

Philippine Fiesta™

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Sacramento's Filipino American History Month Celebration



The Filipino American community of Sacramento and Vicinity with Assemblyman Jim Cooper in the assembly floor of the Capitol building of California.

By Faina E. Abaya

Filipino American history in the United States is replete with difficulties and struggles for our predecessors in their quest for equal opportunity and fair treatment in all facets of human endeavors. Undeniably, Filipino workers during that period of time encountered so much hardship, so immense that it took more than two generations to change all the discriminatory acts leveled against them.

The road to change for the Filipino "old timers" especially farm workers was not strewn with petals of roses but a rough road where only the very strong can endure the many challenges on their way. In the early part of the 20th century when the Philippines became a colony of the United States, thousands of Filipinos were shipped to Hawaii and in the mainland particularly the States of California and Alaska to fill up menial low paying jobs such as farming, canning and part of labor force for all kinds of works.

In the beginning the hard-working Filipinos patiently waited for possible changes of their lamentable social condition as they wallowed into the quagmire of poverty and seemingly their almost subhuman condition has been petrified with the passing of years. Yet, they persisted to wait with their innate resiliency and perseverance, two distinguishing traits that run deep into their veins to strengthen their resolve to overcome the many inequities that they would encounter.

Continued on page 9



Assemblymember Rob Bonta presented the joint resolution to Dr. Charles Panadero and Cynthia Bonta

Philippine National Day Association 25th Anniversary Gala

By Chris M. Mateo


For the first time in its 25-year history, the Philippine National Day Association hosted an anniversary gala on October 29th, 2015 to celebrate the students and supporters that have contributed to PNDA's success in serving the community. The gala's theme, "Our Pride, Our Legacy, Our Future" exemplified the night's program.

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Editor's Note

This is the 14th year of Philippine Fiesta news, in celebrating the special holidays with our FilAm community. It's our hope that your Thanksgiving celebration was the best so far, with so many wonderful reasons to be grateful about. Dave and I are grateful for all God's blessings, with our good health, and the love of our children, family, and friends. These are blessings that allow us to reach our personal goals and fulfill our responsibilities to our children, our family, and our community that we serve through this publication. We pray for more guidance, so that we may be able to continue to serve our purpose in life.

I have been busy in school and my work, while I missed writing the previous months' editorial note. And so, this is a catch up to say about the several community events, that have happened in our community. For one, the Philippine National Day Association's (PNDA) 25th Anniversary was the highlight of them all. It was everything to the "tee", as the guests of dignitaries were taken to witness their years of accomplishments in empowering the youth. I have always had so much respect for Cynthia Bonta, as the immediate past president, founder, and the brain child of PNDA's Outstanding Filipino Youth Award (OFYA) project for her dedication. Even as she stepped down, she assured that PNDA has transitioned to its new height. I just can't wait to see the PNDA to soar into an even higher height, through the new leadership of Dr. Charles Panadero, as the president.

Another community event, "All Souls Day" was held in remembrance of our departed ones. It's a gathering gracefully hosted annually by the East Lawn Memorial Services in Elk Grove, through the effort of Manny Buenaventura. It was another successful gathering of mass celebration followed by raffles drawing and partaking of delicious food prepared jointly by several community organization.

What I thought was one of the great ways to get active in the senior hood was the "Dance Aficionado"- a fund raising dance event project hosted by the American Legion post 604 through the leadership of Ric Rafanan, all for the purpose of helping to restore the legendary Magellan Hall. It was a night to dance our heart out, which yours truly had enjoyed so much. It was promised that there will more of this enjoyable event, which I encourage everyone to attend. It's a way to get active, loosen up our aching joints, and just to enjoy the camaraderie. Most importantly, to help the restoration of Magellan Hall, which we all know is the only building where most Filipino gatherings are held and the closest one that we can call our own, until the longest, ever-dreamed Filipino building is built in Sacramento!

Four big events are happening next month! The legacy continues for the Sinag-Tala theatrical shows, in their 26th year. Another is the Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA and friends' 10th Anniversary Musical Review and Christmas concert. And also, the University of the Philippines Concert Chorus "S'aliw Himig" will be held next month. Last is the The Ilocano Association's coronation and scholarship night. Please read on other community events and articles submitted by our contributing writers. Kindly, we ask that you take time to show and extend your appreciation to our contributing writers, and the Philippine Fiesta. It can be done in many ways: a special mention in your souvenir program, complimentary tickets or pass to your event, and just a simple acknowledgement if you happen to pass them on the streets. For those who have already done so, we are equally grateful for your kind gestures. It's one other way to show us that we are doing fine and that it's worth every effort to highlight the accomplishments of our Filipino people. Maraming salamat. Have a safe holiday celebrations from our family to yours...Dinnah San Pedro

Am I campaigning for Duterte?

By Ramon Tulfo

If sen. Grace Poe is not disqualified by the Commission on Elections (Comelec)—and the Supreme Court on her appeal—the 2016 presidential elections would become the liveliest five-cornered fight in the country's history.



Mayor Rody Duterte

It is the only city in the country (and perhaps in the world) where criminals fear to tread.

Drug traffickers, pushers, killers, robbers, burglars and rapists have left Davao City a long time ago after the lowlife disappeared without a trace or were found dead on deserted streets.

Abusive policemen are never heard of in the city. Some cops from out of town who came to the city and abused civilians regretted their misdeed—or never lived to regret it.

If you're a night person who wants to drink till the wee hours of the morning, Davao City is not for you because bars and nightclubs close at 11 p.m.

Tourists and residents who want to drink until dawn take a ferry to nearby Samal island.

Residents obey the law and city ordinances—like the ban on smoking in public places

—because they know their mayor and his subordinates are incorruptible.

An owner of a nationwide retail store chain told me how his application for a business permit breezed through the process without paying a single centavo in bribes to City Hall.

That's the reason many businesses are scrambling to set up their main office in Davao City.

One other thing: Duterte—Digong to his constituents—goes around the city incognito on a big bike or a taxicab to see if policemen are patrolling the streets.

He is also on the prowl for criminals he wants to catch in the act.

His sterling leadership in Davao City will be replicated in the entire country—if he is elected President.

Now am I unashamedly campaigning for Duterte?

You bet I am.

Apart from Poe, the candidates are Vice President Jojo Binay, former Interior Secretary Mar Roxas, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and the Johnny-come-lately, Davao City Mayor Rody Duterte.

Poe is ahead of her rivals at this time in the surveys with Binay trailing far behind; Roxas, coming up behind Binay; and Santiago, in the fourth place.

Duterte announced Saturday that he was finally running after saying many times he would never be shoved into the presidential race.

If Grace is not disqualified, eventually it will be a neck-and-neck fight between Poe and Duterte.

Duterte will bring into the presidential race a proven track record as mayor of one of the world's safest cities.

Every Davao City resident follows the law and city ordinances to the letter.

Davao City is the only place in the Philippines where residents don't use firecrackers during the New Year's Eve revelry because they believe Duterte when he told them that terrorists could take advantage of the noise to explode bombs or shoot innocent people.

All drivers in the city observe the speed limit of 60 kilometers per hour on the highway and 40 kph in the city proper.



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Unconvinced of ‘tanim-bala,’ P-Noy takes extorters’ side

By Jarius Bondoc

Subalterns have misinformed him that there are only two victims. Based on that he thinks there’s no problem after all.

The fear of Manila airport travelers came true. “Tanim-bala (bullet-planting)” shakedowns resumed right after Manila’s APEC summit. But no one expected it to be this worse. As single bullets again were being “found” in carry-ons of two or three departing passengers per day, P-Noy finally spoke on the matter that has been bugging Filipinos for three months now. And what he said practically exonerated the extortionists.

It’s only news sensationalizing, P-Noy smirked. His (flimsy) proof: of 34 million airport users each year, only 1,400 have been recorded in 2015 with bullets in luggage, only 70 have been booked – and only two have complained of frame-up. So he concluded: someone must be on a smear drive, knowing the issue can be prolonged since investigations would take some time. Then his warning: we’ll investigate too whoever thought this up.

That last line sounded so much like Marcos losing grip on power. To cover up for plunder and military abuses, the dictator had blamed plots on usual suspects – till he fell from the weight of his many lies. With seven months left to his term, is P-Noy turning despot too?

P-Noy has not named his suspected “tanim-bala” schemer. Perhaps he’s leaving that dirty work to the Justice department and NBI. Poor co-terminus appointees heading those agencies; they must be want-

ing to depart with good names, but must put up with the boss’ bad intents. So far, from probe updates, they have been doing right: calling “tanim-bala” victims to file narratives, and repeatedly proving the airport security screeners incapable of detecting bullets that agents sneak in, in jackets and bags. Now they may have to nab not the crooked screeners who plant bullets for mulcting, but some likely imagined anti-P-Noy plotter.

P-Noy can’t get why the investigation is taking so long. It’s because his airport GM-cousin Jose Angel Aquino Honrado, Transport Sec. Joseph Abaya, and Press Sec. Sonny Coloma played the three monkeys who saw-heard-spoke no evil. Along with P-Noy’s anointed successor Mar Roxas, airport security screening head Rolando Reomono, and PNP Aviation Security Group chief Pablo Francisco Balagtas, they were first to cite faulty statistics, claim “media blowing out of proportion,” point to supposed smear plots – and generally belittle the shakedown victims. Honrado and Abaya later were exposed on nationally broadcast Senate inquiry to be unaware of their jobs and lying through their teeth. Calls loudened from ordinary citizens and civic-religious leaders for their resignation, if not sacking, for unparalleled incompetence. They stayed.

By taking the side of his incompetents, P-Noy in effect covered up for their mulcting screeners and cops. Expect their extortion to escalate.

This is not the first time P-Noy is covering up for scammers. His mere silence in the face of documented shenanigans means consent. He uttered no word when his Liberal Party-mates and MRT-3 commuter rail GM were exposed



President Benigno Aquino III

by the Czech ambassador of attempting to extort \$30 million from the visiting chairman of Czech train maker Inekon. Mum too when the extortionists diverted the media fire to P-Noy’s own sister, brother-in-law, and a cousin who had informed him of the fraud.

That cover-up by silence led to bigger crimes. Abaya subsequently granted P1.85 billion, by private negotiation instead of public bidding, to two unqualified companies of the LP-mates for the MRT-3 maintenance that never was. Two weeks ago Abaya awarded those same LP-mates a P4.5-billion maintenance starting Jan. up to two years beyond P-Noy’s term, again by mere closed-door talks in lieu of open bidding. Still, P-Noy is silent.

