

Filipino community wants live-in caregivers program improved



A group was formed to work on immigration issues, focusing on the live-in caregivers program, to prepare for a consultation meeting with the Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Hon. Jason Kenney, on May 30, 2009. From left: Tess Tesselona, Riza Esmeralda, Au Osdon, Julie Parado, Angie Ogerio, Joan Junio, Evelyn Calugay, and Zenaïda Kharroubi. Not in photo: Annie Miaral and Grace Yip. (5/15/09)

The serious allegations of abuses by a Liberal MP, Ruby Dhalla, touched a sensitive chord among Filipino-Canadians everywhere. This case has reinforced what has long been a common knowledge that live-in caregivers are exploited, underpaid, and abused. Although there are some good employers, they are not the majority. The problem has always been a concern but it seems that government policies do not change without active lobbying by the community.

Almost at the same time that this high profile case hit the newspaper headlines, there was already a proposed consultation meeting with the Minister of Immigration, Citizenship & Multiculturalism, Honorable Jason Kenney, scheduled by the end of May which was the result of prior meetings held with him in the past when he was holding the position of Secretary of

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City renewal plan on Victoria to benefit local businesses



A brief ceremony was held on April 30, 2009 in front of a local restaurant to announce the start of the renewal project. Photo shows Councillor Marvin Rotrand speaking about it while Councillor Saulie Sajdel waits for his turn and others listen like Flor Rillo, Riza Esmeralda, Manny Lagasca, Annie Miaral, and other invited guests.

Montreal, April 30, 2009 - Marvin Rotrand and Saulie Zajdel, Cote-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grace borough councillors, today officially launched the concrete improvements to be made to avenue Victoria in 2009, under the renewal plan announced last year.

Work on the commercial section of avenue Victoria will include upgrading a water main, along with an estimated \$2.9M in investment to completely rebuild the road surface and repair parts of the sidewalks between boulevard Edouard-Montpetit and rue Jean-Talon Ouest. About forty trees will also be planted along the street, to add some more greenery to the neighborhood. Individual meetings will be held with all merchants along avenue Victoria, to invite them to take advantage of the renovation subsidies for their business façades available under the success@montréalprogram -

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EDITORIAL

It's about time to do something about abuses

The live-in caregiver program does provide opportunities for women, and it does allow Canada to bring in much-needed workers. But could it also be contributing to a race-based class hierarchy? an editorial writer asks. Perhaps, there is no simple answer to this question for it cannot just be debated from a philosophical point of view but also from practical and basic economic realities. Caregivers are part of the burgeoning overseas workers industry that contribute to support the Philippine government which may not have survived economic crises were it not for its modern day heroes (as the president has called them to be.) The Live-in Caregiver Program also helps support Canada's urgent need for proper child care system. In other words, there is a mutual benefit that should not be ignored. The program provides an easy way to immigrate to Canada but at the same time it is meeting the need of the Canadian labor market. It is therefore important for all stakeholders to examine the program carefully and make sure that it conforms to Canada's human rights commitment and reputation as a human rights champion.

Ever since the Live-in Caregiver Program was introduced, there have been many studies and research done to document the problems due to the compulsory provision of the live-in requirement as well as the rules and procedures followed in its administration which are not only onerous and costly but are unreasonably delayed. After reviewing several reports on the subject, it appears that there are many groups organized in several communities across Canada but so far there is nothing done yet to make the program more equitable. We are not able to understand why the problems of the program have not been properly addressed. But it is obvious that after several years of complaining and many cases of caregivers being abused in many ways and who get sick on the job, get deported for not fulfilling the 24/36 months requirement due to no fault of their own, we begin to wonder when will Canada's lawmakers do something about correcting the inhuman or unjust conditions of the program. The Ruby Dhalla case is perhaps a blessing in disguise for it brings home the point that caregivers are getting a raw deal. People who are

insensitive to others suffering have said that they can always go home if they do not like the conditions of their employment. But is this a fair thing to say? The fact remains that it is the responsibility of fair minded people to do something about the systemic racism built in the program which allows employers to control the life of foreign workers whose services they badly need at a cheap labour cost. Most employers realize that they are able to carry on with their profession or business because of having a reliable caregiver. Why is it then that these people are not given due consideration for their contribution to their happiness and comfort?

Most of us who immigrated and work in another field of endeavour recognize that we are lucky to live in Canada for having the opportunities to improve ourselves. We are not, however, immune to the systemic racism that exist in our society but we have learned to live with it. As our community increases, the problems also increase with the integration of newcomers, and the social problems that result from maladjustment and culture shock. Those of us who are in a better position than others must try to find a way to share the blessings of living in a free country by thinking of ways to work for the improvement of our laws, particularly the ones affecting immigration. But we can only do this effectively by speaking with one voice - unity among our community leaders is imperative for it is difficult if not impossible to be heard if we are speaking with different voices. We are happy to note that we have begun the process of collaboration when a special group of community workers formed a committee to discuss the problems of the Live-in Caregiver Program. The results of our deliberations are published as our front page story. In connection with this effort, we are grateful to the staff of the Minister of Immigration, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism, the Honorable Jason Kenney, for giving us the opportunity to have a round table conference which will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2009. This will mark a historical moment in our Montreal community because we have started to show the signs of unity that will probably have an impact on our collective future.

It is a desired outcome of our round table conference with the

Minister to underscore the significance of the reforms we are proposing. It is not only the caregivers themselves who will benefit from the reforms we have recommended. It will benefit the whole Canadian society for it will resolve the issues of inequality due to race, gender or age. The temporary work permit system endows employers and employment agencies with extraordinary influence over the worker's destiny. This is because the work permit must specify the name of the employer in whose household the worker must not only work but also live in. In effect, the continuity of the LCP worker's valid status in Canada is dependent on the employer's willingness to continue her employment, or on a new employer obtained by an employment agency.

Besides the oppressive working conditions, caregivers also suffer from separation from their families for an average of five years. During this time, the children if there are any, often feel alienated and once they arrive in Canada after a long absence of their mother, they feel alienated and become part of our social problems. If we examine closely the implications of the separation of caregivers from their families, we should be shocked to realize that this amounts to producing more broken homes. The social cost of this separation probably is insidiously

increasing. We have heard of the high drop out rate of our youth, the delinquency of our children, and the unspoken problem of drug addiction that most of us do not even know about unless we talk to social workers and police officers. If the government listens to the expert opinions contained in various studies and reports, we will partly solve the source of some of our problems. It is not enough to look at the vested interests of one group, but it helps to make a better decision if all groups are fairly represented. PINAY, the main presenter during the conference with the Minister, will make most of the recommendations to improve the Live-in Caregiver Program. This organization has been constantly working for the protection of migrant workers, particularly those based in Montreal.

We are hoping that the government is serious in listening to us and will act on our recommendations. We are also learning to understand the lobbying process and the power of a united voice. We believe that once we have started to see the fruit of our collective efforts we will be encouraged to work on other issues besides the need to reform the Live-in Caregiver Program. We are optimistic indeed that this is just the beginning of building a community consensus.

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

Marché Coop Filipino

The Filipino Solidarity Cooperative

4711 Van Horne Avenue
Montreal, QC H3W 1H8
Tel.: 514-733-8915



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4950 Queen Mary Road Penthouse (5th Floor) near Snowdon Metro Montreal, QC H3W 1X3

Tel.: 514-485-7861

E-Mail: marketing@filipinostar.org

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi Chief Editor & Publisher
Hilda T. Veloso Community News
Jerry Estrada Assistant Editor
Mary Joy Lizarondo Sports News
Lina V. Fernandez News & Tourism
Sam Ferry Nida Verginom Butaran Sales Representative
Dr. Victor Gavino Assistant Editor
Bert Abiera Founder
Prof. Isaac Goodine Contributors
Alvin D. Veloso

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COOPERATIVE NEWS

The fate of the Coop is uncertain without membership support

In spite of all our efforts to convene a general assembly of members on Sunday, May 3, 2009, there were very few members who bothered to show up - about 16 people were there to hear my report on two key issues - whether to relocate or not, and whether other people are willing to contribute capital needed to meet the financial obligations of the Coop.

As I have already revealed to most people, I have been the major guarantor for the bank loan and operating credit line that pays for the overhead costs, purchase of merchandise and payment of salaries. For the past three years, since 2006 to be exact. But this cannot go on any longer. A cooperative is supposed to be owned by members, capitalized by members, managed by members. It is not supposed to be owned by many people but only capitalized by one person.

People may say that they cannot afford to give any money. But money is not the only thing that is important in a Coop. It is the moral support of members. We have a large number of members but only a few are buying their groceries and hardly anyone volunteers to see what is needed to be done. I do not know what more to say in order to tell everyone that the Coop will not survive if no one is interested to help out.

During the meeting, one generous member suggested to ask those present to contribute additional capital of \$500 each. If this will happen, then, we have some hope of improving the situation. I need to see more people come forward to offer a helping hand. In my busy schedule, I have not had the opportunity to make a personal appeal to each one of the members who may be in a position to buy more preferred or common shares. Under the Constitution and By-Laws, there is no restriction on how much shares a member can buy but this point has not been properly explored yet. It is therefore my intention to write a solicitation letter to see if anyone will trust us with their money. I have already shown an example that I have already borrowed over \$65 000 to keep the Coop afloat. I believe it is fair that I also ask others to have a little bit of trust that their money will not be squandered as what happened during the term of the first

president. People must realize that it is more difficult to start a business with a negative balance and a lot of debts. This is what I had to contend with, besides the tremendous amount of paper work. So far, there seems to be no one who can find the time to go through the maze of records. I have tried slowly to do the accounting with the help of my students and I keep hoping that we will be able to submit the financial statements soon to make things clearer. But everytime I am about to do so, something else happens. New responsibilities keep being added to my already full schedule.

Although members present during the general assembly approved the relocation plan, the idea is not a good one at this moment for several reasons - the big deficit that is not getting any better as no one else is contributing any capital, and the big job of finding the money to spend on the renovation of the store space. Perhaps, it is better to remain in the same location but drastic changes have to happen - like operating the Coop purely on a volunteer system for lack of funds to pay anyone. Paying the \$2500 rent monthly is already heavy. How much more if we continue to pay over \$1200 monthly for salaries? There are other expenses like insurance, electricity, telephone and permits plus the fact that there are still some accounts payable left over from the old administration.

If there are other people who can be recruited to do the accounting, purchasing, canvassing of other store prices to make sure our prices are the same or lower, and promoting the Coop with their friends and relatives so that we can increase our sales, recruiting new members, passing out flyers at the corner even during the weekend, or other days of the week, there is hope that the Coop can be redeemed. But if the situation whereby only one person is sacrificing everything, the future looks bleak and I wonder how long I can go on alone in my mission to unite the community. I often ask questions such as - Why is it difficult to make our kababayan patronize their own? What is attracting them to the Vietnamese or Chinese-owned stores? Our prices are as low as theirs or even lower, and we have been trying to buy as many products as possible in order to offer a variety of

choices. Still, it seems that most people are oblivious of the fact that the Coop is not for one person's benefit but for everyone in the community. Jerry Estrada writes a regular column promoting the Cooperative, yet, his effort has not shown any effect on increasing the sales which have been very dismal, to say the least, lately. What could be the reason for this lack of patronage from our fellow citizens?

I would like to hear from you, the general public, what is preventing you from patronizing the Coop. Just give us your feedback and let us know what we are doing wrong. We are willing to make changes that will be useful and productive. Starting this month of June, there will be a suggestion box in the Coop for people to give us suggestions on what will make them keep coming back to buy their groceries weekly.

We are also going to ask you to suggest fund raising ideas. Jerry Estrada has proposed a trip to Levis, Quebec, for the education of our members about the history of cooperatives. The Caisse Populaire Desjardins started there and it may motivate us to work for the survival of our own cooperative if we find out that the powerful Caisse Populaire was started in a small town by one man and grew to this huge size of a business. It is one of the success stories in the history of business management.

The educational trip to Levis, Quebec and Quebec City will be on Saturday, July 18, 2009. We have hired a coach, instead of a school bus for comfort of passengers. Ticket costs \$50, departure will be 6:30 A.M. and return to Montreal by 7:30 P.M. - a total of 14 hours trip which will include the traveling time of 6 hours, and 8 hours of sightseeing. Meeting place will be at the Van Horne Shopping Centre, near the Van Horne Exit of the Plamondon Metro.

Please help us sell as many tickets as possible and as early as possible so that we can hire a second coach. It is quite risky to rent two coaches right away because of the cost but if the tickets get sold out early, we may be able to afford to hire a second one. Proceeds from sale of tickets will be for the benefit of the Cooperative.

We also would like to do other fund raising activities like a benefit concert or a talent show. Beauty pageants have been successful ways of raising funds but there are too many associations doing this already. We would like to do something different.

