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A Tribute to Filipino Labor Organizers

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Photos by Dave San Pedro

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By Fr. Shay Cullen

PRED-A-The-Folly-of-our-FreedomFreedom can mean many things. On Independence Day, what is remembered and celebrated is freedom from colonial rule, from occupation by another nation. Some politicians and nationalists celebrate it as the "granting of Independence," as if it was a gift that was bestowed by a generous colonial power and for which we should be forever grateful. In fact it is a right to be regained.

Hundreds of thousands of Filipinos fought and died in bloody atrocious wars against the Spanish and then soon after, against the American occupying forces and later against the Japanese. We must remember that nothing was "given" that was not first taken away by force of arms.

There is no gift of sovereignty and independence is a sacred right for people to rule themselves and freely elect their own leaders.

National Freedom for a people is to freely chart ones own destiny, write a constitution, elect a government of the people, for the people, by the people, who can freely choose those who will serve them with loyalty, integrity, honesty and sacrifice.

They want their leaders to be wise, educated, dedicated to building a nation where the great universal values of human and economic rights and rule of just laws are respected and practiced equally for all. The Filipino patriots who fought for freedom wanted a nation like that, where there would be equal opportunity and freedom to live a dignified life and to prosper by hard work.

A nation where the national resources and wealth are used fairly to generate wealth that is distributed fairly and which provides the means to live out the values enshrined in the constitution. Independence is supposed to bring this great benefit and many fought and died for such a freedom.

True independence is to be free from the restraining and controlling power of any powerful and dominant nation and to be free from the economic chains and political engineering of multinational corporations. Sovereignty is the golden word of national freedom and expresses the values that can bring a people to a dignified life

The folly of our 'freedom'



free from poverty, hunger, oppression, sickness, homelessness, unemployment and exploitation.

In the Philippines, a real sense of patriotic nationhood, a nation in diversity but united proudly in its own identity is as yet a dream, a hope of those who strive for real independence and freedom. Those who fought and died opposing dictators and foreign powers, did so in vain, many a historian would claim.

These idealistic sentiments of national independence make many an educated, thinking and intelligent Filipino squirm with embarrassment, frustration and shame. Others fume with repressed fury, anger and frustration. They see so plainly that such magnificent values and ideals that once inspired the freedom fighters to fight and to die now see them betrayed, trampled and shredded.

Such freedom dreams are the stuff of Independence Day speeches that are repeated at boring college graduations where the majority of students and parents are giggling, tittering and checking their Facebook profiles and taking selfies non-stop. Few are listening with attention to the once long lost ideals of what it is to be a free nation.

The reality today is a divided and conquered people. To be conquered is a tragedy, but to be conquered and not know it is the greatest tragedy of all. The once beautiful Philippines is a nation of 100 million people ruled by 140 dynastic families. Perhaps twenty of them are the mega rich who are mightier than the rest. All have countless relatives and province-mates imbedded in the heart and veins of government sucking the life energy of the people into their own financial blood streams.

The stock market booms for the few yet the nation is impoverished, made a mighty slum. It manufactures little, imports almost all. There is no ability to defend or the poor to prosper. The corruption of the elite has siphoned the wealth into the accounts of the ruling elite and dynastic families and the coffers of the multinationals.

They rule to benefit themselves and their multinational partners and they favor foreign powers both military and economic. The majority of the 100 million Filipinos are excluded from the growing prosperity of the elites. The people have been captured, imprisoned, exploited and no end is in sight. When serious opposition arises the local politicians take care of it. They rule by fear. As I previously wrote; They issue threats of execution and impose the death penalty for so-called unspecified crimes, crimes that are not investigated, are undocumented, unknown and for which there is no evidence, no accusers, or prosecution and trial. The innocent are judged guilty and killed.

It is state sanctioned murder. But it works.

The politician points a finger, utters a name, sends a text, makes a call and the victims – journalists, pastors, priests, human rights workers, even street children – are shot or stabbed dead. It is the way of some powerful politicians to assert and hold power over others from whom they demand submission and docility, praise and adulation.

It is murder on a grand scale, but one by one.

It is a ruling system of tyrannical dictatorship in a fake democracy. It is killing done in the name of public service. How gullible and ignorant are those who swallow that lie and praise the tyrants and their "safe" cities. These elites will rise to even greater power and any appearance of 'Independence' will be truly gone.

People have to be given faith and believe that change is possible, that Eternal Goodness is a force for freedom. They need to be organized, awakened, educated, inspired to struggle for justice and resist the rule by the few over the many. It's risky, the death squads are ready and waiting and the true patriots are all dead. Or are they?



Editor's Note

It's another issue of Philippine Fiesta again! As we've just celebrated our Filipino community fiesta in Sacramento, there are other events that are happening around, in celebration of the Philippine Independence Day and the month of June, and as the summer season also begins.

Congratulations to the birthdays and graduation celebrants. We'd like to invite others to submit family celebrations to be published at our upcoming issues of Philippine Fiesta. We also would like to offer our service to anyone interested in advertising their businesses, at reasonable rates. We're here to help you meet your advertising needs. At the same time, you'll help our community and non-profit organizations to promote their projects and celebrate their accomplishments for our community in this publication.

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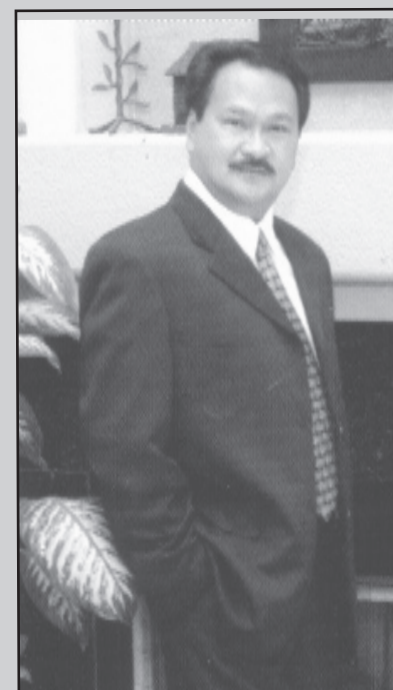
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The 'State of Binay' and the PCOS machines

By Nestor Corrales

The 'State of Binay' address by Vice President Jojo Binay last Wednesday was a sob story about his difficult life.



Vice President Jejomar Binay

He painted a picture of himself being persecuted by his political enemies. He said the Aquino government was out to jail him.

Kawawa naman ako was the impression he gave. He was really appealing to the bakya crowd, his base of supporters, in a desperate attempt to keep his popularity rating from falling further, as shown by the latest surveys where for the first time Grace Poe overtook him.

There was nothing new in his story. He denied the charges of corruption against him, saying his accusers had produced no evidence of wrongdoing.

Instead he turned the tables on the Aquino government. He accused them of allowing "widespread anomalies of their allies and party mates" in the DAP, PDAF and MRT system.

The question is why did he keep quiet until now when he knew all along what was going on inside the government?

We all know there are anomalies. The latest is COA's decision to ground the P25-billion aircraft deals (12 FA50 jets, 8 Bell 412EP and 21 Huey helicopters) of the defense department because of

suspected irregularities.

Former Rice Aircraft agent Rhodora Alvarez had testified earlier at a Senate committee hearing of the obscene commissions to DND Sec. Voltaire Gazmin and Usec. Fernando Manalo. Apparently, there will be more coming.

Is Binay the unblemished knight he claims to be? He couldn't even convince his good friend Grace Poe who signed with nine other senators the Senate committee report recommending he be charged with plunder.

His refusal to face the Senate committee was a tactical error. It gave the impression he had something to hide. An innocent man would not hesitate to face his accusers. He cannot expect people to believe he is innocent because he says so.

Admittedly, the bakya crowd falls for sob stories. They identify with those being persecuted because they themselves feel persecuted by the rich

and powerful. They can sympathize with Binay regardless of his daughter's admission they only have 600 millions in their bank accounts, without mentioning other assets, in a nation stricken by mass poverty, a diminishing middle class and high unemployment. This 'poor' man's wealth is small compared to the billions corrupt politicians normally make.

As a jeepney driver summed it up, Pareho silang lahat. Meron bang naiiba?

Sen. Antonio Trillanes, who doesn't mince his words when he commented on the VP's resignation, gave us a preview of what is to come.

I expect the LP will now go for the kill that will knock Binay out of the presidential race. That will leave Mar Roxas and Grace Poe who might be enticed to run as VP to Mar.

Who Do We Trust?

By Erick San Juan

"In the course of our country's history when the timing of some major events is suspected for something else... there really is something else."



CARAT-RP-US-2015

One recent example was the article posted at <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/>. Did Beijing concede to US by calling off South China Sea land reclamation? (June 20), "China's foreign ministry suddenly announced this week that it is suspending land reclamation efforts on islands and reefs in the disputed South China Sea."

The official media line on the suspension is that it is because the projects are "complete," however other media outlets have framed the decision as a compromise reached between Beijing and Washington, according to Duowei News, a media outlet run by overseas Chinese.

"China and the United States have insisted on their respective positions in the dispute over the South China Sea, from the Chinese military asking US jets conducting patrol duties in the area to leave, to China's issuing of a defense white paper to show its concern over its maritime interests and the 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore where representatives from the two countries defended their respective positions."

The meeting of high-ranking officials from China and the United States that is taking place June 22 and 23 in Washington DC for the seventh China-US Strategic

and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) and the sixth China-US High-Level Consultation on People-to-People Exchange (CPE), discussing issues ranging from security to the economy and people-to-people exchanges. Prior to President Xi Jinping of China's plan to visit the US in September, China and the US are set to engage in more economic cooperation.

So there could be no compromise on the territorial disputes unless coming major events/meetings are actually the real reason for such decision.

Another major event – the 2015 Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise series that kicked off (June 22) in an opening ceremony in Puerto Princesa that will last until June 26.

CARAT Philippines will take place on the ground in Puerto Princesa and in the waters and airspace of the Sulu Sea. The exercise will focus on combined operations at sea, mobile dive and salvage training, coastal and river operations, plus maritime patrol and reconnaissance. It will feature the inaugural participation of littoral combat ship USS Fort Worth (LCS 3) along with rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard (T-ARS-

50) and forward-deployed P-3 Orion aircraft.

"CARAT is the US premier naval engagement in South and Southeast Asia. The bilateral and multilateral exercises provide a regional venue to develop strong maritime partnerships that contribute to the greater peace and stability of the region participated in by Members of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps along with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) counterpart."

Following CARAT Philippines, additional bilateral phases of CARAT will occur from July through November 2015 with Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

Now that the Japanese navy also joined in a separate naval exercises with our country, generally these events are crucial to the "activities" that China has been doing in the South China Sea (SCS).

We have to be wary because we really don't know who is our ally and our enemy. Pundits are suspicious that the saber rattling among party of interest could lead to something else.

Who do we trust?



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Davao City improves to 5th in ranking of world's safest cities

By Aries Joseph Hegina

Davao City is now the fifth safest city in the world, improving from its ninth-place ranking last month, according to the data released by crowd-sourcing survey site Numbeo.com.

As of this writing, Davao City has a crime index of 18.18 and a safety index of 81.82.

This month's rating is a significant improvement from the city's crime index of 19.31 and safety index of 80.69 from the previous survey.

Curiously, the Philippines has a crime index of 43.11 and a safety index of 56.89 according to the website.

The city, which is led by Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, trails behind fourth safest city Bursa, Turkey which has a crime index of 17.66 and a safety index of 82.34.

Osaka, Japan tops the list with a safety index of 84.47, followed by Seoul, South

Korea (83.42) and Singapore (83.36).

Davao City is now safer than Espoo, Finland (81.16 safety index); Bergen, Norway (80.98); Heidelberg, Germany (80.78); Coimbra, Portugal (80.68); and Stuttgart, Germany (80.53).

