

3rd Ambassadors' Consuls' Tour on

Montreal, May 21, 2007 - The 3rd Ambassadors'/Consuls' Tour is fast approaching. May 31, 2007 is the final deadline for the full payment of reservations. On July 12, 2007, the Canadian group will depart for Vancouver where they will take a Philippine Airlines plane to go to Manila, Philippines. If anyone else wants to join the tour, there is a slim chance of having available seats left.

The Ambassadors'/Consuls' Tour is designed to encourage Filipinos abroad and their friends to visit and appreciate the natural beauty of the Philippines. They are guaranteed to get a royal or VIP treatment upon arrival at the airport and will receive a special welcome including an audience with the Philippine president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and a line-up of business networking opportunities.

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Delegation from Canada with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at Malacanang during the 2nd Ambassadors/Consuls General Tour to the Philippines, July 13-21, 2006.

Oriental Mindoro

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Absentee voter turn out only 15.5%



A photo of the 2007 Philippine elections polling station that is crowded but orderly.

MANILA, Philippines—Despite the dismal turnout in the absentee voting exercise, the Department of Foreign Affairs said there was no failure of the absentee vote.

Only 78,360 out of the 504,110 overseas Filipinos who registered for

the May 14 election, or 15.5 percent, actually voted.

But Ambassador Generoso Calonge, vice chair of the Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat, said the fact that more than half a million overseas Filipinos registered for the

poll exercise was already a success.

"The election is composed of two things, registration and actual voting. The fact that 504,110 availed of the privilege to register is a big accomplishment..they may have not chosen to exercise that [voting] right but they signified their intention to vote," Calonge said.

Calonge and DFA spokesperson Claro Cristobal both said that it was "mission accomplished" as far as the DFA was concerned.

"The mission of government is to provide the opportunity. Like in a highway, even if there is no car passing, you provide the opportunity for a better environment for driving," Calonge said.

Cristobal said the foreign office was not remiss in its duty to inform Filipinos abroad about the elections as well as the national candidates running for public office.

Calonge said that all 88

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Elections



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EDITORIAL

We have a lot to be proud of and be thankful for

The month of May has been full of cultural events. On May 16, there was a video conference with Mr. Luis Francia, a Filipino-American writer, journalist, and winner of several literary awards. On May 19, the Philippine Folk Arts Society held its second Terno Ball, and on May 20, Florante Aguilar, a classical guitarist, held a concert. At the same event, an independent film maker, Eli Africa, showed three short films which reminded us of home.

These three events showed a variety of artistic talents that Filipinos can be proud of and to be thankful for. It is a great feeling to know that we have a very rich cultural heritage and to know that we have many fellow Filipinos who have immigrated to other countries do very well in their chosen field of endeavour. They also help us realize that we all have a lot to offer to the rest of the world and that our cultural traditions must be cherished and passed on to our children.

Starting with Mr. Luis H. Francia who delivered a lecture on "Too Asian to be American and Too American to be Asian" to Filipino-Canadian audiences via video conference in Montreal, Halifax, Toronto, Vancouver, and Edmonton, we have been made aware of the duality of our identity or the uniqueness of our hyphenated existence. He spoke of his experience as a Filipino-American in New York and how he has been viewed by people when he returns home to the Philippines. His talk is both informative and provocative which made people ask for a follow-up to the video-conference. Mr. Francia raised an important question for further reflections: "The hyphen between 'Asian' and 'American' - is that a bridge between the two, or a wedge that separates? As a parallel question in our case - Is being a Filipino-Canadian similar to being a Filipino-American? Mr. Francia does not have the answer yet and it may be worthwhile to make a comparative study of the two kinds of hyphenated identities.

The second Terno Ball organized by the Philippine Folk Art Society is another example of showing our rich cultural heritage. The fine craftsmanship of a terno gown and barong tagalog attests to the skill and creativity of our people many of them

unknown but whose work we all can enjoy and admire. By holding this type of activity, the Philippine Folk Art Society is to be commended for its initiative of promoting our native industry and showing the rest of the world the beauty of our national dress. Hopefully, this may lead to spin-off benefits of promoting trade between Canada and the Philippines.

In the field of music, we would like to share with our readers the identity of a critically acclaimed classical guitarist, Florante Aguilar, who is considered as one of the leading proponents of Philippine harana music in America today. Mr. Aguilar plays the guitar skillfully and passionately. Without a doubt, everyone who listened to his music was moved to sing and to reminisce over the past. He also has awakened our interest in learning more about native songs in different dialects in the Philippines.

It is a common knowledge that we find our fellow Filipinos in almost every part of the globe. We cannot possibly learn about all the success stories of everyone but when there is an opportunity to meet someone like Luis Francia, Florante Aguilar, and Eli Africa, we should spread the word of being lucky to know them and share the experience of having enjoyed their brief presence in our midst. Perhaps, by doing so, we also inspire others to follow their footsteps - their love of music, literature, film making, fine craftsmanship, and other creative pursuits.

Wherever we are, we have a lot to be proud of and to be thankful. By immigrating to another country, we have found a way to improve ourselves and that of our loved ones. After all, there seems to be no limit of time and space where we can go because of our inherent character traits of resiliency to adapt to any environment, our ability to speak English, the international language, and our willingness to work hard not only for ourselves but also for our relatives. In other words, we always have a soft spot in our heart for our country of origin.

In spite of having a so-called "hyphenated existence", we are proud of our heritage and our identity as Filipino-Canadians. ■

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi



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Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi
Chief Editor & Publisher

Hilda T. Veloso
Community News

Dr. Victor Gavino
Esther Stansfield
Lina V. Fernandez
Riza Esmeralda
Anna May Tappan
Alvin D. Veloso
Contributors

Sam Ferry
Assistant Editor
News & Tourism
Bert Abiera
Founder

Nida Verginon Butaran
Mary Joy Lizarondo
Sales Representative

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Murder charges filed in Philippines' Peace Corps case GO still leading 8-2-2

May 18, 2007

Prosecutors brought murder charges against a woodcarver who confessed to beating to death an American Peace Corps volunteer because she bumped into him, a government lawyer said Friday.

The charges against Juan Duntugan were filed Thursday in Banaue, in northern Ifugao province, where Julia Campbell was found buried in a shallow grave last month, assistant provincial prosecutor Marvin Ngayawan said.

Campbell was a former Hawai'i resident who attended Punahou School from 1979-82 while her family lived in 'Aikahi Park.

Previously prosecutors were treating the case as a homicide, which carries a maximum 20-year prison sentence. Murder is punishable by up to 40 years because it can involve treachery or cruelty.

Campbell, 40, disappeared April 8 during a solo hike to Ifugao province's famed mountainside rice terraces.

Duntugan, 25, admitted he bludgeoned Campbell with a rock and a wooden stick in a fit of rage when she bumped into him.

Campbell, of Fairfax, Va., was to leave the Philippines in June after serving two years with the Peace Corps.

Duntugan's confession showed he attacked Campbell from behind, Ngayawan told The Associated Press

by telephone.

"There was treachery. Clearly Campbell ... could not defend herself," he said. The autopsy revealed "additional and unnecessary beatings," indicating cruelty.



Juan Duntugan, 25, admitted he bludgeoned a Peace Corps volunteer in a fit of rage when she bumped into him during a solo hike last month.

Her body was found April 18 when soldiers found one of her feet protruding from the shallow grave after it was apparently dug out by a dog. Duntugan surrendered to police nine days later.

Campbell, a former journalist who worked for the New York Times and other media organizations, came to the Philippines, in March 2005.

She helped establish an ecology center that has been named for her in



Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell, a former Punahou student, was found buried in a shallow grave last month in the Philippines.

Donsol in Sorsogon province southeast of Manila, famous for whale sharks. She later taught English and literature at the Divine Word College in Legazpi city capital of nearby Albay province. ■

May 19, 2007

Votes from overseas and several Luzon provinces gave the Genuine Opposition (GO) a steady grip on the lead in the senatorial race based on the canvass of the Commission on Election (Comelec).

As of 5 p.m. Saturday, GO continued to dominate the race, taking eight of the 12 Senate slots up for grabs, with the four remaining slots divided equally between the administration's TEAM Unity and independent candidates.

An INQUIRER.net tally based on the Comelec canvass showed GO candidate Loren Legarda still the front runner with 1,966,930 votes, followed by fellow opposition bets Francis Escudero with 1,947,911 votes, Panfilo Lacson with 1,630,420 votes, and Manuel Villar with 1,610,466 votes.

The poll body tallied 13 certificates of canvass (CoCs) on Saturday -- seven from overseas, one from local absentee voting, and from Sorsogon, Oriental Mindoro, Iloilo City, Apayao, and Romblon.

Local absentee voters -- some 36,000 government employees and state security forces allowed to cast their ballots early because they had to be on duty on Election Day -- gave TEAM Unity five of the top six slots, with administration bet Miguel Zubiri their number one choice.

More Election 2007 coverage on pages 5 & 18



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From Page 1

Elections

Philippine foreign diplomatic posts took part in the information campaign to increase voters' awareness of the candidates for senators and party-list representation.

In the first OAV exercise in 2004, a total of 233,092, or 65 percent, of the 359,297 who registered for the exercise voted.

Colange said the low turnout this year may have been due to the high mobility of overseas Filipinos, particularly workers, who transfer from one employment to another and from one country to another.

A total of 51,246 cast their ballots personally, 23,754 voted by mail, and 3,360 through modified voting by mail.

The OAVS report showed that voters' participation through personal voting was highest in these five areas: Hong Kong, 19,185; Riyadh, 7,519; Jeddah, 5,041; Al Khobar, 3,902; and Kuwait, 2,395.

Voting by mail was highest in the following: Singapore, 5,527; Brunei, 2,702; Taiwan, 1,803; San Francisco, 1,190; and Tokyo, 1,139.

The bulk of the voters were contract and domestic workers while the rest were permanent residents and dual citizens.

Cristobal said the action now shifts from questions about the voters' turnout to actual results of the count which only the Commission on Elections was authorized to release.

Colange said the results of the overseas absentee voting count may be known in three to four days. ■

From Page 1

Ambassadors

This tour package costs CAD\$2 349. (3N package inclusive of taxes), covering the round trip air fare from Toronto, Ottawa or Montreal, Canada on Philippine Airlines from Vancouver with Air Canada connections from 3 cities. Plus Basic Program Package: July 14-17 that includes: 3 nights stay at Shangri-La Makati Hotel, Buffet breakfast at hotel, Meeting and Photo-Op with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Lunch at Malacanang Palace and Tour of Palace Museum, 2-3 dinners with entertainment, Two lunches, Day out-of-town tours (Choice of Corregidor, Taal/Tagaytay, Villa Escudero, and Kawit, Cavite), Tour of Manila and Makati, Grand Welcome and airport amenities, All transfers, portage and more, details to be finalized.

Extension of 3 nights/4 day optional tours will be offered at additional cost. Deadline for registration: 09 May 2007 / Full payment deadline: 31 May 2007. Note: Placement at events shall be

determined according to date of receipt of full payment.

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Kudos to the Philippine Folk Art Society's Terno Ball

The Philippine Folk Art Society of Quebec 's Terno Ball 2007 a fundraising event for Dans La Rue , Philippine Center Foundation of Greater Montreal and Kalinangan Dance Troupe held at Hotel Omni on Sherbrooke West last May 19 , 2007 was an evening to cherish and remember.

