than the 2011 allocation and represents a higher 1.6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) compared to the 1.4 percent in 2011.

According to Abad, the early implementation of key infrastructure programs at the start of the year "can hit the ground running" for the priority projects of the Aquino administration in 2012.

He said it would also reinforce President Aquino's commitment to his Social Contract with the Filipino people and underscores his mission to ensure economic development and transparent government spending.

In addition to the outlay from the national budget for infrastructure projects, PPC Center Executive Director Cosette

Canilao also announced the bidding for a 10.4-billion-peso (239-million-dollar) classroom contract, the first PPP project to be awarded this year after the much-delayed program was finally launched last December with the award of the Daang Hari-South Luzon Expressway project, south of Manila, to the Ayala Corp., a local conglomerate.

The latest project, to be implemented by the Department of Education, involves the construction of 9,623 classrooms for 2,300 elementary and secondary schools in Ilocos Region, Central Luzon and the growth centers in southern Luzon.

According to Canilao, the government also hopes to jump-start the bidding of the 900-million-peso (20.5-million-dollar) Vaccine Self-Sufficiency Program of the Department of Health in the first quarter, to be followed by six more projects in the second half of 2012.

The Philippine government intends to implement at least

eight of 16 PPP projects this year in its bid to recover ground lost due to delays in its centerpiece infrastructure scheme.

These include the 5-billion-peso (113-million-dollar) modernization of the Philippine Orthopedic Center and four projects under the Department of Transportation that include the improvement of major airports in the provinces.

Other PPP projects targeted for rollout this year include the 4.2-billion-peso (95.7-million-dollar) Puerto Princesa Airport Development Project; 20.28-billion-peso (462-million-dollar) North Luzon Expressway and South Luzon Expressway Connector project; Cavite-Laguna Expressway; LRT-2 East Extension/Operation and Maintenance contract; Corn Bulk Handling and Transshipment System project; and the Balara Water Hub in Quezon City.

The Philippine government has invited foreign groups to invest in the PPP projects in the country.

Early last year, a high-level economic mission led by Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima visited China to encourage state-owned Chinese firms to participate in the bidding of PPP projects.

But sources said that most Chinese officials are still awaiting the outcome of the scheduled renegotiation of the NorthRail project, which was approved during the administration of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The project is being funded by a concessional loan from the Chinese Export-Import Credit Agency.

The project, which would connect Metro Manila to the Diosdado Macapagal Interna-

tional Airport at the Clark Special Economic Zone, a former U.S. military facility some 80 kilometers north of Manila, has been delayed due to problems on right of way and the relocation of squatter colonies along the proposed railway tracks.

Completion of the first phase was moved from 2007 to 2013 while the total cost had ballooned from 1.2 billion to 1.8 billion U.S. dollars.

During Aquino's state visit to China in September last year, Aquino and President Hu Jintao have agreed to have the NorthRail contract renegotiated.

Despite the delay in the NorthRail project, Canilao said the government was confident that more PPP projects would take off this year, in contrast to last year's slower-than-expected rollout.

But University of the Philippines Economic Professor Benjamin E. Diokno was quoted by reports as saying that the PPP roll-out "will not make a big contribution to growth this year" unless the projects actually take off and people and resources are mobilized.

Diokno said an invitation to bid is at the very early stage of the bidding process. "The process goes through invitation, submission, opening of bids, award, notice to proceed and mobilization... [but] at least it's moving, though rather slowly," Diokno, a former budget secretary, said.

Canilao has admitted that actual construction of a PPP project could start six to eight months after it is awarded to the winning bidder. In the case of the school-building program -- even with a January rollout -- construction will most likely take place in late December or early January 2013, she said. (www.philstar.com)

It 'Rained Fish' in Agusan del Sur

by Jaime Laude
 Sunday, January 15, 2011

MANILA, Philippines -- Small fish of still unknown species mysteriously fell from the skies over Loreto town in Agusan del Sur Friday afternoon during a heavy downpour, leaving residents and officials baffled and amused.

Blance Gobenciong, Office of Civil Defense (OCD) director in Caraga, confirmed the phenomenon but offered no explanation.

National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) executive director Benito Ramos also could not provide an explanation for the strange incident.

"It came with the rain and about a kilo of these live fish is in the aquarium now," Gobenciong said. Surprised residents went out of their houses despite the heavy rain to collect the fish that landed on rooftops and on the streets.

