

# Philippine Fiesta™

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Rizal's Great Loves  
Page 15



## CONSULATE ON WHEELS SACRAMENTO

Page 11

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## P-Noy, Poe and Ping...

By Cito Beltran

People are once again talking and thinking about who they want to vote, whom to make President, or who should run for the Senate. Then someone asked me: Why do we have such lousy leaders and bad politicians?

The answer dear Pedro is our sin: the idolatry of politicians.

We have made politicians the "all in one solution," the super hero with feet of clay, the person who can make our wishes come true, or at the very least someone we like better than the current person in office. Think hard about the term "Idolatry of Politicians" dear Pedro because there was a nation as young and simple as we are now, called Israel. Fortunate to be loved by God, protected and blessed, until they made a very serious mistake; taking the first step to Idolatry of Politicians.

That nation had the unique favor and title as God's chosen people. They traveled in his presence, lived under his protection, they sat back as God wiped out their enemies and they were constantly within hearing and feeling distance of God. They had it made! They were even provided with human go-betweens who gave them regular updates from God whether it was reassurance or rebuke for being pain in the butts. Moses came first and he was even given super powers, then Joshua the wall breaker, the Judges featuring Samson the brat who brought more enemies to the grave with him than he ever killed in his life time.

Then one day when Samuel the go-between got old and no replacement prophet seemed to be in sight, the elders of the Israelites did something really dumb, they decide to copy their enemies and ask to have a King to rule over them. "We want a King over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles". Just switch the word King with President and we're in business! This really hurt the Prophet Samuel but I figure it pissed off God even more. Speaking to Samuel, God said: "It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king." We've done the same.

We used to be the only "Christian country in Asia" since Magellan. We were Number 2 to Japan in economic and political maturity. Our great grandparents were deeply religious and blessed. But now we have become like the Old Testament Israelites; OFWs scattered into the four corners of the earth, mocked, attacked, enslaved. We look at the leaders of our neighbors and dream of finding our own versions of Lee Kuan Yew, Mahathir, etc. Every counterpoint to current and disappointing politicians, are quickly propped up as the alternative choice. In all of it we choose to be blind to the truth that no one person can solve our collective problems, not even an entire Senate of Angels could do the job, because in the end each of us has a job and a responsibility to perform if this nation will ever be transformed.

First we need to admit and confess that we are guilty of Idolatry of Politicians. They are flesh and bone mortals not divine beings although some pretend to be. If we want the blessing back, then we need to seriously be sorry for replacing God with people who at the end of the day are just like us! I also told someone recently that instead of looking for leaders, we need to lead; lead in our homes and be the good example, lead in our offices with competence and compassion, lead in our communities with a true spirit of service and not the services rendered by a TRAPO or Traditional Politician.

Until we do so, God will curse us with the kind of leaders and false Kings that he warned the Israelites would end up ruling over them (Samuel 8:11-18). In the last verse God says something that many people will sense applies to their current sentiment and our present political situation or dissatisfaction: "When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the King you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."

Yes we have to vote; yes we have to choose our leaders with wisdom so we don't end up voting for "wisely" or "Anonymous". But stop giving the credit and the authority to man when it belongs to God.

## The price of peace and the cost of war

By Ivo Sieber

Her name was Sarah. While hiding behind a tree with her parents, she was hit and killed by stray bullets in an armed encounter. She was eight years old.



There is a cost of war that cannot be calculated in economic terms. It is the measure of human suffering. Since the end of the Cold War, the vast majority of armed conflicts have involved intra-state warfare with devastating results: A majority of civilian victims with long-term effects on public health and social welfare. Sadly, the cost of

war is even higher in countries such as the Philippines, which already suffers a high incidence of poverty. This is especially true in Mindanao which has been the site of armed struggle for more than 40 years. Maguindanao, the setting of the current military offensive, is the country's fourth poorest province. According to Oxford, more than half of the population lives below the poverty line.

Unless one is living in an area affected by armed conflict, it is difficult to understand the cost of war. But what about the price of peace? Many have made the link between peace and development – and for obvious reasons. Poverty is a root cause of conflict and development programs are being created to address structural and institutional needs. Certainly, much progress has been made in this regard in the Philippines in recent years as indicated by sustained robust growth rates, repeated credit upgrades and notable improvements in a number of socio-economic indicators.

In the aftermath of the tragic events in Mamasapano, however, this logic can be called into question. The mounting criticism of the administration's handling

Continued on page 7



### Editor's Note

It's finally spring and the weather has been nice. Seasonal allergies though is here once again, to those suffering from this yearly annoyance. There's no cure for allergies but to manage the symptoms, which can include coughing, sneezing, itchy eyes, and asthma attacks. There are more Americans now than ever before, that are suffering from allergies, and that it has a genetic component. Children are more likely to be affected, if either one of their parents is suffering from allergies (CDC). The most effective way is to avoid the allergens that cause the symptoms of allergies. Stay indoors if you can. Otherwise, do what helps best to get out of the allergies misery.

We are saddened by the passing of Ester Diaz, a very dear friend in our community. Along with her husband, Efren Diaz, and their three children (Charlene, Edgar, and Brian), they are all active supporters and contributors of several Filipino organization's fundraising and community projects in Sacramento. She will be greatly missed.

Congratulations to the Philippines Consulate for another successful "Consulate on Wheels" service to our community, hosted by the Bayanihan Club and other community organization in Sacramento. Till the next issue...

Always,  
Dinnah San Pedro



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## SAF dined soldiers on eve of Mamasapano ops

Manila, Philippines – In a new twist to the complicated story of Mamasapano, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin on Monday, March 23, confirmed that a police Special Action Force (SAF) officer invited to dinner military ground commanders on the eve of the bungled operation that killed 67 Filipinos including 44 elite cops.

The SAF officer brought the commanders out of Maguindanao Saturday night, January 24, to have dinner in Koronadal City (formerly Marbel) in South Cotabato province. It was 10 pm on the same night that the SAF Seaborne unit – the 84th SAF company – jumped off to penetrate the treacherous terrain of Mamasapano.

The SAF operation was kept a secret from the military until the troopers engaged hostile forces in the area the following day, January 25.

“Totoo ‘yung nilabas nila ‘yung battalion commander ng 45th [Infantry Battalion] at saka yung [601st brigade] brigade commander si Colonel Feliciano. Inimbitahan ng isang SAF na mag-dinner sa South Cotabato,” Gazmin told reporters on the sidelines of the celebration of the 118th anniversary of the Philippine Army.

(It is true they invited to socials the battalion commander of the 45th [Infantry Battalion] and the 601st Brigade Commander Colonel Melquiades Feliciano. A SAF officer invited them to dinner in South Cotabato.)



OUT OF THE LOOP: 6TH Infantry Division commander Major General Edmundo Pangilinan.



Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV

This was first revealed by Senator Antonio Trillanes IV, a former Navy officer, to radio station dzMM. Lamenting the incomplete report of the Senate, Trillanes revealed what was discussed during one of the executive sessions in the Senate.

Trillanes claimed the SAF officer supposedly got them drunk to make sure the military will not conduct operations the following day when the SAF launched its manhunt against bomb makers Malaysian Zulkifli bin hir or “Marwan” and Filipino Abdul Basit Usman.

The Army’s 601st brigade

and 45th infantry battalion are responsible for the security situation in the municipality of Mamasapano. They are under the command of 6th Infantry Division commanding general Major General Edmundo Pangilinan. (READ: Alan Cayetano blocks promotion of Mamasapano general)

In the wake of the tragedy, sacked SAF commander Director Getulio Napeñas blamed the military for refusing to provide artillery support. The police Board of Inquiry report said the military hesitated because of the peace process.

The military said they cannot fire the cannons if the information on the ground is not complete. (READ: ‘American tried to give orders in Mamasapano’)

Armed Forces chief General Gregorio Catapang Jr also confirmed the dinner but refused to elaborate. Catapang said it was normal for policemen and soldiers to drink together but only if they have no operations the following day. He stressed that the soldiers did not know about the SAF operation. – Rappler.com

## More Pinoys unhappy with gov’t effort vs poverty

By Helen Flores

MANILA, Philippines - More Filipinos are dissatisfied with the government’s efforts in promoting peace and the rule of law as well as curbing poverty and inflation, a latest Pulse Asia survey showed.

Three in 10 Filipinos (29 percent) disapproved of the government’s performance in terms of “increasing peace in the country.”

This was up by eight percentage points from 21 percent disapproval rating in November last year.

Forty percent of Filipinos, on the other hand, are still satisfied with the government’s peace efforts. The latest figure, however, is lower than the 45 percent approval rating recorded in November.

The Pulse Asia survey was conducted among 1,200 Filipino adults from March 1 to 7, over a month after the botched Mamasapano operation, which left 44 police commandos dead.

Disapproval in the government’s efforts in “enforcing the law on all, whether influential or ordinary people”



also increased from 21 percent in November to 29 percent this month.

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Satisfaction with the government’s law enforcement efforts remained steady at 41 percent, Pulse Asia said.

The survey also found more Filipinos who said they were dissatisfied with the government’s efforts to address poverty and control inflation.

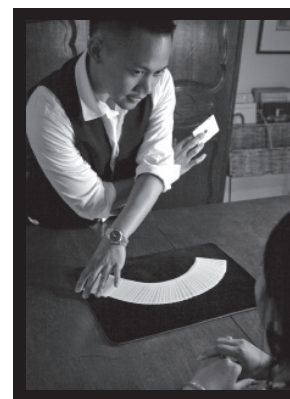
The Pulse Asia’s March 2015 Ulat ng Bayan Survey found 41 percent of respondents disapproved of how the administration is handling inflation, against 29 percent who said they were satisfied and 30 percent un-

decided.

Forty percent of Filipinos also disapproved of the government’s initiatives to address poverty. The remaining 28 percent expressed approval and 32 percent were ambivalent on the matter.

The Pulse Asia survey revealed that controlling inflation, increasing the pay of workers and fighting corruption remained the most urgent concerns among Filipinos at 46 percent, 44 percent and 40 percent, respectively.

“The Aquino administration failed to score a majority approval rating on any of the 12 issues on which it is performance-rated in March 2015,” Pulse Asia said.



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## Miriam endorses Manny Pangilinan for president

Senator Miriam Santiago says of the business tycoon: 'People like him should be in government, not those from highly publicized careers'

MANILA, Philippines — After heading utility, telecommunication, and media companies, should tycoon Manuel V. Pangilinan lead the Philippines as well?

Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago used her leadership talk at a Maynilad event to crack water jokes, and to endorse the chairman of the water services company for president in 2016.

Using her trademark punchlines, Santiago said that Filipinos must choose leaders based on merit and not just mass appeal. It was at this point that she mentioned Pangilinan, who was in the audience to hear her speak at the University of the Philippines.

"I want you to think about Mr Manny Pangilinan as president of the Philippines," she said on Wednesday, March 25.

Responding to Santiago's speech, Pangilinan told reporters that he was not sure if the senator was just joking.

"I thank her for that but I'm not sure if she was totally serious. I respect her opinion. Her opinion counts a lot but I'm not a politician," Pangilinan said.

Before Santiago's speech, the lawmaker met with Pangilinan for about 20 minutes at a holding room. Pangilinan said they did not discuss



**IDEAL CANDIDATE?** Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago endorses businessman Manuel V. Pangilinan for president at her speech in the University of the Philippines.

politics or business.

Santiago devoted the length of her speech to motivating Maynilad employees to practice "self-leadership" and excellence. She again mentioned Pangilinan as she wrapped up her talk.

"Sabi ni Mr Pangilinan sapat ang tubig sa summer. Ang shortage ay sa kuryente. Eh 'di ilagay natin siya doon (Mr Pangilinan said we have enough water for the summer. The shortage is with power. Then let us put him there)," she said.

Ironically, Pangilinan is also chairman of the power distributor Manila Electric Company (Meralco).

Last year, Pangilinan was also rumored to be the possible running mate of Vice President Binay. Yet the businessman said he was not

interested in public office.

"I'm not thinking of that. I'm more focused on the businesses here and in other parts of Asia," Pangilinan, was quoted as saying.

'Just thinking aloud'

In a press briefing after her speech, Santiago said her quip was an endorsement of Pangilinan.

"People like him should be in government, not those from highly publicized careers. People from mass media are blinded on the qualifications for public office."

She added: "I'm just thinking aloud to young people what type of candidate I have in mind. Maybe we can have a survey on the Internet."

Asked if the endorsement meant she was not interest-

ed in higher office, Santiago said the presidency is just one option but is not necessarily the end goal of all those rumored to be aspiring for the post.

She again discussed her ideal president. "My qualification is the president must be honest, have professional excellence, academic excellence."

Santiago reiterated her call to amend the constitutional requirement for those running for president, vice president, and senator. She wants the provision to include a college degree as a requirement. (READ: Miriam: Don't let idiots run for president)

"Biruin mo, ang pulis dapat college graduate. Ang presidente at senador, read and write lang? (Imagine, a policeman must be a college graduate. But a president or senator is only required to know how to read and write)."

