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HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE

HAWAII'S ONLY WEEKLY FILIPINO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER

FIL-COM CENTER'S TOY ARRE TO RETIRE

by JP ORIAS

When Geminiano "Toy" Arre, Jr., president and chief executive officer of the Filipino Community Center, announced his retirement at the Board of Directors monthly meeting last July, he simply explained that he wanted to spend more time with his grandson.

Arre's announcement was unexpected. According to board director Serafin "Jun" Colmenares, Arre's decision was caused for concern since next year marks the 10th anniversary of the Fil-Com Center.

"We were looking forward to celebrating it with him still at the helm. We wanted him to stay on, even for just a year more," Colmenares says.

However, board chair Abelina Madrid-Shaw says that Arre's resignation effective December 30, 2011 was accepted.

"We regret that after several attempts to persuade him to continue his good work, he

chose to tender his resignation," Madrid-Shaw says.

Arre's desire to spend more time with his grandson came about when a friend asked him what he would change in life if he could relive it all over again. Arre was quick to answer, "I would spend more time with my son."

With that opportunity long gone now that his son is an adult, Arre realized that a second chance was possible through his grandson Lucas Hakuto, a playful two-year-old.

(continued on page 4)



Toy Arre to resign after seven years as Fil-Com Center president and CEO

'Busong' to Premiere at 31st Hawaii International Film Festival

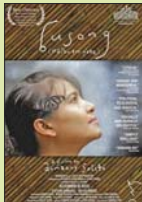
by HFC Staff

MANILA, Philippines - The West Philippine Sea issue will likely be discussed during President Aquino's state visit to China next week, but officials said the Philippines and China had "agreed to disagree" on the matter and would not allow it to affect bilateral relations.

The Filipino film "Busong" (Palawan Fate) will premiere at Hawaii International Film Festival on October 17-18, 2011.

The first screening of "Busong" on October 17 will be held at 8 pm, while the second is scheduled for 1 pm on October

18. Both screenings will be held at the Regal Dole Cannery Stadium.



"Busong" is directed by leading independent Philippine film director Aureaus Solto, who also directed the internationally-acclaimed feature film "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros" (The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros) and "Tuli" (Circumcision).

The film stars Clifford Banagle, Alessandra de Rossi, Dax Alejandro, Bonivie Budao and Rodrigo Santikan. It is set on the island province of Palawan in the Philippines and tackles the indigenous concept of fate—that you do to nature and your fellowman returns

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PNoy to Meet Filipino Community Leaders in Hawaii

by Gregory Bren GARCIA

Philippine President Benigno Simeon Aquino III will be visiting Hawaii in connection with the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting, which will be held in Honolulu from November 10 to 12, 2011.

While in the islands, the president will also meet with Filipino community leaders in a special banquet scheduled on November 13, 2011, at the Hilton Hawaiian



Pres. Noynoy Aquino in New York

Village. The "Alay sa Pangulo" community dinner is being organized by the Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Committee of

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HAWAII FILIPINO CHRONICLE
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EDITORIALS

The Aftermath of 9/11 Continues Beyond Last Month's 10th Year Commemoration

Residents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush recently participated in ceremonial events commemorating this year's 10th anniversary of 9/11. Families and friends of the 9/11 tragedy gathered for a memorial service near the site of the former twin towers where a new building is expected to be completed in a few years. As a symbol of fortitude of our nation, that building will be the tallest in the U.S. upon its completion.

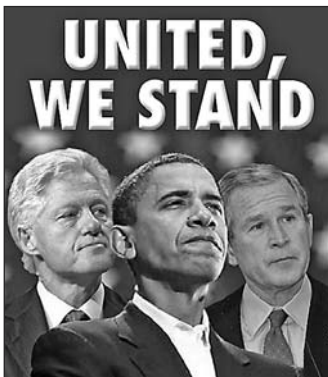
Our country has moved on since that harrowing day, going through wars in the Middle East, electing a new president, and currently facing the worst recession of the modern era. Americans' attitudes toward foreigners and immigrants have changed, our politics have become more extreme on both the left and right. In many ways 9/11 seemed far removed, but upon closer examination the aftermath of that day lingers and actually have been linked to almost every major event in U.S. history for the past 10 years. How this was accomplished all goes back to ground zero as the starting point.

9/11/2001

Everyone has a 9/11 story.

A recent Hawaii high school graduate recalls 10 years ago on 9/11, classes were cancelled at his school and students congregated in the cafeteria to watch the devastating events unfold in New York City. He was only 8 years old at the time, but he remembers lucidly how solemn the mood was: the sadness etched on teachers' faces as they awkwardly tried to project strength for their students. He says because of that day, world politics is something he watches closely.

A Hawaii businessman recalls that morning walking down the staircase hearing his wife weeping in the entertainment room. When he saw what was happening, initially he thought the footage was one of those believe-or-not hoax programs. He moved over to console his wife and to assure her that the burning twin towers was just sensational programming. But when he found out it wasn't the case, he recalled something very unexpected happened. His wife, whom he was embracing at the time, was not really the person he wanted to spend the rest of his life with. A few weeks later, the businessman



toler her of his desire to get a divorce. Now remarried, he admits that it took a tragedy for him to act on something he's always been feeling but never had the courage to follow through. The magnitude of that day made him realize how short life is and the importance of living it the way he wanted to.

A former contributing writer of the Hawaii Filipino Chronicle also had a striking story. Relocated and living in New York City working for one of the largest business newspapers at the time, this reporter's office was located at one of the twin towers. For some reason the morning of the attack, her alarm clock did not go off and she had awoken late. Rushing to work and already behind schedule, she discovered the news of the terrorist attack while in the subway. A feeling of shock came over her, she recalls, followed by panic. The reporter feels very

fortunate to have survived that day. Her only explanation of why she has an extended lease in life while others didn't is fate, just fate. That's all she could come up with, a reporter who spends a career hunting down answers.

These are just three stories of how 9/11 impacted the lives of three Hawaii individuals. There are countless other stories much more dramatic of firemen, police officers, office workers and good Samaritans all rising up to perform heroic acts that day, and months after during search and rescue operations. Then there are even deeper stories with deeper scars of people whose loved ones were killed that day.

HOW 9/11 CHANGED US

Loss of Life: The repercussions of one day 10 years ago still impacts millions of people today. As a nation, we've gone to war with Afghanistan, justly in the eyes of most; as well as waged war against Iraq, unjustly in the eyes of many. Thousands of Americans soldiers have died; hundreds of thousands approaching a million Iraqis have perished. In the process, the U.S.'s reputation and credibility internationally hit an all-time low during President George W. Bush's second term, and it remains relatively tarnished.

Atmosphere of fear: Within our own country, not only have some

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LEGISLATIVE CONNECTION

1 in 6 Americans...



by Senator Will ESPERO

A medical disaster could be the only thing standing between you and bankruptcy. In a national study of 2007 bankruptcy filings in selected states, 62% were caused by medical bills the patients could not pay. Alarmingly, 78% had insurance when they started their illness, including 60.3% private coverage. More than 90% of medically related bankruptcies were due to high medical costs so high the family was compelled to mortgage their home to pay the bills. Eight per cent went bankrupt because the illness caused them to lose their income. Diabetics and those with neurologic disorders had the highest costs (\$26,971 & \$34,167 respectively).

Even being solidly middle class offered no protection: 2/3 of the medically bankrupt were homeowners and 3/5 were college educated. Overwhelming medical bills forced the families to mortgage their homes before they resorted to protection in the courts. The study was conducted by professors at Harvard Medical School, Harvard

Law School, and Ohio University. Just as disturbing is a statistic recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau: 49.9 million Americans (almost 1 in 6, or 16%) do not have health insurance. Lowered access in getting medical care is just the start. When they do get care, the uninsured pay more for it. The bankruptcy study found that those without insurance averaged \$26,971 in medical bills, compared to \$17,749 for those with insurance.

State Insurance Commissioner Gordon Ito says that in Hawaii, thanks to our pioneering 1974 Prepaid Health Care Law, the insurance rate is lower, somewhere between 8-11%. (Hawaii is still the only state with such a law, which is a major reason for our high rates of coverage.) The uninsured generally fall into three categories: the unemployed, students, and those who work but don't get coverage through their jobs. For the unemployed, Ito says, there are the federal/state Medicare and Medicaid programs if they qualify.

Students were a "fall through the cracks" group, but President Obama's Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) was designed to alleviate this. Before the law, insurance companies dropped students from their parents' health plan they reached "legal age." Students also weren't getting em-

ployer-sponsored health insurance they didn't work enough hours even if they had a job. Lastly, on their limited income, they couldn't afford to be covered, if an individual plan was even available. The PPACA ("Obamacare") changed all of that. As of September 23, 2010, the president's health care reform law enables children to remain on their parent's insurance plan until they reach age 26. That applies even if the children don't live with their parents anymore, are not dependents listed on their parents' tax return, are not students, or are married. That's one big reason to be thankful that Congress passed this milestone legislation.

Contrary to popular myth, the uninsured are gainfully employed. Three out of 4 uninsured work, but have jobs that don't offer insurance coverage as a benefit. Of those who are offered a health plan, both premiums and worker's share of those premiums have risen, putting medical insurance out of their reach. Last year the average cost for employer-sponsored family coverage was \$13,770. Many employees simply cannot afford to pay that much in premiums without their company picking up a large portion of that expense. Ninety per cent of the uninsured are in low- to moderate-income families (roughly \$8,000 annual income for a family of four).

Even in Hawaii with our Prepaid Health Care Law, Ito explains, many workers simply can't get employer-sponsored health coverage. The law requires insurance to be offered only if the employee works an average of 20 hours per week. Those who work part-time jobs less than 20 hours a week aren't eligible for job-sponsored medical plan.

Ito says the PPACA will help. Under the new law, businesses with less than 25 employees and an average salary of \$50,000, will be eligible for federal tax credits for providing health insurance for their employees. As of January 1, 2014, qualified small businesses will be able to receive a 50% premium subsidy. To be eligible, the company must have less than 11 full-time employees who have an average salary of less than \$25,000. Companies exceeding these guidelines are also eligible for premium subsidies on a sliding scale (a reduction of 6.7% per additional employee and 4% per additional \$1,000 of average compensation).

