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## Green Philippine passports no longer valid by 2010

FILIPINO citizens holding green Philippine passports will no longer be able to use these travel documents in most countries by April next year.

As such, the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles has started accepting applications for machine-readable passports (MRPs), which is the new official travel document required by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

It will even be much easier for residents of Las Vegas to apply for MRPs, since consular officers will hold a consular outreach in the valley in May to facilitate applications in the area.

"A team from the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles will be conducting a Consular Outreach Program in Las Vegas, NV on 23-24 May 2009," the Consulate said in a statement released last April 8.

The Philippine Consular Office in Los Angeles has jurisdiction over Southern Nevada, Southern California, Texas and Arizona. The Consulate normally requires Filipino citizens living in these areas to do consular transactions in person. MRP applicants, in particular, need to apply in person at the California office.

The new maroon-colored MRP has a "machine readable zone" containing the personal data of the passport holder that can be read by a machine or computer. At the same time, personal details of an individual are also visible to the naked eye.

The ICAO is an agency of the United Nations that fosters the planning and development of air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth.

It has required all its member states, including the Philippines, to issue MRPs before April 1, 2010 to replace existing passports of its citizens. MRPs are expected to make processing of travelers at ports of

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## Nike commemorates Pacquiao

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 SI-PA'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. (Joseph Pimentel)

# US Marine in Subic rape case acquitted

### 'Romantic episode,' not rape, says CA

by DONA PAZZIBUGAN & TETCH TORRES  
Inquirer.net

**M**ANILA—The Court of Appeals has acquitted an American marine of raping a Filipina, saying the soldier and his accuser shared a "spontaneous, unplanned romantic episode."

In a 71-page decision, the appellate court said Lance Corporal Daniel Smith and the victim, identified in court only as Nicole, were both intoxicated after a night out and were "carried away by their passions."

The court also said Nicole flirted with Smith and led him on with "reckless abandon" and that there was "no evidence" that she was forced into sex.

Smith has been ordered "released immediately unless held for other lawful cause," read the decision penned by Associate Justice Monina Arevalo-Zenarosa of the CA's special 11th division.

"What we see was the unfolding of a spontaneous, unplanned



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Suzette S. Nicolas, erstwhile known publicly only as 'Nicole,' and acquitted US Lance Corporal Daniel Smith. PDI photo file

## Number of child laborers in RP to increase due to financial crisis—ILO

by MAYEN JAYMALIN  
Philstar.com

**M**ANILA—More Filipino children nationwide face the prospect of leaving school and working at a young age due to the prevailing global economic crisis, the International Labor Organization (ILO) warned.

ILO executive director Linda Wirth said the mass retrenchment of workers as a result of the crisis might significantly push up the number of child laborers in the Philippines.

Currently, there are 2.3 million child laborers in the country.

"Though there is yet no concrete evidence of the effects of the downturn on education, the risk to increased child labor is a threat as more families withdraw their children from school due to a need for additional hands to supplement decreasing

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## No limit to the Filipino spirit

by TED RAÑOSA, CONTRIBUTOR



INSPIRING. Joy Rojas talks to the audience about her struggles and triumphs as an ultra runner.

**M**EET Joy Rojas, ultra-runner extraordinaire. This magazine editor and freelance writer by profession gained distinction in 2005 by becoming the first Filipina to cross the Philippines from Davao to Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte. She covered an approximate 2000 kilometers in just 46 days. This monumental feat was dubbed Hakbang Pangarap after Joy's dream of running across the country.

Not yet convinced of how tough she is? Try doing all these after overcoming tuberculosis. That's what Joy did, championing the belief that there is indeed "no limit to the Filipino spirit."

"When I ran across the

Philippines," Joy recalled, "people asked me 'what is your goal?' And I said, 'I just want to reach Pagudpud running, that's all.' I didn't want to walk or to ride or to crawl. I want to reach Pagudpud running and, by some amazing miracle, I actually did after 2000 kilometers."

### Dream run

Upon achieving her goal, Joy thought of another, one that would top the last. So on May 11, on her 44th birthday, she plans to be the first Southeast Asian woman to cross the United States.

This Trans-USA run, known as Takbong Pangarap (Dream Run), will begin in Eagle Rock, California and continue through to

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## Pacquiao throws ceremonial pitch at SF Giants Game

by JOSEPH L. PERALTA & MALOU LIWANAG-AGUILAR  
AJPress



Top Rank promoter Bob Arum and Manny 'Pacman' Pacquiao trying on the jerseys given to them by the San Francisco Giants during the Filipino Heritage Night press conference.

AJPress Photo by Malou Liwanag-Aguilar

**S**AN FRANCISCO—Boxing hero Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao became the first Philippine-born athlete to throw a ceremonial pitch before a Major League Baseball game in the Bay Area as the San Francisco Giants hosted division rival the San Diego Padres on April 21.

Pacquiao, who is deep in training in Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles for his junior welterweight bout against England's Ricky Hatton in Las Vegas on May 2,

took time to visit his thousands of fans in the Bay Area during Filipino Heritage Night, an event sponsored by the SF Giants at AT&T Park.

Prior to throwing the ceremonial pitch to Fil-Am pitcher Tim Lincecum, Pacquiao held a press conference in the Giants' Interview Room where boxing promoter Bob Arum and coach Freddie Roach joined Pacquiao to answer questions from media.

Being one of the most successful and influential people not only

in the ring, but also in the world, the press asked Pacquiao if he feels any pressure living up to people's expectations.

"That's what I'm trying to do in every fight, I'm doing my best to make people happy," he said.

With this, Arum informed the members of the press that Pacquiao is one of the nominees of TIME Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World. "Now you can vote, you can go online and vote," he said but added, "I'm

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