Numbeo.com is said to be the largest website which utilizes user-generated data on cities and countries worldwide. The website features rankings of cities in topics such as health care, cost of living, and quality of life.

Research and data that are found in the site are not influenced by any government or organization, Numbeo.com founder Mladen Adamovic claimed.

Data from the website have been cited by The New York Times, The Guardian, British Broadcasting Company, Forbes and Time magazine. IDL

Pacquiao: It's no longer about the money but honor for the country



Manny Pacquiao

By Roy Luarca

"It's not about the money," boxing champ Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao said, explaining why, at 36 and with his family financially secure for life, he continues to fight in the ring instead of hanging up his gloves.

"I just want to bring honor and pride to (our) country," he said.

With the same soft-spoken demeanor and heartfelt humility, the eight-division world champion and Sarangani representative disarmed Inquirer officials and employees during a thanksgiving dinner hosted by the paper early this week to honor him.

In response, Pacquiao recounted how he survived a life of hardship, marked by sleeping on cardboard boxes on an empty stomach and a purse of P50 for his first boxing bout. Then with a grin, he stopped short of revealing his earnings of late, which easily run into millions of dollars including fees from product endorsements.

Unexpected loss
On the Forbes list, Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. are the highest paid athletes of 2015.

Clad in denim pants, a checkered black and white polo shirt and sporting a gleaming Rolex watch, Pacquiao also dwelt on

his unexpected loss to Mayweather in their Battle for Greatness match on May 2 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Speaking half-seriously, the Pacman said he committed a mistake in training for the encounter dubbed Fight of the Century.

"I trained for boxing, but forgot about marathon," he said, referring to Mayweather's fight strategy that had him running around through the 12-round encounter instead of engaging Pacquiao in a slugfest.

It didn't help any that the Filipino boxer had sustained a tear on his right rotator cup in the fourth round, hampering his ability to deliver effective punches from then on.

Pacquiao eventually underwent arthroscopic surgery in Los Angeles on May 6, although full recovery and rehabilitation would likely put him out of the ring for the rest of the year.

He was no longer wearing a sling on his right arm when he came over for the Inquirer dinner, however, and was doubly thankful for that and for the country's support in his quest to bring international honor to the Filipino.

As if in prayer, Pacquiao fervently intoned:

"Without God, there will be no Manny Pacquiao.

"Without the (Filipino) people, there will be no Manny Pacquiao.

"Without you guys (in the media), there will be no Manny Pacquiao."

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US ruling hailed in PH

By Rima Granali and Jocelyn R. Uy

If Tom and Joe can now marry anywhere in the United States, can Tomas and Jose do the same soon in the Philippines?

The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community hopes it will happen here following Friday's decision by the US Supreme Court allowing gay unions throughout the nation, lawyer Jesus Nicanor Falcis III said on Saturday.

But "conservative elements" may get in the way, said Falcis, who has asked the Supreme Court to invalidate provisions in the Family Code that limit marriage to a man and a woman.

Falcis said he was "cautiously optimistic" that the US Supreme Court ruling would have a "strong impact" on his petition.

"I am optimistic because our Constitution's Bill of Rights, especially the equal protection clause, is patterned after the US Constitution," he said.

"And usually, our Supreme Court is easily persuaded to follow decisions by the US Supreme Court because we use the same standards the US uses to analyze violations of fundamental rights," he added.

Earlier on Friday, President Barack Obama praised the ruling, saying it had "made our union a little more perfect."

Resolving a 2013 challenge to the Defense of Marriage Act, five of the nine justices on the US Supreme Court voted on Friday to allow same-sex unions in all 50 states, triggering wild jubilation and tears of joy across the country.

Justice Anthony Kennedy threw in the vote that handed the narrow victory to the gay-rights movement. In his majority opinion, Kennedy wrote that the Constitu-



REAL MEN SUPPORT GAY RIGHTS A rainbow flag, the symbol of gay pride and diversity, flutters in the air alongside the monument of Lapu-Lapu at Rizal Park, where members of an LGBT coalition joined the 21st Metro Manila Pride march on Saturday, a day after the US Supreme Court allowed same-sex marriage in all 50 states. Lapu-Lapu, the first Filipino hero to repulse foreign invaders led by Ferdinand Magellan in the Battle of Mactan in 1521, might as well symbolize the drawn-out struggle of gay Filipinos for the same right in the country.

tion requires all 50 states to carry out and recognize marriages between people of the same sex.

Flag-waving LGBT advocates on the packed Supreme Court forecourt—some in tears—cheered, danced, shouted "USA! USA!" and sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" in celebration.

On Friday night, the White House was lit up in rainbow colors in celebration of the Supreme Court ruling.

The ruling will put an end to same-sex marriage bans in the 14 states that still maintain them, and provide an exclamation point for breathtaking changes in social norms in the United States in recent years.

As recently as last October, just more than one-third of the 50 states permitted gay marriages.

Inspiration to PH Gay Pride

"This is an inspiration to us," Red Macalalad, head of the march organizer Task Force Pride 2015, said, referring to the US Supreme Court ruling. "All landmark decisions

are the outcomes of struggles."

Several hundred gay men and women and transgender people in Manila held a Gay Pride rally at Rizal Park yesterday to celebrate the US Supreme Court ruling, which they said was a victory for their cause.

About 500 people marched around the park, many carrying placards and streamers saying "Fight for Love" and waving rainbow banners.

Some marchers came with pets dressed in rainbow costumes.

Jonas Bagas, executive director of the pro-LGBT rights group TLF Share, said the US Supreme Court ruling "will reverberate in other corners of the world."

"We hope that after this decision, the struggle for equality can be reframed to go beyond marriage equality so that we can address other dehumanizing situations that LGBTs encounter," he said.

Macalalad said a similar event could happen in the Philippines.

"It could and should happen

[here]. Human rights should be enforced completely. Let us stop saying that only a few can have privileges," he said, adding that LGBTs in the Philippines receive only "piecemeal" recognition.

Macalalad said the country's leaders should be sensitive to changes happening in other coun-

tries. He called for the passage of the antidiscrimination bill, which he said was languishing in Congress.

He said the bill, if passed into law, would protect LGBTs against discrimination at work and other places.



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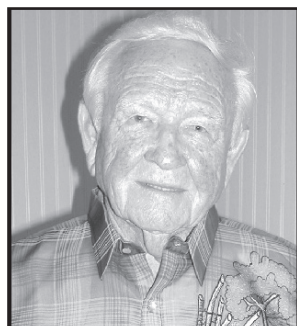
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'The Perpetrator Has Been Arrested, but the Killer Is Still at Large'

By Amy Goodman

The massacre of nine African-American worshippers at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., has sent shock waves through the nation and could well blow the roof off the Confederacy. Dylann Storm Roof is accused of methodically killing the congregants, reloading his Glock pistol at least twice. He let one victim live, according to a person who spoke with the survivor, so she could tell the world what happened. This brutal mass killing was blatantly racist, an overt act of terrorism.

Those murdered included the minister of the historic church, 41-year-old Rev. Clementa Pinckney, who also was an elected state senator in South Carolina and who was leading a Wednesday night Bible-study group. Roof actually sat in on the group for an hour before the massacre.

What little we know of Roof's motivation for his alleged crime comes from a website he is believed to have created. A manifesto posted on the site says: "I chose Charleston because it is most historic city in my state, and at one time had the highest ratio of blacks to Whites in the country. We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me." A survivor of the shooting said that

Roof told a victim begging for him to stop the killing: "I have to do it. You're raping our women and taking over the country. You have to go."

The website includes photos of Roof brandishing a gun, the .45-caliber Glock that is likely the murder weapon, and the Confederate flag, leading to renewed efforts to remove this symbol of racism and hate from flying on public property. For decades, the Confederate flag flew above the South Carolina Statehouse, along with the U.S. flag and the state flag of South Carolina. After the NAACP began a boycott of the state in the year 2000, a compromise was reached. The Confederate flag was removed from the state Capitol dome and placed on statehouse grounds, alongside a Confederate war memorial.

Among those who first stood up last week in favor of removing the flag was a white Republican serving in the South Carolina legislature, Doug Brannon. He told us on "Democracy Now!": "I woke up Thursday morning to the news of the death of these nine wonderful people. I knew something had to be done then. ... Clementa Pinckney deserves this. Those nine people deserve this. Our state Capitol needs to be free of the flag." When we asked him if he would consider a memorial to the victims of the Emanuel AME massacre, he said it was "a



A Confederate flag flies behind the U.S. flag in Charleston, S.C., on Monday.

neyn and the other victims.

"Reverend Pinckney was not just opposed to the flag, he was opposed to the denial of Medicaid expansion," Barber continued. "He was opposed to those who have celebrated the ending of the Voting Rights Act. He was opposed to the lack of funding for public education. He wanted to see living wages raised." Addressing state Rep. Doug Brannon, Barber said: "Let's put together an omnibus bill in the name of the nine martyrs. And all of the things Reverend Pinckney was standing

for, if we say we love him and his colleagues, let's put all of those things in a one big omnibus bill and pass that and bring it to the funeral on Friday."

Wal-Mart, Amazon and other major retailers have pulled Confederate paraphernalia from their shelves. Alabama has taken down the flag, and other states, including South Carolina, are following. The symbol of the Southern states' rebellion and secession, of waging war to protect slavery, will be less visible. But the fight for equality, waged 200 years ago by the very founders of Charleston's Emanuel AME church, continues. As the Rev. Barber says, systemic change is essential: "The perpetrator has been arrested, but the killer is still at large."



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U.S. marriage equality hailed by Fil-Ams except by ‘old school’

By Elton Lugay

Two days ahead of the Stonewall Riots' 46th anniversary, the Supreme Court of the United States handed the LGBT community a huge victory with the 5-4 ruling that legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states. With today's Supreme Court ruling, all loving and committed couples now have the freedom to say "I do" no matter what state they're in.



New York City Human Rights Commissioner Carmelyn Malalis delivers her welcome during the LGBT Pride Month Reception hosted by Mayor Bill de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray June 24 at Brooklyn Museum.

It puts paid to decades of hard work by millions of LGBT activists and allied Americans, for whom marriage equality has been a cherished dream long before the gay community in Manhattan brought the human rights issue to the forefront with the Stonewall Inn as their backdrop in 1969.

In 2004, this could only happen in Massachusetts, the first U.S. state to recognize same-sex marriage. San Francisco followed suit with then-

Mayor Gavin Newsom taking a courageous stand in presiding over the marriage of Phyllis Lyon and her late partner Del Martin. Thousands followed in their footsteps, coming from all over California and the world, eager for the opportunity to legalize their commitment, relationship and love for each other.

"I will never forget those couples and how something so common as a marriage was also so fundamental in the fight for full equality," Newsom, who is now lieutenant governor of California eyeing a gubernatorial run in 2018, said in a press statement.

"We must celebrate today. We must celebrate for all who have led this fight for decades. We must celebrate for all the same-sex couples who now have the fundamental right to have their love legally recognized for the first time. We must celebrate for their families, for their children who can now feel that their parents' love is just as valued as that of any other couple."

In a separate statement, San Francisco Mayor Edwin Lee not-

ed that the Supreme Court decision on the Obergefell v. Hodges marriage equality case brings the nation closer to ideals enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

Historic advance

"Today's decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to protect millions of loving families and parents and to guarantee marriage equality for EVERY American in EVERY state is truly a historic advance. This is equality without exception, and a great victory for the civil rights of every American," he said.

A longtime advocate for LGBT rights, New York City Human Rights Commissioner Carmelyn Malalis is in the right place at the right time. Married for 14 years, the Fil-Am lawyer was appointed as chairman of the City's Commission on Human Rights in November last year.

