

Will Imelda's conviction bring down the Marcoses? Page 9

PHILIPPINE Fiesta

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Season's Greetings

China tried to block Pag-asa Island repairs - Lorenzana



Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Zhao Jianhua.

BY PATRICIA LOURDES VIRAY

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana revealed Friday that China tried to block the Philippine government's plan to repair structures on Pag-asa Island, one of the biggest islands in the Spratlys in the West Philippine Sea.

Lorenzana bares Duterte's order not to 'overly celebrate' Hague ruling

In response to Zhao, Lorenzana stressed that it was proper for the Philippines to improve the runway and every facility in Pag-asa Island as China already developed Subi Reef.

"When he learned that we're going to repair our runway in Pag-asa, he came to me and said, 'No,'" Lorenzana said, referring to Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Zhao Jianhua.

Subi Reef is one of the three features in the Spratly Islands that Beijing has transformed into military outposts and installed with missile systems and electronic jammers.

Flag protocol breach seen in Xi Jinping's Philippine visit
Carpio quashes Xi's false assertion on ancient Chinese explorer used to justify sea claims

Lorenzana also recalled how the Chinese envoy tried to dissuade him from visiting Pag-asa Island.

"When he learned that I was going to Pag-asa he

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'Duterte Death Squad' to be formed vs NPA

BY ALEXIS ROMERO

MANILA, Philippines — President Duterte will create an armed civilian group that he hopes will counter the New People's Army (NPA)'s Sparrow unit, a group of urban assassins blamed for the deaths of several security forces and former rebels.

The President said his "Duterte Death Squad" would be sent to transport terminals, eateries and other public places to kill suspected rebels and even loiterers and junkies.

"I will create my own Sparrow. Walang hanapin kundi mga istambay na mga tao, prospective NPAs at bibirahin sila (They will look mainly for idlers, prospective NPAs and kill them)," the President said yesterday during the turnover of military and police housing units in Bohol.



The President said his "Duterte Death Squad" would be sent to transport terminals, eateries and other public places to kill suspected rebels and even loiterers and junkies. KJ Rosales

"I will match their talent in assassinating people. They have firearms, for sure. That's my plan," he added.

Duterte said he would be satisfied if each member of the armed unit would identify one or two NPA rebels

for liquidation.

The President said he had tried to talk peace with the

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Senator Antonio Trillanes

Duterte: 'Probe on into alleged deals of Sen. Trillanes' parents'

BY EDITH REGALADO

The government has launched an investigation into deals allegedly entered into by the parents of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV with the Philippine Navy, President Duterte disclosed yesterday.

"We are looking into the paper. We're investigating the deals quietly, during the time of his father and mother," Duterte said in a speech in Davao City.

"You can be very sure na lalabas lahat 'yan (that will all come out)," the President said during kick-off ceremonies for the Davao Bulk Water Project here in Barangay Calinan along the Bukidnon-Davao road.

Duterte had earlier declared Trillanes' amnesty void from the beginning and ordered the senator's

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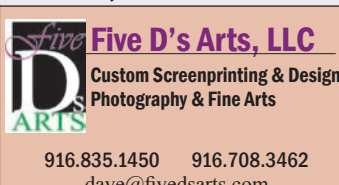
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'Mano po' and other treasures

BY CIELITO F. HABITO

This is the season for "mano po"—a traditional Filipino gesture to honor our elders by bowing to them or pressing one's forehead on their offered hand. The person giving respect may say "mano po" (literally, "your hand, please") to the elder to initiate the gesture, while the elder normally responds with "God bless you" or a silent blessing on the person giving respect.

It especially finds wide use during Christmas, when children go on the annual ritual of visiting their "ninong/ninang" (godfather/mother) to ask for their blessing, but also to ask for an "aguinaldo" or Christmas gift, usually given in the form of cash. Hence the joke that "money po" would be the more apt greeting for the occasion. Beyond Christmas, we also do it with our elders upon leaving or coming home, or upon seeing them after some absence. Catholics do it at the end of a Mass or family prayer, and is especially done to a priest or bishop as a gesture of respect and subservience. It's not only children or young people who do it, as any elder or anyone to whom respect is due, whether older or younger than us, is considered worthy of the gesture.

When I lived in culture-rich Japan as a visiting research fellow at Kyoto University many years ago, I found renewed value and appreciation for the practice being one of the few distinctive features of our culture, many of which are fading. In the midst of the polite Japanese who routinely bow in respect for one another, I saw our mano po to be our closest equivalent everyday gesture, though not as universally applied. I began to silently lament how



the "beso-beso" (cheek to cheek kiss) has replaced it in many families including my own (I now regret not having raised my own children on the practice, especially when I see friends whose children dutifully do a mano po with them.) While it was something I took for granted as my own parents raised us on the practice, I now find its much deeper meaning and value that I wish there could be a conscious effort to revive and preserve it in our society, and not because I'm advancing in age myself.

