

FAMAS elects new president



After the proclamation of official results, the newly-elected executive board members of FAMAS pose with their supporters and some members of the Comelec in front of the Philippine community center on Wednesday, August 16, 2007. Claro Bermudez (6th from left) is the new FAMAS president. From left (front row) Dick Dahirot, Jeff Narciso, Manny Lagasca, Chris Bautista, Riza Esmeralda Sarto, Claro Bermudez, Flor Rillo, Lourdes Rosales, Eric Montilla, and Nilo Parial. Back row are members of the Comelec headed by Jose "Butch" Aracena (2nd from right). Not in photo are: Shelley Quintos and Marites Manuel, also proclaimed elected directors.

Montreal, August 16, 2007 - The election held on August 12 was described as generally peaceful and orderly, thanks to the excellent work of the Comelec headed by Butch Aracena. It was also observed that the canvassing was done faster and there was no serious complaint at all. The winners were not officially declared until after the required waiting period of 72 hours.

The Comelec's report to the community is quoted hereunder:

In fulfillment of its mandate as the 2007 Commission on Elections for the Philippine Association of Montreal and Suburbs, Inc. (FAMAS) Elections for President and Board of Director 2007-2009, the following declarations are presented:

- The COMELEC-sponsored mass for a clean and peaceful elections held on the evening of August 10 at the

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3rd Ambassadors Consuls General Tour Welcomed at Malacanang Palace



President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo shakes hands with Zenaída Kharroubi, the North American Filipino Star editor & publisher, during the 3rd Ambassadors Tour reception in Malacanang Palace, July 16, 2007.

The visit to Malacanang on July 16, and the photo opportunity with President Arroyo, proved to be the tour's highlight for most people. "I met the president during her visit to Ottawa in 2002 but this is the only time I had

the opportunity to be photographed shaking hands with her," said Zenaída Kharroubi, the Filipino Star editor who joined the tour for the first time.

The 3rd Ambassadors Consuls General and Tourism Directors Tour of the Philippines was the biggest and the best tour so far since its inception in 2005 by the then Philippine Ambassador to the United States, Alberto del Rosario. It brought in not only Filipino-American-Canadian tourists but also prospective investors who are looking for trade opportunities.

The basic tour package lasted 3 days from July 14 to 17, and featured not only sumptuous breakfasts and dinners but business networking opportunities during seminars that began in the same morning of arrival of most delegates on July 14 and everyone had the opportunity to go to all three seminars instead of choosing only one. The first business meeting about real estate was held while having breakfast sponsored by Megaworld

See Page 4 Ambassadors Tour



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Jean Pierre Sanchez, Mary Samonas, Patrick Bedikian

EDITORIAL

The tour opens our eyes to our country's beauty and wonder

Perhaps, we have not realized before this tour that the Philippines is indeed a beautiful country populated by warm, friendly people. It is not an exaggeration to claim that it is greatly blessed for it has many mountains and valleys, rivers and lakes, beaches and islands that look like paradise on earth. Seeing those chocolate hills in Bohol, and admiring the tranquil waters in Panglao island are worth the 21-hour flight from Montreal. The first experience of snorkeling and being able to see the blue starfish and multi-colored array of schools of fish are memories that will linger. Some people say snorkeling is even more enjoyable to do in Palawan because it has pristine waters and beautiful corals.

The 3rd Ambassadors Consuls General Tour is indeed an excellent tool to encourage all expatriates and their friends to come to the Philippines. Considering the exchange rate of the Canadian dollar to the peso, it is a bargain to spend a month's holiday enjoying the scenery, the shopping and the food. We congratulate former Philippine Ambassador to the U.S., Alberto del Rosario, for his brainchild which is now benefiting the Philippines because of the tourism windfall generated by this annual tour.

When people ask – how was your tour of the Philippines – it is easy to say that it was a wonderful trip and that we enjoyed it so much that we are looking forward to going back. With this statement, some people are now thinking of joining the tour next year. They better book early in order not to be disappointed. We are expecting it to be bigger and better.

To avoid having to refuse anyone, why don't the organizers think of holding the tour twice a year? Apparently, the space in the dining hall of Malacanang Palace can only accommodate 500 people. If they limit the tour to 500 people, it will be much easier to manage the event.

We have to tell people to begin saving for the next tour. The experience is unforgettable. Tourists being people-oriented and friendly, it is

a pleasure to exchange pleasantries with them. Besides helping the Philippine economy by bringing in more dollars, we are also doing ourselves a favor because of the relaxing effect of going on holidays.

Discovering an unknown spot to visit is in itself an exciting and memorable experience. We are sure that there are many more undiscovered beautiful spots to enjoy in the Philippines. In our next tour, we will visit as many places as possible to collect photos and souvenirs.

Of course, it is not possible to see everything in one tour. We need to make many more trips to see other provinces and cities. Even if we go back to the places we visited, we will certainly enjoy them more because we are better prepared and organized to enjoy other activities and sights.

Putting the Philippines on the map of favorite places to visit will help produce an economic boon. Our farmers and small businessmen will have an additional income by selling their products to tourists. Photographers are able to sell their photos for souvenirs. Some knowledgeable people can act as tour guides. Indeed, there are many people who benefit from this yearly tour. We hope it continues to be bigger and better. For this to happen, we need to give our feedback to the tour organizers. We are sure that they tried to do their best but there are little things that can irritate people. For example, being given a small hotel room without a window is not pleasant. If the tour has the title "Ambassadors/Consuls General Tour, is it not to be expected that only the best hotel rooms are going to be given to the members of such a delegation?

We can hardly wait till the next tour is announced. We encourage everyone to promote it among their friends and relatives. After all, it does not take too much of an effort and it will go a long way to the development of our country's tourism industry. This is the simplest way to give back something to our homeland by creating jobs for our kababayans.

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

Heritage Canada's Unused Festival Budgets Must Be Transferred to Canada Economic Development

GATINEAU – The Conservatives must stop hindering the cultural community and transfer festival funds included in the last budget to the Canada Economic Development Agency for the regions of Quebec (CED-Q), Hull – Aylmer MP and Liberal Critic for CED-Q Marcel Proulx said today.

"The minority Conservatives have completely missed the target with their new program," said Mr Proulx. "It is time to stop dithering, let's be efficient and transfer all of the unused festivals budgets to CED-Q, as the Liberal opposition demands."

Last spring, the Liberal Opposition denounced Canadian Heritage for being too late in distributing allocated sums to summer festivals.

On June 1 and again on June 5, during Question Period in the House of Commons, the Honourable Lucienne Robillard asked the Conservatives to transfer its festivals budget to CED-Q, which already had an existing program to support festivals.

"After ignoring the Liberal Opposition's repeated demands, the Heritage Minister is now trying to mask the Conservatives' deplorable inaction by claiming she is trying to balance Ottawa's financial support between large cultural events and smaller festivals," said Mr Proulx.

"If the festivals support issue really is a top priority for Josée Verner, she has to explain why the Conservatives have not agreed to the Liberals' suggestion that the available sums be transferred to CED-Q," Mr. Proulx concluded.

Contact :
Office of Marcel Proulx
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Tapes come back to haunt president Arroyo

August 23, 2007

The ghost of an election wiretapping scandal that nearly brought down Philippine President Gloria Arroyo in 2005 is threatening to haunt her again as new hearings loom in the Senate next week.



Lawmakers tried to impeach Arroyo when a tape emerged two years ago of a woman sounding like the president calling an election commission official while votes were still being counted in the 2004 presidential vote.

Ten members of her cabinet resigned when the opposition leaked the tapes to the press, and Arroyo — although she insisted she had done nothing wrong — publicly apologized for a “lapse in judgement.”

Now a senator who lost to Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election has called for a new public inquiry after finding what he said was fresh evidence implicating her in corrupting the election result.

Panfilo Lacson played a videotape in the Senate of a former army sergeant, Vidal Doble, who said he had recorded Arroyo asking an election commission official to make sure she won the election by one million votes.

Doble said he had wiretapped a number of officials including Virgilio Garcillano, a senior official on the election commission.

But he later recanted, saying he had been bribed to make the recordings.

Now in the new videotape shown in the Senate this week, Doble said he had been forced to recant because his family had been kidnapped and threatened with harm at the time.

With new hearings into the matter requested, Arroyo's legal adviser Sergio Apostol warned Thursday that Doble could commit perjury if he took the stand.

“This is political. This is not in aid of legislation. This is in aid of presidential ambition,” Apostol told Philippine radio, accusing of Lacson of using the controversy to launch another presidential election bid in 2010.

Garcillano was never named as the election official on the tape. But the woman said to be Arroyo was heard greeting him: “Hello Garci.”

A new round of hearings is expected to start next week, said Senate president Manuel Villar. ■

Freed Italian priest names captors as Abu Sayyaf

August 13, 2007

An Italian priest freed after a 39-day kidnap ordeal in the Philippines told authorities in Rome he had been abducted by the Abu Sayyaf militant group.

39 days after being kidnapped from his parish in Sibugay on June 10. He said he had been properly treated by his abductors, though he lost weight because of a diet of fish and rice.

Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim militant



Giancarlo Bossi, pictured July 2007, an Italian priest freed after a 39-day kidnap ordeal in the Philippines, told authorities in Rome he had been abducted by the Abu Sayyaf militant group.

“The abductors were Filipinos with Arab names. There were about 10 of them, some had their faces covered. They described themselves as members of Abu Sayyaf,” Giancarlo Bossi told investigating anti-terrorist magistrates in a two-hour debriefing, according to official sources.

Bossi, 57, returned to Italy late Saturday August 11.

He had been released on July 19,

group linked to Al-Qaeda, has carried out numerous attacks on Christians and foreigners in the Philippines.

Bossi told the magistrates he did not know the circumstances of his liberation. The Italian government said no ransom was paid for his release.

The priest was to meet Pope Benedict XVI on September 1 in Loreto, central Italy, a Vatican spokesman said. ■

Jocelyn Coulon supports measures to welcome immigrants

Outremont, August 21 2007 – Jocelyn Coulon, Liberal candidate in the September 17 federal by-election in the riding of Outremont, supports measures to encourage the integration of immigrants and undertakes to work to make this happen with all of the organizations concerned.

This position comes naturally to one who is a product of immigration.

“My father arrived here in 1950 as an immigrant, and my mother was Québécoise, so I am particularly sensitive to immigration issues, and I believe that Québec and Canada should remain open and welcoming, because immigration is a source of the wealth of our country. We need new arrivals to maintain our demographic growth and economic vitality”, he said.

