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Binay will be another Marcos
Page 2



Palawan 'is top island in the world'
Page 16



A Celebration of Filipino American History at the Capitol

Photo by Sarah Enloe



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Will Poe be alternative to Binay?

Sen. Grace Poe remains the top choice for Vice President in 2016, leading 11 potential candidates included in a recent Pulse Asia survey.

Manila, Philippines—"It's possible" that Sen. Grace Poe is positioning herself as an alternative presidential candidate in 2016, noting the senator's mention of "atanghap," a campaign slogan associated with her late father Fernando Poe Jr. (FPJ), according to the independent Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (Iper).

During the 2004 presidential campaign, the elder Poe told an audience that agriculture was his priority agenda. He related that when asked by a foreigner what the main problems of the Filipinos were, he said he replied: "Almusal (breakfast), tanghalian (lunch), hapunan (dinner)."

Supporters of FPJ, the action king, claimed that he lost the election to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo because of cheating, as shown by the

so-called "Garci tapes" that recorded the phone conversations between then Commission on Elections Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and a woman that sounded like Arroyo. They were talking about the canvassing of votes and her need to have a comfortable lead.

Iper executive director Ramon Casiple said that the senator could be a strong contender if the results of 2013 senatorial election that Poe topped, her performance in the Senate and the latest ratings of potential presidential candidates, particularly the decline in the ratings of Vice President Jejomar Binay, who leads potential rivals in the 2016 elections, were taken into account.

In a September Pulse Asia survey, Binay saw his rating take a hit among voters, falling 10-percentage points to 31 percent from a 41-percent voter preference in July amid allegations

that he got kickbacks from projects of Makati City when he was its mayor.

"It gives hope to other potential candidates, especially those on the sidelines," Casiple said.

Furnished a copy of Poe's privilege speech on hunger and poverty, Clarita Carlos, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines, said Poe did not say anything new but gave a graphic description of the state of hunger and poverty in the country.

Asked if she thought the senator might be positioning herself as an alternative candidate for the presidency, Carlos said: "Anybody can run for President, and we are searching for that person.

"It is difficult to second-guess the motives of people. One may claim that she is positioning herself for a national position but I do not want to second-guess her."—Inquirer Rese

Binay will be another Marcos - Bayanko

By Carmen N. Pedrosa

I watched the David Bryne musical "Here Lies Love" at the National Theater last night. It was in preparation for a forum in which my daughter and I would conduct on Friday night.

From the point of view of innovative music and its capacity to include audience participation, the musical was excellent. But Bryne missed the beat on historical background. He was working more on clichés about how Filipinos have failed governance. "It was orientalist and thought-free" Veronica said after the show.

We know that and say it about ourselves but on stage in the context of a musical on Imelda it trivialized Filipinos and their culture. The message that came to me was we get the leaders we deserve which is not exactly true either. But we must do more to gain the respect of the world.

The musical freely used text and parts from "The Untold Story of Imelda Marcos." It did bring out its theme that she was driven to acquire wealth because of poverty as a young girl in General Solano in San Miguel and Tacloban but laid equal blame to Filipino naivete.

There was no way to go but to take hold of the body politic through people power in Edsa. That was 1986. Today it is time for Edsa all over again but this time with the use of people power through modern technology



—crowdsourcing. It is time to gather all the forces necessary to stop the misgovernment and incompetence of, ironically, the Aquino government under President Benigno Simeon III that took over and followed the trail of graft and evils of the Marcos regime.

It is time to break the circle of impunity. We cannot continue with a system that nurtures graft and incompetence.

Jose Alejandro Bayanko member and adviser, relentlessly reminds Filipinos that the election of Jojo Binay will be disastrous for the country. He will be another Marcos and his election would be a regression, when what we need are radical reforms through a new Constitution for a new country.

Otherwise we are doomed to be a country laughed at and ridiculed as it was in the "Here Lies Love." It would mean that the Philippines would not have learned the lessons of the depravity of the Marcos regime.

Alejandrino says that Binay is a clever politician and will not hesitate to use deceit and skullduggery for his ends.

"He will not appear before the Senate to answer the charges of corruption

against him. Instead he will take his case directly to the people. He has a solid following of 25 percent from the bakya crowd who out of ignorance are prepared to believe him.

"This is Jojo's last gambit. If he succeeds in convincing the people of his innocence, he will win the 2016 presidency and the LP will break up. If he fails, it will be the end of his presidential bid."

This is his analysis:

"Jojo's failure will add several points to Mar Roxas but not enough to make Mar win the presidency. It could raise Mar from his current 13 percent in the opinion polls to 25 percent at the most in my estimation. This will mean a dead heat between Jojo and Mar each with 25 percent of the votes. That will leave 50 percent undecided.

"This is where the entry of a third force could be decisive. This is where Bayanko could make a difference if its following in the social media advances from half a million to several million by 2016. This is why we must insist Bayanko remains above politics and continues to source men and women of honesty and integrity to run the country regardless of their political affiliation. Once it has attained a critical mass of followers, Bayanko will be able to dictate its own agenda of political reform to do away with the present rotten system."

A rainbow coalition of church and spiritual leaders

Continued on page 3



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Palace: Binay's feud is with lawmakers, not us

By Christian V. Esguerra

MANILA, Philippines—In defending himself against allegations of corruption, Vice President Jejomar Binay is attacking administration lawmakers, not President Aquino, Malacañang said on Sunday.



In defending himself against allegations of corruption, Vice President Jejomar Binay (left inset) is attacking administration lawmakers, not President Aquino, Malacañang spokesman Herminio Coloma (right), who is identified with the Binay faction in

Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma, who is identified with the Binay faction in the Palace, made the distinction clear, but did not comment when asked whether the Vice President should finally show his “true colors.”

Binay, who has long disclosed his plan to run for President in 2016, is under Senate investigation for alleged corruption when he was mayor of Makati City.

He has denied the charges, saying they are politically motivated, and called the Senate blue ribbon subcommittee that is looking into the allegations a “kangaroo court.”

President Aquino's allies have criticized him for choosing to stay with the administration but attacking it in defending himself against the corruption charges.

Binay's latest offensive came on Saturday at a Lions Club gathering at the Manila Hotel where, in a speech, he criticized Aquino's allies in the Senate for wasting time by investigating “recycled” charges against him instead of dealing with the country's pressing problems.

“There is a power crisis, the rising prices of oil and other commodities, the rampant crime plaguing the country, the hellish traffic jams, unsafe MRT and LRT, the recurrent flooding and the wrath of nature that we must all prepare for,” he said.

“But instead of giving all their time and thoughts to achieve solutions to these problems, they chose to advance their own interests by destroying my name and those of my loved ones,” he said.

Aquino not target

Apparently referring to the Inquirer report, Coloma said Binay was not speaking against the President but against “administration allies in the Senate who have mounted an inquiry into alleged corruption in Makati during his term as Makati mayor.”

“Since the subject of the newspaper story was the issue between Vice President Binay and the legislators he was referring to, we have nothing more to add,” Coloma said on

state-run radio.

The Senate blue ribbon subcommittee has invited Binay to the inquiry to air his side on the accusations against him, but he has rejected the invitation and his camp has said he preferred to bring the issue “directly to the people.”

Instead of facing the charges against him in the Senate, Binay has also challenged Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, who had filed the resolution seeking an inquiry into the allegations against the Vice President, to a debate.

Challenge accepted

Trillanes accepted the challenge and the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas is now arranging the debate with its member stations.

The Palace welcomed the debate, saying it was part of a “healthy democracy.”

“Let the discussions that will give our people additional knowledge take place,” Coloma said.

Reacting to Binay's speech to the members of the Lions Club District 301-D2 on Saturday night, Trillanes on Sunday said the Vice President was trying to divert public attention from the inquiry into the mounting charges against him.

“The attacks are just attempts of VP Binay to misdirect or divert public attention from corruption allegations against him. While the issues may be valid, the timing is suspect,” Trillanes said in a text message.

Issues remain unexplained

For Sen. Francis Escudero, going on such an offensive still does not explain the issues hounding Binay.

Speaking on dzBB radio, Escudero said Binay was only human and likely hurting from the allegations coming from former Makati officials. He may have been advised that the best defense is a good offense, Es-

cuadero said.

Among the charges against Binay is overpricing in the construction of the P2.28-billion Makati City Hall Building II, taking kickbacks from municipal infrastructure projects, and using dummies to conceal his ownership of an 8,877-square-meter real estate property in Comembo village in Makati and a 350-hectare farm in Rosario town, Batangas province.

Binay and his press officers insist the charges are aimed at derailing his plan to run for the presidency in the 2016 elections.

Styling himself as a servant of the poor, Binay has also called the Senate inquiry a plot by the rich to prevent a man from low beginnings like him from attaining the highest office in the land.

Committee invitation

Escudero reiterated his support for the Senate move to invite Binay to respond to the allegations against him, saying it was the legislature's obligation to give him the chance to defend himself.

The blue ribbon committee has accepted the Binay camp's condition that the invitation should come from the mother committee and not from the subcommittee conducting the inquiry.

The chair of the committee, Sen. Teofisto Guingona III, has said he would send an invitation to Binay.

If Binay thinks the allegations will not affect him, he can ignore them, Escudero said. But if he believes the charges affect his

numbers, he should study what he should do next, he added.

As to whether Binay should leave the Aquino Cabinet, Escudero said the decision should be left to the Vice President or to the President. At this point, he said, both seem to want to continue working together.

Trillanes, who earlier said Binay should resign from the Cabinet if he disagreed with the administration's policies, said he would not rule out the possibility that the Vice President, after his speech on Saturday, would try to appease Aquino by saying the President wasn't his target.

“VP Binay is truly a politician of the worst kind,” Trillanes said.

He also said he believed Binay had plans to go on a “massive propaganda campaign” employing media and public relations operations to respond to the allegations against him.

Pretending to be poor

In an interview on dzBB, Trillanes criticized Binay for trying to paint his crisis as an issue between the rich and the poor.

He said Binay was wealthier than he, and the Vice President's son had an elevator in his house. But Binay likes to pretend he's one of the poor, Trillanes said.

“You're fooling the people again. You're pretending to be poor, but you're living like a king in Hacienda Binay,” he said.

Trillanes said that at the next hearing of the Senate blue ribbon subcommittee, evidence would be presented to show that Binay owned the farm in Batangas.

He said Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano would present the evidence.

Binay will be another Marcos From page 2

of different denominations, cause-oriented groups, professionals, students, and workers is what Bayanko must strive for. From its growing membership, it seems to be attaining its goal. Such a coalition is what I like to refer to as God's forces. With God on our side, how can we not win?” he asks of his countrymen in his appeal for widespread support for the group.

The Lipa declaration was published in Impact Magazine, a publication of the CBCP Communications Development Foundation, Inc. The article was written by Charles Avila of the National Transformation Council.

The Lipa declaration highlights moral leaders' demand that Aquino resign.

“Therefore, faithful to the objective moral law and to the universally honored constitutional principle that sovereignty

resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them, we declare that President Benigno Simeon Aquino III has lost the moral right to lead the nation, and has become a danger to the Philippine democratic and republican state and to the peace, freedom, security and moral and spiritual well-being of the Filipino people....

We further declare that we have lost all trust and confidence in President Benigno Simeon Aquino III, and we call upon him to immediately relinquish his position.”

We had heard it up and down this beleaguered archipelago. Our moral leaders were about to make a pronouncement on the current political situation, as they did back in 1986 (Edsa I), then in 2001 (Edsa II), and of a different kind in 2005.

In 1986 and 2001, as a result of their moral pronouncement, regime change became a moral necessity.”