The President's health reform law also helps two other groups of uninsured - those who are excluded from plan eligibility for "pre-existing conditions" and those who are dropped because they become sick or their treatment reaches "lifetime limits." Adults with pre-existing conditions became eligible on June 21, 2010 to join a temporary pool that will be replaced in 2014 when health exchanges become available. As of September 23 last year, insurance companies were no longer able to exclude children under age 19 with pre-existing medical conditions, drop policyholders when they get sick, or impose lifetime dollar limits on essential benefits. In 2014, annual

claims will be completely prohibited.

The PPACA will help people stay well by making it affordable. By 2018, the law will require that health plans fully cover (no co-pays) preventive care and check-ups. These help people get care in early stages and avoid more serious health problems and the associated risks of higher mortality.

The much debated health insurance exchanges go into effect nationwide on January 1, 2014. The exchange was envisioned as a way to help consumers and small businesses to review and compare benefits and premiums. Ito's Insurance Division is working on getting up Hawaii's version, which will be called the "Hawaii Health Connector." Ito says it is like Orbitz, a one-stop, open sharing of data, so buyers can make an informed choice in purchasing insurance. The Insurance Division is also striving to improve its process for reviewing requests for premium increases. A grant the Division recently received will enhance the level of detail its staff can examine in coming to its decisions.

For decades insurance industry experts have sounded the alarm on the societal, business, and individual impact of spiraling health costs. On the grand scale, the law will reduce our national deficit by \$143 billion. At the grassroots level, it will help all of us get the medical care we all need, giving companies healthier employees, and bring that portion of our family budgets within our control. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is a much needed, comprehensive law. History will show that President Obama's reforms will take their place among the most significant pieces of legislation in our history. ■

EDITORIAL (CONT.)

(cont. from page 2...)

Americans learned to distrust Arabs, Muslims and Middle Eastern countries, their fear of "all-things-foreign" extends to immigrants in general. The INS was quickly dismantled and turned into Homeland Security. So began the era of a more unwelcoming, closed America. Controversial anti-immigrant laws continue to be forged in response to 9/11. Initially such laws were justified as a means to protect Americans from harms way. But today it has transformed into political exploitation from the right, now overstepping into blatant racism. Anti-immigrant policies will continue as long a prevailing air of fear permeates the American psyche.

Economic impact: The cost of direct U.S. military operations in the Iraq-Afghanistan war (not including long-term costs of taking care of veterans) is \$3 trillion dollars. Adjusted for inflation, only World War II cost more. For a better perspective, the current national debt of the U.S. is \$14 trillion dollars. The cost of just the wars alone is about 20 percent of the entire national debt. Economists generally agree that the cost of war goes beyond di-

rect appropriations for fighting it, beyond the \$3 trillion dollars. Government funds are less available for domestic projects. The cost of oil also goes up which directly impacts goods and services, and overall consumer spending. All of these adverse economic conditions beginning with and sparked by 9/11 actually contributed to the ongoing recession.

What we have learned of 9/11 is that it was a major point in modern history that probably is linked to events prior to 9/11. The terrorist act was a desperate, ugly reaction to Middle East policy. The ensuing wars, loss of life, atmosphere of fear, and economic ruin of businesses and lives following 9/11 is a sad commentary of the choices we've made as a result of that desperate, ugly day. We can only hope that 10 years later, the wounds of 9/11 can begin to heal and that public policy will be based on current merit without the horrors of 9/11 exploited to gain political advantage. A case in point is that in the next two, we hope immigration reform will have a fair chance of being taken up humanely without politicians inciting fear of foreigners. ■



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HEADLINES (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1: FIL-COM...)

FLASHBACK

Three years and two executive directors after Fil-Com was inaugurated, Roland Casamina, who launched a grassroots campaign to build Fil-Com in 1992 with L&L co-founder Eddie Flores, convinced his uncle Toy to give up his financial advisory work with Manila Mayor Joseito Alienza, Jr. and become the president of the Fil-Com Center.

Fil-Com needed someone with the professional expertise in finance to manage payment of its \$3.5 million loan and the balance of its \$13 million building construction cost. This was almost eight years after Fil-Com first offered his services to Fil-Com to no avail. Other than professional concerns, he had other reasons for his affinity for Fil-Com. In 1976, the late Soledad Alconcel, Arre's eldest sister, bequeathed three insurance policies to the Philippine Cultural Foundation of Hawaii—an organization she founded which became "the bulk of the \$100,000 donated by the foundation to the Filipino Community Center, Inc."

Arre was also culturally-astute as a folk dancer and connoisseur of handicrafts and the arts. He started folk dancing in-between his activities as track and field captain at the University Philippines where he graduated with a bachelor of science in business administration and accounting in 1956.

He joined the University of Michigan's International Folk Dancing Troupe when he came to the U.S. a year later with his parents who represented the Philippines at the World Trade Fair in New York with their family business of hand-woven fabrics and handicrafts from their hometown.

Originally from Caoyan, Ilocos Sur, Geminiano G. Arre and Candelaria Quevitis moved to Manila to



Toy Arre (far left) and other Filipino community leaders at grand opening ceremony for the Fil-Com Center

start their handicraft business in 1934, the year Toy was born. The family business flourished through trade exhibitions all over the archipelago. As a child, Toy learned to think ahead and hone his business and art skills.

In 1958, when Arre's sister Soledad opened a Philippine handicraft retail store in Waikiki, Arre visited her during his school vacations and then enrolled at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, where he completed his Master's degree in economics in 1960. He decided to stay in the islands and start his professional life.

In 1979, Arre was appointed as director of finance for the City and County of Honolulu under Mayor Frank Fasi. He was the first Filipino to hold a mayoral cabinet post. At the same time, he also served as the first non-Japanese president of Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce.

THRIVING ON SELF-SUFFICIENCY

A few months after taking over the helm in August 2004, Arre was quoted as saying: "There is no question in my mind that the center could be self-sustaining, if we didn't owe any money."

The burden was the \$3.5 mil-

lion loan balance. Revenues from tenant and ballroom rentals were sufficient to pay for operational costs. Arre voluntarily lowered his salary by 40 percent to assure affordability and a healthy cash flow. Grants and endowments paid for programs like Smart Seniors, computer classes, NCLEX nurse reviews, U.S. citizenship classes, ballroom dancing and folk dancing classes.

Grants and endowments came mostly from the City, State Foundation of Culture & the Arts, the Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation, Bishop Museum and the Hawaii Community Foundation.

U.S. Sen. Dan Inouye made funding for *Banda Kawayan* possible through the U.S. Department of Education via Education through Historical Organization (ECHO) and the U.S. Institute of Music and Libraries (IMLS). Air freight of the 92-piece bamboo instruments was provided by Hawaiian Airlines. Funds and individual donations covered payments of loan interest accruals and the balance went to the master loan.

Endowments and donations were highest at the onset of Toy's solicitations but dwindled to \$100,000 in 2010 and to almost nothing in 2011. Thus, some pro-

grams were discontinued this year. ter has 50,000 square feet and houses 10 rental offices, a 6,000 square foot grand ballroom, the Consuelo courtyard, complete with a water fountain and cafe seating, Technology Center with 32 computer workstations and a fully certified commercial kitchen. About 100,000 people use the center's facilities, most of whom attend one or more of the 150 functions held annually in the ballroom or the varied social and human service programs for all members of the community.

The president and COO reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the general supervision, direction and control of the day-to-day operations of the Center. The president provides leadership and direction towards the achievement of Fil-Com's mission strategy and its annual goals and objectives as determined by the Board.

The president shall have a strong commitment and clear understanding of the Fil-Com's mission. The applicant must have proven skills and experience in: (1) management and supervision; (2) leadership ability in strategizing and coalition building; (3) excellent written and oral communications, including public speaking; (4) strong organizational and decision making; and (5) understanding of the community and political culture of Hawaii.

Salary is commensurate with experience.

Submit letter of interest and resume on or before 4 pm, Saturday, October 15, 2011 to: filcompresidentsearch@gmail.com

grams were discontinued this year.

Fundraising and individual donations peaked at almost \$500,000 in 2006, dipped to \$100,000 in 2007 and 2008 and leveled to a little more than \$150,000 in 2009 and 2010. Another fundraiser is scheduled for December of this year.

Arre moved freely and confidently while executing his duties but not without first dialoging with chair emeritus Eddie Flores at the start of his tenure and requesting space, trust and support—a move that resulted in mutual respect between both men.

Arre and his wife of five years, Maria Corazon Fulgencio, can now spend more cocktail hours watching beautiful Hawaiian sunsets after she finishes her work at UH-JABSSOM as a personnel specialist. They could also perhaps listen to her rendition of some langaug jazz music, after he babysits grandson Lucas.

Arre has declined invitations to remain on the Fil-Com board but promised to make himself available if asked for advice over coffee, tea or *halo-halo*.

You, Toy, we say, 'Aloha and Mabuhay.' ■

WHAT CO-WORKERS AND ASSOCIATES SAY ABOUT GEMINIANO ARRE, JR.

"Toy is a very effective administrator. He uses his knowledge and experience as a fiscal administrator as well as his understanding of the Filipino culture to keep the center financially-sound and culturally-relevant. He transformed Fil-Com into a lively gathering place for Filipinos and promoted the visibility of the center—locally, nationally and internationally. Through his leadership, he tapped Filipino organizations to assist Fil-Com with programs like the annual Filipino Fiesta & Parade and Pasok sa Fil-Com. He was also got support from the federal, state and county governments as well as the Philippine government, aside from businesses, foundations and non-profit and community organizations."

"He thank him for his exemplary service and dedication. He leaves behind large shoes to fill. Personally, I thank him for being a friend, brother and mentor. His departure will be a big loss for the center and the Filipino community."

