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Philippine Fiesta™

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Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA 10th Anniversary Musical Review-Page 10

Campers retake Kalayaan Island



Almost 50 young Filipinos are camping on a remote Philippine-held island in the South China Sea in a symbolic stand against China's claim to most of the waterway.

By Sandy Araneta

Organizers of the group, calling itself Kalayaan Atin Ito (Kalayaan This Is Ours), said 47 of them arrived Saturday on the island of Pag-asa, also known as Thitu, in the Spratly chain.

"Kalayaan," the Filipino word for freedom, is also the name of the township established by the Philippines in the Spratlys to assert its claim to part of the island chain.

'This is ours.' This photo taken on Dec. 26 shows

young Filipinos posing on Pag-asa island, part of the disputed Spratly group of islands, in the South China Sea to announce that the Philippines owns the island. AFP

Continued on page 3

Sinag-Tala 2015

By Dale Esperante

A new season always brings expectations. Like the winter rains showering our landscape, we hope to have more. Yet forecasting the fickle weather may be best left in the hands of meteorologists.



This year show is all about continuing the legacy of Filipino people.

Now for the 26th season of Sinag-tala's Theatrical Revue, it successfully de-

livered another Christmas season gift to the Fil-Am community. The show's

subtle shifts in honoring the past, showcasing

Continued on page 9

An evening to remember



The UP Concert Chorus, is the official choir of the University of the Philippines, an internationally-competitive performing group has mastered versatility in singing classical folk, pop and Broadway musical genres with signature vibrant choreography.

By Perry Diaz

Last December 20, 2015, marked the day the world renowned and award-winning University of the Philippines Concert Chorus (UPCC) – or simply, "Korus" – was in Sacramento, California on the first leg of its U.S. Winter Tour.



Photos by Dave San Pedro

As usual, Korus presented a repertoire of music that made the audience call for an encore. And for those who have seen them perform in Sacramento two decades ago, and two years ago, their recent performance brought back fond memories of their ability

to awe the crowd with their vibrant musical form.

I remember their first sojourn into Sacramento in 1996 when my wife Dolores – who was then the Chairman of the Filipiniana Foundation and UPCC's Sacramento coordinator -- and about 20 couples and I

waited for their arrival at our home. They arrived in two buses, one containing the 40 performers and the other containing their luggage. In spite of the long travel from Washington State where they started their tour, the young U.P. college students looked refreshingly full of

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Editor's Note

Everyone was all dressed up for the occasion, in the celebrations of community gatherings, events, and the holiday season. This is how I see this issue of Philippine Fiesta news. Once again, PF news captures the heart of our community, through our contributing writers and Dave, as he spent his Christmas night and all through the weekend to come up with this wonderful, last issue of the paper for the year.

This issue includes the Sinag-Tala's 26th year's theatrical ensemble show, the Bayanihan of Sacramento's Christmas concert, the Ilocano Association's grand coronation and induction night, and the FCSV's Christmas party and election of officers. Also included in this issue are several community organization and family's Christmas parties and celebrations.

The New Year looks promising for me, my family, and for what we do for our community. As we plan for our new year's resolution, let's also think of measurable ways that we can use to see our progress and to see what it takes to reach our goal. I find it very interesting to read Perry Diaz' article. In almost similar context, he states that it's not too late to make a change. Also, I hope everyone finds peace in their heart, as the year comes to an end. Let's welcome the new year with so much joy and hope and peace!

With love,
Dinnah, Dave, and children (Dino, Dane, and Deidra)



DeeJay delivers music for a good cause

By Dale Esperante

Oscar Gonzalez is an Army veteran and a retired postal employee. Following his passion for music, Oscar aka DJ Ozgee started collecting musical instruments and equipment long before he retired from the post office. Now retired, Oscar occupies himself by providing music as a disc jockey-singer-guitarist for private parties and commercial events.



DJ Ozgee (2nd Left) with Dan Navarro, daughter Ayanna and Mary Ann (R).

On 15 Oct 2013, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 on the Richter scale shook the provinces of Bohol and Cebu in the Philippines that left about 222 dead, numerous missing, and approximately 976 people injured. More than 73 thousand structures were damaged costing millions, if not billions, of dollars. On 7 Nov 2013, three weeks after the earthquake, Typhoon Haiyan aka Yolanda brought destruction to Tacloban, Leyte, and its surrounding provinces. It was the strongest typhoon recorded in recent history when it reached landfall. About 7 thousand people perished in the wake of Category 5 Super-Typhoon Yolanda.

Recognizing the need, Oscar asked Mary Ann Shaw for help in raising funds for the victims of the catastrophic natural events in the Philippines. Oscar and Mary Ann decided to visit the largest Filipino supermarket in Sacramento--Seafood City--to ask Manager Vince Gumabay if they could hold a fundraising event on the property. Hearing the reason for the proposal, Vince said, "Yes of course."

DJ Ozgee and Mary Ann with the help of friends (Dan Navarro of Elk Grove Music, Art Bagtas, Fred Ostil, and Vince Gumabay of Seafood City) raised approximately \$2000 for the earthquake and typhoon victims. This group of friends not only donated hours of their free time for a good cause, they also donated money, \$300 donated by Mary Ann.

Elk Grove Music, a regular guest of DJ Ozgee, is a group of talented young singers. Dan Navarro established this group whose leading singers are: Ayanna Navarro (Dan's daughter), KC Siopongco, Bea Vale, and

Gabby de Valencia. Some of these girls have been champions of singing contests and cast members of local theatre plays, "The King and I" being one of them.

After the fund-raising event for the earthquake and typhoon victims, DJ Ozgee and Mary Ann continued fundraising at Seafood City for medical and dental missions provided by the Mabuhay Foundation International (MFI). Since June of 2015, more than \$1500 have been raised at Seafood City for the next MFI mission to Cagayan de Oro in the Philippines. Preparing for the February 2017 scheduled mission means more karaoke fundraising work for DJ Ozgee and Mary Ann. The Mabuhay Foundation is accepting membership and volunteers for their philanthropic missions. Anyone may apply to become an MFI member or volunteer especially those who have medical and dental field experiences.

Seafood City shoppers who want to participate in DJ Ozgee's karaoke are not required to pay. They are welcome to participate in the entertainment by sharing their singing skills. The funds raised are from the appreciation of the listening public.

So far this year, Oscar and Mary Ann have held fundraising events at Seafood City on June 27 and 28, Aug 15 and 16, Sep 26, and Nov 28. All these events were donated by the altruism of Oscar, Mary Ann and friends. For private parties and events, DJ Ozgee may be contacted either by text or phone at (916) 239-8895.



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PNoy belittles Bongbong

By Sandy Araneta

Despite surveys showing growing support for the vice presidential bid of Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr., President Benigno Aquino III dismissed suggestions that there is a resurgence of support for members of the Marcos family.



Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

“By appearing on a cover of a magazine this demonstrates a resurgence of support? And social media is an unquestioned source of information that cannot be manipulated?” Aquino asked members of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines on Tuesday.

“[Is] there a resurgence of support? No, no. I think the answer to that is very obvious. I don’t think so,” Aquino said.

Aquino was referring to the appearance of Ilocos Norte Gov. Imee Marcos in a popular magazine and the increasing number of Bongbong supporters on social media.

“I have faith in my bosses,” Aquino said. “There is nothing that has caused me to change the faith that they are able to discern.”

Aquino belittled the popularity of the Marcoses and picked on Bongbong for alleged misdeeds committed by the administration of his father former President Fer-

dinand Marcos, who led the country from 1966 to 1986.

But the second The Standard Poll, conducted by resident pollster Junie Laylo from Sept. 21 to Oct. 1, showed that Bongbong was the second choice for vice president in the 2016 elections, behind Senator Francis Escudero.

Respondents were asked to choose from seven possible candidates Escudero; Senators Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Alan Cayetano and Antonio Trillanes IV; Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte; Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo; and former Senator Panfilo Lacson.

During the survey period, Marcos had not yet announced his vice presidential bid while Duterte and Lacson had yet to decide on their political plans for 2016.

Senator Gregorio Honasan, the running mate of Vice President Jejomar Binay, was also not included in the survey as there was no indication he was going

to run during the survey period.

More recently, a poll among students of Polytechnic University of the Philippines, ranked Marcos as the number one choice among the 2016 vice presidential candidates, garnering 37.36 percent or 50,675 of the total 135,622 votes cast.

In second place is Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo of the Liberal Party (LP) with 21.20 percent (28,746 votes). Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV (Independent) is in third place with 13.58 percent (18,424 votes).

Senate Majority Leader Alan Peter S. Cayetano (Ind.) is in fourth place with 12.96 percent (17,578 votes), followed by Sen. Francis Escudero (Ind.) with 10.30 percent (13,976 votes), while Sen. Gregorio Honasan II (UNA) is in 5th place with 2.04 percent (2,765 votes).

Campers retake Kalayaan Island

From page 1

The government had opposed the landing, initiated by a former Navy officer, Nick Faeldon. But President Benigno Aquino’s spokesman Herminio Coloma said Sunday it understood the group’s intentions.

“We recognize the patriotism of these youths that made them venture out,” he told reporters.

But he also reiterated that they should seek “alternative ways” to show their support, expressing concern for their safety in traveling the 500 kilometers from Palawan to the tiny island of Pag-asa.

Photographs and messages from the group posted on their website showed them posing on a beach.

A message on a Facebook page also urged Aquino to “inform the people correctly without sugar coating the truth about Chinese invasion of our Exclusive Economic Zone.”

Members of the group had previously accused the government of not doing enough to stand up to China.

A coordinator of the group, Joy Ban-eg, said the 47 men and women had arrived on Saturday on a chartered launch and would depart on Monday.

She said China had not attempted to block them from reaching the island, adding that they would consult

the local residents and the military detachment.

But she said their voyage itself was an act of defiance against China, which claims almost all of the South China Sea despite conflicting claims from the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan.

She cited the international arbitration case now pending in The Hague where the Philippines is challenging China’s territorial claims.

China has refused to recognize the proceedings.

Despite having one of the weakest militaries in the region, the Philippines has been the most vocal in challenging China’s claims to the South China Sea.

Over state-run radio dzRB, Coloma said the military had appealed to the group several times to cancel their trip due to the dangers.

“We continue to hope and pray that their trip would be safe. We will continue to monitor their trip and will also help them if the need arises,” Coloma said.

The Armed Forces of the

Philippines Western Command said the group was intercepted by the Navy on their way to Pag-Asa Island but Faeldon and his group grew aggressive, forcing authorities to allow them to pass rather than have a skirmish break out at sea.

The AFP said penalties await the owner of the vessel, which took on the group.