P-Noy claims there are only two complainants of P30,000-P80,000 shakedown. Wrong! At least ten victims have come forward: a domestic returning to work in Hong Kong, an American missionary and his father and step-mom,

they speak the truth, he would look so insensitive about their plight.

Insensitivity has been the hallmark of P-Noy’s tenure from the start. He haughtily refused to console the survivors and kin of the eight slain Hong Kong residents held hostage by a crazed Manila cop. He has let citizens left homeless by the Zamboanga City siege two years ago to live in tents till today. He stopped the Super Typhoon Yolanda fatality count at 6,500 because he initially had estimated only 4,000. He looks at the 44 police commandos killed in his botched raid in Mamasapano as mere statistics of his coveted Nobel prize for forging peace with the massaging Moro separatists.

P-Noy can’t seem to grasp in the end that one “tanim-bala” victim already is too much. So he wants to see more victims first before finally admitting that there’s a problem.

The victim-domestic’s lawyer has had to remind P-Noy that it took the assassination of only one man at the tarmac of that Manila airport in Aug. 1983 to change the history of the Philippines.

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Understanding Spratly Islands

By Gabriel Ortigoza

The issues and concerns on the contested Spratly Islands are no longer foreign to me. I used to teach this topic under International Relations to the graduating cadets at the Philippine Military Academy during my stint as member of the Corps of Professors.

The dispute on Spratly Islands has been on the headlines for quite some time now. In this connection, I made a research on the topic to keep myself updated and to share this important information that can be easily understood by the readers.

Freedom of navigation in the South China Sea is the most immediate concern of international communities. South China Sea is one of the primary routes of international trade and a major source of fish that supply neighboring countries and the global market.

South China Sea is composed of two main groups of islands: The Paracel Islands on the northwest and the Spratly Islands on the southeast.

There are six claimant-nations in these two main group of islands: Brunei, China, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. These claimants are contesting on the issue of sovereignty over the islands.

The Spratly Islands are centered in the southern half of the South China Sea approximately 300 nautical Miles (NM) east of Vietnam, 200 NM west of the Philippines, and 800 NM south of Chinese mainland.

Spratly group of islands was named after Richard Spratly, a British whaling captain, who discovered the islands in 1843.

Legal Basis that governs claims of the islands are customary or traditional law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Customary law is based on the generally accepted notions, or past precedence through agreements, arbitration, or rulings by international courts.



In the South China Sea some formal discovery and occupation claims started in the 1800s, but many now cited originated after 1945 when defeated Japan renounced its World War II annexations leaving a void in ownership, and arguably resetting all the geologic features to Res nullius (nobody's property) (Lai, 2011).

There were no claimant for the islands in the South China Sea after World War II.

In 1946, China built and established on a few features in Spratly Islands. One year later, the group of Chiang Kai-Shek broke Woody Island which is a part of Paracel group of islands. Two weeks after the Chinese seized Woody Island, the French and the Vietnamese settled in Pattle Island, also a part of Paracel Islands. The Chinese troops under Chiang Kai-Shek's retreated to Taiwan after a defeat from Mao Tse Tung.

In 1947, a Filipino entrepreneur Tomas Cloma explored, identified, and claimed most of the islands in Spratly. Cloma wanted to establish fish cannery in Spratly.

In 1956, upon the advised of Vice President Carlos Garcia of the Philippines, Tomas Cloma, with the help of his brother Filemon, formally claimed the region as his own. He then named the island Kalayaan. In September of the same year, Tomas Cloma decided to cede and sell all the terri-

tories comprising fifty features of his state to the Philippines for one peso (US\$0.50 of the time).

In 1970, claimant countries were attracted to oil reserved in South China Sea. The Philippines moved in first followed by China.

In the Battle of Paracel Islands, China grabbed several features controlled by Vietnam killing a number of Vietnamese. China likewise sank Vietnamese ship. In return, Vietnam snatched several features in the Paracel Islands.

In 1988, China moved in Johnson Reef which was already occupied by the Vietnamese.

In 1995, China occupied the Philippine-owned Panganiban Reef (international name: Mischief Reef). Panganiban Reef is 130 NM from Palawan province. The reef is obviously within the 200 NM Exclusive Economic Zone. China constructed concrete bunkers at Mischief Reef and preventing Filipino fishermen to come close otherwise Chinese Coast Guard ship will bump their small and inferior fishing boats or hit them with water cannon.

In 1999, the Philippines decided to occupy Ayungin Reef (Second Thomas Reef) and stationed soldiers from the Philippine Marine Corps who used BRP Seirra Madre, a Philippine naval ship, as shelter. China uses "Cabbage Ap-

proach" to choke the occupants of the reef and to dissuade others to come and bring basic supplies.

In 2002, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China signed the declaration of the conduct of parties to establish a framework of a Code of Conduct for South China Sea and promised to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and

affect peace and stability, including among others, refraining from action of inhabiting on the presently inhabited islands, reefs, shoals, cays, and other features and to handle differences in a constructive manner.

In 2009, Malaysia and Vietnam sent a joint submission to the United Nations Commission of the limits of continental shelf setting out some of their claims. China responded by submitting a China made map containing a controversial "Nine-dash line". This map has no historical basis and encompasses all the South China Sea territorial features.

In 2012, China occupied and took the Panatag Shoal (international name: Scarborough Shoal) from the Philippines. Panatag Shoal is part of Zambales province. It started when the Philippine Navy arrested Chinese fishermen illegally fishing and poaching sea turtles. Chinese Navy came in that led to a two months stand-off among two navies. Negotiation done by China and Philippines diplomats and both agreed to withdraw from Scarborough Shoal. The Philippines complied with the agreement but China did not.

On January 22, 2013, the Philippines filed an arbitrary case against China at the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). China refused to participate in the proceeding but released a position paper opposing tribunal's jurisdiction. The

Philippines has submitted its memorial at UNCLOS.

In early 2014, China moved its oil rig in the waters claimed by Vietnam in Paracel Island. This move provoked Vietnamese to riot against Chinese and Chinese businesses in Vietnam. In July 2014, due to mass action against China and the killings of Chinese people in Vietnam, China decided to withdraw its oil rig in the waters claimed by Vietnam.

Since the Philippine government filed an arbitrary case against China at the International Court, China flexes its muscles and has accelerated the constructions and expanding its features by land reclamation, building air strips, and other military infrastructure projects in the contested islands in Spratly.

According to a legal expert in International Law, China cannot claim sovereignty over artificial structures it build in the South China Sea.

In October 2015, the International Court in The Hague, on an en banc decision, declared it has jurisdiction over South China Sea maritime dispute. A decision most welcome by the Philippines. This is a clear manifestation the Philippines has a strong legal case against the bully China.

China wants to be a leader in the region but it cannot be because the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) considered China a security threat. In this connection, China is facing an increasing isolation from Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) members as observed during the November 2015 APEC Summit held in the Philippines.

The maritime issues and concerns over the contested Spratly Islands in South China Sea must be resolved in a proper forum. China must respect and submit itself to the jurisdiction of International Court in settling maritime issues.

International communities are therefore obligated to ensure and protect freedom of navigation and overflight at South China Sea without fear of being harassed and threatened by the bully (gabbyortig@yahoo.com).

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“Rejoice!” is a solo concert featuring Ms. May Gorospe-Favis, a lyric soprano, breast cancer survivor, a wife and mother of three. May is donating her God given talents for the mercy she received in her fight with breast cancer and to convey her message that others that are afflicted with cancer are not alone. The concert will be held at St Paul’s Catholic Church, 8720 Florin Road, Sacramento, CA 95828 on Sunday December 13, 2015 from 6:00pm-7:30pm. Tickets are available by calling the office at 916-381-5200, M-F 9am-4pm. Adults \$10, child 12 years and under \$5. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Albie Aware Breast Cancer Foundation in the name of Ms. May Gorospe-Favis and the balance to St Paul’s Building Fund.

A View of Philippine National Day Association (PNDA) from ARI’s Table

By Dale Esperante

On 29 October 2015, we found an invitation from our friend, the president of TOFA (To’otupu ‘oe “Otu Felenite Association) Inc., Cristina Ofa Mann. She reserved us seats to join Asian Resources Incorporated (ARI), a strong supporter of PNDA.



Dale with the Asian Resources Inc. and pres. of TOFA, Cristina Ofa Mann

We of course accepted which gave us the pleasure of meeting Stephanie Nguyen, Executive Director of ARI. Stephanie was accompanied by husband Kenny and their sweet adorable five year old daughter. Elk Grove District 1 Councilman Darren Suen and TOFA’s board director, Lucy Oback, also joined us. At another table, the president of ARI’s Council of Asian Pacific Islanders Together for Advocacy & Leadership (CAPITAL), Sonny L. Chong was accompanied by more ARI friends. During dinnertime, Stephanie exclaimed how the food was so delightfully different. She compared the taste to the servings of their favorite restaurant on Stockton Blvd. So I took the opportunity to share a copy of the Philippine Fiesta newspaper indicating that an ad of “Heavenly Food Creations” can be found in the paper.



Heavenly Food Creations Catering Service with owner Rhuena Buentipo



Sinag-tala singers

Automatically, Kenny picked up the copy of the paper I shared with him and started looking for the ad. The ad is listed on the front page and on page 13. I was glad to find a supply of Philippine Fiesta newspapers available in the lobby of the venue. Because when Councilman Darren Suen was enjoying the Sinag-tala performance, my wife Melita handed him a copy of the newspaper pointing out the

recent article I wrote about the organization. Hopefully, he’ll be available to join us at the next Sinag-tala Theatrical Revue in December. Our (wife and I) overall experience attending Philippine National Day Association’s event and being welcomed to the table of the leading members of the Asian Resources Inc. was nothing less than exceptional. I witnessed the outstanding presentation of the PNDA group and also enjoyed the company of a great friend (Ofa) and members of TOFA and ARI. Reference asianrecources.org and tofainc.org for more information about these two supportive organizations of our Filipino organizations.

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PerryScope

By Perry Diaz

Can the Philippines defend her sovereignty?

Ever since twelve nationalistic – and left-leaning – members of the Philippine Senate voted to evict the U.S. bases in 1991, our national pride had immeasurably gone up the scale never seen before since the new national flag was raised and independence was declared from Spain on the balcony of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo's mansion in Kawit, Cavite, on June 12, 1898.



Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo raises the new Philippine flag on June 12, 1898 in the balcony of his mansion in Kawit, Cavite.