His departure will be a big loss for the center and the Filipino community."
— SERAFIN COLMENARES, JR.
Board of Director, Language Access Director

"Mr. Arre is smart, talented and very generous. As my boss for more than six years, I learned a lot from him. I admire him for his sincerity and dedication. He is also approachable and never fails to give advice when asked. He is not just a boss but a mentor, friend and father to me."

— ARCELI G. REBOLLIDO,
IT/Office Assistant, Fil-Com Center

"Mr. Arre is a wonderful man. He makes sure every member of Banda Kawayan is safe and that everything is organized. Despite his busy schedule, he always checks to see that all of the instruments are okay. He has a passion for music. He never ceases to inspire us with his patience, words of encouragements and most importantly his awesome character. With all humility and respect, we love him so much. He has really made a difference in our lives."

— RAFAEL P. VELASCO,
Maestro, Banda Kawayan and faculty member, August Ahrens Elementary

"He is one of the best clients we ever had. He knows his job. His most challenging role was to balance the business aspect with fulfilling the mission of the center."

— STERLING LEONG,
consulting accountant of Fil-Com

"Toy Arre will be missed! He is synonymous with Fil-Com Center and is the embodiment of what the Fil-Com Center is to the community. He is one of the kindest men I have known. Thank you Toy for supporting NAMF's program (Nursing Advocates and Mentors Inc) and for providing free NCLEX-RN Review Classes!"

— BEATRICE "BEA" RAMOS-RAZON,
Founder/President, NAMF (Nursing Advocates and Mentors Inc.)

"The center and the community at large have benefitted from Toy's hard work focus and his diligent efforts to reach out to all. Most importantly, he is committed to meeting the mission and goals of the center. Despite scarce funds and resources, he has kept the center bustling and "alive" and brought order and transparency to the administration and operations of the center. He will be hard to replace. The Board appreciates him for giving seven years of his life to the Fil-Com Center. We miss him but we are also happy for he and his supportive wife. Our mabuhay to him."

— ABELINA MADRID SHAW,
Chair, Board of Directors, Fil-Com Center Inc.

"Toy Arre brought Fil-Com to the next level. I have yet to find someone who does not like him."

— ROLAND CASAMINA,
President Emeritus

APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED

The following is some background on the Fil-Com Center for those who may be interested in applying for the position of president and chief operating officer.

Employment Type: Full-Time, Executive, Renewable Appointment
Industry: Not-For-Profit, Charitable, Education, Administration
Manages Others: Yes
Education: 4-year degree
Experience: At least 5-years of executive level experience
Post Date: September 6, 2011

The Filipino Community Center, Inc. (Fil-Com Center), is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. Its mission is "to develop, own and operate a community center that provides social, economic and education services and to promote and perpetuate Filipino culture and customs in the State of Hawaii."

Inaugurated on June 11, 2002, it is the largest Filipino Community Center in the U.S. and outside of the Philippines. Situated on a two-acre parcel donated by American Factors at the site of the former Oahu Sugar Mill, the Fil-Com Cen-

HEADLINES (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1: 'BUSONG' ...)

instantly. The film weaves the untold stories of the Palawan tribe, of a brother and sister searching for a healer and the people they encounter who help them. For the first time, we hear Palawan myths in their own language.

The film introduces the audience to Punay who is unable to walk due to the wounds on her feet that she was born with. Her brother, Angkadang, carries her on a hammock as he searches the changing landscape of Palawan to find a healer.

Different people help carry his

sister along the way—a woman searching for her husband, a fisherman who lost his boat, and a young man who finds himself. Each one meets their fate ("busong").

The film has already garnered accolades overseas. It premiered as an official selection at the 2011 Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Directors' Fortnight) of the Cannes Film Festival where it received positive reviews. Critics described the film as "unique and wonderful," "simply brilliant," and "completely dreamlike."

It also won awards for best direction, best sound and best origi-

nal music score at the Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival in July of 2011. Most recently, "Busong" earned the FIPRESCI International Critics Prize at the Eurasia International Film Festival in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

PERSONAL INSPIRATION

In an exclusive interview with the Chronicle, Solito says that his mother told him bedtime stories of her tribe's myths as a youngster.

"I grew up imagining this world of shamans and magic, of spells and golden sea turtles, of shape shifters and stick-like demons. I am



Director Auraeus Solito

now happy that I finally realized some of her images for "Busong."

Solito returned to her hometown of Puring in the remote southwesternmost point of the Philippines after graduating from college and learned that she belonged to the indigenous Palawan people who have been isolated from the modern world. They created a distinct culture full of magic with original and unique stories and a history that has yet to be told.

"My mother came from a lineage of Tungkulis, the Shamankings and that we were royalty to the tribe, respected by the Palawan people for they ruled the Southern Palawan Islands in ancient times," Solito says. "I came from the first

generation of Palawanos not born in the tribal land. A well of knowledge and ancient tradition opened itself up to me. "Busong" is the middle part of the Palawan trilogy—a retelling of my tribe's history, myths and modern issues that affect my people."

"When asked how he differentiates this film with others he has directed, Solito called 'Busong' his 'dream film.'

"It is the film that I have always wanted to make. Before I thought that all my films were different from each other but then recently I realized the unifying theme of my work," he says. "I make cinema that enables my people. That is my purpose and super intention."

Executive producer Jong de Castro encourages the Filipino community to come out and support the film. They will experience a different type of Philippine cinema.

"Many who have seen 'Busong' say it embodies a new direction in Philippine cinema," de Castro says.

The trailer along with other information on 'Busong' are available at: <http://www.busongpalawan-fate.com/>. Tickets to HIFF screenings may be purchased online at: <http://www.hiff.org/program/schedule/>. ■

(cont. from page 1: FILIPINO ...)

HAWAII (PCCCH)

Philippine Consul-General Leoncio Cardenas said in press statement that Aquino's visit promises to be a milestone event for the Filipino community in the state.

"Since this is the first time that President Aquino will be in Hawaii, we encourage the various Filipino organizations and groups to stand united in presenting a solid show of support in welcoming him. I see this as an opportunity to showcase our achievements in Hawaii and how far we have come in our more than 100 years of migration to the Aloha State," he said.

The PCCCH has recently announced the commencement of ticket sales for the highly anticipated event, which is expected to attract more than 1,000 guests. According to the group, three different seating arrangements will be made available to the attendees, namely the following: Friendship Tables (\$1,500), Mahuhay Tables (\$750), and individual seats (\$75 each). The seating plan for the event will be posted on the Philippine Consulate's website, www.philippineconsulatehonolulu.com.

The PCCCH is a liaison group that assists and supports the Philippine Consulate in the latter's community outreach activities throughout Hawaii. It has been in existence for more than ten years and is composed of community leaders from a broad base of Filipino organizations representing cultural, business, and regional sectors.

HAWAII ON THE CENTER STAGE

Hawaii is home to around 200,000 people of Filipino descent. During the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, President Aquino will be representing these Filipino-Americans and Filipinos in general as the country continues in its endeavor to actively engage the other APEC member economies in order to enhance further the country's economic performance and competitiveness. During the last APEC ministerial and leaders' meeting in Japan, the Philippines emphasized its role in the advocacy for human resources development, creation of jobs, addressing the various social dimensions of globalization, and in sustaining efforts in economic and technical cooperation.

The United States had also previously stated its intention to expand its economic engagement with its Asia-Pacific neighbors. According to an official APEC news release, U.S. Senior Official for APEC Kurt Tong emphasized—during a December 2010 preparatory meeting at the East-West Center in Honolulu—the importance of accelerating growth and creating jobs across the Asia-Pacific by improving the region's trade and investment environment.

As the host country for the 2011 APEC ministerial and leaders' meetings, the United States will be

focusing on three specific priority areas:

- 1.) Strengthening regional economic integration and expanding trade;
- 2.) Promoting green growth; and
- 3.) Expanding regulatory cooperation and advancing regulatory convergence.

The second priority area is particularly relevant to Hawaii, which just hosted the 2011 Asia Pacific Clean Energy Summit and Expo last September. The gathering provided an opportunity for participants from 12 nations to discuss critical topics such as alternative fuels, energy efficiency, smart grid, and policy and economic development.

During the 2011 APEC ministerial and leaders' meetings, the U.S.—with Hawaii at the helm once more—is pledging to work with international partners to make a successful transition to a clean energy future.

"The United States aims to advance APEC's work to address barriers to trade in environmental goods, including non-tariff measures related to advanced technology demonstration products, such as vehicles, as well as remanufactured and recycled goods," Kurt Tong said.

Locally, the APEC meeting is also expected to provide huge economic and publicity benefits for Hawaii. Located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, the state is a strategic crossroads of the Asia-Pacific region. Hawaii also enjoys direct service from major global cities like Los Angeles, Tokyo, Manila, Seoul, and Sydney.


Hawaii is also home to a world-class hospitality industry, modern communication infrastructure, and a flourishing economy, all of which make the state an ideal place to host the Asia-Pacific region's premier trade and investment forum. ■

For more information on the "Alay sa Pangulo" community dinner, please contact the following: Bennette Misalucha at bennette.misalucha808@gmail.com and 808-398-3988 (for Friendship Tables); Melga Gendrano at mgendrano@yahoo.com and 808-383-7986, or Jackie Ho at jackieho88@gmail.com and 808-388-0486 (for Mahuhay Tables and individual seats). The event will be held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village's Tapa Ballroom. The evening starts with cocktails at 5:30 p.m., and the dinner proper begins at 7 p.m. Please come in Filipiniana or formal attire.

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Villaraza to Demonstrate Ancient Healing Arts of the Philippines

NATIVE PHILIPPINE SHAMAN PI VILLARAZA will be in Hawaii for a series of workshops and related events from October 14-23, 2011.

Villaraza was a corporate man who owned businesses in advertising and events management, was a business consultant to major corporations and was the general manager of the travel giant STA Travel in Philippines.

In 2002, he left everything to undergo a five-year vision quest around the world that took him to chance meetings with powerful

spirit guides that sent him on a walking pilgrimage around Mindanao and a two-year stay along a deserted Palawan beach without money and human contact. It was during this time that he discovered an ancient universal sacred movement that moved his body voluntarily and brought about an intense personal healing he was later tasked to share with others.