Someone has mentioned to me that there are retired people who

can be asked to share their management expertise. If anyone in the community wants to be charitable, we need you to help us produce a business plan so that we can seek financial assistance from the government. If we succeed in getting any grant, we will be willing to pay for your services, but only after we receive the grant as we do not have any cash flow at all. Another suggestion is to get a student who is doing business courses in the university. Evelyn Calugay will look into this possibility.

Before closing, I would like to acknowledge new members who have signed up. But the question of the receipt not bearing the name of the Cooperative came up. Perhaps, we will personalize the receipts by ordering a rubber stamp to put them on the receipts but is this really urgent? I wonder as I have been spending my own office supplies for the Coop and I do not know how I will ever be repaid for them. I just want to mention that the cash flow is so tight that I even shoulder all the printing costs of flyers, membership, and brochures for the past three years. I may even attempt to do the certificates of membership by computer in order to save on printing costs.

According to our constitution and by-laws, our full membership is \$100, and this can be increased as the capital needs of the Coop warrants it. Until this day, only about 1/2 of the total membership have fully paid the full amount. It is difficult to find the time to follow up on their balances as often times they either forget or they put it off for tomorrow that never comes. I am therefore reminding those members with a balance to help out by paying their membership in full.

ID Cards will be produced and distributed during our educational trip to Levis, Quebec. Those who have not yet submitted photos, please do so in order to get your ID card soon. The minimal cost of this ID is \$5.00 to cover the lamination and the printing.

New members this month are:
0682-09 Mendoza, Virginia
0683-09 Flores, Bevie Diolanda
0684-09 Eltanal, Cecilia
0685-09 Armelon, Linda Hora
0686-09 Pascual, Jasmin

I would like to thank these new members for their support and trust.

I also wish to remind those who have not yet signed up that we are urgently in need of more members who appreciate the meaning of cooperation and working together for our common prosperity.

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi
President, 2008-2011



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From Page 1

Victoria Ave.

commercial component.

"The announcement today is a great victory for the neighbourhood and comes in response to pressure from merchants and residents who care about Victoria's success," said Mr. Rotrand to an enthusiastic group of citizens gathered across from the Sariling Atin Filipino restaurant. "It is also proof that our administration is serious about wanting to carry out the renewal plan announced last year. We will be making all kinds of concrete improvements in 2009, with more to come in 2010."

"Our objective is to highlight the multicultural wealth and vibrant nature of the street's existing businesses," emphasized Mr. Zajdel. "Avenue Victoria has the potential to become a shopping destination for all Montrealers looking for items from around the world. Together we can make Victoria one of Montreal's leading commercial arteries."

On behalf of the borough, councillors Rotrand and Zajdel took advantage of the official launch of the renewal work on avenue Victoria to thank a number of groups for their unflagging support for this project: the Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs, the Jamaica Association, the Uptown Merchants Association and the CDEC CDN-NDG.

Repair Work

Work to upgrade the water main started on April 20. Once it is complete, repair work on the road surface and sidewalks will follow. A technical information bulletin, *Montréal en action*, will be distributed to local merchants and residents to inform them in advance of the schedules and nature of work to be done on the road surface and sidewalks

success@montréal program - commercial component

In June the Cote-des-Neiges--Notre-Dame-de-Grace borough will hold an information evening for avenue Victoria merchants, to explain the renovation subsidies available under the *success@montreal program - commercial component*. Merchants will be informed in advance of the location and date of the information evening.

Individual meetings will also be held with every merchant, to offer specific renovation advice. The borough wants to encourage avenue Victoria merchants to take advantage of the subsidies available to them to spruce up one or more aspects of their business façades: doors/windows, signs, awnings, patios and landscaping.

Aside from all the concrete improvements to be made starting in 2009, the renewal plan prepared by the borough also calls for the replacement of some street furniture in the longer term.

Source: François Puchin, Communications Coordinator, CDN-NDG borough, 514-868-3483
Hugo Tremblay, Executive Assistant Office of the CDN-NDG Mayor and Municipal Councillors, 514-868-3521

From Page 1 Live-in Caregivers

of Multiculturalism. Erik Hamon, the then Conservative Party Organizer introduced him to the FAMAS Executive Board. During that meeting we raised various issues affecting the Filipino community in Montreal, one of them being the live-in caregiver program. In 2008, the Conservative Party arranged for a meeting with the then Minister of Immigration Chief of Staff, John Weissenberger in Ottawa.



Caregivers Richlyn Tongson, left, and Magdalene Gordo, emerge from a building on Bay St. after testifying via video link before a Parliamentary committee investigating their allegations that they were mistreated by MP Ruby Dhalla. (May 12, 2009)

The delegates from Montreal were: Evelyn Calugay and Delia Deveyra of Pinay, Annie Miaral, proprietor of Eurasian Homecare Services and Riza Esmeralda of FAMAS. The meeting provided real life accounts from caregivers who have lived through mistreatments. PINAY submitted its recommendations for improving the LCP. On April 4, 2009 in Montreal, during a reception hosting Minister Kenney and sponsored by the Hellenic Community, various cultural groups, including the Filipino community were invited to meet Minister Kenney. During the question period, Riza Esmeralda reminded Minister Kenney of previous meetings in 2007 regarding the issue of live-in caregivers and requested for an update on the government's efforts. Minister Kenney replied that he and his staff have conducted consultations with the Filipino community in Vancouver and that the next one will be held in Montreal and Toronto. Shortly after this dinner meeting, the staff of Minister Kenney contacted the Filipino Star editor, Zenaida Kharroubi and asked her to organize the consultation meeting. She then formed a committee composed of community leaders who have worked in the area of helping caregivers.

While the work to organize the committee is happening, CTV news turned to the Filipino community on May 11, 2009 to interview someone about the Ruby Dhalla case. They used to have the name of Tony Fernandez as a reference and so they called Lina Fernandez who in turn gave the name of the Filipino Star editor. Immediately after returning their

telephone call, Zenaida Kharroubi was interviewed by Anne Lewis for that day's evening news for the 6:00 o'clock edition. She cited the same problems that the nannies in the Ruby Dhalla case complained about. Coincidentally, a former caregiver was in her office and she was also interviewed to talk about her own experience. The tape of this interview is available on the website of the Filipino Star.

members of the committee who are going to meet the Minister are: Evelyn Calugay, Riza Esmeralda, Joan Junio, Zenaida Kharroubi, Melle Lugod, Annie Miaral, Francis J. Ocampo-Diaz, Angie Ogerio, Au Osdon, Julie Parado, Flor Rillo, Tess Tossalona, and Grace Yip.

Meanwhile, in other parts of Canada, Filipinos have been organizing more than ever before to lobby the government for changes which they feel are long overdue. Many articles are found on the internet which show a variety of opinions but most favoring changes instead of scrapping it which is proposed by an activist group. As far as the PINAY group is concerned, they only want to improve the program. Hereunder is an excerpt of the report to be presented to the Minister.

FILIPINO COMMUNITY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduction

The purpose of our dialogue is to make recommendations for Government actions that would decrease the systemic discrimination resulting in abuses, exploitation and human rights violations that workers under Canada's Live-in Caregiver Program currently suffer from.

2. About PINAY (Presenter)

PINAY is a Filipino women's organization in Quebec that was created in 1991 with the aim of organizing and empowering Filipino women in Montreal. Since that time it brought domestic workers and their supporters together in the struggle for the basic rights and welfare of Filipino migrant workers in Canada.

The primary objectives of PINAY include advocacy and promotion of the rights and welfare of Filipino migrant workers, mainly those under the LCP. We provide workshops and education on their rights regarding labor standards and immigration policy, orientation and skills development. PINAY previously ran a transition home where Live-in Caregivers could seek refuge and meet other women in similar situations, obtain information, receive counseling, and have access to a legal clinic and receive necessary referrals. The transition home was closed due to lack of funds, PINAY currently has no permanent office or meeting space. The organization is run entirely by Filipino women volunteers and has no paid staff.

3. Summary of the LCP

The LCP was established for the purpose of meeting a labour market shortage of live-in caregivers in Canada. The qualified migrant worker has the opportunity to work and eventually apply for permanent residency within Canada.

Since 2008, a work permit is issued for a period of three years. In the event of termination from their present employment, live-in caregivers (LIC) must apply for a transfer of work permit. The processing delay of this transfer takes approximately 3 to 6 months, which therefore becomes a hindrance in completing the 24/36 months requirement of the program.

In order to prepare for the consultation meeting with Minister Kenney, the committee has met twice, first on May 15, then on May 22. Since most of the issues surrounding caregivers have already been documented by PINAY, Evelyn was chosen to present the main recommendations to improve the program. From the point of view of an immigration lawyer, Francis J. Ocampo-Diaz was assigned to present a recommendation to remove the inadmissibility of a caregiver from becoming a permanent resident if one of her family members is declared inadmissible. Annie Miaral who has a lot of experience in the caregiver issues will request the Minister to look into the long delays of processing applications from the Philippines. Julie Parado was given the task of making a concluding statement to remind the Minister of the Filipino community's needs and concerns about immigration while Zenaida Kharroubi will serve as a facilitator to introduce members of the panel and to present an overview of the Filipino community's historical background in Canada, and Quebec in particular.

The consultation meeting with the Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism is an important event for it shows the willingness of the Conservative government to listen to our concerns. However, we cannot afford to be passive in our efforts to seek a better deal for our fellow citizens. The committee also plans to continue working on this file until all the problems are resolved. At present, the

Applicants who work for more than one employer at a time or who undertake live-out employment are automatically disqualified from the program.

Live-in caregivers may apply for permanent residence after they complete two years of full employment within a three-year period, referred to as the "24/36 requirement". The purpose of this period is to give a live-in caregiver some flexibility to compensate for periods of maternity leave, unemployment, and vacation and illness.

Most live-in caregivers are young, educated women from the Philippines who have families in their home country. They provide childcare, senior home support care or care of disabled persons without supervision in a private home. They must pass criminal, security and medical checks before coming to Canada.

4. Major Impacts of LCP

PINAY's analysis of the LCP is that it is an anti woman and racist program; that it perpetuates modern-day slavery and underdevelopment by relegating women to cheap labour; and that it violates an individual's fundamental human rights, including the Canadian charter of rights.

The following are some of the major impacts of the LCP, well-documented in community-based research and surveys, academic research, books and films, legal cases, media reports, and reports by international bodies.

1.1 Economic segregation and entrenched poverty through de-skilling and stalled development
The LCP keeps women in low-income jobs, even where they have skills that would otherwise allow them to obtain better pay. For example, many LICs are Filipino-trained nurses. Their qualifications are not recognized in Quebec; therefore they cannot work as nurses. The long hours and low pay ensure these women not to seek the further training necessary to get better jobs. Even once accepted as permanent residents, they must take whatever jobs they can get based on their Canadian work qualifications, i.e. domestic work. At the same time, wealthy Canadians save huge amounts of money by hiring over-trained, low-wage domestic workers.

1.2 Rights violations, including abuse and human trafficking
The LCP fosters violations of basic human rights, basic employment standards, contractual obligations, and the Canadian criminal code. The LCP strictly defines the types of work and working conditions. In practice, however, women routinely work overtime and perform tasks which are outside the terms of their employment -- living in the employer's home often means their work-day never ends. LICs have reported to PINAY physical, sexual and psychological abuses by their employers. Other complaints include being fired for becoming ill or pregnant, not getting paid for overtime, or not getting paid at all.

Leaving an employer is an extremely risky proposition. Because LIC work permits are employer-specific, a caregiver must first find a

new employer and then go through the 3-6 month (minimum) process of modifying the work permit. LICs are not allowed to start working for a new employer in the interim. Therefore, unless she wishes to starve for 3 months, she cannot legally leave her old employer until she has received a permit to work for a new one.



Ruby Dhalla (left) is an avid supporter of Michael Ignatieff, seen here holding hands during his coronation last Saturday.

Furthermore, employers may threaten employees with deportation if they refuse to comply with the employers' demand or if they complain to the authorities.

In some cases LICs are victims of human trafficking by recruitment agencies, in direct violation of the Canadian Criminal Code. Some agencies charge them exorbitant fees for processing, strictly control their movements once they arrive in Canada, withhold their documents, threaten them with deportation, and delay setting them up with another employer after they have come to Canada thereby forcing them to work illegally in the interim. Some LICs discover at the end of their 24/36 months period that the agency never obtained for them a proper permit, meaning they cannot apply for permanent residency and may in fact be summarily deported. Regulation of these agencies in Canada is extremely weak or non-existent.

