

Gilmore College's 18th, Filipino Star's silver jubilee to be feted



10th Anniversary of Gilmore International College celebrated at Queen Elizabeth. Oct. 30, 1999. Photo with the then Ambassador Benedicto cutting the cake with Director General Zenaida Kharroubi while Ursulene Mora, Ester Stansfield, Chantal Harvey, Mohamed El Assadi look on.

Montreal, October 14, 2007 - Preparations are underway to celebrate two businesses' foundation day which have been started in the same month of November, Gilmore International College having opened its doors for the first time on November 1, 1989 and the Filipino Star having published its first issue in November 1982. Zenaida Kharroubi, while working as a high school teacher with the former Montreal Catholic School Commission, decided to start her own business in the same field that she loves which is education. She spent her whole summer vacation in 1989 doing the paper work required to get an education permit. In April 1998, upon the request of Bert Abiera, she resumed the publication of the Filipino Star, the oldest newspaper in the Filipino-Canadian community in Montreal.

Although Mrs. Kharroubi had

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Montrealers urged to vote during the school board elections



Mr. Kokon Maniruzzaman, school commissioner for the French School Board in the Cote des Neiges-Snowdon districts, (on the extreme right) visited FAMAS on Sunday, October 14, 2007. He explained why he wants to run for re-election and urges the Filipino-Canadian community to vote during the school board elections on Nov. 4.

Montreal, October 14, 2007 - It is that time again to make an appeal to the whole community to vote on November 4, 2007 for school board elections. Traditionally, the voter turn out is low because people do not seem to realize how important it is to be involved in the education of their children. To encourage people to go out and vote, Mr. Kokon Maniruzzaman, currently running for re-election, came to the Philippine Community Center on Van Horne on Sunday, October 14, 2007 during a gathering for October birthday celebrants. He explained his platform and promised to work with the community in making sure that their schools are run properly. He pointed out the reasons why people should be involved in school board elections. He said that education is the most important factor in the development of a just society as it is through the schools that our children learn the skills

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EDITORIAL

If schools are important, we should go out and vote on November 4

The school board elections are coming but it seems that people are not aware of any issues. Or if there are issues that we should be concerned about, we do not talk about any of them. What could be the reason for this lack of interest in school board elections?

Those who take the time to get involved are usually parents with young children. But once they are grown up, parents do not continue to be involved with the school. This is probably a normal pattern. However, if there are people who want to start a political career, it is a good idea to begin their careers by running for the position of a school commissioner.

School commissioners are apparently quite influential in having things done in the community. They attend school board meetings, they make important decisions concerning the future of a school like whether or not to close it when enrollment is down. Ironically, people are not aware of the potential power of a school commissioner in determining the outcome of policies affecting our public schools.

Media coverage of school board elections is usually light. Forums are reported and questionnaire responses may be printed. That's about all the coverage that can be expected unless a campaign has an unusual twist. If the campaign isn't unusual, it generally won't be reported. If it's too unusual, the candidate may lose support.

Simple ads with the candidate's name displayed prominently and a few key phrases are effective. Long-winded ads are ignored.

Voter turnout for school board elections is generally light. A turnout of over 60 per cent is considered excellent. In other words, any group that can mobilize its supporters has a very good chance of electing its candidate. Getting your voters to their polling stations is the key to winning the election.

When people talk about education, they often talk about skills, test results, curriculum and the impact of education

on the economic viability of our province or country. Is this the real story about public education? No. Public education not only educates our public—it creates our public. Our concepts of community, citizenship and democracy start in the classroom. In essence, the classroom creates our communities.

On the first day of Grade 1, a student enters a classroom and a community. In that learning community the teacher is our community's leader, instructing and nurturing a sense of respect, compassion, fairness and responsibility to the greater community. These are core values that will be carried on past the classroom to the community and the voting booth.

A fundamental concept and purpose of the public education system is to model democracy, and a classic expression is the participation in our electoral process. The public education system cannot do its job if teachers, school administrators and trustees—our local learning leaders—are not committed to the job of modeling democracy. In turn an effective political system is a system that connects to the community. It expresses the symbiotic relationship that the public education system must have to survive and thrive. Teachers cannot do their job well if the model of government belittles and then abandons local decision making that supports local action.

Do you remember the argument of provincial politicians that local politicians are irrelevant because of low voter turnout for municipal and school board elections? The government responds to numbers, especially the number of votes cast at election time. Haven't we all heard it said that the problem with today's youth or that the youths on the street are a reflection of our school system? Do we ever hear someone say that it reflects on the minister of education?

Our concept of local democracy is based on the idea that people collectively elect a representative who will make decisions on our behalf in a

process that is open to everyone. The problem we face as local learning leaders is that the concept of, and support for, locally based decisions and democracy are being eroded.

We may be doing ourselves a favour if we can choose people to act as our local leaders; people who have a vision for the future and care deeply about the community; people who understand the importance of putting people priorities first, and allocating resources through an open and fair process.

If one of the fundamentals of our communities' classrooms is to create democratic communities, then we must support our community through democratic actions. We must emphasize that public education is not a consumer product. Rather, public education is an integral element of a whole and healthy community. As citizens we must ensure that we support local learning leaders through the ballot box, our collective voice and our collective actions. Talk up public education with your neighbors. Support candidates who will be effective leaders. Vote, and urge others to vote.

Zenaida Benali Kharroubi

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Élection scolaire du 4 novembre 2007**Khokon Maniruzzaman, un parti pris pour les élèves, tous les élèves, de la CSDM**

Montréal, le lundi 15 octobre 2007- Commissaire scolaire depuis 2003, monsieur Khokon Maniruzzaman sollicite un second mandat dans Côte-des-Neiges - Snowdon dans le cadre de l'élection scolaire présentement en cours sur le territoire de la Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM).

« Je sais d'expérience et suis convaincu que, pour qui veut changer fondamentalement la société et favoriser la justice sociale, le domaine privilégié d'intervention est le système scolaire, témoigne-t-il. Si l'élève peut apprendre et grandir avec les valeurs et la formation appropriées, une véritable justice sociale devient possible. L'éducation est le fondement de notre société et de notre civilisation.

«Celui qui porte les couleurs du Mouvement pour une école moderne et ouverte (MÉMO) dans Côte-des-Neiges - Snowdon, a plusieurs projets en tête, projets qu'il souhaite réaliser si ses concitoyens lui renouvellent leur confiance à l'élection scolaire du 4 novembre. Il entend notamment faire l'inventaire des inquiétudes et des soucis des parents en rapport à leurs enfants tant au niveau primaire que secondaire et y apporter des réponses ou des mesures appropriées. « Je veux m'assurer, avec la collaboration du milieu scolaire et les parents, que les élèves, particulièrement les adolescents, vivent un bon équilibre entre les exigences académiques et leurs besoins affectifs. »

Khokon Maniruzzaman souhaite aussi développer des mesures spécifiques pour la réussite scolaire des garçons, offrir des activités sportives et culturelles à chaque élève, sans exception, et assurer l'intégration de l'école dans le milieu communautaire en vue de répondre aux besoins des élèves et de leurs familles.

Rappelons que, natif du Bangladesh, monsieur Maniruzzaman est détenteur d'une maîtrise en sciences politiques et a complété plusieurs stages de formation professionnelle, tant aux États-Unis que dans divers pays asiatiques.

Arrivé au Canada en 1996, il a inscrit ses trois enfants à l'école Bedford de Côte-des-Neiges et s'y implique à titre de membre du comité d'école, puis de membre du conseil d'établissement.

Ayant réussi à surmonter ses difficultés d'intégration et de communication, monsieur Maniruzzaman entend mettre à profit ses expériences afin d'améliorer la communication entre l'école et le milieu multiculturel dans lequel elle baigne. Il croit que si nos enfants peuvent apprendre et grandir avec des valeurs et une formation appropriées, une véritable justice sociale devient possible.

Militant des causes telles la sécurité du revenu, l'élimination de la pauvreté au Québec, le logement social et l'amélioration des normes de travail, monsieur Maniruzzaman porte son action au niveau communautaire

et surtout scolaire, où son action contribue à offrir aux enfants une meilleure formation et de meilleures chances de réussite.

« Je sollicite donc un 2e mandat auprès de mes concitoyens, ayant acquis une solide connaissance de l'école publique et des enjeux liés à l'éducation des jeunes et moins jeunes. J'ai établi des liens féconds autant avec les institutions publiques qu'avec les élus de l'arrondissement et les organismes communautaires de ma circonscription. Je compte sur votre appui le 4 novembre », conclut-il.

Si vous êtes inscrits sur la liste permanente du Directeur général des élections du Québec, vous avez le droit de vote aux élections scolaires. Vous pouvez rejoindre la permanence du MÉMO au 514 387-MÉMO (6366) pour confirmer avec eux si vous êtes inscrits et si vous avez le droit de vote.

Le 4 novembre, vous pourrez voter en vous rendant à l'un ou l'autre de ces endroits : École Félix-Leclerc (6055, avenue Darlington), École Saint-Pascal-Baylon (6320, Chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges) ou École des Nations (4860, rue Vézina).

On peut suivre la campagne de monsieur Maniruzzaman sur le site Internet du MÉMO à www.memo.qc.ca. Vous pouvez également le joindre par courriel à khokon.maniruzzaman@memo.qc.ca ou en lui téléphonant à 514 387-MÉMO (6366).

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Source : Jocelyn Bourbonnais au 514 704-6537

Informations : Khokon Maniruzzaman au 514 387-MÉMO (6366)

School board elections on November 4, 2007**Khokon Maniruzzaman is devoted to students, to all students of the CSDM**

Montreal, Monday, October 15, 2007 - School commissioner since 2003, Mr. Khokon Maniruzzaman is seeking a second mandate in the Cote des Neiges/Snowdon district in the coming school board elections.

"I know from experience, and I am convinced that, for those who want to make a fundamental change to society and to favor social justice, the most effective way to intervene is through the school system," he affirms. "If a child can learn and grow with the values and the appropriate training, a true social justice becomes possible. Education is the foundation of our society and our civilization."

Representing the MEMO (Movement pour une école moderne et ouverte) or a party movement for a modern and open school, Mr. Maniruzzaman has several projects in mind, projects he wishes to realize if his fellow citizens renew their confidence in him by electing him on November 4. He notably listens to

See Page 4 maniruzzaman

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Appelez-nous pour confirmer avec vous si vous êtes inscrits.

Le 4 novembre, vous pourrez voter pour moi en vous rendant à l'un ou l'autre de ces endroits :

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- École **Saint-Pascal-Baylon** 6320, chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges
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From Page 1 Joint anniversary

only planned to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Gilmore in 2009, she came up with the idea of holding a party at this time in order to raise funds for the cash-strapped Filipino Solidarity Cooperative. She called upon two people to assist her in this undertaking, Bert Abiera, and Hilda Veloso who quickly responded by coming along to look for an appropriate venue for the party. Since most places are already booked for November parties, the anniversary celebration has to be scheduled after November, the real anniversary month of Gilmore and the Filipino Star. But it proved to be just the right combination of good luck and opportunity because Studio 26 Mtl has just announced its grand opening on November 3rd, hence, they were able to book it for December 8, 2007 starting at 7:00 P.M. and ending at 11:00 P.M. However, all guests can stay longer and continue dancing until 3:00 a.m., the normal closing time of Studio 26 Mtl.