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Three faces of gay life in Olongapo

By Jonas Reyes

Olongapo City has been a melting pot of every culture and every gender in the country. Known for its great night life, Olongapo City has been a bastion of great musicians when they were still starting off as performers.

With the number of transients who frequent Olongapo, it's no surprise that the city is more liberated than what most people think. Open to people from all walks of life, Olongapo City is open especially to the "third sex" – quite a coincidental term to represent the three faces of gay life in the city.

SIMPLY 'BADING'

It's 8 o'clock on a Monday morning. Gigi Estalilla punches in his timecard at Building 255 of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA). A civil servant by profession, but is a homosexual by choice.

Just like any gay man, Estalilla is attracted to members of the same sex. And yet, unlike any other gay man, Estalilla is respected in Olongapo City. He has been an instructor at a prestigious school and is now an information officer of the SBMA.

At 5-foot-6 inches with a hefty build, Gigi has portrayed female roles in dance competitions, costume contests and parties, but the respect and love from his peers never waned.

Estalilla is proud of his homosexuality and is a staunch voice in the community when it comes to Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders (LGBT) rights, telling everybody that they can be a respected member of the community even if the person is homosexual.

'TRANSGENDER WOMAN'

"Tanya" on the other hand is more carefree. Tanya, whose real name wants to be withheld, loves the night life. He frequents bars and discos in Magsaysay Drive here in Olongapo City till the wee hours of the morning.

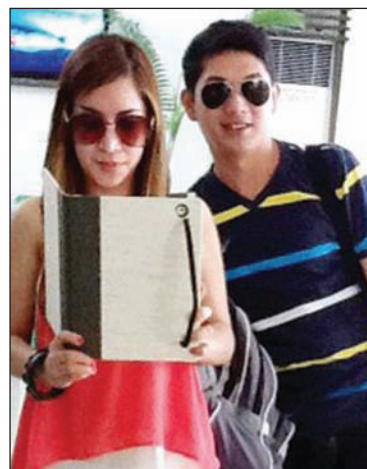
With his makeup on, you need a second glance to know that Tanya



TRANSGENDER FRIENDS – These three friends hanging out in the streets of Olongapo City at night call themselves 'transgender women.'

is gay. Wearing a skimpy dress, stilettos and female perfume, one could mistake Tanya for a very tall woman. But when he speaks, you could hear the raspy, high-pitched, yet undeniably male voice in him. Maybe it was the adam's apple that is making it masculine.

Having relatives in the US supporting him, Tanya also runs a small business of "buy and sell" to support his hobbies. Known by his peers as a friendly person, Tanya has helped many of his friends get out of debt by lending them money.



'PAPA GAY' – Sean Cedric (right) is happy to looking like just the guy next door and being gay at the same time as he poses for a 'selfie' with his cousin. (Courtesy of Sean Cedric)

THE 'GAY' NEXT DOOR

And then there is Sean Cedric, a good-looking guy you'd mistake for a model. With well-chiseled muscles and fair-white skin, Sean

is a call-center agent working for a company inside the Subic Bay Freeport Zone.

He was born and raised in his beloved Olongapo City, saying that even though he left the place, he is still drawn here by his heart. And like Tanya, he is fond of Olongapo's night life and said that there is no other area in the country with the same atmosphere as Olongapo City.

And when he goes out, he usually wears his muscle tee, wearing a small amount of makeup and wears contact lens. Sometimes, he said, ladies would come up to him with their numbers on a napkin. He just laughs it off, adding that if the girls only knew.

And just like the first two gay men, he is also proud of his sexual preference.

'GAPO: A GAY LOVER

With this, Olongapo has been one of the most open port cities in the country, ensuring that there is no discrimination whatsoever for the third sex. But with the openness of the metro, 'Gapo is plagued with the moniker "Sin City" that has given it negative views.

But Olongapo City will forever be a city known for its great bands, great night life, and great people. And the LGBT community is hoping that Olongapo City beefs up its security to ensure that it would remain "discrimination-free."

War on poverty not yet over

12.1M families remain poor; P967.9B allocated for social services in 2015

By Genalyn D. Kabiling

Malacañang yesterday said the war on poverty is not yet over as it vowed to "do better" in implementing programs to reduce poverty in the country in the wake of a survey result showing some 12.1 million Filipino families still feel they are poor.



poor), "sa linya" (on the line), and "mahirap" (poor) is shown.

Based on the survey, self-rated poverty in Metro Manila increased by six points to 43 percent, and by seven points to 52 percent in the rest of Luzon.

However, self-rated poverty was down by 10 points to 61 percent in Mindanao and by nine points to 65 percent in the Visayas.

43% FOOD-POOR

During the same survey period, 43 percent of Filipino families or about 9.3 million households claimed they are "food-poor." This is higher than the 41 percent, equivalent to 9 million households who claimed they are poor, three months ago.

The question on self-rated food poverty was, "Tungkol naman sa klase ng pagkain ng pamilya ninyo, saan po ninyo ilalagay ang inyong pamilya sa kard na ito (Based on the type of food eaten by your family, where would you place your family in this card)?" A similar show card with the choices "hindi mahirap" (not poor), "sa linya" (on the line), and "mahirap" (poor) is shown to the respondents.

Self-rated food poverty increased by three points in Metro Manila (30 percent) and by five points in the rest of Luzon (37 percent).

Meanwhile, self-rated food poverty "hardly changed" in the Visayas, down only by a point to 53 percent but declined by three points to 52 percent in Mindanao.

The self-rates poverty thresholds defined by SWS as home expense budget in order not to consider themselves poor in general increased to median P15,000 from P12,000 in Metro Manila.

The amount stayed at P10,000 in the rest Luzon and Mindanao, while it fell to P8,000 from P10,000 in the Visayas.

SWS further explained that the home expense budget is less than the minimum income needed because it excludes work-related expenses like transportation.

Therefore, it said the median poverty threshold "is the home expense budget that would satisfy the poorer half of the poor households.

"On the other hand, the same FIES also showed subsistence incidence or the proportion of extremely poor Filipino individuals who could not afford to meet basic food requirements, also declined during the period from 13.4 percent in 2012 to 10.7 percent in 2013," he said.

The nationwide survey of the Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey, it found that 55 percent of the respondents, equivalent to 12.1 million Filipino families, say they are poor, the same figures registered during the June, 2014, survey.

Some 12.1 million families claim they are poor despite the P62.6-billion budget for the Condition Cash Transfer (CCT) of the government this year.

However, SWS noted that the poverty rate remains three points above the 52-percent average for the four quarters of 2013.

ANTI-POVERTY EFFORTS

Presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda admitted the problem cannot be solved overnight but the government is determined to step up its anti-poverty efforts.

"We would always prefer to do better than what we have done now. And, therefore, the fight against poverty continues," Lacierda told reporters in the Palace. "Regardless of what the surveys say, we have a focused approach to addressing poverty issues," he added.

Presidential Communications Operations Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said the government shall continue to focus on intensifying programs for poverty reduction and social protection, including increasing the budget and coverage of the CCT program.

In the proposed P2.606-trillion national budget for 2015, Coloma said the government earmarked the biggest portion of the budget to social services at P967.9 billion or 37.2 percent.

"The proposed budget also focuses on delivering high impact projects in 44 provinces with high poverty magnitude where more job opportunities will be created: provinces with high poverty incidence that require adequate social safety nets and those which are vulnerable to natural calamities," he said.

In the latest survey conducted last September 26-29, 1,200 respondents were asked: "Saan po ninyo ilalagay ang inyong pamilya sa kard na ito? (Where would you place your family in this card)?" A show card with the choices "hindi mahirap" (not

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Endorsement: Measure L is a balanced plan to grant more power to Sacramento's mayors

By the Editorial Board (SacBee)

The character and leadership of the person we elect as Sacramento mayor matters as much as, if not more than, the powers vested in the office. That said, a mayor stands a stronger chance to succeed and move the city forward with the additional tools and authority granted under Measure L.

It is a balanced plan that would make city government more nimble and more accountable, and it merits voters' support.

For us, this momentous decision for Sacramento's future comes down to some key points. While the city generally has been blessed with good mayors, the proposed "strong mayor" system is more likely to attract the quality of people the city needs.

In the current system, the mayor commands the greatest attention and is the only person elected city-wide. But the mayor actually has less influence over the daily workings of City Hall than an unelected city manager, who answers to City Council members who sometimes put parochial concerns of their districts ahead of the overall city's best interests.

The council-manager form of government worked well when Sacramento was smaller; it makes less sense now and into the future. Other larger cities in California – Fresno, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego – have made the same transition, and none have gone back.

If Measure L is approved, the mayor would propose the city budget and could veto line items in the spending plan the council adopts. Starting Jan. 1, the mayor could also veto ordinances passed by the council. It would take a supermajority of at least six votes to override mayoral vetoes.

It's not as if council members would somehow lose their influence. They would still pick the city attorney, clerk and treasurer. The council, led by a new president, could still be a counterweight and safeguard if the mayor goes off track. As Fresno Mayor



Dr. Richard Pan state senate candidate with Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson and community leader Aida Azurin, Josie Paria and Maria Bahoric

Ashley Swearingin told us, the quickest way to unite a council is for a mayor to be too power hungry.

Under the new system, the city manager would become the city's chief administrator. The mayor would appoint that person, subject to confirmation by the council, but could remove the manager at will. City Manager John Shirey has done a good job and wisely agreed to extend his contract through at least June 30. If Measure L passes, we hope he and Mayor Kevin Johnson find a way for him to stay on.

The most compelling concern raised by Measure L opponents is that the voice of neighborhoods – fundamental to Sacramento – would be quieted at City Hall. That's why it's so important that another provision in the measure – a new neighborhood advisory committee – is done right, building upon many strong neighborhood associations and community groups.

There are a few flaws in Measure L that eventually would need fixing. With the mayor no longer on the council, there would be eight council members, making tied votes more likely. A ninth district – if one is created – would not happen until 2020 redistricting.

Still, Measure L is much improved from earlier "strong mayor" plans, especially the initial one that Johnson now concedes was a rash overreach. Consequently, the coalition behind the proposal

is much broader and includes business, labor and other groups.

A big part of what makes this plan better is that it includes several other significant changes to the city charter. Besides the neighborhood advisory council, it calls for an independent citizens commission to draw council districts and an independent analyst to watch the budget. It requires a "sunshine" ordinance to improve public access to city meetings and documents. And it requires an ethics code for elected officials and appointees and a new ethics committee to monitor compliance.

These are all important good-government reforms. It's an opportunity – and a risk – that their specifics are not spelled out in Measure L. The council – not the mayor – would be in charge of that work; residents should also get plenty of input.

It has taken years of political twists and turns and often overheated wrangling to finally and rightfully give voters their say on this issue. It's near impossible to separate the measure from Johnson, who has sought more power even before taking office in 2008. If it passes, he would reap its benefits for the remainder of his second term and all of a potential third before voters decide in 2020 whether to make the changes permanent.

Opponents say Johnson's own accomplishments – the planned new downtown arena being Exhibit A – show that the mayor's office doesn't need more power. But the arena is more the exception than the rule. While Johnson is hardly, as he told us, a "figurehead," he makes a forceful argument that the current system has stymied him on other priorities, such as fighting gangs.

In the end, however, this decision should not be about Mayor Johnson. Whether you love him or hate him, Measure L will be good for Sacramento.

The Sacramento Bee Endorses Darrell Fong For Assembly

In this race, Sacramento City Councilman Darrell Fong is the best choice.



Filipino community with Darrell Fong

Fong is facing two experienced opponents – Elk Grove Vice Mayor Jim Cooper, who ran unsuccessfully for Sacramento

County sheriff four years ago, and Sacramento City Unified school board member Diana Rodriguez. Both are Democrats, as is Fong.

