



Philippine Fiesta™

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HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2015



Sinag-tala's 25th Anniversary

Photo by Rick Garcia



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Editor's Note

Another great year has passed in the publication of Philippine Fiesta news! We are excited in the New Year of 2015.

This issue ends the year colorfully and lively with several holiday celebrations that have happened in the past month in our community. Congratulations and greetings to the Mrs. Philippines of the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity and the Sinag-Tala for their 25th Silver Anniversary Christmas Show in our community. The annual Ati-Atihan celebration by the Aklan Association will be held at the Jose Rizal Community Center on January 17. I invite everyone to participate, as this is a fun event that should not be missed, in honor of Sto. Nino. Come as an individual or as a group in costumes and participate in the parade. Please help me re-introduce the "Picture Me Fit and Healthy" community project that I have started sometime in 2012. It's all about being healthy with mindful eating and by staying physically active even at this stage in our life. It's a great way to start the new year.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy life, and a prosperous New Year!

With love,
Dinnah San Pedro

Amazing

By Fr. Jerry M. Orbos

The story is told about a father who loved his first-born child and named him Amazing. But as the child was growing up he became so ashamed of his name because his friends kept teasing him. When he himself grew up, he told his children that when he dies they should not put his name at all on his tomb and that's what they did. But what happened was every time people would pass by his tomb with no name (just date of birth and date of death) they would always end up saying, "That's Amazing!"

In today's gospel (Lk. 2, 22-40), we hear of the mysterious and amazing prophecies that were foretold about the Baby Jesus. Simeon, to the amazement of Joseph and Mary, proclaimed the role of the child for the salvation of all peoples, along with the sufferings and contradictions that they will encounter. The prophetess, Anna, also said amazing things about the Child. Through it all, Mary and Joseph obeyed, trusted and believed in God's word and promise.

Today is the Feast of the Holy Family. Let us preserve the sanctity of marriage and the unity of family. As we honor Joseph and Mary, we honor parents who devoutly and diligently fulfill their role to raise God's children in this difficult world. We

can never really know how much love, hard work and sacrifices our parents have done for us. We also honor children who become a source of joy and pride to their parents—children who know in their hearts what "payback time" is all about.

Dec. 28 is also traditionally the Feast of the Holy Innocents, reminding us adults of how we could hurt and even kill the innocent little ones in our midst because of our selfishness and pride. No less than Pope Francis has expressed his sadness for children who are victims of violence, terrorism, forced labor and child trafficking in his Christmas message when he said, "Truly, there

Continued on next page

Pope Francis: 'So many tears this Christmas'

By Jean-Louis De La Vaissiere

In his annual Christmas 'urbi et orbi' message, Pope Francis calls for an end to 'brutal' religious persecution, killings and hostage-takings, as well as violence against children



Pope Francis

Pope Francis on Thursday, December 25, roundly condemned jihadist violence and the "brutal persecution" of religious minorities in a Christmas message to the world's 1.2 billion Catholics and millions of others.

Speaking to a packed crowd outside Saint Peter's Basilica, the popular Argentine pontiff also made a strong call to end violence wrought against children amid "indifference and tears."

His second traditional "urbi et orbi" message (to the city and to the world) comes at the close of a year plagued by war and violent religious fundamentalism, notably in Iraq, Syria, Nigeria and most recently against schoolchildren in Pakistan.

"Truly there are so many tears this Christmas," he said in the message broadcast across the world.

Without naming the jihadist Islamic State (ISIS) group, he said Christians in Iraq and Syria "for too long now have suffered the effects of ongoing conflict" and "together with those belonging to other

ethnic and religious groups, are suffering a brutal persecution."

Killings and hostage-takings from the Middle East to Nigeria and elsewhere must stop, he said.

Visibly moved and departing from his text, the 78-year-old head of the Roman Catholic Church noted "the children massacred by bombardments, including where the son of God was born" – in the Holy Land – and their "powerless silence that cries under the sword."

Denouncing "indifference", he explicitly condemned abortion, deploring the children "killed before seeing the light."

Children killed in Pakistan

"May Jesus save the vast numbers of children who are victims of violence, made objects of trade and trafficking, or forced to become soldiers." (READ: UN: Child trafficking on the rise)

"May he give comfort to the families of the children killed in Pakistan last

week", he added, referring to the 149 people, including 133 schoolchildren, killed in Peshawar by the Taliban.

In Baghdad, where an estimated 150,000 Iraqi Christians have fled jihadist violence since June, Christmas celebrations were dampened by events.

"We do not have any feelings of joy," said Rayan Dania Sabri at Baghdad's Church of the Ascension. "How can we be joyful when there are thousands still living in camps and schools in poor conditions?"

Turning to trouble spots elsewhere across the globe, the softly-spoken Francis urged Ukrainians also to "overcome tensions, conquer hatred and violence and set out on a new journey of fraternity and reconciliation".

He called for peace in "the whole Middle East" and continued efforts towards "dialogue" between Israelis and Palestinians.

Peace too was essential in Africa, particularly in Nigeria "where more blood is being shed", as well as in Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

He noted the victims of Ebola in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea and thanked those who were "courageously" assisting the sick.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II also paid tribute to the "selflessness" of medical staff

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Workers to get additional P10,000 tax exemption – Palace

By Jc Bello Ruiz

Malacañang announced on Sunday that workers will receive an additional P10,000 tax exemption from their benefits beginning next month.

Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz and Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima announced the good news that will benefit millions of workers all over the country.

“This is the results of the approval by President Benigno Aquino III of new guidelines with regard to additional tax exemptions for the benefits to be given to workers under the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and productivity incentive schemes,” he said.

Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz said in a press statement that the tax exemption is the government’s “fitting gift to our workers this holiday season.”

“With this, millions of Filipino workers could welcome the new year with a more realistic hope of

sharing in the country’s growing prosperity. That is what inclusive growth is,” she said.

The DOLE and the Department of Finance have agreed to have the measure take effect in January 2015, according to Baldoz.

She added that the Aquino administration “recognizes the tangible contributions put in by millions of Filipino workers to the country’s growing economy, and expanding the list of tax-exempt de minimis benefits is a measured way to ensure each hard working Filipino is rewarded for his labors.”

The Bureau of Internal Revenue, which is under the DOF, will issue new revenue regulations to make the measure effective, Baldoz said.

The Labor chief, citing data of the DOF, said the total amount of de minimis benefits that each worker-taxpayer can claim when the measure takes effect will reach P104,225, up by P10,000 from the current level of P94,225.

Baldoz said the BIR revenue regulation on de minimis benefits was last amended in 2012.

She recalled that expanding the list of tax-exempt de minimis benefits was one of the demands of labor at the dialogue with the

President in the last Labor Day commemoration in May 2014.

“Bunga ito ng tuloy-tuloy na pakikipagdiyalogo ni Pangulong Aquino sa mga organisasyon ng mga manggagawa nitong taong 2014 (This is the fruit of President Aquino’s continuous dialogues with workers’ organizations this year 2014),” Coloma said in an interview with government radio station dzRB.

“The new guidelines will be implemented in January 2015 through a revenue regulation to be issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR),” the PCOO chief said.

Purisima described the additional tax exemption for the so-called “de minimis” benefits or those given to employees on top of their compensation that are not subject to withholding tax, as rational because millions of workers will benefit from it.

“These workers are among those who receive the lowest salaries,” Coloma said.

On the other hand, almost P17 million will be deducted from the revenue collection of the BIR due to this additional tax exemption. (With reports from PNA)

N. Korea calls Obama ‘monkey’ in hacking row

(Associated Press)

Seoul — North Korea called President Barack Obama “a monkey” and blamed the US on yesterday for shutting down its Internet amid the hacking row over the comedy “The Interview.”



Kim Jong Un

North Korea has denied involvement in a crippling cyberattack on Sony Pictures but has expressed fury over the comedy depicting an assassination of its leader Kim Jong Un. Sony Pictures initially called off the release citing threats of terror attacks against US movie theaters. Obama criticized Sony’s decision, and the movie has opened this week.

On yesterday, the North’s powerful National Defense Commission, the country’s top governing body led by Kim, said that Obama was behind the release of “The Interview.” It described the movie as illegal, dishonest and reactionary.

“Obama always goes reckless in words and deeds like a monkey in a tropical forest,” an unidentified spokesman at the commission’s Policy Department said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

It wasn’t the first time North Korea has used crude insults against Obama and other top US and South Korean officials. Earlier this year, the North called US Secretary of State John Kerry a wolf with a “hideous” lantern jaw and South Korean President Park Geun-hye a prostitute. In May, the North’s news

agency published a dispatch saying Obama has the “shape of a monkey.”

The defense commission also accused Washington for intermittent outages of North Korea websites this week, which happened after the US had promised to respond to the Sony hack. The US government has declined to say if it was behind the shutdown. There was no immediate reaction from the White House on yesterday.

According to the North Korean commission’s spokesman, “the US, a big country, started disturbing the Internet operation of major media of the DPRK, not knowing shame like children playing a tag.” DPRK refers to the North’s official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The commission said the movie was the results of a hostile US policy toward North Korea, and threatened the US with unspecified consequences.

North Korea and the US remain technically in a state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. The rivals also are locked in an international standoff over the North’s nuclear and missile programs and its alleged human rights abuses. The US stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea as deterrence against North Korean aggression.

Amazing

are so many tears this Christmas.”

Amazing this Pope we have! He is a prophet who is not afraid of anything or anyone, and who proclaims his Master’s message of repentance, beginning with the Church and the hierarchy.

Yet he proclaims, by his words and examples, the gentleness of the Good Shepherd with his message of mercy and compassion. The amazing thing is that we don’t know what he will say or do next. I wonder what he will say or do when he comes to visit the Philippines this January 2015. Abangan!

An amazing Christmas moment

happened last Dec. 21. I saw a father and his little boy walking in front of our Mission Center in San Jose, Batangas. They looked tired, haggard, and hungry, so I called them and invited them to come in. I found out that they were Mangyan from Mindoro. Though they were hungry, the father politely and gratefully declined, but the boy grabbed a chicken leg as soon as food was served. I later found out why the father declined. He asked to take out the food so that he could share it with his wife who was somewhere on the road, resting. As I saw the father and the child walk away with joy, with food in hand, I thought: Wow, maybe, just maybe, wasn’t

that St. Joseph and the Boy Jesus who just dropped by?

So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear. Remember, I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

Please remember that Christmas is a movable feast. It is not a fixed day, but a spirit we carry with us every single day. May all the days of 2015 be filled with joy, hope, giving and sharing. Praying that 2015 will be a better year for all of us, in all aspects, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

A moment with the Lord: Lord, thank You. You are an amazing God, with an amazing love for all of us. Amen.



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A liar just as untrustworthy as a thief

By Ramon Tulfo

The popular commentary program, *Karambola*, on *dwIZ* (882 kHz on the AM band) will be back on Jan. 5, 2015.

Contrary to what Vice President Jojo Binay's claim that he is one of its new hosts, *Karambola* will no longer have any incumbent or former elected or appointed official for its hosts.

Karambola tackles political and economic issues of the day and, of course, controversial topics like the corruption allegations against Binay.

The program temporarily went off the air on Dec. 15, Monday, after Binay, who came uninvited on Dec. 12, Friday, "thanked" the station's management for inviting him to be one of its regular hosts.

The program hosts at the time—Cely Buena, Joel Paredes and Party List Rep. Jonathan dela Cruz—were dumbfounded by the Vice President's announcement.

The program invited Binay on Dec. 10, Wednesday, as guest to explain his side on allegations of unexplained wealth and corruption against him.

Binay with his son, Makati Mayor Junjun, came back two days later uninvited; that was when Binay announced he was joining the program as one of its hosts, to the surprise of the regular hosts.

Mayor Junjun said he also wanted to become another



vacation even during the holidays.

If Binay can lie on a small matter like the *Karambola* issue, he can lie about anything else.

There's a Filipino saying, "Ang sinungaling ay kapatid ng magnanakaw (The liar is brother to a thief, or, a liar is just as untrustworthy as a thief)."

regular host of the show, but his father cut him short saying they might be accused of also having a "dynasty" on radio.

That was on a Friday. Starting Monday, Dec. 15, when the show resumed after the weekend, the *Karambola* hosts decided to go on leave.

