



'Big sister' comes to the rescue
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PHILIPPINE Fiesta

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Aguirre says Napoles now ready 'to tell all'



BY NESTOR CORRALES

Janet Lim-Napoles

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II on Tuesday said alleged pork barrel mastermind Janet Lim-Napoles was now ready "to tell all" her knowledge about the P10-billion Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) scam.

Aguirre issued the statement after he was asked what prompted the Department of Justice (DOJ) to place Napoles under provisional coverage of the government's Witness Protection Program (WPP).

"Janet Napoles is now

ready to tell all what he knows about the PDAF scam," Aguirre said in a Palace briefing.

Aguirre earlier said Napoles has executed an affidavit which provided more details on the misuse of the pork barrel funds.

BY PERRY DIAZ

It was known for its white beach, which was acclaimed as the best in the world, Boracay became a very popular tourist destination in the 1980s.

In 2012, the Philippine Department of Tourism reported that Boracay had been named the world's "second best beach" after Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos Islands. That same year, it was awarded as the "best island in the world" from the international travel magazine Travel + Leisure. In 2013, it emerged among the top destinations for tranquility and nightlife. In 2014, it was at the top of the "Best Islands in the World" list published by the international magazine Conde Nast Traveler.

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Boracay: Paradise Lost



Boracay Island

Duterte to US: Keep PH out of your wars, expeditions

BY NESTOR CORRALES

"Count us out."

President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday said the Philippines would no longer join the United States in its wars and expeditions, saying his country always got nothing but "brutality and agony."



President Duterte

"I'm addressing America right now; Whatever expeditions that you will conduct, any wars that you will fight in any other countries,

count us out," Duterte said during his speech at the graduation of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) "Maragtas" Class of 2018 in Silang, Cavite.

The President said the Philippines would "stand on our own," saying the country had enough of colonial rule.

"Wala kaming nakuha all these years of sacrifice except brutality and agony. We will stand on our own," he said.

"We have been enslaved by two countries in succession - Spaniards for 400

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Compromised justice system

That the justice system in this country has been seriously compromised was once more illustrated by the recent one-two punch from the Department of Justice: the dismissal of cases against confessed drug lord Kerwin Espinosa Jr. and his supposed suppliers Peter Co and Peter Lim, and the grant of provisional state protection to suspected pork barrel scam mastermind Janet Napoles.

Even Senate President Koko Pimentel, a staunch ally of the Duterte administration, was hard put to wrap his head around this “unbelievable, crazy development” of Napoles — the supposed brains behind the scheme diverting some P10 billion in lawmakers’ pork barrel, or the Priority Development Assistance Fund, to bogus projects in exchange for kickbacks — enjoying the privileges of the government’s Witness Protection Program.

“Do some people in the [DOJ] really believe that ... Napoles is qualified to be a state witness in the PDAF scam which she herself invented, organized and perpetuated?” Pimentel said.

Napoles’ SOP, as described by her relative and former aide Benhur Luy, was breathtakingly simple and effective: She approached lawmakers and offered to “buy” their pork barrel with the agreement that they would share the proceeds. She implicated 20 senators and 100 congresspersons and their agents in affidavits she submitted in 2014.

A year earlier, government agents rescued Luy who claimed that Napoles had detained him for supposedly skimming off the profits from her scam. He blew the whistle on his ex-boss and

revealed how she — with lawmakers’ signatures, lists of projects, and suggested NGO-beneficiaries, as well as contacts in the Department of Budget and Management — easily secured billions of pesos intended for government projects.

To make it appear that the funds had in fact been re-



Lim, Aguirre and Espinosa

ceived by the intended parties, Luy said, Napoles had her children and employees use fictitious names and affix their signatures to the receipts.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman questioned Napoles’ “utterly premature and illegal” inclusion in the WPP, given that, he said, Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre and presidential spokesperson Harry Roque had claimed that her affidavit for coverage application was still being studied.

So why had she been enjoying protective custody since Feb 27? Lagman asked. And why was it the DOJ that signed Napoles’ “provisional protection” order when the Special Prosecutor of the Office of the Ombudsman, as well as the Sandiganbayan, had jurisdiction to grant her discharge as a state witness? Lagman added.

The WPP order has “no effect” on the five cases of plunder and multiple counts of graft pending against Napoles in the Sandiganbayan, according to the Ombudsman. But it greatly rankles that she stands to benefit from the program’s provision of a safe house, security, immunity from

prosecution, allowances, and medical services—all funded by taxpayers.

Opposition Sen. Risa Honviveros, who described the protection order as a “travesty of justice,” said she would not be surprised if Napoles would also be used as a “political weapon,” as “those who will not toe the line and have strong opinions against the government’s policies and the President himself could easily be included in Napoles’ pork barrel list.”

Indeed, Sen. Leila de Lima — detained on the basis of testimonies from convicted drug felons — wryly noted that Napoles would say or do anything she was told. De Lima, who was President Benigno Aquino III’s justice secretary when Napoles was taken into custody, recalled that the first question the accused had asked officials was who they would want her to include in her list of pork barrel beneficiaries.

That the justice system in this country has been seriously compromised was clearly illustrated in February 2017, a day after De Lima’s arrest and detention. Addressing a rally at Rizal Park, Justice Secretary Aguirre threw a startling question at the buoyant crowd of President Duterte’s supporters: Sino ang gusto niyong isunod? He wanted to know who the crowd wanted next, after De Lima.

Dismayed by Aguirre’s behavior, Sen. Grace Poe was moved to remind him that he was a justice secretary, and not someone “moonlight[ing] as a perya barker who agitates the crowds.” Aguirre responded that his remark was only meant for “entertainment.”

How long before Malacañang concedes that this man is an utter embarrassment? *inquirer.net*

Duterte to ICC

BY NESTOR MATA

President Rodrigo Duterte challenged the International Criminal Court (ICC) “under what power do you summon me?”

Duterte issued the warning in a speech in Tarlac City in answer to the ICC’s demand to explain why he was preventing foreign tourist groups from staying at the world famous resort in Boracay. The resort is now under a state of calamity, as reported by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). The resort was damaged by all kinds of rubbish and dirt.

“If you don’t like to cooperate and begin to protest, you are to be faulted, you were responsible for the damage all these years,

including the local officials who were all nonchalant of the problem in the island resort. You will all be arrested,” Duterte warned. “And if you put up a fight, then I’ll charge you for sedition for preventing the Philippine government to do what is good for the Filipino people.”

“Under Article 139 of the Revised Penal Code,” he noted, “sedition is problem by those rising up ‘publicly and tumultuously’ in a bid to forcibly attain acts, including preventing the government or any public officer from freely exercising his functions or prevent the execution of any administrative order.”

Duterte pointed out that the island resort is an issue of public interest, public health, and law and order. “The time will come when it is so polluted it can no longer be of use for the next generations. It is to our in-



President Rodrigo Duterte

terest to preserve its pristine state just like before.” He also repeated his appeal to the courts not to interfere by issuing temporary restraining order on his plan. “Please do not make it hard for us to operate. It’s not a warning actually. I am respectfully requesting the judiciary to be sparing and making it hard for us to operate.”

Finally, President Duterte declared, “It’s either I would not believe you or I will put you to task for going against what is good for all the people!”

Duterte to US: Keep PH out of your wars, expeditions

From page 1

years and the Americans for 50 years. Tama na po ‘yon. You have had your fill. Do not ask for more,” he added.

The Philippines has been a longtime ally of the US, with the two countries signing the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, covers mutual support in case of an external attack on either country.

Duterte said the US had always demanded their allies to participate in their expeditions.

“They always demand [their allies] that they par-

ticipate in the expeditions,” he said, citing the wars in Iraq during the term of former US Presidents George Bush Sr. and George W. Bush.

Duterte said the Philippines would “never beg for any help.”

“Sometimes it could mean really the dignity of the people,” he said.

He maintained that the Philippines would no longer be join joint expeditions “unless we are threatened directly.”

“Unless we are threatened

directly, there will be no more joint expeditions,” he said. “At least sa panahon ko. Maghintay kayong lahat kung mawala ako.”

He also slammed the US for allegedly stealing the natural resources of the Philippines and Middle Eastern countries.

“You stole our natural resources. Yyou stole the oil of the Arab countries, divided it arbitrarily into a nation at ngayon kumukuha pa rin kayo, hinihigop pa rin ‘yung oil and there is trouble everywhere,” he said.



Editor’s Note

Just because the spring season has come does not really mean, spring has sprung. The east coast is just getting over another snow storm, and how about this cold weather in the west coast?

Our Filipino American Community of Sacramento and Vicinity does not mind the weather at all. Just recently, another successful fundraising Fashion Show was held to support their scholarship project. Congratulations to the winners and everyone who joined the fashion show.

Also this past weekend was the first anniversary celebration of Rize All Arts Center. Time really flew by fast for them. Watch out for their next “Take One” dance recital, which will be held on May 19.

The Philippine National Day Association is holding an informational meeting on April 14, in preparation for the Sacramento Filipino WWII Veterans Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) Celebration, which will be held on October 27.

Please read through the pages of this April issue of Philippine Fiesta News for other events and announcements in our community.

With you always,
Dinnah San Pedro



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Napoles will implicate anyone to get off the hook, warns Valte



Members of the opposition warned that alleged pork barrel scam mastermind Janet Lim Napoles might be used as a weapon to harass those who criticize the current administration.

BY GAEA KATREENA CABICO

The former deputy presidential spokesperson of President Benigno Aquino III raised concerns on the credibility of Janet Lim-Napoles, the alleged brains behind the multibillion-peso pork barrel scam, noting that she is willing to tag anyone to evade punishment.

Abigail Valte said the credibility of Napoles, who is now “provisionally” covered by the witness protection program of the Department of Justice, is questionable.

“In the beginning, we already saw that she was willing to point a finger at anyone just to get herself off the hook. I don’t think that’s changed now,” she said in an interview on ANC’s “Early Edition” Thursday.

Valte said that Napoles offered to add names of any politician when she submitted to the Department of Justice the list of legislators—dubbed as “Napolist”—who were allegedly linked to the pork barrel scam.

“Sinabi niya [kay then-DOJ Secretary Leila de Lima]: ‘Ma’am, sino bang gusto niyong ilagay namin sa listahan?’ And Secretary De Lima was very shocked because her reply was: ‘Wala kaming gustong ilagay. Gusto namin [malaman] kung sino talaga nakatransaksyon mo,’” she said.

In a statement Wednesday, De Lima also said that Napoles is a “polluted source” and has “no credibility.”

“Now [DOJ Secretary] Aguirre wants the Sandiganbayan to bow to Malacañang’s wish and throw away all the evidence against Napoles and turn her over to the DOJ. They’re helping her attain freedom so they can use her for their own malevolent agenda,” De Lima said.

New names in pork barrel scam Aguirre, in an interview on GMA News TV’s “State of the Nation with Jessica Soho” Wednesday, said that Napoles gave him “in strict-

Death to Drug Dealers: Trump Threatens to Ramp Up Drug War, Praising Efforts in Philippines & China



Mutual Admiration: Duterte and Trump

BY WENDY BROWN

President Trump has reiterated his calls for the U.S. to impose the death penalty on drug dealers, praising countries like the Philippines, China and Singapore that apply capital punishment to drug traffickers.

