

TWO BIG INDEPENDENCE DAY EVENTS IN ATHENS

Three in Cyprus

... with the Filipino Community

Independence Day festivities in Athens began on June 10 with the “*Pista ng Kalayaang Pilipino sa Gresya*” at the Fokianos/Zappeion Basketball Court organized by the Philippine Embassy and the Filipino Community in Athens.

The day-long event began with a parade led by Ambassador Rigoberto D. Tiglao and Madame Getsy Tiglao, with the participation of the Philippine Embassy Officers and staff, and Filipino organizations.

Ambassador Tiglao and Embassy officials read the Independence Day messages of H.E. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Secretary Alberto Romulo, Secretary Arturo Brion, and

OWWA Administrator Marianito Roque.

Cultural presentations of various Filipino organizations in Athens featured dances and songs from the various regions of the country performed by students of Philippine schools and selected members of the Filipino Community.

There were dance interpretations of *Binuyugan*, *La Jota Moncadenia*, *Gaway-gaway*, *Alay*, and *Tinikling*; while the songs included *Kataka-taka*, *Kalesa*, *Byahe Tayo*, *Tagumpay Nating Lahat*, *Isang Lahi*, and *Awit ng Pangarap*.

A contest on ‘Best in National Costume’ was also held to highlight the different regional Philippine attires.

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Ambassador Rigoberto D. Tiglao and Mme. Getsy Tiglao welcome Deputy Foreign Minister Evripidis Stylianidis at the diplomatic reception held on June 12 at the Hotel Grand Bretagne in Athens.

... with the Diplomatic Corps

In the evening of June 12, Ambassador Rigoberto Tiglao and Madame Getsy Tiglao hosted a reception attended by some 250 guests at the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Grande Bretagne, the most prestigious venue in Athens and considered one of the top hotels in Europe.

Guests included Deputy Foreign Minister Evripidis Stylianidis, ambassadors from the Asia-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, ranking officials of the Greek government, the special representative of the mayor of Athens, Christina Deligianni, Chief of Staff of Member of Parliament Stavros Daliakis, and leaders of the Filipino Community.

Greek shipping industry magnates and executives also attended the reception, such as Olympic Carriers’ Antonious Antoniou, Micha Cattai, Katia Filippou of the Hellenic Blue Seafarers Maritime Services, and Gabriel Petrides, one of the two owners of the Aries shipping and energy conglomerate. Close Greek friends of the ambassador attended the event, such as the Philippines’ Thessaloniki Honorary Consul Nikolaos Margaropoulos, Dr. Marcos Fojas, Dr. Helen Marcoyannoupoulo-Fojas, businessman Yorgos Psinakis, and Arthur Antenucci. Prominent Athinian surgeons Prof. Niklas Lygidakis and Dr. Ioannis Lyras were also in the reception.

Guests enjoyed Filipino dishes prepared by the Embassy staff and the Filipino Community. The world-famous Philippine beer, ‘San Miguel Pale Pilsen’

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Ambassador and Madame Tiglao lead Embassy officials and personnel in singing the National Anthem at the Flag-Raising ceremony on 12 June 2007 at the Embassy. The ceremony was followed by a traditional Filipino breakfast.



More photos on pages 4-5, Cyprus celebrations, page 6.

Highlights of Law 3536/2007

Issuance and renewal of residence/work permits of citizens of third countries in Greece

☑ According to the new Law 3536/2007, which amends 3386/2005, citizens of a third country who wish to renew their residence permit may now apply for renewal two (2) months before the expiration of his/her permit. Permits may also be renewed one (1) month after its expiration; however, the applicant must

(Continued on page 3)

RP, Greek officials to negotiate social security agreement in Manila

The second round of negotiations for the Philippines-Greece Social Security Agreement is scheduled to be held in Manila in October 2007 between officials of the Social Security System (SSS) of the Philippines and Greek Ministry of Labor and Social Security. The meeting is upon the invitation of the Philippine Government, and had

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Spotlight

Dr. Marcos Fojas Honored by 'Filipino Image' Magazine



In April 2007, **Dr. Marcos R. Fojas**, a Filipino ophthalmologist residing in Athens, Greece, was named as one of the Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad (TOFA) by the Filipino Image (FILIMAGE) Magazine based in Washington DC.

