

# 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 kababay-an 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.

## Filipino American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES)

Contact:  
30 Grafton Ave.  
San Francisco CA 94112  
(415)378-0909

### Vision

FACES envisions an interconnected world where people are healthy and free to realize their potential through cooperation and solidarity. We aspire for communities that are accountable for the safety and well-being of each other and Mother Earth. We hope for a world where people respect the interdependence of species, protect and preserve the resources of the environment, and sustain all living creatures for present and future generations.

### Mission

FACES is an intergenerational organization that works for environmental justice within communities in the United States and in the Philippines, and builds partnerships through advocacy, education, service, and organizing.

### History

Launched in February 2000, the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity, formerly the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solutions, originated as a growing movement of church, environmental, peace and justice groups, students, scientists, professionals, and other concerned citizens who are committed to seeking environmental justice for the communities affected by toxic contamination at former U.S. military bases in the Philippines.

Efforts in the United States to address the issue began in 1994 when the United States Working Group for Philippine Bases Clean Up (USWG) was formed to support the Philippine non-governmental grassroots organization, the People's Task Force for Bases Clean Up. Mostly technical in makeup, the USWG provided scientific advice, reviewed documents and studies concerning the contamination problem in the former bases, and communicated their recommendations to both the United States and Philippine governments.

While the counterpart of FACES in the Philippines--the People's Task Force for Bases Clean Up--continued to gain ground and support across the Philippines, there was a clear call for American citizens to organize and send a clear message to their own government to take responsibility for their toxic legacy.

Because of the change in political climate in the Philippines and US, conflicts between People's

Task Force for Bases Clean Up (PTFBC) organizations and the affected communities, and the lack of movement in the campaign since FACES' formation, the organization carefully examined its vision, mission, goals and strategy. In 2004, FACES launched a comprehensive assessment process that employed participatory methods for building capacity and strategy around FACES potential future direction. (Also please see: Position Paper and 2004 Trip Report Back under Resources include link)

In January 2005, FACES members attending the biennial national conference decided to re-define and expand organizational and campaign strategy and goals. Through the recent FACES assessment process, the need emerged to extend the scope of FACES to capture the broader environmental justice framework. FACES wanted to deepen our notion of "solidarity" and recognize the reciprocity of our relationship with Philippine partners. This fueled the discussion around the change of "S" in FACES. Through a vote, Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solutions was eventually changed to Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity.

At the national conference, FACES members agreed on a new FACES' future strategic direction, a new vision and mission, and a new organizational structure under which FACES currently operates. (Also please see: 2005 National Conference Summary under Resources include link) After our 3rd National Conference, the Filipino American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES) emerged a reinvigorated organization. We decided to broaden FACES' scope of concerns to address transnational issues of environmental justice that impact Filipino communities in both the United States and the Philippines.

FACES' is excited to advance our environmental justice work in the coming years as we refine our strategy and deepen our commitment through our current programs. As we embark on this new phase in the struggle for environmental justice, FACES invites new and old members to join us. We promise to remain grounded in the personal stories, lives, and struggles of those affected by environmental injustice worldwide. Join us. ■

## 'Write to Change the Classroom' makes a difference with school supplies

Walmart encourages teachers, parents and students to submit stories of supply needs

BENTONVILLE, Ark. – In February, a letter from a 14-year-old girl to her congressman resulted in recognition from President Obama and a beautifully re-supplied classroom for eighth-grader Ty'Sheoma Bethea and her classmates. Walmart was watching. Today, the retailer is inviting teachers, parents and students to write their own letters for a shot at having their classrooms re-supplied this coming school year.

The "Write to Change the Classroom" program will award 20 teachers with \$4,000 in classroom school supplies to help make a difference in students' lives and further a cause that began with one courageous letter.

The "Write to Change the Classroom" program is a natural extension of the efforts expressed by Ty'Sheoma Bethea of J.V. Martin Junior High School in South Carolina. With a carefully crafted letter and a lot of determination, her voice was heard as she detailed the dilapidated state of her school's current learning conditions. As a result, a movement began, a student's life was changed and a community was united.

"We were inspired by the impact of Miss Bethea's letter to Congress and wanted to do something that showed our support and appreciation for all the great work teachers are already doing," said Janet Bareis, Walmart vice

president of marketing. "Walmart has long supported teachers and schools. Our goal with this program is to equip students with the necessary tools and resources to help them learn."