The top two finishers on June 3 move on to the runoff; the seat almost certainly will be won by a Democrat in November. The district starts in the Pocket/Greenhaven neighborhoods of Sacramento, then runs south to Elk Grove, Galt and Lodi. Richard Pan is giving up the seat to run for state Senate against Dickinson.

The Bee's editorial board has not always agreed with Fong during his single term on the council. He has been more obstructionist than helpful in his opposition to the city's deal for the arena, for example.

But Fong took a leadership role by pushing to extend a bicycle

trail along the Sacramento River through the Pocket, an important step for the region but not one that was popular among some of his constituents.

Fong, who served 30 years with the Sacramento Police Department, would bring a much needed cop's-eye view of criminal justice issues to the Democratic-controlled Legislature. He displayed a welcome independent streak by voting to cut the department's budget in 2011 after concluding that the police union had failed to agree to sufficient contract concessions.

As a result, police unions are lining up behind Cooper, who appears to be his main opponent.

Fong's common sense and unpretentiousness would help a Legislature sorely lacking in both.

Social Security Announces 1.7 Percent Benefit Increase for 2015

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for nearly 64 million Americans will increase 1.7 percent in 2015, the Social Security Administration announced today. The 1.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits that more than 58 million Social Security beneficiaries receive in January 2015. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 31, 2014. The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Some other

changes that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$118,500 from \$117,000. Of the estimated 168 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2015, about 10 million will pay higher taxes because of the increase in the taxable maximum. Information about Medicare changes for 2015 is available at www.Medicare.gov. The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.

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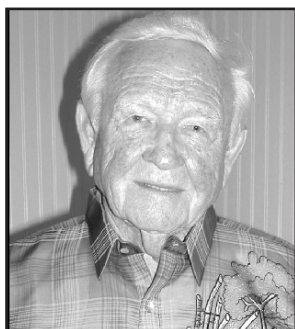
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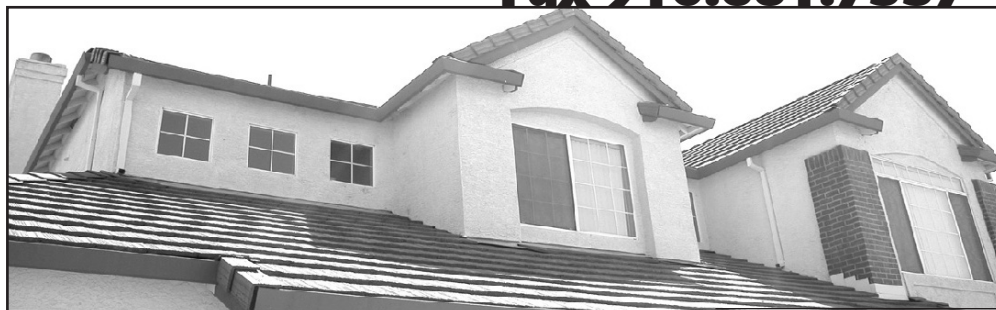


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A Celebration of Filipino American History at the Capitol



By Carle and Sarah Enloe

On October 22, 2014, Assemblymember Dr. Richard Pan, the Office of Assemblymember Rob Bonta, and the Filipino American Community of Sacramento celebrated the Filipino American History Month at the Capitol.

Food and Refreshments were served; a short film on Filipino Americans "Beyond Lumpia and that Bamboo Dance" was presented by Mel Orpilla, National President of Filipino American National Historical Society.

Included in his presentation was Assembly Bill 123, which was authored by Assemblymember Rob Bonta, would require schools to modify their social science curriculums to include instruction on the contributions of Filipino Americans to the farm labor movement. The stories of great Filipino Americans such as Larry Itliong, Pete Velasco and Philip Vera Cruz, and their leadership roles in critical turning points in the farm labor movement, should be learned by every child in our state. To ensure these important stories are not forgotten, it is important to formally add this history to the public school curricu-



Photos by Sarah Enloe

lums. Consul Reginald Bernabe read a very profound message from the Consul General of San Francisco on the Filipino American contributions to the farm labor movement.

The Filipino Community

Leaders were invited back to the Assembly Room where they were presented a Certificate of Recognition. After the presentations there were many Kodak moments. Congratulations to the Filipino Community

Pinay takes helm of US naval command

One of the few females holding a high-ranking position in the United States Navy is a Filipino.

Born in Hawaii to Filipino parents, US Navy Rear Admiral Bette Bolivar was raised in a traditional Filipino family.

"Ang tatay ko ay taga Bicol at ang nanay ko ay taga Pangasinan (My father is from Bicol and my mother hails from Pangasinan)," Bolivar told The STAR in fluent Filipino.

Bolivar came from humble beginnings, the second of four children of Teddy Sereno Bolivar and Virginia Dolor Bolivar. Her father joined the US Navy as a steward and retired as a chief petty officer after 22 years in the service.

The first woman to assume the position of Commander Joint Region Marianas, Bolivar also holds the distinction of being the first female commander of Navy Region Northwest.

She is also the first woman to hold a number of other important positions. She is the US Defense Representative for Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau, and Commander of Naval Forces Marianas.

As US Defense Representative for the Marianas Region, Bolivar reports to Admiral Samuel Locklear, Commander of US Pacific Command, and Admiral William French, Commander of Naval Installation Command. She also plays an important role in the Joint Interagency Task Force as Commander of Task Force West.

Bolivar's area of responsibility includes the US territory of Guam, which is the closest US naval base to Philippines. Her command plays a pivotal role in shaping US policy in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in the face of President's Obama's "pivot" to the Asia Pacific.

Wearing daddy's hat

As a young child, Bolivar would tag along when her father went to work on military bases. She had fun wearing her daddy's Navy hat, but in those days she had no idea that someday she would wear the same hat



Rear Admiral Bette Bolivar

with the same great pride.

Her early exposure to the military community played a huge part in her career choice, but she thought of joining the service as payback for giving her father the opportunity to become a member of the US Navy.

"My father didn't serve as a warrior like me. Back in those days, Filipinos, African Americans and Chamorros could only enter the service as a steward or cook. I feel like I have to give back to the Navy because they gave my father a chance," she said.

Although her father inspired her, Bolivar said the decision to join the Navy was her own and was not something imposed by her parents.

Her older sister has a career outside of the military in Hawaii while her two younger brothers both served in the Navy. One is now a veteran and the other a retired senior chief petty officer residing in Annapolis.

She said her father used to call her the "tomboy" of the family because her parents wanted a boy as a second child. At that time, ultrasound was not available to determine a child's gender but their doctor kept telling her father that their next baby would be a boy because the heartbeat was so strong.

She confessed she knew early on that she would be in the military like her father, but this early vision was almost sidetracked by the thought of studying law at the University of Hawaii.

Bolivar was so determined that she had decided that if she couldn't make it to the Naval Academy she would enlist to join the Navy.

Her perseverance was tested in the academy, not because she was a woman but because the four-year training and education for future Navy officers was difficult

and rigorous.

Bolivar graduated from Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree in Oceanography. She later completed her Master of Science in Management from Troy State University.

Her first tour was as fleet and message center officer of the US Naval Communication Station in San Miguel, Philippines. She recorded remarkable achievements in various positions, including assignments in explosive ordnance disposal, diving and salvaging units, specialties normally held by men.

As special operations officer, Bolivar served as the director of ammunition offload from USS Cole after the 2000 terrorist attack in Yemen. She became the fourth woman to take command of a Navy diving and salvage ship when she was assigned as the commanding officer of USS Salvor and led her crew through a six-month Western Pacific deployment.

Graduating from the Naval Academy, Bolivar knew that she wanted to be a diver. However, for every four or five openings for men to become a diver there is only one reserved for a woman.

The first time she applied, she wasn't accepted, and her perseverance was tested when she was rejected a second time.

"I kept applying and applying, and they kept saying no. I was very persistent. I told myself if they don't accept me on my third application I would try something else," she said. Fortunately, she made it on her third try.

In 2001, she was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame, the international honor society of divers who made outstanding contributions to the exploration, understanding, safety and enjoyment of the underwater world.

Bolivar's passion for diving gave her one of her most memorable and challenging assignments. As the commanding officer of USS Salvor, her vessel and crew were tasked to stop in Guam and recover/clear stranded vessels in and around Apra Harbor after Typhoon Paka devastated the harbor and the island.

Bolivar has received numerous medals, awards and commendations, including the prestigious CNO Pacific Fleet Finalist for the Vice Admiral James Stockdale Leadership Award.

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Filipinos have worst health habits in Asia, says study

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

Filipinos have among the worst health habits in Asia, according to a new research from Sun Life Financial Asia covering eight major markets in Asia Pacific.



The study showed that about half of Filipinos sleep less than six hours a day – the highest in the region – with 45 percent admitting to unhealthy eating habits, also the highest in the region.

Over 60 percent of Filipinos also said they have not been exercising regularly, exceeding the regional average of 56 percent, and almost at the same level as Hong Kong, Thailand and Malaysia.

The Sun Life Financial Asia Health Index, a regional report that covered the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore and Thailand, likewise showed that Filipinos had the highest levels of family history of chronic illness (19 percent versus the average of 13 percent).

They also scored highest in terms of largely preventable health conditions experienced by family members, such as diabetes (47 percent versus the region's average of 32 percent) and heart disease (43 percent compared to 23 percent for the region).

But Filipinos also showed the highest motivation to attain and maintain a healthy lifestyle with a score of 86.8 on the Asia Health Index, which measures attitudes, perceptions and behavior relating to health, lifestyle, priorities, healthcare access and personal finances, outpacing the region's average of 80.1.

Sun Life Financial Philippines President Riza Mantaring said in a briefing on Thursday there has been a "disconnect" between what Filipinos wanted to do about their health – like exercise more and eat a more balanced diet – and what they have actually been doing.

"While people want to make changes in areas of their lives that are largely within their control, such as exercise, nutrition and stress management – that desire hasn't yet been successfully translated into action that

leads to sustained behavior change," Mantaring said.

Perhaps one reason behind the wide gap between knowledge and action is that Filipinos are the most positive about their physical health (77 percent versus 62 percent for the region) and mental health (81 percent versus 64 percent).

They also outperformed the region when it came to relationship with family, level of happiness and level of energy.

Hong Kong and Singapore, on the other hand, were the least positive about their physical, mental and emotional health.

Singaporeans and Hong Kong citizens were also the most dissatisfied about their level of energy, according to the inaugural study of Sun Life.

The Sun Life Asia Health Index was based on the findings of a survey conducted between Aug. 21 and Sept. 11, 2014 among 5,000 middle-income Asians from the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Singapore and Thailand, aged 25 and 55.

The sample population was questioned on their attitudes toward healthy and active living, health concerns for the future and expectations on access to vital healthcare.

Mantaring said the survey findings for the region revealed the emergence of Asia's so-called "Generation O" – a demographic that has been "overworked, overweight and generally overwhelmed."

Filipinos said their main barriers to living a healthy and active lifestyle were lack of health-related activities that interested them, and dearth of good sports and recreational facilities.

For the region, the main reasons cited for failure to lead a healthier lifestyle were lack of time due to work, lack of motivation and distractions, such as

watching TV and surfing the Internet.

Being overweight and obese was also cited as the main personal health issue hounding Asians. Obesity levels in the Philippines, however, are still below the region's average, and well behind the numbers in Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

The Sun Life Asia study also indicated that while Filipinos were the most optimistic in the region, they were also the most concerned about the cost of health care upon their retirement, followed by Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

This is why Sun Life in the Philippines plans to roll out a new line of products that will help cover health care costs.

At the same time, Mantaring said that the insurance company would invest in programs that would encourage Filipinos to turn their plans to lead a healthier lifestyle into action.