A recent survey commissioned by The Standard showed that a majority of Filipinos want a peaceful settlement of the ongoing maritime dispute with China in the West Philippine Sea. But most respondents in the survey by resident pollster Junie Laylo also said it was important to foster “strategic partnerships” with Japan and Vietnam and even approved of joint military exercises with the Japanese.

China’s intrusions in the West Philippine Sea, or South China Sea, remained the Filipinos’ top foreign policy concern, the same survey showed.

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Communist Party lost 'ideology', now 'bandits' – Army officials

By Bobby Lagsa

Major General Oscar Lactao, commanding general of the 4th ID, describes the NPA as terrorists involved in crime and human rights violations

On the 47th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), military officials from the 4th Infantry Division (ID) described followers as bereft of idealism and dismissed them as nothing more than bandits and terrorists.

The 4th ID of the Philippine Army has operational jurisdiction over Northern Mindanao, including the provinces of Surigao del Sur and Del Norte, Agusan provinces, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental and Camiguin, which currently hosts the biggest presence of the New People's Army (NPA).

The CPP is waging among the longest running communist insurgencies in Asia, if not the world.

Major General Oscar Lactao, commanding general of the 4th ID, described the NPA, the armed wing of the CPP, as terrorists involved in crime and human rights violations.

"In order for the CPP-NPA-NDF to project their existence, sowing threat is paramount for them to pursue their armed struggle. However, in a civilized society they already lost their 'ideology' because they shifted to banditry," Lactao said.

Lactao said that National Democratic Front (NDF) Mindanao spokesperson Jorge Madlos or "Ka Oris" and Myrna Sularte or "Maria Malaya" and their sympathizers face charges of multiple murder, frustrated murder, kidnapping, exploitation and illegal position of firearms, explosives and ammunitions.

The NPA had over 40,000 members in the 70s but membership has reportedly dwindled to just over 4,000, particularly in Surigao, Agusan and Bukidnon.



The Communist Party of the Philippines marks its 47th year.

Radicalized minors

Captain Joe Patrick Martinez, 4th ID spokesperson, said that recently, two minor students of TRIFPSS (Tribal Indigenous Filipino People School in Surigao del Sur) and ALCADDEV (Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development Inc), were saved from NPA exploitation with the help of local authorities and officials.

"Their parents have pursued and filed cases against Jorge Madlos, including Genasque Enriquez, Secretary General of Kahugpungan sa Lomadnong Organisasyon sa Caraga (Kasalo) and 11 others, in violation of RA 9208 or the Anti-Human Trafficking in Persons Act and RA 7610 or the Child Abuse and Exploitation Act before the provincial prosecution sub-office in Lianga, Surigao del Sur last December 18, 2015," he said.

Based on the accounts of the two minors, they were radicalized by their teachers in TRIFPSS and ALCADDEV and forced to hold firearms and kill people by the NPA terrorists.

Enriquez was once the third nominee of KaTribu partylist.

Lactao said that because of the NPA's shift to banditry, there has also been a downward trend in NPA Initiated Violent Incidents (NIVIs).

"Comparative data show that in 2011 there were 168 NIVIs and this began to dwindle to 153 in 2012, and before 2015 ends, there have been only 119 NIVIs

recorded," he added.

Martinez said that this can be attributed to the NPAs being captured with the help of civilians. Some have surrendered because they supposedly realized the "futility" of armed struggle. Records show that a total of 269 NPA members have surrendered and have been apprehended in 2015 alone.

"The decreasing efforts and deromanticized existence of the NPA is irreversible. Even if they will fight another decade or century, they will not win the war because people no longer believe in their failed ideology," Lactao said.

Lactao thanked residents of Northern Mindanao for their trust and confidence in the Army, "especially in giving timely and relevant information for us to address the insurgency situation."

He added, "We urge you to continue the same support in 2016 for us to finally reach our goal of having a peaceful Northern Mindanao that is ready for further development."

The CPP has been mum on the exact number of its guerrilla army, but former CPP chairman Jose Ma. Sison claims the NPA has regained the strength it lost during the 1990s. Asserting its influence, the National Democratic Front said candidates in next year's general elections should set aside funds if they wish to campaign in rebel-held territories.

Biological mother-in-hiding

By Dahli Aspillera

REMOVE an elderly woman from her peaceful, 48-year hiding place, force her out into the open for Grace Poe's political ambition? Funders Jesus Rodriguez and friends said this large reward was to expose the woman, rake up the truth from her, and settle the controversy over Poe's citizenship.

Causing this panic is the Comelec ending Grace Poe's political ambition for 2016, if her hiding biological mother does not surface and confess. Why hasn't Grace Poe, out of love, undertaken all these frantic search with nationwide publicity, reward money, coercion, for a biological mother, years ago?

This wanted biological mother, if living, is very aware that she is being hunted. She remembers too well that the baby she left at the church is now Grace Poe, who is dying to be president of the Philippines. Grace Poe has a desperate need for information from her biological mother, not out of love, but for political ambition.

Somewhere out there is a woman, understandably distraught at being hunted against her will, her peace threatened, her past life about to be exposed, very angry at this prospect, of being hunted, not out of filial affection, but to boost a political ambition.

Grace Poe has a lot of savvy financiers aware of the value of a familiar household name: Poe... FPoeJ... Filipinos in Classes D, E, F, put familiar, easy to spell names on their ballots. Grace's foster father, FPJ, was fiction films good-guy-hero idol in hundreds of violent action scripts. Politician Grace promptly became Poe, shedding her husband's name, Llamanzares. Too many Filipino voters are not concerned with candidates management and platform limita-



Senator Grace Poe

tions.

If this biological mother of Grace Poe is still with the living, she is aware of her political need. But the price for the biological mother-in-hiding is too high to pay. She sees no need to expose herself for another's political ambition. We can guess why this missing woman and those dear to her won't service Grace Poe, at her disqualification due to her failure to comply with citizenship and residency requisites to be president. Nothing to do with her being a foundling.

Rodriguez: "We have decided to offer the reward money to help find the biological parents of senator and thus settle once and for all the questions about her being a natural-born Filipino, which we all believe she is.... It's a patriotic act...."

What's patriotic about electing a neophyte, rookie woman president, on the basis of her being popular because of the Poe, the movie actor's name (how many would vote for Grace dela Cruz for Philippine president?) Even her adoption is debatable if it is determined that FPJ had living biological children up to five years younger than Grace Poe.

"The state should not dis-

criminate based on circumstances of one's birth: [I'm] fighting for the equal rights of children. It is the duty of the state to take care of abandoned and abused children.... It is not humane to say that a foundling has no country and no citizenship." -Poe.

As legislator, didn't she learn that the Philippines has laws on: 1) The four disqualifiers for presidency, half of which she is disqualified; 2) Equal rights for all children including foundling and abused; 3) Foundlings are allowed to acquire countries and citizenship with legal procedure, documents, and compliance to requisites. There is a desperate need by Grace Poe (and those who have already given a lot of money to finance her political ambition) to find this woman, but she obviously refuses to be found and get involved; not ready to complicate her life and her loved ones.

Stats show that too many in Classes D, E, F prefer celebrities during election. But mention politician's platform, and they ask, what is that?

Why do Grace Poe's biological mother and those close to her stay in hiding from Grace Poe?

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Santa with Emma

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PerryScope

By Perry Diaz

It's never too late to change

In 1914, more than a century ago, the German Army was advancing into French territory along a 27-mile stretch of land known as the "Western Front." The French and the British armies were fiercely defending French territory in trenches along a 200-foot narrow strip called "No Man's Land" that separates them from the Germans who were dug in on the other side. Firing at each other incessantly, they seemed to be oblivious of what was going on in their countries: people were celebrating Christmas.

Then on Christmas Eve the firing stopped and one of the most incredible events in history took place: the Germans started placing candles on "No Man's Land." Suddenly in those dark hours, "No Man's Land" became a beautiful landscape full of "Christmas" trees.



The Germans began singing Christmas songs and the French and British responded by singing too, which then turned the entire "No Man's Land" into a symphonic Christmas celebration. Then the Germans proposed a "Christmas Truce," which the French and British troops gladly accepted.

Christmas Truce 1914, as seen by the Illustrated London News. In his book, "Silent Night," Stanley Weintraub narrated that memorable event: "Signboards arose up and down the trenches in a variety of shapes. They were usually in



World-War-I

English, or — from the Germans — in fractured English. 'YOU NO FIGHT, WE NO FIGHT' was the most frequently employed German message. Some British units impoverished 'MERRY CHRISTMAS' banners and waited for a response. More placards on both sides popped up."

The following Christmas morning, soldiers from both sides filled the "No Man's Land" and started fraternizing with one another, sharing rations, exchanging gifts, singing together, playing soccer, and... solemnly buried their dead.

When the generals heard about the "Christmas Truce," they ordered their soldiers to start shooting at each other. The soldiers resumed shooting but most of them — for several days — aimed their rifles at the sky. But in some sectors, the truce continued until New Year's Day.

On November 21, 2005, Alfred Anderson, aged 109, the last veteran of that "Christmas Truce," died at his home in Angus, Scotland. Anderson was decorated with France's highest honor, the Legion d'Honneur. He never forgot that moment in his life when he celebrated Christmas with his enemies. Indeed, it was a singular moment in history that has yet to be repeated.

World at war

This year, the world is at war again but on a scale much bigger

than the battle along the "Western Front." Instead of warring soldiers firing their rifles at each other, weapons of mass destruction — deadly cruise missiles fired from ships and submarines, bombs dropped from supersonic bombers, and suicide bombers targeting civilians including

women and children — are used. The "No Man's Land" along the "Western Front" doesn't exist anymore. But today, the entire world is a "No Man's Land."

With rogue states like Russia, China, and North Korea threatening to use their nuclear ballistic missiles against their enemies, no one is safe anymore and there are no safe havens. With mad men having the ability to launch their nuclear ballistic missiles at will, the world is at risk of total annihilation. Yes, Dr. Strangelove is alive and the "Doomsday Clock" is just a minute away to midnight, which makes one wonder: When will there ever be peace on Earth?

In 1955, in the midst of the Cold War, Jill Jackson Miller, an American singer and actress, and her husband Sy Miller, wrote a song that has captured the hearts of many people. It's all about peace. Titled "Let There Be Peace on Earth," this classic song is popularly sung during the Christmas holidays.

The song begins: "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be. With God as our Father, brothers all are we. Let me walk with my brother, in perfect harmony."

"Let peace begin with me. Let this be the moment now. With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow. To take each moment and live each moment with peace eternally. Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."

Christmas truce

Indeed, peace begins with each of us. And only then can harmony be achieved. The "Christmas Truce" during the Great War in 1914 was a manifestation of what the song suggests. All it took was for a German soldier to put up a sign that said, "YOU NO FIGHT, WE



Cruise-missile

NO FIGHT," and everybody took the cue and stopped firing. It's the power of persuasion of one man that did it.