But "independence" was short-lived. Little did Aguinaldo know that Spain had ceded the Philippines to the U.S. for \$20 million at the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. And when the Americans came to claim the Philippine Islands, Aguinaldo resisted the occupation. On February 4, 1899, war broke out. But Aguinaldo's fledgling army was no match to the well-armed and experienced American forces. In November 1899, Aguinaldo went into hiding in Palanan, Isabela where he waged guerilla warfare against the Americans. Thus began the "Philippine Insurrection," as the Americans called it. More than

half a century later, Filipino historians changed it to the "Philippine-American War," which is what it



Americans capture Gen. Aguinaldo at his secret camp in Palanan, Isabela on March 23, 1901.

was.

On March 23, 1901, a contingent of American soldiers with the help of Macabebe Scouts gained access to Aguinaldo's camp by pretending to surrender. Aguinaldo was captured and brought to Manila where he took the oath of allegiance to the American government. On April 19, 1901, he issued a proclamation recommending abandonment of resistance against the Americans.

Thus ended the Philippine-American War and the American colonial era began. In 1934, the Philippines was granted commonwealth status and given limited autonomy of self-government. On July 4, 1946, Uncle Sam granted independence to the Philippines.

Philippine independence

But a lot of historians believe that the Philippines wasn't ready to exercise her freedom after suffering from the ravages of World War II and the brutality the Filipinos endured at the hands of the Japanese oppressors. Many believed that the Philippines' status as a "commonwealth" of the U.S. should have been retained. And many more believed that Philippine statehood would serve the best interests of Americans and the Filipinos alike. They said that Filipinos would prosper peacefully and equally with the Americans. And ultimately, they were convinced that a union between the U.S. and the Philippines would make the U.S. the strongest Pacific power and the Filipinos the most affluent

among Asians. The union would have formed an amalgam of western and eastern cultures in an expanse of land and sea where "the sun will never set." And lest we forget, Philippine statehood would also protect Americans of Filipino descent and their newly created state under the nuclear umbrella of Uncle Sam. That's peace, prosperity, and security all rolled into one. The question is: Why did this geopolitical alchemy not happen? Could it be because of the late Philippine commonwealth president Manuel L. Quezon wishes? His prophetic wish, "I prefer a government run like hell by Filipinos to a government run like heaven by Americans," took hold long after his death on August 1, 1944 in Saranac Lake, New York. He must have believed that given enough time, the Filipinos would eventually become adept at self-government. That's how much confidence he had on the ability of Filipinos to chart their own future. But he was wrong.

Foreign aggression

Seventy years after gaining her independence, the Philippines is still being ran like hell, and the Filipinos are still struggling in learning how to govern. Sad to say, the



Liaoning carrier battle group.

elected politicians today are more interested in enriching themselves than serving the people. Corruption has become the norm, and honesty the exception. Six of the "Magnificent 12" 20 years after their vote to evict the U.S. bases.

And what is indeed very disheartening is that the Philippines doesn't have the capability to defend her territory from foreign aggression. And the U.S. has not been willing to get involved, claiming neutrality, in the territorial disputes between the Philippines and China. It was only recently that the U.S. challenged China's 12-mile territorial boundary around those Chinese man-made islands by sending a guided-missile destroyer to within 12 miles of the reclaimed reefs in what was called a "Freedom of Navigation Operation" (FONOP). However, it



Philippine Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon.

is not anticipated that the "innocent passage" conducted by the USS Lassen would result in China dismantling her man-made islands. On the contrary, China threatened to build more artificial islands around reefs within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

And this brings before the question: What does it take for China to intrude into the Philippines' peripheral territories like the Batanes group of islands, Kalayaan Group of islands, and Tawi-Tawi archipelago? With a navy with no warships and an air force with no warplanes, there is no way the Philippines could defend her territories from Chinese invasion whose military forces are second only to the U.S.

And should the Philippines invoke the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), it is doubtful if the U.S. would automatically and immediately send an expeditionary force to defend the Philippines. The question is: Would the U.S. honor the MDT? When the Philippines rejected the renewal of the U.S. Bases Agreement, many constitutionalists were of the opinion that the eviction would result in the de facto rescission of the MDT. Besides, how can the U.S. defend Philippine territory when she has no basing rights in the Philippines, which is fundamental to any defense treaty?

EDCA challenged

On April 28, 2014, the U.S. and the Philippines executed an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which would allow the "U.S. forces access to and use of designated areas and facilities owned and controlled by the Armed Forces of the Philippines at the invitation of the Philippine Government. It contains clear provision that the U.S. will not establish a permanent military presence or base in the Philippines and a prohibition of entry to the Philippines of nuclear weapons. The EDCA has an initial term of ten years, and thereafter will continue in force until terminated by either party after having given a one-year no-

notice of intention to terminate."

However, the EDCA would provide what the MDT would have provided. But no sooner had the EDCA been executed than nationalist and leftist groups filed petitions with the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of EDCA.

After lingering in the High Court for over a year, it was reported in the news that the court will soon rule to uphold the constitutionality of EDCA before President Barack Obama arrives in Manila for the APEC summit on November 18, 2015. That's the good news.

But the bad news is the Philippine Senate last November 10 passed Resolution 1414 or a "Resolution expressing the strong sense of the



Six of the "Magnificent 12" 20 years after their vote to evict the U.S. bases.

Senate that any treaty ratified by the President of the Philippines should be concurred in by the Senate, otherwise the treaty becomes invalid and ineffective." The resolution was

sponsored by Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago and co-sponsored by 12 other senators. She said that the EDCA is a prohibited treaty of "foreign military bases, troops or facilities," which the Philippine Constitution allows only with the concurrence of the Senate under Article 18, Section 25.

Déjà vu

If Senate Resolution 1414 prevails with the failure of the Supreme Court to declare EDCA as constitutionally legal, then it's déjà vu all over again. With EDCA gone and the MDT unenforceable, the only treaty that binds the U.S. and the Philippines would be the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which is under siege by nationalist and leftist lawmakers. Interestingly, the Supreme Court had ruled that it is constitutional... not once,



Former U.S. Subic Bay Naval Base.

but twice. But it is expected in due time that the VFA will go away, too; thus, ending the "special relationship" between the U.S. and the Philippines that lasted more than

a century. With the Philippines feeling the heat of the Chinese dragon breathing down her neck, can she defend her sovereignty?

(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

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Leni Robredo going for No. 2: Like defying logic

By Marlon Ramos

It came to a point that it was hard to explain. But I felt in my heart that it was something I was meant to be," she said.

"It was like defying logic because when you use logic, all the reasons are there to say 'no.' My (survey) numbers are low, I'm not well-known (among voters), I have no resources, everybody was against it," the Liberal Party's reluctant vice presidential candidate Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo said.

Unlike her unexpected congressional attempt in 2013, Robredo said she was given three weeks to think about the LP's invitation after Poe announced her own presidential aspiration on Sept. 16.

Initially, she asked herself repeatedly why the Aquino administration would want her to form a tandem with LP standard-bearer Mar Roxas when her experience in politics was "very limited" and she had never participated in a national campaign.

After all, she was just on her first term as Camarines Sur representative after putting an end to the decadeslong stranglehold of the influential Villafuerte political clan in their congressional district.

She was also mindful that her awareness among voters was low, as shown by surveys of voters' preference for the next leaders of the country.

Prayers to late husband

Trying to make sense of the mounting pressure on her, Robredo said she actually prayed for her late husband Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo to speak to her even in her dreams.

"My first question was, why me? Of all the possible candidates, why me? I'm not popular. I also do not have resources, as in I cannot contribute even a little to my campaign," she said.

Her daughters' tears

According to Robredo, she start-



Despite her initial reluctance to run, Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo tells the INQUIRER in a recent interview that as a vice presidential contender, she is prepared to step up to the plate should circumstances warrant it.

ed to entertain the possibility of throwing her hat in the vice presidential race when Roxas spoke to her and her three children.

Roxas, a close friend of Robredo's late husband, led the search for her husband after the ill-fated chartered plane carrying the then interior secretary crashed into the waters off Masbate province.

In the days leading to her decision, Robredo said her house in Naga City became "very stormy" as she and her daughters would often break into tears when they discussed the matter.

A few days before she announced her candidacy on Oct. 5, she went home to Naga and again spoke with her children. At the time, her daughters had already decided to give their consent.

Roxas major factor

"They told me that they felt their father would also want them to be supportive of me," she said. "So I called up (Roxas) and told him that my children were already allowing me."

Asked if Roxas was a major factor in her decision, she said: "Yes. And it's not only for me but also for my children."

"If not for you, we would not have agreed," Robredo recalled one of her daughters telling Roxas.

"My husband had trusted Roxas for so many years. I think my children trusted him because they know their father would not have easily trusted anyone. They thought he was deserving," she added.

Symbol of good governance

It also helped that Mr. Aquino was able to answer all her questions and take away her doubts, including her poor showing in the surveys of vice presidential candidates.

She said the President explained to her why the LP leadership chose her.

"I told him all the reasons why I shouldn't be the one but he answered them all why I should be the one. He answered even the questions of my children."

According to Robredo, the President also noted that she could be a symbol of good governance, being the wife of Jesse, who was known for engaging the basic sectors in local governance, which won him a Ramon Magsaysay Award, the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in

Asia.

First time

"The President also noted my background in grassroots organizing which would complement Roxas' experience (in national politics). He also told me there was still time to introduce myself to the public," Robredo said.

For Robredo, the 2016 elections would offer the Filipino people a chance to continue the gains of the daang matuwid (right path), the Aquino administration's centerpiece anticorruption agenda.

"This is the first time that the people are looking for the continuation of the administration's policies and not to change it with something new. That only means (what) we did was right," Robredo said.

"But we will not just continue what we have seen and felt. We will also strengthen and expand them ... so that we will be able to shake even the bottom."

Part of job description

Said Robredo: "All the people who really love me, including my constituents, did not want me to

run. If there was pressure, it was really pressure for me to say 'no.' The strongest lobby group consisted of my three daughters, my mother and the siblings of my husband."

She also sought the assistance of her spiritual advisers in coming up with a decision which, she said, became a very emotional moment for her and her family.

From a reluctant veep candidate for the 2016 elections, she is now prepared to be President—if necessary—should she win what is touted to be one of the hotly contested vice presidential races in the country's history.

"If you run for Vice President, you should be ready to become President because that's one of the job descriptions," Robredo said.

"But it's not something I wanted or wish for. When the opportunity presented itself and there was a call, it was difficult to resist," she added.

"Being President is very difficult. All the blame and the problems of the country would be on you. It's not something you would wish even to your worst enemy."

