

Ex-TV host appointed press assistant secretary

by PAOLO ROMERO
Philstar.com

monsignor Crisanto de la Cruz as presidential assistant for Western Mindanao.

O'Brien was a consultant to then Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes in 2005. She also worked as consultant for various anti-drug campaigns of various government

offices. O'Brien co-hosted the television show *Dance-O-Rama* with the late Pete Roa in 1962. She is the daughter of actress Sigrid von Giese, more popularly known as Paraluman. O'Brien is also a former Miss Pink Camay Girl.

O'Brien has been hosting the programs *People's Government Mobile Action* or *PGMA* and *Serbisyo Muna* at the state-run television channel NBN-4.

De la Cruz, on the other hand, left the priesthood when he ran for mayor of Zamboanga City in 2007 after founding the Nuevo Zamboanga Movement party.

He was supposed to run under ruling party Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats but the administration supported Celso Lobregat instead.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde also announced the appointment of Chief Government Negotiator for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front Rafael Seguis as concurrent special envoy to the Organization of Islamic Conference.

Filipino comics writer Jose Santos was appointed full-time commissioner and concurrent chair-



Cecil Kristin "Baby" O'Brien

Philstar.com Photo

man of the Commission on the Filipino Language, for a term that will expire in January 2013.

Also appointed was Lily Ro-

sales as acting chair of the Board of Guidance and Counseling of the Professional Regulation Commission. ■

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Senate panel paves way for Villar probe *C-5 case' sufficient in form, substance'*

by MAILA AGER
Inquirer.net

THE ethics committee in the Senate has found the case against former Senate President Manny Villar over a controversial road project sufficient in form and substance, according to documents signed by four members of the panel.

A copy was obtained by



Senator Manuel Villar

Inquirer.net ahead of the scheduled hearing by the committee on April 15.

"Without necessarily undertaking a complete discourse of the whole complaint, we believe that there is substance in the complaint that warrants a full blown proceeding in order to accord the complainant a venue to express her grievance against the respondent and for the latter to put forth his defense," the four-page document said.

"Under the rules of the committee, there is sufficiency in form if the complaint is under oath; the name of the member of the Senate who is specifically alleged to have violated a law or any rule or regulation of the Senate or has engaged in an improper conduct; the specific provision of the law and rule of the Senate violated or the acts committed by the said member of the Senate that constitutes improper conduct," it said.

There can also be a declaration of sufficiency of substance, the document said, when the statement of ultimate facts that would constitute the offense committed could be substantiated by the evidence annexed to the complainant to support the allegations contained therein.

"Finding the sworn complaint sufficient in form and in substance and to afford the respondent, Honorable Manuel Villar Jr., the opportunity to answer the said complaint, this committee hereby directs him to file his responsive pleading within five days from

receipt of this order," it said.

The document obtained late Tuesday afternoon was antedated for April 15, the same day the committee, chaired by Senator Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, was set to hear the case.

Lacson and Senators Richard Gordon, Gregorio Honasan, and Juan Miguel Zubiri signed the paper.

Gordon, in a phone interview, confirmed having signed the document.

Gordon said it was the legal team of the committee that studied the complaint and came up with the finding.

"This is not prejudging the case. I'm a lawyer, my goodness," he said.

In a text message, however, Lacson said there was no ruling yet by the committee on any of the cases filed before it.

He explained that under the rules, any order subsequent to a complaint to be considered promulgated must first be filed with the committee and served to the parties affected which service might either be personal or by mail.

"Instead of insulting the integrity of the committee and the Senate itself, it will best serve the interest of all concerned, Senator Manny Villar included, to just answer the serious accusations levelled against him by Senator [Ana Consuelo] Madrigal," Lacson said.

Madrigal is the complainant in the case.

"Snipings and all sorts of squid tactics aimed at muddling the issue by a senator, who is neither a member of the committee on ethics nor a respondent, won't help in the resolution of the issue at hand," he said.

In her complaint, Madrigal accused Villar of benefiting from the C-5 road extension project in Paranaque, which received double allocation in the 2008 national budget.

Villar had admitted endorsing the project but repeatedly denied receiving a single centavo from it. ■

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Protest vs. Charter change goes to committee *Students in togas driven from hearing*

by ABIGAIL KWOK & LIRA DALANGIN-FERNANDEZ
Inquirer.net

PROTESTS against Charter change spilled over last April 14 into the conference room of the House of Representatives when close to a dozen students donned graduation wear and unfurled signs, prompting security personnel to force them out.

Members of the House committee on constitutional amendments were discussing the issue when the students, members of Kabataang Pinoy (Filipino Youth), suddenly stood up and put on graduation caps and some togas, the unfurled small signs opposing Charter change.

Security personnel immediately confiscated the students' protest material and forced them out of the room.

In a statement, the group said their action was a "silent and symbolic protest against how lawmakers are prioritizing political interest over the more pressing need to tackle the unemployment issue."

Paranaque Representative Roilo Golez asked La Union Representative Victor Ortega, the committee chairman, if the action of the security personnel was sanctioned, while

Muna party-list Representative Teodoro Casiño described the eviction of the students an overreaction.

Ortega ordered the head of the security detail to make a report on the incident.

The hearing adjourned without a definite decision on whether or not to adopt the constitutional convention as a mode of amending the Constitution.

The committee earlier approved House Resolution 737 of Speaker Prospero Nograles, which seeks to amend the economic provisions of the Constitution.

Ortega said he personally favored the election of delegates to a constitutional convention as the best mode to change the Charter.

He did not answer queries from Akbayan Representative Risa Hontiveros about whether there was still time to pursue Charter