

**GOOD BYE 2016
WELCOME 2017
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

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PF NEWS

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Was Trump the 'Siberian Candidate'?
Page 8

Sinag-tala

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The Sinag-tala Theater and Performing Arts Association delivering thoughtful interpretations of music, dance literary and cultural works by the best of Filipino artists.

Photo by Eugene Asuncion

Trust me- Duterte

By Elena L. Aben

"Trust me."
This was President Duterte's message to Filipinos wary of his war on drugs, which he vowed to vigorously pursue until the last day of his term.

In separate television interviews on Thursday, the President admitted that with the magnitude of the drug problem in the country, his campaign, though it may seem impossible to win, is doable.



President Duterte

According to Duterte, he has six years in office and if he is not removed as president or if he does not die before the end of his

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ALAM Unit 604 and Veterans Joyfully Welcome the 2017 New Year

By Faina E. Abaya



Photo by Dale Esperante

American Legion Auxiliary founded in 1919 is the world largest women patriotic service organization devoted primarily for our veterans who fought in many wars and battles as well as humanitarian missions in every nook and corner of the globe.

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Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Carol Munar I

By Faina E. Abaya

The impression of the most fastidious person who abhors mediocrity on the degree of high social standard for being wanting in glitter and luster usually observed on many events will readily diminish if he or she had attended the spectacle of the coronation pageantry of her Majesty Queen Carol Munar I, the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity 2017-18 Mrs. Philippines.

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Photo by Dave San Pedro
Majesty Queen Carol Munar I and husband Melchor Munar.

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Double Sad

By Josephivo

We live in a time that new insights are arising. People sense it, the old ways are reaching their limits, signs everywhere, environmental limits, inequalities, mass emigrations, to name a few. Many feel the populist DU30 wants to move in the right direction. But he is hindered by his mix of macho bravado and misplaced modesty, his foul language and above all his lack of respect for the 5th commandment (6th for non-Catholics).

The President is sensing well what many people feel, he has many good notions, good communication skills and crude energy. But his character traits are far out of balance and that makes me double sad, as if his being bad in doing the wrong things should be less painful.

Some examples:

1. The overstretched neoliberal policies.

Current policies are far out of balance. All is about economics and these economic policies are only guided by financial aspects at the cost of social and environmental concerns. Wealth and investments trump the other economic pillars, labor and resources (environment). Returns on large investments are much higher than the economic growth resulting in increasing inequalities (see Pickety). Non-economic aspects of life are neglected or transformed in economic terms (spirituality, relationships, recreation, ethics, art . . .)

In the western world the politics are currently defined by neoliberal technocrats. The political arena is reduced to the question of what to produce and what to consume. Growth is the Holy Grail. The main economic issues are decided outside politics, by central banks, rating agencies, international trade tribunals, boardrooms of major multinationals, and in places like Davos where CEO's, top technocrats and politicians meet in closed encounters, far away



Filipino farmers

from the public eye . . . and undemocratic.

Parties are reduced to individual leaders and elections fought on simple messages, "Make America great again", "Change we can believe in", "The audacity of hope", "No child left behind" . . . People feel this thin air and its bias for the wealthy. They experience the impotence of politicians and it makes them vote for populists who dare to speak the unspoken and, after vilifying "the others", propose simple solutions.

Brexit was manipulated by classical politicians. "Brussels is the enemy." Trump is a neo-liberal technocrat in the extreme, all is as in selling shampoo, great deals, creating supply, cheap labor, all a function of "me", "bigger" and "more" at whatever environmental, moral or social cost. "Immigrants and Muslims are the enemy." DU30 the unwilling candidate, the iron fist of Davao, "Drugs and the American imperialists are the enemy."

The current Philippine president is a little different in so far that he doesn't care about consumption, a bigger car or a more expensive necktie, even as these are the essence of an economy based on growth. He addresses issues such as honor and sovereignty, drugs and crime, peace with rebels and extortionists, hunger and health. He uses a language people recognize as genuine. He calls every spade an ace of spades. He gave voters a real alternative to the traditional oligarchs

and dynasties. Unfortunately, he mobilized mostly septuagenarians as his warriors instead of the youth and millennials. He narrowed his focus to killing shabu addicts and insulting Americans. He missed returning to the es-

sence of politics, the long term interests of citizens, and new ways to organize society (isn't federalism a Pimentel senior thing?)

2. The understanding that addiction is a health issue, not a criminal issue.

Health care has also a mental aspect. People have physical illnesses and also psychological illnesses. Both need prevention, diagnosis, treatment and a health care organization supporting them. Addicts are sick. All addicts, whatever the addiction, narcotics, stimulants or hallucinogens such as nicotine, alcohol, sugar, medicines (pain, sleep, performance enhancing, food supplements . . .), marijuana, amphetamines, cocaine, heroin . . . and other addictive activities as gambling, sex, gaming, and the internet.

They can be categorized as more or less addictive, more or less harmful to the user (physical, psychological, relational), for societal impact (medical costs, lost productivity, white collar criminality, petty crimes, organized crime . . .), as recreational (age bound or not, individual or social usage) or problematic usage (hindering a normal life), on the likelihood of escalation (in quantity, in type), on cultural acceptance . . . All help needs to be differentiated/specialized.

Help should address the full chain of consumption (marketing and need creation, production, trade, usage, side effects), prevention, management or suppression by families, civil society, law and order (police, legal system, prisons), health care, and linkages to corruption, criminality . . .

All of the above is well studied, well documented. In broad strokes: wars on drugs don't work, strictly controlled legalization works, influencing markets works, long term education and cultural changes work.

The current Philippine president sees it differently. Over emotional, zero rational. Did he see addiction from too close by? He mixes up troublesome addiction with

rebellious recreational use. He overlooks the horrible effects of alcohol addiction on families, health and productivity, neglects the staggering cost of nicotine addiction, the alarming rise of sugar usage in fast food and sodas. All is narrowed down to "Let's kill everybody who ever touched shabu and feed them to the fishes."

3. The realization of the dangers of the perfusion of criminal (and terrorist) organizations in the real economy.

Beside building the illegal markets, criminal organizations have infiltrated and thus corrupted all aspects of life, the real economy, national and local politics, the media and several NGO's. The illegality moved gradually into legality, from 100% perfidious activities into technically legal but amoral activities and into 100% legal activities. They cover a lot of ground, drugs, human trafficking, smuggling, hacking, sub-standard production, gambling, rent related activities, establishing monopolies, tax avoidance, to name a few of their favorite activities. As major organizations, they are good in all aspects of the business, product design, marketing, production, logistics, finance, human resources, procurement, risk management, even quality management.

Mapping these organizations requires an international approach. Hindering the financial transactions seems to be the most successful strategy.

But this President sees it differently. He doesn't see the marketing skill of pushers guided by professional criminal gangs. He is afraid of addressing head-on the entanglement of syndicates with politics and the real economy. Chinese triads seem of limit. He wastes much of his energy in an endless fight with one old foe.

Conclusion

Talking of missed opportunities. After 6 months, I have a dwindling hope and I fear that it will go all wrong. But I can still dream of a President being less destructive and less self-destructive. A president not just communicating in such negative terms as planting evidence, killing, canceling contracts or using demeaning terms such as insults and belittling women. I can imagine a president not shooting wildly from the hip in all directions but one surrounding himself with younger people who dare to tell him that the emperor is naked, and who can engage in a rational discussion. And most importantly, a President who respects life.



Editor's Note

This December issue of PF News is the most joyful issue, with all the holiday celebrations that have happened in our community. The grandest of all is the coronation of the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity's Mrs Philippines, Carol Munar, as winner of the organization's major fundraising and popularity pageant. Another is the merriest Christmas Show by the Sinag-Tala Theatrical Ensemble, in their 27th Anniversary in our community.

Once again, is the happiest annual New Year celebration by the American Legion Auxiliary. All others are family and community gatherings that made this January issue the most celebrated one of all.

Sadly, but with much admiration is the celebration of life of Memie Weitzenberg. She will be remembered in all her loving ways, as one of the greatest and inspiring leader and beloved friend in our community. I can't imagine being around in our community's functions without her presence around. May God give us the strength to continue her legacy, in serving our Filipino-American community through the publication of Philippine Fiesta newspaper. May you Rest In Peace Memie, and with heartfelt condolences to the Weitzenberg and the Riego family.

Happy New Year to all the contributors, friends, and readers of PF News. Let's do it all again, with full force in 2017.

With love,
Dinnah and Dave and family



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Take aim at corruption

Lacson urges Duterte to shift focus from drugs to good governance

By Hannah L. Torregozo

After six months in office, President Duterte should now shift his focus from the bloody war on drugs to other important issues in the country, specifically corruption in government, in 2017, Senator Panfilo Lacson said in his New Year's Day statement.

"Corruption in government is one area where he can really make a difference, owing to his political will and resoluteness in getting things done," Lacson said. "Once corruption is eradicated, many great things can happen to our country as a matter of course."

Lacson said he believes it is time for the President to become multi-dimensional, "not later, but starting New Year's Day."

Besides, the anti-illegal drug campaign is being addressed already with more than enough vigor by the country's law enforcement agencies, and thus he should rely, particularly, on the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to do the job, Lacson said.

"He can still be the driving force behind the scene," he added.

In his New Year message, President Duterte asked the people to be the government's partners in the fight against illegal drugs, crime, and corruption.

He pushed for his administration's goals even as concerns over human rights issues were raised by some

quarters on his illegal drugs campaign.

Be a statesman

Lacson said he believes Duterte can very well be the country's best president ever if he starts learning to be a statesman. "He could very well be the best president we've ever had if he learns to discard some old habits of a mayor and develop some good traits of a national leader," he said.

"For a start, he can 'Google' how to become a real statesman," he said. He can also make use of Singapore's experience and use it as a role model, he said.

"The bottom line for me is, I want him to succeed because like him as do most Filipinos, I also love my country. There may not be a better gift that my and the President's generation can bequeath to the next generation than a proud Filipino nation worthy of respect from all the other countries in the world," the lawmaker said.

"Singapore sans dictatorial rule should serve as a good role model for him to follow," he added.

Recompense the families

Lacson also urged Duterte to recompense the families of innocent people who died in his war against drugs, which he called "collateral damage." The senator had been asked to comment on Duterte's apology over the "unintended killings" in the course of the government's



Senator Panfilo Lacson

intensive campaign against illegal drugs.

Lacson heads the Senate Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs which was one of the committees that launched an investigation into recent killings (EJKs) in the course of the drugs drive.

"There must be some explanation with accompanying details as to what the President meant by 'unintended killings,'" Lacson said.

Faithful service

For the President, his vow in this new year is to continue to serve Filipinos faithfully.

"Sincerely really I wish that I could impose things in our country. And nandiyang ho 'yung passion ko to serve,'" he said in an interview over government-run PTV 4 as 2016 came to a close.

He admitted though that "my rage inside me sometimes brings forth words that are not usually or should not be coming from the mouth of the President."

"It's about too late in the day, huli na na mag-apologize ako. It's my character. Just live with it, basta ako ta-trabaho lang," he added.

"I wish I could be more kind to you fellowmen. But there's a task to be done

Continued on page 4

Justice—Philippine style

By David L. Balangue

Extrajudicial killings (EJKs) in the Philippines have raised concerns among Filipinos—the latest Social Weather Stations survey showed 8 of every 10 Filipinos are concerned that they or someone they know could be the next EJK victim. And with President Duterte repeatedly proclaiming that the war on drugs will continue, these killings will certainly go unabated. And except for a very few, the victims come from the poor sector.

While the majority of Filipinos still support the President in his drug war, a growing number is becoming more loud in insisting that due process be observed. It may be noted though that the President himself has admitted that during his stint as state prosecutor in Davao City, due process did not work because of corruption in the police and the judiciary.

The logical move then is to first fix the broken judicial system. This avenue is, however, not being pursued by the President. The present attempts to restore capital punishment, coupled with the President's pledge to have five to six executions every day will make the situation of the poor even worse.

While the poor face harsh consequences, including death (extrajudicial or otherwise), for running afoul with the law, it is totally different with the rich and the politically well-connected. Take the bizarre high-profile corruption cases (to which the congressional hearings kept us glued via TV) that filled

us with so much disgust and anger after revelations of the blatant corrupt activities in high places. Those hearings clearly established that crimes were committed; they also showed strong evidence of guilt on the part of the "suspects." We had hoped there would be prompt prosecutions and just decisions. Boy, were we so dead wrong!

Not only were cases not filed yet; where they have been filed, the trial is taking so long; and where they have been resolved, most of the accused, except for some "small fry," have been freed or acquitted! This again shows clearly that the judicial process does not work: Perpetrators are acquitted as if no crime were committed? Is it because of the brilliance of defense lawyers; or is it the fault (intentional or otherwise) of prosecutors, because the judges are compromised; or is it a combination of any of the above?