Pressure from her children

Robredo said vying for the second highest elective position in the land was already "way beyond my wildest dreams."

"It's not as if I wanted this. Maybe because I'm the wife of my husband, my orientation was to be ready to make the sacrifice when need be," she said in Filipino.

She dismissed insinuations that Roxas and President Aquino had forced her to run for Vice President, saying she actually had to hurdle "strong pressure" from her children, relatives and other close friends to shun the invitation from the LP.

Robredo became the LP's most viable vice presidential candidate after Sen. Grace Poe spurned the administration party's monthslong pursuit to convince the senator to team up with Roxas.

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Sacramento's Filipino American History Month Celebration

From page 1

The stoical position of the government on the plight of the Filipinos for their pathetic working condition was compounded with the callousness of land owners and the numbness of their employers that made them realized that the road to change was tough and rough with no sight for reversal in their favor.

The Filipinos were so isolated from the main stream American way of life that they were prohibited among others to own property, to live in residential areas and even to marry white Americans. The Filipinos were stereotyped as savage and primitive people prone to violence. That was the darkest period of time in the history of Filipino and American relationship in the United States.

It takes a world conflagration perpetrated by powerful nations as they engulfed weaker nations with tentacles of tyranny and oppression to induce the United States to stand up of what it symbolizes as the bulwark and bastion of democracy.

World War II has brought havoc and destructions in the Philippines in both property and human life. The Philippines being a colony and closest ally of the United States in the Pacific its armed forces were mobilized and integrated into the United States Military Service. Thus, both Filipino and American soldiers bravely fought side by side against the Japanese invaders in the malaria infested jungle of Bataan and other battle fields until they were capitulated.

Able bodied Filipinos in the United States were likewise drafted into the United States Military Service and most of them saw actions in both the Pacific and European theaters of the War. Their loyalty and gallantry fighting side by side with their American counterparts were obviously noticed.

The most destructive war in the history of mankind ended with the allied forces led by the United States emerged victorious. The aftermath of the war again shifted on the old predicaments of the



The Filipino community leaders and members of the steering committee for the celebration of the Filipino American History Month with Assemblyman Jim Cooper.

Filipino workers, the seemingly unending discrimination against them.

However, when the Philippines granted independence by the United States in 1946, the wind of change in all phases of human endeavors were noted from immigration quota of just 50 persons to unrestricted immigrants were allowed, high paying jobs were opened to deserving professionals, no restriction on housing and property ownership, naturalization was allowed and other rights and privileges of American citizens were granted.

But the sad social and working conditions of the Filipino farm workers and other laborers continued. The disparity in wages, housing and benefits between them and federal workers on the same kind of jobs were beyond comparison. It was only in the 1960's when the great awakening of the Filipino farm workers started to demand higher wages, better housing and benefits equal to federal farm workers.

In this period of time, great Filipino labor leaders such as Philip Vera Cruz, Benjamin Gines, Pete Velasco, Andy Imutan emerged and they were led by long time labor movement activist Larry Itliong who formed a labor union, the membership of which were predominantly Filipinos. They initiated a strike against the no-

toriously unscrupulous grape landowners. That labor movement initiated by the Filipinos in collaboration with their Mexican counterparts started great changes for the farm workers. That kindling point for change to farm workers is now referred to as the "Delano Grape strike of 1965".

This bygone era in nutshell is the story of human triumph in the face of tremendous adversaries when only the very strong can endure and survive. Our forebears magnificently overcome the indignities, frustrations and down hearted humiliations for us, today, to enjoy a life in the places where we found solace and comfort free of any kind of discrimination and proud to be called Filipino Americans.

The pioneering spirit of our forefathers that started during the Manila Acapulco Galleon trade era when on October 28, 1587 one of the Galleon ships with Filipino crews entered the Moro Bay on the coast of California where a landing party of Spaniards and Filipinos tried to take possession of the place in the name of Spain but was foiled when native Indians attacked them.

Honoring the sacrifices of our ancestors some of whom gave their lives for us to live and enjoy free of any kind of discrimination in the "land of the free and brave" is just fitting and proper to com-

memorate their indelible achievement.

The State of California and the United States Congress recognized the many contributions of the Filipino Americans that it designated the month of October to be the Filipino American History Month, perhaps, to honor the first Filipinos who ever set foot on the shore of the United States.

This is the period of time when the Filipino Americans not only to reminisce the past but to showcase the depth and greatness of our heritage, culture, tradition and custom as depicted in the beauty, grace and elegance of our costumes, dances, songs and music.

Undoubtedly, it is also the time when we bring into fore our high sense of civility in relation to other nationalities in our diversified community that lives within our midst. As always we show our profound respect for their sensitivities and their noble practices on how they live as we expect them to reciprocate what we also value in our daily existence.

As part of the celebration, the State of California invited prominent community leaders to receive Certificate of Recognition for their respective organizations recognizing their activities that redounded to the best interest of the Sacramento Region and the State of California.

During the celebration of the Filipino American History Month on October 26, 2015 held at the Governor's Council Room where the energetic and amiable 9th District Assemblyman Jim Cooper gave a short welcome address while Mona Pasquil, the Appointment Secretary of the Governor expressed her appreciation to all community leaders present on their continued contributions for the betterment of the Filipino American community in Sacramento and vicinity.

Entertainment was provided by Derek Ledda who sang a nostalgic song which he also composed entitled "Oh, May father" that regaled his listeners and received thunderous applause from everyone.

Assemblyman Jim Cooper personally handed the Certificate of Recognition to corresponding recipients in the assembly floor of the Capitol building of California. The Filipino American community organization recipients of the certificate of recognition are; American Legion Magellan Post 604; American Legion Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604; Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA; Fil-Am Chamber of Commerce; Filipino American National Historical Society, Delta Chapter; Filipino Community of Sacramento & Vicinity; Filipino Family Fraternity; Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento; Filipino Women's Club; Ilocano Foundation of California; Kapitbahay; Philippine National Day Association; Philippine Fiesta Newspaper; Sinag-Tala Filipino Theater & Performing Arts Association; University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity and United Naguilian, La Union, Circle of America, Inc.

The members of the steering committee for the celebration of the Filipino American History Month are: Co-Chair Chris Mateo and Josie Patria, Beatriz Alo, Fred Aquino, Aida Azurin, Alex and Ling Avera, Mercy Guerrero, Joe Gonzalez, Dick Mazon, Lilia Rivera and Memie Weitzenberg.

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Philippine National Day Association 25th Anniversary Gala

From page 1

The first section of the program, "Our Pride" kicked-off the night with amazing performances of the American national anthem by Rodge Mamauag and the Philippine national anthem by Krizzia Manlangit. The anthems were followed by remarks from PNDA board president, Dr. Charles Panadero, who then introduced the night's master and mistress of ceremonies, Derek Ledda and Elaine Abelaye-Mateo. Dinner, prepared by Heavenly Food Creations, was accompanied by a video, "PNDA Through the Years" to transition into the second section of the program, "Our Legacy."

During this next segment, PNDA was recognized by the offices of Congressman Doris Matsui, Congressman Ami Bera, California Senator Richard Pan, Assemblymember Rob Bonta, Assemblymember Jim Cooper, Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli, and Elk Grove City Councilmember Darren Suen. Assemblymember Rob Bonta presented the joint resolution prepared by him, Senator Pan and Assemblymember Cooper, along with his own experience with PNDA. Supervisor Nottoli, a long-time supporter of the organization, also presented his resolution and shared his memories throughout the past two decades.

The recognitions were followed by a wonderful performance by Sinag-Tala, which led to the introduction of the evening's guest of honor, Mona Pasquil, Appointments Secretary to Edmund G. Brown, Governor of the State of California. During her moving keynote speech, Ms. Pasquil shared her passion for serving the community and its youth, a passion instilled by her family and cultivated by many founding members of PNDA.

Charles Panadero and Cynthia Bonta then presented Mona with PNDA's "Visionary Award" and a portrait by Deidra San Pedro.

In remembrance of the 50th Anniversary of the Delano Grape Strike, master of ceremonies Derek Ledda performed his song, "Oh, My Fa-



The oath of induction for new members of the board of directors conducted by Assemblymember Rob Bonta



Photo by Dave San Pedro



VIP reception with Cynthia Bonta, Memie Weitzenberg and Josie Patria



PND Visionary Award to honoree Mona Pasquil a portrait of Deidra San Pedro



Megan Sapigao and Elaine Abelaye-Mateo



The Sinag-tala performers



Derek Ledda with Louie Paman and Dee Pizzaro

ther" accompanied by Dee Pizzaro and Louie Paman. The song, an original by Derek, honors the Manongs and their efforts to create a better life for themselves and for their fellow farm workers. The strike, which took place in September of 1965, was comprised of 1,500 farm workers

protesting poor wages and working conditions.

The third and final portion of the evening, "Our Future" started with the oath of induction for new members of the board of directors and renewal of commitment for current members, conducted by

Assemblymember Bonta. The evening concluded with a vision for the future of PNDA and words of gratitude for everyone in attendance. The board shared that 2016 will be an exciting year, one full of growth and new opportunities for the students and the community. In addition to the annual Outstanding Filipino Youth Awards (OFYA) that provides scholarships for incoming high school and college students, the board will be seeking support to re-ignite the Filipino American Youth Leadership Conference (FAYLC), as well as to develop a mentorship program.

The board of directors are very pleased for the support and participation from our elected officials and receiving their recognitions. We are grateful to our sponsors who have given generously because they believe in and support PNDA's work. We thank our board

board members, honorary board members, organizations, and individuals who sponsored tables and reached out to the Filipino, Asian Pacific Islander, and broader community to join the gala. We cheer on the event chairs and their committees for working on the many aspects of putting on an event. We sincerely appreciate our guests who have made the hard work all worth it. In moving forward to the next year, the next decade, and the next 25 years, we are excited to continue current partnerships, develop recently-created relationships, and explore new collaborations with organizations and individuals that share our mission to carry-out educational, cultural, and arts programs that empower the community.

For more information and to contact us to build upon our mission, please visit our website, www.PNDAempowers.org, or email us at info.PNDAempowers@gmail.com.





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Highlights of Sacramento's Fil-Am Veterans and Friends

By Dale Esperante

Preserving Magellan Hall

On the evening of 7 Nov 2015, social dancing ruled inside this historic building we call Magellan Hall. Over one hundred fitness and dancing aficionados arrived to enjoy an evening of practically uninterrupted music for their dancing pleasure. The very first dancer on the floor was Carlina Victoria. She was dancing alone without a partner, so I casually asked if we could dance together. Her partner, Armando Gonzalez, has not arrived and she didn't want to waste the time just waiting. So we danced. Armando finally arrived and so I thanked them both.