Annie Miaral ex- officio was the chair person who looked after the production of the event and Shinete Khoury her dynamic co - chair promoted and marketed the project with a deep sense of commitment. President Riza Esmeralda made the event visible in the government sector. She expressed her gratitude to the effective teamwork among the organizers

The guest speaker for the

Lui Temelkoski, Member of Parliament for Oak Ridges-Markham, Ontario, Rhenita Rodriguez, Second Secretary and Consul, Philippine Embassy to Canada Gerry Weiner, former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, aspiring candidate Member of Parliament for Westmount Wanda Kaluzny, founder and artistic director of the Montreal Chamber Orchestra Marika Coulourides, well known supporter of the arts and civic affairs George Berberi - Member of Union des citoyens et citoyennes d'ile de Montréal (UCIM), presidential candidate for the Cultural Commission (UCIM), Carmelita Sideco - Founding president of the Philippine Folk Art Society of Quebec Julie Parado, Angie Ogerio, Carmelita Sideco - lent ternos to models George Tsoukas - Endocrinologist, Royal Victoria

It was a well attended event with a good multicultural representation from various sectors in the city and other cities in Canada and the United States. The highlight of the evening was the cultural presentation of the Terno directed, choreographed and produced by ROSOTRO PRODUCTION with the participation of diverse groups of Filipinas. It was a show that garnered genuine appreciation for Filipino costumes, showmanship and versatility Florante Aguilar, a critically acclaimed classical guitarist and proponent of the Philippine Harana in the United States performed with a few Harana music . The Kalinangan Dance Troupe

"Too Asian to be American, Too American to be Asian"

On May 16, the U.S. Embassy in Montreal invited representatives of the Filipino communities in major Canadian cities - Vancouver, Toronto, Halifax, Ottawa and Montreal to a video-



conference of a Filipino-American writer, Luis Francia. The above topic focuses on the hyphenated existence of people who immigrate to a foreign country. He asks a rhetorical question about the hyphen between "Asian" and "American" - is that a bridge between the two, or a wedge that separates? He expounded on the mysteries, dilemmas, and delights of being an Asian-American, "a unique citizenship, where one never seems to fit in with one's immediate surroundings."

Luis Francia is a journalist, nonfiction writer, and poet. He is the author of the semiautobiographical Eye of the Fish, A personal Archipelago, winner of the 2002 PEN Center Open Book and the 2002 Asian American Writers literary awards. He was the New York correspondent for the Hongkong based Asiaweek for close to two decades. He has also written or various publications, among them the Village Voice, New York Newsday, the Daily news, the San Francisco Chronicle, Far Eastern Economic Review, and the Nation. He writes a monthly column for the online edition of Manila's Philippine Daily Inquirer.

He has three poetry collections, the latest being Museum of Absences, a collection of reviews and essays, Memories of Overdevelopment, and has edited a number of anthologies, including Brown River, White : A Twentieth Century Anthology of Philippine Literature in English. Francia has taught at Sarah Lawrence College and now teaches at New York University. He lives in Jackson Heights, Queens and is on the Board of Trustees of the Asian American Writers' Workshop. ■



Ed Joaquin made a presentation of the Tagalog version of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, at the Terno Ball, May 19, 2007.

evening was Yolande James, Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities. Among the crowd that evening were the following special people. Marcel Tremblay, City of Montreal Executive Committee Member Responsible for Cultural Communities also representing Michael Applebaum, Borough Mayor of Cote des Neiges/NDG. Ed Joaquin, Special Adviser to

entertained the crowd with cultural dances.

The success of any event is always dependent on the synergy and singleness of purpose among organizers and members but the essential factor is the involvement and attention from the community, the government, sponsors and countless volunteers, too numerous to mention.



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Violence, fraud and killings mar elections

May 16, 2007

Despite tight police supervision over national and local elections, more than 120 people die in election-related violence, including 60 candidates. However, the violence seems limited to isolated incidents and less important than in previous polls. Pampanga archbishop laments widespread vote-buying and selling.



A policeman guards ballot boxes in the northern Philippine province of Abra.

Up to 100,000 voters were unable to participate in national polls fearful of violence. Still, despite violence and many murders, the Commission on Elections and international observers said that the process was generally peaceful and orderly. But allegations about vote-buying have led Pampanga bishop to lament that whoever sells his vote, sells his future.

As many as 100,000 voters in the south of the country were unable to cast their ballots due to the threat of violence or lack of ballot papers, some

of which were stolen, the Commission said. Moreover, "despite the augmentation of security forces, [many] election inspectors refused to serve because of security reasons," commission official Rene Sarmiento said.

Such fears are unfounded. On election day, two election workers, both teachers, were killed when unidentified men burned down a school used as a polling place south of Manila. With their death, the poll-related death toll rose to 126. Another 149 people were injured.

None the less, the Philippines National Police (PNP) Director General Oscar Calderon said that recorded elections-related incidents were so far "relatively low" compared to previous elections.

Incidents include the theft of ballot boxes and other material before sunrise yesterday, Election Day, and the killing of some 60 candidates and 15 policemen; 17 other policemen were wounded in violent incidents in Occidental Mindoro, Masbate, and Abra provinces.

Despite the violence and charges of electoral fraud, voter turnout was high reaching 75-80 per cent, compared to 77 per cent in 2004, and 85 per cent in 2001.

Voters had to elect 12 senators (out of 24) and all 275 members of the House of Representatives as well as 17,600 local government officials

casting their ballots in 224,667 precincts nationwide.

Henrietta de Villa, who chairs the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, a Catholic Church-based poll watch-dog, said polls were generally peaceful.



A policeman looks at two burned ballot boxes and four others recovered from a burned polling center in Pinagbayanan elementary school in Taysan town, Batangas province, south of Manila.

Her office fielded about 500,000 volunteers to ensure clean and honest elections and distributed leaflets on the "10 commandments of responsible voting," among others, urging voters to shun candidates who lead immoral lives, who use force and money to intimidate and those with known records of graft and corruption.

In this election as in the past, the main problem was electoral fraud and vote-buying. For this reason, the Commission on Elections set up a special panel to look into reports of

cheating; 110 special courts have also been set up to handle an expected flood of fraud claims.

Meanwhile Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto told AsiaNews that he was alarmed by reports of alleged vote-buying and vote-selling in different parts of the country.

In his pastoral letter titled "Do What is Right: A Pastoral Letter on Vote-Buying and Vote-Selling" which was read during last Sunday mass, he reminded the faithful to heed the 1992 Pastoral Exhortation on Elections issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines which condemned vote-buying as a particularly degrading form of cheating.

"For the past several days now we have been receiving reports about people being gathered in cockpit arenas, coliseums, sports complexes and other venues where they receive cash gifts from certain candidates," Archbishop Aniceto said.

"When you sell your vote, you sell your honour. You become nothing in the eyes of those who buy you. You harm your future and that of your countrymen," he lamented.

To the people who got money from vote-buyers he said: "Do not allow your conscience to be bound by an unjust deal. [. . .] Repent and be converted to the Lord." ■

Priest wins provincial governor vote

May 23, 2007

A Filipino priest has been elected to the post of provincial governor, becoming the first Roman Catholic priest to be voted into office in the Philippines and beating the president's party in her own backyard.

Father Eddie Panlilio, until two months ago the priest of St James the Apostle church, says he decided to run for office to give voters a "moral alternative".

Pampanga province, 60km north of Manila, is known for being a centre of prostitution and illegal gambling and has long been lorded over by two opposing political families.

It is also the home province of the Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the Philippine president.

"It was an extraordinary situation of a moral decay," Panlilio said, blaming the province's problems on a "culture of corruption".

So against the rules of Catholic leadership – and breaching the constitutional divide between church and state – he took a break from his priestly duties, ran for governor, and won.

Panlilio defeated Lilia Pineda, the wife of an alleged "gambling lord" and the candidate backed by Arroyo. He also beat incumbent Mark Lapid, an actor and son of a senator who has been implicated on corruption charges.

"I believe my entry into politics far transcends the church and state's so called boundaries," he told Al Jazeera after his win was confirmed. "It's a very meaningful kind of service to the people, I believe."



Father Panlilio says he ran for office to give voters a "moral alternative"

With the help of thousands of volunteers, the priest ran an atypical campaign with no political machinery and no funding.

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, the president of the Catholic bishops' conference in the Philippines, congratulated him but also called his case an "exception" and said the church wanted "to keep it that way".

But Panlilio has also made some enemies, some of whom have made threats against his life.

In his new role, rather than his priestly vestments, he wears a bullet-proof vest and has bodyguards everywhere he goes. ■

Pacquiao loses bid for office

May 16, 2007

Filipino boxing great Manny Pacquiao, a supporter of President Gloria Arroyo, has lost his bid to win a seat in the Philippine House of Representatives, urging his opponent to help the poor.

proclaimed Custodio the landslide winner over Pacquiao, who holds the World Boxing Council "international" superfeatherweight title.

Pacquiao, the number one contender to the world superfeatherweight title held by Juan



Manny Pacquiao has lost his bid to win a seat in the Philippine House of Representatives.

A week after elections which pitted him against incumbent Darlene Custodio for a congressional seat to represent South Cotabato province, the 28-year-old conceded defeat.

"If the winner fulfills her promises to the people, then I'm happy," Pacquiao said. "I would be happy as if I had won."

The national election commission

Manuel Marquez of Mexico, said he was sad about the outcome of his first political bout, but pledged to pursue his career.

Some pundits said his defeat was brought about by his closeness to Arroyo, whose political allies appear to be struggling in the race for 12 Senate seats, according to early unofficial results from the May 14 polls. ■

COMMUNITY NEWS

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY AND FILIPINO ASSOCIATIONS

The Philippine Embassy in Ottawa enjoys a cordial relationship with the Filipino community in Canada. We have here in Ottawa an active and progressive Filipino community that is very much involved in various programs, projects and activities that do not only redound to the benefit of our kababayans but also strengthen the bonds of friendship and partnership between the Philippines and Canada.

Many Filipino community organizations have made it part of their mandate to look after migrant workers, especially newcomers, in their midst. Filipino community organizations periodically conduct information sessions on various topics, i.e., computer skills, income tax preparation, social security agreements between the Philippines and Canada for Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS) and Social Security System (SSS) contributors.

The Embassy has also sponsored orientation seminars for newly arrived migrants in the National Capital Region and entrepreneurship seminars, through the support of various Filipino community associations.

Several individual migrants in distress, many of them under the Live In Caregiver Program, had been beneficiaries of the support and generosity of the Filipino community, through the latter's contributions to legal and medical fund drives.

Filipino community organizations, in close coordination with the Philippine Embassy, continue to be responsive to the needs of migrant workers and help out new

migrants in various ways.

In Ottawa, foremost among them is the Pastoral Care for Migrants, under the umbrella of the Philippine Pastoral Committee, whose main work is to ease the adjustment and integration of new arrivals into Canadian society. It also holds information sharing sessions every first Saturday of the month on various topics, for instance on acclimatizing to Canadian winters and on how to avail themselves of the various services offered on the provincial and federal levels to immigrants.

In Montreal, Quebec, the Federation of Filipino-Canadian Associations of Quebec, Philippine Association of Montreal & Suburbs, Filipino Caregiver Association of Montreal all offer free French language instruction on weekends to new migrants, while the Philippine Centre Canada in Ottawa offers free computer courses to migrant workers.

Re: mail-order brides, Philippine Foreign Service Posts regularly provide the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) with a list of shelters, support groups and help lines for victims of abuse and violence in their respective host countries. Counsellors and trained volunteers are in a better position to provide counselling, support and other forms of assistance to victims of abuse. In turn, CFO makes this information available to those attending its pre-departure orientation seminars.

In the first half of 2006, the Filipino community in Ottawa welcomed three (3) new community organizations, namely, the Ilocano Ngarud Society whose members come from Ilocano-speaking regions, the Pilipino Canadian Seniors Association of Ottawa for senior citizens and the Working Group ng Kababaihan Pilipina sa Ottawa at Iba pang Malalapit na Lugar, whose aim

is to establish networks among Filipino women in Ottawa and suburbs where talents, skills and experiences could be shared.

The vibrant Filipino communities in Ottawa and Kingston in Ontario, as well as those in Montreal and Quebec City in Quebec were instrumental in the successful celebration of the 108th anniversary of Philippine Independence in June. Under the guidance of the Embassy, the various community organizations in these areas contributed valuable time and resources in helping orchestrate the numerous activities during the week-long Independence celebration, such as the Philippine Independence Gala night, the annual Philippine Independence Picnic and the wreath-laying and floral offering at the bust of Dr. Jose Rizal.

The Filipino community in Canada is a large and active one that could be harnessed to strengthen the existing bilateral relations and create new areas of cooperation between the Philippines, the land of their birth, and Canada, the country they now call home.