1.3 Systemic racism and discrimination that perpetuate abuses and deny basic benefits
The systemic racism and discrimination created by the LCP program not only forces women to accept these abuses but it also deprives them of even the possibility of some basic benefits. The consequences of complaining or leaving a job are high: fear of deportation if there have been any immigration infractions, fear of losing the employer therefore having to restart the 24/36 requirement, fear of not meeting the 24/36 requirement therefore failing to obtain permanent residence.

Furthermore, since most violations occur in the home there are often no witnesses. Cases therefore hinge on the word of a foreign domestic worker whose first language is neither English nor French, versus that of an affluent and sometimes prominent member of Canadian society. PINAY finds that, in practice, it

is impossible for a woman to win a case of psychological or emotional harassment against her employer.

Finally, these women do not even legally enjoy basic benefits. In Quebec, for example, the CSST (Worker's Compensation Insurance) does not apply to LICs. For their first 3 months of work and during the period

immigration consultants/agencies (whether recognized by the Government or not).

- Give LICs permanent residence status on their arrival.
 - If the Government does not wish to implement the second recommendation, THEN:
 - Allow LICs to submit application for permanent resident status upon arrival.
 - Make live-in requirement optional.
 - Provide a work visa that is work specific not employer-specific, allowing LICs to change employers freely and quickly.
 - Eliminate the 24/36 months requirement.
 - Pass the Juana Tejada law to eliminate the 2nd medical exam
- Prepared collectively by:
PINAY (Filipino Women's Organization in Quebec)
FAMAS (Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs)
Filipino Caregivers Association of Montreal
Filipino Solidarity Cooperative Inc.
Novo Ecijano Association of Montreal
Eurasian Homecare Services
Philippine Benevolent & Scholarship Society of Quebec
Federation of Filipino Canadian Associations of Quebec
St. Kevin's Parish Council
Center for Philippines Concern
Fil-Can Trade & Commerce of Quebec,



that they are holding an open work permit while waiting for the issuance of their Quebec selection certificate that usually takes six months to a year, they do not have public health coverage.

Recommendations

- Regulate recruitment agencies through strict monitoring of

Filipino nannies alleged abuses by Dhalla



Dr. Ruby Dhalla, a chiropractor testifying in front of the Commons committee

Toronto Liberal MP Ruby Dhalla is in the spotlight after allegations that she illegally hired then mistreated two nannies.

The unproven allegations surfaced yesterday in the Toronto Star. Two foreign caregivers employed by the 35-year-old Toronto MP and her brother say their passports were seized. They also claim they were forced to work long hours for cash and perform non-caregiver duties.

They alleged, during a public

forum two weeks ago with two Ontario cabinet ministers, that their passports were seized, they worked unpaid overtime and were forced to do non-nanny jobs such as washing cars, shining shoes and cleaning family-owned chiropractic clinics.

NDP MP Olivia Chow says the allegations, if true, would constitute serious violations of labour, minimum wage and tax laws. Tory MP Paul Calandra referred to the Liberal MP as being "in hot water" for hiring live-in caregivers then refusing to sponsor their immigration applications -- "essentially keeping them in a position of involuntary servitude."

Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, seen holding hands with Dhalla at his coronation on Saturday, would only say he was still "collecting facts" on the case.

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CAVITE PROVINCE

A Place With A Glorious Past



The province of Cavite abounds with great objects, and subjects, of culture and history. It is the birthplace of a good number of Filipino heroes and it has an interesting range of sites associated with the Philippine Revolution of 1896. Found in the province is the residence of the first president of the republic, **Emilio Aguinaldo**, which is also the site where the Philippine Republic was proclaimed on June 12, 1898.

Located 34 km south of Manila, Cavite teems with natural resources and fantastic landscapes. It is home to **Tagaytay City**, the Philippines' second summer capital, next to Baguio City. The accessing highway offers a breathtaking sight of the world-famous **Taal** formation, a crater within an island

among these popular first class resorts complete with modern facilities.

Cavite stands proudly as a place with a glorious past. Its warm and friendly people, whose ancestors fought for a noble cause, manifest industry and patience in various skills and professions, openly receptive to the entry and exchange of culture and technology that are of value to this wondrous province.

The majority of the 2 million strong population speak Tagalog while those in Cavite City and in some areas speak Chabacano. English is considered as the second language and is widely used as medium of communication in business and higher education. Other indigenous languages are Waray, Bicolano, Cebuano, Ilokano, Pangasinense, and Hiligaynon. Chinese and Spanish are also spoken by some local residents.

Tourist Attractions

Cavite's highest elevation is **Tagaytay City**, a heavenly place overlooking Taal Volcano, with its' cool climate and peaceful atmosphere. Most people who visit Tagaytay go to **Picnic Grove** for picnics and sightseeing.



La Pieta, located in Tagaytay City



Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Monument

within a lake. Coconut groves dot the ridges of Tagaytay and classy accommodations give the visiting tourists the pleasures of relaxation, and at the same time, wide opportunities to enjoy the magnificent view of Taal.

Puerto Azul and **Caylabne Bay** in Ternate, and **Island Cove** in Kawit are



Pico De Loro

The overlook at **Taal Vista Lodge** offers a spectacular view of the volcano (about 15 km distant) and lake. Boat rides around the volcano island are also available for those who wish to go volcano trekking.

Popular festivals include the **Maytinis Festival** celebrated every 24th of December in Kawit and **Pahimis Festival** in Amadeo which is a thanksgiving celebration taking place



Maytinis Festival celebrated every 24th of December in Kawit featuring the re-enactment of Joseph and Mary's search for a place to stay the night Christ was born in Bethlehem



Pahimis is a thanksgiving celebration for bountiful coffee harvest in Amadeo Cavite. During the parade, colorful costumes with coffee cherries are worn as people dance in the street.



View of Taal Volcano from the beautiful & popular Tagaytay Picnic Grove.

in late february.

Corregidor Island, also called "The Rock", is another popular tourist attraction. It features the remains of the gallant last stand made by Filipino-American troops against the superior invasive forces of the Japanese Imperial Army, an event which came to be written in history. It is the largest of the five islands guarding the entrance to Manila Bay.

Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine

The town of Kawit played an important role in Philippine political history. The proclamation of the Republic of the Philippines was made in this town on the balcony of the home of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo. Now a national shrine, it was in this house where the Philippine flag was first unfurled. Emilio Aguinaldo became the first president of

the Philippine Republic.

La Pieta - At the back of Pink Sisters Church in Tagaytay City is this large statue, a depiction of the famous "La Pieta." It is arguably one of the most famous rendition of Mary and Jesus. It is especially significant during Lent when the Philippines begins to observe the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Pink Sisters' Church is famous for its piously prayerful nuns who are in pink traditional nun's clothing. They ceaselessly pray for the petitions that the faithful submit to them via small window on the side of the Church.

Pico de Loro offers a magnificent 360 view from the summit. Facing the sea on the north-eastern side of the Manila Bay area., you can actually see ships passing by. ■



Taal Volcano , nestled in Taal Lake, viewed from the ridge of Tagaytay City



View of Taal Volcano from Leslie's Restaurant, a good place to dine and appreciate the stunning beauty of the surrounding landscape.



Cavite Castle, Tagaytay City, Cavite.



This is the Amadeo church located at Amadeo, Cavite. Amadeo is the coffee capital of the Philippines



Basilica De Taal



This is the kind of boat that take passengers to Tall Volcano to see the crater.

DOH confirms 4 more Pinoys 'Manolo' admits family rift over Meralco



Four more Filipinos, including a one-year-old girl, were found infected with Influenza A(H1N1), bringing to six the total number of confirmed cases in the country, the Department of Health (DOH) announced yesterday.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said two of the four new cases – a 26-year-old woman and a 55-year-old man – contracted the virus from the Taiwanese mother and her five-year-old daughter who attended a wedding in Zambales last May 17.

Duque, however, stressed the new development is no cause for alarm.

"There is no need to panic. This is something that we have been preparing for," Duque told a news conference.

He said the one-year-old girl arrived from the United States last May 19 and began exhibiting flu symptoms on May 24.

Duque said the girl is suffering from persistent cough but her fever had subsided.

The other confirmed case is a 13-year-old boy who arrived from Hong Kong on May 23. Duque said the patient manifested flu symptoms when he arrived but has since recovered.

The two contacts of the Taiwanese, on the other hand, exhibited symptoms on May 21.

Both of them are still suffering from cough and fever, Duque said.

Health officials, on the other hand, could not trace the origin of the virus that came from the two Taiwanese.

Officials pointed to the possibility that the two Taiwanese may have already contracted the disease when they left Taipei on May 15 and returned home five days later. The incubation period for A(H1N1) is 10 days.

Duque said the throat swab samples taken from the four patients all tested positive for the virus by the DOH's Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).

"Efforts are being taken to complete contact tracing and to place under quarantine those with known

exposure to confirmed cases," he said.

Duque warned the DOH is expecting more confirmed cases in the coming weeks because of what he called "intensive contact tracing" and heightened public awareness of the virus.

Duque also pointed out the increasing risk of virus contamination from continuous international travel and the increasing number of cases in other countries in the region.

He said the DOH is already preparing for the "worst case scenario."

"DOH, however, assures the public that the pandemic preparedness and response plan is in place and that it has expanded its referral hospitals to all DOH regional hospitals and medical centers," he said.

DOH chief epidemiologist Dr. Eric Tayag said there is still no reported case of local level A(H1N1) transmission in the country despite the spread of the virus from the Taiwanese nationals.

Tayag maintained the Taiwanese contacts fall under the category of "second generation transmission" because they got the virus outside the country.

In case they spread the infection to others, their contacts would constitute the "third generation transmission," he said.

Tayag explained a community level transmission of the virus could occur only from third generation transmission.

The DOH had earlier tracked down and examined three contacts but they were negative for the virus. The results of the laboratory tests for six other cases are still pending.

Tayag assured the public that DOH has already traced the people who had contact with the four new cases.

"We are able to get all of the possible contacts at this time," he said.

The DOH is currently tracking down more than 50 persons who attended the gathering in Zambales last May 17. The guests came from various parts of Central Luzon and Metro Manila.

Health officials in Central Luzon led by Dr. Rio Magpantay revealed yesterday that they are monitoring eight people who have manifested flu-like symptoms.

Magpantay said the eight were among those who attended the wedding party in Zambales. ■

Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) chairman Manuel "Manolo" Lopez finally broke his silence yesterday and admitted that the sale of a substantial chunk of shares of the Lopez clan in the country's largest power distributor had caused misunderstanding among family members.

When asked to clarify reports of a rift among the Lopez siblings, Manolo said: "Alam mo naman sa mga magkakapatid normal ang may tampuhan pero napag-uusapan naman. (As you know it is normal among siblings to have some hard feelings but that can be threshed out). But at the end of the day, we'll be okay."

Manolo said it was normal for people to have differing opinions on certain issues. "Meralco would have been my parents' legacy," he said.

Manolo said he was also not aware of any plans by the Lopez family and First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPHC) to sell more shares in Meralco. "If that's First Holdings' decision then that's their call. I'd rather reserve my reply to that. How they intend to do it I really don't know. I'm not aware of that," Manolo said.

Should the Lopez family decide to sell out their remaining 13.4 percent stake in Meralco, the PLDT Group will have the right of first refusal over said shares. "I'm not privy fully to the contents of the agreement they signed. Normally a shareholders' agreement contains a right of first refusal," Manolo said.

Nevertheless, Manolo said he was happy with the turn of events and expects Meralco to perform better with the entry of the two corporate giants. "Expect operations to be even better, especially with the synergy among three groups. Expect a more dynamic corporation," he said.

Industry observers said the rift between Manolo and his elder brother Oscar Lopez, the patriarch of the Lopez empire, started last year when the Lopez family and Government Service Insurance System head Winston Garcia were embroiled in a tumultuous battle for control of Meralco.

Oscar, himself, admitted that the sale of 20 percent of the Lopez family's



Meralco chairman Manuel 'Manolo' Loopez

34.7 percent stake in Meralco last March 13, was not easy on his younger brother Manolo, who has invested more than 30 years of his life with the company.

The Lopez patriarch, however, pointed out that the divestment was a business decision they needed to make no matter how painful and difficult it was and was meant to ensure the survival of Meralco amid a global financial downturn.

"We feel that divesting a 20-percent interest in Meralco to the PLDT Group, we have forged a strategic alliance that will enable us to continue to participate, both as owners and business partners, in a Meralco whose value has been greatly enhanced by the possibilities of synergy with PLDT," Oscar said in his speech before FPHC shareholders Monday.

He also stressed that the sale has put Meralco in a stronger position and "carries a silver lining over and above providing us cash to settle our debts and to take advantage of investment opportunities."