They didn't want to offend the No. 2 highest official of the land.

And who in his right mind would want to cross swords with the Vice President?

Asked by reporters about the allegation in this space about the reason for *Karambola*'s going off the air, Binay said that the hosts went on vacation because of the Christmas season.

Binay said that when *Karambola* goes on the air again on Jan. 5, 2015, he will be one of mainstays of the show, along with the hosts who "went on vacation because of the Christmas season."

Anybody who knows the work ethic in media will tell you that editors, columnists, reporters and commentators—like the hosts of *Karambola*—don't go on a

Rumor

Justice Secretary Leila de Lima should check out the buzz from insiders at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) that P14 million changes hands every month from convicted drug lords to some officials in exchange for their VIP treatment of the inmates.

Five million pesos, the rumor goes, went to a high official at the Bureau of Corrections.

Another five million pesos ended in the hands of a high Department of Justice (DOJ) official who allegedly shared the bribe with a former spouse of another colleague at the DOJ.

The remaining four million pesos was shared by officials and guards at the NBP.

De Lima won't lose anything if she checks out the rumor. When there's smoke, there's fire.

The rumor is so persistent there could be a semblance of truth to it.

PH nurses urged: Apply to other countries, not just US

By Carmela Fonbuena

MANILA, Philippines – A Cebu lawmaker urged Filipino nurses to look for job opportunities in the United Kingdom and the Middle East as demand for nurses continues to slow down in the US.

"There is an oversupply of nurses in the US now. In fact, some 43% of fresh nursing graduates in America have not landed a job upon 18 months of receiving their license," said Cebu Representative Gerald Anthonay Gullas Jr.

The vice chairman of the House committee on higher and technical education issued the statement Thursday, December 25, as he noted the increase in licensure applications to the US.

Gullas said most US hospitals and nursing homes are not hiring new staff. "For now, they are simply keeping their senior and highly experienced nurses until retirement," he pointed out.

He added that nursing graduates will get better chances of getting jobs in the UK and the Middle East, where there is higher demand for nurses compared to the US.

A tenth of Filipinos – about 10 million of the country's

This appeal from a lawmaker comes as more Filipino nurses are taking the UN National Council Licensure Examination



Filipino nurses taking their oath

population of 100 million – work abroad to send billions of pesos in remittance to their families in the Philippines, where decent jobs can be scarce in various parts of the country. Nursing schools proliferated in the Philippines when demand for the job soared in the US beginning late 90s.

Philippine schools continue to produce tens of thousands of new nurses every year, in spite of the dip in international demand for the job. Just this year, 22,202 new nursing licenses have been issued by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

A total of 3,253 Philippine-educated nurses took the US National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for the first time from January to September this year. It is 10% higher compared to the 2,952 Filipino nurses who took the same licensure exam for the first during the

same period in 2013.

The same statistics show that Filipino nurses are among the most active job-seekers in the US. In the same timeframe, 677 Indians, 489 Canadians, 437 Puerto Ricans, and 330 South Koreans took the NCLEX for the first time.

The NCLEX, administered by the US National Council of State Boards of Nursing Inc, is a requirement for nurses working in the US.

Gullas said, however, that many Filipino nurses also take the NCLEX as an additional credential when they apply for jobs elsewhere.

Gullas said he is pushing for the restoration to Salary Grade (SG) 15 – the equivalent of P24,887 – the entry-level basic monthly pay of public nurses to encourage them to stay in the country. Entry level nurses currently get P18,549, he said.

Pope Francis: 'So many tears this Christmas'

From page 2

and aid workers fighting the Ebola epidemic in her own annual Christmas Day broadcast.

In a speech dedicated to the theme of reconciliation, the queen also said it would "take time" to bridge the differences in Scotland following the defeat of a referendum on independence there.

'Peace in Jerusalem'

In Sierra Leone, all public Christmas festivities were cancelled as a result of the Ebola crisis, with soldiers deployed over the holiday season to prevent spontaneous street celebrations, officials said.

US President Barack Obama and his family, on holiday in Hawaii, began Christmas Day by singing

carols and exchanging gifts.

On Christmas Eve the president spoke by telephone to troops stationed abroad, thanking them for their service, the White House said.

Cubans meanwhile prepared to celebrate Christmas, a resurgent holiday banned for 38 years by the communist government, with an early gift from Obama: a historic rapprochement that has raised hopes for an economic revival on the island.

In Bethlehem on Christmas Eve hectic preparations preceded celebrations on the West Bank town's biggest night of the year, culminating in midnight mass at the Church of the Nativity built over the spot where Christians believe the Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus.

Scouts playing bagpipes and drums marched to the church in a procession led by Jerusalem's Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal, the top Catholic cleric in the Holy Land.

In his homily, Twal called for "peace in Jerusalem", where violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians rocked the city for months, and "equality and mutual respect" among all faiths.

He also asked for the rebuilding of Gaza, which was ravaged this summer during a 50-day war between Hamas and Israel in which more than 2,200 people died.

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West Sacramento mayor puts his mortgage where his mouth is

By Tony Bizjak

West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon made a promise a few years ago to a group of developers: If they'd help the city finance and launch redevelopment of the riverfront area, Cabaldon would be among the first to buy a home there.

Next month, Cabaldon will make good on his vow. He'll move into a new, three-story brick row house in The Park Moderns, an enclave of stylish, tightly packed residences under construction a few blocks south of Raley Field. That puts him among the first urban pioneers in his city's Bridge District, a former industrial area that, if successful, will house nearly 10,000 residents amid office buildings and riverside restaurants, bisected by a streetcar line to downtown Sacramento via the Tower Bridge.

Cabaldon, 49, said he bought the property because he likes the feel of The Park Moderns, which is inspired by modern Amsterdam architecture, and believes in the potential for the broader riverfront district. But he's also making a political statement.

"I think it is important for more policymakers to put their mortgage where their mouth is," he said in an interview earlier this month.

Cabaldon, arguably the region's leading urban infill advocate, contends that the region's cities and aging suburbs can be rejuvenated with densely packed housing mixed with retail and offices at their cores, similar to what his city is doing. He laments that few Sacramento decision makers live in the region's urban centers.

If more did, he argues, they would better understand the issues urban builders face – including higher land costs, resistant neighbors, parking and traffic – and could help shepherd those projects through councils and planning commissions.

"There needs to be more diversity of



Christopher Cabaldon, West Sac's mayor, made good on his promise to developers three years ago: If they built housing in the city's new Bridge District, he would be among the first to buy. He'll be moving into the new and stylish Park Moderns later this month. Andrew Seng aseng@sacbee.com

perspective in city halls around the region," he said.

Cabaldon's move comes as the Sacramento area's major regional planning body predicts a growing desire among homebuyers for urban-style housing. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments, comprised of elected officials from throughout the region, decides how to divvy up federal transportation dollars. It has increasingly sought to invest in walkable communities with access to public transit.

Not all local politicians in the region share Cabaldon's ardor for infill, however. Several SACOG board members and other regional leaders say they agree that denser, transit-oriented development should play a part of the picture as the region grows. But none of those contacted by The Bee said they feel the need to move to one.

The pickings are still slim for local buyers of that type of housing, even in Sacramento's urban core. Beyond that, many locals remain interested in buying the traditional Sacramento style of housing – a home with a back-

yard and plenty of parking, local builders say.

Across the river from West Sacramento, Sacramento City Councilman Steve Hansen is an exception. He owns a home in the Alkali Flat neighborhood, making him the only Sacramento City Council member in the last 33 years to live downtown. Hansen shares Cabaldon's goal of encouraging more infill housing downtown to reinvigorate the central core and to allow more people the chance to live near work and gathering spots. Living in downtown gives him an insider's view, Hansen said, but it's not necessary.

"There is no litmus test for where you live and whether you understand the challenges of these things," Hansen said.

In the city of Sacramento, the jurisdiction with the most opportunity for infill housing, planning commissioners can live anywhere in the city, and several live in midtown and downtown. Sacramento City Council members represent districts that are spread throughout the city, though, and must live in those districts.

Hansen said his goal is to double

the number of people living downtown, matching the roughly 60,000 who lived there in the 1950s. He said he believes his City Hall colleagues have a good sense of how to make that happen. He cited the proposed streetcar line through downtown and part of West Sacramento as an example, a \$150 million project that would not be on the table if city leaders didn't understand its potential to increase downtown livability and spur economic development.

Rancho Cordova Councilman David Sander, who lives in a suburban house on a large lot, said he understands where Cabaldon is coming from. "Diversity on a council is a good thing," he said.

Rancho Cordova has begun a push for denser and more walkable housing areas near jobs, and won plaudits for its Capital Village neighborhood, a suburban version of mixed-use infill development. Sander said he expects people who live in those types of communities eventually will migrate onto Rancho Cordova's council and city commissions.

Lincoln City Councilman Paul Joiner, who has sparred in the past with Cabaldon on growth issues, said West Sacramento and downtown Sacramento may benefit from the experience of infill residents on boards, but his city is going in a different direction – new communities in undeveloped areas.

"We are going to be looking at 'greenfield' development for the next 40 years," Joiner said.

Officials with the North State Building Industry Association agree that infill builders would benefit from having their projects reviewed by council and commission members who understand the hurdles that type of development faces, including dealing with concerns of people living nearby.

"It is important to get the word out there on the challenges," Ioannis Kazanis of the builders group

said.

But he said his group continues to caution city and regional leaders not to turn their backs on traditional suburban housing developments in open areas outside of existing cities. "Infill is great. It's the exciting thing right now, but we are still focused on the whole area," Kazanis said. "There needs to be that balance."

The Park Moderns developer, Mark Friedman of Fulcrum Property, said he is pleased that Cabaldon bought one of his units. Friedman said Cabaldon was the first person he pitched when he was marketing the project to potential buyers a few years ago.

"What better ambassador for the project?" Friedman said. "He's one of the most thoughtful politicians about urban planning that I have ever met."

Yolo County Supervisor Oscar Villegas, a former colleague of Cabaldon's on the West Sacramento council, said the mayor's comments hint at a bit of hometown marketing: "He's signaling West Sac is open for business."

The Park Moderns row houses, which perch facing an oval park, sell for \$460,000 to \$775,000. Cabaldon's neighbors will include a university dean, the Sacramento Kings' lead attorney, a psychiatrist, a downtown clothier, a restaurateur, and a graphic designer/musician. With construction in the district ongoing, likely for years to come, his neighbors also will include beeping backhoes, rumbling cement trucks and pile drivers.

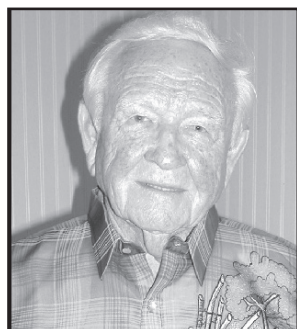
Cabaldon says he is unfazed. He currently lives at the Ironworks Lofts, a few blocks away, where major street reconstruction recently finished and nearby apartment construction is underway.

"Isn't that really the West Sac story?" he said. "We are constantly living under renovation. I'm used to that."

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California readies for 900 new laws

By Melody Gutierrez

SACRAMENTO — New Year's Day will usher in hundreds of new laws in California, including a landmark law that allows undocumented individuals to receive a driver's license.

In all, California will add 930 new laws, most of which will go into effect Thursday. Some of the most talked-about laws won't take effect until July, such as a statewide ban on plastic bags, required sick leave for employees and a requirement that new smartphones come with antitheft technology.

Here's a look at some of the new laws:

Driver's licenses: More than a million driver's license applications from people living in the U.S. without documentation are expected under a law that passed in 2013, but goes into effect Jan. 1.

The Department of Motor Vehicles opened four driver's license processing centers, including one in San Jose, extended its hours and hired additional staff to brace for the onslaught of applications under AB60, which allows undocumented people to drive legally in California.

Officials anticipate processing approximately 1.4 million driver's license applications under AB60 during the next three years. First-time applicants can make an appointment at www.dmv.ca.gov. The DMV is closed New Year's Day, but will be open Friday.

"Selfie" protections: Revenge will come at a price for those who post private naked photos or videos of someone without his

or her consent. The new law extends privacy protections to all individuals who take nude "selfies" intended to be private. A law passed last year to offer "revenge porn" protections did not include selfies. Anyone who violates the new law by disseminating a protected image could be charged with disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor.

