

HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

♦ WEEKLY ♦ FEBRUARY 21, 2009 ♦

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EDITORIAL

Family Values Set Tone for Congressman

As a skilled potter molds clay to form a beautiful vase, so can strong family bonds and values shape an individual. This is especially true for U.S. Congressman Steve Austria from Ohio—a second generation Filipino-American whose close family upbringing helped shape him into the leader he is today.

Austria learned at an early age the importance of family unity, responsibility and hard work—values instilled in him by his father, whom he considers his mentor and best friend. When he first ran for public office in Ohio over 10 years ago, he had the full support of family and friends. To the surprise of many, he defeated his opponent—a six-term incumbent. He again bucked the odds and defeated his opponent last November, earning him a seat as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and the distinction of being the second member of Congress of Filipino ethnicity.

It bears repeating that strong family bonds serve as a link to our beginnings and as a guide to our future. Such bonds are extremely important, especially with the uncertainty in our world today. Having said that, we can only hope that the core family values Austria espouses will help the freshman Congressman to not only survive the pitfalls that await on Capitol Hill, but to thrive as well.

As Filipinos, we could stand to learn from the Austria family's example. Let's not take our own family bonds for granted but instead commit ourselves to strengthening such relationships. Let's do it not only for our children but for the generations to follow. And, let us not forget to nurture and practice our cherished Filipino family values!

Promised Benefits Are Bittersweet For Filipino Vets

The few thousand surviving Filipino veterans of World War II will receive their long-awaited benefits under a provision in the economic stimulus bill signed by President Obama.

The stimulus measure provides \$198 million for one-time payments to these aging veterans. Those who are U.S. citizens are eligible for \$15,000, while non-citizens get \$9,000. Of the 15,000 remaining veterans who are thought to still be alive, some 12,000 reside in the Philippines, while the remaining 3,000 live in the U.S.

Some veterans wanted to continue pushing for full recognition and benefits, rather than settle for partial grants. But with their ranks thinning with each passing day, the veterans simply did not have the luxury of time. Furthermore, the attention of Congress was on the economic crisis, rather than justice for Filipino veterans. Another attempt at another veterans equity bill was doomed to fail yet again, since the overwhelming majority of House and Senate members were not alive to remember World War II or the sacrifices made by the Filipino veterans and were unmoved by appeals to make good on America's broken promise.

In the end, the consensus was that it would be better for the remaining veterans to at least see some benefits rather than to pass on with nothing at all. For many of the veterans, particularly those in poor health and living in the Philippines, the one time payment will certainly help defray their medical expenses.

The Filipino community is indebted to those lawmakers who supported our veterans. We especially tip our hat to Hawaii's congressional delegation—Senators Inouye and Akaka and Representatives Abernethy and Hirono—for working tirelessly on behalf of our veterans. To them we say 'mabuhay' and that in turn, we as a community will not forget.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Welcome to another issue of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle! Most of you are probably aware by now that our Filipino veterans of World War II have finally received recognition for their bravery and sacrifices. While this is welcomed news for the community, it is too little too late for many of these veterans who have since passed on. The remaining few, now in their mid-80s and early 90s, are now in poor health. While some veterans and their supporters insist that the payments are not enough, realistically speaking, receiving something is better than nothing. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is moving quickly to make sure that the veterans, particularly those residing in the Philippines, receive their payments. If you are related to or know of veterans in the Philippines, please read the article on page 12 for instructions on how to apply for the benefits.

For our cover story this issue, which was written by Rowena Ballesteros, we introduce our readers to U.S. Rep. Steve Austria from Ohio. He is the second member of Congress of Filipino heritage. His parents migrated from Quezon in the Philippines to Ohio, where he and his 8 siblings were raised. His father taught him the importance of family values, which he in turn passed on to his own three sons. In fact, Austria says that family values influence much of his decision-making and goals in life. Ultimately, he would like to see more Filipinos become politically active, which would result in a stronger voice in government for the community. We hope you will be inspired by reading his story on pages 4-5.

On page 8, we have a feature story on Ron de Guzman, who is the executive chef at Stage Restaurant, located at the Honolulu Design Center on Kapoli Avenue. De Guzman honed his culinary skills under well-known local chef Alan Wong, who not only taught him about cooking but also encouraged him to become a better person. His creativity is reflected in Stage's menu items, which has been described as contemporary Asian-American cuisine. So consider Stage Restaurant the next time you go out for dinner. After a sumptuous meal, you can work off those calories by browsing through the extensive line of designer chairs, tables and other pieces of furniture.

In closing, we hope you will take time to read these and other articles of interest in this issue—articles such as Legislative Connection, Legal Guide, Legal Notes and Philippine Language. Mabuhay once again for supporting the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle! Until next time...

Aloha and Mabuhay!

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

LETTERS

Filipino Print Media Neglected to Report Filipinos Devastating Plight in Gaza?!!!

It amazes me and other educated ethnic Filipinos that the U.S. Filipino print media has neglected to report on the devastating plight of Filipino/Palestinians and their families in occupied Gaza.

A majority of ethnic Filipinos in the U.S. has had no idea regarding the plight of the many Filipinos who are married to Palestinians and who are attempting to escape from the crises in Gaza.

Our Filipino print media seems to limit their content or are ignorant to report on this most unfortunate and heart-breaking situation.

Mel Domingo
Honolulu

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LEGISLATIVE CONNECTION



By Senator Will Espero

Fireworks and Other Hot Items

Safety and Military Affairs encompasses civil defense. I recently questioned our state Department of Transportation harbor officials about this loophole in the product stream. We will be working on this for the protection of Hawaii residents.

The Legislature is considering several bills on fireworks, among them: SB 2, which would ban fireworks except for religious or cultural purposes; SB 1059, which would establish an illegal fireworks task force to stop the importation of illegal fireworks and explosives; and SB 1060, which would increase the permit fees associated with using and importing fireworks. At the hearings, held by my Committee this week, many testified in favor of the bills.

Can You Give Me Something to Take for This, Doctor?

PhD or MD, is there a difference in ability to prescribe medicine to treat psychiatric disorders?

The psychologists' prescriptive rights bill is once again before the Legislature, drawing psychiatrists and psychologists out of their offices to visit lawmakers and educate them on the issue. The advocacy is passionate and admirable on both sides.

The medical doctors are opposed to granting psychologists the right to prescribe psychotropic drugs on the grounds of patient safety. They say that psychologists simply cannot acquire the medical training to ensure that the patient's health will not be compromised. Psychologists may not be aware of drug interactions with the patient's other medications or medical condition, they say. They will not have the experience to identify adverse reactions or contraindications.

Psychologists, on the other hand, point to problems with access to care. There are many patients who need mental health treatment that requires medication, who live in areas where there is an unavailability of psychiatrists. Psychologists who work in the health care clinics are often the only source of mental health treatment for these residents. Patients are unable or often pressed, financially or otherwise, to go to a psychiatrist for their prescriptions.

The debate has lasted for more than a decade. Last year I voted with the psychiatrists, but this Session I am keeping an open mind and am willing to listen to the arguments.



Civil union

The civil union bill is back. Persons in favor and against the issue have sent their comments to legislative e-mails and telephones. It has passed the House and is now in the Senate. The arguments are familiar, and this issue will heat up.

Dogfighting

— And I don't mean the scraps "Dog" Chapman gets into hunting people down. Dog fighting is, surprisingly, on the agenda. Testimony on the bill in the Senate Judiciary Committee was interesting, on the one hand saying that it's a cultural issue and people need to get together to work things out. Opponents of dog fighting pointed to the strong link to domestic violence shown by criminal justice research. I, personally, am against animal cruelty, and have in the past sponsored bills against chicken fighting. Would many of you even know that dog fighting

took place in Hawaii and it was already a crime?