But it was the generals who forced their soldiers to break the truce, but only after the "brothers" — Germans, French, and British soldiers — walked in perfect harmony in "No Man's Land," without fear of shooting at each other. And to this day, we remember how easy it was to make peace... even for just a day.

Perhaps if the generals gave the truce a chance to keep the peace for a longer time, they probably would come to the realization that peace can hold while the warring powers negotiate a permanent peace, which they eventually did on the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" of 1918. Known as "Armistice Day," the date is commemorated in my allied countries that also coincide with Remembrance Day and Veterans Day.

Give peace a chance

In 1969, John Lennon, of Beatles



fame, wrote a song titled, "Give Peace a Chance." The song became the "anthem" of the American anti-war movement during the 1970s. On January 27 1973, the U.S., North Vietnam, and South Vietnam signed the Paris Peace Accord, which ended direct U.S. military combat, and temporarily stopped the fighting between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. But it took another two years before the war actually ended with the fall of Saigon.

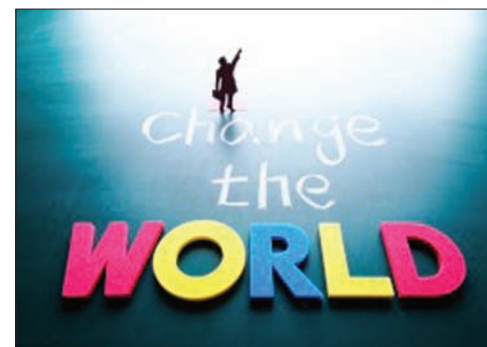
Today, with all the wars going

on in several flash-points around the world, one wonders if peace would ever be achieved in our lifetime. With the war in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and the specter of war looming Asia, the world is in the brink of World War III. But this time around, the

scope and magnitude of World War III would cause the end of civilization and the extinction of the human species.

Change the world

Perhaps it's time to look at ourselves in the mirror and ask: How can I change the world to achieve



peace? And we see ourselves in the mirror looking back at us, reminding us of what Leo Tolstoy once said, "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself."

This reminds me of a Chinese monk who lived 1,000 years ago. He said: "When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town. I couldn't change the town and as an older man, I tried to change my family. Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself, and suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family. My family and I could have made an impact on our town. Their impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world."

One shouldn't give up because he's old. It's never too late to change. Change is not the exclusive domain of the young; it is the covenant of every human being who occupies a space on planet Earth.

May the spirit of Christmas be with you all and may there be peace on earth.

(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

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An evening to remember

From page 1

energy. After a welcome reception they were assigned to their host families during their stay in Sacramento.

Their performance at the Luther Burbank High School Auditorium was roundly applauded by the mostly Filipino-American crowd. A few days later, Dolores, who was then a member of the Board of Directors of the Sacramento Philharmonic Symphony, brought the UPCC performers for a joint performance of Korus and the Philharmonic Symphony and guest conductor, kabayan, Maestro Eugene Castillo.

Their maiden performance in Sacramento was a success due in part to the conductor, Prof. Reynaldo T. Paguio, whose adept orchestration of the performance was lauded resoundingly.

Two years later, UPCC was back in Sacramento for another outstanding performance. With their successful performance in Sacramento in 1996, the turnout grew bigger.

In 1999, Prof. Paguio passed away following a surgery and from complications of diabetes.

We didn't know what happened to UPCC after Prof. Paguio's death. But we heard that they continued to perform in some cities near Sacramento, to wit: Vallejo and Union City. In 2013, Dolores and I attended a conference of the Northern California Sister Cities of which Dolores is Chairwoman of the Sacramento-Manila/Pasay City Sister Cities. We met Dr. Rozzana Aliga, the UPCC coordinator for Vallejo, who mentioned that UPCC was going to perform in Vallejo. Their next performance was in Union City. Dolores found an opening in the UPCC's schedule and suggested that they perform in Sacramento after their performance in Union City. Dolores linked with Vice Mayor Jim Navarro, the UPCC coordinator for Union City, and they worked out a schedule. They agreed that UPCC would come in and out of Sacramento on the day of the performance, which was December 29, 2013. However, there was no venue yet. Ant the event was only six weeks away!

Fortunately, Dolores was introduced to Fr. Phil Ganir, a Filipino priest at Saint Ignatius Parish



Church. It didn't take too long to get Fr. Ganir to agree, after all Dolores and I have been loyal supporters of the Saint Ignatius Parish School where our two daughters graduated and where our five grandchildren are now going to school. We got the church as the venue for the concert... at minimal cost!

That was the time when Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda hit Tacloban City hard. Upon the recommendation of Dolores to the Board of Directors of Eskwela Natin (Our Filipino School), of which she was the President, the proceeds from the concert were donated to the typhoon victims through three non-profit relief organizations, to wit: Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), Red Cross Sacramento Chapter, and the Catholic Relief Services.

The concert was well attended. After a short reception for the performers, they headed back to Union City. We wished they could have stayed longer and there were families who were willing to host them. But time was short.

This year, they came back and stayed longer... one week! There

were eighteen performers including the conductor, Professor Janet "Jai" Sabas -Aracama. There were five host families from Sacramento and another five from Davis. They're part of the Davis Yolo Pinoy Group, which former mayor of Davis Ruth Asmundson organized.

To my knowledge this was the first time that Sacramento and Davis community groups had worked jointly in a project of this kind. The reception committee was delegated to the Davis Yolo Pinoy Group of which a member, Dr. Rich Naval, is owner of Bravante, a St. Helena winery that caters to a select number of high-end restaurants in the Bay Area.

In addition to their concert, the UPCC performed at the Blessed Sacrament Cathedral and in several "Simbang Gabi" masses that included St. Paul, Divine Mercy and the St. Maria Gorretti Catholic Church, which was officiated by Bishop Jaime Sotto. They also participated in Maharlika Lions Club's caroling project in several homes.

After the 5:30 AM "Simbang Gabi" at St. Maria Gorretti, the host

families gave a despedida party for the performers at the beautiful country estate of Lito and Dr. Malu Bautista in Elk Grove. The others in attendance were hosts Pete and Vicki Lumbang, host Ludy Garrucho, Ludi Lapus, Joseph Stayner and Fely Villanueva, and Dolores and myself. Hosts Bert and Julie Melliza couldn't make it due to prior commitment. We drove the performers to Vallejo where the Union City group was waiting to bring them to their next stop.

And now it's time to say goodbye to a wonderful group who dedicated themselves to sharing the rich culture of the Filipino people. And in recognition of their talents, they received awards from all over the world, including the Grand Prix at the 6th International Krakow Choir Festival in Poland on June 14, 2015. Indeed, they have represented the Philippines superbly as its ambassadors of goodwill.

The parting hugs and kisses evoked a poignant mixture of sweetness and sadness. As we savor the sweet success of the Korus performance, we also felt a tinge of sadness that they're leaving. But we also know that they'd be back to Sacramento. And when they do, we're ready to welcome them back to our homes. But for now, au revoir.

And to the Ad Hoc Committee who made it happen, kudos and more power to you!

Dolores V. Diaz (Chair), Ruth Uy Asmundson (Co-Chair), David Yolo Pinoy Group, Johnny Abilay, Myrna Agbunag, Fred Aquino,

Mark and MaryAnn Bamba, Raul Bernaldez, Josie T. Canlas, Joe and Gladys Carrasco, Perry Diaz, Didi Loteyro, Pete and Vicki Lumbang, Bert and Julie Melliza, Ramon and Celsa Taraya, and Zenny Yagen.

And to the Host Families who lovingly cared for the Korus performers during their stay in Sacramento, a BIG THANK YOU.

Paul and Marisa Agnew, Ruth Asmundson, Lito and Malu Bautista, Ludy Garrucho, Dan and Ludi Lapus, Pete and Vicki Lumbang, Alita and David MacKill, Bert and Julie Melliza, Rich Naval, and Rebecca Neumann.

Last but not the least, SPECIAL THANK YOU goes to Joseph Stayner and Fely Villanueva for handling and transporting the luggage from the San Francisco Airport to Davis, and then from Davis to Sacramento, and finally to Vallejo.

SPECIAL THANK YOU goes to Raul Bernaldez for setting up the sound system and lighting. He was also the official photographer and responsible for updating the Facebook account of Eskwela Natin.

SPECIAL THANK YOU goes to Bing and Lynn Ventura for letting us use their 15-passenger van for transporting the performers.

Not only did the Korus make lovely music, they brought out the lovely music of togetherness amongst the members of the Filipino-American community in Sacramento and Davis. The concert was indeed an evening to remember. (PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

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Sinag-Tala 2015

From page 1



talents, and visioning the future stirred our senses to crave for more.

Certainly the whole Sinag-Tala organization should be congratulated for a winning presentation shown on December 4, 5, and 6 at Luther Burbank High School. The winning formula for Sinag-tala's success may be the division of labor between two groups: The Business Staff and The Artistic Staff. The Business Staff is led by Beep Alo (President), Cora Polante Ramirez, Dick Mazon, Alfred Aquino, Raeselle Lao, and Jennilyn Felias.

The Artistic Staff is headed by Gladys Imperio-Acosta and Febelyn Acosta-Green. In addition to the names listed above, there are also business and artistic teams of unsung heroes and heroines contributing their skills, time, and treasures to Sinag-tala.

This year's show opened with the youth singing *Mundo ng Ating Musika* (World of our Music). The presence of children and young teens on stage seemed more prominent this year. And they seemed to enjoy it immensely, especially in the performance of their original idea, "Laro Na Tayo".

Other Acts such as *Polka ni Neneng*, *We are All God's Children*, *Tinikling*,



Photos by Dave San Pedro

Abakada, *Kaibigan Niya*, *Kailangan Mo-Kaibigan Ko*, and *Paru-Parong Bukid* were performed delightfully by the young artists.

The adult cast members performed serious and sentimental pieces that reminded us of where we've been, to where we are, and to where we should be.

Sinag-Tala's direction, with President Beep, may have revived a dialogue with our community. When writing, Beep proudly starts with, "Mga kasapi, kapamilya, at kaibigan ng Sinag-tala."

Whether or not one can understand the salutation, it will draw attention. As for the new Artistic Director,

Gladys Imperio-Acosta, her years of experience in theater as well as her great working experience with her predecessor, Sonny Alforque, makes her the perfect fit to carry on with the artistic mission. The Legacy Continues... **CONGRATULATIONS SINAG-TALA!**



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Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA 10th Anniversary Musical Review

By Dale Esperante

“Disyembre Na Naman” on 5 Dec 2015 served as an apt theme for the return of Bayanihan of Sacramento (Bay Sac) on stage after a sabbatical year. Bayanihan’s last Christmas concert was about two years ago when they showcased their successful “Top Hits of the Stars.”