"As part of our call to the 'Generation O' of the Philippines to convert awareness to action through better, healthier choices, we at Sun Life continue to explore ways to raise awareness about wellness and health-enhancing behavior toward improved physical and financial well-being," Mantaring said.

"It's time to embrace opportunity and to work together toward better outcomes all around."

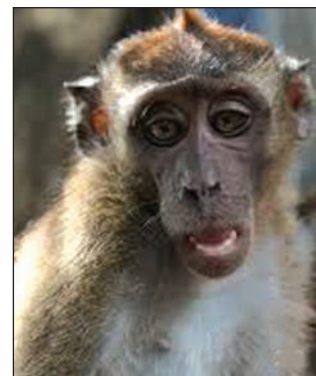
Philippine Monkey One of the Sources of Ebola Virus

Synergy



By Gabriel Ortigoza

When I was a child growing up in the Philippines I remember my neighbors have monkeys as their pet. In fact, my mother's younger brother used to catch exotic animals such as monkeys, snakes, monkey-eating-eagles, wild pigs, etc. in the wilderness of Dugong and Liguasan Marsh.



It was common at that time for other Filipinos living in the rural areas and even in the urban and suburbs to have primates kept at their yards. Some monkeys were tamed and enjoyed the privileged of being cuddled like human babies. Untamed monkeys sometimes attacked and bit people including their keepers.

There is a village in my province called New Israel. That place is located at the foothill of Mt. Apo, the highest mountain in the country. In that place you can find throngs of monkeys mingling with people during daytime. At sunset, they go back to their homes uphill. The occurrence is considered a major part of the attractions, aside from the majestic view of the mountain, the village could offer to its local and foreign tourists. No report of Ebola virus that time.

When I was doing a research on Ebola to be included in my department's quarterly newsletter I found out that one of the five subspecies of this dreaded virus is from the Philippines. Yes, our beloved Philippines - Pearl of the Orient Seas.

Here is what the Center for Disease Control (CDC) says: "A host of similar species is prob-

ably associated with Reston virus, which was isolated from infected cynomolgous monkeys imported to the United States and Italy from the Philippines. Several workers in the Philippines and in US holding facility outbreaks became infected with the virus, but did not become ill."

According to CDC, four of the five have caused disease in humans: Ebola virus (Zaire ebolavirus); Sudan virus (Sudan ebolavirus); Tai Forest virus (Tai Forest ebolavirus, formerly Côte d'Ivoire ebolavirus); and Bundibugyo virus (Bundibugyo ebolavirus). The fifth, Reston virus (Reston ebolavirus), has caused disease in nonhuman primates, but not in humans. Four of the five subtypes occur in an animal host native to Africa.

The first Ebola virus species was discovered sometime in 1976 near Ebola River in Congo. Thus the name Ebola Virus. Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever is one of the viral hemorrhagic fevers. It is a fatal disease in humans and nonhuman primates with a mortality rate of up to 90%.

CDC researchers believe that Ebola virus is animal-borne with bats being the most likely reservoir. The virus is transmitted via direct contact with the blood or secretions of an infected

person and exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected secretions.

Signs and symptoms of Ebola Virus according to CDC includes the following: Fever, Headache, Joint and muscle aches, Weakness, Diarrhea, Vomiting, Stomach pain, and Lack of appetite. Some infected persons may experience a Rash, Red Eyes, Hiccups, Cough, Sore throat, Chest pain, Difficulty breathing, Difficulty swallowing, and Bleeding inside and outside of the body.

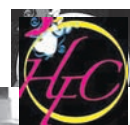
CDC laboratory tests used in diagnosis include: Within a few days after symptoms begin: Antigen-capture enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) testing, IgM ELISA, Polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and Virus isolation.

CDC recommends the following treatment for Ebola infected persons: balancing the patient's fluids and electrolytes, maintaining their oxygen status and blood pressure, and treating them for any complicating infections.

Protective techniques include: wearing of protective clothing (such as masks, gloves, gowns, and goggles) the use of infection-control measures (such as complete equipment sterilization and routine use of disinfectant) isolation of Ebola HF patients from contact with unprotected persons.

Finally, I would like to ask the public: How ready are we for Ebola Virus?

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PerryScope

By Perry Diaz

When is sovereignty sovereign?

The recent brouhaha over the killing of Jeffrey “Jennifer” Laude, a Filipino transgender, allegedly by an American marine in a motel in Olongapo has once again brought to the fore the issue of “sovereignty.” Indeed, it’s so convenient to use “sovereignty” for whatever nebulous issues people are complaining about.

It did not then come as a surprise that when the news hit the fan, Filipinos on the left of the political spectrum took to the streets in protest of America’s violation of the Philippines’ sovereignty. But what had one U.S. marine private done to violate the Philippines’ sovereignty?

While it is sad and reprehensible that an American military serviceman has taken the life of a Filipino on Philippine soil, there is an incomprehensible presumption that such incidents are an affront to our sovereignty and a violation of our sovereign rights. And this begs the question: When is sovereignty sovereign?

According to Oxford Dictionary, “sovereignty” is: (1) supreme power or authority; (2) the authority of a state to govern itself or another state; and (3) a self-governing state. It defines “sovereign” (adjective) as possessing supreme or ultimate power. In simplistic terms, the Philippines is a sovereign republic capable of self-government and possesses supreme authority to govern itself.

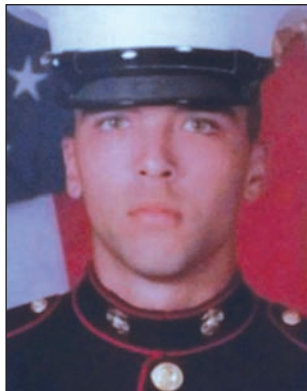


Subic Bay

But more often than not, “sovereignty” has become a catch-all for everything – or anything – that involves U.S. military personnel in situations that are perceived as violative of our sovereignty. All too often, it involved American servicemen who ran into trouble in a sleazy bar on the outskirts of an American base.

“A date gone wrong”

And that’s what happened on the night of October 11, 2014. U.S. marine Pfc. Joseph Scott Pemberton, who was with other servicemen on furlough from ship duty, met Laude at the Ambyanz, a disco bar in Olongapo City.



Pfc. Joseph Scott Pemberton

Before long, Pemberton and Laude left the bar and checked in at a nearby motel. Thirty minutes later, Pemberton left the room and never returned. Later, a housekeeper found Laude’s dead body in the bathroom wrapped in a bed sheet.

A police report indicated that Laude apparently drowned in the toilet. Two condoms were recovered from the bathroom and DNA tests are now being done.

But what happened next was what caused the leftwing to go berserk: the U.S. took custody of

Pemberton. The leftists demanded the scrapping of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). They claimed that VFA was lopsided in favor of the Americans.

Signed in 1999 by both countries, VFA says that the Philippines can prosecute American servicemen in a Philippine court of law, but the U.S. has custody over them “from commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings.” But once a verdict of “guilty” is meted out, a convicted serviceman must serve the sentence in a Philippine prison. Fair enough?

Freeport while the case is pending before a Philippine court.

A question of custody

Jeffrey-Laude-anti-US-rallyThe leftwing said that the “custody” provision of VFA violates the sovereignty of the Philippines. But didn’t the Philippine treaty negotiators agree to the “custody” provision, though? They knew that it was a sensitive political issue that could ignite emotional outburst from the Left, yet the negotiators agreed to that provision.

Thus, the “custody” issue became a cause célèbre for nationalists, leftwing activists, communists, political opportunists, and anybody in between who harbors a grudge against Americans. And like mushrooms, anti-American rallies sprouted overnight demanding justice for Laude and the termination of VFA and EDCA.

It’s interesting to note that just a year after the U.S. sent an aircraft carrier to Leyte to provide humanitarian aid to the victims of Typhoon Yolanda, all the good deeds that America did to help thousands of typhoon survivors were rendered meaningless. And all that matters now is the “illegal” custody of U.S. Marine Pfc.

Joseph Scott Pemberton, who he didn’t do anything.



Artificial island under construction by China on Mabini (Johnson South) Reef in the Kalayaan islands.

Chinese imperialism

Now that the leftwing coalition has once again showed its true political color at the slightest tremor in U.S.-Philippine relations, they have turned a blind eye to what is happening to the Philippines’ offshore territories of Panganiban (Mischief) Reef, Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal and the Kalayaan Group of Islands in the Spratly Archipelago.

When China grabbed Panganiban Reef in 1994 — two years after the Philippine Senate unceremoniously evicted the U.S. bases — nobody lifted a finger to stop the Chinese incursion into Philippine territory.



Artificial island under construction by China on Mabini (Johnson South) Reef in the Kalayaan islands.

In 2012, China took possession of Panatag Shoal and nobody did anything to stop it. Interestingly, just two weeks before the Chinese land grab, President Benigno “P-Noy” Aquino III vowed to protect Panatag at all cost during his State of the Nation Address (SONA). Well, China called his bluff and

use as unsinkable “aircraft carriers” to project Chinese power all the way to the Second Island Chain from Japan to Guam to Papua New Guinea and Australia. With five artificial islands with airstrips capable of accommodating bombers and fighter jets, the Philippines would be helplessly indefensible from Chinese invasion. The only deterrence the Philippines has against foreign invasion is American military presence on Philippine soil. But that is iffy right now.

In my article, “What price sovereignty?” (January 20, 2014), I wrote: “Would the Philippines disallow American military presence needed to protect the sovereignty that we hold so dearly? But without U.S. presence, our sovereignty would be exposed to Chinese imperialistic advances. It’s a dilemma that the Philippines has to grapple with. Simply put, the Philippines cannot have it both ways. Sometimes you got to give a little to gain strategic advantage. That’s geopolitics.”

So, when then is sovereignty sovereign? Sovereignty is sovereign when a state has the capability to protect and defend its independence and territorial integrity by whatever means.

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War veteran, 98, recalls MacArthur's landing in Leyte 70 years ago today

By Rizal Obanil

He lost his wife after a bomb from Japanese forces hit their town capital. He had to drink from murky puddles to survive during the second World War. In his company, belonging to the 1st Regiment of the Eastern Visayas Command under then Colonel Alejandro Almendras, he lost four of his fellow soldiers.

But, he said, when he saw General Douglas MacArthur, President Sergio Osmeña, and Carlos P. Romulo walk side by side on the beach of Palo, Leyte, 70 years ago, that one brief moment was worth all the sacrifices he had made as a soldier.

"Sa wakas malaya na!" (Freedom at last!), said Filipino veteran Pedro Echances, now 98.

Seventy years since MacArthur landed waded ashore in Palo Leyte, the memories come flashing back to Lolo Pedro as if it had all happened yesterday.

When General MacArthur came, he said, the 1st and 2nd Regiments, made of six battalions, all saluted his triumphant return. As MacArthur finally set foot on the beach, Echances recounted, they clapped and cheered.



WWII VETERAN PEDRO ECHANCES: 'When I saw MacArthur... (I knew it was) freedom at last!'

In an interview at a hotel in Tacloban City, Leyte, where he aended the 70th anniversary of the Leyte Landing, Echances recalled: "Grade seven ako noon nung pinatawag kami sa Camp Murphy." He was assisted in the interview by his daughters Celerina Echances, 65, and Augustina, 60. They translated for him as he could not hear very well and could converse more freely in their native tongue.

He said remembers that the camp was located in Pasig. It was there where, he said, underwent five and a half months of training, after which he and his group returned to Leyte.

He recalled his hardship as a soldier. He was assigned to patrol their area and they sometimes engaged the Japanese in fire-fights. They crawled on the ground and kept low to avoid detection and sniper fire.