AMBASSADOR BRILLANTES LAUDS PEACEFUL AND ORDERLY CONDUCT OF OVERSEAS ABSENTEE VOTING IN CANADA

The Philippine Embassy in Ottawa and the Philippine Consulates General in Toronto and Vancouver successfully conducted the implementation of overseas absentee voting in their respective jurisdictions, earning the approbation of Philippine Ambassador to Canada Jose S. Brillantes.

In his commendation, Ambassador Brillantes said, "Our hardworking and dedicated personnel at the Philippine consular offices in Canada, specifically in the Consulates General in Toronto and Vancouver, including their

partners in the community and the attached services, in coordination with the Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila, richly deserve our gratitude and appreciation for their efficient handling of the implementation of the country's Overseas Absentee Voting Act."

Ambassador Brillantes made particular mention of the important role that voters in Canada played in the success of overseas absentee voting in Canada. "I reserve our highest commendation for our voters. The success of overseas absentee voting is due to the high sense of civic duty of our registered voters in Canada, who took the time and effort to accomplish their ballots and mail them back to the respective Philippine consular offices in time for the closing of the voting period at 3:00 p.m. (Philippine time) on 14 May 2007," Ambassador Brillantes said. "Several of the ballots we received were even sent via courier service, evidently in the voters' effort for the ballots to reach the Embassy and the Consulates on time."

The Ambassador noted that the turn-out of overseas absentee voting more than met expectations, pointing out that the absentee voter turn-out of Ottawa was quite notable, at about 25%. Ambassador Brillantes said, "On the whole, the Embassy is happy that we were instrumental in paving the way for allowing our kababayans in Canada to have a say in how the country is governed. The provision of the means for overseas Filipinos to participate in the democratic process by casting their votes is already a victory in itself. The OAV process has successfully provided an avenue by which Overseas Filipinos can exercise their right to vote. Of course, it should be remembered that the right to vote also includes the right not to vote." ■



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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

What is a cooperative?

Generally, the concept of a cooperative is a duly registered association of persons, with a common bond of interest, who have voluntarily joined together to achieve a lawful common social or economic end, making equitable contributions to the capital required and accepting a fair share of the risks and benefits of the undertaking in accordance with universally accepted cooperative principles.

The main purpose of coops is to encourage the people in the community to work together, to facilitate human capital buildup, and to make them aware of the socioeconomic problems with an eye to build entrepreneurial skills. Coops pool the backbone in the community to make decisions to use their own resources, with community concern for economic development.

Coops shall provide highest economic benefits to its members, teach them efficient ways of doing things in a cooperative manner, and spread cooperative practices and let the lower income groups to increase their ownership in the wealth of every nation.

Co-ops are based on the values of self-help, democracy, self-responsibility, equality, equity, and solidarity. Co-op members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, transparency, and caring for others. Conducting the affairs of cooperatives for eleemosynary or charitable purposes is not good for coops.

To become a member of a co-op is simple if you know which you can join! Just check whether there is a coop in your own community or your workplace then meet the president or the manager of the coop and apply to become a member.

You may want to show your support for co-operative values and principles by joining a co-op. Usually, you can be a member of a housing co-op if you are living in one of the houses which are part of the co-op. You need to have a 'common bond' with other members living in the same area if you want to be part of a credit union or caisse populaire. To be a member of an agricultural co-op, you should have a farm or working as a farmer, and so on. However, when it comes to consumer co-ops, you are more than possible to find there is one near you, which you can become a member of and therefore support by using its shop/grocery outlet and all the other services it has to offer. Basically, the aim is not to make the most profit from its members but to reinvest surplus earnings to lower prices and increase the quality of services.

Co-ops keep the benefits of business within a community, rather than simply benefiting the pockets of City investors; co-ops promote democracy, give people the right to have a say and therefore empower them, rather than them being simply the means by which the company makes a profit, often at people's expense but to the benefit of financial investors. Co-operatives can provide innovative and flexible solutions to a variety of social and economic problems. If there is a type of co-operative that you think your community could benefit from, why not think about joining a coop?

Cooperative Principles.
Every cooperative shall conduct its affairs in accordance with universally accepted principles of cooperation which include the following:

1st: Voluntary and Open Membership.

Membership in a cooperative shall be voluntary, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of

membership, and available to all individuals regardless of their social, political, racial or religious background or beliefs.

2nd: Democratic Member Control.

Co-ops are democratic organizations controlled by their members who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. During elections, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) regardless of their share capital. The organizational structure enables members to elect the board of directors. The board hires the manager(s). The manager hires the staff. In co-operatives, individuals serving as elected board of directors (officers) are accountable to the G.A. (general assembly)- the members who need and use the co-op's services.

3rd: Member Economic Participation.

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members allocate surpluses for any of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves for continuous training of members/staff/officers; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4th: Autonomy and Independence.

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5th: Coop Education and Training.

All cooperatives shall make provision for the education of their members, officers and employees and of the general public based on the principles of cooperation. Co-operatives provide continuous education and training for their members, elected board of directors, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They constantly inform the general public about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6th: Co-operation Among Co-operatives.

Co-ops shall actively cooperate with other co-ops. Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by helping and working together through local, regional, national and international structures.

7th: Concern for Community.

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members. Co-ops are a way for communities to exercise control over the economic, social and cultural activities that affect the lives of community members. Co-ops are

directed locally and invested in locally. The surplus profits of the co-op are returned to the members and therefore remain within the community.

To go over the main points, coops are capitalized, owned, operated, patronized by the member-owners. Coops are democratic organizations managed by the members to build better lives. Can you think of a good reason why not to consider doing things the co-operative way? ■

Thank you, Mr. Estrada

In January 2007, Mr. Estrada sent me an email reacting to the January headline story- "Filipino Cooperative Faces New Challenges". Here's an excerpt from his email:

"I've read the January 2007 front page & editorial issue re coop. I like reading this issue because I believe in cooperativism and self-reliance. I am also a coop-volunteer worker in the Philippines and I agree in coop-member's economic participation in capital, volunteerism, democratic exercise of power by members, autonomy and independence, and coop's concern for the community. When I saw Divisoria-Cubao coop for the first time sometime in November 2006, I can't help but admired the people and the leaders behind it who spent and continue spending their personal time, efforts, and money just to help other people especially the have-less. Your coop is still young and yet very strong to face problems you mentioned."

"Per experience, organizing a coop is the hardest part. It's hard to convince people to join the coop movement especially if the coop has no money or just starting. Sometimes people think that the people behind it are "crazy". Sometimes they say the coop is made for self-interest. That's why I salute and admired the coop management, board of directors and most especially to all the volunteer workers who unselfishly shared their talent and skills just to save the coop. Kudos! Mabuhay!"

I told Mr. Estrada I would make a copy of his e-mail message and pass it on to the others, to give them encouragement to hang on to our project. I asked him at the same time if he could help us enlighten our fellow "kababayan" about cooperatives by contributing an article about it. I think that will be super if they see that we are reaching readers everywhere and that the cooperative is really a good idea to help the common people. Without any hesitation, Mr. Estrada immediately reacted (in February 2007) and volunteered to help enlighten us about coops until now.

To Mr. Estrada, we thank you for sharing us your experience and knowledge on coops. I know that you suffer, experience and endure some difficulties until today due to coop involvement in the Philippines but you opted to continue doing it in order to help other people.

Zenaida Kharroubi, Editor

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From the Editors of E/The
Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: Are my kids breathing in dangerous exhaust fumes by riding the school bus?

-- Molly Schink, Winnetka, IL

Over 24 million children ride the bus to school every day and as a result are regularly exposed to harmful diesel exhaust emissions. Major components of diesel exhaust include carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, formaldehyde and tiny soot particles that carry substances called polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classifies diesel emissions as a "likely carcinogen." Diesel emissions are estimated to be responsible for 70 percent of the cancer risk arising from air pollution, according to the California Air Resources Board. Dangers from diesel exhaust can range from respiratory illnesses including asthma and bronchitis to lung cancer and heart disease.

Children are more vulnerable to the effects of diesel exhaust than adults because they breathe more quickly and take more air into their developing lungs. And on average, school children who ride the bus spend an average of 90 minutes each weekday in transit.

The EPA estimates that approximately 390,000 diesel school buses are on the road in the U.S. today. A third of these were made before 1990 when stricter emissions guidelines were first enforced. According to the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), a child riding inside a school bus may be exposed to as much as four times the amount of toxic diesel fumes as someone riding in a car directly ahead of it.

Recently, the EPA pledged

more than \$1 million to a partnership called the Northeast Diesel Collaborative, which is comprised of eight different public and private entities working together to improve emissions on thousands of school buses throughout the northeastern U.S. Recipient groups are using the money primarily to reduce emissions on older buses by installing advanced pollution controls.

Retrofitting old buses with such controls involves installing emissions reducing filters. Diesel particulate filters, which cost around \$700 each, can cut tailpipe emissions by a whopping 85 percent. And "closed crankcase filtration systems," which are installed under the hood and filter the discharges that come directly from the engine's crankcase vent, can cut engine soot by nearly 90 percent at a cost of around \$7,500 each. Buses can be retrofitted with one or both filters.

Nationwide a number of school bus emission-reduction programs are underway with the help of the EPA's Clean School Bus USA program. In addition to retrofit projects the program seeks to replace older buses with new less polluting buses and encourage unnecessary school bus idling.

Concerned parents can help reduce their children's exposure to diesel emissions from school buses by advocating at town and boards of education meetings for the use of new or retrofitted school buses. Also, bus windows should remain open when weather allows, and children are safer sitting nearer the front of the bus, as exhaust tends to accumulate in the back.

Dear EarthTalk: What is "light pollution?" Is it really a factor in breast cancer? -- Gudrun Smythe, Madison, Wisconsin

The glow of city lights blotting out stars in the night sky has frustrated many a stargazer, but recent studies have shown that "light pollution"--defined as excess or obtrusive light at night--can actually have serious health effects. Researchers have found that exposure to bright nocturnal light can decrease the human body's production of melatonin, a hormone secreted at night that regulates our sleep-wake cycles. And decreased melatonin production has in turn been linked to higher rates of breast cancer in women.

"Light at night is now clearly a risk factor for breast cancer," says David Blask, a researcher at the

Cooperstown, New York-based Mary Imogene Bassett Research Institute. "Breast tumors are awake during the day, and melatonin puts them to sleep at night," he adds.

Epidemiologist Richard Stevens of the U.S. Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory first discovered the link between breast cancer and light pollution in the late 1980s. Stevens found that breast cancer rates were significantly higher in industrialized countries, where nighttime lighting is prevalent, than in developing regions.

Lending credence to Stevens' research are the findings of another researcher, William Hrushesky of the South Carolina-based Dorn Veterans Affairs Medical Center, who discovered that female night shift workers have a 50 percent greater risk of developing breast cancer than other working women. He also found that blind women have high melatonin concentrations and unusually low rates of breast cancer.

To reduce breast cancer risks from light pollution, Prevention magazine recommends nine hours of sleep nightly in a dark room devoid of both interior (computer screens) and exterior (street lamps) light sources. A study of 12,000 Finnish women found that those who slept nine hours nightly had less than one-third the risk of developing a breast tumor than those who slept only seven or eight hours. Even bright light from a trip to the bathroom can have an affect, so dim nightlights are recommended for night lighting.

Light pollution causes other problems besides increased cancer risks. According to the Sierra Club, birds and animals can be confused by

artificial lighting, leading them away from familiar foraging areas and disrupting their breeding cycles. And the photosynthetic cycles of deciduous trees (those that shed their leaves in the fall) have been shown to be disrupted due to the preponderance of artificial nighttime lights.

Another environmental impact of excessive use of artificial light is, of course, energy waste. The International Dark-Sky Association computes that unnecessary nighttime lighting wastes upwards of \$1.5 billion in electricity costs around the world each year while accounting for the release of more than 12 million tons of carbon dioxide, the leading greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere. Individuals can do their part by keeping lights dim or off at home at night--and convincing their employers and local government offices to do the same.

CONTACTS: International Dark-Sky Association, www.darksky.org; Sierra Club, <http://newyork.sierraclub.org/longisland/lightpollution.html>.