She said that educating the masses is necessary to improve the quality of public officials.

"Kaya nagiging korap ang leader kasi walang moral character dahil sa kulang ang edukasyon. This starts with voter education (A leader becomes corrupt because he or she has no moral character because of lack of education)."

'A president must listen to

criticism'

In her leadership speech, Santiago made an obvious reference to President Benigno Aquino III.

"Yun ang problema sa mga presidente ng Pilipinas; nagiging obsolete. Unang taon, enjoy. Akala nila totoong matalino sila, ang yabang na. Kaya lahat ng presidente bagsak 'pag malapit na matapos ang termino nila kasi naniniwala sa chuchuha nila at nagagalit pag pinipintasan. 'Di dapat ganun!"

(That's the problem with presidents of the Philippines; they become obsolete. On their first year, they enjoy popularity. They think they are such intelligent leaders and become arrogant. That's why the popularity of all presidents goes down towards the end of their term because they believe their aides, and get mad when they are criticized. It shouldn't be that way!)

It was a reference to how Aquino handled major controversies in office, with critics saying he tends to listen to close allies and friends but is peeved with constructive criticism.

Santiago also criticized her rival, former Senator Panfilo Lacson, for supposedly positioning for president. She questioned a full-page ad on the Philippine Daily Inquirer where former gen-

erals endorsed Lacson and Senator Grace Poe as presidential and vice presidential bets in 2016.

Santiago said that the ad "comes from them."

"A full-page ad is too expensive to express casual opinion. It's not like they have experience working together. It makes you suspicious. These are just the original grumblings of the clash of tectonic plates that will occur in 2016. This is just the start of the campaign. As a veteran candidate, I can dismiss it offhand as part of the PR work of a team working for either camp."

Santiago urged voters to stop voting leaders because of their celebrity status or popularity.

"Ang mga presidentialing may papel sa sine na sila nagtatanggol sa mga api (Presidential candidates are always portrayed on movies as defending the abused). We have to distinguish between what is real, and what is not."

Santiago summed up her message by turning philosophical: "Leadership is the modern equivalent of Socrates' command: 'Know thyself.'"

"What is it you want for the Philippines in 2016? Why hold elections if there will be no change?" — Rappler.com

## Retired police, military officers bet on Lacson-Poe for 2016

By Juhn Etienne Villaruel

RETIRED OFFICERS of the now-defunct Philippine Constabulary and PC-Integrated National Police, along with several officers of the Philippines' police and military have released a full-page ad on several national broadsheets, urging former Senator Panfilo "Ping" M. Lacson and Senator Grace Poe-Llamanzares to run for higher office next year.

In their signed statement, officers -- including those from the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) -- declared that the country needs "national leadership that is competent and incorruptible and does not adhere to traditional politics." The group believes that Ms. Poe-Llamanzares and Mr. Lacson are the candidates who fit these qualifications.

"Looking at our current

crop of nation builders, we perceived that the strong-willed, disciplined, and decisive service reputation of former senator Panfilo Lacson, and the untarnished and compassionate brand of leadership of Senator Grace Poe, would be the best combination to serve the needs and greater interest of the Filipino people," the statement read.

Lt. Col. Harold M. Cabunoc, AFP Public Affairs Office Chief, found nothing wrong with the endorsement.

"As retired military personnel, they are entitled to their right to select their best bets during the next presidential elections and can freely announce this to the public," Mr. Cabunoc said. For his part, Mr. Lacson, himself a former PNP Chief, expressed gratitude to his former comrades, and said that he intends to make an "enlightened decision in



Senator Panfilo "Ping" M. Lacson and Senator Grace Poe

the coming months or even weeks." He also commended Ms. Poe-Llamanzares for "not being a traditional politician."

"Her sobriety and professionalism in showing a commanding presence of her veteran colleagues in the Senate is truly commendable," the former senator said of the neophyte lawmaker.

Ms. Poe-Llamanzares has consistently topped presidential surveys, being the closest rival to the number

one pick Vice-President Jejomar C. Binay for the presidency.

Edmund S. Tayao, political analyst teaching political science at the University of Santo Tomas, believes that in the current political atmosphere "where there's still no clear runaway good choice, his (Lacson) joining in the fray will definitely be welcomed.

"I don't think Senator Grace will consider the tandem though. I don't see, at

least at this time, any point of convergence between them," Mr. Tayao said.

For her part, Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago in a press conference in UP Diliman, dismissed the retired generals' endorsement as "part of the PR work of a team working for either camp."

**PANGILINAN FOR PRESIDENT**

Earlier in her speech delivered at the Maynilad Leadership Forum held at UP-Toyota GT Center, UP Diliman, the lady senator surprised her audience by casually endorsing businessman Manny V. Pangilinan, who was in attendance, as a potential presidential candidate this 2016. Ms. Santiago has declared intentions to run for presidency in earlier interviews.

She later confirmed the endorsement during the press conference afterwards, and took a jab at his celebrity

colleagues for lacking qualifications to run the country.

"Yes it is (an endorsement). People who are like him should be in the position of leadership. It should not be people from highly publicized careers, because the careers where they are, the leading celebrities, might blind them to think that their qualifications are inspirations for the job. I'm particularly talking about people from mass media, films, and television," Ms. Defensor-Santiago said.

Mr. Tayao, on his part, believes that the endorsement of Senator Santiago is a strategy to get MVP to work with her.

"It's not the first time that MVP was mentioned to be a good candidate. There had been efforts to get him to the political fray before. Perhaps she thought of MVP could work for her (Ms. Santiago). In what capacity, I have no idea," the analyst said.

# The Philippines is in great shape. It's in the numbers.

By Joe America

We often complain about the way things are in the Philippines. We grouse about the politics, the lousy tabloid media, the poverty, the poor storm preparation, the trash and over-fishing, the corruption, the murderous rebels, the crazy bishops, the congestion, the electricity, the slow bandwidth.

Today looks a lot like yesterday, and we don't figure there will be much change for tomorrow.

But here are two numbers we ought to reflect on:

GDP growth at 6.5% a year, plus or minus.  
Population growth at 1.7% a year and declining.

What are the main factors fueling the GDP growth?

Low cost of labor and goods for international delivery  
Success industries: OFW placements, tourism, BPO, real estate, retail goods  
People making money are investing money; more foreigners are also investing here  
A growing base of middle class spenders

Why is there so much congestion and so much demand for internet bandwidth?  
Because of the 6.5% growth.

Did you know that an economy growing at 6.5% a year DOUBLES IN SIZE in 11 years? Those who say the economy is the same today as last year are nuts. What they are saying is "I did not get a raise", or "I still can't afford to buy a car", or "my condition is

just the same".

Well, hey, let's interview the 6.5% beneficiaries, the mall workers and construction workers and transportation workers and banks and fast food outlets and manicurists. The people who have jobs today that they didn't have last year, or who are making more money this year by riding the increasing demand. Because the numbers are real, factual.

Folks, congestion is bad because today IS different than yesterday, when it accumulates over the years.

In 2026, the Philippine economy will be generating twice its current GDP.

Can you imagine?  
TWICE AS MUCH PRODUCTION

If we can get and hold 6.5% annual growth.

Your city will have a lot more jobs. More stores grabbing their part of the action. More manicurists and bank branches. More cars. Higher salaries. Everyone moves up a notch. Jollibee coming to provincial towns. More malls. New industries. More tourists. More fun in the Philippines.

Yet if population increases at an average annual rate of 1.5% per year over that same 11 year period, the population will grow only 18%.

Friends, those numbers are the facts. Filipinos across the nation will be doing VERY MUCH better in 2026. Twice the GDP. Population up 18%.

If we can get and hold 6.5% annual growth.

That is why China today has such a huge base of rich and middle class citizens. China has been generating steady growth for years, firing on eight cylinders consistently year after year.

I would suggest that all those critics trying to destabilize the Philippines and remove the Presi-



SteelAsia mill in Davao City

dent who has held to this pace of growth just SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP. They are absolutely the worst thing the Philippines needs. So is an emotional, political Senate that obsesses over a battlefield loss and tries to put that load on the President, distracting him for weeks from doing good works.

And the Legislature has gone frozen. Stopped in place. Stopped building. Except for some stalwarts like Bam Aquino who are determined to do good works. These frozen legislators should figure out how they can be a part of the SOLUTION instead of a part of the problem. How to heal, to learn and move on. How to get on with work, with producing.

You, too, if you like to grouse and complain. Maybe you should figure out how to STOP THROWING WRENCHES into the Philippine machinery and pat someone on the back. Encourage the nation, invest in it, support it. Sacrifice a tabloidian thrill for the joy of achievement.

Like, stop being the brake. Put your foot to the gas. The solution is very basic, so very, very simple. Even leftists ought to be able to understand it:

**Stability.**  
**Steady growth.**  
**The path to Philippine well-being.**

The biggest challenge for the Philippines is not "how can we grow", but how can we stop interfering with growth? How can we hold the ship steady as she goes and not get distracted? How can we prevent this incident or that from stopping the nation's momentum?

It is wise to think about infrastructure and how to do even MORE than the aggressive work now being done. I wrote a while back about building new master-planned metropolises in Cebu and Mindanao ("Manila is to New York as Davao is to Los Angeles").

Take is seriously, eh?

A cork in the growth, as congestion is proving to be in Manila, hinders the well being of the nation.

If it takes 11 years to build a new expressway, by the time it is done it must carry twice the volume as before.

Here are a few other things that need to be done:  
Thank every OFW profusely. Give him or her a huge welcome and thanks when he or she visits or returns to the Philippines.

Build a real manufacturing base rather than just doing piecework.

Grow tourism, BPO, and freeport services.

Make defense a domestic indus-

try (military and storm response) and stop buying so much gear from abroad.

Buy products "made in the Philippines". You can't do that??? (Thank you Senator Aquino, for expressing so clearly what "buy Philippines" means to small businessmen and businesswomen.)

Continue to get rid of red tape and nonsense so that investors find it a pleasure to do business in the Philippines.

Convert agriculture from farming to agribusiness. Stop handicapping the industry by running it as a social program. Let producers loose. Large farms. Mechanized farms. There will be jobs off the fields. Plenty of them.

It's in the numbers.

Make one simple number our national goal. Get every Filipino to help, for the pride of it.

6.5% annual GDP growth, or more

With reasonable education, we can expect another achievement to come naturally. It does not have to be a goal:

1.5% annual birth rate, or less

And for sure, tell the senators who are out to undermine the leadership of the nation, and the leftists who believe ideology can grow jobs, and the crooks who take good money that could be used to invest in the Philippines and put it into Swiss bank accounts or homes in America, to get out of the way.

And all the critics and blame artists? Those demanding resignation a year from elections? The impeachment freaks who think disruption is the way to go? All the self-serving malcontents?

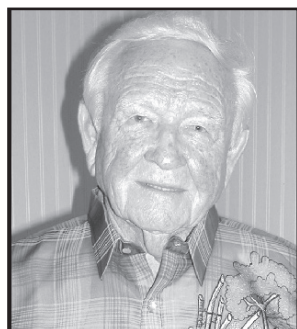
Sit down and shut up. Until you can find a way to help. Stop bothering the rest of us. We have work to do.

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## US Senators want comprehensive strategy to stop China's destabilizing behavior

Senators from United States are calling on its State and Defense departments with regards to "the alarming scope and pace of land reclamation now being conducted by People's Republic of China in the Spratly island chain of the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea)." Senators John McCain, Bob Corker, Democrats Jack Reed and Bob Menendez said in a joint letter, dated March 19, to Defense Secretary Ash Carter and State Secretary John Kerry "without a comprehensive strategy for addressing" China's assertion in sovereignty claims "long-standing interests of the United States, as well as our allies and partners, stand at considerable risk."

The senators said "reclamation by any state to enhance their sovereignty rights in the South China Sea complicates these disputes and runs contrary to calls from the United States and As-



US Navy 7th Fleet

sociating of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for parties to exercise self-restrain." They noted while other states built on existing land masses, China made "qualitative change that appears designed to alter the status quo in the South China Sea."

They added that US should maintain "a military balance in the region that secures our long-standing political and economic interests, upholds our treaty commitments, and safeguards freedom of navigation and commerce."

Initial actions the senators want State and Defense departments to consider are to

know the benefits of releasing intelligence more regularly on China's destabilizing behavior, what forms of security cooperation can be discontinued if reclamation continues, what incentive can be provided if China changes behavior. They also want to know how to help partners in the region in terms of strengthening own capacity.

Senators McCain and Corker are chairmen of Senate Armed Services Committee and Foreign Relations Committee, respectively. They added that US Congress stands ready to support renewed effort to address the rising challenge.