To satisfy his thirst, he often had to drink water found in the fields. Celerina recalled that at one time, when she reminded him to refrain from drinking straight from the faucet as it might not be safe, he answered back: "Sus, kung dati, kahit yung nilakaran nga ng kalabaw iniinom ko e, di naman ako nagkasakit, e yan pa kayang galing sa gripo na malinis naman? (If I didn't get sick from drinking water that a carabao had stepped

on, I certainly wouldn't get sick from drinking water from a faucet)."

Celerina said that her father and mother were separated by the war. As he fought the Japanese, her mother served at the town hall, attending to the wounded and the sick. She died when a bomb hit the town hall. Eventually, after the war, their father remarried at the age of 52.

Towards the end of the war, Echances found himself with the Filipino soldiers assigned to help secure General MacArthur's and President Osmeña's safe return. They secured the beach, despite continued bombing from the Japanese forces.

During our interview, Lolo Pedro recalled the names of his superior officers. "Malakas pa yan! Sharp pa din! (He's still strong! He still has a sharp mind), Celerina beamed with pride.

She said, though, that her father is saddened by younger generations who are oblivious to the sacrifices made by him and other veterans.

"He receives P6,000 a month for his pension," she said.

When I heard her say that, I remembered a scene from the movie "Saving Private



Ryan," where a general read a letter written by then US President Abraham Lincoln to a mother in Boston who had lost five of her children in the civil war.

The letter read: "I feel how weak and fruitless it must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice."

Perhaps, when the youth of today, so detached from what Lolo Pedro and his generation did for our country, look back at our history, they should do so carefully as not to belittle the sacrifices they made.

At the end of the interview, I shook Lolo Pedro's hand, then offered a salute as best I could.

I told him: "Salamat po, Lolo, kung di po sa mga katulad n'yo, hindi po kami malaya ngayon (Thank you Lolo Pedro. If it were not for those like you, we all wouldn't be free today)."

VETERANS DAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2014 ONE MOMENT TO REMEMBER

By Glenn D. Carrasca
United States Air Force Retired

We are a nation so free that we sometimes take this privilege quite for granted. The hard edge of gratitude has given way to soft, simple-minded pursuits of happiness. We gleefully pick the fruits of freedom, often without pausing to tend or pay tribute to the roots which bare them. We should be able to say: "I know why I am free and know who sacrificed their lives for me."

During this Veterans Day we direct all attentions in one great moment so those fallen in service to this country -- giving the ultimate sacrifice to establish and preserve our freedom and privileges.



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October- The Filipino American History Month

By Faina E. Abaya

It is with great sadness that many Filipinos in Sacramento have not heard some important events that have transpired in the course of time that shaped the role of the Filipino workers in their fight for better treatment and equal opportunity just like any other workers enjoy.

Indeed, our history is replete with so many struggles to unshackle ourselves from oppression, injustices and brutalities against colonial intruders that lasted for so many years. Yet, even after we had successfully freed ourselves from such tyrannical rules, we found that we were not still treated as others equal in the work place.

Paradoxically, such unequal treatment happened in the country where labor had been respected as a way to elevate the dignity of the workers whatever the nature of the jobs that they do. Such event happens so many years ago but it is just fitting and proper to always remember such circumstance as a reminder to be always vigilant, so that it will not be repeated, not only against Filipinos but to all races.

The month of October was designated as the Filipino American History Month initiated by the Filipino American National Historical Society in 1988 which was subsequently recognized nationally through the Act of the United States Congress in 2009.

The month long October celebration is to bring into fore the struggles and pioneering spirit of our descendants who came before us in the United States. The event, likewise, showed the Filipino people's great tradition, culture and heritage in the United States as they interact with diverse communities.

In cooperation and coordination with major Filipino American community organizations in Sacramento, the annual celebration was observed on October 11, 2014 at the Rizal Community Center on Florin Mall Drive, Sacramento. The program which was emceed by Josie Patria was focused on the lives of two Filipino American labor leaders Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz who were able to play important roles to change the plight of farm workers during their time.

The national Anthems of the United States and Philippines were sung by Eddie Aducayen while the invocation was rendered by Letty O'Quinn. The president of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 604 said that the resiliency



and hardworking traits of the Filipino workers will always be maintained. She prayed that such honorable traits be emulated by the coming generation of Filipino American workers just like our pioneering farm workers who were able to overcome challenges for better working condition.

Aida Azurin, the president of Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity delivered the welcome address as she expressed her profound gratitude to all the sponsoring community organizations in Sacramento for their usual cooperation in holding the Filipino American History Month.

In conjunction with this event two labor leaders Larry Itliong and

Philip Vera Cruz were remembered and honored by bestowing awards in their names to deserving men who showed the same courage and leadership just like their predecessors in the field of labor movement. West Sacramento's Mayor Christopher Cabaldon and An Chie Tsou presented the Larry Itliong Warrior Award to Johnny Itliong while the Philip Vera Cruz Philosopher Award was received by Sid Valledor.

Larry Itliong, a militant labor

leader who was also fondly called the "Seven Fingers" because he lost three fingers in an Alaskan cannery accident was actually a self schooled man however he was a linguistic having learned to speak Spanish, Cantonese, Japanese aside from English and several Filipino dialects. Larry arrived in the United States at a very young age but he already embroiled himself in several labor movements for the best interest of the labor workers. He rose to prominence when he initiated together with other leaders several farm strikes that eventually resulted in the improvement of the condition of the farm workers. He was also known as one of the fathers of the west

coast labor movement.

Like Larry Itliong, his contemporary Philip Vera Cruz was also a militant labor leader. He was a long time vice president of the United Farm Workers where Cesar Chavez was the president but because of personal conflict with Chavez in 1977, Philip Vera Cruz was replaced with another Mexican which ended the participation of the Filipino farm workers with the UFW. Thus, relegating into the limbo the role of the Filipino labor leaders particularly Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz the many labor strikes that they led or participated especially the Delano Strike in 1965 that was initiated by the Filipino Farm workers which started it all.

Sad to say, that while Cesar Chavez has been internationally recognized as a labor leader, our very own Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz were only known by very few, despite, the fact that the three of them were contemporaries and had an equal participations at the height of the labor movements that eventually changed the plight of our farm workers. Many believe that it is about time to give due recognition to Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz their important roles in that stage of our history.

For the first time in the community, a Balagtas (Poetic debate) was presented by the UPAASV to honor the great Filipino literary laureate Francisco Balagtas (Baltazar) the author of Florante at Laura. The debate was delivered in Tagalog to resolve a proposition "Kasama Ang Biyanan Sa Bahay" (Living with In-Law). The casts were Beep Alo (Stage manager), Susan Castillo (Project manager), Pete Dela Cruz (arbiter) Dr. Fred Aquino and Lilia Rivera were the judges.

The protagonists of the debate were Lea Samson (Poetess) who took the affirmative side while Noven Cadiz (Poet) was on the negative side. The lively debate was immensely enjoyed by everyone especially those who have seen the Balagtas for the first time. After the Poet and Poetess have defended their arguments the result of the debate was tied and both of them were given the laurel wreath like crown symbolizing their well accepted performance.

Community personalities who were seen enjoying the evening were; Joe Rivera, Dave and Dinah San Pedro, Joe and Carina Gonzalez, Leila Ferreira, Mercy Guerrero, Cynthia Bonta, Alex and Ling Avera, Aurora Ramos, Dick and Memie Weitzenberg, Maria Bahoric, Lourdes Velasco, Virgie Monteagodo, Lolita Roque, Remy Mangosing, Esther Mros, Linda Gibson, Segundo Azurin, Jun Abaya and many others.

Sinag-Tala's 25th Anniversary

By Dale Esperante

“Sinag-tala Filipino Theater and Performing Arts Association” (SFTPPA) held their Silver Anniversary and Recognition Awards Night at the Double Tree Hotel on 18 October 2014. Sinag-tala is “a Tagalog word for Starlight.” It is a charitable organization that nurtures and enriches the artistic and cultural flair of participating individuals. Anyone who is willing to audition may participate in performances. Behind the scene participants need not audition, they will essentially be the support group. “Participation is open to all interested children 4 years and older, teens, and adults. All ethnicities, racial backgrounds, and skill levels are welcome. No prior experience or training is required, and no one is turned away.” “Each year, the Theatrical Revue offers 12 weeks of free training in basic artistic and business aspects of the theater and performing arts.”

Sinag-tala’s anniversary celebration proudly showcased their experienced members. During dinner and before the awards presentation, the audience was entertained by members of Sinag-tala’s talented cast and crew. A variety of melodious tunes, in Filipino and English, were professionally sung by members and visiting alumni. Philippine cultural dances were performed classically by the younger members of the cast, most of whom were probably born or raised here in the United States.

Celebrated during the nationally recognized Philippine American History Month in October, Sinag-tala truly plays a significant role in the cultural performing arts history. “Many Sinag-tala alumni have since become arts educators and scholars, professional artists, continuing students of the arts, entertainment promoters, competition champions and founders or leaders of their own performing troupes.”

The program of the evening was masterfully ran by Mr. Eddie Aducaen. To start the evening, he introduced a trio of Kristina Garcia, Amaya Marquez, and Apollross Reyes. The young ladies harmonized America’s Star Spangled Banner beautifully. Sarah Sy followed with a lovely rendition of the Philippines’ Lupang Hinirang. The religious blessing of the evening was delivered by Father Jovito Rata, the Pastor of St. Rose Parish in Sacramento. President Cora Polante-Ramirez welcomed everyone with a message that the “highlight of tonight’s event is to recognize the proud accomplishments of artists, community leaders and community organization in the Theater and Performing Arts and their role in shaping through study and performance, the history and legacy of Sinag-Tala.” “Uncle Sonny,” the indefatigable Mr. Sonny Alforque followed the president. He acknowledged the presence of Honorable Roger Dickinson. He also acknowledged a contingent of Sacramento Fil-Am community leaders who came to show their support.



ered by Father Jovito Rata, the Pastor of St. Rose Parish in Sacramento. President Cora Polante-Ramirez welcomed everyone with a message that the “highlight of tonight’s event is to recognize the proud accomplishments of artists, community leaders and community organization in the Theater and Performing Arts and their role in shaping through study and performance, the history and legacy of Sinag-Tala.” “Uncle Sonny,” the indefatigable Mr. Sonny Alforque followed the president. He acknowledged the presence of Honorable Roger Dickinson. He also acknowledged a contingent of Sacramento Fil-Am community leaders who came to show their support.

Prior to the presentation of the awards, the audience was entertained by the following artists: Kristina Garcia, Apollross Reyes, Raeselle Lao, Sinag-tala touring Ensemble, Sarah Sy, Eddie Aducaen, Lorraine de Arco, Kapitbahay Line Dancers, and Sounds by “D’ Sound Conneczion.”

The B.J. Alisago, Jr. Award is “a salute to Sinag-tala alumni who have grown bodies of work that are not only of high artistic quality but best represent the Sinag-tala legacy of nurturing artists and cultural preservationists.” The recipients: Lorraine de Arco, Cheena Chun, Gladys Imperio-Acosta, Joseph Larot, Rogeniv Mamauag, Conrad Panganiban.”

The Balcony Award will express our gratitude for the extraordinary roles that

specific entities have played in shaping Sinag-tala history.” The recipients: Dick Mazon, and Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento Josie Patria An excerpt from President Polante-Ramirez’ message: “This year marks the 25th year of the Sinag-tala Theatrical Revue. We are very honored that you could all join us for this milestone celebration to honor our ‘Bayani ng Kulturang Pilipino’, Uncle Sonny and Auntie Letty Alforque.” For the benefit of our readers who aren’t familiar with the Filipino language, the award presented to Uncle and Auntie Alforque translates to “Hero of Philippine Culture.”