Members of the Ensemble, dressed in traditional Philippine attire, started this year’s show with a medley of Filipino songs that evoked the warmth and sounds of the islands. The Ensemble was followed by the Bayanihan children (the Go sisters: Abigail-Annabelle-Gabrielle, Emma Mendoza, Noah and Olivia White) who performed their “Itik-Itik” dance. The audience should have been warmed up by this time, but just in case, the Divine Mercy’s Mixed Crew Dancers’ contemporary dance number heated things up. Thanks to Nonie Arciga, Amy Dy, Mayet Delfin, Vivian Mendoza, Grace Molina, Tess Nadela, Edna Smith, and Carmie Wooley for their exhilarating choreography. Loved that Uptown Funk number! Is Divine Mercy located Uptown?!

Segueing from Divine Mercy to The Prayer by Remy Solomon and Eddie Aducaeyen reminded all of our Faith, as we listened to their melodious harmony in the safe confines of St. Charles Borromeo Parish’s vast venue. The Bay Sac Tenors of Alex Morato, MC Paradela, Lito Pabon, and Eddie Aducaeyen offered their splendid rendition of “Hallelujah” after the heartfelt Prayer. Then came “The Impossible Dream” that produced some of the highest notes of the evening, belted out by James Frilles. If the distance of his high notes could be measured, it may have already reached the unreachable star.

Reverend Father Michael Ritter came on stage and admitted that James’ performance was a hard act to follow. But Father Mike eloquently expressed his appreciation for everyone’s presence and continued support. His church duties did not enable him to be present for the invocation earlier. Nevertheless, he wished everyone an enjoyable and excellent evening.

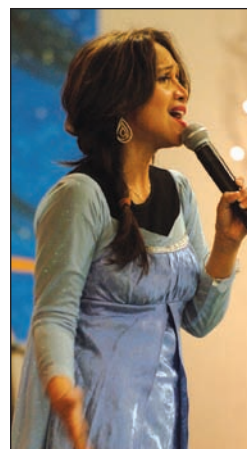
Standing by off stage wrapped in long fur coats, three lovely la-

adies (Roselie Crandall, Estela Rabara, and Lani San Luis) waited for their introduction. Upon their Introduction as Bay Sac’s “Supremes,” the ladies freed from their fur coats and now wearing chic outfits, took the stage and performed a wonderful medley of supreme songs. The timing, grace, and sashays of their movements captured the essence of the original Supremes. The ladies were followed by the fabulous four, Bay Sac’s “Beatles.” From fab four to the king--Elvis--RJ Mata delivered his vocal interpretation of Elvis Presley. With his high collar shirt, sideburns, and dark glasses, El RJ stirred some swooning and reactions from the audience. A lady excitedly approached the stage and threw him a long stemmed rose.

Four disco-ready ladies entertained next with their version of “Dancing Queen from Mamma Mia.” Shoes started tapping to their fun swinging number. Kudos to Leila Pereira, Maria Sotelo, Sarah Enloe, and Tina Bambao! The act that followed should be attempted ONLY by highly skilled artists like Rize All’s Dane San Pedro and Amanda Newsum. The agile duo exhibited dancing and magic skills in their performance of “Different and the Same.” Alumnus of America’s Got Talent Dane and beautiful Amanda truly graced the stage this evening!!

The First Lady of Bayanihan of Sacramento, Remy Solomon, took time to announce the generous list of sponsors who continually support community projects. The parish of St. Charles Borromeo will be one of the beneficiaries of Bayanihan’s fundraising efforts.

Thinking heat on this particular chilly December evening, the



Photos by Dave San Pedro

Copacabana dance troupe readied themselves to perform their hot number; however, it seemed like the leading male dancer (Vladimir Butov as Rico) was nowhere to be found. Someone was volunteered to check the dressing room but regretfully returned without Rico. The show must go on and the dance troupe proceeded to perform, then from out of nowhere to everyone’s thrill, Rico showed up! Suspense and drama accompanied this great dancing performance (thanks again to Vladimir as Rico, Lydia Ilomin as Lola, Eddie Aducaeyen as Tony, Ensemble: Alicia Laurel, Aurora Kianmajd, Edna Villanueva, Fe Alvarez, Janet Tavor, Lena Kahue, Marian Kronmeyer, and Marinell Soriano.

Broadway numbers followed:

Lion King’s “Circle of Life” (MC Paradela, Alex Morato, and Ensemble); Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor’s “Any Dream will Do/Close Every Door” (starring Eddie Aducaeyen with the Ensemble); Phantom of the Opera’s “Music of the Night” (sung passionately by the masked JR Miguel and danced dramatically by Edna Villanueva and Alvin Sisayan); Frozen’s “Let it Go” (beautiful Ice Princess Vivian Mendoza); Mulan’s “Reflections” (sweet Krizzia Manlangit dressed in an exquisite oriental costume as she held a parasol); Hunchback of Notre Dame’s “God Help the Outcast” (Colorful cast: Dr. Tony Solomon as the compelling Hunchback, Vocalist Remy Solomon, Gypsies: Lee Ramirez, Leila Pereira, Lu

Capuchino, Sarah Enloe, and Memmie Weitzenberg).

The Ensemble returned on stage to offer their finale of “Ang Pasko ay Sumapit” before the closing remarks of the Chairman of the Board, Memmie Weitzenberg. The songs and performances were complemented by the significant contributions of the following individuals: Anna Weitzenberg Vellanoweth (Mistress of Ceremonies), Bill Carlos (Accompanist), Espie Espena (Conductress), Remy Solomon (Musical Director), Rose Delacruz (Stage Manager), RJ Mata and MC Paradela (Sound System), and the aforementioned singers and performers. Congratulations to the Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA, for another Wonderful Christmas Concert!



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Ilocano Foundation of California Crowns Catherine Cabe Boswell as Mrs. Ilocandia 2016-2017

By Faina E. Abaya

There was a time when the Ilocanos were branded as too clannish in their social and political leanings. That kind of perception is based on their personal inclination to be more comfortable and confident in what they are supposed to achieve when they are with their fellow Ilocanos.

This personal tendency to be always with fellow Ilocanos was bolstered during election time when the so called "Solid North" was invented by Ilocano politician. It was actually a political slogan to indicate that the Ilocos Region comprising of several provinces will always support Ilocano candidates, especially, during national elections. It was capitalized by prominent politicians for many years in several national elections which confirmed the preferential choice of the Ilocanos of whoever identified with them.

However, the passing of years and the harsh realities of life, this attitude of the Ilocanos of being with themselves has gradually changed. More Ilocanos became educated and many more were leaving their ancestral homes to seek better life in many places within the Philippines and in foreign lands.

Many Ilocanos went to different regions in their country and many more sailed vast oceans and crossed continents in search for jobs and better living condition. Thus, they became social conscious and brought out their natural friendliness and high degree of civility as they lived in diversified community where they have found comfort to establish their families.

Today, the Ilocanos who are now in every nook and corner of the world are not only known for their being frugal, hardworking and friendly but also highly sociable. Their gregariousness in dealing with other people regardless of race and religious beliefs but with noble practices was borne on their being multi-lingual, although, they still proudly speak the language of their great ancestors.

Just like in any other places where the Ilocanos are found, they also organized themselves to ease the loneliness for being away from their homeland by bonding together and frequently hold social gatherings with friends of different ethnicities or nationalities.

The Ilocanos of America was founded in Sacramento, California and for a long period of time became one of the community organizations that actively engaged in social, charitable and civic endeavors for the betterment of everyone.

However, the leadership of the organization unanimously agreed to change its name to have a more realistic scope in membership and meaningful objectives for the best interest of the Ilocanos and friends in the State of California. The Ilocanos of America as it was known for many years became the precursor of the Ilocano Foundation of California, now under the leadership of Ling Avera as the organization's first President.

The first significant event for the Ilocano Foundation of California was held on December 5, 2015 at the Double Tree Hotel along Point West Way, Sacramento for the coronation of Mrs. Ilocandia 2016-2017. However, in reality this event is the 10th year of uninterrupted project of one and the same organization as above mentioned.

The inclement weather and the cold winter night have not dampened the eagerness and enthusiasm for everyone to witness the pageantry of the coronation of Mrs. Ilocandia for 2016-2017, the coveted title went to Catherine Cabe Boswell who will be crowned and to reign as Queen Catherine I.

The spacious California Ballroom of the Hotel, the coronation place of Queen Catherine I was magnificently decorated befitting the prestige and honor only bestowed for the incom-



Photos by Faina E. Abaya

ing queen. All the fifteen tables with chairs accommodating 150 members and exclusively invited guests were covered with white linen cloth and freshly cut flowers as center pieces in elongated crystal vases. While the stage where the reigning Queen and her royal entourage will be presented and crowned was likewise decorated with fresh flowers of varied species and colors.

At exactly 7:30 in the evening when the Ballroom was already filled up to its capacity, the program started by two well known community personalities who acted as Emcees, Dr. Fred Aquino and Mercedes Guerrero. Both are also community leaders who usually entertained everyone when acting as Emcees with their wits and humorous antics.

Maria Bahoric, well known community songstress led the singing of the National Anthems of both the United States and the Philippines. The commander of American Legion Magellan Post 604 Rick Rafanan delivered the opening prayer, invoking the guidance of the Devine Providence for the health and safety of everyone. And after which, sumptuous dinner was served.

Thereafter, IFC President Ling Avera delivered her welcome address saying, "I am very delighted to see you all. Your presence is really very valuable to us and we are truly grateful for that" She also added that the incoming

Queen Catherine I and Her Royal Court will superbly represent the IFC in various Filipino Community events especially during our Filipino Fistas when they will be recognized for their community accomplishment.

Filipino American Community of Sacramento President Aida Azurin introduced the Guest Speaker, Cris Mateo the Senior Field Representative of California Assembly member Jim Cooper. The Guest Speaker congratulated the efforts of the Ilocano Foundation of California for their various activities to the best interest of the Filipino American Community not only in Sacramento but also the State of California. Cris Mateo also added that he will welcome the IFC scholars to become interns in the office of Jim Cooper or in the legislative body to learn the rudiments of government activities preparatory for their possible employment in public or private jobs after their college education.

The Scholarship Awards were presented to Alexander Raymond Oineza who received the First Place Award, Gabrielle Miller who took the Second Place Award and Kalina Sangco for the third place award. The awards were presented by Queen Catherine I and her Royal Court together with Ling Avera and Ray Oineza.