Entrants can submit their 500-words-or-less letter in English at [www.writetochangetheclassroom.com](http://www.writetochangetheclassroom.com) outlining their school supply needs (e.g. basic educational materials, classroom furniture, technology, etc.) and explaining how these materials will be used throughout the school year. Supply needs might include everything from new computers, to replacing aging, broken or depleted classroom supplies. All entrants must be at least 18 years of age. Any state-accrued elementary (K-6), junior high (7-8) and senior high (9-12) and traditional school is eligible to receive the supplies. The call for entries period will run from July 14 through July 24, 2009.

Selected finalists will receive \$4,000-worth of school supplies to their designated classroom and an additional \$4,000 toward supplies for their entire school. Essays will be judged on level of need, creativity and the positive impact these supplies will have on the school.

For more information regarding the Walmart "Write to Change the Classroom" program, please visit [www.writetochangetheclassroom.com](http://www.writetochangetheclassroom.com). ■

## People and Events

### Pampanga's Patroness at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels

THOUSANDS of Kapampangans will gather on Saturday, September 12, 2009 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, California to celebrate the 53rd Canonical Coronation Anniversary of the Virgen de los Remedios. The devotion to the Virgen de los Remedios was initiated by Pampanga's first Bishop Cesar Maria Guerrero, D.D. to save the province (which also used to host the biggest US military facility in Asia, northwest of Manila 1903-1991) from a breeding ground of socialism, where at that time peasants and workers were revolting against landowners and wealthy hacenderos, as well as the widening gap between rich and poor.

He entrusted his diocese to the Nuestra Senora de los Remedios and started a Crusade of Charity and Goodwill. Her image was taken to every village, barrio and town. Daily processions were held and Masses were attended by the faithful. Rosaries were recited all day and all night. Prominent ladies of buena famille, otherwise known as *Damas de Caridad* were designated to collect alms and gifts for the poor. Eventually faith was strengthened and peace was restored.

In recent times, Kapampangans prayed and work together to rebuild their communities from the ruins of Mt. Pinatubo eruption. Two years ago, they rallied for the restoration of good governance in their province. In commemoration of

the golden anniversary of the Canonical Coronation, a caravan of goods traveled to Albay for the victims of Mayon Volcano eruption. Fifty children of poor families are attending vocational or college courses with scholarships from *Lamac King Birhen, Pondo ning Balen* program of Social Action Center of Pampanga.

As a humble recognition of Kapampangans' enthusiastic and deep devotion to the Mother of God, Pope Pius XII decreed in 1956 the bestowing of Canonical Crown to the Nuestra Senora de los Remedios and declaring her the patroness of Pampanga. This devotion continues to this day, with replicas of the Virgen de los Remedios and Santo Cristo del Perdon visiting every chapel and church all year round. Kapampangans in Los Angeles annually hold the cherished tradition of re-enacting the coronation rites and attended by kabalans from California, Nevada, Washington and other states.

This year's celebration will begin with the procession of delegates from the different towns and flower bearing children. His Excellency Paciano Aniceto of the Archdiocese of San Fernando, Pampanga will be the main celebrant of the Solemn Concelebrated Mass to be followed with a gala dinner and fiesta at the Glendale Civic Auditorium. The faithful and other Marian devotees are invited. ■

### Big gatherings on the Iglesia ni Cristo - Church of Christ Grand Anniversary Celebration

THE Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) will mark its 95th founding anniversary in the Philippines on July 27, 2009. Aside from the annual thanksgiving services that will be held in all its congregations worldwide, the INC is also set to conduct on Monday a grand religious assembly in 19 huge venues around the globe. Here in California, such gathering will be held at the HP Pavilion in San Jose.

Huge crowds are expected to come to the said event, as INC delegates and guests from the Northern and Southern California including those from Nevada are set to join in the celebration of the "Iglesia ni Cristo Day."

In the Philippines, Malacanang has declared that day, July 27, as a special national working holiday pursuant to Republic Act 9645 enacted last June 12 which decrees the observance of the INC's foundation day as national holiday.

Other venues for the said occasions are the following:

NORTHEASTERN SEABOARD & SOUTHEASTERN SEABOARD - Washington Convention Center, Washington D.C.