In view of the short time available, it was decided to hold a party that is simple but entertaining. Dignitaries and VIPs will still be invited but they will not be delivering long speeches. A souvenir program will be prepared in order to solicit advertisements and messages from other community organizations as well as from businesses. There will be a short program that will probably last an hour and will include the presentation of certificates of appreciation to those who have given their time to the community in general, and to the Coop, the Star and Gilmore in particular. The support of everyone will be solicited as the fund raising is not going to one person but to the Filipino Solidarity Cooperative which must meet its numerous financial obligations, the most urgent one being the settlement of account in the amount of over \$9 000 still owed to Paluagan members. Previously the amount owed was over \$90 000 way back in July 2006. This is why the Coop has not been able to improve sales for lack of capital to buy enough merchandise. Most of the income is used to cover the deficit incurred last year.

It is almost the end of the year and the vicious cycle of deficit spending continues. Mrs. Kharroubi, who guaranteed the credit line of the Coop with the Bank of Nova Scotia, realized that the financial burden is too heavy to carry alone any longer. It was out of extreme desire to help the Coop

to get out of this financial "black hole" that she came upon the idea of a fund raising drive by holding the joint anniversary celebrations of her two businesses.

Although there are supposed to be over 500 members of the Coop, not everyone is buying groceries often enough.

Moreover, Paluagan members usually buy only to take merchandise without paying cash as their reason is to apply their purchases against the unrefunded amount of their deposits in the Paluagan. For this reason, the Coop cannot raise enough cash to buy new merchandise again and get stuck with buying from middlemen. The cost of transportation does not warrant ordering from the wholesalers in Ontario because it is only economical to order from them if we can order a bigger volume of stock.

By holding the fund raising dance party, Mrs. Kharroubi hopes to bring to the attention of the Filipino-Canadian community in Montreal to help the first Filipino Solidarity Cooperative in Canada. After all, there is a big Filipino population in Cote des Neiges. However, it seems that many people have not yet been aware of how much they can make a difference if only they would start to care about patronizing the business of their own community.

A series of articles under the column entitled "The Cooperative Movement - it's bigger than what you think" by Jerry Estrada has been appearing in the North American Filipino Star. But how many people really read it and pay attention to the message it contains? What other ways can we appeal to the community to help the Coop? Do they understand that the Coop is for the whole community and not for one person?

As far as Gilmore International College is concerned, how many people in the community really know what services are offered here? For the past 9 years, its advertisement appears on the back page of the North American Filipino Star. It is only now that there are prospective students who call and say they saw the ad here.

When Gilmore College was just started, people used to say that they are studying French at McGill, University of Montreal, or other big schools. But do they know that they can also receive a good education from a private college like Gilmore International College?

Mrs. Kharroubi hopes to convince the community that we can all benefit from patronizing the businesses of our fellow "kababayan". ■

From Page 1 School boards

they need to earn a living and make it possible to improve their economic situation. Most of the people in the group already know Mr. Maniruzzaman as he has been frequently seen in many of the community's events including the re-chartering of the first Filipino Canadian Scouts Group Laging Handa in Quebec in September 2004. ■

From Page 3 Maniruzzaman

make a note of the cares and concerns of parents about their children in the primary as well as in the secondary level and to answer them or to bring measures appropriate to them. "I want to assure myself with the collaboration of the schools and parents that students particularly teenagers, live a balance life between their academic and emotional needs."

Khokohn Maniruzzaman wishes also to develop specific measures for school success of boys, offering sports and cultural activities to each student, without exception, and to ensure the integration of the school in the community in order to respond to the needs of students and their families.

A native of Bangladesh, Mr. Maniruzzaman is a holder of a masters degree in political science and he completed several professional training courses in the United States as well as in different Asian countries.

After arriving in Canada in 1996, he enrolled his three children in Bedford School in Cote des Neiges and he got involved as a member of the school committee and then member of the Administration Council.

Having succeeded in overcoming his integration difficulties and communication, Mr. Maniruzzaman wants to apply his experience in improving the communication between the school and the multicultural community. He believes that our children can learn and grow up with the values and the training appropriate, for which a true just society becomes possible.

Active in the movement for causes such as income security, elimination of poverty in Quebec, social housing and the improvement of working conditions, Mr. Maniruzzaman exerts his effort on the community level particularly in the school milieu, to offer to the students a better education and the tools to succeed.

"I am seeking therefore a second mandate from my fellow

citizens, having acquired a solid knowledge of the public school system and the factors related to education of the young and the not so young. I have established connections with both the public institutions and the elected representatives of the boroughs and community organizations in my area. I count on your support on November 4,; he concluded.

If you are registered in the permanent list of voters by the Quebec Director-General of Elections, you have the right to vote in the school board elections. You can reach the office of MEMO at 514-387-MEMO (6366) to confirm with them if you are registered and if you have the right to vote.

On November 4, you will be able to vote by going to one or the other of the following places: Ecole Felix-Leclerc (6055 Darlington Avenue) Ecole Saint-Pascal Baylon (6320 Cote des Neiges Road) or Ecole des Nations (4860, Victoria street).

One can follow the campaign of Mr. Maniruzzaman on the website of MEMO at www.memo.qc.ca. You can also reach us by e-mail: khokohn.maniruzzaman@memo.qc.ca or by calling him at 514-387-MEMO (6366).

Source: Jocelyn Bourbonnais at 514-704-6537

Information: Khokohn Maniruzzaman at 514-387-MEMO (6366). ■

From Page 5 Torch Bearer

neighbors whose smiles and "ni haos" are gestures of their affectionate welcome to us, as we become part of their community.

As I aspire for another dream to become one of the expat torch bearers in the Beijing Games, the Olympic watcher and enthusiast in me remains wishful and hopeful of another dream. And that is for our sportsmen to make an indelible mark in Philippine sports history by finally winning our country's first-ever Olympic gold medal in the 2008 Beijing Games.

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Noel Novicio

My fascination with the Olympics started in 1984 when as a young high school student, I watched on television China's Olympic star, Li Ning perform and win several gold medals in men's gymnastics in the Los Angeles Games. My love affair with sports also started during my high school years when as a young student, I represented my school in a nationwide sports writing competition and brought home a gold medal for winning an on-the-spot coverage of a volleyball game. From then on, my young mind has not stopped dreaming and aiming for what I thought was an impossible dream – to witness the Olympic Games. In August of 1988, this dream came into reality when as a senior university student, I won the Olympic Quiz show on national TV in the Philippines. And the prize? An all-expense paid, 17-day trip to the Seoul Olympic Games! To this day, I still cherish a prized memorabilia, the key chain to my room key in the Olympic village where I was billeted along with Filipino journalists.

Last August 8, 2007, barely three months in my assignment as a diplomat in the Philippine Embassy in Beijing, I once again felt very privileged when China hosted a lavish pageantry beamed worldwide to celebrate the one-year countdown to the 2008 Beijing Olympics. As I sat there at historic Tiananmen Square to witness the grand celebration, my mind flew back to 1988 and started dreaming about 2008 when I will, once again, have the privilege to see the Olympics live.

Here I am, once more, aiming for another dream – to be one of the expat torch bearers during the Beijing Games. And why not? We Filipinos consider ourselves "citizens of the world". There are Filipinos in almost every country in the world. To represent my country in China and during the Games will be like reliving a significant part of Philippines-China relations, which dates back centuries ago. Like my Olympic dream as a teenager, when I joined the foreign service, I have always considered China a dream assignment.

After a two and a half year-stint in Hong Kong, I was honored to be cross-posted to Beijing at a time when Philippines-China bilateral relations have reached its "golden stage". I am very privileged to be part of the "Philippine team" that continues to endeavor to elevate this relationship to a higher level.

Here I am now with my wife and two children witnessing China as it continues to emerge as a world destination where citizens of the world are welcome to come. There are so many interesting facts about China, its culture and history that we would like to enrich ourselves with. And so many places to visit beyond the Great Wall. As we immerse ourselves in our new home in Beijing, we are touched by the warmth and kindness of Chinese

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Fil-Can Idol Finals

The Federation of Philippines-Canada Trade and Commerce of Quebec is inviting young and adult Filipino-Canadians alike to participate in one of the biggest events of the year and get a chance to be featured as one of the most promising groups of Filipino-Canadian performers that showcase their God-given talents not only to entertain the Filipino-Canadian community but also to extend their hands to our less fortunate brothers and sisters in the Philippines. This year's Grand Finals will be held at Salle Spectacle, College Jean-de-Brebeuf on December 8, 2007.

For tickets, interested parties please contact Ms. Grace Yip (514) 928-4268, Mr. Ariel Tan (514) 839-3373 or Ms. Joy Mesina (514) 910-3282 for more details. Be a part of the musical, cultural and entertainment fusion that is Filipino-Canadian Idol!

FIL-AM COMMUNITY GROUPS MEET WITH ABC's EXEC MENDEZ

ABC Television Network facing an impending picket and protest in front of Manhattan's ABC Studios on 77 West 66th Street, NY, NY, October 5 at 6 pm, and October 6 (noontime) at ABC Office, 1100 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22209 (Metro Washington D.C.), agreed to meet with the Filipino-American Delegation led by NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR

FILIPINO CONCERNS (NAFCON), PHILIPPINE FORUM AND the MIGRANT HERITAGE COMMISSION (MHC). As mounting protests and international condemnation for the racial slur made by Actress Teri Hatcher in a scene with a doctor in Sunday's episode of "Desperate Housewives" where she remarked: "Okay, before we go any further, can I check those diplomas? Because I would like to make sure they are not from some med school in the Philippines."

Robert Mendez, Esquire, Senior-Vice President for Diversity and Talent Development of ABC NETWORK had a very cordial and pleasant telephone conversation with Arnedo S. Valera, Esquire, Executive Director of the Migrant Heritage Commission (MHC), this evening and both agreed to meet in Trump Plaza Hotel in New York at 5 P.M. tomorrow, October 5th, four blocks away from the organized community picket led by NAFCON and PHILIPPINE FORUM. As a good faith gesture to the Filipino Community, ABC's Mr. Mendez assured Mr. Valera that the controversial episode will be edited and the scene permanently cut and never again be shown even in re runs, DVD set or any format for sale or rent. Likewise in exchange of goodwill with Mr. Valera, Mr. Mendez agreed to listen to the demands for more concrete measures of accountability to be presented by the Filipino-American

Community panel group led by NAFCON, PHILIPPINE FORUM AND THE MIGRANT HERITAGE COMMISSION (MHC). He further promised to seriously address all the demands and concerns of the picketing groups.

The picket in front of Manhattan's ABC Studios at 77 West 66th is supported by the following organizations: The New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines, NAFFAA, Anak Bayan, Movement for Free Philippines, FILIPINOS FOR RIGHTS AND EMPOWERMENT (FIRE), KABALIKAT and the SENTOSA ++ NURSES.