There are a number of other distinctive practices and traits we Filipinos have that we ought to take pride in and preserve for posterity. One is the "bayanihan" or mutual assistance among community members, exemplified in the image of neighbors literally carrying a nipa house on their shoulders to help the owner relocate it. Many see it as a dying value and practice, as Filipinos have increasingly imbibed a to-each-his-own (kanyakanya) mentality with wider urbanization. Gone are the days when we would occasionally borrow a cup of sugar, rice or whatever from the neighbors when we ran out. Now, few people know

their neighbors at all, or bother to do so, even in an apartment building where they are literally next door.

Hospitality is another positive trait we Filipinos have traditionally been known for. I recall how in my teenage years, friends of my parents overseas gave up their master bedroom in their small home for my wife and me as we stopped over in their city while traveling. They chose to sleep on couches in their living room for our sake, to our great discomfort (and possibly more theirs). We would indeed bend over backwards to make our guests feel comfortable often to the point of self sacrifice, and happily, this Filipino trait may not necessarily be fading as fast as mano po appears to be.

We Filipinos are also said to be both creative and resourceful. I need not elaborate on the former, as we are usually seen and envied by others as being particularly talented in the arts (whether in the performing arts or in design). I recall how a visiting professor colleague was once impressed with Filipino resourcefulness when his imported American car, with no spare parts available locally, got a dose of what his mechanics described to him as "remedyo Filipino," when he had a problem with the vehicle.

It's often said that we Filipinos have a tendency for self-flagellation. But in this season for counting our blessings, we should be mindful of the positive traits we Filipinos could treasure and take pride in.

Christmas bells for Balangiga

BY BABE ROMUALDEZ

It was at a closed-door meeting which I attended during the October 2017 ASEAN Defense Ministers' Conference hosted by the Philippines in Clark, Pampanga that President Duterte took up the Balangiga Bells with US Defense Secretary James Mattis.



Secretary Mattis very clearly told the President that he will do what needs to be done to ensure the return of the bells. The US Defense Secretary has a reputation of being a man of his word. True enough – as people close to him say – when the secretary makes a commitment, he just slices through obstacles and gets things done. No wonder the US Marine Corps general is highly respected at the Pentagon as well as within the Washington diplomatic circle.

If anything, President Duterte's impassioned speech at his second State of the Nation Address in July 2017 for the return of the bells became the catalyst for renewed and strengthened awareness about these historic bells.

Our meetings and engagements with key officials in Washington, D.C. invariably touched on the return of the bells – a symbolic gesture underscoring the shared history between the US and the Philippines. It was clearly understood by both our countries that their return will usher in a renewed era of friendship and mutual respect.

Our trip to Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming was undoubtedly historic. I was extremely proud to represent the president and the Filipino people during the turnover ceremony with Secretary

Mattis (hopefully we'll have these historic photos featured in "This Week on PeopleAsia" at the Allure section of the Philippine STAR next Sunday).

"In returning the Bells of Balangiga to our ally and our friend – the Philippines – we pick up our generation's responsibility to deepen the respect between our peoples," Secretary Mattis said, stressing his confidence that "America's ironclad alliance with the Philippines is stronger than ever."

A veteran of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the former general recognizes the critical importance of alliances, saying during his confirmation hearing – "History is clear... Nations with strong allies thrive, and those without them wither."

The Balangiga Bells' journey back home started over two decades ago during the time of former Philippine Ambassador to Washington Raul Rabe in 1996, with many groups that include US veterans, the Catholic Church's Diocese in Borongan in Samar, private individuals and organizations such as the US-Philippines Society and countless Filipinos becoming the moving force, working together to overcome obstacles.

Over four million US veterans lobbied for the return of the bells because "it is the right thing to do," with only a handful of veterans mostly

from Wyoming opposing moves to repatriate the bells to the Philippines. One of those who worked tirelessly is Pampanga-based retired US Navy captain Dennis Wright who solicited support from US congressmen and urged fellow veterans to lobby for the return of the bells.

There was also retired US Navy captain Brian Buzzell who sits on the board of the US-Philippines Society and was stationed in the Philippines as representative of the Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Command; and retired Rear Admiral Dan McKinnon who was instrumental in the return of the San Pedro bell of La Union that was also taken by American soldiers.

But the ones who carried the bells through the whole nine yards, so to speak, are Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for South and Southeast Asia Joseph Felter and American multimillionaire businessman Henry B. Howard who also happens to be our honorary consul in Florida.

Henry, an old friend of mine from 20 years ago, went to Xavier University High School in Cagayan de Oro as an exchange student and American Field Service Scholar when he was 17, living with the family of former senator Nene Pimentel whom he fondly calls his "Tatay."

While in Mindanao, Henry met then-Davao mayor Rodrigo Duterte, and they have become personal friends. In 2001, Henry put up a scholarship program in Xavier University for poor students from Mindanao, shouldering their tuition, dormitory fees, food expenses, uniforms plus transportation for the students' annual visits to their parents.

Henry Howard played a major role in the return of the bells, using his personal resources together with Deputy Assistant Secretary Felter, a retired US Army colonel who served as US military attaché in the Philippines. Henry kept me abreast of the developments along the way and continually updated me on the progress of his efforts.

A critical piece of legislation was the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that prevented the return of "war memorial objects" to a foreign entity or government without Congressional authorization, which expired in September 2017. Henry Howard's team lobbied hard, as a provision

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Editor's Note

This is it for the rest of 2018!