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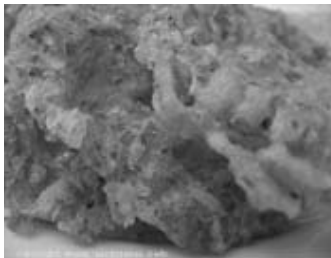
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Philippine Cuisine

UKOY



These two recipes are common snack foods in the Philippines. Having lived abroad for so many years, one tends to forget what is "maruya" and "ukoy" as they have similarities in appearance as well as in preparation.

Ukoy Recipe:

Ingredients

Sweet potatoes (camote), sliced julienne style or you can use potatoes or jicama (singkamas)
egg whites
corn starch
bean sprouts
cooked shrimp (no heads)
salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

In a bowl, mix shrimps, camote, and egg white. Dissolve corn starch in a little bit of water and then add to the bowl. Mix in the bean sprouts. Add salt and pepper to taste. Heat oil in a skillet

MARUYA



and drop in a tablespoonful of the camote mixture, and fry like frying an omelet until golden brown.

Maruya Recipe:

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup sifted flour 1 teaspoon baking powder 1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar 4 tablespoons milk 1/3 cup water
1 egg, beaten 4 ripe bananas 1 / 2 cup cooking oil
powdered sugar (optional)
1 Sift flour, baking powder, salt and sugar. Add milk, water and egg to the dry ingredients and mix until batter is smooth.

2 Peel the bananas and slice lengthwise into 4 pieces. Dip in the batter and roll lightly in flour. Deep fry in cooking oil, browning evenly. Drain and serve with powdered sugar if desired.

New pest threatens to wipe out RP coconut industry

May 20, 2007

The Philippine government warned of a new malady which threatens to wipe out the country's US\$ 760 million coconut industry in three years' time.

Called the coconut hispine beetle (*Brontispa longissima* Gestro), it has already affected about 70,000 trees or 700 hectares of coconut plantation.

CIIF Oil Mills Group president and CEO Danilo M. Coronacion, in an interview during the Farmers Night held recently at the Hotel Intercontinental, said these pests are native to Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and were brought to the Philippines in 2004 through ornamental plants imported from Thailand and Vietnam.

These pests were first spotted preying on palm trees along the Baywalk strip of Roxas Boulevard in Manila and along the stretch of Silang to Dasmarias highway in Cavite.

Coronacion said the infestation had spread in different areas throughout the country from southern Luzon to Mindanao.

According to the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), *Brontispa* feeds on young leaves, which then appear burned or scorched and may cause death to young palms and those situated in poor growing conditions.

The beetle causes great damage to seedlings and mature coconut palms, kills the young spears and eventually the whole palm. Ornamental palms suffer the same fate.

The larva and adult are the destructive stages. They damage the epidermis of the young leaves that eventually provide easy entry for pathogens. The adult is not capable of long flights but its long life span lasting from 75 to 90 days is responsible for

the short distance spread of the insect.

On the other hand, the larva feeds throughout its growing period, which normally lasts for 36 days. Both larva and adult stay between unopened leaflets of young coconut spears. They feed on the soft tissues but spare the harder veins and mid-ribs. Affected parts decay and dry up, thus preventing the coconut palm from bearing fruits, it said.



It said chemical spraying is ineffective against this pest and is hazardous to non-target organisms and the environment in general.

Based on the study conducted by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), the pest is best controlled by pruning, clean culture, and proper disposal of infested coconut palms or parts thereof.

The hispine beetle is considered one of the most damaging pests of coconut and other palm species. The beetle is endemic in Sulawesi, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, and spread in the late 1990s to Southeast Asia and Maldives where it severely damaged coconut production. ■

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The province's foremost asset is **Puerto Galera**, blessed with one of the world's most beautiful natural harbors. Known as the Pearl of Mindoro, it is world-famous for splendid beaches, coral reefs, and exquisite dive sites.

Other attraction within the area is Sabang Beach, a portion of which is tourist-flocked for water sports and a cluster of nightspots popular for evening socials. Beside Sabang Beach is Small La Laguna, with amazingly beautiful coral reefs, and water ideal for snorkeling and scuba diving.

Indulge in a number of special interest tours while in the province, from mountain climbing to trekking, hiking, camping, butterfly watching, game fishing, and adventure trips to the wilderness. Enjoy active water sports such as scuba diving, snorkeling, and swimming. Visit the Mangyan settlement areas, and find it rewarding to engage in natural cave



Puerto Galera sunset off the rocks



Mangyan Tribe traditional necklace.

Puerto Galera - A major tourist destination with its beautiful harbor, numerous fine beaches, and sheltered coves against a green mountain. The more famous beaches are Haligi, white, Tamaraw, Talipanan, Small and Big Lalaguna, Garcia, and Sabang. All are ideal for water skiing, windsurfing, scuba diving, snorkeling, boating and swimming.

Tamaraw Falls - The largest waterfall in the province, is 131 meters above sea level with a natural swimming pool at its base. **Hidden Paradise** - The attraction consists of a natural spring with a swimming pool and picnic cottages. It is located in Baco, and can be reached in 45 minutes by taking a jeepney bound for



Tamaraw Falls, Puerto Galera

It is actually a series of asymmetrical falls, leading to the grand one dropping to a frothy waterbed 423-feet below.



Galeras such as this one can be found resting on the shores of, where else, Puerto Galera



Hidden Paradise Beach, located in Baco. The area contains a natural spring with swimming pool and picnic cottages.

above sea level with a natural swimming pool at its base.

Hidden Paradise - The attraction consists of a natural spring with a swimming pool and picnic cottages. It is located in Baco, and can be reached in 45 minutes by taking a jeepney bound for the Calapan market.

Mt. Halcon - Towering 8,488 feet above sea level, Mt. Halcon is the country's third highest peak. It is a favourite destination for nature tripping and mountain climbing. Mt. Halcon is located in Baco. It is accessible in two hours, by taking a jeepney to Baco, the jump-off point.

Alibatan Island - The island measures five hectares and is noted for its white sand. The place serves as the breeding place of seagulls and turtles. Corals and oysters can be found all around the area. The island is also called "Target Island" because Americans who stayed in San Jose used this place for bombing practices

in 1946. It is located in Baco, and can be reached in an hour through a motorized banca from the market square bound for Alibatan Island.

Buyayao Island - It is a rocky island, except for the area facing Buyayao Peninsula. Big snakes called "sobre kama" are found in the mountains. The water around the island is suited for deep-sea fishing. It is located off the coast of Mansalay, and can be reached in 30 minutes by motorized banca from Mansalay market.

Colorful Festivals - Numerous festivals run year round, including the most popular: *Banana Festival* (March 18-19; Baco city) which coincides with the town fiesta in honor of St. Joseph; *Coco Festival* (December 8; San Teodoro) a religious festival honoring the Immaculate Conception featuring many activities centered on the town's agricultural bounty, the coconut; ■

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Mt. Halcon (Baco), towering 8,488 feet, is the country's third highest peak



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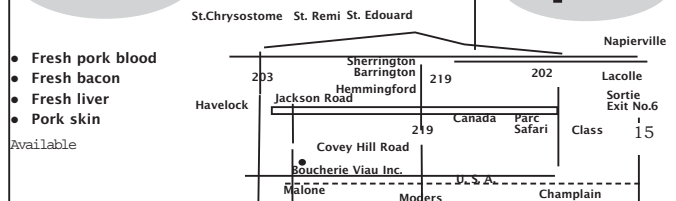
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The North American Filipino Star Photo Gallery



Gilmore College organized a trip to the Tulips Festival, May 20, 2007. In spite of the rainy day, everyone smiled for the camera.



Minister of Immigration & Cultural Communities Yolande James, (3rd from left) poses with Fred Magallanes, Filipino Forum publisher, Shinette Khoury, Co-Chair of the Ball with Annie Miaral, Riza Esmeralda, president of the Phil. Folk Art Society, and Zenaida Kharroubi, editor and publisher of the North American Filipino Star, May 19, 2007.



Tulips served as the background for happy people smiling in the rain after watching the boat festival, May 20, 2007.



Laging Handa Scouts went on a hiking trip in the Mount Royal Park, Saturday, May 5, 2007.



Hermie Arguilles celebrated her 70th birthday with over 200 guests on April 28, 2007 at the Notre Dame des Neiges Church in Montreal



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Mr. Marcel Tremblay, Decarie councillor, poses with the Laging Handa Scouts, April 28, 2007, during the "Grande corvée sur Linton" sponsored by Eco-quartier CDN.



Friends of Hermie Arguilles pose for souvenir of her 70th birthday, April 28, 2007.

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FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ

Not just another light comedy



I've always had faith in the works of Cathy Garcia-Molina ever since I saw her first film — an episode in the trilogy *Bcz of U* (the one with Hero Angeles and Sandra Park in it).

I liked even better her succeeding projects — the full-length films *Close to You* (with John Lloyd Cruz, Bea Alonzo and Sam Milby) and *You Are the One* (with Toni Gonzaga and Sam Milby).

No doubt, Molina is now one of local cinema's most reliable and bankable directors. Her films make good at the box-office and also get mostly positive reviews — like this one.

You Got Me! is actually better than her past works — topping even *You Are the One*, which I thoroughly enjoyed (it's the one where Toni Gonzaga gets back at Sam Milby for denying her a US visa).

Molina's film once more stars Gonzaga and Milby, but they throw in Pinoy Big Brother (PBB) alumnus Zanjo Marudo so that it doesn't look like a repeat of *You Are the One*.

Set mostly in Manila proper, *You Got Me!* casts Toni Gonzaga as a tough female cop afraid of romantic relationships. She is wary of falling in love because she sees how her cop father (Johnny Delgado) has become so grief-stricken after the death of her mother.

In her place of work, she knows that another cop — Sam Milby — likes her, but he is the nerd of all nerds and is afraid to profess his love for her.

Before he could even make his first move, Marudo, a vendor of pirated VCDs and DVDs, gets into the picture and there is a guessing game who gets Toni Gonzaga in the end.

Of course, you know who wins the girl's heart as the end credits roll, but it's the getting there that's fun. This is most enjoyable in the part where there is a long chase scene and Toni's life is threatened. In this entire sequence, you just do not know who gets to save

Toni — and it's anyone's guess.

I also find very inventive the way they get rid of the third party: He isn't killed or made to look very bad. I can't tell you how he exits, but it's a very innovative way of disposing of an important character in a love triangle.

The great thing about the movie is that there is always a logical explanation as to why this person became like this and like that. How Sam Milby becomes so insecure and awkward with everything he does is even provided with a believable background. Surely, they also try to find a way to work around Sam Milby's defective Tagalog, but unfortunately, Cathy Garcia-Molina can only do so much about that. In all fairness to Sam, there really is an actor in him waiting to get out, except that the language barrier really gets in the way. It's a problem only he can solve and frankly it's already getting to be pain listening to him speak that way.

Due to Milby's inability to speak in the vernacular fluently, he is effortlessly eclipsed by newcomer Zanjo Marudo. Marudo surprisingly turns out to be a competent actor with a strong screen presence. This is an impressive screen debut for the PBB finalist and he should be ready for leading man roles in his succeeding films.

Even the other Pinoy Big Brother graduate Jayson Gainza turns in an effective performance here in the film. Playing a janitor in the police headquarters, Jayson is hilarious in his scenes without resorting to trying-hard tactics. He is just naturally funny.

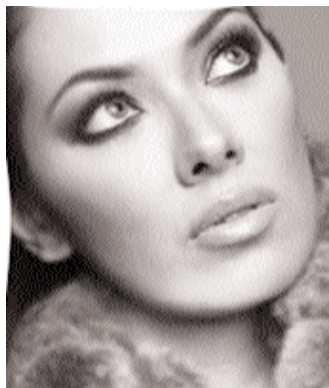
As the leading lady, Toni Gonzaga fares even better here than in her previous films. In *You Got Me!*, her screen character could easily have been a caricature, except that — with proper guidance from Molina — she manages to deliver an endearing performance that charms the viewers no end.

The best part of *You Got Me!*, however, is the screenplay written by Raz de la Torre and Francis Lau. While it is not the greatest story ever told, it is very creative and you see that the writers put their best effort into it so that there are no loose ends in the script. Finally, a local movie that doesn't have lapses in the story!

To tell you honestly, I was prepared to dismiss *You Got Me!* as just another light comedy — the usual stuff that tries to be cute. And I thought that Cathy Garcia-Molina would have run out of creative juices by now.

