



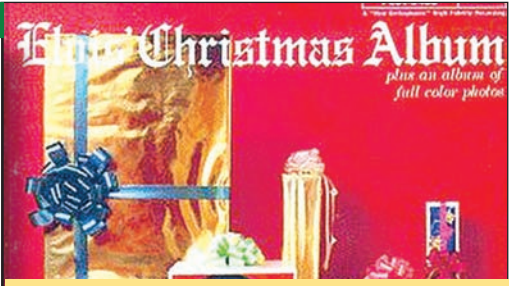
Carol Munar tops FCSV Mrs. Philippines contest - Page 11

PF NEWS

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Elvis album tops Christmas hit list - Page 19

Duterte appeals for peace, unity

By Elena L. Aben

Amid so many issues facing the nation, President Duterte appealed for unity and peace this Yuletide season. He issued his call as he led the lighting of the Christmas tree at the Malacañang grounds Monday.

In his speech, Duterte said the government would work hard to fulfill his campaign promise of bringing lasting peace in the country, stamping out corruption, and ending the illicit drugs trade.

"I plead for the unity of the country, that we shall be freed of the communal wars. I plead for the next generation that there will be Filipinos able, competent, healthy, and good," said the President.



President Duterte

"I plead for peace so that our citizens can move around anytime of the day or night. And I ask everybody in government that together we will stop corruption," he added.

He stressed that law-abiding citizens in the country will be protected and he will not stop until he puts an end to the problem of illegal drugs. "My orders are: Destroy the apparatus that has really damaged the Republic of the Philippines," he said. The drug menace has produced four million Filipino addicts, he said.

On the decades-old communist insurgency in the country, the President expressed optimism about the peace process with the left, saying that the government negotiating

Continued on page 2

FAVA Christmas Party



Photo by Joe Gonzales

Filipino American Veterans Association Christmas Party on December 2, 2016 at the American Legion Magellan Hall. It was a very successful Christmas party well attended by FAVA members and their children.

VETERANO DAY



Photo by Dale Esperante

By Dale Esperante

Gabrielle Evangelista and Sherrylee Lomboy first visited the veterans of Magellan Post 604 on 18 Sep 2016, to present their plans for the 19 Nov 2016 Veterano Day. On 16 Oct 2016, Gabrielle stopped by again, but this time she only had time to drop off Kappa Psi Epsilon's (KPsiE) \$110 donation for the preservation of Magellan Hall. On her way to work, on a day of a rainy downpour, she made this stop. Commendable.

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A vice presidency in jeopardy

By Tony Katigbak

Over the last few days there has been a flurry of activity concerning our Vice President Leni Robredo. To be honest, these problems began months ago – since the elections actually – but are really only coming to head in the past few days. I suppose tension has been building up since May and it is now at the point of bubbling over. For the sake of the country I hope it doesn't, but realistically we are at a point where something has got to give.

It's no secret that President Duterte and VP Leni Robredo don't see eye to eye. This has been a problem that they have run into over and over again since they were elected into office. And I don't think it has anything to the fact that they come from opposing political parties. They have a strong difference of opinion and they are both not afraid of saying how they feel.

If you look at it objectively, one would think that this is a good thing. There should always be a system of checks and balances in place and those who may not have voted for President Duterte in May felt a bit of comfort knowing that someone like Vice President Robredo was on board to make sure he didn't cross the line. On paper, it was a solid partnership that should have yielded good results. The reality though was quite the opposite.

Over the months since Duterte has been in office it seems that the president prefers to surround himself with people who will not question his actions and just say "yes" to whatever he says. It's no secret he would have preferred to have a VP that was on his "team." Unfortunately that was not the case this time around, and he has repeatedly expressed his disappointment when Robredo questioned his war on drugs or his stand on the Marcos burial.

That in itself is probably one of the biggest issues concerning Duterte-Robredo. President Duterte has never seen Vice President Robredo as his partner or even as his equal. He made it clear coming into the office that he wished he had won along with his running mate Alan Peter Cayetano or even his good friend Bongbong Marcos. In fact, Duterte had quite looked forward to a partnership with Marcos and he was quite verbal in calling Marcos his would-be VP.

That mind frame alone would have made it difficult for Robredo to find a place for herself in Duterte's administration. Add to that, the fact that she is a strong and opinionated woman and it was a recipe for disaster. From the moment they began working together the way Duterte treated Robredo was not ideal and not befitting a relationship of two professionals working hard to do what is best for

the country.

To be fair I don't believe the animosity comes from Leni even though it would be perfectly understandable if it did. In the time she has been working in this administration she has been treated like an afterthought, left out of most decisions, and even reduced to the clothes she wears or the way her knees look. It's almost laughable and I would clearly understand if she held resentment towards the current government. However, in true Robredo fashion she just kept her head down and tried to do her job to the best of her ability.

That's not to say she didn't speak out when she felt the president was acting out of turn. She made her position quite known on extrajudicial killings and she protested along with many Filipinos against the burial of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. She stood up for her beliefs even though she knew it might cause a problem between her and the president.

And sure enough, it did cause a problem. The other day, Leni announced her resignation from Duterte's cabinet as the chairperson of Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC). Citing a text message she received that told her to "desist from attending cabinet meetings" starting this week. It's been funny because she said if she was going to be unable to do her job she felt it best

Continued on page 4

Who is a hero?

By Roderick Toledo

Who is a hero? The notion and the question are as old as oral history. Greek mythology is rife with heroic gods and goddesses. The word "hero" is in fact derived from the Greek word "heros," which means "demigod," and the Latin word "servare," which means "save, serve, protect."

The best answers are approximations. The hero concept is time- and culture-bound. The classical Greek hero need not even be morally upright, like the bloodthirsty Achilles, who defeated and defiled the pure-hearted Hector, defender of Troy and a hero in his own right. So it's like asking the six blind men what an elephant is like when each one touches a different and distinct part of the animal. Naturally, the answers vary widely and no one accurately describes the elephant in its entirety.

In a cursory examination of more recent heroes and their heroism, three things stand out: self-sacrifice, an uncommon humility, and involvement in a cause or calling. While external, public acknowledgement or acclaim is also a factor in designating someone a hero, as real heroes rarely set out to be so, like our most recent national hero Ninoy Aquino, whose bulletproof vest proved useless against his treacherous executioners.

Heroism may be shown under extraordinary cir-

cumstances, such as during a disaster or a war, or it can also be the quiet heroism displayed in daily life. Whether extraordinary, episodic heroism or quiet, continuous heroism, the common denominator of heroes is character, and the common denominator of heroism is circumstance. When the two converge, a hero arises and heroism is displayed. Perhaps a fairly accurate definition of a hero is someone who displays the best qualities of humanity during the worst possible circumstances.

Real heroes do not call themselves so, at least not in public. They may accept awards and acknowledgments of their heroic deeds, but they always deflect attention from themselves and say they just did what they had to do. In fact, many of them are not around to care whether or not they are considered heroes. Which may be just as well, for many heroes, in the unforgiving light of hindsight, prove to be horribly flawed.

Frailty, shortsightedness, sheer incompetence, raw ambition and narrow interests plagued many of our revered national heroes. Nick Joaquin's seminal book, "A Question of Heroes," persuasively details the shortcomings of everyone, from Jose Rizal to Emilio Aguinaldo.

When the extremely rich like Bill Gates give their wealth to altruistic developmental projects, it is a practical heroism that entails not the giving up of life but the giving up of profit. "And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but

lose your own soul?" must be the realization of philanthropists like him and his wife Melinda. There is the everyday heroism, when we do even the most menial of tasks exceedingly well, when we give ourselves over to values of excellence and duty.

Who is not a hero? That is a far easier question to answer, especially if it refers to someone who thinks himself a hero and resorts to fakery and lies to build his own myth, as in the case of the late, unlamented "hero of Bessang Pass" Ferdinand Marcos, who was nowhere near it when the months-long battle to take it from the Japanese happened, and whose eldest child Imee is distancing herself from his legacy by saying she was too young (another brazen lie) to be aware of her father's martial law abuses.

We can also add to our list of nonheroes the nine Supreme Court justices who ruled in favor of the Marcos burial in the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Their historical amnesia renders them unfit to pass judgments of law that strengthen our moral fabric, putting their worth as protectors of our people's democratic aspirations in question.

In conclusion, what is the best way to be a hero? First of all, don't try to be one. Just do your job well. And follow your conscience, if you have one. History will judge, and while we may not approximate Achilles or Hector, the actions of us mere mortals will always be viewed with fairness by the heavens.

Duterte appeals for peace, unity

From page 1

team "will not really abandon the things that we all crave for our country."

Duterte said the government is also pursuing peace negotiations with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"The MILF has shown its sincerity to talk to us about peace. NurMisuari chooses to be different. But he has said that he will work with us in government to find peace," he added. Misuari is the founding chairman of the MNLF.

"So maligaya ako except for the extremists actually. That would really be a

danger to our country in the days to come," he said. The Maute group, he said, occupied government buildings in Butig, Lanao del Sur, and raised the flag of the Islamic State.

The President said the last thing he would want to do is to wage war against the local terror group, specially since they are also Filipinos.

"Ako, sabi ko, I really do not want to fight. More than that, I do not want to kill. It is not a good thing to be killing people. We cannot build a country over the bones of our fellow countrymen," he said.

"What is really very disheartening is you would see

Filipinos killing each other... It's not something that I would want in my country, especially that I am the president of this Republic," the President added.

The administration, he said, will try to prospect for things that would end hostilities and restore peace and stability in the region.

"Sana lang naman, makinig sila... Naghahanap kami ng paraan para ma-accommodate kayo. And if they just hang on to that promise that we are looking below and above ground for a compromise and all of these things," the President said.



Editor's Note

I hope that everyone had a nice Thanksgiving celebration with their families and friends. It is now the busiest time of the holiday season. Hopefully, we get to squeeze in some time to shop for gifts, decorate for the occasion, attend get together, and to really feel the spirit of the holiday season.

This should also be the time for self reflection and realize what we have accomplished in our personal lives. It's a familiar ritual that we do for ourselves that allows us to make an assessment of what we need to improve on in the coming year.

Each one of us has a different life situations. There are those who are away from their love ones, afflicted with illness, and those that are going through financial or marital conflicts in life. Which ever is the case, we should allow ourselves to be sensitive of each other's situation. Let's offer a piece of consolation and be consoled with each other's guidance and presence.

This past decade, I realized has been the most challenging times. And we have yet to see what changes the new presidency, both back home and here in the states, will bring for the people. My heart goes for the victims of the Ghost Ship Oakland's fire. May they all Rest In Peace, and their families to find comfort in the celebration of their lives.

In ending, Dave and I and our children wish everyone a happy and safe holidays celebrations. We're forever grateful to all the PF News' contributors, advertisers, and our readers. Let's do it all again next year, provided with good health, peace, love, and all God's blessing.

More power and congratulations to Carol Munar, as the new Mrs. Philippines of the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity (FCSV). Your graceful contributions and accomplishments for the community have topped it all off! Don't forget to watch the Sinag-tala's 27th Theatrical Performance in our community.

With you in celebrations,
Dinnah San Pedro

Bastusang Pambansa

By Val G. Abelgas

They call themselves “Honorable” and want to be addressed your honor at the end of every statement. And yet for seven agonizing hours, the congressmen at the hearing of the Committee on Justice showed the nation why bloggers have called their place of work the “Bastusang Pambansa” because that’s what they did last Thursday – to embarrass the subject of all these hullabaloo, Senator Leila de Lima.

In aid of legislation, as they are wont to say, the committee members grilled De Lima’s erstwhile bodyguard, driver and lover, Ronnie Dayan, asking questions that was so personal it didn’t serve any purpose for any kind of legislation related to illegal drugs. Instead, the “honorable” lawmakers were obviously out to humiliate and persecute a lady senator whose only obvious mistake at this point was that she fell for a man in her employ, and worse, crossed the path of the sitting President.

It is not a secret that President Rodrigo Duterte explodes in anger each time somebody criticizes or questions his brutal drug war that has killed more than 4,000 mostly poor Filipinos. He was still mayor of Davao City when De Lima first earned Duterte’s ire when the then chair of the Commission on Human Rights investigated the so-called Davao Death Squad that had been accused of hundreds of extrajudicial killings in the city.

And then in July, not yet warmed up to her Senate seat, De Lima

stood several times to criticize the daily death of drug dealers and users and investigated the killings resulting from Duterte’s drug war until she was ousted as chair of the Senate committee on justice. Her unceremonious ouster from the important chair was obviously just the beginning of a seething vengeance as Duterte’s allies in the House of Representatives started linking her to the illegal drug trade in the National Bilibid Prison.