In July, a second "revenge porn" law will allow a person whose naked image was shared online without his or her consent to file a civil suit for monetary damages against the perpetrator under a pseudonym in court.

Care homes: State-licensed assisted-living homes could be subjected to substantially increased fines for major violations under a new law that arose out of several instances of failures at care facilities in the state, including last year's botched closure of Valley Springs Manor in Castro Valley, where residents were left behind when the state shut it down.

The previous maximum fine of \$150 levied for serious incidents including death will be raised to a maximum of \$10,000 in cases of physical abuse and \$15,000 for violations that lead to a death. Facility operators can appeal the fines.

Another law would ban residential care facilities for the elderly from accepting new residents if they have not corrected serious health and safety violations or have failed to pay a state-issued fine.

Sexual assault: Colleges and universities in California will be required to adopt policies against sexual assault that radically rewrite what constitutes consent as a condi-

tion of receiving state financial aid.

Under the new law, the standard for consent to sexual activity in campus judicial hearings shifts from whether a person said "no" to whether both partners said "yes." The law only applies to the burden of proof used during campus disciplinary hearings, not criminal proceedings.

Birth to death: Birth certificates will receive a makeover in California to accommodate same-sex couples. Instead of being able to select only mother or father when identifying a parent, birth certificates will include "parent" as an option.

How death certificates are filled out for transgender people also will be updated. Under a new law, coroners will be required to list the gender consistent with how the person lived, instead of solely relying on the person's anatomy.

The bill was inspired by Christopher Lee, co-founder of the San Francisco Transgender Film Festival, who committed suicide in 2012. Lee's friends were dismayed to learn his death certificate listed him by his anatomical gender, female.

Education: All public high schools will be required to submit grade point averages electronically for each graduating senior to the California Student Aid Commission to increase the number of students who receive Cal Grant award offers for higher education. Students or schools failing to send GPA information is among the more common reasons students don't receive Cal Grants.

Groundwater: California will begin the

long process of regulating groundwater for the first time in the state's history under three new laws that require local agencies to create sustainable groundwater management plans to ensure priority basins are sustainable by 2040.

Mug shots: It will be illegal in California for websites to profit from posting arrest mug shots by charging embarrassed people to have them removed. Under the new law, commercial websites could face a \$1,000 civil penalty for each violation in what lawmakers called a "mug shot racket."

Many of the people whose mug shots have been posted by websites were never convicted of a crime.

School pesticides: Parents will have the right to know what pesticides are used at K-12 schools and many licensed child care centers. Pesticides can be used on school campuses to get rid of cockroaches, vermin and weeds, but the new law will make chemical pesticides a last resort and increase disclosures of what is used.

Sex abuse: Childhood sex abuse victims will have more time to press charges against their abusers under a law that goes into effect Jan. 1. Victims of childhood sexual abuse previously had until they turned 28 years of age to press charges, but the new law extends the age limit to 40.

'Audrie's Law': Teens will face increased penalties and receive fewer privacy protections if convicted of sex acts on someone who is passed out from drugs or alcohol or incapable of giving consent due to a disability. Known as "Audrie's Law," the tougher penalties were sought after a Saratoga teen named Audrie Pott committed suicide days after she was sexually assaulted while unconscious. The teens convicted in the attack were given light sentences between 30 days and 45 days in juvenile detention.

Prison transition: State prison inmates will be given current California Identification cards upon release in hopes of helping them apply for jobs and housing or access health care and social services.

Plastic bags: Later this year, California will begin phasing out single-use plastic bags. The statewide ban goes into effect July 1 in grocery stores and pharmacies and a year later in convenience stores and liquor stores. The state became the first in the nation to ban single-use plastic bags, although many cities and counties in California already have bans in place.

Paid sick leave: Millions of Californians will begin earning paid sick leave under a law that takes effect in July. Largely affecting retail, fast food and other service-industry jobs that don't offer sick leave benefits to full-time or part-time employees, the law will allow workers to earn one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

California became the second in the nation to require the benefit, after Connecticut.

Kill switches: Smartphones manufactured after July 1 and sold in California must come pre-equipped with antitheft technology that allows the owner to temporarily or permanently render the phone inoperable if stolen or lost. Consumers would be prompted to enable the kill switch as the default setting during the initial setup of a new smartphone. Consumers can opt out if they choose.



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Banner year for Eskwela Natin

By Perry Diaz

Founded in May 2013, Eskwela Natin, in the short period it's been in existence, is making a great impact in the Filipino-American community, particularly among the youth. It has been the dream of Dolores and Perry Diaz ever since their first grandchild was born nine years ago. Since then, four more grandchildren were added to their family. That's when they thought that it might be a good idea to teach their grandchildren and other Filipino-American children about the rich and diverse culture of the Filipino people. They formed a core group of like-minded people including several Filipino-American teachers who volunteered their time to teach the youth. They named the project Eskwela Natin.

Grand-Opening

The grand opening was held on May 19, 2013 with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting by then Consul General Marciano A. Paynor Jr. assisted by Ambassador George Aducaen Jr., former Mayor Ruth Asmundson of the City of Davis, and Governor Jerry Brown's Appointments Secretary Mona Pasquil.

On August 8, 2013, Eskwela Natin was incorporated with the State of California as a non-profit 501 (c)(3) entity. On September 22, 2013, the first graduates of Eskwela Natin, 36 in all, received their certificates of achievement. Robert Abelon of Assemblyman Richard Pan's office gave special certificates of achievement to the graduates as well.

Inspired by the overwhelming interest of Filipino American high school students, Eskwela Natin held a seminar catered to this age group. It included a panel discussion on community service, politics and Filipino culture. Speakers were Mayor Ruth Asmundson, Lions Council Chairman Derek Ledda and Sinagtala Artistic Director Sonny Alforque



The graduates, Class of 2014.

with community leader Josie Patria moderating. The day's busy schedule also included a jeopardy game on knowledge of the Filipino traditions and current events, cooking demonstration and tasting of chicken adobo for lunch and a

parol (Christmas lantern) making and contest. The net proceeds of more than \$10,000 were sent to typhoon relief efforts through the American Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, and the Lions Clubs International Foundation.

Second Year

Eskwela Natin's second year was busier than the first year. Year 2014 began with 10 Sunday classes from May to September. More than 40 young Filipino-Americans graduated. The new Consul General Henry S. Bensurto Jr. gave the diplomas to the graduates during a ceremony, complete with the traditional "Pomp and Circumstance" graduation marching song. The students — with their graduation caps with tassels — really enjoyed the graduation ceremony.

Eskwela Natin also launched the scholarship program for deserving Filipino American high school graduates. This would become an annual program reaching out to local high schools in Sacramento. The scholars were presented at the opening of the summer program. Eskwela Natin held several events to raise funds for the 2015 school year. The first was a dinner dance in August at the Asian Pearl Restaurant. In September, Eskwela Natin was the beneficiary of the Interclub Golf Tournament in Vallejo, California. About 120 golfers participated in the tournament. Through the efforts of Board Members Mark and Maryann Bamba more than \$5,000 was raised for the benefit of Eskwela Natin.

In October, which was Filipino-American Heritage Month, Eskwela Natin worked with the Southgate Public Library to open a section for Filipino-American books. The grand opening of the Filipino-American Collection was held on October 3, which also kicked off the month-long community-wide celebration. Ambassador George G. Aducaen Jr. gave an inspirational speech during the reception held at the library's multipurpose room. Eskwela Natin Vice President Joe Carrasco coordinated this project.

The display window in the lobby of the library was decorated to showcase the Philippines. Miniaturized landmarks such as Intramuros, Malacanang Palace,

Quaipo Church, Rizal Monument and Manila Hotel were part of the exhibit courtesy of the Sacramento Manila and Pasay City Sister Cities Association. Various Filipino Fiestas and celebrations depicted were Santacruzán, Christmas with colorful parols, Ati-Atihan and a chandelier of kiping of the Pahiyas/rice festival. A rare basket collection complimented the display.

On October 18, Eskwela Natin held a golf tournament at the Bartley Cavanaugh Golf Course in Sacramento. Board Member Ernie Santos organized the successful tournament. More than 100 golfers participated and more

Jr. was the keynote speaker and Bert Melliza, Lions International MD-4 Past District Governor, was the guest speaker.

Kudos goes to the Board of Directors for its leadership in fulfilling Eskwela Natin's mission, which is: "Eskwela Natin exists to educate Filipino-American children



Ambassador George G. Aducaen Jr. cuts ceremonial ribbon at the grand opening of the Filipino-American Collection at the Southgate Library.

about the rich and diverse Filipino culture, ensuring the unique traditions of the Philippines are passed on to the next generation, in a safe and fun environment."

Congratulations to the members of the Board of Directors and volunteer teachers for their untiring and selfless efforts to promote the ideals of Eskwela Natin. The Board of Directors consists of the following: President

Dolores V. Diaz; Vice President Joe Carrasco; Secretary Gladys Carrasco; Treasurer Josie Canlas; Community Liaison Officer Celsa Taraya; Public Relations Officer Andrea Diaz-Vaughn; and Board Members Myrna Agbunag, Sonny Alforque, Mark Bamba, Maryann Bamba, Perry Diaz, Didi Loteyro, Josie Patria, Ernie Santos, and Ramon Taraya. The Volunteer teachers are: Vangie Hinnencamp, Anna Mestidio, and Lilibeth Brewer.

To expand Eskwela Natin's community outreach, it invited several outstanding community leaders

to join the Board. They are Pete and Vicky Lumbang, Sarah Enloe (President of the Maharlika Lions Club), Raul Bernaldez, and Raeselle Lao.

The coming year 2015 should be another exciting year for Eskwela Natin, especially with the repeat performance of the University of the Philippines Concert Chorus, which will begin its 2015 world tour in May.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.
(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)



Golf tournament at the Bartley Cavanaugh Golf Course.

than \$4,000 was raised for Eskwela Natin.

Eskwela Natin's last project of the year 2014 was the Ten Outstanding Young Filipino-Americans (TOYFA). It was the first annual event that recognizes outstanding young Filipino-Americans in various fields. The awards were presented last October 26 in Sacramento. The recipients were the following: Chenelle Castellano Aquino (Sports), Gamila Saleh AbadAssad (Community Service), Haley Marie Bambula (Arts), Jeremiah Calagui (Leadership), Mat-



TOYFA 2014 Awardees

thew Molina de Guzman (Sports), Avina B. Kliatchko (Essay Writing), Alfonso Benjamin Reyes (NJROTC), Chase Santos Mitchell (Sports), Tyler Santos Mitchell (Performing Arts), Jestoni Opinaldo (Sports), and Sarah Joy Polante Sy (Music). A special award — the Ester Carrasco Community Service Award — was also given to Gervilyn Mae Tormis Cadimas. Ambassador George G. Aducaen

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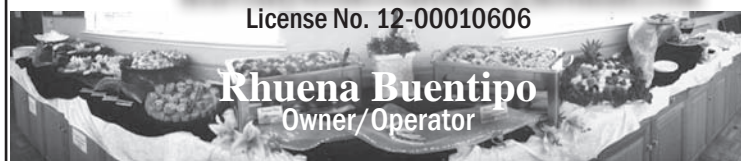
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PerryScope

By Perry Diaz

Up until a few months ago, Vice President Jejomar Sr. was on top of the world. He was untouchable and invincible. He probably thought that he was second only to the Holy Family. Perhaps he was ordained to holiness – or greatness — at birth when his parents named him “Jejomar,” a contraction of the names Jesus, Joseph, and Mary. Indeed, Jejomar seemed to have possessed an “agimat” – amulet – that gave him mystical powers, and kept him out of harm’s way... until now. Then the whole world turned upside down. He was no longer untouchable or invincible. His agimat must have worn off.

But agimat or no agimat, what happened to Binay was unavoidable. The moment he declared his candidacy for president in 2016, all guns were trained on him. And within two months his popularity ratings plummeted 10% in surveys. Such sudden drop in his popularity ratings indicates that Binay – who had enjoyed “very high” marks in popularity since he was elected vice-president – has one vulnerability; that is, he may not be the “Mr. Clean” that he claims to be. Binay with Cory Aquino during the EDSA Revolution

As salvo after salvo from his accusers hit him, he might turn out to be the most corrupt public official since the late dictator, Ferdinand E. Marcos. But the difference is that no past president before him had been accused of massive corruption before assuming the presidency. In the case of Binay, all these allegations of corruption happened within a span of three decades, from the time the

late President Cory Aquino appointed him Mayor of Makati City after Mayor Nemesio I. Yabut died while in office during the EDSA “People Power” Revolution. Since then, Binay, his wife Elenita, and son Junjun held power over one of the richest – if not the richest – city governments in the country.