For the past twenty years, this prestigious award has been given annually to Filipinos living abroad who have made a name for the Philippines and in their host countries. As quoted by the magazine, Dr. Fojas has now become a member of the International Circle of Filipino Leaders, and is the lone awardee from Europe. He will receive the Award in September 2007 during a ceremony to be held in Washington DC, USA.

Dr. Fojas demonstrated his commitment to the welfare of Filipinos in Athens when he was one of the founders of the Katipunan Philippines Cultural Academy. He managed the school as President of the Kaphilca Board of Trustees for eight years until 2005, during which time the school reached a peak enrolment of about 200 students. Dr. Fojas continues to serve Kaphilca as the Philippine Ambassador's Special Adviser on Kaphilca Affairs. He played the crucial role in securing for Kaphilca the required authorization to operate as a school from the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. Consequently, Kaphilca is now the only school in Europe for Filipinos overseas that is recognized by the host government.

Dr. Fojas is married to Dr. Helen Marcocoyannopoulou-Fojas, a world-renowned cardiologist, who has also been committed to promoting Filipinos' health in Greece. ■

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Birth: 17 March 1931 in Manila

Married to Dr. Helen Marcocoyannopoulou

Children: Angel Constantino and George

EDUCATION:

Valedictorian, Torres High School, November 1948.

Sixth Place, University of the Philippines (UP) College of Medicine, March 1956

Sixth Place, Medical Board Examinations, August 1956

MEDICAL EXPERIENCE:

Ophthalmologist, UP-PGH Medical Center

Chief Researcher, Philippine Eye Research Institute

Project Director of the "Operation Sight Saver" which extended free eye care to thousands of indigent patients in slum and rural areas of the Philippines in the 1960s

Secretary Treasurer, Philippine Ophthalmological Society

Professorial Lecturer, Teacher Training Program for the Blind

Assistant Editor, Philippine Journal of Ophthalmology

Awarded a **Colombo Plan Scholarship** in London from 1960-1961

Consultant Ophthalmologist, Evangelismos University Hospital, the biggest General Hospital in the Balkan Area after moving to Athens, Greece in the 1970's.

Director and Chief, Ophthalmological Department, Kinshasa General Hospital in the Republic of Zaire (formerly the Belgian Congo) from 1971-1973.

AWARDS:

Recipient, Presidential Banaag Award, December 2005

Inducted into the Grand Ordre des Mediciens du Zaire for outstanding services to the people of Zaire from 1971-1973

KAPHILCA Holds 5th Commencement Exercises

The Katipunan Philippines Cultural Academy (KAPHILCA), the Philippine School in Greece, held its Fifth Commencement Exercises and Tenth Closing Ceremonies on 23 June 2007 at Danaos Theatre in Athens.

Ambassador Rigoberto D. Tiglao graced the occasion and conferred medals, awards and certificates to the twenty graduates. He was assisted by KAPHILCA Director Roberto Fresnido.

Dr. Marcos R. Fojas, former President of the Board of Trustees of KAPHILCA and Special Adviser to the Ambassador on KAPHILCA Affairs, delivered the commencement address.

Around 450 people attended the graduation which included parents and

relatives, as well as friends of KAPHILCA pupils and the entire school community.

KAPHILCA is accredited with the Department of Education of the Philippines having been granted accreditation for all three levels of basic education. It was granted a permit to operate in Greece by the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs in a Note Verbale sent to the Embassy dated 15 November 2006 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Resolution No. 01-2006 issued on 9 June 2006 by the Inter-Agency Committee on Philippine Schools Overseas placed KAPHILCA under the direct supervision of the Philippine Embassy in Athens and authorizes the Embassy to take steps as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of the resolution. ■

COA Visits Athens

A six-woman delegation from the Commission on Audit (COA) was in Athens for an official visit from 18-29 June 2007.

The team was headed by Director Aida Maria Talavera and included State Auditors Delia Monte de Ramos, Victoriana Maquiling, Alma Harder, Adela Dondonilla and Belen Ladines.

The auditing is standard practice for foreign-based government agencies (FBGAs) under the Department of Foreign Affairs, and includes the attached agencies of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO), the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Pag-Ibig Fund Overseas Office.