Sonny Alforque directed his first Sinag-tala production on 8 Dec 1990. He has been Sinag-tala’s only Artistic Director since 1990. He was the Artistic Director from 1990 through 2003, while Sinag-tala was a Philippine National Day Association (PNDA) undertaking. He remained in the same capacity when the SFTPPA took the program under its wing in 2004, and will continue to do so through the end of 2014. Director Sonny is retiring at the end of this year. He will help the SFTPPA in a limited capacity if requested. When I asked if he will remain as a consultant, his answer was, “I will be as retired as I can be.” And deservingly so, if I may add.

Continued on page 13

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Sinag-tala 25th Anniversary

UPAASV Gloriously Celebrates 7th Year Anniversary

By Jose P. Abaya, Jr.

They stand tall and think big, of course, over the ordinary. They despised and never glorified mediocrity. They are the cream of Philippine intelligentsia and as always they are on top of their respective professions, so they think. We beg your pardon but let us give way to the members of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity on their 7th year anniversary celebration.

Whatever you think about them, every alumni association of the University of the Philippines the world over has one foremost mission among others for the betterment of their country and Alma Mater. The alumni of this great university of learning are unbending on their meritorious objective to return favor to their Alma Mater, obviously, the premier and Mecca of educational learning in the country, where they acquired the skill of their professions that make the kind of lives they are now enjoying today.

They are the men and women who passed the same portals where their predecessors went through producing presidents of the country, justices of the Supreme Court and to all functionaries of the three branches of the government. For them the future holds the same line of leaders that come through from their alma mater which they take the responsibility to share whatever assistance that they can muster for the education of the coming generation of national builders and leaders.

It is significant that the October



4, 2014 event held at the Clarion Inn, Sacramento headed by the amiable and energetic lady President Beatriz Alo of the Association was geared towards the fulfillment of that commendable mission to augment whatever funds the government has allocated for the scholarship grants of deserving students.

As early as 5:00 PM, the members and guests were now queuing at the entrance of the Ballroom of the hotel showcasing the elegance of the ladies in their Filipina dresses and evening gowns while the gentlemen showed their sartorial splendor in Barong Tagalog and tailored suits. Such array of radiant beauty was led, who else, than the preeminent lady president in her blue floor length gown with sparkling beads on the upper part accentuating her impeccable fair complexion and strong personal-

ity.

The celebration was formally opened by the presentation of both the American and Philippine colors briskly executed by the Lt Col. Gerard Guevara with retired officers Major Al Guevara, Capt. Fred Aquino, NCOS Ato De la Cruz and Joe Gonzalez in their splendid regalia uniforms representing the branches of the United State Military Service.



Photos by Faina Abaya

The national anthems of both countries were ably sang by the Sinagtala ensemble composed of Apol Reyes, Tintin Garcia, Amaya Maquez, Alan Limos, Xavier Limos and Andre Limos. While the invocation was rendered by Pete Generao invoking the guidance of the Divine Providence for the success of the event and His continues blessing to everyone who have contributed to attain its objective.

Immediately, thereafter, the sumptuous dinner was served with appetizing salad and personal food preferences of either salmon or beef steak mixed with assorted veggies and proper

sauce. While the attendees who swelled to more than 160 were enjoying dinner, entertainment was provided by Giesselle Ann Castillo singing the theme song of the night "Our Dream, Our Future" with guitar accompaniment by Josh Cosico and backed up by UPAASV singers.

At this juncture, the sequence of the program was altered to give way to an important ceremony, the bestowing of the "Distinguished Alumnus award" to Alcide "Sonny" Alforque, the founder, CEO and artistic director of Sinagtala Filipino Theater and Performing Arts Association. The award was in recognition of his "25 years of outstanding service and unflinching dedication in promoting, enhancing, teaching Filipino music, dance and literature, thus enriching the cultural heritage of the Filipino-American community of Sacramento and vicinity" The award was personally received by the recipient together with wife Letty who also received a special appreciation gift from the UPAASV.

The usual dashing and energetic Dr. Fred Aquino took over the role of Sonny Alforque who was politely relieved from being the

Emcee to enjoy with family and friends the music and dance of the evening. It was not a complicated change of the program because it was just the transfer of responsibility of one community icon to another with valid reason.

UPAASV president Beatriz C. Alo delivered her opening remarks expressing her profound gratitude to everyone for having graciously accepted their invitations to enjoy the night with them. She likewise added that the student loan program is available to all students in all the campuses of the University as a respond to the underprivileged students in the Philippines. Furthermore, she also said that in "Sacramento we support community and civic projects, initiated the Museo Pilipino project to exhibit Philippine traditional, historical, and cultural artifacts for the education and appreciation of the diverse communities of Sacramento and beyond".

San Francisco Deputy Consul General Jaimon Ascalon was introduced by Dr. Fred Aquino as the night's guest speaker who said that he was deeply impressed of the UPAASV commitment to the student loan program to help financially strapped students to pursue their dreams through education for better future. Indeed, our youth of today who will hold the mantle of responsibility in the future should be properly guided and educated because without such proper caring, they will become like a swelling of waters of flood that could destroy everything in its course.

As expected, the evening was filled up with music, dance and raffles for the enjoyment and excitement of everyone. The music was ably rendered by the River City Swing Band and entertainment by the Kabit bahay Line dancers showing the elegance of the participants, not to mention the individual gracefulness and virtuosity of all the dancers who filled up the dancing floor up to the closing hours.

The results of the raffles were; First Prize was Andre Limos, (donated by Beatriz Alo), 2nd Prize was Carol Munar (donated by Dr. Fred Aquino), 3rd Prizes were Carina Gonzales, Jackie Sunbern and Jim Foresee (donated by Alma Guevarra, Faina Abaya and Henry Bambao), and the 4th prizes were Julie Vergara and Alex Avera, (donated by Crisel Centeno and Anthony Bui).

Those community personalities seen enjoying the celebration were; Dick and Memie Weitzenberg, Sarah Lenoe, Faina Abaya, Carina Gonzalez, Jesse and Beth Velasco, Lilia Rivera, Letty O'Quinn, Dale and Melita Esperante, Dick Mason, Segundo and Aida Azurin, Mercedes Guerrero, Aida Calindas and Alma Guevara and many others.



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Sinag-Tala

From page 11

I asked Sonny if he would like to share a personal message: "I would like to thank every program participant, family, volunteer, supporter, donor, sponsor, audience member, community organization and arts advocate that have been involved with Sinag-tala programs over the past 25 years for making it possible for my family and me to serve the community through the theater and performing arts. I'm grateful to all Sinag-tala alumni who, in their own ways, have been sharing their experiences, insights, bodies of work and pride with the world since 1990. I'm also indebted to the countless Filipino and non-Filipino visionaries, storytellers, artists, artisans, chroniclers and cultural preservationists who have created and continue to create the narratives of the Filipino American and Philippine experience. I'm also appealing to the entire community to continue supporting the SFTPAA's efforts." He also mentioned, "...that regardless of who steps up to assume the work, it is my hope that because of SFTPAA's value to the community, the community will consider the best interests of Sinag-tala, including ensuring it has a robust leadership, and providing that leadership with the necessary support, a widely shared responsibility – not just the responsibility of a few within the SFTPAA."

Of course, in order for Sonny to maintain the inspiration, dedication, and commitment during his years of leading Sinag-tala, he had to have the great support and devotion from his one and only Letty and family.

Letty Alforque will also be retiring. Letty has worn countless hats in both PNDA and SFTPAA over the years, including as a performer, but her preferred



focus has been on costume coordination and administrative support. The only daughter of Sonny and Letty is Dr. Angela-Dee Alforque, Ed. D., who is currently the Director of the Theater and Dance program at Parker School in Kamuel, Hawaii. Prior to that, she headed the ethnic theater and film studies program at Sacramento City College and also taught at California State University – Sacramento. Malaya, the only granddaughter, appeared in Sinag-tala as an infant and in following years performed multiple times with the Sinag-tala Theater Ensemble and in the Sinag-tala Theatrical Revue prior to moving to Hawaii with her parents.

More background info on Sonny: He is a graduate of both the University of the Philippines High School and the University of the Philippines (UP) (Diliman) College of Arts and Sciences where he earned a degree in Speech and Drama. As a UP theater arts graduate, he was mentored by the late film and stage director Behn Cervantes. Since then he has worked in theater, radio, television and print journalism in Manila before moving in 1969 to San Francisco. In San Francisco, he has worked for the American Conservatory Theater then became an Asian American Theater Workshop actor and board member. In Sac-

ramento, he has led, helped, pioneered, choreographed, organized, received credits, received awards, co-wrote and produced original plays, acted-collaborated, supported, and served in various theater and arts endeavors. In short, Sonny is a productive and successful multitasker.

As anyone who has occupied a leadership position knows, it could be the most daunting or rewarding responsibility. It takes a tremendous amount of hard work, strong character, and sometimes a "Teflon" skin in order to achieve something worthwhile. Considering work as a labor of love could help overcome challenges and difficulties in any chosen endeavor. Sinag-tala is evidently a labor of love for Mr. and Mrs. Alforque. Congratulations to Sinag-tala's 25th year of being one of the most beloved organizations in the Philippine-American History of Sacramento and northern California. On behalf of the community, this writer borrowed a line from one of show biz' legendary artists, Mr. Bob Hope, to humbly and affectionately express our sincere "Thank You for the Memories." Enjoy your forthcoming retirement Uncle Sonny and Auntie Letty, or in my case Kuya Sonny and Ate Letty!

Halloween Bash



Halloween party for Marilyn Lopez' birthday and Elna and Val Dicipulo's wedding anniversary held at their residence in Elk Grove, CA on October 17, 2014.

Altar Servers



St. Charles Borromeo Altar Servers. Trained by Sr. Maria Josielinda Tanudtanud, RVM. Sr. Josie is in charge of the Parish Catechesis & Evangelization. She is originally from Cebu, Philippines. She received tremendous support from the Vicar, Fr. Octavio Ventura during the training. Fr. Oscar Gomez-Medina is the Pastor who along with Fr. Octavio encouraged Sr. Josie to conduct the training.

In Loving Memory of Ester Ramos Carrasco

July 14, 1939 – October 5, 2014



where she remained a faithful and active until her passing.

During her service as a member of the Lions, she received the most coveted award from Lions Club International – the Melvin Jones Fellow Award. Ester enjoyed cooking for her friends in the community and fellow Lions of District 4-C5, but most all; she loved spending time with her children and grandchildren.

One sterling quality of Ester that stood out above all was that she was a giver and never wanted anything in return. She would rather give than receive! She will be sadly missed by all. Survivors include three children: Michelle Carrasco; Cristina and her husband Ron Ruiz; Maria and her husband Irwin Glover; two step sons and nine grand

children: Ryan, Drake, Zachary, Nyah, Jonah, Leah, Teah, Jalen, and Alaya. Ester and her loving husband Ron "Toto" Carrasco were laid to rest at East Lawn Elk Grove Memorial park. Following their internment, friends, Lions, and family gathered at St. Paul's Catholic Social Hall for a reception and delicious lunch was served.

We will definitely miss Auntie Ester, but it gives us great joy and consolation to know that she is now free from all her pain and illnesses; and that she is now in paradise together with her Loving husband, Toto.

We send our deepest condolences and sympathy to the Carrasco family. May she rest in peace.

Ester Ramos Carrasco, age 74, also affectionately known to all as Auntie Ester, passed away peacefully on Saturday, October 5, 2014. She was preceded in death by her loving parents and husband Ron "Toto" Carrasco.