Unable to present solid evidence that would link her to illegal drug trade and send her to prison, the President’s “honorable” lackeys seem to have decided they would destroy her person instead, launching a character assassination reminiscent of the destruction of then Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona, also in the early years of the previous administration.

What else would you call the line of questioning by the congressmen that day?

The “your honors” spent most of the seven hours not establishing beyond hearsay and more importantly, beyond reasonable doubt that De Lima knowingly received drug money from suspected drug lord Kerwin Espinosa and some drug lords operating from inside the Bilibid, and that she used this money for her senatorial campaign.

Instead, they asked Dayan very private and personal questions about his relationship with De Lima when the senator herself had already admitted to the romantic affair and there was, therefore, no need to establish the relationship. For example, after repeatedly asking Dayan whether his relationship with De Lima grew out of true love, a committee member asked, with a smirk, sarcastically and for no apparent reason but to grandstand and please his salivat-



Kerwin Espinosa and Ronnie Dayan

ing colleagues, “So, ang sinasabi mo, ang relasyon mong ito kay Senator de Lima ay hindi lamang para saluhan siyang magtampisaw sa pagmamahalan o saluhan siya sa pagpawi ng init ng katawan?”

Another asked: “Sabay ba kayong matulog sa isang kwarto?” while still another asked: “Ano ang tawag nyo sa isa’t isa?” Another congressman, the same congressman who asked about the “init ng katawan” wondered: “Masasabi mo bang ang pagmamahalan ninyo ay tunay, matibay at wagas?” Each time these questions were asked and answered, the committee members and the gallery would break into malicious laughter.

The moral inquisition went for hours, obviously because it thrilled the committee members no end and gave them opportunity to grandstand and show that they were more macho than they looked. To the kanto boys drinking in the corner sari-sari store and the macho men used to talking about their sex exploits over cases of beer, it was a great “pulutan,” as they would say.

The committee has presented several alleged witnesses, most of whom were convicted felons who stood to gain from cooperating with the Department of Justice and were afraid of going the way

of Albura, Leyte Mayor Ronald Espinosa who was killed inside his detention cell in an alleged shootout with members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group a few weeks ago that had all the signs of a rubout. The congressmen wouldn’t even consider investigating the brazen killing, and yet would go all out to investigate and humiliate a sitting senator.

It should have been the words of scared convicted criminals against an elected senator and former DOJ and CHR chief. But the “honorable” congressmen would rather give more weight to the convicts’ words despite the lack of any concrete evidence, such as paper trails and fat bank accounts!

Also, there were glaring inconsistencies in the testimonies of Kerwin Espinosa and Ronnie Dayan but the congressmen decided to ignore them and dwell on the romantic liaison between Dayan and De Lima.

What the seven-hour inquisition proved was that the House of Representatives that is supposed to represent the people in government policies is just a bunch of sexist, misogynist and indecent individuals who just happened to have the money to get elected to the House and get the title Honorable.

Then Inquirer columnist Manuel Quezon III first coined the term “Bastusang Pambansa” after the House lynched and unceremoniously ousted Speaker Jose de Venecia in 2008. The building that houses the House of Representatives is called “Batasang Pambansa” after the parliamentary body during the late years of martial law.

In 2009, bloggers and netizens again called the House the “Bastusang Pambansa” when the congressmen railroaded House Resolution 1109 in 2009 to allow Congress to reconstitute itself into a constitutional assembly (con-ass) to amend the Constitution and hopefully enable Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to either run for reelection or become prime minister.

After Thursday’s hearing, the social media was abuzz again with the words “Bastusang Pambansa” to describe the inquisition. Rightfully deserved!

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Robredo: Opposition to Marcos burial possibly the clincher

Vice President Leni Robredo says her biggest difference with President Rodrigo Duterte is her stand on the hero's burial for the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos

By Patty Pasion

MANILA, Philippines – Though President Rodrigo Duterte and Vice President Leni Robredo have opposing views on a number of issues, Robredo believes it was her condemnation of Ferdinand Marcos' burial at the Libingan ng mga Bayani that was the clincher that made Duterte distance himself from her.

Duterte, through a text message sent by Cabinet Secretary Leoncio Evasco Jr, had ordered Robredo to stop attending Cabinet meetings. This was "the last straw" for Robredo, who then resigned as housing czar on Monday, December 5, as she got the impression that she was already being "eased out" of the Cabinet.

Last month, Robredo had condemned the hero's burial for Marcos, which was ordered by Duterte. The President is close to the Marcos family, including the late dictator's son and namesake, Ferdinand Marcos Jr, who lost to Robredo in the elections by a slim margin and is contesting her win.

"There have been many times that I have expressed my views – on extrajudicial killings, on the death penalty, Marcos burial. And always during Cabinet meetings I will tell the President that, 'Thank you, Mr President, kahit po (even if) I'm very vocal about the opposition to certain policies you have not taken it against me,'" Robredo said.

"Yung pinakamatindi ito talaga, Marcos burial. Ito talaga 'yung pinakamatindi. Ito 'yung pinakahuling statement na 'binigay ko. And after I issued that statement



OUT OF THE CABINET. Vice President Leni Robredo gestures during a press conference on December 5, 2016.

hindi pa ulit kami nagkakausap." (It's really our biggest difference – the Marcos burial. It's the biggest. It was also the last statement I gave. And after I issued that statement we haven't had the chance to talk again.)

Robredo, however, recalled that when she first expressed her opposition to the Marcos burial earlier on, Duterte told her not to worry about their clashing views.

"I was even assured by the President na, 'wag ka mag-alala niyan, 'wag mong alalahanin (don't worry about it)."

Marcos plot?

But given the latest developments, Robredo maintained she is even more convinced that there is a plot to unseat her and propel former senator Marcos to power.

The Vice President again recalled receiving warnings that she was not welcome in the Cabinet, but said she just focused on doing her job.

"Marami nag-wa-warn (Many people were warning me) that there were people around the President, even people in the Cabinet who did not want me there, and wanted Bongbong Marcos instead," said Robredo.

"Ang kasama ni Presidente sa China si Bongbong Marcos. Siya

'yung 'pinakilalang vice president, pero 'yung sa 'kin lahat ko 'yun nilunok kasi 'yung sa 'kin meron akong trabahong gagampanan," she added.

(It was Bongbong Marcos who accompanied the President during his recent state visit to China. He was the one introduced as the vice president, but I just put up with that and all the other obstacles because I have a job to do.)

But what seemed to be a giveaway, Robredo said, was Evasco's text message. The Vice President said less than 10 people from her camp knew about it, but pro-Marcos groups were already saying "farewell" to her online.

"Kahit nanay ko hindi alam. Pero may mga tweets na from the Bongbong Marcos groups na nag-goo-good-bye na sa 'kin. Ano ibig sabihin noon?" she said.

(Even my mother didn't know about the text message. But there were already tweets from pro-Bongbong Marcos groups saying good-bye to me. What's that supposed to mean?)

"It only confirms what we have been warned about for so long."

A vice presidency in jeopardy

From page 2

to resign while some people from Duterte's camp said that through the message she was effectively "fired". Yesterday Duterte's spokesman said he was surprised by her withdrawal. Just goes to show that a good lack of communication is really a problem in this administration.

Leni leaving Duterte's cabinet due to "irreconcilable differences" is one thing, but it's worrisome because it seems like just another step in a grander scheme. Many have said that Duterte is "paying back" Marcos little by little – the burial of his late father was just another confirmation that their friendship is strong and carrying over in an

official capacity. Even before the Libingan ng mga Bayani issue Duterte and Marcos were close. Duterte was even quoted as saying that should he not be able to fulfill his campaign promises he would gladly step down for VP Marcos. And these days he talks about Marcos as the country's next Vice President. As if it were already a done deal.

If I were Robredo I would be scared. A recount is one thing but there is no way to ensure that it will be above board and completely fair. As far as the Supreme Court goes I think we know where they stand when it comes to issues with the Marcos family. It may sound like a big conspiracy but it's very

possible that in this game of chess, all the pieces have fallen into place perfectly to give Bongbong the Vice Presidency and maybe even the presidency afterwards.

Now is the time for vigilance.

For all of us who voted for Robredo and voted for a system of checks and balances have to be on high alert. The vice presidency is in jeopardy and the only thing that stands in the way of it getting "stolen" are the people. We need to stand watch now more than ever.

Rody to pardon old, sick political prisoners

By Alexis Romero

MANILA, Philippines - President Duterte yesterday said he would allow the release of old and sick political prisoners before Christmas.

In a speech during the Christmas tree lighting at the Malacañang grounds last night, Duterte said "there's really no point in detaining a person who is old and sick."

"I find it something not...It's a very awkward feeling, I am uncomfortable. So 'yung lahat ng matatanda, may sakit, umalis na kayo (so all the old and sick, they may leave)," he added.

But Duterte said he cannot release more than a hundred political prisoners as requested by the Left.

"I know that the Left has good intentions for our country. Long ago, I used to cross the ideological border because I was a student once and I saw the inequity...I also saw the other side, how should it be in government," he said.

"We have to continue and even now they're asking for the release of 130 political prisoners. I said, I cannot give you that. I'm sorry but I have already conceded so much on the side of the government.

"But you're going back tomorrow and if you can show me a document signed by the Republic of the Philippines representatives and communists, then I will release the 130 plus more because by asking that...how many are there still beyond 70 years old and those suffering from incurable diseases at this time, who has cancer or kidney (problem) or anything? And if they are ready to be released and will be accepted by the families, i-release ko na (I will release them) before Christmas time," he added.

Before Duterte's speech, political prisoners and their families yesterday went on the third day of their week-long hunger strike to appeal to the administration to finally free more than a hundred of political prisoners this Christmas.

In a statement, the Kilusang



President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday said he would allow the release of old and sick political prisoners before Christmas. AP / Bullit Marquez

Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) challenged the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process to "walk the talk on its commitment to release political prisoners."

"Don't anymore make promises you can't keep. Bring political prisoners home to their families this Christmas. They have languished in jails for many years and served unjust sentences for crimes they did not commit," said Joseph Canlas, chairman of KMP.

"Political prisoners are not criminals. They were imprisoned because of their political beliefs and actions related to their quest for social justice. Many of them are farmers who have defended their right to the land they till," he added.

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza said yesterday that the government is working on the release of political prisoners.

Dureza also said the government "understands their angst and impatience but we are all forgetting that these efforts were never possible nor even imaginable in the previous times."

"It is only in the Duterte administration that these releases are all happening," he added.

Canlas said that while the KMP welcomes the presidential pardon for political prisoners Martin Villanueva, Bonifacio Suyon, Dindo Absalon and Rico Bodina, it is campaigning for the release of all 300 peasant political prisoners.

He said among them are Dario Tomada and Oscar Belleza, both detained at the Manila City Jail after being falsely implicated in the Hilongos, Leyte mass grave case.

Tomada, 56, is a former leader of peasant group SAGUPA-Sinirangan Bisayas. He was arrested on July 22, 2010 in Biñan, Laguna.

Belleza, 59, is the former vice chairman of KMP-Leyte. He was arrested on Nov. 26, 2008 in Olongapo City. He suffered a stroke while in detention and underwent brain surgery. He is now paralyzed and in poor health. –

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Firm that runs card room games is bankrolling Elk Grove casino fight

By Dale Kasler

The force behind the effort to halt the proposed Indian casino in Elk Grove is a Bay Area company tied to a Sacramento card room operator.

Knighted Ventures LLC, an Emeryville company that provides financial services and employees to card rooms, revealed itself in a state Fair Political Practices Commission filing as the group pushing a ballot referendum that could derail the Wilton Rancheria Indian tribe's plans to build a \$400 million casino at the southern edge of Elk Grove. The filing was dated Nov. 16 but didn't surface until Monday, when the state commission dismissed a complaint from a pro-casino group.

The disclosure follows weeks of mystery about who was trying to squelch the proposed casino. On Nov. 21, an unidentified group submitted 14,800 signatures to the Elk Grove city clerk, demanding a voter referendum to overturn the city's agreement with the tribe and a developer. That's well more than the 9,000 signatures needed to force a vote, although the clerk is still verifying the validity of the signatures.

Roger Salazar, a spokesman for Knighted Ventures, said the firm has "a market interest in the outcome" of the casino fight and "isn't trying to hide" its connections to the card room business. But he added that 14 of Knighted Ventures' employees live in Elk Grove, and the firm believes voters should have a say in whether "Vegas-style gambling" comes to the suburb.