The parade of the past Mrs. Ilocandia was

announced as they were recognized for their great contributions to the community honoring them with standing ovation as they gracefully entered the social hall. All of them were in their best attires and everyone has a sash indicating the year when they held their title. The seven past Mrs. Ilocandia were Carol Munar, Ling Avera, Lillian Batoon, Betty Rigonan, Marie Dacpano, Julie Oineza and Rose Cariobac.

Emcee Dr. Fred Aquino announced the appearance of the reigning Mrs. Ilocandia 2014-2015, Her Majesty Queen Josephine Pasion 1 who was wearing her queenly attire escorted by her husband Rodney Pasion in his dark suit. The Queen's Royal Court composed of Princesses Justina Ancheta, Maria Dacpano and Emily Pascua were likewise in their best formal gowns. All of them made their farewell walk around the center of the Ballroom waving to everyone as they received thunderous applause a manifestation of saying "Thank You for what you have done to the Filipino American Community."

At this juncture, Emcee Mercedes Guerrero proclaimed the start of the coronation pageant for the incoming Mrs. Ilocandia, Her Majesty Queen Catherine I and Her Royal Court. First to appear was 2nd Princess Cristina Ocampo in her formal blue evening gown who was escorted by Paul Arconado in his dark suit as they proceeded towards the stage to take her reserved seat. They were followed by Tiara, sash and Bouquet Presenters.

The next to be introduced was the First Princess Mila McEvelly who was elegantly wearing a pink layered gown while her escort Joe Gonzales was in his dark suit. As soon as she took her reserved seat, she received her Tiara, Sash and Bouquet from their respective presenters.

The entrance of the incoming Queen and her Royal Court was announced and to the tune of the Queenly March, the Scepter Bearer Lailani Gavin, Crown Bearer Kalulani Gavin and Flower Girl Kaelyn Maxine Polivka entered the Hall.

The pomp and grandeur of the coronation pageant of the incoming Queen and Her Royal Court has reached its peak as Mrs. Ilocandia 2016-2017 Catherine Cabe Boswell who will reign as Her Majesty Queen Catherine I gracefully entered the Hall in her elegantly luxurious impeccable all white chiffon queenly attire escorted by Logan Boswell in his dark suit with matching tie. Just as she takes her reserved seat on the stage, a sash was given by Lillian Batoon and Cathy Ubungen followed by a bouquet handed by Diviona Palacol with Dina Soria and the Scepter was presented by Alex and Ling Avera.

Immediately thereafter, the outgoing Queen Josephine I gloriously crowned Mrs. Ilocandia Catherine Cabe Boswell 2016-2017 to start her reign as Queen Catherine I as everyone stood up and applauded to recognize her assumption to her throne.

A huge trophy was awarded to Queen Catherine for her reign by Lety Cabe and Gleen Cabe while the first and second princesses received smaller trophies from Carol Munar, Rose Tarubac and Bill McGirr. Entertainment was provided by Rick Pasalo as he serenaded the Queen and her Royal Court with a melodious song entitled "The way you look tonight" by Frank Sinatra followed by the Grand Dance of the Queen and her Royal Court.

Ray Oineza delivered the closing remarks who took the occasion to express his thanks on behalf of the members of the Ilocano Foundation of California to all the attendees for their tireless support of their meritorious and commendable activities that redounded to the best interest of the Filipino American community.

Continuous music and dancing followed until closing time.

UPAASV Ventures on Wine Tasting for Museo Pilipino Fundraising

By Faina E. Abaya

The University of the Philippines is known for Academic Excellence. From its great portals passed outstanding leaders for nation building. The premier university of learning is also in the forefront of advocating the preservation of our rich cultural heritage.

The leadership of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinities has taken upon themselves to fund a Filipino Museo (Museum) to become the repository of our cultural heritage.

In the Museo, we will showcase the depth and greatness of our cultural heritage as embodied in our literature, traditions, costumes, dances, songs and music. In the meantime, some of the cultural items already collected are temporarily housed and displayed at the Jose Rizal Community Center along Florin Mall, Sacramento.

As the items being collected are increasing in number, the UPAASV leadership believes that there is a need to find a permanent place to publicly display the items already in hand for everyone to appreciate the elegance, grace and beauty of our culture. But we need financial assistance from everybody to put into action and reality for such commendable project.

The UPAASV and Corte Riva Vineyard producer of fine red and white wines joined hand and hand to have a fund raising for the said purpose and the occasion was referred to as "Wine Tasting for Filipino Museo". However, you do not need to be a wine connoisseur or good Dom Perignon drinker to attend the event because what really matter is the sincerity of purpose to help raise funds for the future establishment of the Museo Pilipino in Sacramento.

The chilly winter night has not



Photos by Faina E. Abaya

discouraged everyone's enthusiasm to be a part of the meritorious objective of the event which was held on December 11, 2015 at 11833 Prospect Hill Drive, Gold River, CA. The place is the residence of Susan and Alex Castillo who are acting as the curators of the cultural items already collected and displayed thereat.

The spacious residence of the hosts was converted into a museum like place with some of the cultural items displayed were in every corner of the house. The arrival of the guests are well introduced by Dr. Fred Aquino (the incoming President of the UPAASV) who also entertained them with Johnny Regadio and Al Guevarra by singing Filipino and English songs flavored with Christmas tunes to

capture the spirit of the season.

Varieties of red and white wines were displayed for sale or just for tasting. Likewise, assorted finger food and cut up fruits were also brought out for everyone takes to satisfy fastidious palate.

For the enjoyment and entertainment of all, a game of "Sunka" was played and Johnny Regadio emerged the winner after capturing all the beads of his opponent. He received a memorable gift for his extraordinary ancient inherited skill.

Among the items displayed in the house are Filipina Maria Clara dresses of different intricate designed and colors. This traditional gown is worn by women in the Philippines and the dress takes its name from Maria Clara, the Mestiza protagonist character in the

great national epic literature Noli Me Tangere penned in 1890 by Pilipino National hero Jose Rizal. Also on display was the official costume sash of the University of the Philippines called "Sablay" with Greek letters placed on a Filipina dress. Other cultural items on display are ancient jewelries and beads usually worn by our ancestors during important social gatherings and ritual rites.

The Kalinga Skirt is made by the blackstrap weaving industry of Kalinga province. The skirt is accessorized with shells and colorful embroidery. The heirloom beads of Kalinga are passed from generation to generation by the women in the family. This bead arrangement is called the Kalinga "winayway" and is traditionally placed from one shoulder to one hip.

We also have Filipina evening gown with butterfly sleeves, usually worn for special occasions by Filipina women. Different meticulously hand embroidered designed "Barong Tagalog" the national formal attire of Filipino gentlemen were also displayed.

The old wedding gown worn by the parents of the host, Susan Castillo in 1946 was also displayed which was made of fine lace with gold rimmed embellishments accentuating tiny waistline.

A modest amount was generated from the Silent Auction, the winners and donors of the prizes from the said activity were the following; TGIF Basket donated by Joe and Carina Gonzales won by Ricardo Diaz; It's Time to Relax basket donated by Atty. Beep Alo won by Remy Poquiz; UP School Spirit basket donated by Alex and Susan Castillo won by Johnny Regadio; Pasta Basket donated by Cecilio and Anita Felix won by Tony Sumdiang.

Other auction items with corresponding winners and donors are; Happy Hour basket donated by Johnny Regadio won by Dave San Pedro; Picnic Basket donated by Dr. Fred Aquino won by Rommo Ghosh; Two Corte Riva Merlot and wine tasting passes donated by Corte Riva Vineyards won by Myrna Carillo and Karen Lookingbill; Two Brunch for Four at Bella Piazza Winery donated by Santee Galinato won by Carina Gonzales and Karen Lookingbill; Sangria Basket donated by Rommo Ghosh and Janice Shiu won by Tony Sumdiang and lastly, Framed Last Supper Plaque by anonymous donor won by Nieves Cortez.

Santee Galinato and Myrna Carillo prepared the finger foods. The event ended with a lot of singing and merry making in the spirit of Christmas and the coming New Year. Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to One and All!!



The Aklan Association of Sacramento & Vicinity, Inc.

Cordially invites you to our
25th Anniversary

Ati-Atihan Festival

Saturday, January 23, 2016
Mass at 6pm

Jose Rizal Community Center
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For more information call: Frank / 916.712.6094

UNLUCAI Holds Christmas Party For Family and Friends

By Faina E. Abaya

The United Naguillan La Union Circle of America, Incorporated (UNLUCAI) is one of the oldest community organizations in Sacramento having been founded in 1982 by a group of Naguillanders headed by Fred and Adel Vita.

In the beginning, the UNLUCAI was just a social community organization for Naguillanders and close friends to ease the feeling of loneliness prevailing among members being far away from their hometown. Social gatherings were held to update themselves for any good or bad news on their beloved town as well as to exchange pleasantries of family activities in their respective places.

However, the passing of years and with increased membership from as far as San Francisco and outlying areas, the scope and objective of the organization evolved into a better and meaningful community organization.

Gatherings among members and friends were no longer solely for social get together purpose but more meritorious and commendable objectives such as raising funds to assist natural calamity victims that hit the town, scholarship grants for deserving students, medical and dental missions. The UNLUCAI even supported the building of Elementary Schools for children living in remote areas of the town, the renovation of the town church and many other projects for the best interest of the community and the town of Naguillian.

To give respite to the members and supporters for such many strenuous and selfless endeavors, the leadership of the organization led by Henry Bambao decided to hold a family Christmas Party on December 19, 2015 at the American Legion Magellan Post 604 building along Gerber Road, Sacramento.

The Magellan Hall was well decorated with multi-colored Christmas tree decors made of Origami trees in different sizes, placed as center pieces on each of the tables to capture the spirit of the Christmas season and coming New Year. The abundance of fruits and home cooked Filipino, Chinese and American recipes brought out by members made everyone wondered which food to pick.

Continues Christmas songs and music were played as the Hall was filled up with children, parents and friends. UNLUCAI President Henry Bambao enthusiastically welcomed everyone and thanks them for graciously accepting their invitations to join the Christmas merry making.

Entertainment was provided by Tino Floresca and Erna Bambao as they led the singing of Christmas songs both in Filipino and English versions as children made their own



Photos by Faina E. Abaya

antics for the enjoyment of everybody. Jayda Bermudo regaled her audience when she sang "Thinking Out Loud", "Lullaby" and "Cheap Date" accompanying herself with her guitar. The children also showed their gracefulness as they danced to the tune of the "Watch me, Nae Nae" receiving thunderous applause from their admiring audience.

Games for both children and adults were played with Chris Bambao directing, such as the musical chair game eliminating one chair every time the music stops, until one remains seated in one chair to be declared the winner and to receive a modest prize. Another game for adult participants was called the Penguin walk. Each participant from two teams, both ladies and gentlemen, carries four paper plates placed on the different parts of the body and whoever reached the finished line without dropping the paper plates is declared the winner, likewise received a modest prize.