During a speech on Saturday, Trump recounted conversations with Chinese and Singaporean leaders who, he said, solved their countries’ drug problems by executing drug traffickers. Trump has also

repeatedly expressed admiration for Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte and said he’s done an “unbelievable job on the drug problem.” Last month, the International Criminal Court opened a preliminary investigation into accusations that Duterte had committed crimes against humanity by overseeing the killing of up to 8,000 people in his so-called war on drugs. We speak to Widney Brown, the managing director of policy at the Drug Policy Alliance.

Donald Trump: “Think of it. You kill 5,000 people with drugs, because you’re smuggling them in and you’re making a lot of money and people are dying, and they don’t even put you in jail. They don’t do anything. But you might get 30 days, 60 days, 90 days. You might get a year. But you’re not going to get—and then you wonder why we have a problem. That’s why we have a problem, folks. And I don’t—I don’t think we should play games.”

est confidence” the names of new officials involved in the Priority Development Assistance Fund scam.

He has not yet revealed who these officials are. Aguirre also alleged that his predecessor failed to release

other names to “cover up” their involvement.

Members of the opposition warned that Napoles might be used as a weapon to harass those who criticize the current administration.

China, PH discuss joint South China Sea projects



Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano (L) shakes hands with China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano was in Beijing on Wednesday for talks on possible joint development projects in the South China Sea amid signs of an easing of tensions in the disputed waterway.

Cayetano was scheduled to meet with his counterpart Wang Yi later in the afternoon and on Friday with newly-appointed Vice President Wang Qishan, a close ally of President Xi Jinping.

China and the Philippines have long tussled over islands and reefs in the South China Sea and since taking a hard line on issues of Chinese sovereignty.

Kicking off his second five-year term on Tuesday, Xi declared in a fervently nationalistic address to the ceremonial legislature that China would never cede “one inch” of its territory.

China rejected an international tribunal’s 2016 ruling invalidating much of its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea in a case brought by the Philippines.

Prior to his Tuesday departure, Cayetano said the sides would discuss “broad areas of collaboration,” but gave no specifics, according

to Philippine online news source Rappler. He said the territorial dispute would be discussed “in the context of how we can improve the situation,” and that the sides were trying to find a legal framework acceptable to both that would allow joint exploration even as they continued to disagree.

Cayetano said talks would also touch on agricultural exports, investment in infrastructure and operations against Muslim extremists allied with the Islamic State group in the southern Philippines, Rappler reported.

President Rodrigo Duterte has pushed for closer relations with Beijing, downplaying the dispute over territory claimed by both sides and courting Chinese aid and investment. For its part, China has eased pressure on Philippine fishermen and is working with the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to reach a code of conduct to avoid frictions while operating in the area where an estimated \$5 trillion in international trade passes annually.

Along with rich but diminishing fishing stocks, the South China Sea is believed to hold deposits of oil, gas and other resources.



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Legalizing divorce in the Philippines: What you need to know

BY KRISTINE JOY PATAG

March 19 marked a monumental day for advocates of divorce.

In a vote of 134-57, the lower house of Congress approved on third and final reading House Bill 7303 or “An Act Instituting Absolute Divorce and Dissolution of Marriage in the Philippines.”

Seen as a “pro-women legislation,” the bill aims to legalize divorce in the Philippines—the only other country aside from the Vatican City where it is illegal to do so.

The proposed measure pushed by progressive party-lists in Congress also saw support from two unlikely allies: opposition lawmaker Rep. Edcel Lagman (Albay), the main sponsor of the bill, and House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, one of its co-authors.

Here's what you need to know about moves to legalize divorce in the Philippines.

1. What options are available for Filipinos who want to get out of marriage?

Currently, the only legal recourse available to Filipinos who want to exit a failed union is through an annulment or a petition for legal separation. These two options have different grounds and end results.

Under the Family Code of the Philippines, a marriage may be annulled if any of the following grounds exist: lack of parental consent, psychological incapacity, fraud, marriage by force or intimidation, inability to consummate the marriage and if one party has contracted a sexually-transmissible disease. The 1987 Family Code was introduced under the presidency of Corazon Aquino.

Those seeking annulment must undergo a mental exam, testify in court and

sometimes even claim they or their spouse entered the union while afflicted by a psychological disorder. The process can cost at least P250,000 and take anywhere from one to 10 years given the congestion in Philippine court dockets.

Meanwhile, a petition for legal separation requires any of the following grounds: repeated physical abuse from partner, coercion to change religious or political affiliation, attempt of respondent to corrupt petitioner or their child to engage in prostitution, respondent meted with imprisonment of more than 6 years, drug addiction of spouse, lesbianism or homosexuality, bigamous marriage, sexual infidelity or perversion, attempt against the life of spouse and abandonment without justifiable cause for more than a year.

If the petition is granted, the couple may live separately from each other. The conjugal partnership is also dissolved, but the marriage bonds are still in effect. Annulment also allows remarriage but legal separation does not.

2. Why is there no divorce law in the Philippines?

Across the globe, the Philippines and the Vatican are the only states without divorce but allow the annulment of marriages. The Vatican is an independent state headed by the pope, who also heads the Catholic Church. The Philippines, meanwhile, is a predominantly Catholic country. Majority of couples also opt to marry in church.

A week before the Divorce Bill got the approval of the lower house, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines issued a statement calling for “more reasoned debates on the issue.”

The CBCP warned that lawmakers packaged divorce as an “easy option,” which may result in mar-

riages and families breaking up more easily.

“We merely ask that they consider the possibility that divorce, while it may indeed provide quick legal remedies for some seemingly ‘failed marriages,’ might end up destroying even those marriages that could have been saved by dialogues or the intervention of family, friends, pastors and counselors,” Archbishop Romulo Valles, president of the CBCP, said.

The CBCP, however, cannot participate in the bill's interpellations. Some also raised the separation of the Church and State as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution.

Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Emmi de Jesus in a statement after the bill hurdled the lower house reiterated calls for its legalization.

Entering the contract of marriage, that is recognized by the state, is a right. A right that has corresponding obligations which must be met by both sides. There should be love, respect, support and other factors that ensure a happy and healthy relationship.

If there are violations of these obligations, that sometimes even endangers the life and sanity of the couple, it is just for the state to also recognize their right to end the contract and exit the failed relationship.

Gabriela Women's Party has been pushing for the legalization of divorce since the 13th Congress when it first secured seats in the lower chamber.

Muslims in the Philippines, however, are not covered by the ban on divorce. Presiden-



Five similar bills on divorce were also filed during the 16th Congress. The Ilagan-sponsored bill has been pending with the Committee on Population and Family Relations since May 20, 2014.

4. What are the pertinent details of HB 7303?

House Bill 7303 aims to make divorce more accessible to a wider range of couples seeking liberty from irreparable marriage.

It provides that the “State shall assure that the court proceedings for the grant of absolute divorce shall be affordable and inexpensive, particularly for court assisted litigants and petitioners.”

The proposed measure also pushes for a pro-women legislation as the bill notes that in most cases of irreparable marriages it is the wife who is entitled to liberation from an abusive relationship.

The status of the children of divorced couples also takes precedence. A joint petition for divorce should include a plan for parenthood that details support, parental authority, custody and living arrangements of the common children.

For the legitimate and adopted children of divorced spouses, they will retain their legal status after the petition for divorce is granted. A child born or conceived within 300 days after filing for divorce is also considered a legitimate child, except when the basis for divorce is marital infidelity of the wife.

The bill also proposes that divorced spouses shall have the right to remarry.

It also prioritizes filing of Filipinos working abroad.

One of the grounds under the proposed bill is when

“one of the spouses undergoes a gender reassignment surgery.” Other grounds include:

- *reasons stated under legal separation and annulment under the Family Code
- *separation of spouses for at least five years
- *legal separation by judicial decree for at least two years
- *psychological incapacity
- *irreconcilable marital differences

The bill also seeks to penalize a spouse found guilty of coercing his or her partner into marriage. The respondent will face imprisonment of five years and a fine of P200,000.

5. So what's next for the divorce bill?

The Senate is due to receive the bill approved by the lower house. But it is expected to face a tougher passage there with several senators publicly stating their opposition.

Senate President Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III, a party-mate of President Rodrigo Duterte, had earlier said that he is more inclined to add more grounds for annulment than push for divorce.

Should the two chambers of Congress approve the same version of the bill, it would be elevated to Malacañang for the signature of the president. Duterte, however, might veto a Congress-approved divorce bill as he has been vocal of his disapproval of it. During the March 2016 presidential debates, Duterte has thumbed down divorce.

Hours before the voting at the lower house, presidential spokesperson Harry Roque reiterated Duterte's stance against it.

The 72-year-old Philippine leader has separated from his estranged wife through annulment long before he was elected president.

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Lea Salonga calls out another un-disciplined fellow Filipino in airport: 'This is why we do not progress'

BY CODY CEPEDA

Perhaps it's easier to point out all the sociopolitical wrongs in the country when you're coming from a place of convenience, say, when reading a newspaper or watching late-night news at home. But when it comes to one's actions, it's easier to turn a blind eye or look the other way.

Tony Award-winning singer and actress Lea Salonga was in the Ninoy Aquino International Airport when something happened that irked her. She took to Twitter last March 18 to share her experience, writing, "Excuse me, lady, what part of 'Wait behind yellow line' do you not understand? #Seriously."

It seems Salonga was already in the baggage retrieval area of the airport when she noticed a lady who wasn't following the rule that one must stay behind the yellow line while waiting for their luggage.

"Mga simpleng patakaran, ayaw sundin. Kahit saan," wrote Salonga further. "Kailangan pa ba tanungin kung bakit bilang bansa, hindi tayo umuunland?"



Lea Salonga

(These are simple rules and we refuse to follow, everywhere. Do we still really need to ask why we do not



progress as a nation?)

In the end, Salonga shared the lady recognized her and that was when she took the opportunity to tell her she wasn't supposed to be there. "End of the story, lady recognized me, after which I told her to back up to be-

hind the yellow line while saying she wasn't supposed to be there. Firmly, but not meanly."

When a netizen asked Salonga if the lady was a foreigner or Filipino, Salonga replied, "Old lady Filipino. Most likely balikbayan."

This isn't the first time Salonga had been irked by people not following simple rules at the airport.

Back in December 7 last year, Salonga tweeted a picture of her at NAIA once again, with people crossing the yellow line in the baggage retrieval area. She wrote then, "Why even have that yellow sticker if it won't be followed?"

Meanwhile, netizens empathized with Salonga, agreeing with her that the problem sometimes is not with the President nor the government, but fellow Filipino citizens who cannot follow simple rules.

"Minsan talaga it's not the President nor the government eh," wrote a certain Angelika to Salonga. "Mga kapwa Pilipino talaga, lumalabag ng batas. Haaay, nako! How will our country prosper if ganyan ang iba? Simple rules, we cannot follow!"

(Sometimes it's really not the President nor the government. It's really our fellow Filipinos, disobeying rules. Sigh! How will our country prosper if others are like this? Simple rules, we cannot follow.)

"Exactly! That's why I really believe that the first step for the development of our country is DISCIPLINE," another said.

Perhaps before harping about social change, people should also double check if we ourselves are setting a good example as self-disciplined and law-abiding citizens. Ignorance of the law excuses no one — and this goes the same way for the simplest of rules.

Sereno to present 'missing' SALNs

By EDU PUNAY

Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno has recovered some of her supposedly missing statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) — an issue that is being used by her critics as basis for her impeachment.