The auditing was done at the Embassy premises and the Filipino Workers Resource Center (FWRC). ■

ATHENS PE ACHIEVES 32% VOTER TURNOUT DURING OAV EXERCISE

A total of 1,867 voters, or 32% of the registered 5,907, took part in the month-long Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) exercise in Athens from 14 April – 14 May 2007, thus giving the Philippine Embassy in Athens the distinction of having achieved one of the highest number of voter turnout.

There was even a voter from the islands who traveled by overnight boat to Athens to cast her vote, Mrs. Virginia B. Turiano from Chios, an island which lies just a few miles from the coast of Turkey.

During the first weekend of May, a team led by Consul General Eleanor Jaucian traveled by van to the northern city of Thessaloniki and was able to serve 74 voters, representing almost 80% of the total eligible voters in that area.

The Embassy attributes the successful voter

turnout to the various meetings with the Accredited Community Partners (ACPs)/ Filipino Community leaders held prior to the OAV period, when everyone was urged to participate in the elections, thus availing of the benefits of the political exercise abroad. The Filipino Community was also challenged to equal, if not surpass, the voter turnout achieved during the 2004 Presidential Elections that saw the Philippine Embassy in Athens rank among the top 5 posts in Europe.

The successful overseas voting in Athens was also due to the aggressive and energetic information dissemination campaign undertaken by every member of the staff, led by Ambassador Tiglao, particularly during after-office hours, such as attendance at Filipino Community gatherings, private celebrations, competitions and distribution of leaflets in venues frequented by Filipinos throughout Athens and soliciting the support of the Embassy's staff and friends. ■



Lauro Caparas (*extreme left*) was the first OFW in Greece to cast his ballot during the overseas absentee voting (OAV) for the 2007 Senatorial and Party List Elections.

LAW 3536/2007, (Continued from page 1)

pay a fine.

☑ With regard the renewal of the permit for dependant work, the new law allows those who have not completed the required minimum IKA stamps to buy out the rest, up to 20% of the total stamps. Moreover, the residence permit for dependant work can be transformed to a residence permit for independent economic activity after three years following its first issuance.

☑ The new law also allows citizens of third countries who stayed in Greece until December 31, 2004 to obtain a temporary residence permit. The required supporting documents will be defined with a Ministry's Decision. The deadline of submission of applications is 30 September 2007.

☑ Those who have applied for the renewal of their residence permit after the implementation of Law 3386/2005 and lack the required minimum IKA stamps may now buy out the rest of them. ■

Athens PE Acquires Passport Printing Machine

Beginning the third week of January 2007, passports and visas issued by the Philippine Embassy in Athens have been typed on an 'IBM Wheelwriter 35 by Lexmark' machine specially flown in from Los Angeles, California. Prior to

this, passports were scripted by hand.

The machine resembles an electric typewriter, but has an extra mechanism which allows the insertion of thicker passports. Typing errors can now be more easily corrected, minimizing spoilage. In addition, the passports have acquired a 'modern' look like the ones being issued by other countries. ■



IMPORMASYON UKOL SA INYONG PASAPORTE

Republic Act 8239 or the Philippine Passport Act of 1996, states that the acquisition of a Philippine Passport is a **PRIVILEGE**, hence it remains at all times the property of the Philippine Government.

A passport is a document that is superior to all other official documents. As such, it should be accorded by its holder the highest respect and care. To do damage to its integrity and validity is a serious crime and punishable by law.

GROUNDS FOR DENIAL, CANCELLATION OF PASSPORT

An applicant may be denied issuance of a passport for the following reasons:

1. on order of the court;
2. upon the formal request by the natural or legal guardian when applicant is a minor;
3. *when the applicant has been found to have violated any of the provisions of R.A. 8239 or the Philippine Passport Act of 1996;*
4. upon the lawful order of the Secretary when it deems it necessary to the interest of national security, public safety or public health;
5. *upon failure of the applicant to present documentary proof as specified in Article 6, Section 1(E) hereof;*
6. such other disqualifications under existing laws.

Para sa aming kababayan sa Gresya at Cyprus,

We wish to assure you that assisting Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) remains the highest priority of the Philippine Embassy.

Mabuhay ang Pilipino sa Gresya at Cyprus!!