"It also liberates us from a Catch22 strategy of having to defend our position in Meralco at all costs, a battle that we could not possibly win under the current domestic political and global financial environment." ■

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Couple face corruption rap Filipino pair accused of 'plunder,' tax evasion in homeland

A wealthy couple living in Richmond face massive corruption charges in the Philippines -- but they could be immune from extradition unless Canadian tax experts decide they've broken tax laws here.

Gloria and Faustino Chingkoe, who own a million-dollar Richmond house, three expensive condos and have three daughters educated at Crofton House private school, face a host of charges in the Philippines, including "plunder," falsification of documents and tax evasion.

After several failed bids to extradite the Chingkoes, the Philippines Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) turned to its 1976 tax extradition treaty with Canada in a tactic that could force the Chingkoes to face the charges.

The Chingkoes are alleged to have bought and sold tax credits through a series of companies, including Filstar, in an elaborate scam that the Philippine government claims defrauded the impoverished country of \$75 million.

Since the couple are dual citizens, they "may declare income and pay taxes in either country," said Philippine BIR deputy commissioner Gregorio Cabantac.

But there's no evidence the Chingkoes paid taxes on their 1995 to '98 windfalls in the Philippines, where the couple face 26 charges of tax evasion.

Now Philippine officials want to know if the Chingkoes coughed up



Faustino and Gloria Chingkoe

any taxes to the Canadian taxman.

Philippine commissioner of internal revenue Lilian Hefti cites "our income-tax treaty" in a request for help from the Canada Revenue Agency's International Tax Office.

Hefti wants to know if the Chingkoes volunteered information to Canada about their multi-billion-peso income from the Philippines' tax-credit sales.

Yesterday, the Philippines office of the ombudsman ordered the filing of "plunder" charges against 23 people,

including Faustino and Gloria "Eng Eng" Chingkoe, listed as "owners of Filstar Textile Industrial Corp."

The ombudsman said in an 81-page statement that Filstar was given tax credits it wasn't entitled to.

In Vancouver, Philippine consul Ruth Morales Prado said she couldn't comment as the case is "sub judice" (before the courts).

Faustino Chingkoe became a Canadian citizen in 1997 and is dubbed a "frequent flyer free on bail." The corruption charges against him are now entering their second decade. His wife has reportedly not set foot in the Philippines since charges were first laid against her in 2001.

One phone number listed to the Chingkoes' home in Richmond is out of service while a second rang unanswered yesterday. One of the Chingkoe daughters has used her parents' names and income to buy her own condo.

Federal justice spokeswoman Lyse Cantin confirmed Canada has an extradition treaty with the Philippines, but she noted that a "formal extradition request to Ottawa [can't proceed] until there are equivalent charges in Canada."

But even if an extradition request

was granted and an arrest warrant was pending, Cantin said,

"We can't confirm what we're doing because of state-to-state confidentiality."

Canada would not give advance notice to a fugitive that an arrest was forthcoming "because of the flight-risk issue," Cantin added.

Philippines officials told The Province in 2007 that the money alleged to have been scammed by the Chingkoes "should have gone to school houses, government hospitals . . . bridges that should be constructed, to basic services for the poor."

Faustino Chingkoe and his brother Felix, now 53 and also living in Richmond, went into the textiles business together, and within a decade had built up an empire of 30 companies. Felix now vows to testify against his brother, whom he claims owes him millions of dollars. The two brothers are embroiled in lawsuits.

Felix Chingkoe said yesterday he hopes the new plunder charges will help get his brother and sister-in-law extradited from Richmond to the Philippines and force disclosure of their sources of income. ■

Philippines' two biggest parties merge ahead of polls

The two largest political parties in the Philippines, which hold 60-70 percent of all elected positions, merged on Thursday ahead of presidential elections in May 2010.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo blessed the union of Lakas (Strength) Christian-Muslims Democrats and Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Movement of Free Filipinos) or Kampi, describing the merger as the administration's key to win elections next year.

"The emergence of Lakas-Kampi CMD as one party is our finest weapon and perhaps our best guarantee for

success in the 2010 elections," Arroyo told cheering party members at a Manila hotel.

She said the merger of the two parties was "tangible proof" that her government was determined to push through with elections contrary to doubts expressed by critics and detractors.

"I look upon Lakas and Kampi as one, fighting as one and the instrument and vehicle for electing the best, most qualified and worthiest leaders of our country," she said.

Arroyo's allies in the House of Representatives are preparing to

debate a bill on amending the constitution, which opposition politicians say is aimed at removing term limits on elected officials, including the president.

Arroyo is not eligible to contest next year's election, under current law.

The economy, which shrank in the first quarter by its biggest margin in 20 years, is shaping up as one of the key issues. The government is pushing the central bank to continue its accommodative monetary policy, while the Bank is urging the government to step up spending in tandem with that.

Gabriel Claudio, the president's political adviser, said the merged party's next agenda was to choose a common candidate for president and vice president and it has until August or September to announce the administration ticket.

We're working to field a common ticket to fill up all vacant seats," Claudio said.

Along with the president and vice-president, half of the 24 seats in the Senate, all 250 members of the House of Representatives and more than 17,000 regional and local posts are to be filled in the May 2010 elections. ■

Run-off polls eyed in case of minority president

A bill was filed at the House of Representatives seeking to require the holding of "run-off" elections for president and vice president in case no candidate for such offices gets more than 50 percent of all votes cast.

Authored by Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. of Iloilo, House Bill 6183 requires a "surgical" amendment to the Constitution to introduce the scheme of a run-off election. The run-off poll must be held not later than three weeks after the recent election, according to Gonzalez, who said his proposal would prevent a situation where a winning president is elected with only minority votes.

His proposal says: "If no candidate gets more than 50 percent of the total votes cast, whether for president or vice president or for both offices, a run-off elections shall be held between the candidates

garnering the two highest number of votes, whether for president or vice president or for both offices."

Gonzalez said that a minority-elected president is at a great disadvantage and, lacking in mandate, has to enter into alliances with other political parties to strengthen his hold on power.

"Even before his term of office begins, minority-elected president is already at a great disadvantage. Instead of 'hitting the ground running' so to speak, a chief executive who is elected by a mere plurality or less than 50 percent of the total votes case, first, would have to strike alliances with various political groups in order to solidify his hold on power and govern more effectively," Gonzalez said. Lacking the confidence of a decisive mandate, a minority president would be hesitant to introduce necessary but

unpopular reforms and would be more susceptible to the influence of vested interests, Gonzalez said.

"What our country needs today is a strong national executive who possesses a clear and indubitable mandate from people so that he can have the necessary political capital to deal with vested interest groups, implement difficult reforms, as well as unite our nation especially during crucial times," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez admitted that it may be too late for his proposal to be adopted in time for the 2010 elections. "I just want to present the idea and maybe we could adopt the system in the next presidential elections after 2010."

Gonzalez noted that all the post-Edsa (Revolution) presidents were "minority presidents". In the 1992 elections, Fidel Ramos was elected president with only 24 percent of all

the votes cast; Joseph Estrada, 40 percent; and Mrs. Gloria Arroyo, 39 percent of the votes in the 2004 elections.

All other past presidents were elected by a majority vote: Manuel Luis Quezon, 68 percent in 1935 and 82 percent in 1941; Manuel Roxas, 54 percent in 1946; Elpidio Quirino, 51 percent in 1949; and Ramon Magsaysay won the 1953 elections with 69 percent of the votes. The lone "minority" president in pre-Edsa days was Carlos Garcia who got 41 percent of all the votes cast.

In 1961, Diosdado Macapagal was elected with 55 percent of the votes; Ferdinand Marcos, 55 percent in 1965. Marcos was re-elected in 1969 with 61 percent of the votes. ■

COMMUNITY NEWS

FAMAS holds press conference to explain results of beauty pageant



Bb. Pilipinas-Montreal 2008, May Ann Miras, puts the crown on Mishael Thea de la Cruz who became Bb. Pilipinas-Montreal 2009 after the results were corrected.

Monday, May 11, 2009, FAMAS invited the local press and other community members to explain what happened and to give the crown of Bb. Pilipinas of Montreal 2009 to Mishael -Thea de la Cruz because of the mistake in tallying the scores. Although it was just a difference of less than one point between her and Krisa Lacsamana who was crowned during the April 25th pageant, the

winner of the title. The correct score was only determined after Svetlana Suarez called Shelly a week later to discuss the issue of the points for the second place title of Miss Popularity and Miss Charity. She met with the family of Krisa Lacsamana but she did not know yet at that time what would

happen. She also met with the committee and the FAMAS executive board on a Tuesday evening following the call of Ms. Suarez. It was decided to call a press conference to declare Mishael the winner of the title. The family of Krisa was also invited to attend the press conference but they were unable to come. Due to the delicacy of the problem, the FAMAS committee did not



Mishael receiving the revolving trophy as Bb. Pilipinas-Montreal 2009 from May Ann Miras.

fact remains that she should be declared the winner.

What is the best way to make up for an honest mistake? There seems to be no easy answer and FAMAS still has to figure it out. Shelly Quintos, chairperson of the Bb. Pilipinas 2009 committee is grateful to the families of Krisa Lacsamana and Mishael Thea de la Cruz for their understanding. In a telephone interview, the Filipino Star asked her to explain why and how the mistake in the tallying of scores happened. It would appear that the auditing committee just added the points given to them and Shelley did not remember to give them the scores of Mishael for winning second place for Miss Popularity and Miss Charity worth 3 points each. Upon tallying all the scores, the difference between the two candidates was less than one point, but it was significant in terms of declaring the

take back the crown and the cash award given to Krisa. They used another crown and gave the balance of cash to Mishael for winning the title of Bb. Pilipinas 2009.

Supporters of Krisa Lacsamana had called the Filipino Star to say that they wanted to see an article about this problem that would be representative of both sides and to understand what had really happened. Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview Krisa anymore as she left for a vacation in the Philippines. Mishael was interviewed immediately after the press conference to ask her the question: What would you feel if you were declared the winner and then later to find out that there was a mistake? She said that she would definitely feel sad but she wanted to win "fair and square."

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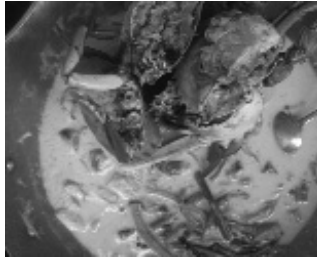
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Philippine Cuisine

Crabs in Coconut Milk (Guinataang Alimasag)



- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon ginger, minced
- 2 12-ounce cans coconut milk
- 6 whole blue or rock crabs, well cleaned or 1 pound crag legs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 4 green onions, cut into 1-inch lengths

Heat the oil in a large pot and saute the garlic and ginger.

Add the coconut milk, bring it to a boil, reduce the heat and cook for 15-20 minutes or until the liquid is reduced by half, stirring occasionally.

Add the crabs, salt and pepper to the pot and mix well. Cover the pot and cook for 5 minutes. Add the green onions and simmer for another 3 minutes or until the onions are just tender.

Serve with hot rice. Makes 3-4 servings.

Preparation Time: 00:10
Cooking Time: 03:30
Servings: 6

Creamy Beef Kare-Kare Ingredients:

* 1/2 kg beef pecho

Creamy kare-kare (variation of a traditional dish)



- * 2 1/2 liters water
- * 2 11g MAGGI Beef Broth Cubes
- * 1 cup sliced talong
- * 1 cup sliced sitao
- * 1 cup peanut butter
- * 1 tetrabrick 250ml NESTLE All Purpose Cream

NUTRITIONAL CONTENT: Calories:523
Carbohydrates (g):19
Protein (g):31
Fats (g):36

Creamy Beef Kare-Kare Cooking Instructions:

- * Tenderize beef in 2 liters of water for about 3 hours or until beef is very tender.
- * Add in MAGGI Beef Broth Cubes and the remaining 1/2 liter of water.
- * Add in vegetables and simmer until vegetables are crisp tender.
- * Stir in peanut butter and pour in NESTLE All Purpose Cream.
- * Simmer for 2 minutes.

Thai Spicy Beef Recipe
timed preparation and cooking time: 23 minutes

Serves : 4



Thai Spicy Beef Stir-fry Ingredients:

- * thai-beef-stir-fry.jpg2 tbsp vegetable oil
- * 400g beef strips, or steak cut into thin strips
- * 1 red chilli , deseeded and finely sliced
- * 2 tbsp oyster sauce

* handful of basil leaves
Nutrition Per serving:
178 kcalories, protein 22g, carbohydrate 1g, fat 10 g, saturated fat 2g, fibre 0g, salt 0.55 g
Thai Spicy Beef Stir-fry Cooking Instructions:

- * Heat a wok or large frying pan until smoking hot. Pour in the oil and swirl around the pan, then tip in the beef strips and chilli.
- * Cook, stirring all the time, until the meat is lightly browned, about 3 mins, then pour over the oyster sauce.
- * Cook until heated through and the sauce coats the meat. stir in the basil leaves and serve with plain rice

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The North American Filipino Star Photo Gallery



LAGING HANDA SCOUTS participated in the clean up of Mackenzie King Park. Wearing the green t-shirts given by the City, the group takes a break in front of the monument of Dr. Jose Rizal. Will this clean up lead to better maintenance of the grounds around the monument?