Sereno's camp will use the recovered SALNs to bolster her defense in the impending impeachment trial at the Senate.

Sereno's camp will use the recovered SALNs to bolster her defense in the impending impeachment trial at the Senate.

These SALNs will be submitted to the Senate, sitting as the impeachment tribunal, and not to the Supreme Court (SC) where a petition was filed by the Office of the Solicitor General seeking her ouster.

Lawyer Romeo Igot has petitioned the SC to compel Sereno to submit the missing SALNs.

Sereno manifested this plan to the high court in her comment to the quo warranto plea filed by Solicitor General Jose Calida over her invalid appointment in 2012 for failing to meet the 10-year SALN requirement for the SC post.

"The Chief Justice retrieved her missing SALNs and will present them before the Senate without prejudice to her legal defenses in light of the fact that her alleged failure to file SALNs before she joined the SC is not within the scope of the impeachment complaint or the grounds for impeachment provided in the Constitution," read the chief magistrate's 77-page answer.

"With due respect, the Chief Justice declined to produce these SALNs before this Honorable Court because of her objections on the jurisdictional grounds to the petition and the proceedings being taken hereunder," it added.

The SC yesterday ordered Calida to answer Sereno's defense and submit a reply within five days from notice.

The justices will decide whether there is a need to hear the case in oral arguments.

The non-filing of SALNs by Sereno during her stint as professor at the University of the Philippines

College of Law was among the grounds in the articles of impeachment approved by the House committee on justice.

It was also the basis for the quo warranto petition filed by Calida, who accused her of failure to meet the integrity requirement in the Constitution because of the non-submission of her SALNs.

During the impeachment hearing at the House of Representatives, it was discovered that Sereno only submitted three SALNs covering 2009, 2010 and 2011 instead of 10 as required by the rules of the Judicial and Bar Council.

It was also discovered that she submitted her SALN to UP only in 2002. Sereno allegedly did not submit her SALNs in 2001 and 2003 to 2009 when she taught in the premier law school.

The filing of SALNs is required under Article XI, Section 17 of the 1987 Constitution and the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

But Sereno argued that she was not required to submit SALNs in those years as she was on leave during the period of July to October 1998, June 2000 to May 2001, June 2001 to May 2002, November 2003 to May 2004, June 2004 to October 2004, February 2005 to October 2005 and November 2005 and May 2006.

"Since the record shows that the Chief Justice was

on leave without pay, she was not required to file any SALN for these years," the Chief Justice pointed out.

Sereno, who is on leave while facing impeachment proceedings before Congress, said the submission of SALNs was not among the documents which the JBC considers "evidence of integrity" under Section 1, Rule 4 of the JBC Rules.

"In fact, the filing of the SALN is not even mentioned in any of the six sections on integrity. In sum, based on the JBC rules, the non-filing of one's SALN does not negate one's integrity. Therefore, even assuming that it was shown that the Chief Justice had not filed her SALNs as a UP professor, said failure would not necessarily have made her ineligible for the position of Chief Justice," she stressed.

Sereno also alleged that the solicitor general failed to prove the theory that she was not qualified to become Chief Justice for lack of integrity, arguing that the petition could not prove such allegation by citing the SALN issue alone.

"The failure to file one's SALN, or to submit the same to the JBC, has no bearing on the relationship to the Chief Justice's integrity, there being no allegation, let alone evidence, that she had committed corruption by acquiring unexplained wealth," she explained.

Sereno has asked the SC to dismiss the quo warranto petition filed by Calida.

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Police investigate hate crime after death threats made to Sacramento LGBT center



Photo by Hector Amezcua

A pride flag and the American flag hang over the Sacramento LGBT Community Center in midtown Sacramento.

BY BENNY EGEL

The Sacramento LGBT Community Center is on high alert after receiving two letters containing death threats and homophobic language Wednesday.

possible hate crime. The letters included a similar language and tone, said Officer Linda Matthew, police spokeswoman.

Both letters had a “faith-based bent” to them, said David Heitstuman, center executive director, and were more specific in nature than past hate mail the center had received.

No arrests had been made as of Friday morning.

“They talked about various ways they felt homosexuals have plagued society, then went on to talk about the various ways they would harm our community, including destroying and murdering every queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual (person) in Sacramento,” Heitstuman said.

The LGBT Community Center, at 1927 L St., occasionally receives hateful calls or emails, Heitstuman said, and has had rainbow flags stolen from outside the Lavender District building in the seven years since he joined the board.

Heitstuman called the Sacramento Police Department, who took the letters as evidence and began investigating the situation as a

“It’s an unfortunate reality that this sort of hate exists in our community, and it’s a travesty that so much of it continues to be directed at the LGBT community and other marginalized populations,” Heitstuman said.

Ethnic Studies NOW EGUSD!



Photo by Chelsea Lee

Members of PNDA’s Board of Directors and our Filipino community partners joined the Ethnic Studies NOW Coalition in addressing the Elk Grove Unified School District Board of Trustees. We joined other parents, educators, community leaders, and, most importantly, students in recommending that Ethnic Studies be brought to EGUSD as a graduation requirement. We highlighted PNDA’s mission: “To create and carry out educational, cultural, artistic, and other programs that contribute to the betterment and empowerment of the Filipino-American Community. To accomplish this mission, PNDA will mentor, educate, and support Filipino youth, in order to promote an appreciation of the distinct contributions of Filipino-Americans to the regional and national communities, to stimulate intergenerational community leadership, and to assemble multicultural partnerships.” Thanks to our Board, our partners, and our community, we have taken a huge step in securing a better future for our students, and, in this way, we have continued the mission of PNDA

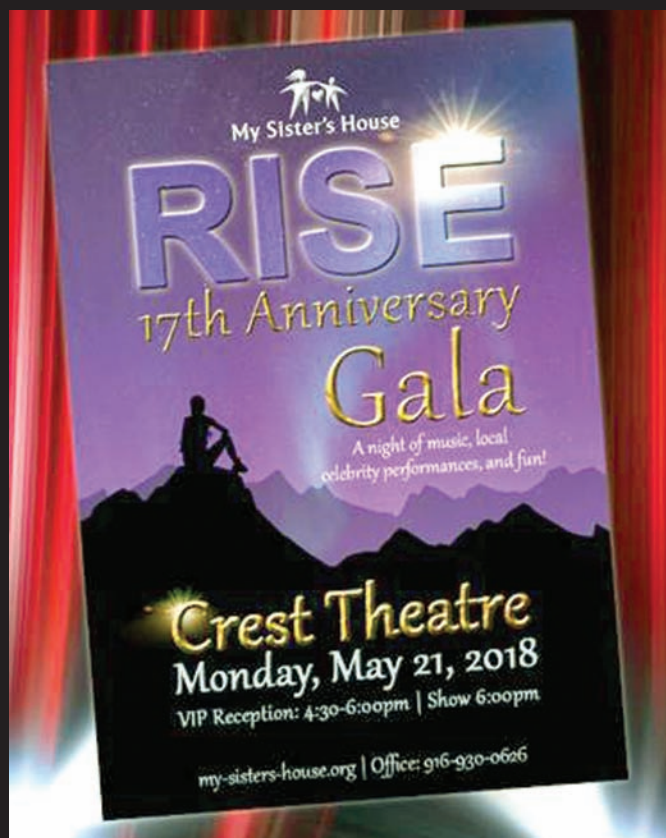
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6 months after Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico pleads for help

BY DANICA COTO

COROZAL, Puerto Rico Hurricane Maria shredded the electric poles in this plantain farming town high in the mountains of central Puerto Rico, leaving tens of thousands of people without power or running water. Desperate, residents of the town's Barrio Mana neighborhood asked federal officials for a generator to pump water from the well that supplies the neighborhood's 130 families.

That was nearly six months ago. Today, like everyone in Barrio Mana, World War II veteran Antonio Morales, 93, sleeps in a single-story concrete home with no running water, its floor covered with dozens of gallon jugs and plastic buckets of water that his nurse uses to bathe him.

"Barrio Mana is not even on the government's radar," said Morales' 61-year-old daughter-in-law, Maria Perez, her eyes filled with tears. "Practically no one has shown up here."

Super-charged with energy from unusually warm seas, Hurricane Maria caused roughly \$100 billion in damage to Puerto Rico when it roared across the island Sept. 20, according to the government of the U.S. territory. In November, Puerto Rico asked Congress for \$94 billion to fund needs ranging from power restoration to home repairs.

U.S. lawmakers have appropriated \$23 billion in direct aid, a response that some Puerto Rican officials called woefully inadequate. Separately, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has spent some \$6 billion for Puerto Rico from its standing emergency funds since the hurricane.

As the six-month anniversary of the Category 4 storm approaches, only a fraction of the \$23 billion in congressionally approved funds has actually been spent in Puerto Rico. In February, a \$4.7 billion loan approved last year for Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico was reduced by the U.S. Treasury Department to \$2 billion for Puerto Rico, none of which has been disbursed. And programs funded with FEMA money, like generators for rural wells, have yet to reach thousands of Puerto Ricans like those in Barrio Mana, American citizens living in Third World conditions six months after a natural disaster.

Puerto Rican officials say the Trump administration is neglecting the territory because it doesn't have a vote in Congress or presidential elections. The Trump administration has blamed Puerto Rico for creating delays in the disbursement process, but has not been more specific.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans are still waiting for permanent shelter, water or power as the next Atlantic hurricane season approaches.

"If we were a state, the response certainly would have been a lot quicker," said Omar Marrero,

director of Puerto Rico's Central Recovery and Reconstruction Office. He said that of the \$23 billion, Puerto Rico has so far received only \$1.27 billion for its federal assistance nutrition program and \$430 million to help repair public infrastructure.

Last week, 58 U.S. legislators sent a letter to U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin demanding the agency expedite the loan process and offer the full amount.

"At a time when people on the island are hurting, it is unconscionable to not provide maximum relief to American citizens at the hour of their greatest need," they wrote. "Unfortunately, the Treasury Department seems more concerned with repayment of the loan than in providing emergency liquidity relief to an island battered by two hurricanes and 11 years of recession."

Puerto Rico remains mired in a longstanding economic crisis, struggling to restructure a portion of \$73 billion in public debt accumulated through years of mismanagement, corruption and the elimination of decades-old federal tax breaks. The response to Maria has unleashed fresh allegations of corruption and mismanagement of federal aid.

Mnuchin testified to a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee that Puerto Rico's government was delaying the process by making unreasonable demands, which he declined to specify.

"I can assure you we have a team at Treasury that stands ready to lend them money right away," he said. "We are not holding this up."

Maria destroyed some 75,000 homes and damaged 300,000 more, causing an estimated \$31 billion in damage to housing alone, said the island's housing secretary, Fernando Gil.

FEMA has granted more than \$1 billion in rent payments, home repairs and other expenses, spokesman Daniel Llagues said. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has installed more than 59,000 tarps for the roughly 60,000 homes approved for the project, according to public affairs director Jacqueline Tate.

But billions of dollars remain pending, including \$1.5 billion in congressionally appropriated money that was promised last month in community development block grants for Puerto Rico's Department of Housing.

"If we had power in Congress ... I ask myself if any federal agency would treat us as second-class citizens," Gil said. "They are not doing this to Texas. They are not doing this to Florida."

In Barrio Mana, neighbors cleared a small piece of land five months ago after meeting with federal officials who pledged to provide a generator to pump water from the neighborhood's well.