"This is a historic ruling for our nation and a very important one to me personally as a mother of two in a same-sex biracial marriage," Malalis told INQUIRER.net. "The Supreme Court recognized that LGBTQ individuals and families are entitled to fundamental freedoms and equal protection of the law. Recognizing the constitutional right of same-sex couples to marry acknowledges the dignity of our relationships and the full rights and responsibilities that come with marriage."

Noting that marriage equality is being celebrated today beyond the LGBT community, Malalis

emphasized that equal protection of the law is essential in any civil rights movement.

Same-sex marriage has been legally recognized in New York since for almost four years, under the Marriage Equality Act, which was passed by the New York State Legislature on June 24, 2011, signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo on the same day and took effect a month after.

"At the NYC Commission on Human Rights, we not only enforce the law but we also work to educate the public and promote diversity and inclusion," she said. "Now all municipalities across the nation must work to ensure that this decision will help LGBTQ people to be treated with dignity and respect. This is a significant step towards equality but there is still more work ahead to achieve fundamental freedoms and equal protection of the law for all," Malalis added.

Most marginalized

Geena Rocero, prominent Filipino transgender activist based in New York City who founded Gender Proud, agrees.

"As a TransPinay and a person of color, my community is the most marginalized," she told INQUIRER.net via email. "You can still get fired because of your gender identity. There's still no basic access to transition-related health care."

Rocero warned that high numbers of homeless trans-youth of

color are at risk. "I don't want to live in a world where if you are a trans person of color, your life expectancy is 35 years old," she said. "I will celebrate now but will work harder through Gender Proud and to continuously tell my story. It's hard to hate when you know people's story."

For Dr. Kevin Nadal, professor of psychology at City University of New York and executive director of The Center for LGBTQ Studies, the Supreme Court ruling is a catalyst.

"Not only will couples be allowed to legally wed, but the ruling will open the door to a number of other rights for LGBTQ people, including adoption, hospital visitation, immigration, and even fairer tax payments," he said. "I hope that this ruling will also lead to advocacy for other issues affecting the LGBTQ community, including hate crime assaults against transgender people— especially transgender women of color, job discrimination, and HIV/Aids which still affects our community in disproportionate numbers," Nadal said further.



U.S. Supreme Court ruling capped years of difficult struggle for gay rights movement. Photos by Elton Lugay

A big weight off

In San Francisco, longtime HIV/Aids awareness advocate and program manager at Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center Nikki Calma, popularly known as Tita Aida, observed that the historical ruling lifts a big weight off society.

"This has been forthcoming and I hope that many other nations will follow," she told INQUIRER.net. "With this already achieved, I hope that we can now work on other relevant legislations that will impact other communities such as the transgender community. I would like to see the same energy and compassion put towards transgender equality in this nation. On a lighter note, bridal registry will never be the same."

In Houston, Texas, married Filipino couple Vincent Evangelista and Ken Cruz paid tribute to advocates who have passed on.

"This is a monumental day for us—we feel ecstatic and emotional at the same time, we're thinking of and grateful to those who were before us who have fought hard for equality," Evangelista, a

community liaison manager at 1 Stop Health Care Services, told INQUIRER.net. "We especially remember all those who have passed on that did not witness this very special day."

Old school

Rudy Asercion, commissioner of the Veterans War Memorial in San Francisco, who is opposed to gay marriage in view of his Christian faith and because "I'm old school" nevertheless concedes that the law must be obeyed.

"I believe that marriage is between a man and a woman. Period," he told INQUIRER.net. "But of course everybody must obey the law if that's the law of the land, because the good thing about America is that the law is superior to anything else. So everybody must obey that."

"Even though I am opposed to gay marriage, I am certainly not going to go around and tell gays not to get married because that's their prerogative, plus it's legal so yes, they can go ahead and marry anyone they want. The gay people should not be exempt from the horrors and tribulations of divorce. Why should just the straight people suffer from the consequences of divorce?"

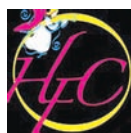
But for New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, the Supreme Court ruling is more about love and compassion. "America will never forget this day, and neither will people all across the world who know the meaning of love and compassion," De Blasio stated. "June 26, 2015, will forever be memorialized as a pivotal moment in the history of our nation – the day the Supreme Court affirmed our core values of love, equality, and justice, rejected ignorance and malice, and appealed to the humanity in us all," he added.

'Country is richer'

"Our country will finally afford millions of Americans the rights they have always deserved, but until now were unable to exercise. Today, this country is richer – filled with more equality, more acceptance and more love than yesterday. And for the people of this city, where the movement for LGBT rights began in 1969 at the Stonewall Inn, we can be proud that we helped blaze the trail to this great victory," De Blasio said further.

Describing the Supreme Court ruling as "justice that arrived like a thunderbolt," President Barack Obama also traced the decades-long struggle for marriage equality and touted the ruling as a victory for America. "This ruling will strengthen all of our communities by offering to all loving same-sex couples the dignity of marriage across this great land," he said at the White House.

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PerryScope

U.S.-China proxy war

By Perry Diaz

In less than two years, China had reclaimed 2,000 acres in seven tiny reefs in the Spratly archipelago and soon she would start constructing buildings and fortifications. One of these reclaimed reefs is Fiery Cross Reef where satellite images show what appear to be a runway and a harbor. Once completed and put to use, it would be China's first overseas military base, which is 1,400 miles away from mainland China and less than 200 miles from the Philippines' Palawan Island. And once the base is operational, it would project Chinese power beyond the First Island Chain all the way to the Second Island Chain at the doorstep of America.

But there's a "wild card" in this geopolitical chess game that plays a crucial role in stopping China from penetrating the First Island Chain, which provides a natural defense line against Chinese expansion. This "wild card" is the Philippines, which has a noisy and troublesome nationalist/leftist coalition that has been trying to abrogate the U.S.-Philippines Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). Together with their allies in the Senate, they can be a formidable force, enough to make Uncle Sam uncomfortable. This reminds American policy-makers of the time when the Philippine Senate rejected the retention of the U.S. bases in 1991. The following year the U.S. flag was lowered for the last time at the Subic Naval Base.

Mutual Defense Treaty

But what I find strange is that the nationalist/leftist coalition never questioned the validity of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), which obliges the U.S. to come to the aid of the Philippines in the event of foreign invasion. What they're saying is it's okay for American forces to come in and defend the Philippines from

foreign invaders but it's not okay for them to come in to protect the country from threats to her security. Indeed, it is tantamount to saying: "Hey, Uncle Sam, you are not welcome here but we expect you to defend our country if we're invaded."

Why don't they just say, "Let's abrogate the Mutual Defense Treaty; we'll defend Inang Bayan ourselves to the last drop of our blood!" Defend her with what? With a navy with no warships and an air force with no warplanes, how can the country defend her sovereignty?

Unfortunately, as it stands today, the Philippines is the weakest link in the First Island Chain. If the Philippines falls under Chinese control, it would break the line of defense against Chinese imperialism. The Bashi Strait between Taiwan and Northern Luzon and the Sulu Sea between Mindanao and Sabah would be wide open to Chinese penetration into the Second Island Chain.

With the anticipated passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) in the Philippine Congress, the United States has started scaling back her counter-insurgency operations in Mindanao including



U.S. vs. China.

Amboys vs. Manchurians

It is for this reason that the Philippines' presidential election in 2016 will be one of the most important elections in the country's history. Right now, there are presidential contenders who are identified with either the U.S. or China. For the sake of argument, let me drop a few names. On the American side are the "Amboys" – short for "American boys" – and on the Chinese side are the "Manchurian candidates."

At the head of the pack of "Manchurians" is Vice President Jejomar "Jojo" Binay, whose position on the South China Sea is definitely pro-Beijing. He wants to forgo with the arbitration that the Aquino administration is pursuing

at the United Nations and instead prefers to negotiate bilaterally with China. But here is the stinger: China has a precondition that the Philippines must admit and acknowledge China's sovereignty over the disputed territories before bilateral talks could begin. But who in his right mind would accept this precondition... unless he is at the beck and call of Beijing? Other aspirants who are perceived as "Manchurians" include Senators Francis "Chiz" Escudero and former Senator Panfilo "Ping" Lacson.

The perceived "Amboys" are Sen. Grace Poe and former presidential candidate Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro Jr., a cousin of President Aquino. The two would be the perfect "Amboy" tandem. It would either be Grace-Gibo or Gibo-Grace tandem or they can be called the "Gigi Duo." But what would happen to Chiz whom Grace had in-

sisted she'd like to be teamed up with? Well, this is politics and what works today might not work tomorrow. As the old adage goes, "There are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies, only permanent self-interest."

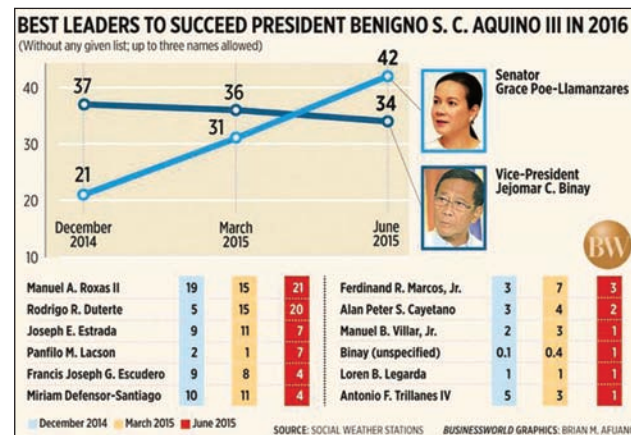
In the latest Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey, Binay's popularity rating dropped from 36% in March to 34% in June while Grace's 21% in December and 31% in March hit the roof at 42% in June! The question is: Can Binay regain his lead? He said

ment of the new justices, the next president would be able to shape the "political" leaning of the high court by appointing justices who share his or her "vision" for the country. Is it fair to presume that Grace represents the future leaders of Filipinos who will chart a new direction that will bring true change and progress? Is it fair to say that Binay represents the dynastic and corrupt politicians who enrich themselves in office at the expense of the people's well-being? Is it then fair to infer that their appointees to the high court could mirror their own core beliefs? If so, could you imagine whom would a "Manchurian candidate" appoint if he or she had won the presidential election? And to think that the 11 appointees to the high court will be around long after the appointing president has left office, it makes their appointment one of the most – if not the most-

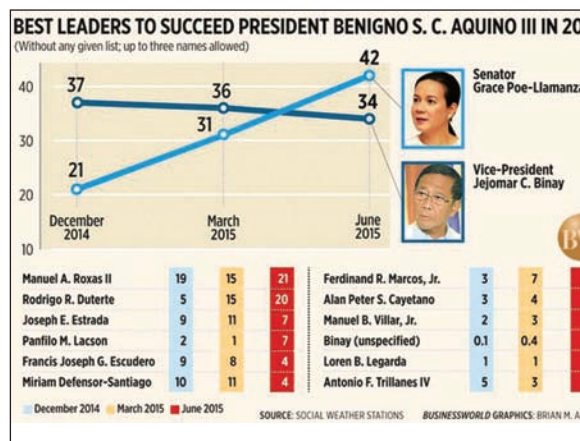
important decisions of the next president.

Indeed, the stakes are so high that the 2016 presidential election would seem like a proxy war between the U.S. and China, the outcome of which would have far-reaching geopolitical consequences in

the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. It could tip the balance of power in favor of China, who might emerge as the new superpower in the region. As Chinese President Xi Jinping has been telling people, the Pacific is so vast that it can accom-



SWS survey in June 2015.