All the games were immensely enjoyed by both the participants and their admiring audience for the many spills and body contortions made by the participants.

The presence of so many children made the Christmas Party very enjoyable because of their unlimited energies of running around and performing activities only the very young of their age can do. When Santa Claus appeared personified by Marvin Esplana, a former United States Marine, the son of the late Roger Esplana, the children were very excited and happy. They alternately have taken pictures with him as Santa asked what they want for Christmas and gave them gifts to remember.

The high light of the Christmas Party was the Exchange of Gifts by the members and friends which were also played by letting everyone who has a gift to take their seats as they carried with them their respective gifts. Music was played and the participants with his or her gift will pass their gifts to either left or right until the music will stop. Who ever received a gift not his or her owns gets that gift. The method played in receiving a gift was also enjoyed by everyone.

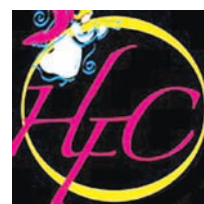
Our deep appreciation to the members who attended all the way from San Diego, San Francisco, Vallejo, Stockton and Canada, to the Commander of American Legion Magellan Post 604 Rick Rafanan, Joe Gonzalez past Commander of ALM Post 604, Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA president Dr. Tony Solomon, and (Ret. Col. AFP) Mon Veridiano,

Members of the working committee were Erna Bambao and her daughter April, Tina Bambao, Sonia Delizo, Fely Esplana, Cherie Nairn, Jane Bambao and Charity Avena for helping with the origami Christmas trees, Cris Floresca for the smoked beef steamboat. And most especially for the cleaning committee and to everyone who have helped one way or the other. Hugging and greetings of Merry Christmas and Happy New Year gloriously ended the Christmas Party. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to one and all!!!



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Community Health Outreach Project



Community Health Outreach Project (CHOP) with the community volunteers at the 7th Annual Health Fair led by Cristine Lacerna- giving free flu shots, BP and blood sugar check, which was held on Dec. 12, and as sponsored by Kapitbahay and the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity.

Holiday Luncheon for 1Lt Brian Mutas Prior to Middle East Assignment



With his cousins and nephew Ja'ie.



With Uncle Dale and family

Army National Guard 1st Lieutenant Brian Mutas is scheduled for an assignment in the Middle East. His family and friends surprised him with a holiday luncheon on 20 Dec 2015 at Celi's Mexican Restaurant in Daly City. May Brian and all Members of the U.S. Armed Forces be blessed with a Safe Merry Christmas and a Joyous Prosperous New Year!

The Golden Hips Dancers and Friends Christmas Party



On December 18, 2015, the Golden Hips Dancers with friends celebrate the holiday the "Santa way" at the residence of Tav and Judy Mendoza. Happy New Year to all!

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Birthdays



Ethan Rivera Diep's 7th. Birthday celebration on November 7, 2015 at Gilroy, CA. With him in this picture are his parents, Eloise and Sean Diep and little brother Colin.



CHRISTIAN ERESPE
DECEMBER 19



ELIZABETH ABAYA
JANUARY 2



JOHN NINO ABAYA
JANUARY 9



JOSYLYN SABINIANO
with husband Celso, son Mathew
and daughter Alex
DECEMBER 29

Anniversary



BERNADETTE and LEO ABUCAYAN
32nd Wedding Anniversary
December 12



LIZA and MIKE VALENTINE
Wedding Anniversary
December 30



LITA and AVELINO (Boy) SANTIAGUEL
45th Wedding Anniversary
December 27

Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 31, 2015 (Thurs)

6:00pm to 1:am
**New Year's Eve Celebration
Dinner & Dance**
Joe 916.396.7863
Magellan Post 604
Gerber Rd. Sacramento, CA
\$30 per person
Music by High Tech Sound System



FEBRUARY 6, 2016 (Sat)

**Filipino American Veterans
Association, Inc.
26th Anniversary Ball
& Installation of Officers**
Joe 916.396.7863
Double Tree Hotel
2001 Point West Way, Sacramento, CA
\$55 Donation



Maria (Maur) Corpuz
June 2, 1940 - November 30, 2015



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By Dale Esperante

On the evening of 4 Dec 2015, about 100 Filipino-American Veterans Association (FAVA) members exercised their privilege to take part in the election process. 2014-2015 President Fred Aquino called the meeting to order early and had the

ELECTION OF 2016-2017 FAVA OFFICERS

Reading of the Minutes and the Treasurer's Report completed prior to proceeding with the main focus of the evening, the Election.

The newly elected FAVA Officers are:

President: Dick Weitzenberg
Vice President: Pete Delacruz

Secretary: Joe Gonzalez
Treasurer: Beth Velasco
Auditor: Alex Cheng

Directors of:

Personnel: Bill Versoza
Social Activities: Aurora Foresee
Ways and Means: Andy Tancioco
Education and Welfare: Rick Rafanan



Photos by Dale Esperante

THE NATIONAL COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION VISIT SACRAMENTO

"National Commander Dale Barnett is making his initial visits to all Departments (State) Headquarters within the American Legion. The Departments then arrange visits to some of the Districts within their Departments," according to District 6 Commander Will Williams. The Sacramento District's National Commander's Luncheon was held at Magellan Hall on 10 Dec 2015 where Commander Barnett spent time speaking and meeting with a group of California American Legion officers and members. Filipino-American officers and members of Magellan Post and Auxiliary 604 hosted and availed their Post to the commander and his entourage. The luncheon included a healthy dose of Filipino cuisine appreciated greatly (lumpia especially) by the



non-Filipino visitors.

Commander Barnett's inspiring speech included: his acknowledgment of the Legionnaires positive attitude; the impact of the American Legion on decisions made by

Congress; and the growing membership (New Post) in some regions. Commander Barnett also admitted that he is an angry commander because of the Veteran Administration's Fraud, Waste,



and Abuse (FWA). He is attempting to address the FWA within the Veterans Administration being paid by the taxpayers.

When it was time to conclude the meeting, Magellan Post 604 Com-

mander Rick Rafanan was asked to declare the official adjournment. Commander Barnett then warmly received every member who approached him asking for an autographed memento. Along with an autographed photo of the commander, every member was given a special national commander's 2015-2016 pin engraved with the words, Duty-Honor-

Country.

Dale Barnett is the national commander for the American Legion organization that has more than two million members worldwide.

FAVA CHRISTMAS PARTY

On 12 Dec 2015, FAVA families gathered once again to celebrate the Christmas season. Outgoing President Fred Aquino welcomed the festive group, then asked Chaplain Will Williams to deliver the evening's prayer. Filipino servings with a mix of Korean beef, some chicken nuggets for the kids, and a healthy dose of sweets for dessert were served. Bill Versoza, Linda Cordero, Carmen Versoza, Nora Basco, Malou Amper, Olive Jackson, and Bella Nidoy definitely made Santa's Good List for ensuring everyone had a good share of helping from Santa's kitchen.



President Aquino took a moment to deliver his heartfelt thanks for the support he received during his time in office. One of the president's favorite duties is to introduce special guests and new members. President Aquino therefore called on Luzviminda Molina, an army veteran, to introduce her as the newest member of FAVA. Luz said a few words summing up her good feelings about becoming a member of a close-knit organization. Bella Anderson-Nidoy's positivity contributed to Ms. Molina's decision.

To start the evening's entertain-

ment, Apoll Reyes of the famed Sinagala's Theatre Performing Arts was introduced by President Aquino. Lovely performance as always by Ms. Apoll. Her rendition of "Can't Help Falling in Love" was highly appreciated, especially by the Elvis fans.

Pete Delacruz took over next, being the Caroling Choir Director. All the ladies, the mamas and the grand-mamas, stepped up to form the background singers. The children then formed the front and

center group of carolers. The accompanying musicians of Fortunato Delacruz (keyboard) and his 10 year old granddaughter Kaiya Delacruz (clarinet) along with Joe Zaragoza (trumpet) readied themselves for the choir. Director Pete assigned the smallest members of the choir to lead the Christmas medley—a different leader for each song. The children were encouraged to sing with gusto and loud enough so Santa will hear. As the children sang "Santa Clause is

coming to Town," a wisp of cold air snuck in the Hall followed by a bearded red suit all jolly and nice. There appeared to be a face behind that wavy bush of a white beard and it started wishing Christmas cheers. The smallest choir members stood agog unsure of what to do. Finally assured that the jolly visitor was indeed Santa Clause, a bee line automatically formed to meet with Santa. Even the moms, dads, Lolo and Lola waited for their turn to be in the picture with

Santa. With all the flashing camera lights, someone noticed that Santa somehow resembled the incoming president, Dick Weitzenberg. Hmm...

With the contents of his large bag now held contently in the hands of the children, Santa bade farewell promising to return next year to the good little ones. Santa didn't want the party to end just because he had to go, so he instructed his assistant, Yollie Delacruz to start the games. With every game played, the children received more prizes and surprises left by Santa for Auntie Yollie to hand out. With the kids now played-out, the big kids (parents and grandparents) were invited to try the musical chair game. The "big kids" played heartily as the small kids watched with glee. After the game, the music continued playing to the delight of the line dancers.

Another FAVA Christmas party filled with reminiscing, dining, entertaining, caroling, belonging, hoping, sharing, giving—and most of all, rewarding to see the children and grandchildren enjoying the celebrating. May All Have a Merry Christmas Season and a Joyous New Year!



By Nancy Cristi Bautista

Every December 24, all children and even some adults want to believe that there is a Santa Claus. Santa is not just a religious belief, but, also a hope and a dream of a miracle. It affects almost all families during Christmas time, especially the family of a seven year old boy, named Kristan. He lives with his parents in a decent part of the suburb in New York.

Santa



Every Christmas eve, the family gathers around their wonderfully decorated Christmas tree, waiting for the birth of the Savior and the coming of Santa. Kristan, an only child, is not spoiled when it comes to wanting toys during Christmas time, but sure gets just enough to make him happy. He is brought up that toys come from Santa if a child stays good, especially at this time of the year. However, his parents ignore that rule once in a while, but, Kristan does not expect much anyway.

Nevertheless, this year, his parents decide to adhere to this rule. Kristan's father, Dean, lost his job and Kate, his mom has to get another job temporarily to support the family. Dean has to stay home to fix some home projects and to care for their child to save money from paying for some repair jobs and for a babysitter.

After spending Thanksgiving with Dean's family, he and Kate explains to their son that Santa has to rest for a while and will not be able to give him the toys in his wish list. Kristan becomes more inquisitive on the real reason, and asks if he has been bad this year. His parents have to find answers that would satisfy their smart son. Sadly, Kristan, agrees and gets convinced.