Since immigration is a shared jurisdiction, it is essential to respect the prerogatives of each level of government. But beyond the governments, there are a great many

community and volunteer organizations working to welcome immigrants and to help them integrate. Jocelyn Coulon intends to work with and support these organizations.

“I would like to see the immigration welcoming services, which are already effective, become even more so by adopting measures to that would make them more transparent and flexible, and less bureaucratic. This will be a goal for my work with all of the Outremont organizations working in the field of welcoming and integrating immigrants,” said Coulon.

He also expressed his concern on the subject of recognition of foreign diplomas.

“Outremont has many workers with training in another country, struggling

Jocelyn
Coulon
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See Page 20 Coulon Supports

From Page 1 FAMAS Elections

Catholic Mission of Montreal brought the 2 presidential candidates and most of the candidates for directors together in a rare demonstration of unity under one faith.

• Two dates were set for advance registration of voters (August

entries which may have occurred when data were combined and to the number of those who registered but did not vote. The COMELEC also recognizes the possibility of other reasons for such an error.

• Generally, the elections were peaceful and orderly. Several cases of voters with expired Medicare



Comelec commissioners pose for souvenir after a hard day's work, August 12, 2007

5 and August 11) to help facilitate a more participative and expedient registration procedure. There were a total of 479 advance registrants. Final review of the records showed that 54 of the advance registrants did not vote

cards (as far back as one year ago) trying to get pass the pre-registration step were reported. The COMELEC allowed voters with expired MEDICARE Cards since four (4) months ago to vote. Other cases were



Some of the people who witnessed the proclamation of winners in the FAMAS elections pose with the newly elected executive board, August 16, 2007.

on August 12.

• The August 12 elections opened at 7:45 a.m. and closed at 5:00 p.m.

• There were 2 928 registered voters as shown in the COMELEC computer files.

• There were 2 846 ballots cast; 46 of which were invalid ballots (6 were spoiled votes for the president; 39 were spoiled votes for the office of director, 1 was an unstamped ballot).

• The discrepancy between the number of ballots cast as to the number of registered voters may be attributed to the imperfect computer

dealt with according to their individual merits.

• The Canvassing of Votes was held at the FAMAS Centre from 8:00 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.

• The COMELEC appreciates the cooperation of all the political parties in respecting the guidelines set for the tallying of votes. The canvassing was faster this year due to the multiple sub-precincts that were set up. All in all, the different party watchers and floaters were very helpful and respectful except for some over-zealous representatives who were annoying at times.

• At the end of the canvassing, each political party was furnished with a duly signed original copy of the precinct summary of votes and statement of unofficial election results.

• No one lodged any formal protest with the COMELEC within the period provided.

• The COMELEC thanks the outgoing FAMAS Executive Board for giving us the opportunity to be of service to the community. May God bless you all in your endeavors.

• Herewith is the final official statement of election results:

For the office of president:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. BERMUDEZ, Claro | 1 528 |
| 2. FLORESCA, Albert | 1 206 |

For the office of director

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1. BAUTISTA, Christopher | 1 393 |
| 2. NARCISO, Jeffrey | 1 380 |
| 3. PARIAL, Danilo | 1 369 |
| 4. CLEOFAS-MANUEL, Maritess | 1 346 |
| 5. RILLO, Floresto | 1 305 |
| 6. LAGASCA, Manuel | 1 278 |
| 7. ESMERALDA, Riza | 1 273 |
| 8. QUINTOS, Shelley | 1 264 |
| 9. ROSALES, Lourdes Blanco | 1 245 |
| 10. MONTILLA, Frederick | 1 202 |

The above results were the basis of the proclamation of Claro Bermudez as president, and the 10 directors of his team. The other candidates of the opposing party obtained the following results:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 11. ABERIN, Aquilino | 1 186 |
| 12. DOMINGO, Mel | 1 117 |
| 13. BACULINA, Freddie | 1 116 |
| 14. PIMENTEL, Silvestre | 1 064 |
| 15. MENDIGORIN, Noel | 1 044 |
| 16. GUINTO, Emilia | 1 023 |
| 17. VILLANEUVA, Ester | 983 |
| 18. CANDOLETA, Alberto | 973 |
| 19. DELOS REYES, Dionisio | 858 |
| 20. VISARIO, Vangie | 857 |

Signed: Jose Aracenas

From Page 1 Ambassador Tour

Corporation, a property development company owned by Andrew Tan. This company apparently reaped the most benefit from the tour this year as many balikbayans were interested in buying a property. Immediately after this seminar, all the tour participants were conducted to the Forbes Town Center a major business/residential development of Megaworld and the Bonifacio West Development Corp. at The Fort in Taguig.

During the same briefing, Bing Limjoco, president of the Philippine Franchise Association, spoke of the opportunities in investing in local franchises. She also noted the success and continuing expansion of Jollibee Foods Corp. because of franchising, edging out the US-based McDonald's

Corp. in the local fast-food business/ Cecilia Ramos, owner of Rice's Jewelry and chairwoman of the Meycauayan Jewelry Industry Association Inc., Meycauayan, Bulacan, made a presentation which highlighted Bulacan as the site of the country's best manufacturers of gold jewelry, exporting millions of dollars worth of products to the world market. She also urged people to look at the displays of jewelry at the ground floor of the Forbes Town Center.

In the evening of July 14, the tour group was given a welcome dinner at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza where they feasted on dishes from the Mindanao region hosted by the Department of Tourism. Ambassador Jose Brillantes delivered an inspirational message encouraging the audience to continue their involvement in the yearly tour. A fashion show was also held during the dinner that featured the Muslim-inspired creations of veteran Filipino designer Toni Galang whose clientele includes Filipino-Americans on Guam and the mainland U.S.A. He is well-known for his intricately designed wedding gowns. Also featured were Muslim handicrafts and accessories on display at the hotel.

On July 15, the different delegations separated for the day tours to Corregidor, an island off Manila Bay, which became the headquarters of the Allied Forces in the Pacific, and the temporary seat of the Philippine Commonwealth during World War II; Villa Escudero, a resort featuring man-made waterfalls amid a vast coconut plantation, and Tagaytay to get a glimpse of the world famous Taal volcano. A better view of the volcano can be had by going to the exclusive clubhouse of the Highlands where membership alone costs 35 million pesos. One has to know a member in order to visit this place. Those who went to Tagaytay were also treated to a healthy, delicious lunch at Sonya's garden, famous for its fresh herbs and vegetables grown on the premises by the owner.

In the evening of the same day, a trip to the ABS-CBN studio was organized. A simple fast food buffet was served to the guests. The fact that most balikbayans did not know the young actors and actresses from "Kapamilya" did not make it a thrilling experience.

On July 16, all delegates were brought to Rizal Park by 17 tourist busses with police escorts. Philippine Ambassador to Canada Jose Brillantes presided over the wreath laying ceremony. There. Then the whole delegation headed to Malacanang Palace. They had the opportunity to visit the Palace Museum and to be treated to lunch at the Heroes Hall. At 2:00 P.M., everyone prepared for the photo-op with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

When the appointed time for the President to come to the hall came, everyone seemed to expect a speech but instead got a short greeting of welcome. A few who had joined the previous tours, like Eloise Baza, president of the Guam Chamber of Commerce, were disappointed and wondered "why the President did not



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Dumaguete City Mayor Agustín R. Perdomo shakes hands with Zenaída Kharroubi during the tour group's courtesy call, July 19, 2007. Looking on are Carl Abella from Washington, Lem Amit from Los Angeles, and the Tour Director from Chicago.



Some members of the tour group that went to Bohol pose for souvenir during the courtesy call on Governor Erico B. Aumentado, July 17, 2007.

give any speech." No official explanation was given for this, but a DFA source told BusinessMirror that "it is now the President's official policy to give only one speech a day." At noon that day, the President had already spoken before participants of the 2007 Corporate Social Responsibility Expo at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza.

In the previous tours, President Arroyo had managed to whip the tour participants into frenzied clapping as she outlined the accomplishments of her administration and encouraging them to invest in the country. Last year, she even pushed the Filipino-Americans to support her campaign for Charter change.

This time, the President merely exchanged a few pleasantries with some members of each tour delegation as she sat throughout the souvenir photo-taking with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, and Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila.

After the basic tour of three days, some delegates opted for the extended tours to other regions such as Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Boracay, Bohol, Dumaguete City, Palawan, and other provinces, some on their own and others organized by Rajah Tours for another three days from July 17 to 20, 2007, for an additional fee ranging from \$349 per person, twin sharing to \$764 per person.

An enthusiastic endorsement of the tour came from Atty. Alexander Modaber, the US Public Defender for Guam who had joined the two previous Ambassadors/Consuls General Tour. Of his third tour, Modaber said: "They've added something new and each time is a new experience ... Everybody had a great opportunity when they had different trips to the various regions in the Philippines. So it's a tremendous opportunity to see the Philippines, to see the culture and to see the things outside of Manila. Of course, what's amazing, too, is you get to go to the museums and just learn so much. There's always something new to see. You can always take something out of it."

A proof of the growing popularity of the tour came from Lem Amit of Los Angeles. Last year, there were 50 participants from this city. This year there were over 150 who joined the tour.

Aside from the out of town tours and museum visits, the tour group was also brought to major shopping destinations in the metropolis, such as the Mall of Asia of the SM Group along Roxas Blvd., and Tiendesitas, a bazaar in Pasig City. ■



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COMMUNITY NEWS

NDG Community Council meeting

NDG Community Council is organizing this month NDG 2020 on "Cultural Diversity in NDG: Between tolerance and acceptance, do we value our diversity?"

Join us on Thursday, September 06, 2007, 7 pm at Empress Cultural Centre 5560 Sherbrooke W. The evening will include presentations Cultural diversity in NDG, The NDG Community Council networking and support tools. How and who support cultural communities: La Commission interculturelle, Le Comité interculturel de côte des neiges, la Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles.

Join us for this diverse forum and bring along your country's favorite dessert to share.

As usual, the first part of the meeting will begin with a "Community Exchange" where you will have the opportunity to learn about the work of local groups in NDG.

For more information, or to register for childcare, please contact Halah Al-Ubaidi at ndg2020@ndg.ca, or 484-1471. Halah Al-Ubaidi
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Looking for sponsors for scholarship program

Saint Hannibal Empowerment Center located in Malibay, Pasig City, Philippines is looking for people who are willing to support students from poor or squatter areas. This Center is led by Rogationists priests. They work like Mother Theresa. Their mission is dedicated to poor people, especially in squatter areas of Manila.

They are asking help from other countries to send talented youths from poor areas to school and give them a chance to have a better future. The only way they can avoid to repeat the same pattern of their poor parents living in poor or squatter areas is to give them the chance to graduate and later find permanent work.

