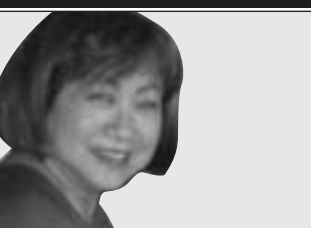


**IMMIGRANT LIVING:
101 AND BEYOND**



MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA

(Here's a condensed version of an old favorite, a belated "Ode to Spring," sort of.)

THE delightful tongue-in-cheek quote above is a humorous dig at the tedious nature of gardening. But spring will soon give way to the dog days of summer when a slice of heaven could mean rocking slowly under a tree in a hammock with a book in one hand and a chilled margarita on the other.

I am a reluctant gardener. I was thrust into it by circumstances since I have a thing about not wanting anything dying on my shift. Nothing I did seemed right at the time. I tended to over water not knowing about the dangers of root rot. Very few plants like to have wet feet. Plants died on me the same way Jerry Seinfeld's plants tend to commit suicide on his watch.

My track record at growing things was dismal, yet I have often wondered what it would be like to watch something grow. I marveled at my mother's green thumb. She can stick a seemingly lifeless stump at a clump of earth and grow a new beautiful plant nearly every time. I wasn't one to give up easily though. Te-

Lessons from the Garden

The best way to garden is to put on a wide-brimmed straw hat and some old clothes. And with a hoe in one hand and a cold drink in the other, tell somebody else where to dig.

—Texas Bix Bender,
Don't Throw in the Trowel

naciously, doggedly I hung on to an image of me as a confident gardener. My education on the art and science of growing things had begun. I took baby steps and stumbled countless times and still do. I became quieter within as I began to observe and seek to understand the process of growth, the seasons and the cycle of life. I read voraciously volumes upon volumes about plants and watched public television that featured gardening. Nurseries and gardens have become my favorite haunts where I could ask those who knew better. I boned up on my rusty, halting Spanish quizzing the gardener as best I could. Finally, I slammed on the brakes fearing I had become boringly, compulsively obsessive. But I found that unless I got down on the ground myself, nothing happened.

I have discovered gardening to be a quiet, solitary pursuit somewhat fit for hermits and loners — unglamorous, unexciting, backbreaking, time consuming, manual, icky, down in the dirt labor that was certainly not meant for immediate gratification. So, why do it at all? I don't really know. Must be borderline

idiocy. Of course, I speak only for myself. For one thing, it teaches you the patience of Job and the virtue of humility. I have failed more than succeeded and am still working on it. But as time passed, I have been encouraged by modest results. I became synchronized with the seasons and their gentle nuances. I took baby steps and was off and running at one point. At times, I would even become bolder with the temerity to dispense advice a la Martha Stewart and help a few others with their own patch of earth. I must confess however that lately, I have become a slacker and it shows. I squirm at the sight of how neglected the garden looks.

I know I will have to take up gardening 101 once again and devote time and energy to see results. Back to square one, I suppose. It will be easy because I only have a small patch of earth to work with and a bit of paid help to do the grunt work. Did I mention that I have a garden the size of a postage stamp? Oh, all right, maybe a wad of postage stamps. But it is small, really small — just the way I like it. Truth to tell, I don't think my aching back, my diminutive size and what I have

available in time, energy and resources, can tackle anything bigger.

Years ago, I bought a discarded ugly duckling — a pot bound areca palm tree with about three pathetic fronds for half a song and a dance. This is one gardening fairy tale you could believe in. Well, it has turned into a tall, graceful swan with luxuriant fronds. I gave it rich soil and placed it in a bigger pot, top dressing it and sticking some time-released fertilizer pellets. That palm tree is like a person that grew because it was given the opportunities and the environment to do so. But it took a bit of work, some imagination, and a dash of patience and considerable time.

I could call most plants by name these days and seem to instinctively know what to do when a problem arises. If things don't work on my own accord, I seek help. I still am a failure with azaleas. Azaleas have been dying on my shift so I am staying away from them. I suspect it has something to do with the amount of light and too much water that has drenched the soil because of an unusually wetter, longer winter season. I said goodbye too to a beautiful sago palm that must have suffered root rot. Farewell too, to a French lavender bush that gave me so much fragrance. The garden gets a lot of shade being in a Northwest orientation so I am quite alright with the fact that I will never have roses which I would love to have but can't. Believe me, I tried. So I just admire

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The Voice of FilAmerica

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials — regardless of political affiliation — in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

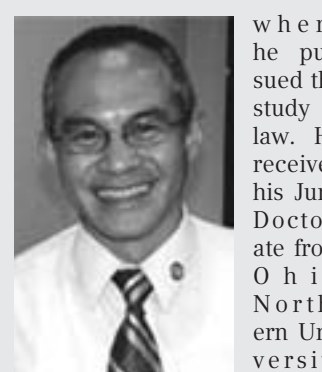
James V. Espaldon Fil-Am Senator of Guam

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO
AJPress

JAMES V. Espaldon was born June 21, 1956 to Dr. Leticia Virata Espaldon and the late honorable Dr. Ernesto Espaldon, former Senator in the 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 20th, 21st Guam Legislatures. He is married to the former Gilda Respicio Eay and together they have three children, Jonte, Christian James and Victoria. James is a 1975 graduate of Father Duenas Memorial School and earned his Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration from Menlo College in California.