During dinnertime, the music continued for anyone wishing to take over the dance floor. There were only brief instances when social dancing stopped: invocation, a unique black lit dancing exhibition by the Golden Hips Dancers led by Dinnah San Pedro, a Broadway song by Remy Solomon, and the drawing of the winning raffle tickets. The Hall was completely dark when the Golden Hips Dancers performed. The dancers wore reflective costumes made visible by the use of Black lighting. After their performance, Dinnah (a Kaiser nurse) spoke for a couple of minutes to congratulate everyone for dancing is a fun form of exercise. She urged everyone to continue a healthy lifestyle as she added brief nursing perspectives and recommendations. Remy Solomon gifted us with one of her powerful song performances. She also reminded all of a December 5 fundraising concert at St. Charles Borromeo to help out the parish and various other projects.

As promised, no lengthy speeches nor official program occurred. Dancers dominated the evening. There were the line-dancers as well as ballroom dancers. When the sweet slow music played, the elder couples joined the swaying dance floor. Dance circles, conga lines, and dancing with gusto filled the evening. The measure of success for a dance event is the all-out participation of everyone without malice. Social dancing etiquette prevailed.

Magellan Hall Post/Auxiliary members greatly appreciate the support of all those who participated. The support of everyone who attended will contribute to the preservation of this vintage building, the legacy of our 1940's predecessors (manongs). The next Social Dance at Magellan will be scheduled in January 2016. More information will be publicized by next month. There is a plan to include a Dance Contest. So for the Friends of Magellan Hall, please prepare your dance contest routines as well as your dancing shoes. It will again be for only \$15 per person, dining and dancing with no official program. Maraming Salamat Po.

Veterans Day Parade 11/11/15 – Elk Grove

Our community's veterans and friends participated again in this annual traditional parade of Elk Grove. One of the largest pa-



The energetic dancing aficionados



Remy Solomon of The Bayanihan Club, USA



The Golden Hips Dancers in their itsy, bitsy...yellow polka-dots bikini.

rade floats belongs to the American Legion Magellan Post 604. Post 604 Commander Rick Rafanan led the Post members. American Legion Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604 member Linda Cordero represented Ms. Liberty this year. She represented flawlessly by donning her liberty gown and crown while carrying a replica of the eternal flame. The Filipino American Veterans Association (FAVA) group headed by Doc Fred Aquino walked behind the Legion float. The FAVA banner held by Bella Anderson-Nidoy and Melita Esperante led the way for the group. The parade started from the Elk Grove Shopping Center on Elk Grove Florin Blvd and ended at the Elk Grove Regional Park past Elk Grove High School. Every step of



Ms. Liberty Linda Cordero



The FAVA banner held by Bella Anderson-Nidoy and Melita Esperante



The American Legion Post 604 and friends.



With US Army Sgt Major Veronica Tayo (Middle)

the way, the Post-Aux-FAVA groups were greeted with applause and thank you remarks from the people who lined up on the side of the parade route. Many small children along with their parents waved homemade THANK YOU VETERANS signs. As in past years, our group was joined by a couple of grandchildren. This year the grandkids of Fortunato and Yollie Delacruz proudly carried the American flags as they paraded with us down Elk Grove Florin Blvd. There were a sprinkling of Filipinos greeting us with MABUHAY and SALAMAT and PROUD KAMI SA INYO calls as we passed them by. As we reached the

end, Elk Grove Park, we were offered hot dogs, pastries, chips, and refreshments. A few boys and girls scouts were also handing the veterans souvenir trinkets and flags. I received my miniature flag from a grateful girl scout.

A special thank you to Gemma Manalang Balaoro for strategically taking our group's photos in the best spots. Reliable like clockwork, Dave San Pedro shows up every year to photograph and publicize the best captured moments. For the first time parade participants who joined our group this year, we hope to see you again next year: Rey Ado, Chito Balaoro, Jose Beitia, Alexander

Cheng, and Melita Esperante. I salute all the color bearers especially the most senior veteran, Evelio Bill Versoza. He carried the Army service flag through the entire route without missing a beat. I looked in awe at my comrade knowing he was an athletic swimmer in his youth (40 to 50 years ago) tackling and crossing Manila Bay for exercise. For all those who said thank you to the veterans, the veterans are humbled and honored by your appreciation. So long as our health endure, we will continue our service to this country and to our community as always.

Commemorating Veterans Day

"Veterans Day is a United States Federal Holiday that coincides with other countries' holidays called Armistice Day or Remembrance Day. The major hostilities of World War I ended on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. The US previously observed Armistice Day. The US holiday was renamed to Veterans Day in 1954. Veterans Day celebrates the service of all U.S. military veterans. Not to be confused with Memorial Day, honoring those who died while on active duty."

At 1600 hours (4 p.m.) in Magellan Hall, Post 604 2nd Vice Commander Joe Gonzalez welcomed the veterans and their families and friends.

Continued on page 12

Highlights of Sacramento's Fil-Am Veterans and Friends

From page 11

Pacific High School JROTC of North Highlands Posted the Color. American Legion California District 6 Commander Will Williams officiated the POW/MIA Remembrance Service. A candle is lit by Post 604 Service Officer Howard Williams. The lit candle symbolizes the upward reach of the POW/MIAs unconquerable spirit (never giving up). REMEMBER.

Post Chaplain Ato Delacruz delivered the Veterans Prayer. The Master of Ceremonies (MC), yours truly, welcomed all and also reported the outstanding participation of veterans and friends earlier in the Elk Grove Veterans Day Parade. The MC explained that he is also one of the official photographers and recorder of the day's events. He then performed his first introduction by proudly asking the commander of Post 604, Commander Rick Rafanan to say a few words. Commander Rick made his acknowledgements. Then he resumed by reading an impressive bio of one of our community's leading members, Mr. Chris Mateo, Special Assistant to State Assembly Member Jim Cooper.

A long list of outstanding community and personal work was recited by the MC in his introduction of the Post 604 Director, Doc Fred Aquino. Doc Aquino in turn cited the notable biography of one of the Army's top enlisted non-commissioned officers, US Army Sgt Major Veronica Tayo. Since her enlistment in the Army, she has served in every leadership position from squadron leader to Operations Sergeant Major. She has served as First Sergeant; as Assessment and Audit Team member for the Combined Joint Task Force in Operations Enduring Freedom and Ops Iraqi Freedom in 2003. In her speech, she included her appreciation to the veterans for paving the way for those who followed, like her. Her success in the Army can be attributed to the sacrifices of those who came before her. The veterans and guests gave her a vigorous round of applause after her talk.

The talented Ms. Leslie Bernabe gifted us with two special songs that closely relate to the images of our journey as veterans. Although she is not fluent in the Filipino language, she obliged when I asked her to sing Bayan Ko. Her performance of the song exceeded everyone's expectations. The tone, feeling, and pronunciation of every Filipino word was right on point. Her version of the song Bayan Ko vicariously transported us to the motherland, the Philippines. With her next number, America the Beautiful, she brought us back to the hallowed hall of Magellan, in our adopted homeland—the United States of America. The



Photos by Dale Esperante



veterans' and friends' robust applause poured for Ms. Leslie after her performance. The MC asked her to stay with him up front and center for a minute. On behalf of the Magellan members and guests, the MC handed her a signed copy of the program, signed by several Magellan members. This has been Leslie's third visit to our Post, and we'll make sure there will be many more to follow.

Commander Rick, for his closing remarks, expressed his appreciation to everyone who took the time to come to our Post's observance of Veterans Day. Dinner was delicious and enough to feed a squadron of the United States Armed Forces, thanks to Director Evelio Bill Versoza and the Ladies of the Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604: Meding Mangosing, Bella Anderson-Nido, Lilia Rivera, Linda Cordero, and Malou Amper.

Shortly after the official program, State Assembly Member Jim Cooper made a brief stopover on his way to numerous other commitments. Jim shook hands, posed for photos, delivered a brief speech thanking and congratulating

the Fil-Am veterans. Regretfully he had to dash off quickly to make his official rounds. His stopover at Magellan was not scheduled. It was a thoughtful gesture on his part to do so. The veterans welcomed this gesture.

Magellan Hall witnessed another commemoration for the service of our Fil-Am US military veterans. History is taking place every time its doors open for our veterans and community. Preserving this building is preserving an important part of our history. If you would like to assist in the preservation of Magellan Hall, please join us in our fundraising events. Our next event will be the annual New Year's Eve Dinner and Dance, and breakfast will be served after the clock strikes 12 midnight.

Veterano Day

On 14 Nov 2015, an early Thanksgiving celebration landed at Magellan Hall courtesy of California State University Sacramento (CSUS) Kappa Psi Epsilon (KPsiE). KPsiE's contemporaries: fraternity Chi Rho Omicron (XPO) and friends from UC Davis, also came to show their appreciation

to the veterans. The students outnumbered the veterans they came to visit. There was one table where a lone veteran was gladly enjoying all the questions and pampering directed at him by a group of young students. Before lunch was served, veteran Joe Zaragoza did the invocation. For the national anthems, Ronalyn Udep belted out the Star Spangled Banner with ease, then the KPsiE ladies perfectly sang Bayang Magiliw as if they were all born and raised in the Philippines.

The old folks remained seated while the energetic group of college students served them platefuls of delicious chicken, rice, noodles, and egg rolls. Coffee and water were also served. I jokingly asked a young lady walking around with a pitcher of refreshment if rum and coke was available. She hit me tenderly like family, smiled, and walked on. One of the best days ever for Magellan veterans.

A quartet from UC Davis started the entertainment portion of the program. The four dapper looking gentlemen started with a Boys II Men hit that started echoes of encouragement and swooning

from the numerous young ladies in the audience. Their next song surprised the Filipino-American contingent of the veterans. They tackled a Filipino classic that brought smiles, especially to the elders who recognized the song. Well done gentlemen. Next up, the UC ladies perked up the room with their pop hit and dance number: infused parts of Maroon 5's Sunday Morning, Lullaby by Lateeya, and Lemonade by Jeremy Passion. Alaina Kyra Cagalingan, our newest adopted sorority niece, was part of the group. Alaina mingled with my group all day and made sure that we were all taken care of. We are truly honored to be your newest veteran uncles and aunts Alaina!