Lt. Col. Niel Patricio, commanding officer of the Army's 26th Infantry Battalion whose unit has operational jurisdiction over Loreto town, said one his



men witnessed the incident. "He reported back to me about what he witnessed and I instructed him to get or secure even a single sample for us to see and examine," Patricio said.

He said troops and militia-men were in Loreto to monitor possible flooding as it has been raining heavily in the area. The nearby Bunawan River is reportedly in danger of overflowing.

Patricio said the phenomenon might have been triggered by a twister that sucked out a school of mudfish fingerlings from the Agusan Marsh, which is a breeding ground for mudfish.

"That's the most logical explanation for now," he said.

Saltwater fish shunned

In a related development, residents of Iligan City are now switching to freshwater fishes such as tilapia and bangus in the wake of reports that saltwater fish

have feasted on uncollected victims of tropical storm "Sendong" off Northern Mindanao.

Dr. Livey Villarín, city health official, said local residents have also avoided eating "kinilaw." Fish vendors in the two public markets in the city are complaining of low sales of saltwater fish -- even those sourced from far-flung areas such as Zamboanga del Sur.

Villarín assured the public that it is safe to eat saltwater fish as long as their internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed and the fish are thoroughly washed. (www.philstar.com)

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

SC Misuse of WB Fund May Be Included in Impeach Raps

from www.philstar.com

Tuesday, January 17, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - Prosecutors in the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona may use as additional evidence against him the reported misuse of a \$21.9-million World Bank (WB) loan to the Supreme Court (SC).

"We could use the report as evidence to support the impeachment charge relating to graft and corruption against the Chief Justice. The report will strengthen the graft and corruption charge," Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares said.

He said that although the anomalies found by the WB in the use of its loan were not specifically mentioned in the eight impeachment charges, he believes the Senate would allow them to use it as evidence.

"What the impeachment rules don't allow is the introduction of a new charge, say, treason. But the introduction of new evidence, I think they would allow," he said.

He added that he would discuss with the prosecution panel the inclusion of the WB report.

Eastern Samar Rep. Ben Evardone, meanwhile, has already filed House Resolution 2044 directing the House committee on good government and public accountability to conduct an investigation into the allegation.

"It behooves this august body to exercise its power to check on a coequal branch of government

in order to safeguard the limited government coffers," he said.

Lacson slams WB Senate probe

As this developed, Sen. Panfilo Lacson expressed opposition to a Senate probe into the alleged WB loan misuse of the SC while the impeachment trial of Corona is going on.

Interviewed before the resumption of the regular session at the Senate yesterday morning, Lacson said that conducting the probe alongside the impeachment trial may not be in the best interest of the Senate, considering that Corona is involved in both issues.

"It will be hard from a practical point of view and even to the fairness of all concerned. I don't think it's advisable to hold the Senate investigation, the issue of which might put on the spot the impeached official," he said.

Lacson said he is worried that the investigation would "wittingly or unwittingly appear prosecutorial.

"As senator-judges, it won't augur well on our position because we will be the ones to sit in the trial and also hear the issue on the alleged misuse of the loan of the World Bank," he said.

The proposed probe into the alleged misuse of the \$21.9-million WB loan to the SC for the Judiciary Reform Support Project (JRSP) was the initiative of Sen. Franklin Drilon, who would also conduct the hearing as chairman of the oversight committee



The Senate performing as the Impeachment Court

on public expenditures.

A review of the project recently conducted by the WB found several irregularities in the implementation, including the use of funds for purposes not agreed upon.

"There are reports that the World Bank recently rendered an opinion to the effect that since mid-2010, progress in attaining the development objectives of the JRSP and its implementation have been rated 'unsatisfactory,' with the fiduciary environment pertaining to the project deteriorating to a point that the JRSP has been rated 'high risk' on project management, project procurement and financial management decisions," Drilon said.

He said the WB allegedly noted that several procurement of goods were undertaken without prior agreement and, in some cases, even against the approval of the bank, resulting in the present situation where further ex-

penditures must be undertaken only with the prior agreement of the bank, in writing, and reflected in the agreed procurement plan.

The WB team also questioned Corona's appointment of one man as court administrator, head of the Supreme Court's public information office and chairman of the bids and awards committee.

It did not, however, name Midas Marquez as such official.

Corona authorized Marquez to approve disbursements of up to P200,000, which was later increased to P500,000.