## Bonta Presents Woman of the Year Award to Rose Padilla Johnson

By Rob Bonta

In celebration of Women's History Month, I am honored to name Rose Padilla Johnson as the 2015 Woman of the Year in the 18th Assembly District. Each year, the Legislature passes a resolution declaring March "Women's History Month" and recognizes outstanding women in our communities.

"Rose began her career working with low-income, immigrant families in Alameda County, eventually establishing the Davis Street Family Resource Center---one of the first comprehensive family resource centers in California," said Assemblymember Bonta.

In addition to her work at Davis Street, Rose is President of the California Al-



Woman of the Year 2015

ternative Payment Program Association, a statewide childcare advocacy organization, Administrator of the RotaCare Free Medical Clinic, and a member of the California Child Development Administrators Association. She has also served as Chair of the Alameda County Child Care Planning Council and President of the San Leandro Chamber of Commerce where she engaged the business community and helped employers grow their business to purposefully contribute to the community and support a thriving and diverse San Leandro. She was also President of the San Leandro Rotary Club.

Rose is the recipient of the Oakland Magazine Hometown Hero Award, San Francisco Business Times, Women of Distinction Award, Rotary International Service Above Self Award, and the United Nations Global Citizen Award for her work to alleviate poverty, inequalities, and disparities in low-income communities around the world. Rose has also been recognized in the Congressional Record for her life's work to help the underserved.

"I am honored to recognize Rose Padilla Johnson as the 18th Assembly District's Woman of the Year. She has devoted her career to protecting and uplifting the underserved in Alameda County, and her longstanding commitment to the District will benefit our community for many years to come," Bonta concluded.

## Protecting the California Voting Rights Act

(Sacramento) – On the day before the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act Assemblymember Rob Bonta (D-Oakland) took part in a news conference on the State Capitol steps to discuss legislation aimed at increasing voter turnout, protecting California's voters and its election process. Assemblymember Bonta co-authored Assembly Bill 182. It expands the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 to allow challenges to district-based elections. "The California Voting Rights Act of 2001 was intended to protect the right of every Californian to elect a candidate of his or her choice," said Assemblymember Bonta. "Oftentimes, when cities implement district-based elections, those elections dilute the voting strength of minorities and frustrate the purpose of the Act.



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## Synergy



By Gabriel Ortigoza

## Bell's Palsy in Children

One morning my 11-year old son reported to me saying his face is "weird." I further asked him to explain what he meant by "weird". He gave me an exaggerated smile by opening big his lips with his teeth sticking together. The difference was obvious. My son manifested asymmetric facial contour with his right face naturally moving up and down when he smiles while his left face manifested minimal voluntary muscle movements.

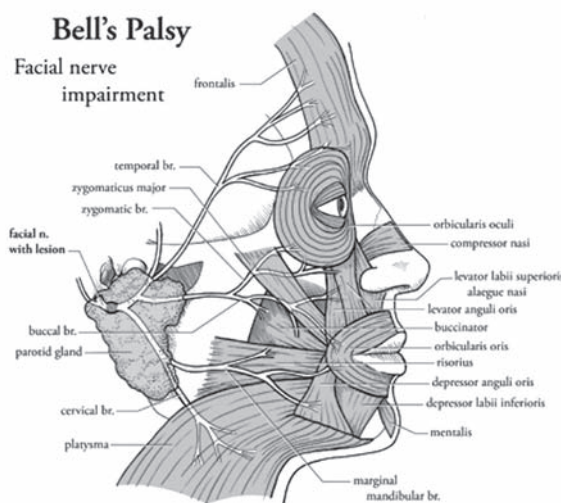
I seems to me my son got a stroke. I then performed quick stroke assessment using acronym FAST wherein F stands for Face, A stands for Arms, S stands for Speech, and T stands for Time. Face – I asked my son to smile and I noticed there was facial asymmetry but it doesn't look like a one-sided facial droop. Arms – I asked my son to raise both of his arms 90 degrees to see if one arm drifts downward within 10 seconds but there was none. Speech – I asked my son to repeat the phrase I was instructing him to do (i.e., Old Carabao eat young grass) to see if there is slurring. There was none. Time – I asked my son when did he

observed the "weird" symptom. "Maybe over the night when I was sleeping." My son worriedly replied. As the saying goes "Time is gold" so is the time to call 911 for any medical emergencies when there are deficiencies noted based on this layman's FAST stroke assessment like facial droop, arm drift, and speech slurring.

In that quick assessment my son has facial asymmetry but didn't look having a facial droop. He didn't manifest arm drift nor slurred speech. But still I was concerned for my son's health situation. So I did further assessment.

When I asked my son to raise both of his eyebrows I found out the eyebrows were uneven. The one on the right moved up and down naturally while the one on the left didn't move that much. At that time I was suspecting of Bell's palsy.

My wife and I decided to bring our son to the Emergency Department. A medical doctor did a neurological examination and based on MD's evaluation my son has Bell's palsy. The ED doctor left us in the room for a few moment. While the MD



was out, my wife and I quickly pulled out our respective iPhones and googled Bell's palsy in children. Here is what we found on the web:

"Bell's palsy is a self-limiting idiopathic rapid onset facial palsy that is non-life-threatening and has a generally favorable prognosis. Facial paralysis can be caused by numerous conditions, all of which should be excluded before a diagnosis of Bell's palsy is

reached. The etiopathogenesis of Bell's palsy is uncertain; acute immune demyelination triggered by a viral infection may be responsible. Controversy exists regarding treatment options (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14992461>).

When the doctor came back she discussed with us the diagnosis, therapeutic options and the plan of care. The MD ordered steroids but not acyclovir saying there is no need for it as there was the absence of rashes and it is not good for a child to take antiviral. My wife asked about getting CT scan to rule out stroke. The MD explained that it is not good for a young patient to take in contrast if it is not necessary.

We agreed with the plan of care and the MD discharged my son from the ED. We then headed to take the prescription at the hospital's 24-hour pharmacy. Lucky we were for there was no long queue, as a daily scenario, in the pharmacy.

As a concerned parent I want my son to get well as fast as possible. In this connection, I spent time finding out treatment solutions to hasten the recovery of my son. I did some research on Bell's palsy and asked friends in facebook about treatments aside

from pharmacological products. I got positive responses from my FB. One friend from Baguio City, Philippines, her name is Jennifer Fernandez, commented on my FB post saying chewing a gum is helpful for the facial muscle. I said to myself, yes, there is truth to that. Her suggestion is reasonable. I did give my son gums to chew and he loved it.

The following day I called my mother in my hometown of Mlang, North Cotabato (Southern part of the Philippines), about 10,000 miles away, to ask what she did when she was diagnosed to have Bell's palsy sometime in the 80s. My 80-year old mother told me she applied hot compress over her affected face. I understand there is swelling, caused by viral infection, in the nerves of a patient with Bell's palsy. Application of hot compress is helpful in treating swollen body parts, and in this case the nerves, because it increases blood circulation. That was another priceless advice from my mother. Mother knows best.

Aside from prayers and doctor's prescription, it is my obligation to carry out, which I did without hesitation, those pragmatic non-pharmacological treatments suggested by concerned people. Lo and behold, my son's symptom was gone within two weeks. The literature says it will take six weeks to 12 months to treat Bell's palsy. Not for my son.

Faith without work is useless ([gabbyortig@yahoo.com](mailto:gabbyortig@yahoo.com)).

## The price of peace and the cost of war

From page 3

of the incident and the intensified scrutiny of the Bangsamoro Basic Law by members of Congress and the Senate have led to an impasse in the peace process. In this situation of heightened tension, the simple equation of peace and development will not suffice. A third element, namely that of security, needs to be added.

It is useful, in this regard, to call to mind the World Development Report issued by the World Bank in 2011. Comprehensively analyzing the intertwined relation between conflict, security, and development, the report addresses the challenges posed to developing countries by protracted conflict. It cautioned that once organized violence takes root in a society, restoring stability will

become a generational challenge. The way to break the cycle of violence, according to the report, is to establish legitimate and effective institutions that promote stability and prosperity through the provision of human security, justice and economic opportunities.

This dimension, it appears, has been sidelined in the national debate since Mamasapano. A renewed focus on military operations will not bring peace and development to Mindanao. The Philippine government's "Internal Peace and Security Plan Bayanihan" recognizes this. What critics of the peace process fail to see is that the institutional transformation and confidence building called for in the World Development Report is in a position to offer to the Bang-

samoro and to the nation at large. The BBL not only opens the way for a new beginning after a past marred by conflict and forgone opportunities. It also offers an early delivery of the tangible results necessary to move forward.

Tomorrow will see the first anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. The CAB is both a vision and a road map to peace in Mindanao. This is what the population in the conflict-affected areas is calling for. They and the untold number of civilian victims of the war have paid the price for peace.

Every victim deserves a name. Her full name was Sarah Pananggulon. She died on 25 January 2015 in her home community of Mamasapano.



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PerryScope

By Perry Diaz

For the past 40 years several attempts have been made to create an autonomous government for the Filipino Muslims in Mindanao. In 1975, representatives of the Philippine government and the rebel Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) met in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to discuss MNLF's demand for autonomy. Consequently, the "Tripoli Agreement," which called for the establishment of an autonomous region in the Southern Philippines, was signed.

But in an attempt to derail the negotiations, the Marcos administration insisted that the local population of the region – which included the Christian majority – should make the decision through a plebiscite. The plebiscite, held in April 1977, rejected the Tripoli Agreement; thus, denying the MNLF's aspirations for a "homeland" of their own. The MNLF refused to accept the results of the plebiscite and the civil war continued.

The failed attempt to establish a Muslim autonomous region led to a split in the MNLF. A splinter group, called the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), broke away from the MNLF. The MILF's mission was to create an independent and sovereign nation carved out of Mindanao, which they claimed to be their "ancestral domain."

In 1979, Marcos created the "Regional Autonomous Government in the Western and Central Mindanao" through the rubber-stamp Batasan Pambansa (Na-



Imelda Marcos signs the "Tripoli Agreement" on behalf of the Philippine government in 1975 in Tripoli, Libya.

tional Assembly). But that, too, failed to take off.

In 1989, during the presidency of Cory Aquino, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was created through Republic Act No. 6734 in pursuance with the new 1987 Constitution, which mandated to provide for an autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao. A plebiscite was held and only four provinces – Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi – voted to join ARMM.

FVR's peace initiative



Nur Misuari and FVR celebrate signing of "Final Peace Agreement."

In 1996, President Fidel V. Ramos (FVR) and MNLF leader Nur Misuari – who was elected ARMM's third governor that year – signed a peace agreement, known as the "Final Peace Agreement." It ended the 24-year secessionist war. The 57-member Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) recognized the Misuari-led MNLF faction; however, the MILF opposed the peace agreement and continued the fight for an independent ancestral domain.

But instead of fighting the MILF, FVR pursued an all-out peace, allowing the MILF to hold territories. He even constructed a highway that ran deep into MILF territory including Camp Abubakar, the MILF's headquarters. But the highway also improved the government forces an easy access to the MILF fronts.

Erap's folly

In March 2000, President Joseph "Erap" Estrada, FVR's successor, declared an all-out war against the MILF. He attacked and captured Camp Abubakar. However, he failed to stop the insurgency. The MILF merely changed its strategy and went into guerilla warfare.

On January 20, 2001, Erap was deposed in a sham "people power" revolution staged by supporters of Erap's vice president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Upon assuming the presidency, Gloria pursued a different tact.

On March 24, 2001, the Arroyo administration and the MILF agreed to resume peace negotiations mediated by Malaysia, Indonesia, and Libya. On June 22, the two parties' representatives signed the "Tripoli Peace Agreement." On August 7, they signed a formal ceasefire agreement, which ended the war that Erap waged at a high cost: Nearly one million displaced and 70,000 killed.

Gloria's gambit  
In my article, "What Price Peace" (September 9, 2008), I wrote: "In her fervent desire to have peace in Mindanao, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo went to the extent of secretly forging an agreement that would virtually cede a huge portion of Philippine territory to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The treaty would have expanded the present Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) into a virtual state within a state replete with all the functions and authority of a sovereign and independent state.

"But, in a twist of fate, the day before the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) last August 5, 2008 in Malaysia, the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order in response to several petitions claiming that the treaty was unconstitutional. What followed next was a tragedy of error that cost lives and property in Mindanao.

"In the aftermath of the public uproar over the attempt to partition the country, Gloria decided to scrap the controversial MOA-AD. She also dissolved the government's peace panel negotiating

with the MILF. Basically, it's back to square one for the peace process. And, worst, Mindanao is now in a virtual state of war or, to be more precise, a civil war between Muslim Filipinos and Christian Filipinos. In reaction, Mohaqher Iqbal, the MILF's chief peace negotiator declared, "The peace process is now in purgatory."

P-Noy's secret deal

On August 4, 2011, Gloria's successor, President Benigno "P-Noy" Aquino III, left the country unannounced on a "secret" mission to Tokyo, Japan where he met with MILF Chairman Murad Ebrahim. Their agenda: Ways to push the peace process forward.