Can of worms

Lord-of-Makati. In March 2001, the first exposé of corruption against the Binays surfaced. Investigative journalist Miriam Grace A. Go published a detailed account of questionable properties allegedly acquired by the Binays. Titled “Lord of Makati,” it said: “In less than a decade, Jejomar ‘Jojo’ Binay, former chair of the



Young Jejomar Binay

Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and former mayor of Makati, accumulated at least P80 million worth of real estate properties in Makati and Batangas, which he kept undeclared, our investigation shows. The amount excludes P12 million in declared investments, as well as other businesses that he and his friends reportedly control through dummy



Binay with Cory Aquino during the EDSA Revolution

corporations.”

But his agimat must have been working for him then. All he did was deny those allegations, and zingo! his problems went away. Since then, “denial” had become



Binay Dynasty

an effective modus operandi to deal with allegations of corruption. In fact, his mastery of the art of denial has become legendary in political circles.

Indeed, it didn’t matter what allegations – ghost employees, overpriced equipment and supplies, kickbacks on projects and purchases, and grease money extorted from businessmen – were hurled at him during elections; all he had to do was deny, deny, and deny. He was so good at it that he could wring himself free from any situation and come out of it fresh and unblemished. That was then.

Now, that Binay is running for President, he’s faced with the biggest challenge in his political life. And guess what his first campaign promise was? He vowed to continue President Aquino’s anti-corruption drive. Whoa! That would be like Don Michael Corleone promising the American voters that if they elected him President, he’d stop organized crime in America.

Surmise it to say, the difference between organized crime in America and institutionalized corruption in the Philippines is in form only, but the substance is the same — it’s all about money. Yes, dirty money.

He also promised to continue the “daang matuwid” (straight path) that Aquino started. Makes one wonder what “daang matuwid” really means to him. As the recent Pork Barrel scam and questionable Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) turned out to be, “daang matuwid” seemed to project the notion that the shortest distance between a politician’s pockets and his secret bank accounts is a straight path. With the Philippines’ strict deposit bank depository laws, corrupt officials, gambling lords, vice lords, and those involved in illicit trades, hiding their loot in Philippine banks is safer than depositing them in Swiss banks. Indeed, corrupt officials need not leave the country to stash their ill-gotten wealth; they can just go to their local banks and deposit it.

“Invisible exodus”

Many believe that if Binay were elected President, it would be “business as usual” for a lot of politicians. Sensing that Binay appears to be unbeatable, politicians of various stripes began jumping into the Binay bandwagon. A recent news report said: “At least 48 of the 120-member Liberal Party have so far trooped to Vice President Jejomar Binay’s camp

to signify their intention to back his presidential bid, in the process defecting and abandoning Interior Secretary Mar Roxas II, the LP’s presumptive standard bearer. The ‘inevitable exodus’ was disclosed during the news conference of the members of the House Independent Minority Bloc.”

In my article, “Balimbing Republic revisited” (December 3, 2014), I wrote: “With the 2016 presidential elections fast approaching, political realignments are beginning to change the political landscape of the country. New faces replace old faces. But don’t take oldies for granted. They have a trove of election tricks.

“The question is: Is Vice President Jejomar ‘Jojo’ Binay, an ‘oldie’ favorite, going to be the next president, or are the people going to go with a new face in the arena like Sen. Grace Poe?”



Grace Poe

The Grace factor

Although Poe denied any ambitions to run for higher office in 2016, many believe that her decision is not set in stone. Surveys show that Poe is only 10% behind Binay. With a year and half away from Election Day, Poe’s popularity ratings would rise the moment she enters the presidential derby.

If there was one opponent that Binay is scared to face, it’s Poe. It is no wonder then that Binay’s camp has been trying hard to convince Poe to run as Binay’s vice-presidential running mate. If she accepts the offer, a Binay-Poe tandem would be unbeatable.

But why would Poe team up with someone who is tarnished with corruption charges? However, if Poe runs for President, it would give the voters a choice. And with Binay’s Achilles’ heel exposed in the open, he needs a more powerful agimat and lots of prayer to beat Poe.

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PerryScope
By Perry Diaz

Was Bonifacio the First President?

Recently, there has been a great deal of interest on one of our heroes and founder of the Katipunan, Andres Bonifacio. Indeed, many are now of the belief that he had been denied the recognition he deserved.

A decade ago, I wrote a column, "Was Bonifacio the First President?" that revisited the turbulent times when the revolutionary movement was in disarray; divided into two factions, one led by Andres Bonifacio, the Supremo of the Katipunan, and the other, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, leader of the Magdalo faction.

Although Aguinaldo succeeded in wresting control of the Katipunan from Bonifacio in a power struggle that cost Bonifacio his life, Aguinaldo never had a chance to establish his rule over the archipelago. The coming of the Americans weakened his fledgling government. He fled to Palanan, Isabela in Northern Luzon where he made his last stand.

On March 23, 1901 — exactly four years after Aguinaldo took his oath of office as president at the Tejeros convention — the Americans, led by Brig. Gen. Frederick Funston, captured Aguinaldo in his camp in the mountains of Palanan. Caught by surprise, Aguinaldo was subdued without a shot fired.

Thus ended the aspirations of the Filipino people to establish their own nation, sovereign and independent from foreign powers, which makes one wonder: If Bonifacio wasn't murdered and Aguinaldo had joined his government, would the revolution have succeeded under the leadership of Bonifacio? And this begs the question:

On July 7, 1892, Andres Bonifacio — upon hearing the news that Dr. Jose Rizal was arrested and deported to Dapitan the day before — called for a meeting with five of his friends, to wit: Jose Dizon, Valentin Diaz, Deodato Arellano, Ladislao Diwa, and Teodoro Plata. That night, they organized a secret society called Kataastaasang Kagalanggalan na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (Highest and Most Respected Society of the Sons and Daughters of the Nation) — in short, Katipunan. Bonifacio was named their Supremo.

They recruited people to join and by 1896, on the eve of the revolution, the Katipunan had more than 400,000 members. During the revolution, two dominant leaders emerged — Bonifacio and Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo. By 1897, to the detriment of the revolution, their rivalry had divided the revolutionary forces into Bonifacio's Magdiwang faction and Aguinaldo's Magdalo faction.

Attempts were made to reconcile the two leaders. On March 22, 1897, the two factions held a convention in Tejeros, a barrio of San Francisco de Malabon in Cavite, Aguinaldo's bailiwick. Aguinaldo did not attend the gathering. Jacinto Lumberas, a Magdiwang, presided over the assembly. The agenda of the convention was to adopt a plan for the defense of Cavite. However, the subject was not even discussed as the meeting became tumultuous. Instead, those in attendance decided to elect the officers of the revolutionary government. In essence, the participants threw out the Supreme Council of the Katipunan under which all the revolutionary forces had been fighting

for. Bonifacio reluctantly agreed to preside over the election. Aguinaldo was elected President; Mariano Trias as Vice President; Artemio Ricarte as Captain-General; Emiliano Riego de Dios as Director of War; and Bonifacio as Director of the Interior. The following day, March 23, Aguinaldo and the other elected officials, with the exception of Bonifacio, took their oath of office in the new revolutionary government. Meanwhile, on the same day the Aguinaldo took his oath of office, Bonifacio and his followers — numbering forty-five — met again at the same venue of the convention held the day before. They were furious. They felt bad about the results of the election. They believed that the Magdalo faction committed anomalies during the balloting. Consequently, they decided to invalidate the election. They drew up a document — Acta de Tejeros — giving their reasons for nullifying the results of the convention.

Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo

Bonifacio and his supporters believed that Aguinaldo's men were responsible for the chaos at the Tejeros convention. He believed that Aguinaldo's men had maneuvered him out of power. Indeed, it was a rude awakening for him because even the Magdiwangs, his followers, did not vote for him either for President or Vice-President.

Adding insult to an injury, Daniel Tirona, a Magdalo, protested Bonifacio's election as Director of the Interior saying that a person with a lawyer's diploma should hold the post. Bonifacio, outraged by Tirona's insult, angrily declared: "I, as chairman of this assembly and as President of the Supreme Council of the Katipunan, as all of you do not deny, declare this assembly dissolved, and I annul all that has been approved and resolved."

At Naik, where Bonifacio subsequently moved his Magdiwang forces after the failed Tejeros convention, Bonifacio and his supporters drew up another document — known as the Naik Military Agreement — in which they resolved to establish a government independent and separate from the one established at Tejeros.

Bonifacio and his supporters proceeded in forming a government. The government was called Haring Bayang Katagalugan (Sovereign Country of the Tagalog Nation). They printed its Cartilla, a small handbook containing the rules, the 14-point code of ethics, and the recruitment process. In it, the Katipunan declared that the word "Tagalog" stood for "all who were born in this archipelago... hence Visayans, Ilocanos and Pampangos were all Tagalogs"



The original Katipunan flag

("Filipino" during the Spanish regime was a Spaniard born in the Philippines and the natives were called "indios"). The following were elected as officers of the de facto government of Haring Bayang Katagalugan: Andres Bonifacio — President; Emilio Jacinto — Minister of State; Teodoro Plata — Minister of War; Aguedo del Rosario — Minister of the Interior; Briccio Pantas — Minister of Justice; Enrique Pacheco — Minister Finance; Silvestre Baltazar — Treasurer General; Daniel Tirona — Secretary General. Unfortunately, the Bonifacio government was never recognized because they were all busy fighting the Spanish colonial forces.

Upon learning of the Naik Military Agreement, Aguinaldo sent a contingent of soldiers to arrest Bonifacio and his brothers Procopio and Ciriaco. The confrontation became deadly. Ciriaco was killed and Bonifacio and Procopio were wounded. They were brought to Naik to face a military tribunal. Albeit the absence of evidence, the Bonifacio brothers were found guilty of treason and sedition. They were recommended for execution. Aguinaldo commuted the sentence to deportation. However, Generals Mariano Noriel and Pio del Pilar, both former allies of Bonifacio, convinced Aguinaldo to withdraw his order and proceed with the execution. They believed that as long as Bonifacio were alive, there would be no unity. On May 10, 1897, Aguinaldo's soldiers executed the Bonifacio brothers



Andres Bonifacio

at the foot of Mt. Tala. They were buried in shallow graves without markers.

On June 12, 1898, Aguinaldo proclaimed the independence of the Philippines and installed a "Dictatorial Government" that would be temporary in nature until peace is achieved at which time it may be "modified by the nation, in which rests the principle of authority."

On March 23, 1901, exactly four years after he took his first oath of office, American forces captured Aguinaldo in Palanan, Isabela. Thus ended the Philippine revolution started by Bonifacio.

Today, Andres Bonifacio's admirers believe that he was the first president of the Philippines. He organized the Katipunan and led the revolution against Spain. They believed that not only was he the first president of the country, he should be accorded the title of "National Hero" of the Philippines.

Had the historians robbed Andres Bonifacio of his rightful place in Philippine history? Shouldn't Bonifacio precede Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo as the acknowledged Father of the Philippines? And shouldn't his stature as "National Hero" supersede Dr. Jose Rizal? (PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

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Sinag-tala's 25th Anniversary

By Dale Esperante

It was thrilling to be part of the audience on 7 Dec 2014 for the year's final showing of Sinag-tala's theatrical revue. The thrill like being fastened to a seat of an uplifting and emotional roller coaster ride. The ascending joy, passion, pride, excitement, privilege, and the descending tears were all expressed. Joy in the company of kindred spirits. It was a homecoming where the open arms of family meant warmth and welcome. Passion was displayed in the stellar performances of the dedicated artists on stage. Pride glowed in the hearts of many who witnessed the results of all the hard work and commitment in promoting the Filipino-American experience through art, music, and theater. Excitement galvanized all who saw, heard, and felt the regalement offered by the Sinag-tala family of artists, performers, and behind the scene supporters.