Councilors Marcel Tremblay and Marvin Rotrand pose with the group of volunteers cleaning Mackenzie King Park, Saturday, May 16, 2009. The clean up volunteers are from different Filipino-Canadian associations such as APO, FAMAS, Knights of Columbus and Laging Handa Scouts



Gilmore International College organized a trip to the Tulips Festival in Ottawa, May 17, 2009. The students and their friends pose for souvenir in front of the Museum of Civilization.



With multi-colored tulips as background, this group poses for a souvenir of their visit to Ottawa, May 17, 2009.

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Date: Saturday, April 11, 2009,
Fil-Canadian family wins round
One of anti-bias suit

JOSEPH G. LARIOSA,
GMANews.TV04/10/2009 | 02:01 PM
CHICAGO – The Charter violations are
not considered insignificant matters
and that the Quebec Human Rights
Tribunal in Montreal, Canada cannot
decide on the case
without first hearing its merits.

This was the initial ruling of
the Quebec Human Rights
Tribunal as it rejected the Marguerite-
Bourgeoys School Board's motion to
dismiss the case of the Filipino-
Canadian mother who filed a
discrimination suit on her and on her
son's behalf against his school.

In a press statement issued
by Leila Jawando, civil rights advocate
of the Center for Research-Action on
Race Relations, a human rights
advocate in Montreal, it was disclosed
that the tribunal also denied the
motion of the school to limit
discriminatory remarks in the case to
the one made by one educator.

Last December 2008, Maria
Theresa Gallardo filed her lawsuit with
the Tribunal against the school board
and two officials for racial and ethnic
discriminations she alleges
was perpetrated against her and her
son, Luc Cagadoc.

Gallardo, a native of Quezon
City in the Philippines, said Luc was
reprimanded at school, Ecole Lalande,
for eating in the customary Filipino
manner, with fork and spoon, during a
lunch hour in 2006. Luc was born in
Manila and came to Canada when he
was eight months old.

On separate occasion, the
educator, Martine Bertrand, made
discriminatory remarks about Filipinos
and hand-washing.

Gallardo is seeking \$24,000 in
moral and punitive damages from the
educator, the school principal,
Normand Bergeron, and the school
board.

Last January, 2009, the
respondents filed a procedural
motion to dismiss the suit, claiming
that the tribunal had no jurisdiction
over the case.

The motion was heard at the
end of February 2009, and in a
decision handed down a month later,
the tribunal denied the school board's
request.

The School Board had
argued that the Quebec Human Rights
Commission, where the suit was
originally filed before elevating it to the
tribunal, had "only partially upheld the
complaint," and the commission did
not refer the remaining issues of the
case to the tribunal, citing public
interest reasons.

The respondents further used a well-
known legal principle of
proportionality to argue that the
impugned comments, which were
found to be discriminatory by the
commission, had minimal
consequences and the tribunal ought
not to use its resources to hear
'insignificant' matters. The school
board also argued that if the tribunal
decided
to hear the matter, the inquiry should

be limited to
discriminatory remarks made by
Bertrand.

In its decision dated March 31, 2009,
the tribunal ruled that allegations of
charter violations are not considered
to be insignificant matters.

The principle of proportionality cannot
be invoked when the
QHRC has found there was enough
proof to refer the matter to the tribunal,
particularly in a society founded on the
rule of law and protection against
discrimination.

As a result, the tribunal ruled that it
cannot dismiss the matter on a
preliminary motion to dismiss, such as
the motion brought by the School
Board, and that it is required

to hear the evidence before deciding
the case on its merits. The tribunal also
denied the school board's request to
limit the matter to the educator's
remarks, as to do so

would be an error in law. Accordingly,
the tribunal will hear the matter in its
entirety.

"I am very pleased that the
Human Rights Tribunal will hear the
whole case. This is an important first
step in our fight for the dignity of my
son, and the entire Filipino
community," said Ms. Gallardo, who
was supported by CRARR throughout
her QHRC complaint and is currently
represented by civil rights lawyer
René Saint-Léger in her lawsuit.

For his part, CRARR Executive
Director Fo Niemi, said, "the road to
equality is built with one stone at a
time."

The case arose in 2006, when
Gallardo filed a case before
the Quebec Human Rights
Commission, alleging that her son,
Luc Cagadoc, was exposed to
discriminatory remarks and
treatments for eating with a spoon and
a fork in a west-end school of
Montreal. At that time, Luc was in
Grade 2. He is now 10 years old.

She denounced the educator,
Bertrand, who asked Luc whether
"in (his) country, Filipinos washed
their hands before they eat."

Gallardo also denounced
comments allegedly made by the
school principal, Bergeron, to the
effect that Gallardo ought to teach her
son to "eat the way Canadians
eat".

The QHRC upheld the complaint with
respect to Bertrand's comments
(although CRARR maintains that the
QHRC did not fully investigate the
school principal's comment). It
exercised its discretion not to
represent Gallardo before the tribunal.
In Quebec, the QHRC receives
and investigates complaints of civil
rights violations and will take the case
to the Human Rights Tribunal on the
victim's behalf if it finds sufficient
evidence of discrimination.

When the QHRC upholds the civil
rights complaint but exercises its
discretion, in the public interest, not to
refer the case to the Tribunal, a
complainant can bring the case before
the tribunal at his or her own expense.

In this case, Gallardo was
required to file the lawsuit at
her own expense.

The Gallardo family and CRARR
www.filipinostar.org

welcome donations from anyone
in Canada and the US to defray the
costs of the litigation. CRARR is a
Montreal-based independent, non-
profit civil rights organization that was
founded in 1983 with the mandate to
promote racial harmony and equality
in Canada.

It is considered as one of the
leading non-profit race relations
groups in Canada and has worked
closely with different segments of the
Montreal Filipino Community to
promote and raise awareness
regarding civil rights. - GMANews.TV

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 27, 2009

GOVERNMENT MUST REVOKE
SECOND GENERATION CUTOFF IN
CITIZENSHIP LAW: CHOW

OTTAWA – New Democrat Citizenship
and Immigration Critic Olivia Chow
(Trinity—Spadina) is introducing a
private member's bill in Parliament
today that, if passed, would restore
equality in our citizenship and laws.

"As of April 17, 2009, the children and
grandchildren of Canadian expatriate
and adoptive families have had their
citizenship downgraded or worse,
stripped away," said Chow.

The recent changes in citizenship and
immigration law that were meant to
restore citizenship to Lost Canadians
have instead created a new generation
of Lost Canadians.

"The expatriate and international
adoption communities are up in arms
about this. I receive letters almost
every day and was even asked about it
recently by concerned Canadians in
Asia," said Chow.

Millions of Canadians work abroad for
Canadian corporations, engineering
firms, universities and colleges. Many
also work for the United Nations, and
humanitarian organisations such as
UNICEF and Doctors without Borders.
The government should treat
citizenship in a manner that reflects
and promotes Canada's economic,
social, intellectual and humanitarian
engagement with the world.

"In this day and age, enacting a law
that creates two levels of citizenship,
or even strips it away, based on the
mere fact that one's birth does not
occur on Canadian soil is
unacceptable," said Chow. "It's time
for this severe inequity to be fixed, and
I call on the government to adopt my
bill which will restore equality."

- 30 -

For more information, please call:
Carole Saab, Press Secretary, 613-
222-5997

Minister of Foreign Affairs to Visit
China and Japan
May 6, 2009

No. 122
The Honourable Lawrence Cannon,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, today
announced that he will be visiting
China and Japan from May 10 to 15.
The Minister will engage in a number
of high-level meetings aimed at
broadening Canada's relations with its
Pacific neighbours.

"I look forward to my first official visit to
Northeast Asia," said Minister Cannon.
"China and Japan are very important
partners for Canada on the global
stage, and it is crucial that we continue
to deepen our cooperation on
important bilateral and multilateral
issues.

While in China, Minister Cannon will
meet with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi
and other senior members of the
Chinese government. He will also
meet with leaders of Canadian
businesses established in China, as
well with as non-governmental
stakeholders. In Shanghai, the
Minister will participate in preparations
for the Canadian Pavilion at
Shanghai's 2010 World Expo.

"I will take advantage of my time in
China and Japan to learn about the
challenges and opportunities in their
respective markets, and to share
Canada's economic plans for
addressing the global financial crisis.
"The world is also dealing with the
difficult issues brought about by the
recent H1N1 outbreak, and I look
forward to discussing them further
during this trip."

In Japan, Minister Cannon will meet
with Japanese Foreign Minister
Hirofumi Nakasone, Canadian and
Japanese business representatives as
well as Japanese opinion leaders.
Minister Cannon will also deliver a
keynote address at the Japan National
Press Club and pay a visit to Japan's
Miraikan, an impressive exhibition
centre for science and innovation in
Tokyo.

Canada and Japan are celebrating 80
years of bilateral diplomatic relations.
Japan is a key economic and security
partner with whom Canada shares the
values of freedom, democracy, human
rights and the rule of law. High-level
visits contribute immeasurably to
mutual ties.

- 30 -

For further information, media
representatives may contact:

Natalie Sarafian Press Secretary Office
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995-1851

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COMMUNITY NEWS

FAMAS releases calendar of activities June to August 2009

The following are the upcoming activities:

- June TBA (Press conference 2)
- 26 June - Philippine Independence Day Gala, Hellenic Community Center, Event Co-Chair: Vicky Laya and Malou Nejal
- 28 June FAMAS Graduation and Recognition Day, 6767 Cote des Neiges Intercultural Center, Event chair: Riza Esmeralda
- 1 July - Canada Day Parade, FAMAS Event Chair: Manny Lagasca, Co-organized with the Federation of Filipino Canadian Associations of Quebec: Miss Angie Ogerio and various Philippine Associations
- 11 July (Tentative) Fireworks and Rides at La Ronde, Event Co-Chairs: Erik Hamon and Riza Trillanes Esmeralda.
- 18 July - Munting Binibining Pilipinas 2009 - 2011 First and last canvassing Event Co-chairs: Pat Magallanes and Vicky Laya
- 26 July - Pista sa Nayon, MacKenzie Park
- 9 August FAMAS Election
- 22 August Coronation of Munting Bb. Pilipins, Event Co-chair: Pat Magallanes and Vicky Laya

The second Philippine Consular Outreach in Montreal is scheduled on Saturday, 6 June from 9 am to 5 pm.

To conclude the press

Minister of Foreign Affairs to Visit China and Japan May 6, 2009

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today announced that he will be visiting China and Japan from May 10 to 15. The Minister will engage in a number of high-level meetings aimed at broadening Canada's relations with its Pacific neighbours.

"I look forward to my first official visit to Northeast Asia," said Minister Cannon. "China and Japan are very important partners for Canada on the global stage, and it is crucial that we continue to deepen our cooperation on important bilateral and multilateral issues.

While in China, Minister Cannon will meet with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and other senior members of the Chinese government. He will also meet with leaders of Canadian businesses established in China, as well with as non-governmental stakeholders. In Shanghai, the Minister will participate in preparations for the Canadian Pavilion at Shanghai's 2010 World Expo.

"I will take advantage of my time in China and Japan to learn about the challenges and opportunities in their respective markets, and to share Canada's economic plans for addressing the global financial crisis.

"The world is also dealing with the difficult issues brought about by the

conference, Vicky Laya, Director of Social and Cultural Affairs and Riza Esmeralda, Public and Government Relations Officer, thanked the Committees, Board of Auditors, Board of Judges, Host and Shelly Quintos, Chair of Binibining Pilipinas-Montreal Pageant 2009 for their hard work in making the event a successful one. The candidates and their families were especially thanked for the enthusiasm and dedication demonstrated during and after the event.

A heartfelt apology was extended for the series of omissions made during the series of pageants and the Organizers commend the candidates, especially Kriza and Mishael, and their families and supporters for the grace and sportsmanship with which they have handled the situation.

As a result of re-tallying scores, Mishael Thea de la Cruz was crowned Binibining Pilipinas-Montreal 2009, Kriza Lacsamana, 1st Runner Up and Eva Lynn Llaguna, 3rd Runner Up.

On behalf of the FAMAS Executive Board, Riza Esmeralda congratulated all the candidates and hoped they forged lasting friendships during their experience and encouraged them to be actively involved in community service by participating in FAMAS events and activities.

recent H1N1 outbreak, and I look forward to discussing them further during this trip."