She was born on July 14, 1939 in Meycawayan, Bulacan, Philippines. Ester joined the Sacramento Rizal Lions Club 13 years ago and was President of her Lions Club five times and held several offices at the District and Club level. She subsequently transferred to Maharlika Lions Club,



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■ Birthdays



DAISY MAGSUCI with hubby Simon
NOVEMBER 2



REY DE JESUS with wife Susan
OCTOBER 19



ALEX DEL PILAR
NOVEMBER 8



KORBEN ABAYA
NOVEMBER 2



CHRIS MARZAN
OCTOBER 22

Calendar of Events

NOV. 1, 2014 (SATURDAY)

ALL SOULS DAY
Honoring our departed loved ones
4:30 p.m. - Assembly
5:00 - 5:30 p.m. - Remembrance Walk and Rosary
6:00 p.m. - Memorial Mass
Video Tribute Reception to Follow
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Josie - 916.392.6252 /
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NOV. 11, 2014 (TUESDAY)

E.G. Veterans Day Parade
10 am / CDS Admin. Bldg.
8820 Elk Grove Blvd., CA
Contact Lynden King
skyking@elkgrove.net



October Celebrants

L-R: Rose Meris - Oct. 29,
Fely Lasaga - Oct. 1,
Linda Cordero - Oct. 24,
Alex Estioco - Oct. 23,
Lety O'Quinn - Oct. 8,
Alice Pambid - Oct. 6



OCTOBER 31

Anniversary



REGINA and GERRY LOBO
6th Wedding Anniversary, November 8



CINDY and BOBBY RICHARDS
7th Wedding Anniversary, November 10



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By Nancy Cristi Bautista

Grandparents' Benefits

After many years of being employed by other people, retirement is such a long time dream of everyone. As for grandparents, to be financially free to do what they wish to do without worrying of getting up early to go to work finally came true. However, no one expects that this is just a start of the true meaning of being a grandparent, except maybe for a few, including myself and my husband__ being needed by our own children and grandchildren and helping them, not only physically, but also, morally.

Some of the people we knew could not believe that we retired just to be 'slaves' again of our kids. One even expressed a technique on how this could be avoided by changing our telephone numbers and not to give these to them, which, I thought was so heartless. Some friends were even ridiculing us because we retired not to tour the country and see the world, but just to stay home and baby sit our grandchildren. These so-called sympathizers could not completely comprehend our decisions and actions, which, we understand and some might actually agree with those "un-friendly" advisers.

However, I would gladly share with you the real awesome benefits of being grandparents. Actually, for us, this was the best way of being genuinely be needed at this point of our lives. Some might think that being old could be useless and meaningless and that no one really appreciates them. No doubt that this feeling could be the most awful emotion that a person, more so, a senior person could encounter. It could mean hopelessness, loneliness, and sometimes, depression. Therefore, having people genuinely care and make you feel needed, not only could boost your ego, but make you feel whole again.

Without the little children around, time would just be spent sitting down, maybe in front of the television set or other electronics. Also, how many times could a retiree travel around the country or the world, even with appropriate fund? It would probably

be more beneficial to be with the people you love than just with strangers, no matter how fun these fleeting groups are.

Even with the proper health coverage, it would be safer to be around the places and people one is familiar with than somewhere else where one is lucky if aid would be in sight when needed. One could be traveling far and at this stage of a senior citizen's life, it is no denying that danger is more likely closer than one thinks. There is nothing wrong with traveling once in a while, but, to say that the rest of our senior lives should be spent out there seeing the rest of the world is not for us.

We realize that even when the grandchildren are not cute little tykes anymore, as they seem, watching closely their progress of transforming into adulthood is still part of the whole miracle. The fulfillment of being a grandparent is there to behold.

When the young parents' children were



small and loveable, their parents were busy working to provide for their own kids and their future, that they even missed out most of the fun things that were happening to them. The children were being entrusted to other caregivers, even to the outside of their families.

What more is fulfilling than having their own parents take care of their own children? On the other hand, it is more fulfilling for the ageing parents to be able to lend a hand to their own children by taking care of their own grandchildren. What a delight to be able to watch miracles within our grandchildren that we had missed with our own children when they were small. Our hearts are runneth over with love.

It is true, to each his own, but, for me and my husband, there is no regret on the path we chose during our golden years.

To our children, thank you for letting us be a part of this wonderful trip of giving us a second chance in being parents again to your wonderful and beautiful kids.

Eskwela Natin Grand Opening of the Filipino American Books Collection and Window Display Southgate Library, Sacramento, CA

By Carle and Sarah Enloe

Eskwela Natin, our Filipino School, celebrated Filipino American Heritage Month with the Grand Opening of the Filipino American Books Collection and Window Display on October 3, 2014, at the Southgate Public Library in Sacramento, CA.

Maharlika Lion Joe Carrasco, Master of Ceremonies and Vice President of Eskwela Natin, opened the program by welcoming and thanking them for their attendance. He then introduced Dolores Diaz, President of Eskwela Natin, who gave her welcome address and an overview of the importance of the Filipino American Heritage Month, and more importantly, the significance of the first Filipino American Books Collection and the beautiful Window Display in the entrance to the Library. She went to report that in 2014 Eskwela Natin partnered with Southgate Library to acquire space for the Filipino books to be placed in the library.

Following President Dolores' remark, MC Joe introduced Christy Aguirre, Branch Supervisor, Southgate Branch, Sacramento Public Library. She briefly outlined the Southgate Branch Program and how proud she was that the Branch was able to facilitate a new Filipino American Books Collection Section, to include the beautiful window display that was prepared by the Eskwela Natin Officers.

MC Joe introduced Vangie Hinnencamp and Anna Mestidio, two of the Eskwela Natin Teachers, who introduced the Guest Speaker, the Honorable Ambassador George G. Aducaen, Jr. He gave his warmest congratulations to President Dolores Diaz and to the Officers of Eskwela Natin for their excellent job in assembling a collection of Filipino Books that will be available for the public to borrow and



Filipino American books collections and window display



The Filipino community of Sacramento

Photos by Sarah Enloe

learn more about the Filipinos in America and the Philippines. He went on to note that this noble project of Eskwela Natin is the kick off of the Filipino American Heritage Month, a time when Filipinos celebrate the incredible contributions that the Filipino Americans have made in their communities.

Ambassador Aducaen remarked that by knowing their historical roots, our children will be proud of their heritage. By knowing Jose Rizal, our children will not only appreciate the Washingtons and the Lincolns; but also the man who paid the supreme sacrifice to make the Philippines that they know of today. He concluded his remarks by reminding everyone that it's the Filipino Americans responsibility to help preserve national and cultural heritage.

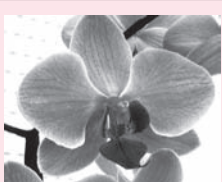
Following his remarks, everyone was invited to join President Dolores and Ambassador Aducaen in the main library where the new Filipino American Collection of Books will be shelved as they cut the Ceremonial Ribbon dedicating this historical section. There were many Kodak moments as Ambassador Aducaen cut the ribbon.

Josie Canlas, Eskwela Natin Treasurer, gave the closing remarks and invited the guests to stay for the reception that followed and enjoy some refreshments and drinks. Congratulations to Eskwela Natin on another historical first. Mabuhay!

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Eskwela Natin 2014 Graduation

By Sarah and Carle Enloe

Eskwela Natin, our Filipino School, held their second graduation on September 21, 2014.

The students of Eskwela Natin will leave each class with ways to easily adapt etiquette, language and general information about their Filipino Heritage. The Honorable Henry S. Bensurto Jr., Consul General, Philippine Consulate, San Francisco, CA graced the Eskwela Natin graduation with his presence. Presentation of Certificates and Awards were presented by Chris Mateo assisted by Perry Diaz.

Assemblymember Dr. Richard Pan was invited and gave special remarks to the graduates and guests. Eskwela Natin, a non-profit, volunteer based program dedicated to educate Filipino American children, ages 5 to 12, on all aspects of the unique Filipino culture.

Approximately 40 plus students graduated with flying colors, and as evidenced by their performance during the graduation, the 2014 Graduates learned the basic steps and danced the Tinikling and Maglalatik. They also learned several songs like Ton tong Palatong; Sitsiritsit; and Parung Parung Bukid.

Alyshanee Santiago sang "Ako'y Isang Pinoy".

The mission statement of Eskwela Natin exists to educate Filipino American children about the rich and diverse Filipino culture, ensuring the unique traditions of the Philippines are passed on the next generation, in a safe and fun environment. Eddie Aducaen sang the National Anthems and a very moving rendition of Bayan Ko!

Congratulations to the 2014 Graduates of Eskwela Natin. We would like to acknowl-



Photos by Sarah Enloe

edge and thank the volunteer teachers and officers of Eskwela Natin for a very successful summer program. For more information about Eskwela Natin, please visit

EskwelaNatin.org; email EskwelaNatin@gmail.com or contact Dolores V. Diaz at (916) 396-23551.

Books of Truth

By Marion de Celis Sarte

In an unlikely place
I find a fortress,
A sense of solace.
Not behind walls of iron and stone
To protect me from the unknown,
But through the well-worn pages
Passed down through the ages,
Preserving the timeless wisdom
Of past generations and kingdoms.
The ancestors are with me
On my lifelong journey.
I shall not fear falling astray
For they guide me all along the way.
The words are silent to the ear
But to the heart, ring loud and clear,
Striking chords of human emotions –
In victories and failures,
Obsessions and devotions –
In thundering symphonies
And gentle ballads floating on balconies.
They echo what I feel in my story today.
The lessons of the past are here
With me to stay.
My strength, I persevere in the fight.
What will always endure
Is what is right.
The written word helps me remember
Not to forget
In the written word,
The truth is set.



Palawan is 'top island in the world'

By Matikas Santos

With its world-renowned underground river, the island of Palawan in the Philippines emerged as the top island destination in a poll by an award-winning US travel magazine.

Beating 147 other islands throughout the world, Palawan was voted as "Top Island in the World" in the 27th annual Readers' Choice Awards of Conde Nast Traveler magazine.

The magazine announced the results on its website Monday October 20 (US Time) after over 76,600 readers cast their votes.

Palawan was given a rating of 88.750 by the readers owing mostly because of the declaration of the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River as one of the new seven natural wonders of the world.

"Palawan's natural wonder is one of the longest underground rivers in the world, traveling five miles through a subterranean cave system. Guided boat tours take visitors



Puerto Princesa Underground River.

down a portion of the waterway, where karsts, natural rock formations created by dissolving limestone, loom in every direction," the magazine said.

Boracay Island in Aklan province was also included in the ranking at number 12 and given a rating of 82.683.

"This itty-bitty island (10 square miles) in the Philippines is as close to the tropical idyll ideal as you'll find in the Philippines,

with gentle coastlines and transporting sunsets. Add in a thriving nightlife scene, and you have one of the top tourist spots in the region," the magazine said.

"The aptly named White Beach is Boracay's main draw, with powdery white sand and shallow azure water ideal for swimming and snorkeling," it said.

Palawan was able to beat other world-famous islands such as Bora Bora in French Polynesia (25th), Maldives (19th), Bali in Indonesia (17th), Bermuda (14th), Santorini and Cyclades in Greece (7th), and Maui in Hawaii (3rd).

The Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Survey started in 1988. The 2014 survey got 76,659 responses

"Individual candidates are judged on a set of criteria relevant to their category, based on a standard five-point scale: excellent, very good, good, fair, and poor," Conde Nast explained in how they are ranked.

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Real Estate Friend

The biggest challenge for many first time home buyers is coming up with enough money for the down payment. There are many of us out there that have not had the luxury to save as much as we would have liked for various reasons. With this challenge at hand, we will need to track down a source for a down payment.

