

Nike commemorates Pacquiao

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJPress

LOS ANGELES—Just as they did last year, Nike has created exclusive commemorative Manny Pacquiao merchandise as the pound-4-pound boxer prepares for his battle against Ricky Hatton on May 2.

The limited custom Pacquiao products will be available at The Montalban Theatre in Los Angeles and Fatlace in San Francisco starting this weekend. Nike made a similar exclusive Pacquiao t-shirt when he faced The Golden Boy Oscar De La Hoya last December.

Both locations will feature a Pacquiao photo gallery with autographed prints by photographer Ray Potes, free giveaways, music, Pacquiao's gear on display and video highlights of the legendary Filipino boxer, according to Nike representatives.

In addition, The Montalban Theatre and Fatlace will feature exclusive Manny Pacquiao t-shirts for sale.

A portion of the shirt proceeds will benefit SIPA's (Search to involve Filipino Americans) Temple Gateway Youth Sports League in Los Angeles and the Filipino Community Center's sports program in San Francisco.

The t-shirts will be available at The Montalban Theatre as of Saturday, April 25 and at Fatlace on Monday, April 27.

The Montalban Theatre will be the official Manny Pacquiao "Fan Headquarters" as fight night approaches.

The Montalban is located at 1615 Vine Street in Hollywood. ■

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

RP emergency plan readied vs flu

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be provided with other forms of protection.

Unfair label

The government is preparing various measures to deal with the potential threat of swine flu even as the Department of Agriculture (DA) insisted that the suspect virus is unfairly being labeled as swine flu when there is still no concrete evidence that it had been sparked by an outbreak in the hog sector.

In a press conference, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap argued that the swine flu outbreak in Mexico, the United States and Canada is a human health issue rather than an animal health issue.

The unfairly labeled swine flu, Yap clarified, has been identified by the World Organization for Animal Health as a multi-strain virus that includes human, avian and swine components.

Yap said that according to the international agency, the virus should be more appropriately labeled as the "North American influenza."

Import ban stays

The Department of Agriculture said it will continue to temporarily suspend pork imports from affected areas in Mexico, the United States and Canada.

Also last April 28, the department revealed that it is closely monitoring reports of incidences of this new influenza strain in France, New Zealand, South Korea, and Spain to find out if there is a need to expand the temporary suspension of pork imports from these areas.

The temporary ban, Yap clarified, would cover only specific areas and not the entire US, Canada and Mexico.

The Philippines does not import pork from Mexico but imports about 20,000

metric tons from the US and about the same amount from Canada, for a total of about 50,000 MT.

Yap said the Philippines will maintain the import ban as a precautionary measure despite the latest pronouncement by the World Organization for Animal Health that "there is no evidence that this virus is transmitted by food."

Strict inspection

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza has ordered all officials of airport and port authorities in the Philippines to implement strict inspection of passengers through thermal scanners to prevent the entry of swine flu into the country.

Mendoza also authorized the purchase of all other needed equipment to ferret out possible carriers of the H1N1 strain of the deadly swine flu virus. ■

Manny dedicates fight to mom

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on and her son.

"Masayang-masaya ako at maligaya ang puso ko sa pag suportar kay Manny (I am very happy and my heart is filled with joy in my support for Manny)," said Dionisia to the *Asian Journal*. "Nagikot-ikot ako at sigaw na sigaw sa mga Filipino at kahit hindi rin mga Filipino (I was turning around and shouting with the Filipinos, even to non-Filipinos)."

During the final press conference where her son Manny met with his opponent Ricky Hatton for the final time before their much-anticipated match on Saturday, May 2 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena on Wednesday, April 29, Top Rank President Bob Arum introduced Dionisia to the world's media.

For Dionisia, she has come a long way from her home in General Santos City, Philippines. The 60-year-old Dionisia was impressed with the bright lights of Las Vegas.

And according to an ABS-CBN report, she's already gone shopping and took a quick tour of the town.

Manny is also making sure that his mother's trip to the US will be memorable.

Pacquiao said this is a fight that he's going to dedicate to his mom. He said because this is her first time here and first time ever watching him fight, he's extra motivated.

"She's my inspiration," said Pacquiao. "Of course, I'm going to try harder and do my best to beat Hatton."

Although Dionisia will have ring-side tickets, she won't be in the MGM Grand Garden Arena when her son walks in.

Saturday night, Dionisia will be in a separate room inside the Mandalay Bay where she will pray for her son's well being.

War

Manny Pacquiao and Ricky Hatton expect a war to erupt the

moment they both step inside the ring.

"I'll make it into a war," said Hatton during the press conference. "Once I get in the ring I'm a nasty (expletive). I have to fight in a smart, and clever way."

Hatton said that he's not impressed with Pacquiao's physique.

"I'm even more confident now that I've got a chance to look a him again, weighed him out in my head. I can't wait to get inside that ring," he said.