The young ladies of KPsiE dressed in their island colors complete with a couple of ukuleles followed next. If you have ever seen the I Lava You short film usually shown before a featured film in a theatre, their live version did the original justice. The chorus made all of us want to sing along, "I have a dream, I hope will come true, that you'll grow old with me, and I grow old with you, we thank the earth, sea, and sky we thank too, I lava you..." Aloha, Mahalo, Salamat, and Thank You Ladies of KPsiE.

After a short break, open dancing started. Veteran Joe Rivera led an enthusiastic group of college students into some line dancing sessions. All eyes were locked in on Joe's every dance move, until finally the students caught on and danced along exuberantly with Joe. The energetic electricity in the room increased tremendously. If only we could store up all this enormous energy, Magellan Hall will have no use for the services of PG&E and SMUD anymore. And if only I could retain a slice of that energy, I'd be partying until 2029.

This is the third consecutive year that the veterans of Magellan Hall have been recipients of the altruism of California State University Sacramento's sorority sisters of Kappa Psi Epsilon and fraternity brothers of Chi Rho Omicron, and UC Davis's group. These young folks represent one of the many reasons why the veterans served in the military. To see and feel the joy and appreciation from these college-age friends of ours is to know that our time in the service for our country was all worth it.

Disyembre na naman!



The Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA and Friends

On December 5, 2015, The Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA will celebrate their 10th Anniversary Musical Review at St. Charles Borromeo start at 5:00 pm. The proceeds will benefit the SCB Parish and other Bayanihan projects.

For more information, call Remy and Dr. Tony Solomon at 916-682-3382 or email remidi50@aol.com

S'aliw Himig 2015



On Sunday, December 20, 2015, at 4:00 o'clock PM, Eskwela Natin, and other sponsoring organizations, will present the UP Concert Chorus at a concert entitled "Christmas Extravaganza S'aliw Himig" at the First Light Christian Church, 7246 East Southgate Drive, Sacramento, California. The UP Concert Chorus, or UPCC, is the official choir of the University of the Philippines, the country's premier institute of higher learning. A multi-awarded choral group that performs worldwide, the UPCC's most recent triumph was winning the grand prize at the sixth International Krakow Choir Festival Cracovia Cantans held in Poland in June 2015.

Tel. No. (916) 396-2351
Email: DoloresVDiaz@gmail.com

Community Christmas Celebration

Sunday, December 6, 2015 / 3-8 pm / Free Admission
Jose Rizal Community Center
7320 Florin Mall Drive
Sacramento, CA 95823



Sponsors are the following:
FCSV, Philippine Fiesta News, FWC, TIA, FFF, Pangasinan, Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA, Kapitbahay, Chamber of Commerce, ALAM Unit 604, Mercury Acosta, Lovi Prieto, Linda Gibson and Fernando and Betty Riganan.
Program will be Mass, light dinner, Christmas caroling headed by Remy Solomon, Distribution of gifts by Santa Claus.
Contact Persons:
Aida Azurin-916.686.9886;
Mercedes Guerrero-916.266.1923;
Lilia Rivera-916.524.8008



The Great Gatsby Style



Fun night at Liz Valencia's residence with Fil-Am nurses and friends of Elk Grove and Sacramento. It is a prelude to another chapter in their life after retirement. The best is yet to come!



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Lagasca Reunion



Mini Lagasca reunion during the 83rd. birthday celebration of Mercedes Lagasca Belvis on October 17, 2015 at the residence of her daughter Liz Belvis in Tracy, CA. Present were her daughters, namely, Ruby Saucedo, Ditas Forlanda, Mary Lou Petersen and Mary Anne Pasaoa; her brother Danny Lagasca, relatives and close friends.

The University of the Philippines Alumni Association Sacramento and Vicinities, Inc.



The University of the Philippines Alumni Association Sacramento and Vicinities, Inc. (UPAASV) will be hosting "Museo at Vino", a private wine tasting fundraiser for the establishment of a Museo Pilipino (Pilipino Museum) in Sacramento on Friday, December 11, 2015.



We will be introducing the wines of Corte Riva Winery, the only Filipino-owned winery in the Napa Valley. This is the chance to taste three of their varietals and to meet one of the owners during the event. You can read a review of their wines here.

Your \$35.00 ticket will also include specially prepared light refreshments and a souvenir wine glass. There will be raffles and a silent auction of gift baskets featuring wine tasting gift certificates, UP commemorative items, and more that would be perfect as Christmas gifts!

No ticket sales at the door. For questions regarding tickets, contact: Janice Shiu, UPAASV Secretary, via email (upaasv@gmail.com) or text/call (909) 720 9770

SCHEDULE
 5:00 PM Door Opens
 5:15 PM Wine Tasting Bar opens
 Silent Auction Starts
 7:00 PM Pinoy Game "Sungka" Challenge
 8:00 PM Silent Auction Ends
 Pinoy Game Trivia Challenge
 8:30 PM Silent Auction Winners Announced
 9:00 PM Christmas Carols Sing-Along
 Friday, December 11 2015
 11833 Prospect Hill Drive
 Gold River, CA 95670
 Sunday Best Attire

All Saints / All Souls Day

'Alaala sa mga minamahal na pumanaw'



An annual event hosted by the East Lawn Elk Memorial Park and Mortuary, "All Souls Day" was held on Nov. 1, in remembrance of the departed ones. It was another successful event of mass celebration followed by the partaking of food and raffle drawings, held through the joint effort by several community organization and Manny Buenaventura, as the representative of East Lawn.





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After



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Birthdays



ANALICIA MARIA CASTELLANO
NOVEMBER 4



Happy 10th Birthday
JA'IE KENNACH on DECEMBER 6,
Lolo and Lola Esperante love you.



JULI VERGARA with Emmy
NOVEMBER 25



MANNIE BUENTIPO
& wife Rhuena
DECEMBER 24

ALEX DEL ROSARIO
with mom Josylyn
NOVEMBER 24



CYNTHIA PEREIRA
and son Xander
NOVEMBER 26

Anniversary



FRANK and JENNY AYRAN
5th Wedding Anniversary
December 11



CARLE and SARAH ENLOE
19th Wedding Anniversary
November 21



SHERYLYNN and EDMOND NAZARENO
1st Wedding Anniversary
November 8

Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 5, 2015 (SAT.) 6:30pm
The Ilocano's of America
Coronation of Mrs./Ms Ilocandia 206-17
& Presentation of Scholarship Awards
Double Tree Hotel
2001 Point West, Sacramento, CA
Mercy Guerrero 916.266.1923



DECEMBER 5, 2015 (SAT.) 6:00 pm
DISYEMBRE NA NAMAN!
Bayanihan of Sacramento, USA
10th Anniversary Musical Review
St Borromeo School Gym
7580 Center Parkway, Sacramento, CA
Remy 916.682.3382



December 4, 2015 7:30 PM
December 5 2015 7:30 PM
December 6, 2015 2:30 PM
Sinag-tala 2015:
A theatrical Revue
Luther Burbank High School Auditorium
3500 Florin Rd., Sacramento 95823
www.sinagtala.org



DECEMBER 20, 2015 (SAT.) 4:00 pm
Christmas Extravaganza S'ALIW HIMIG
UP Concert Chorus
Eskwela Natin
7246 East Southgate Dr., Sacramento, CA
Dolores 916.396.2351



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Sacramento, CA 95841
Lic. #FD-1242
Tel 916.732.2020

EAST LAWN
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& Sierra Hills Pet Cemetery
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Sacramento, CA 95841
Tel 916.732.2037

EAST LAWN
Albert Brown Mortuary
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Oakland, CA 94611
Lic. #FD-242
Tel 800.652.1873

EAST LAWN
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Elk Grove, CA 95624
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EAST LAWN
Andrews & Greilich
Funeral Home
3939 Fruitridge Road
Sacramento, CA 95820
Lic. #FD-136
Tel 916.732.2026

Christmas in the Philippines

The various ethnic groups in the Philippines each observe different Christmas traditions, and the following are generally common.

Christmas parties

In urban areas like Metro Manila, many offices organise Christmas parties. These are usually held during the second week of December, or right before schools and universities go on holiday. Common activities include Monito/Monita (Kris Kringle), musical or theatrical performances and parlor games. Food is provided either through potluck, or via a pool of contributions to buy food. Some have fireworks displays.

Simbang Gabi/Misa de Gallo

Simbang Gabi ("Night Mass"; Spanish: Misa de Gallo, "Rooster's Mass", or Misa de Aguinaldo, "Gift Mass")[2] is a novena of dawn Masses from 16 December to Christmas Eve. The Simbang Gabi is practised mainly by Catholic and Aglipayans, with some Evangelical Christian and independent Protestant churches having adopted the practise of having pre-Christmas dawn services. Attending the Masses is meant to show devotion to God and heightened anticipation for Christ's birth, and folk belief holds that God grants the special wish of a devotee that hears all nine Masses.

Morning observance of Simbang Gabi begins as early as 03:00 PST, while in some parishes, anticipated Masses begin the previous evening at 20:00 PST. After hearing Mass, Catholic families buy traditional Filipino holiday fare for breakfast outside the church and eat it either within the church precincts or at home. Vendors offer many native delicacies, including bibingka (rice flour



Illustration by Dave San Pedro

and egg-based cake, cooked using coal burners above and under); putò bumbóng (a purple, sticky rice delicacy steamed in bamboo tubes, buttered then sprinkled with brown sugar and shredded dried coconut meat). Drinks include coffee, salabát (a ginger infusion) and tsokoláte (thick, Spanish-style hot chocolate). Some Aglipayan churches invite the congregation to partake of the "pañit" (literally, "heater"), a post-Mass snack of mostly rice pastries served with coffee or cocoa at the house of the Mass sponsor.

Christmas Eve

For Filipinos, Christmas Eve ("Bisperas ng Pasko") on 24 December is celebrated with the Midnight Mass, and the traditional Noche Buena feast. Family members dine together at around midnight on traditional yuletide fare, which includes: queso de bola (Filipino Spanish for "ball of cheese", which is made of edam sealed in red paraffin wax); tsokoláte, noodles and pasta, fruit salad, pandesal, rel-

leno and hamón (Christmas ham). Some families would also open presents at this time.

Panunulúyan

In different provinces and schools, the journey of Joseph and the pregnant Virgin Mary in search of lodging is re-enacted. The pageant, traditionally called the "Panunulúyan", "Pananawágan", or "Pananapátan", is modelled after the Spanish Las Posadas.

The Panunulúyan is performed after dark, with the actors portraying Joseph and the Virgin Mary going to pre-designated houses. They perform a chant meant to rouse the "owners of the house" (also actors) to request for lodging. The owners then cruelly turn them away, sometimes also in song, saying that their house is already filled with other guests. Finally, Joseph and Mary make their way to the parish church where a replica of the stable has been set up. The birth of Jesus is celebrated at midnight with the Misa de Gallo.