The picket in Metropolitan Washington D.C. on Saturday (noontime), 6 October is to be led by the Philippine Medical Association of Metro Washington D.C. (PMAMW) and MD to be supported by various Fil-Am organizations, among them are the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) DC and MD and the MIGRANT HERITAGE COMMISSION (MHC).

Rico Foz of NAFCON, BERNADETTE LLORIN of PHILIPPINE FORUM, a representative of the medical community and Arnedo S. Valera, Esquire of the MIGRANT HERITAGE COMMISSION will lead the panel that will present the demands of the organized picketing groups to ABC Senior Vice President, Mr. Robert Mendez.

Among the demands to be presented are: ABC Network Broadcast Public Apology and not simply a one paragraph statement; Conduct a complete and thorough

investigation of those responsible for writing the reprehensible and racial slur script line; ABC to conduct racial and cultural sensitivity programs for all employees; ABC should make a categorical and unequivocal statement that it recognizes the significant contribution of Philippine Health Care professionals especially our doctors, nurses and other health care givers to the entire U.S. Health Care System because of their competence and high quality of skills; A sincere and proper apology to the Filipino People and the nation and the Fil-Am community groups for disparaging and maligning the Philippine Educational System and the expressed racial prejudice to Filipino doctors and physicians; ABC will commit to make episodes and shows that will depict Filipinos and other minority groups as prominent positive role models of the community and that ABC agrees to support Filipino-American Community projects that will strengthen racial diversity and harmony in local communities and at the national level.

NAFCON promised to organize more peaceful, continuous and sustained pickets and protests together with various Filipino-American groups and minority groups in the country until the demands are substantially met. ■

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Editor & Publisher,
North American Filipino Star
Group Commissioner, Scouts Canada, Quebec Council



COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Bigger than what you think

By Jerry Estrada

The Role of Coop Leaders

No successful business enterprise was built in a day, week or even a few years. This holds true for cooperatives as many coop leaders entered the business world with nothing but the clothes they were wearing coupled with commitment and vision to make a difference on people's lives.

Coop leaders play a major role in order to encourage their members and make them think to succeed. Leadership is the process of persuasion by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives shared by the leader with his members. If coop leaders do not really believe in this strategy, there will be few members willing to make the extra effort needed for truly innovative work.

A Coop needs dedicated leaders that have to be completely involved in it from the day it open its doors.

Working in the Coop sector is different from the private or government sector because coops are governed by the principle of 'one member, one vote'.

Coop members elect a board, which hires the manager to oversee operations. Coop managers are conduits between the Board and staff. The Board provides direction to the manager based on what the members want. Coop leaders report back to their members annually at their Annual General Meeting. Financial statements for the coop are presented to members and resolutions are introduced and voted on. That is how a coop determines its future direction.

The board of directors administers the business of the cooperative and call special meetings whenever necessary or upon the request of members as provided in the rules.

The number of directors on the board will vary depending on the size of the cooperative and its activities. The powers and duties of the directors are regulated by both the rules of the cooperative and the Coop Act.

The following lists are only a guide to the statutory and other responsibilities of directors and other persons empowered under the rules of a registered cooperative. Basically, the cooperative shall have a

Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and a Secretary who shall serve according to the functions of their respective offices as follows:

Chairman – shall preside over all meetings of the coop and the Board of Directors (BODs), sign contracts and other instruments or papers essential to the operations of the coop, and perform such as other necessary functions, subject to the restrictions as may be imposed by the board of directors or the general assembly. Vice-Chairman – in the absence or incapacity of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall discharge the duties and responsibilities of the Chairman; provided, that in case of death, resignation, removal or permanent incapacity of the Chairman, the Board of Directors may elect a new Chairman. In the Philippines, the Vice-Chairman of the Board shall serve as ex-officio chairman of the Education and Training Committee.

Treasurer – shall take custody of all monies, securities and papers acquired by the coop, and maintain a complete records of all its transactions; keep a complete record of its cash transactions for the establishment of proof of his cash position at any given time and date; pay all financial obligations incurred by the coop as approved by the manager and/or board of directors; render report and certify the correctness of the cash position of the coop in all financial statements and other reports submitted to the BODs and the general assembly; turn-over to his successor all monies, securities, papers, books and other properties belonging to the coop in his possession upon the expiration/termination of his term of office; and perform such other duties as the board of directors may prescribe. In the Philippines, the Treasurer acts, as Secretary in case of the latter's absence or incapacity to perform his duties.

Secretary – shall keep and maintain a complete registry of all members and records minutes of all

meetings of the Board of Directors and the general assembly; give notice of all meetings called; and turn over to his successor all books, records and other properties belonging to the coop in his possession upon the expiration or termination of his term of office. In the Philippines, the Secretary acts, as Treasurer in case of the latter's absence or incapacity to perform his duties.

For a full list of restrictions on directors and officers, refer to Cooperative Act of a particular country.

October 27 (6:00 pm- Church Hall)

- Pre-Halloween Party featuring the Final Canvassing of the 2007 Search for the FCMM King and Queen of Angels.

October 28 (11:30 am / 5:00 pm- Church)

- MISA NG SAMBAYANANG PILIPINO

Last Sunday of the month Masses in Pilipino Language

November 2 (7:00 pm- Church)

- ROSARY and LITANY for the Dead

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October 21 (11:30 am- Church)

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Philippine Cuisine

Humba Recipe (Braised Pork Belly)



Humba is one of the comfort foods of every Filipino household. It's a popular Filipino food dish somewhere in the Visayas and Mindanao regions

Ingredients :

- 1 lb. pork (i usually used pork belly or pork hocks), cut into serving pieces
- 1 cup water
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/3 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 tsp. pepper or 1 tsp. peppercorns
- 1 tsp. oil
- salt to taste
- 3 potatoes, peeled and quartered (optional)
- hard-boiled eggs (optional)

(Measurement Guides)
Cooking Procedures :

1. Combine all ingredients in a big pot and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for about an hour or until pork belly or hocks is tender. You may wish to adjust the taste according to your style and liking.

2. If you want to add some potatoes and hard-boiled eggs in this dish, potatoes usually cook about 15 minutes. It's up to you whether you like it very soft or just tender to bite. You may add it halfway of the cooking time or later.
3. As for the eggs let it sits for a few minutes before its done to let the sauces covered into it.
4. Remove bay leaf and peppercorns (if used) just before serving. Serve hot.

Bibingka Cassava



Ingredients

- * For the bibingka 3 eggs
- * 2 cups sugar
- * 1 cup evaporated milk (fresh milk can be substituted)
- * 7 cups raw cassava, grated (or frozen) - cassava are now available in most groceries in cities with a large Latin American or Asian population.
- * 1/4 cup butter, melted
- * banana leaves (available frozen in Philippine stores; or use cookie sheet or something)
- For the topping
- * 1 cup thick coconut milk (available in Asian stores)
- * 2 tablespoon flour
- * 1 can condensed milk

See Page 20 Philippine Cuisine

Gilmore College sends nursing aid students to CHSLD St. Margaret



Gilmore International College students pose with their instructors at the entrance to CHSLD St. Margaret Residence on 50 Westhill Avenue in Westmount. From left: Amy Manon-og, instructor, Daisy Morales, Daisy Castillo, Rafael Agaloo, Leah Mar Peradilla, students and Hermie Arguilles, supervisor. Other instructors not in photo: Nina Schiff, Clarice Mackay and Josie Toledo.

The third batch of nursing aid students started their practicum on Saturday, October 6, 2007. They will be undergoing a very intensive training on the job training for 170 hours at St. Margaret under the close supervision of their instructors.

Gilmore International College started the PSW (Personal Support Worker) program, also known as PAB in Quebec, or nursing aid, in 2005. Starting with a small group, the College has steadily received more and more requests for different schedules for the nursing aid program. It is expected to have several classes organized for the January 2008 school opening

Students who graduate from

the program are given a certificate of proficiency and a reference letter showing the students' profiles, giving due recognition to their previous educational and professional background. They will also be given a complementary seminar on job search techniques and interview preparation. A CPR course is being planned to be organized next year for all the graduates in order to provide them with an up-to-date first aid certificate which is always an asset to have.

If you are interested in the nursing aid (PAB) course of Gilmore, call 514-485-7861, and make an appointment for registration. Bring your transcripts and CV (resumé). ■

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Alalum Falls, Sumilao, with a height of 148 ft

Bukidnon is a highland paradise in the heart of Mindanao. It is home to the world's biggest pineapple plantation boasting a classic golf course dating back to 1928. It is the biggest cattle-producing province in the region. It is

well endowed with natural attractions like the *Kitanglad Ranges* that includes *Dulang Dulang*, the second highest peak in the country. And it has been identified as one of the country's richest in biodiversity and endemic



Kaamulan Festival, Malaybalay - It is held in September and is the biggest festival of the province

species of flora and fauna.

Bukidnon is in the heartland of Mindanao, linking Davao to the south and Misamis Oriental to the north of the island.

The province has different dialects brought by the immigration of lowlanders that come from the different islands of the archipelago. Cebuano is spoken by 77.9% of the population; Binukid, by 8.9%; and English, by 0.05%.

Bukidnon is an agricultural economy. It is a major producer of rice, corn, sugar coffee, rubber, pineapple, tomato, flowers, cassava, and other fruits and vegetables. It is also a major producer of chicken, hogs, and cattle.

Among its major corporations, **Del Monte Phils Inc.** is engaged in pineapple production and cattle fattening while Bukidnon Sugar Milling Corp. and Crystal Sugar Milling are into sugar milling and refining.

The original migrants of the province were driven internally toward the rugged and hilly ground. Thus, the people are called Bukidnons, which means "people of the mountains" and where the place got its name. They are closely similar with the Higaonon tribe of Agusan del Sur where the settlers are usually packs of 3-10 households with a datu as their chief.

Other tribes that live in the posterior of Bukidnon gather together in the city during the first week of

September to celebrate the **Kaumulan Festival**. Their intention is to unite the tribal groups of the area and to encourage understanding between the minorities and lowlanders who are the inhabitants of the province.

During this festival local tribes people perform unique dances like "inamo" a monkey dance, "binakbak" a frog dance, and the "kayamotan" a dance of birds. One of the main features of the festivities is the enactment of a wedding ceremony between members of the tribe.

Major local attractions include:
- **Mt. Kitanglad Range National Park** Spectacular landforms and a diverse mix of plants and wildlife cover this vast natural park.