The month of November, is quite a month to remember for my family and for our Filipino/American community in Sacramento. This is the month of Thanksgiving and when big celebrations such as reaching important milestones in life, and even celebrations of life and death of friends who have made a big impact in our community, have occurred.

We'd like to convey our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the bereaved family of Roland Gantan, Ben Fenkel, and Dr. Frank Marasigan. And we sure missed the fun celebrations of good friends Lu Capuchino's 80th, Elvie Caswell's 70th, and the 16th birthday celebrations of Aida and Segundo Azurin's granddaughter, Julie Soohoo with parents Lynda and Sheldon.

For my family, we experienced another weeklong vacation in our homeland, the Philippines, as we timely arrived on All Saints Day, with our two children. We also had the chance to visit the beautiful beaches in Puerto Princesa in Palawan. See also our visit to Plaza Cuartel on p. 16.

In this month also is when the biggest day of giving has just happened. Let us not forget to help those people who were affected by one of the biggest fire casualties in California, and also to donate to our favorite organization in our community.

But December is another one to prepare for with the Christmas holiday that's fast approaching. With this, I have to say don't forget to see the Global Winter Wonderland, which will run from Nov. 23 until January 6. They reach out to Philippine Fiesta, inviting our community at the Asian night, on Dec 30, at Cal Expo.

Here is to feeling excited about 2019. I can't wait. Each year that passes, I know, it means getting closer to my retirement years.

Be safe and happy holidays,
Dinnah S. San Pedro

Foreign powers enforcing ruling on South China Sea

BY PAOLO ROMERO

MANILA, Philippines — Acting Chief Justice Antonio Carpio disputed yesterday Malacañang’s claim that “no power on earth” can enforce an international arbitral court’s ruling invalidating China’s massive claim in the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea.



Speaking at the first general assembly and forum of the Akademyang Filipino at the University of the Philippines Professional Schools in Taguig City, Carpio said navies of the US, Australia, Britain, Canada, France, India and Japan have been conducting freedom of navigation operations (FON-OPs) in the South China Sea and West Philippine Sea since the 2016 ruling by an arbitral tribunal based in The Hague invalidated China’s massive nine-dash line claim.

The same ruling reaffirmed the Philippines’ own maritime entitlements.

“All these naval powers are asserting freedom of navigation. They (foreign navies) are enforcing it for us...even as we speak it (ruling) is being enforced at its core – the ruling that there is no nine-dash line, it has no legal effect and we have high seas and EEZs (exclusive economic zones) in the South China Sea,” Carpio said.

Last week, presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said “no power on earth” can enforce the ruling. The pronouncement was made on the day Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived for a two-day state visit during which the Philippines and

China signed a memorandum of understanding for joint oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea.

An “automatic consequence” of the ruling, he said, is the designation of about a quarter of South China Sea as high seas where freedom of navigation is openly exercised.

The acting Chief Justice, who was part of the Philippine delegation that won the country’s case against China in The Hague, said the Duterte administration cannot just say it would not take sides in the issue.

Instead of warning about possible conflict or “accidents” in the disputed waters already militarized by China, the Philippines should welcome FONOPs to stabilize the situation.

“We should take a position, we should ask the navies of the world to sail and fly over the South China Sea so it will never be a Chinese lake,” he said.

The arbitral ruling has encouraged navies to conduct more FONOPs to protect trade routes and common sources of marine resources, Carpio said.

Australia has assembled its biggest naval task force in 30 years to conduct FON-

OPs in the South China Sea while the French navy has done the same even if it is thousands of miles away, as such activities have implications in territorial claims in the Arctic Ocean, he said.

Carpio also called on the government and the Filipinos to strongly counter Beijing’s persistent narrative of the Philippines and China being close neighbors, separated only by “a narrow strip of water.”

While such a description may sound innocent or dismissed as harmless propaganda, he warned the Chinese may have meant it to be what is left of the Philippine territory vis-à-vis Beijing’s “nine-dash line.”

The narrative has been hammered into the consciousness of the Chinese people by their government despite its being rebuffed in the arbitral ruling, Carpio said.

“This story is totally false, the fake news of the century. It’s a gigantic fraud on the human race used at the expense of several coastal states,” he pointed out.

China won’t recognize PH arbitral victory over WPS – Locsin

BY DAPHINE GALVEZ

China “won’t respect” the Philippines’ arbitral tribunal victory over the West Philippine Sea, so “who are we to impose that upon them?” Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said Monday.

The remark came when Locsin was asked, in an interview over ABS CBN News Channel, whether China would respect the United Nations’ (UN) Arbitral Tribunal’s decision in relation to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for oil and gas development cooperation with the Philippines.

“No, [China] won’t respect it. They said we did not take part in that agreement and who am I — who are we — to impose that upon them? The point is it is now a part of international law,” Locsin said.

In 2016, the UN Arbitral Tribunal ruled that the Philippines had exclusive sovereign rights over the West Philippine Sea (in the South China Sea) and that China’s “nine-dash line” was invalid.

But Locsin saw no point in bringing up the arbitral ruling in the MOU of oil and gas development cooperation with China.