This Christmas eve, Kate has to work on her second job at the cosmetic department in a posh New York hotel. She is scheduled to work until closing time, which is at ten in the evening. She is worried that she might not have enough time to commute to be home before midnight, because there is a blizzard in the city. Customers are still piling up to get their last minute gifts. In Kate's department, there is a long line because of the free gift of a cosmetic bag with plenty of assorted cosmetics and cologne inside. In front of Kate's line is a middle aged gentleman who has been patiently waiting for his turn in

the midst of women customers. He approaches Kate, whom he has noticed is a little worried about something.

He asks her, "How are you, young lady? You seem upset?" "Oh, I'm quite sorry, I was just thinking of how to get home to my husband and our seven year old son in this kind of weather. Anyway, may I help you, sir?" Kate politely replies with her normally sweet smile.

"That's true. This weather makes me worry also." The gentleman agrees with Kate. "I am looking for a nice gift for my wife who is under the weather right now."

"Oh, sorry to hear that. Does she like perfume? We have a new one that just came out, everyone loves it, and I have just one bottle left." Kate says while reaching for the only bottle at the bottom of the shelf. "Would you like to try to smell it first?"

"Oh, no, I believe that my wife will like it, I will take it please." The gentleman reaches out for his wallet and hands his credit card to Kate.

Kate's eyes get big when she reads the name on the plate. "You... you, mean, you are the Mr. D.T. Klaus, the owner of this hotel? Why...why did you have to wait in line?"

"That's okay, life is too short and waiting can delay the time." Mr. D.T. Klaus chuckles and gets amused with his own joke.

"Shall I have it wrapped for you?" Kate trembles as she asks him.

"That would be nice, Mrs. Smith." Mr. D.T. Klaus says upon reading her name tag.

Kate, then calls the wrapping department and she finds out that they have a long waiting time. She explains the situation to the gentleman that if he won't mind, she, herself, will wrap the perfume for him. He, in return, appreciates her offer. Kate calls for her assistant to help the other customers in the line while she tends to Mr. D.T.Klaus's gift wrapping. They move to the side and Kate starts wrapping the perfume.

For some reasons, Kate forgets about the weather and in fact, she is humming a Christmas song while wrapping. This makes Mr.D.T.Klaus smile. When Kate is done with the transaction with Mr. D.T Klaus, he tells her, "You are a good worker. If you and your family are available tonight, I would like to invite you to join me and my wife for a Christmas eve dinner and gift giving afterwards. I can have my chauffeur pick them up so you do not have to get back home before the party." Kate is so happy and tells him that she will ask her husband first if it is okay. but, reassures that her family would be ecstatic to join them.

When Dean agrees to the dinner at Mr. D.T. Klaus's home, Kate is so inspired to work more up to the closing time. She finishes and closes her cashier box. A chauffeur is waiting for her to take her to Mr. D.T.Klaus's residence, and an executive assistant is waiting to take her to a private showing of special dresses that she

could wear for the evening. Kate could not believe what is going on.

At the mansion, Kate is shown to the ballroom. Inside, there is a lot of people, whom are mostly children. She looks around, looking for her family and Mr. D.T. Klaus.

"Mommie, mommie!" Kate looks to where the voice is coming from and she sees Kristan with Mr. D.T. Klaus in line to meet Santa Claus.

"Oh, Kristan, it's so nice to see you here," Kate says, while wondering where her husband is and why is their son with Mr. Klaus.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Smith, Kristan and I are practicing what he will tell Sta. Claus." Mr. D.T. Klaus says with a wink to Kate.

"Mommie, Daddy just left to help the other kids with their toys." Kristan excitedly tells his mom.

Still wondering what is going on, Mr. Klaus, points towards the Sta. Claus sitting on the big chair with a child on his lap. Kate's eyes widen when she figures out who was sitting on that chair. "It's Dea..." Kate covers her mouth.

Kate thanks Mr. Klaus and asks him to let her take his place with Kristan on the line. Mr. Klaus agrees and says goodbye to Kristan.

At the end of the line, Sta. Claus picks up Kristan and place him on his lap. When Sta. Claus asks Kristan what he wants for Christmas, the little boy whispers to Santa's ear and hands him an envelope. Santa's eyes almost well out with tears. He looks at Kate and he says, "Mommie, you have a very nice son. You and his dad must be so proud of him." Kate wonders why Santa has said that after Kristan has whispered to him, and most of all, what is inside the envelope.

Instead, Santa talks to Kristan, and he says, "You are a very nice child. Give this envelope to your mom and tells her that Mr. Klaus is giving her and your father a check inside. Also, tell her that your father can also start working in this hotel after New Year, and that your mommie can stop working so that she can stay home with you."

Kate is so happy that she hugs Santa, while the song 'I Saw Mommie Kissing Santa Claus' is being played on the loudspeaker. Santa manages to whisper at Kate's ear, "You look so lovely, Mrs. Smith." On one side of the ballroom, Kate glances at Mr. D.T. Klaus, who is standing next to a beautiful woman, saying that she is Mrs. D.T. Klaus. Kate tearfully mouths, "Thank you very much and Merry Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Santa." Kate, then, helps in giving the kids the toys.

The song, "Away in a Manger" is on, at the stroke of midnight. Kate is so surprised to see that Santa is with Kristan on the stage while their son is with the microphone, singing the said song. Kate looks up and says a short prayer of gratitude to the Good Savior.

Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year to all!

Gratitude [grat-i-tood] is a positive note, sense of wonder, thankfulness, or appreciation of life.

When I was growing up my parents taught me to give thanks for everything, bad or good. Expressing yourself by saying something good or simply "thank you" makes you feel better. The same is true for the other person you are thanking for. It is wonderful to appreciate or being appreciated.

My gratitude goes to God for the blessings received this year. As the lyrics of the church song says, "Count your blessings and name them one by one." Let me count my blessings.

Rain. Rain came late in December this year that showed over the dry California. The state suffered drought for years. But God is good. He gives rain. And when it rain, it pours.

Health is wealth. So far, my family and I are in the pink of health all throughout the year. I have no Call-Ins listed from my work this year. In fact, I received four invitations to attend Kaiser South Sacramento perfect attendance breakfast. When you are healthy you can go to work every day with no problem, and have a good pay.

Knowledge is power. Thank God my two middle school sons are consistent straight A students. What can I ask for?

Good-paying stable job. I'm glad I took nursing in college. Being a registered nurse in the United States is a security already. I have this "in demand" job for over ten years now at KP in Sacramento. The turnover of RNs in my department is fast but I managed to stay. I guess KP needs to give me "Fidelity Award." Speaking of award, I got the end of year certificate of recognition given this December. I've been a recipient of this kind of recognition two years in a row now.

Loans paid off. My goal this year is to completely pay my loans. How can I do that? I have to make SMART objectives and strategies to attain my goal. I have to work hard and allocate money intended to pay my loans. Before the end of this year, I completely paid off my credit card and consolidated loans. Thank God! I have no more headache for loan payment.

Successful weight loss. I joined the Free 20 Pounds 6 Week Challenge offered by Results Transformation Center in Elk Grove, California on July 20th. At the end of the challenge on August 28, I lost 24 pounds. My core is strong and my abs are getting obvious. I have to dispose my old clothes and pants to buy smaller sizes. Now I feel light and mind you it's a damn good feeling.

Fountain of blessings. Because God continue to bless me I was able to share the same to the public and private institutions in my hometown. An amount of ten thousand pesos (P10,000) was donated to Baptist Church extension at relocation area in Mlang

to help the ministry. Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000) was donated to Magallon Elementary School thru Sammy Deslate, the school principal. Ten thousand pesos (P10,000) was donated to Liboo Elementary School via Febi Peremne-Deslate, the school principal. Ten thousand pesos (P10,000) and student activity materials were donated to New Consolacion Elementary School thru the school principal Mae Bosabica. Five thousand pesos (P5,000) was donated to Malayan Elementary School via school principal Belina Agapito. Five thousand pesos (P5,000) was donated to Ugpay Elementary School thru principal Gina Crispin-Varina. Ten thousand pesos (P10,000) was donated to Lika Elementary School via Mlang North District Supervisor Ludez Tayong-Adelantar. Cash and educational materi-

Gratitude

als were donated to Donguan Elementary School thru teacher Nyra Bantas.

I was able to double the fund of GO HELP (Gabriel Ortigoza Higher Education Loan Program) at Southern Baptist College from one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000) to two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000) this year. This project helps a lot of students at SBC who are in dire need of cash primarily for the payment of their tuition at a very low interest of 3%. A student can loan P5,000 per semester. Some students used to go to lenders who were into "5/6" in which the debtors pay an interest rate of 20%. Thank God, GO HELP was created.

My pledge to donate one hundred thousand (P100,000) every school year for Macario Celestial Scholarship at SBC was fulfilled one semester ahead. This scholarship project was created for the memory of my late grandfather Macario Celestial who is one of the founders of SBC and this scholarship has been in existence for eight years now. I have a specific beneficiaries for this project and they are the students of Theology, those who wanted to become pastors. Supporting this project is my way of spreading the good news to mankind.

Recognition from Cotabato Province. It is a privileged to receive a Certificate of Commendation for Community Service personally handed by Governor Emmylou "Lala" Talino-Mendoza of Cotabato province during the 101st anniversary celebration of the province on August 31, 2015 at provincial gymnasium in Amas, Cotabato.

Travel Privileges. I was privileged to travel from California to the Philippines twice this year. The first one was in the month of May during the golden wedding anniversary of my parents. It was literally a very quick visit just to attend the historical 50th celebration in Mlang. I stayed overnight at my ancestral home. The following day I flew back to California. The second time I travelled to the Philippines which



By Gabriel Ortigoza, PhD

I am thankful for was in September. This time I was with my wife. It was a three-week vacation with noble purpose - to give back. My wife and I initiated and helped coordinate with two other classmates, a medical mission in Tanay, Rizal. On September 5, 2015, together with some members of the Nurse Corps class 01-92, we successfully conducted our class first ever medical mission at Sitio Agoho, Barangay Sampaloc, Tanay, Rizal.

Opportunity to celebrate my birthday in Mlang. On September 15, 2015, I celebrated my 45th birthday in Mlang. I invited friends from different walks of life which included my childhood friends from the town's squatter area at the river side who I used to play and work with. Washing of public utility jeepneys and selling popsicles (ice drops) were some of the activities I was into during those years which taught me to appreciate the dignity of labor. It generated income I used to buy afternoon snacks like banana cue and orange juice. Some old and new friends who graced my birthday celebration were high school classmates, schoolmates and friends from the academe and a friend from broadcast industry. To make my birthday special, I hired a Jazz Band from Digos City to entertain us with soothing jazz music that penetrates the soul.