"After that, we never saw them



93-year-old World War II veteran Antonio Morales rests in a single-story concrete home with no running water, in Corozal, Puerto Rico.

again," said Enemias Rivera, the well's administrator.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said it is awaiting permission from FEMA to install the generator, but FEMA said it has not received a request from the administration of Gov. Ricardo Rossello. Meanwhile, Corozal town officials did not return calls for comment.

FEMA said in a statement that it continues to work with Puerto Rico's government and other agencies and groups, and noted that the response to the hurricane in Puerto Rico was the largest disaster air delivery mission in U.S. history.

"After two catastrophic hurricanes struck the island six months ago, we realize that there will still be unmet needs, as federal assistance isn't meant to make people whole, but help survivors start their recovery," the agency said.

Six months after Hurricane Maria, 97 percent of water customers do have service and 91 percent of power customers have electricity. But for those rural areas that remain in the dark, power company officials are considering installing FEMA-funded battery-powered solar panels to provide more immediate relief, Electric Power Authority interim director Justo Gonzalez said. At the same time the company is struggling with nearly weekly outages. The most recent one, on Monday, affected some 50,000 customers. Two weeks ago, some 970,000 people were left in the dark.

The Power Authority also is facing allegations of corruption and mismanagement. On Monday, the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources demanded documents related to any investigations into the allegations, including that crews accepted bribes to restore power first to strip clubs and that some restored power to their own homes ahead of the island's largest public hospital and main international airport. The company has said it has not received any complaints or information regarding those allegations, but said it would investigate if anyone came forward with information.

Perez and her neighbors say they have given up hope they will ever get a generator for their well.

"They've abandoned all of us," said Jose Antonio Rosado, whose wife needs dialysis three times a week and depends on an electricity inverter that a nonprofit organization donated to the couple as they continue to wait for power and water connections. "The help never, never, never materialized."

Recycling Chaos In U.S. As China Bans 'Foreign Waste'

BY CASSANDRA PROFITA

Like many Portland residents, Satish and Arlene Palshikar are serious recyclers. Their house is coated with recycled bluish-white paint. They recycle their rainwater, compost their food waste and carefully separate the paper and plastic they toss out. But recently, after loading up their Prius and driving to a sorting facility, they got a shock.



China's ban means recycling is piling up at Rogue Waste System in southern Oregon. Employees Scott Fowler, Laura Leebrick and Garry Penning say their only option for now is to send it to a landfill.

"The fellow said we don't take plastic anymore," Satish says. "It should go in the trash."

The facility had been shipping its plastic to China, but suddenly that was no longer possible.

The U.S. exports about one-third of its recycling, and nearly half goes to China. For decades, China has used recyclables from around the world to supply its manufacturing boom. But this summer it declared that this "foreign waste" includes too many other nonrecyclable materials that are "dirty," even "hazardous." In a filing with the World Trade Organization the country listed 24 kinds of solid wastes it would ban "to protect China's environmental interests and people's health."

The complete ban takes effect Jan. 1, but already some Chinese importers have not had their licenses renewed. That is leaving U.S. recycling companies scrambling to adapt.

"It has no value ... It's garbage."

Rogue Waste Systems in southern Oregon collects recycling from curbside bins, and manager Scott Fowler says there are always nonrecyclables mixed in. As mounds of goods are compressed into 1-ton bales, he points out some: a roll of linoleum, gas cans, a briefcase, a surprising number of knitted sweaters. Plus, there are the frozen food cartons and plastic bags that many people think are recyclable but are not.

For decades, China has sorted through all this and used the recycled goods to propel its manufacturing boom. Now it no longer wants to, so the materials sits here with no place to go.

"It just keeps coming and coming and coming," says Rogue employee Laura Leebrick. In the warehouse, she is dwarfed by stacks of orphaned recycling bales. Outside, employee parking spaces have been taken over by compressed cubes of sour cream containers, broken wine bottles and junk mail.

And what are recyclables with nowhere to go?

"Right now, by definition, that material out there is garbage," she says. "It has no value. There is no demand for it in the marketplace. It's garbage."

For now, Rogue Waste says it has no choice but to take all of this recycling to the local landfill. More than a dozen Oregon companies have asked regulators whether they can send recyclable

materials to landfills, and that number may grow if they can't find someplace else that wants them.

At Pioneer Recycling in Portland, owner Steve Frank is shopping for new buyers outside of China.

"I've personally moved material to different countries in an effort to keep material flowing," he says.

Without Chinese buyers, Frank says U.S. recycling companies are playing a game of musical chairs, and the music stops when China's ban on waste imports fully kicks in.

"The rest of the world cannot make up that gap," he said. "That's where we have what I call a bit of chaos going on."

Adina Adler, a senior director with the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, says China's new standards are nearly impossible to meet. The group is trying to persuade China to walk back its demanding target for how clean our recycling exports need to be. But Adler doesn't think China's decision is all bad.

"What China's move is doing is probably ushering in a new era of recycling," she says.

Bulk Handling Systems is betting that robots can be the future of recycling. At its research facility, bits of waste pass by on a conveyor belt as robotic arms poke down, sucking up plastic bags and water bottles then dropping them into bins.

CEO Steve Miller says the robot uses cameras and artificial intelligence to separate recycling from trash "in the same way that a person would do it," but faster and more accurately.

"It actually moves at a rate of 80 picks per minute," he says. "A person might only get 30 picks per minute."

Miller believes technology like this could let the U.S. make its recycling clean enough for China. But the robots are expensive, and few companies have them.

For now, the best bet may come back to the curbside bin.

Recycling companies are considering changing the rules for what's allowed in them or adding an additional bin for paper only to help streamline the sorting process. Steve Frank says Pioneer Recycling is even looking into adding cameras to collection trucks to catch people putting trash in their recycling bins.



PerryScope

BY PERRY DIAZ

'Big Sister' comes to the rescue



Ilocos Norte Governor Maria Imelda "Imee" Marcos

With her little brother caught in a quagmire of electoral protest that doesn't seem to be moving towards a victory over Vice President Maria Leonor "Leni" Robredo, Ilocos Norte Governor Maria Imelda "Imee" Marcos is stepping up to the plate to lead the Marcos dynasty in trying to regain national preeminence. Can she do it?

At 63 years of age, the road to a national office is fraught with risks. Simply put, there are many of the old Marcos enemies who would relish in pulling her down. And just like what her only brother former Senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. had to run the gauntlet to make it to the finish line. But it was a "photo finish" with Leni finishing by a nose – 263,473 votes – that Bongbong could not accept, claiming he was cheated. Yep, it seems like it is another case of the Loser Syndrome: "Survival of the Cheatest."

Bongbong had asked the Supreme Court, which sits as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), to order the recount of ballots in pilot provinces Camarines Sur, Negros Oriental and Iloilo. The initial recount is set for March 19.

That reminds me of the unofficial election rule: In Philippine elections, there are no winners, only the winners and those who were cheated. And when a candidate gets defeated, it breaks his or her heart, but usually – in most cases – he or she would concede defeat and graciously congratulate the winner. But at the back of the loser's mind, plotting begins on how he or she could cheat bigger and better to win the next election.

But Bongbong couldn't admit that he was beaten with the "unofficial election rule" still fresh in his mind. So he was cheated, he so believed. The election was his to win. It was his destiny to continue his father's legacy but

it was short-circuited by the "Yellow Army" of former prez Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III. Yep, the Yellows did it again, just like in 2010 when Noynoy won the presidency. It was a long period – six years -- of nightmarish mind games.

Bongbong's gambit

But Bongbong set his eyes on the presidency by way of the vice-presidency. He thought that it would be easy to win the vice-presidency because the presidential derby was packed with high-powered wannabes who know how to play the "unofficial election rule" and win! Bongbong figured that once he is elected vice president, there are several ways in which he could take over the presidency. I don't know how he would have done it, but who cares – he's out of the game now. Instead he's concentrating in trying to convince the PET members to reverse the outcome. He had counted the heads of the justices and was pretty sure that he had majority of them supporting him. This led some observers to believe that the Marcos billions was being



Bongbong Marcos with sister Imee Marcos

played like Monopoly money.

However, the pace of the PET process was painstakingly slow and tedious like a turtle having difficulty making it to the finish line, which makes one wonder: would PET be able to complete its mandate by May 2022 at the end of the current presidency? And while the PET process continues, Bongbong is immobilized, unable to make a political move, lest he'd lose his chance of winning his electoral protest. But this could all be an exercise in futility because nobody has yet to win an electoral protest for the presidency or vice-presidency.

"Big Sister"

Meanwhile, "Big Sister" Imee

Marcos has been honing her political tools, knowing that she is entering an arena where political gladiators fight it to death: no rules to adhere to, no "below the belt" restrictions, and no quarters given.

Of course, Imee will win a Senate seat if she decides to enter the Senate race in 2019. There is no question about it. She told reporters there is a 50-50 chance that she will run. It all depends on whether Bongbong continues to pursue his electoral protest against Leni. But it's taking forever and there is no end in sight.

If she wins a Senate seat, that would position her to run against Leni for president in 2022. It would be quite a spectacle: Leni supported by the Aquinos and the Liberal Party and Imee supported by the Marcos dynasty, the arch-enemy of the Aquinos. Indeed, it's going to be a proxy war between the Marcoses and the Aquinos.

When asked if her father's legacy will affect her decision to run for national office in 2019, Imee said she's confident that her father's legacy will "stand on its own." But she'll be vying for one out of 12 senatorial seats, which gives her a greater chance of securing a Senate seat.

But what if Bongbong wins his

electoral protest? Would Imee still run for Senator? With Bongbong gunning for president in 2022, would "Big Sister" forgo a Senate run and put all of the Marcos' political capital behind Bongbong? It's sort of "all or nothing" for Bongbong.

But what if Bongbong loses the election? That would put an end to the Marcoses' plan to regain the power and prestige that they lost during the People Power Revolution 32 years ago.

Third generation Marcoses

And with Imee terming out as Ilocos Norte governor in 2019, that would put a limit to the family's influence beyond her province. It



Bongbong Marcos with wife Louise and Family

doesn't come as a surprise then that third-generation Marcoses have been involved in local politics.

In May 2015, Imee officially notified the Commission of Elec-

tions that she was a resident of Laoag. In September that same year, the three sons of Bongbong – Ferdinand "Sandro" Alexander III, Joseph Simon, and Vincent – registered as voters of Laoag City, claiming their dad's house in Barangay Suba as their residence. Imee's youngest son, Matthew Joseph Manotoc, ran for the Ilocos Norte provincial board in 2016 and won. It won't take too long before this new crop of Marcos politicians would be running for Congress. Ilocos Norte has two congressional districts. The 1st District is controlled by the Fariñas political dynasty while the Marcoses hold the 2nd District tightly. Congressman Rudy Fariñas – just like Imee – will be terming out in 2019. With Imee now officially a resident of Laoag, which is in the 1st District, what is the likelihood that she'd run in the 1st District?

Bongbong's eldest son Sandro is now primed to run for office in the province. Why not the governorship that Imee would be vacating? Bongbong's second son, Joseph Simon would be in a position to run for mayor of Laoag City against incumbent Chevylle Fariñas. And Bongbong's youngest son Vincent would qualify to run against Laoag City's incumbent vice-mayor and Chevylle's husband, Michael Fariñas. That would certainly stack up the cards against the Fariñas clan right in their own backyard.