On the lighter side

The pit bull bill generated a lot of e-mail and took down a few trees in massive, mass faxes, but there was never any serious impetus for it.

Amusingly, the ban for pocket knives also generated a fair amount of e-mail but we didn't want to disenfranchise the Boy Scout vote, so the bill won't go anywhere.

Filipino World War II Veterans

One note on the fireworks on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C.: President Obama's Stimulus package contains funds for payments to Filipino World War II veterans. As you are aware, Republican opposition to the bill poses a threat to the bill. Please join me in supporting President Obama's proposal by contacting members of Congress to ask for their vote in favor of the bill.

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Ohio Congressman Pushes for Family Values, Speaks Out For Filipinos

By Rowena Ballesteros

Despite the negative light on America's troubled economy, the year 2009 brings promising changes. Just last month, the nation witnessed history as the first black man was inaugurated as the nation's 44th president.

History was also made in November of last year when Steven Austria, a republican state senator from Ohio, became the second American with Filipino heritage elected to Congress. He was also the first Filipino elected to the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate.

Austria's House colleague, U.S. Rep. Robert Scott of Virginia, holds the distinction of being the first member of Congress with Filipino blood running through his veins.

Austria was born in Cincinnati and grew up in Xenia, Ohio. He graduated from Carroll High School in 1977 and lived in Beavercreek for more than 20 years. The eldest of nine children, Austria took it upon himself to set standards high for his brothers and sisters and therefore was very close with his parents.

His mother is Dr. Jean B. Austria and his father was the late Dr. Clement G. Austria from Tiaong, Quezon, Philippines who moved to Ohio to attend medical school.

While growing up in Ohio, his father warned him about prejudice that he would encounter from classmates and peers. There were only a handful of Filipinos at the school he attended, where Filipinos totaled a mere 4-5 percent of the student body. Austria overcame racial prejudice by participating in sports and extra-curricular

activities.

"I didn't let anyone or anything put me down," Austria explained. "I kept myself busy by playing baseball and basketball. I also made a lot of friends by joining various clubs that were offered at school."

Despite the bouts of discrimination, Austria says that he and his siblings were raised in an overall positive environment.

Looking back at his humble beginnings, it seemed politics was an unlikely career choice for Austria. His first job was



U.S. Representative Steve Austria

helping his father.

"My dad owned 16 acres of land and I would occasionally help with maintaining the land," said Austria. But it didn't stop there. Austria also delivered newspapers and worked a few odd jobs to make extra money.

Austria and his wife Eileen have three sons—Brian, Kevin and Eric. In 1985, the Austrias received one of the state's most prestigious awards—the Ohio Family of the Year and The Great American Family Award.

"We were one of nine families that received the award," he says. "It was an honor to be chosen. My family and I had the privilege of visiting the White House. At that time, we met First Lady Nancy Reagan who presented the award to us."

It didn't end there. The Austrias then traveled to Rome, where they met the Archbishop and shook hands with the Pope.

Austria credits his father for stressing the importance of family values.

"My father was my mentor," he says. "He got me involved in politics and the government. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be where I am today."

With an ever-increasing interest in politics and government affairs, he decided to run for a seat in the Ohio House of Representatives in 1998.

"My father stood by my side and helped me during my first election," Austria says. "He taught me the importance of letting voters know who you are and what issues you stand for."

That election, Austria gained the support of family, friends and the Filipino community. He ran against and defeated a six-term incumbent. Four years later, Austria served as a member of the Ohio State House representing the 10th District. He then was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives representing Ohio's 7th congressional district.

In the 2008 election, Austria was the Republican nominee for the U.S. House of Representatives from Ohio's 7th congressional district. He defeated Democratic challenger Sharen Neuhardt in the general election.

One of Austria's legislative priorities is the Filipino Veteran's Bill. For him, it's a personal matter.

"My father was a World War II vet himself," Austria said. "As a Congressman, I would like to recognize and thank our Filipino veterans for their sacrifices."

Other legislation Austria will propose in Congress include lowering gas prices, protecting jobs and controlling government spending. He is



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COVER STORY



U.S. Rep. Steve Austria's oath-taking

also pushing for more protection for our keiki.

"In 1998, I pushed for the Internet Job Protection Act," Austria says. "The purpose of that act was to protect every child of pedophiles and sex offenders."

Austria took it a step further and pushed for the monitoring of all sex offenders online.

Austria says that family values influence much of his decision-making and goals.

"My father drilled faith and family first before anything else," said Austria. "These values helped me to become a better legislator, father and person."

"I am honored to be a voice of the Filipino community," said Austria. "I want the Filipino community to get more involved in politics be-

One of Austria's legislative priorities is the Filipino Veteran's Bill. For him, it's a personal matter. "My father was a World War II vet himself," Austria said. "As a Congressman, I would like to recognize and thank our Filipino veterans for their sacrifices."

cause together we can make a difference. Together we can have a stronger voice that will be heard."

Austria believes there's a greater unity across the country amongst Filipinos, as indicated by the outpouring of support he received. The momentum, he says, needs to continue building.

"For the younger generation of Filipinos, I encourage

them to not be afraid to speak out," Austria says. "More Filipinos need to get involved in government and in their communities and to run for elected office. Hopefully one day, we'll have a Filipino in the White House."

Austria's ultimate goal is to visit the Philippines someday and to see more Filipinos making a difference in their respective communities.

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Farrington Receives Funds For High Tech Community Projects

Island Insurance Company, Ltd., through its Foundation, has provided \$50,000 to Farrington High School in matching funds from Gov. Lingle and the Legislature for the expansion of the Project EAST program to Oahu.

The check was presented by Colbert Matsumoto, Island Insurance CEO and Chairman of the Board, at the school's student induction ceremony on February 13, 2009.

"We are grateful to be able to provide this opportunity for our students," says Farrington principal Catherine Payne. "For this project to be successful, it will require continued commitment and hard work from our teachers and staff, along with help and guidance from outside the school."

"We are proud to be one of the first with Project EAST on Oahu."

Project EAST is an educational program that engages students in an environment steeped in emerging technologies and focused on self-direction and community service. The program focuses on student-driven service projects using the latest in technology.

Project EAST schools are equipped with state-of-the-art computers, GPS/GIS mapping tools, architectural and CAD design software, 3D animation suites and other technology that students use to solve real problems in their local communities.

The students participating in Project EAST don't find the solutions in a textbook or from a teacher's lecture. Instead, they devise their own solutions by

creatively applying knowledge obtained from various sources, developing project plans and executing strategies through teamwork and their own diligence. This approach enables students to be better prepared for the challenges of both college and the business world. The process also helps to develop critical learning and problem solving skills.

Project EAST is part of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education initiative through a federal grant, county and state funding, and matching money from private business.

"Island Insurance hopes that other businesses will join us in supporting the introduction of Project EAST to more schools," Matsumoto says.

Farrington's Project EAST

is receiving a total of \$150,000. Three other Oahu schools are beginning EAST projects during 2009—Milliani, McKinley and Roosevelt high schools. Ten neighbor island schools have already incorporated Project EAST into curriculums. Those schools include Maui High, Baldwin High, King Kamehameha High, Lahainaluna High, Kihei Charter School, Kea'au High, Molokai Middle & High School, Kauai High and Kauai Chiefs Middle School.

"Project EAST prepares students with the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in the 21st century workplace," says Isla Young, project

manager at the Maui Economic Development Board's Women in Technology program and Project EAST Hawaii coordinator.