Privileged to donate cash for the fire victims. I was able to give financial help of US\$500 to members of the Nurse Corps, thru The Chief Nurse of AFP Col. Nelia Valmonte, whose military quarters at AFP Medical Center in V. Luna Road, Quezon City was engulfed by fire that fateful night of October. Most of the victims' civilian clothes and military uniforms were burned into ashes. Thank God no one was seriously hurt. I'm glad to send financial help insigida (immediately) after Col. Valmonte sent me facebook message asking to help fellows in need. Thank God for multimedia facebook that connects people around the globe. Information spreads quickly. Help was received immediately.

Opening of my rubber trees. This is the ultimate item I am grateful for this year. Five years ago, I bought a barren farm land from a friend in Mlang. Five thousand rubber seedlings were planted. Most of the trees survived, some did not. I blamed it on drought brought by scorching heat of summer. I am still very much thankful to God for allowing those trees to grow tall and big. When I visited the farm last September, I took picture besides a rubber trunk. Looking at the photo, I was dwarfed

Continued on page 19

Pacquiao may face Mayweather's protégé

By Nick Giongco

Adrien Broner, the Floyd Mayweather protégé who loves to talk like his benefactor, confirmed yesterday that he is being offered to serve as the farewell foe of Manny Pacquiao.

As reported by the Bulletin almost two weeks ago, Broner said in a video interview that Mike Koncz, the Canadian adviser of Pacquiao, reached out to him and asked him to become the Filipino's opponent.

Broner, holder of a 31-2 record with 23 KO's, told interviewers that he relishes facing left-handers like Pacquiao.

"I love fighting soutspaws, man, just check my record," said the 26-year-old Broner, who hails from Cincinnati.

Saying that should he and Pacquiao get it on, fight fans will be guaranteed "a hell of a fight," describing himself as a "young rising star against an elite Hall of Famer on his way out."

But Broner feels he has what it takes to get the better of the 37-year-old fighting congressman.

"Can't wait to send him home back to the



Manny Pacquiao



Adrien Broner

Philippines and become governor," he said, knowing that Pacquiao is running for public office but unaware of the position his potential foe is aspiring for.

Still, Broner was modest enough to keep his feet planted on the ground when taunted by a tricky question.

"You can't put a pass nobody. This is boxing and it only takes one shot," said Broner, when asked whether Pacquiao is already done.

Team Pacquiao hasn't made any announcement about the details of his planned April 9 fight, leaving Top Rank boss Bob Arum at a loss.

Arum is dangling the names of Tim Bradley and Terence Crawford, both fighting under his promotional banner.

The Queen of All Trades

By Ian Carlo Bajada & Giulliano Rodriguez

"Rachel Nason is a 43-year old happily married, full-time working mother of two active and athletic middle school-aged girls. Rachel is also the one who carpools and competes in Bikini Fitness Competitions, while her husband works of town. She works twelve-hour shifts at UCSD Medical Center in SICU/Trauma. She is the Hospital Unit Service Coordinator, formerly as an Emergency Trauma Technician.

Rachel's husband works in the fitness industry and co-owns a UFC Gym, as a silent partner. In addition to being a national level bikini competitor, she is a blue belter in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and enjoys doing MMA, kickboxing and boxing. She also has a background in Krav Maga, Israeli Self-Defense. Added to that, I'm proud to say that she is a Filipina! Rachel was born in Dagupan City, is from Bactad, Urduyina and father (Gene Cayabyab) is from Malasiqui, Pangasinan. She was raised in the United States, because her dad was enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Rachel is part of Team NJFF, coached by Norm Johnson. She is currently living in Carlsbad, California, which is in the San Diego area, so she is really blessed to say that she pretty much live in the summertime, year round!"

A quote from Rachel, "Fitness has always been my passion, ever since I became involved with it, beginning with being a collegiate cheerleader. I am in constant awe of the wonder of the human body. I also like to help and inspire others to be healthy."

Rachel's sister, Ruth, shared the following with Dale Esperante: "My sister began fitness competitions as part of her bucket list; it was something she always wanted to try. She was busy with life (full time job and 2 kids), but she was determined. At first, she wasn't sure if she should try Bikini or Figure. She decided on Bikini. In her first show, she placed and got a trophy! She tried a second time, and placed higher. She strived to improve each time she completed. She qualified for Nationals in Bikini and was one place away from receiving her Pro Card! A year after she began in Bikini, she debuted in Figure and won first place!!! We were in the audi-



Rachel Cayabyab Nason



Family and friends of Rachel

ence screaming at the top of our lungs with pride, and she cried with happiness! She is now qualified for Nationals, again, but in Figure. It's been an amazing Journey! We're all very proud of her! Go, Rachel CAYABYAB Nason!"

Gene and Ruby Cayabyab are the proud parents of Rachel. Her parents, and her sister Ruth, still live in the Sacramento area. Her father is an active member of the American Legion Magellan Post 604 and both her parents are also members of the Filipino American Veterans Association, Inc (FAVA).



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Getting to know the Queen

By Pauly Abando

Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach makes history and brings pride to the Philippines by winning the Miss Universe 2015 crown, Monday, in Las Vegas.

The Filipino-German beauty emerged victorious among 80 hopefuls.

Her win marked the third time the Philippines took home the coveted title following Gloria Diaz in 1969 and Margie Moran-Florendo in 1973.

Here, we get to know more about the beauty queen and her showbiz connection:

JACK OF ALL TRADES

The 26-year-old culinary arts graduate started her career as model at age 11. At 12, she was discovered by ABS-CBN and launched as a Star Magic batch 11 talent under the screen name Pia Romero. Her first acting project was "K2BU," a teen-oriented program that aired in 2002. She then landed a role on the TV sitcom "Bora" in 2005.

In 2006, she became part of the drama series "Sa Piling Mo" topbilled by Piolo Pascual and Judy Ann Santos.

In 2012, she played the role of a sexy jellyfish on the fantaserye "Aryana." She also appeared on several "Maalaala Mo Kaya" episodes like "Birth Certificate," "Stroller," and "Komiks," and was a regular host and performer on "ASAP" from 1996 to 2011. Her film credits include three Star Cinema films, namely "Kung Ako Na Lang Sana," "All My Life," and "All About Love."

Her last acting appearance was on the TV5 horror-suspense series, "Third Eye." Pia is also a writer, a stylist and makeup artist.



Pia through the years

BREADWINNER

Undoubtedly a hard worker, Pia is the family breadwinner who gives financial help to her two sisters. Her parents separated when she was just nine years old.

"It was pretty hard. It was a lot to put on as a teenager when all I should be thinking about were my grades, but I'm thinking about the rent and the bills," she said in an interview on "Personage."

Despite the hardships, Pia tried anything and everything. She is planning to continue her acting career after her Miss Universe reign.

"Acting is always going to be there. I've always liked it, I grew up doing it, so I see myself going back to acting," she said in a separate interview on "ANC Mornings."

THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM

As a child, Pia already dreamed of becoming a beauty queen. She even used to don her mom's high-heeled shoes imagining herself making her victory walk. Pia joined Binibining Pilipinas in 2013 where she won first place.

Unable to snag some of the more prestigious plums, she told "Personage" she hates losing. "Imagine being the only runner-up beside girls who are wearing crowns tapos ikaw wala, I felt really left out."

farmers in the region significantly succeeded in this field of agriculture because it is a low maintenance farming. It does not need irrigation. When done properly, it brings better and brighter future for generations to come. Let's go farming!

Finally, let me end by expressing my gratitude to God and to the people who, in one way or the other, influenced me to be thankful.



Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach



Pia with Pauleen Luna

But it was a mistake. Harvey had the winners mixed-up.

Though the boo-boo would remain controversial, Pia nevertheless emerged victorious – an early Christmas gift her beloved countrymen are sure to cherish for a long time.

Beauty queens past and present were all one in voicing their support for Pia. Miriam Quiambao tweeted, "Congratulations Pia!!! We love you! You deserve the crown!! We're so very proud of you!!!"

Megan Young posted, "Nakakaiyak!!! We love you @PiaWurtzbach!!! You deserve this so much!!!!"

Shamey Supsup shared, "OMG the Universe is finally ours!!!!"

Lea Salonga added, "We have something to smile about!!! This high is going to last us awhile!!! Woo-hoo!!!"

KC Concepcion posted, "Ang saya saya ng Pilipinas!!! May libreng kulay at saka gupit ang mga parlor, libreng pizza at spaghetti naren! Go MISS UNIVERSE!!!"

Several international personalities joined in on the fun, including supermodel Tyra Banks who tweeted, "Dang, girl. You betta #SMIZE, @PiaWurtzbach for the win, girl!"

Hollywood actress Chloë Grace Moretz added, "Miss Philippines deserves that she felt so genuine and real."

Competitive and persistent, Pia joined Binibining Pilipinas anew the following year but only made it to the semi-finals. Still, there was no stopping Pia. She joined the competition again in 2015, finally winning the chance to represent the country at this year's Miss Universe tilt.

OVERWHELMING SUPPORT

Her supporters all thought Pia came up short again when she was announced first runner-up to Miss Colombia at this year's Miss Universe pageant host Steve Harvey.

Gratitude From page 17

by those towering trees. The farm looks green and definitely it provides oxygen and fresh air to the community. On December 11, 2015, the farm operation started. Identified and numbered rubber trees were tapped and are now producing sap. The locals call it "White Gold" because rubber sap is color white and the market price is good. Rubber is a high value crop. Many rubber

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Season's Greetings!

From the Publishers and Contributors of Philippine Fiesta Newspaper



Bringing good cheers to all of you. Merry Christmas with love from our family! Dave and Dinnah San Pedro



Dale and my wife Melita would like to wish all our family members and all Philippine Fiesta friends a very Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year!



Once again, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Editorial Staff of our community newspaper, the Philippine Fiesta for their tireless dedication to bring out the best of our inherent noble practices in social, charitable and civic activities. We have humbly participated in such selfless endeavors to showcase the depth and greatness of our cultural heritage. To Dave and Dinnah San Pedro and to our readership thank you for giving us this opportunity to be with you especially this time of the year. **MALIGAYANG PASKO AT MANIGONG BAGONG TAON SA INYONG LAHAT. SALAMAT PO!**
From Jun and Faina Abaya



Hope you all had a wonderful Christmas filled with joy. From Sarah and Carle Enloe



Our family: Christianne and Cary Hegna with their son, Casey; April and Thomas Wong with their children, Chloe and Barrett, greets everyone, especially our readers, our staff, and most especially, the San Pedro family. A Blessed Christmas and a Very Hopeful and Peaceful New Year!
Nancy and Francis Bautista



Wishing you all the best this holiday season! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! - Perry and Dolores Diaz and Family



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Gabriel Ortigoza and Family