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ATTY. JOEL R. BANDER

H-1B visas still available

THE US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on May 18, 2009 that it will continue to accept H-1B petitions for the fiscal year 2010. USCIS has only received approximately 45,500 petitions counting toward the general 65,000 cap and approximately 20,000 petitions for the 20,000 cap for aliens with advanced degrees.

This turnout contrasts with our experience in 2007 and 2008, when USCIS was immediately swamped with more petitions than visa numbers available on the first two days of the filing season beginning April 1. During those years, USCIS conducted lottery and rejected thousands of applications that were not fortunate enough to be selected in the lottery. While many still expect USCIS to reach its ceiling this year, the question is whether USCIS will still conduct lottery once the ceiling has been reached.

Last year, USCIS issued a regulation allowing a minimum window of five business days for USCIS to receive H-1B cap-subject cases and thereafter, run a random lottery selection to determine which cases filed within this window will be eligible for a cap number. This is due to the excessive number of petitions received. However, for this year, the general cap has not been met during the five-day window, giving rise to the speculation that no general lottery will be conducted. Some predict a "mini lottery" for cases filed after the five-day window if the number of additional filings exceeds the remainder of the cap. Until USCIS makes an announcement, it is not certain how the selection will be made.

One thing is certain, though. Those who failed to beat the April 1 rush can still file their petition and hope to be selected for processing. They still have time, but must act NOW.

Contact Bander Law Firm now to know if H-1B is an appropriate visa petition for you. H-1B is a temporary work visa for individuals with a bachelor's or higher degree to be employed in a professional occupation. The petition must be filed by a US employer on behalf of a foreign beneficiary. If the beneficiary is presently in the United States as a nonimmigrant, he must be in valid status to apply for a change of status. The petition may also be filed for a beneficiary outside the United States, in which case, the visa will be applied for and issued in the US consulate in the beneficiary's home country.

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Bander Law Firm, LLP has been providing immigration services for over 15 years and has multilingual staff. Feel free to call Bander Law Firm, LLP at 213-873-4333 to schedule your consultation regarding your legal concerns. Bander Law Firm provides a full range of legal services in the fields of Immigration, Mortgage Litigation, Personal Injury, Bankruptcy, Criminal and Removal Defense, Civil and Business Litigation, Wage and Hour Litigation and Class Action lawsuits.

Bander Law Firm, LLP Downtown office address: 1055 W. 7th Street, Suite 1950, Los Angeles, CA, 90017. Tel: (213) 873-4333 Fax: (213) 873-4334. San Gabriel Office address: 1045 E. Valley Blvd., #A215, San Gabriel, CA 91776. Email: info@banderlaw.com.

(Advertising Supplement)

RE:UNION

Filipino-American Associations in America

Searching for a kababata from your hometown, a college buddy or a Pinoy colleague? Your search is finally over. The Asian Journal brings you Re:Union, Filipino American Associations in America – your link to a network of kababayan associations here in the United States. As your Filipino-American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes your need to nourish and maintain ties with the people and the culture you were born with. This is our way of connecting our kababayans to the past, of creating new opportunities for the present and of inspiring you to pay it forward by becoming active members of your association and the FilAm community at large in the future.

Visayas and Mindanao Philippine Bisaya Global Association (VMPBGA)

Contact : Rosemarie Reposar, President/CEO and Founder
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THE Visayas and Mindanao Philippine Bisaya Global Association (VMPBGA) is a non-profit organization. One of our goals is to provide information about the Philippines and about Bisayan activities to Filipino communities all over the world.

The association also assists in the preservation of traditional Bisayan culture, lifestyles, languages, and native tribal dialects. In addition, VMPBGA works with the Visayas and Mindanao regions of the Philippines, and recognize individual contributions that have been made in the service of the worldwide Filipino community. Above all, their belief is that Visayans and Mindanaoians have one common aim -- to work for unity, world peace, and the preservation of human rights.

Filipino unity

VMPBGA believes that the best way to achieve unity is to improve communication among Filipinos around the world, and to encourage people to speak up and actively participate in their community. While many Bisayans have been unwilling to get involved, the VMPBGA is one avenue by which Filipinos can give each other moral support, advise each other, and stand together as a team. Members of the VMPBGA assist new members and introduce them to group activities. While the VMPBGA began by focusing on local charities and service in the Filipino-American community, we now seek to expand our group to include all Pilipino communities around the world.

