

IMMIGRATION CORNER



ATTY. MICHAEL GURFINKEL

A relative or a friend's legal advice could be wrong

MANY people rely on the advice of friends or relatives for their immigration problems, rather than consulting an attorney. After all, it's cheaper. But many times, a friend's "advice" is wrong, can mess up a person's immigration situation, and can put a person in an even worse position than if they had done nothing at all. When people in this situation come to me for consultation, I ask "What law school did your friend or relative go to, that you're following his legal advice?"

Here are some examples of wrong advice by friends that many people followed, only to find themselves in a worse situation:

1. A woman was applying for a visitor's visa, so that she could attend her parents' 50th wedding anniversary in the US. She was a teacher in the Philippines. She had a stable job, property, etc.

However, just before she went to the Embassy for an interview, she was told by friends that she should submit a fake tax return, showing that she was making more money than she actually was, to increase her chances of success in obtaining a visitor's visa. Because this advice came from a friend, she listened, and bought a fake tax return from Recto Street. The Embassy instantly spotted that it was fake, and she was refused the visa, based on fraud, which could carry a lifetime ban. What makes the situation even worse, is that she may have had a good chance of obtaining the visitor's visa, had she simply been truthful, and submitted genuine documents.

2. People came to the US as visitors and wanted to work. They were told by friends or relatives to apply for political asylum (claiming to be persecuted in the Philippines) or CSS/LULAC (claiming they had been in the US since 1981, and therefore entitled to an "amnesty" green card). By applying for political asylum or CSS/LULAC, they could get work authorization, and everything would be fine. However, in applying for these types of benefits, they had to lie and submit fake papers. But, the

friends further advised that, "It's OK, everyone does it, and the CIS will never catch on." Now, people are finding that their applications are being denied, and they are being placed in deportation or removal proceedings by the DHS. In many cases they were qualified for legitimate immigration benefits, such as temporary working visas (H-1B) for college graduates or green cards through Labor Certification (employer-sponsored green cards for professionals and skilled workers). But, they messed up their case, by listening to the advice of friends, instead of attorneys.

The bottom line is that when you are sick, don't you go to a doctor? When you have a toothache, don't you go to a dentist? Then why, when you have a legal matter, don't you go to an attorney? If your child needed surgery, would you listen to the advice of a friend as to how to perform the surgery, or, would you go to a surgeon?

Therefore, if you have a legal matter, you should seek the advice of a reputable attorney who can possibly help you in solving it. People should know that their immigration status is perhaps the most important thing in their life in America. Not a day goes by that these people don't think

about their immigration status and how their whole future in America is up in the air or in jeopardy until they are finally in valid, legal status.

If their friends tell them to commit fraud and submit fake documents, will their friends be there when things go wrong and/or when they get placed in removal/deportation? Or will the

friend say, "You need an attorney?"

Michael J. Gurfinkel is licensed, and an active member of the State Bar of California and New York. All immigration services are provided by, or under the supervision of, an active member of the State Bar of California. Each case is different. The information contained herein (including testimonials, "Success Stories", endorsements and re-enactments) is of a general nature, and is not intended to apply to

any particular case, and does not constitute a prediction, warranty, guarantee or legal advice regarding the outcome of your legal matter. No attorney-client relationship is, or shall be, established with any reader. WEBSITE: www.gurfinkel.com Call Toll free to schedule a consultation for anywhere in the US: (866) - GURFINKEL Four offices to serve you: LOS ANGELES · SAN FRANCISCO · NEW YORK · PHILIPPINES (Advertising Supplement)



THE SUPERSTAR FINALLY SPEAKS OUT! She is many things to many people. Multi-awarded actress. Controversial persona. Legendary icon. The one and only Superstar of Philippine entertainment! Ms. Nora Aunor - Ate Guy to her many fans - finally speaks out on all the controversy and the issues that have haunted her in the past years. Be there when hosts Attorney-to-the-Stars Michael J. Gurfinkel (right) and broadcast personality Gel Santos-relos (left) get up close and personal with the Superstar (center) in a tell-all exclusive. Watch this special encore presentation of Citizen Pinoy - airs this Sunday, at 5:40 pm (PST) with a replay on Wednesday, at 12:15 am (PST) on TFC. Citizen Pinoy also airs on ANC-US every Sunday at 12 am with replays on Sunday at 8 am and Thursday at 7 pm, all PST; and on ANC- Philippines every Sunday at 4 pm with a replay at 12 am every Monday (Manila time).

'Citizen Pinoy' is live in the Bay Area on Sunday, May 31st!

REDWOOD CITY, CA. - As ABS-CBN's The Filipino Channel (TFC) celebrates its 15th year of committed service to the global Filipino, *Citizen Pinoy* embarks on its eighth season of public service to Filipinos around North America and their families back in the Philippines - by giving them valuable immigration information that could eventually help in reuniting them with their loved ones.

As it opens its new season, the most popular immigration program on television returns to the Bay Area to provide answers to your (immigration) questions. *Kapamilya* from cities surrounding the San Francisco Bay Area are invited to be there at any of the three scheduled live studio tapings on Sunday, May 31st at the ABS-CBN Global Studios at 150 Shoreline Drive, Redwood City, CA 94065. Tapings will be at 12:00 noon; 2:30 pm; and at 4:30 pm. Leading US immigration attorney Michael J. Gurfinkel will be there to listen to your immigration concerns & provide relevant information that you will all find useful. As a public service from the TFC and the Law Offices of Michael J. Gurfinkel, seats are FREE, but you need to reserve now at www.citizenpinoy.com or you may call toll free 1-866-487-3465.