I was wrong and I admit — you got me there! ■

Ruffa Gutierrez breaks up with husband



Ruffa Gutierrez admitted she has broken up with Yilmaz after four years of marriage.

"We tried hard to save it and make our marriage work, but it's so difficult because of basic cultural differences," she says. "He was even willing to come here with his relatives to thresh things out but I said not to do that anymore as I've already made up my mind. There's really no third party involved. We still love each other but it just so happened marami kaming pagkakaiba."

What we gather is that Ruffa is giving her career here more importance. Yilmaz wants her to return to Istanbul with their two daughters, Lorin and Veniz, since she has been staying for four months hosting "Philippines' Next Top Model" and "The Buzz," but she prefers to stay here as she loves working.

"Showbiz is my passion and now that offers continue to come in, I just can't let them go," she says. "I really enjoy and get much satisfaction from what I'm doing."

We hope Ruffa won't regret her decision to prioritize her showbiz career. As for Annabelle, she's just very happy that her daughter and granddaughters are now staying here in Manila for good.

This is the official statement of Ruffa Gutierrez about the breakup of her marriage to Yilmaz Bektas:

"It is with much regret that Ruffa Gutierrez and Yilmaz Bektas announce their mutual decision to end their four years of marriage. Earnest and sincere efforts at saving their marriage have failed. It is to the best interest of Ruffa

and Yilmaz, their children, and respective families that such decision to severe marital ties had to be made."

Ruffa and Yilmaz will remain committed parents and continue to be friends as they live their separate lives. They ask for everyone's understanding and consideration in respecting the family's privacy during this most difficult time. No further statements will be issued." ■

John Estrada arrested at Gen San airport?



Yes there's no harm in throwing a joke, even if it's about a bomb. But that doesn't apply when you do that in establishments where security people are supremely cautious about terrorists attacks.

Actor John Estrada realized he made a mistake Monday morning when security at the General Santos airport didn't laugh at his joke about him carrying a bomb in his luggage.

Initial reports we gathered was that John got arrested for his "bomb joke." Soon after cracking the joke, we were told, John was taken aside for questioning, as is standard operating procedure.

His manager Douglas Quijano more or less confirmed the story to Manila Bulletin. "He called me up around 12 in the afternoon (on Monday) and told me about the incident. Hindi naman siya naaresto kasi nandito na siya sa Manila ngayon," said Quijano hours after the incident.

Quijano elaborated the episode in a laughing tone, probably because of how John put himself into trouble by just cracking a bad joke, "It's funny because I don't think he would be carrying a bomb. Anyway ang kwento niya sa akin, biniro niya 'yung isang gwardiya who's checking the bags that 'Pare mag-ingat ka may bomba diyan (referring to one of his bags).' The guard supposedly just did his job of making sure everything's fine kaya ayun kinakapan siya talaga."

Estrada is reported to have flown to the Mindanao province to visit boxing star Manny Pacquiao. It is not clear, however, if it was about the southpaw's political campaign or the blessing occasion of his newly built house that he had to visit the province. He was back in Manila Monday afternoon.

"John said it was a humbling experience," Quijano said adding that John learned his lesson in that experience. The Bulletin tried to reach Estrada for comment but he wasn't answering his phone. ■

Boyet's love for First photos of Kris Aquino and baby James Jr. Batangas drives him to run for office



Not everybody knows that actor Christopher de Leon has several properties in Batangas. He has always loved their property in Mabini, where he almost always takes his family.

In his wife Sandy Andolong's case, though, their place in Lobo, Batangas is the best. "It's on a beach front," relates Sandy. "It is ideal for diving, which is a sport Boyet (Christopher's pet name) and I both love."

It is Boyet's love for Batangas, according to Sandy, that inspired the actor to run for vice governor of the province. And he is happy that he does not only have his family's support but also that of his friends, colleagues in showbiz and the people of Batangas.

He simply felt overwhelmed when, at a special dinner Regal Entertainment producer Mother Lily Monteverde, hosted for him, he saw familiar faces from showbiz and media personalities who all offered their support to him. In Mother Lily's film firm, Boyet appeared in a number of films, including the award-winning movies "Relasyon" and "Broken Marriage," where he had for his leading lady Vilma Santos, who is running for Batangas Governor.

Boyet was taking up fine arts at the University of the East when he was discovered for showbiz. He was 18 years old when he won his first award for his performance in the movie, "Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang." He has, so far, starred in 120 films.

Boyet and Sandy are parents to six children. He has a son, Ian, with his first wife, Nora Aunor.

Boyet is very active in the Oasis of Love Community where all its members call him Brother Bo. He is chairman of this group which, incidentally, he founded some years back. ■

At 10:50 a.m. today, April 29, Kris Aquino and James Jr. checked out of Makati Medical Center. The TV host-actress was carrying baby James in her arms and was in a wheelchair. The mother and child were seen leaving through the back entrance of the hospital.

Kris was accompanied by her maids and two nurses. Onlookers did not see James Yap around. The cager had a previously scheduled ball game in Baguio.

It's been ten days since the No. 1 host of ABS-CBN—Kris hosts Game KNB, Kapamilya Deal or No Deal, and The Buzz, which puts her on TV every day of the week!—gave birth to her first



child with husband James Yap. On April 19, Kris delivered the baby when she was only 35 weeks into her pregnancy. During a routine check-up, she began experiencing contractions.

Baby James weighed 4.3 pounds. He was immediately placed in an incubator and subjected to a ten-day antibiotics treatment.

"Ang haba ng kamay! Sana maging mana sa akin, di ba? Kasi nakikita ko na mahaba talaga 'yong paa tsaka galamay," enthused James about his son in an interview with The Buzz.

Meantime, after her successful caesarian operation, Kris experienced some health complications, but it looks like everything is fine now. Today, Kris and her baby were on their way home to their Oakwood unit, where they are expected to recover in comfort and warmth. ■



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Florante Aguilar's passionate musical journey



On Sunday, May 20, 2007, Montrealers were treated to a fine evening of classical guitar renditions of Philippine "harana" music. Florante Aguilar, sponsored by the Philippine Folk Art Society in collaboration with Elenita Belgica's Voice Productions company, gave a fine concert which many people described as a splendid and an artistic performance. Some members of the

comfortable playing traditional western classical music as a virtuoso and also ventures into contemporary music and other genres with ease. But his true love and affinity belongs to the music he grew up with in the Philippines - the music of a bygone era called the harana.

Born in Manila, Florante grew up in Cavite province where he learned to play the octavina in rondalla group. At an early age, he picked up the guitar by way of rock and roll and by sixteen was enrolled at the University of the Philippines College of Music where he was trained as a classical musician. In 1985, Florante toured Europe, United States and Asia for 6 1/2 months performing in major cities both as a soloist and ensemble player.

Later, he moved to New York under a scholarship to study at the Manhattan School of Music with Sharon Isbin, Grammy Award winner and current guitar department chair of the Juilliard School. Florante also studied with internationally-recognized Filipino guitarist Michael Dadap and has performed in masterclasses of guitar luminaries such as David Russell, Manuel Barrueco, David Starobin, Frederic Hand and Benjamin



himself "jamming" with the most authentic and experienced practitioners of rondalla music as well as the art of harana.

The harana, the name of this particular musical style, also refers to the traditional practice itself of courtship whereby a maiden is serenaded beneath her window at night. Although the

United States.

Florante also performs regularly as a member of the Barbary Coast Guitar Duo with guitarist Michael Walsh.

When asked how he decided to become a classical guitarist, he said that he already made up his mind to become one since he was 9 years old.

Florante has already produced three



Dick Dahiroc sings along with the playing of a favorite love song.



The artistic team - Florante Aguilar, Elenita Belgica, Ronaldo Trono, and Eli Africa

audience could not help but hum along when a familiar piece was being played beautifully by Florante. (See photo of Dick Dahiroc singling along). On the same occasion, an independent film maker, Eli Africa, also showed three short documentary films entitled "Lolo's Presents", "Empanada" and "Selling Songs of Leyte" which won an award in the New York Film Festival about two years ago. These films were not only humorous but also portrayed the life of ordinary people who are adorable by virtue of their simplicity and honest to goodness attitudes towards life.

Critically acclaimed, classical guitarist, Florante is considered one of the leading proponents of Philippine harana music in America today. He is

Verdery.

Florante later accepted a position with the pioneering Buffalo Guitar Quartet where he toured and recorded he critically acclaimed CD New Music for Four Guitars (New Work 384-2). Florante received his Bachelor of Music Degree at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 1996 under the tutelage of David Tenebaum.

One of Florante's fondest memories of his boyhood was playing octavina and guitar in a rondalla ensemble led by his neighbor's gardener, Francisco or Ti Ikong, a septuagenarian at the time, was a virtuoso of the banduria and octavina and have kept his band of equally virtuosic (and equally vintage) rondalla players. At the age of 9, Florante found

practice has since died out, the music survives, preserved and even elevated to an art form worthy of a concert piece. Florante champions Philippine music not only through solo guitar but with singers and ensembles performing throughout

CDs and is currently in the process of producing a fourth one. If anyone is interested to purchase a copy of his CDs, they are available on his website. <http://www.florante.org/> or call Elenita Belgica at 514-481-3758, 514-258-9137.



Florante gladly poses with his "instant" fans who enjoyed the concert, May 20, 2007.

A Mother's Day Special "Rex, c'est Talagang Crazy" By Teng

Everyone who attended the REX C'est Talagang Crazy Concert Show were given a special "Mother's Day" treat that night. It started with three young Filipino-Canadian artists belting out songs like "Pretty Woman" and "Someday" by upcoming Jed Bermillo followed by sultry Mishael- Thea De La Cruz "Let's Dance" and "Hurt". Christopher Tapia entertained the crowd with his melancholy soother song "Lovely" and ending it with "I feel good". With the Blacksmith Sound Band going all out with songs like "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow" "Knock on Wood" and "Crazy in love" the mixture was right. The parting song "When will I see you again" with all the performers was a moving experience.

To top all that, after the intermission

REX entertained the audience with his comedic acts like "Sample....sample whether it's buying at Costco or a family introducing a well known friend....sample...sample. Then he followed it with his re-enactment of the "balikbayan boxes" and "the aunt with a visiting nephew born outside the Philippines"

It is hard to relate all the memorable moments that happen that night. But one thing is sure; the people came out singing in their hearts and a belly full of laughter.

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Rex Navarette, after autographing CDS, poses with his favorite "thumbs up" gesture, with Maryjoy Lizarondo, Zenaida Kharroubi, and Ester Nuguid Vicente, May 13, 2007.

From Page 6 Community News

**Philippine Tennis Association
Schedules for the Summer 2007**

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If we can save just one youth from drugs by learning tennis, our day is made and our effort is not in vain" ■

Novo Ecijano Association Dinner Dance on Saturday June 30, 2007 6:00pm at Salle Trianon, Holiday Inn
Pointe Claire - Montréal Aéroport
For Info: Please call
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Myrna: 514-699-4160
Gina: 514-737-7449
Nelson: 514-340-0812
Fernand/Marina: 514-924-3181
Sonny: 514-733-7991
Boy/Pon: 514-799-2581
Flor/Rose: 450-926-9986

St. Anthony of Padua Triduum and Feast Day Celebration Triduum Prayers and ENGLISH LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

Event Date & Time: Sunday, June 10, 2007 - 5:00 p.m.

Monday, June 11, 2007- 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 12, 2007 - 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 13, 2007- 7:00 p.m.

Location:

Directions: FILIPINO CATHOLIC MISSION OF MONTREAL, (St. Thomas, the Apostle Church) 8500 boul. St - Laurent H2P 2M8

By Private Vehicle:

Take Aut- 40E/ Aut. Metropolitan Take Exit 71 towards Rte-335/ Boul.St. Laurent/ Rue St. Denis.

Take the Boul. De L'Acadie ramp toward Aut- 40E/Rte 335/ Boul.St. Laurent/ Rue St. Denis. Stay straight to go onto Boulevard Cremazie Ouest. Turn right onto Boulevard Saint Laurent (South)

The church is at the corner of Liege St. and St. Laurent Boulevard near PROVIGO.