"Project EAST provides an opportunity for the students to connect what they are learning in school to the real world. Ultimately, the goal is to educate, train and employ a strong homegrown workforce instead of having to import talent to fill the gaps."

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Island Insurance executives present a check for \$50,000 to students at Farrington High School during their Engineering Academy student induction ceremony on February 13, 2009.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

OPINION

A Great Filipino, A Remarkable Public Service Career

AS I WRECK THIS CHAIR By William M. Esposo

Because of the Information Gap, many Filipinos do not know the great men in public service — who they are and what they silently accomplish for our country. We suffer from a leadership crisis because most Filipinos are prevented from knowing the very people who could best serve them.

This occurred to me last Friday when I attended the retirement ceremony of Supreme Court Associate Justice Adolf Azcuna. Hearing the highly-esteemed Chief Justice Reynato Puno extol the legacy of the retiring Adolf Azcuna, as if in awe, narrating Adolf's landmark decisions and initiatives — I could not help feel that here we have a great Filipino bowing out of public service and only the cognoscenti will know what we all owe him.

Among the many land-

mark ponencias that Adolf Azcuna contributed which improved tremendously the administration of justice in our country are the Writ of Amparo, the recent decision that Cpl. Daniel Smith, the US soldier found guilty of raping a Filipina, should be held under Philippine custody and the decision that slapped down the CPR (Calibrated Pre-emptive Response) edict of the Arroyo regime.

It is no coincidence that the promulgation of the Writ of Amparo and the slapping down of CPR were major contributors to the popularity of the Supreme Court in the last two years. That popularity plummeted somewhat when the high court rendered that highly controversial decision on executive privilege which hid the truth on the ZTE Broadband overprice scandal. To highlight his patriotism, Adolf Azcuna dissented from

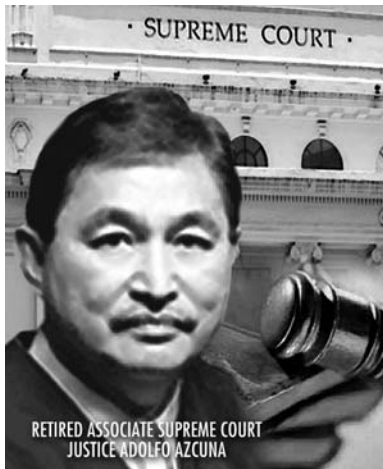
that decision on executive privilege.

In a country where utang na loob (debt of gratitude) weighs a lot, Adolf Azcuna proved that he could resist favoring the Malacanang Palace resident who appointed him to the Supreme Court if doing the right thing called for it.

Unless you are naïve, you'd do well to regard as friends of convenience those who you meet whilst walking the corridors of power. Although I maintained that sober attitude during the Cory Aquino administration, I must admit to being fortunate to have made lifelong friends. Adolf Azcuna was one of them.

I met Adolf through Elfrén S. Cruz, former PMS (Presidential Management Staff) Secretary and Metro Manila Governor. Elfrén and I worked together under the wings of Jimmy Ferrer during the 1984 Parliamentary Elections and the 1986 Snap Elections that led to the People Power Revolt. Adolf and Elfrén are sterling examples of the kind of leadership that Cory Aquino wielded — recognizing the effective, technically equipped, strong, silent workers and trusting them with some of the most sensitive positions in the Office of the President.

What immediately struck me about Adolf Azcuna was his unaffected manner of occupying the powerful and sensitive positions that Cory Aquino entrusted to him. He was at one



time Presidential Legal Counsel, Press Secretary and Presidential Spokesman and Chairman of the PCGG (Presidential Commission on Good Government). He was so unaffected by power that one could mistake him to be some lowly legal assistant who carried the briefcase of a legal eagle.

From those Malacanang Palace days up to now, Adolf and Mariarun Azcuna (Azun is Adolf's bitter half, oops I mean better half) still reside in their BF Homes Alamanza house. Have we not seen many others who occupied much lesser positions and who now live in the posh villages of Forbes Park, Dasmarias in Makati and Ayala Alabang?

I can never forget one unusual situation that took Adolf to resolve during the Cory years. There was this commercial aircraft that aborted take-off and crashed on the South Expressway. Naturally, a mammoth traffic jam was caused on both the northbound and southbound lanes — caused by curious passersby whose vehicles slowed to a crawl in order to get a glimpse of the plane on the highway.

Then Metro Manila Governor Elfrén Cruz was being harassed to get the traffic flowing. To his consternation, Elfrén could not get his own personnel to move the plane simply because nobody could ascertain who had the jurisdiction to move it. Because it was

an aircraft, there was the view that the AVSEC (Aviation Security Command) had jurisdiction. Because the aircraft was on the expressway, there was the other view that the Metro Manila Commission had jurisdiction.

Desperate to resolve the issue, Elfrén ran to Adolf for help on how to decide which government agency had jurisdiction. Adolf finally resolved it and the clearing operation got underway. The aircraft being on the expressway, the Metro Manila Commission was tasked with its removal.

I was surprised and felt privileged when Adolf deviated from his prepared speech during his retirement ceremony and talked about me and the memories we shared during the Cory years. What to me was help which I'll gladly extend to a friend, Adolf never ceased appreciating the help I gave him when he was Press Secretary, Presidential Spokesman and PCGG Chairman. Adolf needed my advice on how to avoid the landmines that naughty media men can plant along the route of public officials.

Many of us were touched when Adolf acknowledged that he followed the advice of his former law professor to pray first for the Lord's guidance before he pens a decision. To us who know Adolf Azcuna, there was no doubt that he did just that. (www.philstar.com)

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LEGAL GUIDE



By Atty. Emmanuel Samonte Tipon

"C"an nude pictures of Madonna stimulate the economy?" asked Larry King of Bill Maher on CNN. Bill expressed amazement. "Somebody paid \$37,000 for the pictures," replied Larry. Madonna's economy was stimulated. What part of the buyer was?

Stimulus Bill Butt of Joke

Don't be naughty. This column is not about SSS (sexual self stimulation). This is about the \$787 billion stimulus bill that the Democrats approved with the aid of three Republican contrarios or RINO (Republicans in Name Only). (It was supposed to be a job-creating bill. It has turned out to be a gigantic spending bill.

The stimulus bill has become the butt of jokes. "Who is the real Stimulus Bill?" asked Jay Leno Friday. Answer: Bill Clinton. Remember Monica and how she stimulated Bill in the Oval or Oral office.

A cartoon shows President Obama looking at pigs. "This proves that Obama is not a Muslim. He likes pork," says the caption. The stimulus bill is a giant pork barrel bill – government appropriations providing rich benefits to patrons for political advantage.

Obama promised change and a solution for our country's economic problems. Is this all he can do? Spend? Bush did the same. So did McCain who backed Bush's \$700 billion giveaway to banks, insurers, and car makers. Where is the change?

Self-Reliance

Republicans, except Bush and the three RINOs, believe in self-reliance, not reliance on big government spending. Ilocanos share that value. Nobody among the Ilocanos in Hawaii I have talked with is relying on bailouts. They earn money the old-fashioned way -- by working.

WW II Vets Get Little Stimulation

The stimulus bill gives Fil-

ipino WW II veterans in the U.S. \$15,000 and in the Philippines \$9,000. Veterans in the Philippines should sue for denial of the equal protection of the laws.

This paltry amount is an insult. Many veterans were cheering, however, probably believing in the Spanish saying "Mas vale poco que nada" (Better to have a little than nothing). The U.S. gave \$20,000 each to the Japanese who were interred during WW II. What did they do for the U.S.? Weren't some spies?