Citizen Pinoy's new season is sure to provide more relevant immigration information to our *kapamilya* viewers. For several years now, the

program has constantly been a genuine commitment to public service on the part of ABS-CBN International's The Filipino Channel (TFC) and the Law Offices of Michael Gurfinkel. TFC subscribers and their families and loved ones around the world benefit from the helpful advice and counsel learned from the show.

Citizen Pinoy is made possible with the support of friends who are committed to giving back to the Filipino community: Asian Journal - with circulation in Northern and Southern California, Nevada, and in the East Coast and Arko Foods of Glendale. *Citizen Pinoy* is also supported by ABS-CBN Global's key product offerings: Star Kargo, Starry Starry Store, ABS-CBN Telecom and TFCDirect.

Informative. Entertaining. Inspiring. Tell your family and friends around Northern California who have immigration concerns to reserve their seats now and be there when *Citizen Pinoy* returns to the Bay Area on May 31st at the ABS-CBN Global Studios in Redwood City.

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(Advertising Supplement)

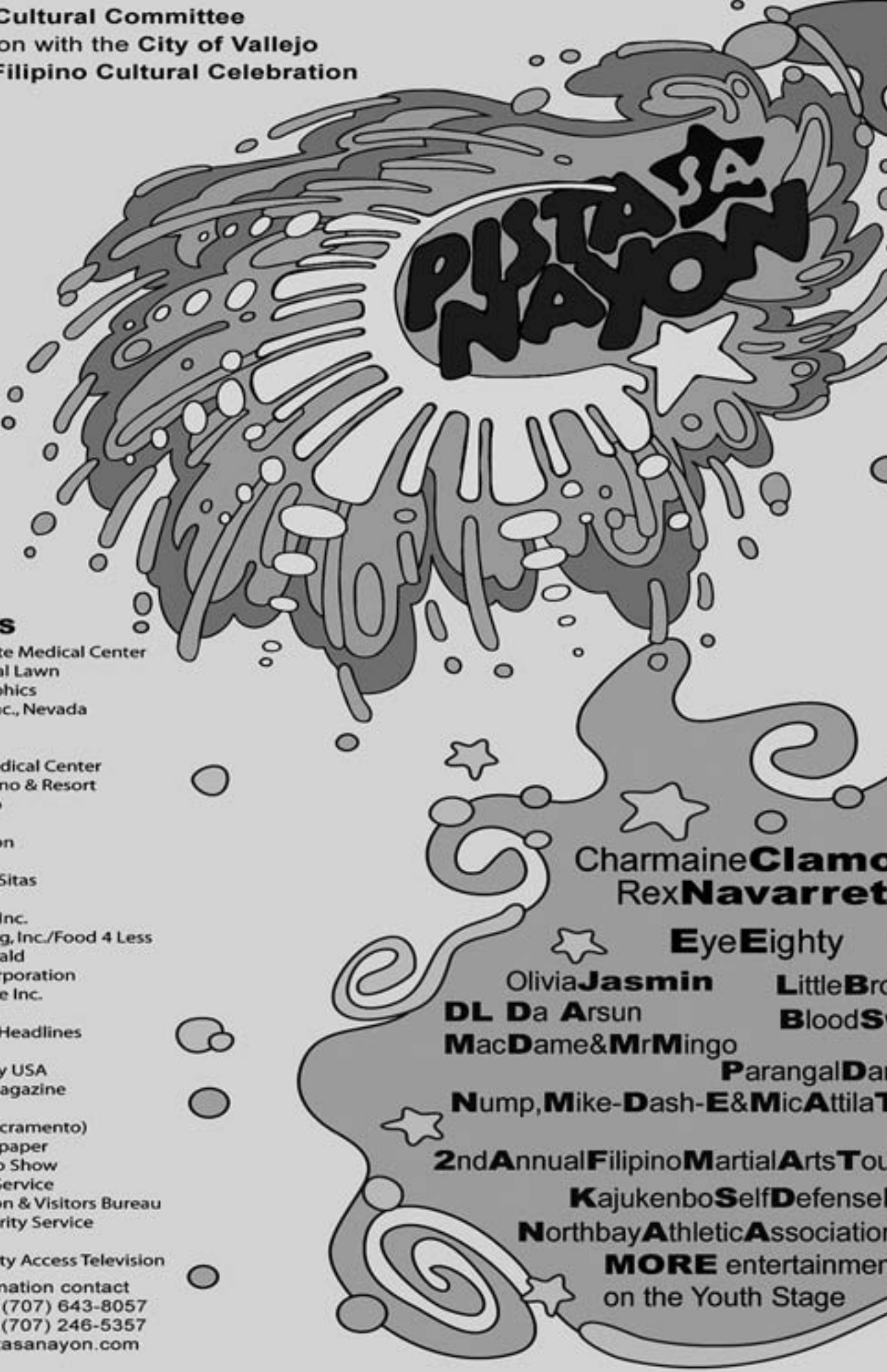


CITIZEN PINOY LIVE IN THE BAY AREA ON MAY 31! Kapamilya from the San Francisco Bay Area are invited to be part of the live studio audience of *Citizen Pinoy* on Sunday, May 31st at the ABS-CBN Global Studios at 150 Shoreline Drive, Redwood City, CA 94065. Tapings will be at 12:00 noon; 2:30 pm; and 4:30 pm. Leading US immigration attorney Michael J. Gurfinkel will be there to answer your immigration questions and provide relevant information that you will all find useful. As a public service from the TFC and the Law Offices of Michael J. Gurfinkel, seats are free, but you need to reserve now at www.citizenpinoy.com or you may call toll free 1-866-487-3465.

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in cooperation with the **City of Vallejo**
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