Look at the long list of these corruption cases: Among them, those filed against former president Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies; the Industrias Metalúrgicas Pescarmona (Impsa) bribery scandal; the "Hello Garci" tapes; the NBN-ZTE contract; the fertilizer fund scam; the PDAF kickbacks; and so on.

After years of court proceedings, the accused principals were acquitted.

But did the acquittals come because the accused were found innocent of the charges, or the evidence present-


ed was not enough to prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt? What about the poor who cannot afford an expensive and brilliant lawyer who has the ability to exploit strict rules of evidence to defend them and get them acquitted?

As if these were not enough, the Supreme Court affirmed that Marcos may be buried in the Libingan ng mga Bayani, notwithstanding previous decisions it and the US courts rendered, finding the dictator guilty of human rights violations and of amassing unexplained wealth. Clearly, our judicial system needs to be fixed—or perhaps our values are gravely misplaced.

President Duterte has repeatedly said he will stop the drug menace and eradicate corruption. While his war on drugs is very "obvious," the same cannot be said of his anticorruption drive. In the recent Jack Lam P50-million bribery scandal, the President sacked the two Bureau of Immigration officials involved; they happened to be his frat brods—to show the country that he is sincere in fighting corruption. But shouldn't criminal cases be filed against all those involved?

Hopefully, they will be prosecuted immediately and within six months, if found guilty, imprisoned. The country awaits.

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2,169 killed so far in campaign vs illegal drugs, 43,196 arrested

By **Jerome Aning**

A total of 2,169 people have been killed in "Operation Double Barrel," the Philippine National Police's anti-illegal drug campaign, in the past six months, official data showed.

Citing reports from its regional offices, the PNP also said 43,196 arrested in 40,420 antidrug operations from July 1, 2016 until 6 p.m. of Jan. 1.

Twenty-one policemen and three soldiers were killed, while 61 policemen and eight soldiers were wounded.

Through its Oplan "Tokhang," or "visitations" of residences of suspected drug dealers and dependents, the PNP said its operatives visited a total of 5,919,650 houses, resulting in the surrender of 74,944 confessed pushers and 936,186 users.

On Dec. 27, PNP Director General Ronald dela Rosa said the PNP had surpassed 70 percent of its target to account for some 1.8 million "drug personalities" or those involved in illegal drugs.

Citing statistics from the PNP Directorate for Operations, Dela Rosa said the antidrug campaign accounted for 73.7 percent—or 1,326,472 of the 1.8 million—from July 1 to Dec.

22, 2016.

The data included not only those who gave up under Project Tokhang and those killed or arrested in police operations, but also those who were already in jail or under rehabilitation, and those arrested or killed in the administration of President Benigno Aquino III.

Nationwide survey

The 1.8-million figure came from the nationwide survey conducted by the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) in 2015 to estimate the number of Filipinos who were then involved in drugs.

Dela Rosa said the 3 million to 4 million drug addicts being cited by President Duterte in his speeches were derived from the DDB estimate, which saw "exponential growth."

He said the number would be taken into account within the President's six-year term. In a television interview, Mr. Duterte said the campaign would not stop as long as the last drug lord, dealer and dependent remained free.

Six-month extension

Dela Rosa, however, admitted that the PNP had difficulty achieving the 70-percent target for 2016.

Oplan Double Barrel entered its second phase, or "Alpha," in late October af-

ter Dela Rosa sought a six-month extension from Mr. Duterte. His request was granted.

During this phase, the PNP will focus more on the arrest or "neutralization" of "high-value target" personalities involved in illegal drugs. It will progress to a "barangay drug-clearing strategy" to be coordinated with other government agencies.

For this year, Dela Rosa said the PNP leadership would also focus on internal cleansing.

The PNP maintains separate statistics for so-called "deaths under investigation" (DUIs), which are murders and homicides that may or may not be drug-related and whose circumstances or motives are still being ascertained.

As of Dec. 15, the PNP recorded 2,928 DUIs out of the 4,049 total number of deaths due to murder or homicide since July 1.

Dela Rosa earlier said DUIs should not be automatically regarded as extrajudicial killings and drug-related, and lumped with the number of drug suspects killed in legitimate police operations.

He said the PNP's initial study indicated that only about one-third of DUIs involved illegal drug ac-

to form a composite team of seasoned investigators and intelligence operatives to deal with at least 4,000 vigilante killings – what police had earlier referred to as "deaths under investigation." Lacson said law enforcers should go after these perpetrators.

"Otherwise, they cannot expect to disabuse the thinking that most of those killings were either state-inspired or, at worst, state-sanctioned or sponsored," he said.

Duterte, during a televised interview, said sorry for the innocent people who were killed in the drug war. "There were really killings unintended, I'm sorry there had to be casualties," the President said in an ABS-CBN interview. But he denied that the killings were state-sponsored.

The President reiterated that crime has "considerably gone down" in the past six months of his administration.

Trust me-Duterte

From page 1

term, he will not stop until the last drug pusher is out of the streets and the last drug lord is killed.

And when he showed his thick list of drug personalities, the President appealed to Filipinos to trust him as he continues to wage his war on drugs.

"You elected me as president. You must have trust in me. When I say that it's time to lift it, I will lift it. I have no personal stake here, I do not even know them," he added.

Duterte, who won the May elections by a landslide because of his vow to rid the country of illegal drugs and stamp out corruption, likewise admitted that he may have "miscalculated" the scale of the narcotics trade in the Philippines.

It was recalled that he made a self-imposed deadline to eliminate the drug problem in three to six months of his presidency, but later on he said he needed a six-month extension, saying he did not realize how severe and how serious the drug menace was in the country until he became president.

"I was not privy... I was thinking gawin ko lang ang Pilipinas like Davao – peaceful," he said. But, Duterte said that when he "squeezed it all out," it was revealed to him that there are thousands of personalities, among them government officials involved on the illicit trade.

KILLING NOT THE SOLUTION

Considering the magnitude of the problem, the President said that the government is making headway in its campaign and pointed out that there are already those who have been marked "X" in his list of drug personalities.

When asked if he considers killing as the solution to the problem, the President categorically said "no" but given the number of people involved in the trade, Duterte said that he will solve it the way that he knows how.

"You can't call the heavens to come down on bended knees because of our problem. I am only six months into the presidency (and) this (thick list) is what I got. I will solve the problem the way I know how, the way I solved the problem of Davao," he

said.

Duterte then called on those involved in the drug trade to stop their nefarious activities if they want the killings to stop. This, as he also said that being poor does not give anyone the license to engage in illegal drugs nor do government officials have the right to destroy the country with their illegal activities.

SORRY

As he vowed to push the fight against drugs, the President apologized to the families of those who have been killed.

"I am sorry that there is something which we cannot agree on. Pati yung ibang naman talagang lumaban sa police (Some fight it out with the police). I'm sorry for that. Wala ako talaga magawa. Trabaho lang po (I can't do anything, we're just performing a job)," he said.

He said he cannot be always present to supervise all police operations and that he has no control over criminal minds.

He insisted that he never ordered the police to execute criminals.

NO TO MARTIAL LAW

Duterte also allayed fears that he is laying the predicate for the declaration of martial law.

"Hindi nga eh, hindi ako sanay diyan (No, I'm not used to that). I am smarter than martial law. Hindi ko kailangan yan (I don't need that)," he stressed.

Duterte added that with the present state of things, referring to the problem on drugs and the threat of terrorism, he is okay with his declaration of a state of lawless violence.

PEOPLE SPEAK OUT

More than 6,000 people have been killed in the anti-narcotics drive since he took power, about a third in police operations with the rest still being investigated. Many are believed to be vigilante murders.

His hardline measures have been criticized by many, including the United States and the United Nations, but Duterte retains a "very good" opinion poll rating at home, the Social Weather Stations said this month.

On the streets of Manila, residents from a variety of professions gave their thoughts.

Felicidad Magdayao, 59,

owner of a fast-food restaurant: "Our business has really suffered. People are afraid to go out. At dawn we only have few customers. At least, there are fewer drug addicts and drug pushers."

Ronaldo David, 49, police officer: "My load in filing cases in the office has been reduced. I am now more focused on educating people and in prevention."

Cristine Angelie Garcia, 24, call center agent: "Maybe there is another way where people do not need to die," she said, but stressed she felt safer walking the streets at night.

"I'm on Duterte's side. Maybe he's just misunderstood because he grew up on the streets."

Rosalina Perez, 41, from Tondo, Manila. Perez is the sister of Benjamin Visda, who was killed by police during a drug investigation: "At first, we liked what he (Duterte) was doing. But as it went on I started to question what he was doing. Everyone who wants to change is just killed. They are not even given a chance to explain themselves to the authorities."

Weng Ruda, 36, mother of three, lives in a slum at the foot of Payatas garbage dumpsite in Quezon City: "I like that he is very tough. There are no children loitering around now. They also avoid picking up bad habits."

Zainab Omar, 41, teacher, from Taguig City: "The children are safer now. Parents used to accompany their children to school before Duterte sat as president. Now they let their children go to school by themselves."

Graciano De Leon, 19, parking attendant, from Parañaque City: "What he is doing is good. He gave jobs to many people and many are happy with him. I just don't know about the families (of those killed) if that is good for them."

Marianito Navarra, 54, village watchman in Pasay City: "I pity the families of those who are killed, especially those who really had nothing to do with crime. There have been a lot of people who were killed that weren't really involved with drugs. They should just arrest them."

"...I am not saying Duterte should keep killing people. But for us, we will keep working as long as there is work."

Take aim at corruption

and I will do it even if I put my life and presidency at stake," Duterte further said, as he vowed to continue to work to achieve his election promise to eradicate corruption, criminality, and illegal drugs.

"That is my promise, non-negotiable ako diyan," he stressed.

Vigilante killings

The senator also reiterated his call for the PNP and the Duterte administration



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ALAM Unit 604 and Veterans Joyfully Welcome the 2017 New Year

From page 1

Undoubtedly, our men and women in uniform are our heroes, they are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to preserve and protect the freedom we have cherished most in our democratic way of life.

Indeed, the heroic deeds of our veterans are forever embedded in the pages of our history from such places as the malaria infested jungle of Bataan to the chilly cold hills of Korea, navigating through the treacherous meandering Mekong river of Vietnam up to the dangerously high mountains of Afghanistan down to the blinding sand storm of Iraq. Yet, they have also time to bring aids and assistance to such typhoon and earthquake ravaged places in far parts of the earth.

Auxiliary members are closely associated with our veterans who will serve in peace as the Legion served in time of war, "so that the Auxiliary could then carry forward the phases of the Legion activities more suitably perform by women".

In conformity with this mission, when the American Legion Auxiliary was founded, the American Legion Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604 came into being to help and assist our veterans in their many activities for their families and community where they have found peace and enjoyment with other residents.

Just like the many years that they are closely associated with Legion, the Auxiliary members are devoted to play their role in helping the veterans in whatever capacity that they are requested to do. And one of those is their traditional New Year's Celebration. However, everyone was surprised and bewildered when the New Year celebration to welcome the year 2017, the venue has been moved from the traditional place at the Magellan Hall of the American Legion Magellan Post 604 to the social hall of St. Paul Catholic Church on Florin Road, Sacramento, CA. We leave that perception into the minds of those who take it seriously why such change has been move.

The usual traditional celebratory spirit in welcoming the New Year continues between Auxiliary and Legion members who have been enjoying the camaraderie and friendship cultivated in so many years of New Year's celebration. The more than 150 Auxiliary and Legion members with their families and guests bravely overcome the cold weather with their winter clothing to be counted as revelers to welcome the 2017 year.

As expected the social hall of the church was well decorated with all the tables covered with white linen cloth containing bottles of champagne with multicolored balloons and champagne glasses. At the stage was a conspicuous streamer

with written words in bold letters "Happy New Year". There were also three giant plastic bags containing several multicolored balloons hanging from the ceiling to be pulled down when the clock strikes midnight.

When the social hall was filled up to capacity, well known community leader Lilia Rivera requested Dr. Fred Aquino to join her to co-emcee the night program and thereafter they called up Aida Azurin the President of American Legion Magellan Auxiliary Unit 604 to deliver her opening remarks.

In her speech, President Aida Azurin expressed her heartfelt thanks to everyone for accepting their invitations to join them in welcoming the 2017 new year. She also thanked the three candidates for Mrs. New Year Tere Ablang, Milet Pangilinan and Jasmine Asper to raise funds for disabled veterans and their families. Likewise, she also cited the spirit of volunteerism of those who extended their assistance and help in the preparation of the night's gathering as she wishes all a happy New Year and also urged them to enjoy the night program with continues music and dancing.

As everyone was enjoying their sumptuous dinner prepared by Rosalie Crandall and members of the Auxiliary, the three candidates for Mrs. New Year were presented as they prepared for their social boxes to be auctioned.