Most veterans risked their lives for the U.S., although a few are probably fake. I once asked some of the vets hanging out at the Honolulu Philippine Consulate why they did not stay at the Marcos mansion at Makiki. "There are ghosts," replied one. "How can you claim to have bravely fought the Japanese when you are afraid of ghosts?" I exclaimed.

Others Getting Stimulated

Bailing out the aged and infirm is okay. But not for the RIGS (rich, irresponsible, greedy, and slothful). The most deserving – war widows, orphans, and injured veterans – get nothing.

Billions are appropriated for infrastructure to create jobs. But how can the legacy secretary who lost her job or the laid off elderly Wal-Mart greeter build roads and bridges?

Workers will get \$13 weekly from a tax credit of \$400 for singles and \$800 for couples. \$13 cannot even buy a meal for two except at a cinderella.

First-time homebuyers purchasing before Dec. 1, 2009 get a tax credit of \$8,000. This is discriminatory. How about those who bought last year or after Dec. 1?

Homeowners who buy furnaces and air conditioners will get a tax credit equal to 30 percent of the cost. If you don't pay taxes, like several of Obama's cabinet appointees, you don't get the benefit. This discriminates against those in Hawaii and California who do not need heaters or coolers.

New car buyers get a deduction equal to the sales tax. Sales taxes are already deductible. What else is new?

A \$1,000 child tax credit is given to low-income families

who do not pay taxes because they do not make enough money. How silly can the legislators be? A tax credit is an offset against taxes due. How can you offset \$1,000 against a \$0 tax due?

If you want to know more about this extravagant spending bill, read USA Today and the New York Times, Feb. 13, 2009.

No Recession Or Need for Stimulation in the Philippines

I was in the Philippines recently on immigration and real estate business. I traveled to our beloved Ilocandia and went to the barrios. There was no evidence of recession. I doubt whether they even know how to spell "recession". There were

big new beautiful homes being built, especially along the road from Laog City to the airport. Restaurants like Max's and Golden Cow were full of diners. San Nicolas has its 365 which is the venue for shops and restaurants and a big mall is being built by Robinson's. Two new car dealers have set up shop there. Magsinghal has a new public market and its municipal building looks remodeled. Filipinos back home do not need stimulation or bailouts. They are self-reliant. Filipinos in America should not lose this virtue.

(ATTY. TIPON has won all deportation cases he handled and obtained approval of all visa petitions he filed.

He is from Laog City. He has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. He served as an Immigration Officer. He is co-author of "Immigration Law Service," an 8-volume practice and procedure guide for immigration officers and lawyers. He specializes in immigration and criminal defense. Office at 905 Uni St., corner N. King, Suite 201, Honolulu, HI 96819. Tel: (808) 847 1601. Fax (808) 847 1624. E-Mail: filamlaw@yahoo.com. Website: www.ImmigrationServiceUSA.com. Listen to the most interesting and humorous radio program on Hawaii radio KNDI 1270 every Friday 7:30-8:00 AM. This article is a general overview of the subject matter discussed and is not intended as legal advice for any specific person or situation. Neither the writer nor publisher warrant the completeness or accuracy of the information provided herein at the time of publication.)

HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Alyssa Reyes, Kalayaan Binibining Pilipinas

Alyssa Reyes, the daughter of Manuel and Agnes Reyes garnered the title of Miss Kalayaan Binibining Pilipinas recently at the Pacific beach Hotel.

She won most of the categories including pre-pagant interview, swimsuit, evening gown, terno and speech. She also won Miss Photogenic and Miss Aloha.

First runner-up was Charmaine Lazo, 2nd runner-up was Shayne Sabugo who also won



the title of Miss Metro Asia, followed by Jasmin Sorio who won Best in Talent and Miss Congeniality. Miss Kalayaan International was garnered by

Georgette Miranda. The president of Kalayaan Hawaii International is Ben Pulido.

Reyes traveled to Laog City, Philippines to compete for Miss Laog Philippines – another pageant that contestants enter in order to qualify to compete for Miss Earth Philippines.

At age 16, Reyes was the youngest of all the contestants. She competed against older contestants, some of whom were professional models. Nevertheless, she won 1st runner-up, the best in talent category for hula and most elegant.

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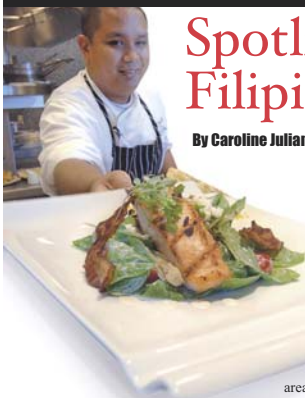
The stimulus bill gives Fil-

ipino WW II veterans in the U.S. \$15,000 and in the Philippines \$9,000. Veterans in the Philippines should sue for denial of the equal protection of the laws.

FEATURE

Spotlight Shines on Filipino Chef at Stage

By Caroline Julian



dining area is filled with designer chairs and tables.

It's been a little over two years, but Executive Chef Ron de Guzman is still in awe over where he works.

"Stage is different," says de Guzman. "We're in a furniture store. But I enjoy the environment and the ambience," the 1995 Pearl City High alumnus adds.

Stage Restaurant opened its doors about two years ago at the Honolulu Design Center on Kapiolani Boulevard, where selling fine furniture is its focus. Its

The environment is certainly one-of-a-kind compared to where de Guzman honed his culinary skills.

He got his first taste of the restaurant industry while attending Leeward Community College as an apprentice under well-known Hawaii chef Alan Wong.

De Guzman proved his talent and skills and in time, landed a job at one of Wong's restaurants as a cook.

"Right when I heard they were opening a restaurant at Ala Moana—the Pineapple Room—I started as a cook, then

I (eventually) was offered the job as a Sous Chef," he says.

After five years at the Pineapple Room, de Guzman took a position at Alan Wong's where he spent two years.

"I worked with Chef Alan for so long, he's pretty much my mentor," he says. "He taught us more than cooking, but also motivated us to be better people."

"He's very creative (with food)... he also works with local farmers," says de Guzman.

De Guzman takes the same creative approach with the items on his menu, which has been described as "Contemporary Asian-American Cuisine."

"I work with local farmers as much as possible to use local products like tomatoes and asparagus. The greens are from the Big Island," he says.

His signature dish is also local—Garlic Ahi. It's made of seared Hawaiian ahi, sake braised baby spinach, shaved fennel, topped with Indonesian black peppercorn garlic sauce. The tantalizing dish can be paired with wine such as Pinot

Grigio, Riesling, Sake, Chardonnay and Viognier.

Even with a sophisticated palate, this chef still appreciates the simple food.

"I like comfort food, such as meat loaf and chicken adobo. I also like Filipino food, such as mongo beans," says the 32-year-old chef, whose parents are from Pangasinan, Philippines.

De Guzman says the job of an executive chef is no piece of cake. He works nearly 12 hours a day, 6 days a week and manages a staff of 20.

"It's challenging. There's always something new that I haven't dealt with before," he says. "It's like being a fireman, putting out fires throughout the day and wearing many differ-



ent hats—not only in the kitchen. I also need to know about numbers and the business side and be a people person as well as a manager."

Nonetheless, de Guzman enjoys making people smile with his food, whether it's patrons or his employees.

"It requires long hours but it's worth it for me," he says. "I guess it's about self-satisfaction."



While being in the kitchen is his passion right now, de Guzman says one day that he would like to teach aspiring chefs and mentor them.

His words of advice for future chefs?

"Stick with it. If you fall down, get back up and keep doing it."