In Japan, Minister Cannon will meet with Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone, Canadian and Japanese business representatives as well as Japanese opinion leaders. Minister Cannon will also deliver a keynote address at the Japan National Press Club and pay a visit to Japan's Miraikan, an impressive exhibition centre for science and innovation in Tokyo.

Canada and Japan are celebrating 80 years of bilateral diplomatic relations. Japan is a key economic and security partner with whom Canada shares the values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. High-level visits contribute immeasurably to mutual ties.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:
Natalie Sarafian Press Secretary Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs 613-995-1851
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Stimulating the Economy Through Arts and Culture: Government of Canada Increase Support for Infrastructure Projects in Quebec



Heritage and Official Languages Minister, Hon. James Moore, came to Montreal to meet with the members of the ethnic media, May 15, 2009

Montreal, May 15, 2009 - On behalf of the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, the Honourable Andrée Champagne, Senator, today highlighted new funding for the Cultural Spaces Canada program.

Cultural Spaces Canada helps cover part of the costs of cultural and heritage infrastructure projects such as upgrades or maintenance to theatres, performance halls and local museums.

"Our Government is stimulating the economy through investments in targeted sectors, including arts and culture," said Minister Moore. "We are not just renewing our support for cultural and heritage infrastructure projects, we are increasing it. The projects we are funding will create jobs for local residents, as well as provide our community with better facilities where we can enjoy a show, see some artwork, or get in touch with our heritage."

In Canada's Economic Action Plan, our Government has committed to investing an additional \$60 million over the next two years in Cultural Spaces Canada program.

In addition to supporting a larger number of projects, the funding

increase will make it possible to raise the maximum level of support provided to recipients for a project. The level may now be as much as 50 percent of total eligible costs, up from 33 or 40 percent previously depending on the project type. Thanks to this new measure, a project could receive between 25 and 50 percent more funding for the same total eligible cost. For the next two years, priority will be given to projects that clearly help stimulate the economy by immediately creating jobs and offering long term economic benefits.

Senator Champagne took the opportunity to encourage local organizations to apply for funding and to stress the significant impact of the Cultural Spaces Canada program in Quebec, and particularly in Montreal.

"We all know that construction and renovation work can be expensive, but it's worth the money and effort once we see the finished project. Our Government's investment translates into better suited cultural venues for the creation process, training of our artists, and more seats in theatres and improved conditions for the preservation of museums," said Senator Champagne.



Councillor Marvin Rotrand poses with his constituents after the launching of the renewal plan on Victoria Avenue, April 30, 2009



Jerry Estrada

Sharing ideas for a better life

Meetings
By
Jerry Estrada

On May 3, 2009, the Filipino Solidarity Cooperative conducted its 3rd assembly to discuss whether or not it's advantageous to transfer from its current store location, which is on Van Horne Avenue to Cote de Neiges

Prominent coop and community volunteers like Julie Parado, Salve Deprez, Angie Ogerio, Magnolia Camat, Merle Valiente, Alex Robles, Ben Bade, and other members attended the said meeting that lasted for three hours. Of course, Zenaida Kharroubi, the coop president was there also to preside the gathering. I was appointed to take the minutes of the meeting.

The focal point of the agenda was the transfer of location though there were other concerns being discussed like the financial report and the coop's current financial needs. Thanks to the coop president, Zeny Kharroubi, for her undaunted courage to lead the coop. Her undeterred character to fight defeat or failure has kept the coop going up to now. Kudos to Zeny! Without Zeny Kharroubi and other coop volunteers' dedicated efforts, the only Filipino coop in Montreal would have long been considered a part of history.

Let's go back to location. Management books written by business wizards will tell us that there are three important aspects to consider when we go into business: one, location; two, location; and three, location.

Location is part of the "marketing mix," a terminology used by marketers. It is a set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that work together to achieve business objectives, they are: place, price, promotion, and product. The four Ps concept and the importance of location is explained in most marketing textbooks.

If all coop members could understand the reason for the coop's existence, and why we built it, no doubt, the cooperative would surely succeed because cooperatives have its own sure market (customers who

are the COOP MEMBERS themselves). The Filipino Coop has almost 700 registered members. These members are the Coop's SURE customers. If all coop members will just buy even once a week, every cent and income will go to the Coop instead of going to privately-owned businesses.

Believe it or not, location is very important if we want to expand our business and maximize opportunities. But Coop sustainability is not a question if we, Coop members, will continue to patronize our own business. Even in the Philippines, coop members belong to the doubting Thomases during the early stages of the coop. But after the "test of times" and hardships, the coop members and officers become strong and united; eventually they become convinced to continue supporting the coop.

Nobody should doubt that the establishment of a grocery cooperative, formed on the basis of mutual knowledge and confidence as well as for the mutual assistance of one another is for the benefit of the members. This benefit also redounds to the whole district in which we live. The grocery store business is a cutthroat one where the weak are eaten and the strong get rich. It is a marathon. He who endures wins the gold. At the present set up, our fellow citizens (kababayan) are the ones making the other bigger stores get the "gold" while the Filipino Coop hardly get noticed in spite of the regular articles being written in the Filipino Star, urging Filipinos to become members and to buy from it.

Let's just remember that wherever the location of the Filipino coop might be, the purpose of the coop doesn't change. There is no other goal of the coop but to uplift its members and to do other projects beneficial to society or the community and all of mankind. Coop work needs a strong ally, if it's to rise and help chase away poverty like demons that set upon people around the globe.

Calgary's Jason Kenney named Canada's Best Overall MP in Ottawa

Maclean's magazine hands out the honours at the Parliamentarians of the Year Awards in Ottawa

TORONTO, May 13 /CNW/ - Maclean's magazine, in association with the Dominion Institute, L'actualité and Presenting Sponsor Enbridge,



Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

celebrated the third-annual Parliamentarians of the Year awards this evening on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Attended by Members of Parliament, some of the country's most prominent journalists and other Canadians of note, the event honours Canada's top MPs, as voted by their peers in the House of Commons.

This year marked the highest-response rate ever among Members of Parliament with 70% from across all parties voting for Parliamentarians of the Year. Winners and runners-up cross all political lines as well.

The award-winners will be highlighted in a special issue of Maclean's hitting newsstands tomorrow, Thursday, May 14. Full award results, photos, runners-up and methodology can also be found at Macleans.ca/parliamentarian.

Best Overall MP

This year's Best Overall MP is Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney. Mr. Kenney (Conservative) was first elected to the House of Commons in 1997 and has been re-elected three times, most recently with 76 percent of the vote.

In addition to the coveted Best Overall MP, six other awards were bestowed upon MPs: best orator, best rookie, most collegial, best constituent representative, hardest working and most knowledgeable.

Maclean's 2009 Parliamentarians of the Year winners:

Best Overall MP
winner:
Jason Kenney (CON) (Calgary Southeast)

runner-up:
Michael Ignatieff (LIB)

Best Orator

winner:
Bob Rae (LIB) (Toronto Centre)

runner-up:
Gilles Duceppe (BQ)

Best Rookie
winner:
Megan Leslie (NDP) (Halifax)

runner-up:
Marc Garneau (LIB)

Most Collegial
winner:
Peter Stoffer (NDP) (Sackville-Eastern Shore - Nova Scotia)

runner-up:
Rodger Cuzner (LIB)

Best Constituent Representative
winner:
Bill Casey (IND) (Cumberland-Colchester - Nova Scotia)

runner-up:
Charlie Angus (NDP)

Hardest Working
winner:
Paul Szabo (LIB) (Mississauga South - Ontario)

runner-up:
Ted Menzies (CON)

Most Knowledgeable
winner:
Joe Comartin (NDP) (Windsor Tecumseh - Ontario)

runner-up:
Gilles Duceppe (BQ)

How the winners were selected:

To determine the Parliamentarians of the Year Awards winners, Ipsos-Reid surveyed all 308 Members of Parliament and asked them to nominate the best MPs in each of seven categories (hardest working, best orator, most collegial, most knowledgeable about the issues of the day, best at representing their constituents, best rookie, and best overall). Almost 70 per cent of the MPs took part this year, casting votes for fellow MPs both within and outside of their party. The votes were then weighted and converted to a point system to ensure that larger parties did not have an advantage. The MP with the most points in each category was the winner.

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Ask the Video Guy

Al Abdon

Practice Makes Video Shoot Perfect

Summer is here and there is no better way to get your video camera and start firing away. A lot of people buy or upgrade their camcorders for a specific event such as sister Fely finally marrying her living-in partner for 15 years, the 25th wedding anniversary of your parents. This is a wise move people should buy camcorders, and they should capture important moments with them. What you should not do is use these irreplaceable moments to learn how to use your equipment. Just like no boxer in his right mind would get into the ring without training first, no videographer should use important events to practice.

In the old days, back when televisions had only five channels and people made movies on Super 8 film, practice was expensive. With video, practice is free. So, take a few hours



this weekend to try out these camera maneuvers, so that when your big day comes, you'll be an old hand. Truck and Dolly

Trucking and dollying are two very common camera moves. "Trucking" means moving towards the subject, "Dollying" is lateral motion. In Hollywood, these are done with the camera mounted on tracks with a crew of people pushing the camera operator and a \$100,000 Panavision camera. In the real world, your feet would most likely be your dolly or truck pedestal. Practice holding the camera steady while walking straight at your subject, then straight back. Then practice walking sideways, videotaping your subjects as they walk in a straight line. The first time to try it, you will be shocked to see your shoot so terrible that you feel dizzy after a few minutes watching it. Do not be discouraged because no one does it perfect on his first try. Changing Tapes and Batteries

Tapes and batteries run out at the most inopportune moments. While you are expected to be constantly vigilant and have an eye on these things, sometimes the inevitable occurs and you find yourself with a flashing "end tape" symbol in front of the bride's face as she says "I do." Many professional camera people wear belts or vests with plenty of pockets -- these are for storing frequently used items like pens, business cards, batteries and videotapes. Whether you're using a vest or a camera bag, it's important to keep your spent tapes and batteries in one place and your fresh tapes and batteries in another and always keep them in the same place, and keep them with you. Reaching for a new tape and putting away an old one is something you have to be able to do with your eyes closed. The same goes with batteries.

Test New Equipment

Never use new, untested equipment for the first time on an important shoot. Make sure you understand the recording modes, white balance controls, battery life issues, and menus long before that special day. What a disaster when you are shooting an important event without checking the camera indicator is recording. Make sure that the sign "REC" on the viewfinder is "ON" or flashing "REC" and not on "STANDBY" Don't Waste Your Effort

Just because you're practicing doesn't mean it has to be an exercise in a diligent manner. There's no reason why it can't be fun and useful. Enlist the help of friends and family--practice your techniques while making a video letter for someone who lives back home or incorporate your techniques in a family video scrapbook. Dolly left with mom while she shops for fruit at the open market. Observe how she selects fruits and vegetable and describing her judgment to buy it. Tilt, pan, and zoom through your little sister's stuffed animal collection.

Conclusion

Your work as a video artist will improve every year. The more occasion you have under your belt, the easier it will be for you to produce quality work. When that time comes maybe you can get paid while working on it.

Advertise in the
Filipino Star
call 514-485-7861



FAMAS members and their guests pose with the Bb. Pilipinas-Montreal 2009, Mishael Thea de la Cruz, who was previously declared runner up during the April 25 pageant but was given the title after correcting her score which was less than 1 point more than Krisa's.




Flor Rillo, Acting president of Famas, and his wife Rose, pose with the newly crowned Bb. Pilipinas-Montreal 2009 on Monday, May 11, 2009 at the press conference.



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FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Joyce Jimenez's biggest role yet



Joyce Jimenez

Long removed from her days as the local entertainment industry's "Pantasya ng Bayan," actress Joyce Jimenez plans of one day returning to what she calls her "first love." "I would love to act and do a movie again," Joyce shares.

But for now, all her showbiz plans takes a backseat to her forthcoming role as a mother. Joyce is currently pregnant with her first child, and will leave for the United States anytime soon to be with husband Paul Ely Egbalic.

How about her business concerns here? "Even when I'm abroad, I'd still like to stay on top of my lingerie business partnership with Ever Bilena Cosmetics," Joyce explains.

"And Negosyo Boost offers small businesses like mine to do that in an effective yet affordable way."

Yes, she has to contend with managing her local lingerie direct-selling business from abroad with help from the PLDT-SME Nation Negosyo Boost. With this Negosyo Boost, Joyce is confident start-up and medium businesses like hers can enjoy the

competitive advantages of having both broadband connectivity and business-enabling hardware devices like netbooks and printers in one convenient package.

Top priority

Meanwhile, her top priority now is her pregnancy. "I passed up so many showbiz offers and opportunities so I can concentrate on my pregnancy and then being a mom," she shares.

Joyce is due to give birth sometime in October. She says that she wants to fully enjoy her pregnancy, more so because it's her first.