By METRO/BUS:

1- Take BLUE LINE, get off at Station De Castelnau
Take Bus 55 at St. Laurent Blvd. going NORTH.

After (6) six stops, descend at the bus stop at the corner of Liege Street. On your travel by autobus, you will pass along Jarry Park, and three roads after the park is Liege Street.

2- Take ORANGE LINE, get off Station Cremazie

Go out the South Exit and walk five blocks along towards St. Laurent Blvd. until you reach Liege Street. Or...Go out the North Exit take Bus 100 going WEST.

After one stop, descend at the St. Laurent Blvd. South.

Walk one block to Liege Street.

3- Take GREEN LINE, get off at Station St. Laurent.

Take Bus 55 at St. Laurent Blvd. going North.

Travel along St. Laurent Blvd.

Descend on the Liege Street Bus Stop before reaching the Metropolitan Highway.

Description:

With the closing of the St. Joseph Convent of the Franciscan Friars in Rene Levesque Blvd., the devotion to St. Anthony of Padua will be celebrated at the Filipino Mission. Rev. Fr. George Morin, ofm will be the Celebrant and Preacher at all the Triduum Masses and will be joined by the other Franciscan Friars for the Feast Day celebration on June 13. Devotees are welcome.

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FILIPINO STAR Special Coverage **2007 ELECTIONS**

Arroyo's arch nemesis re-elected

May 17, 2007

One of Philippine President Gloria Arroyo's harshest critics has been re-elected as mayor of the country's financial capital -- and promptly vowed to step up the campaign against her.

Makati mayor Jejomar "JoJo" Binay said his win was a "repudiation" of Arroyo and sarcastically thanked her for serving as his "campaign manager" after the government tried to get him suspended from office for alleged graft.

over one of the wealthiest cities in the Philippines.

It is home to some 400 of the country's top corporations, the stock exchange, banks, insurance companies, financial institutions, luxury hotels and foreign embassies.

Appointed by then president Corazon Aquino to head the city after the fall of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, Binay and his family have run Makati ever since.

As one of the few metro Manila

Bataan elects its first congresswoman in 40 years

May 20, 2007

The provincial Board of Canvassers officially proclaimed Friday noon Herminia Roman as winner in the congressional race in Bataan's First District, beating former chairman Felicitio "Tong" Payumo of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority by more than 11,000 votes.

The newly-elected congresswoman, wife of three-termer Rep. Tony Roman, got more votes than Payumo in five out of six towns. Even in Payumo's hometown, Dinalupihan, Mrs. Roman out-voted him by 600 votes. The former undefeated three-term congressman won only in Morong town.

She became the first woman solon in Bataan for the last 40 years. Medina Lacson de Leon was congresswoman of the province 50 years ago.

Roman said she has not resorted to vote-buying as claimed by her rival. "Hindi galing sa amin ang vote-buying kundi sa kabila sapagka't maraming tao na kakampi namin ang binigyan nila ng pera," she said.

Bishop Socrates Villegas and 43 priests in the dioceses of Balanga City in a pastoral letter has described the recent polls as the dirtiest in the political history of Bataan. They blamed both the winners and the losers as resorting to massive vote-buying.

"Dapat tanggapin na ang hatol ng bayan and let us cooperate with one

another because I know that all of us are thinking of what is good for our province," she appealed to her opponent Tong Payumo.

She said she will focus on livelihood, health and scholarship programs in her district composed of Dinalupihan, Hermosa, Orani, Samal, Abucay and Morong towns.

Partial official results of canvassing for governor showed that incumbent Gov. Enrique Garcia is leading by 29,300 votes over his opponent former governor Leonardo Roman.

Garcia garnered 111,453 votes as against Roman's 82,153 votes in 10 out of 11 towns and one city. Balanga City and Mariveles, two most vote-rich areas in Bataan with combined registered voters of more than 100,000, have not yet submitted their canvass.

For congressman in the Second District, lawyer Marie Gonzales is leading reelectionist Rep. Albert Garcia by 5,297 votes. Per partial official results of canvassing Gonzales got 40,822 votes while the young Garcia has 35,525 votes. Still being awaited are the outcome of the municipal canvass in Balanga City and Mariveles.

Marie is 29-year old daughter of national security adviser Norberto Gonzales while Albert is 37-year old son of Governor Garcia.

The Second District, aside from Balanga and Mariveles, is composed of the towns of Pilar, Orion, Limay and Bagac. ■



Re-electionist Mayor Jejomar Binay, right, and his running mate Ernesto Mercado of the financial district of Makati city, raise their hands as they are proclaimed winners in the city's local election by a big margin over their pro-administration rivals at sunrise Thursday May 17, 2007 east of Manila, Philippines. Binay's entire ticket won the elections which also saw initial results of more than half of the 12 senatorial slots favoring the opposition.

"The message from Makati is clear -- in a democracy, it is the people who will judge their leaders," the 63-year-old Binay said.

He trounced his Arroyo-backed rival, film star Lito Lapid, by more than 170,000 votes, according to the election commission.

As mayor of Makati, which is part of metropolitan Manila, Binay presides

mayors opposed to Arroyo, Binay has allowed Makati to become the venue of huge anti-Arroyo protests.

Due to term limits, Binay cannot run for re-election in the next polls in 2010. But his daughter Marlen Binay was elected congresswoman of one district of Makati, while his son Jejomar Junior was elected town councillor. ■

Coin toss breaks tie in elections in northern Philippine town

May 19, 2007

A tie between two candidates for the last spot on a town council in the northern Philippines was decided with the toss of a coin, a news report said yesterday.

Candidates Brian Bellang and Benjamin Ngeteg were tied for the eighth and last spot on the council of Bontoc town in Mountain province, 270km north of Manila, the Philippine Daily Inquirer newspaper said.

To break the tie, election supervisor Mary Umawing suggested a coin toss.

"The people were not expecting that tossing a coin was an option to break the tie," she told the Inquirer. "The people were laughing and asking me, 'Are you joking?'"

While it may sound odd, Umawing

said the Commission on Elections actually allows flipping a coin or drawing lots to break a tie.

Bellang, 37, a neophyte politician, chose heads and won, the report said. "At first, it was hard to explain the feeling when I won, but I was happy that I won," he said, adding that Ngeteg, a relative, had agreed to the tie-breaking flip.

Filipinos voted for half of the 24-member Senate, all of the more than 200 members of the House of Representatives and some 17,000 local officials last Monday.

Many of the winners in the local and congressional elections have already been proclaimed, but it could take three more weeks before the official results of the senatorial races are known. ■

Philippines elections favour bloodlines

May 20, 2007

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo proved to be one of the biggest gainers in last week's midterm elections in the Philippines.

Her two sons and a brother-in-law all won in Congress, showing generations of dominance for a few wealthy clans in Philippine politics.



Philippine President, Gloria Arroyo, is from one of a number of wealthy dynasties that control political seats in the country.

political clans holding various positions at all government levels, including 160 lawmakers in the two chambers of the Philippine Congress.

"Each of the country's 80 provinces is kept under the thumbs of at least one dynasty," director of the centre, Bobby Tuazon, told Kyodo news agency.

"These political dynasties run a patronage system of local political families and networks of supporters bound together by interlocking political and commercial interests."

President Arroyo, head of a family that has been in politics since the 1950s, illustrates what analysts called as "dynastic politics".

Her case is not unique in the Philippines where a few families rule over 15 million other families. ■

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COOPERATIVE NEWS

By Zenaïda Ferry Kharroubi

The fate of the Filipino Solidarity Cooperative is certainly in the hands of its members. Before it can receive the next grant for its second year of operation, a business plan is required. This has to be submitted as early as possible before Mr. Jason Prince leaves for his summer vacation. In this document, it should include a progress report and an improvement of the sales record of the Coop. If members do not patronize the Coop, how will the sales record improve? Another problem is who will sacrifice his or her time to go over the business plan to make it acceptable to CDEC? Mrs. Kharroubi is not only busy with her business but also with other volunteer work. If we hire someone to do the business plan, it will cost an outlay of cash which the Coop does not have.

The declining sales recorded during the period of the financial crisis which started last July 2006 was due to lack of merchandise as the Coop had to start paying the Pauagan members. Although there is still a balance left, it is not as big as it was at the beginning of the crisis. The Coop did not have any money to pay even its rent and its suppliers. Without the assistance given by Mrs. Zenaïda Kharroubi who guaranteed the credit line with the

Bank of Nova Scotia, the Coop would have ceased to operate.

But the crisis is still not completely resolved for there is still some money owed to the Paluagan members. They cannot be paid until we receive enough support from the membership, both in terms of patronage (buying often from the Coop) and trust (enough trust to invest more money in the Coop). We need new members who will pay for their qualifying shares of \$100, and those who have already paid should also be asked to invest in interest bearing shares. The Coop will issue preferred shares in order to build the funds necessary to meet not only the obligations to the Paluagan members but also to purchase additional equipment such as vegetable and meat coolers. Without proper equipment, fresh vegetables and meat cannot be purchased for resale to the members. It is also not possible to compete successfully with the other stores which have more capital to buy bigger volumes of merchandise. Because of the small amount of cash being used to buy merchandise, the suppliers do not give the same prices to the Coop as they give to other bigger stores.

Obviously, until the Coop can



Mr. Jason Prince, Social Economy Agent of CDEC, presents the cheque for \$20 000 to Mr. Ben Bade, President of the Coop, and Zenaïda Ferry Kharroubi, secretary-treasurer, on April 26, 2007.

accumulate a bigger amount of capital, it will always have difficulty in having a better sales record. However, if everyone in the community will buy more often and go out of their way to patronize the Coop, it will help increase sales thereby providing a good sales report for the purpose of preparing the business plan and obtain a grant of about \$50000 but again this is not to be paid out to pay the Paluagan but to buy equipment and merchandise.

The only way the Paluagan can be paid is through the sale of membership shares. Mr. Jason Prince checked the provisions of the Cooperatives Act and informed the Coop that it is legal to issue interest bearing shares and it is up to the Board of Directors to pass the appropriate resolution to authorize this method of raising capital funds.

In going over the different expenses incurred during the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31, 2006, numerous errors are being discovered by Anna Polskaya, the accounting clerk who has been hired on an independent contract labor basis. She has to spend time in checking source documents which seem to have been incorrectly entered twice in some cases, or some notations of cash payments in addition to cheques already issued to pay for the same bill. Meals were also charged against the repairs of the basement although the contractor was paid for the job. These startling discovery of excessive expenses may be one of the reasons for the big financial problem of the Coop. After this tedious inspection of records is finished, we will submit a report to the Board and share the information with all the members to make them understand the real problem. Why did the Coop spend so much money in such a short time?

In addition to excessive charges, Ms. Polskaya also discovered many cases of overpayment caused by inaccurate arithmetic. She also found some cash paid out without any proper receipt and was only based on a handwritten note, sometimes without any date.

When all the accounting has been done, the auditors, Gosselin and

Associates, will receive all the documents used for verification. It is to be expected that the auditors will now have an easier and faster time to prepare the final official financial statements once a trial balance from the Accpac Accounting System has been produced. From this point on, the accounting of the Coop will be more reliable, and will offer more useful and timely reports for better management control.

Many people have already indicated an interest in investing money in the Coop once the accounting records have been straightened out. While this work is being done, we would like to ask for patience and understanding, especially from the Paluagan members who will be promptly repaid once money is available in the coffers of the Coop. No amount of telephone calls and personal visits can make the Coop pay anything to anyone for the time being as there is no cash available. Even the treasurer, Mrs. Kharroubi, cannot collect her personal cash advances of over \$4,000 in addition to the guaranty she gave the bank. We are using "deficit spending" at the moment, which means, that the \$25000 credit limit is always being used everyday and incurring interest charges since February 2007. The negative balance is temporarily reduced every time cash sales are deposited but the negative balance goes up again the moment cheques are issued to pay suppliers.