Christmas Day

Christmas Day in the Philippines is primarily a family affair. The Misa de Gallo is celebrated on December 25 and is usually one of several Masses that all family members (including non-churchgoers) are present. The Misa de Gallo is often celebrated between and midnight, a schedule preferred by many Filipinos who stay up late on Christmas Eve for the night-long celebration of the Noche Buena.

Preferably in the morning, Filipinos typically visit their extended family, especially to pay their respects to senior relatives. This custom of giving respect is enacted through the "Págmamáno". A supplicant takes the back of an elder's hand and presses it against the forehead, while giving the greeting, Máno, pô (lit. "[Thy] hand, please"). The elder often responds by reciting a blessing or simply acknowledging the gesture, and in return gives "Aguinaldo" or money in the form of crisp banknotes, often placed in a sealed envelope such as an ang pao. Godparents in particular are socially obligated to give presents or aguinaldo to their godchildren, to whom they often give larger amounts compared to other younger relatives.

A festive lunch may follow the "Págmamáno". The menu is heavily dependent upon the finances of the family, with richer families preparing grand feasts, while poorer families choose to cook simple yet special dishes. Some families choose to open presents on this day after the lunch.

When nighttime falls, members of the family usually return home or linger to drink, play parlour games, and chat. Some may opt to have another feast for dinner, while a minority spend the entire day at home to rest after the previous days' festivities.

Niños Inocentes

Holy Innocents' Day or Childermas is commemorated on 28 December as Niños Inocentes. Filipinos once celebrated the day by playing practical jokes on one another, similar to April Fool's Day. [3] One of the widely practised pranks on this day is to borrow money without the intention of paying back. Creditors are usually helpless in getting remuneration from borrower, and are instead forewarned not to lend money on this day. Victims of such pranks were once called out, "Na-Niños Inocentes ka!"

New Year's Eve

On 31 December (Bisperas ng Bagong Taón), Filipino families gather for the Media Noche – a lavish midnight feast that supposedly symbolises their hopes for prosperity in the coming year, and lasts until the following morning as with the Noche Buena taken on Christmas Eve.

Filipinos make noise both to greet the New Year and in the belief that the din exorcises their surroundings of malevolent spirits. In spite of the yearly ban, people in most towns and cities customarily light firecrackers, or employ safer methods of merrymaking such as banging on pots and pans and blowing car horns.

Other traditions and beliefs include encouraging children to jump at the stroke of midnight to increase their height; displaying circular fruit such as oranges; wearing clothes with dots and other circular designs to symbolise coins and money; eating twelve grapes at midnight for good luck in the twelve months of the year (a Spanish custom); and opening all windows and doors to let in the blessings on the first day of the year.

Kumain ka na ba? Lutong Pinoy

Puto Bungbong

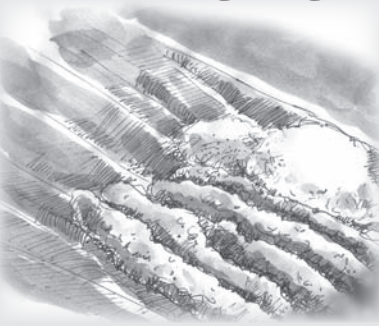


Illustration by Dave San Pedro

Ingredients:

1 Pack (400 grams) glutinous rice flour
2 Packs (115 grams) purple yam powder
2 1/2 Cups of water
Brown sugar or mascuvado (raw sugar)
Banana leaves
Grated coconut
2 pcs bamboo tube (bungbong) steamer for making puto

Cooking Instructions:

Prepare steamer with enough water for steaming.
In a large bowl, combine purple yam powder and glutinous rice flour, Mix to-

gether until well combined.

Gradually add enough water to the rice flour to make a dough. Knead until smooth.

Pinch off about 2 tablespoons of the dough, using your hands make a ball and roll into a round and long shape, about 4 to 5 inches in long. Spread margarine or butter in a heat proof plate and layered the dough, steam for 3-4 minutes or until done.

Apply margarine or butter then roll in shredded coconut and serve with muscovado sugar.

Salabat

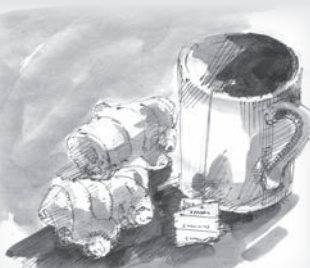
Ingredients

4-5 cups water
3 inches fresh ginger, sliced thinly
1 cup brown sugar

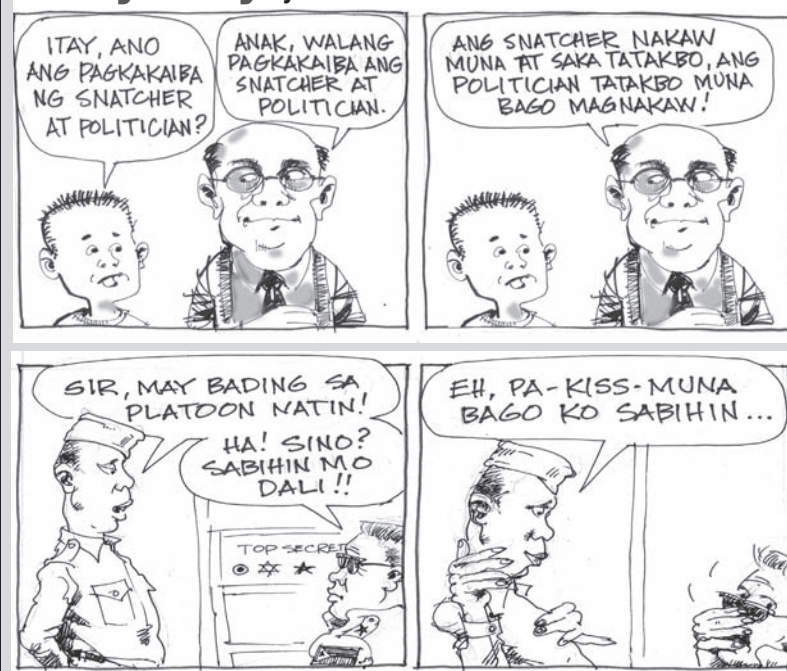
Directions

Boil the water, ginger, and brown sugar

together. Reduce heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Add more water if tea is too strong. Strain and serve hot or cold.



Buhay Pinoy by Dave San Pedro



The Streets of Our Youth

By Dale Esperante

Cuevas, Zulueta, and Paz are names of streets in Paco, Manila. Starting in the late 1950s, a large apartment complex bordered by these side streets was home to childhood friends.

The complex stood tall above the street because of the raised concrete walk surrounding the building. This walk, intended for residential pedestrians, was also used by the children for their skates, scooters, and pedal cars. A couple of apartments at the tail end converted their front walks into a fenced in potted garden area where the children couldn't trespass with their toys. This raised walk also saved us from being flooded during the rainy season. The streets would flood but the complex remained dry like a Disney island, the kids overjoyed by the temporary knee-high water playground around them. Since the complex's design was square, the "backyard" was a wide span of aluminum roofing. This rooftop area became the kid's evening hangout where they swapped stories or just gazed at the clear night sky dotted by the moon and the twinkling stars. Manila's night sky was darker back then.

The boys and girls of this neighborhood became fast friends. They played patintero, tumbang preso, hide and seek, sipa, jolenz, scooter, skating, piko, shato, truth or consequence, telephoned each other using empty cans and a super long string, and more. The smaller boys played with their plastic toy figures in the gravelly ground and bits of grassy area, sailed paper boats in the water puddles, pulled rubber toy sports cars and trucks, flew kites, and many more outdoor games. Definitely no electronic games at all. On occasions, the sportier ones would play baseball using a stick and tennis ball. The teenagers,



Front left center is Ernest. To his right is Dale. Standing is Dick behind Ernest, Lillian, Don Don.



Ernest (middle front), standing L-R: Alma, Lillian Vita, Edda, Esther, Ayma.



50 years ago, they were teenage girls. Front to back: Alma (seated), Lillian (red dress), Edda, Vita, Esther, Betty, Ayma



Esther Esperante and Vita Valentin. After all these years (50 years), a long long friendly hug.



My sister Esther and bro-in-law visited in October 2010. They have paved and raised the street level. I guess they don't use the rooftop to dry their clothes anymore. It wasn't like this in the 1950s and 60s.



Cuzulpa Reunion at Green Valley Resorts in Henderson Nevada. — with Ernest Gonzaga, Vita Valentin, Edda Bernal and Julieta Riofrir in Las Vegas, Nevada.



with their close friendship, felt their streets of Cuevas, Zulueta, and Paz should be unified and be called Cuzulpa (CZP). CZP was a safe haven for these kids because it was a half circle. Only residential traffic used the half circle. Though trucks were parked around the apartments, there was still ample space for playing on CZP. Manolo Cruz (Frank's dad) owned the biggest cargo trucks while Delfi Express Freight Service owned the medium size vehicles. Delfi is reversed for Fidel (my Pa). The parked trucks were often used by the children when playing hide and seek or war games with toy guns (sometimes tirador) between the older boys.

On special occasions, the teenag-

ers would meet at Frank's house next to the apartments. The big yard gave the older kids space to enjoy their dances called Twist, Watusi, Mashed Potato, and the Sleep Walk. While the young men and women were practicing the latest dance crazes, little ones like me would sneak up on the roof observing the happenings. As we grew older into high school and college years, opportunities to travel abroad arrived. Instead of social dances, farewell parties became more regular. And soon the glow of Cuzulpa was left behind in the past.

Until 50 years later, online searches came up with positive results, thanks to Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook. Reunion plans

sprouted. A year trickled down to months then weeks to excruciatingly slow days and finally to the approaching hour. At approximately 6 p.m. on 2 Nov 2015, the door of a World Mark timeshare in Las Vegas opened and there to greet us with a big grin was the always cheerful Ernest Gonzaga. His sisters Alma Gonzaga and Edda Bernal came running behind him to greet my sisters Lil and Esther, Butch, Melita and me. I thought Ernest was cheerful enough but when we got to know his wife Vicky, we were sure that she must be his inspiration. At first, Vicky and Edda busied themselves in the kitchen preparing the group's dinner. When it was time for mingling and dancing, Vicky's ease to get

along made all of us feel more at home with our reunion. Hanga kami kay Vicky!