The Visayas & Mindanao Philippine Bisaya Global Association was created by Filipinos of Bisayan descent. The association includes groups across the United States from California to New Jersey. And, in the future, it is their hope to attract new Bisayan members from all over the world. In doing so, it aims to increase communication and enable more direct contact between all Bisayans. While enhancing Bisayan unity is one goal of the VMPBGA, we also work to show the world and non-Filipinos what a rich culture the Bisayan people have to offer. ■

People and Events

RETURN OF THE NIGHTINGALE IN THE NEW MILLENIUM. In celebration of the Legacy of Clinical Nursing nationwide (Nurses Week, May 6-12) in Kaiser Permanente-Sacramento, CA, Operating Room nurse Madonna Ibanez Abria, RN, BSN, CNOR was honored and recognized in a ceremony hosted by the Kaiser Permanente management last May 12 for being the recipient of the 2009 Nursing Excellence Award. This award honors nurses who emulate dedication to quality, patient safety and advocacy, commitment to research and evidence-based practice and leadership, as demonstrated by mentoring, teaching and advancing the profession. Ms. Abria was also the recipient of the same award in 2008. Ms. Abria's family and friends would like to congratulate her for being bestowed this award and for all her hard work and dedication. In photo above shows (L-R) Madonna Ibanez Abria, RN, BSN, CNOR holding her "Return of the Nightingale in the New Millenium" medal with Terri Owensby, Chief Nursing Officer-KFH and Marge Geary, Director of Nursing Practice, TPMG.

PVB of Northern California annual picnic

MEMBERS of the Philippine Veterans Bank of Northern California Group will hold their annual picnic on June 20, 2009 at Lake Elizabeth in Fremont, California. For more information, please call Marites Famacion at (650) 438-8766 or Peanuts Ferranco at (510) 709-8249. ■

El Shaddai Mass and Healing

THE San Jose Chapter DWXI-Prayer Partner Fellowship International, celebrating their fifth anniversary, cordially invites you to join the El Shaddai Mass and Healing on June 20 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in 2020 East San Antonio Street, San Jose, CA 95116.

For more information, please contact Sister Ann Pascua at (408) 987-9610 or Bro. Ed Pascua at (408) 674-1804. ■

Family Appointment with Yahweh El Shaddai

EVERYONE is invited to join a family appointment with Yahweh El Shaddai, the God who is more than enough where Jesus Christ is Lord, on the first, second and third Saturdays of the month from 6:30-9pm at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in 2020 East San Antonio Street, San Jose CA 95116.

For more information, please contact Ann Pascua at (408) 987-9610. ■

The Filipino Fiesta 2009 is just around the corner

YES, just two weeks away, on June 7, we will celebrate the 34th year of Filipino Fiesta in Sacramento and commemorate the 111th year of Philippine Independence from Spain (June 12, 1898). This is the largest gathering of Filipino-Americans in Sacramento and vicinity.

The fiesta is engrained in the Filipino culture. It is popularly known to be the link that binds Filipinos anywhere in the world. In Sacramento, Filipinos come in full force to join the celebration. This year's theme is "Celebrate our Living Traditions," translated in Tagalog, "*Ipagdiwang ang ating mga gawi.*"

We have just concluded a very successful fund raising event, a dance concert performed by the famous group, Press P.L. A.Y. on May 15 and 16. This was held at the world-class Natomas Charter School's Benvenuti Performing Arts Center. This group is one fourth of the Family Royale which consists of Boogie Monstarz, Super Galactic- Beat Manipulators, and Jabbawockeez. Family Royale is under the direction of MTV's Season One America's Best Dance Crew, Jabbawokeez member, Joe Larot.