Thereafter, each candidate was given 5 minutes to auction her "social box" as she danced with each bidder until the time was consumed. When the three candidate's social boxes were already auctioned, the money handlers Oyen Abad, Josie Banag and Letty O'Quinn were sequestered to a secluded place with each of the candidate's watchers to count the money dropped into the basket of the candidates.

While waiting for the counting and the winner of the contest, continues dancing usually led by the Kapitbahay Dance group under the guidance of Lilia Rivera and husband Joe Rivera from line dancing to the latest craze of dance steps showing the grace and virtuosity



Mrs. 2017 New Year Tere Ablang with Milet Pangilinan and Jasmine Asper.



Photos by Dale Esperante



ALAM 604 President Aida Azurin and FCSV President Mercy Guerrero

of the revelers.

After just few minutes, the money handlers emerged and they announced the accumulated money garnered by the candidates. Jasmine Asper wearing a black brand named designed dress was declared as Mrs. Charity. She was escorted by Dr. Fred Aquino to the stage to claim her reserved seat where she received her Sash from Gigi Perez and her Tiara was given by Lita Calindas. Melit Pangilinan who was wearing an attractive white strapless evening gown dress was named as Mrs. Faith and likewise she was also escorted by Dr. Aquino to the stage to take her seat where she also received her Sash from Nannette Gerona while her Tiara was given by Josie Banag.

President Aida Azurin announced that the Mrs. 2017 New Year went to Tere Ablang who also named as

the Queen of the night. She was all smile in her joyful personality and she was stunningly beautiful in her pink backless evening gown as she was escorted by her husband in his black suit with matching red bow tie towards the stage to take her seat receiving several rounds of applause from her admiring audience. Mrs. 2017 New Year Tere Ablang received her Sash from Ron and Yumi Ablan and she was gloriously crowned by the outgoing Mrs. New Year Aurora Foresee. Royal dance was played by Rick Pasalo the D'Zound Connection for the Queen of the night and her Royal Court as the public followed.

Music and dancing were non-stop until Joe Gonzales led the countdown to welcome the New Year and when the clock strikes midnight all sorts of noise paraphernalia were made as they pulled down the three plastic bags hanging from the ceiling scattering all the multicolored balloons as the revelers stepped on them creating

laud noises. Hugs and kisses from the revelers as they greeted each other Happy New Year and the tradition of throwing coins on the floor was made by Joe Gonzales for good luck which was also enjoyed by those who picked them. Immediately thereafter, delicious "lugaw" was served courtesy of our community chef Carol Munar.

Teresita "Tere" Ablang is a native of Agoo, La Union, Philippines while her husband, Benedicto "Benny" Ablang is from San Fernando who served and retired from the US navy. Their marriage is blessed with three children Ron, Lance and Cher and they five grandkids (the youngest of whom are twins). Her two sons are both in the field of Engineering working with the County of Sacramento, while her daughter who resides in Boston is a nurse. She is a business owner and currently an active member of the Ilocandia Association of Sacramento.

Seen enjoying the night were: Rick Rafanan, Olive Jackson, Bill Bostoc, Doug and Nelda MacDonald, Dale and Melita Esperante, Howard and Glenda Williams, Dr. Vince and Precy Carbonell, Drs. Frank and Erlinda Marasigan, Engr. Joseph Ancheta, Segundo Azurin, Alex and Ling Avera, Melchor Munar, Mercedes Guerrero, Ruben Ruz, Warnita Avillanoza, Jessy and Beth Velasco, Rusty and Gloria Somera, Ched Discargar and Jun Abaya.

WE WISH YOU A PROPEROUS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Veterans Magellan Hall

Before this year is over, we would like to take this opportunity to express our sincerest appreciation to all those who contributed for the preservation of Veterans Magellan Hall.

The goal is to keep Magellan Hall standing for all veterans including our disabled comrades. Currently the access to this historic building is not disable-friendly and not compliant with the American Disability Act (ADA). Once we can open it up to all veterans by meeting ADA standards, we can offer more such as Linked Bingo which could guarantee support and revenue for Magellan Hall for continued existence into the future. With increased support, there will be more opportunities to spread goodwill to those in need. Thank you. May You All Have a Safe and Happy New Year!!!



Pope decries terrorism, says 2017 will be good if people do good



Pope Francis - New Year's Day 2017

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis in his New Year's greetings Sunday declared 2017 will be good to the degree that people do good and reject hatred, as he prayed for those courageously dealing with terrorism gripping the world in "fear and bewilderment."

"The new year will be good in the measure in which each of us, with the help of God, tries to do good, day by day, that's how peace is created," Francis told a crowd of 50,000 pilgrims, tourists and Romans gathered in St. Peter's Square for his noon blessing and New Year's Day remarks.

Francis advised people to "say no to hate and violence and yes to brotherhood and reconciliation." The Roman Catholic church dedicates the first day of the year to the theme of peace.

He also told those standing in the biting cold air that the new year had already begun badly.

"Unfortunately, violence has struck even on this night of well-wishes and hope," he said, referring to the attack on an Istanbul nightclub filled with New Year's revelers early Sunday that left 39 dead and dozens wounded.

"In sorrow, I express my

closeness to the Turkish people, I pray for the numerous victims and wounded, and for all the nation in mourning," Francis said.

He then prayed that God will sustain "all men of goodwill who courageously roll up their sleeves to deal with the plague of terrorism and this bloodstain which is gripping the world in a shadow of fear and bewilderment."

Earlier, during his homily during New Year's Day Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, Francis lamented "narcissist hearts" in societies becoming "cold and calculating."

"The loss of the ties that bind us, so typical of our fragmented and divided culture, increases this sense of orphanhood and, as a result, of great emptiness and loneliness. The lack of physical, and not virtual, contact is cauterizing our hearts and making us lose the capacity for tenderness and wonder, for pity and compassion," Francis said.

Francis says humility and tenderness are signs of strength, not weakness. —Frances d'Emilio/AP

By Tonyo Cruz

The general consensus online is that 2016 is by far the shittiest in recent memory — and I tend to agree only partly. Let me explain.

This 2016, we actually attained the achievement of connecting a majority of Filipinos to the Internet. The subjective feeling about having an awful year could be more because information has nearly totally exploded and readily available as never before. And could be immediately liked, shared, and broadcast too

The passing of great men and women, disasters, calamities, violent incidents and other bad news are delivered to us in real time and with an immediacy to a majority of our people.

For instance, the brazen hero's burial of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos of course qualifies as one of the most awful events of this year. No contest. What made the incident worse and perhaps helped call out the thousands to the streets that same day was that it unfolded practically right before our very eyes.

The live tweeting complete with photos, the last and the live TV coverage grabbed our complete attention and brought our blood to a boiling point. And there was the same-day video ordered and released by the Marcos family.

Any people in whose presence such a most dastardly deed been done would have reacted with the same fury that we saw ourselves caught up in.

Nobody also really cared much before about rallies brutally dispersed by authorities, because media would always report them as mere street fighting between rallyists and police. This year was different:

Saying goodbye to 2016

We saw the real thing as it unfolded — twice.

On April 1, the shots fired at the hungry protesting farmers in far away Kidapawan were seen and heard as if the incident happened in Manila. The condemnation was as swift and nearly complete, save for the usual anti-communists who have been happy with manipulating public opinion to villify protesters. They could not airbrush the videos that we saw online and on TV, and the fearful looks in the faces of our own poor people, and the shamelessness of the authorities as well.

It happened again right in the capital, in front of the embassy, when the Manila police run over rallyists in what they called a "dispersal." Only a most brazen few came forward to dispute the maltreatment of the protesting Lumads and other supporters.

Whether it happens far away Aleppo or "nearby" Hilongos, Leyte, the violent incidents hound us in some form we have ironically sought with before: immediately, in full color, blow-by-blow.

And so in a year that saw a new president take office and launch a most vicious and depraved "war on drugs," we saw its real face everyday and often. Complete with photo, videos and the most gory details.

To further complicate matters, the trolls are out there, apparently fortified by Milo since they show no evidence of suffering from any "energy gap" in despoiling the political discourse.

Feedback today is almost immediate and also immediately shared. The trolls and trolling by otherwise decent and respectable friends have

gotten many hooked even after — or especially after — the elections. Both wouldn't be a problem really in the old world of limited access to information. But how social media and the Internet operate heavily favor them. Each comment to or take-down of trolls and trollish behavior — however intelligent or brilliant — lifts them up, amplifies the troll content and end up being seen by even more people.

If Donald Trump's election happened 20 years ago, when cable TV was only available to a few and Philippine Internet was just in its formative years, I doubt

if we would've been as immediately disappointed and shocked as the Americans. But the world witnessed in 2016 the electoral repudiation of Hillary Clinton in real time.

Righteous indignation and fervent beliefs fueled 2016's three biggest positive stories in my book: the election of Rodrigo Duterte and repudiation of the previous regime in May; the magnificent anti-Marcos protests of November; and the triumph of Sunday Beauty Queen in the latest iteration of the Metro Manila Film Festival. In these cases, social networks yet again proved potent tools for mobilizing voters mobilization, for organizing mass actions and for championing new cinema. Even our kababayans abroad have not been absent from the scenes, rightfully inserting themselves into the elections, the Marcos debate and the movies.

2016 is the year of national and international interconnection of the Filipino. We are more connected to each other and to the world, and more informed as never

before. Bad and sad news — forever a mainstay of human history — can only travel faster today and affect us almost immediately. There are actually truly worse years for the country and the world.

The challenge of interconnection and information explosion are also their own consolations. If we are more connected and more informed, we should be able to approach and embrace 2017 more ready to make it a better year, with lots of good news waiting to be made and shared. If we are more connected and more informed, we should be able to see clearly the worst features of our system — at its core: bureaucratic corruption, foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism — and take appropriate collective and informed action.

Most probably, there would still be anger in 2017 and perhaps even never-before-seen fury because the times would demand it and our many problems have not been resolved in 2016. The public, 95 percent of whom approach 2017 with hope according to a survey, knows this.

That hope rests perhaps on the realization that, in our more connected and more informed world, the citizens cannot merely be a captive audience or even a witness to unfolding events, good or bad. It is the same as in our personal lives: Whether in the election of a new president, in the protests over the hero's burial of the dictator, in the rebirth of cinema, the citizen must be an active participant, key player, newsmaker, and thought-leader.

2017 is for us to make better and maybe even glorious. Yes, for us to make. What more exciting and sweeter thing can there possibly be for a nation and people?

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PerryScope

By Perry Diaz

Quo vadis, Leni?



Leni Robredo

When Maria Leonor “Leni” Robredo entered politics 2013, little did she know that within four years she’d be propelled to the second highest position in the country – the vice presidency. Some people call it “fast track” ascension; some call it luck; and a few call it destiny. But as the country’s vice-president since June 30, 2016 – just a little over five months in office – many people now believe that Leni is destined to assume what the country needs: a servant-leader whose compassion for the poor transcends policy.

Before entering public life four years ago, Leni led a simple and down-to-earth lifestyle. She graduated from the University of the Philippines with a degree in Economics in 1986. That was the year the People Power Revolution erupted. Inspired by the revolution, Leni deferred her law studies and went to work as a researcher for the Bicol River Basin Development Program, a government agency that was responsible for planning the development in the three provinces of the Bicol region. It was here where she met her future husband, Jesse Robredo, who was then the agency’s Program Director. They got married the following year.

A few years later, Leni obtained her Master’s Degree in Business Administration at San Beda College. After getting her MBA, she went to law school at the University of Nueva Caceres where she earned her law degree in 1992. She passed the bar exam in 1996

and went to work in the Public Attorney’s Office, where she took up the defense for cases pursued by her husband, who was then the Mayor of Naga City.

Fate and destiny

With 26 years of experience in serving the people – mostly poor – in the Bicol region, Leni sharply honed her “people skill,” which prepared her for a life of public service. However, she didn’t realize that fate – and destiny – would catapult her in a trajectory that would lead her to the vice presidency... a heartbeat away from the presidency.

With the untimely and sudden death of her husband Jesse from a plane crash in 2012, who was then the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) under the administration of then President Benigno Aquino III, Leni was encouraged by Liberal Party stalwarts including President Aquino to run for a congressional seat to represent Camarines Sur’s third district.

Her first foray into politics was one of the most – if not the most – watched contests during the 2013 mid-term elections. Pitted against Nelly Favis-Villafuerte, a member of the powerful Villafuerte dynasty, conventional wisdom dictated that Leni didn’t stand a chance of beating Favis-Villafuerte. The odds were just too great. But she won! She occupied her district’s congressional seat in Metro Manila and commuted by bus to and from Naga City once a week. She could have availed of a government-paid chauffeur-driven sedan but she didn’t.

Underdog wins

In 2015, Aquino prodded her to run for vice-president when the LP couldn’t find a strong candidate to field against several seasoned and nationally recognized senators. With no track record of winning in

nationwide elections, Leni didn’t stand a chance of beating them.