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PHILIPPINE NEWS**More Asians to Become Poor, Jobless - ILO**

By **Mayen Jaymalin /**
Thursday, February 19, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - More than 140 million people in Asia could be plunged into poverty, with 7.2 million more jobless people in 2009 than last year due to the fallout from the global economic crisis, raising the region's jobless rate to 5.1 percent, the International Labor Organization (ILO) said yesterday.

The Geneva-based ILO also said yesterday 23 million people would lose their jobs in Asia this year as the global financial crisis batters the region.

The ILO forecast the ranks of unemployed workers would likely balloon to 97 million in 2009 in Asia, the world economy's star performer in recent years but where a third of the population still live on a little over \$1 a day. Last year, the unemployment rate was 4.8 percent.

In the most pessimistic scenario, the number of unemployed could swell to 113 million, or 22.3 million more than last year, the ILO said in a report on the crisis' fallout in Asia.

ILO regional director Sachiko Yamamoto said the youth, particularly graduating students and women, face the greater risk of losing their jobs or not finding one.

Migrant workers with short-term contracts as well as women working in small- and medium-sized factories and firms are particularly vulnerable, she said.

Young people in the region, meanwhile, will also find opportunities dwindling, while children of poor families may be forced to quit school as incomes fall, she said.

"Youth are at least three times more likely to become unemployed than adults," said Yamamoto, who presented the ILO report on the impact of the economic crisis on employment.

In the Philippines, as many as 200,000 Filipino workers here and abroad could lose their jobs this year due to the economic crisis, Labor Secretary Mariano Roque told a House labor committee yesterday.

"That is our worst-case scenario. That is also the projection of the National Economic and Development Authority," he told the committee hearing chaired by Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Guniungon. "But at the rate we are going, it's likely that we will not hit that figure."

Some 30,000 domestic employees and 5,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have lost their jobs since September when the global financial crisis erupted.

He added that an additional 5,000 overseas workers losing their jobs this year "would be on the high side."

And as unemployment rises, it is imperative for countries in the region to use fiscal stimulus packages for safety nets to

prevent widespread social unrest from erupting, officials said.

"A dramatic increase in working poverty of more than 140 million people by 2009 is projected under this scenario, representing regression of the Asia and Pacific region to a working poverty rate of 2004," the study said.

Yamamoto noted the situation was quickly evolving "into an employment and social crisis."

"Its impact is deeply felt in both industrialized and developing countries in Asia," she told senior policy makers from 11 countries at a meeting in Manila, stressing that the downturn's "magnitude and speed have been astounding."

The region too is at the tipping point of seeing social unrest explode into the streets, as the jobless and marginalized demand greater government action.

The report said that as Asia moves to spend about 3.9 percent of its gross domestic product on stimulus packages, there is also a need to protect employment and support household purchasing power.

51 M new jobs needed this year

The ILO also reported that an estimated 51 million new jobs will be needed this year and next to absorb Asia's growing labor force, with most jobs needed in the region's giant economies - 20.3 million in India, 10.9 million in China and 3.6 million in Indonesia.

Countries with the highest rates of expected labor force growth through 2015 include Pakistan at 6.1 percent, Cambodia at 4.9 percent, and the Philippines at 4.9 percent.

"There is very little chance that a sufficient number of new jobs will be created in the region this year to keep up with expected labor force growth," the report added.

As fewer jobs were created at home, remittances from the region's army of migrant workers began to slow in the third quarter of 2008.

The ILO said the World Bank now forecasts an overall drop in remittances in 2009 - partly due to the deep recession in the US, which accounts for 44 percent of workers' money sent to East Asia and the Pacific, and 28 percent to South Asia.

"As global demand for workers contracts, the flow of migrant workers from developing Asia will moderate in 2009," the report said. "For labor-sending countries, this will exacerbate the challenge of mitigating job losses and generating new employment domestically."

It said the number of vulnerable Asian workers, estimated at 1.08 billion in 2008, could rise this year by 21 million, and in an extreme case, by 61 million.

"The poor face a double crisis - high costs for basic necessities on which they spend the majority of their income, along with economic stagnation that threaten their livelihoods," the ILO said.

(www.philstar.com)

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Pinoy War Veterans Troop to Aguinaldo

By James Mananghaya /
Friday, February 20, 2009

MANILA, Philippines — Hundreds of World War II veterans and their relatives flocked to the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City to file their claims at the start of the processing of compensation claims yesterday.

Some of the veterans, though, were confused on the qualifications that would enable them to avail of the compensation package that US President Barack Obama approved for Filipino World War II veterans.

Obama signed on Tuesday the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that included a provision acknowledging Filipino war veterans as US soldiers and granting them

a \$198-million lump-sum package.

The compensation package is part of the \$787-billion economic stimulus package that Obama signed into law.

Filipino veterans with US citizenship will receive a one-time pay of \$15,000 while non-US citizens will get \$9,000.

PVAO spokesman Nostadram Villanueva said some of the concerns addressed by representatives from the US Veterans Affairs Office were the inquiries of widows who thought that they were entitled to the compensation package on behalf of their spouses who served during WW II.

Rosa Dinginbayan, a veteran's widow, said she and other widows of war veterans thought they were qualified to avail of the package but were disappointed to learn otherwise.

Her husband Paulino died last year.

"Ano ang gagawin namin. Ang sabi ko magreklamo tayo, magkaisa tayo, karapatan natin yan (What will we do now? I told the widows that we have to get together and complain, that is our right)," she said.

Aside from the widows, members of the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Hukbalahap) also came to file their claims, not realizing that qualified claimants are only those that are included in the Revised, Reconstructed Guerrilla Roster of 1948 which was compiled by the US army administration center in Missouri.

At around noon, the US Veterans Affairs Office was able to process around 300 applications from qualified veterans.

Defense Undersecretary Ernesto Carolina said only members of the organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed, designated

or subsequently recognized by the Commander-in-Chief of the Southeast Pacific Area or other competent authority in the US Army are qualified to receive the compensation.

Those who served in the Philippine Scouts under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Voluntary Recruitment Act of 1945 are also considered qualified claimants.

Meanwhile, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) urged all Filipino veterans to deal only with US veterans' agencies and to avoid short cuts offered by unscrupulous fixers.

DFA spokesman Bayani Mangibin said "fixers" might take advantage of the veterans.

"We are hoping that the Filipino veterans beneficiaries of this program will follow the process and will not resort to short cuts," Mangibin said.

The US Embassy said all Filipino WWII veterans must submit their applications by

Feb. 16, 2010.

The Filipino veterans are requested to bring two forms of identification (such as passport, driver's license, senior citizen ID, Bureau of Post ID, Voter's ID, etc.); VA claim number; Service Number; PVAO claim number; PVAO Pension bank account number; US passport (if a US citizen.)

"In order to provide effective, transparent service, claims will only be accepted from Filipino WWII veterans. We encourage all Filipino WWII veterans to apply in person at one of the locations listed on the dates indicated. If a veteran is unable to appear in person, the US department of veterans affairs Manila regional office will arrange to obtain the application in an appropriate manner," the US Embassy said.

Claims by spouses, widows and children of Filipino WWII veterans will not be accepted, it added. (www.philstar.com)

GMA to Sign Baselines Bill Despite China Protests - Palace

By Paolo Romero
Thursday, February 5, 2009

MANILA, Philippines — President Arroyo will sign into law a bill seeking to set the nation's territorial boundaries despite protests from China.

The government will let the United Nations resolve the six-way dispute over the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) in the South China Sea, according to deputy presidential spokesman Anthony Golez and Foreign Affairs spokesman Bayani Mangibin.

However, the Philippines will assert its sovereignty within international law and agreements with claimant nations, they added.

Mangibin said the government is open to talks with China to prevent relations between the two countries from deteriorating. "We're looking at summoning the Chinese ambassador," he said.