Consular Section

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Pista ng Kalayaang Pilipino sa Gresya, 10 June 2007, Zappeion Court, Athens



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao lead the officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy personnel and the members of the Filipino Community during the parade that officially opened the festivities in Zappeion Court.



From left: Mr. Royce Edrozo, Ms. Tess Doe, Ms. Tess Sells, and Mr. Sixto Umandap lead the Invocation.



Amb. Tiglao reads the Independence Day Message of H.E. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, while Consul General Eleanor Jaucian, Labor Attaché George Eduvala and Welfare Officer Jocelyn Hapal read the messages of Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, Labor Secretary Arturo Brion, and OWWA Administrator Marianito Roque, respectively.



Exequila Aledon leads the singing of *Lupang Hinirang*.



Students of KAPHILCA serenade the audience with a medley of Filipino songs: *Kataka-taka*, *Kalesa* and *Byahe Tayo*.



Students of KAPHILCA dance the *La Jota Moncadena*.



Members of Youth for Christ (YFC) dance the *Tinikling* like a pro.



Members of Servants Community interpret *Ako ay Pilipino*.



Members of Abrenians in Greece perform the Tinguians ethnic dance.



Athina Bravo belts out *Isang Lahi*.



The OWWA Graduates Chorale, composed of graduates of OWWA courses, sing *Awit ng Pangarap*.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao pose with the winners of the *Best in National Costume*.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao with Mr. Joel Capuz, one of the winners of a round trip ticket to Manila during the Raffle Draw.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao with the members of *Minus One*, winner of the event's Youth Band Competition.



Amb. Bobi Tiglao and Mme. Getsy Tiglao pose with some of the Accredited Community Partners (ACPs) in Greece.

National Day Reception, 12 June 2007, Hotel Grand Bretagne, Athens



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao greet officials from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Elsa Zorbala and Amb. Constantine Giovas; and Ministry of Tourism International Affairs Director, Amb. Alexis Christophoulos.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao welcome the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Patrick Coveney and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Estonian Amb. Andres Unga.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao with the ASPAC Ambassadors: Thai Amb. Chatchawed Chartsuwan, Chinese Amb. Tian Xuejun, Korean Amb. Bae Young-han, Australian Amb. Paul Tighe, Indian Amb. Bhaskar Balakrishnan, Indonesia CDA Hadi Sasmito and Japanese Deputy Chief of Mission Masaki Takano.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao with colleagues from the Middle East: Israeli Amb. Ali Yahya, Kuwaiti Amb. Khaled Al-Duwallah, Syrian Amb. Souad Al-Ayoubi, and Iranian Amb. Mehdi Mohtashami.



With Angolan Amb. Isaias Vilinga and South African Amb. Mandisa Dona Marasha.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao greet the European Union (EU) Ambassadors: Spanish Amb. Juan Salazar, Austrian Amb. Herbert Kröll, Czech Amb. Hana Mottlova, and Cyprus Amb. Georgios Georgis.



With Amb. Tahsin Burcuoğlu of Turkey.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao with Thessaloniki Consul a.h. Nikolaos Margaropoulos (extreme left), Arthur Antenucci, Micha and Feny Cattai, and Yorgos Psinakis. Mr. Psinakis, a nephew of anti-Marcos dictatorship militant and former Meralco top executive Steve Psinakis, is active in promoting Greek-Philippines trade.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao with Consul Patricia Barrera and popular singer, Jose Mari Chan, and his wife.



Amb. Tiglao samples a can of San Miguel beer. San Miguel Corporation (SMC) generously donated San Miguel Pale Pilsen and its new product, Hess Malt Beer, for the reception.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao with 2005 Presidential Banaag Awardee Dr. Marcos Fojas, Ms. Yvette Jarvis, representative of Athens Mayor Nikitas Kakkamanis, and Dr. Helen Marcoyannopoulou-Fojas, a world-renowned Greek cardiologist.



Amb. and Mrs. Tiglao are flanked by Consul Patricia Barrera, Consul General Ellen Jaucian, renowned artist Anton Juan (from left), Cultural Officer Analy Turiano, designer Dita Sandico-Ong (from right), and members of the Filipino Community.