The Senate, however, is a hard nut to crack. There are just too many "senatoriables" from the various political groups and dynasties, mostly southerners with political ties to President Duterte.

By the way, the matriarch of the Marcos clan, Imelda Marcos, is the congresswoman representing the 2nd District of Ilocos Norte. If she's ready to retire from politics, she could easily hand the district to one of her grandsons, unless Imee comes to the rescue and takes full command of the family's political affairs.



BY R. CARADO DIZON, PH.D.

(Continued from last Issue)

Part II - A Massive Relief Operation .

The U.S. government was not caught flat-footed on Sept. 20, 2017, the Day of Disaster (D-Day). Two weeks before, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had already deployed in San Juan, 124 of their staff members to prepare for the relief operation. In the "Rich Port" of this Capital City, pre-positioned meals, cots and blankets, and other relief goods were packed in container vans ready for distribution to the intended recipients. FEMA is the U.S. government agency that takes the lead in mobilizing and coordinating other federal government forces (the Feds) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to confront and address any disaster problem, man-made and/or natural. FEMA at the same time, established an official Relief Command Center (RCC) in the huge Convention Center right in the heart of the city. Here, they also assigned the Army Signal Corps contingent to assist the National Weather Service in putting up a mini weather station where weather conditions in the mainland as well as throughout the entire island can be monitored.

D-Day plus Five – The highly experienced Gov. Ricardo Rosello was officially appointed by FEMA as overall commander of the Relief Command Center (RCC). He assumed the leadership of the RCC in a concurrent capacity and was given an office at the Convention Center without abandoning his own capitol office nearby. Here he "read out the metrics" (issued orders) with the concurrence of FEMA and the chiefs of the cooperating agencies. Thus, the official Massive Relief Operation started in full blast and implemented right away throughout the entire Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The first order of the day was to deputize the 78 mayors in the 78 municipios throughout the entire island to provide the relief management leadership in their own respective areas of responsibilities.

D-Day plus Six - The extent of Maria's destruction has reached the White House

Cambio Climatico: A Hurricane Named Maria and the Warming Caribbean Sea Across the Shores of Puerto Rico



Hurricane Maria made landfall on Puerto Rico on September 21, bisecting the island like a buzz saw and knocking out power for the entire island, home to 3.5 million people. Before that, it toppled trees and flooded streets on the tiny islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. A humanitarian disaster may unfold as the islands runs short on food, fuel, and access to clean water and communications remain limited.

and President Donald Trump's attention. He framed the disaster by tweeting about the island's financial debts "The scale of the devastation – combined with the inattention of the White House, generated a tableau that critics describe as evidence of neglect or worse", wrote TIME in its Oct. 8, 2017 issue. Pushed into the defensive, the White House hastily arranged a presidential visit to Puerto Rico (including the U.S. Virgin Islands) on Oct. 3, 2017.

D-Day plus Nine - This time, the newly repaired San Juan International Airport was up to its neck in terms of plane arrivals and departures. The mob of departing passengers were mostly islanders who are evacuating to the either Florida or New York in the mainland where they have quite a number of relatives. They are all U.S. citizens and emigration to any state in the union is no big deal for them. On a cheerful note, the private airline companies have lowered their fares and doubled their scheduled flights to cater to the thousands of evacuees. Squadrons

of planes from media and from anywhere kept coming. Several planes, conspicuous in their red cross pennants, were noted taxiing to a special parking area re-served especially for them. They were chartered by the American Red Cross. Their passenger manifest listed mostly young volunteer relief workers and technicians, the so-called "Red Cross Disaster Services Volunteer Group." Likewise, their accompanying cargo planes were laden with 4-wheel-drive light ambulances and blood mobiles; and such other disaster-relief paraphernalia as tarpaulin canvas sheets, bundles of clean used clothing, more crates of canned food, medicine and even fresh diapers for the young and old.

Right there and then, the Cable News Network (CNN) was quick to broadcast the jeremiad (woe list) of the Honorable Carmen Yulin Cruz, the outspoken lady mayor of the capital city of San Juan. The discontented chief executive criticized the "flailing" efforts of FEMA in handling the disaster aid. Speaking passionately in

mixed English and Spanish expressions, her bottom line went something like this: "Mas vale tarde que nunca pero faltarle un turnillo". [The aid came late. ("It is better late than never but a screw was missing") but it was not all there].

D-Day plus 13 - With his group of White House advisers and some Republican politicians, President Trump visited Puerto Rico, as promised on Oct. 3, 2017. On hand to meet him at the San Juan International Airport was Gov. Rosello and selected political leaders. "You've thrown our budget a little bit out of whack", Trump interjected. He saw for himself first hand, the extent of Maria's devastation. He witnessed the miserable situation of all the disaster victims still struggling to survive a near empty scenario, deprived of the most important desideratum of all – electric power, to run their machinery like water pumps and food mills, etc. (In between, he reproved City Mayor Cruz in particular: "Such poor leadership!" Some Puerto Rican officials, he chastised: "They want everything to be done for them, such politically motivated ingrates!") Still, he was very much impressed by the herculean efforts of the groups of Feds, NGOs and religious sects working together side by side to comfort and save lives of the victims, one way or another. In the end, he promised to erase the nation's \$73 billion debt.

"We are going to wipe that out", he pledged (TIME, 10-16-2017.) However, his advisers disavowed the promise because of some legal inconsequences. Instead, a Disaster Aid Package was quickly drafted and forwarded to the Republican Congress for immediate funding. TIME (02-26-2018) recently reports that President Trump signed a sweeping budget deal on Feb. 9, 2018, that includes \$ 2 billion to fix the electric grid in Puerto Rico and additional funding for other infrastructure improvements.

(Part III – Lessons from the Hurricane Disaster will be continued)

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Congressional Gold Medal of Honor Recipient

BY DALE ESPERANTE

On Saturday, 7 Apr 2018, there will be a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) to surviving Filipino WWII Veterans and families of deceased Veterans at the Presidio in San Francisco. The event will start at 9AM at the San Francisco National Cemetery (1 Lincoln Blvd) beginning with a procession by San Francisco High School JROTC cadets, the 191st U.S. Army Band, the Pacific Division/84th Training Command, the 91st Division and Faleo (Filipino American Law Enforcement Officers) Color Guards. This will be followed by a wreath laying ceremony and a 21-gun rifle salute by the Pacific Division/84th Training Command. The Outdoor Ceremony will be open to the public.

At 10:30AM, the indoor ceremony (by invitation only) will take place at the Golden Gate Club (135 Fisher Loop at the Presidio) adjacent to the San Francisco National Cemetery. The CGM ceremony coincides with the 76th Anniversary of the Bataan Death March.

Teofilo R. Corpuz (deceased) will be awarded the CGM. His daughter, Rose Delacruz, from Elk Grove, CA, will be attending the ceremony to receive the award in behalf of her father.

Mr. Corpuz was a member of the United States Army Forces of the Far East (USAFFE), "H" Company First Infantry, First Regiment from 1 Apr 1938 through 31 Dec 1941. He was also part of "A" Company, 2nd Anti-Tank Battalion, Bataan, Philippines from 1 Jan 1942 through Apr 1942. He became one



Teofilo R. Corpuz (Deceased) will be receiving a Congressional Gold Medal on April 7, 2018. His daughter, Rose Delacruz of Elk Grove will honorably and proudly receive the award in his behalf.

of the Prisoners of War (POWs) at Camp O'Donnell, Capas, Tarlac, Philippines. In July 1942, he was released from the Concentration Camp. Veteran Teofilo R. Corpuz was one of the Bataan Death March Survivors.

Rose Delacruz is very honored and proud to stand in for her father to receive his award. Rose will be accompanied by four members of her family (the indoor ceremony set a limit of 5 (1 Awardee and 4 guests per family). Accompanying Rose will be her sister, Lolita Dela Cruz and Lolita's son Mark, both from Dallas, Texas. Rose's children: Jasmine and Justin Delacruz will also attend the ceremony.

Rose's husband, Pete Delacruz will attend



Rose Delacruz's family from left to right: Rose Delacruz, Jasmin Delacruz, Diego Edralin, Rocco Edralin, Angelo S. Edralin [father], Angelo D Edralin [son] and Pete Delacruz.

the outdoor ceremony but due to the limited indoor seating, he will not be in the indoor ceremony. Pete and Rose Delacruz are active members of the Sacramento Filipino American Community by their memberships with several organizations including The Filipino-American Veterans Association, Inc. (FAVA), The American Legion Magellan Post 604, The American Legion Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604, The Bayanihan of Sacramento, The Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity, and University of the Philippines Alumni Association of Sacramento and Vicinity (UPAASV).

Rose Delacruz extends her appreciation to Cecilia I. Gaerlan, Executive Director, Bataan Legacy Historical Society. She

also wishes to express her gratitude to United States Army General Taguba and his group who lobbied the United States Congress to recognize the services and contributions of the Filipinos who fought on the American side in the Philippines during WWII. In addition, Rose is thankful to the Veterans Equity Center of San Francisco as well.

PF News congratulates the family of Rose Delacruz. We thank Rose for bringing this newsworthy event to our attention. We also acknowledge that there may be countless Fil-Am WWII veterans in our community and in the country, who deserve this kind of recognition.

From a veteran to all my fellow veterans, I salute you.

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FCSV 2018 Spring Fashion Show

BY DALE ESPERANTE

It was a bright St. Patrick's Day (17 Mar 2018) on our drive to Rizal Community Center to attend the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity's (FCSV) Spring Fashion Show. As we walked inside the huge venue, we were greeted by the lovely members of the FCSV committees. The committees consist of the following: Overall Chairman Mercy Guerrero, Event Chair Mina Guerra, Co-Chairs Remy Solomon & Leila Pereira, Music MC Paradelo & Michele Devel, Decoration by Alex & Ling Avera- Estela Rabara-Cleo Sabarre Ner- Luvy Prieto-Luz Daclan-Mina Guerra-Remy Solomon-Leila Pereira-Rose Basos-Norman & Vicky Johnson, Reception Desk by Luz Daclan-Rose Basos-Maria Bahoric, Food by Melchor & Carol Munar, Receptionists: Aida Azurin-Edna de los Reyes-Lourdes Belasco-Linda Gibson-Sarah Enloe-Erlinda Aglubat, Peace Officers: Joe Rivera-Steve Coloma-Narde Pena-Richard Sexton-Melchor Munar, Stage Managers Cleo Sabarre-Ner & Rose dela Cruz, Stage Ushers Dick Mazon & Alex Avera. And many more others...

The invocation before dinner was given by Ms. Aida Azurin. The feast was prepared by Carol Munar. President Mercy Guerrero delivered her welcoming address and thanked all who came to support this fundraiser for the scholarship program. Next, Event Chair Mina Guerra explained the guidelines for the fashion show and thanked the ladies for their participation.

After dinner, songs were played and sung by MC Paradelo and Michelle Devel to afford the guests time to move and enjoy the spacious dance floor. When it was time for the fashion show to begin, emcees Remy and Leila announced the models' names. There were seventeen models. Each model received some time alone to appear on stage, descend the stairs ushered by Dick Mazon and Alex Avera to the main floor, walk the length of the room, turn around and walk to exit. After the first presentation, the models prepared to model a different gown for



Photos by Dale Esperante

the second go round.