Fortunately for her fans, Joyce's absence from showbiz is only temporary. She promises to go back to acting when her mommy duties ease off.

"Acting is what I love to do it's a big part of my life," she declares. "Showbiz made me who I am now. I'll be back, definitely."

She says her dream role is to be in an action movie, "like the characters played by (Hollywood actress) Michelle Rodriguez. That would be fun." ■

Valerie doesn't regret being a mom at 16



Valerie Concepcion

Wowowee co-host Valerie Concepcion doesn't cry over spilt milk. She accepts whatever comes her way, good or bad. Her being a mother at an early age was the most trying moment in her life.

"Pero marami po akong natutunan

sa nangyari sa akin non," confessed Concepcion.

Now, the 21-year-old actress and TV host is more mature and judicious. This maturity and sound judgment make her more fascinating and exciting. These, naturally, add to her beauty inside and out.

When I talked to her recently at the backstage of Wowowee, she was always smiling and there was no dull moment with her.

"Ngayon, masaya ako sa lahat ng bagay pero hindi ko naman sinasabi na hindi ako masaya noon na may boyfriend ako, said Concepcion.

For her, it was the highest point in her life to be in love. Although she and the father of her kid did not end happily ever after, she remained optimistic.

Concepcion was 16 years old and her career in show business was still young when she got pregnant in 2004. Her boyfriend was the first cousin of the late young actor Miko Sotto. Unlike other stars, the actress did not hide her pregnancy. Now, she is a proud single parent to her four-year old daughter, Fiona. ■

Wendy denies secret wedding with Bruce



Wendy Valdez

After 'I Love Betty La Fea', former Pinoy Big Brother housemate Wendy Valdez is glad to be given a new show right away, "Precious Hearts Romances Presents Bud Brothers." She appears in an episode with newcomer Joem Bascon. So how's it working with him?

"Okay naman kasi kilala na namin ang isa't isa," she says. "He was also in 'Betty la Fea' at nagka-bed scene pa nga kami sa role niya as playboy executive who beds the women in our office. Nagkailangan pa kami noon sa 'Betty', but now, comfortable na ako with him."

Does she read romance novels like the ones published by Precious Hearts? "Sa totoo lang, no. Kasi mas gusto kong magbasa ng horror stories. Pero hindi ibig sabihin niyon, hindi ako romantic kasi I love romantic movies.

The story Joem and I are doing is really romantic. Makulit ang character ko rito at sa simula, para kaming aso't pusa ni Joem na laging nag-aaway, but we end up doing a lot of sexy scenes.."

How's her real life boyfriend Bruce Quebral who she met inside Bahay ni Kuya? "He decided na mag-quit sa showbiz nang makuha siyang flight attendant sa United Arab Emirates where he's getting a good pay. Decision niya 'yun kasi walang ibang offers sa showbiz, e he's helping his family, just like me."

Is it difficult to have a long distance relationship? "Mahirap 'yung first few months kasi hindi siya nakakauwi rito dahil nag-training muna siya sa Emirates. So we talk lang sa phone and we chat. But now, nagkikita na rin naman kami kasi kapag nasa Manila sila, they stay up to four days before they board their next flight assignment. So far, enjoy naman siya."

Isn't she worried he might meet someone else abroad? "We always get to talk naman and we trust each other, so hopefully, there's nothing to worry. Pareho naman kaming busy sa trabaho, which is our priority. Parang test din ito sa amin kung magiging faithful ba kami talaga sa relasyon namin."

But how come it's reported that they were secretly married on March 10, 2009? "May nagsabi rin sa'kin, may nagkakatat daw sa internet na kasal na kami, but it's not true. Ewan ko kunsaan nila nakuha 'yan. If ever ikakasal kami, ba't namin lililhim ganung we're open na." ■

Judy Ann Santos and Ryan TFC presents 'Nasaan Ka, Maruja?' on its 15th year

Agoncillo tie the knot



Celebrity couple Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo finally tied the knot early Tuesday morning, April 28. (Photos courtesy of ABS-CBN)

After almost a year of being engaged, celebrity couple Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo finally tied the knot early Tuesday morning, April 28 at San Juan Nepomuceno Church in San Juan, Batangas.

The private ceremony, which was closed to the media, started at around 7 a.m. and ended after an hour.

The wedding was officiated by Fr. Tito Caluag, the couple's spiritual adviser.

The couple's principal sponsors include -- Mon Isberto, Smart Communications spokesman; Bien Bautista, Ace photographer; Benjie Gonzales, Ryan's uncle from the US; Susie Entrata-Abrera, TV Host; Rory Quintos, TV & Movie Director; and Jane Buencamino, Judy Ann's road manager.

Megastar Sharon Cuneta, Santos' "sister-in-showbiz", was the matron of honor while Agoncillo's brother, Dondi, stood as best man.

Some of the country's top singers performed during the ceremony. Agot Isidro sang the song "Runaway" while Regine Velasquez and Ogie Alcasid sang "The Prayer" during the offertory.

Isidro and Alcasid performed "One Hand, One Heart" during Communion.

The ceremony was attended by the couples' families and closest friends in and outside showbiz. Spotted at the event were Santos' mother, Carol, Senator Francis Pangilinan, KC Concepcion, Suzy Entrata, Paolo Abrera and directors Joyce Bernal and Rory Quintos.

As of posting time, the newly wed couple and their visitors are headed to an undisclosed private resort for the reception.

As early as last night, the couple and some of their guests were already spotted near the church to make sure that they will be present for the early wedding ceremony.

The couple decided to marry at daybreak to signal the new start in their lives as a married couple.

Agoncillo and Santos were first paired in the teleserye "Krystala" where their romance blossomed. They have starred in two movies together, "Kasal,

Kasali, Kasalo" and "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo" -- both of which have been heavy earners at the tills.

Their next project for ABS-CBN is the teleserye "George & Cecil."

Agoncillo proposed marriage to Santos on her 30th birthday last year. They revealed the engagement a month later.



The couple have been mum about the actual date of their wedding with some news reports saying that the wedding was scheduled on May 2.

Santos earlier said they plan to go to Mexico for their honeymoon, according to an SNN: Showbiz News Ngayon report.

Santos, who turns 31 on May 11, has an adopted daughter named Johanna Lois or Yohan. ■

To fulfill its promise of bringing new and high-quality programs on its 15th year, TFC presents 'Nasaan Ka, Maruja?' -- the series that will surely keep Filipinos from all over the world glued to their screens.

After Flash Bomba's triumph comes a story of love that defies even time. Topbilled by Kristine Hermosa, 'Nasaan Ka, Maruja?' is based on the 1967 classic thriller where the Queen of Philippine Movies Susan Roces played the leading role.

In the television remake, Kristine will be joined by Derek Ramsay, John Estrada, Karylle, Kitkat, Enchong Dee, Bing Pimentel, Menggie Cobarrubias and veteran actress Gloria Romero. The TV series is under the direction of Jerome Pobocan and Dondon Santos.

Don't miss each hair-raising scene that will surely change your homeviewing experience. Watch "Komiks Presents Mars Ravelo's Nasaan Ka, Maruja?" only on TFC. ■



Kristine Hermosa will play as Maruja in an upcoming Sineserye on ABS-CBN 2 after her long absence on TV.

Kim Atienza recognized as 'environmental hero'

He is known as a weather man and as a trivia king. Now, he is regarded as an environmental hero.

Kim Atienza recently received the Fr. Neri Satur Award for Environmental Heroism, which recognized his advocacy for environmental awareness and biodiversity conservation and his effective hosting of the reality adventure travel show "Matanglawin."

"Ang mga taong nanonood ang inspirasyon ko talaga. Kahit nakakapagod ang ginagawa namin at medyo delikado, nagkakaroon talaga ng meaning at advocacy. Lalo kong huhusayan," he said.

In just one year, "Matanglawin" bagged eight other recognitions from prestigious award-giving bodies such as the Golden Dove Awards, PMPC Star Awards, Anak TV Seal and Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union.

Watch as his adventures heat up even more this week and find out more about humanity's most serious crisis of all time— global warming.

Discover why as years pass, strong typhoons are getting more



Kim Atienza

frequent and the sun's rays become more intense. Could 80% of the Philippines actually be submerged in water in 2100?

All these and more in the exciting episode from the multi-awarded "Matanglawin," only on TFC. Visit the show's official Multiply site at <http://matanglawintv.multiply.com>. ■

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Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.19***Ruffa denies romance with adviser John Lloyd****Ruffa Gutierrez and John Lloyd Cruz**

Are Ruffa Gutierrez and John Lloyd Cruz romancing each other? This is what some wags on the Internet allege.

Ruffa now vehemently denies the rumor that she's having an affair with Lloydie, which is said to be the reason why he and girlfriend Liz Uy have broken up. Lloydie is now in New York shooting "In My Life" with Vilma Santos and Luis Manzano while Liz flew to Europe with Anne Curtis allegedly to nurse a broken heart.

"Naku, walang ganun," says Ruffa. "I admit that John Lloyd and I became good friends while we're doing "Betty La Fea" kasi we have plenty of scenes together in the Ecomoda office. Tapos, biglang may nag-post ng mga pictures namin together sa Internet at

Roxanne on Jake: What is past is past**Roxanne Guinoo**

Roxanne Guinoo is very honest in saying that after her failed love affairs with Joross Gamboa and Jake Cuenca, she's now much happier with a non-showbiz guy.

"I think siya ang ibinigay sa akin ng Diyos. I'm happy sa minamahal ko ngayon na I can feel na minamahal din ako nang sobra. Don't just ask for his name kasi he's a private person

ipinagkalat na kami na raw ang secret lovers. Those pictures were taken sa set ng "Betty La Fea" and, hello, hindi ba puwedeng maging close friends ang isang babae at isang lalaki without them being linked together? E, ngayon ngang tapos na ang show at nasa abroad pa siya, hindi na kami nagkikita, ño? My gosh, buti na lang at hindi ako natuloy sumama kina Mommy at Daddy ko in going to the States, kundi may nag-insinuate na rin siguro na ini-stalk ko si John Lloyd doon. I really want to go sana kaya lang I have to host 'The Buzz' at meron pa akong 'Ruffa and Ai' at live (telecast) kami three times a week kaya hindi ako puwedeng umalis ng Pilipinas." ■

and let's just respect his privacy and that of his family."

She's paired with a newcomer in "Precious Hearts Romances Presents Bud Brothers" shown on ABS-CBN's Hapontastic, singer Guji Lorenzana who's with Star Magic.

"I welcome the chance to work with a new partner," she says. "Mabait naman si Guji at mukhang magkakasundo kami."

Jake is also in the cast of "Bud Brothers" but paired with Cristine Reyes. Doesn't she wish she was just paired with him again?

"I'm not the one making the decisions as to who'll be paired with whom. Basta marami kami ritong love teams at bawat isa, may kanyakanyang story. Pero wala namang problema sa'kin working with Jake again. Okay naman kami, e. We already did work together in an episode of 'Maalaala Mo Kaya' at wala naman kaming naging problema. Yung sa amin noon, past na ñyun, hindi na dapat inuungkat pa. Ang importante, we continue to respect each other." ■

Krista Ranillo turns sex adviser**Krista Ranillo**

Krista Ranillo agreed to pose for Maxim after she did FHM. She now also writes a sex column for Maxim. "Hindi naman sobrang sexy ang dating," she says. "Parang Carrie Bradshaw in 'Sex and the City' commenting on various things from a woman's perspective. Hindi siya puro sex lang. I was surprised with the response as there are really so many male readers writing to me. But most of them, ang tanong lang is what do women really want?"

So what is she doing now that "Pieta" has ended? "I have a new movie, 'Marino,' and a new endorsement for a brand of liquor. I was told may isa pang movie that I'll do

for Regal but I'm not sure yet when we'll start it."

Shooting "Marino" on location in Bangkok became so memorable for her as she was arrested by Thai policemen.

"We were shooting kasi guerilla style, no permits. The location was near a temple. E, very conservative pala sila roon. I was wearing a sexy outfit na litaw ang cleavage, so the cops approached us. The problem is they don't speak English so we have difficulty communicating with them. Basta gusto nila, dalhin na lang ako and my leading man and producer, Allen Dizon, sa presinto. We told them we're just shooting a wedding video. E, hindi nila maintindihan, so we had to get an interpreter to explain. Natakot talaga ako. Ayoko yatang ma-jail. In the end, we were just told to pay a fine. After that, kumuha na lang kami ng necessary permits to shoot which turned out ang mura-mura lang pala duln sa kanila."