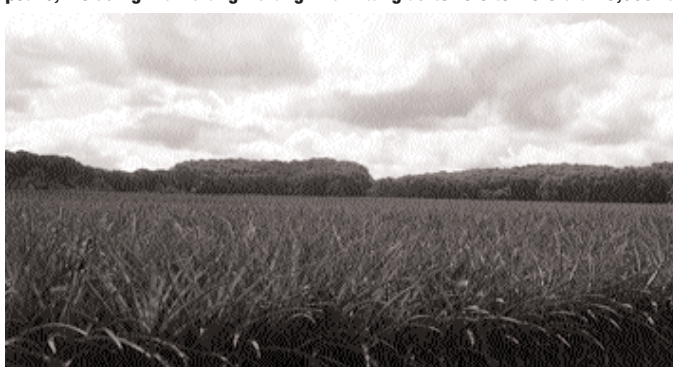
- **Del Monte Philippines Inc.** - It is considered to be the biggest pineapple plantation in the Far East. It also has a famous world class 18-hole golf course
- **Monastery of Transfiguration** Designed by National Artist Leandro Locsin, it offers solitude and a spiritual retreat.

- **Alalum Falls** - Located along the Syre Highway, less than a kilometer from the municipality of Sumilao. Travelers on motor vehicles can easily see its imposing grandeur.

- **Mangima Canyon** - the zigzag road of Mangima Canyon stuns any visitor who visits the place. It is famous for its natural and scenic beauty. ■



Mt. Kitanglad with Mt. Dulang-dulang looming - Kitanglad National Park is situated in North Central Bukidnon. It is composed of more than a dozen mountain peaks, including Mt. Dulang-Dulang. Mt. Kitanglad towers to more than 9,000 ft.



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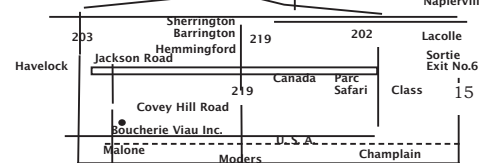
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Star Photo Gallery



PSW (PAB) students of Gilmore International College pose for souvenir iwith their director-general, Zenaida Kharroubi (left) and teacher, Amy Manon-og (2nd from right) and Hermie Arguilles, supervisor at the CHSLD St. Margaret Residence.



Pumpkins for Halloween waiting for the picking. Gilmore College students enjoying the the sunshine and the colorful setting, September 30, 2007 at Denis Charbonneau orchard.



The Laging Handa Scouts with their families (from left) Riza Esmeralda, Jean Mathew Sarto, Thomas Nuguid, Bob Araneta, Helen Araneta, Natasha Nuguid, Zenaida Kharroubi, Dawn Sarto, Joselito Sarto, Kevin Araneta, and Mary Joy Lizarondo. (September 22, 2007)



October birthday celebrants led by Cairo Bermudez at FAMAS get-together on October 14, 2007, having a wonderful time.



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FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Regine Velasquez tells Preview magazine about 'slowing down'



One of the best-known success stories in showbiz belongs to Regine Velasquez. She started out in amateur singing competitions and kept reinventing herself throughout her career. Now looked up to as one of the biggest names in the music industry, Asia's Songbird has become the prime example of how hard work pays off.

"I've worked really hard. I've done a lot of things in my desire to grow as an artist," she shares with Preview magazine (October issue), which she graces for the first time. Her hard work has more than paid off, but Regine remains down to earth. "Nakatulong rin talaga ang pagka-probinsyana ko. I really started from scratch."

The cover shoot for Preview magazine took place at the Villamor Air Base. Regine—dressed in long, bode-fitting gowns inspired by the movie *The Aviator*—is shown climbing steel scaffolds and improvised stages, made of wooden planks on steel, to get to the top of a grand old YS-11 turbo-prop. The grand old airplane serves as backdrop for many of her stunning photographs. It seems an uncomfortable, glamorless task, but Regine gets the job done, and beautifully.

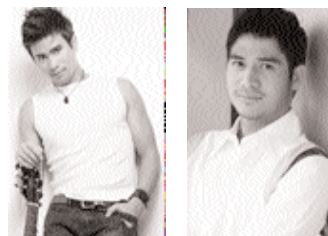
Regine has plans of slowing down eventually. "For many years now, I've concentrated solely on my career," she says, citing the work that she has done for herself and for other artists as well.

"The funny thing is, when I was starting, I told myself that I will do everything now and when I feel ready, I will stop and have a family. I still want that now."



As Regine herself started from humble beginnings and worked hard to make a name for herself, so do the 26 Pinoy artists featured in Preview's annual Creative It-List. Preview supports Filipino talent and ingenuity by featuring those who have helped set the standards for artistic excellence, each on the verge of becoming a superstar in her/ his field. Some notables are stage actress and dancer Ina Feleo, bossa nova singer Sitti, director Marie Jamora, and actor Ping Medina. ■

Lolit Solis stumbles upon Sam Milby, Piolo Pascual's 'date'



Sam Milby

Piolo Pascual

Talent manager and TV host Lolit Solis was treated to one of the most surprising visual spectacles of her life when she was invited by businessman Erning Lim to visit an exhibit at the Sofitel (formerly called the Westin Philippine Plaza).

No, it wasn't the exhibit that caught her attention, but it was what she found out that utterly surprised her.

According to Manay Lolit's article in the Philippine Star Ngayon, it all began when she got lost inside Sofitel, trying to find the location of the exhibit.

Owing to misdirection and probably the unavailability of a venue map, she found herself entering Sofitel's poolside coffee shop at around four in the afternoon. Realizing that she was at the wrong place, she started looking for another entrance or exit, walking and looking left and right.

Two men caught Manay Lolit's attention as she sauntered over. She noticed that the two men looked sweet to each other, exchanging whispers as their cheeks nearly touched. As Manay Lolit approached, waiters who saw her called out her name, apparently wanting to get an autograph.

The two men, upon hearing Manay Lolit's name, hastily left as Manay Lolit nearly tripped trying to get a closer look.

Her curiosity rewarded her as she found who the two men were: It was Sam Milby and Piolo Pascual. Someone told Manay Lolit that Sam and Piolo frequented the Sofitel poolside coffee shop since the place doesn't usually get that many visitors.

According to Manay Lolit, she wouldn't have noticed the two if it weren't for their hasty and noticeable exit.

She wouldn't even put malice on what she just saw if Sam and Piolo didn't mind being found out or if they would just say their "hellos" to Manay Lolit even if they didn't know her that well. All that she could do on her way home was ponder on the things that she had witnessed.

As for Sam and Piolo, people could only speculate about their true sexuality as both heartthrobs have been rumored to be gays.

Some write-ups say that the two are in a relationship, some say Sam isn't gay because he's attracted to Angel Locsin and Anne Curtis Smith; the same with Piolo, who have been linked to the likes of Judy Ann Santos and Rica Peralejo. But Piolo has a son out of wedlock. ■

Dennis Padilla hopes for reconciliation with Marjorie



Comedian Dennis Padilla on Sunday defended his estranged wife Caloocan City councilor Marjorie Barretto against vicious rumors linking the former actress to City Mayor Enrico "Recom" Echiverri.

"Hindi siya umalis. Noong time na yun buong council yun e. Siyempre siya lang naman yung artista r'on, siya rin yung pinakamagandang gawan ng issue," Padilla said in a taped interview with Showbiz Central.

He said rumormongers should better stop spinning tales about Marjorie because nothing could destroy the understanding he and Marjorie have now.

"Magkaibigan kami, bahagi siya ng buhay ko dahil ang gaganda ng mga anak namin. The more that I show my respect to Marjorie, the more that my children will respect me," he said.

Dennis said she and Marjorie are both ready to move one but he is still hopeful that they would be able to work things out.

"Siyempre I'm still praying na maybe someday magka-crush siya sa akin ulit, papatingin-tingin na naman siya sa akin at nakahanda naman ako andito lang ako anytime," he said.

Even Marjorie's sister, Claudine Barretto, denied the rumors.

"Siyempre alam ko hindi totoo. Sana 'yun ang paniwalaan ng mga taong nanonood ngayon na hindi totoo yung kay Mayor at kay Marjorie. Pagde-date na nga, kunwari nagde-date kayo di ba parang napakalaking issue. Maghahalikan pa kayo sa harapan. parang di ba hindi na makatotohanan yun. Sa pagkakaalam ko hindi sila nagde-date," she said.

Claudine said she feels sorry for her sister and Dennis but she assured: "Dennis will always be part of our family. Walang magbabago. Mahal na mahal namin yun." ■

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Manny Pacquiao talks about next boxing fights and acting career



Dalawang malalaking boksingero ang naghahamon ngayon sa Pambansang Kamao na si Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao para makalaban nila sa boxing ring. Isa rito ang undefeated champion ng WBO super featherweight division from the Dominican Republic na si Joan Guzman. Ang pangalawa ay ang WBA super featherweight division from Venezuela na si Edwin Valero.

Nakarating na kay Manny ang mga hamon na ito ng dalawang boksingero at sinabi nito na kaya niya silang labanan, depende sa magiging usapan ng mga agents nila.

"Lagi naman akong handa. Kung maayos ang pakikipag-usap nila ay magagawan natin ng paraan 'yan. At saka if the price is right!" sabay tawa ni Manny sa panayam sa kanya ng PEP (Philippine Entertainment Portal) sa birthday party ng kanyang anak na si Princess noong October 12 sa Renaissance Hotel.

Ayon kay Manny, nakatakda siyang humarap sa boxing ring ng tatlong beses sa susunod na taon. Ibinigay niya ang kanyang schedule sa mga buwan ng March, July, at November.

Sa naging grand welcome ni Manny noong October 11 sa GMA Network Center, kung saan isa na siyang certified Kapuso, nabanggit niya ang gagawing mga shows sa GMA-7— isang reality show at isang sitcom. Pinag-uusapan pa raw ang mga gagawin niyang shows, pero this November ay may isa nang ilu-launch.

"Excited po ako kasi magkakaroon na tayo ng sarili kong show, at natutuwa ako sa magandang suporta ng mga Kapuso natin. Kaya abangan nila kasi maganda ang magiging shows ko rito. Abangan din nila ang guestings ko sa iba't ibang programa sa GMA-7," sabi ni Manny, na may grand welcome din sa SOP ngayong tanghali.

Uuwi ng General Santos City si Manny para mag-enroll sa isang 20-day special course for business administration. Nais raw ituloy ito ni Manny sa kursong Law dahil may plano pa rin siyang pumasok sa politics, sa kabila ng pagkatalo niya noong huling eleksyon nang tumakbo siyang congressman.

"Hindi ko naman itinatago 'yon, e," sabi ni Manny. "Gusto ko pa ring subukan ang politics. Wala namang masama. Gusto ko lang maglingkod nang tapat sa mga kababayan ko sa GenSan.

"Kung hindi ko pa matuloy ng Law, puwede ko pa naman gamitin yung kurso ko sa mga negosyo na itinayo namin ng misis ko [Jinky Pacquiao].

Marami pa akong gustong malaman sa negosyo at gusto ko alam ko ang mga nangyayari," paliwanag ng Pambansang Kamao.

Gusto raw ni Jinky na in three years ay tapusin na ni Manny ang pagboxing. Tama na raw yung magnegosyo na lang sila dahil hindi nawawala ang kaba sa dibdib ni Jinky tuwing humaharap sa ring ang asawa.