CYPRUS Corner



SHEMAINE ALONZO
BUSHNELL-
KYRIAKIDIS
New Honorary
Consul, Nicosia

Mrs. Shemaine ('Ginger') Alonzo Bushnell-Kyriakides is the new Philippine Honorary Consul in Nicosia, Cyprus, who officially assumed her position on 02 May 2007.

She is married to Mr. Alexis Kyriakides, a Cypriot citizen, and has been residing in Cyprus for the past two years.

Mrs. Bushnell was born in Cebu and moved to California during her high school years.

She graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) with a degree in B.A., Political Science, with emphasis on International Relations.

She worked for Fox News Channel/ 20th Century Fox from 1996-2003 as Regional Show Manager/Satellite Feed Supervisor, Assignment Desk Editor/Producer, and Field Producer/ Assistant Planning Editor.

From 2003-2004, she was the PR Manager/Events Coordinator for Davick PR in Los Angeles, California.

From 2004 to the present, she is the owner / manager of Leason USA, a successful international export business.

FILIPINOS IN CYPRUS CELEBRATE 109TH INDEPENDENCE

The Filipino Community in Cyprus celebrated the 109th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence with two celebrations in the capital, Nicosia; and one each in Limassol and Paphos.

The celebration on June 3 in Nicosia was hosted by the Visayan Region Overseas Workers and Friends Organization at the Solomon Square Park and was attended by Labor Attaché Atty. Jaime Gimenez and Mrs. Shemaine Bushnell-Kyriakides, the newly-appointed Philippine Honorary Consul.

There was a cultural presentation by Filipinos from Nicosia and Larnaca.



Labor Attaché Jaime Gimenez and Honorary Consul Shemaine Kyriakidis (2nd and 4th from left) pose with the winners of *Queen of the Philippine Independence Day 2007* held on 03 June 2007 in Nicosia.

Former Honorary Consul Vanthoula Tsaousis-Constantinides sponsored the uniforms of the dancers belonging to the Consular Volunteers group.

The celebration on June 10 in Nicosia was hosted by

'Tinig Pinoy Filipino Voice' at Tripoli Park, and was attended by Filipinos from Nicosia, Limassol and Paphos. Labor Attaché Jimenez read the Independence Day message of H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, while Honorary Consul Kyriakides sent a representative as she had to leave for the United States. Guests included Cypriot businessmen close to the Filipino Community.

A celebration was held in Limassol on June 17 and in Paphos on June 24. ■
Based on a report from Joy Miranda / photos from



Volunteer OFWs entertain the spectators with a Filipiniana dance at *Tinig Pinoy Filipino Voice's* Independence Day celebration in Nicosia on 10 June 2007.



Shown above are the members of the Consular Volunteers, a group of Filipino overseas workers in Cyprus that helps the Philippine Embassy in providing immediate assistance to distressed OFWs in Cyprus.

RP-Greece Social Security, (Continued from page 1)

earlier been scheduled for mid-December 2006 but was postponed by the Greek Government due to unforeseen obligations.

The meeting in Manila is a follow-up to the first round of negotiations held in Athens on 11-14 April 2005 attended by

officials of the Philippine Embassy in Athens and the Philippine Social Security

System (SSS), and officials of the major Greek social security institutions - the Social Security Institute (IKA) for salaried workers, Agricultural Insurance Organization (OGA) for farmers and the General Secretariat for Social Security from the Ministry of Employment and Social Security.

The bilateral Social Security Agreement with Greece was proposed by the Philippines in 1997 to benefit Filipinos working in Greece. ■

The Philippine Embassy welcomes...



Ms. Lina G. Catbagan assumed her duties and responsibilities as Collecting Officer and Consular Assistant at the Philippine Embassy in Athens on 25 June 2007.

This is her first posting abroad and looks forward to serving the Filipino communities in Greece and Cyprus.

Ms. Catbagan replaces Mrs. Renell D. Martinez, who is ending her tour of duty in Greece after six years.

Ms. Catbagan or 'Ada', began her career in the Department of Foreign Affairs in November 1998 as an Assistant in the Cash Division of the Office of Fiscal Management. She was assigned as Account Examiner in the Foreign Service Accounting Division from October 2004

... and bids farewell to ...