First and Second Island Chains.

the disbanding of the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF-P). She can then redirect her forces to non-insurgency related programs such as maritime surveillance in the South China Sea. With China aggressively building artificial island outposts in the Spratly archipelago, maritime surveillance would be a key element in containing Chinese expansion.

he's not giving up. With a huge personal fund and the contributions from wealthy Filipino businessmen and taipans, he is ahead in the money game against Grace who admitted that she didn't have the money and organization to run a national campaign. However, with a strong showing in the popularity surveys, she should be able to attract lots of campaign donors. Yes, the stakes are high and money from special interest groups would certainly flow into both candidates' war chests.

High stakes

But the biggest stake in the 2016 election is that the next president will be appointing 11 new associate justices to replace 11 of the 15-member Supreme Court, who will be retiring due to mandatory age requirement. With the appoint-

modate two superpowers. Does Xi have in mind the creation of bipolar "co-prosperity spheres of influence" between the U.S. and China? Or is it going to be winner takes all?

(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)



Barack Obama and Xi Jinping.

Jose Rizal, Martial Arts Warrior

Rene J. Navarro

"My hands are shaking because I have just had a fencing bout; you know I want to be a swordsman."

Jose Rizal, age 18, to Enrique Lete, November 27, 1879.

Jose Rizal was born a frail, sickly child. To compensate for his small size, he devoted himself to a regimen of exercise and body-building. He had a private pastime he called *higante* (giant), in which he would stand on tiptoe and stretch his body, legs and arms. He studied *arnis de mano* (stickfighting), *dumog* (wrestling), *suntukan* (boxing) and fencing (foil and rapier), which became lifelong disciplines to him.

Even in Europe, he pursued his martial arts interests with almost fanatical zeal, despite illness and near-starvation. In Spain he continued his study of fencing at the famous school of Sala de Armas y Carbonell. He spent afternoons fencing with Nelly Boustead, Juan Luna and Valentin Ventura.

Rizal also pumped iron. Dr. Maximo Viola remembered that him boasting to the members of a gym in Berlin, Germany, that he would beat their strongest man within two weeks. At this time he had been forced to turn vegetarian due to persistent lack of funds. Said Dr. Viola: "To triumph in his desire he tried lifting great weights under an unaccustomed diet." Although the smallest in the gym, Rizal did succeed in vindicating himself.

A contemporary in Madrid described Rizal: "He was then in his thirty-first year. The first impression one had of him was of wholesome vigor and physical well-being. He was rather slender of build, but all muscle and sinew, compact, for he never remitted in his exercise."

De Cadena

There is no record of the style of *arnis* Rizal studied. Howev-

er, from his uncle he may have learned the prevailing system of stickfighting in the Tagalog region called *panandata* or *escrima*.

Arnis de mano figured prominently in his college life, when he was called upon to use it against Spaniards who called his countrymen "chonggo" or monkey (Filipinos paid in kind by calling the Spaniards "bangus" or milkfish). Indeed there were frequent encounters between the two groups. Rizal became something of a street lord of a campus gang, ready to face a whole pack, one at a time.

Unfortunately, at one such encounter, he was deserted by the members of his gang called "Companerismo" (Comradeship) and was pounced upon by a contingent of about 12, and was left bleeding and nearly unconscious in the street.

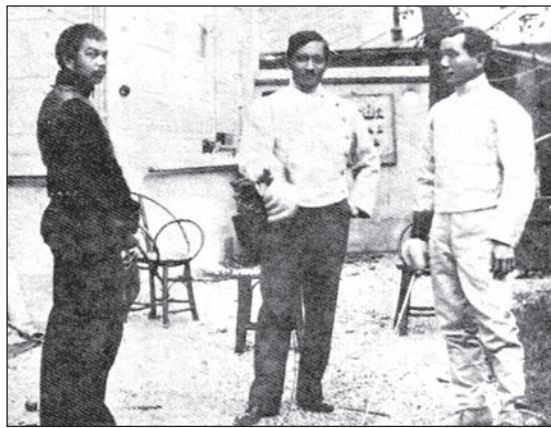
Rizal was, however, not a hot-headed ringleader whose temper exceeded his prowess, but a real expert. On one occasion, he and the best *escrimador* in Calamba, Laguna, his hometown, had a bout; Rizal was hit on the forehead. Requesting a return match two weeks later, he underwent a thorough preparation and won.

To reach that stage where he could defeat the town's master practitioner, Rizal must have had tremendous speed, technique and calculation. He must have learned to link his techniques fluidly, without interruption, so that they became, in the jargon of the art, *de cadena*, an unbroken concatenation of attacks, parries, feints and defenses, which left the opponent no breathing space.

Mister Cool

Rizal became master of the foil, saber and dueling sword, and acquired a legendary reputation for grace and technique.

He also became an expert marksman. Witnesses from the period say that Rizal could shoot through the mouth of a bottle and put a



Jose Rizal (middle) with Juan Luna (left) and Valentin Ventura.

hole through the bottom without breaking the bottle itself. From 25 yards, "he could pick the circles ('oros') of a gambling card." Like many of today's martial artists, Rizal could not resist showing off. He mailed a target board full of holes to Valentin Ventura, himself an expert shooter and fencer, who predictably wrote that he was impressed. Writing to Antonio Luna, Rizal said, "I am sending you a target containing ten bullet holes; it was seven and a half meters from me." Then, he added in mock humility it seems to me, "I shoot slowly, but with perseverance I shall become a fair shot." Caveat: Rizal presented no witnesses to these feats.

Ironically, sometime later, the tipsy Luna made some reportedly unsavory remarks about Nelly Boustead. Something like "baka ang Noli mo maging Nelly" (Your Noli might become Nelly). It was a cutting pun and Rizal took umbrage and challenged Luna to a duel. Nothing came of it though because Luna, now sober, apologized. I wonder if he was somehow intimidated by the reputation of Rizal.

Biographer Pedro A. Gagelonia surmised, "Had the duel prospered, Rizal's fate would have been jeopardized. It was a fact that he was probably better in the use of pistols than Luna but the latter was a better swordsman. In duels, the challenged party had the option of weapons, hence, Luna, logically, would have chosen the sword." This was the consensus of

the Filipino exiles in Europe, too, but Rizal had a different view: "Luna is a nervous and impulsive temperament. I am cool and composed. The chances are he would not have hit me, while I could have hit him at will, but certainly would not have killed him."

Here, Rizal pointed a finger at three bushido (samurai) principles. First, know your enemy and exploit his weaknesses (Sun-Tzu). Second, avoid unnecessary killing. And three, strive for serenity. Rizal's suggestion was, sword-play demands not just technical proficiency but also psychological balance. He used the words "cool and composed" which in martial arts mean a mind in repose. Like Sekiun and Takuan, Japanese masters of swordsmanship, Rizal emphasized the psychological against the merely technical.

Rizal: Warrior

Rizal's martial qualities have understandably been eclipsed by his other accomplishments. Yet when he died, he had behind him at least 25 years of experience in the native regimen of *arnis de mano*, *suntukan* and *dumog*; 20 years in fencing and weightlifting; and about 15 years in marksmanship.

A layman may find it hard to understand the kind of physical, mental and emotional peak a martial artist like Rizal achieves. When an *escrima* master goes through a pattern, his whole being is behind every movement, every stroke. Totally centered, he focuses all his faculties -- power, breath, muscles, body, mind and spirit -- into that single strike. A master marksman reaches the same intensity. He blots out everything, including himself and his ego, and becomes one with

the target.

Fighting with a master is a different plateau altogether. How to respond to an attack, which may be real or feigned, demands tremendous coordination of eye and body. When a stick is whipped, it travels a maximum of 150 miles per hour. At close range, this acceleration takes only a split second from inception to impact. A defender has to react instantaneously to avoid, divert or stop the blow. There isn't much time to decide what specific technique the defender must employ -- only his instinct, sharpened by training, can help him with a precise and, hopefully, appropriate answer -- or else. Within that almost infinitesimal span of time, the martial artist determines different coordinates -- the distance, position, direction not only of his body, legs and arms but also his opponent's, and moves accordingly. How much more complicated it becomes when one considers that the forces constantly shift. And then again, what does one do in the face of a synchronized multiple attack?

"Rizal's public gym in Calamba (circa 1887) combined classes in wrestling, weightlifting, fencing, marksmanship and *arnis de mano*. It was probably the first integrated martial arts club in the country."

The expert acquires a skill so spontaneous it's like second-nature. S/He moves without hesitation. Neither fear of death or injury nor extraneous thought must intrude into his mind. He becomes, after years of discipline, a person who's centered, one who has broken through the dualism of nature and the contradiction of body and mind.

It is not an easy passage to that level of expertise often described as mystical. A student has to endure pain and loneliness until body, mind and reflexes respond mechanically, until the weapon becomes a mere extension of the hand, until finally the discipline becomes "artless art."

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(916) 708-3462 (916) 835-1450 (916) 215-7077
E-mail: philippinefiesta@fivedsarts.com Website: philippinefiesta.net

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Managing Editor Dinnah S. San Pedro	Editorial Assistant Dane San Pedro	Layout and Design Dave San Pedro Deidra San Pedro	Photographer Divino San Pedro Jr. Frank Ayran
--	---------------------------------------	---	---

CONTRIBUTORS

Carleton Enloe Sarah T. Enloe	Faina Abaya Jose Abaya, Jr.	Maria Kang Gabriel Ortigoza	Nancy Bautista Perry Diaz	Glenn Carrasca Dale Esperante
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Rick V. Rafanan takes leadership of American Legion Magellan Post 604

By Faina E. Abaya

The simple yet solemn ceremonies for the installations of the new leaders of both the American Legion Magellan Post 604 and American Legion Auxiliary Unit 604 were held at the Magellan Hall of the American Legion building on June 14, 2015 along Gerber Road, Sacramento.

The Magellan Hall was properly arranged for the incoming officers and members of both organizations. The left side facing the stage of the Hall was occupied by the Post while the Auxiliary members were assigned at the other side.

The installing officers of the American Legion Magellan Post 604 incoming officer for 2015-16 term was Grand Chef de Garde (Commander) Gary Leach assisted by Aumonier (Chaplain) Michael Hughes and Grande-de-la Porte (Sergeant at Arms) Will Williams, all are members of the American Legion 40/8 of District 1. They were all wearing their splendid red regalia suits with matching caps.

On the other side, the installing officer for the incoming officers of the Auxiliary was designated to ALA district 6 past president Alice Pambid although the current president Maria Lopez of the same was also invited together with Chaplain Mary Coghurn and Department VA & R Chairwoman Wendy O'Brien to witness the event.

Before the Induction of the incoming Post officers, the Black Banner with the initial MIA referring to the Missing in Action soldiers from several wars and battles fought by the members of the United States Military Service was raised by the 2nd. Vice Commander Ken Thompson to remind everyone that the missing soldiers are not forgotten. Later on, the MIA Banner was placed on an empty chair, purportedly reserved for them.

At this juncture, outgoing Commander Tom Amaba stood up and said that the missing MIA soldiers wherever they are will be searched continuously until they will be found alive or their remains to be honored for what they have done for their country to preserve our democratic system of government.

Immediately thereafter, the United States flag was brought in and placed at the left side corner facing the stage as everyone stood up for the singing of the National Anthem which was proceeded with the reciting of the United States Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the reading of the Preamble as embodied in the Constitution of the American Legion. Glen Carrasca led the opening prayer invoking the guidance of the Devine Providence and to protect our soldiers who are in harm ways in the performance of their duties wherever they may be.

As a tradition, Commander Amaba rang the miniature bell once to formally start the meeting of the American Legion Magellan Post 604, however, a motion was made to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting with no objection, thereby, the bell was rang twice to end the meeting.

At this juncture, the ceremony of the installation was ordered by calling all the incoming officers to line up at the main entrance of the hall facing the stage to wait for



Commander Rick V. Rafanan



The American Legion Magellan Post 604 officers for 2015-2016.