Villaraza's healing work and his capacity to teach this "inner dance" has been reported in newspapers, magazines, radio and television throughout Asia, the U.S.



Pi Villaraza

and Europe. He has hosted workshops and retreats in Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines,

Malaysia, the U.S. and at the Inner Dance Retreat Center in Palawan where his family resides.

To date, Villaraza has taught over 6,000 people around the world who regularly attend his workshops, talks and healing sessions. Attendees include people from all walks of life, including politicians, fisherfolks, businessmen, travelers, farmers, families, religious officers and medical practitioners.

Villaraza will hold introductory presentations on the following dates:

- October 14 at the Kea'au Shopping center - KYBC across Ace Hardware at 10 am

- October 14 at La'akea Permaculture Community - Ala Ii, Pahoa at 7 pm
- October 17 at the University of Hawaii-Hilo campus at 12 noon
- October 17 at the Honokaa People's Theatre at 4:30 pm
- October 18 at the Lileiani Community Recreation Center, Pahoa at 5:30 pm
- October 18-23: Quest Journey and Weekend Coconut Fast-ing Retreat

Please call (808) 965-1612 for more information. ■

Good Advice for College Students from Hawaii's BBB

AS COLLEGE STUDENTS GET SETTLED in on campus, fighting fraud may not be at the top of their list of priorities. They may not realize it, but college students are susceptible to identity theft.

"In this day and age, you must be cautious with how you treat your personal information," says Dwight Kealoha, president and CEO of Hawaii's Better Business Bureau. "It's extremely important for students to be attentive to their bank and credit card statements to spot unauthorized activity. Sign up for security alerts on your accounts and have them sent to your mobile phone so you'll know if any changes have been made to your account."

Hawaii's Better Business Bureau recommends that they take the following seven simple steps to protect themselves on campus:

1. Send sensitive mail to your parents' home or a post office box. School mailboxes are not always secure and can often be easily accessed in a dorm or apartment.

2. Important documents should be stored under lock and key. This includes your Social Security card, passport and bank and credit card statements. Shred credit card offers and any paper documents that have sensitive financial information rather than just tossing them out.
3. Never lend your credit or debit card to anyone. Just say 'no' if a friend wants to borrow your card or asks you to co-sign for a loan or financing for items like a TV.
4. Make sure your computer has up-to-date antivirus and spyware software. Always install any updates and patches to your computer's operating system or browser software, which help keep your computer safe from any new advances by identity thieves online.
5. Always check your credit or debit card statements closely for any suspicious activity. The sooner you identify any poten-

tial fraud, the less you'll suffer in the long run.

6. Check out unfamiliar websites with the BBB. Look for the BBB-Accredited Business seal along with other trust seals. Click on the seals to confirm that they are legitimate.
7. Check your credit report at least once a year. You are entitled to one free report a year from each of the three reporting bureaus: TransUnion, Experian and Equifax. Look for any suspicious activity or inaccuracies.

You can do this for free by visiting www.annualcreditreport.com.

In 2010, 8.1 million Americans, or roughly 3.5 percent of the population, were victims of identity theft, according to the 2011 Identity Fraud Survey conducted by Javelin Strategy & Research and sponsored by BBB. The average mean cost of identity theft is \$631 and the average time to resolve identity fraud is 33 hours—valuable study time.

"Friendly fraud" accounts for 14 percent of all ID theft crimes. This means that new roommates and friends can do just as much damage as a foreign-based scam artist phishing on the Internet. And identity thieves—friend or foe—think nothing of dumping diversting in un-shredded paperwork or even taking mail from unlocked mailboxes or off desks. They are even cruise social networking sites looking for some personal tidbit that can unlock a wealth of information elsewhere. ■

Kalihi Residents Urged to Attend Transit Planning Workshop

THE CITY'S DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & PERMITTING (DPP) will hold the second in a series of community workshops for the Kalihi Neighborhood Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 from 6 pm to 8 pm at Farrington High School's library.

DPP officials urge Kalihi resi-

dents to join their neighbors in submitting comments on preliminary ideas for development, transportation improvements and public spaces in the neighborhoods surrounding the three Kalihi rail stations—Middle Street, Kalihi and Kapalama.

Participants' ideas and perspectives on new retail stores and offices, housing types, sidewalk and

street improvements, park and open space enhancements, and industrial and waterfront areas will be crucial to the new TOD plan and integrating rail transit into Kalihi.

For more details on the workshop, go online to: www.honolulu.gov/planning or contact Renee Espiau, project planner with DPP's Community Planning Branch, at 768-8050. ■

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State House to Discuss Soaring Government Debt

THE HAWAII STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES will host an informational briefing on government debt on Tuesday, October 11, 2011 at 10 am in Room 309 at the State Capitol.

The purpose of the briefing will be to discuss ways to control government spending and the impact of the national and state debt crisis on Hawaii's future. At the national level, America is borrowing 40 cents out of every dollar spent—a move that lawmakers say is unsustainable.

"Hawaii's families carry the third highest per capita debt burden in the

U.S.—more than \$23,000 for every person who lives here," says Rep. Gene Ward who will convene the briefing.

"Hawaii is facing an economic tsunami with unfunded pension and health costs approaching a staggering \$22 billion," says Rep. Barbara Marumoto who will co-convene the briefing.

The briefing will also feature national and local panelists including Shleia Weinberg from the National Institute for Truth in Accounting; Paul Brewbaker, former Chair of the State Council on Revenues; and newly-appointed State Chief Financial Officer Kalbert Young.

The public and media are invited to attend. ■

IMMIGRATION GUIDE

“Tayo Tayo” System – Did It Save Obama’s Uncle and Aunt from Deportation?



by Atty. Emmanuel Samonte TIPON

“When the President does it, that means that it is not illegal.” – Richard Nixon

It is the Filipinos “deviant culture that promotes ‘bootlicking,’ ‘nepotism,’ ‘padrino system’ ‘kamag-anak’ incorporated, and ‘tayo-tayo’ system,” according to writer F. Sionil Jose.

Apparently these bad cultural traits are not confined to the Philippines. It has migrated to the United States.

Look at how President Obama’s aunt and uncle have “escaped the long arm of the [immigration] law,” notes R. Cort Kirkwood in his article “Obama Uncle Beneficiary of Deportation Moratorium,” *The New American*, September 12, 2011. He was referring to the new policy of the administration to use “prosecutorial discretion” to save about 300,000 people from immediate deportation which we discussed in our article on “Backdoor amnesty for certain illegal aliens”.

UNCLE OMAR

Uncle Omar Onyango Obama, half-brother of the President’s father, had reportedly been ordered deported in 1992, but like his Aunt Zeituni, managed to abscond until after his nephew Barack became President.

Illegal aliens ordered deported are “absconders” or “fugitives” and subject to arrest and deportation. There is a criminal penalty for failure to depart after a deportation order becomes final. INA § 243, 8 U.S.C. § 1253.

On August 24, this year, according to reports, while he was in Massachusetts “the car he was driving darted in front of a police cruiser, nearly causing the officer to hit his car.” His blood alcohol level was said to be 0.14, way above the legal limit. Since he was a liquor-store clerk, it is surprising that it was not higher. He was arrested and charged with DUI and negligent driving. When he was asked if he had money for bail, he replied: “I think I’d like to call the White House.”

He was immediately released. There is no indication whether he put up bail. According to reports, he was brought to Burlington where Immigration and Customs Enforcement has offices. Why does not Barack send him back to Kenya to

show that he respects his oath of office – “to take care that the laws shall be faithfully executed.” Barack can even make Uncle Omar King of Kenya. Ala ngarud.

Our kababayan columnist Michelle Malkin attacked the White House’s silence about Uncle Omar in her column “America’s Uncle Omar Problem,” *Hawaii’s Midweek newspaper*, September 7, 2011.

AUNT ZEITUNI

Earlier there was Aunt Zeituni Onyango, half-sister of Barack’s father, whom we wrote about in 2009. Auntie even went to Washington, D.C. for the inauguration of her nephew and attended an inaugural ball. She had been ordered deported in 2004 after her visa expired and her asylum claim was denied. She did not leave the country and became an absconder. These absconders if caught are immediately deported. Not Auntie Zeituni. She managed to live in public housing and reportedly collected \$700 monthly in disability checks.

When she was caught, after nephew Barack had become President, someone hired a well-known immigration attorney in the Midwest who filed a motion to reopen her deportation case years after the deadline for filing such motions had

expired. In 2010, she was granted asylum by an immigration judge on the ground, according to reports, that she would suffer persecution in Kenya, her home country. Can you believe that? The auntie of the most powerful nation on earth will be persecuted in her native land, yet her nephew was lionized when he visited Kenya? Why did not Barack send her back to Kenya to show that he respects the law? Barack could have built a mansion for her, provide her with the comforts of life in a tropical setting, and surround her with servants and an army of bodyguards if she felt insecure.

DEPORTER-IN-CHIEF

Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay did not believe in the “tayo tayo system” or “kamaganak, incorporated.” He once said: “I will send my relatives to jail if they commit any crime.” Will this American President emulate Magsaysay and be true to his oath of office? If he does, he can go on the campaign trail and say: “See, I believe in immigration reform. I enforce the law. I am not only the commander-in-chief, but the deporter-in-chief. I have deported over one million illegal aliens, including my own relatives, more than any President in history.”

OPENING THE FLOODGATES

Will the cases of Obama’s uncle and aunt case set a precedent and open the floodgates for other illegal aliens to flaunt immigration laws involving equal protection of the laws. Will they be as lucky as those with a kamaganak in a high place?

NIGHTMARES FROM MY RELATIVES

Uncle Omar and Aunt Zeituni are mentioned in Barack’s best-selling book *Dreams From My Father*. The book can now be bought very cheaply. It appears to have been re-mandered. Who knows how many more presidential relatives are having problems with the law? Perhaps Barack will write a book about them after he is booted out of office next year “Nightmares From My Relatives.” I doubt that it will be a best-seller, though. It might be a no-seller.