Jim, as he is commonly known by friends and associates, has worked in a number of career fields prior to running for office. He toiled the fields as an onion farmer in Maui and later joined retail management with ABC Stores in Hawaii. James returned to Guam and dabbled in real estate brokering before following in the footsteps of his parents, somewhat, at the Doctor's Clinic, where he served as Director for Facilities Services.

Seeking to expand his horizons, James left to Ada, Ohio



where he pursued the study of law. He received his Juris Doctorate from Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law in 2003. Jim worked as a law clerk in the Superior Court of Guam under Presiding Judge Alberto C. Lamorena, III. He was sworn in to the Guam Bar in September 2006.

Elected to the 29th Guam Legislature in November 2006, Senator James V. Espaldon brings a wealth of knowledge and life experiences to the Legislature. Jim serves as the Chairman of the Committee on Judiciary, Natural Resources, Infrastructure, and Cultural Affairs. Senator Espaldon also serves as Legislative Parliamentarian and is the Legislature's representative to the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures. ■



Are your financial problems pushing you into bankruptcy?

MINDING YOUR FINANCES



ATTY. RAYMOND BULAON

HAVE recent changes in the economy or the real estate market put your back against the wall with no way out? Are you struggling to make sense out of the financial mess that you are currently in and have thought of filing bankruptcy as a possible solution to your financial crisis? You are not alone.

It has now been more than 4 years since Congress passed more restrictive bankruptcy laws. While filings did go down temporarily for a few months after October 2005, it didn't take very long for things to change. Now we are seeing a massive increase in bankruptcy filings again. Why is this happening? Here's why:

(a) The Deepening Recession And Skyrocketing Foreclosures Fueled By The Worsening Housing Market Crisis - There is no doubt that the above factors are the major culprits in the increase of bankruptcy filings. While bankruptcy doesn't always save a property from foreclosure in every case, it may be a viable solution to qualified individuals who are desperately trying to stay in their home. If you are facing foreclosure at the moment, find out whether bankruptcy will help your situation. Currently, there is also a pending bill in Congress that may allow bankruptcy judges to force lenders to modify mortgages in the future.

(b) New Bankruptcy Laws Originally Intended To Curtail Bankruptcy Abuse Are Ineffective To Help Those In Genuine Need Of Debt Relief- According to the credit counseling agencies, so far almost 97% of people who go through the mandatory debt counseling (required by the new laws passed in 2005) are NOT in a position to pay anything AT ALL to their creditors. This means that 97% of people who elect to file bankruptcy are

clearly BANKRUPT and need help. Contrary to what the proponents of bankruptcy reform said (i.e., that most people who file bankruptcy can actually afford to pay their creditors if they just wanted to), everyone is now realizing that this is not true. The fact is that people who file bankruptcy are the people who genuinely need a fresh financial start.

(c) Consumer Debt Is Once Again At An All-Time High- The average household now owes approximately \$25,800 in credit card debts. Studies show that 65% of all credit card accounts are only paid the minimum required every month. With the outrageous interest rates charged by the credit card companies, people are bound to be in debt for many years, perhaps for decades in some cases. To make things worse, credit card companies have increased monthly minimum payments in most cases, making it harder for consumers to come up with more money every month just to stay current.

We are facing tough times ahead. This is not a good time to be in debt. If your debts are out of control, you may be headed for serious financial trouble. If you have already maxed out your credit cards and can't even pay your monthly minimums, I suggest you immediately cut up all your credit cards before you get buried in debt.

If you feel trapped in your situation and don't know what to do, maybe you should find out what your legal options are in dealing with debt problems. Your situation may look grim but there is hope and it's not the end of the world. In some cases, bankruptcy protection may help before your problems get worse and you end up losing everything you have worked so hard for. Don't let this happen to you. To request a free case evaluation, please call Toll-Free 1-866-477-7772 to schedule an appointment. We have offices in Glendale, Cerritos and West Covina.

None of the information herein is intended to give legal advice for any specific situation. Atty. Ray Bulaon has successfully helped more than 4,000 clients in finding solutions to their debt problems. To schedule a free attorney consultation, please call Ray Bulaon Law Offices at TOLL FREE 1-866-477-7772. (Advertising Supplement)

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Bandila natin ay muling wawagayway sa HPMC

Halina at sumama sa PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY 2009

Photo by Ver Pellaranda

Sabado June 13, 2009 9:00 am

Festivities begin at 9:00 am with the Flag Raising Ceremony at the HPMC Complex

Napakaraming \$200.00 worth of grocery certificates na mapapanalunan!

10 certificates ang mapapanalun. You must have a raffle ticket to win. Raffle tickets will be distributed at 8:30 am before the Flag Raising ceremony

LIBRE ANG ENTRANCE KAYA ISAMA NA ANG LAHAT NG INYONG KAMAG-ANAKAN PARA MAS MASAYA!

All Photos taken during HPMC Independence Day 2009

...may FREE TRIP to Manila pa para sa Seniors* *Medicare Seniors only. Seniors must register and get a Raffle Ticket at 8:30 am to qualify for the FREE TRIP to Manila.

We need performers for our whole-day Variety Show.

For more information, call or contact the following:
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