Court records and other documents show Knighted Ventures has connections to Silver F Inc., owner of four card rooms in Northern California. They include two in

greater Sacramento: Parkwest Casino Lotus on Stockton Boulevard and Parkwest Casino Cordova in Rancho Cordova. The Stockton Boulevard card room, which lies about 15 miles north of the tribal casino site in Elk Grove, is undergoing a multimillion-dollar expansion.

A visit Monday to the Parkwest Casino Lotus, in Sacramento's Little Saigon neighborhood, made clear the connection between the card room and Knighted Ventures. Employees of Knighted Ventures were working in the card room, identified by their badges.

Elk Grove Mayor Gary Davis, a supporter of the tribal casino, said he was angered that a group affiliated with a card room was trying to block the casino project, which would go on a plot of land the city has wanted to see developed for years.

"Hopefully, Elk Grove voters will see this for what it is," Davis said. He called the anti-casino group "fraudulent, self serving."

Josh Wood of Region Business, an alliance of building contractors supporting the casino, said, "We know why they wanted it to be a secret. They're an out-of-town group trying to kill the project. ... They're trying to kill this to protect a different gambling interest."

Wood's group filed a complaint with the Fair Political Practices Commission in November, saying the group behind the voter referendum hadn't made the necessary campaign-finance disclosures. The agency dismissed the complaint Monday, saying the group had made the required filings.



Wilton Rancheria wants to build Sacramento County's first tribal casino on the site of these unfinished structures of an ill-fated mall project on Promenade Parkway in Elk Grove, Calif., on Friday, February 12, 2016.

In its letter dismissing the filings, the FPPC said Knighted Ventures paid for the signature-gathering effort out of its own pocket. Salazar said he didn't know how much money Knighted Ventures spent.

Knighted Ventures, which also has offices in Los Angeles, is a "third-party provider of propositional player service," a kind of financial-services firm that is essential to the operation of the card room industry.

Unlike Indian casinos, California card rooms aren't allowed actually to take bets on blackjack and the other table games they host. In other words, they can't act as the "bank" or the "house." Instead, they turn to the third-party firms that perform that function. These firms take the profit or loss, depending on the outcome of each hand, and their employees work in the card rooms and deal the cards.

In addition, Knighted Ventures has done work for at least one of the Little Saigon card room's sister venues, Parkwest Casino 580 in Livermore. That connection was spelled out in a 2013 lawsuit filed by a former Knighted Ventures employee who claimed he wasn't reimbursed for some expenses incurred while working at the Livermore venue.

What's more, real estate database firm LexisNexis says Roy Choi, the head of Knighted Ventures, has purchased property in Los Angeles in concert with John

16TH ANNUAL "HEALTHY KIDS DAY" PROVIDES FREE HEALTH SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Thousands of Sacramento families to receive flu shots, health screenings, coverage assistance, a no-cost Farmers' Market, and more

SACRAMENTO, CA (Dec. 6, 2016) – Sacramento Covered, the area's leading health care navigation and enrollment assistance organization, hosts its 16th Annual Healthy Kids Day event on Saturday, December 10 at Sleep Train Arena. This event draws thousands of area residents and offers FREE flu shots, dental and vision screenings, a farmer's market and other health-related services to children and adults.

To support its mission of connecting people to health care coverage and primary and preventative care, Sacramento Covered hosts this large-scale event annually to bring health resources directly to the community.

"We know that having coverage does not always mean having access to health care. Healthy Kids Day is an exciting, hands-on representation of our work to bridge the gap between coverage and access and inspires families to stay healthy. It serves as a reminder that we are here to assist area residents overcome barriers to care

and help improve the health of our community," said Sacramento Covered Chief Executive Officer Kelly Bennett.

"We encourage everyone to attend and take advantage of the great health services and resources that will be available – free of cost," Bennett added.

All attendees can receive free health services including: flu shots, health, dental, and vision screenings, health care enrollment assistance, and access to a farmer's market of fresh and organic produce, provided the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services. In addition to a variety of health services, the event offers a strong line-up of multi-cultural entertainment, including performances by the Sacramento Kings Dancers, TAT2, Ntxhais Ntshiab Si, Robinson's Taekwondo, Zumba with Kelly Chavez, and Los Alteños Grupo Folklórico.

Healthy Kids Day is made possible through the support of sponsors like the Sacramento Kings, Dignity Health, Kaiser Permanente Thrive, Sutter Health and

UC Davis Hospital, along with many other community partners.

The event runs from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Sleep Train Arena (One Sports Parkway, Sacramento, CA 95834). Free Transportation from select locations will be provided to the event, parking is free.

Sacramento Covered is a community-based non-profit organization dedicated to improving the overall health of area residents by connecting them to primary and preventative care, and other needed resources. Through one-on-one assistance, Sacramento Covered helps the uninsured, newly insured and underserved in our community overcome barriers to accessing health care.

Who: Sacramento Covered with Dignity Health, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, UC Davis Children's Hospital and the Sacramento Kings

When: December 10, 2016
Time: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Where: Sleep Train Arena, One Sports Parkway, Sacramento, CA 95834

Park, the owner of Silver F and the four Parkwest casinos.

Choi and Park couldn't be reached for comment Monday. Salazar said he didn't have details on the relationship between Knighted Ventures and the Silver F card rooms.

The Wilton tribe wants to build a \$400 million casino on a slice of land it would purchase from developer Howard Hughes Corp., near Highway 99 at the south end of Elk Grove. Hughes would turn the rest of the property into an outlet mall.

The tribe needs approval from the U.S. Interior De-

partment and National Indian Gaming Commission to build a casino on the land. It also must sign a gambling compact with the governor.

The proposed ballot referendum would target the casino on other grounds. Specifically, the project's opponents are trying to overturn the Elk Grove City Council's decision Oct. 12 to let Howard Hughes sell a portion of the mall site to the tribe. That decision amended the city's earlier development agreement with Hughes.

Hughes officials have said the tribal casino is crucial to the economic success of the

outlet mall. The developer hasn't set a groundbreaking date for the mall project.

"It would be unfortunate and misleading to the citizens of Elk Grove to discover that out-of-town card rooms are behind the campaign to kill the mall," said the tribe's chairman, Raymond Hitchcock.

The mall site has been a sore point with city officials for years. An earlier developer, General Growth, abandoned work on an earlier version of the mall in 2008, leaving behind a series of half-built shell buildings.

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“Dining in the Dark” as Experienced by Somebody who Really Almost Went Blind

(Note: Sacramento’s Maharlika Lions Club sponsored a fundraising event called “Dining in the Dark.” Participants put on blindfolds and served dinner, enabling them to experience what a blind person does. This story was written by Doug Greene who almost went blind from glaucoma, and was a guest invitee. He gives inspirational speeches to Lions Clubs in the Sacramento area.)



Sacramento Maharlika Lions Club with President Perry Diaz, (4th from left) with wife and Chairman of Dinner in the Dark event, Dolores Diaz (5th from left) and guest speaker, Mary Dignan, Embarcadero Lions Club (7th from left) with husband, Andy.



Blindfolded Lions enjoying the dinner.

I slipped the blindfold over my eyes and the world went dark. There were ten of us at the table, and we were about to experience eating dinner - completely blind.

The knot in my stomach expanded up and into my head. I winced as a subtle fear crept in behind my eyes. I felt muscles tightening up throughout my body.

Breathe, Doug I thought to myself.

The event is called “Dinner in the Dark”. It was put together by the Maharlika Lions Club in Sacramento. Dolores Diaz organized it as a way to raise funds for for Maharlika’s Centennial and Community Projects, and to give participants a “taste” of what blind people deal with when eating.

For me, it was visceral, and re-triggered fears that had once driven me to the brink of suicide.

Eight years ago I learned I had advanced glaucoma. It’s a disease where excessively high pressure in the eyeball strangulates the optical nerve where it exits the eye, literally “crimping” it. Nerve cells die off one by one.

It doesn’t hurt and there’s no abrupt changes in vision, so it can sneak up on you. It often takes out a person’s peripheral vision “one pixel at a time” as it advances, then works its way inward. That’s why it’s often referred to as “the stealer of light.”

As happens with many people, my vision loss happened slowly - probably over the course of eight years. Hence, I didn’t catch it until major damage had been done.

When I was diagnosed, I’d already lost 90% of the vision in my right eye, and over half in my left.

What is my vision like now? Visualize looking at the world through a paper towel tube with your right eye and holding a blank sheet of paper over your right eye covering the upper half of your vision - everything above the horizon line is gone.

There is some condolence ... despite the doctor initially saying it was likely I’d lose all of my right eye’s vision, I’ve been able to hold onto the remaining 10%.

But the hardest part was accepting that my vision was gone forever. Nothing will bring it back. Compounding on that ... my vision would be fine if I’d just

gone in for vision tests 15 years ago. Eye drops would have kept my eye pressures down, and no damage would have happened.

They say there are basically three types of people: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. I’m visual. I’ve been a writer, photographer, and outdoor adventurer. I’m a visual learner. I think visually. The

fear of losing the one sense I relied on the most was simply too much.

I recently read an article stating that “going blind is the greatest fear many people have”. I believe it. After vision loss, I dropped into a deep, two-year depression. My world was so dark, I was ready to check out.

I got lucky. A series of events pulled me back from the brink. (You can read about that journey in my book From Grief to Grace.) I now speak in Placer and Sacramento Counties about my experiences with suicide.

And I speak to Lions Clubs about vision loss - including the Maharlika Lions Club. Because the Lions Club organization has such a strong mission to raise vision awareness and help those vision issues, speaking to their local chapters is especially rewarding for me.

So when the Maharlika club extended an invite to attend “Dinner in the Dark”, I accepted it with both fear and excitement. Fear, because the dark, visceral memories of that dark hole are still with me. And excitement because this event was about to give me a way to explore those edges in the supportive company of others.

I slipped on my blindfold and my world went dark. I realized I didn’t really know where anything was. I remembered there was a glass of water in front of me ... somewhere. And there were cups filled with snacks in front of me ... somewhere.

Okay, slow down Doug, I thought to myself.

I lowered my hand down to



table level, then slowly moved it forward with fingers extended - like sensors seeking out anything to give me a clue of what was in front of me. A soft “tick” and my ring finger tapped a glass. I slowly raised my hand up and grasped the top of the glass. Water.

I sipped it, then placed it back exactly where it had been before. I reached my other hand out and felt a similar “tick”. I slowly picked up that glass, then tilted it lightly. I heard some rattling. Snacks. I poked my fingers inside, grabbed some of the mixed nuts and put them in my mouth.

Success!

There was lots of banter around our table as others had their own experiences with figuring out “water” and “snacks”.

Then the main course was brought in.

As the tables were being delivered, a speaker gave us directions. As servers set the meals in front of us, he said to visualize the dinner plate as a clock. “The chicken is at 9 pm, salad at noon, mashed potatoes at 3pm, and the dinner roll at 6pm.”

I asked him to repeat it. Rather than using the clock system, I thought it as “Chicken on the left, salad at the top, mashers on the right, and dinner roll at the bottom.”

I took a deep breath and dropped out of my head and into my body. I was sitting at a table with 9 others. The couple across from me laughed. The couple to their right were checking in with each other about location of the snacks and

water.

As a kid I remember learning to use a piece of bread as a “pusher” to help guide food onto my fork or spoon. After a few fruitless tries to put the chicken-whatever-it-was onto my fork, followed by limited success with my stabs at the salad, I drew on my “pusher” experience. Except I used my finger.

I placed my index finger along the plate’s left edge, placed my fork at my best guestimate of the center of the plate, then nudged it slowly to the left. As I hoped, the creamy-chicken-whatever-it-was bumped up against my finger. I think I managed to guide some food onto the fork, but the proof would be in the trying.

I brought the fork to my mouth, closed down on it and - and tasted success!

I repeated this technique a half dozen times on the chicken, then decided to get adventurous and give the mashed potatoes a try. Since the “mashers” were at 3pm on the plate, I lowered my pusher finger to plate’s center; it landed on the edge of the creamy chicken.

Undeterred I then lowered the fork to the right side of the plate then slid it toward my finger. The potatoes nudged up against my finger and onto the fork. More success!

Just for the heck of it I took another stab at what I thought was the chicken and placed it in my mouth. The chicken was cut into small squares to make it easier to eat. But as I chomped down something alien flooded my mouth.

It turned out I’d also scooped up the foil-wrapped cube of butter and

bitten into it. By now the room-temperature butter was soft and creamy, so it almost exploded in my mouth. I pulled the foil from my mouth, but decided to just do what I could with the butter. Mmmm ... looks like I’m going to have my roll plain.