"This senior official (referring to Marquez), due to the combination of his appointments and functions, was the requestor of services, the approver of the terms of reference, the end-user of services (requested), the authorizer of contract extensions, and the authorizer of payments," Drilon said.

The WB pointed out that

such a situation presented a conflict of interest and did away with internal checks and balances in disbursements and procurement of supplies.

Among the deals Marquez entered into which the WB mission questioned were four "tri-media monitoring" contracts worth from P195,000 to P250,000, all awarded to Media Banc Manila Monitoring Services Inc.

Lacson said he would not participate in the probe if ever Drilon pushes through with it and would rather that this be held after the impeachment trial.

He said that Drilon would have to find just one senator to support him on the proposed probe in order to come up with a quorum to hold a hearing.

If ever the probe pushes through, Lacson said that there must be a clear delineation between the issues to be discussed in the hearing and the matters that will be brought up in the impeachment trial.

He said he does not believe the timing of the release of the report on alleged irregularities in the use of the WB loan was suspicious because it is a legitimate issue.

Lacson added that it was also highly doubtful that the WB would be complicit in coming out with black propaganda against the Chief Justice.

(www.philstar.com)

MAINLAND NEWS

US Senators See No Clash with China in Asia

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — A US-China confrontation in Asia is unlikely but Washington is committed to help bolster the military firepower of its allies like the Philippines amid territorial disputes with Beijing, two US senators said yesterday.

The Philippines has turned to Washington for warships, fighter jets and radar to bolster its anemic military after accusing Chinese ships last year of repeatedly intruding into areas it claims in the South China Sea's disputed Spratly Islands and disrupting oil exploration in its territorial waters.

Vietnam has leveled simi-

lar accusations against China, which dismissed the allegations and reiterated its sovereignty in virtually the entire region. The potentially oil- and gas-rich sea territory has long been feared as Asia's potential flashpoint for conflict.

Sen. John McCain, however, said he did not expect any major conflict erupting between the United States and China but reiterated Washington's commitment to maintain its presence in Asia and bolster the military firepower of its allies to counterbalance China's dominance.

"We do not foresee a conflict or confrontation with China," McCain said in a news conference in Manila, where he and three other US senators

held talks with Philippine officials on bolstering defense and trade ties.

But he added the best way to guarantee Asia's stability was for Washington to build a strong military presence in the region as well as robust alliances with its allies.

With the US drawing down its military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, McCain said America will intensify its deployment of air and naval assets to Asia, increase joint military exercises with allies and bolster trade.

Responding to a question, McCain said the US has no plans to try to re-establish its military bases in the Philippines, which adopted a consti-

(continued on page 13)

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LEGAL NOTES



By Reuben S. Seguritan

Income Requirements for the Affidavit of Support

On a family-based visa petition, the petitioner must submit an affidavit of support to show that the intending immigrant has adequate means of financial support and will not become a public charge, or someone who depends on the government for subsistence. A person who is likely to become a public charge is inadmissible or not eligible to become a lawful permanent resident.

The sponsor in an affidavit of support (Form I-864) must be a U.S. citizen, national or a lawful permanent resident, at least 18 years old, and domiciled within the United States or a U.S. territory or possession.

The rules require a sponsor to have the means to maintain an annual income equal to at least 125% of the Federal poverty line for the sponsor's household size. The household size for purposes of Form I-864 includes the immigrant being sponsored as well as all immigrants previously sponsored.

Take for example a U.S. citizen who filed an I-130 petition for his parent and now must submit an affidavit of support. If the petitioner has a spouse and one dependent child, he must have a minimum income of \$27,937, which is 125% of the poverty guideline for a four-member household.

If the sponsor's income is not enough, assets of the sponsor, the sponsored immigrant, and other household members may be counted. Another option is to find a joint sponsor

who meets the financial requirements.

To prove that the sponsor's income meets 125% of the poverty guidelines, a copy of the latest tax return is usually determinative. However, immigration authorities may request proof that the sponsor has sufficient current income and the sponsor may need to provide current pay stubs and an employer letter.

Petitioners who are self-employed or have a business that shows a loss in their tax returns may still qualify as a sponsor if they have enough income or assets that are readily available or could be converted into cash within one year. Examples of these assets include savings, stocks and bonds, and personal property.

If real estate sought to be included as an asset is situated

in an area with a depressed real estate market, the examiner might not be convinced that it is "readily convertible to cash" within one year. Furthermore, if the property is underwater or subject to debt greater than its current market value, the examiner might exclude it as substitute for income.