“What would be the point of saying that? Remember, on the other side they’re also lawyers like we’re lawyers on this side. Why would you even bring that up?” he said when asked how the two

nations would proceed with the MOU if China would insist on its stand against the arbitral ruling.

“This is a cooperation agreement for exploration. Now, the notion that came out that there is only need for technical assistance, no we don’t. We also need money to explore,” he added.

Locsin also pointed out that the arbitral tribunal decision was “not so much” against China or in favor of the Philippines but in favor of international law.

“The arbitral ruling is not so much against China, is not so much in favor of the Philippines, as it was in favor of international law. There was confusion in what are maritime features and they [UN] clarified it,” Locsin said.

“Perhaps, one day, China, too, has maritime features and they will use that. It’s



Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr.

not a question of one won the other laws, and that’s it. It’s now part of international law,” he added.

Despite this, Locsin said the UN Arbitral Tribunal decision would still be part of the MOU under the context of international law. This, he said, could serve as a basis for the MOU on oil and gas since it is part of the international law.

Asked again if the arbitral tribunal ruling could serve as the basis for the MOU, Locsin said: “Yes it can. Yes, it’s here, international law.”

Christmas bells for Balangiga

From page 2

in the new 2018 NDAA stated that the bells may only be transferred if the Secretary of Defense certifies to Congress that their transfer is in the national security interest of the US, that appropriate steps are taken to preserve the history of the veterans associated with the bells, and that consultations with local communities in Wyoming have been done.

In August 2017, Secretary Mattis notified Congress that the Defense Department intends to return the

bells to the church in Balangiga – after which a 90-day period was observed to see if there are objections or comments from Congress.

With God’s grace, Christmas in Balangiga will have the bells ringing again sooner than soon. Balangiga could become the center of tourist attraction that would create jobs. But more importantly, the bells should remind us that our friendship with the United States remains stronger than ever with the sovereignty of each nation recognized and respected.



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Why Filipinos distrust China

BY SOLITA COLLAS-MONSOD

What we can take to the bank, Reader, in this era of fake news and overstated achievements, is the fact that Filipinos don't trust China.

Social Weather Stations (SWS) has been conducting surveys on this since 1994, and out of 47 surveys, only nine times did trust in China come out positive (but just barely).

Understand, Reader, we're not talking about trust in Chinese, but trust in the country China.

The difference is important. I for one, don't trust the US government. They've done this country too many wrongs, some of which I have cited in my previous columns—they colonized us against our wishes (the issue in the US Congress was won by one vote), they reneged on their pledge to recognize our soldiers in World War II as US veterans, they mistreated the relatively few veterans they did recognize, they intervened in our constitution and in our elections to make sure that American interests were carried out, and they used our land as military bases and insisted that what they were giving us in return was "aid" rather than rent, leaving us with a sense that we owed them a debt of gratitude.

But I do have great trust in the American people to do the right thing. And this trust has been constantly justified—most recently, for example, by how they spurned Donald "Rodrigo" Trump and what he stands for in this month's US elections.

On the other hand, the Filipinos' trust in the United States is practically phenomenal. Using the same SWS survey data, the latest shows a net trust rating of +59 percent ("very good") compared with a -35 percent ("poor") for China. It seems that, as much as we distrust China, we trust the United States by an even greater margin.

Why is this so? I can only surmise. Maybe

the benefits we have received from the United States (our education system, our democracy) far outweigh the costs mentioned above. Or maybe when those costs were being imposed, we were kept in ignorance.

With regard to China, though, our relationship with the Chinese government and China is relatively new. And in this day and age of blazing media scrutiny, it is difficult to be ignorant of what is going on. In addition, we may have been brainwashed against China, especially since the communist takeover of that country. Or, alternatively, our experience with the Chinese themselves, which has been going on for centuries, has influenced our opinion.

There seems to be no distinction between the Chinese people and the Chinese government, as there may be in the case of the United States. Actually, I have often observed, Reader, that a Chinese-Filipino will never state unequivocally that he/she is a Filipino first, and a Chinese second (meaning, his loyalty is to the Philippines).

Combine this with the fact that most of our billionaires are Chinese-Filipinos, and that Chinese-Filipinos (especially the males) seem to be culturally averse to marrying Filipino women, and that they are some of this country's most hated employers. It then becomes easier to understand the distrust factor.

But what about China's increasing hegemony? Isn't that a factor in our distrust? Not particularly, especially since the United

States is equally, if not more, guilty.

Well, what about China's unkept promises to the Philippines? When President Duterte went to China in 2016, he came back with glowing promises of \$24 billion worth of goodies: \$15 billion worth of foreign direct investments and \$9 billion in projects. Two years later, according to estimates, less than \$400 million has come in. Is that a factor? I don't think so. That is more a question of hype on the part of our government than anything else.

So does it boil down to: We don't trust China because we don't trust Chinese and Chinese-Filipinos? On the face of it, no. So let's go back to the SWS survey. We don't trust them because we see that they are taking away what is ours (including what has been ruled to be ours by an international court). Because they treat our fishermen like dirt.

Nothing President Duterte says to the contrary will disabuse Filipinos of that view.