When Leni began her vice-presidential election campaign, she was the underdog with only 1% approval rating in the surveys versus the 44% of Chiz Escudero, who won then the front-runner. By April 2016, just two weeks before the elections, Leni climbed to the top of the leader board at 26% and tied statistically with Bongbong Marcos’ 25%. Leni won the vice-presidency by a razor-thin margin over Bongbong, which led Bongbong to file for recount.

But Bongbong wants the recount the precincts in which he got zero votes. However, he doesn’t want the recount of Leni’s zero-vote precincts, which she claims was four to five times as many as his.

Marcos burial



Marcos burial (Libingan Ng Mga Bayani)

Newly elected President Rodrigo Duterte who won in a landslide due mainly to his populist appeal to the common people and a promise to end illegal drugs, criminality,

and corruption in three to six months, appointed Leni as Chairperson of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC). However, the appointment did not dwell too well with Bongbong whom Duterte is openly supporting in his electoral protest against Leni. The case is now pending before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), which consists of members of the Supreme Court. Interestingly, the Supreme Court, by a 9-4

vote, recently ruled to allow the burial of Bongbong’s father and namesake, the late dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos to be buried in the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani (Heroes’ Cemetery). Does their vote indicate that PET would likely declare Bongbong the winner of the vice-presidential election; thus, replacing Leni as Vice President?

Déjà vu

With the political currents shifting erratically, speculation is rife that there is an insidious plot for Bongbong to replace Leni. The obvious one is for Bongbong to win the recount, which many believe would be done by hook or by crook. As to how they’d do it hookedly or crookedly, depends on many factors, including an attempt of Duterte to amend the Constitution to convert the government system to a federal system. Or, perhaps, into a parliamentary system where Duterte would remain President as the head of state and Bongbong who would be Prime Minister as head of government?

This reminds me when the elder Marcos changed the Constitution to a parliamentary system with him as President and Cesar Virata as Prime Minister. With a large majority of congressmen – many of them were LP turncoats – serv-

ing as rubber stamp for a Duterte-Marcos alliance, there wouldn’t be a need for Bongbong to run for President in a national ticket. All Duterte has to do is to convince the turncoats to make Bongbong the Prime Minister. And with the LP reduced to about 30 congressmen and a handful of senators, they could hardly function as an opposition party. There won’t be any opposition party! Does that remind you of the dark era of the Marcos dictatorship? Yes, it’s déjà vu all over again.

The battle begins

Last December 4, Leni resigned from the Duterte Cabinet after she received a text message from Cabinet Secretary Jun Evasco to “desist” from attending Cabinet meetings. In her letter, Leni said:



Leni Robredo VS. Duterte-Marcos

“I had been warned of a plot to steal the Vice Presidency. I have chosen to ignore this and focus on the job at hand. But the events of recent days indicate that this plot is now being set into motion.

“From the very beginning, the President and I had major differences in principles and values. Since I assumed office, I have been consistent in my opposition to issues such as the burial of former President Ferdinand Marcos in the Libingan ng mga Bayani, extra-judicial killings, reinstating death penalty, lowering the age of criminal liability, and sexual attacks against women.”

In a press conference following her resignation, Leni declared her readiness to lead the political opposition to a Duterte-Marcos conspiracy to steal the vice-presidency. “This is not a time for fear. This is a time for conviction and courage.” She concluded, saying: “We have fought this battle before and won. We will never let anyone revise our history and twist it to turn evil into good. What is at stake here is our collective future.”

And now, the battle begins. Quo vadis, Leni?

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PerryScope
By Perry Diaz

Was Trump the ‘Siberian Candidate’?



Putin’s Siberian Candidate.

President-elect Donald J. Trump won the U.S. presidency by virtue of the electoral vote. This is what the U.S. Constitution prescribes upon whom the presidency is given to. However, he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by 2.9 million votes.

More than half of the American voters believe that Trump’s come-from-behind victory happened because the Russians hacked the electoral votes in his favor. There were many indicators that support the findings of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that Russia had indeed interfered in the U.S. elections.

And the fact that Trump considers Russian President Vladimir Putin his friend, adds fuel to speculations that once Trump takes over the presidency, he would not stop Putin if he invades Europe.

How can one forget that Putin, on several occasions, declared that if Clinton wins the election, World War III is inevitable? His threat might sound innocuous but it would lead the American people to wonder: Why is Putin rooting for Trump? Or, to be more precise, why is Putin “blackmailing” the American people into voting for Trump lest Russia and the U.S. will go to war?

Ghosts of Yalta

From a geopolitical perspective, one might ask: Would Putin and Trump be able to synchronize the security and economic interests of their countries so as to avoid any conflict, particularly those of territorial nature? Does it call for Trump and Putin to meet just like when Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Josef Stalin met in 1945 at the Yalta conference for the purpose of discuss-

ing Europe’s post-World War II reorganization, which was how to divide Europe between the U.S., United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union? Well, the big winner then was the Soviet Union who ended up snaring Central and Eastern Europe into her political orbit. The big losers were the U.S. and U.K. who managed to keep Western Europe in their sphere of influence.

Seventy-one years after the historic Yalta conference, Europe is once again on the geopolitical chopping block. This time around, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is threatened by a resurgent Russia led by a megalomaniac dictator who dreams of regaining Mother Russia’s once-powerful empire. NATO, which is also known as the Western Alliance, was founded in 1949 to repel Soviet expansionism during the Cold War.

Western Alliance

After Putin grabbed Crimea in 2014 -- without firing a shot -- using what is now known as the “little green men,” Eastern Europe was thrown into a cauldron of fear and hysteria when Putin threatened to retake the Baltic countries -- Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. These countries joined NATO in 2004 together with other former Soviet client states Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. As members of the Western Alliance, they can invoke NATO’s Article 5, which says that an armed attack against one shall be considered an

attack against them all and each is obliged to assist the member attacked.

But here is the stinger: On July 20, 2016, during the presidential campaign, Trump shocked the Western Alliance when he told The New York Times that the U.S. would protect Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, from a Russian attack only if they have “fulfilled their obligations to us,” which is to allocate 2% of their GDP on military spending as required by NATO guidelines. Of the 28 NATO members, only five -- U.S., Greece, Poland, Estonia, and U.K. -- are fulfilling their obligations. Of the Baltics, only Estonia meets this requirement.

Needless to say, the Central and Eastern Europeans would not be able to defend their territories in the event of Russian invasion. And if the U.S. wouldn’t come to their aid, Putin would gobble them up... like chicken in a coop.

Pax Americana

Obviously, without the U.S.’s intervention to defend her NATO allies, Trump might as well kiss the Western Alliance goodbye, which begs the question: Is Trump serious about abandoning her NATO allies who have served as a buffer zone between the U.S. and Russia, thus protecting America’s Eastern Seaboard?

In my opinion, Trump wouldn’t abandon Europe. Sooner or later, he’d come to his senses. For the

U.S. to survive in a shrinking world he has to protect America’s Atlantic and Pacific flanks. The consequences of non-intervention would spell the end of Pax Americana and usher in a new world order -- Pax Russica. And if Trump really lives up to his threat to dismantle NATO altogether, it wouldn’t take long for Russia to dominate the Atlantic Ocean where she’d be able to strike at any part of the continental U.S. from her submarine-launched nuclear ballistic missiles.

Putin’s “nice letter”

Recently, Trump disclosed a letter dated December 15, 2016 that he received from Putin. Putin offered his “warmest Christmas and New year greetings” and urged him “to take real steps to restore the framework of bilateral cooperation.”

Putin continued, “I hope that after you assume the position of the President of the United States of America, we will be able -- by acting in a constructive and pragmatic manner -- to take real steps to restore the framework of bilateral cooperation in different areas as well as bring our level of collaboration on the international scene to a qualitatively new level.”

Trump’s reaction was contained in a statement he released to the media, saying: “A very nice letter

campaign, Trump said it would be proper to normalize and it can’t be worse, and I agree with him.” While it seemed like Putin was offering an olive branch, there was an underlying attempt to soft pedal Trump into relaxing his TrumpTweet, which said: “The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes.” He also told MSNBC, “Let it be an arms race. We will outmatch them at every pass and outlast them all.”

It must have scared the daylight out of Putin, who responded at the news conference, saying: “If anyone is unleashing an arms race, it’s not us... We will never spend resources on an arms race that we can’t afford.” Hmm... Could it be that it is still vivid in his mind that what caused the Soviet Empire’s disintegration was when the USSR tried to compete with the U.S.’s development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), commonly known as “Star Wars”? Certainly, Putin should have known it because he was embedded deeply into the KGB apparatus, which fell prey to CIA “disinformation” campaign about the “Star Wars” program. In 1984, the Pentagon rigged a test to show that a U.S. missile had brought down a target



Donald J. Trump and nuclear explosion.

from Vladimir Putin; his thoughts are so correct. I hope both sides are able to live up to these thoughts, and we do not have to travel an alternate path,” which makes one wonder: Why did Putin write a “nice letter,” which in the Russian psyche is a sign of weakness?

Arms race

At his annual year-end news conference last December 22, Putin said that the US and Russia “need to discuss ways to normalize our relations. During his election

get missile over the Pacific. The truth is: SDI was a hoax intended to fool the Soviet Union into wasting hundreds of billions of dollars in military spending to catch up with Star Wars.

During the presidential campaign,

the American media had suggested that Trump was the “Siberian Candidate” whom Putin helped in winning the presidency by orchestrating the hacking of the U.S. elections. While he seemed to be Putin’s man in the U.S. elections, it’s turning out now that Trump may have deceived -- or tricked -- Putin all along to help him win the election. In my opinion, Trump is by no means Putin’s puppet; he is an American patriot!

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Be 'willing heroes' like Rizal, Duterte urges Filipinos

By Roy C. Mabasa,
Hannah L. Torregoza,
and Merlina Hernando-Mali-

President Duterte called on Filipinos yesterday to emulate the traits of National Hero Dr. Jose P. Rizal in order to fight the country's present enemies – poverty, crime, illegal drugs, and corruption.

Vice President Ma. Leonor "Leni" Robredo also urged Filipinos to honor the national hero's legacy by bravely defending the rights of their fellowmen.

President Duterte made the call as the nation commemorated yesterday the martyrdom of Rizal. In his message during the Rizal Day celebration, the President said Filipinos are the "fortunate recipient of the fruits of Rizal's sacrifices, the freedom that he fought for, and the self-identity and honor that he strongly believed we ought to defend."

He said during challenging and perilous times and beyond his prodigious and various talents, Rizal became a "beacon and moral compass."

Today, Duterte pointed out that the country is still fighting for independence. But in place of foreign colonizers, the "modern invaders that subjugate our people's hearts, minds, and spirits" are impoverishment, lawlessness, drug addiction, and dishonesty in government.

According to the President, in order to successfully fight for the nation's freedom from the bondage of these afflictions and to bring about genuine change in society, the government needs the active involvement of all sectors

Duterte said Filipinos should become "willing heroes."

"As our nation undergoes a significant phase of social development and economic growth, a period of national unity that calls for the cooperation, patience, and



Duterte offering a wreath before the Rizal Monument at the Rizal Park in Manila.

sacrifice for our people is necessary," he said. "Each of us should manifest the same fervor, and dedication that moved and motivated Jose Rizal to action. Let us therefore emulate that traits of Rizal; let us be willing heroes – patriotic, faithful, and loyal to our Motherland."

The President expressed hope that Filipinos "may also awaken and become our own heroes-committed to advocate good governance and uphold the rule of law; steadfast to end criminality and all forms of government corruption; and compassionate to the plight of the poor and privileged."

STAND UNITED
Robredo stressed the importance of being united in facing the challenges that confront the society. "Let us stand united in the face of adversities and bravely defend the rights of our fellow Filipinos

as we celebrate his memory and legacy," she said.

She urged the public to remember Rizal's contribution to the Filipino people, adding Rizal's "life and work have brought hope to those in despair, and courage to those living in fear."

Robredo also enjoined the whole nation to honor Rizal's sacrifice "as we learn by his example, and emulate his love for our country." She noted that Rizal's life is "testament to the fundamental importance and liberating power of education."

Rizal's legacy, Robredo said, is a "continuing reminder that it is the duty of every Filipino to find the courage to always

speak the truth and unfailingly safeguard the freedom of its people."

BE LIKE RIZAL

Senator Loren Legarda noted that Filipinos also possess a resilient spirit that enables them to weather challenges, "even the worst economic and social conditions."

"Rizal was the epitome of strength and resiliency and overcame the monumental challenges he faced as we know from our nation's history. He drew strength from his family, his faith and his beloved nation. I hope Filipinos would follow his example," she stressed.

Sen. Grace Poe also said the spirit of Rizal's heroism "lies in loving our country in our thoughts, words, and deeds."