During the fashion break, dancers Alvin Sisayan & Christine Jones presented a rhythmic and electrifying number. They demonstrated lifts, rocks, rolls, and acrobatic moves. For their five to ten minutes of dancing, I probably took a thousand photos. To describe their dynamic dance

presentation will be difficult, thus I let my Canon camera do the work. There is a saying that "a photo is worth a thousand words." I hope you can see for yourself.

After Alvin & Christine, the guests had a few minutes to display their own moves on the dance floor, thanks to MC Paradelo and three female vocalists who belted out

some Latin dance songs.

It came time again for the fashion show. One by one the contestants showed up modeling a different gown. The models sure kept the judges busy. The official judges were: Amy Svistoonoff, Beth Esternon, Noel Rominque, Zenny Yagen,

Continued on page 12

FCSV 2018 Spring Fashion Show

From page 11

and Sarah Enloe.

After much careful deliberation, it was time for the judges to reveal the Five Finalists. Emcees Remy and Leila announced the results: CAROL MUNAR – 4th Runner Up; FE ALVAREZ – 3rd Runner Up; ANNABELLE PIMENTEL– 2nd Runner Up; MILDRED MABITAD GO – 1st Runner Up.

And the Title of FCSV Miss 2018 SPRING FASHION SHOW goes to LENA MORELLI, who received the Title, the Sash, and the Grand Prize Money. Ms. Lena Morelli generously donated her Grand Prize Money back to FCSV to add to the funds of their scholarship program.

Congratulations to all the ladies who participated as models for the FCSV Fashion Show. Seventeen beautiful ladies participated as fashion models but unfortunately only one can hold the title of Miss 2018 Spring Fashion Show. We consider every model a winner because everyone contributed to the success of the evening's program as well as to the success of FCSV's Scholarship Program.

When driving home after 10PM, the night sky was starless, and I wondered why. Perhaps the stars couldn't compete with the ladies who brightened the confines of the Rizal Community Center this evening? Congratulations to another successful and fun event organized by the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity! Thank you to the leadership and membership of FCSV for a lovely show this



Photos by Dale Esperante

spring! What could we expect for summer! It's a sure bet a lot of folks are eager to find out.

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Amanda and Dane with the City of Elk Grove Vice Mayor Darren Suen.

RIZE ALL arts center YEAR ONE ANNIVERSARY

Dane San Pedro and his fiancée Amanda Newsum, owner and dance instructors of a non-profit dance arts center Rize All celebrated their one year anniversary on March 18, 2018 at their studio in Elk Grove, CA.

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Calendar of Events

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3/pm. Mass
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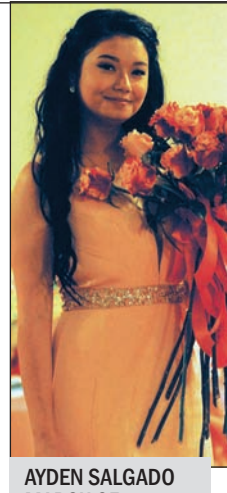
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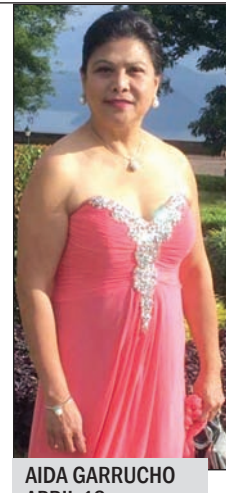
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MARCH 25



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APRIL 18



LIZA VALENTINE and mom Faina
APRIL 6



TESS SANTOS with Dinnah & Levy
APRIL 27



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APRIL 18



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APRIL 3



FRANK AYRAN
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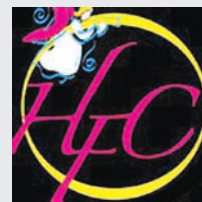
With family and friends around him, BEN SAN PEDRO celebrated his birthday on March 10, 2018 in San Leandro, California. (L-R) Brother Dante and Johnny, Nita, Aida and Pennet.



On March 30, 2018, FELY SALGADO will celebrate her 80th birthday. Photos taken in Elk Grove, CA on March 18 at Ruben and Edna's residence with Fely's husband Ceasar and best friend Adele Madariaga.



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Boracay: Paradise Lost

BY PERRY DIAZ

From page 1

In 2016, Boracay headed the magazine's list of "Top 10 Destinations to Watch." By 2018, Boracay is about to be closed. What happened?

Today, Boracay is facing a multitude of environmental issues – overcrowding, garbage, and water pollution -- and there are no easy solutions to fix them. The worsening conditions had prompted President Rodrigo Duterte to threaten to close the popular resort island, which he described as a "cesspool." He instructed Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu to resolve the problems in six months. Poor Cimatu. This reminds me when Duterte promised during the campaign that he would eradicate the drug problem within three to six months.

Last month, officials of the municipality of Malay, which has jurisdiction over the resort island, served closure order at the controversial Boracay West Cove resort for continuously operating without a business and other permits. Cimatu also visited the resort and ordered the demolition of illegal structures, including those erected on top of rock formations. The DENR also canceled a 25-year Forest Land Use Agreement for Tourism Purposes (FLAgT) issued to the resort covering 998 square meters. But the resort owner, Crisostomo Aquino, appealed the ruling at the Office of the President where it remains pending.

Meanwhile, the DENR

also issued a cease and desist order (CDO) against a two-story multipurpose government building on Boracay for violating shoreline easement rules. In this case, local government of Malay was building the structure within 30 meters from the waterline. However, Malay officials said that the building is necessary and there is no other place to build it.

One of the problems is the non-enforcement of an ordinance requiring residents and business establishments to connect to the island's sewerage system. This is the number one problem. DENR has given companies not connected to the sewer lines one month to link up or face sanctions.

What we're talking about here is just the tip of the iceberg. With the number of visitors increasing 14% every year, it's projected to hit 2.2 million in 2018. But the environment may have reached a point of no return where it would take 25 years or more to rehabilitate and restore it to its pristine condition. But that's easier said than done. The problem is that nobody seems to be interested in fixing the damage to the environment. They just want to deal with "beautifying" the landscape.

New Boracay

And that's what the "planners" are thinking: Develop a "new Boracay." Can it be done? Tourism Assistant Secretary Frederick Alegre said the new Boracay would have features at par with global standards like bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, two-way streets for tourists and small vehicles, and an expanded road network for trucks.



Boracay was known for its white beach, which was acclaimed as the best in the world.

"Imagine when you go to Boracay and walk in the streets, we have a world-class destination with inferior services. We have to demolish illegal structures from the streets. We have to take it out if within the limits," Alegre said.

A task force has been formed, which is composed of secretaries of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Tourism, Department of Justice, Department of Public Works and Highways, and DENR. "We already know the extent of the problem; it has to be resolved. We know what has to be done," Alegre said.

The task force is proposing the "declaration of a state of calamity" for six months, and its closure for two months, starting on April 26, to address the sewerage and environmental concerns. "For public health, public interest and general welfare, I recommend to the President the closure of Boracay Island as a tourist destination for a maximum of one year, effective one month after the declaration," Cimatu said.

Cimatu added this period

of closure would give the national government "ample time for the undisrupted implementation" of several measures that will help restore and sustain the island as a major destination. He said the water in Bulabog Beach, where kite surfing and other water activities are held, was too contaminated and the job of constructing the needed sewerage system is so massive that there was a need to close down the island as soon as possible. [Source: Business Mirror]

Political issue

What is strange is that the "closure" of Boracay has become a political issue. Some politicians are lobbying for a shorter closure time while some have agreed to the six-month timeline imposed by Duterte. Cimatu, however, believes that a one-year closure would suffice.

But the senators have different views on the rehabilitation plan. Sen. Nancy S. Binay seems to be more interested in preventing job losses over an extended period. She opposed the one-year closure that Cimatu suggested. Another one, Sen. Sherwin T. Gat-

chalian, offered alternative measures to solve the environmental problems. He said the government could consider shutting down erring business establishments only and filing administrative cases against negligent local officials. He said that a complete shutdown would displace 30,000 low-skilled workers, and that poverty and hunger would also worsen if unemployment rises.

Another senator, Emmanuel J. Villanueva warned that a full closure might cripple the tourism industry. He urged the national government to "simply ensure the compliance of business establishments with environmental laws, such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and Solid Waste Management Act."

It is interesting to note that Sen. Cynthia Villar, chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, is conducting a probe on Boracay. Last week, she announced that along with other senators, they would ask Duterte not to shut down the entire resort island for two months. She said they were recom-

mending that only the non-compliant establishments be shut down. However, she did not disclose during the probe that the conglomerate of her family owns a hotel in Boracay and is now selling high-end condos under the brand name Costa de la Vista. She also did not disclose that her family conglomerate Vista Land, which owns the 54-room Boracay Sands, was bought for P157 million in 2016.

Sad to say, the senators don't seem to know that the problem is not about jobs. Jobs are created and maintained when the business industry is operating healthily. The business industry grows healthily when more tourists come to the resort island. And the tourists would continue coming back if there were no environmental problems. Villanueva had hit the nail on the head. However, that's only a small part of the solution. The biggest problem is infrastructure. How would the businesses deal with garbage and human excreta? From what I heard, a lot of the businesses dump their waste and sewage into the sea. This results in the high presence of algae in the waters around the island. The politicians should realize now that Boracay is no longer the gem of the country; it is "Paradise Lost" and will remain so for as long as the government ignores the gravity of the deteriorating environment. If the government fails to rehabilitate the island, it won't be long before tourists will stop coming.

Whatever the politicians have decided how long the closure should be, they should -- nay, must -- give the task force the support it needs to accomplish what it's mandated to do. It is not too late to regain Boracay to what it was before: God's gift to the Filipino people. (PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

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Shades of Gray: Catriona sweeps Binibining Pilipinas awards

BY DENI ROSE AFINIDAD-BERNARDO

An early pageant favorite, Catriona Elisa Gray, wins as the Philippines' official representative to the 2018 Miss Universe pageant.

Gray has been crowned Bb. Pilipinas Universe 2018 at the coronation night held in Araneta Coliseum, Cubao, Quezon City on March 18.

From the moment Catriona was named as the first winner of the first-ever Pitoy Moreno National Costume Award, fans of the 24-year-old TV host, model and singer already had a good feeling that she is going home with the topmost title by the end of the night.

From winning Best in National Costume in a Mindanao-inspired Jason Demavivas ensemble, Catriona went on to win five of the 11 minor and major special awards given, including Jag Denim Queen, Miss Ever Bilena, Best in Swimsuit, and Best in Long Gown.



Bb. Pilipinas Universe 2017 Rachel Peters crowns her successor, Bb. Pilipinas Universe 2018 Catriona Gray.

Initially, Gray was pitted against volleyball star Michele Gumabao, who later on went to win as Bb. Pilipinas-Globe 2018.

In the much-awaited Question and Answer portion, Gray was the last of the contestants called via draw lots. One of the judges, H.E. US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Yong Kim, asked her: "After the devastating war, Marawi is now on its way to recovery. What is your message to the young women of Marawi?"

She nailed the title when she flawlessly answered: "Thank you for that question. My answer and my

message to the women is to be strong. As women, we're the head of the household and we have amazing influence not only in our families, as mothers, sisters and friends, but also in our community. If we could get the women to stay strong and be that image of strength for the children and the people around them, then once the rebuilding is complete and is underway, the morale of the community will stay strong and high. Thank you."