On October 15, 2012, representatives of the government and MILF signed a preliminary peace accord, the "Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro," which called for the creation of an autonomous political entity named "Bangsamoro." It would replace ARMM.

On March 27, 2014, the Philippine government and the MILF signed the historic "Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro" (CAB). On September 10, 2014, P-Noy submitted to Congress the draft of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), which would provide for the basic structure of the Bangsamoro autonomous government. It would supersede the existing Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Finally, peace was just around the corner. And then all hell broke loose!

On the wee hours of January 25, 2015, 44 members of the elite Special Action Force (SAF) were massacred in Mamasapano in Maguindanao by joint forces of the MILF and the splinter group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). Many believe that P-Noy should be held responsible for the massacre for ordering the nearby military camp to stand down when the beleaguered SAF commandos radioed for reinforcement, which begs the question: Why did P-Noy order the military to stand down and leave the SAF commandos at the mercy of the Muslim rebels? One reason that has gained traction was that P-Noy didn't want to jeopardize the establishment



President Erap Estrada inspects government forces at Camp Abubakar.



President Cory Aquino meets MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari in Jolo in 1986 to talk peace.

of the autonomous Bangsamoro political entity and the passage of BBL, which is pending in Congress. In an effort to fast-track the creation of Bangsamoro to replace ARMM, P-Noy had been saying that ARMM was a "failed experiment."

Recipe for failure

ARMM-expanded  
Not too long ago, the Philippine Constitutional Association (Philconsa) released a 75-page position paper claiming that the BBL bill was flawed and cluttered with unconstitutional experimental features. But assuming that Congress will approve BBL and P-Noy signs it into law, it is expected that it will be challenged in the Supreme Court.

Surmise it to say, ARMM was a political solution to an economic problem. The region is one of the most – if not the most – impoverished regions in the Philippines. Long neglected by "Imperial Manila," its per capita is 75% lower



P-Noy secretly meets Murad Ebrahim in Tokyo, Japan.

than the national average. It is the lowest among the country's 17 regions, and lower than the second lowest region by one-half. Its poverty incidence is almost twice the national average. It is the country's poorest region, where the average annual income is less than one-third of Manila's level.

The records show that since the establishment of ARMM in 1989, the Philippine government failed to infuse development funds into the region; thus, perpetuating – if not worsening — its dire economic conditions.

If P-Noy were serious about achieving peace in Mindanao, he should – nay, must – address the economic well-being of the region. He cannot give autonomy to the Filipino Muslims and leave them to fend for themselves.

At the end of the day, economic prosperity is the surest guarantee that would preserve peace, and no peace plan in Mindanao could succeed without uplifting the lives of the Muslims. Simply put, economic freedom is the only solution to a political problem.

It's time to break the chronology of failures.

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## ... But was Mindanao ever part of Philippine territory?

By Oscar P. Lagman Jr.

Four hundred and ninety-four years ago today, a nation was born. It was on March 17, 1521, when Ferdinand Magellan and his crew landed on the shores of Samar, the first island in the group of islands that would eventually be called the Philippines. Antonio Pigafetta recorded the event in his journal as having taken place on March 16. That was because the International Date Line, which Magellan's expedition had crossed, did not exist at the time.

The history textbooks we used during my high school days (my high school batch celebrated the 60th anniversary of its graduation last Saturday) refer to the event as the Discovery of the Philippines, as if the islands had not been visited by merchants from China and Japan and missionaries from Arabia long before Magellan set foot on Samar soil. As Renato Constantino wrote in his book *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*, historians view the past through the prism of their own prejudices.

Because Magellan's discovery of the island of Samar discouraged more Spanish expeditions to the Southeastern rim of the Pacific, resulting in the establishments in Cebu, Bohol and Panay of permanent settlements under Spanish rule, it is recorded in history books written three generations ago as the beginning of the Filipino nation. In 1543 the explorer Ruy Lopez de Villalobos named the group of islands Filipinas, originally Felipinas, in honor of Crown Prince Felipe of Spain.

Emboldened by the success of their conquests, the Spanish adventurers sailed on to the northern islands, reaching the large rich kingdoms of Manila and Tondo on the Western side of Luzon. Instead of resisting the landing of the invaders, the two kings wel-



The Moros of Mindanao



Hope for Peace

comed them. The name Filipinas was eventually applied to all the islands and communities that had come under Spanish rule. It is therefore more apt to refer to Magellan's discovery as the birth of a nation, as the formerly independent island-sultanates in the Southeastern part of the Pacific were unified under one rule.

While very little resistance was offered by the natives in most of the central and northern islands of the archipelago, the Spanish adventurers met fierce opposition in Mindanao and Sulu. In retaliation for the Spanish assaults on their homeland, the natives of those islands, predominantly Muslim, who the Spaniards called Moros

as Muslims in Spain were then called, pillaged Spanish communities in Luzon and the Visayas. The Spanish colonial government waged military campaigns against the Moros, but they failed to score decisive victories.

Military operations were launched in Jolo and Mindanao from time to time. These forays would succeed in placing Moro land under the Spaniards' control, but the Moros would eventually drive out the invaders. There were attempts by the Spaniards to invade Cotabato and Lanao, but the natives defended their land valiantly. Technically, Mindanao and Sulu never became part of Filipinas and calling their inhabitants Filipinos would be inappropriate.

What history books call the Moro Wars ended toward the end of the 19th century. The Spanish government acquired steamships, ending the superior-

ity of the Moro vinta in Philippine seas. At about the same time, the Filipinos in various parts of Luzon rebelled against the abuses of the Spanish government and the Spanish clergy, drawing the Spanish armed forces away from Mindanao and Jolo.

The war between Spain and the United States in 1898 ultimately ended Spanish rule in Filipinas. In the Treaty of Peace between the two nations, Spain ceded to the United States the archipelago known as the Philippine Islands, and comprehending the islands lying within defined lines. Mindanao and Sulu were considered within the defined lines.

But Spain never took permanent possession of Mindanao and Sulu for it to cede them to any sovereign state. The Philippine Constitution of 1934 defined the Philippine territory as all the territory ceded to the United States by the Treaty of Paris concluded by the two sovereign states. That is understandable as that constitution was drafted, promulgated, and ratified when the Philippines was a colony of the United States. The 1987 Constitution says that the national territory comprises the Philippine archipelago, with all the islands and waters embraced therein, and all other territories over which the Philippines has sovereignty or jurisdiction. But unlike the Treaty of Peace between Spain and the United States, the Philippine Constitution did not define the lines within which the Philippine archipelago lies.

Should we assume that the Philippine archipelago referred to in the Philippine Constitution is the one defined in the Treaty of Peace between Spain and the United States? The Philippines gained its independence again in 1946. It should not be bound by the declarations of the United States, espe-

cially those made more than 100 years ago and with which the Filipino people had no involvement.

A number of retired justices of the Supreme Court, senators, and eminent constitutional lawyers and experts assert that the Bangsamoro Basic Law is unconstitutional because it virtually proclaims the Bangsamoro a sub-state. But did the framers of the 1987 Constitution have the right to include the Bangsamoro territory as part of the national territory of the Republic of the Philippines when history books do not indicate that Spain took permanent possession of Moro land? Did they think and act in the name of the United States? Are the members of Congress who are invoking the Constitution's article on the Philippine territory acting as emissaries of the US government?

As Al Haj Murad, chairman of the MILF, said during the signing of the Framework of Agreement on the Bangsamoro in Malacañang in 2012, almost five centuries of foreign invasions and dominations have seen the loss of the Moro sultanates, their captivity eradicating their Bangsamoro identity and reducing their ancestral homeland into small parcels of territories called provinces, leading to the marginalization of their people within a larger Philippine society that barely took cognizance of their forebears and struggles for freedom before the Philippine nation declared its independence in 1898 and again in 1946.

Today, the Moro people are giving up their call for independence and have agreed to be part of the Philippines and be known as Filipinos in exchange for autonomy and development support. That is a large concession being given by people who have suffered injustice from Imperial Manila for centuries.

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# UPAASV Takes Voluntary works for Filipino Fiesta Celebration

By Faina E. Abaya

The great Filipino tradition of holding fiestas have been with us since our colonial years under Spanish regime which they actually introduced with profound religious fervor to honor their patron saints.

Despite the tentacles of tyranny and oppression of the colonial power, the fiestas were celebrated in every town purely for religious connotations which had been inculcated into the minds of the Filipinos. Today, fiestas are no longer celebrated solely for its religious purposes but have been transformed into more of commercial endeavors to benefit the towns and cities where the fiestas are being held. The Fiesta has variety of festivities in the fields of entertainment, games, contests and shows in different forms are also added to attract and enhance more participants.

When the Americans took over the Philippines from the Spaniards, fiestas were already embedded into the Filipino way of life and, thus, it becomes part of our great tradition. America being a benevolent colonial power introduced another system of government, the democratic way of life and such political ideology can only be fully practiced with the education of the population, thereby, making democracy and education to become the primary contributions of the American colonial power.

The Filipinos who are now educated and can compete with their skills and talents against the world can offer but far away from their country of birth having crossed vast continents, sailed sea lanes and oceans. They are now nostalgically yearning to have their own fiestas in the place where they have found peace and comfort to have established their families.



The University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity under the leadership of Atty. Beatrice Alo



The Philippine National Anthem performed by the UPAASV choral group.

The Filipino American community of Sacramento with the active participation of various organizations has annually held the Filipino Fiesta now led by Dick Mason, the newly installed President of the Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento. The Theme in this year's celebration is "Remembering the Delano Grape Strike of 1965", a tribute to Filipino Labor movement that changed entirely the treatment of the farm labor workers.

The University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity one of the most active community organizations in Sacramento under the leadership of Atty.

Beatrice Alo has volunteered to work hand in hand with other volunteers to make the Filipino Fiesta of 2015 a successful venture. The Association has volunteered to drum up the interest and enthusiasm of the community to participate and join the festivities scheduled on June 7, 2015 at the Jose Rizal Community Center.

Joe Gonzales, the Vice President of the Filipino Fiesta and member of the UPAASV gave to Gabby Ortigoza, Philippine Fiesta columnist the information on how to contact the ABS-CBN and other media outlet for possible spot coverage. Likewise, the UPAASV will try to contact local television, radio broadcast and print media for possible news items to promote the Fiesta.



Photos by Dave San Pedro

This writer in collaboration with other writers are endeavored to feature the event in our very own Filipino American newspaper, the Philippine Fiesta, courtesy of Dave and Dinnah San Pedro.

Lilia Rivera, one of the most active community leaders and other volunteers have joined their efforts to work for possible corporate sponsors such as Kaiser, Wells Fargo, East Lawn, Jackson Rancheria, Thunder Valley and the Koreana International Market. The UPAASV will also make feature articles about the Car Shows and entertainment possibly in print and social media.

Persons to be contacted in case you want to share any of your skills or talent are the following; Dick Mason for Interactive/Activities, (916) 868-7801; Joe Gonzales for Vendors and Logistics (916) 396-7863; Dr. Tony Solomon for Food-Vendors, (916) 682-3382; Lilia Rivera for Corporate Sponsors, (916) 524-8008; Roselle Lao for entertainer. (916) 204-0169; and Renee Abelada for Singing Contest, (916) 719-8100.



## Mai's Facial

### Eyebrow & Lips Tattoo

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After



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# Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA Hosts Another Very Successful **Consulate on Wheels Outreach Program – Sacramento**

By Carle and Sarah Enloe

**O**n March 14, 2015, the Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA, along with the following sponsoring organizations: American Legion Magellan Post 604; Maharlika Lions Club; Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity; Philippine Fiesta News; Fil-Am Chambers of Commerce of Sacramento; and the United Naguillan, La Union Circle of America, Inc.; hosted the San Francisco Philippine Consulate on Wheels' 6th Community Outreach to Sacramento, CA at the Filipino Americans Veterans' Hall, 8831 Gerber Road, Sacramento, CA. The San Francisco Philippine Consulate on Wheels Staff was led by Deputy Consul General Jaime Ramon T. Ascalon. As in years past, once again Dr. Tony and Remy Solomon of Bayanihan were the local contacts for coordinating the visit.

The paperwork to be processed were Filipino Passport applications and renewals; Dual Citizenships; and Legal Documents (Special Powers of Attorneys, Affidavits, etc, Civil Registry, and Reports of Births and Marriages), etc. We are proud to share that there were 103 passports; 53 Dual Citizenships; and 30 legal documents were processed.