Grand Chef de Garde (Commander) Gary Leach, Aumonier (Chaplain) Michael Hughes and Grande-de-la Porte (Sergeant at Arms) Will Williams.



Outgoing Commander Tom Amaba

Photos by Dave San Pedro

the start of the ceremony. However, the outgoing Commander took the moment the opportunity to deliver a short speech and said that the American Legion Magellan Post 604 was founded by Filipino American farmers who served in the United States during the World War II in many theaters of the war.

He further said that, the founding fathers of the Post were not highly educated as some of the members today but they joined hand and hand in a common band of unity they were able to overcome their shortcomings. And, for their strong united efforts, perseverance and common purpose, they were able to build a permanent structure where they held their meetings and family social gatherings. That structure is our current building today where our veterans or the members of the Post are still holding the same purposes as yesteryears, although, it also now serves the community for whatever event it fits to hold.

Thereafter, Sgt.-At-arms Will Williams of the American Legion 40/8 of District 1 called the names of the incoming officers one after the other who were escorted forward facing the installing officer Commander Gary Leach waiting at the podium. As their names were being called, the audience stomps their feet on the floor and clapped their hands until they reached their respective places assigned for them to take their oath. And when all the incoming officers were already in their assigned places facing the installing officer, they solemnly took their oaths for their respective offices. The Installing officer reminded them of their duties and responsibilities as such and after which they faced the audience who



The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 604 officers for 2015-2016.

gave them several round of applause.

The incoming officers of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 604 followed the same procedure of ceremony as they took their oath before Alice Pambid. She was assisted by Chaplain Trinidad Cabalfin and Sgt.-At-Arms Linda Cordero.

The new president of the Auxiliary Olivia Jackson in her acceptance speech said that she will faithfully perform her duty as such and likewise expressed her profound gratitude to members for given her their full confidence to lead the organization. In addition, she also said that she will always coordinate with the American Legion Magellan Post 604 for the best interest of both organizations.

The new president of the Auxiliary was born in General Santos City, Philippines where she spent the best years of her young life with her siblings and parents the late Isabelo Lautengco de Asis and Glocella Cadiente. She is an Alumna of Santa Rita College with the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Commerce, class 1986.

Olivia Jackson has been a member of the Auxiliary since 2008 through her husband. Since then, she was active in all the activities of the auxiliary and held several positions such as secretary, treasurer and

second vice president. She was happily married to the late Atty. Aaron Jackson (served with the US Navy from 1944-46) for 24 years and their marriage was blessed with twin sons, Andrew a graduate of Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley and Thomas Jackson, a student of Civil Engineering at the Sacramento State University.

American Legion Magellan Post 604 new Commander, Rick V. Rafanan is a veteran of the United States Navy having retired as E8 (Chief Petty Officer) from the same after serving for 28 years. He is currently employed with the California Franchise Tax Board. Ric Rafanan is also a long time community leader in Sacramento having held many positions in different community organizations that contributed to the best interest and betterment of the Filipino American community of Sacramento and vicinity.

In his acceptance speech he said, "To my comrades, thank you for putting your faith and trust in me to lead our organizations in the coming year. I am honored to have your support". He further said that "Comrades, just like you I belong to many veteran and military organizations but it is here where I choose to give my time and energy for the good of our organization".

In addition, commander Rafanan said, "I would like also to extend my sincere appreciation to the outgoing officers for your dedication to our Post and your contributions to make sure that all our projects and programs have attained success".

Rick Rafanan was born in Sto. Tomas, La

Continued on page 13



Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento Honors Larry Itliong, Philip Vera Cruz and Lourdes Huerta for Pioneering Farm Labor Movement

By Jose P. Abaya, Jr.

The almost unbearable summer heat has not discouraged nor dampened the enthusiasm and celebratory spirit of the Filipino American community in Sacramento to be at the place where their fiesta is being celebrated on June 7, 2015.

It is a time of the year when the Filipino American community in Sacramento since 1976 converged at the center of their fiesta to enjoy the activities, entertainments and cultural presentations just like the fiesta celebration back home. The fiesta was originally envisioned by Philippine National Day Association, the precursor of the current festivity which eventually evolved to include all the major community organizations to make it a truly Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento.

Usually, the fiesta is in conjunction with the Philippine Independence Day celebration on June 12 every year since it was declared in 1964 under Republic Act No. 4166 signed by then President Diosdado Macapagal to officially recognize permanently the declaration of independence by General Emilio Aguinaldo on June 12, 1898 at Kawit, Cavite from the yoke of Spain's colony hold.

Likewise, the annual fiesta is also the time to show the grace, elegance and beauty as well as the richness of our great tradition and cultural heritage as depicted in our music, dances and songs. The celebration also brings into fore the many contributions of the Filipino Americans who blended with diversified ethnicities for the best interest of community and country where they were given solace and comfort to live.

Suffice to say, our fiesta is also the place to meet friends like the always looking good Joe Rivera better known as the husband of community leader Lilia Rivera and my friend Colonel (AFP, Ret.) Mon Veridiano who just arrived from the Philippines also known in the community for his civic and charity works, however, Mon's priority now is to serve his town Sto. Nino in the great province of Cagayan in a capacity he hopes to improve his town.

Indeed, our fiestas have started from a simple celebration with



Photos by Dave San Pedro

religious fervor to highly commercialized ventures to benefit the places where the festivities are being held. The Sacramento Filipino Fiesta has designated three places where various activities are being held namely, the Rizal Center, the amphitheater just at the back of the Center and the spacious adjacent park.

At the park we find big and small canopy tents temporarily erected as stalls for various business ventures from giant banking and television network corporations to eateries with food that caters to the appetite of everyone and also family business like Dave and Dinnah San Pedro, the publishers of our own community newspaper, The Philippine Fiesta with their artistically printed shirts. Kudos to Dave San Pedro for perfectly illustrating the picture drawing of Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz, the leaders of the Filipino farm workers on the cover of the Filipino Fi-



esta of Sacramento program.

The festivities started at exactly 10:30 AM with a parade by the different contingents of various participating community organizations as they rendezvoused at the corner of Florin Mall and Orange Avenue, Sacramento. The parade was led by Flag bearers of both the United States and Philippines namely Rudy Delizo of the US Army and Bobby Aglubat, US

community organizations in their colorful costumes and formal attires.

The short route of the parade ended at the giant canopy tent in the middle of the park where a program was held which was ably emceed by Sarah Enloe and Bobby Roy. After the United States and Philippine flags were brought in by the same flag bearers, the singing of the United States national anthem was made led by

the Sinagtala ensemble composed of Kristina Garcia, Jasmine Lewis and Apoll Ross Reyes while the Philippine national anthem was led by the University of the Philippines Alumni Association.

Dick Mazon, the President of the Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento the community organization responsible for putting into action and reality of the event graciously welcomed everyone. He said that the fiesta has three fold purposes, to celebrate the high points of our Independence Day, to bring out the many contributions of the Filipinos in the United States and to showcase the richness of our cultural heritage that helps define us as Filipinos.

Dick Mazon also said that the Theme in this year's celebration is "Remembering the Delano Grape Strike of 1965" to fittingly revisit 50 years ago the farm labor movement, the defining moment of the Filipino farm workers led by Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee. The Filipino farm workers initiated the strike which was eventually joined by the National Farm Workers Association, a Mexican dominated union. The united front of both unions has achieved a historical changed of the despicable working conditions of farm workers not only in California but throughout the United States.

Cynthia Bonta, the President of the Philippine National Day Association delivered the opening remarks stating that the fiesta is an event that will surely unite us in our quest for social justice just like the Filipino Americans farm workers struggles in the early 1960's for better working conditions. She traced how the Filipino farms workers initiated the farm labor movement to achieve better working conditions not only for themselves but everyone who works in the farm.

Christopher Cabaldon, a Filipino American Mayor of West Sacramento presented the Contract Benefit won by the 1965 Delano Grape Strike that entirely changed the shameful working conditions of migrant farm workers to a better one equaling other federal farm workers.

Rob Bonta, the first Filipino American elected to the California's State assembly, presented several resolutions.

Continued on page 12

Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento

From page 11

Tani Cantil Sakauye, the first Filipino American Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California takes the honor to present the Tribute Awards to; “LARRY DULAY ITLIONG and Filipino Members played an indisputable role throughout the struggle, without them there could not have been a strike victory of unionization right to collective bargaining”; “PHILIP VERA CRUZ taught us that the Filipino decision of the Delano Grape Strike delivered the initial spark to explode the brilliant incendiary bomb for social, economic and political changes in U.S. rural life”; “DOLORES HUERTA a lifetime organizer, a builder of equality movements, a leader empowering communities, the embodiment of the rights and freedoms that nurtures and sustains our democracy”.

A moving tribute in song entitled “OH, MY FATHER”, written, composed and sang by Derek Ledda was well received with thunderous applause from the admiring audience. Community leader and past president of the Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento, Josie Patria delivered the closing remarks who as always expressed her profound gratitude to all the people who worked feverishly for the success of the event. She also thanks all the distinguished guests present for taking time to attend and grace the Fiesta.

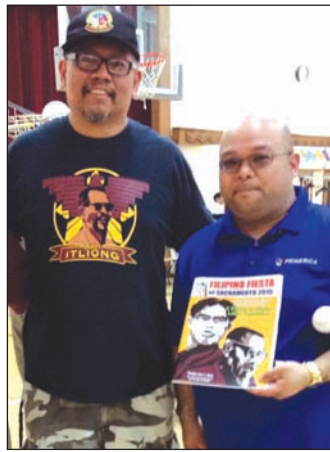
The festivities continued in all the places where entertainments were being held. Inside the Rizal Center, the audience especially the children were entertained by the amazing sleight of hand magic by Dane San Pedro, marionettes show, pabatin and of course a lot of dancing for everyone, It was also the place where the VIP’s were treated with sumptuous lunch as some of them watched the show and others joined the dancing. At the giant canopy tent, cultural presentations in dance, song and music were held with audience participations. Likewise, at the amphitheater continues music both the old and the present crazies were played to the enjoyment and delight of their audience. There were several shows and entertainments but for lack of space, we cannot possibly mention them all.

The participating Organizations in the parade were: Dumaguete Alameda Sister City Delegation, University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity, Filipino Community Beauty Queens, Filipino Women’s Club, the Ilocanos of America, Jollibee Mascot, Philippine National Day Association, Sinagtala Filipino Theater, Tau Gamma Phi Fraternity, Ati-Atihan Band, Filipino American Veterans Association, Filipino-American Medical Technicians, United States Filipino War Veterans Legion, United Residential care and Eskwela Natin Float.

The judges of the parade contest namely, Rosie Dauz, Dr. Michael Ramos and Dr. Marycor Cuevas Ramos have decided the following winners in their respective categories;

- 1- Most Participants, Ati-Atihan/ Aklan.
- 2- Most Colorful-FCSV
- 3- Most Orderly- Eskwela Natin
- 4- Most Filipiniana looking group-Filipino Women’s Club
- 5- Group that best represents the Theme of the Fiesta- Sinagtala.

The officers of the 2015 Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento are: Dick Mazon, President; Joe Gonzalez, Vice President; Mercedes Guerrero, Secretary; Mena Domondon, Treasurer; Aurora Ramos, Auditor; Lilia Rivera and Josie Patria, Ex-Officio Members.



Jonna Espera Turns 18



By Dale Esperante

Mr. and Mrs. Jon and Edna Espera, with daughter Joana and son John, celebrated debutante Jonna's birthday on 21 Jun 2015 at The Falls Event Center in Elk Grove.



Remy Solomon as the Master of Ceremony ensured Jonna's special evening flowed flawlessly. Remy also gifted the Espera family a touching serenade, one of the special moments of the evening. Kevin Huynh, as Jonna's escort, proved that chivalry is still alive and well in these modern times.