As the new Binibining Pilipinas Universe 2018, Catriona wins: One year ambassadorship contract with Cream Silk P500,000 worth of man-

agement contract from Bb. Pilipinas Charities, Inc. P500,000 worth of Dairy Queen endorsement contract that includes a TV commercial Complete set of wardrobe from BPCI Full scholarship training from Dale Carnegie 18 months of salon services and gym membership Personal accident insurance P25,000 cash and P25,000 worth of Ever Bilena products P500,000 Pizza Hut endorsement contract, including a TV feature

Born in Queensland, Australia, Catriona has an Australian father, Ian Gray, while

her mom, Normita Ragas Magnayon, is from Albay, which is why she represented Albay in Binibining Pilipinas.

Catriona was named after her paternal grandmother, accomplished painter Catherine Gray nee Ross from Scotland.

A taekwondo black belter, Catriona earned a Masters Certificate in Music Theory from the Berklee College of Music in Boston, USA. She also has a Certificate in Outdoor Recreation.

Apart from being the lead singer of her school's jazz band, she starred in local "Miss Saigon" productions. After taking up high school in Australia, she moved to

Manila, where she became a top model at the age of 18.

In 2016, Gray was hailed as Miss World Philippines and she competed at the Miss World 2016 pageant, where she landed in the Top 5. She also received special awards such as the Multimedia Award, 2nd place in Talent, and Top 5 finalist for Beauty with a Purpose project.

If victorious, Gray will become the Philippines' fourth Miss Universe titleholder, following Gloria Diaz (1969), Margie Moran (1973) and Pia Wurtzbach (2015), who hosted the 2018 Bb. Pilipinas pageant alongside Richard Gutierrez.



Bb. Pilipinas Universe 2018 at the coronation night held in Araneta Coliseum.

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Where is the Marcos Loot hidden?

BY PERRY DIAZ

On August 29, 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte said that members of the Marcos family were “willing to open” and “return” to the government the questionable wealth, including a “few gold bars.” “The Marcoses, I will not name the spokesman, sabi nila (they said), ‘we’ll open everything and hopefully return yung mga nakita na tala-laga (those that had been discovered),” he added.

Recently, rumor was circulating in the news that the Marcos family and the Philippine government had agreed on a compromise agreement – which would include immunity from prosecution -- for the return of a “portion” of their allegedly ill-gotten wealth. But former Senator Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos and President Duterte debunked the rumor and said that no agreement had been reached. However, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo had confirmed that lawyer Oliver Lozano, a supporter of the Marcos family had submitted to Malacañang a draft proposal for the return of a part of the Marcoses’ wealth to the government.

According to Lozano, his proposal was based on the April 9, 1973 notes of then president Ferdinand E. Marcos “bequeathing his earthly goods to the Marcos foundation for the benefit of the people.” Duterte should then issue an executive order lifting the freeze so that the government would have a share although Lozano did not say by how much.

It’s interesting to note that Lozano’s proposal did not say how much the Marcoses were willing to return. If he was referring to what the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) – created by then president Cory Aquino after Marcos was ousted from power in 1986 – had estimated to be \$10 billion, of which \$4 billion the PCGG had recovered, that it can be presumed that the remaining “wealth” in question is only \$6 billion. And what would be the “portion” of that wealth the Marcoses were willing to return?

What Lozano did not take into consideration was the amount of loot that Marcos recovered from Japanese treasure sites all over the Philippines during his dictatorship. The recovered gold is now referred to as the “Marcos Loot.”

In my column “Brouhaha over the Marcos Loot” (January 11, 2013), I wrote: “The hunt for the fabled

‘Marcos Loot’ is beginning to look like an Indiana Jones sequel. The only difference is that this one is for real with real life characters, tons of real gold bullions, and a 2,000-pound solid gold Buddha filled with real diamonds, emeralds, and other precious stones that would make the Queen of England look like a pauper.

“And after three decades of hunting for the Marcos Loot that began the day the late President Cory Aquino kicked the Marcoses



This photo taken on May 5, 2013 shows Philippine former first lady Imelda Marcos standing next to a bust of her late husband and Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos in Batac town, Ilocos Norte. AFP file

out of power, the hunt is finally coming to an end during the presidency of her only son, Benigno Aquino III. Not that the Marcos Loot has been recovered but that the government had seemingly lost the will to continue the hunt.

“Soon after Cory took over power and established a revolutionary government in 1986, she formed the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) and mandated it to hunt for the Marcos Loot. Twenty-six years later, the PCGG claimed that it had recovered

\$5 billion of the estimated \$10 billion loot in the form of hard cash, artwork, jewelry, secret bank deposits, and corporate assets. But where is the gold?

“But nobody really knows how much the Marcos Loot is valued at. Some experts estimate it to be more than \$60 billion. Some say at least \$100 billion. But here is the stinger: Imelda Marcos showed evidence that her husband deposited a very large sum in a bank in Brussels, Belgium that would make the loot PCGG was trying to recover look like loose change.

“In February 2009, a BBC reporter interviewed Imelda Marcos. Imelda showed the British reporter several paintings by masters hanging on her living room walls. When the reporter asked where she got her wealth, she said that her husband was a very rich lawyer who worked for gold mining companies and also traded in

gold. She then showed the reporter a piece of paper, which the reporter read. It was a Treasury Certificate for a deposit made by Ferdinand E. Marcos in a bank in Brussels, Belgium for the amount of... are you ready for this? Nine Hundred Eighty Seven Billion United States Dollars. That’s the equivalent of 41.5 trillion Philippine Pesos!

“In his 2003 book, *Gold Warrior*, Sterling Seagrave told the story of the hunt for Yamashita’s Gold, which began when Gen. Douglas MacArthur returned to the Philippines in October 1944. A team of men, whom he personally selected, wasted no time searching for the treasure sites. MacArthur used the recovered gold to establish a trust fund for Emperor Hirohito after Japan surrendered in August 1945. Known as Showa Trust, the fund’s trustees were Hirohito and MacArthur himself. Nobody knows the exact amount of Showa Trust but by 1982 it was paying nearly \$1-billion interest per year! MacArthur also set up the M-Fund to back up the newly formed Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which became the dominant political force in Japan to this day.

“So, what happened to the rest of Yamashita’s Gold?

“First of all, Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita had nothing to do with the loot. He was wrongly linked to the loot because he happened to be the top Japanese commander in the Philippines during the waning days of the war.

“The real person who was responsible for looting Asia was Prince Yasuhito Chichibu, younger brother of Emperor Hirohito. As head of the ‘Golden Lily’ campaign, Chichibu oversaw the plunder of conquered territories.

His first cousin, Prince Tsuneyoshi Takeda, was in charge of hiding the loot at 175 secret vaults scattered around the Philippines. Takeda had a young Filipino valet named Ben Valmores. When Takeda sneaked out of northern Philippine when the Americans were closing in, he gave a copy of the maps to Valmores for safekeeping and to be given back to him upon his return. He never came back.

“But some of the treasure maps found their way to then President Ferdinand E. Marcos. In 1968, he sent a team of military officers to Japan to make a deal for joint recovery of ‘Yamashita’s gold. They met with a prince, a cousin of the Emperor, who told



Imelda shows a Treasury Certificate for a deposit made by Ferdinand E. Marcos in a bank in Brussels, Belgium for the amount of Nine Hundred Eighty Seven Billion United States Dollars.

them that Japan hid over \$100 billion worth of loot in the Philippines that would take ‘more than a century’ to recover it all. It’s not known if an agreement had been reached. However, Marcos proceeded with the hunt.

“In January 1971, Rogelio Roxas, a Filipino locksmith and amateur treasure hunter found a tunnel behind the Baguio general hospital and crawled inside. He found a 28-inch tall solid gold Buddha that weighed one ton, and thousands of gold bars! This was the first treasure site discovered since the end of the war. Roxas, with the aid of 10 men, took the golden Buddha home.

“President Ferdinand E. Marcos heard about the discovery and sent his men to confiscate the golden Buddha. When Roxas protested, he was arrested and allegedly tortured.

“It is said that by the time Marcos was deposed from power during the EDSA People Power Revolution of 1986, his men had recovered tons of gold and precious stones from 12 treasure sites. Where did Marcos hide his loot?



Prince Tsuneyoshi Takeda, first cousin of Prince Chichibu.

“In 2004, an illegitimate daughter of Marcos by a German-born mother of Hungarian descent, Evelin Hegyesi, surfaced in the news in Australia. Her name is Analisa Josefa Hegyesi. Josefa is the name of Marcos’ mother. “Investigations by The Sun-Herald revealed that Evelin’s Australian companies have financial links to Marcos’ secret accounts in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The Sun-Herald provided a dossier of the Australian link to the Marcos loot to the PCGG. But the trail went cold.

“In 2011, Analisa was in the news. Now 40 years old and an interior designer, Analisa was reported by The Daily Telegraph that she was fired from a TV reality show ‘Renovators’ after she revealed to her producers that she was Marcos’ daughter.

“PCGG Chairman Andres Bautista heard about it when his staff showed him The Daily Telegraph news account. ‘We will look at the money trail and see if the amount to be recovered would be worth the lawyers’ fees we would be spending for it,’ Bautista told

the media.

“Recently, it was reported in the news that PCGG would be abolished. However, Bautista said that the hunt for the Marcos Loot would not end; the job will be continued by the Department of Justice. He said that the reason for closing the 200-man agency is that it is no longer cost effective to hunt for the \$5-billion leftover from the Marcos Loot.

“But who says there is only \$5



Rogelio Roxas and the gold buddha.

billion left in the loot? The original estimate was made 26 years ago, at which time the extent of the loot was not fully accounted for. And it may never be accounted for. But like an iceberg, what you see is only the tip of the iceberg... until you submerge into the water. It’s the same with trea-



Evelin Hegyesi, illegitimate daughter of Marcos by a German-born mother of Hungarian descent.

sure hunt; you never see the loot until you dig it.

“In September 2009, then presidential candidate Benigno Aquino III, made his first campaign promise: ‘I will recover the Marcos Loot.’”

With the news that the Marcoses had offered to return the “loot” to the Philippine government, the question remains: Where is the Marcos Loot hidden?

(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)



BY GABRIEL ORTIGOZA, PHD

“Saving a life, you’re a hero. Saving hundreds of lives, you’re a nurse.” - CNA

It was 2230 in my cell phone when I overheard announcement was made from PR105 flight paging medical personnel on board to approach flight attendants. I was just starting to sleep when I heard the page. I approached the flight attendant introducing myself and she brought me to the location of a distressed passenger. I assessed the patient and perform actions to save his life.

Mr. X is a 73 years old male from Urdaneta City, Pangasinan. He was on severe fatigue when I saw him sitting on chair. He was very pale and unresponsive. His eyes starting to close as if he was about to sleep. Pulses were weak and thready. Vital signs are the following: BP=61/38, HR=46, RR=32.

He was situated at the middle section of the plane so I decided to move him to the hallway by lifting him up with the help of another passenger. Oxygen was placed via simple plastic mask.

His vital signs deteriorated. Pulses were no longer appreciated. I decided to perform CPR and asked for AED. I gave 2 cycles of CPR and another responder performed a cycle of CPR. His pulses came back.

Another passenger told us there are empty seats in the business section. I suggested to the flight attendant to move the patient to business class. The whole crew of PAL flight PR 105 were

all supportive and assisted us to move Mr. X via aircraft wheelchair. Again, I used my muscles to lift him up from the hallway to the wheelchair. Then we placed him on a much better location with more space to maneuver.