"Yun naman talaga ang plano namin. In three years ay medyo hihinay na ako. Twenty-eight years old ako ngayon. Kaya ko pa naman pero kung sasabihin ni Jinky na tumigil na ako ngayon, pag-uusapan namin," pagtatapos ni Manny. ■

Criselda Volks hubby denies ruining son's life



Criselda Volks

Former actor Cris Villanueva has denied the allegation of his former partner Criselda Volks that he plotted to ruin her plans for their son's future, entertainment talk show Showbiz Central reported Sunday.

"There is no truth at all to what was claimed that I refused to sign any papers nor didn't allow my son Rafa to live with her," Villanueva said in a text message to Showbiz Central.

He added: "That in truth I have not spoken to her (Volks) for almost three years now. Sadly I have last seen my son Rafa a year ago."

Reports said Volks on Monday tried to commit suicide due to loneliness. She said she drank liquid laundry bleach and detergent after Villanueva refused to sign papers that would allow her to bring their seven-year-old child to the United States.

"I'm sick and tired of being alone. I merely gave up...I wanted to be with my family but they are all in the States ... I don't have anyone here. I just wanted to die," she said.

Volks was rushed to the Ospital ng Makati past 5 p.m. after a guard at her residence called the Makati City emergency hotline.

But almost as soon as she arrived, Volks refused medical treatment. She signed a waiver, then stormed out of the hospital and boarded a cab back home.

A witness who saw what happened described on dzBB radio Monday evening. The witness said Volks was walking "pasuray-suray" (swaying from side to side). ■

Martin Nievera says partner Katrina offended by Pops's revelations in "YES!"



The Martin Nievera-Pops Fernandez controversy continues to escalate after Pops's tell-all interview in YES! magazine's October 2007 issue. ABS-CBN's Saturday showbiz talk show Entertainment Live, with the help of U.S. ABS-CBN correspondent Jaime Reyes, showed a video interview of a very emotional Martin reacting to the said article yesterday, October 13.

"I just hope that Pops is happy with what happened here," Martin began. "I just hope that Pops got what she wanted to get. Now what? Now, my life... I feel I'm naked. I'm not confident anymore. I feel ugly. That's how this article made me feel."

Martin also added, "I want her life to be better. I wish she would just spend her day talking about her love and happiness with Jomari Yllana, for the guy that she's with, rather than talk about her hate and regret. I'm the past."

Martin also shared girlfriend Katrina Ojeda's reaction to the issue and wished to reach out a message to his two sons with Pops, Robin and Ram. Katrina was blamed for the eventual breakdown of Pops's marriage to Martin.

"She [Katrina] was offended, but she would rather support me. We are not proud about what we've done, but we are trying to make our wrong to something right now. Now, we're just doing our own thing and living a life, making it simple, trying to correct mistakes... I wish we could just all move on," said Martin.

For Robin and Ram, Martin had this to say: "Mom and Dad are wrong, for making this so public, for not fixing this. I wanted to apologize to them for having to live this through again. I'm sorry, you know, you have now a document to read all of Dad's bad days. I'm only human...and I hope that you can learn from this."

Concerning the rumors about Martin filing a lawsuit against YES! magazine, he stressed that he wasn't going to sue Pops or the said entertainment magazine. Entertainment Live got the chance to take YES! magazine editor-in-chief Jo Ann Maglipon's take on this.

"Naghahanap si Martin daw ng kung ano ang legal options niya," Ms. Maglipon said. "In fact, nakatanggap ako ng tawag sa abugadong unang kinausap ng ina niya. If there is a court case, we're ready. I think we did our jobs as journalists, so we're ready." ■

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Solomon Alcorido Mendoza

December 21, 1962 - October 13, 2007

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved, Solomon A. Mendoza after a lengthy and courageous battle with cancer. Peacefully, surrounded by his family and friends, he is gone to the Father at age 44 on October 13, 2007 at the Jewish General Hospital. Beloved husband of Jean, devoted father of Child 'MM', cherished son of Fil and Betty, Caring brother of Liza Malday (Dr. Cesar), Ray (Lilka), and Mei (Roland Belmore). Solomon will be lovingly remembered by his family and numerous relatives and friends.

Solomon, a licensed mariner, graduate of Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation in the Philippines, worked several years as a seafarer in a Greek Shipping company before immigrating to Montreal. Sol was a hardworking man going through a trail of numerous jobs until he was hired at the Seaman's Mariner's House, a charity organization for seafarers at the port of Montreal. He worked at the Mariner's for nine years while at the same time building his career as a successful Filipino Businessman. He was a co-founder and president of the Filipino Seafarers Brotherhood of Montreal. He also was a dynamic and passionate community leader, adviser, member and officer of other various Filipino community organizations around Montreal. He was also recognized and awarded a Plaque of Appreciation by the previous Philippine Ambassador Francisco Benedicto as Role Model in the community. Sol, as he is fondly called, will truly be remembered and greatly missed.

Special thanks to the caring staff of the Jewish General Hospital, Royal Victoria Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital Center, his superiors and colleagues at the Mariner's house, his primary caregiver Mary Grace Balbon, and his many friends who tirelessly visit spending countless vigils at his side lifting his spirit up and comforting him.

Visitation will be held at the
Rideau Funeral Home
 4275 Sources, Dollard des Ormeaux, Quebec
 (Tel. 514-685-3344)

on Wednesday, and Thursday October 17 and 18 from 2-5, 7-10p.m.

Funeral Mass will be celebrated at St. Kevin's Church

5600 Cotes-des-Neiges, Montreal on Friday, October 19, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.

Interment follows at a later date in Mabalbal, Cebu, Philippines

SM Services, as wished and planned by Sol, will continue to operate and serve the Filipino community and its hundreds of customers under the administration of Sol's sister Mei Mendoza.

POLITICAL NEWS

THRONE SPEECH TAKES CANADA IN WRONG DIRECTION

Up to Stéphane Dion to give Harper a 'mandate to govern' says Layton

OTTAWA – NDP Leader Jack Layton says the agenda laid out in the Harper Throne Speech continues to take Canada in the wrong direction on key issues and therefore cannot be supported.

On issue after issue, the

commitment to close the growing prosperity gap hurting middle class families.

"If Stephen Harper is looking for a mandate, he'll have to get it from Stéphane Dion and the Liberals," said Layton.

Layton called on Mr. Dion to ensure that all Liberals show up for



Prime Minister Stephen Harper sits tightly while listening to the speech from throne being delivered Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean.

Throne Speech failed to chart the right path on key issues," said Layton. "Everyday Canadians were looking for

votes on the Throne Speech in the coming days.

"A Throne Speech is a rare but



The Senate Chamber where the Governor General usually delivers the speech from the throne.

a change in direction on Afghanistan, a clear commitment on climate change and a recognition of the current hardships average families face despite signs of economic growth. This Throne Speech failed on all fronts: no new direction on Afghanistan, watering down the re-written Clean Air Act and

important opportunity to indicate whether you support the direction of the government or not. If Mr. Dion fails to show leadership, to oppose the Harper government, the NDP will do it." For more information, please contact: Karl Belanger, 613-720-6463 or karl@ndp.ca

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion Marks the 60th Anniversary of Canadian Citizenship Week

no TORONTO - Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion met members of the ethnic media council in Toronto yesterday to discuss how to move multiculturalism beyond the traditional concepts of tolerance and acceptance to true equality and partnership.

"Every year new Canadians affirm their commitment and dedication to Canada's laws, our democratic process, rights and freedoms, and our linguistic, multicultural and natural heritage," said Mr. Dion. "This fact should make us all proud and renew our hope for a brighter future - a future in which many more citizens of the world will choose to become citizens of Canada."

Meeting in Toronto with leaders from a wide range of cultural communities, Mr. Dion emphasized the Liberal Party's continued commitment to the concept of multiculturalism and had an open and frank dialogue about how multiculturalism policy can, and should, evolve in Canada.

Mr. Dion also reminded the members of the ethnic media council of Prime Minister Harper's Reform and Alliance Party roots.

"The 'New' Conservative government once called for the abolition of the department of Multiculturalism," said Mr. Dion.

Mr. Dion also noted that Mr. Harper said in 2001: "You've got to remember that west of Winnipeg the ridings the Liberals hold are dominated by people who are either recent Asian immigrants or recent migrants from eastern Canada: people who live in ghettos and who are not integrated into western Canadian society."

"This is a far cry from the true equality and partnership that needs to be established with new Canadians," said Mr. Dion.

-30-

A photo is available at: <http://www.liberal.ca/images/pages/council1.JPG>

Contact:
Press Office
Office of the Leader of the Opposition
(613) 995-5904

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's minority government has laid out an agenda of clean government,

The main points, most taken from last winter's Conservative election platform, include:

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean delivers the throne speech.

Legislation to "clean up government," with new rules on lobbying and campaign donations. # A one-point cut in the goods and services tax, to six per cent, with a possible cut to five per cent later.

"Direct financial support" for child care, with no mention of the dollar figure cited in the campaign, \$1,200 a year for each child under six. Continue Article

Tougher sentences for violent and repeat offenders, particularly those convicted of gun crimes, and more police on the street.

More elbow-room for "a strong and dynamic Quebec" within Canada, including a role for Quebec in UNESCO, the United Nations agency.

A formal apology for the Chinese "head tax" charged to Chinese immigrants between 1885 and 1923.

After the speech, Heritage Minister Bev Oda said the Tories were working with Chinese groups to find the "the fairest and most appropriate" way to compensate people for the tax. There are only about 800 left alive who paid the tax, but there are many descendants, she said.

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean began reading the speech after 3:35 p.m. EDT from a text by Harper's speechwriters.

Although it is delivered by the Governor General, the speech is the prime minister's. It sets out the government's broad goals for the new

See Page 20 Throne Speech



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In the Philippines, religion and nature collide

Story by Jon Hamilton

This is a story about what happens when the heavens and the earth collide — and who gets blamed.

Last November 2006, a typhoon slammed into the Philippines near the city of Legazpi. The wind and rain were so intense they sheared away the slopes of an 8,000-foot volcano.

Charlito Valderrama, who was living in a village below the volcano, described it as a "big bomb."



The Mayon volcano near Legazpi in the Philippines. A typhoon in 2006 triggered mudslides that wiped out nearby villages.

Torrents of water, volcanic mud and boulders as big as cars crashed down toward the ocean. Valderrama says his family was running for higher ground when they were swept away. Only three of nine family members survived.

"It was two days before they found my wife," Valderrama says. "They found her body in Santo Domingo."

Acts of God

Nearly a thousand people died in the typhoon. Valderrama seems sure he knows why the disaster occurred.

"It was the will of God," Valderrama says. "It was not because of man."

Many Catholics in the Philippines, who make up more than 80 percent of the population, believe that God is responsible for natural phenomena. But it's a sentiment the church is trying to change — and not just in the Philippines.

The Vatican has become very interested in climate change. This year, Pope Benedict XVI hosted a conference on global warming. And he has announced plans to preserve

forests, install solar cells, and make Vatican City a carbon-neutral state.

The Vatican considers global warming a pressing issue — in part because there is evidence that man is contributing to the problem, and in part because the effects will be felt most intensely by the poor.