Prior to the day of the event, there were several planning, strategy, and training meetings to ensure that all the volunteers were adequately oriented to their duties. Once again, the Maharlika Lions Club provided a contingent of volunteers to assist the Bayanihan members and other volunteers. It should be noted that the volunteers from the various organizations are members of several organizations. This year's event was once again chaired by Leila Pereira and Memie Weitzenberg, of the Bayanihan. The Bayanihan volunteers were Dr. Tony and Remy Solomon; Espie Espena; Shane Aguirre; Maria Lani San Luis; Lito Pabon; Frances Torres; Lee Ramirez; Bobby Ching; and Edna Villanueva. The volunteers from the Philippine Fiesta News were Dave San



Photos by Dale Esperante

Pedro, owners and managing editors and also members of Maharlika Lions Club; Jojo San Pedro, their son and the official photographer for the event. The volunteers from the Maharlika Lions Club were Lions Carle and Sarah Enloe, current President; PDG Bert and PinS Julie Melliza; Les and PinS Fil Duldulao; Aida Azurin, also FCSV President; Placida Butcher; Frances Torres; and Dave and Norma Jese, and Lety Mate. The American Legion Magellan Post 604 contingent was led by Commander Tom

Amaba and Officers Dale Esperante; Dick Weitzenberg; Pete de la Cruz; Bill Bostock and several other officers that we were unable to get their names. The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 604 Ladies and many other volunteers too numerous to list them all. Suffice to say, that we would like to thank all the volunteers for all their hard work and dedication to the event. This event was definitely a team effort by all concerned.

We would like to acknowledge and thank

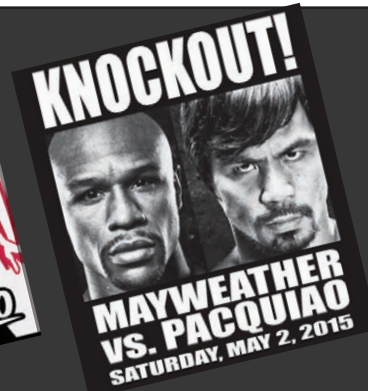
Deputy Consul General Jaime and the Consulate Staff for all their hard work and effort. A huge thank you to the American Legion Post 604 for providing the venue for the event. Also, we would like to thank and congratulate the Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA and all the sponsoring organizations for sponsoring such a successful and worthwhile event benefiting the entire Sacramento Filipino Community.

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# Consulate on Wheels – 14 March 2015 Veterans' Community Service

By Dale Esperante

A group of military veterans assembled early on 14 Mar 2015 ready to volunteer for the annual Consulate on Wheels (COW). They arrived first to unlock the gates of the American Legion Magellan Post 604 on Gerber Road. After they entered the property, the veterans formed a beeline to the storage area to pick up all the available tables and chairs.

Various work teams distributed, delivered, and set up the tables and chairs according to the decided plan. Outside, a team pitched a tent and set up more tables and chairs. It almost seemed like another military operation back in their active duty days. Pat Engkabo, the eldest veteran in the group who served during the Korean War, was among the first arrivals. Veterans from the Vietnam War era represented most of the early volunteers. A larger contingent of Post volunteers showed up this year because of the strong leadership of current Post Commander Tom Amaba.

Since the latter months of 2014 during the monthly Executive and General-Membership meetings, Commander Tom urged the veterans to participate in COW. Commander Tom appointed the Post Adjutant, yours truly, and Post Judge Advocate Dick Weitzenberg to represent Post 604 at the monthly organizing committee meetings held at Doc Tony and Remy Solomon's place of business.

During the event, Commander Tom assigned me and Fred Amper to be the coordinators for the Post volunteers. Bill Bostock, Rey Ado, and Gus Deguzman volunteered to be the ushers posted by the doors to check in the customers. The ushers guided those with appointments to the reception desk inside. Walk-In customers, without appointments, were assisted by the ushers to the tables outside to complete the required forms. Bobby Ching (Bayanihan), an annual volunteer for the usher position, worked with the new Post volunteers. Printing service was manned by Joe Gonzales in the morning then Gus Deguzman



Photos by Dale Esperante

took over in the afternoon. Korean War veteran, Pat Engkabo, assisted Leila Pereira of Bayanihan in staffing the Dual Citizenship station. Parking control was handled by Howard Williams and Fred Amper. Pete Delacruz provided the tent. The rest of the Post volunteers assisted where and when needed. Augmenting the veterans, President Letty O'Quinn, Bella Nido, and Olive Jackson of the Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604 stayed the whole day ensuring drinks and snacks were provided. Filipino-Americans who applied for dual citizenship were sworn in by Deputy Consul General Ascalon. The swearing-in ceremony requires special attention.

I was tasked to ask the people in the packed hall to be respectfully quiet for the ceremony. Commander Tom and I agreed that a sound system needed to be picked up. With the sound system set and in place, announcements of subsequent ceremonies were delivered with ease. The diligence and professionalism displayed by the consulate staff starting with the deputy consul general were

notable to the Post veterans. From the moment the doors opened for service until closing, Consul Ascalon and his Staff served Fil-Am citizens for passport renewal, dual citizenship, and legal processing. Customers without an appointment were listed as Walk-Ins. Walk-in customers waited longer than those with appointments but everyone ultimately received assistance. The consulate staff's one hour lunch schedule was voluntary reduced to about a twenty minute lunch break. Though the doors

were closed for lunch, part of the staff's lunch schedule was used to process the remaining morning workload prior to reopening for afternoon service.

At the end of the day, it took approximately two hours after closing time before the consulate staff was able to pack up, load up, and start their drive back home to the bay area. The Veterans of The American Legion Magellan Post 604 proudly salute Deputy Consul General Jaime Ascalon and his staff.

It was indeed an honor and a pleasure for The American Legion Magellan Post 604 Veterans and Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604 Members to voluntarily serve with the Philippine Consulate on Wheels. Post volunteers: Commander Tom Amaba, Howard Williams, Pat Engkabo, Ken Thompson, Fred Aquino, Joe Gonzales, Dick Weitzenberg, Bill Versoza, Fred Amper, Rey Ado, Andy Tancico, Ted Tabarango, and yours truly. Two 604 veterans from afar volunteered to serve our community: Gus Deguzman from Stockton, and Bill Bostock from Dixon. Post members Carleton Enloe and Dave Jese represented the Maharlika Lions. Post member Pete Delacruz represented Bayanihan. Carlos Cordero and Jaime, Post maintenance, cleaned the hall and the parking lot a day before the event. At closing and lock up, Ted Tabarango and Bill Bostock were the last to leave at 7:30 in the evening.

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 1st and 2nd for each categories will be selected on June 7th at the Filipino Fiesta.  
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*"Tomorrow is promised to no one."  
"Miss me but let me go."*



The Diaz's Family spokeswoman said that the first quote was the favorite and the second would have been said by **Alegria "Ester" Ceralvo Diaz**, 17 Aug. 1954 -18 March 2015. She left behind her husband Efren, sons Edgar and Brian, daughter Charlene and son-in-law Jayson, and grandchildren Grayson and Emberley. She was an active member of the Filipino-American community.



**Johnny San Pedro's birthday celebration  
at Campo Di Bocce of Livermore.**

The San Pedro family gathered in celebration of Juan's 70th birthday celebration held at Campo Di Bocce in Livermore, CA. It was another way to a get together and see everyone in the family and had a chance to play bocce for the very first time.



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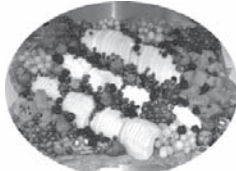
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**CHARMAINE ERESPE**  
APRIL 14



**LENNOX and JOHN ABAYA**  
APRIL 1



**DEREK LEDDA**  
APRIL 18



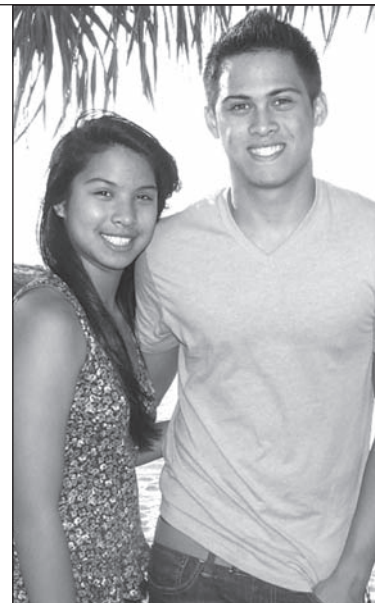
**FRANK AYRAN**  
APRIL 16



**JAKE ROBIN**  
APRIL 12



**LIZA VALENTINE with husband Mike**  
APRIL 6



**ASHLEY DEL PILAR with brother Alex**  
MARCH 16



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**Calendar of Events**

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of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
65TH Anniversary Dinner & Dance  
6 pm - 11pm  
Jose Rizal Community Center  
7230 Florin Mall Dr. Sacramento, Ca  
Aida - 916.686.9886  
Mercy - 916.266.1923



**APRIL 25, 2015 (SATURDAY)**  
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# Rizal's Great Loves

By Penélope V. Flores

Last I counted, Rizal supposedly had nine loves. Really? I consider only three. There are apocryphal stories of Rizal's girlfriends. However, I don't believe what our textbooks say about them, and I'll tell you why.

## 1877. First Love: Segunda Katigbak-Teen-Age Puppy Love-Doesn't really count

Rizal's supposed first love, Segunda Katigbak, was but a harmless flirtation between a 14-year-old convent-bred girl and a teen-aged Rizal. Segunda was already betrothed to a Manuel Luz of Lipa, Batangas, when they met.

Rizal, then 17 years old, had a teen-age infatuation, albeit the beginning awareness of the other gender. In fact, this was the first time Rizal had a tete-a-tete alone with a girl other than his sisters. Remember when you were 17 and you kept walking to and fro in front of the house of your "crush"? You don't call it real love, do you?



## 1878. Second Love: Leonor Valenzuela-Imagined love-a Chenggoy Concoction

Rizal's supposed affection for Leonor Valenzuela, age 14, was a love story made up by his gossip friend, Jose Cecilio (Chenggoy), who derived pleasure from titillating Rizal. He told Rizal (then studying in Madrid) that there was a rivalry for his affection between Leonor Valenzuela



(Orang) and Leonor Rivera (the landlady--she was the daughter of Rizal's former Ateneo landlord and uncle, Antonio Rivera). Rizal was 18 years old. He had no real love for Orang, just the wandering eye of a Bagong Tao na nag-bi-binata (a young man barely out of adolescence). Thus, count Orang out.

## 1878-1890. Third Love: Leonor Rivera, Age 15, Long-Distance Idealized But Doomed Love.

Jose Rizal was never the preferred choice of Leonor Rivera's mother, who confiscated all the correspondences between Leonor and Rizal till it frittered down to zero. Rizal was 18 going on 21 and was devoted to Leonor. But he was just then opening his eyes to Europe's Enlightenment, where the women were pleasing and the men were gallant. Rizal really was in love with Leonor Rivera. He even invented a coded alphabet so that they could write sweet nothings to each other. But soon, Leonor faded in memory. Why? Because in Europe, Rizal conveniently romanced other girls and forgot he was engaged to her. Eventually the Leonor Rivera-Rizal engagement did not survive the long-distance romance. In the end, it turned into an idealized one (reflected as Maria Clara in Rizal's novel, Noli me Tangere), a painful love match doomed to fail from the very start. Yes, count this one as real love. As an engaged couple, they showed real affection for each other while it lasted.



There is no mention of this kind of marriage in any of Rizal's biographies. Why? Probably because the Samurai cultural practice of "temporary marriages" was mainly hidden away from the lenses of "staid and proper" westerners. However, this was an ancient and respectable Japanese tradition. The women were neither geishas nor prostitutes. They belonged to the top of the social class as Samurai's daughters!

## 1884. Fourth Love: Consuelo Ortega y Reyes, the Madrid Flirt

In Madrid, Rizal courted Consuelo Ortega, age 18, the daughter of Señor Pablo Ortega y Rey, who was once mayor of Manila and who owned the apartment where the Circulo Hispano Filipino met regularly. Rizal, age 23, was then acquiring and developing his charming ways with women. He treated them with special consideration and with gallant courteousness. All the young Filipino expatriates courted Consuelo, and she in turn encouraged every one including José Rizal, Eduardo Lete, the Paterno brothers (Pedro, Antoni-



no, Maximiano), Julio Llorente, Evangelista, Evaristo Esguerra, Fernando Canon and others.

Rizal gave Consuelo gifts: sinamay cloth, embroidered piña handkerchiefs, chinelas (slippers) -- all ordered through his sisters in Calamba (see his letters). Consuelo accepted all the swains' regalos but played Eduardo Lete against Rizal. She finally rejected Rizal's attention in favor of Eduardo's, a Filipino Spanish mestizo from Leyte who, a year later, dumped her.

Two-timing Consuelo didn't really catch Rizal's true fancy except that he impulsively joined the crowd. No, sorry about that.

## 1888. Fifth Love: O Sei-San, age 22, the Samurai's Daughter

This relationship is what I would call Rizal's Great Love, in bold letters. Rizal, age 27, an author and a doctor had returned to the Philippines in 1887, but because of his Noli Me Tangere, he incurred the wrath of the Spanish authorities. He had to leave in 1888 via Japan to the U. S. and then Europe. In Japan, he met a Samurai's daughter. They went to excursions and places together. She taught him Japanese and her culture.



