

Ramos, Estrada meet this week

US government officials to celebrate ...

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loyal allies in Lakas who will follow him," Malay added.

agreed to merge at the prodding of Ms Arroyo, they are believed to be still miles away from resolving party conflicts at the local level, the main problem that had delayed the merger for years.

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stream groups in the American community."

Philippine delegation.
The Helldorado Days parade is the oldest local Las Vegas tradition that aims to recapture the spirit of the "old west" at the same time integrating it with the various cultures that has been brought into Las Vegas over the past decades.

Palace hits Villar
As a Ramos-Estrada meeting loomed, Malacañang implicitly accused another presidential aspirant, Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., but without naming him directly, of trying to pirate members of Lakas-Kampi-CMD.

Speaker Prospero Nograles and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, leaders of Lakas and Kampi, respectively, have declared that the "equity of the incumbent"—the principle that favors sitting officials in the contest for party endorsement—would be respected in the 2010 polls.

NaFFAA is a non-partisan, non-profit national affiliation of more than five hundred Filipino-American institutions and umbrella organizations. Its core mission is to empower Filipinos in the United States.

Filipinos are one of the largest cultural groups in Las Vegas, numbering close to 100,000 residents. The Filipino people were at the center of celebrations at City Hall last May 6 during the celebration of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in this city.

Earlier, Malacañang said it had ironed out its differences with Ramos, who had deplored the supposedly hasty merger of his Lakas-CMD (Christian Muslim Democrats) and Ms Arroyo's Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) party.

But some Lakas and Kampi members are skeptical about whether this policy would be enforced to the letter.
One reason cited for the debacle which the administration's senatorial candidates suffered in 2007 was the infighting between Lakas and Kampi members in the provinces, cities and towns.

It has been one of its aims to unify the various Filipino groups in each city in the United States and help integrate it with American society.
Last May 16, NaFFAA NV spearheaded nine Filipino organizations that participated in the decades-old Las Vegas tradition Helldorado Days Parade.

NaFFAA was also recognized for empowering the Filipino-American community in Las Vegas. Meanwhile, celebrity performers who will grace the 2009 Fiesta Filipino on June 6th include long-time Las Vegas entertainer Earl Turner as well as Filipino singers Lani Misalucha, Imelda Papin and Gloria Papin.

Malay said a Ramos-Estrada union could leave Lakas-Kampi on shaky ground.
A number of Lakas-Kampi members have indicated disenchantment over the merger and apparently are looking for other parties to latch on to.

Defections loom
The looming defections supposedly are part of "poaching" activities by some presidential aspirants to boost their own political bases.

The National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) spearheaded its member organizations to take part in the parade. The Filipino American Heritage Foundation of Nevada, Filipino Village, Filipiniana Cultural & Arts Foundation, Las Vegas Filipino-American Lions Club, Oras ng Ligaya, Bikolnon Association of Las Vegas, Filipino-American Youth Foundation, and the Philippine-USA Motorcycling Club comprised the

The whole-day celebration will be on June 6th from 9am to 9pm at the Sammy Davis Jr. Festival Plaza, locally known as Lorenzi Park. An awards and recognition gala night, meanwhile, will be held on June 20th at the Treasure Island Hotel. ■

Back to the LP fold
Quezon Rep. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III reported that 10 former members of the Liberal Party from Lakas-Kampi had sent feelers about wanting to return to their old party.

The LP's standard-bearer, Sen. Manuel Roxas II, has surged in recent surveys, tightening the 2010 race. This has made it imperative for the party to strengthen its national network.

The group comprised the biggest delegation of Filipinos to participate in this city's local festival, which celebrated its 75th year this month.

On April 29, Perez and a companion found HK\$350,000 in cash and checks.
While the princely sum could have afforded her relief, she instead called up the company whose name was in the documents to return the money.

The LP spokesperson said the potential LP returnees could be accompanied by between 5 and 10 core Lakas-Kampi members distressed by the haste with which the country's two biggest political parties were unified.

Kampi's former president, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, on the other hand, is seeking a new home with the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC).

Another supposedly "active" recruiter is Villar's Nationalista Party. A pro-Villar source claimed several Lakas-Kampi members—including congressmen, governors and mayors—were finalizing plans to transfer to the NP.

For her good deed, she was given a can of cookies.
"Mildred's story reminds us all that even in the darkest of times, our ideals and principles should not falter. She could have chosen not to return the money and end all her sufferings in Hong Kong, but she chose not to," Escudero said in a statement. ■

"Exploratory talks are being held with these Lakas-Kampi members and the leadership of the LP," Tañada said.

At the Palace, Claudio told reporters that a "presidential wannabe" had been trying to woo Lakas-Kampi-CMD members, specifically municipal mayors, to his side but this had so far been "foiled."

Monday, June 1 filed a resolution commending Perez for her honesty.

Escudero with 23 percent; and Legarda with 18 percent.