(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, *Ad!ad!* every Thursday at 7:30 a.m., *rebroadcast* at www.thuko.com.) ■



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SOCIETY PAGE

GRADUATION PARTY



▲ Jay-Anne Yadao, Estefania Yoro and Ian James Yadao



▲ Linda Sarmiento with Jaime and Gloria Yadao



▲ (Left) Gemma Siruno and James Pagdilao, (Right) Gizelle Siruno and Gerrick Siruno

WELCOME PARTY



▲ Christian Gonzaga with relatives during his graduation party



▲ Andrea Herana and Aida Aquino



▲ Lei Colleado and Arnold Villaflorte



▲ (L-R) Virginia Chua, visiting from the Philippines with guests Rose Sherry and Paulo Campos during a party given to welcome her in the island

BIRTHDAY PARTY



▲ (L-R) Drs. Ray Romero, Ronnie Roaquin and Richard Kua

Standing (L-R):
JP Oñis and
Dr. Louie Corpuz
Seated (L-R):
Dr. Benilda Luz-Llena,
Dr. Sorbela Guillermo,
Kathy Adaoag and
Dory Villaflorte ▶



▲ (L-R) Loreto Viloria, Cristina Aglibot, Reggie Dayoan, Nelson Sonido, Jay-Anne Yadao, Shali Pagulayan, Avenida Nuestra and Cresencia Angeles



▲ (L-R) Dr. Charlie Sonido with medical preceptees: Drs. Bernice Yap, Cheryl Udani, Julie Anne Galinato, Bora Nam, Dana Carasig, Dennis Bautista and A.T. Sill University medical student Brennan Owsan

BUSINESS FEATURE

From Pilipinas to Amerika: An Entrepreneur's Triumphant Tale

by Odilon LUNA SANTOS

S & S Travel Agency, a Filipino-owned business thriving in the United States (US) for more than 20 years, is a living testament that Filipino entrepreneurs can compete side-by-side foreign counterparts in a global market environment. It is just one of the 163,226 Filipino-owned business firms in the US, making Filipinos the fifth strongest Asian players in the US market next to the Chinese (423,631), Indians (308,472), Vietnamese (229,139) and Koreans (192,502).

FILIPINOS REPRESENT

Filipino-owned businesses represent 10.5 percent of the overall Asian-owned businesses, one of the strongest segments of the US economy. Among Filipino-owned US firms, nearly half are in the health care and social assistance sector, the professional, scientific and technical sector, and the repair, maintenance, personal and laundry services sector. About 55 percent of these Filipino-owned firms had one to four employees and nearly two percent had 50 or more employees.

More than a fifth had annual receipts of \$10,000 to \$24,900 while the 1.8 percent had annual receipts of \$1 million or more. The largest number of Filipino-owned firms can be found in the State of California, numbering around 81,348 or nearly 50 percent of the total number of Filipino-owned firms in the US.

They generate an annual income of \$9.1 billion, representing 45 percent of all Filipino-owned receipts in the US. The vast majority of Asian-owned businesses can be found in the State of California (509,097), followed by the States of New York (196, 852) and Texas (114,336). The cities with the largest concentration of Asian-owned businesses are in New York (153,885) and Los Angeles (61,607).

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Unlike most business owners who started their careers in the US as employees of other companies before becoming business owners themselves, Odilon "George" Luna Santos, the man behind the success of S & S Travel Agency, did not work for any company in the US since he arrived in 1992.

Armed only with his Philippine education from San Beda College and University of Santo Tomas, training and experience working in different top Philippine corporations like Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific Company Manila, Inc. and Del Monte Pacific Ltd, while fine-tuning his managerial skills as an overseas Filipino worker (OFW) assigned in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, George was able to harness his talents by starting his own business in a small 100 square feet office in San Diego, California way back in 1992.

MAKING IT BIG

From travel, he meticulously added other businesses that also



George Luna Santos

cater to the basic needs of Filipinos in America. In the process, he was able to meet and introduce his company to the bigwigs of large corporations while getting their respect and support through internationally accepted business practices, winning their full trust and confidence. In addition to working closely with top airline consolidators in the US, S & S Travel Agency has existing contracts with the San Diego Gas & Electric, one of the biggest companies in San Diego, California, and with Western Union, a world renowned money transfer company, among others.

FROM CALAMITIES TO OPPORTUNITIES

In its 20 years of operations,

the company has weathered all the storms that disrupted the travel industry market, such as the European hoof-and-mouth disease, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak, bird flu, September 11 attacks, Persian Gulf wars and the Japan earthquake and tsunami. Its marketing niche, the Philippines, has an average of 20 typhoons per year.

Despite the destruction brought forth by such tragedies, George always has a positive attitude of turning calamities into opportunities through one simple explanation: "Every time such an event occurs, it levels up the whole playing field by eliminating the marginal one or part-time players while boosting further the position of major players of the industry."

Throughout these years, the travel agency has won praises from various organizations within the community for its active civic involvement. Topping the list of awards it has received is the prestigious Minority Entrepreneur Award given by the California State Assembly for its contributions to minority business development.

Today, S & S Travel Agency is among the 1.8 percent of Filipino-owned firms in the US with annual receipts of more than \$3 million. Its

office space has grown tenfold when it first started in 1992, while its territorial coverage has continuously grown in leaps and bounds.

Coming home

George plans to retire from a very active role in his business five years from now and return to the Philippines for good. He considers retiring early at the age of 60 years old is the greatest compliment he can receive, a feat everybody dreams of but only a few would dare do especially in these tough economic times. Until then, George will have to carefully pass on the reins of his business to his most trusted next of kin to make sure the legacy of the company stays on and will live long after he has left the business scene.

They say the ultimate "dream destination" of most OFWs, no matter where they came from, is the USA to fulfill their "American Dream." But after having been there and done that, after proving to the world that the Filipino is not only among the best, as an OFW and even as an overseas Filipino entrepreneur as well, the best accolade we can get as an OFW is the warm reception of our countrymen every time we come home to the Philippines, our beloved native land. (www.philstar.com) ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS — POEA: 400,000 Pinoy Seamen by End of 2011

from www.philstar.com
Monday, October 3, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - THE NUMBER OF FILIPINO SAILORS WORKING in the world's merchant fleet is expected to hit 400,000 before the end of 2011.

Carlos Cao, Philippine Overseas Administration Office (POEA) administrator, attributed the rising number to the seamanship skills and competence of the Filipino seafarers.

"We are targeting to reach a 400,000-mark deployment of our seafarers overseas this year, and it is indeed, very encouraging, indications have surfaced that we may

even surpass this target," he added.

"In 2010, our deployment data for sea-based sector was 347,000 which was a 5.06-percent growth over the 2009 data, with an increase for land-based of 3.2 percent, showing a combined total of 1,470,826 deployment for that same year (2010), as compared to 1,422,586 in 2009, and 1,236,013 in 2008," Cao emphasized.

The POEA chief also said seafarer remittance for January to July 2011 has already reached the USD11.4 billion or a 6.3-percent increase over the same January to July 2010 figure of USD10.679 billion. (www.philstar.com) ■

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■ **PHILIPPINE NEWS**

**NPA Attack on Mining Firms
'Isolated' Case: Gov't**

from www.philstar.com
Tuesday, October 4, 2011

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - **THE GOVERNMENT SAID YESTERDAY** that the leftist New People's Army's (NPA) attacks on two mining firms in southern province of Surigao del Norte were isolated and will not stop the Aquino administration from luring investors to the country.

"This incident is an isolated case and the business community and the public can be assured that the government is on top of the situation, and that this will not deter this administration from luring investors into the country to help spur the economy and improve the lives of our people," Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa Jr. said.

But he stressed that the government considers the attacks by armed rebels on Taganito Mining Corp. and Platinum Group Metals Corp.

in Claver, Surigao del Sur "seriously" and the authorities are continuously monitoring the situation in the area.

"The situation in the area has been contained and we are now exerting efforts to ensure that those responsible for these attacks are brought to justice," he said, adding that all foreign nationals working at the sites have been accounted for and are unharmed, while local employees are now out of harm's way.

Three security guards of the Taganito Mining Corp. were killed in the attacks.

The NPA, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has been waging a guerrilla campaign in the countryside for more than four decades. The Philippine military estimates that there are some 4,700 NPA guerrilla fighters scattered in more than 60 provinces throughout the Southeast Asian country. (www.philstar.com) ■

**Closure of 12 Diplomatic
Posts Abroad Ongoing - DFA**

by **Marvin SY**

Wednesday, October 5, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - **THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA)** is currently processing the closure of 12 of the country's 94 embassies and consulates around the world as part of its ongoing rationalization program.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario told the Senate committee on finance yesterday that the rationalization of the country's diplomatic posts could be completed by the end of next year.

Del Rosario said that closing the 12 posts could result in savings of around P100 million for the DFA.

There are currently 94 posts maintained by the Philippine government including 67 embassies, 23 consulates, and four missions to international organizations.

He said that he sent a memorandum to the President last Sept. 30 informing him about the rationalization of the posts.

"We would like to rationalize the use of limited funds and see how best we can avail of these funds and be able to deliver quality services in all aspects related to our foreign policy," Del Rosario said.

Del Rosario explained that the recommendation was the closure of 12 posts over a two-year period, the first six of which would be done during the first or second quarter of 2012.

He declined to identify the posts that would be affected and said that he is waiting for the President to act on his recommendation.

Among the considerations made by the DFA in its study of the diplomatic posts was whether or not the posts were able to effectively use the resources available to them.

"We have a rationalization process which means that we would like to effectively use the limited resources that we have. We've taken a good look, certain posts obviously have not made those standards, they have not been able



to pass our criteria," Del Rosario said.

Finance committee chairman Franklin Drilon asked Del Rosario to compare the number of the Philippines' foreign posts to its Association of Southeast Asian Nations neighbors like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Del Rosario admitted that the Philippines has more diplomatic posts than its neighbors and there was a clear need to streamline this because having more posts does not translate to being more efficient.