When will the Coop be in a positive cash position? This can only be answered by each and every Filipino-Canadian citizen living and working in the city of Montreal. If there are 15 000 people living in Cote des Neiges area alone, and there are at least another 15 000 people living elsewhere in the island of Montreal, why is it taking so much time to see them come to help support the Coop? What are they waiting for? Who else will come aboard to give much needed cash without charging usury rates of

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Isaac T. Goodine

Global Perspectives



Cheers at World Bank as Wolfowitz steps down

...Sheldon Alberts, with files from Reuters

In the last issue of this column I was sad to comment on a controversy regarding: World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz, who was under fire for "unethical" conduct in his official capacity.

In the meantime I visited the Bank in Washington DC and refreshed some linkages with colleagues where I once worked on a full time basis and still serve occasionally as a consultant and as a member of a Speakers Bureau to help promote the work of the Bank.

I now join my friends and associates at the World Bank in celebrating the decision by our President to resign with effect from June 30, 2007. The reason for this is the perception that he has lost much of the credibility needed to achieve the main mission; "To fight poverty with passion and professionalism for lasting results". He stated: "I have concluded that it is in the best interests of those whom this institution serves for (the bank's) mission to be carried forward under new leadership." Enough said!

So, now for more good news in our global perspective: Alicia Natividad, of Filipino heritage, has been selected as one of three finalists for the inaugural Senator Vivienne Poy Asian of the Year Award. Senator Vivien Poy is Canada's first senator of Asian descent. The award recognizes the contributions made by an Asian Canadian role model living in the Ottawa area, and the nominees are evaluated according to their demonstrated ability to maintain a successful career in balance with community and charitable responsibilities. Alicia is the epitome of one who demonstrates these characteristics and who easily transcends the cultural differences that there can be unity in diversity.

Alicia is the first female lawyer of Filipina heritage to practice law in Canada. In addition to 20 years of legal experience, she has spent much of her time promoting Filipino culture, promoting the status of women, and in organizing trade missions for Canadians to visit the Philippines in her capacity of Chair of the Canada Philippines Business Council. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Philippine Presidential Award for Overseas Filipinos, in 2004, and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, in 2002.

I am grateful to Alicia for introducing me to many of her contacts when I moved to Ottawa, after several years living and working abroad, and it was through her that I became acquainted with Zenaïda Ferry-Kharoubi, publisher of this paper. Together we have tried to focus attention on global perspective in human relations in general and in particular to focus attention on issues related to immigration, employment, and cultural integration.

Last year, 14,600 immigrants came to Canada from the Philippines making that country the largest source of new Canadians. For many this signals a dream come true but for several others it signals the start of some very difficult times as they are challenged to integrate into a new environment that is not always as welcoming as they were led to believe. Immigrants from the Philippines come to work, not as refugees, and generally not to establish a business operation.

For example, there are over 225,000 Canadian passport holders in Hong Kong; who immigrated to Canada, by investing, prior to the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, but now they find the business environment and working conditions better in Hong Kong than in Canada. For the most part Filipinos who immigrate to

Canada do not have the flexibility to leave and must often accept a lack of recognition of their qualifications and long delays in becoming integrated into the workforce as well as into society. The overall result is that immigrant families suffer needless hardship and Canadian society foregoes enormous financial and cultural benefits because the skills and talents of the immigrants are untapped.

I have addressed many aspects of this situation in previous issues of this column and these are available on-line in previous issues of the Filipino Star on the dates shown with page numbers and titles as follows: November 05, Page 5, Employment and Immigration, shows that the Canadian policy on immigration will shift to help fill gaps in the labor force; December 05, Page 7, Canada-Philippines Human Relations, shows how a policy on sharing our future contributed to human resource development in the Philippines; January 06, Page 7, From Globalization to Internationalization, shows that we need internationalize education and training for a global work force; February 06, Page 7, shows how we are moving to one-world in culture as well as economy; March 06, Page 7, Why Leaders Should Have a Worldview, shows that the World Bank is supporting a global Mindset Foundation; April 06, A Global Mindset for Leaders Leading Leaders, shows that we need to facilitate democratic-participatory administration; May 06, "For the Cause that needs assistance; 'Gainst the wrongs that need assistance; for the future in the distance; and the good that I can do"; June 06, Page 7, Schools have to address the needs of a diverse society, shows that teachers need to be sensitive to other cultures; July 06, Page 7, Importance of a global mindset in promoting synergy; August 06, Page 6, Building on a Canadian legacy in the internationalization of education and training, shows that many Canadians contributed to human resource development during a period when there was a policy on official development assistance defined by a document designated as Sharing Our Future;

September 06, Page 6, The truth cleverly told can be the greatest lie of all, shows that we need to teach

integrity; October 06, Page 6, Contributions of Immigrants, shows the that the Montreal Board of Trade has undertaken steps to assist immigrants to integrate more quickly into the work place and into society; November, 06, Pages 16 & 17, Canada awakens to the World; December 06, Page 25, the trend is clear, slowly, finally Canada is reawakening to the world; January, 2007, Pages 21 & 22, Managing the Age of Transition, shows that the we now have more say in when to retire although "ageism" has superseded race and gender discrimination in the workplace;

February 07, the choice of were to retire is now yours, shows that the Philippines has a very generous retirement scheme operated by the Philippine Retirement Authority; March 07, Canadian Charles Taylor wins award for thinking, shows that the more human and spiritual side of intellectual endeavor is being recognized; April 07, Page 21, Wolfowitz determined to continue the good work of the World Bank, shows that it would be better for the institution if he left.

And, finally, May, 07, brings the good news that that Wolfowitz is leaving the World Bank in June and that, on May 28, 2007, Senator Vivien Poy will present the award for contributions made by a Canadian of Asian origin. Besides Alicia Natividad there are two men short listed: Tae Eun Lee, (Korea) founder of Ottawa's first taekwondo school; and Inspector Kai Liu, (Taiwan) the first high ranking Asian police officer in Canada with service abroad in the United Nations and the Canadian International Development Agency. These three role models show us that serving the greater good of society can also lead to fulfillment for the individual. The fundamental difference between Asia and the Americas is that the collective good takes precedence over individual freedom, in general, in Asia. If we are to experience the true nature of "unity in diversity" in Canada we need to recognize Asian role models who can help us understand that human rights apply, equally, to society and the individual. ■

Award Announcement

AsiaNetwork Senator Vivienne Poy

AsiaNetwork is proud to announce three finalists for the first Senator Vivienne Poy Asian of the Year Award for the capital region. They are chosen by the Selection Committee consisting of: Ms. Jacqueline Hsuan, former Ottawa Mayor and committee chair; Mr. Anand, Publisher of the Ottawa Citizen; and Mr. Jeffrey Dale, President & CEO of OICA. The winner will be announced at the Parliament on May 28th, 2007. For details, please visit www.asianet.ca



Inspector Kai Liu

Ottawa's first Asian police officer, Inspector Liu has risen to the highest-ranking visible minority Ottawa Police Officer through his 20-year plus police career. A subject expert and speaker at UIC and CIDA, Inspector Liu is an active volunteer, a mentor and a role model for fellow officers and people in the Ottawa community.

Alicia Natividad

Mrs. Natividad is the first female lawyer of Philippine heritage to practice law in Canada. Through her 20-plus year of legal practice, she has been active in public service, promotion of Philippine heritage and the status of overseas Filipinos. She is the recipient of the 2004 Philippine Presidential Award for Overseas Filipinos and the 2002 Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal among her other awards.

Grandmaster Lee

Grandmaster Lee, founder of Ottawa's first Taekwondo school started 10 years ago, is one of the world's highest-ranking Grandmasters. An inductee into the Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame, Grandmaster Lee was instrumental in having Taekwondo recognized as an official Olympic event. May 11 is proclaimed as THE BILLY LEE DAY in Ontario to honour his many achievements.

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From Page 19

Cooperative

interest to operate the Coop?

A brochure has been prepared and distributed during the Terno Ball of the Philippine Folk Art Society last Saturday, May 19, 2007. Mrs. Kharroubi, in collaboration with Mr. Jerry Estrada, used her office facilities to create and produce this brochure. It is hoped that this will help people learn about the existence of the Filipino Solidarity Cooperative and attract more memberships. Needless to say, if more people become members, there will be more customers who will buy from the Coop.

As this cooperative visited is selling environmental products, Jerry Estrada suggested to include their products to be sold at the Filipino Solidarity Cooperative. Mr. Hughes, agreed to allow the Coop to have a special display of their products. This will probably help bring other kinds of customers to the Coop without any outlay of cash because their products will be on consignment. Another idea that was spawned from this visit is to have a similar set up where members can have a place to have coffee and attract them to visit the Coop. Maison Verte sells organic products and takes pride in brewing organic coffee in its



Ben Bade, Zenaïda Kharroubi, and Jerry Estrada pose with Jason Hughes, coordinator of the Maison Verte solidarity cooperative specializing on environmental products.

If we increase our membership to at least 5,000, within the first five years of the Coop's existence, we can win a prize for having resolved not only the financial crisis of the Coop but also for attaining a record of having the biggest membership among all the new cooperatives. A monetary award is usually given for any new cooperative that showed the best record when evaluated by CDR. The award ceremony gala is usually held every year around February or March.

Visiting other cooperatives and learning from their experience was suggested by Mr. Jason Prince who arranged such a visit for Ben Bade, Zenaïda Kharroubi, and Jerry Estrada. They visited Maison Verte on Sherbrooke West last May 4 and met with the coordinator, Jason Hughes who was very helpful and willing to answer all kinds of questions on what they did to become successful. He suggested to invest in up-to-date technology to have an efficient way of keeping track of membership and financial transactions. It was quite a timely visit for it was also the time when he was about to clear up the basement and give away shelves. He even offered to deliver them to the Coop.

coffee shop. As soon as possible, it is planned to offer the same organic coffee at Divisoria Cubao.

In order to develop more patronage and commitment from our community, it is imperative to educate the public about cooperatives which seem to be not too well known in the Montreal community. Mrs. Kharroubi volunteered to initiate an information session for all members and prospective members. A resource person will be invited to these monthly sessions.

The first info session is tentatively scheduled on the first Sunday of the month, starting on July 1, 2007 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. For this session, the Cooperatives Act of Quebec will be explained. Other examples of topics that can be discussed are: 1) The Key to Success of a Cooperative, 2) How Cooperatives Help a Community in the Creation of Wealth and Sharing of Resources, 3) The Legal Issues of Being a Director of a Coop, 4) Rights and Obligations of Cooperative Membership, 5) Goal Setting, 6) Marketing Strategies for Cooperatives, 7) Other topics can be suggested by members or anyone who is interested in the cooperative movement. ■

The Filipino Solidarity Cooperative cordially invites you to a FREE Info Session on Cooperatives
Sunday, July 1, 2007
2:00 to 4:00 P.M.
Divisoria Cubao
4711 Van Horne Avenue
Please call 514-733-8915 or 514-485-7861
Seats limited. If more people sign up, additional sessions will be scheduled.

Filipinas reach Nepal base camp, set world record

May 18, 2007

The first Filipino women to reach the summit of Mount Everest set another world record Friday by becoming the first women to traverse the two main routes to the world's highest mountain.

Noelle Wenceslao, Carina Dayondon and Janet Belarmino reached Everest Base Camp (EBC) in Nepal before 6 p.m. Manila time where they were welcomed by the Philippine support group.

Belarmino sobbed as she recounted the ordeal of climbing the mountain months after she gave birth to her first baby.

"Napakahirap kaya masaya ako na makakabalik na kami.... medyo pagod lang kasi mahaba ang trek namin pero OK lang kami. [Wala kaming] sakit. Wala namang problema (It was very difficult that is why I'm glad that we can now come back.... it was tiring because the trail was quite long but we're OK. We are not sick. There have been no problems)," she told radio DZMM.

missed her family back in the Philippines but the other climbers and the support of the Filipinos there helped her.

Team leader Art Valdez said the three set two world records in Everest history. They are the first Filipinas and first ASEAN women to reach the summit of Mount Everest and the first women to cross the mountain from the north route in Tibet to the south route in Nepal.

Crossing the mountain from Tibet to Nepal has only been done by a handful of mountaineers – all of them men. The traverse posed a bigger challenge for the women as they passed an unfamiliar route to come down the mountain.

ABS-CBN Correspondent Abner Mercado said the Everest team will rest at EBC before they proceed to Kathmandu, Nepal.