We would appreciate your help and support for these youths who are eager to finish their studies. Please join us and give a chance to talented youth from a poor family to graduate and have a nicer future.

We assure you that all the money you will send is used 100% for the studies of these poor youths. There is no administration fee taken from your donation. You will receive a picture and information about the

student you sponsor.

If you are interested to participate in this program or for more information, please, contact Bertrand Robert, volunteer adviser in the Philippines, at: 450-435-1803

Biogas Congress to review huge untapped potential

The European biogas sector is growing rapidly as concerns grow about oil and gas prices and climate change. A recent 'Biogas Barometer' report, published by a consortium of renewable energy groups led by France's Observ'ER, cites a 13.6% increase growth in biogas use for primary energy production between 2005 and 2006.

Biogas is composed primarily of methane and CO₂, and can be used for heat production and electricity generation. A variety of sources are used to create biogas, including municipal wastes, sewage sludge, manure or biodegradable waste.

The EU's 1997 White Paper on renewables set a target for biogas use at 15 megatons of oil equivalent (Mtoe) by 2010. However, analysts believe this ambitious target is unlikely to be met, forecasting a more likely usage rate of between 5.7 and 8.6 Mtoe of biogas use in the EU by 2010.

Despite this, combined heat and power (CHP) facilities in particular are using an increasing amount of biogas for electricity and heat production, with Germany's CHP sector leading the way.

A new Agra Informa conference, to be

held in Brussels in November, will cover all aspects of the burgeoning biogas sector. The Global Biogas Congress will examine prospects for new legislation to increase the adoption of biogas, in the light of the EU targets.

A keynote speaker at the two-day event in Brussels will be Hans van Steen from the European Commission, who will look at government initiatives to increase biogas usage. This will include investment grants, tax measures and subsidies.

Delegates will also hear case studies of waste management companies who are pioneering the capture of landfill gas, as well as the latest developments in biogas for electricity generation and CHP, such as the applications of new technologies.

Expert advice will also be given by leading industry representatives on how to secure finance for biogas projects and capitalise on extra revenue streams created by the Clean Development Mechanism, which applies to developing countries under the Kyoto Protocol to combat climate change.

For further information contact Carol Algar at conferences@agra-net.com or phone +44 (0)20 7017 7496.

www.agra-net.com/biogas

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Diploma in Education, TESL
Founder & Director-General
Gilmore College
Editor & Publisher,
North American Filipino Star
Group Commissioner, Scouts
Canada, Quebec Council



COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT Bigger than what you think

By Jerry Estrada
Philippine Correspondent

Why Coops Fail

There are many competing theories explaining the causes of coop failure. Like any organization or association, co-operatives have the strengths and weaknesses, too. Most early co-ops failed for several reasons. Even the Raiffeisen Coop Banks (U.S.) and the Caisses Populaires Desjardins (Canada) only began to have true and long-lasting success in the early 1900s after persisting and surviving plenty of coop problems.

It is useful for all coop members to know what causes a coop failure in order to help prevent the collapse. This is because most coop managers are dismissed and officers are blamed when coops fail. Prevention is better than cure.

The number of failing coops has been on the increase as reported around the world. In the 1990s, many important industrial nations have experienced upsetting coop failures like in Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Israel, France, and in Japan. But now, coops in these nations became large in various fields like insurance, banking, retail and in transport. Some of them even sell airplanes and lend money to their own governments.

Today, we will review and highlight some of the various theories on the factors behind coop crisis because up to now many people still fear to join coop business ownerships for they might encounter a ton of roadblocks in their own paths.

CAUSES OF COOP FAILURE

Business Climate. Globalization and liberalization have resulted to more competitive business environments. Several small, medium and big coops like those in the electric, producers, coop banking, consumers and trading industries are exposed to strong competition.

In the Philippines, consumer

coops, which are mostly university-based are caught in a competitive squeeze since their markets are being siphoned by the rich franchise operators of food chains and by the family-owned canteens and restaurants whose organizational structures are much leaner and informal than the coops.

Insufficient Capital. The lower a coop's capital, the higher the probability of its failure since as a coop's capital decreases, the higher its motivation for actions towards survival. This leads to more dangerous risk-taking operations. Therefore, the risk of failure rises with the decline of equity.

If coop members and officers do not effectively address a capital erosion situation early, it could result in bankruptcy. Adequate funds reduce risk-taking, while insufficient capital motivates coops to engage in actions towards survival at all costs.

Mismanagement. Management is a key to a successful business. Mismanagement caused many coops to fail in the 1980s and early 1990s. Coop crisis mostly comes from the absence of good managerial ideas in management decision-making. Therefore, competence and focus play a major role in coops. Even though coop leaders are accused of misconduct, it is difficult to prove that the negligence of management is the only cause of coop failure.

Mismanagement triggers the following: inability of management to appreciate and control a business; inability of management to ensure compliance with laid down procedures; lack of policies, and if policies existed at all, they are not observed which could eventually result in the failure of a coop.

Incomplete Financial Information. Financial data if inadequate or does not exist is dangerous. Internal and external audits play its role in formulating policies and procedures,

preparing plans, and programs. With the absence of audit figures, BODs cannot make decisions effectively and cannot efficiently plan. Moreover, coops are owned by a lot of members, hence financial reports are necessary for transparency purposes.

Lack of financial statement is one of the main reasons why a lot of Philippine coops went bankrupt in the past and this is still true until today. Government Intervention and Political Interference. Governments can cause coops to fail in many ways. The mentality of relying too much on government protection is still prevalent among many cooperatives. When governments intervene in coop from failing, coop member-owners tend to rely on the government to protect their interests. They feel that coops should be continuously protected and subsidized by the government.

Government regulations for coops are neither needed nor advantageous but ineffective government regulatory system causes coop failure. Likewise, politically directed coop policies lead to coop crisis as what happened in the Philippines in the 1980s when some dishonest leaders exploited the funds of coops.

Fraud and Corruption. Dishonesty and deception have been the general causes of many failed coops. Coop failures are seen by many to be caused by fraud and corruption. Over-reliance on one member of staff must be avoided. Most of the time organizations are defrauded by some of their own workers, mostly those who have been with organizations for long periods of time and whose work is not supervised. However, fraud is not the primary cause of coop crisis, since coop failures were rampant in the 1930s when there was no fraud.

"GET INNOVATIVE - OR GET DEAD"

The board of directors (BODs) and management should ensure that the coop operate within secure and reliable rules, observance of internal control (audit), good management, maintain BODs' competence, constant innovation, and continuous coop education and training.

Strong internal audit is a must to safeguard coop members' investment, and as a constructive risk-concentrated tool to discover, examine and guard the coop from the main aspects of risks. BODs should learn how to analyze and interpret financial reports and make immediate actions if necessary.

BODs must set up efficient

audit and inventory committees that hold regular meetings. But meetings should be done with a sound, understandable, periodic financial statements where the manager gives details to the board of directors about earnings generated.

Coops are knowledge-based discipline hence staff and officers are required to handle coop records in a good way and better manner for data control and expenditure on assets. Coop philosophy and rules should be observed with the right attitude. There should be documented rules and procedures, operations manual that are regularly revised, and effectively transmitted to all employees in order to ensure their successful application. These will protect a coop from failure arising from ignorance, negligence or deception.

Coop organizations should possess competent managers to guide and make the coop focus on what gives them a competitive advantage. It is not easy to attract skilled managers and officers during the infancy stage of the coop for many of them could not afford to give enough remuneration yet. What the coop needs during the early stage are dedicated volunteer leaders who are willing to help build a better community.

These recommendations could be a useful guide for preventing the recurrence of coop crises. There are no shortcuts, no magic formula. The risks are high, the problems are severe, and sometimes solutions can be harsh, but the challenges and the satisfaction of achieving a successful turnaround to help other people can make it all worthwhile.

BODs and management must retain the desire to innovate and improve. They should be more intellectual and thoughtful. Coop officers should be inspired to think. And above all, they should be inspired to play a role in making their community a better place to live. Remember- coops don't fail, people do. ■

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Villanueva, Arellano Class 55 alumnus, receives award

"Gus", as he is fondly called by all who know him, was awarded one of the ten outstanding Manilans 2007 for his long record and dedicated service to the city of Manila as a journalist and sports advocate for more than 50 years. He was interviewed briefly for this article last July 28 to get a little insight into the life of a journalist who is

currently holding a tough job as editor-in-chief of several newspapers and magazines.

Gus started journalism early, beginning with his first year high school. At the end of his high school education, he tried his luck with the old Manila Times in 1955 as a sports writer. From that time on, he has always been an active practitioner of journalism. He



Souvenir photo of Arellano High School alumni in the office of Gus Villanueva, July 28, 2007 before our luncheon at the Seafood Wharf.



OUTSTANDING MANILAN -- Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and wife Beng award Journal Group Editor-in-Chief Augusto B. Villanueva, one of the Ten Outstanding Manilans honored for his journalism and sports advocacy during the 436th Araw ng Maynila Testimonial Dinner and Awarding Ceremonies on June 27, 2007 at the Manila Hotel. Photo by Ernie Tenorio

has not only written about sports but also covered a variety of subjects.

The Philippine Journal Group of Publications was started in October 1972, one month after martial law was declared by President Marcos. All newspapers were closed down except the Daily Express as it was being operated by a crony of Marcos. The government then established a media council headed by Hans Menzi, publisher of the Manila Daily Bulletin. Gus and other journalists from the closed newspapers decided to form a group and launched a newspaper which was eventually named the Times Journal. Out of the Times Journal, they were able to publish the People's Journal, People's Tonight, Taliba, Parade, and other magazines. These newspapers and magazines are doing very well. In fact, the People's Journal, before the Edsa revolution was

publishing 600,000 copies, the largest in Southeast Asia. For this accomplishment, Gus was interviewed by a reporter from the Wallstreet Journal and was given a full page spread in this well-known business publication.

In spite of his long hours of work as the Journal Group chief-editor, Gus finds satisfaction seeing results of his efforts. He says it is quite satisfying to know that after having written some complaints in his newspaper, the government is willing to take action and do something about them.

His advice to prospective journalists: "If you want to succeed in journalism, you have to be honest and only tell the truth." He adds: "One has to see both sides of an issue in order to be fair." ■

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Philippine Cuisine

Fresh Kangkong Salad



2 large bundles kangkong
2 pieces red bell pepper
2 pieces green bell pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
100 grams seedless grapes, peeled
100 grams gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
1 bundle kinchay

Caramelized Walnuts

1 ½ cups walnuts
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon dried chili powder

Walnut Vinaigrette

½ cup walnut oil
1 cup olive oil
1 cup white or cane vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon chili powder
¼ cup kinchay stems, chopped finely

>> Remove the kangkong leaves from the stems. Wash the leaves then dry. Set aside.