"There need not be bloodshed to show our love for the motherland," said Poe who was one of

the senators who called on the Duterte government to put a stop to the spate of extrajudicial killings in the country.

Senator Leila de Lima, a staunch critic of the Duterte administration, expressed hope that today's generation of Filipinos would find time to study and live the principles Rizal taught with his life.

"As Filipinos who show our love and concern to our country and to our fellowmen, let us live the values and principles Dr. Rizal and our other heroes' had established. Let's fight for the freedom that our ancestors didn't get to see yet

they fought hard for so we can pass on to the next generation a just and peaceful future," de Lima said.

Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, likewise, urged the Filipinos to emulate Rizal who was a "multi-tasker" during his lifetime as a doctor, writer and teacher.

Pangilinan said there is no need for Filipinos to die for the country just to follow Rizal's principles. "You don't need to die just to be like Dr. Jose Rizal," Pangilinan said.

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Sinag-tala's Glad Tidings To All



By Dale Esperante

On December 10, 2016 at 5:30 p.m., SinagTala held a reception for their closest friends, in the beautifully decorated dining hall of Luther Burbank High School. The VIP Reception Team led by Chair Rachele Limos provided an “endless” line of entrees and desserts.



Photos by Dale Esperante and Eugene Asuncion

Co-emcees Doc Fred Aquino and Rolie Mamaug managed the announcements and introductions. To add holiday cheer, the Maharlika Lions Club choir led by President Perry Diaz sang a medley of

Christmas carols, followed by Sinagtala's singers: Violet Taraya, Taryn Bajar, and Ella Bajar (Children's Ensemble), Jazmine Lewis, Tintin Garcia, and Apoll Reyes (Teen Ensemble), and Ronaviv Garcia (Alumna). Special guests to this affair were staff of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, Lenee Eller, Program Manager, and Diane Cripe, Art in Public Places Program Manager. The California Arts Council was also represented by some of their staff who enjoyed the performances. Both organizations provided financial grants to Sinagtala, thanks to the Sinagtala Grants Committee led by Charlie Galinato. Between songs and dinner, President Beep introduced the Producers Team of Dr. Alfred Aquino, Jennilyn Felias, Raeselle Lao, Dick Mazon, Conrad Panganiban, and Cora Ramirez. The lady responsible for the artistic direction of the show was introduced last, none other than Artistic Director Gladys Imperio-Acosta. Gladys was accompanied by her loving husband Dave and their precious Gabriella.

tempo for the rest of the evening. The melody of Shine Pilipinas led by Tuesday Freas and Allan Limos played well with the rapid-fire poetry (rap) energetically performed by Chris Galinato. The lively energy on stage captivated the audience who expressed their appreciation with cheers of approval. Without question, faces smiled as they watched.

Dinner was superb, thanks again to VIP Chairwoman Rachele Limos and her committee members. Warmed by the songs and gratified by the dinner reception, at 7 p.m., a VIP group joined a behind the scene tour of Sinagtala. The tour lasted close to a half an hour. A few minutes after 7:30 p.m., Sinagtala 2016: A Theatrical Revue, started.

The opening number of the show set the

This writer described this show in the past as an emotional roller-coaster ride. Always a thrill. This year's roller coaster still thrilled, but with a bit more swag. The familiar songs, such as Handog ng Pilipino Sa Mundo, Bayan Ko, Magkaisa, May Bukas Pa, Mama, Anak, Hindi Kita Malilimutan, 12 Days of Pinoy Christmas in addition to

Continued on page 12

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Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Carol Munar I

By Faina E. Abaya

Indeed, the pomp and grandeur of the coronation ceremony of Her Majesty Queen Carol Munar with her entourage and Royal Court which was held on December 17, 2016 at the California Ballroom of the Double Tree Hotel by Hilton, Sacramento, California was the last social gathering of the Filipino American Community of Sacramento as the most prestigious and successful event of the year.

Undoubtedly, we owe this kind of spectacle to the sincerity of purpose of our four outstanding women whose dedication and unselfishness have brought the best of ourselves to support the objective of the event for the best interest of our community.

The weather warning of possible storm and intermittent rain of the cold winter night has not affected the eagerness nor dampened the celebratory spirit of everyone to come out and witness the crowning of her Majesty Queen Carol Munar and her Royal Court.

Accordingly, the expected 150 crowd to attend such memorable occasion has swelled to more than 250 attendees from our diversified community and beyond. As expected, both the ladies and gentlemen were wearing their best evening attires, the ladies showed their elegance with brand-named formal evening gowns of different designs and colors. The gentlemen were not far behind with their sartorial looks in their one or two piece suits with matching ties and some were even comfortably wearing tuxedo and Barong Tagalog.

To emphasize the significance of the gathering befitting the Royal Coronation of a woman who gives enormous contributions to her community, the California Ballroom of the hotel has been well decorated. A tall sparkling Christmas tree was placed at the entrance of the Ballroom while multicolored wreaths were tacked on the walls to conform with the spirit of the Christmas season which everyone feels at this time of the year.

A well decorated Ark where the Queen and entourage with her Royal court were to be presented was placed at the end of the Ballroom facing the stage where the Queen and her Royal court will be crowned and seated throughout the evening's ceremony. The stage was also decorated with miniature twinkling lights and different species of flowers with varied colors while the four white and purple covered chairs were reserved for the Queen and her Royal Court.

As soon as the Ballroom was filled up to capacity, the evening's program started by well-known community personalities Remy Solomon and Leila Pereira as co-emcees who immediately called the color bearers Joe Gonzales and Rick Rafanan to post the Philippine and United States flags and thereafter both countries National Anthems were sang by Estela Rabara and D'Dreamgirls. Rick Rafanan rendered the



Photos by Dale Esperante and Dave San Pedro

invocation who implored the blessings of the Devine Providence for the wellbeing of everyone and for the success of the night's event.

While everyone was enjoying their sumptuous dinner incoming Queen Carol Munar I and her Royal Court Mrs. Mindanao, Imelda Del Rosario, Mrs. Luzon Esmeralda Maguire and Mrs. Visaya, Luz Molina were presented with their respective escorts Melchor Munar, Robert Allen, Johnny Martin and Frank Ancheta. The four outstanding ladies showed their grace and elegance when they performed a well-choreographed dance receiving thunderous applause from their admiring audience.

Thereafter, the amiable and energetic President of FCSV Mercy Guerrero delivered her welcome address saying among other things, "I congratulate Her Majesty Queen Carol Munar I, Mrs. Luzon Esmeralda Maguire, Mrs. Visaya Luz Molina and Mrs. Mindanao Imelda Del Rosario for keeping their commitment to help FCSV on its pursuit to build the Filipino Cultural Center and to support its program". She also thanked Mina Guerra and Margie Pasalo who co-chaired and managed the Mrs. Philippines contest as well as their handlers, supporters and volunteers to make the event extremely successful. Likewise, the President also expressed her profound gratitude to the outgoing Queen Mercury Acosta I and her Royal Court Cristine Sison Wiggins and Atty. Kathleen Gallagher for remarkably representing FCSV during their reign.

Well known community leader Sarah Enloe took the honor to introduce the guest speaker, Cris Mateo pinched hitting for Assemblyman Jim Cooper of the 9th California Assembly District who was unable to attend due to prior commitment. Cris Mateo has been with Assemblyman Cooper since 2015 as his Senior Representative serving

as a liaison officer for the many community organizations within the Assemblyman District.

Accordingly, "Chris also spent over 8 years in higher education administration,

including teaching college level English and professional development, managing an undergraduate business program and directing the training and development of twelve campuses collegiate system" In addition, he is also a board member of the Philippine National Day Association and serves as a member of the Cultural Advisory Council for California state Fair.

In his speech Cris Mateo said that, assemblyman Jim Cooper is "honored to represent over 7000 Filipino voters in Sacramento County that live in Assembly District

Continued on page 12

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Sinag-tala

From page 10

Wishing You Were Brown, Our Voices, PINaSmile, 90's Medley, Bulaklakan, Kalapati, Subli, Sayaw sa Bangko, Kwento ng Pasko, Pasko Para Sa Lahat, Thank You for The Love, gratified all who came for the ride. Folks who braved the wet and wintry conditions outdoors to watch A Theatrical Revue were rewarded with the warm community feel of the show.

History, hope, and unity may best describe the feel of this year's show. The numbers and the song selections touched all three descriptions. Hope stood out, especially when participated by the children's ensemble, the show is guaranteed to continue long into the future. The participation of the alumni, not only as show performers, but also as trainers and mentors to the young and the new, who wish to join ensures history, hope, and unity. The words sacrifice and giving also came to mind.

Sinagtala is a community activity that grows like a family. The alumni encouraged their children to be part of this year's show: Gladys had Gabriella, Tuesday had her twins Maceo and Miles, Ronaviv had Kaylan, who sang



Mama, the very song that Ronaviv first sang at a past Sinag-tala Revue. Merebeth Bajar enjoyed coaching her nieces Ella and Taryn Bajar, and wowed the audience with her own emotional rendition of "May Bukas Pa." Other alumni contributing to the show's success were Malou Verder-Carlos (Bayan Ko), Lorraine De Arco (Handog and Magkaisa), Hubert Lardizabal (Handog), Ben Fenkell (Wish-

ing You were Brown) and Aljion Tabion (90's Medley). And while they appeared accomplished as stage performers, they were also a proficient production crew manning the microphones and assisting backstage.

Fun was also an important factor in this year's successful show. The love of performing by those onstage was obvious and greatly appreciated by those of us off-

stage. As evidenced by the cheers and sniffles I heard from the lady seated behind me and the folks around her, smiles and emotional tears prevailed. For the lady behind me, I hope the gentleman (Conrad?) with her was holding her hand when she was tearful.

Noteworthy this year in addition to the performances onstage: the flawless sound system, the intro turn of Dee Pizzaro and her mas-

terful conducting of the band who provided great music, the decision to include translations displayed on the monitors next to the stage, the simple but relevant stage background, the song selections, the inclusion of a little bit of modern poetry (rap), the melodies and the harmonies, the fresh and renewed feel! Joy Joy!!!

Time flies when one is having fun. On this evening, time flew because we didn't want the show to end, but it did. Two by two, the cast members of the show stepped forward on stage to take their bows. Followed by the backstage crew who stepped out from behind the curtain to take their bows onstage as a group. Then cheers erupted onstage and offstage when a quiet figure came out last. Artistic Director Gladys Imperio-Acosta took her bow. Celebration ensued. Then a voice on the loudspeaker spoke, it was President Beep Alo thanking all who attended. The people onstage and offstage became one as hugs and handshakes took place all around. Knowing Beep, she would have preferred to say thanks in her usual way, Mga kasapi, kapamilya, at kaibigan ng Sinag-tala, maraming salamat po.

Coronation of Her Majesty

From page 11

9". Adding that they are not just ordinary voters but most of them are "community leaders, engaged in business, educators, medical professionals, military men and women that serve and have served our country and many others that contribute to the social wellbeing and overall success of our community".

Furthermore, the speaker also said, that Jim Cooper is "always excited to support FCSV in its efforts to preserve the Filipino American social and economic wellbeing through its leadership in the community." Assemblyman Cooper also "recognizes the organization efforts such as its many great events to raise funds for its scholarship program and other important causes". And, in conclusion he said, "our office would like to thank the organizers of this event, especially, FCSV President Mercy Guerrero for her leadership and we look forward to continuing our partnership for the betterment of our community".

At this juncture, the outgoing Mrs. Philippines, her highness Queen Mercy Acosta with her royal Court Mrs. Visaya, Atty, Kathleen Gallagher and Mrs. Luzon, Cristine Sison Wiggins were summoned to have their farewell walk before their admiring subjects. Outgoing Queen Mercy Acosta in her farewell message said that she was deeply honored to have served the community where she had found enjoyment and participated in many commendable activities for the best interest of everyone.

In a pomp of flaming colors, showcasing the beauty, grace and elegance of the four outstanding women of our community who



dedicated their lives to preserve our great cultural heritage are now called upon to receive their accolades as a reciprocity of their unselfish efforts for the betterment of their community.

First to be introduced was Imelda Del Rosario who holds the title Mrs. Mindanao wearing a blue colored evening dress with bright frontal designed entered the Ark with her escort Robert Allen in his tailored western suit to the tune of a melodious music until they reached her reserved seat on the stage where she received her Tiara from Edna Villanueva and Dr. Tony Solomon while the sash was presented by Mina Guerra and Ray Oineza.

Thereafter, Luz Molina as Mrs. Visaya was called in her strapless red evening dress with white fur like shawl on her shoulder while her escort Frank Ancheta was all smile in his tailor made black suit and upon reaching the stage, she received her Tiara from Atty. Kathleen Gallagher and Tom Amaba while her Sash was given by Evangeline Molina and Maria Bahoric. She was followed by Mrs. Luzon, Esmeralda Maguire wearing a designer's red evening dress as she walked with her es-

cort Johnny Martin in his dark suit towards the stage for her reserved seat. She received her tiara from Atty. Kathleen Gallagher and Dr. Fred Aquino while her Sash was given by Elvie Caswell and Atty. Beatriz Alo.