This is where the California House Finance Agency (CalHFA) can help. For more than 35 years, CalHFA has supported the needs of homebuyers by providing financing assistance that create affordable housing opportunities for low to moderate income Californians.

The California Homebuyer's Down Payment Assistance Program (CHDAP) is the agency's signature program.

CHDAP gives first-time home buyers loans of up to 3 percent of a home's purchase to be used for down payment. The most common use of the CHDAP loan is in conjunction with a FHA loan, which requires just 3.5% down at the time of purchase. CHDAP provides the majority of the required FHA down payment, leaving the home buyer to put just 0.5% of the purchase price down on a home. Although seller participation is not required for the

CHDAP program, since FHA allows up to 6% seller contribution for closing cost, this provides homebuyers with an opportunity to close on their home with as little 0.50% of the purchase price.

Via the CHDAP, your loan is recorded on title as a second lien but no monthly payments are required. You only make payments on your CHDAP loan once your home is sold, refinanced, or paid off in full. The guidelines for CHDAP are straight-forward, and similar to the mortgage guidelines of an FHA-backed mortgage. For example, a buyer using the CHDAP program must be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or other qualified alien. In addition, CalHFA requires that your debt-to-income ratio remain at 43% or below.

Other CHDAP eligibility requirements include:

- * Primary residence only
- * California properties only
- * Minimum credit score of 640
- * first time home homebuyer. CalHFA's definition of a first time homebuyer is someone who has not owned a home within recent 3 years
- * Homebuyer counseling

CalHFA also enforces incomes' sales price limits based on household sizes' geography. For example, incomes; sales in limit in San Francisco county will be much higher compared to Sacramento

county. Based on CalHFA'S income limits as of 8/15/13. For a household of 5, the income limit in San Francisco county is \$127,900. Meanwhile for a household of 5 in Sacramento county, the income limit is \$94,450.

Since CalHFA is not a direct lender, their mortgage products are offered through private loan officers who have been approved & trained by our Agency. These loan officers can help you find out more about CalHFA's programs and guide you through the home buying process.

CalHFA understands the path to homeownership & continues to lead more Californians down that path, overcoming the hurdles that most first time home buyers experience.

To determine if you can qualify for this program, please contact me for complete details. As a CalHFA preferred loan officer, with 17 years of mortgage experience and knowledge, I have successfully worked with people in California and throughout the country. It is my pledge to you to always provide the same sincere commitment with consistent, outstanding service while diligently striving to earn your business now and for many years to come. For upcoming dates on first time home buyer seminars, please contact me or John Formoso Realty Group of REMAX Gold.

Remembering Everyone The Beginning of Veterans Day on 11-11-11

On the 11th Hour of the 11th Day in the 11th Month, in 1918, the world celebrated the end of World War 1. After four years of war, a truce was signed ending what was called the "War to End all Wars".



November 11 was named "ARMISTICE DAY" in the U.S. to remember the sacrifices those male and female service members made, during the war for peace. It was a joyous occasion in cities all across America, families and friends celebrated the return of their loved ones. Those who survived the war marched in a parade through their home towns on that day, politicians and veteran officers gave speeches and ceremonies of thanks for the peace they had won. Congress voted Armistice Day a federal holiday in 1938, 20 years after the war ended.

Unfortunately, the "War to End All Wars" was not the last one. World War II erupted in 1939, setting off another struggle for world peace. After the war, Armistice Day continued to be observed on November 11.

Ironically, the name "VET-

ERANS DAY" did not originate in Washington or from any congressional leaders. Residents in the small town of Emporia, Kan., localized the holiday by renaming it "VETERANS DAY" to pay homage to the veterans in their town. Congress later followed suit and passed a bill that was "VETERANS DAY".

To this day we continue to give thanks for peace and remember the men and women in uniform who have served and sacrificed for it. In keeping with the spirit of tradition, there are ceremonies and speeches and many Americans will observe a moment of silence at 11 A.M., the 11th Day of November.

On Tuesday, November 11, 2014, when you meet a Veteran, greet them with a simple "THANK YOU".

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Pacquiao aiming for knockout

Manny Pacquiao sees long-time trainer Freddie Roach becoming a happy camper after he takes care of business on Nov. 23 in Macau.

Just before Pacquiao and Roach and members of his training and promotional team left for Hong Kong to meet the Chinese media, the Filipino fighter assured his Hall of Fame trainer that "he won't be disappointed" when he battles the upset-conscious and unbeaten Chris Algieri at the Cotai Arena.

"I am going for it all," said Pacquiao as quoted by ace publicist Fred Sternburg, who arrived in General Santos City with Top Rank big boss Bob Arum last week.

After the open workout this afternoon in the bustling Central district of Hong Kong, Pacquiao and his team will head back home to resume his training, while Arum and Sternburg will return to the US.

What will certainly make Roach a happy man is for Pacquiao to pull off an overpowering performance, something that fans and even the media have been clamoring the past few years.

Pacquiao is confident that exactly will happen against Algieri although the 35-year-old wouldn't publicly say just that.

But based on what Roach has been seeing in the gym, the way Pacquiao has been treating his sparring partners, there is little doubt in his mind that the five-



Manny Pacquiao

year knockout drought will come to an end next month.

Last time Pacquiao scored an abbreviated win, it took him almost 12 rounds to stop Miguel Cotto.

Since then, Pacquiao has settled for lopsided decision victories.

But Pacquiao's handlers insist that he was just facing fighters who are naturally bigger than him.

Still, that streak is about to come to a screeching halt.

"A knockout is in place," Roach said.



Pacquiao vs Algieri

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Doors that 'Saigon' opened for Rachelle

By Allan Policarpio

Her "Miss Saigon" character Gigi opened the door to "amazing" opportunities for Rachelle Ann Go. Thus, although she has until May 2015 to play the jaded bar girl, the 28-year-old Filipino singer-actress said she was exploring options that would require her to either stay in London or come home to Manila after her stint in the musical's West End revival.

Rachelle flew in recently for a three-day engagement with a new clothing brand, and met reporters in a media gathering. She said auditions for new cast members for the musical's next run had started. "We were told not to worry because not everyone will be replaced, and that we will be asked if we want to keep our current roles or consider others."

While the role of Kim, currently being played by 18-year-old Filipino-American Eva Noblezada, would seem desirable, Rachelle said, "I see Eva perform onstage and her job is so vocally and emotionally draining." She is looking for an agent, she said, "because you need one in order to try out for other productions." Another attractive prospect for her is the role of Eponine in "Les Misérables." She's watched several other musicals, besides, like "Phantom of the Opera," "Matilda," "Wicked" and "The Bodyguard."

Most unforgettable

The most unforgettable part of her "Miss Saigon" journey so far was the 25th anniversary gala show, which was joined by original lead cast members Simon Bowman (Chris), Jonathan Pryce (The Engineer) and Lea Salonga (Kim).

Rachelle is thankful that "The Movie in My Mind"—



RACHELLE Ann (center) struts her stuff as a bar girl in "Miss Saigon."

her character Gigi's show stopper—was among the numbers picked for the special program. She performed it with Lea, who told her that she was amazing. "I wept tears of joy," said Rachelle.

The reviews were just as encouraging. "I'm so grateful; I didn't think I would be noticed—it's really a small role," she said.

The onset of winter reminds Rachelle that she should take extra care of her voice. "Cold weather makes singing a little more difficult. I have to be very disciplined," she pointed out. "I can't afford to be sick because no one will take care of me."

Sick days

She does eight shows a week, and on at least two occasions, she had to will herself into performing. She related: "I fell ill on Aug. 30, a day before my birthday. I had a cough, which made my voice hoarse—and I was supposed to do two shows, that day. I was crying while singing during the matinee show, because I couldn't reach the notes. I had to excuse myself for the second show because I didn't want to ruin it."

The second time her health failed was, mercifully, after the 25th anniversary show. "We were rehearsing every day. It was a combination of stress, nerves and lack of sleep," she recalled. She has since learned not to push her body. "It's better to rest than risk getting sidelined for

much longer."

Rachelle trains with Mary Hammond (one of Lea's teachers) whenever her schedule permits. "I'm learning new techniques and my vocal stamina has improved," she said.

Unwinding

Her idea of unwinding on days off consists of house cleaning and practicing her cooking skills. "That's therapy for me. But sometimes I just sleep!"

She gets homesick more now than she did in the first two months, when her schedule was tighter. That's why she thanks Filipinos in London who troop to the Prince Edward Theatre to meet her, and ask for photo-ops and autographs. Some of them bring Filipino food, or offer to cook for her. She related, laughing, "One brought me cakes and I was like, 'Ate, naka-two piece (bikini) po ako dito, ah!'"

Rachelle is also thrilled that her friend Mark Bautista made it to the cast of "Here Lies Love," which opened in September, also in London, to good reviews. "I'm happy that we're making it in the international theater scene. I plan to watch him soon."

They meet up often, she said, usually on Sundays to attend church. "It's great to have someone I'm close to, someone I consider family, in London. Some other friends, like Erik Santos have visited, too, but did not stay long," she said.

Mark used to court Rachelle. Teased about the possibility of them dating, she quipped, "Not a chance—we're such tight friends." Then, reminded that it would soon be really cold in London, she retorted, "What are blankets for?"

Sarah Geronimo voted Best Southeast Asia Act at 2014 MTV EMA

Manila, Philippines – MTV has announced that Filipino singer and actress Sarah Geronimo was adjudged Best Southeast Asia Act at the 2014 MTV EMA, one of the biggest global music events of the year that celebrates the hottest artists from around the world.



Sarah Geronimo

"Congratulations to Sarah Geronimo on becoming the 2014 MTV EMA Best Southeast Asia Act winner," said Paras Sharma, vice president of MTV Brand and Digital Media, Viacom International Media Networks Asia.

"From her nominations at the MTV EMA last year to this year's Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards, we knew she was a fast rising Asian star. We will continue to elevate Asian artists at international platforms, grow the awareness and appreciation of Asian music and artists for fans around the world to enjoy," said Sharma in a statement.

Following her victory, Geronimo now has the opportunity to be voted into

the prestigious Worldwide Act award category, the winner of which will be revealed during the 2014 MTV EMA in Glasgow.

For Geronimo to advance to the final round of Worldwide Act voting as one of 10 international Worldwide Act nominees, fans can cast their votes at mtvema.com. Voting started at 6 p.m. Thursday and would close at 5:59 p.m. Singapore time on Wednesday October 29. The final list of 10 Worldwide Act nominees will be revealed via mtvema.com on October 30.

Global hip hop superstar Nicki Minaj is set to host the 2014 MTV EMA that will be broadcast live to MTV channels worldwide from the SSE Hydro in Glasgow on Sunday, November 9 at 9:00 p.m. (Monday, November 10 at 4:00am Singapore time).

Calvin Harris, Charli XCX, Kiesza, Royal Blood, Ariana Grande, Ed Sheeran and Minaj have been previously confirmed to perform at the 2014 MTV EMA.

British rock legend Ozzy Osbourne will be honoured with the Global Icon Award and will be in Glasgow to accept his award.

The MTV EMA – one of the biggest global music events of the year – recognizes artists from around the world and across genres, and brings together music fans everywhere for a one-of-a-kind experience in the weeks leading up to and at the show.

Bruce Gillmer and Richard Godfrey are executive producers for the 2014 MTV EMA.



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 What: Parol ng Pinoy Workshop
 When: November 15, 2014 (Saturday)
 Time: 10:00 AM - 4:00PM
 Where: 21900 S. Main St., Carson, CA 90745

Let us all celebrate the richness of the Filipino culture as we look back and remember the joy, the fun and Christmas spirit that the Parol ng Pinoy folk art brings to everyone.

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