Fisherfolk-members of activist group protest China's alleged thievery and harassment against Filipino fisherfolk Panatag Shoal.

'Duterte Death Squad' to be formed vs NPA

From page 1

communists but the rebels continued to kill soldiers and policemen.

"What I lack is a sparrow unit. That's their advantage... So I will create a sparrow – Duterte Death Squad against the sparrow. There's no problem. They are the enemies," he said.

Duterte reminded soldiers and policemen to be careful when leaving their camps. He said NPA guerrillas would always attempt to seize their firearms.

He also reiterated his directive for government troops to shoot drug suspects if they feel that their lives are in danger.

"If they resist violently... if you believe your life is in danger, shoot. If you believe in good faith, son of a b****, they will shoot you. If you are behind that animal, shoot him," the President said.

But after his tough talk,

Duterte claimed he did not want to fight fellow Filipinos. He said no leader would want to declare war on his people forever.

Meanwhile, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año slammed critics of the administration's move to deploy more troops in the Visayas and the Bicol region, saying they were creating fear among the people.

Año said members of the opposition and communist rebels should not interpret the issuance of Memorandum Order 32 as a prelude to the declaration of nationwide martial law.

"Martial law will not be declared in the country. What MO 32 will do, on the other hand, is to focus military and police presence in those areas where insurgents are active," he said in a statement.

Año said critics are just looking for ways to put the administration in a bad

light.

"The opposition and communists are reading too much into the Order and are intentionally trying to instill fear or panic among the Filipinos," he said.

The former AFP chief said the purpose of MO 32 is just to facilitate the movement of

troops from other parts of the country to Bicol, Samar and Negros Island.

Only enemies of democracy are fearful of Duterte's directive to suppress violence in some parts of the country, he pointed out.

"The communist terrorist groups and their front organizations are crying foul over this because they know for certain that they will be decimated by government forces once these troops are deployed," said Año.

He also assured the public that order will not lead to human rights abuses by state security forces.

China tried to block Pag-asa Island repairs - Lorenzana

From page 1

came to me and tried to deceive me from going there. He gave a lot of reasons — some countries might follow me to go to the islands," the defense chief said.

In April 2017, Lorenzana visited Pag-asa to assert the country's claim to the island, which is under the jurisdiction of the municipal-

ity of Kalayaan in Palawan. The secretary inspected the runway on the island, as well as the reefs and atolls in the area that have been partly eroded.

Beijing expressed concern and dissatisfaction on Lorenzana's trip to the island, claiming that he went against the consensus between Manila and Beijing "to properly deal with the

South China Sea issue."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang called on the Philippines to follow the consensus, "maintain general peace and stability in the South China Sea" and "promote the sound and steady development of China-Philippine relations."

Duterte: 'Probe on into alleged deals of Sen. Trillanes' parents'

From page 1

Trillanes holed out in his Senate office, challenging the President's move. A trial court judge later allowed Trillanes, a former Navy officer, to post bail.

The President has said that Trillanes took advantage of the position of his father who was also with the Armed Forces when the senator was a cadet in the Philippine Military Academy.

Duterte also alleged that

Trillanes' mother was a supplier for the Philippine Navy. This was "a clear case of conflict of interest" as the senator was then a Navy officer, Duterte said.

He said the results of the investigation on Trillanes' parents would soon be out. Duterte declined to provide details.

Trillanes had earlier denied the accusations of corruption hurled against his mother Estelita, 84, who is suffering from advanced Parkinson's Disease.

"The public knows how low that blow was," Trillanes said in Filipino at a press conference last September. "If he has a problem with me, stick with me because I can fight for myself. But to drag my mother, that's personal. Don't go there, that is not the act of a real man."

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Imelda will be free

BY ANTONIO MONTALBAN II

Dash your hopes. Imelda Marcos will never serve jail sentence. Not because she is 89 years old, but because she is simply filthy rich. Few of the wealthy and powerful go to jail in this country. Forty-two years of jail sentence will merely be a castle in the air for a people who have long endured the wait for a grand Marcos chastisement. Lest we forget, this is the Philippines where justice is selectively skewed if the price and influence are right.

In fact, the signs of impunity started to be written on the wall that very minute the Marcoses and their entourage stepped on those helicopters at Malacañang Park across the Pasig to fly them to Clark Air Base, and then to Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii in February 1986. It was a ginormous entourage not fleeing from the bar of justice but about to hop on to the next bacchanalian revelry. Even cronies were on board the flight to Hawaii with Imelda crooning “New York, New York” all the way.

The verdict to oust the Marcoses from power had been handed down by the people in the streets. In a kangaroo court, the verdict precedes the trial. But this was no kangaroo court. This was collective fury expressed in the streets not just on Edsa but nationwide, never before seen in the annals of world history. Yet the exactitude of justice did not match the people’s verdict.

Almost four years later, that revolution served as a template in repression-ridden Romania. The

conjugal dictatorship of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu, fattened as well by public coffers, was ousted by a people power uprising in Bucharest on Dec. 22, 1989. Convicted on Dec. 25, the Ceausescus were executed by a firing squad. I am not saying the Marcoses should have been sentenced to death. But the absence of a swift trial that could have summarized all their crimes gave them sufficient leeway to maneuver themselves through a political space where dirty money, payoffs and influence were the standards of the game.