In addition to being poor, the Philippines is vulnerable to extreme weather. In a warmer world, these islands are likely to see more flooding and more intense typhoons. As a result, Catholic leaders are asking people to do more to protect themselves — and their planet. It is a message that challenges some long-standing views about man's dominion over the earth.

One member of the clergy who has been especially vocal is Lucilo Quiambao, 75, the auxiliary Bishop of Legazpi.

During the typhoon, Quiambao was in his church, caring for people. He remembers watching the pews come loose from the floor as the waters rose toward the stained-glass windows.

"All those benches were floating," Quiambao says, walking through the sanctuary of St. Raphael Church. "You see the blessed sacrament there. Just around two inches from that line was the water."

He saved the organ by raising it up onto the altar. But many records of baptisms, marriages and deaths just floated away.

Firm Believers

The typhoon struck on a Thursday. At Mass on Sunday, Quiambao was surprised to see that the church was full.

"I thought people would be angry with God so they would not come," Quiambao says. "But no. They came — most of them would say, in thanksgiving, because at least we are alive."

But he says many of them misunderstood God's role in the disaster. So he gave an unusual sermon.

"I enlightened the people," Quiambao says. He told the worshippers that it was God who

brought order to all of creation. "But it is man who disordered everything and we are suffering the consequences of this."

Quiambao says it is also people's responsibility to fix the problem, and the church is helping them.

Stewardship of the Earth

In the Philippines, the task of caring for the earth often falls to younger members of the clergy — like



Tarp houses serve as temporary shelters for those who were displaced during the mudslides.

Father Jovic Lobrigo, a Franciscan. Jovic, whose church overlooks an area devastated by a mudslide, likes to remind people that St. Francis is the patron saint of the environment.

So it makes sense that he often speaks about what the church calls "stewardship of the earth."

"Yes, you are a primary creation," Jovic tells parishioners, "and you have superiority of all beings. But with it is responsibility of taking care of creation itself."

Otherwise, he says, the



A worker collects sand brought by the floods. He will use the sand to build new homes.

Philippines will eventually have fewer trees and more typhoons.

He tells people that truly understanding stewardship requires a long spiritual journey.

On a recent day, though, he takes his parishioners on a physical journey.

His congregation is helping to carry a statue of Mary from the ruins of an ancient church near the foot of the volcano to Father Jovic's church on the hill. Only the steeple of the old church remains above ground. Lava buried the rest, nearly two centuries ago.

Father Jovic says he understands why people blame God for volcanoes and typhoons.

"This is the simplest way of rationalizing what happened," Jovic says. "Because if you do that, then you don't blame anybody else but God." That thinking also absolves the individual from responsibility, Jovic says.

In Genesis, God gives man dominion over the earth. Jovic says many Christians have interpreted that to mean people can use the earth in any way they like. He says people in the Philippines have abused their power less than the residents of many other countries but that, even so, they need to do more for the earth. And he sees signs that it's happening.

A New Start

The procession of Father Jovic's parishioners winds up past a camp for people who lost their homes in the typhoon. It's the last place anyone would expect to find people worrying about their impact on the environment. And yet, some of them are.

A woman named Josephina Baliktau has spent most of the past year living in a plywood shed covered with a tarp. But she is praising God, because soon she'll have a new house made out of cement blocks.

"Little house," Baliktau says over and over as she admires her half-finished residence. But building new houses like this one has taken a toll on the environment.

"When we came here, there were many coconut trees," says Sister Merceline Galeshia. "And since we cannot build with the trees, the trees

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DUMANDAN ENTERPRISES

were cut down."and over as she admires her half-finished residence.

But building new houses like this one has taken a toll on the environment.

"When we came here, there were many coconut trees," says Sister Merceline Galeshia. "And since we cannot build with the trees, the trees were cut down."

Since then, she says, residents of



the camp have decided to plant a new tree for each one lost.

"We had cut down 80 coconut trees and were saying, 'Oh, it is something we have to replace or we'll be feeling the consequences of our decisions,'" she says.

The new trees, she says, are a way to help make peace between the heavens and the earth. ■

It's now possible to read the Filipino Star twice a month. Be sure to pick up your copy from an outlet nearest you.

Arroyo revives campaign for Charter change, federalism

October 15, 2007

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, facing renewed attempts in the legislature to impeach her, on Monday restarted the controversial campaign for Charter change.

In a speech in Pasay City at the regional workshop on the establishment of national human rights institutions across Asia, President Arroyo said she was forming a panel to draft "a road map to federalism by 2012."

New legislation

The President also stressed that she wanted new "legislation to affirm and expand executive issuances, and eventually Charter changes."

The panel, tasked to draw up regional planning structures, would include the Secretaries of the Interior and Local Government, Justice, Presidential Management Staff, National Economic and Development Authority, leaders of local government units and congressional leaders.

"Maybe even pro-federalism opposition leaders" should join the panel, the President said.

Immediate fire

Arroyo's announcement drew immediate fire from militant opposition leaders.

Rafael Mariano of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines) accused

her of trying to divide the country to cover up the many corruption issues now plaguing her administration.

The Charter change campaign of 2006, which took the form of a people's initiative to change the present bicameral presidential system to a parliamentary one -- with an eye toward gradually shifting to federalism -- was stopped by the Supreme Court as a "grand deception."

The high court ruled 8-7 that while a signature campaign could be used to amend provisions of the Charter, the proposed overhaul could only be done through a constitutional convention or through Congress acting as a constituent assembly. The latter method was shot down by the Senate.

The Palace had backed the people's initiative campaign led by House Speaker Jose de Venecia and officers of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP).

Reacting to the revival of the Charter change campaign, militant groups threatened to mobilize anew for protest demonstrations.

Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap, representing the fisherfolk, said it was becoming clear why the Palace was recently reported to be giving out bags of money to local officials.

Ermita surprised

"It is like President Arroyo saying, 'Congressmen, governors and local government officials, now you have your brown envelopes with you, it is

time for me to say what I want you to do for me. Let's dance again the Chacha,'" he added.

The President's announcement had taken even Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita by surprise.

"This is the first time in many months that I heard the President say that," said Ermita who was with the President.

"When I was listening to her it seemed... that eventually we may move to federalism."

Ermita confirmed that moves to change the 1987 Constitution have not been abandoned by the Arroyo administration.

Among the proposed Charter changes being pushed by Malacañang are economic provisions lifting restrictions on foreign investments in mining and other natural resource-based industries.

The 1987 Constitution requires 60 percent Filipino ownership of firms engaged in the exploitation of natural resources. This provision, discussed in a recent Senate hearing, would make unconstitutional a new Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) which opens fishing rights, among others, to Japanese companies.

Controversial, too, are the transitory provisions in the Charter change draft that would extend the terms of local officials.

Opposition leaders last year said they suspected that Ms Arroyo herself wanted to prolong her term beyond 2010. ■

RP launches mass measles vaccination

October 15, 2007

The Philippines launched a nationwide vaccination programme Monday to immunise nine million children against measles, the department of health said on its web site.

It said more than 10,000 vaccination teams will begin a month-long programme to immunise children aged between nine months and four years.

The Philippines hopes to eliminate measles by 2008, earlier than the 2012 target set by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Yolanda Oliveros, director of the department of health's National Center for Disease Prevention and Control was quoted by local media saying all health activities will be halted for a

month to ensure the success of the programme.



A doctor administers a vaccine

Although a safe vaccine has been available since 1963, measles remains a leading cause of childhood preventable death and disability.

It is estimated that 20,000 to 30,000 deaths a year in the region are due to measles. ■

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Isaac T. Goodine

Global Perspectives



On Body Language

"Watch my lips!"...was George H. Bush's way of appealing to his audience for credibility when, as a Candidate, he vowed that he would not raise taxes if elected President.

"Hips Don't Lie"...is pop singer Shakira's way of appealing to her audience for credibility as a modern day song and dance Diva.

As it turns out Bush's lips did lie; he raised taxes as president. However, Shaker's hips don't lie, according to a world wide audience who has scrutinized her hips by video. An army of true believers have made the popular young singer from Colombia a multimillionaire. Her real claim to fame is that she has contributed some \$40 million to a Foundation to help alleviate poverty for disadvantaged children in Latin America. "Good on her", as they say in Australia.

Body language is a very important part of communications, particularly for anyone working in a cross-cultural environment. In her book "Working in a Cross-cultural Environment," Violetta A. Laraya, wrote about her experience as Director of Administration at the Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education when the College relocated from Singapore to Manila. This international inter-governmental institution has been among the most successful institutions in the world in developing ways to enable participants to overcome cultural barriers based on stereotyping, language differences, religious belief, governance, and issues related to gender and generational customs. In all cross-cultural communications signs, symbols, mode of dress and of course body language, take on great significance. Canada's official policy on multiculturalism and the value of cultural diversity in society is currently in debate as efforts are underway to determine what "reasonable accommodation" for diversity is. Needless to say the debate is not always as rational as one might expect as stereotyping and prejudice create fear and discord that may be based on innuendo and ignorance.

As a former Director General of the Staff College I am well aware of the pitfalls and challenges that may confront anyone who enters the international workforce by any of the various existing regimes for career and employment mobility throughout the

Asia Pacific region. Now that Canada has designated China, India, and the Philippines as the countries in which to set up a new Canadian Immigration Integration Project to provide counseling for immigrants before they leave for Canada, it is an opportune time to consolidate past experience and draw on existing knowledge.

It is in that context that I can recommend to Canadians an educational program in International Business and Management (IBM) offered at the Colombo Plan Staff College in Manila. The program consists of custom designed courses of: two weeks; one month; and three months. with a six month course designed for those who need additional competence in English. The courses may be custom designed depending on the participants' needs and would accommodate persons who wish to enter the international labor market or, for those already working internationally, it offers the opportunity to strengthen interpersonal and cross-cultural skills in an international environment. This program is suitable to supplement the Canada based Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) program that offers a series of courses leading to a qualification as Certified International Trade Professional (CITP).

By blending, or dove-tailing the appropriate Modules of the internationally recognized IBM and FITT programs it is feasible to strengthen the overall efforts to: promote economic development through education and training designed to create and utilize human capital across international boundaries; facilitate international trade and commerce as a means of sharing prosperity; and unlock cultural resources that promote human understanding needed to realize the benefits of diversity and to foster world peace.

Cultural resources currently remain locked up in many cases when people move to another country to live and work, whether as landed immigrants, contract workers, or as students. Landed immigrants typically wait three to five years for processing and take 10 years to gain Canadian experience to catch up to their Canadian born colleague with comparable qualifications. Contract workers currently are processed more

quickly but there are many hurdles and delays to overcome. Cultural factors and related language issues constrain people unnecessarily. In regard to students, University enrollments in Canada have grown substantially in the last decade and 25 percent of the growth in enrollment was due to foreign students, accounting for about 75,000 students enrolled in 2006. The average investment per student is about \$35,000 per year, of which about half goes to the institution, so foreign students contribute \$2,625, 000,000 per year to the economy and about \$1,312,5 00,000 to the Universities. Once a student graduates, one-year's extension to the student visa may be granted to work on research related tasks and then the graduate must leave Canada. It is not just about the money and so counseling and attention to diversity issues for this population has been given higher priority in recent years and is partly responsible for the establishment of the International Educators Association of Canada, just a couple of years ago.