Mrs. Renell D. Martinez is ending her six-year tour of duty as the Embassy's Collecting Officer this July. Mrs. Martinez was extended

for another three months beyond her 25 March 2007 recall due to the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) and June 12 celebrations.

Mrs. Martinez began her career in the Department of Foreign Affairs in September 1981. She had been assigned to various offices in the Department as Consular Clerk, Records Officer/Budget Analyst, Acting Finance Officer, Executive Assistant and Administrative Officer. She has attended several seminars and trainings in the Philippines and abroad.

Mrs. Martinez had been previously posted as Collecting Officer in the Philippine Consulate in Seattle, USA from 1991 to 1993 and in the Philippine Consulate General in Chicago, USA from 1993 to 1996. She arrived in Athens on 25 March 2001.

She graduated with a degree in Political Science from URIOS College in 1977. She obtained a Bachelor of Science in International Relations from the Mindanao State University in 1979, and Bachelor of Laws from Manuel L Quezon University (MLQU) in 1984.

Mrs. Martinez was born on 22 July 1958

to March 2006. From March to October 2006, she was temporarily detailed as Collecting Officer at the DFA Regional Consular Office in San Fernando, La Union. She resumed her duties as Account Examiner at the DFA Head Office in October 2006 until her designation as Collecting Officer at the Philippine Embassy in Athens, her first posting.

Ms. Catbagan's sister, Connie, is currently assigned as Collecting Officer in the Philippine Consulate General in Milan, Italy.

Ms. Catbagan graduated *cum laude* from Saint Louis College in San Fernando City, La Union in 1998 with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Accountancy. She was born on 03 April 1978 in San Fernando, La Union. ■

in Butuan City. She is married to Jose Tereso Martinez and have three children, Brynheld Renelle, Berne Jonathan, and Bruce Edward, of whom she speaks proudly as only a mother can. ■

Following is a Q&A with Mrs. Martinez:

Has your stay in Greece for the past six years enriched you professionally and socially?

Yes, definitely. I became aware that my assignment in Greece as a civil servant is like working on call 24 hours a day; and was never meant to be a glamorous job. Your work assignments can be multiplied anytime, as the need arises and you never get the chance to whine. However, if you have the element of love for duty and the passion to serve the people, your work station would not really make a difference.

What was your most memorable experience in Greece?

I have a lot. I realized that in all my postings abroad, what makes a certain episode in this country worth remembering depends entirely on one's attitude. One happy thought can make every experience most memorable. I treasured the memories of my travels, both in and out of the country. But the chance to roam every possible island and corner of Greece made me understand the magnificence of its glorious past. I wish to pause, borrowing Edgar Allan Poe's most stirring line, "To the glory that was Greece..."

Anything more to say?

On behalf of my family, I wish to extend our profound gratitude to one and all who, in many ways, made our stay in Greece more pleasant and meaningful. *Etharisto parapoli!*



Letter from Crete

The Filipino Club in Iraklion, Crete was established on 14 January 2007 with the help and encouragement of Ambassador Rigoberto "Bobi" Tiglao who visited the island last January. The objectives of our organization are to strengthen the ties among the members of the Filipino Community in Crete, and to have smooth communication with the Embassy in obtaining some documents needed by our kababayans in Iraklion. At present, the Club has 57 members from Iraklion and Agios Nicolaos. We are also targeting other nearby towns of Iraklion to unite our kababayans in Crete.

Our club has already helped some of our members through financial assistance and other forms of help such as hospital visits and counseling. The Filipino Club aims to widen its programs by also extending assistance to our kababayans in the Philippines who are affected by calamities in our country.

We thank Ambassador Bobi Tiglao and the officers and staff of the Philippine Embassy for their wholehearted support. Many thanks to Fr. Peter, our Parish Priest here in Iraklion, and to the Couples for Christ community headed by Bro. Luis Ilagan.

We hope that we will be able to accomplish our goals for the benefit of the Filipinos in Iraklion, Crete.