Twenty-seven years later, the Marcoses are comfortably ensconced under a regime that lionizes them as idols, their thieving patriarch resting peacefully in a cemetery for national heroes. In the delay of 27 years, we found ourselves under an anachronistic president who has had no qualms telling us that thieves like Imee Marcos financed his presidential campaign.

The charges against Imelda were filed in court in 1991. The prosecutors wrapped up their case in 2015. What kind of court takes 27 years to ferret out the truth about the Marcoses? What kind of court does not take due notice of the fact that Marcos lawyers were continually absent from hearings simply to delay the case? What kind of court takes decades to read sworn statements testifying the Marcoses stashed stolen money in private foundations and Swiss bank accounts? Was there money that changed hands to ignore the elephant in the room or is that simply a rhetorical question to ask of the Philippine justice system?



Imelda Marcos

It is chilling to read news reports that the court had issued a warrant for the arrest of Imelda Marcos; more chilling to read the verdict carries the penalty of disqualification from public office. The Madame is running for governor of Ilocos Norte in a game of musical chairs that had seen her dancing from Leyte to Ilocos. Chilling because we know these will never come. Imee Marcos will inevitably sit in the Senate beginning July 2019. And by the machinations of a law-breaking president, who has placed fellow alumni and fraternity brothers in the Supreme Court, the son and namesake of the dictator could be our next vice president and, God forbid, the next president.

The verdict is appealable before the Supreme Court. But who can trust a high court that has no shame in stripteasing before the public just to kowtow to the megalomaniac wishes of its appointing power? After the Marcos burial in the Libingan ng mga Bayani, after the sham Sereno ouster, do we still have a court that reigns supreme in its integrity?

No, Imelda Marcos will never be in jail. That is the fate of fortunes in this country.

With the sale of Imelda Marcos’s ill-gotten paintings at Christie’s, \$4.3 Million will head back to the Philippines

BY HENRY NEUENDORF

Decades after former Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his wife, Imelda, assembled a collection of major Impressionist paintings using money embezzled from Philippine taxpayers, the taxpayers were finally reimbursed after three works were sold at Christie’s, New York on Monday. Altogether, they made close to \$4.3 million—netting a healthy profit, albeit one that took some three decades and much legal wrangling to secure.

Claude Monet’s *L’église à Vétheuil* (1881) had been bought by the Marcoses at Marlborough Fine Art in 1975 for \$138,000 and sold at auction for \$3.1 million. The second work, Alfred Sisley’s *Langland Bay* (1897), was also bought from Marlborough around the the same time for \$82,000. On Monday, it sold for \$1.1 million.

A third painting, *Le cyprès de Djenan Sidi Saïd* (1946) by the minor French Fauvist Albert Marquet, sold for \$87,500.

According to Christie’s, in 1985 Imelda Marcos had given all three works to her former personal secretary, Vilma Bautista, for safekeeping as their grip on power began to slip. Months later, the Marcoses were removed from office by a popular uprising in 1986. Bautista subsequently took the artworks with her to New York.

In 2010, the three paintings were discovered in two houses in New York City as part of an investigation into Bautista’s finances launched by US authorities af-



Former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos pays her respects to a glass enclosure holding the preserved body of the late Philippines president Ferdinand Marcos.

ter she failed to disclose the \$32 million sale of an 1899 Monet on her tax returns. According to the *Telegraph*, the painting was eventually bought by British hedge-fund manager Alan Howard, who reached a \$10 million settlement with a victims group to keep the painting.



Claude Monet, *L’église à Vétheuil*

The three remaining Impressionist works were subject to a protracted legal dispute, with a group advocating for Filipinos affected by the dictatorship, the current government of the Philippines, and Bautista, each making an

ownership claim. An order issued by a district court in New York eventually ruled that the proceeds from the sale of the works should benefit the Republic of the Philippines.

Bautista started a six-year jail sentence in New York last year after she was found guilty of fraudulently selling art that belonged to the Philippines and failing to pay \$3.5 million in income taxes to New York City and New York State.

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Pinoys affected by Bay Area Camp Fire lean on each other for support



This was what it was like for many people escaping the Camp Fire on November 8th.

BY ROMMEL CONCLARA

CHICO, CA — The blaze devastated the city of paradise within hours of starting.

Many were able to evacuate while unfortunately there have been a number of deaths and missing people.

Members of the Paradise Fil-Am group gathered in the hall of our Divine Savior Catholic Church in Chico, located about 16 miles east of the fire area.

The Junio family says that their priority was getting their children out as fast as possible.

“I was so lucky because I think I was the first of the 10 parents who were there but it was chaos already. That was around 7:30 am. So there was black smoke, ash falling, everyone rushing.”

This is what remains of the Wood’s home. And for the matriarch of the family, Minda, the chaos was extra stressful due to the separation from her kids during the evacuation.

“Three of my kids we went all in different, separate ways so did not get together until 6 o’clock which is a long time for a mother.”

For Marivic Jaks, her home was spared with the fire stopping right at her driveway.