I rechecked his vitals and these were my readings: BP=91/57, PR=61, RR=21. His skin color was much better and he can make one sentence statements.

The pilot thru the lead flight attendant asked me if we need to make an emergency landing either in South Korea or in Japan. I told the attendant Mr. X is stable. There is no need to make an emergency landing. The lead flight attendant the advised the pilot.

Mr. X has history of pulmonary embolism, thoracentesis, deep vein thrombosis has IVC filter, and chronic respiratory failure. Mr. X’s niece told me 2 liters of fluid was removed from his chest last week.

Medical Evacuation team called to give aspirin 320 mg. I helped the crew opened their orange color emergency kit to look for aspirin. Aspirin 80 mg/tab x 4 tabs given.

Mr. X was accompanied by his wife and His niece in this flight. I asked the crew if we can call his wife and niece to come and stay with him to for company. Without hesitation the crew asked his boss and the later agreed to allow Mr. X’s family to stay with him not only for the moment but for

Another Life Saved



the whole flight.

I went back to my assigned seat to take a rest.

About an hour after I left Mr. X and his family I was called again by a flight attendant saying the patient was having chest pain. I immediately went back to see the patient. Vitals were taken. BP=87/46, HR=55, RR=33. Another RN suggested to give nitrol sublingual for chest pain. I suggested to halt it for now and instead to give Tylenol only for the reason that the BP was low. And the vitals were unstable. The cause of his chest pain might be the compression I gave him. We agreed to give tylenol. Tylenol 500 mg given orally.

The flight attendant told us we are three (3) hours away before landing. I made a deep breath and s’t to myself, “thank you Lord, we are close to the Philippines.”

Mr. X’s chest pain subsided and he looks more comfortable. I told the family and the flight attendants that I will go back to my chair. I advised them to call me if the need arises.

At around 0600 we finally landed in Manila after 14 hours of non-stop flight without further medical problem. Mr. X was endorsed to ground medical team who came up the plane to receive Mr. X. Another precious life was saved. Thanks be to God almighty.

To design costumes for ‘Black Panther,’ this artist drew on his Filipino upbringing

BY RUBY VERIDIANO

When Anthony Francisco received the assignment to design costumes for “Black Panther,” he knew the project was going to be big.

A senior visual designer at Marvel Studios, Francisco and his team (headed by Marvel Studios visual development head Ryan Meinerding), have worked on more than a dozen super hero movies, but none as iconic as “Black Panther.”

They thought I grew up in a hut! But yes, we do have technology.

“We knew it was going to be big and important before it came out,” Francisco said. “We put out heart and soul into every movie, but this was special.”

Before the script had even arrived, Francisco’s team began visually designing the costumes and environments, making sure they were as loyal as possible to the Marvel Comics vision. They were also guided by director Ryan Coogler’s “Wakanda bible,” which outlined the vision of a futuristic African society that Coogler had.

Francisco’s task was to visually design the costumes worn by the “Dora Milaje” — the all-female personal guard of the ruler of the fictional African country of Wakanda — which were then created by costume designer Ruth Carter.

He wanted to make sure the costumes were iconic and communicated strength and modernity.

“I hate it when women are put down,” Francisco said. “That was the main drive for me when I designed this. Aside from the cultural representation, the #MeToo movement was happening while I was working on this. It was important for me to do a really good job.”

The Dora Milaje costumes draw heavily from Pan-African roots, which Francisco made sure to



Art of “Dora Milaje” warriors from Marvel Studios’ “Black Panther.” Photo Courtesy of Marvel Studios

honor. The gold rings the warriors wear around their necks are known as “idzila” and come from the Ndebele tribe of South Africa, Francisco said. The deep red color of their armor draws from Maasai warriors from

es helped me problem solve during my design process.”

The artist also feels a personal connection to the film’s message of cultural pride and representation, as he said that mainstream media depictions of Africa have historically been limited by what he calls a “third-world” narrative.

He could relate: When he first moved to Los Angeles from the Philippines as a teenager, his new friends didn’t think he grew up with electricity, much less a television set.

“They thought I grew up in a hut! But yes, we do have technology,” he said. “That’s why this movie was close to me. It was important to me as a fellow minority to be a part of changing the narrative.”

Francisco also identifies slightly with the film’s antagonist and witnessed firsthand the type of violence and tension the character experienced while a teenager, he said.

With the success of “Black Panther,” Francisco unexpectedly finds himself in the public eye.

An illustration of the Hulk by Anthony Francisco. Courtesy of Marvel Studios

“I never thought I could be a voice for the Asian-American community. Even my old classmates in the Philippines saw my name in the news, and I didn’t know that it made it that far,” he said.

Eventually, Francisco may work on an Asian-American super hero, he noted, referencing Marvel Comics’ current “The Hulk,” who is a Korean-American character named Amadeus Cho.

“Comic books are more forward thinking than Hollywood!” he said. “And it’s still taking so long for Hollywood to catch up to it. But things are definitely changing.”



Anthony Francisco, a visual designer who worked on the “Dora Milaje” costumes in “Black Panther,” drew on African and Asian cultures for inspiration.

southern Kenya and northern Tanzania.

Francisco noted that Japanese and Native American elements also informed his process, as well as symbols from the Catholic Church and his Filipino upbringing.

Anthony Francisco Rodney Fuentebella

During his creative process, Francisco thought about the textures he experienced growing up in the Philippines, like the weave chairs that his family owned, he said. He also drew on a table runner in his aunt’s home that he used as a costume as a child as well as clothing from the Igorot ethnic group in the Philippines.

“As a kid, I would take those table runners and put them over my shoulder or my waist as a belt,” Francisco said. “Those referenc-

Komiks Buhay Pinoy by Dave San Pedro



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Netflix partners with TV 5; will stream Mendoza's 'Amo'

BY MARJALEEN RAMOS

The world's leading internet-television network Netflix has announced partnership with TV 5 Incorporated to stream its first Philippine-produced series 'Amo'.

Cannes-winning filmmaker Brillante Ma. Mendoza's 'Amo' is a 12-part action series on the prevailing controversies of Philippines' war on drugs.

'Amo' will be the first ever mini-series from the Philippines to be available on Netflix, and will be made available globally to viewers worldwide starting April 9.

Vice president of content acquisition at Netflix Robert Roy said in a statement: "We are always seeking to work with passionate, talented storytellers like Mendoza, to bring premium content to Netflix's 117 million members around the world."

He also tagged 'Amo' as a "bold and suspenseful show that has the potential of capturing thrill-seeking viewers



Derek Ramsay in Mendoza's Amo

worldwide."

Amo focuses on the lives of individuals caught in the crossfire of the government's campaign against illegal drug trade in the country.

Vince Rillon portrays a high-school student who started out as a small-time shabu peddler and eventually got involved with drug lords and corrupt government officials, while Derek Ramsay plays a policeman who's running after drug pushers.

Also featured in the series are Allen Dizon, Felix

Roco, Apollo Abraham, Archie Adamos, and Baron Geisler.

Meanwhile, TV5 president and chief executive officer Vincent (Chot) Reyes lauded Mendoza for making "a beautiful job in bringing paper to life".

He added that TV5 is open to the idea of producing more entertainment content on top of its high-rating sports content.

Mendoza is best known for his Cannes-winning masterpieces "Ma' Rosa," "Thy Womb" and "Kinatay."

Sharon Cuneta dines with President Duterte

MB ENTERTAINMENT

It was a special moment for famed actor Sharon Cuneta to have dined with President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday, March 20, at the Malacañang Palace.



Sharon Cuneta with President Rodrigo Duterte

Sharon is known to be a fan of the President, whom she said is a close friend of her late father, Pablo Cuneta. Of course, Sharon did not miss the chance to take selfies with the President.

"Itong mga kinikawento ko kay Kiko kanina pa. Kumain ng sardines si Tatay Digong kanina, nagcrave tuloy ako. Mag-sardinas din kami ni Kiko bago ako matulog," Sharon said as she posted their group photos on Instagram.

She also brought her brother Chet along with her. While Sharon's husband Kiko is from the Liberal Party, this doesn't affect Sharon's admiration for President Duterte. She previously said that Kiko understands her political stand.

"My beloved only brother with the exact same DNA as mine, Chet, @chetdc9 finally met his idol and hero tonight. My Daddy was a good friend of the President's. Kuya and I

always find ways to make each other happy. Tonight, I was not only happy and honored to have dinner with Pres. Duterte, but also to make my Kuya the happiest I've ever been able to make him. Hope you're happy, Daddy! I love you so much, Kuya ko," she said, posting a photo of Duterte and her brother.

The last part of her message reads her support and prayer for Duterte's endeavors.

"And thank you, Mr. President. We pray that God's hand be upon you so that you may steer our country where He knows it will be best! May God bless you, sir. (Miss you, Mayor In-day!)(Thanks so much for everything, @bernsrp Berna! Luv u!)," she added.

Sharon also posted a photo of the Presidential Gift they

received. "My Kuya is so happy that he might go back later to swim in the river around Malacanang. Hahaha!," she said.

Special Assistant to the President Bong Go also shared on Facebook photos from the dinner. "Dinner with PRRD and Sharon Cuneta, Sarap ng sardinas," he said.

Sharon has always been a self-confessed fan of Duterte. Last month, Sharon posted a video message of Duterte dedicated to her.

"Maam Sharon thank you for remembering me, I am your good friend and my daughter Sarah ay talagang ina-idolize ka. She has been an avid admirer. Among the many things you have done for my family, I am grateful," Duterte said on the video

Kathryn Bernardo nixes tight pants for Daniel Padilla

BY RITO P. ASILO

Like his fun-loving mom Karla Estrada, Daniel Padilla enjoys wearing classic and comfortable clothes that send up Tinseltown's trendy stars of yesteryears.

When asked to explain his fashion preference, he said, "I prefer the retro or vintage look, because I'm really an old soul. I don't even mind being garbed in ukay-ukay clothes (laughs). Nakuha ko sa ermat ko ang fashion sense ko. For the most part, she lets me choose what I want to wear, but there are things she truly dislikes—like, she doesn't want to see me wearing white shoes



Daniel Padilla

with white shirt, kasi nag-mumukha daw akong si Sir

(mentions a character actor's name) (laughs)."

What about his constant screen partner, Kathryn Bernardo?

"Kathryn also doesn't want me wearing very tight pants, kasi alam na... (laughs)!" he added. "Magaling manamit si Kath, as you can see. So, she doesn't need my opinion in that regard. I just don't like it when she wears overly revealing outfits—that's where I put my foot down."

Such disarming candor sets Daniel apart from other bland and boring interviewees in show biz.

Nadine Lustre 'chooses to be happy' (and sexy) with James Reid

BY ALFRED BAYLE

The latest from Nadine Lustre and James Reid comes from the waters off the coast of Zambales.

Lustre shared with fans a couple of photos on her Instagram page showing JaDine playing around in the water at Nagsasa Cove in Pundaquit, Zambales. She wrote, "Choose to be happy."

The actress also shared a some sexy solo shots from

the same venue for a watch ad. Photographer Andrei Suleik uploaded similar photos and a few other fashion shots.

Lustre and Reid will be starring in a new movie titled "Never Not Love You" which will premiere on Mar. 31



James Reid and Nadine Lustre

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