In a magnificent setting, so gloriously awaited was the entrance of her Majesty Carol Munar I who was so stunningly beautiful in her all white floor length attire with golden trimmings and attached long court train to complement the elegance of her queenly dress. Beaming with love and pride was her Majesty's escort, Melchor Munar in his flawless white suit with matching red bow tie.

Leading her way to her throne were well dressed flower girls, Kimiko Munar and Jaslene Ramos Singh followed by her Scepter Bearer Eli Ruz and just behind was the Crown Bearer Kaleb Munar Sanjo. Upon reaching her reserved seat, Brandon Sanjo and Anna Marie Munar presented her Sash while Vangie Flores and Talia Shadwick gave her a Bouquet and the Scepter was presented by Peter and Jovelyn Nisperos.

Culminating a commendable journey which is only the like of an outstanding woman can put



into action and reality to help propagate and show the depth and greatness of our culture heritage with her dedication now receives the honor that the community can give. Holding also the title Mrs. FCSV Mrs. Philippines, Her Majesty Carol Munar I was likewise crowned gloriously as such by Cris Mateo on behalf of Assemblyman Jim Cooper, outgoing Queen Mercury Acosta and Dr. Carmelita Nisperos.

Queen Carol Munar I and her three princesses also received their respective trophies as their lifetime remembrance for their selfless dedication to their community to preserve our cultural heritage and to help maintain and sustain the many programs for the betterment of everyone. Queen Carol Munar expressed her heartfelt gratitude to her family, supporters and to the officers of the Filipino community of Sacramento and Vicinity for giving her the chance to serve her community.

Community Diva Remy Solomon mesmerized her audience with her professional like rendition of the love song "Ikaw" which she obviously referred to her loving husband, Dr. Tony Solomon when at the end of the song she pointed

at him as the "Ikaw", receiving standing ovation and deafening thunderous applause from her admiring audience. The closing remarks was delivered by Joe Gonzales who thanked the community for their support to make the event joyful and successful.

Thereafter, the Royal dance ensued with her Majesty Queen Carol Munar and escort Melchor leading the members of her Royal Court to a classical waltz as the public followed. Music and dancing continues through the wee hours by the D' Zound Connection Live Band headed by Rick Pasalo.

Past Mrs. Philippines and Princesses present were: Maria Bahoric, Elvie Spano, Luvimine Prieto, Mina Guerra, Edna Villanueva, Nellie Holland, Vicky Johnson, Fe Alvarez, Rosie Sloan and Janet Tavora. Community personalities seen enjoying the night were: Dr. Fred Aquino, Atty. Beatriz Alo, Aida Azurin, Ling Avera, Tom Amaba, Joe Gonzalez, Dr. Tony Solomon, Dave and Dinnah San Pedro, Sarah Enloe, Angie Borgeo, Dale Esperante, Jun Abaya and Ray Oineza. HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ONE AND ALL.



In Loving Memory

Ermelina R. Weitzenberg “Memie”

Born in Manila, Philippines on 24 August 1940, Memie left us to join our Father on Sunday, December 18, 2016. Wife of Dick, Mother of Raymond and Anna Marie (Ryan Vellanoweth), Lola of Tyler and Thomas, Sister of Ate Josie (Larry Patria) and Loida (Frank Villegas). Taught in North Sacramento School District. Leader in the Filipino Community. Services held on Monday, December 26th (9th day); Memorial held on Tuesday the 27th, 5:30 p.m. at East Lawn Elk Grove; Funeral Mass held on Wednesday the 28th, 11 a.m. at St. Ignatius Loyola on Arden Way followed by a reception at the Sacramento Hilton Hotel. - See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sacbee/obituary.aspx?n=ermelina-weitzenberg>

Family

To the Loving Family of Memie Weitzenberg, on behalf of Dave and Dinnah San Pedro and the Staff of PF News, we offer our deepest and sincerest condolences. We heard and felt your great love during the memorial services. On the 27th at East Lawn in Elk Grove, we listened to Dick, Loida, Josie, and Cynthia Bonta. Dick shared how much he is missing the Love of his Love and his Best Friend. Loida shared that she is the youngest of the three sisters, and if they were in the military, she would be the obedient “Private—to Corporal—to Drill Sergeant,” Memie the “General /Admiral” otherwise the Chief of Staff, and Josie the “Commander-in-Chief.” Ate Josie shared that when something needed to get done, she would confidently expect “General” Memie to get it done. Things got done with the General. Cynthia shared inspirational tidbits about her friend and spiritual sister—Memie.

On the 28th at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, the Wednesday morning mourners at 11 a.m. for Memie looked like a Sunday morning congregation. Father Art Wehr shared that Memie became a member of the parish in 1989. Father Art, in his homily, related that now we can stand back to appreciate Memie’s Masterpiece—A Beautifully Created Tapestry of Many Colors Signifying Memie’s Love of Life for Family and Friends. The Bayanihan choir with Remy Solomon sang the hymnals. Remy delivered a moving rendition of Ave Maria for meditation. After the mass, Raymond accompanied by his dad and sister shared his memories and then thanked all who came to all the rosaries, novenas, and this mass for his mom. Dick and Anna Marie also expressed their gratitude for all the love and continued support.

On the 28th at the reception, the room was set to receive a throng of family and friends. Still, the Hilton Hotel staff had to add more tables outside the room for the groups who arrived last. The services and the gatherings, daughter Anna Marie shared, were all in accordance with the instructions left by Memie. Mom wanted a joyful celebration of her life, Anna Marie announced. MC Paradela sounded like Louis Armstrong aka Satchmo when he sang one of Memie’s favorite songs, What A Wonderful World. Remy Solomons’s Wind Beneath My Wings said a lot about her friendship with Memie. Derek Ledda sang a song he wrote about Filipino Fathers, but revised the lyrics to tribute Memie. The Vellanoweth Trio: Anna Marie’s husband Raymond (guitar) with his brother (lead vocal) and dad (guitar), delivered another Memie’s favorite, Let It Be. The family trio was followed by a group who relived Memie’s fun habit in the past—



The Riego-Weitzenberg Family and Friends

The Singing Sisters. Twelve (my count) of Memie’s friends entered the room looking like the nuns on the movie, Sister Act. The “Sisters” carried a large framed photograph of Memie dressed as a nun. They set Memie’s photograph on the wall near them before their song. The twelve nuns performed a lip-synched version of the movie’s song “I Will Follow You.” Their performance was so entertaining that while watching, people were also holding their smart phones recording. For the finale, Anna Marie bravely performed a duet with Auntie Remy. Based on what we heard, she should sing more! Memie’s daughter sang beautifully and in harmony with Auntie Remy. Seeing that all her wishes and instructions were followed diligently by her family, Memie’s loving smile is now eternal.

Community

When I met Memie in 2007, it was Richard “Dick” Weitzenberg’s second term as Filipino American Veterans Association (FAVA) president and Memie’s second time around as First Lady. Since Dick is the 2016-2017 FAVA president (third time), made this for Memie’s third time as First Lady. With all due respect to all former FAVA First Ladies, including my own wife, I would venture to say that Memie may be defined as the First Lady of all First Ladies. She was

soft spoken who firmly supported all that was good for FAVA, the veterans, and the community. Her influence as FAVA’s first lady was accepted by many of her community friends. Being the outgoing President and First Lady, Dick and Memie organized the 2008 FAVA Anniversary and Installation of Officers ceremony. It seemed like the whole Fil-Am community showed up for the event because of Memie’s friendly invitations.

Well known to most of us, she was a leader in Sacramento’s Filipino-American Community. She had served as President of the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity (FCSV). This year, she served as the President of the Filipino Women’s Club (FWC), and represented FAVA as First Lady. She had led, supported, and involved other organizations in the community for the greater good of all. Her profound service to the Filipino-American community

departed friends, her voice bared some emotion. When she mentioned lifelong friends and colleagues who have traveled far and wide with her during the years, she glowed with pride. And later that evening, she even performed a cultural dance with the Filipino American Veterans’ Association (FAVA) Ladies.

In past small gatherings or meetings, when no one was officially appointed to do the invocation, Memie would look for me to say the prayer. On the 18th of December, before an American Legion membership meeting at Magellan Hall, Commander Tom Amaba quietly informed me of Memie’s passing at 1 p.m., two hours before the start of our meeting. The ritual of a legion meeting includes the playing of the national anthem as part of the flag ceremony. As the anthem played while saluting the flag, I thought of Memie. After the flag ceremony, it was time for me as the chaplain to pray. It became obvious to all my legionnaire comrades that it was more than an opening prayer. After the prayer, the commander had to call for a ten-minute break before we could resume the official meeting.

On the 19th of December, before a rosary, Memie’s sister Josie Patria expressed her appreciation for the photos of the September FWC event. The photos were the last taken of Memie with friends in a social party setting. Josie, it was a privilege and an honor for me to have photographed your sister, Memie.

Memories

On 20 Dec 2016, an email was sent out to contacts who I knew were also friends of Memie Weitzenberg. It was a request for a line of memories of our dear friend. Memie was loved by an enormous number of friends. My email contact list is probably abbreviated compared to Memie’s friends list.

- *Beatriz Alo: Mentored me on community service...the value of serving others.*
- *Perla Nolasco: I’ve known Memie since the 1980s because of our kids attending school at St. Charles, and she was a person that always had a smile on her face.*
- *Alexander Cheng: Aunt Memie was a very hard-working lady who seemed to never tire serving the community. Knew her since 1997 when I first joined FAVA.*
- *Fred Aquino: Memie invited me to join the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity. I’m grateful for her invite, for it allowed me to be part of the community. To serve just like her.*
- *Erlinda Aglubat: Very efficient leader, all giving, loving and kind. We will really miss her.*
- *Aurora Foresee: Memie was a devoted and dedicated leader. The Filipino Community benefited immensely from her leadership.*
- *Marie Uber: She was truly a remarkable woman, soft spoken and a torch of light in leadership.*
- *Alice Pambid: I’ve known Memie for almost 50 years. She was a loving and af-*

Continued on next page

“Memie”

fectionate friend. Even on the phone, I could sense the warmth and tenderness in her voice. She was the only friend who called me Elice, not Alice. I will miss her so much.

• **Aida Calindas:** Memie was like Mother Teresa. She was ready to help anyone. She had a big heart proven by her positive thinking, caring and appreciation. I had known her for 30 years, we used to ride the train going to the Bay Area, been on cruises together, and our last trip together was to Las Vegas just for fun. I will miss her dearly.

• **Jun and Faina Abaya:** We will miss but treasure your friendship with a big Smile forever.

• **Sarah Enloe:** I will miss you very much, Ate Memie.

• **Santee Galinato:** I am truly grateful to Memie for providing help and support when I needed it most. The last time was a week before she was diagnosed with her illness, Memie and Dick attended a fundraising event that I helped organized in El Dorado Hills, I would like to dedicate the success of that event to Memie.

• **Leila Pereira:** I got to really know Ate Memie in the early 1990s when my family, along with others who are now our long-time and close family friends, put together a very successful FCDAS ‘Sayaw Nang Pagibig’ variety show under her chairmanship. She was my mentor, my close friend, and big sister, who groomed and inspired me to take on active roles in the community,



Photos by Dale Esperante

working side by side on the many worthwhile projects of Bayanihan, PNDA, FWC and FCSV. I will surely miss her beautiful and gentle smile, her gracious and kind-hearted spirit, but most of all, her generous

and loving friendship.

(Family and Community articles by Dale Esperante, Contributing Writer for PF Newspaper. Thank you to all who submitted their memories to PF News (Philippine Fiesta).

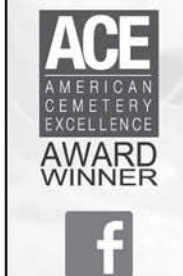
FCSV



FCSV Christmas Party at Jose Rizal Community Center on December 11, 2016.



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Birthdays



ADELINA CASTELLANO and sister Analicia JANUARY 13



DANA S. MERCADO JANUARY 28



GILBERT GARRUCHO & wife Aida DECEMBER 29



HOMER LUMBANG JANUARY 28



BENEDICTO ABLANG with wife Tere DECEMBER 27



TITO DE LEON with wife Elsa and children / JANUARY 4



EZRA ARGUELLES with sis Aria and Grandpa Dave / DECEMBER 24



GEORGE ADUCAYEN JR. and wife Caring / JANUARY 9



LIZA and MIKE VALENTINE Wedding Anniversary, December 30

Arya's Winter One-derland



Arya Solomon Amorao's first birthday celebration on January 1, 2017 held at the Magellan Hall in Sacramento. With Troy Keala Takara, Camilla Solomon Lozano, Andrew Amorao, Amanda Solomon Amorao, Remy, Tessa, Jose and Priscilla Hangartner Solomon.