AUSTRALIA - Hills Center, Sydney, Australia

NORTHERN EUROPE - Central Hall Westminster, Central London

SOUTHERN EUROPE - Parco Esposizioni Novegro - Via Novegro Segrate, Milan, Italy

METRO MANILA EAST - Araneta Coliseum, Cubao, Quezon City

METRO MANILA NORTH & SOUTH, at RIZAL - Rizal Memorial Sports Complex

And in 12 other regional locations in the Philippines.

Gates open at 3pm local time. Admission is open to the public.

95 Years of Expansion Beginnings. The Iglesia ni

Cristo was first preached by the late Brother Felix Y. Manalo in the Philippine capital city of Manila. Its first local congregation was established in Punta, Sta. Ana. On July 27, 1914, the Church was registered with the Philippine government.

In 1915, Brother Felix Manalo, as the first Executive Minister of the Church, started training ministers to assist him in the propagation of the gospel. By 1918, ministers and volunteer preachers were being sent to provinces around Manila. In its tenth year, the first ecclesiastical district was organized in Pampanga province.

Domestic growth. By 1939, the Church had already expanded to as far as Ilocos Norte province in Northern Luzon to Cebu province in the Visayas with the addition of 14 districts. It reached farther south in Mindanao in 1946 with the establishment of a district in Cotabato. When Brother Eraño G. Manalo assumed overall administration in April 1963, the Church had established districts in more than half of all Philippine provinces.

Overseas. On July 27, 1968, the incumbent Executive Minister officiated at the first worship service of the Church outside the Philippines. This gathering held in Ewa Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii marked the establishment of the Honolulu Congregation, the first overseas mission of the Church. The following month, the Executive Minister was in California to establish the San Francisco Congregation and lead its inaugural worship service.

The Americas. In 1971, the Church set foot in Canada. In June 1987, the US Main Office (USMO) was set up in Daly City, California to assist the Central Administration in supervising the then 11 districts of the

Church in the West.

The first local congregation in Latin America was established in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in 1990. The following year, the Church reached Mexico and Aruba. From 2000 and beyond, congregations rose in the Central and South American countries.

Europe. The first local congregation in Europe was established in England in 1972. The Church came to Germany and Switzerland in the mid-70s. By the end of the 1980s, congregations and missions could be found in the Scandinavian countries and their neighbors.

Mediterranean. The Rome, Italy Congregation was established on July 27, 1994; the Jerusalem, Israel Congregation in March 1996; and the Athens, Greece Congregation in May 1997. The predecessors (prayer groups) of these full-fledged congregations began two decades earlier. Meanwhile, the mission first reached Spain in 1979.

Africa. The first mission in northern Africa opened in Nigeria in October 1978. After a month, the King William's Town Congregation, in South Africa was established.

Asia, Australia, and Oceania. A congregation was organized in Guam in 1969. In Australia, congregations have been established since mid-1970s. The Church first reached China by way of Hong Kong, and Japan through Tokyo also in the 1970s. Missions have also opened in Kazakhstan and Sakhalin Island in Russia.

In Southeast Asia, the first congregation in Thailand was established in 1976 and missions have already been conducted in Brunei since 1979. In addition, there are also congregations in Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. ■

### Judge Reynaldo Grauly ...

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Commissioner of the State Insurance Commission in 1997.

As Insurance Commissioner he was able to reform our no-fault auto insurance law. At the time, Hawaii drivers were paying the second highest auto insurance premiums in the nation. As a result of Grauly's work, drivers saw a drop of 20-percent on their auto insurance premiums, the largest reduction in the nation.

In 1999, he was appointed and confirmed as a Circuit Court Judge. Early on, he took on one of the largest cases of government fraud in Honolulu history.

Judge Grauly presided over the Ewa Villages

scandal where Michael Kahapea was convicted and sentenced for stealing \$5.8 million from taxpayers. He says the ultimate satisfaction of sitting on the bench came from the week in, week out, trials that lead to a safer community.

Over his illustrious career in government, Reynaldo Grauly made substantial contributions to state policy, protection of consumers, and the administration of justice.

Many of his initiatives will continue to better our community in the decades to come.

Now in retirement, Grauly revealed that he plans to play golf while enjoying life as a full-time grandpa. ■