Drilon said that he believes the number of diplomatic posts overseas should be reduced, particularly those that do not necessarily serve the national interest.

"We believe that we can better husband our resources. Singapore, a rich country, I understand is present in 23 countries. We are present in 67 countries and 23 consulates. We have even a consulate in Vladivostok; I do not know what we are doing in Vladivostok, Russia. We spend about P2.4 million in Vladivostok," Drilon said.

Drilon clarified that the intention is not to displace the foreign service personnel of the DFA but rather to strengthen the other posts that require more funding support.

He said that it was important to look at the mandate of the DFA in the assessment of which posts would be maintained.

"You look at assistance to Filipino nationals, you look at economy in terms of trade, and you look at the political value of our presence there," Drilon said. (www.philstar.com) ■

PHILIPPINE NEWS

GMA, Mike A Directly Linked to 2007 Fraud

by Sheila CRISOSTOMO/
Tuesday, October 4, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - FOR THE FIRST TIME, FORMER PRESIDENT and now Pangampang Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband Jose Miguel Arroyo have been directly tagged as masterminds in alleged cheating in the 2007 senatorial elections.

In a press briefing yesterday, Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman Sixto Brillantes and Justice Secretary Leila de Lima presented former Maguindanao provincial administrator Norie Unas, who claimed to have heard Mrs. Arroyo give explicit orders to then governor Andal Ampatuan Sr. to ensure a 12-0 victory for Team Unity senatorial candidates.

"Dapat 12-0 sa Maguindanao kahit ayusin o paltan nyo ang resulta (It should be 12-0 in Maguindanao, even if you tinker with or change the results)," Unas quoted Mrs. Arroyo as telling Ampatuan. The former governor is on trial for the November 2009 Maguindanao massacre.

Also presented yesterday were 14 election officers and a computer voters' list technician who confirmed manipulation of election results in Maguindanao.

A spokesman for the former president said the latest allegations were meant to conceal the failures of the Aquino administration.

"Again, it's a pattern that Filipinos are getting used to, whenever the administration makes a blunder, expect a so-called expose or allegations against the former president and her family to come out," lawyer Raul Lambino told THE STAR.

De Lima said Unas' testimony, contained in an affidavit, was the first time that the Arroyos were "categorically and directly" linked to poll cheating. She said other pronouncements linking the two were mere "hearsays."

"That's very damaging. He (Unas) had first-hand knowledge and he made direct implication of the former president and the former first gentleman who gave orders to do everything to ensure 12-0, including the rigging of the election results," De Lima said.

She said Mr. Arroyo may be placed again under watch list order. "We can issue a WLO against him. It's possible," she said.

Brillantes said the 14 Comelec personnel, acting as chairs of the Board of Canvassers (BOC), were tasked to canvass the election returns (ER) from each Maguindanao town in 2007.

"There are two ERs, one is for the local and one is for the national. What happened so as to ensure the 12-0 votes was that copies of the

national ERs were not given to the EOs (election officers). They were taken away from them and were prepared elsewhere," he said. The EOs later found doctored ERs at the provincial canvassing centers. Subsequent canvassing showed a 12-0 win for TU. The ERs were taken by "more of Gov. Andal's people," Brillantes said.

He said the affidavits of the witnesses would be forwarded to the preliminary investigation committee of the joint panel for review and filing of appropriate charges.

The 14 poll personnel were Alhaj Sallao Amba of Mamasapano, Ma. Susan Albano of Datu Unsay, Nena Aldi of Talayan, Alice Lim of Pagagawan, Susan Cabanban of General Salpida Pendatun, Magsaysay Mohamad of Sultan sa Barongis, Araw曹 of Mangudatu, Estelita Orbase of Shariff Aguak, Jeehan Nur of Ampatuan, Ragah Ayunan of Rajah Buayan, Russam Mabang of Pandag, Asuncion Reniedo of Paglat, Rohaida Khalid of Datu Saudi, and Norjehan Hangkai of Guindulungan.

Salonga Edzelza of Guindulungan is the computer voters' list technician.

PALACE, LTA MEETINGS

In his affidavit, Unas said that a few days before the May 10, 2007 elections, he accompanied Ampatuan to a meeting in Malacañang with Mrs. Arroyo and with TU senatorial bets and some governors.

Unas claimed he was surprised to hear Ampatuan declare in a speech that "Maguindanao is the extension of Pangampang, Maguindanao will deliver the votes."

He recalled that when it was Mrs. Arroyo's turn to speak, she "made a special mention and reference to Gov. Datu Andal, gesturing her appreciation."

"When the President was about to exit from the hall as she was shaking hands with several participants, the President signaled Datu Andal to a corner and I heard the president tell Datu Andal: 'Dapat 12-0 sa Maguindanao kahit ayusin o paltan nyo ang resulta,' to which the governor answered, 'Opo, Ma'am,'" Unas added.

The following day after a dinner in Malacañang, he recalled that Ampatuan received a phone call from Mr. Arroyo summoning him to a meeting in the former first gentleman's LTA office in Makati.

"We immediately went to Makati and we arrived at the LTA building shortly thereafter. I saw FG (first gentleman) Mike Arroyo sitting behind his table with one or two other persons inside the room," he said.

Ampatuan was called inside the room, leaving Unas behind. After

a few minutes, the former governor came out of the room and they left the LTA.

"Once outside the office, Gov. Datu Andal told me: 'Utos ni FG kailangan 12-0 ang resulta sa Maguindanao at kailangan walang makuhang boto si Cayetano,'" he said, referring to preferred zero votes for Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, who was then critical of Mr. Arroyo.

Unas added that Ampatuan later called him and former provincial election supervisor Lintang Bedol to a meeting where he "reiterated the instruction for 12-0 coming from the President and FG Mike Arroyo."

"National candidates from LAKAS-CMD did not anymore have any campaign rally in Maguindanao. Campaign sorties of national Team Unity senatorial candidates were limited to just having a courtesy call to Gov. Datu Andal and to some mayors who were just coincidentally present when senatorial candidates came to see the governors," Unas said.

Unas said that he resigned from his post "prior to the Maguindanao massacre" because he had "chronic obstructive pulmonary disease."

Unas, who worked for Ampatuan from 2001 to 2009, said he had no falling out with his former boss whom he had even informed of his affidavit.

"I made him and his family understand that my coming out is not about the issue but what lies behind this issue. Why is it always happening in Maguindanao and in any other Muslim provinces in the autonomous region? Why is it always our region that they see," he said.

Unas admitted that he is scared of the possible consequences of his coming out but he is hopeful that it would be the start of "serious" reforms in the region.

"I'm afraid but I'd like to take this opportunity that my coming out would lead the way for serious efforts from the Comelec and the government to institute some needed reforms, especially on election process in Maguindanao and any ARMM (Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) provinces," he pointed out.

Lambino, meanwhile, said President Aquino was the one calling the shots in the election issues against Mrs. Arroyo.

"He (Unas) is a very convenient witness and the timing is very suspect. Only recently, P-Noy was being criticized for his absentee leadership when typhoons 'Pedring' and 'Quiel' sowed destruction in Luzon," he said.

"The impartiality of De Lima is questionable. And it's an open secret that she has some political am-

bitations for the 2013 elections so what better way to gain public attention than to hit the previous administration," he said.

GMA HAND

Another poll cheating whistleblower said Mrs. Arroyo was likely aware of the alleged switching of ERs at the Batasan compound in January and February 2005.

"We assumed she knew about it," Senior Superintendent Rafael Santiago told the House committee looking into the supposed Batasan break-in and ER switching.

"Since it was her national security adviser who ordered the operation, we concluded that she had knowledge of it and gave it her blessing," he said.

Santiago had revealed the alleged ER switching, saying it was then national security adviser and now Zambales Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. and Marcelino Franco, his commander at the Philippine National Police Special Action Force (PNP-SAF), who ordered him to participate in the election fraud operation.

He claimed that he and his men and a group of election operators led by one El Bello broke into the Batasan compound in early 2005 four times to switch ERs to ensure that Mrs. Arroyo won in the election protest filed against her by the late Fernando Poe Jr.

Bello is reportedly a son of a former Comelec official.

Ebdane, a former PNP chief, has denied Santiago's allegations.

Ilocos Norte Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas raised the possibility that Santiago exposed the alleged Batasan break-in to get back at Ebdane since the Zambales governor had replaced the officer as his provincial commander last July.

"You should not picture yourselves here as heroes," he told Santiago and his men who have admitted to being involved in the intrusion.

"You have an axe to grind against Gov. Ebdane. Why did you come out only in July, more than a year after President Aquino assumed office, when you could have done it much earlier?" Fariñas asked.

Santiago said his replacement as Zambales PNP chief had nothing to do with their exposé.

"Our coming out was providential. When the Ampatuans exposed cheating in Mindanao, we thought it was time for us to speak out. We were bothered by our conscience," he said.

He claimed that his replacement in Zambales, although it happened in July, was part of efforts of Mrs. Arroyo's loyalists in the PNP to harass us, get rid of us."

"The order for my replacement was signed July 7 or 8, but it was informed of it on July 18 while I was meeting with my police chiefs. What kind of PNP organization do we have?" he said.

Though he criticized his own organization, he chose to stay with it. He and his men are now on detail with Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo.

Santiago also said his former SAF superior Franco would soon support his story.

"I know him to be a principled officer. In fact, he was involved in the 2006 coup attempt," he said.

But Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. expressed doubt on his assertion, noting his previous statement that Franco, along with Ebdane, had also ordered him to participate in the Batasan break-in.

"Assuming your story to be true, how could one who directed you to participate in an illegal activity be a principled officer?" he asked.

(www.philstar.com)

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

'Pedring' Damage May Exceed 'Ondoy's

by Alexis ROMERO/
Wednesday, October 5, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - THE NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (NDRRMC) yesterday said the amount of property damage caused by typhoon "Pedring" may exceed that of tropical storm "Ondoy" in 2009.

Office of Civil Defense Administrator Benito Ramos said the P8.8-billion property damage caused by Pedring could still go up, since they are still consolidating reports from the field.