Since the potatoes were the messiest item on the plate, I decided to finish them off. They were also great for washing down the butter. I then headed onto the next item - salad.

My left finger became my food sensor. I touched it to the upper part of my plate to get a sense of what kind of salad I was dealing with ... leafy greens. With some adaptation my finger also worked as a pretty good salad pusher. By rolling it slightly to the left as I brought my fork in from the right, I was able to “bunch it up” to make it easier to stab onto the fork.

All around me others were doing their own food-eating experiments. Mostly laughter, and quite a few questions. First it was guesses as to the type of food. Then it moved to “where’s my water?” or “We need some more napkins.”

It ended with a dessert that was creamy, messy and delicious. People finished it at different paces. One by one we removed our blindfolds and reentered the visual world.

The Dining in the Dark experience was a powerful one for me - and also uplifting. I still deeply fear going completely blind. For glaucoma victims, the best they can hope for is to not lose further vision.

But successfully eating an entire meal showed me it is possible to do a basic task without vision. And, with practice, I’m sure I could develop a more refined technique than using a “pusher” finger.

But it was also a powerful and visceral way to remind the Lions Club members of why they work they do to raise awareness about vision is so important. For that I am grateful.

Doug Greene is an author, speaker, adventure and digital media consultant. You can learn more about him at www.DougGreene.net.



PerryScope

By Perry Diaz

For twenty-one years that he was in power, the late president Ferdinand E. Marcos had it his way regardless of what people said. He ruled with an iron hand and exercised his authority like the Greek gods did. He was Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades all rolled into one. As Zeus, Marcos was omnipotent. His word was the law of the land. He demanded loyalty and subservience under the severest conditions. His second self, Poseidon, the “God of the Sea,” was also called the “Earth-Shaker” due to his role in causing earthquakes. As Poseidon, Marcos shook his enemies with the intensity of an earth-shattering earthquake. And if that didn’t suffice to force them to submit to his authority, his third self, Hades, the “God of the Dead” and the “King of the Underworld,” salvaged and sent them to the Underworld.

But with all the power he had at his command, Marcos lacked something that everyone who aspired to be a God wished for: he was not immortal. Marcos was a mortal being. And the best that he could have hoped for was to be immortalized in history as a hero. Yes, a hero! And buried at the Heroes’ Cemetery or Libingan Ng Mga Bayani (LNMB). Why not? After all, he had all those medals he claimed to have received for all his derring-do during World War II.

But while Marcos’s life was replete with controversy from birth to death... and long after his death, his journey into the Underworld had taken a long and circuitous route.

Burial in Ilocos

He died on September 28, 1989 at age 72 while he was in exile in Hawaii. For the next 27 years, his wife Imelda Marcos refused to bury him. Instead his remains were first put in a crypt in Honolulu, Hawaii. The family was hoping that the powers-that-be in Manila would eventually allow them to bury their patriarch in the Philippines.

Then the day Imelda had been waiting for had arrived four years after Marcos’ death. On September 3, 1993, Marcos’s remains were flown to the Philippines aboard a chartered plane from Guam. This was made possible when then President Fidel V. Ramos -- a cousin of Marcos and the hero of the People Power Revolution that toppled the Marcos dictatorship -- allowed it to happen. However, there were three conditions, to wit: (1) Marcos’ remains will not stop over in Manila but flown directly to Ilocos Norte; (2) During Marcos’ burial in Ilocos Norte, Ramos said that Marcos would be given the honors befitting a major of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, which the Marcoses had effectively agreed that Marcos would be denied “state honors” and no 21-gun salute for him; and (3) Marcos’ burial would be quick.

While the Marcos family agreed to these three conditions, only the first condition was met. The Marcos family reneged on the second and third conditions: no honors befitting a major were given and there was no quick burial. By the time Ramos realized that Marcos’ body wasn’t buried, there wasn’t much he could have done to force the family to bury him.

Years later, Ramos talked about the third condition. “My third condition was that he be buried in the meantime in Ilocos Norte, [pending] on the decision of the family as to the place [for his final burial]. But that was not fulfilled

because he was not buried,” he said. Instead, the family put his remains in a glass encasement placed atop a platform inside an air-conditioned mausoleum with a piped-in music playing endlessly.

For the next two decades, the Marcos mausoleum became the most visited “tourist” attraction in Ilocos Norte. Yes, tourists would go see his preserved body to satisfy their curiosity as to whether it was real or – as had been rumored – just a wax mannequin.

Solomonic solution

In 2011, the question of Marcos’ burial at the LNMB became a national issue, which had divided the nation. When the Marcos family asked then President Benigno Aquino III to allow Marcos to be buried at the LNMB, Aquino passed the buck to Vice President Jejomar “Jojo” Binay to determine whether Marcos should or shouldn’t be buried at the LNMB.

In my article, “Great job Jojo” (June 3, 2011), I wrote: “Vice President Jejomar ‘Jojo’ Binay’s recommendation to bury the remains of the late dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos with ‘full military honors’ in his home province of Ilocos Norte, not at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (Heroes’ Cemetery), is the best solution to President Benigno ‘P-Noy’ Aquino III’s dilemma.

It’s an equitable compromise considering that it has divided the people in half between those who opposed his burial at the Libingan and those who believed that he deserved to be buried in a place reserved for heroes.

“Given that one half of those who responded to an SWS survey believed that he was a hero and the other half believed that he was not a hero, it would have been a no-win situation for Binay. However, if Binay were King Solomon, he would have done something similar to what King Solomon had done to resolve the issue of the two mothers claiming the same baby: ‘Cut the body in half and bury one part at the Libingan and



Marcos buried at the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani.

the other part in Ilocos Norte.’”

Well, it’s easier said than done. However, the idea of burying him with “full military honors” in Ilocos Norte, while it wouldn’t make everybody happy, would have given the Marcoses a face-saving solution and would have put an

honorable closure to a dishonorable dark era in Philippine history.

A week later, in a follow-up article, “Solomonic solution to Marcos burial issue” (June 9, 2011). I wrote: “In reaction to Binay’s recommendation, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin – who served under the Cory Aquino administration — and Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV said that Marcos ‘deserves to be given military honors and to be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani under military regulations.’”

“One might ask if Marcos was deemed a ‘hero’ by virtue of him receiving the country’s highest military recognition, shouldn’t he be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani? Not necessarily. In my opinion, burial at the Libingan is a privilege, not a right. There are overriding criteria that constitute the basis for denial. The atrocities committed during the Marcos martial law regime would negate that one criterion which some people say justifies a hero’s burial for Marcos at the Libingan. To that end, I must say, ‘You can make a villain out of a hero but you cannot make a hero out of a villain.’ And to many Filipinos, Marcos was a villain, not a hero.”

At the end of the day, Binay’s “Solomonic” solution to bury Marcos with “full military honors” in Ilocos Norte might just be the right thing to do to put to rest not only Marcos’ body but also to quell the unrest that has been rocking the body politic of the nation. And besides, didn’t Marcos make a wish that he be buried next

to his mother? Perhaps, his body should then be exhumed from the LNMB -- as some people had suggested – and re-interred in Ilocos Norte with the pomp and circumstance befitting a distinguished son of Ilocandia.

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PerryScope
By Perry Diaz

Are Duterte and Trump the new normal?

The election of Rodrigo R. Duterte and Donald J. Trump -- six months apart -- as president of the Philippines and United States, respectively, shook the world in a manner that differed from previous presidential elections in both countries. While Duterte was favored to win in large part due to his promise to kill drug pushers and users, Trump was doomed to lose simply because of his controversial stand against a lot of issues and causes that many people consider as "sacred cows." But as it turned out, the "sacred cows" were as fair game as anything else, which -- surprisingly -- had attracted the support of many Americans. "I'll build the wall and tell Mexico to pay for it," Trump promised, and his supporters went a-gaga!

It's the same thing with Duterte who told his supporters at a campaign rally: "I'll kill 100,000 drug pushers and users and throw their bodies into the Manila Bay to fatten the fishes." And his supporters went bananas!

Yes, it's indeed a world gone crazy! What the hell happened? But the question should be: "What happened in hell?" And hell is what hoi polloi think of the environment they're living in today, which reminds me of Dan Brown's book, "Inferno." A character, Dr. Brooks, who was visiting Manila said, "I've run through the gates of hell," to describe the crime, poverty, and sex trade that she saw.

And for all the hellish situations that the people have to coup with, they can only blame their governments for not doing enough to make their lives worth living. And all the politicians running for office in both countries -- two of the freest democracies on earth -- know it. Duterte and Trump saw an opportunity to get ahead of the crowded pack of presidential wannabes by inflaming the emotions of the people. While some people

laughed them off, a growing number of people began to wonder, "Why not?"

Duterte made "War on Drugs" the cornerstone of his campaign for the presidency. And true enough he delivered. During his first 100 days in office, more than 4,000 drug pushers and users ended up dead on the streets. The police said that the police gunned down 1,200 of them when they resisted arrest. The rest were tagged as "death under investigation" (DUI), a newly coined term for someone killed under mysterious circumstances, mostly by vigilantes.

"Build the wall"

Meanwhile, as Trump savored his stunning victory over Hillary Clinton who won the popular vote -- which doesn't count -- but lost the electoral vote to Trump, a lot of Americans wonder how Trump would craft his domestic programs and foreign policy, after all those nasty things that he said about certain groups of Americans and America's allies as well.

If there is one scorching issue that has ignited emotional backlash from Trump's supporters, it's "illegal immigration." With an estimated 11 million illegals residing in the U.S., Trump's solution to this problem is two-fold. First, deport the illegals. And second, build a wall to prevent them from entering the U.S. by way of the porous U.S.-Mexico border. Then he inflamed his supporters' emotion when he accused the Mexican government of sending criminals, rapists, drug pushers, and other undesirable

across the border. He promised that the Mexican government would pay for the wall's construction. The question is: Is Mexico willing to pay for the wall?

But regardless of whether Mexico would pay for the wall or not, the perceived "danger" of undesirable aliens crossing the border in record numbers has already been ingrained in the minds of his supporters. In other words, Trump stoked xenophobic fear of Mexican illegal immigrants, which he considers as a threat to national security.

Geopolitics is addition

If there is one major and critical area of concern among geopolitical experts, it's foreign policy. Duterte made headlines during his state visit to China last October when he declared that he was pursuing an "independent foreign policy." He also announced his "separation" from the U.S., which caused a geopolitical tremor of tectonic proportion, which left the Philip-

pin's allies -- particularly the U.S. -- trembling. And to drive his point, he said that he would seek economic and military alliance with China and Russia.

Duterte's flirting with China and Russia is nothing more than "puppy love." But what truly caused a lot of headaches among America's allies were Trump's threats to withdraw American forces from Japan and South Korea unless they pay the cost of their deployment in their countries. He also made similar threats to America's NATO allies and even suggested that NATO disbands, which made Russian President Vladimir Putin happier than Dr. Strangelove fiddling with the Doomsday Machine.

But in the event that Duterte and Trump find solace to the notion that foreign policy is not zero-sum game but an intricate art of "geopolitics is addition," they just might play down their rhetoric and do what is best for their people. Let me put it this way: Duterte will need America more than China and Russia combined, while Trump needs NATO as a counterforce to Russian expansion. He also needs America's treaty allies Japan, South Korea, Australia, Philippines, Thailand, and Taiwan to contain China and North Korea.

But there is a silver lining to all the gloom and doom that Trump has been trumpeting around; he wants to make the U.S. stronger to maintain the balance of power in a world in turmoil. During the final days of this year's presidential elections, Trump laid out an ambitious plan to build 350 new warships for the U.S. Navy to match the growing navies of China and Russia.

Ideological shift

But the most significant aspect of Duterte and Trump's elections is that both of them will have the opportunity to change the ideological make-up of their respective country's Supreme Court. In the case of Duterte, he'd be appointing 11 new Supreme Court Justices to replace justices who will be retiring when they reach the mandatory retirement age of 70. With only four justices left from the current bench, Duterte -- who is an avowed leftist -- would presumably appoint justices in his own image.

In the case of the U.S. Supreme Court where there is no mandatory retirement age, Trump will surely nominate a hard-core conservative to take the seat of the late ultra-conservative Justice Antonin Scalia; thus, maintaining the conservative majority on the High Court. However, Justice Anthony Kennedy, although considered a conservative, had oftentimes held the swing vote in big cases; thus, giving the liberals a tactical edge over the conservatives. Another swing vote is Chief Justice John Roberts, who wrote the majority opinion in favor of Obamacare to the chagrin of his fellow conservatives.