>> Remove the kinchay leaves from the stems. Wash then dry. Set aside the leaves for the salad and the stems for the dressing.

>> In a pan over high heat, toast the walnuts to release their oils. Add the sugar and toss to coat well. Sprinkle with chili powder. Remove from heat and transfer to a tray. Allow the sugar to crystallize around the walnuts.

>> Slice each pepper into 6 lengthwise pieces. Remove the seeds. Heat some olive oil in saucepan and cook the peppers until the skins are blistered and soft.

>> In a bowl, whisk all the ingredients for the walnut vinaigrette until the sugar is dissolved.

>> In a salad bowl, toss the kangkong and kinchay leaves, grapes, cheese, and ¼ cup of the walnut dressing. Top with the warm peppers and caramelized walnuts



Machine-readable passports for every Filipino by Sept 17

August 16, 2007

After pilot-testing machine-readable passports with government officials and diplomats, then by senior citizens and overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), the travel document will be available to every Filipino by September 17, the Department of Foreign Affairs said Thursday.

However, Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Domingo Lucenario said the more advanced electronic or e-passport may have to wait until the middle of next year. Aside from bar code and other security features of the machine-readable passport, the e-passport contains a computer chip that contains the details of the passport holder.

But he assured the machine-readable passport is already accepted by the International Civil Aviation Organization and is several times more advanced than the current manually prepared passport.

The DFA is scheduled to launch the new passport on Friday, August 17, for those seeking to renew their old ones.

Among the changes on the new passport are:

* Instead of passport-sized pictures with a white background, the new passport requires pictures with a royal blue background.

* The applicant needs to show up at the DFA so that his or her fingerprint may be taken.

* The processing will take a little bit longer now: 10 days for regular processing and five days for speed processing. But, Lucenario assured, once everyone in the system becomes accustomed to it, processing time will be reduced to current levels.

Lucenario said the price of the new passport will remain the same: P500 for regular one week processing and P750 for two-day processing. ■

Filipinos now rely heavily on mobiles for communications

August 13, 2007

Filipinos now rely heavily on their mobile phones for communication needs, according to market research studies.

Market research firm Synovate has found in its surveys done in Metro Manila that about 70 percent of its respondents own or regularly use mobile phones.

In other urban areas, about 62 percent owned or used a mobile phone regularly, the surveys showed.

Filipinos living in Metro Manila said they used mobile phones to send text messages rather than make calls.

A quarter of those surveyed also said they use mobile phones to take

and send photos, download songs and share files.

Close to 90 percent of Filipinos in Metro Manila who use mobile phones have pre-paid accounts. The average monthly bill of pre-paid users was about P470, Synovate said.

The Synovate surveys were conducted monthly in Metro Manila and key urban areas in the Philippines. The ages of the respondents ranged from 15 to 64 years.

Filipino mobile marketing firm Global Wireless Connections said there are now 40 million mobile phone subscribers in the country, with more than one billion messages sent daily across all mobile networks. ■

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Cloud Nine Beach, Siargao Island



The pebbled beach of Mabua

Surigao del Norte is a province of the Philippines located in the **Caraga** region in Mindanao. Its capital is **Surigao City** which is best known as an embarkation point for island hopping adventures. The province consists of three major islands — Dinagat Island, which is the largest, **Siargao Island**, and Bucas Grande

Island — in the Philippine Sea, and a small region at the northernmost tip of the island of Mindanao. This mainland portion borders Agusan del Norte, and Surigao del Sur to the south.

The province is blessed with long stretches of white sand beaches, enchanting rock formations, mysterious caves, and vast mangrove



Pagoda Off Siargao Island



A typical Caraga region landscape



The bonok-bonok *maradjao karadjao* festival is marked by street and stationary dancing festivity in a mardi gras atmosphere. The festival is celebrated annually (September 9) to honor Surigao City's Patron Saint San Nicolas de Tolentino and to show gratitude for the blessings and good graces received.

forests. The strong waves in Siargao Island has made the province the Surfing Capital of the Philippines.

Once a quiet and pristine place, Surigao del Norte rural charm now caught the fancy of local and foreign tourists who frequent the province's numerous islands. Over the years, Surigao del Norte has indeed become a Shangri-la for visitors from all over the world, especially for surfers and body boarders.

During the month of September, the **Maradjao Karadjao Festival** is celebrated in honor of the San Nicholas de Tolentino. Various presentations of Bonok-bonok, a dance performed as a thanksgiving ritual, are seen during the fest.

The best white sand beach in the area is on **Sagisi Island**, also an excellent dive site. **Mabua Pebble**

Beach, features parallel lines of native cottages and is an ideal spot for water sports, such as windsurfing and jet skiing. Other noteworthy places include:

- **General Luna Beach** - A discovery of foreign surfers and scuba divers. White sand beaches line the shores for miles and miles facing a handful of islets some hundred meters away from the unrushing waves of the Pacific.

- **Buenavista Cave** - Located near Sitio Pagkawasan. Unique stone formations inside the cave create an illusionary vision of a majestic "King's Court" complete with other chambers.

Access to the province is provided by numerous ferries that cross the Surigao Strait between Surigao and the island of Leyte carrying vehicles and passengers between Liloan in Southern Leyte and Surigao City.



View of some of the islands that form Surigao Del Norte



Cloud 9, General Luna



Bonok Bonok Festival

Apple picking time is here again! Let's go to Mont St. Gregoire.



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Sunday, September 30, 2007

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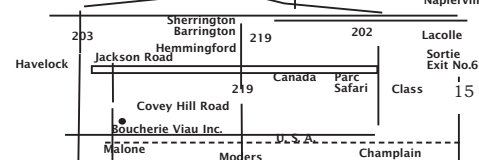
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The North American Filipino Star Photo Gallery



Zenaïda Kharroubi, the Filipino Star editor and publisher, stands by the welcome banner on the tour bus in Dumaguete City, July 19, 2007.



Montreal-Ottawa-Winnipeg delegations photo with President Arroyo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alberto Romulo, Ambassador Jose Brillantes, July 16, 2007



Tour members from Los Angeles, Washington, New York, San Francisco, Hawaii, with Zenaïda Kharroubi the only one from Montreal who went to Dumaguete City on an extended tour



The sunset is visible from behind Cely Lizarondo, Bea Soliman, Zenaïda Kharroubi and Ana Lizarondo Soliman. Photo taken on July 28, 2007 at the Mall of Asia, world's 7th biggest.



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FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Gutierrez family shares their blessings



The Gutierrez family is undeniably one of the most prominent families in show business today. Richard Gutierrez is GMA 7's hottest male star. Raymond is fast becoming a favorite TV host.

Ruffa is so busy with a number of TV and movie assignments. She is hosting *The Buzz* every Sunday at ABS CBN Channel 2. She is also appearing in ABS CBN's latest TV fantasy drama *Kokey*. Aside from TV shows, she also shoots *Desparadas*, a movie produced by Regal Films which also stars Ruffa Mae Quinto, Iza Calzado and Marian Rivera.

Despite their busy schedules, the three managed to spend some time to produce a fund-raising show "Rampa



for A Cause.' The show will be held at Rockwell, Makati City on September 16 for the benefit of Make a Wish Foundation and World Vision.

Ruffa said it will be a combination of tiangge with a minimal P300 charge for the entrance. There will be a fashion show and musical presentation in the evening with cocktails at P1,500 per ticket.

Ruffa held a fund-raising bazaar last year which reportedly earned P1 million which was donated to the Red Cross and the victims of the landslides.

Richard for his part said that their family is so blessed so they thought of helping the less fortunate as their way of giving back what the Lord has given to them. ■

Bianca, type makilala si KC!



Bianca Gonzales is looking even prettier nowadays. She confessed na naka-move-on na siya, mula nang maghiwalay sila ni Direk Lino Cayetano, who was her boyfriend for one-and-a-half years.

Does this also mean na na-overcome na niya whatever feelings

she had for Direk Lino?

Ngumiti si Bianca, bago sinagot ang aming tanong: "In time, I will. Pero ngayon, sabihin na nating hindi pa totally. After all, we have had pleasant experiences together."

Bianca has remained close to Direk Lino's mom and only sister, Sen.

Pia Cayetano.

Ano ang nagiging reaction nila sa isa't isa kung nagkikita sila, considering that they have the same workplace, ang ABS-CBN Network?

"We say hi to each other, tulad ng nangyari kamakailan lang," sagot ni Bianca.

Happy daw siya na finally, natupad na rin ang pangarap ni Direk Lino na makapagdirek ng pelikula. Direk Lino is at the helm of Star Cinema's *I'm Falling for You*, launching movie nina Kim Chiu at Gerald Anderson.

"Ang tagal na niyang pangarap 'yan," susog pa ni Bianca.

Nagkita na ba sila ni KC Concepcion, reportedly Direk Lino's current apple of the eye?

"Hindi pa," ang maliksi niyang sagot. "But I hope we will one of these days."

Of course, KC is megastar Sharon Cuneta's daughter by former actor Gabby Concepcion. ■

Claudine: Giving birth is a lovely experience



Easy does it. After laboring for six hours, she made five "pushes" and then she heard her baby cry.

"It was a lovely experience," Claudine Barretto said, recalling how she delivered her and husband Raymart Santiago's firstborn, Rodrigo Santino, the normal way last July 19, a day before her and Raymart's birthday. "My OB-Gyne, Dr. Gregorio Pastorfide, told me, 'I want you to experience childbirth at its loveliest; I want it to be a beautiful experience for you. I don't want you to be traumatized.'"

Claudine said that Raymart was such a big help from whom she got great moral support.

"We had a six-week lesson in Lamaze. We both studied child-bearing, including how to breathe properly. He was supportive all the way, that's why I'm really proud of him. He was a great coach. I was active during my pregnancy. Raymart and I often strolled in the mall. A few days before I gave birth, we went pa to Tagaytay. Sabi nila, when you give birth, your husband appreciates you all the more. In my case, it was the reverse. I started appreciating Raymart even more."

The baby is a namesake of Santino Martin Nievera, son of Martin Nievera and Katrina Ojeda. It's no coincidence. Raymart's full first name is Raymond Martin, and Santino is short for Martin.

Raymart can change diapers and

prepare the feeding bottle with his eyes closed because he has gone through it with their daughter Sabina. But up to now, he can carry Santino only when he's swaddled. Otherwise, he can't; he doesn't dare.