"It's our hope that the bill will be respected and that's the reason why we're optimistic that this will be resolved.

"We have expected that (protest), we're prepared to face the concerns of China."

Mangibin said lawmakers took pains to ensure that the bill would abide by the United Na-

tions Convention of the Law of the Sea and address concerns of claimants including China.

"We will have to highlight the fact that the (Philippine) baselines (bill) is in conformity with our own laws," he said.

Mangibin said dialogues should be held to resolve the matter, instead of making threats. "In the (ASEAN) Code of Conduct, both parties must exercise self-restraint," he said. "In short, we're looking forward to peaceful discussion of issues."

Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) may also discuss the issue during their summit in Thailand next week, Mangibin said.

On the other hand, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said the bill that aims to categorize the Kalayaan Island Group and Scarborough Shoal as a "regime of islands under the Republic of the Philippines" is the "best version" that the country could put forward to emphasize its claim on the islands.

The issue could be brought before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, she added.

Santiago, Senate foreign affairs committee chair, said Mrs. Arroyo should sign the bill to



Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago

uphold the country's claim to the disputed islands.

"It will remain for the International Tribunal (for) the Law of the Sea to arbitrate the conflict but for China to file a protest would be equivalent to bullying the Philippines to surrender our claim," she said.

"We are equal states, we should not be prevented from making our claim. I don't think we should expect retribution from China because if they stop their foreign aid or foreign trade with us, we will view that as a belligerent act on their part."

In separate statements, Senators Manuel Roxas II and Loren Legarda said the nation's sovereignty must be protected despite protests from other claimant-countries.

Roxas said fears that trade

and other relations with China and other countries might sour due to this dispute should not blur the primary need to defend the national territory and sovereignty.

"They are not entitled to everything," he said.

"Are we going to surrender just because they have a stronger army or navy? What's important is we stand for our country and its territory."

"We should also complain against their claim that is an affront to our sovereignty," Roxas said.

Legarda said claims over

the KIG and Scarborough could be settled peacefully.

"It should not be a flash-point or source of conflict among the claimant states, nor should the dispute affect their normal and harmonious relations as sovereign states," she said.

Meanwhile, the Center for International Law, together with the Concerned Citizens Movement and students of the University of the Philippines-College of Law, are preparing a petition to challenge the constitutionality of the Baselines Bill after Mrs. Arroyo signs it into law. (www.philstar.com)

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MAINLAND NEWS

Filipino WWII Veterans to Receive Additional U.S. Benefits

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) is reaching out to all Filipino WWII veterans regarding the new one-time lump-sum benefit payment signed into law by President Barack Obama on February 17, 2009.

This new legislation, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, formally

recognizes the service of Filipino WWII veterans as active military service in the Armed Forces.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 authorizes one-time lump-sum payments to all eligible Filipino WWII veterans. Those veterans with U.S. citizenship will receive a one-time lump-

sum payment of \$15,000. Non-U.S. citizens will receive a one-time lump-sum payment of \$9,000. This is an additional benefit for those eligible and qualified WWII veterans. It will not change or affect other benefits an individual may be receiving.

This new lump sum benefit will result in approximately \$120 million in payments to eligible Filipino WWII veterans

residing in the Philippines.

In accordance with the new law, for an individual to be eligible for payment, the DVA must receive the individual's claim no later than February 16, 2010, which is one year from the date President Obama signed the historic legislation.

The DVA is working to quickly implement the new U.S. law. Filipino WWII veterans can inquire about and submit claims for the new lump-sum benefit at the DVA's Manila Regional Office lo-

cated at the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

Instructions on how to apply will be posted on the U.S. Embassy website at <http://manila.usembassy.gov>.

The DVA's Manila Regional Office will also conduct extensive outreach, within and outside of Manila, to the many Filipino WWII veterans throughout the Philippines to ensure all those entitled receive the benefits they deserve as soon as possible.

Filipino Youth in Jersey City to Wear Yellow Ribbons

Members of Anakbayan New York/ New Jersey, a progressive Filipino youth group based in Jersey City, recently gave out yellow ribbons in remembrance of the 1986 People Power movement in the Philippines.

Yellow ribbons with the inscription "People Power Lives!" were handed out to Filipinos on Westside and Newark Avenue

last February 16, 2009.

"Yellow is the color of one of the most momentous event in Philippine history," says Yancy Gandionco, Anakbayan vice president. "It is the symbolic color of our united voice that ended a 21-year rule of the Marcos regime. It has been more than two decades ago but we are still very proud of it."

"We should be constantly

reminded of this historic affair to draw lessons from and give us hope that change is possible."

Anakbayan members see similarities between Marcos' reign and current President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's eight years in office. They say Filipinos have remained poor, while others have faced political repression and even execution for opposing her administration's policies.

To commemorate the 1986 People Power revolution, Anakbayan encourages Filipinos in the U.S. to wear yellow ribbons on February 25, 2009 as a sign of their resolve for genuine change in Philippine government.

Anakbayan NY/NJ and the New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines will be holding "Paggupugay" on February 21, 2009 as a tribute to the anti-Martial Law activists who tirelessly fought from the First Quarter Storm movement

of January 1970 and who still continue to fight up to the present for the realization of true national democracy in the Philippines.

Anakbayan is one of several U.S. chapters of Anakbayan Philippines, a comprehensive national democratic mass organization fighting for the rights, welfare and basic needs of Filipino youth around the world. Other chapters include Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle, Las Vegas and East Bay.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Charter Change Through Constituent Assembly Still Alive

By Jess Diaz/ Friday, February 20, 2009

MANILA, Philippines - The renewed effort of President Arroyo's House allies for Charter change (Cha-cha) via a constituent assembly (con ass) is very much alive, Rep. Joel Villanueva of the party-list group Citizens

Battle Against Corruption said yesterday.

He told reporters that on Wednesday, he personally witnessed "10 or more" congressmen drop by the office of Speaker Prospero Nograles.

"They were made to sign a resolution. This is not the Speaker's resolution on amend-

ing the economic provisions of the Constitution, but the con ass resolution of Rep. (Luis) Villafuerte (of Camarines Sur)," he said.

He said "Malacañang allies" were in Nograles' office to present the Villafuerte resolution to House members who have not signed it.

"This means that Cha-cha via con ass is President Arroyo's exit option. She can stay in office beyond 2010 through an amendment that will extend her term," he said.

He added that there is Malacañang pressure for Nograles to help in the signature-collection drive of Villafuerte and his colleagues.

"We should be vigilant against the GMA forever campaign," Villanueva stressed.

Sought for comment, Nograles confirmed that some congressmen went to his office to sign Villafuerte's resolution asking the Senate and the House to convene as a con ass.

But he insisted that his Resolution 737 on economic amendments would take the legislative process route, which means that it would be sent to the Senate after the House approves it.

The committee on constitutional amendments has already endorsed the Nograles resolution, on which the House expects to begin floor discussions next week or before Congress goes on its Holy Week break next month.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile has expressed support for the Speaker's proposed changes in the Constitution's economic provisions since the envisioned process involves his chamber.

In contrast, Villafuerte's con-ass could bypass senators. Villafuerte, who is president of Kabalikang ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), President Arroyo's party, made this clear in a recent debate with Rep. Rollo Golez of Parañaque.

"We will invite them (senators). If they don't show up, it will be their fault," the Kampi chief said.

He claimed 197 congressmen could propose Charter amendments by themselves since they represent three-fourths of the combined membership of the Senate and the House.

"The Constitution provides that amendments be approved by a three-fourths vote of all members of Congress," he said.