However, the shaky equilibrium on the High Court might tilt to the conservative side if one or two of the four liberals' seats were vacated. Among the conservatives, Justice Kennedy at 80 is the oldest. If his seat is vacated, Trump would nominate an ideological conservative to take his seat; thus, solidly strengthening the conservative bloc on the Supreme Court.

With Duterte exiting in six years and Trump in four or eight years, both would leave a lasting legacy that would determine the future of their respective countries. Duterte would leave a left-leaning Supreme Court while Trump would leave the most conservative Supreme Court for the last 50 years, if not the last century.

At the end of the day, what we're seeing is that unorthodoxy has become an acceptable behavior among our political leaders. Duterte and Trump's campaign styles have led people to call Duterte the Trump of the Philippines and Trump as the Duterte of the U.S. Their opponents have called them "loose cannons." But loose cannons or not, they're now the leaders of their countries, which begs the question:

Are Duterte and Trump the new normal?
(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

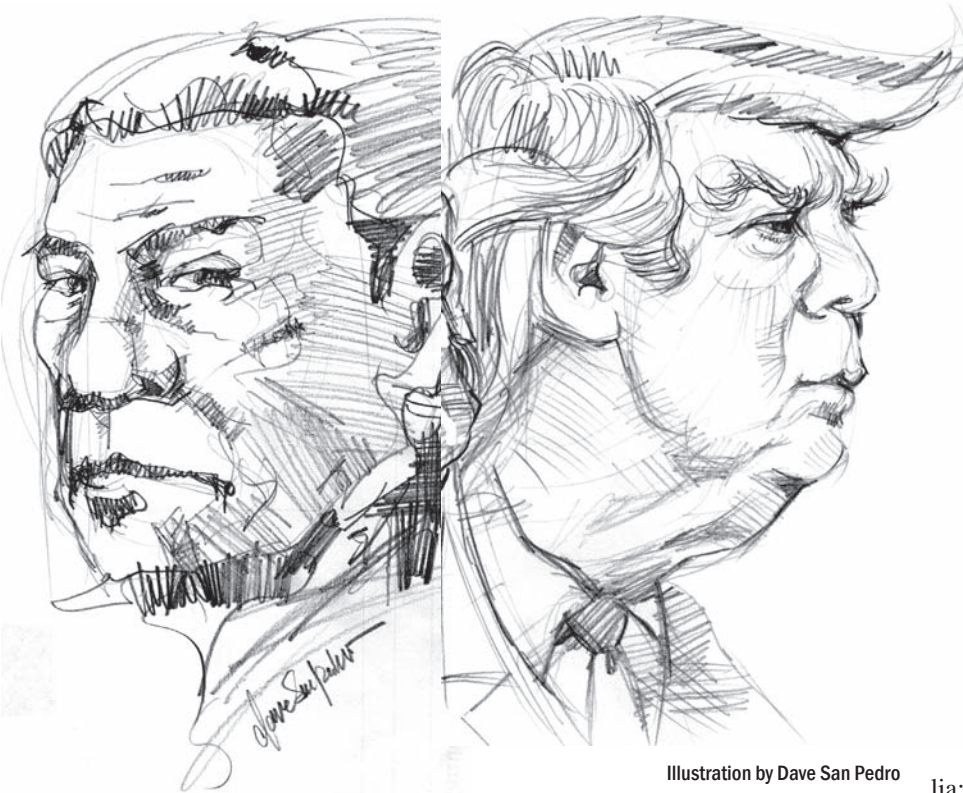


Illustration by Dave San Pedro

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Andres Bonifacio, the Other National Hero

By Penelope V. Flores

Who is Andrés Bonifacio? Why is it important to know him? People who revere him as a hero know little about his life, much less his death. November 30, his birth date is celebrated as a Philippine national holiday. Why is there an ongoing, oversimplified debate between Bonifacistas versus the Rizalistas?

Learning about Andrés Bonifacio will help us see the connection between our lives as Filipino Americans today and the historical events of the 19th century, especially during Bonifacio's time.

Andres Bonifacio, declared a national hero has an impressive monument by Guillermo Tolentino on EDSA Circle, showing him brandishing a bolo and leading a rabble of plebeians known as the Katipuneros. There is another, less imposing, monument formerly found in Balintawak. That historic monument is now inside the University of the Philippines Diliman campus in front of Vinzon's Hall. Balintawak is supposedly the place where Bonifacio first tore his cedula as a protest against the injustices of the Spanish regime. The cedula was a personal head tax used as an identification card.

Bonifacio was born in Tondo, Manila on November 30, 1863. He was orphaned early and he raised his younger brothers and sisters. He made a living selling homemade fans and walking sticks. In today's world, I would call it a "family-run" cottage business. A sister, when asked about this vending experience said they managed a good business. Some of their bastones or canes were high-end, costing about 100 pesos each in 1870s pesetas.

"Who should be the legitimate Philippine National Hero? Rizal or Bonifacio? Are you a Bonifacista or a Rizalista?"

Andres found work in a British trading firm, Fleming and company as a messenger-agent clerk, corregidor, or tax appraiser. Later he worked for a German trading firm, Fressell and Co., and was assigned to its industrial warehouse or bodega. This is where our textbooks began calling him, in a disparaging manner, a bodeguero, whereas his occupation was listed as a mandatorio or attorney.

He never went to secondary school because he took over the family responsibility at a young age. However, he was a self-determined, self-educated man. He taught himself English and was well read—History of the French Revolution, Les Misérables, Eugene Sue's The Wandering Jew, The Count of Monte Cristo, the Lives of American Presidents. He read the La Solidaridad, Rizal's

annotated version of the Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas by Morga and Noli me Tangere. Rizal's El Filibusterismo was almost a blueprint for Bonifacio's KKK revolution.

Bonifacio was greatly influenced by Rizal's political views. He considered Rizal a real patriot and joined the latter's La Liga Filipina in July 1892. With Rizal exiled to Dapitan, Bonifacio organized a secret society, the KKK. The initials stood for Kataas-taasang, Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (the highest, the most respected Association of the Nation's Children). This organization's aim was to rise in armed revolt against the Spanish colonial power and to win freedom and independence for the country. Bonifacio wrote a constitution called the Kartilya, patterned after Rizal's La Liga Filipina. He realized the need to wrest control of the government from the oppressive hands of the Spaniards.

The Katipunan was supported by the local masses mostly from Tondo (his bailiwick), Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and Tarlac. Soon, the organization, operating like a cell, grew in strength exponentially. The other members did not know who the other partners were, and they swore to secrecy knowledge of any actions or plans against the authorities.

However, by 1896 the organization's growth became overwhelmingly unwieldy. Thus, the tentacles of the religious orders were able to reach them through the Catholic sacrament of the confession. A religious manang, a Katipunero's wife, confessed to a priest at the confessional the plan of a revolt by the end of August. The Augustinian priest quickly alerted the Spanish government, and scores of Katipuneros were arrested.

A coordinated pincer attack had been planned (from Tondo and Cavite), but with the discovery of the Katipunan's strategy, the actual revolution date was advanced and staged earlier than planned.

So, in Balintawak, Caloocan, on August 23, the "cry" was proclaimed. It was not a cry literally. It was a symbolic metaphor. "El Grito de la revolucion," the "shout," now taught to schoolchildren as the "Cry of Balintawak."

Bonifacio staged the gesture of defiance when the opportunity came, a "media event" as it were. He tore up his cedula on August 23, 1896 to signify freedom from oppression. The leader of the Philippine Revolution was catapulted onto the national scene, the icon, a commonly dressed revolutionary leader, raising a Philippine bolo in one hand and a "torn cedula" in the other.

It was also the beginning of the recognition of the identity Filipino—no longer Indio. Filipinos



began to see themselves as a nation and aspired to fight Spain as a nation. Earlier revolts had been attempted to redress specific injustices. This time, the people stopped looking at Spain as the mother country and considered Filipinas as their motherland or Inang Bayan.

In the first encounter with the Civil Guards, Bonifacio lost the element of surprise and thus lost the battle of Pinaglabanan (where the battle was fought). Historian Ambeth Ocampo, with tongue-in-cheek, called the place Pinagtalunan (where the battle was lost).

However, in Cavite, a faction developed between two rival parties. The Magdiwang, a group loyal to Bonifacio and the Magdalo, headed by Aguinaldo, the mayor of Kawit and a Katipunan leader who had successfully won battles with the Spanish. Bonifacio, as head of the organization, (the Katipunan called him Supremo,) went to Cavite to patch up the rift. However, he was trapped by circumstances and fell victim to turf mentality. Aguinaldo's men would not follow his orders and were very disrespectful and dismissive of his title and office.

Aguinaldo's men saw Bonifacio as a usurper of the leadership post in Cavite. A general assembly was held, elections were rigged and Bonifacio was voted out as the Katipunan leader. Bonifacio declared the elections fraudulent. He and his brother Procopio were arrested, brought to the hilly town of Maragondon and assassinated by officials of Aguinaldo's fac-

tion. They were buried in a shallow grave under an alibangbang tree on May 10, 1897. He was 34.

The Significance of the Revolution

Without the revolution, which the Katipunan espoused, there would be no red sun with eight shining yellow rays in the Philippine national flag. Many revolts had transpired during the colonial period in many localities. In the past, the Pampangos and the Nueva Ecijaneros were always on the side of Spain. What was different with Bonifacio's revolutionary effort through the Katipunan was that eight provinces joined the revolt of the Tondo masses. It was the Katipunan that united the provinces and made the message of independence and freedom resound clear over Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Manila, Bulacan, Tarlac, Pampanga and Nueva Ecija (eight rays in the Philippine sun.)

Today, Emilio Aguinaldo's legacy is clouded by his high-handed order to his trusted officer, Colonel Agapito Bauson, nicknamed Yntong, to execute Procopio and Andres. Gregoria de Jesus, Bonifacio's 21-year-old widow was taken to a hut near the place of execution. The residents were ordered to leave, and Yntong forced himself on Aling Oryang. Aguinaldo could have ordered an investigation on the accusation of rape, but he never did.

It is true that at the execution of Rizal in Bagumbayan on December 30, 1898, rumors were rife that the Katipuneros would invade the grounds and kidnap

Rizal to set him free. Three regiments of armed guards and Guardia Civiles therefore lined Bagumbayan. Rizal was notified of the plan, but he objected: "If there is only one person who will die during the encounter, I will agree. But if ever two people are killed, I will refuse any aid." (See Ambeth Ocampo's Bonifacio Lectures).

Now, the raging question: "Who should be the legitimate Philippine National Hero? Rizal or Bonifacio?" "Are you a Bonifacista or a Rizalista?" Historian Ambeth Ocampo is of the opinion that arguing for Bonifacio as the "better" hero on the grounds that he, not Rizal, began the Philippine Revolution is moot since Rizal inspired Bonifacio, the Katipunan and the Revolution. Even prior to Rizal's banishment to Dapitan, the Filipino people already regarded him as a national hero (he had been elected as honorary president by the Katipunan). Leon Ma. Guerrero notes that while Rizal did not give his blessing to Bonifacio because he believed revolution was premature, he did not condemn the aim of independence per se. Teodoro Agoncillo believed that Bonifacio should not replace Rizal as national hero, but they should be honored "side by side."

In early dawn on December 30, 1896, Rizal received his mother, sisters and his wife Josephine Bracken in his cell to say their final good-byes. He gave Josephine a book, Kemper's The Imitation of Christ. Then he handed her an alcohol burner. Turning to sister Trining, he said in English: "There is something inside." It was his last poem now known as Mi Ultimo Adios.

Immediately, Trinidad had the poem copied and sent safely to Jose Basa in Hongkong where it could be published and circulated. Bonifacio obtained a copy and was the first one to translate the whole poem into Tagalog. It was distributed to all the members of the Katipunan. At that time, in 1898, the Katipuneros numbered around five million. The Katipuneros recited that poem in the battlefield. It was Bonifacio's translation that made Mi Ultimo Adios accessible to the common masses.

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VETERANO DAY

By Dale Esperante

On 19th November, approximately 60 veterans and family members came to KPsiE's sponsored event, Veterano Day at Magellan Hall. The numbers of the Sac State and UCD Davis's students doubled that of the veterans. Chi Rho Omicron (XPO) and the UCD students accompanied KPsiE to honor the veterans.

The program started when Gabbie and Sherry, the co-emcees, called on the Post Chaplain to say the opening prayer: "Dear Lord, I look around me and I see the blessings that you have bestowed upon us today. I see you've given us hope for you have surrounded us with good young people. I see you've given us a long history for you have blessed us elderly folks' continuity. I see you've given us great support from the love and care of our families...Certainly, this is the day which the Lord Has made. We shall rejoice and be glad in it. Amen."