Privilege was what many thought to themselves hearing Sonny and Letty Alforque sing, perhaps their last song together on a Sinag-tala stage. They will be retiring at the end of the year. While her parents sang, their only child Dr. Angela Dee Alforque danced a graceful hula interpretation of the song. A beautiful song, a beautiful dance, and a beautiful family together on stage made this Silver Anniversary sparkle like a million points of light on a clear and starlit night. At the end of their performance, everyone in the audience seemed to race from their seats to give the loudest standing ovation. This writer was seated on the first row closest to the stage and when I sprung up suddenly to stand, I thought I was going to bounce up on stage. The uninhibited display of love and affection for everything that Sonny and Letty have given, not only to their beloved Sinag-tala, but also to the Filipino-American community was so exhilaratingly touching. More! – More! – More!-, surely was the meaning of the prolonged applause.

Tears were obviously starting to flow when the ensemble sang "Hanggang SA Muli" (Til next Time). All the feelings described above, and more undefined ones, started bubbling over around this time. A lady on the left side of the stage caught my attention when she kept lifting her hand to wipe away the tears on her face while everyone else was singing.

When the "Kasadya Ning Taknaa/Maligayang Pasko at Masaganang Bagong Taon" number came, it was time for the entire company to take a bow. Two at a time walked up to center stage to bow. Then the classes from the newest to the oldest (1990s) were introduced. As each class was introduced, they were asked to walk forward for their class photo.

Sonny came out last looking like a proud Papa, clad in dark trousers and white long sleeve shirt with a lei around his neck. He appeared comfortable, yet the degree of the emotional roller coaster ride within – only he will know. He first turned to his right and pointed to the group behind him, and then turned left and pointed to the group there. Then with open arms he faced the audience, and in one fluid motion, he touched his lips with both hands and threw a kiss out to the audience. The Kiss was clearly of Faith and Love. Message received Sonny.

From the moment Sonny stepped out to acknowledge everyone, a continuous round of applause and cheers from the appreciative audience resonated throughout the whole auditorium. On behalf of the entire Filipino community in Sacramento and vicinity, we bow to you our unabashed love "Uncle Sonny and Auntie Letty". May you both be blessed with retirement years as joyous as the years we've known you in Sinag-tala! "Hanggang sa Muli," 'til next Time!



Photos by Rick Garcia

Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity Crowns Mercury Acosta as Mrs. Philippines for 2015-2016

By Faina E. Abaya

The evening chilly cold weather and occasional intermittent light shower rains on December 20, 2014 have not dampened the eagerness, excitement and enthusiasm of everyone to find ways leading to Double Tree hotel on Arden Way, Sacramento where the coronation of (FCSV) Mrs. Philippines for 2015-2016 takes place.

As early as 5:30 PM we were already at the main door of the Grand Ballroom of the hotel but only met Rose Basos and another lady waiting for everybody to arrive. Both ladies were kind enough to allow us inside to wait for others to come. The Ballroom was so meticulously arranged and luxuriously decorated. The 25 round tables with 10 chairs each were covered with white and red linen.

The table center piece was a foot long crystal flower vase containing freshly cut red, white and yellow roses. A movable arch like structure was placed at the end just opposite the stage where the Queen and entourage will be presented. At the right side corner near the stage was a giant Christmas tree well decorated with multicolored sparkling contraptions of every sort to greet the season with hope, love and brotherliness for all. The stage was elaborately decorated befitting the place where the Queen and her royal court stay for the coronation ceremony.

The pomp and grandeur of the place awaits the arrival of the guests, the former occupants of the queenly throne, current and incoming queens with their respective entourages. In just few minutes, thereafter, the Grand Ballroom was gradually filled up to the capacity of more than 200 persons wearing their best attires for the evening.

Conspicuously noticed among the ladies who were all fabulously and elegantly dressed with their brand designed evening gowns was Aida Azurin, the amiable President of



the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity. She was wearing a striking blue of Filipina dress influence designed projecting her wholesome personality while her better half Segundo wore a tailor made Barong Tagalog. Undeniably, both were standout through-

out the evening.

When everything had been in placed, the program emceed alternately by Ann Viernes and Mercy Guererro started with the presentation of the United States and Philippine flags which was

briskly executed by Joe Gonzalez and Ric Rafanan in their splendid US Air Force and Navy uniforms respectively. Stella Rabara sang both the United States and Philippine National Anthems, while the invocation was rendered by Fr. Joyle Martinez, Pastor of St. Paul

Catholic Church.

Aida Azurin in her welcome speech said that she was thankful to everyone for graciously accepting their invitations to come and witness "this highly regarded FCSV traditional event, the crowning of the new Mrs. Philippines, Her Majesty Queen Mercury Acosta I and Her Royal Court Mrs. Luzon Christine Sison Wiggins and Mrs. Visayas Atty. Katleen Barredo Gallagher." She also added, "I sincerely thank the outgoing Mrs. Philippines Queen Kristine Aducayen I and Her Royal Court Glory Guzman, Kim Nachazel and Janet Tabora for their hard work, wit, enthusiasm, generosity, and best of all their financial support for our dream of building a Filipino Cultural Center." She likewise, expressed her gratitude to all who made this event enjoyable and successful.

Dinner was served with Salad as appetizer; a choice of either Pork mixed with mashed potato and veggies or roasted Chicken leg with rice and custard as dessert. While everyone was enjoying dinner, community chanteuse Remy Solomon regaled her audience with emotionally filled song entitled "As If We Never Say Goodbye" which she dedicated to her BFF Memie Wetztenberg, Leila Periera, Lee Ramirez, Stella Rabara sitting at her table with loving and caring husband Dr. Tony Solomon. The professional like performance received thunderous applause and congratulatory comments.

The presence of VIPS and community leaders were duly acknowledged such as Dave and Dinnah San Pedro, George Aducayen, CA Assembly member Jim Cooper, Mercedes Guererro, Dr. Tony Solomon, Henry Bambao, Ling Avera, Atty. Beatriz Alo, Dr. Fred Aquino, Memie Wertztenberg, Josie Patria, Alice Pampid and many others.

Ruth Uy Asmundson a Filipino American and the former mayor of the City of Davis, California was the guest speaker of the evening and she was introduced by Josie Patria. Accordingly, the guest speaker obtained her BS Chem-

Continued on page 12

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Mercury Acosta as Mrs. Philippines for 2015-2016

From page 11

istry from Adamson University and through Fulbright scholarship she earned her MS degree in Chemistry from Wilkes University and likewise her PhD. in Agricultural Chemistry through the same Scholarship Grant from the University of California, Davis. In her inspirational speech, she traced how she attained her educational achievements in spite tremendous challenges on her way but through perseverance and resiliency she was able to overcome all the obstacles to reach her goals in life. She encouraged everyone to involve themselves in the community for the betterment and best interest of the people whom they will serve.

The national hero of the Philippines, Dr. Jose P. Rizal was remembered on his martyrdom and was fittingly given a tribute and was offering a bouquet of flowers and lighting a candle near his bust placed at the middle of the Ballroom. The solemn ceremony was rendered by her Majesty Queen Kristine Aducaen I and her Royal Court. While the Philippine Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity sang "Ang Bayan Ko" rendered by Beatriz Alo, Sonny Alforque, Al Guevarra, Dr. Fred Aquino, Joe Gonzalez and Johnny Regadio to emphasize the significance of the occasion.

A duet of Eddie Aducaen and Remy Solomon singing "The Prayer" electrified and mesmerized their listeners for their professional like performance which expectedly received deafening applause from their admiring audience.

Immediately, thereafter the reigning Mrs. Philippines and Her Royal Court made their appearance by walking around showing the beauty, grace and elegance of the Filipino women with their evening gowns which drew thunderous applauds from everyone. Subsequently, Her Majesty Queen Kristine Aducaen I was called to make her "Farewell Walk" wearing a turquoise strapless gown



neckline beaded with rhinestones and the skirt was densely ruffled and flares boldly to the floor projecting her beauty and contagious smile. While her escort husband Eddie Aducaen was in his black suit with matching blue necktie.

Finally, the evening most awaited part was announced with the entrance of the incoming Mrs. Philippines 2015-2016 and Her

Royal Court as all stood up to pay respect for her. First to come out from the arch was the entourage of Mrs. Visayas Kathleen Gallagher who was wearing an elegantly designed red Filipina dress escorted by Brian Gallagher in his tailor made dark suit as they were led towards the stage to take her reserved seat. She was followed by Mrs. Luzon Christine Sison Wiggins who was wearing a beautifully designed floor length purple evening dress escorted by her husband Dr. Edward Wiggins who likewise wearing dark suit with matching necktie, as they proceeded to the stage for her reserved place.

The grand entrance of incoming queen Mercury Acosta I and her entourage was announced which was met with deafening thunderous applauds from her admiring future subjects. To show their highest respect and admiration for such breed of a woman who is willing wholeheartedly to make her queenly reign for the betterment of her realm, everyone stood up as she walks with her escort husband Carlos Acosta in his dark suit with matching necktie exem-

plifying the sartorial splendor of all gentlemen of the evening as they walked towards the stage for her coronation.

Mercury Acosta was a picture of a Filipina beauty, accentuating her personality with grace and elegance to compliment her impeccable fair complexion, a true model of Filipina womanhood. Her queenly attire was befitting of her title which was a hand embroidered floor length white ruffled dress made of luxurious fabric delicately trimmed to fit her well proportion physique and a well placed extra length train with golden rounded sparkling trimmings.

The incoming Queen was preceded by flower girls Armanda Agyulae and Ava Santos who dropped

fresh petals of flowers on the red carpet way as she walked towards the stage. She was followed by Scepter bearer Kevin Bodeman and Crown bearer Jonathan Nate. When her Majesty, assumed her reserved chair, she received her train aides Lili Alejandra and Gaye Del Rosario, Sash Presenters Andy and Vita Santos, Scepter Presenters Venny and Lilian Vengco and Bouquet Presenters John and Santee Galinato.

Mercury Acosta was crowned gloriously by Hon. Jim Cooper, California State Assemblyman and the outgoing Mrs. Philippines Kristine Aducaen, thus, finally becoming her highness Queen Mercury Acosta I to reign as Mrs. Philippines for 2015-2016. Likewise, Mrs. Philippines, Mrs. Visayas and Mrs. Luzon received their respective extra large trophies. They were serenaded by the University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity singing the "Haramedley".

Mina Guerra, the FCSV Mrs. Philippines 2009-2010 delivered the closing remarks thanking everyone who worked hard for the enjoyment and success of the event. Likewise, she also expressed her gratitude to all who supported the event, the proceeds of which will be used for the dream of everyone to have our own Filipino Cultural Center in Sacramento.

FCSV Mrs. Philippines, Queen Mercury Acosta I was born in Mangaldan, Pangasinan, where she spent the best years of her young life with her family. She obtained her college education from the University of the East and Ateneo de Manila University with studies at Bryman College at San Jose, California. The Queen is happily married to Carlos Acosta and the marriage is blessed with four children, namely Krissun Khloe, Karlton Riccii, Kaia Chandal and Cartier Andrew, who all excelled in academic and athletic disciplines.

Just like every Filipino American in Sacramento and vicinity, Queen Mercury Acosta I also dream to have a Filipino Cultural Center that will become the repository of our great heritage and tradition to proudly identify ourselves as Filipinos. She likewise added, "To remember the little girl Tala from the poorest of the poor in the Philippines whose dream is to become a teacher. The reason she strongly supports Scholarship programs and promotes educational value as a form of good citizenship. She believes that charity and love begin at home." Indeed, all such commendable and meritorious aims are the missions of the FCSV to put into action and reality in our community with your support.



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Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity Holds Christmas Celebration for Children and All

By Faina E. Abaya

They say that Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year for many reasons but to the Christian world it could just boil down simply as the time of the year when the feeling of Godliness is stronger than ever before. In addition, it is also the time of the year when our innate natural character of being generous is brought out for others to enjoy and live with it.

Indeed, Christmas is the most anticipated day of the year especially for our children who believe that, it is a day of receiving gifts from Santa Claus or loved ones. And, just like the children, the adults likewise are also excited to show their love and generosity to the persons nearest to their hearts.

With that concept of loving and giving, the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity under the leadership of Aida Azurin with the full support of other community organizations held their annual Christmas celebration on December 8, 2014 at the Jose Rizal Center on Florin Mall, Sacramento.