As parishioners of St. Charles Borromeo, the family actively volunteers

to the faith community. Jon is a coordinator and minister for the noon mass every Sunday, as well as a Knight of Columbus member.

Following their parents' examples, daughters Jonna and Joana serve as parish gift shop volunteers. Jonna's other activities: West Campus High School President of the nationally recognized MESA (Mathematics-Engineering-Scientific-Achievements), a Top Ten Student of Class 2015, Interact Club member, and California Scholarship Foundation member. Young lady, we are all proud of you!



American Legion Magellan Post 604

From page 10

Union where he spent his happy young life as the only child of Paula Villanueva and Jose Rafanan. He is happily married for 40 years to Mary Thorne and their marital union is blessed with a son and three daughters namely; Jose who has an Associate Degree, Cassandra a College graduate and a Government employee, Marie, a practicing Lawyer and Paula with a Masters Degree in Education.

The members of both organizations and their guests were entertained by Leslie Bernabe who sang two songs entitled "Bridge over troubled water" and "Time to say goodbye" receiving thunderous applause from her admiring audience. The members as well as their guests were treated with Filipino, Chinese and American cuisines for their dinner.

AMERICAN LEGION MAGELLAN POST 604 officers for 2015-2016 are; Rick Rafanan, Commander; Ted Tabarango, 1st Vice Commander; Joe Gonzales, 2nd Vice Commander; Ato Dela

Cruz, Chaplain; Ken Thompson, Sgt.-At-Arms; Bill Bostock, 2nd Sgt.-At-Arms; Dick Weitzenberg, Judge Advocate; Fred Amper, Historian; Andy Tancioco, Finance Officer; Dale Esperante, Adjutant; Howard Williams, Service Officer; Tom Amaba, Past Commander; Executive Board Members: Bill Versoza, Carlos Cordero, Pat Engkabo, Fred Aquino and Gus Deguzman.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT 604 Officers for 2015-2016: are; Olive Jackson, President; Jocelyn Banag, Vice President; Lita Calindas, 2nd Vice; Florentina Abad, Secretary; Letty O'Quinn, Treasurer; Penefrancia Williams, Sgt.-At-Arms; Linda Cordero, Marshal; Trinidad Cabalfin, Chaplain; Lilia Rivera, Historian; Alice Pambid, Parliamentarian; Letty O'Quinn, Past President. Executive Board Members: Cynthia Amaba, Marilou Amper, Aida Calindas, Yasko Floresca, Carina Gonzalez and Bella Nidoy.



Ann Crawford's retirement party

The Golden Hips group performed a Hip Hop dance at Ann Crawford's retirement party: Marilyn Lopez, Vissia Valencia, Laurie Ligsay, Ida Alvarez, Nancy Bautista, Elna Discipulo, Helen Enriquez, and Hilda Bobier {missing from the photo was Mariflor Ong}

Ida Alvarez, Hilda Bobier, Laurie Ligsay, Vissia Valencia, Ann Crawford, Mariflor Ong, Nancy Bautista, Helen Enriquez, Marilyn Lopez, and Amy Bush



Advice of Wisdom to the New Graduates

By Nancy Cristi Bautista

Graduation day is probably one of the happiest and most memorable events in one's life. However, this fulfilling experience is also one of the most terrifying beginning of adult realizations. Most likely, especially the younger generations do not really comprehend what exactly lies ahead. For them, they think that a diploma is enough to get a high paying job, that banks will just loan them money for their cars and homes, and that other amenities will automatically fall in their hands like what they see on the media. Little do they know that they need more than luck and a lot more of hard work.

Here are some words of wisdom compiled from common people who are considered successful in their own rights.

"Not all popular people are successful. Do not idolize them. Just let them be your guideline; get their good traits and discard their flaws. Use your mind and follow what's in your heart."

_Carol, Grandmother, California

"Accept any decent job. Work hard and use it on your way up. You can write it on your resume as your experience."

_Francis, Grandfather, California

"If all you have is a high school diploma, don't stop. Go to college. More opportunities will open up for you. When applying for a job after college, don't aim at dead center on your target; aim a notch below and you will hit it. When you land your first job out of college, live within your means and start saving money."

_Vince, Data Center Operator, Chicago

"Learning doesn't stop when you graduate. Life is filled with experiences to learn from. Take them all, good and bad and continue to grow from each encounter."

_April, Registered Nurse, California

To the High School new graduates: *"Live away from home. Try on your own for at least a semester. It will really make you appreciate what you have/had and how important narrowing down a career path is."*

_Chris, Educator, California

"Pursue your passion and strive to excel in your chosen field. There is no shortcut to success. Be prepared to work your way to the top without stepping on others in the process. Set your priorities straight. Ambition should never trump family and loved ones. Always be humble and be thankful for your blessings. Do not be afraid of failure. Persevere in the face of the numerous obstacles in your path and the many disappointments you will inevitably experience. Never let anyone tell you what you can and cannot do, but set deadlines for your goals. Knowing when it's time to redirect your energies is not giving up; it's being realistic and honest about your strengths and weaknesses. When a door refuses to open, be prepared to move on and

consider other avenues of opportunity. Life will not always proceed as you envision it, that is why it's a great adventure! Explore the world! Love with all your heart. Serve others. The world is yours! Congratulations and "Carpe Diem!" {Seize Life!}. "Van harte gefeliciteerd en succes!" {Congratulations and good luck!}"

_Raymond, United Nations, International Criminal Lawyer and
_Dennise, Pediatrician, The Netherlands

"Your own family or future family should come first, so consider them in your future goals and plans."

_Tom, IT, State Controller Office, California

"Life is an unending series of HELLOs and GOODBYEs, a series of comings and goings. A phase in your academic life has just ended and a new one lies ahead marked with new adventures, greater challenges, and numerous opportunities for you to be in the service of others. Carry on, graduates and "bear fruits __ the kind that last." Congratulations!!!"

_Maria Antonia, Program Head, Bachelor of Arts in Communication

St. Mary's College, Quezon City, Philippines

"Don't be lazy. Nobody owes you anything. Always smile."

-Cary, 'Snap on Tool' Dealer, Granite Bay, California

"I am incredibly proud and blessed to have graduated successfully as a Filipino-American at Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa. I owe all my work ethic and accomplishments to my parents. The qualities they have instilled in me over the years have continued to provide me with the necessary tools to represent us Filipinos presently and in the future. "

To the other graduates: *"Life is a continuous learning experience. Just because you received your diploma doesn't mean that you stop learning __ continue to obtain from the vast resources around you. Be a life-long learner and implement passion and love In everything that you do. If you do this, you can never fail."*

_Patrick, Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy, 2015 Dubuque University, Iowa
*Note: Patrick was a Summa Cum Laude. He was so humble about it. In fact, he surprised his parents, especially his mother on Mother's day, which was the day of graduation itself. Congratulations, Patrick!

The motivational and inspirational advices which the contributors have bestowed to the new graduates are deeply appreciated. It is assured that the newly promoted students would carry these practical words with them in their search for their bright future. Now that they have the right tools, it is up to these dreamers to create their own fortune. Good luck and God bless.



PATRICK with his parents and brother, graduates as summa cum laude with Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy on May 29, 2015 at Dubuque University Iowa.



CHRISTOPHER JEREL ABAYA
River City High School
Class of 2015



JOLIN NINO ABAYA
University of Wisconsin OSHKOSH
Bachelor of Liberal Studies
May 15, 2015

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Birthdays



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JULY 15



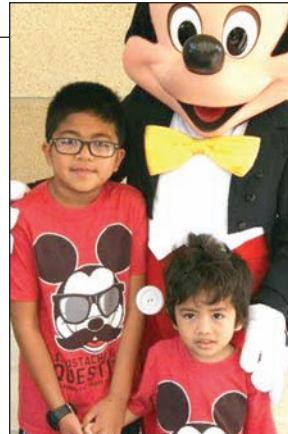
CAROLINE KANG
JULY 23



JUN ABAYA
JULY 28



CHARITY AVENA
JULY 29



CHRISTOPHER LEON ERESPE
with brother Carl - JULY 21



GEORGE EDWARD ADUCAYEN with wife
Christine - JULY 28



VIRGILIO FAUNDO and wife Grace
JULY 26



CAROL MUNAR with grandchildren
JULY 27

Calendar of Events

JULY 18, 2015, SATURDAY

FCSV Scholarship Award & Hawaiian Night
6 pm - 11pm / Donation \$20
Jose Rizal Community Center
7230 Florin Mall Dr. Sacramento, Ca
Aida - 916.686.9886
Mercy - 916.266.1923
Nelle - 916.215.4716



AUGUST 8 & 9, 2015 (Sat-Sun)

42nd Annual Barrio Fiesta
11am- 8pm
Filipino Center Plaza
Stockton, CA 95202
209.466.1416 / 209.466.3940



Pedro Adan Generao

January 26, 1936 - June 2, 2015



Pedro Orlando Adan-Generao, age 80, resided in Elk Grove, CA. Orlando the name by which his close friends and family knew him. The youngest son of eight brothers and sisters of the late Mauricio P. Lagmay-Generao of Sison, Pangasinan, Philippines, and the late Mrs. Victoria Castillo Adan-Generao. Orlando was a 22-year U.S. Navy retiree and a Veteran who served three tours of duty during the Vietnam war. He was also known as "Pete" by his American Navy buddies, business colleagues, friends and extended family. He was always actively involved with his family and in his community. Orlando was the past president and lifetime member of the Filipino Community of Solano County, Inc., in Vallejo, CA, and a lifetime member of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento & Vicinity.

Orlando is survived by his wife of 57 years, Mrs. Teodora "Dory" Mangahas Flores-Generao of Angat, Bulacan, Philippines and Elk Grove, CA, his daughter, Victoria (Vicky) Ann Flores Lanakila Generao and John David Harrison-Crawford, of Gig Harbor, WA, his son, Jeffrey Flores Generao and Aquilina Quiambao-Generao of Stockton, CA, and two grandchildren, Haruna Grace Asakawa of Irvine, CA, and Peter Alexander Quiambao-Generao of Stockton, CA, who is presently attending Stanford University; his older brother and wife, Rudy and Fe Adan-Generao, of San Francisco, CA, and youngest sister, Nellie Adan Generao-Miranda of Richmond, CA. Pedro is interred at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetary in Dixon, CA.



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Filipino American Veterans Association (FAVA) Annual Picnic



By Dale Esperante

On 6 Jun 2015, Freedom Park at the former McClellan Air Force Base teemed with members, family and friends of FAVA. Even though the weather hovered around 90 degrees Fahrenheit, the veterans ensured the barbecue grill was kept sizzling. Picnickers enjoyed all of the grill-masters' specialties.

A summer picnic is traditionally held by FAVA to show appreciation to the members for their continued service and support. It is also an opportunity to share the camaraderie with invited friends who may wish to join the organization.

Any active duty military or veteran

who served honorably in the United States Armed Forces is eligible to join this respected veteran organization founded more than 25 years ago here in Sacramento, California. Community events, social affairs, parades, dances, scholarship programs, memorials, picnics, casino fund-raising trips, morale programs, and a golf tournament-- just to name a few-- are all part of FAVA's yearly schedule.

The picnic at Freedom Park was enjoyed by all thanks to President Fred Aquino and the organizing committee starting with Chairman Bill Versoza, Carmen Versoza, Andy Tancioco, Rick Rafanan, Joseph Ventura, Ed Peluso, Fred and Malou Amper, Tom and Cynthia Amaba, Bella Nidoy and Olivia Jackson, Alex Cheng, and the FAVA Ladies and Gentlemen.