After the prayer, Gabbie and Sherry surprised the Chaplain by presenting KPsiE's collection of \$415 for Magellan Hall's preservation. The Chaplain requested Commander Tom Amaba to step up and receive KPsiE's present.

Another presentation, this time by the Chaplain and Commander Tom's to Gabbie and Sherry. Each one received an American Legion Certificate of Appreciation. Sherry--for her initial visit with Gabbie to brief the veterans, and Gabbie--for her continued communication with the Post ensuring all planning details were covered. The Chaplain then requested for KPsiE President Juliana Tran to come forward for the last presentation--an American Legion Certificate of Appreciation presented by Magellan Post 604, Department of California, to KPsiE for their annual morale-lifting visit to the "beteranos."

Bayang Magiliw followed the presentations. A group of KPsiE and XPO members combined to harmonize the Philippine national anthem. Then two KPsiE ladies rendered a proper Star Spangled Banner.

Comrade Chef Ding Delarosa took charge of chopping the crispy lechon brought by



Photos by Dale Esperante

the students for the veterans. The complete lunch with dessert served by the students included more than its good taste, a generous amount of love and care were surely part of the ingredients.

Following lunch, the UCD ladies gave a rollicking medley of Christmas songs, warming up the holiday spirit. Three XPO gents came up next crooning up boyband hits with passion, stirring up some cheers and thrills from some of the ladies in the audience. And last-but-not-least, the KPsiE group presented a dance medley that started out traditionally but finished fast with Otso Otso.

Games started with a Senorita Bread eating contest for the veterans. The elderly veterans struggled with this but they showed their mettle by being good sports about it. Navy veteran Albert Cordero finally finished his seniorita bread to win--to the relief of the other veteran contestants. The room was divided into two groups for the second game. Sherry would ask for an item and whichever side delivers it first via the XPO runners, gets a score--the final score was a tie. The third and final game had to be the Hep Hep Hurray game--a young lady won it this year.

The Annual Photo Session--first the veter-

ans and auxiliary ladies posed for the student paparazzi. Satisfied of the result, the students then joined the veterans in posing for the annual Veterano Day group photo. This year, two WWII veterans honored us with their presence.

Then the gift bearing students spread out delivering bags of goodies to every elderly man and woman present. The smiles and attention offered freely by the young folks would be the most appreciated gifts to the old folks. Christmas 2016 came early for the veterans and their guest, courtesy of Santa KPsiE and their friends (XPO and UCD).

VETERANS DAY PARADE



Photos by Dave San Pedro

The Filipino-American veterans paraded proudly in the Elk Grove Veterans Day Parade on 11 Nov 2016. Three groups of Filipino representatives could be counted on to participate in the parade. They are the American Legion Magellan Post 604 Veterans, The American Legion Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604 Ladies, and the Filipino American Veterans Association. On the last issue of the PF newspaper, there was an invitation for the Filipino community organizations to root for the veterans during the parade. Hopefully, they did this year.

After the parade, Magellan Hall at 8831 Gerber Road in Sacramento held a social luncheon for members and invited guests. American Legion District 6 Commander Will Williams delivered the keynote address for this special event. Will Williams is the husband of Manang Penafancia Williams. Manang Frennie is an officer of the American Legion Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604.

Commander Tom Amaba and the members of the American Legion Magellan Post 604 would like to give thanks to those who continue to support the veterans.

Carol N. Munar tops FCSV Mrs. Philippines Contest

By Faina E. Abaya

The Filipino American community of Sacramento is fortunate to have outstanding women who are willing to give their precious time for the betterment of their community. Undoubtedly, the FCSV candidates for Mrs. Philippines are among those women who can be cited for their unselfishness, dedication and high sense of being civic minded for the best interest of the place where they have found social enjoyment and comfort for their families.

Just like the previous candidates, many of them are still employed, practiced their professions, indulged in business, retired or just plain housewives but their willingness to contribute for their community is their primary objective. They have in mind to support the many various commendable projects of the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity to raise funds for the building of our own Filipino Cultural Center, Scholarship to deserving students and many other programs that greatly affect our community and beyond.

The FCSV Mrs. Philippines contest is a fund raising drive for the above mentioned purposes chaired by its energetic President Mercy Guerrero with the able assistance of Mina Guerra and Margie Pasalo who managed the search for all the candidates.

The contest traditional process is to hold social gatherings for the public to auction the social boxes of the candidates and also the time to canvass the ballots accumulated or sold by the candidates to be counted in their respective names. And, whoever garnered the highest votes will be declared the winner who will be crowned as FCSV Mrs. Philippines for 2017-18.

The first canvassing of votes or ballots was held on July 26, 2016 at the Jose Rizal Community Center where the candidates were introduced with their respective managers and it was also the time to auction the candidate's respective social boxes to raise more funds in their names. However, the canvassing results had indicated that no candidates had received clear cut number of bal-



Carol N. Munar



lots to lead the contest. The candidates introduced were Esmeralda Maguire managed by Emily Burns and Fe Alvarez, Luz Molina with Bella Nidoy as her manger, Carol Munar managed by Nellie Umali and Edna Villanueva, Imelda Del Rosario managed by Star Champlin and Maricar Abril and Susan Aquino with manager Fred Aquino.

Despite, the inclement weather and chilly cold night, the enormous enthusiasm of the Filipino American community of Sacramento concerned with the realization of the meritorious programs envisioned by the FCSV bravely trekked to Jose Rizal Community center for the final canvassing of the FCSV Mrs. Philippines con-



Photos by Faina Abaya



A talent portion of the program supposedly for entertainment purpose to be performed by candidates was only limited to one because the other three were not prepared. Candidate Esmeralda Maguire, was stunningly beautiful in her sparkling silver evening gown sang a Filipino melodious love song entitled "Kahit maputi na ang buhok ko" which she dedicated to her husband who was beaming with love and pride. Esmeralda's performance conveyed the message of the song to everyone that while both lovers gracefully aging their love becomes deeper and stronger which received thunderous applause from her admiring audience.

The auctioning of the candidates' social boxes were the highlights of the evening's program as Mercy Guerrero laid down the rules of the auction process. All the candidates who were all wearing their best evening attires with their respective escorts were again requested to walk around the middle of the Center for everyone to see them in preparation for the auctioning of their social boxes.

Social box auctioneer of the evening was assigned to Rey Oineza and the timer was Rick Rafanan who allotted at least seven minutes to every candidate for her social box to be auctioned. To the tune of a slow melodious music, the auctioneer called up candidate Luz Molina to bring out her social box containing handcrafted Glass Candle Holders and thereafter he urged all her supporters to bid as they dance with her until her social box was won by the highest bidder.

Same process of bidding was followed by all the candidates with their respective social boxes, Esmeralda Maguire with her expensive brand named brown Michael Kors purse, Carol Munar with her porcelain Italian made Capo De Monte horse figurine and a mystery social box of Imelda del Rosario. Other volunteers who were responsible for the orderly conduct of the social boxes auction were, Money Dance Couriers handled by Luz Daclan, Maria Bahoric and



test.

When the Center was filled up to capacity, the evening's program Emcee Remy Solomon, a well-known community personality immediately called up the D' Dreamgirls to sing the National Anthems of both the United States and Philippines. The invocation was rendered by former American Legion Magellan Post 604 Commander Rick Rafanan who implored the guidance of the Devine Providence to have a successful FCSV Mrs. Philippines Contest.

FCSV President Mercy Guerrero delivered her Welcome Address

by expressing her usual heartfelt gratitude to all who supported the FCSV Mrs. Philippines Contest, a fund raising endeavor to put into action and reality the many programs of the organization for the best interest of the community. Likewise, she also thanks the candidates for giving their time and efforts to raise more funds for the many projects of the FSCV. She also expressed her thanks to all the officers and volunteers who unselfishly devoted most of their efforts for the success of the many projects of the FCSV especially the Mrs. Philippines Contest.

FCSV Christmas Celebration
 Sunday, Dec. 11, 2016
 2-6 PM
 Jose Rizal Community Center
 7320 Florin Mall Drive
 Sacramento, CA 95823

Coronation of FCSV Mrs. Philippines 2017-2018
 Dec. 17, 2016 - Saturday
 Double Tree Hotel, by Hilton
 2001 Point West Way
 Sacramento, 95815
 Donation - \$50.- Formal Attire

FAVA Christmas Party

By Joe Gonzales in collaboration with Faina Abaya

The chilly cold weather of winter has not dampened the enthusiasm and joyful feeling of every member of the Filipino American Veterans Association of Sacramento to be with their family and friends in their traditional Christmas Party.

It is a spiritual uplifting and refreshing to see the members of the FAVA with their families in one gathering at the Magellan Hall of the American Legion Post 604 on December 2, 2016, exchanging pleasantries and early greetings of the message of Christmas which is Peace On Earth and Goodwill to Mankind.

As expected the Magellan Hall was well decorated with colorful Christmas wreaths, candy canes and gift socks on the walls while the ten-foot-tall sparkling Christmas Tree was placed near the stage of the hall and most of the almost 200 revelers were wearing red attire, the usual color of choice during Christmas season.

Santa Claus personified by Ed



Photos by Joe Gonzales

Peluzo who sat at the middle of the hall distributed envelopes to all the children with modest amount of money as their Christmas gifts. The children have immensely enjoyed to be with Santa Claus as they received their gifts and even took pictures with him.

The Christmas party was led by FAVA Vice President Pete de la

Cruz and was chaired by former President of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 604 Olive Jackson while the Filipino American cuisines served were catered by Rosalie Crandall.

FAVA President Dick Weitzenberg who excused himself from staying longer greeted everyone to enjoy

the spirit of Christmas and also expressing the greetings on behalf of wife Memie who could not attend because she was not feeling well. Before leaving, the President joined prayers with everybody for Memie on her health and he also expressed his profound gratitude to all who prayed for the wellbeing of his wife.

The program of the night was emceed by Joe Gonzales who called both children and adults to perform several games and dancing that made the night more enjoyable and colorful to bring out the true spirit of Christmas.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Carol N. Munar tops FCSV Mrs. Philippines Contest

From page 11

Rose de la Cruz; Dance Money Collectors assigned to Aida Azurin, Linda Gibson and Julie Oineza; Social Box Money Control was managed by Lilia Rivera and Social Box Commission messenger was taken by Estela Rabara.

After a lively and frenzy friendly competition of the candidates' social boxes, Mercy Guerrero announced all individuals who were chosen to watch and manage the tabulation of the ballots or money dropped into the candidates' respective boxes to proceed at the Deacon Room for the final counting of the same. Those who were designated to proceed at the said place were; Mina Guerra, Margie Pasalo, Rick Rafanan, Aurora Ramos, Edna de los Reyes, Cleo Sabarre-Ner and Carlos Cordero and the place was secured by Melchor Munar and Steve Coloma.

While waiting for the final tabulation, music and dancing usually led by line dance guru Joe Rivera continued until Mercy Guerrero and the rest of those concerned in the counting emerged from the Deacon Room where they were sequestered fort almost two hours. Mercy Guerrero officially confirmed that Carol Munar is the incoming FCSV Mrs. Philippines for 2017-18 while Esmeralda Maguire will be Mrs. Luzon,



Photos by Faina Abaya

Luz Molina, Mrs. Visaya, Imelda del Rosario, Mrs. Mindanao and Mrs. Susan Aquino takes the title Mrs. Metro Manila. The coronation will be held on December 17, 2016 at the Grand Ballroom of the Double Tree Hotel on Arden Way, Sacramento.

Carolina Nisperos Munar was born and raised in Sto. Tomas, La Union, Philippines by her caring

and loving parents Juanito and Teresa Nisperos. It was also the place where she spent the best years of her young life with her eight other siblings. In 1972, at the age of just 18 years old, she immigrated to the United States and initially resided in Yuba city, California. Shortly after becoming a U.S. citizen she petitioned her parents and six of her siblings to immigrate into the

United States.

In a social gathering at Yuba city, she met the love of her life Melchor Munar and in a whirlwind courtship they married 38 years ago. The marital union has been blessed with three daughters namely; Vangie, Jennifer and Anna, seven grandchildren and one great-grandson. Eventually, after 20 years living in Yuba city,

the family decided to move to Elk Grove City, California where they are now residing permanently.