Tropical storm Ondoy damaged P10.9-billion worth of agricultural products and infrastructure.

"That (property damage of Pedring exceeding that of Ondoy) is a possibility but I hope it would not happen," he said in an interview yesterday.

Ramos noted that the typhoon, which left the country last Sept. 28, damaged costly infrastructure such as bridges.

"We have yet to receive some

reports on agricultural damage from Central Luzon," he added.

In Pangasinan alone, the latest estimate of damage has reached P717 million, and local officials said it could go higher.

Ramos said the combined amount of property damage caused by Pedring and "Quiel" would likely surpass that of Ondoy.

The property damage caused by Pedring stood at P8.804 billion as of yesterday while disaster management officials are still assessing the impact of Quiel.

"The amount of damage caused by Quiel would not be that much since it affected the same areas ravaged by Pedring. There is nothing much to destroy," Ramos said.

He, however, said the number of casualties of Pedring would be less than Ondoy, which claimed 464 lives.

Ramos attributed this to the improved awareness of the public and the disaster response measures of the government.

"People were not prepared for Ondoy, which caused eight hours of



Residents wade through floodwaters to get to food and water in Paombong, Bulacan. With several areas in Central Luzon still inundated, the government has stepped up assistance and relief operations in affected communities. | EDD GUMBAN

non-stop rains. In the case of Pedring, we were able to warn them early," he said.

Latest reports from the NDRRMC showed that the death toll for Pedring has risen to 55 while that of Quiel has climbed to nine. A total of 31 people were reported missing due to the two typhoons.

More than 2.83 million people were affected by the typhoon in 3,284 barangays in Ilocos, Cagayan, Central Luzon, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, Bicol, Western Visayas, Cordillera and Metro Manila regions.

On the other hand, a total of 417,737 persons in 825 barangays were affected by typhoon Quiel. The affected residents were from the Ilocos, Cagayan, Central Luzon and Cordillera regions.

A state of calamity has been declared in parts of Ifugao, Isabela,

Aurora, Quirino, Bulacan, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan and Maguindanao.

Aside from those in Bulacan, Malabon and Navotas, at least 13 municipalities in Tarlac are still under floodwaters.

The bodies of five victims of flooding were also recovered on Saturday in Camiling and another in Dansol, adding up to the total of 21 casualties tallied by the NDRRMC.

The flooding in Maguindanao, however, is not related to the two recent typhoons but is due to continuous heavy rains caused by the southwest monsoon.

NO RESPITE

Meanwhile, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said no tropical cyclone is expected to affect the country in

the next three days, but rains brought by the intertropical convergence zone and the southwest monsoon would continue.

Graciano Yumul, PAGASA supervising undersecretary, said the low pressure area that was earlier expected to become a tropical depression has already dissipated.

"Up to Friday, the country will be cloudy with light rains. No tropical cyclone in the vicinity per satellite and numerical models," he said.

PAGASA weather division chief Robert Sawi said two to five more cyclones are expected to enter the Philippine area of responsibility before the end of the year.

"The track is Northern and Central Luzon for October; Central and Southern Luzon for November and Southern Luzon and Visayas for December," Sawi said.

Yumul said the cyclones during the latter part of the year are usually make landfall.

A total of 17 cyclones have so far entered the Philippines this year.

PAGASA also warned the public against venturing into the seas of Northern Luzon, saying the western seaboard of Northern Luzon will have rough to very rough seas with wave heights expected to reach 3.7 to 4.5 meters.

"Fishing boats and other small seacraft are advised not to venture out to sea, while larger sea vessels are alerted against big waves," it said. (www.philstar.com) ■

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VILMA D. FUENTES, Registered Physical Therapist

PNoY: Gov't Looking for Solutions to Luzon Flooding

from www.philstar.com
Wednesday, October 5, 2011

MANILA, Philippines - PRESIDENT BENIGNO AQUINO III TODAY ASSURED FLOOD VICTIMS in Tarlac province that the national government is looking for solutions to mitigate flooding in the province and other parts of Central Luzon, the hardest-hit region in Luzon by two typhoons last week.

Aquino told local officials and residents in La Paz town that the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is presently reviewing the designs of infrastructures not only in the province but in the whole region to find if there are any defects that caused perennial flooding, especially to low-lying areas.

"Matapos ang pag-aaral nila, laayos po natin para kungdi man mawala ay maibsan ang problema. Kalikasan po yan, may hangganan ang ating magagawa, pero pipilitin po natin na maibsan ang pamiminsala," he said.

The President also assured the affected residents of La Paz town at the municipal plaza: "Hindi ko

kayo pababayaan. Mag-antabay lang po kayo at alagaan ninyo ng inyong kalusugan."

Aquino was welcomed by some local officials led by Governor Victor Yap and La Paz Mayor Michael Manuel. The local officials briefed the President on the extent of damage wrought by typhoons "Pedring" and "Quiel" on the province.

The President inspected the Chico River where there is heavy siltation that said to be the main cause of flooding in this town. After the inspection, he proceeded to the evacuation center and talked to the evacuees, whose numbers have swelled to around 31,000 families.

Enroute to the plazuela, the President also passed through health facilities (rural unit II and La Paz Community Hospital) which were rendered non-serviceable due to severe flooding.

La Paz is a catch-basin of runoff water coming from major



Pres. Naynoy Aquino

dams in Northern Luzon such as the San Roque Dam in Pangasinan.

From Tarlac, the President proceeded to Pangampa to visit the site of the ongoing Pinatubo Hazard Urgent Mitigation Project Phase 3-B (PHUMP 3-B) in Barangay San Felipe which is also located in the City of San Fernando.

PHUMP 3-B is a flood control project that serves as a line of defense for the City of San Fernando and nearby towns against flooding.

The President was also scheduled to visit the evacuation center within the United Pulp and Paper Company compound in Barangay Iba Esté in Calumpit town in Bulacan province.

He will also inspect the flooded areas near the Calumpit municipal hall aboard a 6x6 truck and then be motored to the Hiyas Convention Center in Malolos City to attend the meeting of the Regional Development Council 3. (www.philstar.com) ■

LEGAL NOTES

Preparing for a Marriage-Based Green Card Interview



by Reuben S. **SEGURITAN**

for the purpose of circumventing immigration laws, the USCIS will find the marriage fraudulent and deny the immigrant petition filed for the alien spouse.

Some of the red flags or indicators of a "sham marriage" are the following: short time between entry and marriage, unusual marriage history, large age discrepancy, unusual cultural differences, and low employment or financial status of the petitioner spouse.

When one or some of these factors are present, the spouses should gather documentation to prove the good faith of the marriage and be ready to address them at the interview.

The spouses must prepare evidence of their shared life. These include joint tax returns, joint bank account statements, lease agreements, joint mortgage statements, life insurance beneficiary designation, mail showing same residential address, cell phone bills, and photographs. There are no rules as to how much evidence would be sufficient, so in case the USCIS officer

is not satisfied with the evidence given or would much rather hear from the spouses themselves, the couple must be prepared to be questioned thoroughly.

In all cases, but more so where a marriage has red flags, the couple must anticipate a hard interview. The USCIS officer can ask a wide variety of questions ranging from how the couple first met and who was present at their wedding, to the color of the bedroom wall and what the other spouse's favorite meal is. At times, they may even be called back for a second interview, particularly when the USCIS detects fraud in the marriage.

In one case that our firm handled, the client and her spouse could not provide joint tax returns and other primary evidence to show a good faith marriage. The USCIS officer, probably suspecting that the marriage was fraudulent, scheduled them for a second interview. The alien spouse through our firm eventually obtained her green card.

At the interview, the couple

must remember to always tell the truth and answer the questions without guessing or unnecessarily giving too many details. At the same time, they must know when not to answer a question. For example, they should not respond if they do not know or remember the answer at all, or if the officer's question assumes or misstates a fact.

The couple must also try to be calm and focused throughout the interview, which could take an hour or even more. Needless to state, adequate preparation by the spouses is valuable. A lawyer can help the spouses prepare for the interview in addition to representing them at the interview itself.

One of our former clients was the beneficiary of a petition by her U.S. citizen spouse, who was over 20 years her senior. At her visa interview, she gave a few inconsistent answers which led the consul to deny her immigrant visa application, perhaps considering also the large age difference between the spouses. She was not assisted by an attorney at the time. She later retained our firm and we helped her appeal the visa denial. We were able to establish the "bona fides" of

their marriage and she eventually got her green card.

There are criminal and civil consequences if a marriage is found to be fraudulent. Aside from liability for false testimony and perjury, a person who knowingly enters into a marriage for the purpose of evading immigration law may face imprisonment of up to 5 years and/or a maximum fine of \$250,000.

Any subsequent petition filed on the alien's behalf is also barred from being approved if the USCIS finds that a marriage was entered into to evade immigration laws. This includes petitions filed by employers, future spouses, and other relatives. No waiver is available if there has been a finding of marriage fraud.

Even a previously-granted conditional residency may be terminated if the USCIS later determines that the marriage was fraudulent, and in that case the alien may be placed in removal proceedings. ■

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

MAINLAND NEWS

Undocumented Filipino Criminals to Be Deported

by Joseph **PIMENTEL**
Saturday, October 1, 2011

UNDOCUMENTED FILIPINOS WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS in the US were among the 2,900 arrested in a massive roundup by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials on Thursday.

The 34 Filipinos arrested are scheduled for deportation, ICE officials told ABS-CBN.

The arrests were part of a seven-day national "Cross Check" enforcement operation by ICE.

"The results of this targeted enforcement operation underscore ICE's ongoing commitment and focus on the arrest and removal of convicted criminal aliens and those that game our nation's immigration system," said ICE Director John Morton in a statement. "Because of the tireless efforts and teamwork of ICE officers and agents in tracking down at large criminal aliens and



fugitives, there are 2,901 fewer criminal aliens in our neighborhoods across the country."