"Income" includes income from employment, pension, interest income, dividends, alimony and child support. Receipt of means-tested public benefits does not disqualify a petitioner from sponsoring an immigrant, although these benefits do not always count as income. For instance, supplemental security income (SSI), food stamps and Medicaid are not income, but unemployment compensation and workers' compensation may be included.

Failure to file tax returns sometimes arises in the case of petitioners who have worked on

a "cash basis". In some cases, the tax returns also show incorrect filing status (such as filing as single when married) and improper dependent claims. Petitioners must make sure that they have properly filed all necessary tax returns, and if they did not, that they file amended or late-filed tax returns.

Concealment or misrepresentation of material facts relating to income, assets and household size may not only lead to a finding that the affidavit of support is not sufficient to overcome the public charge ground of inadmissibility. It could also expose the sponsor or joint sponsor to liability for criminal prosecution for submission of fraudulent immigration documents.

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.co

MAINLAND NEWS

Loida Lewis Leads Support for OFW in Saudi

Filipino-American philanthropist and political activist Loida Nicolas Lewis is calling on Filipinos worldwide to empathize with the plight of an Overseas Foreign Worker (OFW) who needs the support of every Filipino to stop his execution by beheading.



Loida Nicolas-Lewis

Rodelio "Dondon" Lanuza, 37, was in the wrong place at the wrong time when the accidental death of a Saudi national occurred in 2000. Lanuza has been in prison for over 11 years

and is under a death sentence by beheading.

In February 2011, he was pardoned by the relatives of the victim in exchange for blood

money in the amount of \$35 million pesos or US\$800,000. Lanuza's mother Letty has launched a campaign that has only raised about \$13,000 or 2 percent of the goal, in the last 9 months. She approached Lewis who decided to help raise the money needed to save her son's life.

"After I met his mother in Manila, I knew that I had to help him," Lewis says. "Dondon Lanuza does not deserve a death sentence (by beheading). He is an OFW in jail in Saudi

Arabia unjustly. We Filipinos have to help him because he is our son, our brother, our cousin."

Lewis has asked her friends and contacts to support Lanuza. She and several Filipino philanthropists are matching dollar-for-dollar donations that the public will give.

The one-year anniversary

of the family's forgiveness and condition to receive the "blood money" is February 2012 next year.

Donations may be given by PayPal at www.helpDondon.com. Checks can also be sent to:

Loida N. Lewis
FBO Dondon Lanuza
P.O. Box 1080
New York, NY 10028

(from page 12, U.S. SENATORS...)

tution in 1987 that forbids the permanent basing of foreign troops. He was flown to the US Clark Air Base north of Manila in the early 1970s after years as a prisoner of war in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Clark and other US military facilities were shut down in the early 1990s.

"I don't believe that those days will ever return," McCain said, adding new collaboration by the allies "can mean joint military operations" or provision of American ships and military equipment like a US Coast Guard cutter, which the

Philippines recently obtained and became the largest and most modern warship in its dilapidated naval fleet.

Despite its economic difficulties, the US can build a strong presence through robust defense cooperation with its Asian allies and maintain a formidable force in critical areas like the South China Sea, Sen. Joseph Lieberman said.

"We simply cannot allow one nation, in this case China, to exercise disproportionate control over these waterways," Lieberman said.

"We're not gonna let those claims to be settled by force or by bullying," he said. "We're

going to make sure to the best of our ability that they're settled as a matter of negotiations, multilateral negotiations and international rule of law."

China wants bilateral negotiations to resolve the longstanding conflicts. It has warned non-claimants led by the United States from intervening.

The battle for ownership of the Spratlys has settled into an uneasy stand-off since the last fighting, involving China and Vietnam, that killed more than 70 Vietnamese sailors in 1988. The other claimants are Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan.

(www.philstar.com)

Joseph M. Zobian, M.D.



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Philippines
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PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE



DAYASADAS
By Pacita Saludes

Fiesta Ti Kailokuan Celebrates the 41st Anniversary of GH

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Sumagmamanon a tawen a selselebraran ti AKA ti anibersaryio ti GH. Ita 41st anibersariona maaramid iti August Ahrens Elementary School iti Waipahu, inton Sabado Enero 14, 2012, 6:00 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Ti selebrasion idasarna ti kultura, arte ken tradision dagiti Ilokano babaen kadagiti salsala, kankanta, tuktukar ken kawes dagiti agpabuya, FILIPINO MUSIC babaen ti nabayagen a mangtuktukar (Badua's Band)ti Filipino Fiesta. Kadaanan a kankanta ken tuktukar ti maipatayab, kasta met dagiti salsala a mailalaok kadagiti kabaranan a salsala.