Calendar of Events

JAN. 7, 2017, (SAT)
Feast of Santo Nino

9:30 am
Good Shepherd Catholic Church Santo Nino Prayer Group Elk Group CA
Tessie 916.346.6554
Agri 916.799.0750



JAN. 21, 2017, (SAT)
ATI-ATIHAN FESTIVAL

Mass at 6pm
The Aklan Association of Sacramento and Vicinity
Jose Rizal Community Center
7230 Florin Mall Dr. Sacramento, Ca
Frank - 916.712.6094

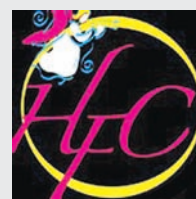


JAN. 28, 2017, (SAT)

7th Annual Leo Giron Crab Feed
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Dinner will begin @ 6:45
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By Gabriel Ortigoza, PhD

What if your patient asks you to pray?

On Friday, December 9, 2016, I was assigned patients with ratio of 1:3. This assignment simply means that I am in charge of three patients. These patients are either Head and Neck, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), or Thoracic cases.

On that day I had a Head and Neck patient assignment. One of my patients was a status post partial glossectomy (part of her tongue was surgically removed) due to tongue cancer. The patient was fully alert and oriented but because

of that surgery she cannot talk. The best way my patient can communicate is thru writing.

The patient has a good support system. Her husband stays with her 24/7. Her children came from different states to take care of her.

I work day shift which starts at 7am till 3:30pm. At around 11am the patient's husband came out of the room towards my direction at the nurses' station located just right outside the patient's room. The husband relayed a message from the patient asking me to pray for the patient.

I've been a registered nurse for 25 years and it was my first time to received that peculiar request from my patient. Most of the things patients' ask are the basics like water, food, medicine, assistance to the toilet, etc., but not a prayer.

That request from my patient made me take one step backward for a second. My spiritual gift is in healing. Then I realized am a believer. I am not a chaplain but as

a believer I should be ready to minister to the sick. Thank God I was educated in Christian schools (Southern Baptist College and Central Philippine University - both baptist institutions), not to mention my mother was once a bible teacher. I was like a boy scout - always ready. To

make the long story short, I went to my patient's room and prayed.

When I was hired by the hospital am working right now 12 years ago I was required to attend NEO

(New Employee Orientation). At NEO it was discussed all DOs and DON'Ts. An employee is prohibited to talk about these two topics: politics and religion.

In this case, it was the patient who requested for a prayer. As long as I did not initiate the topic I believe I am safe and should not be in trouble.

On the day my patient was discharged she wrote me this letter:

"Thank you Gabe for your kindness to us. You have an Ideal family. Specially thankful for your prayers for me. Please continue to pray for me. We can always depend on Him for all our needs and He will never leave us nor forsake us. Thanks to you and Gemma."

My new year's message to all the believers is to stand firm on your faith.

Happy new year and God bless (*gabbyortig@yahoo.com*)



Manigong Bagong Taon!

By Manny Villar

Maybe I'm just an old school but I really prefer the way we used to greet each other for the New Year: MANIGONG BAGONG TAON! Of course, the traditional English greeting of "Happy New Year" is fine but our Filipino greeting is just full of hope.



year.

First, we had a peaceful, honest, and very successful national elections in May where an overwhelming majority of our people voted into office the first President from Mindanao, Rodrigo Roa Duterte, who immediately set out

fulfilling the mandate given to him: restore peace and order in the country in order to ensure progress for the poorest of the poor.

Manigo means prosperous or favorable. And that's what I want for everyone in 2017: to be happy and prosperous.

In my previous column, I talked about using Christmas and New Year's celebrations as opportunities to make memories with our families. I mentioned the small tradition I started with my family of getting together abroad to celebrate the holidays.

In my company, I also started a tradition about 25 years ago. Every year, I would bring some of my officers and management people to the US to celebrate the coming of the New Year. My only criteria is that they should not have visited the US before.

I decided to do this for two reasons. First, I treat my employees as family. This is cliché, I know, but it's true. I treat my company as an extended family. I firmly believe that a happy and contented workforce is a productive workforce. So, I want to give my officers who have never experienced going to the States the opportunity to do so. Second, the US trip also gives them the opportunity to be exposed to different business practices. The trip might actually give them ideas on how to improve our business here in the Philippines.

Corollary to these is that it gives us the opportunity to bond outside the work environment. Running a business is not just about the bottomline. It's also about human relationships. I would like to think that I have very loyal, capable, and passionate employees. Many have been with the company for years, even decades.

By the time this column sees print, I should be in the US with 40 of my officers. I hope everyone has a great time celebrating the end of a year and looking forward to a new one.

That is the same wish that I have for our country. 2016 has been an exceptional

Second, our economy hit some high notes particularly a 7.1% GDP growth in the usually lackluster 3rd quarter of the year. This performance was hailed by many as the strongest growth in Asia outpacing China and other emerging markets.

There is a lot more good news, but these two should make us proud and happy of what we have accomplished this year. Sure, there are bad news and complaints left and right. But I would rather look at it as a healthy sign that our democracy is working despite its imperfections.

I wish our nation more success in the coming year as the country assumes chairmanship of the ASEAN. We will host the ASEAN Summit on the heels of President Duterte's successful trips to China, Japan, Brunei, Cambodia, and Singapore. I hope we can continue with strong ASEAN cooperation on security and trade issues.

In 2017, we also look forward to the success of the peace talks between government and the Communist Party of the Philippines and the track with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. I hope next year, we can finally make that first significant step towards genuine peace.

On a personal note, as some sort of a New Year's resolution, let us all endeavor to be nicer to one another. Let's be more caring towards our fellowmen. I understand that sometimes we have strong feelings about certain issues and we see ourselves in the middle of a nasty debate. But remember that we can disagree without being disagreeable. Let us not lose what makes us human, what makes us Filipinos.

Manigong bagong taon po sa inyong lahat! I wish you and your family peace, health and progress!

Komiks by Nancy Bautista



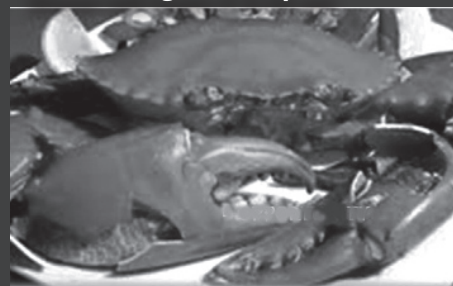
7th Annual Leo Giron Crab Feed

Featuring Bahala Na Multi-Style's Very Own Chef Fidel Cabuena II

Saturday, January 28th, 2017

No Host Bar @ 6:00 pm

Dinner will begin @ 6:45 pm



Tickets \$50 Donation
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2017: Year of the ordinary Filipinos

By Mocha Uson

“A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.” – Proverbs 22:9 (The Holy Bible, New International Version)

What is Duterte’s Kitchen? It is a soup kitchen which was launched by the President’s political party, PDP-Laban. Their goal is to give free food to Filipinos, especially children living on the street. They are only receiving in-kind donation and volunteer work and what I like about this project is that it shows that there are people who don’t just sit idly, pity the poor, and post it on social media – they do something tangible about it which supports the goal of the President to make our country a better place for everyone and not just selected individuals. Aside from providing food to the street children, volunteers at Duterte’s Kitchen also teach them how to read and write.

Now, does the spirit of giving apply only during Christmas season or must it continue as long as there are people in need? I believe in the latter and I am certain that there are Filipinos who are inherently generous and caring which is proven by the great number of donors and volunteers at Duterte’s Kitchen. The volunteers and donors that I met really enjoy helping the underprivileged and do not care about public recognition, they simply want to help in their own way.

When it comes to the people and children relying on the soup kitchen, you will feel the relief that they feel because they don’t have to worry about whether they will be eating today or not. We are all familiar with the “rugby boys” which refers to street children who are inhaling “rugby” or solvent in order to escape the hunger that they feel. By putting

up establishments like Duterte’s Kitchen, their regular meals are secured and they are kept away from the possible health dangers of inhaling solvents.

So far, Duterte’s Kitchen only has one branch which is in Cebu. But in order to help more street children and even adults living on the street, they will be opening branches in Pasay and Manila. Since Duterte’s Kitchen will be expanding, I would like to encourage more people to volunteer or donate food or groceries so that they will be able to feed more people living on the streets. Last time, we heard that some yellow supporters are collecting financial support to help protect a certain witness, I just hope that they can also support projects/programs like this that helps the poor Filipinos instead of just helping to put back in power the politicians that they support.

Recently, we also interviewed a Japanese volunteer at Duterte’s Kitchen who believes in helping people; and if foreigners can do it, surely, we can also do it for our underprivileged countrymen regardless of our political stance.

I, for one, believe that Duterte’s Kitchen became a symbol of hope for the people and children who go to them for their everyday meal. They became the light that helps these children survive the day and through this small action by the soup kitchen, it shows them that they are not left alone.

Let us all unite in fueling the light of Duterte’s Kitchen by volunteering or donating so that all Filipinos will really feel that change is here and that a brighter tomorrow can be achieved.

My wish this 2017 is for our government to continue to serve and protect the interest of ordinary Filipinos and we can only achieve this if this government is governed by the ordinary Filipinos and not by the oligarchs.

The secrets to having a 100-year lifespan

Asia News Network

Don’t smoke or drink, exercise daily, go to bed on time and don’t make enemies.

These positive habits, according to two residents at the Home for the Aged Simee here, are the secrets to their longevity.

Kuan Lek, the home’s oldest resident who will turn 100 on Jan 14, said he keeps himself fit by sticking to a daily exercise regiment.

“I used to do tai chi in the past and I was an expert at it. I wake up at 6am and sleep at 9pm.

“Every day, for at least 30 minutes, I will do some exercises to keep myself fit,” he told reporters at an event to celebrate his upcoming birthday and to fete another senior resident at the home.

The residents were treated to a buffet lunch and singing session as Kuan and Geh Suan Bee, 96, cut cakes to celebrate their longevity.

Kuan, who was born in Ipoh, said he was glad to have lived for so long.

He comes from a humble family and only has a primary school education.

Japan invaded Malaya when he was in his 20s, and the experience, said Kuan, taught him



Reaching a milestone: Geh getting a helping hand from the home’s administrator Helen Lai as she blows out the candles on her cake. Looking on are (from left) the home’s chairman Vincent Lee and Kuan.

many valuable lessons.

“I was independent and started doing odd jobs to survive.

“Adversity brings the best out of you and it has worked for me,” he said.

Kuan has never married but he is fine with it.

Geh, who turns 97 on May 4, said her memory is not what it used to be but she is happy to stay at the home.

“You know what’s the secret to my longevity? Just be happy and not create any enemies.

“I’m friendly with the residents here and I want to keep it that way,” said Geh, who was born in

Penang.

When asked how does it feel to be 96, she said, “Who said I’m over 90, I’m 60 and I always feel young.”

She said life is all about bridging gaps and making everyone happy.

“When I feel like going anywhere, I will just go.

“There will be someone to chaperone me but they don’t instruct me at all.

“I like that freedom and I try to enjoy it as much as possible. That’s why I can live long, I guess,” said Geh.

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Source: gettyimages.com

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Pacquiao wants \$20M guarantee vs Crawford



Manny Pacquiao and Terence 'Bud' Crawford

Manny Pacquiao understands the risks in fighting a dangerous rising star in WBC and WBO super lightweight champion Terence Crawford.

That's why he will demand a guaranteed purse of \$20 million if Top Rank is keen on pitting him against the 29-year-old Crawford.

"If it's Crawford that Top Rank wants for Manny Pacquiao, then we'll fight Crawford," Mike Koncz, Pacquiao's adviser, told Nick Giongco of the Manila Bulletin.

"But we want a guarantee of \$20 million," added Koncz.

Pacquiao definitely wants a bigger payday against a more risky opponent. Against the light-punching Jessie Vargas in November last year, he was reportedly paid just \$4 million and a percentage of the pay-

per-view and live ticket sales.

It was probably the lowest payday Pacquiao got for a while, but it turned out to be worth it as he regained the WBO welterweight championship after defeating Vargas, boosting his stock.

Now, the Filipino icon is looking at fighting two more times this year, with Crawford as frontrunner.

The Omaha, Nebraska-based fighter will remain atop the shortlist for Pacquiao's next foe as long as the retired Floyd Mayweather Jr. remains uninterested in fighting again.

Pacquiao has long insisted his desire to face Mayweather in a rematch, previously saying it will be his priority.

But with Mayweather giving no hint on whether he'll return to ring, Pacquiao will have no choice but to take on Crawford, who is undefeated in 30 fights (with 21 KOs).