UPAASV University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity



Executive meeting and Induction of new members and officers on June 20, 2015: Susan Castillo, Vice President and acting President; Janice Shui, Secretary; Johnny Regadio, Treasurer; Anita Felix, Auditor; Board of Directors: Cecilio Felix, Albert Guevara, Beatriz Alo and Art Calindas; Joe Gonzalez, Ways and Means; Faina Abaya and Dale Esperante, PRO.



10 Things You Need to Know About Kapampangans

By Robby Tantingco

So you want to live in Pampanga, or room with a Kapampangan, or even marry a Kapampangan? Prepare for a bumpy ride! Here are tips to help you survive the company of this much-admired, much-reviled and much-misunderstood people:

1. Kapampangans talk loud when they're together. They enjoy listening to themselves and to the sound of their language. They love their language with a child's love for his mother, calling it amanung sisuan ("suckled word"). They'd navigate across a crowded room to find anyone speaking in Kapampangan, and when they do, they'd gush like long lost friends. They sound like they're arguing, but they're actually just tracing their six degrees of separation in search of a blood relation or a common acquaintance. You can't blame them for savoring each other's company. There are only two million of them left on Earth, compared with 22 million Tagalogs, 20 million Cebuanos and eight million Ilocanos.

2. Kapampangans are proud of their race. Call them conceited, call them ethnocentric, but they sincerely believe that they're the first, the best and the most in everything. Bravest soldiers? Check. First Jesuits? Check. Best cooks? Check. Prettiest women? Check. Longest literary work, first woman author, first vernacular zarzuela, first novel in English. Check, check, check, check! Kapampangans are fiercely patriotic — not to the Filipino nation, but to the Kapampangan Nation, which they claim (correctly) to be older by a thousand years. Other Filipinos deny their ethnicity, but Kapampangans will announce it even when no one's asking! Their



Mount Arayat in Pampanga

attachment to their land of birth compels them to stay, but if they leave at all, they always look to Mt. Arayat as a sentimental beacon guiding them on their way back.

3. Kapampangans are offended when they're called dugong aso (dog-blooded). They take it as an



The Macabebe Scouts, who allied themselves with the United States versus Emilio Aguinaldo's forces during the Philippine American War



Sisig, a popular kapampangan dish

attack on their personal integrity and an affront to the memory of their ancestors. Generations of Kapampangans have endured humiliation from people carelessly and even maliciously calling them traitors. Who wouldn't re-

sent being told that treachery runs in your blood?

4. Kapampangans can really cook, and Pampanga is really the food capital of the Philippines. You can contest the other claims, but this one is universally accepted. Other regions are known for single dishes and desserts; Pampanga has a

whole cornucopia of culinary delights, from colonial to folk to exotic. This gift can be traced back to their access to the friar's kitchen, their land's plentiful harvests and the episodes of floods and famine that have taught them to improvise. Everyone in Pam-



Morcon, another Pampanga classic

panga can cook, even the men; woe to the Kapampangan who can't cook!

5. Kapampangans are notorious bashers. You make one small mistake, you won't hear the end of it. You cook caldereta (stew) that's a tad bland, you'll be the topic for days. State a contrary opinion and you're dead. Kapampangans are highly opinionated and contentious, probably the result of pampering by their colonial masters who gave them access to exclusive schools in Manila and Madrid (while their compatriots could only attend parochial schools) which in turn made them feel intellectually superior.

6. Kapampangans are deeply religious which, of course, is not the same as spiritual. Their fetish for anitos (spirit idols) has morphed into an excessive, almost irrational, devotion to anything associated with their colonizers' religion. Kapampangans have found their

new idols on which to lavish their affections: the church temple for which they'd spend any amount to build, rebuild and renovate; the retablos and santos (altars and icons) which they over-decorate, over-dress, and over-process; and of course their priests whom they over-revere to the point of electing one as governor. Pampanga is home not only to the most devout Catholics in this country, but also to Eli Soriano's Ang Dating Daan and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ's Apollo Quiboloy plus a host of other churches, sects and cults.

7. Kapampangans love the good life. They can't last a week without "mallong," movies and mahjong. A birthday, an anniversary, a promotion—there's always an excuse to party and a justification for spending all their savings. This joie de vivre, this utter lack of proportion between work and play, has put them in stark contrast with the thrifty Ilocanos, whom God has only given a sliver of craggy land to work on while Kapampangans wallow in fertile fields and rivers teeming with fish. Kapampangans' devil-may-care attitude is the reason hospitals, diagnostic clinics and dialysis centers thrive in Pampanga.

8. Kapampangans have fine tastes — another offshoot from early exposure to their colonial masters' lavish lifestyles. The rise of feudal lords and wealthy families in the province also nurtured artists and turned bucolic towns like Bacolor and Guagua into thriving cultural and political centers. Kapampangan writers like Aurelio Tolentino, Crisostomo Soto, Amado Yuzon and Bienvenido Santos; Kapampangan artists like Fernando Ocampo Juan Flores, Vicente Manansala and Bencab; and Kapampangan performers like Rogelio de la Rosa, Cecile Licad, Lea Salonga and Apl.de.ap all raised the bar of Kapampangan aesthetics and refined Kapampangan tastes.

9. The other side of the care-free nature of Kapampangans is their durability. When Pinatubo erupted in 1991, even the proud scions of genteel families and descendants of poets and warriors had to suffer the indignity of staying in evacuation centers and the difficulty of starting over in resettlement areas. How the Kapampangans rose from a depth of despair this low to the economic peak this high is one of the most spectacular recoveries ever seen in this country. Kapampangans are a hardy people after all. It took a cataclysmic eruption, followed by four years of pounding

by lahars, to bring out their hidden fortitude.

10. Kapampangans are risk-takers, almost to a fault. When the "brave youth from Macabebe" unsheathed his sword to take on a whole Spanish armada in 1571, he began a tradition of brave and bold Kapampangans who'd fight in battle, see the world, or start a business enterprise with an al-



Catholic devotees flagellate themselves and re-enact Christ's journey to his crucifixion as a form of penitence during the Lenten activities in Angeles City, Pampanga

most reckless audacity. The landscape of history is littered with fallen Kapampangans who dared to cross swords with much bigger enemies, from Maniago's rebels in the Kapampangan Revolt of 1660 and the Macabebes whose town was razed to the ground by the revolutionaries, to Taruc's Huks who fought the Japanese



Lea Salonga

and Dante's NPAs who fought the government and even Ninoy Aquino who fought the dictatorship.

So there. The list is by no means complete, and Kapampangans are certainly much more than the sum of these descriptions. But for starters you can use it as a road-map to get into the conflicted, unpredictable heart and mind of Kapampangans.

Kapampangans are hard to understand, and harder to live with. The contradictions that shaped their land and history — the cycle of feast and famine, the tension between loyalty and rebellion, feudalism and peasant unrest, Church tradition and folk Catholicism, and the presence of the largest US military base in the hotbed of Communist insurgency — have made Kapampangans truly unlike any other people in this country.



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An Interesting Quick Summer Vacation

By Gabriel Ortigoza

Summer vacation is one of the most awaited part of the year by my children because we are going on vacation.

In the morning of 23 June 2015, everybody is ready. Bags are packed for our four days' vacation to three tourists' destinations in the three states of Arizona, Nevada, and California.

My 11 years old fully loaded over used 4-wheeled Honda Pilot with 124,000+ mileage on its odometer has been our car of choice for family's long drive to vacation destinations because it can accommodate up to eight passengers.

From our home in Elk Grove, CA we drove a total of nine hours, including four 30-minute rest periods to different clean rest areas going to our reserved Time Share accommodation in Las Vegas, NV.

On day 2, we drove two hours Grand Canyon West where the famous glass-made Sky Walk is hanging 4,000 feet above Colorado River. Grand Canyon is one of world's seven natural wonders.

At the Canyon we took the 1100 guided bus tour to different locations. It was in our first stop that horses are available for free horseback riding. It was in this place where I experienced my childhood dream to fire a real cowboy's gun. Not only did I shoot a cowboy's .22 mm revolver but I also experienced shooting it in a gun duel against another person. That lucky or unlucky person is my wife, of course we used blank ammunitions with fiber glass in the middle that divides the two of us for safety reason. Revolver duel is the most memorable Wild Wild West experience to me and my wife.

On day 3 we went to the famous Hoover Dam in Boulder City, Nevada. It was a 45-minute drive away from our PCP. Hoover Dam is considered a majestic engineering construction after the pyramid in Egypt.

The dam's construction was started in 1928 after a



long debate amongst political leaders in the states of Nevada, Arizona, and California. Those politicians argued which state gets how much share from the dam's income. The construction was completed under-budget two years ahead of scheduled target time. Workers were paid \$4/day and they worked long hours 24/7.

In 1935, the dam was named after 31st U.S. president Herbert Hoover, an engineer by profession, who initiated the construction of the dam. Since its operation, the states of Nevada, Arizona, and part of southern California benefited from irrigation and the much needed water supply in the desert.

The same can be done to the disputed Spratly Islands composed of 750 reefs, islets, cays, and islands in the South China Sea where claimant countries like the China, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Brunei can talk and agree what to do with the rich natural deposits such as gas and oil. Once agreement is reached, deep sea drilling can be started. The huge projected income which the bully China salivates can be divided among claimant countries. This will prevent military confrontation by the United States of America, world's only super power after the Cold War, and its allies like Australia, Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, etc., against giant China which, by the way, just celebrated its regional unpopular festival called Yulin "Dog" Festival, the civilized people of the world hate so much.

In the eve of Thursday,

we watched The Beatles by Cirque Du Soleil at the Mirage. Thereafter we strolled in the Strip. Then we experienced the famous High Roller ride, build in 2013, a 30-minute ride where Vegas' panoramic view at night is better appreciated at 500+ feet above ground.

On day 4 we decided to leave our huge two-bedroom accommodation in Vegas early in the morning to avoid traffic congestion going out of the Sin City to the famous Sequoia National Park in California Central Valley. It took us another five hours on the road.

Sequoia National Park is California's first national park established in 1890. Its land area measures 66 miles from north to south and 36 miles from east to west. The highest elevation is 14,494 feet, the tallest peak in the contiguous 48 states.

Have you heard about Sequoia trees? Those are the giant red-brown color trees that grow in the mountains of Central California. General Sherman Tree is the earth's largest living tree. It weighs approximately 2.7 million pounds. It grows up to 275 feet tall. Trunk circumference at ground level is 102.6 feet.

The road going uphill Sequoia National Park is long and winding, and steep. Most turns towards General Sherman Park are 180 degrees at 10 MPH speed. Using low gear is recommended driving downhill.

Lots to learn from mother earth in our four days' vacation. I highly recommend Sequoia National Park to interested tourists.

(gabbyortig@yahoo.com)

Vision Floater, Line, or Curtain

By Dale Esperante

My first experience with floaters or spots was two years ago before my cataract surgery. The doctor told me this was normal and that they'll go away. After the cataract surgery, they did go away and I was happy.

Then on a recent Sunday evening, an annoying line under my eye suddenly appeared. Anywhere I turned and looked, that line followed. Thinking that it will eventually go away, I didn't worry. Monday when I awoke, the line was thicker. I decided to set up an appointment with the eye doctor through the Kaiser website. The earliest appointment available was 16 June. I decided to accept it. Tuesday morning, it seemed like the darkest night covered half of my eye. I anxiously phoned Kaiser Hospital. After explaining my eye condition, the nurse set up a same day appointment.

The general ophthalmologist examined and determined that my right eye's retina became detached. I was then given another appointment for examination by an eye surgeon the same day. An hour later at Point West Kaiser hospital, my wife and I sat in the waiting room to see the surgeon. I didn't find out until later that the surgeon was fully booked but I was inserted between appointments because of my "emergency" condition.