"It's scary," said Raymart. "The baby looks so soft. Ang lambot-lambot!"

"We are very careful with Santino because he has just been circumcised," said Claudine.

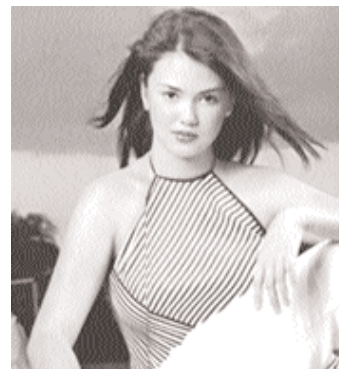
Sabina doesn't feel insecure or jealous because Claudine and Raymart have prepared her for Santino's arrival.

Because she's breastfeeding, Claudine will return to work in September or October yet. By then, Santino shall have been baptized. Claudine and Raymart haven't set a date for the baptism and are in the process of making a list of the ninongs and ninangs, so far with only four names — Edu Manzano, Robin Padilla, Kris Aquino and Piolo Pascual.

How many more children do they want to have? Just one.

"We want only three," the couple agreed. "We now have Sabina and Santino." ■

Angelica happy to work with Maricel and Aga



Angelica Panganiban is overwhelmed to be working once again with the diamond star, Maricel Soriano. It is also her first time to work with local showbusiness' Tom Cruise, none other than Aga Muhlach.

The movie "A Love Story" stars Maricel, Aga and Angelica. Maricel is a successful doctor in the movie, Aga is a businessman while pretty Angelica plays a 24-year-old flight stewardess. It is obviously about a love triangle and Aga is caught between the two women.

It is already Angelica's fourth time to work with Maricel. She played Maricel's daughter in the movies *Separada* and *Ama, Ina, Anak*. In television, she was Maricel's sister in *Vietnam Rose*. Now that she's all grown up, Angelica will be Maricel's rival for the love of one man in the upcoming movie *A Love Story*.

Angelica appreciates that the diamond star always makes her feel comfortable on the set. Maricel, Angelica says, is very supportive of her in each scene. She said she did not expect Maricel to be so generous in giving her tips to improve her craft.

Mayro J. de los Reyes directs this wonderful film. ■

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Message to all our Kababayan:

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Thank you once again and may God bless us all.

FAMAS-ELECT EXECUTIVE BOARD 2007-2009

content, Red Bull has about a third to a



HEALTH & SCIENCE

Dr. Victor C. Gavino, Ph.D.
Professor, Université de Montréal
Dept. De Nutrition, Faculté de médecine

Energy Drinks

An energy drink in general is a product meant to produce a feeling of higher energy levels or "kick." As yet, there are no legal definitions or standards of composition for these products the popularity of which increased dramatically over the past few years worldwide. The popularity of energy drinks may be the result of a combination of aggressive marketing techniques and the ever-increasing demands of the workplace, academic institutions and/or social activities. In general, energy drinks are targeted towards younger people, particularly students, those in recreational sports, and even teens and pre-teens. Manufacturers have also tapped the social sphere by promoting energy drinks combined with alcohol in bars and other public drinking places. Wikipedia reports that 65% of energy-drink consumers are under the age of 35 the majority of which are male. The retail sales of energy drinks in the US were \$400 million in 2001 and 3 billion in 2005. It is projected to rise to 10 billion dollars annually by 2010.

Among the energy drinks, the most visible or popular product in North America is "Red Bull." It has a market share of close to 50% in the US. (Please note that this article is not to be taken as an endorsement of any particular product.) The recipe for Red Bull had its beginnings in the 1950s in Japan, where a product called "Lipovitan" was sold to white-collar businessmen in order to enable them to work long hours. The Lipovitan recipe found its way to Thailand where it was sold under the name "Krating Daeng." An Austrian businessman took the recipe from Thailand to Europe, modified it and marketed it as "Red Bull."

The "kick" that energy drinks give comes from only two principal ingredients, namely caffeine and sugar. The caffeine is a stimulant and the sugar is the fuel necessary to support the stimulant effect. The sugar ingredient may be a combination of slow, medium and fast-release in order to prolong the stimulant effect. Interestingly, some energy drinks are now sweetened artificially. Artificial sweeteners do not give energy and so the sought-for stimulant effect of this type of product may not be as intense as for the full-calorie brands. Other ingredients may be present as well. Red Bull for example contains taurine, a substance I will come back to later in this article.

When it comes to caffeine

half compared with regular coffee. Other caffeine-content comparisons with Red Bull (80 caffeine mg per can): in mg, Coca-cola has 34; Pepsi-cola has 37; 40 to 50 in a cup of tea; Mountain Dew has 55; espresso may have from 36 to 102; instant coffee has 71 to 111; regular coffee contains 135 to 180. Energy drinks containing the highest levels of caffeine in mg per can are: Celsius at 280, Spike Shooter at 300, and Wired X505 at 505 mg. Therefore, a can of Wired X505 is like taking all at once 6 cans of Red Bull or 3 cups of regular coffee.

Now back to taurine. It is really not clear from a scientific point of view, why many energy drinks contain this substance as one of the principal ingredients. Taurine is not an amino acid, as much publicity may have said it is. It is not a building block of proteins. This substance was first identified in bile from bulls, hence its given name, because bull in greek is "Taurus." The taurine now found in energy drinks is chemically synthesized. In the normal human body, taurine is an essential component of bile, "apdo" in Pilipino, which is necessary for the digestion and absorption of food fats. While the human body is able to make the taurine it needs, premature infants can't. This is why taurine is often added to infant milk formula just as a safety measure. There is much scientific speculation on the other effects of taurine. Some of these include slowing down of the nerve response, lessening of muscle fatigue, decrease in blood pressure and other things. It is possible that taurine, because it slows nerve action, actually reduces the "jittery" feeling that high caffeine might induce. Supplements popular with bodybuilders often contain taurine for the possibility that this substance might reduce fatigue and enable the practitioner to stay longer at the weights.

There have been much concern raised over the popularity of energy drinks, particularly that of Red Bull. In some countries, the sale of Red Bull is not permitted. The can itself contains warnings that the consumer should be aware of. The jury is still out. In general however, sports enthusiasts must beware that caffeine is a diuretic and high consumption of Red Bull during sports events may lead to dehydration. Dehydration can lead to collapse. At the very least, it actually diminishes performance. It is interesting that one of the principal targets of the very successful marketing strategy for this product is the sports enthusiast.

Consumers must also beware that the alcohol mixed with Red Bull or other such energy drinks is not a good idea. The energy drink diminishes the "feel" of being drunk but does not improve the reflexes or the motor response of a drunk. In other words, you may be drunk with alcohol but the energy drink will fool you into thinking you are not. And for those students who believe that Red Bull can improve marks, a scientific study done among students at the University of Wisconsin in 2006 revealed that this product had no effect whatsoever on improving memory. Well perhaps it would keep the student awake longer in order to study longer. Of course, the better option would be that the student begin studying days before without Red Bull, instead the night before with the false impression that the product makes you smarter. ■

RP seas may hold key to cancer cure

August 21, 2007

If a Filipino scientist's research on venomous sea snails has led to the production of a drug 1,000 times more powerful than morphine, it's not farfetched for the study of sea sponges by other Filipino scientists to be the springboard for a cure for cancer.

The world's largest concentration of marine life is found in the Philippines, according to American ichthyologist and marine biologist Dr. Kent Carpenter. And Filipino scientists consider this marine biodiversity, including microorganisms and terrestrial plants, a wellspring of possible anticancer compounds and sources of antibiotics and other medications for various diseases.

"We have a biodiversity that's unparalleled all over the world. [From here] we can find new antibiotics and new high-value drugs," said Gisela P. Concepcion, Ph.D., who was presented to the media by the Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD) at the Philippine College of Physicians' health forum last Tuesday.

With rich biodiversity comes rich "chemodiversity" because marine organisms have evolved to interact intimately with other organisms in the environment, Concepcion said, citing as an example a coral reef where both competitive and symbiotic relationships exist.

Concepcion, a professor at the University of the Philippines' Marine Science Institute, and her team of scientists have been studying sea sponges as a possible source of anticancer compounds.

"Marine invertebrates, like sponges, produce a chemical arsenal—compounds used for their defense and survival. This is the basis for [the search] for cytotoxic compounds that can be potentially useful," she said.

She added that with all this marine wealth, "we just need more efficiency in the way we do research. Funding is needed. We can count on foreign-based Filipino scientists to help us

develop high-value drugs."

Concepcion's team has discovered a potential anticancer component that can be made to target only cancer cells on the general principle of antibody-targeted therapy.

The team—comprising around 20 marine scientists, natural products chemists, biochemists, and cell and molecular biologists, including Dr. Ed Padlan of the US National Institute of Health and Dr. Ameurina Santos of the UP National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology—has submitted what it called the "Pharma Seas" program to the Department of Science and Technology and the PCHRD to pursue its research.

Its discovery is the subject of a project called "Amor" (for Antibody and Molecular Oncology Research), which is aimed at finding a cure for breast cancer.

Amor involves the development of targeted therapies for cancer using an antitumor antibody designed by Padlan, who was in the Philippines in 1998 under the government's "Balik Scientist" program. During that visit, he became one of the major collaborators of the project.

The first phase of Amor, which was funded by the PCHRD for six years, ended last year. It is currently on hold pending the latter's recommendation for the second phase.

Concepcion is also a collaborator of Filipino molecular biologist Dr. Baldomero Olivera in another project involving sea snails.

Olivera, a professor of biology at the University of Utah, was named Harvard Foundation Scientist of the Year for 2007 in recognition of his three decades of work in developing drugs from animal wildlife.

His research has led to the discovery of a pharmaceutical class known as conopeptides, the active ingredient of a new drug—Ziconotide (Prialt)—which is derived from snail venom.

The drug has been tested to be about 1,000 times more powerful than morphine but not as addictive. (Olivera was apparently unable to patent his research, and has not profited from the sale of the drug.)

The compounds discovered by Olivera in the snail venom can be used to treat Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia, myocardial infarction, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy and depression, among others. ■

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LE GROUPE QUANTUM



Gilmore International College seeks partnership with Philippine universities' colleges of nursing



The president of Tarlac State University, Dr. Priscilla C. Viuya, shakes hands with Mrs. Zenaida Kharroubi upon concluding a verbal agreement in principle to collaborate in the implementation of an integration program for nursing graduates. Others in the picture are Ms. Lucy Sunga, Dean of the College of Nursing, Prof. Ma. June S. Carlos, Director of International Affairs, and another university staff member. Photo taken July 31, 2007.