Remember, Rizal had been exposed in Germany to ethnographers (Fedor Jagor, who studied the Igorots) scientists (Dr. Rudolf Virchow, linguist, who studied the "Mangianes" or Mangyans) and anthropologists/historians (Ferdinand Blumentritt). Rizal, now a self-confident, mature gentleman-scientist, was attracted to the Japanese culture and immersed himself in its ancient tradition.

What if Rizal unconsciously (he never planned it) entered into a treaty-port marriage, which had existed for centuries in Nagasaki Bay as early as 1630? One-month treaty-port marriages were common, especially in Nagasaki. They cost \$4 for a license plus \$15-\$25 for a house and \$10 for a servant. What if Rizal and O-Sei-San, for the whole month in Yokohama, got into this cultural arrangement? Just saying.

Did Rizal and O Sei-San write sentimental haikus together? Painted Japanese art? In fact, we have several Japanese art he made, kept at the Rizal Historical Commission. Did they admire Japanese temple architectures like Meguro amid Japanese gardens together? Did their hearts bond over the rituals of the Tea Ceremony, "a cultural event never duplicated but always imbibed in its peaceful and tranquil meditative aspect"?

Could the Samurai code of loyalty, love of nature's simple beauty, and options for self-effacement and self-improvement have made Rizal cherish his month-long relationship with O Sei-San? Could he and O Sei-San have shared a simple and honest love without hypocritical guilt and unburdened by embarrassment? One only has to read Rizal's journal to intuit the answer.

"O Sei San, sayonara, sayonara! .... No woman like you has ever loved me. ... Like the flower of the chodji that falls from the stem whole and fresh without stripping leaves or withering... you have not lost your purity nor have the delicate petals of your innocence faded--sayonara, sayonara.

... I have thought of you and that image lives in my memory. ... I'll always think of you—



(L-R) Jose Rizal, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo and Nellie Bousted, whom Rizal would have married had she not insisted that he renounce his Catholic faith and become a Protestant. (Source: In Excelsis: The Mission of Jose P. Rizal)

When shall I return to that divine afternoon ... your name lives in the sighs of my lips and your image accompanies and animates my thoughts. ... When will the sweet hours I passed with you return? When will I find them sweeter, more tranquil, more pleasing ... its freshness, its elegance ...? Sayonara, sayonara."

You be the judge. But I'm treading on dangerous ground here, and I know I'll be mercilessly crucified if I'm not careful. For me, however, the entry hints of true love and deep longing.

## 1886. Sixth Love: Gertrude Beckett, age 19, a Contemporary Pastime

The flirtation Rizal indulged in while staying in house number 37 Chalcot Crescent, London, was an innocent pastime, not real love. Rizal, age 27, had been thrown among his landlord's daughters--Gertrude (Tottie) and Sissie. When Tottie showed signs of ardor, and when Rizal felt being slowly drawn to her, he left her high and dry without notice and without answering her yearning letters. You don't really do that to a "loved" one. No. Zero points earned here.



## 1889. Seventh Love: Suzanne Thill, age 18, Clean Fun re: The "Naughty Boy" of Brussels

In Brussels, Rizal lived in the house of the Jacoby sisters: Marie and Suzanne. Marie was 48 and Suzanne, 45. Both were besotted with Rizal's gallant and charming manners. Their 18-year-old niece named Suzanne Jacoby Thill lived with the sisters during Rizal's time. Our historians say Aunt Suzanne Jacoby became Rizal's girlfriend. Why would Rizal, age 27, go for a 45-year-old, when there was a young 18-year-old (called Petite Suzanne) who was also enjoying his attention? There's a letter signed by a Suzanne J. Thill saying, in effect: "I wear out the soles of my shoes going to the mailbox waiting for a letter from you. Why don't you write, you naughty boy?"



In a recent talk at the San Francisco Public Library, I heard historian Ambeth Ocampo explain what "naughty boy" really meant--something lustful or "naughty doings," while other historians make it appear like forbidden love between the two. But I disagree.

Last summer 2012, in Brussels, I visited the apartment of the Jacoby's where Rizal was a lodger. Rizal's room was facing the street on the first floor. There's a Rizal Historical Marker on that building. Suzanne Thill's room was on the same floor facing the street, next to Rizal's room. The two aunts lived on the second floor above. The house was a few walking blocks away from the famous fountain, a two-foot bronze statue of the Manneken Pis.

I could picture Petite Suzanne and Rizal enjoying each other's company, walking down that street, sitting in bistros enjoying the passersby, who were admiring and giving naughty judgments of that statue of the naked little urchin boy relieving himself in front of a crowd. Then I discovered to my great amusement, that actually, the local name for that beloved cutie is Naughty Boy. Now, let's suppose it was Rizal and Petite Suzanne (not the elderly Tante Suzanne) who enjoyed each other's company and used the naughty boy line to recall strolling down the streets of Brussels, wouldn't that be a personal private little joke between them? Rizal, age 28, was then waiting for his novel El Filibusterismo in the printing press in nearby Ghent.

Little Suzanne and Rizal could easily have had a healthy boyfriend-girlfriend relationship, but it was just that. Clean fun and very tentative, spent under the watchful eyes of two elderly

aunts within the same roof, while strolling by the streets, where a naughty boy is shamelessly urinating in public. Yes, for a very short-lived, lovely experience. Not a great, shattering love affair.

## 1891. Eighth Love: Nellie Boustead, age 19, the Rich Heiress. She antedated the modern Pre-Nuptial Agreement

In Paris, Rizal fell in love with Nellie Boustead, a Filipina whose father (Filipino-Anglo French) Edward Boustead owned a villa in Biarritz. Rizal was on the rebound at the time, because he received news that Leonor Rivera, his arranged fiancé, had married Charles Kipping, a British engineer working on the Dagupan railway.

Rizal (now free from a romantic engagement) did propose marriage to Nellie. He was anxious to start his own family at age 30. Nellie was a good candidate. Her mother was from the Genato family in Manila. She was well-educated, good at fencing, very intelligent and good-looking.

I wouldn't call it Rizal's great romance, because from the very start the courtship encountered many complications. First, Antonio Luna thought Nelly was favoring him. Luna and Rizal almost came to a sword duel, but Luna withdrew and gave up the suit. In the end, Nellie, who was a Protestant, gave some marriage conditions that Rizal could not accept--to renounce his Catholic faith and become a Protestant. I would hesitate to call Nellie Boustead Rizal's great love. It was more a Rizal licking-of-wounds-love after having been spurned by Leonor Rivera.

I see Nellie Boustead as antedating a modern pre-nup. Not a real love, more like a marriage transaction. If it had succeeded, Rizal would have become a practicing ophthalmologist in Paris and eventually would have become a Frenchman. Definitely No Love Lost on this one. The possibilities are too staggering to contemplate.

## 1895. Ninth Love: Josephine Bracken, age 18, the Dulce Extranjera

Rizal was already 34 when he met Josephine. She accompanied her stepfather, George Tauffer of Hong Kong, who sought Rizal's expertise as an eye doctor in Dapitan. This European woman brought back memories of his European sojourn. At first, Rizal pitied the young Irish girl, but their proximity sparked their love. Remember, Rizal was an exile, deprived of many liberties and conveniences. His future was uncertain. Josephine was there. She was kind, loving and served Rizal hand and foot. Rizal wrote in his journal that she had fulfilled his needs more than any Filipina girl could ever give him.



Did he sound very lonely and vulnerable? Yes, and did he fall in love? Yes. They pledged themselves to each other, but not canonically as husband and wife. They planned to marry within the church, but couldn't. The Archbishop of Cebu demanded that Rizal sign a retraction letter prepared by the diocese. Rizal refused. The couple conceived a (boy) who, in its last trimester, was lost in a miscarriage. The infant was named Francisco, and Rizal buried him in Dapitan.

We read Rizal's letters constantly praising Josephine for her character and attributes. He even begged his sisters to be nice to her. In my view, Josephine Bracken was the dulce extranjera whom he loved dearly, of whom he made a sculpted face, left sketches and dedicated a book before he was executed. It read: To my dear and unhappy wife, Josephine. She served as his dulce amor. But it was a sad ending, as we know, on the morning of 30 December 1896.

Yes, I believe, Josephine Bracken was José Rizal's great love.

Penélope V. Flores, Ph.D. is a Professor of Education Emeritus at San Francisco State University. Her main interest is in "Tracing the Footsteps of Jose Rizal in Europe." She is building a Rizaliana library in San Francisco where scholars and researchers can have free access to her collection.

# 9 Extremely Notorious Pinoy Gangsters

By Mark V.

**F**ilipino pop culture tends to trivialize or even glorify the gangster lifestyle so much that we sometimes forget just how dangerous these people can be. Yet for all their dastardly deeds, there are just some gangsters whose exploits made them so notoriously well-known that we can't help but unconsciously put them on a pedestal.

Without further ado, here are some of the most notorious gangsters to have ever set foot on the archipelago.

## 9. Emilio Changco



Emilio Changco in 1992 at the New Bilibid Prison. Photo Credit: Mike Goldwater.

One of the most infamous Pinoy pirates of all time, Changco and his gang terrorized Philippine waters during the 1980s and the early 90s. Using a hotel that overlooked Manila Bay as their base, Changco and his henchmen were often hired to seize commercial vessels to the tune of \$300,000.

Usually, the clients would hire the gang to steal the ship's cargo, repossess a ship, or to collect fraudulent insurance in case their ships neared the end of its service. Changco's career in piracy finally came to an end when he and his men brazenly hijacked the state-owned M/T Tabangao oil tanker. For that crime, he was given a life sentence in Bilibid.

## 8. Marvin "Shyboy" Mercado



Marvin Mercado shown in a police photo in 1997. It's easy to see why Mercado got eight life sentences without pa-

role in the US. As the leader of the Asian Boyz Gang he had founded in the 1970s, Mercado—who is a Filipino-American—had been found guilty of killing eight people and attempting to kill another ten in 1995 in Los Angeles, a crime spree that authorities dubbed as the "summer of madness."

During this time, the gang committed robberies, violent assaults, and killed people just for the sake of it. To avoid the authorities, Mercado later fled to the Philippines where he married a socialite and tried to keep a low profile. However, the long arm of the law finally caught up with him in 2007, resulting in his arrest and deportation back to the US.

## 7. Octavio "Ongkoy" Parojinog Sr.



Although we'd usually remember the Kuratong Baleleng as the unfortunate gang on the receiving end of an alleged police rubout in 1997 in Quezon, some say it was a well-deserved fate. After all, the Kuratong Baleleng was said to be one of the most notorious gangs to have ever come out of Misamis Occidental.

Ironically enough, it was the military who organized the group in 1986 to counter increased NPA activity in the area. Led by the first leader Ongkoy Sr., the group was effective in stifling communist expansion in Western Mindanao although allegations were rife that Parojinog also used the group to further his criminal activities such as robbery, kidnapping, and extortion.

To the people in his hometown however, he was known as the "Robin Hood of Lawis" due to his reported generosity. After the military deactivated the group in 1988, it eventually focused more on organized crime and splintered off into several off-shoots. As for Parojinog, he died at the hands of the authorities who shot him in a botched drug sting inside a local cockpit in 1990.

The Kuratong Baleleng was later implicated in the deaths of the authorities involved, ostensibly as retaliation for their founder's death.

## 6. Grepur "Butch" Belgica

Although he may be known today as a born-again pastor, Grepur "Butch" Belgica was at one point one of the most infamous gangsters of the 1960s and 70s.

A spoiled brat from a prominent family, Belgica earned his ticket



to the big house at the age of 16 when he was convicted as an adult for the murder of another scion. He spent jail time in Muntinlupa and a penal colony in Palawan.

During his prison term, Belgica became known as a gang leader, as well as being a dedicated communist. Fortunately, he also became a born-again Christian while inside prison, and was later rewarded by President Marcos with a pardon in 1976. Since then, he has never looked back and has dedicated his time to civil and pastoral work.

## 5. Alvin Flores



Other than being the leader of the ultra-violent gang that bears his name, little is known about Alvin Flores' background. While authorities say that Flores—who died in October 2009 after a shootout with NBI agents in Cebu—used to be a waiter with no military or police training, a former comrade claimed that Flores once worked as a car thief for the communist hit squad Alex Boncayao Brigade in Malabon in the 1980s.

At some point, Flores even became a "police asset" due to his effectiveness. Afterwards, he went on to form his own group that would gradually earn its reputation through ruthlessness and penchant for pulling capers while dressed in police uniforms.

In the years leading up to his death, he and his group would be implicated in dozens of high-profile killings and robberies, the most infamous being a brazen daylight raid on a Rolex store in Makati's Greenbelt 5 in 2009.