While thankful, she along with others are

still not allowed to go back to their neighborhoods.

“We’ve been staying at friends and families and look at me, I’m doing this wash and wear because it happened so fast it made me rattled and I just grabbed what I could and that’s it.”

As of this broadcast — authorities say the death count is up to 79, with almost 700 people still unaccounted for.

These kababayans say their Filipino community of about 300 is safe.

“I’ve been trying to list down who are the families and then try to inquire if they’re ok. And our vice-president also made her list and I compare. According to our list, no Filipino are injured or burned or anything like that unless a Filipino that’s not active that we do not know of.”

According to these families, they will still try their best to celebrate Thanksgiving but they do plan on bringing all the families from the organization together to celebrate Christmas once things are more settled.

Congratulations to Mayor Cabaldon



Our leading community leaders held a fundraising dinner for West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon at South Villa Restaurant, days before the November 6th election. Congratulations to Mayor Cabaldon for his successful reelection! L-R, Lilia Rivera, Dave Tamayo, Naty and Guilly Fontillas, Mayor Christopher Cabaldon and Josie Paria.



The Maharlika Lions Club with President Joe Stayner and members attending the District 4-C5 Cabinet Meeting. “Honoring Veterans”

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Source: gettyimages.com

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What makes a California wildfire the worst? Deaths and size



Burning van in Paradise

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The so-called Camp Fire in Northern California in many ways has become the worst wildfire in the history of a state whose topography and climate have long made it ripe for devastating blazes.

With terrain ranging from steep, tree-topped mountains to dry, brush-covered hillsides, and matched with a climate that frequently varies from light rainy seasons to drought years, California has been home to deadly, destructive wildfires since record-keeping began in the early 20th century.

Figuring out just how bad a wildfire is requires taking into account several statistics, including not only lives lost and homes destroyed but other buildings burned and the amount of forest, timberland and brush laid to waste.

A look at what makes for the worst wildfire and where the most recent blaze falls in those categories:

Deadliest California wildfires

The Camp Fire, which destroyed the historical mining town of Paradise, is the most deadly in state history, with 84 fatalities as of Friday, according to statistics from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. It's also the deadliest in the U.S. in a century.

With hundreds of people still reported missing, the death count is likely to rise.

The state's second-deadliest wildfire, Los Angeles' 1933 Griffith Park blaze, killed 29 people, most of them workers hired under a Depression-era Works Progress Administration program to widen roads and

build trails in the sprawling wilderness park on the edge of downtown Los Angeles.

Those workers had no experience fighting fires and no water readily available when flames erupted. They became trapped in a canyon when they tried to stop it with shovels and their feet by stomping on hot spots.

The Tunnel Fire of 1991 killed 25 when it roared down the densely populated hillsides of Oakland, trapping people in homes and on narrow, winding streets. This third-deadliest wildfire began as a small blaze that firefighters thought they had contained, only to see it roar back to life when smoldering embers ignited other brush as fierce winds erupted.

Largest California wildfires
The Mendocino Complex Fire this year blackened more than 459,000 acres, or 717 square miles (1,857 square kilometers), much of it in the Mendocino National Forest, making it the largest in state history, state statistics say.

That's nearly triple the size of the Camp Fire that has consumed more than 153,000 acres, or 240 square miles (620 square kilometers). But only one person died in the 2017 blaze.

Last year's Thomas Fire, which scorched about 440 square miles (1,140 square kilometers) in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, is the state's second largest. It killed two people.

The Cedar Fire, which roared across about 427 square miles (1,106 square kilometers) in 2003, was

the largest in state history at the time and is now the third largest. It is also the fifth deadliest.

The blaze, which began in the Cleveland National Forest, killed a firefighter and 14 other people. Most were residents of a rural San Diego County canyon who didn't have time to outrun the wind-driven flames.

Currently the Camp Fire is 16th on this list. Most destructive California wildfires

This statistic is based on total structures destroyed, including homes, businesses and other buildings. The Camp Fire is far and away the leader with nearly 19,000 buildings lost, including 13,954 homes.

Last year's Tubbs Fire, which burned through California wine country, is a distant second at 5,636 structures. It's also the state's fourth-deadliest wildfire, having claimed 22 lives.

The third deadliest, Oakland's Tunnel Fire, is also the third most destructive, claiming 2,900 buildings. Are California wildfires getting worse?

Statistically, it would appear so.

Fifteen of the 20 most destructive California wildfires have occurred in the past 20 years.

During that same period, 10 of the state's 20 deadliest wildfires have broken out, including four in just the past two years. Sixteen of the state's 20 largest wildfires have erupted since 1998.

Scientists issue stark climate change warning to the U.S.

BY SHEETAL SUKHIJA

WASHINGTON, U.S. - A major U.S. Government report on climate change released this week, has issued a stark warning to the U.S. President Donald Trump over the dangers facing the country, due to his administration's pro-fossil-fuels agenda.

The report outlined the prospective impacts of climate change across every sector of American society and underscored the reality of climate change during the Trump presidency.

Prepared by a team of 13 federal agencies, the U.S. Global Change Research Programme has stated that there is "no convincing alternative explanation" for climate change besides "human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases."