The surgeon gave me two options after the examination. The priority was for me to undergo a retina reattachment surgery the next day after fasting for twelve hours. I agreed to the surgery. To do nothing would permanently blind my eye. He described my detached retina as a "heart attack of the eye." The severity of my condition finally sunk in. I finally welcomed and enjoyed the things that I could see all along – the trees, the sky, the freeway traffic, my wife's smile, books that I have yet to read, the garden, the world - all created by God.

By the day of the surgery, about 75% of my right eye was dark (curtained). A gamut of emotions overcame me from a feeling of depression to hope. Given local anesthesia, I laid still



and wide awake in the operating room. I didn't feel any pain. My good left eye was covered while my right eye was being operated on. All I could do was listen to the finest operating staff headed by Doctor Giri. The outstanding doctor hand-picked his best operating assistants to complete the 2 plus hours of microscopic work requiring precision and skill to reattach my retina.

The day after surgery, the bandage on my right eye was pulled off by the surgeon's assistant. I was afraid to open my right eye at first to find out if it could see again. Upon opening it, I breathed a sigh of relief because of the blurry vision that greeted my right eye (no more curtain and darkness). My doctor told me that it could take three months for my eye to heal. My bright beautiful world (blurry for a while) has been gifted back to me by my skillful surgeon, his excellent team, and the technology of the day. Of course, I thanked God most of all.

My doctor advised me to follow his instructions until my eye is completely healed: No flying, No driving up to Lake Tahoe or similar altitude, No sleeping on my back (recommended sleeping position is face down or on my left side), No lifting more than 5 pounds, No physical activities that may increase my heart rate, No health

club, No steam room, No Zumba, and so many other restrictions. Activities allowed: walking, slow dancing, reading, TV, and computer (left eye can see), and not much else.

I have no one to blame for this disability except myself. I took my eyes for granted. I was offered an eye examination last year. We have vision care insurance but I opted to just buy a new pair of eyeglasses using the year old prescription. If I had agreed to an eye check-up last year, if I had not taken my eyes for granted, if I had called the advice nurse right away when I felt or saw something weird in my eye - who knows - could I have prevented my retina from almost completely detaching and collapsing?

From KRAMES Patient Education:

"WHEN THE RETINA IS DAMAGED: If the retina is torn or detached, the eye can't send clear visual signals to the brain. Damage to the peripheral retina affects side vision. Damage to the macula affects central vision. If not treated, retinal problems can lead to permanent vision loss."

"WHO IS AT RISK? Anyone can have a tear or detachment. Factors that can make a tear or detachment more likely include: Near-sightedness, Older Age, Previous Eye Surgery, Trauma to the Eye, Thinning or Weakness of the Retina, Diseases such as Diabetes, Family History of Retinal Tears or Detachments."

Please don't take your eyes for granted, like I did mine. Have your eyes (the windows of your world) checked regularly. The colors of the world are so beautiful compared to nothing. Can you imagine seeing darkness for the rest of your life?

My devoted wife, I thank you for taking care of me during this ordeal.



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By Jer



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We foresee that in two or three more years, this film fest will become a major cinema event in Asia. It's important for local audiences to patronize it," said Briccio Santos, chair of the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP), main proponent of the 2015 World Premieres Film Festival Philippines (WPFPP), which opens today.



ANGGA Sasongko's "Filosofi Kopi" from Indonesia

is a detective story revolving around a tattoo artist who finds out that she was sold as a baby. It will premiere on June 27 at 5 p.m.

Anna Bofarull's "Sonata for Cello" (Spain) follows a cellist as she battles fibromyalgia, a chronic disorder with no known cure. It will premiere on June 27 at 7:30 p.m.

The filmmakers were presented during a press conference yesterday, Santos reported. They will also attend their respective gala premieres and participate in Q&A sessions with the audience after the screenings.

With subtitles All films will be shown in their original languages with English subtitles. The films will compete for: Grand Festival Prize, Grand Jury Prize, as well as awards for best actor, best actress, best artistic contribution, technical grand prize and best ensemble performance.

With subtitles

"The WPFPP celebrates the power and magic of film," Santos said. Serving as the festival's opening film is the restored version of National Artist Lino Brocka's masterpiece "Insiang." The screening is at 2:30 p.m. today, at the Premiere Cinema of SM Mall of Asia.

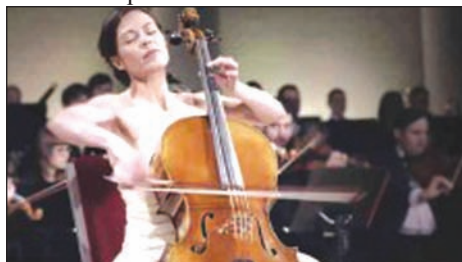
Renowned programmer and Brocka supporter Pierre Rissient will be the guest of honor, Santos said.

The restoration of "Insiang" was made possible through the efforts of the FDCP and Martin Scorsese's World Cinema Project/The Film Foundation. It was completed at the L'Immagine Ritrovata Laboratories in Bologna, Italy.

Featured in a section called New Filipino Cinema are Alvin Yapan's "Ang Kubo sa Kawayan," Nestor Abrogena's "Ang Kwento Nating Dalawa," Will Fredo's "Filemon Mamon," Genesis Nolasco's "Maskara," Ruben Maria Sorequez's "Of Sinners and Saints," Carlos Morales' "Piring" Jonah Lim's "Sino Nga Ba Si Pangkoy Ong?" and Charliebebs Gohtia's "I Love You. Thank You."

Admission to gala premiere screenings is free. Regular run will be from June 29 to July 7 at SM Cinemas in Metro Manila.

Serving as WPFPP's highlight is the main competition, which "presents the best and latest films from all over the world," Santos told the Inquirer. "This is only our second edition and we've come up with a formidable lineup."



ANNA Bofarull's "Sonata for Cello" from Spain

First in the lineup is Li Da-hsu's "The End of Love" (Taiwan), a film that explores the meaning of love. Its gala premiere is tomorrow, 5:30 p.m., at SM Mall of Asia.

Aleksandr Melnik's "The Territory" (Russia) focuses on a team of geologists searching for gold on the northeastern shores of the Arctic Ocean. Its gala premiere is tomorrow, 7:30 p.m., also at SM MOA.

Remy van Heugten's "Son of Mine" (The Netherlands) reevaluates notions of manhood in a provincial town. Screening is on June 26 at 2 p.m.

Angga Sasongko's "Filosofi Kopi" (Indonesia) uses the quest for the perfect coffee as metaphor for the main characters' failed dreams. It premieres on June 26, at 5 p.m.

Burak Cem Arliel's "Crimean" (Turkey) presents the Crimean Turks' struggles against colonizers. The film will premiere on June 26, 7:30 p.m.

Ana Murugarren's "Three Lies" (Spain) is a detective story revolving around a tattoo artist who finds out that she was sold as a baby. It will premiere on June 27 at 5 p.m.

Anna Bofarull's "Sonata for Cello" (Spain) follows a cellist as she battles fibromyalgia, a chronic disorder with no known cure. It will premiere on June 27 at 7:30 p.m.

The filmmakers were presented during a press conference yesterday, Santos reported. They will also attend their respective gala premieres and participate in Q&A sessions with the audience after the screenings.



ANA MURUGARREN'S "Three Lies" from Spain



NESTOR Abrogena's "Ang Kwento Nating Dalawa" in the New Filipino Cinema section

Featured in a section called New Filipino Cinema are Alvin Yapan's "Ang Kubo sa Kawayan," Nestor Abrogena's "Ang Kwento Nating Dalawa," Will Fredo's "Filemon Mamon," Genesis Nolasco's "Maskara," Ruben Maria Sorequez's "Of Sinners and Saints," Carlos Morales' "Piring" Jonah Lim's "Sino Nga Ba Si Pangkoy Ong?" and Charliebebs Gohtia's "I Love You. Thank You."

Admission to gala premiere screenings is free. Regular run will be from June 29 to July 7 at SM Cinemas in Metro Manila.

Marian Rivera: Ayoko ng birth control, gusto ko marami

By Chuck Smith

Manila, Philippines – Marian Rivera said she does not plan to practice birth control after giving birth to her first baby with husband Dingdong Dantes.



Marian Rivera on her pregnancy: "Gusto ko namnamin yung pagkakat-aon na sa akin na lang yun."

"Ay, ayoko ng birth control," the GMA-7 actress said when if she's open to vasectomy, ligation or other forms of family planning methods in an interview with GMA News TV's "Tonight With Arnold Clavio" recently. "Ayoko. Gusto ko nga basketball team kami. Gusto ko marami."

Marian further explained: "Sabi nga ng asawa ko, 'Pagkatapos mo manganak, pahinga ka muna. Tapos saka ulit tayo mag-baby.' Sabi ko, 'Hindi. Kung bigyan tayo ng Panginoon ulit, e 'di why not?'"

The 30-year-old actress revealed her pregnancy last April; she is currently five months pregnant. The actress had to give up the lead role in the GMA-7 soap opera "The Rich Man's Daughter" to focus on having a baby.

"Okay naman pero may mga pagkakat-aon na nahihirapan pa rin kahit papaano, kasi lumalaki siya e," Marian said of her pregnancy. "Pangarap talaga naming

magkaroon ng anak." Marian revealed she already knows the gender of her baby. And while she does plan to reveal it to her fans, Marian wants to keep it private for now.

"Alam na namin. Hindi naman kami naging madamot sa pagbibigay ng impormasyon tungkol sa amin. Kaya siguro minsan mapapansin nila na sa Instagram ko, hindi ako nagpo-post ng baby bump ko. Gusto ko namnamin yung pagkakat-aon na sa akin na lang 'yun," she said.

Do they already have planned names for their baby?

"Gusto ko kasi kapag babae may Maria, kapag lalaki may Jose. Kasi si Dong, Jose Sixto siya ako. Ako Marian, parang Maria yun in Spanish," Marian said.



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25th Outstanding Filipino Youth Awards Celebrates Excellence

By Bobby Dalton G. Roy

The Philippine National Day Association, along with several community organizations, joined with dozens of students and their families to honor excellence.

The early-May event, which was held at the California State University, Sacramento Redwood Room, featured extraordinary young students from various middle and high schools in the greater Sacramento region. The grade eight and twelve awardees at the 25th annual Outstanding Filipino Youth Awards (OFYAs) were all nominated by school staff members and went through an application and interview process in order.

Following a social reception, the attendees were welcomed by PNDA Secretary Justin Delacruz, who noted that the awards are not only a celebration of individuals for their personal achievements but a contribution that advances the whole community.

Recognition awards, achievement awards in academics, arts, athletics, community service, or leadership, best essay awards, Ganting Pala, Gintong Lahi, and scholarship awards were plentiful as the amount of scholarships awarded

exceeded \$4k, bringing the grand total of scholarship awards over \$80k since 1999. The PNDA believes that an educated community is an empowered community.

The event also allowed former awardees to reunite with each other and with the program. Alumni included Amanda Camposagrado, Fernan Tolentino, Dane San Pedro, Jofil Borja, and Tiffany Alunan, who each gave words of encouragement and advice to the current awardees. Event organizers shared that the best part of their experiences have been the palpable sense of excellence and were struck by the high level of accomplishment of the students both in and outside the classroom.

Emcee Delacruz noted the generosity of many benefactors, whose stalwart support of the awards helps make the event possible. He also noted the unique characteristics of the exceptionally high-achieving students. "They challenge themselves, their peers and their teachers on a daily basis," he said. "These young men and women don't lead their lives to blend in; they lead their lives to stand out."

For more information on the OFYAs, PNDA, or any of its projects, please contact Bobby Dalton G. Roy at 916-224-8244 or by e-mail at bobby.g.roy@gmail.com.



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