## 4. Ben "Tumbling" Garcia



Hailing from Malabon, Benjamin Garcia—better known as Ben Tumbling due to his acrobatic

skills as a former stuntman—achieved notoriety in his hometown by engaging in drug-dealing, robberies, and carnapping.

However, it was his personal hand in the deaths of seven policemen that made him especially feared by authorities. It is said that Garcia hated the police for torturing him in his youth; that hatred reached the point of no return when they also allegedly raped his wife.

Yet for all the fear Garcia evoked in the police, the poor locals held him in high regard because he would share the profits from his criminal activities with them. In fact, thousands of them even attended his wake and funeral after he was finally killed by the police on Friday the 13th, 1981.

## 3. Marcial "Baby Ama" Perez



Don't let the innocuous-sounding nickname fool you; Marcial "Baby Ama" Perez was regarded as one of the most notorious inmates to have ever graced the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa.

Perez first ended up in jail after stealing money to help fund a friend's schooling. While inside the prison, he had to endure ridicule and abuse due to his boyish looks. Although he survived it all, it is said that he snapped after learning that his pregnant wife committed suicide after being raped by one of the prison guards.

He later became a hitman inside the jail, offing several of his fellow inmates and eventually emerging as the leader of the Sige-Sige Gang. Perez later conducted the largest and deadliest riot in Bilibid, a bloodbath which resulted in the deaths of nine inmates (including one beheaded).

"Baby Ama" eventually met his end via electric chair in 1961 even after his death penalty had been commuted—a testament to his notoriety.

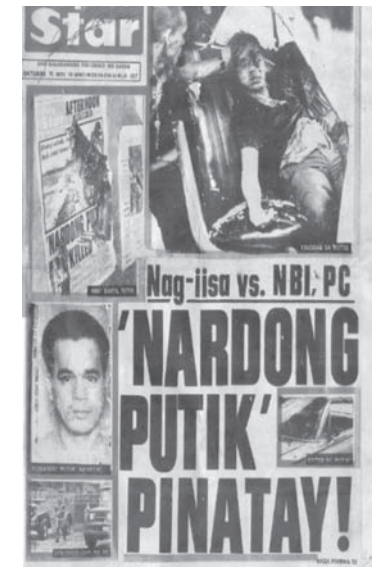
## 2. Nicasio "Asiong" Salonga



Born and raised in the tough neighborhood of Tondo, Nicasio "Asiong" Salonga gradually developed two polarizing reputations. To those neighbors he was generous and amiable with, he was known as Robin Hood. To his enemies and the rest of the country however, he became branded as Tondo's Public Enemy No. 1 and the kingpin of Manila due to his involvement in several gang-related violence and assortment of crimes, the accusations of which he always managed to evade.

Salonga's relatively short life—he was 26—came to an end on October 8, 1951 during a drinking spree when a gunman shot him at close range with a .38 caliber to the head. Police identified the assailant as Ernesto Reyes, a henchman of Salonga's rival and also-notorious gang leader Carlos "Totoy Golem" Capistrano.

## 1. Leonardo "Nardong Putik" Manecio



One of the most notorious gangsters to ever come out of Cavite, Leonardo "Nardong Putik" Manecio's reckless exploits and ability to evade the law made him something of a folk hero to his town mates. It is said that he always carried an anting-anting and would submerge himself in rice paddies to hide from his enemies or evade the authorities.

During his career, Manecio was involved in several felonies ranging from murder, abductions, robberies and illegal possession of firearms. His biggest claim to infamy however, was his role in Cavite's Maragondon Massacre in 1952, an incident wherein he and his henchmen killed the mayor and the police chief allegedly on the orders of a senator from a rival political party.

Manecio also escaped jail a total of three times; his reign of terror as Cavite's Public Enemy No. 1 came to an end on February 10, 1971 after NBI agents engaged him in a highway shootout.



# WAY TO BEAT EACH OTHER: PACQUIAO VS. MAYWEATHER

By Reni M. Valenzuela

Don't fight Floyd if you only want to win.

Freddie Roach must be in serious condition as he is reportedly devising a tactic for his pupil to win every round versus the sharp shooter of boxing. How can Manny Pacquiao or any boxer of this generation do that to a Floyd Mayweather Jr. without first handcuffing him? Pac beats Floyd by nullifying a "brave" style to penetrate a wall filled with dread. And it can't be done with a mindset to "win" every round.

Pacquiao has the tool and he has it to obliterate a fortress. Defensive scoring is Mayweather's expertise and strength. Therefore get him to engage in "exchanges" and Floyd will be helpless fighting his fight. The American boxing "lord" is comfortably the sport's Ninja Turtle. His chance of winning is always the same. How he won all his 47 professional fights is how he can win the contest versus Pacquiao. Mayweather simply has to be "Mayweather" to sustain his winning streak. He can't be unnatural and expect to retain his "zero"

and retire unbeaten. The question for Roach to ask is not how Pacquiao could beat Mayweather, but how Pacquiao would KO Mayweather. Pacman can be a Marvin Hagler, but not by imitating his movement or style. Hagler was constantly advancing in a fight and that's the point. Pac has to have the fire of a Mike Tyson from the opening round, but the perseverance of an Evander Holyfield towards the end of the stretch.

You don't leave the knockout to chance if it is Floyd you're up against.

Pacman and his team must throw away the idea of a second "Mayeather vs. Pacquiao" lest they focus on money and thereby err in strategizing a game plan. There is little possibility for Mayweather to lose by points. Note that. And if he wins by decision against an ill-prepared Pacquiao, the "astute" promoter would be alone to sing his tune, or would vainly call for a second dance. No rematch.



Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao

Be aware that both Pacquiao and Mayweather want to win. The biggies and the rest around them just want to fatten their wallets more from a rematch or rematches. To Roach, Michael Koncz and Bob Arum: Why purpose to defeat Floyd if your chief concern is merely to score points, or give way to greed? Innocent cash cows and the Ma-

fias rule the game.

Who will expect Pacquiao to be victorious on May 2nd apart from an aim to knock a barrier down? What adjustment can Mayweather make against multiple blinding combinations except do a "toe-to-toe" and sway to Pac's rock and roll music? When that happens, Floyd will fall, or at best, the ref will run for the rescue. Mayweather Sr. will have to wonder and ponder how many of Pacquiao's power shots can his Junior take, if he cares.

If Pacman's handlers will get it truly right for their rooster in the MGM "La Loma" cockpit, amid the noise and confusion of a stunned crowd, the Derby of the Century won't last the distance. No rematch.

The Filipino icon must train like he's fighting for his dear life without a basketball in his left hand. He should "starve" himself good enough during training to feel the urge and ferociousness of a hungry boar, wearing gloves and hotly pursuing. The way to beat Mayweather is to KO May-

weather, at least with that determined goal in mind. The knockout ought to be intentional.

Everybody lost to Mayweather because everybody just wanted to win. 47 have tried but failed. So know what the 47 did and do the opposite.

The Mega Bout for Pacquiao involves his heart, not just his fists. But for Mayweather, it's his ego. During the fight's LA press conference, Floyd lectured: "Winning is in the mind." Wrong, it's in the heart. And it's in that place where Mayweather has issues and struggles to this date, now that he'll be facing the one boxer he never ever wanted to face.

Finally, it is Pacquiao who has significant reshaping to make in order to win, not Mayweather. And it's a tall order for the fellow Filipino to be on the offensive mode every second and minute of each round. Single mindedness and aggression to stop Money within halfway is the key to a Manny win - via knockout, or by whipping a "hometown decision."

Do it differently and you'll not end up similarly.

Will Pacman fail his people? Be exciting.

## Manny Pacquiao's Trainer Has a Plan for Beating Floyd Mayweather - It Involves Blood and a Different Kind of Bible Study

By Geoffrey Gray

Freddie Roach is struggling to walk up the stairs to the Wild Card, the boxing gym in Los Angeles he made famous by training the most elite crop of talent in recent decades. The man who molded Manny Pacquiao from a raw prospect who had lived on the streets in the Philippines into one of the greatest boxers of his time really ought to be in bed, resting and allowing his back to heal. Instead he's heading to the gym, which will certainly make it worse.

"It's the biggest day of my life," Roach told me recently about his protégé Pacquiao's upcoming matchup against Floyd Mayweather, a fight that's already been billed as the biggest in the sport's history, and is projected to gross more than \$300 million. Later today in Los Angeles, Pacquiao and Mayweather and their camps (Roach included) will take the dais for the first and only press conference to discuss the legendary bout—including, presumably, the state of Roach's bad back.

"I can't catch right now, and it's gotten me a little pissed off," Roach said, of not being able to work the mitts with Pacquiao lately.

With his chunky eyeglasses and spiky hair, Roach, now 55, could

be mistaken for an aging guitarist in a punk band. But he's a boxing savant, and in the cramped space in a strip mall at Sunset and Vine, amid the dozens of aspiring champions skipping rope and pounding the heavy bags, Roach, who years ago was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, moves around like a doddering pugilistic deity, trailed by a loyal crew of assistants under framed pictures of legends he's worked with, including Mike Tyson, Oscar De La Hoya, and newer talents like Miguel Cotto.

"Freddie Roach is the difference," Miguel Cotto says of Pacquiao's ability to handle Mayweather. Unlike many world champions, Cotto has the unusual experience of losing to both Pacquiao and Mayweather. "If Manny follows Freddy's plan, he'll be fine."

But the biggest question in the boxing world right now is what, exactly, Roach's plan will be.

"Manny has to fight the best fight of his life to win, and that won't be easy," Roach says.

For starters, Roach is a little concerned that his pupil's conversion to evangelical Christianity has gotten in the way of his training and softened his killer instinct in the ring.

Manny Pacquiao works the mitts with trainer Freddie Roach during

a workout session at The Venetian on November 20, 2014 in Macau, Macau.

In the boxing world, Roach is considered a maestro of the focus mitts. Photo: Chris Hyde/Getty Images

"I want to get him meaner and more aggressive because he's going to need it in this fight," Roach says.

To that end, Roach has been scouting around for Christian scholars who can point Pacquiao to passages in Bible that support violence and aggression. But Pacquiao has already been pushing back against his efforts, Roach says.

"He tells me, 'Let's just fight and let God decide who wins,'" says Roach. "I said, 'Manny, God doesn't give a fuck who wins. He's got bigger things to do.'"

As for Mayweather, Roach believes his greatest weakness is psychological.

"I want to get inside his head a little bit," Roach says. "He's not a secure person. He's very fragile. He's really insecure. You can tell by the way he lives. The money, the cars, the houses. I've seen that before in boxing. He's on the road to disaster."

In the ring, Pacquiao should be willing to fight dirty, Roach says.

"Mayweather is bothered by



Roach and Pacquiao at the Wild Card gym earlier this week.

blood," Roach says, referring to rare moments in fights where Mayweather has been cut either by accidental butt or punches. "I don't know if Manny will be willing [to purposefully instigate a cut], but accidents do happen."

Roach himself is also an area of concern. His recent back injury is so severe Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum hired a pain specialist to treat Roach so he can get back to working the focus mitts with Pacquiao. As a trainer, Roach's greatest strength is personifying another opponent's style in training sessions, and using the focus mitts to train his boxers in how to exploit subtle weaknesses. He's created his own equipment to improve the workouts: tiny mitts, so fighters must be more accurate with their punches, and larger body padding, so they can target more areas. Roach's success as a trainer is bittersweet, though. The more of himself he sacri-

fices for his fighters, the more fighters want to work with him. The more fighters he takes on, the more they beat up on him in the gym. The impact of the punches he catches

with the mitts tear at his joints. Sometimes the body punches suck the wind right out of him.

"Sometimes I pee blood," Roach said. "It's not good for me, but it's good for them."

Sidelined with the back injury, Roach has been left to use his mind to craft the blueprint Pacquiao can use to beat the unbeaten Mayweather. He's rewatched Mayweather's fights on tape, studying his subtle movements and reactions. Roach has noticed how Mayweather's response to opponents has changed as he gets older. In the late rounds, the side-to-side movement has disappeared. The undefeated boxer has actually been forced to throw punches. For once, he's exposing himself. Roach sees a way to win.

"I have it in my head," he says of the strategic master plan. "And it's almost there."

## FILIPINO MARTIAL ARTIST MAKES IT BIG IN THE U.S.

By Aquiles Z. Zonio

Los Angeles – An elite Filipino martial artist is making it big in the field of fitness and martial arts here.

Despite his success, however, George Tañon Edillor, 45, a native of Virac, Catanduanes, remains humble.

He attributes his success to his current partner in life, Eliza Rica Anderson.

“Without Eliza, it could have been difficult for me to put up this kind of fitness and martial arts facility. We spent around half a million dollar to establish this kind of training facility,” Edillor said.

Jojo, as he is fondly called by his family and friends, met Eliza, a former actress and beauty titlist from Cavite, during the Manny Pacquiao-Timothy Bradley rematch in Las Vegas last year.