The shortage of qualified nurses has long been felt. It is at least over five years now that experts have been saying that this shortage is not only in Canada or the United States but everywhere else. Considering that healthcare issues are a matter of life

biggest tragedy is that they are at the mercy of employers who are not always prone to following the rules of the employment contract. Consequently, they are not able to study French properly because of being taken by employers on their trips

caregiver program if their objective is to work as nurses in Quebec.

As a first step, we will be writing memoranda of agreement with universities who are interested in promoting this integration project among their students. The details of partnership shall be worked out with the aim of building bridges towards the possibility of establishing a student exchange program whereby nursing graduates from the Philippines will be

my questions. I therefore consider Manila Central University a very good prospective partner in this endeavor.

Upon recommendation of Mr. Eric Soliman who is an alumnus of Tarlac State University, I met with the university president, Dr. Priscilla C. Viuya and three members of her administrative staff. They seemed to be very interested in my proposal. We agreed to exchange correspondence and to draft a memorandum of



Manila Central University Dean of the College of Nursing, Dr. Lina A. Salarda, welcomes Mrs. Zenaida Kharroubi during her visit to discuss the prospect of establishing a partnership in the integration of nursing graduates who wish to work in Quebec. (Photo taken July 30, 2007)

evaluated by the Professional Order of Nurses before they are enrolled in the Integration Program which is currently being processed for submission and approval by the Quebec Ministry of Education. The Order appears to be very interested in this proposal, hence, I proceeded to go on an exploratory mission in the Philippines. After joining the 3rd Ambassadors Consuls General Tour, I visited some of the most important universities like Far Eastern University, University of Sto. Tomas, Manila Central University and Tarlac State University. From each of these universities, I requested a copy of their nursing program, however, only Manila Central University provided me with one right away. On the same day I called, Dr. Lina A. Salarda gave me an appointment to meet with her. She was very helpful and answered all of

agreement as soon as possible. We also agreed to have more communication about this subject.

To form strategic alliances with educational partners, Gilmore's administration shall be actively involved in marketing its plans and programs. A communication or press kit shall be produced and distributed to the right people and places. To realize the full potential of this project, we have to organize a project management team. We have to set up a logistics schedule, priorities, and do relevant research on what resources are needed. In addition, contacts with government departments and other agencies will be initiated in order to seek support for this international venture which will have a significant impact on solving the nursing shortage in Canada.



The facade of the main building of Tarlac State University (Photo taken July 31)

and death, we should all be concerned and take the necessary steps to solve the problem or problems for such a shortage. Moreover, we are also aware of the big waste of human resources, in particular, due to the lack of programs or system whereby an immigrant with a university education is able to practice his or her professional training. Often times, these immigrants waste their time doing menial jobs which can be done by anyone without any special training.. A glaring example of this phenomenon is the Live-In Caregiver program which attracts all kinds of people from different professions in the Philippines. They have used this route to immigrate to Canada but the

to Florida, the country, or other places. With such a predicament, very few caregivers with nursing degrees ever succeed in getting back into the profession. Moreover, the lack of practice of their profession makes it difficult if not impossible to pass the required examinations to obtain their nursing permits.

In the course of our meeting with OIIQ (Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec) as part of our application for an education permit, we were told that the failure rate of people who have been out of practice for at least three years is high. Hence, we have proposed to look at the possibility of having nursing graduates go directly to the integration program and not go through the live-in



Taken in the campus of Far Eastern University, July 23, 2007

Man arrested for inventive P500,000 cell-phone scam

August 23, 2007

A man was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigations after he duped Globe Telecom of more than P500,000 by perpetrating a scam using various false identities. His scheme involved using Globe Telecom's subscription offers for postpaid lines that included a handset from its branches all over Manila and even the provinces.

The suspect, Deolito Abel Sy Navarette, was arrested on August 18 at the Globe Telecom Business Center in SM Bacoor.

Navarette, using the alias Arnold Paul Sy Manalo, had applied for two high-end postpaid plans which came with free units of cell-phone models N73 and N6300. An N73 cell phone is worth around P21,900 (\$490 CAD); an N6300 is worth P12,000 (\$270 CAD).

Navarette had been the subject of an investigation by Globe Telecom fraud investigators for victimizing several provincial Globe Telecom branches.

The suspect had used a variety of aliases.

According to a source from the Globe Telecom Security-Investigation Division they were alerted to Navarette's suspicious activities after they noted that the suspect's likeness appeared on different applications

from several branches.

Navarette's first application was at the Globe Telecom branch in SM Centerpoint in May. Since then he had applied for 28 lines at various branches throughout the Philippines.

His biggest haul was from a branch in Ayala Center in Cebu where he applied for, and was granted, 12 phone lines and cell-phone units.

Navarette would apply for the promo using aliases, fraudulent ID cards and falsified public and commercial documents. He would use the lines and accumulate airtime until the line was cut off due to failure to pay.

Navarette would then sell the phone unit and submit a new application to another Globe branch.

The suspect reportedly defrauded Globe Telecom of around P333,200 worth of handsets and P2,000,441.21 worth of airtime rate.

Investigation is going on, since it is suspected that Navarette is not working alone and might even be part of a syndicate.

At the time of his arrest, he had on his person several bogus identification cards such as a voters' ID, Postal Identity Card, BIR Tin Card and falsified documents including a DTI Certificate of Business Name Registration and bank passbooks. ■

Jollibee surges as investors find stock inexpensive

August 21, 2007

Jollibee Foods Corp., the Philippines' largest fast-food company, surged 20 percent, its biggest gain in at least a decade, after some analysts said a fall last week made the stock relatively inexpensive.



Jollibee rose 9 pesos to 53 at the close in Manila today as Philippine stocks gained the most in more than six years. The stock dropped 17 percent from Aug. 14 when Asian markets started a four-day decline on concerns that credit-market losses in the U.S. may spread worldwide.

The rout in equity markets discouraged some investors from buying Manila-based Jollibee which reported a 32 percent increase in second-quarter profit on Aug. 14, said Ron Rodrigo, head of research at Unicapital Securities Inc. in Manila, whose company has been buying the stock.

"We see a lot of opportunities in this stock," said Rodrigo, who forecast that Jollibee may rise to 65 pesos in the next six months. "We've been buying Jollibee shares and have been recommending it to clients even when the market was down."

Jollibee is trading at 22 times its earnings, half the average price-to-earnings ratio of the 125 restaurant stocks tracked by Bloomberg in the Asia Pacific.

Jollibee's plan to open more stores overseas, including in China and India, has also boosted optimism that Jollibee may sustain revenue growth, Unicapital's Rodrigo said. Jollibee is "looking" for \$20 million to \$40 million of acquisitions in China and India to take advantage of rising consumer spending in those markets. ■

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Real Estate Tips

House Inspection - Do it or be sorry

By Rachel Reyes
Century 21 Services Plus
514-817-5000

After shopping around visited many houses as you can during summer. You found the one and you finally say "it's very nice I like it", it's mine! And I feel I'm at home already'. You hardly sleep that night thinking about the house. You made an offer with your agent. Within five days after acceptance of the offer your finance is accepted. It's a relief that after knowing the house you dreamed of will be finally yours. The next step after finance approval should be inspections. You were too excited, your lease with your landlord is expired, you signed his letter that you will be out of the apartment by the end of June so you have to move in the next month and you decided not to do inspections anymore. You say, "The house looks like it's in good condition so no need for inspections". You passed the notary and everything was documented and paid. Then, after six months during the winter, when started to get cold, the snow does not stop falling and you discover that there is moisture all over the ceiling of the house. You start to get worried and suspect something is not right from the roof. You ask a friend to come and visit to check what is wrong from the ceiling. Your ceiling starts to get more moisture until it damages the whole ceiling. What happens then?

In this case, you want to know what you have to do - the fact that you just bought the house a few months ago. So you call your agent to complain that the roof is leaking. So the problem starts; your agent then would say that you didn't want to do inspection and you accepted the

house as it is. The vendors declare the conditions of the house even before you made the offer. You signed a paper indicating that you accepted the house with its conditions. Now because you accepted it, you have no choice but to hire an expert and repair whatever damage on the roof. You ended up paying \$5,000.00 to repair the roof; otherwise the moisture continues to grow in the whole house and the worst case scenario is you have to evacuate your own house until it's fixed. You tried to get a lawyer to sue the vendor, the vendor wins. In the end, you feel sorry and devastated.

Buyers must be informed about the procedures in buying. Be prudent and aware of the consequences of each decision you make before seeing the notary. It happens many times that people buy their property and do not do inspections. Surprisingly, some people don't even do inspections because they do not want to pay the cost to save their money. Buyers should not regret paying the amount between \$300- \$600 for a complete professional inspection. Many times in my experience as an agent, clients thought the house is okay and sometimes clients bring a good friend to check the house. You will be shocked that you thought nothing is wrong but after the expert has gone through the inspections in the house; there are so many things to be done. Agents in these cases should not be blamed if they had explained the consequences properly to their clients. In Quebec, we have so many laws that protect the

consumers and in many cases agents get to be blamed when things go wrong down the line. However, good agents put the conditions on paper and have them signed by clients to avoid future problems. Agents make a lot of paper work. When making an offer, we have quite a few forms to fill up. These include the conditions of financing and inspections. Now, after these two conditions are fulfilled, agents should fill up a paper called "Amendments and Notice of fulfillment of conditions". If this form has been signed by the buyer after inspections then it will be hard to use when you make a complaint against the vendor. This form is usually the last form to sign by both parties. The agents sign as witnesses.

Building or house inspectors are trained and have the skills about structure, architecture, electrical, plumbing, roofing, heating, insulation and many more. They should give suggestions in writing or verbally what to do with a problem, or how you can economize by fixing the damage or doing the maintenance by yourself. They give a report at the end of the inspections and thru this report you can actually have an idea of what decisions to make. Most of the time, they use it to re-negotiate, sometimes buyers decide not to buy the house after they find out the present conditions. Buyers do not ask vendors to repair things not recommended by an agent. You should rather negotiate the price equivalent to the cost of the house's defects. Unless they are small things such as cleaning the backyard or removing the junk in the basement which naturally can be discussed by both parties. Inspectors usually have professional insurance to protect them as well. Educated buyers should pick inspectors with insurance. Nowadays, everyone pays something or a premium for the insurance. Why? Because agents, inspectors or people involved in real estate need to have insurance to protect them in cases of negligence or error and face court trials. In real estate, we should not neglect anything I recommend that everything must be in black and white.

Philippines seen leading property boom in Asia

August 16, 2007

A global boom in housing prices has put the Philippines in the lead of an Asian rally as of the first quarter, according to a study made by online research firm Global Property Guide.