Muntinlupa Rep. Rufi Biazon (LP) said the fallout from the administration parties' merger was expected because not all of the members embraced it.

"I won't name him, but I think he should attend to his problems in the Senate because he's being hit there left and right. He should spend more time in the Senate than in the field trying to pirate legitimate members of the party," Claudio said. ■

"By returning the money, Perez has demonstrated that the traits of honesty and trustworthiness are not lost among the Filipinos even abroad. Moreover, she has set an example, worthy of emulation which deserves the full appreciation and deep gratitude of the Filipino nation," Padilla said in the resolution.

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Attractive option
"The transfer to other parties is also expected and the LP is an attractive option," Biazon said, adding that the new entrants should accept certain conditions before they would be taken in.

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Honest HK OFW gets ticket home

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Her husband Eddie, a tricycle driver, also returned an envelope containing cash to a passenger several months ago, Padilla said.

The passenger, a school official, had dropped an envelope of cash in the tricycle. When Eddie found the envelope, he drove back to Nueva Vizcaya State University, and was able to find his passenger by describing her to the people in the school.

Like his wife, "Eddie did not ask anything for returning the money," Padilla said.

Perez, 38, a mother of two teenagers, has been out of a job

since 2007 when she filed sexual assault charges against her Hong Kong employer.

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SWS survey puts Villar on top

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per cent; Escudero with 23 percent; and Legarda with 18 percent.

If the 2010 presidential race would be a three-way contest among Escudero, De Castro and Villar, the latter would still win the election with 37 percent compared to De Castro's 30 percent and Escudero's 27 percent.

If it's a three-way contest with De Castro and Legarda, Villar would still win the presidency with 39 percent with De Castro getting only 30 percent and Legarda, 24 percent.

"In a scenario with De Castro and Villar as candidates, Villar leads over De Castro with a score of 53 percent v. 38 percent. Those undecided, don't know, none comprise 9 percent," said the survey.

"In a scenario with Escudero and Villar as candidates, Villar leads with 36 percent, Escudero with 35 percent. Those undecided, don't know none, comprise 9 percent," it said.

"In a scenario with Legarda and Villar as candidates, Villar leads over Legarda, with 57 percent vs. 34 percent. Those undecided, don't know, none comprise 9 percent," it further said.

Meanwhile Escudero emerged as the top choice for Villar's running mate with 21 percent, followed by De Castro, 20 percent; Legarda, 19 percent; Roxas, 16 percent; Batangas Governor Vilma Santos and Senator Jose "Jingoy" Estrada 7 percent each, and Susan Roces-Poe with 3 percent.

Reached for comment, former Congressman Gilbert Remulla, spokesman of Villar's Nacionalista Party, admitted that the result was "reflective" of the survey that they had commissioned in the SWS.

"No comment but we find the result accurate and reflective of our own survey," Remulla said over the phone.

"We have our survey done periodically but we do it for internal use," he further said. ■

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130 Las Vegas residents re-acquired Filipino citizenship

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program, making the applicants Filipino citizens again.

The 130 oath-takers lost their Filipino citizenship after being naturalized citizens of the US. But Republic Act 9225, or the citizenship retention and reacquisition act, allows these individuals to reacquire said citizenship and become dual citizens of both the United States and the Philippines. As dual citizens, individuals can own land and property as well as engage in business in the Philippines. They can also travel using a Philippine passport and run for public office in the Philippines.

The Philippine government also allows these dual citizens in the US to participate in national elections in the country.

In fact, the Arroyo administration in the Philippines is urging all Filipinos living in the United States to participate in choosing the next Philippine president in May 2010. Both Filipino citizens and those holding dual citizenship can participate in said elections.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said earlier that it is targeting one million Filipinos to participate in overseas absentee voting (OAV) in preparation for the 2010 presidential elections in the country.

"That's why we are urging all Filipinos abroad to register now. This is an opportunity to choose our leaders. This is also our duty," Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rafael Seguis said in a previous interview in Manila, Philippines.

At the Las Vegas consular outreach last May 23rd, 241 individuals registered for overseas absentee voting, data from PCG LA showed.

OAV was made into law in 2003 through Republic Act 9225 or the Citizenship Retention and Reacquisition Act. Under this law, Filipinos who have re-acquired their Filipino citizenship can participate in Philippine elections via OAV.

Similarly, the law allows Filipino citizens living abroad to participate in elections in the Philippines even without going back to the country.

With OAV, ballots are sent to voters by mail. The ballots need to be mailed back to the Consulate where a voter is registered.

This is the third OAV registration for overseas Filipinos after the law was passed in 2003 in time for the 2004 Philippine presidential elections. Registration period this year, for the 2010 elections, started last February and will end in August.

Meanwhile, the consular team in Las Vegas also completed 551 Philippine passport renewals during the outreach program. (Dymphna Calica La-Putt)