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GLOBAL NEWS

Indonesian VP Calls for Acceleration of ASEAN Visa Implementation

JAKARTA (Xinhua) - Indonesian Vice President Boediono asks the ASEAN to speed up implementation of a joint visa for the region in order to boost the number of foreign tourist arrivals and services in the industry in the region amid the global economic crisis threat, a statement from the vice presidential office said here on Friday.

The statement was made as the Indonesian and ASEAN tourism industries had contributed significantly on the regional economy which was growing fast at present.

"The goal that we want to reach is not only the increasing number of tourist but also the improved quality of services and the sustainability of the visits," Boediono said.

The vice president said that the authorities in ASEAN had to made a breakthrough in anticipating the risks of the weakening global economy due to the debt crisis in the United States and Europe.

"Europe is the biggest market for



VP Boediono of Indonesia

the region at the present, but now Europe is facing a problem. It has to be a diversification of tourism industry which is more creative," he said.

ASEAN leaders had given commitment for the implementation of the facility during the 11th ASEAN Summit in Bali in Nov. 2011.

Boediono expected the commitment could be realized soon and discussed further at the level of minister.

The vice president said that with a

strong economic growth, which led to the emerge of new middle class, had boosted the tourism market in the region it self.

Indonesia relies much on tourism from the ASEAN as most of the foreign holidaymakers in Indonesia coming from the region, former Indonesian tourism minister Jero Wacik has said.

Indonesia expects 8 million foreign holidaymakers coming into the country this year, according to Minister for Tourism and Creative Economy Mari Elka Pangestu.

For last year, Indonesia expects 7.6 million foreign tourist arrivals, higher than that of at 2010 of 7 million, Deputy Minister for Tourism and Creative Economy Sapta Nirwandhar has said.

He said that the government was looking to attract visitors from countries that have emerged relatively unscathed from the credit crisis including China, India and Australia.

The Indonesian tourism industry has recovered from the impact of terrorism and epidemics. (www.philstar.com)

Processed Meat May Increase Pancreatic Cancer Risk

STOCKHOLM (Xinhua) - Eating too much processed meat may result in a rise in the risk of pancreatic cancer compared to those who eat no meat, showed a new Swedish research on Friday.

The risk of pancreatic cancer increased by 19 percent for each 50 grams of processed meat eaten every day, equivalent to a sausage or two rashers of bacon compared to those who ate no meat, said the Swedish medical university Karolinska Institutet in a statement.

The study, funded by the Swedish Cancer Foundation and Karolinska Institutet, also showed that there was a 29-percent rise in pancreatic cancer risk for men who ate 120 grams red meat per day compared with those who ate no meat, the statement added.

However, there was no certain evidence showing that red meat would lead to increased risk considering rise in the cancer risk was only for men but not women, probably because men in the study tended to eat more red meat

than women.

The research was published in the British Journal of Cancer, based on 11 studies with over 6,000 people having pancreatic cancer involved, said Karolinska Institutet.

"Pancreatic cancer has poor survival rates. So as well as diagnosing it early, it's important to understand what can increase the risk of this disease," Associate Professor Susanna Larsson, study author at Karolinska Institutet explained the motivation of the re-

search in the statement.

Still, more studies are needed on the links between meat and pancreatic cancer. "But this new analysis suggests processed meat may be playing a role," said Sara Hiom, director of information at Cancer Research UK.

According to Karolinska Institutet, there were 8,090 people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in Britain in 2008, taking up 3 percent of all cancer cases, while around 7,780 people died from it. (www.philstar.com)

China, ASEAN Countries Hold Meeting on South China Sea

BEIJING (Xinhua) - China and member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on Saturday held a meeting of senior officials on the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in South China Sea.

All the participants had in-depth discussion and reached a series of consensus, said a press release posted on the Foreign Ministry's official website

(www.fmprc.gov.cn).

The meeting concluded that the general situation of South China Sea is peaceful and stable, and appreciated the positive efforts from all concerned sides.

The meeting regarded 2011 as a fruitful year with positive progress made in implementing the declaration, and reached consensus on the future works, including to speed up specific

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