Cong. Joel Villanueva

As of last count, Villafuerte and his Kampi colleagues had 165 signatures on their con-ass resolution, or 32 shy of their target.

Con-ass proponents stepped up their signature-collection drive a few days after former senior government officials, including some who served in Mrs. Arroyo's Cabinet, warned the nation that the President would try to cling to power via Cha-cha.

Unlike Nograles' Resolution 737 that proposes specific constitutional changes, Villafuerte's con-ass can subject the entire Constitution to amendments.

If this happens, Mrs. Arroyo's critics fear that her allies might extend her term along with their own tenure.

(www.philstar.com)



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By Reuben S. Seguritan

Last December 5, the Ombudsman of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued its recommendation on ways to improve the processing of visas for Registered Nurses (RN).

But it did not address the issue of visa retrogression which has delayed the recruitment of thousands of foreign nurses, mostly from the Philippines.

In its background report, the Ombudsman affirmed the worsening of the nursing shortage. It cited a 2007 study made by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which pro-

jected that the U.S. will need 1.2 million RNs by 2014.

The Ombudsman said that the immigration process should be expedited to address the critical shortage. He recommended that the RN applications be separated and prioritized and be processed by just one service center.

At present, there are two service centers that adjudicate RN applications. Because of the lack of regular communication between these two service centers, there have been inconsistencies in the number of USCIS requests for evidence and the processing time has become longer. The adjudication time for an I-140 petition is now more than one year in both centers.

The Ombudsman said that

designating just one center to process the application would result in a more efficient, uniform and faster adjudication.

The recommendation will certainly go a long way in shortening the processing of RN visa applications but it will not lift the current retrogression of visa numbers.

RNs are categorized under the employment-based third preference. The December 2008 visa bulletin shows a backlog of three and one-half years for the Philippines. The backlog for India and China is even worse.

As the Ombudsman report pointed out, visa availability is the principal cause for the delay in the recruitment of foreign nurses. This issue can be addressed only by the U.S. Congress.

H.R. 5924, otherwise known as the Emergency Nurse Supply Relief Act, is intended to address visa retrogression. It was introduced in the House on April 29, 2008 by Rep. Wexler and Rep. Sensenbrenner. It has bipartisan support and it was approved by the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration last August 7.

Under the proposed law, 20,000 visa numbers will be given to registered nurses and physical therapists every year through September 30, 2011. Their immediate family members will also be allowed to immigrate without being subject to quota limitation.

The USCIS will be required to review and act on the immigrant visa (I-140) petition within 30 days from filing. After ap-

proval of the I-140 petition, the file will be transferred to the National Visa Center (NVC) which would then request the submission of the biographic data of the alien and other documents. The last step is the immigration interview to be conducted at a U.S. embassy.

If the alien is in the U.S., he/she may file an adjustment of status. The proposed bill requires a fee of \$1,500.00 for each petitioned nurse to fund future nurse training and development in health professional shortage areas.

Immigrant advocates remain hopeful that this proposed bill will pass and that the Obama administration will usher in a more vigorous and effective response to the nursing shortage crisis.

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

LEGAL NOTES

Expedited Processing for RNs Recommended by Ombudsman

GLOBAL NEWS

RP One of Asia's Bright Spots

The Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) says the Philippines remains one of the economies in the region insulated from the effects of the global economic downturn.

This was the observation of Dr. Victor Fung, chairman of the ICC. Dr. Fung is the first chairman from Hong Kong of the ICC, the largest, most representative business organization in the world with hundreds of thousands of member companies in over 130 countries spanning every sector of private enterprise.

"The Philippines is one of the economies in the region that has been relatively insulated," Dr. Fung says. "I'm very impressed with the way the Philippine economy has functioned. It's one of the brightest spots in the whole region."

Fung says the effects of the global recession upon the Philippines' exporting industry is only temporary and would be offset by gains from remittances by Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and other robust businesses, such as the business process outsourcing

(BPO) industry.

"Obviously, the Philippines' exports have been somewhat affected but is still going strongly. That is not a major part of its economy. I think that remittances have kept up and BPOs have developed very strongly due to good government policies that started a few years ago," Fung says.

The continuing reforms and policies have firmly put the Philippines on a path to stability and growth which has maintained momentum in foreign investment, Fung says. (*Good News Pilipinas*)



Business Process Outsourcing in the Philippines

Remittances Up 13 Percent in 2008

Foreign exchange remittances from Filipino expatriates surged in 2008 despite the global economic crisis.

According to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, remittances through banks and other official channels reached \$16.43 billion last year, up 13.7 percent from \$14.45 billion in 2007, when the amount grew 13.2 percent from 2006.

Major sources of remittances in 2008 were the United States, Saudi Arabia, Canada, UK, Italy, United Arab Emirates, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

In December, remittances rose to \$1.4 billion, compared to \$1.3 billion in November and with \$1.397 billion in December 2007.

"Amid the challenges posed by the global financial market strains and the economic downturn experienced by host economies, remittances from overseas Filipinos remain a dependable source of foreign exchange for the economy," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

He stressed that the demand for Filipino professionals and skilled workers remained high in foreign countries as shown

by the high number of deployment for work overseas.

He said more and more Filipinos abroad were also using banks and other formal remittance channels to send money to their families. The remittance data captured by the BSP do not include those sent through non-formal channels, including personal couriers.

The BSP said that while jobs may have declined in Western countries, new employment opportunities have opened in Canada, Bulgaria, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. (*Good News Pilipinas*)



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PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE

BAHAGHARI



ni Elynia S. Mabanglo at
Jovanie De La Cruz

Guro ko si Dr. Teresita V. Ramos, professor emeritus ng Filipino at Philippine Literature sa University of Hawaii-Manoa. Hindi maaaring hindi ko siya ikuwento, lalo na ngayon, nang malaman kong ginawaran siya ni Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ng "Presidential Award" para sa mga Pilipinong nangibang-bayan at nakapagbigay ng makabuluhang ambag sa bansang Pilipinas kahit nasa ibyang dagat na sila.

Taas-noong ipinagamamalak ko siya sapagkat naging bahagi siya ng nabuong kamalayan ko ng pagka-Pilipino, ng kaalaman sa aking mga paniniwala.

Nang umuwi siya sa Pilipinas para tangapin ang parangal sa Malakanyang, kabilang ako sa mga estudyanteng nagbunyi. Sa aking paglagay, talagang "deserving" siya sa prestisyosong parangal ng Pangulo ng Pilipinas.

Samakatawid, hindi nasayang ang nominasyon nina Konsul-Heneral Ariel Abadilla at Arlene Gonzalez-Macasis kay Dr. Ramos para sa Presidential Award. Sa 122 nominadong indibidwal at organisasyong Pilipino mula sa 29 bansa, isa siya sa 31 napiling gawaran ng parangal noong Disyembre 10, 2008. Napili si Tita Terry (iyang ang tawag naming sa kanya) dahil sa hindi matatawagang dedikasyon sa pagtuturo at pagtataguyod sa wikang Filipino at kulturang Pilipino na mag-isang pinalaganap niya sa Hawaii! at saka sa mainland US noong dekada sitenta pa ng nagdaang siglo. Lumaga na lamang ang Tagalog at ang pagtuturo nito sa Amerika noong siglo beinte. Pero nang kasalukuyang nagisapik siya, mag-isa niyang binalikang ang mga hamon nito. Pinalaganap niya ang Tagalog na tinatawag ngayon Filipino sa pamamagitan ng pagiging aktibo sa mga pang-akademikong organ-

Sa buwang ito, isang ipinagamamalakang estudyante ng Filipino and Philippine Literature Program sa UH ang ating magiging panauhing kolumnista. Ito si Jovanie De La Cruz, tagapamahaling patnugot ng Katipunan Magazin at recipient ng Aida Ramiscal-Martin Scholarship for Filipino noong 2007.

