

Las Vegas residents invited to meet with Mayor Oscar B. Goodman

LAS VEGAS—Residents looking to meet and converse with Mayor Oscar B. Goodman in a casual setting will have the opportunity from 8:30 to 10am on Friday, May 15, at Luca's Café and Deli at 231 S. Third St. Residents who have issues to discuss or would simply like to meet the mayor are welcome to join the session.

Following the event Mayor Goodman will not hold an Open Door Meeting. In 2009 Open Door Meetings and Coffee With The Mayor events are scheduled in alternating months. For more information citizens can call the mayor's office at 229-6241. ■

RealtyTrac: April foreclosures rise 32 percent

by **ADRIAN SAINZ**
AP Real Estate Writer

MIAMI—The number of US households faced with losing their homes to foreclosure jumped 32 percent in April compared with the same month last year, with Nevada, Florida and California showing the highest rates, according to data released May 13.

More than 342,000 households received at least one foreclosure-related notice in April, RealtyTrac Inc. said. That means one in every 374 US housing units received a foreclosure filing last month, the highest monthly rate since the Irvine, Calif.-based foreclosure listing firm began its report in January 2005.

April was the second straight month with more than 300,000 households receiving a foreclosure filing, as the number of borrowers with mortgage troubles failed to abate.

The April number, however, was less than one percent above that posted in March, when more than 340,000 properties were affected. The March data was up 17 percent from February and 46 percent from a year earlier.

"We've never seen two consecutive months like this," said Rick Sharga, RealtyTrac's senior vice president for marketing. "It's the volume that's surprising."

While total foreclosure activity was up, the number of repossessions by banks was down on a monthly and annual basis to their lowest level since March of last

year, RealtyTrac said.

But that's far from positive news. Because much of the foreclosure activity in April was in the default and auction stages—the first parts of the foreclosure process—it's likely that repossessions will increase in coming months, RealtyTrac said.

About 63,900 homes were repossessed in April, down 11 percent from about 71,700 in March, RealtyTrac said. But the mortgage industry has resumed cracking down on delinquent borrowers after foreclosures were temporarily halted by mortgage finance companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, together with many other lenders.

"All of these loans are now being processed pretty rapidly by the servers," Sharga said.

Help might be on the way. The Obama administration announced a plan in March to provide \$75 billion in incentive payments for the mortgage industry to modify loans to help up to 9 million borrowers avoid foreclosure. But the extent of the relief remains unclear, with questions lingering about how much the lending industry will cooperate in modifying loans.

After banks take over foreclosed homes, they usually put them up for sale at deep discounts. Nationwide, sales of foreclosures and other distressed properties made up about half of the market in the first quarter, the National Association of Realtors reported. ■

Processing of Filipino vets' claims 'on track,' says Gaa

by **MOMAR G. VISAYA**
AJPress

NEW YORK—Ambassador Willy C. Gaa last May 12 said that the processing of the claims of Filipino World War II veterans under the Filipino Veterans Equity Fund remains on track.

"We are in constant dialogue with the US Department of Veterans' Affairs," Ambassador Gaa said. "As of today, approximately 31,000 claims have been received and 1,661 checks have been sent to our veterans both here and in the Philippines, while another 242 have been approved and are about to have checks sent out," he added.

"We are very grateful to all those who have been instrumental in ensuring the implementation of this monumental mea-

sure. We understand the great care that must go into this process to ensure that the benefits go only to those truly deserving. But I would also like to express the hope that given the situation our veterans are facing, that the time our veterans have to wait to receive their benefits could be reasonably reduced," the Ambassador also said.

According to an e-mail sent by Ronald Sagudan, AA/PI Liaison at the US Department of Veterans Affairs, it takes an average of 46.6 days for the approved claims to be processed.

Of the 31,000 claims that have been filed as of May 4, "the vast majority are now in the system and being processed." He said that of the claims that are now

being processed, "15,962 claims were filed in the Philippines while 7,407 were filed in the US."

So far, more than 2,000 claims have been completed and of all the claims that were filed, about 200 have been disapproved.

Ambassador Gaa also welcomed the inclusion of funding for the Filipino Veterans Equity Fund in the 2010 proposed budget submitted by President Barack Obama to the US Congress last May 7.

"The inclusion of funding for our veterans in the 2010 budget proposed by President Obama not only assured continued appropriations for their benefits but also reiterates the importance the current administration gives to the contribution, courage and sacrifices of our Filipino veterans of World War II," Ambassador

Gaa said.

According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, seven Filipino-American veterans from San Jose are among the first Northern Californians to receive long-sought compensation for their military service during World War II, and among those getting a \$15,000 check was Dominador Valdez, 83, president of the Santa Clara County chapter of the American Coalition for Filipino Veterans of WWII.

"We are happy and grateful to the 111th Congress for finally taking this action," Valdez told the newspaper.

Based on estimated figures, only about 18,000 of the 250,000 Filipinos who fought in World War II war are still alive—with 6,000 still in the United States and 12,000 in the Philippines. ■

Pinay to run across America

by **JOSEPH PIMENTEL**, AJPress

EAGLE ROCK—DON'T call her Forrest Gump. Yet.

A small crowd gathered at the Eagle Rock mall to wish Joy Rojas a happy birthday and a safe trip to the US on foot.

Rojas began her journey to being the first Filipina to run across America last Sunday, May 10. Rojas is running from Eagle Rock to New York City.

Rojas from Manila was the first woman to run across the Philippines in 2005.

The 44-year-old journalist said that this adventure, which she calls "Takbong Pangarap" or "dream run" has been a lifelong dream.

"For some strange reason I was dreaming of running across the United States, and now I'm here so there must be a reason why I'm here," said Rojas, who is donating proceeds from the run to the anti-tuberculosis program in the Philippines and the Philippines Heart Center. "You know so you just have to go for it. Not everybody has this privilege of being able to do this so just go for it."

And she's going for it.

For the next four months, she'll be running an average of one marathon a day.

During the three thousand mile trek, she'll encounter elevation that can go as high as 8,000-feet and weather that may reach over 100 degrees.

Takbong Pangarap Events Director Chuck Crisanto said that only 200 people have successfully ran across the US.

"Well the difficulty can be compared to climbing Mt. Everest. Climbing the top is 8 kilometers vertical, running across the US is 5,000 kilometers horizontal," said Crisanto. "When Joy completes this run, she'll not only be the first Filipina to accomplish this but also the first Southeast Asian woman." ■



Joy Rojas

AJPress Photo by Andy Tecson

Seasoned marathon runner Joe Matias says even ultra runners aren't willing to do what Rojas is doing.

"It takes a different breed of people to do something like this," said Joe Matias, who is helping coordinate runners nationwide to pace with Rojas along the way. Rojas knows her run is difficult. She admits of not being the most talented runner in the world.

But she said her biggest attribute is her stubbornness to finish a project.

Her first stop will be Las Vegas. Crisanto said that it would take about two weeks.

To follow Joy Rojas or donate to the cause, visit www.thepoc.net/index.php/Takbong-Pangarap/ ■



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