Currently there is much inefficiency and considerable frustration caused for employers as well as immigrants and contract workers throughout the country. Much of this frustration could be reduced by better accommodation of cultural differences. There are serious problems facing many immigrants and often they are not warned of these issues and face hardship. There is a Website dedicated specifically to would be immigrants to warn them of the various traps and pitfalls that may await them in Canada. The website is www.notcanada.com

Now for the good news: you don't need to read any lips and certainly don't need to watch any hips to understand this message. Things are improving all around. You can bet on it. The Forum for International Trade Training has signed a memorandum of understanding with the World Trade Centres Association to cooperate more fully.

The World Trade Centre, Montreal organized a workshop on doing Business in China recently, and I participated and was encouraged to see some interest. Gilmore College, in Montreal, is undergoing renovations and will offer additional courses, in which I may participate. The Province of Ontario has announced a new plan to recruit foreign workers to fill vacancies in the workforce, and I will participate in a workshop in Ottawa later this to learn more about the new plan. And finally, I am pleased to announce that I have been added to the Speakers Bureau of the World Bank Group, based in Washington DC.

Here is a final thought regarding the importance of body language; What if Bush had said "hips don't lie" and Shakira said "watch my lips"?

Isaac Goodine may be reached at: itgoodine20@hotmail.com

From Page 17 Throne Speech

session.

It is an occasion of parliamentary pomp. The Governor General, as the Queen's representative in Canada, speaks in the Senate chamber from an oak chair reserved for the head of state or her stand-in.

* IN DEPTH: Canada's Governor General

"In support of building a stronger Canada, the government's agenda will be clear and focused," the Governor General said.

"It will clean up government, provide real support to ordinary working families and strengthen our federation as well as our role in the world."

Streets 'under threat of gun, gang violence'

Canadian streets and communities "are increasingly under threat of gun, gang and drug violence," she said, adding that the government will "tackle crime" with amendments to the Criminal Code.

It will also improve border security, she said, without mentioning the question of issuing pistols to customs agents, an idea Harper has supported.

On taxes, she said the government "will continue with a responsible approach to lowering taxes," including a further GST cut to five per cent. She did not mention the personal income-tax cuts implemented by the Liberals in January. The Conservatives have said they would reverse those cuts.

The Governor General did not speak directly about an elected Senate – an idea dear to the hearts of many Conservatives – but said the government "will explore means to ensure that the Senate better reflects both the democratic values of Canadians and the needs of Canada's regions." ■

From Page 9 Philippine Cuisine

- * 2 egg yolks
- * 2 tablespoons grated cheddar cheese

Directions

1. Beat eggs and sugar till lemon colored. Add the rest of the ingredients. Pour into a greased 9x9 in pan lined with banana leaves (or cookie sheet).
2. Mix coconut milk with the flour. Add condensed milk and cook over medium heat till thick. Add egg yolks and mix well. Return to heat and cook 5 minutes more. Pour over baked bibingka. Sprinkle with the grated cheese and broil till golden brown. ■

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Philippines is latest outsourcing hot spot

October 10, 2007

India commands 40 percent of the worldwide business process outsourcing market. The Philippines wants to increase its comparatively tiny 4 percent share and mount a challenge to India's domination of the business it pioneered. It's an optimistic goal, to be sure. However, there is no shortage of optimism these days in the Philippines, where economic growth is trucking ahead at the fastest pace in almost 20 years.

U.S. companies looking to outsource overseas have found an attractive new home for their back-office operations -- and it's not India or China. It's the Philippines.

The Philippines has an aggressive new plan to more than double its market share of global business. Over 800,000 High Quality Domains Available For Your Business. Click Here. process outsourcing Latest News about Outsourcing by 2010. Banking on newfound economic stability and an English-speaking work force, the country is aiming for 10 percent of the market for outsourced jobs in customer service, financial market research and, at the top end, software development.

Challenging India

India commands 40 percent of the worldwide business process outsourcing market, which is otherwise highly fragmented. The Philippines wants to increase its comparatively tiny 4 percent share and mount a challenge to India's domination of the business it pioneered.

It's an optimistic goal, to be sure. However, there is no shortage of optimism these days in the Philippines, where economic growth is trucking ahead at the fastest pace in almost 20 years and where the country's president, a trained economist, has been able to push through crucial reforms to support business growth.

More than 600 foreign companies now employ about 240,000 workers in the Philippines, including Citigroup, IBM, insurer American International Group and the consulting firm Accenture. Companies say they're attracted to the country's low wages and large pool of English-speaking workers -- a legacy of U.S. involvement in the region a century ago.

Philippines bans poultry, bird imports from Canada

October 10, 2007

The Philippines has temporarily banned imports of poultry and live birds from Canada after a dangerous strain of bird flu was found on a chicken farm in a Canadian province, the agriculture department said on Wednesday.

Canadian veterinary officials said last month they found the H7N3 strain on a farm in the Saskatchewan province. The strain is not normally associated with human illness but is seen as a serious risk to animal health.

The Philippine agriculture department issued a memorandum saying the ban was meant to ensure

Roadmap 2010

The Business Processing Association of the Philippines recently previewed its "Roadmap 2010" toward outsourcing growth of 40 percent per year for the next two years. The government commissioned the trade group's study; Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo promoted the plan at its release on Sept. 27 to industry investors in New York.

Business outsourcing is the fastest-growing sector of the economy, Arroyo said in a speech.

"We're now focused on growing the higher value-added services segment of the knowledge process outsourcing industry -- accounting, legal, personnel and administrative services," she said.

The Philippines has a "strong Western culture affinity" that makes it easy to do business there, said Neil Elias, Philippines manager for LogicaCMG during the seminar. LogicaCMG's clients in the Philippines include Chevron and Germany's Deutsche Bank, he said.

The Philippines economy has grown a brisk 7 percent so far this year, the fastest expansion in nearly two decades. The growth has been driven by consumer demand, which has in turn been fueled by the billions in remittances that Filipinos working abroad send home each year. Revenue from the influx of business process outsourcing companies has also contributed.

Threats Remain

Still, there are threats to growth. Politics have often undermined progress. Arroyo has managed to survive crises including two coup attempts and two impeachment bids. Terrorism remains a concern, although most bomb attacks and kidnappings have been confined to areas outside the country's capital and economic center, Manila.

However, conditions have improved, and foreign direct investment has surged fivefold in three years.

Even India has taken notice -- as an investor. Standard & Poor's credit analyst Agost Benard, who covers India, Pakistan and the Philippines, says he has seen large Indian outsourcing firms start outsourcing in the Philippines. ■

the country remained bird flu free.

Manila has a similar ban on all live bird and poultry imports from Korea and Britain.

The Philippines is one of only three countries in Southeast Asia that has not had avian influenza since the virus resurfaced in Asia in 2003. The two others are Brunei and Singapore.

According to the World Health Organization, the H5N1 avian flu virus has infected 330 people since 2003, and killed 202 of them. More than 30 countries have reported outbreaks in the past year, in most cases involving wild birds such as swans. ■

Stellar ramps up call centre operations in Cubao

October 8, 2007

Stellar, a leading global call centre and business process outsourcing provider, today announced that Stellar Philippines has commenced recruiting inbound customer service representatives for their call centre in Cubao.

Stellar Philippines is experiencing rapid growth, and we currently plan on hiring 100 people per month until we reach our target of 1,100 employees said Arthur Harrow, Chief Executive Officer, Stellar Philippines. We are quickly establishing a reputation as an employer of choice here in Cubao, and our call centre facilities and employment conditions are world class.

The current recruitment drive supports the recent acquisition of two new clients from North America who have outsourced their inbound call centre services to Stellar.

The new centre in Cubao is fully

equipped with the latest call centre technology. It has an impressive array of staff amenities, including a dedicated recruitment and training centre, kitchen, dining and recreation rooms, Internet café and sleeping quarters.

The centre is strategically located in Cubao, Metro Manila, within the CBD of Quezon City, which is serviced by excellent transport infrastructure. Stellar staff enjoy the convenience of working in a location serviced by both the LRT and MRT train systems and being surrounded by a number of large commercial malls for shopping and eating out.

The new Cubao centre is located at Superstore Building, Times Square Street, Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City and prospective employees can contact Niza Sarmiento, Vice President Human Resources, by email jobs@stellargsp.com to find out more about current career opportunities. ■

India, Philippines Agree to Boost Trade, Cooperate in Fighting Terrorism

October 5, 2007

India and the Philippines signed several agreements to strengthen economic relations and cooperate in fighting terrorism as Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo met with Indian leaders Friday.

Law enforcing agencies in the two countries will share information and work together to prevent terrorism and the financing of terrorist acts, according to a joint declaration signed after Arroyo held talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Both sides also agreed to set up a joint commission that will explore measures to boost bilateral trade and investment. They also signed agreements to cooperate in renewable energy and health care.

"As one of the neighbors of India in the east-Asian region we are happy to be here to move the integration of our economies forward," Arroyo said after the Indian president welcomed her earlier Friday.

India's exports to the Philippines

totaled \$490 million in the fiscal year ended March 2006 and imports from the Philippines were \$255 million in the same period.

The numbers are far below the potential, officials from both sides said.

She said her government also planned to encourage the importation of medicines from India to help cut the price of medicines by half.

Indian software companies such as Infosys Technologies Ltd. and Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. have entered joint ventures in information technology services in the telecommunication and banking sectors in the Philippines over the past two years.

Arroyo said she hoped India's fast-paced economic growth would translate into more investment in the Asian region. India's rapid economic growth has been averaging nearly 9 percent annually over the last couple of years. ■

RP promoted as destination for Bollywood filmmakers

October 8, 2007

The Philippines' spectacular beaches and other interesting places may soon be seen in Bollywood movies as President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo invited Indian filmmakers to consider the country as an alternative site for producing movies.

In her speech before the Indian and Filipino business forum at the Oberoi Hotel in Mumbai the President said Bollywood movies may soon be produced in the Philippines.

She said when she invited Indian filmmakers during a meeting, "they agreed to visit the Philippines before the end of the year to look for film locations." Aditya Raj Kapoor, a leading

producer in India, has committed to make a movie in the Philippines within a year, she added.

Tourism Secretary Durano said Kapoor pledged to produce a US\$10 million Indian movie in the Philippines.

President Arroyo said the Philippines offers fine locations, creative Filipino talents, post-production houses and studios, and other technical and logistics requirements for Bollywood, one of the largest film industry in the world, which produces some 1,000 films each year.

"This is an advantage not only for investments but also as a film location site for the largest movie industry in the world - Bollywood," she said. ■

RP officials protest racial slur against Philippine health professionals

October 3, 2007

The Philippines Wednesday expressed "displeasure" over a racial slur made against Philippine medical schools and professionals in a United States award winning television show.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Claro Cristobal said Philippine Consul General to Los Angeles Mary Jo Bernardo Aragon has written to the producer of the ABC TV Network show to express the Philippine government's dismay "over the remarks made about our Filipino medical schools".