The study considered property prices as end-March, covering 27 countries and territories, including nine in the Asia-Pacific region.

Research findings show that first-quarter nominal prices in the Philippines rose 14.29 percent compared to year-ago level, higher than 13.75 percent in Singapore.

Philippine prices went up 10.04 percent while those in South Korea jumped by 9.36 percent.

Still, Singapore led the region in terms of real price improvements, registering an increase of 13.19 percent year-on-year.

"The house price boom is now moving toward Asia-Pacific," the GPP study said. "Property prices in countries affected by the Asian crisis are showing strong signs of recovery, prompting fears that a property bubble is developing anew in the region."

Global Property Guide senior economist Prince Christian Cruz said the current economic and monetary conditions suggest continued strong demand for housing in countries affected by the crisis.

Cruz said income per person in Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Korea and the Philippines were at an all time high. Here, the rate of increase was placed at 24 percent.

Global Property Guide said the Philippine real estate sector started its recovery in 2004, boosted by the business process outsourcing industry.

It added that with growing demand from overseas-based Filipinos, condominium projects were rising all over Manila and condominium prices and rents were going up.

Also, demand for office space for call centers and other business process outsourcing operations sparked the revival of the sector. ■

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Isaac T. Goodine

Global Perspectives



It's about Productivity, Stupid!

"The point is if we are going to be competitive in Canada we have to have a hell of an increase in productivity" Don Drummond, Chief Economist, Toronto Dominion Bank

Don Drummond's comments on Canada's productivity were published on 15 August 2007, a day after Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced a major reshuffle of his Cabinet, the third such shuffle in the past 16 months. Critics have already charged that such a shuffle, of ministers who do not seem to know or care much about productivity, will have no impact on the steady slide that threatens the economic wellbeing of Canadians. The cabinet ministers, along with the rest of Canadians, are locked into a system that is just very ineffective—and there is little anyone can do about it.

Glen Hodgson, senior vice president of the Conference Board of Canada, recently noted that there is a \$9,000-per capita difference in labour productivity between Canada and the USA—about what Ontario spends on health care, and that is an improvement since 2000. That is the good news; but the bad news is that it came about because Canadians have made up the gap by working more hours, rather than working more efficiently.

For some months now, in this column, we have been highlighting the problems created by Canada's relentless slide in productivity in comparison to other industrialized countries. Productivity is measured as a country's economic output per hour worked and is immediately reflected in that country's standard of living. It matters because, as Ronald Reagan once said: "there is no free lunch."

Back in November 2005 the situation was portrayed in this column as increasingly grave and a threat to the Canadian standard of living. At that time I wrote:

This piece was prompted by news reports that the Canadian Government is considering a major shift in immigration policy to alleviate a growing economic problem of shortages of skilled people in the workforce. Productivity is in jeopardy. A team from New Brunswick is going to China this autumn to recruit skilled immigrants and Kenya's Ambassador to Canada recently visited Alberta and identified a plethora of skilled jobs in the west and no one to fill them, and

since immigration levels to Alberta are not meeting the needs, the Embassy is looking to speed up the immigration of skilled Kenyans. A friend and colleague has obtained a license from the Government of the Philippines to recruit professionals to work in Canada.

The following month, December 2005, I wrote that: Last week, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges announced the signing of an agreement with Immigration Canada to assist in the process of integrating immigrants to be recruited for employment in selected areas. This would involve pre-departure activities abroad and induction programs on arrival designed to help integrate immigrant workers and their families into civil society.

The pilot scheme, called the Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP), was slow to materialize due to bureaucratic procedures, "red-tape", and staffing hitches, but finally became operational a couple of months ago.

In the meantime, in November 2006, MacLean's Magazine highlighted a growing concern in a cover story "HOW TO FIX CANADA: We work as hard as Americans and earn 20% less. Australia has taken our place at world trade talks and Spain wants our spot at the G8. This year, 135 economies will grow faster than ours. It's time for action."

Of course there is no quick fix. This is a compound problem and would require a policy on human capital that would coordinate the production and utilization of human resources so that the key issues causing the steady decline in productivity could be addressed. Canada has two serious economic issues: a chronic lack of productivity growth and an ageing and shrinking work force. As a result the Provincial and Federal Governments have undertaken commitments that will be extremely difficult to meet unless meaningful reforms are implemented. Since these programs were created in the 1950s and 1960s birthrates have declined; income growth has stagnated; and mortality rates have decreased.

The situation regarding human capital in Canada is bleak. There is no comprehensive or integrated system for policy development, strategic planning, or for management of a coherent labour market, as there is now in China. The Conference Board of Canada, and various Economists, continue to report and recommend on specific issues but this has little effect on the overall human capital component of the economy. In particular, production of human resources remains institution-based and is not market-driven, as it was in the 1960s and 70s when Canadians, were the most productive people in the world. Two decades without a strategy have changed all of that. So when high prices for oil and minerals recently brought "windfall" gains in financial capital there were shortages of skilled workers in every segment of the economy, resulting in a lack of capacity to utilize such newfound wealth in sustainable and socially beneficial ways. Declining productivity is exacerbated by a moribund system of education and training that is either unable or unwilling to respond to the requirements of a flexible modern labor market. Canada must now rely on a combination of immigration and, increasingly on transnational contract-workers with fixed-term work permits. This is necessary to sustain an economy faced with pressures from globalization and introduction of new technologies by other countries that have enabled 17 such countries to overtake Canada in productivity in a decade and a half.

Economists have concluded that, in only 31 years out of the 'life cycle' that is currently based on a life span of 80 years, does the average North American earn enough money at work to pay for the goods and services that he or she consumes. The cost of schooling has been rising and the length of time preparing for work has been increasing. At the same time people have been retiring earlier, living longer, and drawing on health services whose costs have steadily been increasing. Population growth in the working age group has not kept pace resulting in severe financial problems in the system. So now, Canada faces a debt crunch because governments have made commitments which cannot be serviced under the present and emerging circumstances. According to a report published in 2006 by the Fraser Institute, the Governments must collect an average of \$171, 032 from each taxpayer to meet these obligations.

Another set of debt issues relate to the education system. University enrollment in Canada is now at a million raising the question: what will all these students do with their lives? A disturbing fact is that enrollments by fields of study bear no relationship to "where the jobs are." One in five university graduates work at jobs that require only high school or less. Most of the underemployed are young workers. They are also immigrants and people with commerce, arts or humanities

degrees. Many work in the low-paying retail or wholesale sector while skilled workers in trades are in short supply in a market where emphasis has been on higher education that is not related to either the employment aspirations of the students or the employers demand for enhanced productivity. Student debt at the time of graduation places added strain on society as these young people begin working with considerable personal debt. About 60 % of all students are carrying an average debt of \$24,047 when they start their first job.

Experienced workers are needed to boost productivity and Canadian authorities recently revealed that work permits will be issued when justified. Now, it is with this broad picture in mind that I recalled that in November 2005, I wrote in this column that: "A friend and colleague has obtained a license from the Government of the Philippines to recruit professionals to work in Canada". That was a little premature but finally, last week, that friend and colleague, Violeta A. Laraya—who happens to be the Editor of my book "Leaders Leading Leaders", contacted me to say that the license was granted by the Philippines Overseas Employment Authority (POEA). "Would you be interested in a Business Proposition to facilitate recruitment and placement of qualified Filipino contract-workers in Canada?" she asked. "Yes", I said. So, that is what we have agreed to do. This is a highly focused program and will supplement the on-going immigration programs and the CIIP. The process operates under the aegis of the POEA, recruiters must be licensed, and the work permits can be processed more quickly than immigration visas once contracts are signed with a Canadian employer.

Finally it is about productivity—and fair wages for those who enhance productivity. ■

From Page 3 Coulon Supports

to have their qualifications recognized here. On the one hand, we have all these qualified people who can't get recognition. On the other hand, we are deploring the shortage of qualified people in many fields! What a loss of opportunity – for the people involved, and for the host country that keeps them from getting to work that meets our vital needs."

In 2005, the Liberal government in Ottawa launched an initiative to deal with workers who obtained their qualifications in another country, in order to help their integration into the Canadian workforce. Since they have been in power, the Conservatives have treated this Liberal initiative with disdain, and achieved far less than it was set to accomplish.

So it is time to return the Liberals to power in the House of Commons. This starts on September 17, in Outremont, with the election of Jocelyn Coulon as a Liberal Member of Parliament. Information: Irène Marchette, (514) 340-1880. (514) 515-7186

Look to the Philippines to fill your professional and skilled worker needs

By Violeta Laraya

The Philippines, with its educational system patterned after the Western model and its use of the English language as the medium of instruction in schools, provides its people with the level and quality of education that enable them to join the ranks of and hold their own as workers in the global workforce. In the past, Canada, with all the opportunities that it opens up to its migrant population, has been a favored destination for many Filipinos who are seeking a better quality of life for themselves and their families. Filipino professionals have made their own contributions towards the growth and development of Canadian economy. Coming from a heavily Westernized society, the average Filipino often has no difficulties being assimilated into Canadian society. Within a few years of landing in Canada, many if not all of them are fully integrated into the fabric of Canadian society. With the recent developments in Canada and the recognition that it would need more workers to sustain its place as one of the member nations in the Group of Seven, Canada is once again opening up its doors to more immigrant workers.

The Canadian situation has been recognized by the Government of the Philippines and has encouraged would-be Canadian worker/applicants as well as Philippine recruitment and placement agencies to look to Canada as a promising country of destination for Filipino workers. On the other hand, prospective Canadian employers should seriously consider sourcing their workers from the Philippines. This country has been identified by the Canadian government as one of the countries included in Canada's Canadian Immigration and Integration Project. The Canadian government itself has established a clear cut system of how foreign

workers can come into Canada and help boost the productivity of the workforce through a list of jobs that are begging for workers. Employers only have to secure a Labor Market Opinion from Service Canada to enable them to bring in the foreign workers that they need for positions that Canadians do not have the inclination nor the skills for. In general, Filipinos have the edge over other foreign workers in the sense that they come from an educational system patterned after the western model and are conversant in the English language. Philippine society is also heavily influenced by Western lifestyles, causing very little, if any, culture shock or dislocation when Filipinos make the move to Canada. While admittedly, there may be some bad eggs in the basket, on the whole, Filipinos are highly educated, very hard working and are dedicated workers and quite loyal to their employers. Any deficiencies they may have upon arrival, whether on the technical or cultural aspects, can be remedied by bridging or enrichment programs that appropriate Canadian institutions can implement for a given period of time. The average Filipino family puts a great value on education and as such will be open to the idea of furthering the education of their own members in order to qualify for a better job in their new country. Such programs may be organized in collaboration with Canadian professional groups to ensure that by the time the individual is employed, he/she is already well prepared to start work.