The early Christmas celebration also held a Mass to thank everyone in the community for their usual support and cooperation of the several activities and event that have redound to the best interest of the community as a whole. The Mass was officially celebrated by Rev. Fr. Joyle Martinez, Pastor of the St. Paul Catholic Church along Florin Road, Sacramento. The hymnal songs were rendered by the Bayanihan of Sacramento Choir under the leadership of Dr. Tony Solomon. Well known community songstress Remy Solomon was the choir's soloist while Espie Espena led them all the way.

Rev. Fr. Martinez in his homily said that everyone should always



FCSV Pres. Aida Azurin with the committee members with Rev. Fr. Martinez.



The Maharlika Lions Club and some generous individuals donated assorted Christmas gifts for the children which were distributed by Melchor Munar who acted as Santa Claus and assisted by Sarah Enloe.



The FCSV prepared Filipino cuisine for dinner which was served by Rose Basos, Cleo Sabarre-Nex, Ling Avera, Luz Daclan, Julie Oineza.



Bayanihan Club of Sacramento Choir conducted by Espie Espena.

Photos by Faina Abaya

take good care of their well being because a healthy individual makes family happy, serves more to the community and helps fulfill the missions of the church. Members of the FCSV volunteered to give their helping hands during the Mass from the reading of the gospel to the collection of tidings up to the offering of the host, wine oil and water before the altar.

Despite, the prospect of inclement weather and the chilly cold winter evening, community mem-

bers and their children were not discouraged nor dampened their enthusiasm to participate for such commendable, joyful and memorable endeavor. After the Mass, a short program was held ably emceed by Memie Weitzenberg and Sarah Enloe.

Aida Azurin, the President of the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity expressed her usual profound gratitude to all the committee members who



Supporters and guests.

worked feverishly to put into action and reality the community's Christmas celebration. She also thanked the major community or-

ganizations for their usual utmost support and the logistic that they received from them.

The Filipino American community's major organization that lend support to the celebration are; The Ilocanos of America, Filipino Women's Club, Pangasinan Association of Sacramento & Northern California, Filipino Family Fraternity, American Legion Auxiliary, Siquijorian Fellowship of Sacramento, Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA, Maharlika Lions Club, Mina Guerra realty and Luvy Prieto.

Crab Feed



Midtown Lions Club Crab Feed on Dec.12, 2014:Front Row: Melita Esperante, UP President Beatriz Alo and Faina. Standing, Dr.Fred Aquino, Dale Esperante, Joe Gonzalez and Jun Abaya.

Xmas Carolers



2014 United Naguilian La Union Circle of America, Inc. Christmas carolers, headed by UNLU-CAI President, Henry and Tina Bambang.

■ Birthdays



HOWELL FELIX
DECEMBER 20



MANNIE BUENTIPO and wife
Rhuena
DECEMBER 24



JOCELYN SABINIANO with
husband Celso
DECEMBER 29



HONORLITA S. GABRIEL with
hubby David
DECEMBER 29



DAVE SAN PEDRO and wife
Dinnah
JANUARY 13



A surprise 70th Birthday celebration for Ate Vivian Rama given by her family at the Holiday Inn in Elk Grove, CA on Nov. 28, attended by her family, relatives, and close friends. It was a night of singing and serenades of affection by her three wonderful and talented children and their families.



Marie Gomez Garcia's 50th birthday celebration held on November 29 at the Arden Hills Resort Club, hosted by her brother and beautiful sisters, with the presence of their friends and relatives. She's grateful to her mother, loving husband Rick, and their two lovely daughters Angerica and Tin, and all the guests who have made a fun night of dancing possible. Lastly, she's thankful to her Sinag-tala family for their presence and for a classic-ever, "Tinikling and Pandango Sa Ilaw" dance entertainment performed by the Sinagtala Theatrical Ensemble dancers.



A wacky-wickie picture of Elna Discipulo. Marilyn Tauro-Lopez, Mariflor Ong, Nancy Bautista, Eva and Edgar Morales, Kim Vu, Helen Enriques, Hilda Bobier, Liz Valencia, Judy Mendoza, and Ida Alvarez in celebration of the Christmas holidays held at Elna Discipulo's residence.



Christian Erespe's 3rd birthday and his mom Maria's nursing graduation from American River College- a double celebration of get together given by her parents Johnny and Norma, husband Carlito, and their children, Christopher, Joy, May, and Camille, held at their residence on December 20, with friends and family.

Bayanihan of Sacramento - Year End Celebration

By Dale Esperante

The annual holiday gathering of the Bayanihan of Sacramento was held at the American Legion Magellan Hall on 27 Dec 2014. This has always been a special tradition for the members, thanks to the leadership of Remy and Doc Tony Solomon. This year, as in years past, many hands eagerly assisted: Leila Pereira, Lee Ramirez, Pete and Rose Delacruz, Lito Pabon, Henry Bambao, Bobby Chang, MC Paradella, and regrettably my memory does not have enough space to list the many more who answered the call of Bayanihan. The venue, Magellan Hall, was enjoyed by all because of the hospitality of Post 604 Commander Tom Amaba. The Post commander recognizes the invaluable contributions of organizations such as the Bayanihan of Sacramento.

Even the former pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Father Ron Marcelo, stopped by briefly to the surprise and delight of his former parishioners. Father Ron said the prayer for the luncheon. He later mentioned to this writer that even though he was on his way back to his parish in Salinas, one phone call from Remy was special enough for him to take a brief detour to this gathering.

The afternoon was enjoyed by the members exchanging gifts, dancing, singing, and taking photos. Remy's friends didn't want this day to end without hearing a song from her. Remy relented and decided to sing. She asked MC to sing a song with her. Impressed by the duet, Commander Tom invited Remy and MC to sing the same special number on a Legion New Year's Eve dinner party.

The day showed that the gathering of Bayanihan friends is more like a gathering



of family. Everyone was so comfortable in participating and helping where there was a need. The set-up, contributions, and clean-up of the hall was a communal effort. In the Philippines, communal effort is referred to as bayanihan.



"Bayanihan is a Filipino term taken from the word bayan, referring to a nation, country,

town or community. The whole term bayanihan refers to a spirit of communal unity

or effort to achieve a particular objective."

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Synergy

The Love of Giving

By Gabriel Ortigoza

For God so love the world that He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. — John 3:16

In the verse quoted above, it says that God loved us first and then he gave his only begotten son. Love comes first before anything else. You love first and then you give. As the saying goes, “You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving. In the book of Corinthians, it talks about love. Love is patient, love is kind, etc., and the writer summarizes the chapter with the phrase, “But the greatest of it is love.”

Giving is a cycle. When God bless us with finances we give him back in return. Tithers give back at least 10 percent of their income. Some give more than one tenth. Why? Because when you give the return is tenfold. In the business world the investors call it ROI or the Return of Investment is promising. When you give God blesses you more. I’m saying this because I personally experienced it. Every time I give, I feel satisfied and there is always something left in my account to spend. I don’t get red. On the other hand, when I become selfish and spend the 10 percent for myself I always go on the red. I experienced deficit. It’s mysterious. But I feel secure when I remember my mother told me several times that God works in a mysterious way. He is Omniscent.

It is more blessed to give than to receive and God loves a cheerful giver. When we give, it is more appreciated by the receiver when we do it with a sincere smile. We give deep down from the heart. When we smile, it relaxes our muscles however when we frown it tenses our muscles and as a consequence

we become stressful. Stress is the main cause of major ailments that cause mortality such as heart diseases, stroke, diabetes, etc.

Giving is our gratitude for the blessings we receive from God. Because we were blessed it is proper that we give in return. Again, it goes back to the cycle of give and take, not just take and take. We thank God for everything as our gratitude to Him. We express our gratitude in many different forms: by singing, by shouting, by jumping and dance a few and say: hallelujah, etc. Let us develop an attitude of gratitude because it feels good.

I will continue to give until God stops giving.

There are different forms of giving. We can give by volunteerism. We can volunteer our time, money, and effort. We can be a church usher on Sundays. We can be a Sunday school teacher. We can be like Zacchaeus the tax collector of the church to gather tithes and offering. We can sponsor scholarship. We can give grants. We can volunteer ourselves in a civic action. And a lot more under the arsenal of volunteerism.

Happiness is not only in receiving but in giving. When we receive something and we love the stuff we feel happy and sometimes elated. But when we are the one giving, there is fulfillment.

We give because we value others and we give because of sincerity. We should be a conduit of blessings to others. (Written out of boredom at 38,000 feet above sea level while inflight Philippine Airlines from San Francisco to Manila on December 20, 2014. gabbyortig@yahoo.com).



Good Night, My Friend

By Gemma Nemenzo

Dearest E,

I can never figure this out — how does God or whoever it is that makes decisions such as this, decide which person should get sick, which should die immediately and which one should continue living? Is it just the luck of the draw that you’re there right now awaiting the inevitability of your passing while I’m here still dealing with the minutiae of surviving? Why you of all people when you have lived a life dedicated to making this world a better place? I could easily name ten people who should be in your place right now, whose passing will make this world safer and happier, yet there they are, in the peak of health, still strutting in the illusion of their invincibility while you are lying there wasting away, unable to finish all that you wanted to do. Is this what Divine Justice is about or did you, in one of your adventurous treks, make the mistake of displeasing one minor god who then marked you with the insignia of death?

I can just see you now, shaking your head and smiling that magnanimous smile of yours. There you go again, you would tell me, pondering the imponderables instead of just believing and accepting. That has always been your way of tempering my rages, no matter how justified they were, and because you would say it with such conviction, I would calm down. And in my calm I would arrive at a solution. You have always been wiser than me, I have always deferred to your good sense and the clarity of your reasoning. So why are you there, immobile, unspeaking when I am bent out of shape by anger, sadness and disbelief? You always helped me get through situations like this; you promised me you would always stand by me so why are you abandoning me now?

I’m sorry, this is so selfish and inconsiderate of me, this flail-

ing about in all directions. So typical of me, you would say, when I am confronted with something that I can’t understand and I can’t control. Okay, stop shaking your head; I’m simmering down now. Believe and accept. Believe and accept. Believe what? Accept what?

I wonder how you are feeling, whether you are still feeling something. When your system shuts down does it mean all sensations are gone? What about your emotions, do they go away too? C’mon, E, you have always been generous with your knowledge, wake up and tell me how it feels to be dying. Is it true that you can see your entire life pass before you like a video on fast-forward? Or does it happen incrementally, the tips of your toes first then creeping up slowly like when you’re standing in the bathtub and the water starts going up your legs? Is “life” a feeling, a sensation that ebbs, or is it like artificial light that is gone at the flick of a switch?

I remember when I was eight years old and very sick with nephritis, I asked my father how a person would feel if he is dying. The question caught him by surprise and for once my scientist-father did not seem to know the answer although he eventually mumbled something like “an extreme tiredness.” It was only years later that I realized how scared he must have been with that question since at that time my ailment was so severe that it was touch and go for a while. Throughout the three months that I was confined to that hospital bed, I was watching out for “extreme tiredness” but of course I never found out how that would feel. Is that what’s happening to you now? Did you will your body to shut down so you no longer have to deal with your pain?

Remember how we used to talk about the best way to die? You always opted for a quick way like a plane crash or a stray bullet to your brain. No time for pain or regret, you insisted.

I have always opted for the chance to document the entire process; you know, a slow glamorous going, where you don’t have to wither. I would write a daily diary and I would be able to tell everyone who mattered in my life how important they were to me. How naïve I was, how little I knew about terminal ailments! And how arrogant of us to think that we could have our way in life and in death.

I am listening to the clock ticking each second to oblivion. Time has assumed a different dimension now as we wait. I close my eyes tight so I can listen to the sounds of living — there’s a bird chirping and a slight breeze is making the leaves rustle. Elsewhere I hear a neighbor’s radio turned up while a car revs up its engine. Around me the computer hums its constant rhythm and my clicking of the keys seems almost musical. I’ve never noticed these things before, these evidences that life goes on. I wonder if in your last days of consciousness you were able to soak in the sights, the smells, the sounds, and the taste of mortality. And I wonder how it felt to let go.