In a season premiere aired in the U.S. on Sept. 30, "Desperate Housewives" character Susan Mayer, which was played by actress Teri Hatcher, was featured in an episode wherein she was consulting a gynecologist about menopause.

Mayer said: "Can I check those diplomas because I want to make sure that they're not from some med school in the Philippines?"

The spokesman said the Philippine medical profession is highly regarded all over the world as evidenced by high demand of Filipino healthcare professionals in many countries, including the United States.

"The Philippines is also considered a top medical tourism destination with many foreigners including U.S. citizens who choose to undergo surgical and other medical procedures in

recognition of high quality and reasonably priced medical services," said the spokesman.

The Philippine presidential palace has also expressed unhappiness over the racial slur in the TV show.

"Well, on the face, we can look at it as a racial slur. We are looked down upon too much, considering the number of our medical professionals (in the U.S.)," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told a news conference at the Malacanang presidential palace.

Asked if the Palace would seek an apology from the producers of the show, as well as the local television network ABC which carries it, Ermita said: "Yes, I think we should, on behalf of our Filipino professionals."

Ermita also appealed to civil society groups and other Filipino organizations in the U.S. to "call the attention" of the show producers to the "racial slur." Several Filipinos, mostly in the medical field, denounced the discriminatory remarks against Philippine medical schools and demanded an apology from the show's producer.

"Desperate Housewives", which aired in October 2003, features the lives of five sub-urban housewives living along Wisteria Lane in the fictional American town of Fairview.

Aside from Hatcher, the show stars Felicity Huffman (as Lynette Scavo),

Marcia Cross (Bree Van De Kamp), Nicollette Sheridan (Edie Britt) and Eva Longoria (Gabrielle Solis).

The show is aired locally over Studio 23 of Filipino television cable net.

The local daily Philippine Daily

Government imposes ban to revive biggest reef

October 10, 2007

The Philippines has tightened laws banning fishing and collecting of species on the country's largest coral reef to help it recover from near destruction, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature said on Tuesday.



The 27,400 hectare Apo Reef off the coast of Mindoro island was almost drained of life by heavy fishing, including by dynamite and cyanide, which left only a third of coral cover by the early 1990s.

A ban on fishing, only partially enforced since it took effect in 1994, has helped restore some of the reef so that around half is now alive. Now a new local law, brought in this week, is stepping up protection in what was once of the world's top dive spots.

Inquirer first reported about the incident on a blog run by one of its reporters.

The United States recruits thousands of Filipino nurses each year to work in American hospitals. ■

"It has been declared a 'no-take zone' to allow the reef and the various species around it ample time to recover from years of fishing," said Gregg Yan of the World Wildlife Fund-Philippines.

Yan said the marine park would be opened for tourists to help generate funds for its protection as well as provide an alternative livelihood for hundreds of fishermen in the area.

The Philippines tops a list of hotspots for endangered coral reefs due to destructive fishing methods and pollution, the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science said in a recent report published in "Science" magazine.

Some of the endangered species are returning to the reefs.

"A few months back, divers saw a school of over a hundred scalloped hammerhead sharks," Yan told reporters, adding that groups of manta and eagle rays had also been sighted in "ever-higher concentration."

"Even giants like the whaleshark and sperm whales are being seen regularly, an indicator that biodiversity levels are returning," he said. ■

In the Philippines, cell phones double as electronic wallets

October 7, 2007

It's Thursday, so 18-year-old Dennis Tiangco is off to a bank to collect his weekly allowance, zapped by his mother - who's working in Hong Kong - to his electronic wallet: his cell phone.

Sauntering into a branch of GM Bank in the town of San Miguel, Tiangco out a form and sends a text message via his phone to a bank line dedicated to the service.

In a matter of seconds, the transaction is approved and the teller gives him 2,500 pesos (\$54), minus a 1 percent fee. He doesn't need a bank account to retrieve the money.

More than 5.5 million Filipinos now use their cell phones as virtual wallets, making the Philippines a leader among developing nations in providing financial transactions over mobile networks.

Mobile banking services, which are also catching on Kenya and South Africa, enable people who don't have bank accounts to transfer money easily, quickly and safely. It's spreading in the developing world because mobile phones are much more common than bank accounts.

The system is particularly useful for the 8 million Filipinos - 10 percent of the country's citizens - who work overseas and send money home, like Tiangco's mother, Anna Tiangco. Previously, she sent money via a bank wire transfer, which costs \$2.50 and

takes two days to clear. The cell phone method costs 13 cents and is nearly instantaneous.

"The good thing here is, wherever my children are, they can text me and I can send money immediately," she said by telephone from Hong Kong.

Consumers also can store limited amounts of money on their cell phones to buy things at stores that participate in the network - although this practice isn't widespread in the Philippines.

Many more Filipinos use their phones to send airtime values called "loads" to prepaid subscribers. A parent, for example, can send a 60-peso load to replenish a child's cell phone, charged to the parent's account.

While Japanese and South Korean consumers have been using cell phones as virtual wallets for several years, those systems use a computer chip implanted in a handset that allows people to buy things by waving the phone in front of a sensor. The Philippine system relies on simple text messages.

The 41 million cell phone users in the Philippines are avid texters. The electronic connections have fostered a culture of quick greetings and forwarded jokes. Text messages also played a key role in mobilizing crowds that fueled the 2001 "people power" revolt that ousted President Joseph Estrada.

The Philippines' two biggest

mobile service providers, Globe Telecom and Smart Communications, have harnessed this penchant for text messaging to enable consumers to enter the world of e-commerce.

Tapping into the cash flow from overseas Filipinos - who sent home \$12.7 billion last year - Globe and Smart forged partnerships with foreign mobile providers and banks, as well as with local banks and merchants, to create a network that allows users to send and receive cash internationally.

When Anna Tiangco wants to send cash home, for example, she goes to a branch of her local provider, Hong Kong CSL Ltd., where a clerk credits her cell phone with the amount she has brought with her. She then transfers the money to family members via text messages - in essence instructing her providers to deduct money from her balance to the recipients she indicates.

If a cell phone loaded with cash values is lost or stolen, the money can't be tapped as long as the personal identification number isn't revealed. Control over the funds can be restored with a replacement SIM card from either mobile provider.

The system was "built for remote payments and for the unbanked markets," said Rizza Maniego Eala, president of G-Xchange, Globe's subsidiary in charge of its G-Cash money transfer service.

Eala said her company's 500,000 G-Cash users transfer about \$100 million monthly, but she declined to say how many transactions involve remittances from overseas.

Smart offers a slightly different money transfer system, used by about 5 million Filipinos, that links cash or a debit card to a cell phone.

Users load their phones with money via text messages. The card - which costs 200 pesos but does not require a bank account - can then be used to purchase goods in establishments that accept MasterCard, or to withdraw cash from an ATM.

Smart Communications spokesman Ramon Isberto said each time the recipient spends the money, the sender receives a transaction message. That allows the sender to see how the funds are used.

"The added value there now is that Filipinos overseas have greater control over their funds. Believe me, that is important to them," he said.

Aside from transferring cash and making purchases, both Globe and Smart also allow their users to pay bills with their phones. Anna Tiangco said she pays her family's electric bills in San Miguel from Hong Kong via text messages, just like she sends money.

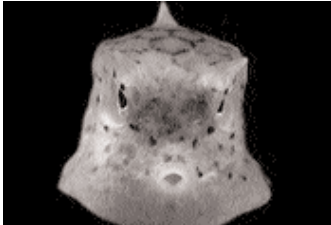
"Even if we are far apart, it's like we are still together," she said. "This is like my wallet now." ■

Scientists discover rare marine species

October 15, 2007

Scientists exploring a deep ocean basin in search of species isolated for millions of years found marine life believed to be previously undiscovered, including a tentacled orange worm and an unusual black jellyfish.

Project leader Dr. Larry Madin said Tuesday that U.S. and Philippine scientists collected about 100 different specimens in a search in the Celebes Sea south of the Philippines.



A photo of juvenile boxfish, collected by a diver in the Celebes Sea, is shown during a briefing on Monday, Oct. 15, 2007, in Manila, Philippines.

Madin, of the Massachusetts-based Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, said the sea is at the heart of the "coral triangle" bordered by the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia - a region recognized by scientists as having a high degree of biological

diversity.

The deepest part of the Celebes Sea is 16,500 feet. The team was able to explore to a depth of about 9,100 feet using a remotely operated camera.

"This is probably the center where many of the species evolved and spread to other parts of the ocean, so it's going back to the source in many ways," Madin told a group of journalists, government officials, students and U.S. Ambassador Kristie Kenney and her staff.

The project involved the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and National Geographic Magazine in cooperation with the Philippine government, which also provided the exploration ship.

The expedition was made up of more than two dozen scientists and a group from National Geographic, including Emory Kristof, the underwater photographer who was part of the team that found the wreckage of the Titanic in 1985.

The group returned to Manila on Tuesday after spending about two weeks in the Celebes Sea off Tawi-Tawi, the Philippines southernmost provincial archipelago nearly 700 miles south of Manila.

Madin said the specimens they collected included several possibly newly discovered species. One was a sea cucumber that is nearly

transparent which could swim by bending its elongated body. Another was a black jellyfish found near the sea floor.

The most striking creature found was a spiny orange-colored worm that had 10 tentacles like a squid, Madin said. "We don't know what it is ... it might be something new," he said.

He said it would take "a few more weeks" of research to determine whether the species are newly discovered. He expects to release a report by early next month.

National police given a friendly makeover

October 12, 2007

The Philippines is starting to give its 110,000 policemen a makeover, trying to make them more like friendly neighbours than their current hard man image, the new national police chief said.

Avelino Razon also said he has ordered police officers to stop wearing expensive jewellery, such as gold necklaces, bracelets and rings, to remove suspicions they were corrupt.

For a start, Mr Razon, said he has ordered 500 police officers to patrol the streets of the capital Manila with a baton and whistle.

He has barred them from carrying assault rifles and has said handguns should be used only as a last resort.

The number will be increased progressively, Mr Razon, who used to head the national police commando

Madin said the Celebes Sea, being surrounded by islands and shallow reefs, is partially isolated now and may have been more isolated millions of years ago, leading scientists to believe that "there may be groups of organisms that have been contained and kept within" the basin since then.

"That makes it an interesting place to go and look to see what we might find," he said. ■

unit, told reporters.



A riot policeman pulls down the visor of a colleague during a protest against President Arroyo's State of the Nation address in Manila, July 23, 2007.

"We're trying to go back to the basics. We'll be training our police officers to blow whistles instead of firing their handguns in the air to stop crime," he said. ■



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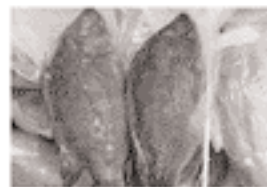
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