Wenceslao was the first to reach the summit at 6:10 a.m. Nepal time (8:10 a.m. in Manila) on Wednesday followed by Carina Dayondon at 6:20



Belarmino said that her feat also showed that motherhood does not prevent anyone from pursuing her dreams.

"Iyon din mensahe ko sa mga ina na tulad ko. Ang mga pangarap namin ay hindi natutulog sa apat na sulok ng kwarto. Iyong mga panaginip natin bilang ina, kailangan natin ipakita sa buong mundo na kaya din natin (It's also my message to mothers like me. Our dreams are not confined in four corners of the room. Let's show the whole world that we can also do it)," she added.

For Dayondon, the support of fellow Filipinos inspired them even more to reach the top of the world's tallest mountain. She added that she

a.m. (8:20 a.m. in Manila). Belarmino reached the summit three hours later after she had to fall in line because a lot of people wanted to reach the summit.

First scaled in 1953 by Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary, the 29,035-foot peak has now been submitted 3,067 times.

This year, around 550 people will be attempting the peak from both Nepal - where a peace deal signed last year with Maoist rebels has brought an end to a decade of civil war - and via the northern flank in China.

In 2006, 11 people were killed, and already this year one sherpa has died while preparing for commercial expeditions. ■

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Laging Handa Scouts 0592 Photos of the Month



It was a beautiful sunny day, perfect for a hiking trip to the lookout at Mount Royal Park on Saturday, May 5, 2007



Cub Scout, Sarah Beltran, renders a vocal solo while other Scouts listen intently during the "Herana" concert of Florante Aguilar on Sunday, May 20, 2007



Head Scout Leader, Claro Bermudez, makes sure that everything is cleaned. The Cubs and Scouts participated in the clean up campaign of the City on Saturday, April 28, 2007, from 9:00 to 11:30 A.M. The clean up was centered on Linton Street from the corner of Cote des Neiges up to Victoria Avenue.

Peso surges to 45.90:\$1

May 23, 2007

The peso Tuesday broke into the 45-per-dollar territory to hit its highest level in nearly seven years, amid heavy foreign inflows into the stock market and cash remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

The peso has gained about 6.7 percent so far this year and about 3.0 percent this month.

Philippine Dealing System.

On the Philippine Stock Exchange, share prices surged 1.1 percent, with the key index breaking 3,500 points for the first time ever and closing at a fresh record high.

In a surprise visit to the trading floor, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo congratulated stock exchange executives, saying prudent fiscal



Despite the central bank's market intervention, the peso breached the 46-per-dollar barrier, peaking at 45.82 before closing at 45.87 to the dollar.

Volume reached about \$1 billion in robust trading on the spot market

spending had improved the economy.

"We thank the investor community for acknowledging the nation's hard-won advances in the fiscal consolidation, economic growth and political stability," Arroyo said. ■

AMBASSADOR BRILLANTES LAUDS PEACEFUL AND ORDERLY CONDUCT OF OVERSEAS ABSENTEE VOTING IN CANADA

The Philippine Embassy in Ottawa and the Philippine Consulates General in Toronto and Vancouver successfully conducted the implementation of overseas absentee voting in their respective jurisdictions, earning the approbation of Philippine Ambassador to Canada Jose S. Brillantes.

In his commendation, Ambassador Brillantes said, "Our hardworking and dedicated personnel at the Philippine consular offices in Canada, specifically in the Consulates General in Toronto and Vancouver, including their partners in the community and the attached services, in coordination with the Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila, richly deserve our gratitude and appreciation for their efficient handling of the implementation of the country's Overseas Voting Act."

Ambassador Brillantes made particular mention of the important role that voters in Canada played in the success of overseas absentee voting in Canada. "I reserve our highest commendation for our voters. The success of overseas absentee voting is due to the high sense of civic duty of our registered voters in Canada, who took the time and effort to accomplish their ballots and mail them back to the respective Philippine consular offices in time for the closing of the voting period at 3:00 p.m. (Philippine time) on 14 May 2007," Ambassador Brillantes

said. "Several of the ballots we received were even sent via courier service, evidently in the voters' effort for the ballots to reach the Embassy and the Consulates on time."

The Ambassador noted that the turn-out of overseas absentee voting more than met expectations, pointing out that the absentee voter turn-out of Ottawa was quite notable, at about 25%. Ambassador Brillantes said, "On the whole, the Embassy is happy that we were instrumental in paving the way for allowing our kababayans in Canada to have a say in how the country is governed. The provision of the means for overseas Filipinos to participate in the democratic process by casting their votes is already a victory in itself. The OAV process has successfully provided an avenue by which Overseas Filipinos can exercise their right to vote. Of course, it should be remembered that the right to vote also includes the right not to vote." ■

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**03 JUNE 2007
29 JULY 2007
30 SEPTEMBER 2007
25 NOVEMBER 2007**

Texas Instruments Plans \$1 Billion Factory

May 10, 2007

The decision by Texas Instruments to invest one billion dollars to expand its operations in the Philippines was a vote of confidence in the country's international competitiveness, analysts said.

Long considered the laggard in Southeast Asia, the Philippines has been desperately trying to lift its game to attract foreign investors.

Its reputation for dishonoring contracts, corruption and bureaucratic red tape led foreign investors to side-step the Philippines for countries like Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia.

Last year the Philippines attracted just over two billion dollars in foreign investment compared to the 70 billion poured into China.

"What the Texas Instruments deal shows is that the Philippines can compete with the best of them if it wants to," Robert Sears, the executive director American Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, told AFP.

"The company has been in the Philippines for a long time. It knows the lay of the land and more importantly it knows how the place works," said Lawrence de Leon, an analyst at Accord Capital Equities Inc.

Sears agreed, saying: "Texas Instruments is comfortable in the Philippines and is looking at the long-term picture."

In the biggest investment of its type in the Philippines the US-based chip maker is to invest one billion dollars in a new plant at the Clark Freeport Zone, north of Manila, which was once home to the biggest US air force base outside America.

Work on the eight-hectare (19.7-acre) assembly plant and test centre will begin in July or August and is expected to be completed by the end of next year.

At the same time the Clark Development Corporation has set aside some 30 hectares (74 acres) for an estimated 500 support industries and suppliers of Texas Instruments that will relocate to the Freeport.

Kevin Ritchie, Texas Instrument's senior vice president, told a news conference last week that the new plant will be a "showpiece both for the Philippines and Texas Instruments long into the future."

What was not laid out to the media were the incentives the government offered to help keep the American giant in the Philippines.

According to Raffy Galvez, the marketing manager for the Clark Development Corporation, companies operating in the Freeport enjoy "generous" tax concessions.

Corporate income tax, for example, is only five percent of gross income earned compared with the normal rate of 32 percent, while the import of capital equipment and raw materials is duty free.

Mike Clancy, CEO of the Philippine Business Leaders Forum, said: "If the

government wants to attract investments like this it has to give something in return to make it attractive.

"The Philippines can be competitive with its Southeast Asian neighbours ... all it needs is a push in the right direction."

Ritchie said the Philippines was chosen over Thailand, Vietnam and China because of factors like labour quality, incentives and the company's successful 28-year operations in northern Baguio City.

The final venue decision was a toss-up between the Philippines and China, but the balance tipped to the Philippines' favour because of "the performance of our site in Baguio."

"At last we have broken the China myth," the executive director of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines, Ernie Santiago, told AFP.

"This deal has proven the point that the Philippines is just as good a location for this type of investment as China. We have the skills and we have the right incentives. It's just a matter of getting out there telling investors."

"The China card has probably been overplayed," Clancy told AFP.

"China's consumer market continues to elude many major foreign corporations.

"They are now finding that there is a hidden cost to doing business in China such as due diligence on local partners or suppliers and the cost and quality of life for expatriate staff still remains a problem."

He said many foreign companies are starting to realize that while an Asian presence is essential to their global growth strategy a total reliance on China to provide that presence is "undesirable."

"The Philippines has quality people. It can be competitive both in productivity and wage costs.

"The fact that Texas Instruments has been in the country for 28 years has proven that and it is prepared to stay."

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said Texas Instruments has built up a strong "loyal" workforce over the years.

"Even during the disastrous earthquake in 1990, people stayed at work to ensure there was no disruption in production," Favila said.

Texas Instruments' exports from the Philippines last year totalled 3.5 billion dollars, which could double once the Clark site is operational.

The company's Baguio operations accounted for 35 percent to 40 percent of Texas Instrument's revenue, which was 3.2 billion dollars for the first quarter of the year. ■

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Philippines in \$1.3 billion biofuels deal

May 23, 2007

The Philippines signed a \$1.3 billion deal with UK-based NRG Chemical Engineering on Wednesday to build biofuel refineries and plantations, in one of the biggest foreign investments into the Southeast Asian country.

State-owned Philippine National Oil Co. said its biofuels unit would form a joint venture with NRG, whose billion dollar investment, spread over five years, is a big boost for Manila's ambitions to become a major source of alternative fuels.

"NRG has been looking for a possible partner in the region," Peter Abaya, president of PNOC-Alternative Fuels (PNOC-AFC), told reporters, adding that he had been in negotiations with the company, which also has offices in Singapore, for 9 months.

The two groups plan to build a 3.5 million metric ton biorefinery, at a cost of around \$450 million, within three years. Abaya did not give an exact location for the refinery.

They also plan to create a 1-million-hectares-plus plantation for jatropha, an indigenous plant used for biofuels.

Around \$200 million would be spent on a 300,000 metric ton bioethanol plant.

The joint venture would be 70 percent owned by NRG.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is determined to reduce the Philippines' dependence on imported crude oil in favour of alternative fuels produced from locally grown crops, such as sugar cane, coconut and jatropha.

A new law requiring a mandatory 1 percent coconut blend in diesel was introduced earlier this month and by 2009 gasoline will contain a 5 percent mix of ethanol to reduce the Philippines' \$6 billion plus oil import bill.

The government has courted foreign investment to boost biofuel local production and earlier this year signed agreements for five possible ethanol projects with China.

But NRG's investment is the biggest yet into the biofuels sector and a boost for the country's low levels of foreign direct investment, which have failed to match buoyant portfolio inflows from overseas amid high power costs and concerns over corruption. ■

RP Government moves closer to selling San Miguel stake

May 15, 2007

The Philippines moved a step closer to selling its 24 percent stake in food and drinks giant San Miguel on Tuesday after an anti-graft court confirmed the \$1.2 billion holding belonged to the government.

Manila has fought for the shares in Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage group for over 20 years. It aims to sell them as early as July and use the proceeds to help reduce its budget deficit and fund the agriculture sector.

Former president Corazon Aquino confiscated the shares from her cousin, current San Miguel chairman Eduardo Cojuangco, in 1986 because the funds used to purchase the stock were illegally collected from coconut farmers.

Other parties claiming to own the shares, including coconut farmers' groups and Cojuangco, may still take the case to the Supreme Court. The anti-graft court's ruling, made on May 11, was only released on Tuesday.

The government has said it hopes to agree a compromise deal with the farmers in which they would drop their claim in exchange for representation on a foundation, which would invest proceeds from the stake sale in the farming sector.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told Reuters last week the government hoped to get all parties to agree on the compromise deal by the end of the month or by middle of June, with the

sale likely to happen a month or two after. The government wants to sell the shares as a block.

Teves declined to comment on the court's decision.

Cojuangco is also claiming a separate 17.4 percent stake in San Miguel which he said he bought using his own money. But the government alleges the block of shares was part of assets illegally acquired by late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

On Tuesday, San Miguel's B shares open to all investors jumped 7.4 percent to 87 pesos (\$1.9) as the main index gained 1.31 percent to reach a 10-year high.

Its A shares restricted to local players climbed 7.8 percent.

Japan's Kirin Brewery Co Ltd owns about 20 percent of San Miguel while Philippine conglomerate SM Investments Corp holds 10.8 percent.

The Philippines is relying on the sale of its San Miguel stake and a 10 percent holding in the country's largest power distributor Manila Electric Co to raise 55 billion pesos this year to help reduce its budget deficit, which is expected to reach 63 billion pesos.

But the fiscal shortfall goal is in doubt after the government missed its first quarter deficit target due to poor tax collections and despite a 25-billion-peso windfall from the sale of a minority stake in telecoms giant PLDT. ■



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