Respectfully yours,

Johnny P. Quinto

Chairman, Filipino Club Irakleio Crete

With the Filipino Community, from p.1

In the afternoon, parlor games for children and adults were held, followed by a raffle draw which included among

its major raffle prizes, (3) round-trip tickets courtesy of Thai Airways, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, and Singapore Airlines; 3-day cruise for two from Monarch Classic Cruises; and a cellphone each from Vodafone and Western Union. A youth band competition organized by OWWA showcasing the musical talents of the younger set ended the program. ■

With the Diplomatic Corps, from p.1

were also served, courtesy of San Miguel Corporation, which donated the beer, and shipped these all the way from Manila.

The holding of the country's national day reception at the prestigious Hotel Grande Bretagne, the first time the Philippine embassy has done so, has boosted the Philippines'—and Filipinos'—prestige in Athens. ■

LABOR PAGE

Philippine Overseas Labor Office

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Labor Attaché (Cyprus)



JOCELYN O. HAPAL
Welfare Officer



JEAN V. SANTOS
PAG-IBIG Representative



CARLOS P. MONTENEGRO
Administrative Assistant, POLO

Magandang Balita Para Sa Mga Miyembro Ng Pag-IBIG Overseas Program (POP)!

Ibinaba na ang Housing Loan Interest Rate ngayong 2007!

Magmula sa pinakamataas na 8% at 14% ay ibinaba na sa 6% hanggang 10.5% kada taon, at itinaas na ang halaga ng mahihiram na pera sa dalawang milyong piso para sa pabahay na maaaring bayaran sa loob ng lima (5) hanggang dalawampung (20) taon.

Para sa karagdagang impormasyon tumawag o mag sadya lamang kay:

Ms. Jean V. Santos

Pag-IBIG Representative

Filipino Workers' Resource Center

63-A Katechaki St., Neo Psychico

Tel. no.: (210) 6983 265

Cell phone nos.: 6937124927 at 6977425678

Ang Pag-IBIG Office ay bukas ng 9:00 ng umaga hanggang 5:00 ng hapon, Lunes hanggang biyernes at tuwing linggo Mula 2:00 pm – 5:00pm.

How to Become an OWWA Member?

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) is a membership institution. As such, its programs, projects and services are geared towards safeguarding and promoting the welfare and interests of its members.

For a US\$ 25.00 membership contribution, an OWWA member is entitled to various benefits and services.

Membership in OWWA may be obtained in two ways:

1. By enrollment upon processing of contract at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)
2. By voluntary registration of a would-be member at job sites overseas.

Proof of Membership

The names of all OWWA members are maintained by the OWWA and POEA in a database which is updated regularly. Members are issued an Official Receipt upon payment of contribution. They shall likewise be issued an OWWA e-card.

Effectivity of Membership

OWWA membership, either through the compulsory or voluntary coverages, shall be effective upon payment of membership contribution, until expiration of the employment contract.

Renewal of Membership

Membership shall be renewed upon payment of contribution on contract renewal/issuance of new contract. In the case of voluntary membership, coverage shall be renewed upon payment of contribution. ■

Benefits and Services for OWWA Members

Life Insurance. A member is covered with life insurance for the duration of his employment contract. The coverage includes P100,000 for natural death and P200,000 for accidental death.

Disability / Dismemberment Benefits. A member is entitled to disability/dismemberment benefits as a rider provision of his life insurance. The coverage is within the range of P2,000 to P50,000.

Total Disability Benefit. A member is entitled to P100,000 in case of total permanent disability.

Burial Benefit. A burial benefit of P20,000 shall be provided in case of the member's death.

Pre-Departure Loan and Family Assistance Loan. For ready-to-leave newly-hired OFWs and for emergency and other family needs, a maximum loan of P40,000 can be availed of.

Scholarship Programs. On technical vocational training, for baccalaureate courses (maximum of P10,000 for school fees and P20,000 for allowances per semester) and seafarer's upgrading program (training subsidy from P1,200 to a maximum of P7,500).

Reintegration Program. Members may avail of capability building such as, in particular to Greece and Cyprus, training on care giving, computer operation and Greek language lessons.

Welfare Services. Assistance to OFWs such as locating missing OFWs, providing information and guidance, psycho-social counseling, conciliation services, medical and legal assistance, and outreach missions, among other services. ■

OWWA in Action



During the Independence Day Celebration on 10 June 2007 at the Fokianos Basketball Court (Zappeion) in Athens, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) conducted a membership drive and free medical services to Filipinos present at the event.