And Pacquiao is making sure he'll get paid handsomely for this. — Dino Maragay

Amanda Nunes stuns comebacking Ronda Rousey in UFC 207

By Greg Beacham

Las Vegas — Ronda Rousey was stopped 48 seconds into her comeback fight, losing to bantamweight champion Amanda Nunes at UFC 207 on Friday night (Saturday in Manila).



Amanda Nunes, left, celebrates her win as Ronda Rousey stands at right, after their women's bantamweight championship mixed martial arts bout was stopped in the first round at UFC 207, Friday, Dec. 30, 2016, in Las Vegas.

Rousey (12-2) returned from a 13-month absence and never managed to get her footing against Nunes (14-4), who rocked Rousey with her very first punches.

Rousey staggered and stumbled backward while Nunes relentlessly pursued her and landed multiple shots. Referee Herb Dean stopped the bout with Rousey still on her feet, and Rousey briefly protested the stoppage before leaving the cage in her mother's arms.

Cody Garbrandt also won the men's bantamweight title in the penultimate bout, battering champion Dominick Cruz to earn a surprising decision victory at T-Mobile Arena in the UFC's traditional end-of-the-year show in its hometown.

Rousey couldn't compete in her first fight since losing her belt to Holly Holm 13 months ago in her first career defeat. Rousey became arguably the world's most famous female athlete and a combat sports trailblazer while she rocketed atop the UFC, but a year away from the sport apparently did little to heal the holes in her game.

Nunes claimed her belt with a violent stoppage of Miesha Tate at UFC 200 in July, completing an unlikely ascent for a Brazilian veteran whose skills have improved in recent years. Nunes lost three fights earlier in her career to opponents beaten easily by Rousey, but Nunes' work ethic and toughness propelled her

into the biggest fight in the women's game against Rousey.

Rousey hadn't fought since November 2015, when Holm stopped her with a head kick in one of the biggest upsets in MMA history. Rousey had never lost or been in much trouble while the former Olympic judo medalist rocketed to the top of her sport with a series of one-sided victories, but Holm's veteran striking made Rousey look amateurish before the dramatic finish.

Rousey nearly vanished from public view after her loss, taking time away from the gym and attending to her acting career. After the bantamweight belt changed hands two more times in her absence, Rousey agreed to return for a shot at reclaiming her title. The UFC also was sold during her absence to WME-IMG, the entertainment conglomerate that also represents Rousey's career.

But Rousey refused to promote this pay-per-view show, leaving Cruz and Nunes to do most of the work. While Rousey's media blackout will hurt her cut of the pay-per-view revenue, it didn't affect her guaranteed payday of \$3 million, matching Conor McGregor for the biggest disclosed check in UFC history.

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Still the 'Bomb'

By Regina Mae Parungao

From being mere background dancers on "Eat Bulaga!," the Sexbomb Girls have become multimedia stars – name it, they've done it.

Popularly known for the ear-piercing chant, "Get, get aww!," the Sexbomb Girls are behind "Bakit Papa" and "Spaghetti," hit songs culled from their 4x Platinum certified album "Unang Putok" released in 2002.

The girls also dominated TV screens via their own afternoon drama series "Daisy Siete," which lasted for 26 seasons.

Having been awarded Most Popular Dance Group from 2002 up to 2008 by the Guillermo Mendoza Memorial Scholarship Foundation, the Sexbomb Girls have no doubt, stayed true to their tag as "Pinaka Mabentang Dance Group Sa Kasaysayan Ng Pilipinas."

Their successful run ended in 2011 with each of the girls eventually pursuing solo careers or settling into a quiet life outside show business.

Not that the group's story ends there. With many fans still longing for their breathtaking splits and backbreaking hip bends, comes a fresher version of the well-loved Sexbomb Girls.

Dubbed SB NewGen, the group consists of five beautiful, sexy, and sweet girls namely Jane Lumabi, Kesha Almoroto, Nerizza Germina, Daphny Apigo, and Julie Aring.

In an exclusive interview with Bulletin Entertainment, Jane, who stands as group leader, acknowledged they have big shoes to fill.

"Dati pinapakinggan lang namin 'yung mga kanta nila pero ngayon kami na mismo 'yung sumasayaw nito," she said. "Iba 'yung feeling, sobrang nakakatuwa lang talaga."

The lineup of SB NewGen was completed last year. According to Jane, some members went through auditions, while some were discovered through different dance contests.

The group currently works as freelancers often seen on TV shows such as "Banana Sundae" and "ASAP."

Humble beginnings

The members of SB NewGen have interesting back stories.

Kesha, the "Smart Chick" of the group, is a mass communication graduate. The dancer revealed her parents initially frowned on her decision to pursue a dancing career.

"Ayaw kasi talaga nila but pinatunayan ko na kaya kong pagsabayin ang pag-aaral at pagsasayaw," she said.

The 22-year-old eventually earned the support of her parents.

"Akala kasi nila hindi ko kakaya-



SB NewGen (Photo by Manny Llanes)

nin pero pinatunayan ko na 'yung akala nila na hindi kaya, posible naman pala."

She advises everyone to continue pursuing their dreams despite the challenges they encounter.

"If ever gusto nilang may marating sila sa buhay, unang-una sa lahat maniwala sila sa sarili nilang kakayahan. Tapos 'yung mga negative na naririnig nila, i-take lang nila 'yun as challenge or inspiration," she said.

Unlike Kesha, "The Girl Next Door" of the group, Jane, left school to chase after her dreams.

"Hindi kasi kaya ng time eh," she said.

Although her parents are now separated, Jane said her family remains her inspiration.

"Nu'ng naghiwalay magulang ko, kasabay po nu'n 'yung pagkapasok ko sa grupo. Sabi ko nga 'God's will 'to,'" she explained.

"Kahit na broken family na kami ngayon, naging dahilan po 'yun para magpursigi ako. Para sa kanila kung bakit ko 'to ginagawa."

The "Bad Girl" of the group is 18-year-old Nerizza who used to be a member of that hip-hop dance group, Philippine All-Stars.

Nerizza admitted she was hesitant to join the group at first, thinking her hip hop background isn't suited to the established Sexbomb style.

"But eventually nag-decide ako na sumali na then na-realize ko na kaya ko naman pala," she said.

Like Nerizza, Julie, the "Bungisingis Princess" of the group, also had her doubts joining the group at onset.

"Nu'ng na-discover po ako sa isang dance contest, sabi ko parang hindi ako interesado kasi parang iniisip ko hindi ko kayang mag-split, mag-sexy dance, sexy-outfits," she shared.

The dancer changed her mind due to financial issues.

"Kumontak po ako sa kanila tapos nag-audition ako," she said. "Nakakatuwa kasi ngayon nakakatulon na po ako sa family ko."

The youngest of the group is the 15-year-old Daphny a.k.a. the "Twerk Princess." She believes being part of SB NewGen is gift from God.

"Super duper idol ko po ang Sexbomb, kaya nu'ng pinapirma po ako ng contract para maging member ng NewGen, ay sabi ko,

'Blessings sa akin 'to.'"

No worries

Of course, comparison with the original Sexbomb is inevitable but SB NewGen has no worries.

Jane said, "Para sakin po kasi, wala akong masasabi sa kanila na negative kaya okay lang na kino-compare kami sa kanila, tanggap ko."

Jane revealed they actually maintained good friendship with the original members of Sexbomb. In fact, Aira Bermudez is one of their choreographers.

"Si Ate Aira naging hands-on po siya sa pagtuturo samin, talagang gina-guide niya kami," Jane shared.

So how can they differentiate themselves from the original Sexbomb?

"'Yung Sexbomb po kasi kilala lahat ng tao, 'yung mga tugtog nila novelty. Kami naman ngayon, iba-iba na 'yung mga style and genre ng sinasayaw namin," Kesha explained.

"Tapos kami rin po 'yung tinatawag na sexy-sweet, hindi sobrang sexy. Sa'min po kasi nandun 'yung barrier na kailangan kapag sexy kami, aside sa pagiging sexy, dapat classy kami and at the same time cute tignan. Very pleasing sa mga tao."

SB NewGen hopes to equal or surpass the original Sexbomb's achievement.

"Dapat mapantayan namin or kung pwede nga mas umangat pa kami para naman maging proud 'yung mga original members sa'min."

J's on the go

SB NewGen is currently is managed by Jara and John Cancio, the son-and-daughter tandem of Sexbomb's former manager Joy Cancio.

According to John, they plan to attain what their mother did with the Sexbomb.

"It's like a paying it forward kind of thing," John said. "We're trying to continue kung ano 'yung nasimulan ng nanay ko."

Rebel girl: An ode to Princess Leia

By Mikers Litton

For millions of people worldwide, December doesn't mean Christmas, but more about "Star Wars." As early as September, toy stores stock their shelves with a collection of faces, new and old alike, in anticipation of that December's next adventure in a galaxy far, far away.

This month, all seemed right in the world of the Force. "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" restored our faith in the franchise with the introduction of a new group of Rebel Scum that was poised to draw even more fans. But then, the unthinkable happened when Princess Leia died in real life.

I first met her as a "Star Wars" character on the Tantive IV, just moments after she was abducted in her vessel by Darth Vader and his Stormtroopers. After hiding the stolen Death Star plans inside an R2-unit, she killed a Stormtrooper and confronted the Empire with courage and grace.

There was no denying, up until that point, the world had never seen anyone like Princess Leia. Stood her ground

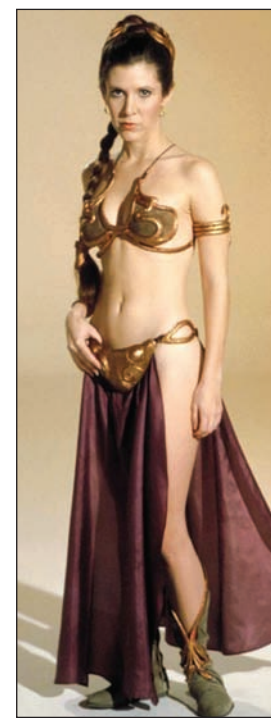
She was beautiful, poised, and always stood her ground. She was assertive and brutally honest, with a wit that could hurt, if you ticked her off.

Above all, she never gave in to fear. She was always calm and collected. That was her advantage over most people who'd gotten their hands on a lightsaber.

Growing up, I couldn't count the



Carrie Fisher as Princess Leia



times I would day-dream about Princess Leia. Instead of listening to the teacher discuss math in class, I'd be lost in my own little world, where I was Han Solo, and my girlfriend was Princess Leia.

We'd be gunning down Stormtroopers on our way back to the Millennium Falcon after another daring adventure. I never went anywhere (and I still don't) without my Leia and Han model figures with me.

I fell in love with her. I guess most guys did, too, because there was no

resisting her charms.

Even today, over 30 years since the release of "Return of the Jedi," with the prequels and the sequels, there aren't a lot of characters in the galaxy who can live up to Princess Leia.

Born in the middle of a war, she was imprisoned for her beliefs. She watched the Empire destroy her home planet with the Death Star and freeze her boyfriend in carbonite.

During a badly-planned rescue operation, she was taken prisoner again, where she became the object of degradation before the court of crime-lords.

She watched the family she had raised get torn apart by a manipulative warlord, but she never gave up hope. She always fought back.

She was, and always will be, an inspiration.



PERSONAL INJURY and IMMIGRATION

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Greetings

From the Publishers and Contributors of Philippine Fiesta Newspaper



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



May the New Year brings us all the love, peace, happiness, and good health, so that we may continue to share this wonderful publications with our family and friends in the community. With love from our family: Dave, Dinnah, Dino, Dane, and Deidra



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



Our heartfelt gratitude to the hard working Editorial Staff of the PF Newspaper especially Dave and Dinnah San Pedro who brought out this unique kind of publication allowing everyone to write worthwhile articles and pictorials about our community and beyond to preserve our great traditions and cultural heritage. We hope that the year 2017 will be just like the many years that the publication has been with us where we have written commendable community activities, celebrated memorable events, prayed the health of every one of us and even mourned the passing of our loved ones. And, just like everyone's wish, we greet you Happy and Prosperous New Year. Jun and Faina Abaya.



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



May all our prayers be answered this coming year! Good health, Good life, and Peace! God bless. Nancy and Francis Bautista and family.



Let us welcome 2017 with new hope, good health, positivity, and gratitude. As long as the sun rises in the east there is hope. We hope that everything will be alright but we need to plan to realize our dream. Our plan must be smart: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. Health is wealth. An hour of exercise a day, eating healthy food, and sleeping at least eight hours every night are enough to have good health. Take good care of your body because you will benefit from it. Don't forget your body is the temple of God. Be Optimistic. Let us see the world full of positiveness. Being optimistic makes us feel and look good. Avoid negative things that bring stress to our mind and body. Stress is the leading cause of heart attack and stroke. Take the opportunity to convert pessimism to optimism. Lastly, remember to always thank God for everything. A thankful heart brings joy to the soul. Happy new year to all. God bless.