Carol as she is fondly called by everyone becomes active in community activities especially events that involved fund raising for meritorious projects. She is also known to be friendly, generous, diligent, caring and indefatigable hard worker managing her small scale businesses. Her culinary expertise is known in the community for which she usually catered most of the important events and celebrations of the many organizations in the community.

Our incoming Mrs. FCSV Philippines showed her generosity and spirit of being civicminded by accepting many competitions to raise funds for the betterment of the Filipino American community. With the help of her loving husband and family together with her avid supporters, Carol always emerged at the top of all the fund raising competitions that she was involved such as, Mrs. Queen Ilocandia of America 2001-2003 of Sacramento, Mrs. New Year 2004 of the American Legion Magellan Post 604, 2008 Mrs. Philippine Headline-Earth at Roaming Keys Production of Sacramento and 2010 Reyna Imperatriz for the Filipino Family Fraternity of Sacramento. Congratulations to our outstanding women of Sacramento especially Carolina N. Munar.



Paz Cajucom 80th Birthday Celebration

Friends, families & communities members celebrated 80 years of life this past November, in honor of Paz Cajucom's birthday! Paz's life embodies service. Service to the Catholic church, service to the medical community, service to the UPAA, and service to her friends and families. Members of each of these communities were represented at her celebration which became more a celebration of family, friendship and fellowship.

Paz serves as a member and past officer in many capacities at St. Paul's Catholic Church since the 1990's. She has served as a member and past officer of UPAA. In her earlier years, she took blood pressure for the "mall walkers" through Mercy Hospital. She is dedicated to her family and friends.



Golden Hips Girls



The (GHG) Golden Hips Girls at the Mendoza residence in Hollywood Glitz and Glamor attire. From left: Helen Enriquez, Rowena Mayuga, Hilda Bobier, Judy Mendoza, Gigi Martin, Ida Alvarez, Nancy Bautista, Marilyn Lopez, Aida Garucho, and sitting down is Mariflor Ong...Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!



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Rosary and Memorial Mass for departed ones.

All Souls Day

“Alaala sa mga minamahal na pumanaw”
(Honoring our departed loved ones)



East Lawn Manager Mel Osborne and Manny Buenaventura

An annual event by the Filipino Community and hosted by East Lawn Elk Grove Memorial Park and Mortuary. All Souls Day was held on November 1st, in remembrance of the departed ones.

It was another successful event and mass celebration followed by partaking of food and raffle drawings, made possible through the joint effort by several community organization and Manny Buenaventura as the representative of East Lawn.



Candles offering to honoured and remembered the deceased members.



The Filipino Community of Sacramento and other organization.

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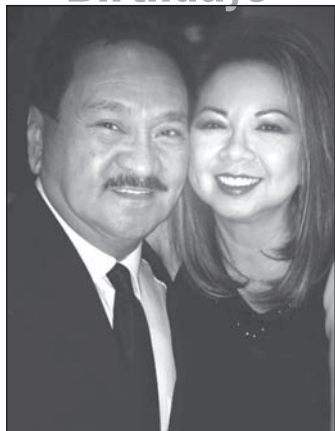
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LITAN GABRIEL AND Dave
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OLYMPIA L. SANTIAGUEL and daughter Dinnah
DECEMBER 17

Calendar of Events

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DECEMBER 29

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By Dale Esperante

Viking River Cruise is a popular tour company offering river and ocean cruises worldwide. In Europe, the Viking Cruise Ship Skadi plies the international rivers connecting the great cities of Budapest, Hungary, and Amsterdam, Netherland.

During a recent trip, we were pleasantly surprised to discover that Viking cruise ships employ overseas workers from the Philippines as well as from many countries of Europe. The Viking Cruise Ship Skadi, named after the Norse Goddess of the Hunt, has a predominantly dining and kitchen Filipino staff.

The Executive Chef is Mario Tayong and the Maitre D' is Alvin Lopena. Both officers hail from Imus, Cavite.

Also from the Philippines are the following:

Henry Espeno, Legaspi Albay - Kitchen Chef

Eddie Aquino, Pasig City - Kitchen Chef
Rex Carbadura, Las Pinas City - Kitchen Chef

Luchavez Abelito, Camiguin Island Mindanao - Kitchen Chef

Marlito Rana, Paete Laguna - Kitchen Chef

Efren Agravante, Kaloocan Manila - Dining Staff

Jim Ryan Cortez, Sta. Cruz Manila - Dining Staff

Kian Asok King, Maramag Bukidnon - Dining Staff

Johnny Atupan, Caparian Sta. Cruz Ilocos Sur - Dining Staff

Alejandro Enciso, Muntinlupa City - Dining Staff

One of the best on board schedules on Skadi was the dining experience, thanks to the culinary skills of the Filipino chefs headed by Chef Mario Tayong, and the attentive service provided by the dining staff headed by Alvin Lopena. It became obvious to the four Filipino passengers that the Filipino staff had influence on the other international crew members. Serbians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Croatians knew short phrases in tagalog. It was music to our ears to hear "salamat po, walang anuman, maganda, pogi, mataba, asawa." One evening, we asked Ouna (pronounce Juana), a Romanian Dining/Beverage Staff to take our picture. Focusing the camera on us, she suddenly blurted out "pekpek" and the three Filipinos around our table burst out laughing. And this happened on our first evening dinner, a great sign of a great river cruise experience. Thank you Ouna, wherever you are and thank you also for filling my glass with red wine all the time.

Then we heard Alejandro, a dining staff, singsong the word boun appetit, with emphasis on petit. Alejandro introduced himself to us as Lady Gaga because he likes to sing and play the guitar, but I know he just wanted to make us feel entertained when he used Lady Gaga's name. Not to be outdone, his best dining staff buddy, Ryan, introduced himself as Britney Spears. Every-

The OFW Vikings



one around our table enjoyed the service provided by this dynamic duo.

For breakfast, Dining/Chef Johnny prepared various made to order cooked eggs. Mine was an omelet with everything on it. After ordering, I would circle the buffet line for other breakfast goodies such as oat meal, bacon and sausages, various fresh fish, vegetables, and various international bread and pastries. I'll bring my plateful to my table to find my perfectly cooked omelet; then either Efren or Ryan or Kian or Alejandro will offer me juice, coffee, and water. After the first day, the staff knew exactly that my wife prefers Multi-V juice, water with no ice, and decaf coffee, while I prefer sparkling mineral water with the bubbles, Multi-V, and regular coffee. Efren, Kian, and Johnny also entertained us in their own ways by chatting with us about their cruise and travel experiences. Maitre D' Alvin and the Filipino dining staff excelled in their duties.

As for the kitchen staff, they prepared Filipino cuisine especially for the four Filipino passengers. One evening I mentioned how we miss eating rice dishes, unbeknownst to me, Executive Chef Mario heard this from his dining room partners. The next day, he offered us his special adobo and rice, fine dining style. Sarap ni Chef magluto talaga. Then another time, Pancit Special. One freezing day after we returned from a wintry tour of the city, we quickly warmed up when the dining staff placed a bowl of Sinigang Hapon on our table straight from the kitchen of Chef Mario.

On this river cruise, we docked near cities and towns starting from Hungary's Budapest; Austria's Vienna and Melk, Germany's Passau and Regensburg and Nuremberg and Bamberg and Wurzburg and Wertheim and Koblenz and Cologne; Netherland's Kinderdijk and Amsterdam. The day excursion for each stop was included but there were also optional tours one may buy. The Vienna stop for example had an included walking tour in the morning. After which we were guided back to Skadi where we had lunch at the casual lounge terrace or the fine dining in the ship's restaurant. We were always met with warm smiles from the international dining staff including the Filipinos of course. Alejandro would even offer his arm to my wife to escort her to our table. After lunch, we then joined the optional



tour to Schoenbrunn Palace, fashioned after the Versailles outside Paris.

On the evening of our Cologne stop, Executive Chef Mario prepared a hearty fare of German cuisine. For only this night, we were welcome to enter the galley to select our food. Upon entering, I was immediately given a plate full of Crispy Pata and Lechon by Johnny. Of course, they gave my wife and I a dish of white rice to complete our meal, no one else but us. The Filipino contingent sure made us feel special. The Germans are like Filipinos for their preferred taste of crispy pork knuckles and roasted ham (lechon). However, the Filipinos added a saucer full of spicy sawsawan for my crispy pata and lechon. Thank you Chef Mario and your squad of chefs. Besides the Filipino dish, we were always offered our choice of appetizers, a basket of freshly baked bread, and the main entrée, then the various delightful desserts, and of course any beverage we preferred (wine, beer, soda, champagne). At one of our stops, I was almost tempted to buy a larger belt size from one of the local department stores...ugh.

The capacity for Skadi is 190 passengers; however, the passengers for this tour totaled just 103 passengers. The ship's crew treated all of us real special. Geno, the Romanian Lead Receptionist told me, "Whatever we can do for you Mr. Esperante, we will do." Even the Captain from Romania appointed my wife as the Number One Captain when he allowed her to sit in the captain's chair during our tour of the Captain's Bridge. He also allowed her to steer the ship for a moment, but when she steered it too much to the left, he immediately took over the controls, but still gave her a big smile. Since then, every time the Captain met us, he always addressed my wife with, "How you doing Captain or How's the Captain today" with a genuine smile. Or when the other passengers wish to join our table, some would

fondly ask, "May we join the Captain?"

I could go on with our river cruise experiences, but I promised the Filipino crew members to share their stories. Maitre 'D' Alvin Lopena's story may represent the story of Viking OFWs:

Alvin Lopena restarted in the cruise industry in June 2012. Beforehand, he enjoyed a career as a Food and Beverage Instructor at St. Dominic College of Asia. In April 2012, he received a text from an agent of Magsaysay Shipping Management asking him to consider working again in the cruise industry.

He previously worked in the cruise industry but decided to stop to be with his family. At first he refused the offer to join Viking in June 2012. But they called again in November of 2012 asking if they could show him a video of the Viking Company. He enjoyed watching the video so much that he decided to give Viking a try. He left his teaching career in March 2013. Just after the semester break.

His initial duties with Viking allowed him to refresh his skills in various essential cruise ship assignments. He already had prior experience as a former Silver Sea Ocean Liner crew member. With Viking, he started as a waiter then as a bartender. When the Bar Chef went on vacation, management selected him as the reliever. His Maitre D' at the time knew his experience as a bartender as well as being a college professor.

When he finished his first contract in January 2014, Alvin started training as Maitre D' Hotel onboard Viking Delling. Alvin feels privileged to work for Viking because it allows him to travel in the heart of Europe with "joy and excitement at every port we visit." Seeing the castles along the river, which he used to only imagine in his dreams and see in photos, now he can visit and take a selfie with these scenes in the background.

Someday, when he decides to return home and resume his teaching career in the Philippines, he will be able to share first-hand knowledge of his time in the European river cruise industry. Compared to the huge ocean liners, the river cruise ship is a very relaxing journey into the heart and highways of the Old World. River Locks allow river boats and ships to travel up and down stream, if their dimensions could fit the Locks. Water management is an awesome engineering marvel, proven when our ship sailed an aqueduct in Germany. It was disorienting to be on a sailing ship while glimpsing a piece of land under the aqueduct.

The scenes and the people, especially the OFWs, rewarded us with many memorable moments. Salamat Ouna, Dessi, Andreja, George, Gary, Franchesca, Marco, and Hilari! Maraming salamat also to Chef Mario and Maitre D' Alvin. And to all our great Filipino kitchen and dining friends, bow kami sa inyo.

On the 2nd day of our post-extension tour in Amsterdam, three Filipinas near Old Town's Dam Square came to our rescue when they found us lost in the crowded Dutch city. Dank U Wel Juvilyn Masajo, Jennifer Estaca, and Jocelyn Balio.

To sum it all up, though we experienced freezing temperature in Europe this time of the year; the warmth, excellent service, and experience provided by Viking River Cruise-- especially by the OFWs--made it a truly memorable journey.



By Gabriel Ortigoza, PhD

The Comeback of Organic Food and Eco-Tourism

Organic food is getting popular. Fitness centers are promoting organic food. Flea markets are selling organic food. Big stores are now selling the same. Health-conscious people are now into organic food. Food labels on organic food are posted in the stores and in the food label prints. Organic food comeback to people's consciousness is getting solid grounds and spreading to the community.

Backyard organic gardening is on the rise. People are now utilizing their backyard by planting organic food. Remember that organic vegetables can grow whether you have small or big backyards. It can even grow in vertical garden. Some make use of their backyard fence to hang and grow micro vegetables. Following the principle behind economy of scale states that every square foot of land or space shall be planted and used for organic gardening to maximize the return of investment.