She plays Allen's mistress in "Marino" and they have a sexy love scene. "Okay lang as I've worked with Allen before in 'Paupahan' at maganda ang working relationship namin. Allen is so nice to work with as a producer dahil maasikaso siya sa mga artista niya. 'Marino' is about the lives of seamen, the wives they leave behind sa Philippines and the girlfriends that they have abroad." ■

Toni Gonzaga not running in 2010**Toni Gonzaga**

Popular actress and television host Toni Gonzaga is not running for mayor in 2010 elections. Speculations on Gonzagals alleged political plan surfaced after she attended "Sunduan '09" in her hometown, Taytay, Rizal, on Sunday. Rumors said this was part of her campaign strategy for next year's elections.

The actress, however, shot down the rumors.

"Definitely [no] for me. This is not a

campaign but a way to give back to the people who love me," she said.

The Sunduan cultural affair is considered one of the biggest events in Taytay, which is done every three years.

"Isang tradisyon ito sa Taytay na palaging ginagawa. Actually pangalawang beses ko na ito. 'Yong mga kalalakihan ay susunduin 'yong mga kadalagahan sa kanilang bahay tapos paparada ng naka-Filipiniana sa buong town," Gonzaga explained.

During the Sunduan, Gonzaga was escorted by her real life sweetheart, director Paul Soriano. When asked how she convinced her boyfriend to join the event, Gonzaga replied: "Sinabihan ko lang siya. Hindi naman 'yan nakaka-hindi sa akin at tsaka ginamit ko ang daddy ko para lang hindi maka-hindi."

She added that she invited Soriano to show him her hometown's lifestyle and culture. Soriano, for his part, said he would do anything for Gonzaga and her family, noting that the event was also "bonding time" for the actress's family.

Also spotted in the event were Alex Gonzaga, IC Mendoza, Jao Mapa, Pinoy Big Brother Season 1 grand winner Nene Tamayo, JC Castro and Pauleen Luna. ■

'Just call me Charice,' Charice drops last names



Charice

Charice has dropped her family name, Pempengco. Henceforth, she will be billed, here and abroad, as plain "Charice."

Actually, according to the singer, it was Oprah Winfrey yes, the international TV host whom Charice considers her principal benefactor who first suggested that she do away with her surname.

"Nakakatuwa nga ang kanyang reason," said Charice. "Sabi niya, nahihirapan daw siyang sabihin ang Pempengco. Lalo na ang i-memorize ito."

"Ito rin ang sabi ni Mr. David Foster (the international recording

producer).

"So, sabi namin ng Mommy (Raquel) ko, if that's your opinion, then we'll abide by it."

Right now, Charice is recording for her first album for international release. It is Foster, she said, who's in full charge.

Although Foster has gotten Charice a manager for her international career, he still supervises all her professional activities. Foster has also gotten for Charice a fashion and make-up stylist and a wardrobe consultant.

In the less than three years that Charice has been in showbiz, she has no doubt achieved much, especially when it comes to international exposure. She has guested in shows abroad, hosted by international TV personalities, such as Ellen de Generes' "Ellen" and Oprah's "Oprah." She has sung a duet with her favorite international singer, Celine Dion, and performed in concerts of David Foster and Andrea Bocelli.

In addition, Charice has graced several international events, like the Oscar Ball, the ceremonial first pitch at Dodger Stadium, where she sang the US national anthem, and, of course, the pre-inauguration of President Barack Obama. Charice also has a Hollywood movie with the Chipmunks coming soon.

In the local scene, Charice has just launched her second album for Star Records, "Charice, My Inspiration." Truly an inspirational album, it contains songs for moms that she is dedicating to her own Mommy Raquel and to all the mothers in the world.

"I'm glad that Star Records chose to release the CD in time for Mother's Day.

"I really consider my mom my inspiration. All her life, she has been there for me and my younger brother, Carl.

"She was my first mentor as a singer. Mom, you see, used to be soloist of a band. So, when she noticed na hilig ko ang umawit at may boses naman ako, she not only encouraged me to pursue singing but also taught me how," Charice said.

One song in the album, "You and Me Against the World," features both Charice and Mommy Raquel. Other cuts in the album, which is produced by Jonathan Manalo, are "Always You" (which is the carrier single), "Wind Beneath My Wings," "I'll Be There," "Mama," "For Mama," "You'll Never Stand Alone," "You Raised Me Up," "Through the Years" and "In My Life."

The singer's first album, simply titled "Charice," is now platinum, according to Star Records head Annabelle Regalado.

Charice left May 7 for another commitment in the US. When she returns, Ms. Regalado announced, she will have a nationwide mall tour. ■

Marvin Agustin, Jolina Magdangal together again

Jolina Magdangal and Marvin Agustin were still both in their teens (they are now in their late 20s) when they became a loveteam in many successful movies which their home studio Star Cinema produced. Their team-up's TV shows were also followed.

Like love teams before them, they also eventually fell in love, that is until Jolina's decision to try her luck on another channel, GMA 7. Not long after, it was Marvin's turn to bid Star Cinema and ABS-CBN, which discovered and gave him and Jolina their break as performers, good-bye. He is now a confirmed Kapuso star like Jolina.

The two are reunited in a series, "Adik Sa'Yo," which Joel Lamangan will direct. With them are new love team Dennis Trillo and Jennica Garcia. Since both are said to be unattached, there are predictions that Jolina and Marvin might fall for each other again. Jolina, as we all know, has broken up with her boyfriend, lawyer Bepong Munoz. Marvin, meanwhile, has not made secret the fact that he is the father of twins Santiago and Sebastian. He is not married to his sons' mom, Tetet Dy, who, we heard, is committed to someone else.

Love is sweeter the second time around, right? ■

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A knockout bash for Pacman



GMA 7 top bosses Felipe Gozon (L) and Gilberto Duavit Jr. share confetti shower onstage with their famous Kapuso, Manny Pacquiao (R)

It was the victory party that boxing champ Manny Pacquiao almost missed.

GMA 7 threw an "intimate" bash

for Pacman to celebrate his triumph over Ricky Hatton on Friday night. Alas, the guest of honor was stranded in Mindanao.



Handshake for Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, fan and high-profile supporter



Jamming with Lito Camo, who will be his sitcom co-star

According to event host Paolo Bediones, Pacquiao, who was a bit under the weather, had missed the morning and afternoon flights from General Santos City earlier.

Friend and politician Luis "Chavit" Singson came to the rescue, lending his private jet plane to the boxer.

Though two hours late, Pacquiao arrived at the Renaissance Hotel in Makati—where 100 or so guests from the media, entertainment and advertising awaited him.

They call this "intimate"?

Among the celebrities at the party were JayR and Rochelle Pangilinan, Mel Tiangco and Mike Enriquez, Pia and Maxene Magalona, Paolo Contis and Lian Paz, Raymart Santiago and Claudine Barretto. Also Alfred Vargas and Dingdong Dantes, who both came date-less.

Claudine brought along a letter written by daughter Sabina who is Pacquiao's godchild. It said: "Ninong, you're the best puncher in the world."

Barretto told Inquirer Entertainment: "Sabina talked to Manny on the phone. She told him: 'Ninong, Hatton is a loser, but you're a winner!'"

That same evening, Pacquiao signed a contract with GMA 7, represented by network bosses Felipe Gozon and Gilberto Duavit Jr. The GMA execs presented to Pacquiao a Ramon Orlina glass sculpture.

The boxer announced that he was set to do a sitcom with the network, co-starring songwriter Lito Camo and former Olympian Onyok Velasco.

Pacman capped the night, belting out "Lahing Pinoy," "I Never Cry" and "Bilog ang Mundo." Now, that was a knockout. ■

Actress's affair with 'Doctor Hunk' grips the country

A steamy affair between a celebrity surgeon known as Doctor Hunk and one of the most glamorous young actresses in the Philippines has engrossed the country after video footage of their passionate embraces appeared on the internet.

Amid claims that their relationship was fuelled in part by drug-taking and that the liaisons caused the break-up of the doctor's previous relationship with a fellow surgeon almost twice his age, the salacious details have gripped the Philippines to the point that the protagonists they were summoned to the Senate yesterday to explain themselves.

At the centre of the story are Katrina Halili, a 23-year-old actress; Dr Hayden Kho, 29, a celebrity plastic surgeon; and his former girlfriend, Dr Vicki Belo, 52, the owner of the country's biggest cosmetic surgery business.

Dr Kho's good looks and Dr Belo's status as plastic surgeon to the stars, along with their age gap, was enough to make them a famous couple in the Philippines. But the romance came to an abrupt and very public end in December when Dr Belo found some "controversial" videos on Dr Kho's laptop. The films, which have since



Katrina Halili and Doctor Hayden Kho

appeared online and on pirate DVDs, graphically depicted Dr Kho's relationship with Miss Halili.

Yesterday (Thurs) the humiliated protagonists were summoned to give evidence to a public hearing on how to strengthen anti-pornography laws.

Speaking to senators in testimony broadcast live on television, Dr Kho confessed: "Everytime we saw each other, there was no conversation. It was all drugs and sex."

tapes became public, which remains a mystery, and on the damage to Miss Halili's career. Dr Kho's jilted former lover was unable to testify because she is in Europe on holiday with her children.

The proceedings were interrupted when a retired policeman poured water over Dr Kho.

The case has been front page news for weeks, often accompanied by pictures of the muscular Dr Kho posing topless. The media has asked why he videoed his sexual encounters, to which he has only been able to answer that he is consulting a psychologist in an attempt to find out.

The government has placed him on an immigration watch list to prevent him leaving the country.

Suring the hearing, the distraught Miss Halili turned on Dr Kho and told him: "You have the gall to even look at me."

At that point Senator Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal, chair of the Senate committee on Youth, Women, and Family Relations, suspended the hearing. ■

David Byrne mints Imelda Marcos CD

A concept album that tracks the rise and fall of former First Lady Imelda Marcos will be released this year, featuring former Talking Heads frontman David Byrne, British DJ and big beat musician Fat Boy Slim, and 22 guest performers.

The coming "Here Lies Love" will feature singers such as Santigold, Cyndi Lauper, Roisin Murphy, Sharon Jones, Alice Russell, Martha Wainwright and Tori Amos, Byrne said on his Web site.

Each vocalist will sing a different track, with the album following Imelda "from her childhood spent in poverty and her rise to power to her ultimate departure from the Palace."

"We've got three more singers who have still to record on it but we're almost there," Byrne recently told BBC 6Music.

"There is a different singer on every song, including Sharon Jones from Amy Winehouse's backing band the Dap Tones, Alice Russell and Tori Amos. There's a lot of singers, it goes on and on."

In 2007 Byrne played a rough draft of the project at a show in New York City, and the album version of "Here Lies Love" was originally scheduled to be released at the beginning of this year through Nonesuch. But at this point, no firm release date has been confirmed for the record's release.

Songs from "Here Lies Love"



David Byrne (left) is releasing his 'tribute' to Imelda Marcos (left) album later this year.

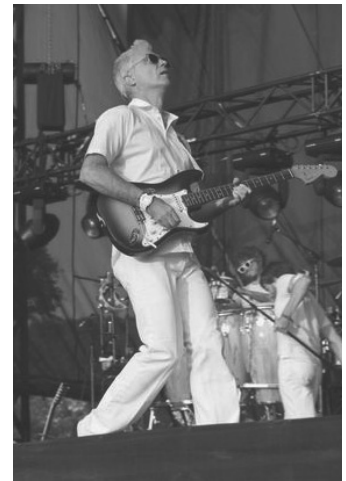
presents Imelda meditating on events in her life. In particular, the production looks at her relationship with a servant from her childhood, Estrella Cumpas, who appeared at key moments in the former first lady's life.

"Here Lies Love" begins with an opening disco number with Imelda at a disco in the late 1970s, where she spent time with all the "beautiful people—Christina Ford, George Hamilton and Henry Kissinger. "Here Lies Love" is what she was quoted as wanting inscribed on her tombstone.

The disco opera ends with Imelda

and her maid contemplating the sacrifices they have made. As the Marcoses are airlifted out of the country during the People Power Revolution, Imelda says she doesn't understand why the people don't love her anymore, and she looks forward to her vindication and a triumphant return.

Byrne, best known as a founding member and principal songwriter of the new wave band Talking Heads, has released solo projects on record and worked in a variety of media including film, photography, opera and Internet-



David Byrne performing at Austin City Limits Music Festival at Zilker Park

based projects. He has received Grammy, Oscar, and Golden Globe awards for his achievements.

Fat Boy Slim is the stage name of Norman Quentin Cook, a British DJ, big beat musician and producer. Cook has achieved considerable success in the UK's single and album charts, and first as a member of the Housemartins.



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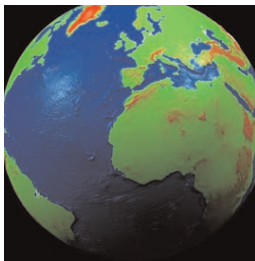
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