Prior to this event, the Filipino Fiesta presented a very successful kick-off mini concert performed by talented young stars. This was held at the popular Jose Rizal Community Center on March 6. The star performers were Doce Pares, Angela Barrios, Kristina and Marlise Dizon, Kenny Kauulupali, Isabel Nisay, Marikar Sinnung, Katelyn Torres, Nikka Magahis, Madison Javier, Apolross Reyes, Alexa Sison, Reyna Armour and Chloe Villegas. Eddie Aducayen performed a duet with Chloe Villegas while Jim Torres performed a duet with his grand daughter Katelyn Torres. Hip-hop dance crews energized the audience by their dance numbers. They were Those kids, Super Nova, Beat Statics and Press P.L.A.Y. Come and watch some of these performers at the fiesta.

At the fiesta, we will celebrate the passage of the Veterans Equity Bill with a special presentation. We will also have a unique display of history as shown in pictures and newspaper clippings, a vast collection courtesy of Linda Maghong Montano of Stockton.

In addition, there will be the popular *yo-yo* contest, so get ready for a fun filled battle of the *yo-yo*. The word *yo-yo* is a Tagalog word, the native language of the Philippines which means "come back."

The fiesta is not complete without the Philippines' display of native food and delicacies. From the world famous *halo-halo* to *lumpia*, we have it all for you to try. Visit our food booths and sample each offering, you'll be glad you did. Don't be afraid to go back for more.

Our corporate sponsors are very generous to celebrate with us this memorable occasion. The active Filipino organizations that participates every fiesta, every year make the annual celebration a success. We salute our veterans and our elderly who always join the community parade in their might and splendor. Special thanks to our numerous donors who unselfishly share their support in more ways than one. We acknowledge and recognize the vendors- profit and non profit, food and non-food for their commitment in offering high quality products and services.

We also welcome the presence of dignitaries and special guests from Sacramento and beyond. Their support is greatly appreciated.

The performers always deserve standing ovation. They represent a well blended culture of old and new traditions. Our volunteers are commended for their untiring devotion to serve the various aspects of the fiesta. They are the unsung heroes. We also have the *Salamat Po* donors who proudly contribute to the success of producing our souvenir program. Last but not least, kudos to the steering committee members who share their time and efforts to give you enjoyment and merriment you deserve at the fiesta.

Mark your calendars, June 7, 2009! We welcome everyone to the Filipino Fiesta to be held at the Rizal Community Center, 7320 Florin Mall Drive, Sacramento. Feel at home and enjoy the festivities. For more information, visit our website at www.sactofiesta.org. ■

Invitation to the GK 2024 Global Summit

Boston, Massachusetts, June 12- 14

GAWAD Kalinga invites you to the first Gawad Kalinga 2024 Global Summit, a historic initiative that will take place in Boston, Massachusetts on June 12- 14, 2009 dedicated to the eradication of poverty in the Philippines and other developing countries.

Since its launching as a patriotic Filipino movement for nation building in 2003, Gawad Kalinga has successfully brokered private and public partnerships, bridged friendships between Muslims and Christians, and fostered collaboration among Catholic lay organizations. Due to its transformative impact, both on the poor and the rich alike, it has a growing global base of over 1 million volunteers.

We want to share the GK way with like-minded global citizens to help expand our work. Through the GK 2024 Global Summit, we hope to achieve the following goals:

To proclaim the resolve of Filipinos to end poverty of the five million poorest families in the country by 2024, following the twenty one year timeline and template of Gawad Kalinga. This is the coming out party in the most credible academic setting in the world of Filipinos who share the dream of a prosperous nation that they can build together.

To launch Gawad Kalinga as a global template of social development consistent with the UN Millennium Development Goals. We will showcase the best practices of Gawad Kalinga in the Philippines and abroad and recognize partners from government, business, and civil society. Outstanding governors and mayors will present their development plans to build trust, attract grants and investments, and encourage tourism in their respective areas.

To honor outstanding GK partners starting with the GK village builders of North America, who have made heroic sacrifices to grow the Gawad Kalinga movement and to attract more patriots and partners to our cause of nation-building and building a better world.

We would like to invite you to this gathering of GK patriots and friends. To register and for more information, please visit www.gawadkalinga.org/globalsummit or call 714 906 1488 and look for Che Mari

We look forward to the sharing and shaping of our collective dream of a Philippines that every Filipino can be proud of. ■

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