Eco farming is making the soil healthy. The use of organic fertilizer is beneficial to the land. It makes the soil healthy where plants and animals thrive best. Vermiculture is gaining momentum in organic farming while the chemical companies are getting jealous. The use of African Night Crawlers (worms) in producing organic fertilizer is a big boom to farming. Farmers can produce their own fertilizer for free thereby increases their income. Cuba is the best example of organic farming. When Col. Fidel



Castro took over the government of Cuba, economic embargo was imposed in the 60s as a consequence of his policies. The supply of commercial fertilizers imported to Cuba were also cut off. It was a good riddance. Generally, chemicals are bad. It kills normal soil flora. The embargo made Cuban farmers went back to traditional farming which is organic in nature. Today, Cuba's farmland is fertile and one of the world's best in organic farming. Cuba is now one of the best sources of organic produce in the international market.

Organic food brings health benefits. Organic produce is a product of natural farming. Meaning, growing plants and livestock the natural way without the use of toxic chemicals sprayed on plants or antibiotics introduced to the livestock. Some chemicals are carcinogenic which causes cancer. Sickness can be prevented by eating organic food. People can live longer if they eat healthy balance organic food.

Economic benefit gained from organic garden. You don't need to buy food from the market if you can get it from your backyard for free. When I need to eat eggplants with scrambled eggs I just go to my back-

yard and get the number of Japanese eggplants and organic chicken eggs I want to cook for my family's meal. I don't have to spend a single cent for this delicious healthy food. Those organic foods are available in my backyard for free. My wife sometimes bring those backyard produce to work and give it to our co-workers for free. On the other hand, you can sell your backyard organic produce to earn a living. In the Philippines, Ronald Costales, founder of Costales Nature Farm, said he earned about P100,000/month (\$2,000) thru his 1,000 square meters high value micro plants. Organic farming is lucrative business and a very healthy source of livelihood.

Anybody can farm. You don't need to be an agriculturist to start your organic farm. You only need a space and water supply for your farm and you will succeed. There are hundreds of good internet sites to choose from to learn organic farming. I go to youtube most of the time and I learned a lot.

Let's go organic and live a healthy long life (gabbyortigoza@yahoo.com).

UNICEF survey: 80 percent of Filipino youths suffer violence

By Teresa Cerojano

MANILA, Philippines — A survey conducted by UNICEF and the Philippine government has found a high prevalence of violence against Filipino children, with eight out of 10 suffering some form of physical or psychological abuse.



(UNICEF Philippines Representative Lotta Sylwander, right, gestures as she answers questions from reporters beside Council for the Welfare of Children Executive Director Patricia Luna in Manila, Philippines on Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2016. The United Nations agency UNICEF that promotes children's rights says its survey shows a high prevalence of violence against Filipino children, with 8 out of 10 of them suffering some form of physical or psychological abuse, with the highest number of incidents found among lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender youth. AP/Aaron Favila

UNICEF and the Philippine Council for the Welfare of Children said Tuesday that their first nationwide survey of children and youth aged 13-24 also found one in five respondents had been sexually violated.

More than 60 percent of the cases of physical violence happened at home, with slightly more victims among boys (81.5 percent) than girls (78.4 percent), the survey found.

UNICEF representative Lotta Sylwander said the Philippines seems to have become "some kind of a center of internet abuse" of children. With Filipino children sought after by pedophiles all over the world, and impoverished families tempted to earn from it, online child sexual abuse has become a big business in the country, she said.

The interviews of 3,866 children and youth were conducted last year in ran-

domly sampled villages in 17 regions of the country. A survey of that size typically has a margin of error of less than 3 percentage points.

The 13 types of violence during childhood identified in the survey included physical or psychological neglect, witnessing physical or psychological violence at home, overall physical or psychological violence, severe physical or psychological violence, severe sexual violence, peer violence or bullying, cyber violence and collective violence.

Headlines (Article MRec), pagematch: 1, section-match: 1

Three out of five, or 66.3 percent, of respondents experienced some form of physical violence, with more than half of them receiving corporal punishment at home. More than 30 percent received more severe punishment like slapping, kicking or burn-

ing.

"This underscores the widely spread practice of acceptance of corporal punishment," the report said.

Officials and the report said poverty, a culture of silence and fear of reporting, and ineffective implementation of laws protecting children are among the drivers of violence against children. They called for a whole-government approach, addressing the problem at home and at the community level, and banning corporal punishment.

"The study has shown that we really need to be more serious in addressing violence against children which is happening all over the country, from the places that are supposedly safe — the homes to the schools to the streets and the rest of the community," said Social Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo.

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Filipino American History Month Celebration in LA

By Rees Retuta

In celebration of the Filipino American History month, the FAHM group based in LA produced a successful concert, held at the Greek Theater on Oct 23, 2016. It was a reunion concert by the Fil-Am celebrities and considered as their first, in performing together in over a decade.



Gary Valenciano and Gab Valenciano



The Fil-Am performers included Gary Valenciano, Gab Valenciano, Mama Bares, Tim Atlas, Jocelyn Enriques, KAI, Drop N Harmony, AJ Rafael, Pinay, Nico Santos, Devotion, Manny Streetz, The Filharmonics, Tribal Theory, Mastaplann, JR Aquino, Brian Puspos, Andrew Garcia, Kayaman ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts, Doce Pares, and other surprise guests.

Among the hosts included Arianny Celeste, Brian Vilorio, and Liane V. The event was made possible by Frontier Communications as the main presenter, along with the following sponsors: TFC, Philippine Airlines, Shangri-La, AMG, Philippine Department of Tourism, CMFA, Mobilitie, Kababayan, and AirBNB.

The Filipino American His-

tory month celebration is held annually during the month of October all over the states to commemorate the contributions of Filipinos to America. This concert was held in honor of the Fil Am Arts, Rembrandt Flores, The Park's Finest, Gina Alexander, and Ruby de Vera.



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Elvis album tops Christmas hit list

By Baby A. Gil

Out here, there is no contest. Jose Mari Chan's (JMC) Christmas In Our Hearts, now 26 years old, remains the No. 1 selling Christmas album of all time. And the figures continue to increase what with JMC continually getting all those requests to perform songs from the album in assorted Christmas shows year after year. So until a song that will rival the enduring appeal and lively sparkle of Christmas In Our Hearts comes along, the album will remain our Christmas No. 1.

Out there, too, in the U.S. of A., the competition has bowed down before a former teen idol whose rocking album is the all-time top seller, The Elvis Christmas Album.

This is according to Billboard Magazine, which has come out with a list of The Top 10 Christmas Albums of all time. It is an eclectic line-up that goes from the traditional classical collections to pop, jazz and with Elvis on top, also rock and roll. Note that save for one or two new compositions, the albums are made up mostly of old songs. Silent Night, Joy To The World, etc.

But it is to the credit of the artists and their producers and arrangers and I must add their engineers, because the mix is very crucial in holiday albums, that they made those songs sound new and made us listen and enjoy them again. Come to think of it, that is very much like Christmas, which feels like new every year.

Perched on top of the stellar heap is the Elvis Christmas Album by Elvis Presley from 1957 with 10 million copies sold. I am not surprised at all. This is a fine example of a pop album that just happens to have Christmas songs. And because it is pop, it also has great singles like Blue Christmas and Santa Bring My Baby Back To Me that were radio friendly and got excellent airplay.

Next is Miracles by Kenny G, 7.37 million from 1994. The big surprise here is how the saxophone, which is not traditionally considered a Christmas instrument came out full of Christmas warmth. That is how I feel when I listen to the album, all safe and toasty inside.

The Christmas Song by Nat "King" Cole has already sold six million copies since it was released in 1960 as The Magic of Christmas. This is another great album but it cannot be denied that its main selling point is the title track, which is also known as Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire.

This is really an old song when Cole decided to do a new version in 1961. It was in fact his third, including one recording where he sings "if reindeers really know how to fly." That has since then been corrected.

Christmas and A Fresh Aire Christmas, two albums by the instrumental group Mannheim Steamroller that have truly become a Holiday staple in America at six million copies each. Check out any Christmas hit list these past years and you will surely find these albums.

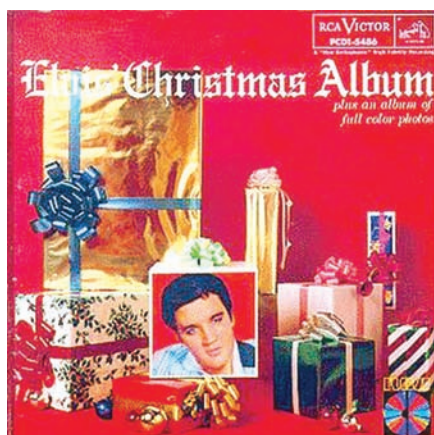
Noel by Josh Groban, 5.89 million. Popera and Groban were hot in 2007 and this album defeated High School Musical and became the No. 1 seller of the year. Produced by David Foster, it is a mix of the pop and traditional with A Christmas Song, I'll Be Home For Christmas, a new original Thankful keeping company with Panis Angelicus, O Come All Ye Faithful and Angels We Have Heard On High.

Merry Christmas by Mariah Carey, 5.5 million since 1994. If Nat Cole has his Chestnuts song then Mariah has All I Want For Christmas Is You to propel the sales of the album to the top. The song is, in fact, the most downloaded and most streamed Christmas song ever with a record of 2.6 million.

These Are Special Times by Celine Dion which has sold 5.44 million since 1998. Also produced by Foster, this is another good example of how to produce a good Christmas album that will sell but without sacrificing the charm of the traditional. New songs here are I'm Your Angel, a duet with R. Kelly; The Prayer with Andrea Bocelli; and Don't Save It All For Christmas Day. Then there are O Holy Night, Adeste Fidelis, Happy Christmas (War Is Over), Feliz Navidad and others.

A Christmas Album by Barbra Streisand with 5.37 million from 1967. The big selling factor here, of course, is Streisand herself and her singing is at its absolute best. Big surprise is the inclusion of My Favorite Things, the song from the musical The Sound of Music that has since then become a Yuletide carol. There is also the new original The Best Gift and killer rendition of the Bach-Gounod Ave Maria.

Merry Christmas by Johnny Mathis with 5.24 million copies sold. This was released in 1958 when Mathis was the hot, young balladeer with hits like Warm and A Certain Smile. Several cuts turned out to be very effective singles that helped make the album a big hit. Silver Bells, O Holy Night, White Christmas, The First Noel, Silent Night and that ubiquitous Chestnuts Roasting song.



Elvis Christmas Album

Beyonce, Adele nominated for top 3 Grammy Awards

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Beyonce and Adele are competing in the top three categories at the Grammy Awards.

The Recording Academy announced Tuesday that Beyonce's "Lemonade" and Adele's "25" are nominated for album of the year, along with Drake's "Views," Justin Bieber's "Purpose" and Sturgill Simpson's "A Sailor's Guide to Earth."

For song of the year, Beyonce's "Formation" and Adele's "Hello" will battle Lukas Graham's "7 Years," Mike Posner's "I Took a Pill in Ibiza" and Bieber's "Love Yourself," co-written with Ed Sheeran.

Beyonce, Adele and Lukas Graham's tunes are also nominated for record of the year, competing with Rihanna and Drake's "Work" and twenty one pilots' "Stressed Out."

Best new artist nominees are Chance the Rapper, Maren Morris, the Chainsmokers,



Beyonce



Adele

Anderson Paak and Kelsea Ballerini.

The Grammys air live on

In this Feb. 24, 2016 file photo shows Adele onstage at the Brit Awards 2016 at the O2 Arena in London. Adele, who has five Grammy nominations, announced Tuesday, Dec. 6, including album, song and record of the year.

Former Sacramento electronic musician scores Grammy nomination

By Chris Macias

Nominess for the 59th annual Grammy Awards have been announced, and the list includes a touch of Sacramento. Tycho, the electronic music project led by former local Scott Hansen, is up for best dance/electronica album with "Epoch."

Though Tycho currently headlines the likes of Oakland's Fox Theater and Hansen now calls San Francisco home, long-time locals may remember Tycho's gigs at local clubs like Old Ironsides, Fox & Goose and various underground parties. Tycho's sound explores the more relaxed side of electronic soundscapes, with soothing splashes of synthesizers, live guitars and other cerebral sounds.

Tycho's Grammy competition in the dance/electronica album category in-



Scott Hansen, professionally known as Tycho, is an American ambient music artist and producer who was formerly based in Sacramento.

cludes such veterans as Jean-Michel Jarre, Underworld and the house music icon Louie Vega. Check the Grammy ceremonies on Feb. 17 to see how Tycho fares.

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