

## LEGAL RIGHTS



By Atty. Johnson Lazaro

AN adopted child doesn't need to stay behind. Like natural or stepchildren, he or she can easily immigrate to the United States as long as a few requirements are met.

First, consider what I call the two and two rule. You must have two years of legal custody and two years of physical custody of the child to make this happen. Adoption is the most common way to obtain legal custody of the child. A legal adoption in the Philippines is honored by the U.S. Immigration. The magic number is 16. Adopt the child by age 16. Legal adoption in Manila can be very slow. Make sure you hire a good Philippine attorney. Immigration will want to see a final adoption decree.

The physical custody requirement is also known as the residency requirement. The two years residency with the child may occur before or after the adoption. There must be some showing that you physically cared for the child for a two-year period. Remember, custody can occur at any time but it has to be for two years.

Immigration requires a strong showing of physical

# Adopted Child Can Immigrate

custody and parental control. The documents that can be used to prove the two-year residing requirement can include school records, medical records, dental records, and tax returns listing the child as a dependent (in order to list the child on a United States tax return, a taxpayer identification number should be obtained for the child). Get a camera with digital date and take lots of pictures.

The other category of adoption is orphan adoption. An orphan is a child whose parents died, disappeared, or deserted the child. A child is also considered an orphan if the sole or surviving parent is incapable of providing the proper care and has in writing irrevocably released the child for emigration and adoption.

A U.S. citizen and spouse jointly, or by an unmarried United States citizen at least 25 of age, who personally saw and observed the child prior to or during the adoption proceedings may be eligible to adopt the orphan. If it is not possible to adopt the child in the Philippines, it may be possible for the child to immigrate and be adopted in the U.S. This is a special situation that is used sparingly.

The four agencies that play a part in international adop-

tion process are the local child welfare agency, the government adoption board, a home study organization, and the immigration service.

In the Philippines, for example, the Inter-country Adoption Board (ICAB) will investigate whether in fact the child is an orphan. The agency will look into the background and history of the child and the whereabouts of the parents. Once the ICAB is fully satisfied that the child comes within the legal definition of orphan, it will prepare a report to the U.S. Immigration. These reports are usually accepted and the cases go forward. The next steps will be preparation of applications for visa and the subsequent entry of the child to the U.S.

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(Advertising Supplement)

## DENTIST'S CORNER



By Dr. Librada C. Yamat

MOST people don't even think about dental health for children until they have a number of teeth in their mouth, but you might be surprised to hear that even babies need dental attention! Ask us about cleaning your baby's gums and first teeth, dental issues with bottle feeding and pacifiers, the use of toothpaste, fluoride supplements and sealants with young children, and nutritional advice for good dental health at any age.

If your teenager surprises you with a tongue or mouth piercing, keep us in mind so that we can keep an eye out for oral hygiene issues and infections, to fractured, cracked or chipped teeth that may result from contact with a tongue stud or other piercing.

# Healthy Dental Habits from Day One

As the adult years approach, we continue to encourage both men and women to continue to be vigilant with their dental hygiene, paying attention to preventive dental care before problems arise. Common problems, from bad breath to gum disease to tooth decay and tooth loss, even the identification of oral cancer are all issues that we deal with on a day-to-day basis in our office.

Women's oral health can be linked to different stages of life and fluctuating levels of hormones. For example, pregnant women have an increased risk of inflammation of the gums because of a surge in estrogen and progesterone. Rigid attention to dental hygiene and regular cleanings at the dentist are a must in order to keep teeth and gums clean, and to prevent plaque from forming. Menopause brings its own set of dental concerns; during

this time some women can experience dry mouth, burning sensations and changes in taste. Hormone replacement therapy may cause gums to bleed, swell and become red.

As your dental professional, we're here to help you and your family through each life stage. Regular visits and open communication about health or medication changes will allow us to monitor any changes in your oral health, and make each stage as healthy and comfortable as possible.

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# Political Will Needed to Boost Competitiveness

By Daxim Lucas / Inquirer.net

THE Philippine government needs to find more political will to improve the business climate and consequently make the country more hospitable to foreign and local investors, according to business leaders.

At the same time, a unit of the World Bank recently unveiled the results of a competitiveness ranking survey which its officials hope would encourage authorities to per-

severe with reform measures meant to make the country more "business friendly."

In this year's edition of its "Doing Business" survey, the World Bank's International Finance Corp. (IFC) noted that the Philippines' ranking slipped to 133 in a field of 178 countries. This was slightly lower than the previous year's ranking of 130, and the rank of 121 from two years ago.

IFC officials dubbed the country as a "slow reformer" but expressed hopes that the

survey would serve as a guide for the government on which aspects of the regulatory and business environment to focus on.

"We want to use this study as a tool," IFC acting country manager Jesse Ang said in an interview. "We want it to be used as a guide for the country's reform agenda."

He said the IFC's findings were also meant to help the private sector identify countries that are most business

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# Peso Seen Firming Up to 43:\$1 by...

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traded at around 26 to the dollar.

The commentary, written by BNP Paribas analyst Chin Loo Thio, recommended that investors stay "long" or buy into most Asian currencies including the peso throughout this year and next year.

Aside from the peso, BNP Paribas' other top currency picks for the next two years were the Malaysian ringgit, Singapore dollar, Chinese yuan and the Indonesian rupiah.

"The continued rapid pace

Taiwan and Indonesia which deserve closer monitoring — is encouraging at a time when there are fears of foreign capital repatriation from emerging markets," the research said.

"Indeed, flows showing that investors see Asia as a safe-haven play attest to investors' confidence in the region, underpinned by solid economic growth, strengthening domestic demand, still competitive exports, better policy and attractive earnings potential," it added.

The Philippines yielded a record-high BoP surplus

pinos and foreign investors, according to the latest central bank data. The rising surplus reflects a strong buildup in the gross international reserves, which breached the \$30-billion mark at end-August.

The gross domestic product grew by 7.3 percent in the first half of the year, with a growth of 7.5 percent in the second quarter, its strongest growth rate in 20 years.

BNP Paribas said the credit headwinds triggered by rising delinquencies among US subprime mortgage borrowers had a limited effect in Asia as