I guess the time has come for me to let go of you too. This is not how it’s supposed to be. We were going to grow old together so we could find out which lover we would remember when the rest of our memory has turned to mush. And now you leave me without answering that question, how fair is that?

I love you, dearest friend. We’ve had one great ride but you still owe me an answer. And because of that you will always, always be alive in me.

Good night.





Maharlika Lions Club

Crab & Shrimp Feed

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Floyd afraid of Pacquiao, says Roach

By Nick Giongco

Floyd Mayweather is not a risk-taker like his No. 1 fighter Manny Pacquiao, says Hall of Fame trainer Freddie Roach.

Roach remains frustrated that a deal can't be put in place for Mayweather and Pacquiao to get it on next year despite major obstacles that have been cleared on the part of the eight-division Filipino titleholder.

"I think he is just a little bit afraid to take a challenge like Manny," said Roach in the immensely-influential HBO program The Fight Game.

"He's so in love with that zero on that record," stressed Roach, referring to Mayweather's immaculate 47-0 win-loss card.

In the event efforts to make the fight go down the drain, Roach believes that it will do Mayweather's reputation and legacy more harm.

"If he retires not fighting Manny, that will be a big question when he's asked for things. I think that will ruin his legacy."

Roach, 54, even criticized Mayweather's decision to grant Argentine Marco Maidana a rematch, saying "there is no sense in that."

Unlike Mayweather, 37, Pacquiao has never ducked an opponent in building up his record and attaining universal recognition as the most recognizable face of the sport of boxing.

While Pacquiao hasn't been with a mar-



Freddie Roach with Manny Pacquiao

quee name the last year or so, it is because he has ran out of popular foes to choose from.

The last few years, Pacquiao has faced Erik Morales (thrice), Marco Antonio Barrera (twice), Juan Manuel Marquez (four times), Miguel Cotto, Ricky Hatton, Shane Mosley and Oscar Dela Hoya.

Top Rank chief Bob Arum is still in the process of working out a Mayweather matchup for Pacquiao in coordination with CBS big boss Les Moonves, whose network has two more fights left in its six-fight contract with Mayweather.

Arum said that it is ideal that a Pacquiao-Mayweather super fight be held in June instead of May as it is reserved for the clash between Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez of Mexico.

If Pacquiao fails to get Mayweather, Arum said that he will instead return to the ring in April.

Roy Jones Jr makes Fun of Mayweather for Ducking Pacquiao

"Pacquiao did all he can. He did all I would have done. I think Mayweather just got a little too scared if you ask me." **Holmes** said.

Boom Boom said the guy (Floyd) don't want to fight the guy (Pacquiao).

Ray Leonard: 'If I Was Mayweather I would have fought Pacquiao by now'

"Floyd doesn't fight Pac because he doesn't have the power of Mosley, Floyd wants nothing of Pacquiao..." **-Chop Chop Corley**

Austin Trout has "No Doubt" That Pac would have beaten Floyd...

Tim Bradley - "Floyd doubts himself. Why won't he fight Manny? Scared, man." Tyson basically said he's scared.

Roy Jones Jr. says Floyd Mayweather wants no part of Manny Pacquiao

Stephen Smith now realized Floyd's scared.

Muhammad Ali on twitter begs Floyd Mayweather to fight Manny.

Marvin Hagler called him a coward.



Roy Jones Jr

"Because it's never gonna happen. It's not gonna happen. (Then, with a smile he added) Mayweather is playing with all you guys." **- Erik Morales**

James Toney said he would put his money on pac by ko **Quote:**

James Toney: "I grew up with Floyd Mayweather... we all came from the same block in Michigan. Me, the Mayweather family, Buster Mathis, Tony Tucker..."

'Hall of Fame' block, you know what I'm sayin? I love Floyd and I'm glad he's doing what he's doing... but if you claim to be the best fighter in the world in the world pound-for-pound... fight! Don't make no excuses."

"Pacquiao's going to knock Floyd out... and Floyd knows it. Floyd's my man and I love him but I'm going to call it like I see it. The thing is this: Do you know what a rabbit does when it gets backed into a corner? It faints. And that's what Floyd's doing."

Aaron Pryor favors Pacquiao over Floyd: "I don't think he's equipped to handle Pac Man".

Bert Sugar said Floyd don't want none of Pacquiao.

World Class Billiards to be held in Gensan

By Eddie Alinea

World Pool Association championship returns to the Philippines after a seven-year absence with General Santos City in South Cotabato as the site. World Boxing Organization welterweight champion Manny Pacquiao, himself a billiards practitioner - besides involving in other sports like basketball, chess and darts, among others, - has agreed to host the WPA 10-Ball tourney in February next year.



Filipino pool legends Efrén 'Bata' Reyes (L) and Francisco 'Django' Bustamante teamed up at the MP Billiards Doubles Tournament in General Santos this month. Photo by Rupert Wendell Alinea.

At least the top 100 players in the world, according to the eight-division boxing champion, including reigning titlist Niels Faijen of The Netherlands, who is also ranked no.1 in the world, will be invited to vie for what could be the biggest and most lucrative gathering of cue artists in terms of participation and money at stake.

"Yeah, magho-host na rin lamang tayong world championship eh di lakihan na natin ang premyo para mas maraming magagaling sa mundo ang lumahok," Pacquiao told this writer last week following his hosting of the \$150,000 Second MP International 10-Ball Singles and Doubles Championships held also in GenSan and swept by the Filipino pool sharks.

"Besides, hosting the world tournament in GenSan will be my way of introducing the city to the world as one of the better places in the country to visit by tourists, especially for reason that our city is located in Mindanao, a placer which we should all project as a peaceful place contrary to what is being reported abroad," Pacquiao said.

Ageless Efrén "Bata" Reyes, the 1999 WPA 9-Ball winner, emerged triumphant in the singles event, while the unheralded duo of Jordan Legaspi and Romeo Sevilano ramped off with the doubles title as they, following along while, once again proved to the entire universe the caliber of the Filipinos atop the clothed table.

"That's precisely the reason why I consented in hosting the 2015 world championship, to relive the Filipino cue artists glory days in the sport, which, incidentally, our countrymen, led by Bata himself, popularized and respected the world over," Pacquiao, who turned 36 last December 17 and in whose honor the MP International tournament was held, said.

"Hindi naman maikakaila na tayong mga Pilipino ang nagpasikat sa bilyar sa buong mundo," he averred. "Hindi lamang yun, mga Pilipino rin ang nagnagbigay ng bagong pagkakilala sa bilyar bilang sport."

Reyes agreed, saying "ang kahusayan nating mga Pilipino ang naka-pagbago sa pagkilala ng buond mundo sa larong bilyar. Dati, ang bilyar ay kilalang nilalaro sa madilim na kuwarto na puno ng usok at amoy alak. Pero noong magsimula tayong manalo sa mga international tournament, nabago yun at ngayon ay nilalaro na sa mga nagga-gandahan at naglalakihang hotel."

"That's why I welcome Con-

gressman Pacquiao's involvement in the sport," Reyes declared. "At magiging mas maganda at mas hahangaan tayong mga Pilipino kung tayo ang mananalo sa darating na world championship. Higit sa lahat, mababalik na rin ang interest ng mga kababayan natin sa bilyar na intong mga nakaraang taon ay parang nakalimutan na."

"Kaya dapat magpasalamat ang lahat ng ilipinong bilyarista at pati na ang mga dayuhan sa pagkakaroon natin ng isang Cong. Pacquiao na handang tumulong na mag-organisa ng malalakaing tornero gaya ng world championship," he said.

Reyes attributed the fall of billiards in lack of sponsors, who only a decade ago were responsible for the rise and growth of the sport in the country.

"Dati, nang nagpapanalo kami, nagkandarapa ang mga sponor na mag-host ng international events dito. Ang media, lahat kinokober ang laro. Ngayon hindi na halos nadya-dyaryo ang mga torneo. Kahit malalaki ang premyo, ' Reyes lamented.

Outside of Feijen, among those to be invited, according to Ishi Caparras and Troy Danao, who ran the First Second MP International 10-Ball events held in a span nearly four months, are Chang Yu Lung of Taiwan, Shane Van Boening of the United States, Hewen Li of China, Dennis Orullo of the Philippines, Aloin Ouscnan of Australia, Carlo Biado, also of the Philippines, Nick Ekonomopoulos of Greece, Johan Gonzales Chua of the Philippines and Chang Jung Lin of Taipei, ranked second to 10th in the world.

Former Filipino world champions Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Ronnie Alcano and Fil-Canadian Alex Pagulayan have also confirmed participation as well as Raymund Faraon, Warren Kiamco and Jeffrey Ignacio, all in the list of top 20 players in the world today.

Pacquiao said he is seeking recognition from the WPA for the purpose of those who would perform creditably could world rankings. The last time the world championship was held in the country was in 2007 in Quezon City where Daryl Peach beat local boy Roberto Gomez for the crown.

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The year that was

By Nicky Faustine De Guzman

From quotable quotes to the best and worst things in 2014, here are the highlights of the year that was—or the year that is about to end. Bonus: Please say goodbye to trends we should not see in 2015.

NEVER EVER

Besides actually and really, 2015 (and the coming years) should ban the word ever. Blame it on One Direction, responsible for putting an “ever” on everything—the best song, the best night, the best year. Ever. Here are the highlights of the last 365 days.

NEW WORDS

The keeper of new words, Merriam Webster (not BuzzFeed, no), has revealed its 150 new additional collection of words with references to technology and pop culture. Words like #hashtag, steampunk, and catfish made to the list. Don't know their meaning? While GMG isn't part of Merriam's roster, we say, GMG it, dude.

ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE

Perhaps, this is the most important trending topic of the year that should not just drown into the sea of our #TBT flood posts. To promote the awareness of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and to fund its research, people across the US, UK, and the Philippines threw ice buckets and nominated their friends to do the same and donate cash. Others saw it as a waste of precious water but it's a sexy excuse to see celebrities go wet and wild and almost shirtless.

OF #MEMES AND MARRIAGES

There's the bridal war between Marian Rivera and Heart Evangelista. And oh, JC Intal, Jericho Rosales, and Drew Arellano put a ring on their girls' finger, too. Then there's the meme. From the resurrection of Princess Sarah and her potatoes to Michael Martinez' Ikaw na! meme, the virtual world is a treasure trove of funny and punny things. (Please see page D1 for our story on marriages and memes.)

QUOTABLE QUOTES

@Hi_Hipon: Ang daming hipon dito sa Davao. (There are a lot of shrimps here in Davao.)

Internet rock star and author Ramon Baustita aka the Hipon Guy was sauteed in Davao after calling the Davaoños hipon, which means a person with smolderingly hot body but with faces you can throw away. After declaring him persona non grata in the city, Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte has since moved on and supplied Ramon with, you guess it right, jackfruit, err, hipon.

@TyphoonQueen: Itong si Anderson Cooper, sabi wala daw

government presence sa Tacloban. Mukhang hindi niya alam ang sinasabi niya. (Anderson Cooper says there's no government presence in Tacloban. He doesn't seem to know what he's talking about.) In less than a year, Typhoon Queen drew major flak yet again when she said:

@TyphoonQueen: Sa kanila na lang lahat (yung bagyong Ruby). Parang mas kaya nila. (Let the Japanese have typhoon Ruby. It seems they can handle it better.) Everybody knows who @TyphoonQueen is right, Joey de Leon? She goes by another name: @QueenOfSlippers.

The year of quotable quotes is about to end but starlet Nathalie Hart formerly known (if anyone even knew her before) as Princess Snell likes to make an appeal. She seemingly, desperately, wants attention. She said:

@EnjoyitWhileitLasts According to my dad's lesson: If rape is inevitable, lay back and enjoy it! If only all rape victims could tweet back.

THE YEAR OF... figure skater Michael Martinez and his “Ikaw na!” meme, Katy Perry's blue hair, Lorde and her dark lippies, TayTay, and the fashion trend we hope will die in 2015, the boyfriend jeans.

THE YEAR OF... figure skater Michael Martinez and his “Ikaw na!” meme, Katy Perry's blue hair, Lorde and her dark lippies, TayTay, and the fashion trend we hope will die in 2015, the boyfriend jeans.