Kuwentong Tagalog: Si TERESITA V. RAMOS ng Maynila



Dr. Teresita Ramos receives the "Pamana ng Kultura" Award, a presidential award for outstanding Filipino overseas, from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at a special ceremony in Malacañang Palace, December 10, 2008.

isasyong nagtataguyod ng mga araling Asian at Pacific (Asian and Pacific Studies) sa Estados Unidos.

Mahirap ang pagpapalaganap ng Tagalog sa isang komunidad na halos walang Tagalog. At higit na mahirap itong gawin kung mangilang-angilang ang Pilipinong makakatulong mo sa mismong unibersidad na pagtuturuan nito. Naisip ko ring mahirap lalo kung wala kang mga kasangkapan (tools) magpadpalang laban o trabaho mo. (Alam ko kasing ni hindi marunong magmakinihi sa Dr. Ramos; hanggang ngayon, lapis pa rin ang ginagamit niya. Ha-ha-ha!). Pero magaling talaga si Tita Terry. Sa kabila ng lahat ng sagabal, nariyan ang Filipino and Philippine Literature Program ngayon—malusog! (May 224 estudyante ang Programa, may 8 gradwest ng BA in Philippine Language and Literature, konsensasyong Filipino), may mahigit na 10 napagtatapos ng mayor at kasalukuyang may 5 medyor!

Paano nagsimula ang Tagalog sa Hawaii?

Ang Unibersidad ng Hawaii ang una kundi man ang kauna-unahang institusyong nagturo ng Tagalog sa Amerika. Nagsimula ito noong 1962. Si Dr. Howard McLaughan, propesor ng linguistics sa UH ang nagturo nito sa Department of Asian and Pacific Languages. May ilang estudyante at lecturer muna bagu dumating ng Dr. Teresita Ramos. Hindi ito madali dahil bagu siya, saka mag-

susulat pa ng mga kagamitang para sa Pacific and Asian Linguistics Institute. Dahil gusto niyang mapalaganap ang Tagalog, tinapos niya ang lahat—tatlong bolyum na libro, diksyonaryo at gramatika.

Noong magsimula siya, 5-6 estudyante lang ang nasa unang antas, 3-4 lamang ikalawa. Puro hindi Pilipino ang mga estudyante. Karaniwang graduate students sila ng antropolohiya o lingwistika. Noong 1971, inumpisahan niya ang ikatlong antas, at pagkatapos noon, ang ikaapat na antas. Para tangkilikin at pahalagahan ng mga Pilipino ang kaniilang kultura, nagbukas siya ng mga kursong literature sa Ingles at Tagalog. Para sa mga guroang full time na nagtuturo, 12 credits ang kailangang ituro, pero 17-20 credits ang itinuturo niya (libre) para ito lumaganap. Isinakinilang niya ang kanyang oras at lakas (magbibiro sana ako, kaya hindi nakapag-asawa!).

Noong 1975, ipinakilala niya ang panitikan ng Pilipinas, folklore at kultura. Noong dekada otenta, UH lamang ang may ganap na programa sa wika at kulturang Tagalog. Maaaring magkaroon ng certificate sa kaalamang Tagalog sa mga panahong ito. Noong sumunod na panahon, lumitaw ang Intermediate Tagalog at Conversational Tagalog, mga best seller ng Amazon.com. Naging sikat ang mga librong ito kaya binansagan siyang ng mga estudyante sa Utah (BYU) na "superstar ng Tagalog".

Kabilang sa tagumpay na tinahag ng Tagalog sa Unibersidad ng Hawaii ang pagkakaroon ng Bachelor's degree na nagsimula noong 2003. Ito ang kauna-unahang unibersidad sa labas ng Pilipinas na may ganitong digri. Bukod dito, siya ang Advanced



Thirty One Outstanding awardees with President Macapagal-Arroyo. The Awardees from Hawaii included Dr. Teresita Ramos and the United Filipino Council of Hawaii

Filipino Abroad Program (AFAP) na binibigyang pondo ng Fulbright-Hays at Department of Education, Title Six Program. Sa programang ito mababait pa rin ang layunin ni Dr. Ramos na lalong pagyamanin ang wika at kulturang Filipino.

Ang Tagalog Ngayon

Hindi na Tagalog ang pangalan ng mga kurso namin ngayon. Tinatawag na itong Filipino sapagkat ito ang mandato ng konstitusyong 1987. Sinunod ng programa ang tagubilin kaya mula sa Tagalog, pinalitang lahat ang pangalan ng kurso sa Filipino. Sapagkat si Dr. Ramos din ang founder ng

Consortium for the Advancement of Filipino (CAF), ipinagbilin niya sa mga miyembro na palitan na rin ang pangalan ng kurso sa kani-kanilang unibersidad.

Sa ngayon, mahigit 10,000 estudyante na ang natuturan ng Filipino sa Programa. Sa aking pakiramdam, kaming mga naging estudyante nito ay nahubog sa isang bagong direksiyon ng pagkilala sa aming sarili at pagkatao. Para sa akin, ito ang nagawa ni Tita Terry sa akin. Mapapatunayan ko na higit akong matatas ngayon sa Filipino bukod sa pagiging matatas ko rin sa aking ibang wika – ang Ilokano. Higit na malawak ang aking paningin, higit kong napahalagahan ang aking kulturang Ilokano sapagkat napayayaman ito ng kaalaman ko sa Tagalog. Naging grantee ako ng Advanced Filipino Abroad Program – natutuhan ko roon ang pagpapatalim ng karanasan upang lalong maging masamang sa pangangatiwain, pagpapaliwanag at pagkikipagtalos. Natutuhan ko ring magsalin ng mga kanta at iba pang bagay. Sapagkat nasa Amerika na

ako, lalong mahusay ang aking pag-i-Ingles sa aking pakiramdam sapagkat nagmemedyor ako ng political science bukod sa Filipino.

Ipinagamamalak ko ang pagiging estudyante ng Filipino. Ipinagamamalak kong estudyante ako ni Dr. Teresita Ramos. Siya ang aking huwaran. Nakita ko kung paano niya napanatiling mataas ang kalidad ng pagtuturo ng mga iba't ibang wika sa daigdig sa pagtulong niyang mabuo ang Hawaii Association of Language Teachers (HALT) at ang Council of Teachers of Southeast Asian Languages (COTSEAL). Dahil doon, nalaman kong, kailangan mo lumabas at tumulong sa iba para may tumulong din sa iyo. Nagsisilbing inspirasyon at ilaw ko siya – nagawa niyang mapagbuklod-buklod sa isang adunang ang kanyang mga kaguro – ang mahalin ang propesyon ng pagtuturo at isulong ang wika at kulturang Filipino dito sa Amerika. Marami pa akong kakaing bigas bago ko marating ito – pero kay Tita Terry ko natutuhan ang formula: hindi sapat ang talino, kailangan din ang sipag; magtrabaho nang walang hinhiyati na kapalit, huwag mawawalan ng loob, lag-iing ipaglaban ang sariling simulain at paniniwala, maging tapat sa sarili.

Tunay ngang hindi matatawaran ang mga bagay na nagawa ni Dr. Ramos. Isa siyang tapat na alagad ng wikang Filipino at busilak ang puso sa kanyang hangaring itaguyod ang mga programang magdudulot ng kaunlaran at kaalaman. Tamang-tama ang Pamana ng Filipino Award na tinanggap ninyo kay Pangulong Arroyo noong Disyembre 10, 2008. Salamat sa aking "mana", Tita!

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