A well-qualified Filipino professional may be what your business needs to improve your overall productivity! ■

Always look at what you have left. Never look at what you have lost. Robert Schuller

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Women executives on top in Philippines according to recent survey



Two women traders discuss business with a male colleague at the Philippine Stock Exchange in Manila. Women are now outnumbering men at the top of the corporate ladder in the Philippines and the trend is set to increase over the coming years, according to the country's labour minister.

Women are now outnumbering men at the top of the corporate ladder in the Philippines and the trend is set to increase over the coming years, the country's labour minister said Monday.

The key was access to education, with one in three of the estimated 12.8 million working women having reached college compared to only one in five of 20.1 million working Filipino males, Labour Secretary Arturo Brion said.

Official figures showed the number of women in supervisory and executive positions rose from 1.86 million in 2002 to 2.257 million last year.

The number of men also rose, but at a slower pace -- from 1.4 million in 2002 to 1.63 last year.

The trend is set to continue: last year 97,000 women joined the executive roll compared to just 16,000 men.

Brion said the ratio of women holding top posts was the world's best. A Grant Thornton International Business Report from earlier this year showed 97 percent of Philippine businesses have women in senior management roles.

That compares to the global average of 59 percent. ■

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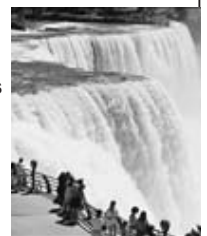
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Canadian Immigration Integration Project, a new government policy that recognizes a long-felt need

By Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

During the 3rd Ambassadors Consuls General Tour last month, I took the opportunity to visit the CIIP center (Canadian Immigration Integration Project). It was quite a fruitful visit as I was able to meet the Field Manager, Mr. Jimmy Agbayani who gave me an update on what has been done so far. He said that the Center started giving seminars to qualified immigrants since December 2006, and has serviced immigrants going to Canada but has not included immigrants to Quebec. Perhaps, this is because Quebec is the only province with a special power to determine its own criteria of immigrant selection. Can Gilmore International College be given the mandate to offer integration and orientation service to immigrants going to Quebec? Mr. Agbayani replied that the best person who could answer this question is the Project Director of the Canadian Association of Community Colleges based in Ottawa.

From the CIIP pamphlet that I received from Mr. Agbayani I have gathered the main features of this pilot project being implemented in three countries, namely, the Philippines, India and China.

The Canadian Immigration Integration Project offers the following services free of charge:

1) Group information sessions on how to prepare for integration to the Canadian workforce, including economic trends, occupational demands, workplace culture, and job search techniques.

2) Personalized work-related advice and guidance in a one-on-one interview, which will result in the production of an Individual Integration Plan.

3) Support in getting access to language assessment and upgrading, credential assessment and recognition, licensing bodies, opportunities for skills and academic development, and work experience as required.

The Project can:

- help immigrants understand what to expect on arrival in Canada so that they can identify appropriate opportunities for integration;

- offer them support in making informed choices required to enhance immigrants employability;

- direct them to assessment agencies, training and education institutions, regulatory bodies, immigrant-serving organizations and employers that may be able to assist with their integration into Canada.

Those qualified to apply to this service are principal applicants and their spouses who are assessed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada as eligible to immigrate to Canada under the skilled worker program.

In addition to the information I gathered from Mr. Agbayani, I came across an article showing how skilled immigrants benefit from Canadian Immigrant Integration Project. This



Mr. Jimmy Agbayani, the Field Manager of CIIP, poses with Zenaida Kharroubi, director-general of Gilmore International College.

new federal program helps would-be immigrant professionals navigate the Canadian job market even before they leave their home countries. Months before landing in Toronto in April, Teresita Mariano already had a plan to prepare for Canada's labour market. By June, she had landed a job similar to one she had in the Philippines.

The 39-year-old engineer is among the first skilled immigrants to benefit from the Canadian Immigrant Integration Project in Asia, a \$4.5 million, three-year pilot program that's Canada's response to all those surgeon-driving-a-taxi tales that have sullied this country's reputation as a good place to resettle.

Like couples taking prenatal classes before the baby arrives, would-be newcomers to Canada in the skilled-worker class can now take "pre-arrival orientation" in Manila, Delhi and Hong Kong – and, starting August 2007, in Beijing, Gujarat and Punjab.

"Our goal is to help (foreign-trained professionals) have a faster acquisition of appropriate employment by connecting with them and preparing them ahead of time, so they can hit the ground running once they arrive," explains project director Katrina Murray.

Immigrants meet with counselors at the overseas offices to devise a settlement plan while they're still waiting for medical and security clearance to immigrate, instead of wasting time and money catching up after they get to Canada.

It seems to have worked for Mariano. By the time she moved to Canada, she had obtained her university transcripts, had her foreign credentials assessed, contacted settlement agencies online, researched prospective employers, posted her resumé on Workopolis and even checked out the TTC map. She won a job as a desktop publisher for a multinational consulting firm.

Silvano Tocchi, a director of the foreign credential recognition division at Human Resources and Social

Development Canada, says with an evolving labour market it's in the country's best interests to give newcomers like Mariano a helping hand. "It's better for them to be forewarned and forearmed than come and be disappointed," he notes. "It's a mitigating strategy."

Good preparation helps newcomers time their arrival so that they can immediately begin language training, or identify shortcomings in their qualifications and take correspondence courses before they leave, says Tom Owen of Toronto's World Education Services.

Many newcomers face big delays when they get here, notes Owen, who points out that only 10 per cent of immigrants who ask his agency for a credential assessment do so while they're still overseas.

"You can save anywhere between three weeks and two months on that if you actually have it done ahead of time," he says.

The program, dubbed CIIP (ciip.accc.ca), is funded by Ottawa and delivered by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. It includes a day-long group workshop in the home country, divided by profession or province of destination,

followed by 90 minutes of one-on-one counselling.

Since its January inception, 1,000 skilled immigrants have voluntarily participated to learn about Canadian labour market trends, skills in demand in various regions, licensing procedures, and how to hook up with career bridging programs.

Mariano's husband, Nathaniel, 40, says the couple was initially overwhelmed by all the information on the Internet. "People can give you an encyclopedia but you won't know what to do with it. You don't know what you don't know," says Nathaniel, an engineer who also attended the Manila workshop.

"The people at the office explained to us the reality in Canada. It might make you think twice before coming, but they helped us come up with a plan," adds the father of two, whose immigration took five years to process. "Before that, we had not had a plan."

Although an evaluation downgraded his degree from the Technological Institute of the Philippines to the level of a college diploma, Nathaniel, who is still job-hunting, says the workshop has opened up new options and given him hope.

Josie Di Zio of COSTI, the lead Ontario settlement agency involved in the project, says the workshops may be brief but they're a good start.

"We can now do the referrals as early as possible, so people can have a good, realistic understanding of their decision, and there won't be any surprises when they get here," explains Di Zio, whose organization has received 150 inquiries to date.

The greatest need of the future is for more and better leaders in all fields of human endeavour - leaders who will have the knowledge, courage, conviction and human understanding to cope with the problems of a shrinking world, freer trade, the population explosion and the need for improved living conditions for all.

Anton Rupert

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Expensive cars destroyed to teach smugglers a lesson

August 16, 2007

Gleaming luxury cars were reduced to crushed glass, twisted metal and tattered leather Thursday as Philippine officials oversaw the destruction of 18 vehicles smuggled into a former US naval base that is now a tax-free port.

Thursday were not crushed because of some legal hurdles, but will be wrecked at a later date, officials said.

A Lincoln Navigator, three BMW X5s, a Chevrolet Camper and a Mitsubishi GTO sports car were among the vehicles worth a total of P30 million crushed by backhoes at the Subic Bay

The cars were destroyed on orders from President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo "to send a message and also because it's common knowledge that if we auction them, the smugglers also win so it defeats the purpose," said Mrs Arroyo's aide, Cerge Remonde.

The government hopes the example will serve as a deterrent to smugglers, Teves said.

"It's morally justifiable because (smuggling is) harming the state, it's harming our industry, it doesn't generate potential employment for our people," he said.

He appealed to everyone to "pay your taxes to help the country because we need the revenues to provide our people services and infrastructure."

Teves said the 18 smuggled cars alone cost the government P10 million in lost taxes.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the 18 destroyed cars were smuggled into Subic in 2002 but were not claimed by their owners, perhaps for fear of being in trouble with the law. The 14 other cars have claimants who are contesting their forfeiture in court, he said.

Earlier this month, Mrs Arroyo vowed to step up anti-smuggling efforts after revenue collections fell short of the target for the first half of the year and local industries complained about rampant smuggling. ■

Yamaha Motors to open Philippine plant

August 9, 2007

Major Japanese motorcycle maker Yamaha Motor Co. announced plans Thursday to build a new factory in the Philippines as the company seeks to boost production in Southeast Asia's emerging markets.

The company based in central Japan said in a statement that the new plant -- to be located in the city of Lipa, south of Manila -- will allow it to more speedily respond to changes in the Philippines' growing two-wheeler market. It is scheduled to start operation in early 2009.

The company also announced that its subsidiary Yamaha Motor Philippines Inc. will start assembling and selling motorcycles with 105cc to 135cc engines starting in late September.

The subsidiary, which was established in May, is expected to have an annual output of 70,000 motorcycles in 2008, Yamaha said.

Motorcycle sales have been rising steadily in the Philippines thanks to the country's economic expansion, the company said. Sales in the country grew 6 percent to 620,000 units in 2006, it said.

Yamaha has been assembling and distributing its motorcycles with local partner Norkis Trading Co. since 1962. ■



Backhoes are used to destroy smuggled luxury cars and SUVs as Lincoln Navigators, BMW X5 models, and other brands which officials hope will teach smugglers a lesson Thursday Aug. 16, 2007 at Subic Freeport, a former U.S. Naval base, west of Manila, Philippines. A total 18 vehicles worth about 30-million Pesos (US \$600,000), smuggled into Subic Freeport were reduced to rubble Thursday and officials have scheduled to destroy more luxury cars as Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Audis in the next few weeks.

Fourteen other cars - including a Porsche, a Lamborghini and a Ferrari - that were supposed to be destroyed

Freeport as Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and customs officials watched.



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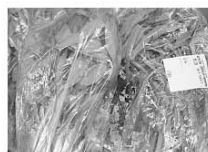
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