“She’s a lovely work of art. I’m exaggerating the obvious but I’d like to tell you she’s more beautiful inside. That was the reason why she captivated by heart and imagination the first time we met,” Jojo said.

The couple owns the MPowerhauz, a world-class fitness and martial arts facility, located at Lassen street, Chatsworth, California.

### Hall of Famer...

Edillor’s unassuming character has sometimes been misinterpreted by some as a sign of his being a lily-livered fighter.

But, he’s no poltroon or weakling. He rose beyond mediocrity through discipline, patience and hardwork.

No wonder, he was designated no less than by world eight-division boxing champion and Sarangani Rep. Manny Pacquiao as overall security in-charge of Team Pacquiao here.

Aside from that, he also once served as personal security of Hollywood actor Tim Curry.

It’s a tough job but his colleagues in the Team Pacquiao looked up to his skills with great admiration and respect.

Edillor was inducted last year into the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame.



George & Eliza inside Cong. Manny Pacquiao’s residence in North Plymouth, Los Angeles. Photo by Aquiles Zonio

He is a four-time Hall of Famer in Martial Arts back in the Philippines and a recipient of the prestigious “Master of Masters” and “Outstanding Trainer” awards in the US.

He is a fourth-degree black belt in martial arts and a fifth-level black belt in Krav Maga (Hebrew words for contact combat) with one year advanced training in hostage situation, home invasion, hold-up, and hijack situation.

He is also a Krav Maga-certified fitness instructor.

Currently, he is the chief instructor of the MPowerhauz Training club, which also serves as headquarters of Alpha Krav Maga here.

Before putting up his own training facility, he taught martial arts in various private clubs here.

“I taught practical self-defense techniques and combat martial arts in different gyms here before I was able to establish my own. My students include, among others, UFC & MMA fighters and other martial arts buffs, security personnel, policemen and even sheriffs,” he said.

MPowerhauz specializes in Combat Martial Arts like boxing, hand-to-hand fighting, street fighting, ground fighting, guns & knives attacks and sticks.

The training facility is also conducting trainings and crash courses on weight training & physical conditioning, boxing, kickboxing, guns proficiency & marksmanship, as well as, VIP Security.

### Wholistic...

MPowerhauz’s training approach is far from conventional.

“It’s all-in-one concept. We

offer CrossFit, mixed martial arts and everything,” Edillor said.

The gym uses equipment from multiple disciplines, including barbells, dumbbells, banana bags, punching bags, treadmills, stationary bikes, tires, pull-up bars, benches, ropes, boxing ring, octagon, etc.

Inside the gym, students are not only getting appropriate training and practical knowledge on self-defense and contact combat but the right mindset and attitude in handling different situations.

“It’s part of our training regimen to develop among our students the right attitude how to handle or deal with white-knuckle situations. Skills and adequate trainings are just useless when we panic or become nervous vis-a-vis the actual situation,” he said.

Barely two months since the training facility started, the number of students who regularly train at the gym surged to 60.

“Our training approach is highly-personalized to really develop an A-1 fighters. Nothing they can ask more. We offer a total package -- from physical conditioning to acquisition of the desired skills and the right mindset,” he said.

### Topnotch...

Aside from being well-equipped, MPowerhouse Training Club is also handled by topnotch instructors.

These include chief instructors Jacov Bresler, a world-class Alpha Krav Maga instructor; Eugene Smith, a Navy Seal and Afghan war veteran; and Cesar Pacol, an aerospace engineer aside from being a martial artist.

The assistant instructors are Alexis Nelson, a doctor; and JD Divine, a retired C-130 reloader of the US Air Force.

The chief strength and conditioning instructor is Ken Ray-usada, a martial artist and former Mr. Japan.

## Touring musical biography of Beatles comes to Auburn on May 17

Musical retelling of Beatles story through the eyes of manager Brian Epstein features the live music of renowned tribute Abbey Road

Auburn, CA - Almost everyone knows that The Beatles are one of the most acclaimed bands in rock and roll history because their music has the hypnotic qualities that made teenage girls scream and artists today and yesterday cite them as one of their influences.



“Sullivanfunniestcolor” shows (l-r) Nate Bott (“John”), Axel Clarke (“Ringo”), Jesse Wilder (“George”) and Chris Paul Overall (“Paul”)

While many of us don’t have the opportunity to see the two surviving Beatles Paul McCartney or Ringo Starr live in concert these days, the closest thing to watching an actual Beatles concert will be In My Life – A Musical Theatre Tribute to the Beatles at the Auburn Placer Performing Arts Center at the State Theatre on Sunday, May 17 at 4 pm.

You mean just another tribute band? No, because not all tribute bands are alike.

This one portrays the Beatles—John Lennon (Nathaniel Bott), Paul McCartney (Christopher Overall), George Harrison (Jesse Wilder) and Ringo Starr (Axel Clarke)—as authentically as possible, from their singing to the myriad of guitars used throughout the band’s decade-long career. Listening to songs like “Penny Lane” or “I Want To Hold Your Hand” from this tribute band is almost like listening to the original icons themselves. The cast members are age appropriate for the Beatles, between 22 - 32 years of age.

While the great repertoire of songs bind this musical together, the audience also gets the opportunity to relive the most important moments of The Beatles’ epic legacy, which spans the entire 1960s period. The actors that portray the band members connect with the crowd through their lovable sense of humors and cheeky banter.

As one watches The Beatles progress throughout that decade, the band’s manager Brian Epstein (Murphy Martin) makes his presence known throughout the musical, narrating his side of the story starting from his discovery of the Fab Four at the Cavern Club in Liverpool up until after the release of Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. Epstein plays a very important role in this show, not only because he was the man who discovered the group, but he also influenced their personal touch with audiences and, of course, their fashion sense. Who

could forget the image of the four dressed up in suits on their arrival at New York’s JFK Airport in 1964?

This show is not just about reliving the breakthrough Ed Sullivan Show performance on February 9, 1964 that 78 million people watched on television, or reviving their deafening and packed Shea Stadium concert in 1965, it also touches on the band’s intimate moments in the recording studio. The audience observes the four in the studio as they struggle to reconcile their creative differences after Epstein’s death in 1967, a couple months after the release of Sgt. Pepper.

As for inspiration for the musical, Tom Maher, one of the co-producers alongside Andy Nagle, said that a friend gave him a biography on Epstein, which was the basis of the “In My Life” musical.

“It took a while to get the pacing, but we are happy with the results,” Maher said.

Maher added that he wanted to make the portrayal as accurate as possible, with the band using the exact gear from the box amps to the guitars. Even the costumes they used throughout the performance—from the suits to the ensembles they wore during their Sgt. Pepper’s period—mirror the originals designs.

The show in Auburn is part of a 125 stop tour of the U.S. and Canada. The show has been touring since 2008.

“In My Life - A Musical Theatre Tribute to the Beatles” is the musical retelling of the Beatles story through the eyes of manager Brian Epstein and features the live music of renowned tribute band, Abbey Road. The award-winning musical performs at the Auburn Placer Performing Arts Center at the State Theatre on Sunday, May 17 at 4 pm. Tickets are \$30 and may be purchased online at [www.livefromauburn.com](http://www.livefromauburn.com) by phone at 530.885.0156 or at the Theatre Box Office. Auburn Placer Performing Arts Center at the State Theatre is located at 985 Lincoln Way Auburn, CA 95603. The show is appropriate for all ages.

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# Russian action star's 'showdown' with Pinoys

By Pau Aguilera

Action star Alexander Nevsky, dubbed as Russia's Arnold Schwarzenegger, has only good words for the Philippines and its people.

Nevsky is in the country shooting "Showdown In Manila" – about a cop tracking her journalist girlfriend – and appreciates the warm welcome given to him by Pinoys.

"I like it here. I'm here for more than two weeks now, and really, I'm falling in love with the people. It doesn't matter if the people from that district (are rich or poor), they're all warm, they approach with me a smile – I love it. I wanna do more movies over here," he said in a recent interview.

Nevsky also raved about working with Iza Calzado and Jake Macapagal, who are among local actors included in the star-studded cast. "They help us, they teach us a little bit of language, they're having fun, so it's just great. I feel like home in here, (even though) this is my first time in Asia," he said.

Nevsky is equally impressed with the Filipinos in the crew.

"You have so many professionals who can work and do their job so great. Armory guys, martial arts experts, stunt guys; I've been working with them for almost three weeks and I love it," he said. "Right now, it's no wonder to me why so many studios are trying to come to the Philippines and make films."

He shared how Fil-Am actor and martial artist Mark Dacascos (director) broached to him the idea of doing an action film here.

"(I asked him), 'Why Manila?' He told me, 'That's the only place where you actually can find a jungle, waterfalls, big buildings and huge



Alexander Nevsky

run for its money. That is, if they could actually involve more "legendary" actors in the film. "There (are still) so many action stars he (Sylvester Stallone, 'The Expendables' co-writer) didn't have in 'The Expendables' films yet, so it's time for 'Showdown In Manila' to push (them) a little bit."

markets," Nevsky narrated. "I was looking for something different, because my previous film, 'Black Rose,' (was set) in Moscow and Los Angeles, and I wanted to try something new..."

### Future 'Showdown'

Nevsky believes "Showdown In Manila" could be another "great publicity" for the country given that its cast is composed of international stars like Casper Van Dien and Tia Carrere; and kickboxing and martial arts practitioners-turned-actors Cary-Hiroiyuki Tagawa, Matthias Hues, Don Wilson, Oliver Gruner and Cynthia Rothrock.

"All these people, yes, they're my friends, but they're also my idols. I love their films. When I was a kid, I was watching Mark Dacascos in 'Only The Strong' (and) Don 'The Dragon' Wilson in 'Bloodfist,' so it's kind of like a dream come true for me."

Nevsky sees the film's potential in becoming a huge franchise that could even give "The Expendables" a

One name that comes to his mind is idol and good friend Jean Claude Van Damme.

"When I came to Hollywood, he was one of the first people who helped me over there, introduced me to his agent, because he was on the cover of one of my books ('Kickboxer')," claimed Nevsky. He added, "I hope he will be in one of my next films, because he's a great action star. He was in 'The Expendables,' (but) they killed (his character in the story), so it's time for him to move to 'Showdown In Manila.'"

According to a release, behind "Showdown In Manila" is a team of experts in various fields of action movie production, including Rudy Harbon as Director of Photography, fight instructor Al Dacascos, and assistant fight instructor Sonny Sison for fight choreography and stunt coordination. It is set for release by year's end.

# Willie Revillame not getting poor at all

By Pocholo Concepcion

The roller-coaster ride that is Willie Revillame's life and career seems to be on the ascent again, with news that the controversial television host-comedian will be back on the airwaves soon with a new game show on a new network.

Speculation among gossip columnists is that he's slowly losing the fortune that he earned from past TV shows. But apparently he's not getting poor—far from it, as a source among his circle of friends and business associates told Inquirer Lifestyle.

How can Willie get poor, the source argued, when he's still got all these assets, namely: the property in Tagaytay he bought from the Madrigal family, with an estimated value of P350 million, on which he's now building a hotel; the house and lot in Ayala Heights formerly owned by Gabby Lopez and Panjee Tapales, now worth P400 million; four floors at Wil Tower plus a helipad; a collection of paintings including a BenCab mural worth P40 million, three Fernando Zobels (P20 million), a vintage Arturo Luz (P7 million) plus a number of sculptures; a brand-new Rolls-Royce Wraith, P12 million, among a fleet of high-end cars; a private plane and yacht; and Hermès bags and Louis Vuitton suitcases.



Willie Revillame

He wants to buy a helicopter when his Tagaytay hotel is finished.

The only properties Willie has sold, the source said, is Wil's Events Place and the mall in Wil Tower, both in Quezon City. The sale has netted him P650 million.

All told, the source said, Willie could be worth around P2 billion.

Much of his cash is invested in a foreign country; some of it is in Banco de Oro.

Surprisingly, the source added, Willie has recently stopped gambling, on the advice of his business partners.

The real problem with his gambling habit, the source said with a laugh, is that Willie has been winning more than losing—especially in Macau. His financial advisers seem to worry that this winning streak could suddenly be reversed if Wil-

lie keeps on betting heavily in casinos.

So the question is, why does Willie want to get back his TV hosting day job when his wealth can sustain him for a lifetime?

The truth, said the source, is not so much a desire to be in the limelight, but more of a need to earn money for his daily expenses, which are quite considerable. Willie's lifestyle, the source added, may not be extravagant, but it's not exactly frugal.

In any case, it seems all-systems-go, as far as his coming new game show is concerned. It's called "Wowowin," which will air 3:30-5 p.m. every Sunday on GMA 7.

The only difference, the source revealed, is that Willie is a blocktimer—meaning he won't be a GMA 7 talent but will buy airtime by paying the network P2 million every week.



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