The operation is the largest of its kind this year, according to ICE. Arrests occurred in all 50 states and four US territories. ICE conducted its first "Cross Check" operation in December 2009, and has since conducted Cross Check operations nationwide. These previous Cross Check operations have resulted in ICE arresting more than 4,500 convicted criminals, fugitives and aliens nationwide, who have illegally re-entered

the United States after removal.

According to ICE, all of the 2,901 individuals taken into custody had prior criminal convictions including at least 1,282 aliens who had multiple criminal convictions. More than 1,600 of those arrested had felony convictions including manslaughter, attempted murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug trafficking, child abuse, sexual crimes against minors, and aggravated assault. Of the total 2,901 criminal aliens arrested, 42 were gang members and 151 were convicted sex offenders.

The ICE Cross Check enforcement arrests comes at a time when the Obama administration in August ordered the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice to review more than 300,000 cases regarding undocumented immigrants. The administration had announced that

government resources would not spent arresting undocumented, law-abiding immigrants but rather focus its attention and resources on arresting and deporting out convicted criminals and those who pose a public safety and/or national security threat. (www.asian-journal.com) ■



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TRAVEL & TOURISM

Business, Leisure Travelers Unfazed by Economic Uncertainty - Survey

from www.philstar.com

MANILA, Philippines - Business and leisure travel in the Asia-Pacific region has held firm despite the uncertain global economy, with the trend favoring more affluent markets, according to findings of the latest MasterCard survey on consumer purchasing priorities-travel.

The latest survey was conducted from March 15 to April 27 this year and involved 10,374 consumers from 14 markets. Data collection was via Internet surveys, personal, telephone and computer-aided telephone interviews, with the questionnaire translated to the local language wherever appropriate and necessary. The index and its accompanying reports do not represent MasterCard's financial performance.

From the Asia-Pacific region, more than 80 percent of

respondents from Singapore (85 percent) and Hong Kong (84 percent) had made at least one international leisure trip in the past 12 months, with 27 percent of respondents from Hong Kong and 23 percent of respondents from Singapore making more than three trips.

South Korea (55 percent), Taiwan (54 percent) and Australia (53 percent) also showed high propensity for making international leisure trips, with a majority of respondents having made at least one trip in the past year.

Business travel is an important component of international travel in many markets in the Asia-Pacific. In Hong Kong and Singapore, 48 percent and 43 percent of the respondents, respectively, made at least one international business trip in the past 12 months, followed by South Korea (29 percent), Taiwan (27 percent) and Australia



(21 percent). Eighteen percent of respondents from Hong Kong made more than three business trips in the past 12 months.

In spite of the strong growth of outbound travel in recent years, the fact remains that in many of the markets in the Asia-Pacific region, the vast majority of people surveyed have not made any international leisure trips in the past 12 months.

For instance, 98 percent and 91 percent of the survey respondents in India and China, respectively, have not traveled overseas in the past 12 months, and these high percentages are matched by 93 percent in Vietnam, 98 percent in Indonesia, and 82 percent in the Philippines.

Not surprisingly, there is a high correlation between

household income and international travel. According to the survey, in markets where high travel incidence is reported, monthly household income ranges between \$3,000 and \$5,000. In contrast, in markets where low travel incidence is reported, average monthly household income is less than \$1,500.

"The pattern continues to reflect that international personal travel in the Asia-Pacific region has proved to be resilient in spite of the weak and uncertain recovery of the global economy. In regional business centers like Singapore and Hong Kong, business travel continues to be robust," said Yuya Hedrick-Wong, global economic advisor for Master-

Card Worldwide.

"The fact that extraordinarily high percentages of respondents in markets like China, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam have not traveled in the last 12 months suggests that international personal travel is likely to be a powerful growth trend for the foreseeable future, as these markets continue to see growth in income and an expanding middle class," Yuya added.

Overall, majority of the respondents are likely to travel for business the same as or more than in the past 12 months. South Korea (27 percent), Singapore (23 percent) and Hong Kong (19 percent) display significantly higher propensity to travel more for business in the next 12 months.

The same applies for leisure travel, with a majority of respondents looking to travel the same as or more than in the past 12 months. South Korea (40 percent) and Australia (32 percent) show the highest interest to travel more for leisure over the coming year. ■

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MAINLAND NEWS

Gawad Amerika to Hold 10th Annual Awards Night

THE 10TH ANNUAL GAWAD AMERIKA AWARDS NIGHT (GAAN) is scheduled for November 5, 2011 at the Celebrity Centre International in Hollywood, California.

The evening is an annual celebration recognizing the excellence of Filipino individuals and entrepreneurs who have gone above and beyond in their areas of specialty. GAAN is an independent award-giving body mainly composed of newspaper publishers and selected reputable community leaders.

By creating an environment in which exemplary Filipino-Americans can validate their importance in American society, Gawad Amerika awardees encourage other prospective and fledgling Fil-Am's to pursue their dreams and aspirations. In constructing new and innovative projects, Gawad Amerika continues to endorse fresh ideas and talents.

Established in February 1996, the non-profit Gawad Amerika Foundation (GAF) is based in California and takes pride in its mission to shelter the homeless, feed the hunger, protect abused women/children and provide counseling. GAF also works with other non-profits, community leaders, elected officials and businessowners to help the less fortunate. GAF is funded mostly by private donations and government agencies.

GAF also provides financial assistance to many struggling Filipino-American families. Today, there are about 125 students who are recipients of the Gawad Amerika's financial support.

GAAN is sponsored Cerinmax Entertainment in cooperation with Asian Panorama, Caremax Home Health and "A" Celebrities Talent International. More information on GAAN is available by calling (818) 224-9390. ■

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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For more details, please contact
Loretta Yajima at 524-5437

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GLOBAL NEWS

Two Filipinos Named Asian Heroes in Canada

**A FILIPINO ENTREPRENEUR AND
A FILIPINO-CANADIAN NURSE** were
among the six awardees of the 2nd Asian
Heroes award in Canada.

Feliciojano Gorospe, chairman emeritus of the VGenet Group of Companies, was recognized as the Asian Hero from the Philippines.

Born to a poor family in Ilocos Sur, Gorospe has succeeded as an entrepreneur. A report from ABS-CBN North America News Bureau said,

He helps send hundreds of poor children to school through his company, VGenet Foundation.

Since 2009, the foundation supports at least 100 scholars annually and vows to do so for the next 100 years

"I'm preparing the trust fund so that even if we will no longer be around, the earnings from the trust fund will be sufficient to continue the project," he said.

Phoebe Carantes, meantime, is a Canadian with Filipino roots. A registered nurse with the Fraser Health Institute BC, Carantes let go of a lucrative career to vol-

unteer for healthcare services to war-torn Afghanistan where she is being recognized as an Asian Hero.

"If I would have the opportunity to give back to this country and also to serve our men and women in uniform in Afghanistan, I will do it anytime," she said.

Organizers behind the award say they hope to help the heroes not just through recognition, but more so through funding for their causes. Successful individuals from different fields make up the team behind Canada's version of Asian Heroes.

(<http://www.thefilipinopost.com>) ■

Immune System Discoveries Earn Nobel in Medicine

STOCKHOLM (AP) — **THREE SCIENTISTS** WON THE NOBEL PRIZE IN MEDICINE on yesterday for discoveries about the immune system that opened new avenues for the treatment and prevention of infectious illness and cancer.

American Bruce Beutler and French scientist Jules Hoffmann shared the 10 million-kronor (\$1.5 million) award with Canadian-born Ralph Steinman, the Nobel committee at Stockholm's Karolinska institute said.

Their discoveries have enabled the development of improved vaccines against infectious diseases. In the long term they could also yield better treatments of cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and chronic inflammatory diseases, award committee secretary Goran Hansson told The Associated Press.

Beutler and Hoffmann were cited for their discoveries in the 1990s of receptor proteins that can recognize bacteria and other microorganisms as they enter the body, and activate the first line of defense in the immune system, known as innate immunity.

Steinman was honored for the discovery two decades earlier of dendritic cells, which help regulate adaptive immunity, the next stage of the immune system's response, when the invading microorganisms are purged from the body.



(L-R) Scientists Bruce Beutler, Jules Hoffmann and Ralph Steinman

Their discoveries have helped scientists understand why the immune system sometimes attacks its own tissues, paving the way for new ways to fight inflammatory diseases.

"They have made possible the development of new methods for preventing and treating disease, for instance with improved vaccines against infections and in attempts to stimulate the immune system to attack tumors," the committee said.

No vaccines are on the market yet, but Hansson told AP that vaccines against hepatitis are in the pipeline. "Large clinical trials are being done today," he said.

Hansson said he had not been able to reach any of the winners before the announcement.

"Hoffmann for example is traveling in China and is difficult to reach," he said.

Beutler, born in 1957, is professor of genetics and immunology at The Scripps Research Institute in San Diego, California. Hoffmann, 70, headed a research laboratory in Strasbourg, France, be-

tween 1974 and 2009 and served as president of the French National Academy of Sciences between 2007-2008.

Steinman, 68, has been affiliated with Rockefeller University in New York since 1970, and heads its Center for Immunology and Immune Diseases.

Hoffmann's discovery came in 1996 during research on how fruit flies fight infections. Two years later, Beutler's research on mice showed that fruit flies and mammals activate innate immunity in similar ways when attacked by germs.

Steinman's discovery dates back to 1973, when he found a new cell type, the dendritic cell, which has a unique capacity to activate so-called T-cells. Those cells have a key role in adaptive immunity, when antibodies and killer cells fight infections. They also develop a memory that helps the immune system mobilize its defenses next time it comes under a similar attack.

The medicine award kicked off a week of Nobel Prize announcements, and will be followed by the physics prize on Tuesday, chemistry on Wednesday,

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literature on Thursday and the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday. The winners of the economics award will be announced on Oct. 10.

The coveted prizes were established by wealthy Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel — the inventor of dynamite — except for the economics award, which was created by Sweden's central bank in 1968 in Nobel's memory. The prizes are always handed out on Dec. 10, on the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896.

Last year's medicine award went to British professor Robert Edwards for fertility research that led to the first test tube baby. (www.philstar.com) ■

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