YEAR OF THE MOVIES

2014 is also the year of local and Hollywood movies. Gone Girl, 12 Years a Slave, X Men, Maleficent, Interstellar, The Hunger Games Mockingjay Part 1, Guardians of the Galaxy, the list goes on. Pinoy movies and TV shows were also a hit, thanks to their iconic lines. Starting Over Again, She's Dating the Gangster, Legal Wife, My Husband's Lover all tickled the masses' fancy. “Sige humabol ka kay Adrian, magpakabasahan ka,” (“Go follow Adrian and be a doormat.”) is just one of the many iconic, memorable lines from Legal Wife.

#REPRESENT!

The 2014 world games are packed with Pinoy pride. There's Wimbledon, World Cup, FIBA Basketball, Super Bowl, NBA All Star, and French Open. While Sochi games were blemished with controversies (hello undrinkable water and under constructed hotels), Pinoy young skater Michael Martinez made us proud with his back bending stunts. His unbrows couldn't agree more.

TRENDS WE SHOULD SAY GOODBYE TO IN 2015

From online games like Flappy Bird and Candy Crush to loom bands and crazy ramen noodles, pop culture's popping and bursting with fads and trends, both hits and misses. Some are worthy of emulation but other are downright meh. Here are the trends (with hope) we should not see in the Year of the Goat. Adieu...

DARK LIPPIES

Whoever invented dark lipsticks in plum, black, oxblood, burgundy, dark chocolate, and violet must be a) a squid lover b) a disciple of Dracula c) or both. Unless you are Lorde, Kim Kardashian, or a runway fashion model, honey, dark lips won't look good on you. It scares the boys, too!

BAE, YOLO, TWERK, WE CAN'T EVEN...

...finish this sentence. STFU and let's talk normal.

SEX TAPES...

Unless they include Kit Harington or Cosmo's 69 hot men in their naked glory. Seriously. Nobody should ever see one's naked photo or private video, in Jennifer Lawrence's words, “Anybody who looked at those pictures, you're perpetuating a sexual offense. You should cover with shame. Even people who I know and love say, ‘Oh, yeah, I looked at the pictures.’ I don't want to get mad, but at the same time, I'm thinking, I didn't tell you that you could look at my naked body.” You go girl. #Feminism

WATTPAD MOVIES

We support local literature but if some of them are done in bad taste, swimming in clichés, and tattered with bad grammar... err, we're thinking twice. Wattpad-turned-movies are boring. An ugly duckling, plain Jane who falls in love with a jock? I think we've seen it. Again and again and again. Nobody wants a rerun.

SKITTLE-LIKE COLORED HAIR

Blame Vice Ganda, Katy Perry, and the rest of the gang who like to dye their hair in crazy colors. Green hair? Really.

BOYFRIEND JEANS AND CULOTTES

Throw away the baggy jeans. A pair of boyfriend jeans looks exactly like its name, your boyfriend's and not yours. It doesn't highlight your every curve and only makes you look fatter and slouchier than you already are. Don't get us started with the culottes. A pair of shorts that fall right in the middle of your calves cuts your height and makes you shorter.

Ramiele Malubay, American Idol Season 7 Finalist, Celebrates the Season with, ‘This Time of Year’, a debut Holiday Release

The Luna Company, Inc. is proud to announce the release of This Time of Year, a debut holiday release by Ramiele Malubay. The Christmas EP Album is now available on iTunes <http://ow.ly/FuH2b>. The album is also available on Amazon.com.

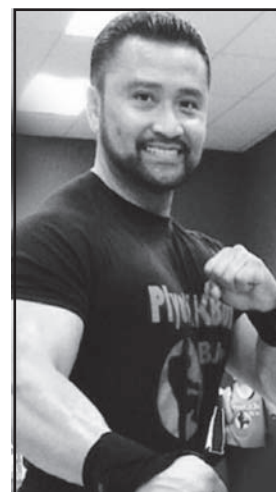


Ramiele Malubay, based out of Miami, Florida, has been singing and performing since a young age. Malubay is notably known for successfully auditioning and becoming a part of the television show, American Idol (Season 7). On the show, she received rave reviews for her performances and finished ninth place. After American Idol, Ramiele toured with American Idol Season 7 Top 10 Finalists, toured the Philippines, appeared on several television shows in the United States, and performed the American National Anthem for the Manny Pacquiao and Miguel Cotto fight at the MGM Grand Las Vegas. Asides from performances, Ramiele has also been able to return to school to complete her nursing degree which she has desired to complete – prior to being a part of American Idol.

As a gift to all of her fans and supporters over the years, Ramiele brings the holiday spirit in the Christmas EP, This Time of Year. Ramiele states, “I've always wanted to be release a Christ-

mas album and I really hope that people do enjoy it, as much as the team and I enjoyed creating it.” The EP includes favorite Christmas hits, such as ‘Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas’, ‘The Christmas Song’, ‘O Holy Night’, and a duet with R&B singer Russy Isberto for ‘Baby It's Cold Outside’. With the craft of producer/songwriter, Elvin Reyes and songwriter, Manilene Ginelsa, the EP features an upbeat original titled, ‘Holidays Are Here’ and the title song, This Time of Year. Chris Baldomero and Anthony Ancheta of Breakstone Productions, along with Elvin Reyes featured producers who will be working on Ramiele's full-length album to be released in 2015.

This Time of Year is Ramiele Malubay's first EP album release, distributed by 37 Entertainment and Select-O-Hits Distribution. The album's Executive Producer is The Luna Company, Inc., artist management company for Ramiele Malubay and other artists. For media interviews and inquiries contact: info@thelunaco.com Contact: +1.415.894.5376; info@thelunaco.com



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Film buff fantasy

By Pau Aguilera

Every once in a while, a movie lover asks what if his favorite actor or actress played this certain character or starred in a particular film or concept. Fans do have vivid imagination.

Bulletin Entertainment did a bit of wishful thinking, in the hope of coaxing producers and directors to mull over these plausible film concepts for next year. Yes, please...

Sobbing Bossing

Comedy has been Vic Sotto's bread and butter since entering show business, and he is not looking to let up any sooner. Though the Box-Office King has drawn flak with his recent funnies, particularly with 2013's supposedly subpar showing in "My Little

Bossings," he still pushed through with its sequel for this year's Metro Manila Film (MMFF) Festival. But what if Bossing decides to shed a tear or two on-screen for a change, like that of what they do on "Eat Bulaga" Lenten specials? Surprisingly, we think that he would be more potent in the drama genre. The hard part: finding the perfect leading lady.

Conquering his own demons

After his publicized spat with his home network, Aljur Abrenica has yet to be seen on TV or in a film project. And while his brother



Vic Sotto

Vin keeps telling the press that the "Star Struck" alumni is actually enjoying his hiatus, it's hard to deny that Aljur might be longing to flex his acting chops once more. And what better way to jumpstart his career with



Aljur Abrenica

psychological thriller a la "Fight Club." Doesn't matter if he plays either Brad Pitt or Edward Norton's character...

A Ryzza (or) Lyca musical

These two child prodigies would probably be the most qualified for a starring role in a musical comedy-drama (Remember "Annie"?), albeit for



Ryzza Mae Dizon



Lyca Gairanod

entirely different reasons. Ryzza Mae Dizon's innate cuteness and candor versus Lyca Gairanod's raw but still otherworldly vocal prowess? You be the judge. Or how does the idea of Aling Maliit prancing around on the big screen belting a melody, voiced by "The Voice Kids" champ? We just hope there would be no problem when it comes to the billing...

Putting on a mask

Robin Padilla, the touted "Bad Boy" of Philippine cinema, has since changed his ways, shifting from action scenes to projects with social relevance ("10,000



Robin Padilla

Hours"), the latest breathing life into the Father of the Philippine Revolution, Andres Bonifacio, in the historical epic and MMFF entry "Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo." With that kind of run, why can't he take it up another notch, and literally do another hero - a superhero to be exact - this time? While he has donned the tattoos of comic book character Joaquin Bordado on a previous TV series, it didn't have quite the "superhero" feel, for one, with the lack of mask and spandex suit. Maybe he would want to get his hand on Paolo Fabregas's "The Filipino Heroes League"...

On her own

2014 has been a rough year for the Sharon Cuneta, being on an emotional roller coaster at the latter part of the year, which was unfortunately capped off by losing her mother, Elaine Gamboa-Cuneta. In the wake of her departure from TV5 last September, no one is sure when and where will we see Sharon again on-screen. That is why an independent film, in its entire substance and sobriety, would be the perfect comeback endeavor for her. It worked for the Superstar ("Thy Womb"), the Star for All Seasons ("Ekstra"), why wouldn't it for



Sharon Cuneta

Tireless Martin just keeps going

By Shirley Pizarro

Everyone it seems is already on vacation mode, what with Christmas just around the corner. Well, everyone except Concert King Martin Nievera that is.

Apparently, Martin prefers to work even during the holidays. "I am not someone who will ever complain about too much work. In fact, I especially like working on the last day of the year. Somehow it gives me the feeling that there will be more work in the coming year," he



Martin Nievera

smiles.

True to form, Martin has several shows already lined up this December. He will be in Las Vegas for a show on Dec. 21. He will then fly to Michigan for a show on Dec. 26. He will return to Manila for another concert on Dec. 27.

He will also have a show at the Samsung Hall of SM

Aura on Jan. 3, 8 p.m. - his first for 2015.

Billed "Martin Nievera Live at the Samsung Hall: The Big Mouth Rocks the New Year," the show will feature Martin singing all of his greatest hits as accompanied by a big band. His guests include Allen Sta. Maria, Morissette Amon, and KZ Tandingan.

Produced by Hills and Dreams Events Concepts Co., the concert is sponsored by Belo Medical Group, Jet 7 Bistro, 10 Inch Lights and Sounds, Star Studio, PEP.ph and Kawasaki.



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Season's Greetings!

From the Publishers and Contributors of Philippine Fiesta Newspaper

always a celebration



As we move forward to a new episode of our lives in this coming new year 2015, we pause to turn back the time to reminisce nostalgically the many events that we have been together. We always remember, the kaleidoscope of colors in our social gatherings as shown in our culture and costumes which distinctly our very own.

We have showcased the greatness, beauty, grace and elegance of our heritage and tradition in our music, dances and songs. Our generosity has been tested for those who need our help and assistance. As always, we mourn the passing of our friends and loved ones as we likewise pray the speedy recovery of those who are indisposed.

All such events are chronicled in our own community newspaper, the Philippine Fiesta whose Editorial Staff and publishers are determined to bring into fore through writer contributors the many events that make us united for the betterment of our Filipino American community. For such selfless dedication, we say Thank You very much. Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong taon sa inyong lahat. SALAMAT PO!!! 8 Jun and Faina Abaya and Family



Wishing all the wonderful readers of Philippine Fiesta a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year! Love from the Diaz Family.



May we continue to be strong and healthy with each passing year to enjoy what life has more to offer. May we be guided to face the many challenges we have yet to undertake. In these we pray for the love and continued support of our family and friends in the community. In behalf of my family and the contributors of Philippine Fiesta, we wish everyone a Joyous and Prosperous New Year! Dave, Dinnah, and family



It has been a great year because of the stories that we've been privileged to share. We are grateful to all who welcomed our presence. Especially those who entrusted us with writing and reporting the important events in their lives, thank you. I acknowledge my mentors at the newspaper because without them, I would be like that old huge tree in the forest that fell and nobody heard. The old year has gone. It is the past but its stories will live on in the archives of a community newspaper called "Philippine Fiesta." A new year is here and may its stories be as brilliant as last year's. We hope your Christmas 2014 was Grand and Merry and your 2015 New Year's So Very Happy! Dale and Melita Esperante"



As we finish this wonderful year of 2014, we look back at all the things that have happened and marvel at the year. There is so much to be thankful for. We welcomed our first granddaughter on December 10. Then I underwent a successful surgery and am slowly recovering. Also, our Maharlika Lions Club Members have done so much for the less fortunate in our communities to make their lives fuller and richer. Of course, we also lost several of our Precious Friends, who are serving in a better place with the good Lord.

Sarah and I want to extend a joyous wish of a Very Properous and Happy New Year filled with love, peace, good health, and cheers. Carle and Sarah Enloe and family



Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year ! Love from, Chloe (5 yo) Barrett (3 yo) Children of Bunny and Tommy Wong Casey (6 yo) Son of Chrissy and Cary Hegna and grandparents Francis and Nancy Bautista



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Gabriel Origoza and family.