Pacquiao also said that a war would break out.

"This fight is going to have a lot of action in the ring," said Pacquiao. "Everybody knows the style of Ricky Hatton. He wants to fight inside and always comes forward and throws a lot of punches. That's what I want."

"It's going to be a war," added Pacquiao. "And I'm really excited." (Joseph Pimentel)

The bottom-line you need to know about swine flu

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several hours, like a doorknob just touched by someone who sneezed into his hand.

Q: Is it treatable?

A: Yes, with the flu drugs Tamiflu or Relenza, but not with two older flu medications.

Q: Why are people dying in Mexico and not here?

A: That's a huge mystery. First, understand that no one really knows just how many people in Mexico are dying of this flu strain, or how many have it. Only a fraction of the suspected deaths have been tested and confirmed as swine flu, and some initially suspected cases were caused by something else.

Q: What are the symptoms?

A: They're similar to regular human flu—a fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting.

Q: How do I know if I should see a doctor?

A: Health authorities say if you live in places where swine flu cases have been con-

firmed, or you recently traveled to Mexico, and you have those symptoms, your doctor can decide whether you need treatment or to be tested.

Q: Did last winter's flu shot protect me?

A: Probably not. Even though it did protect against the Type A family of flu viruses that this new swine flu belongs to, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ran some preliminary tests and doesn't think it offered any cross protection.

Q: Why are people calling it swine flu if it's not just from pigs? Did it really come from pigs?

A: Pigs do spread their own strains of influenza and every so often people catch one, usually after contact with the animals. This new virus is a mix of human, pig and bird viruses but the name, for ease, was shortened to swine flu—and unlike typical swine flu, it is spreading person-to-person.

Q: So is it safe to eat pork?

A: Yes. Swine influenza viruses don't spread through food. (AP)

Pacman's lucky charm

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It is not unknown to many that the Pacman is a devout Catholic and a tad bit superstitious when it comes to his fights. Mayor Leonardia shared how Pacquiao's Catholic devotion and superstitious beliefs became instrumental in forging a strong partnership with the mayor.

So what brought Manny to the shores of Bacolod City in 2005 and compelled him to create a lasting relationship with Mayor Leonardia? Perhaps, it's the fact that Bacolod is known for being a "relatively friendly city, bearing the nickname City of Smiles." Perhaps, it's the charm of the MassKara Festival, a noted celebration and an annual attraction that gravitates millions of tourists every year to Bacolod City. Or perhaps it's because Mayor Leonardia has personally invited the pound-for-pound champ to become "Bacolod's adopted son."

One thing is certain—Manny was moved and overwhelmed by the warm and eager reception he got from the people of Bacolod. A beautiful, poignant and profound friendship soon entailed after his

meaningful encounter with Mayor Leonardia and his townsfolk.

Soon after, Manny paid the city of smiles another visit and personally asked Mayor Leonardia to hold on to his boxing belt. It was initially unclear to Mayor Leonardia why he was afforded this privilege and he was hesitant in the beginning. He found out later on that he has become a sort of "lucky charm" for the Pacman.

Mayor Leonardia amusingly recalled Manny's reason: "Simula noong hinawakan ni Mayor ang belt ko, di na naagaw." He jokingly reiterated that he was Manny's magnet—affording Manny five victory boxing belts to date.

But Manny's friendship with the Mayor of Bacolod City goes beyond superstitious beliefs. Theirs is a symbiotic relationship—one that was forged from trust and from believing in each other's capabilities.

Superstitious or not, Mayor Leonardia will continue to be a formidable supporter of the pound-for-pound champ in all his endeavors and will be rooting for our Pinoy pride. (AJPress)

Philippines remains a model on migration and protection of migrants' rights

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in the field of migration and for its robust institutional capacity to protect its citizens abroad.

Mr. Abdulhamid El Jamri of Morocco, Chairperson of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW), called the Philippines a source of inspiration for many, because of its wealth of experience and dynamism in migration management and development.

He commended the Philippines for its clear commitment to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) and welcomed the size and quality of the Philippine delegation as a concrete manifestation of that commitment.

In light of the Philippines' notable achievements, the Committee raised the benchmark for evaluation of the Philippines' implementation of the Convention.

The Philippines has been the most active advocate, in all UN

fora, on the campaign to promote ratification of the Convention on Migrant Workers.

Moreover, the Philippines figures prominently in the *Guide on Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* as a strong supporter of the Migrant Workers Convention.

The Guide cited the Philippines' contribution in encouraging more countries to ratify the Migrant Workers Convention.

Page 28 of the *Guide* stated that: "Several countries, such as Mexico and the Philippines, have engaged in diplomatic efforts to widen ratification..."

"The Philippine Government has always championed the rights of migrant workers and their families in all fora in firm recognition of the significant role and contribution of all migrant workers," Ambassador Erlinda F. Basilio, Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, said. ■

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