Betty Tecson, Jovita Santos, Vita Valentin, Julie Riofrir with husband Jolly and Tany Jauregui from New Zealand, Ayma and Dandy Ramboyong arrived with more hugs, tears, and euphoria all around. At about 9 p.m., Ernest and Betty left for the airport to pick up the last arrival.

When Frank Cruz arrived in the unit, his friends from long ago surrounded and quizzed him. Frank stood in one place and looked around for a while. He resorted to scratching his head before attempting to identify anyone. He had to be helped in recognizing about three of us. Then Vicky suddenly challenged Frank with, "Who am I, naalala mo ako, hala sige, hindi mo ako naalala ano?" Frank was dumbfounded and couldn't utter a word. Frank was stumped so we finally introduced Vicky as Ernest's wife who wasn't part of his childhood friends. Vicky cracked us all up with her challenge to Frank. She easily won us over with her pakikisama.

Longing, laughter, living, reminiscing, misting (happy tears), partying, enjoying the birthday blowout by Lillian, and much more. Precious! We will value our rekindled friendship and we will meet again for sure. I could write more about this reunion but I must adhere to the adage of "What happens in Vegas, STAYS in Vegas." A goal to remember, Ayma reminded everyone to stay healthy so we can have more treasured moments. A sit down dinner at Fiesta Filipina restaurant resulted in an overwhelming vote to meet on a cruise in 2017.

Since I was the smallest and one of the youngest back in the day, I thought I was going to be just a Saling Pusa for this reunion. I am so pleased to say that the former teenagers opened their arms to fully embrace the one they used to call Boy. On our long drive home, my wife told me how much she admired the enduring friendship and how she appreciated the welcoming embrace of the neighborhood group called Cuzulpa. One word came to mind to describe the reunion—Harmony!

The family names listed below were also residents of the Cuzulpa neighborhood. In case they happen to read this story and would like to reunite with their childhood friends, please email esperante1868@frontier.com. Alcantara, Bunyi, Castillo, Chan, Espanola, Manalo, Ongcal, San Pedro, Topacio, Villavicencio, Villanueva.

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SINAG-TALA

753 words

Jonathan Taraya
jonathantarayaexpress@gmail.com

Walking indoors from a brisk winter day and being greeted by the familiar warmth of your family standing together in one room, singing in harmony, is usually experienced on Christmas Eve and often times at church.

Once in that room, like magic, the biting cold melts away and the stress of your day fades into the background, behind beautiful voices rising together, carrying you to that wonderful moment we all feel during the holidays: The joy of being home.

For over 70 local Filipinos, this joy is recreated everyday, for practice.

Since training began in October, the Sinag-tala Filipino Theater and Performing Arts Association, have brought together over 30 Filipino families from across the region to practice every night in preparation of their signature event, Sinag-tala 2015: A Theatrical Revue.

Featuring pieces composed and created by Filipino writers, artists and musicians, this year's Theatrical Revue has a wide range of numbers to highlight multiple aspects of Filipino history and culture, including classical dances of the Spanish era, a spotlight on the sacrifices made by Filipino fighters during World War II, and Filipino pride in our boxing heroes, including Manny Pacquiao's song "Lalaban Ako (I Will Fight)."

"Our producer team have come up with a fantastic mix of pieces, building upon core numbers provided by retired Sinag-tala Artistic Director Sonny Alforque," says SFTPAA's President Beep Alo. "A truly collaborative effort."

The show welcomes everyone with "Mundo ng Ating Musika (Our World of Music)" with a meaningful message of "tayo'y mag-sama sama (let's be together)". The children's numbers revolve around different activities like learning "Abakada (ABCD)", playing "Laro Tayo (Ring Around the Rosie)", friendship "Kai-bigan Ko (My Friend)", and praying "We Are all God's Children."



Past Sinag-tala viewers will be pleasantly surprised with artistic changes to traditional ethnic pieces like "Salidumay" and "Suling Suling" which will both be performed with modern dance moves while "Aawitan Kita (I Will Sing to You)" will be presented in hula-inspired choreography.

"Polka ni Neneng (Neneng's Polka)," "Sakuting (Sticks Dance)" and "Paruparung Bukid (Field Butterfly)," all lively dances that depict the joys in the countryside will be featured. And of course, "Tinikling," always a crowd favorite and a hallmark of the Sinag-tala touring ensemble, will be performed as well.

True to Sinag-tala tradition, patriotism will run high with the segment on Japanese occupation and the resistance movement with "Awit ng Proletaryo (The Commoner's Song)." In that context, Josefa Llanes Escoda, the founder of the Girls Scout of

the Philippines, stood as the movement's spiritual leader and will be the featured heroine with "Sinisintang Bayan (Beloved Nation)", culminating with the acknowledgement of women's contribution to nation building with "Babaing Makapang-yarihan (Women of Power)."

At this point in the program, Sacramento's Filipino women leaders will join the cast in this number as Sinag-tala's way of recognizing their dedication and support that strengthens our sense of community.

Filipino pride will have its focal points with the boxing segment, and premier presentation of "Ako'y Filipino (I am Filipino)" and "Sabihin Mo (Tell)" medley, ending with a very apt "Tagumpay Nating Lahat (Our Victory)."

The Christmas segment will bring the nostalgia of traditional Filipino Christmas with "Himig ng Pasko (Christmas Tune)" and "Pasko Na Naman (It's Christmas Again)," complete with the carolers, the lechón and the barking dog.

Hearts will tug and tears may fall when "Pasko na Sintá Ko (Its Christmas My Love)" is sung to remember our dear loved ones who passed on.

And more exciting surprises...a live band, under the direction of Dee Pizarro, ably assisted by Lui Paman, both Sinag-tala alumni, will provide the show's music. Good times!

Since its first show in 1990, the Sacramento-based nonprofit's mission is to promote theater and performing arts through community outreach by providing training in the study, interpretation and staging of Filipino musical and literary art, including cultural dance.

"This year's show is all about continuing the legacy of our organization and the Filipino people," says Alo.

The all-volunteer Theatrical Revue cast and crew received 12 weeks of free training in basic artistic and business principles of theater and performing arts and the ages of participants ranges from as young as 3-years-old to performers in their late-seventies.

Sinag-tala 2015: A Theatrical Revue will have three performances beginning opening night, Friday, Dec. 4 at 7:30 p.m. The 2nd performance will be Saturday, Dec. 5, at 7:30 p.m. The final performance will be Sunday afternoon, Dec. 6 at 2:30 p.m.

All performances will be held at Luther Burbank High School, 3500 Florin Rd., Sacramento 95823.

General admission is \$20 for all shows. Admission is \$15 for children under 12, students and seniors.

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Sarah takes on the challenge 'From the Top'

By Allan Policarpio

When Sarah Geronimo attends shows by foreign acts, one of the things she notices is how their repertoires, save for the occasional cover, are always composed of their original material—something the singer-actress has been wanting to emulate for the longest time.



SARAH: "I just want to go out, focus on my own music and do my own thing."

"I just want to go out, focus on my music and do my own thing. It's a dream of mine," Sarah told the Inquirer in a recent interview. "Oftentimes, when I do corporate gigs, I get asked to perform whatever's popular. And I get sad because they hire me to do covers and not because of my hits."

"It frustrates me," stressed the 27-year-old artist, adding that it isn't uncommon for her to be asked by Filipino fans abroad this question: "Why don't you sing your own songs? You record albums, but you perform only a few tracks off those."

They do make a fair point, she conceded. So while staging a concert that features mostly her catalog of songs may alienate the more casual fans, Sarah is looking forward to taking on that challenge in "From the Top," her two-night show, on Dec. 4 and 5, at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

"It was something we considered," pointed out Sarah, whose previous album, "Perfectly Imperfect," yielded the burnished, mid-tempo earworm, "Kilometro." "Lakasan lang ang loob natin... There could be consequences and you have to be prepared... I figured, let's just go for it; this is for my craft."

Since winning the talent search, "Star for a Night," in 2003, Sarah has released more than 10 studio records and a slew of unreleased material that she doesn't want to go to waste.

"I have enough songs—many of which weren't promoted or selected as singles. My only concern now is how they'll be re-

ceived. We'll just have to work hard and make each number special," Sarah related. "I'm worried, but what's important is that I give importance to my music."

Colossal

Is she setting her sights on doing a concert at the Philippine Arena after "From the Top"?

According to Sarah, she doesn't think she can pack a colossal venue, and is content to perform in smaller places.

"Honestly, I'll be fine with Music Museum," she said. "Of course it's a dream to fill up a venue that huge and see all the fans who support you. But you'll have to be prepared for something like that: You have to have the hits and lots of new things to offer."

Also, at the press conference, not a few show biz writers prodded Sarah into divulging details about her relationship with her boyfriend, Matteo Guidicelli. And for the most part, she was her usual meek and giggly self, visibly thinking if she had been sharing with the press more than she should—far from what she's like when performing.

Onstage, she's a different woman. "When I know I'm prepared and all set physically, mentally and emotionally, I get a natural high," she said. "When I feel the light, my makeup, my costume and the music coming all together, I get lost. I don't even see the people; I get lost in my own world!"

Fil-Aussie Cyrus Villanueva wins 'X Factor Australia'

Manila, Philippines - Filipino-Australian Cyrus Villanueva is declared the winner of the seventh season of "X Factor Australia" during the show's grand finals on Tuesday.



Filipino-Australian Cyrus Villanueva wins the seventh season of "X Factor Australia."

The 17-year-old singer bested two other finalists, Jess and Matt and Louise Adams, to win the competition.

Jess and Matt from the Groups category were eliminated earlier during the finale, which left Louise from the Over 25s category and Cyrus from the Under 25 Boys category as the last contestants standing.

But in the end, it was the Fil-Aussie who took home the crown.

"I can't thank everyone enough," Cyrus said after being announced as the winner. "I want to thank my beautiful family and friends, all the other contestants, the judges, Chris [Isaak], of course. I couldn't have had a better mentor than you."

On Monday, Cyrus performed three songs: his audition song "Earned It" by Canadian singer The Weeknd, Nick Jonas' "Jealous" for his Grand Finals song and "Stone" for his winner's song, which will be his debut single as the winner of "X Factor Australia."

His mentor Chris Isaak said of his performance: "That's it for me mentoring you,

I guess. It's sad for me in a way because I had so much fun working with you. I have learned so much from you. You know, I might ask back for that handkerchief I gave you early on when you started crying, because now I'm crying."


"There has been a level of perfection to your performances tonight that no one can deny," judge Daniil Minogue said.

Last year, Filipina teen Marlisa Punsalan won the sixth season of "X Factor Australia."

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