It warned that unchecked climate change is set to cost the U.S. hundreds of billions of dollars and will damage human health and quality of life by the end of the century.

The 4th National Climate Assessment has stated, "With continued growth in emissions at historic rates, annual losses in some economic sectors are projected to reach hundreds of billions of dollars by the end of the

century - more than the current gross domestic product (GDP) of many U.S. states. Future risks from climate change depend... on decisions made today."

According to the report, climate change is "presenting growing challenges to human health and safety, quality of life and the rate of economic growth."

It claimed that gross domestic product could be slashed by 10 percent by 2100 - causing losses twice the size of that which occurred during the Great Recession.

It also pointed out that the poorest communities nationwide would be among the most disproportionately impacted by global warming since droughts, flooding and increasingly powerful storms begin regularly impacting the country.

However, the warnings issued in the report contradicted the U.S. President and his repeated denial of climate change.

The federal report and its warnings were immediately dismissed by the White House.

Earlier this week, Trump commented on reports that temperatures were set to reach record lows on Thanksgiving and tweeted, "Whatever happened to

Global Warming?"

After the report was released, the White House dismissed it as inaccurate.

Commenting on the report, White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said the new report was "largely based on the most extreme scenario, which contradicts long-established trends by assuming that... There would be limited technology and innovation, and a rapidly expanding population."

Over the last two years, the Trump administration has been rolling back Obama-era environmental and climate protections.

The administration has issued policies that maximize the production of domestic fossil fuels, including crude oil - which is already the highest in the world, above Saudi Arabia and Russia.

However, Brenda Ekwurzel, Director of Climate Science at the Union of Concerned Scientists and one of the authors behind the report said in a statement that the U.S. government should respond to the report with action.

She said, "This report makes it clear that climate change is not some problem in the distant future. It's happening right now in every part of the country."

Trump says doesn't believe own government's climate warning

Agence France-Presse

President Donald Trump said Monday he doesn't believe his own government's report last week warning of massive economic losses if carbon emissions continue to feed climate change unchecked.

"I don't believe it," Trump said at the White House, adding that the United States would not take measures to cut emissions if the same was not done in other countries.

Trump said he had read "some" of the report and that it was "fine."

However, he rejected the central warning in the National Climate Assessment, which said there will be hundreds of billions of dollars in losses by the end of the century due to climate change "without substantial and sustained global mitigation."

"No, no, I don't believe it," he repeated.

"You're going to have to have China and Japan and all of Asia and all of these other countries, you know. It addresses our country,"

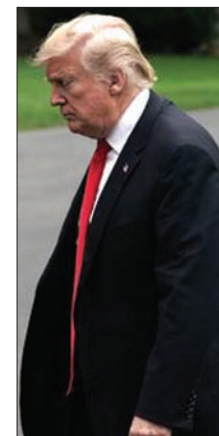
he said.

"Right now, we're at the cleanest we've ever been. And that's very important to me. But if we're clean, but every other place on Earth is dirty, that's not so good. So I want clean air, I want clean water, very important."

According to the report, released Friday, climate change will "cause growing losses to American infrastructure and property and impede the rate of economic growth over this century."

The effects will spill into global trade, hitting import and export prices and US businesses with overseas operations and supply chains, it added.

Trump has long said he distrusts the consensus by nearly all the world's respected climate scientists on the link between human activity and rising tempera-



President Trump

tures, as well as other damaging climate change phenomena.

Since becoming president in 2016 he has pulled the United States out of the international Paris Agreement on attempting to bring down global temperatures, and torn up a raft of environmental protection laws, saying the

US economy needs

the boost. In October, Trump said during a visit to inspect hurricane damage in the southern state of Georgia that climate change "is going to go back and forth," rather than be permanent.

He also gave a lukewarm reaction to publication of a major UN report warning in October of global warming-caused chaos, saying "I want to look who drew it, you know, which groups drew it, because I can give you reports that are fabulous and I can give you reports that aren't so good."



PerryScope

BY PERRY DIAZ

Has Chinese colonization begun?

For the past several years, the prospect of Chinese invasion of the Philippines has instilled fear among Filipinos – they remember the Japanese invasion in 1942 came to their minds. When China reclaimed the Panganiban Reef, also known as Mischief Reef, in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) in 1994, that fear transformed into apprehension.



China reclaimed the Panganiban Reef, also known as Mischief Reef, in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) in 1994.

When China started building artificial islands around seven reefs in the Spratly Islands in the WPS in 2013, the Philippine government went into a state of shock not knowing how to respond to China's takeover of parts of the Spratlys. When China began building airbases and harbors capable hosting warplanes, warships, and missiles on the artificial islands, the Philippine government tried to appease the "Chinese Dragon" that's extending her territory in the WPS. And when she started deploying aircraft and missiles in the militarized artificial islands, the Philippine government slid into paralytic state, incapable of how to deal with the "Chinese Dragon."

In May 2017, Duterte visited Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing. In their meeting, Duterte boldly told Xi: "We intend to drill oil there, if it's yours, well, that's your view, but my view is, I can drill the oil, if there is some inside the bowels of the earth because it is ours." Xi responded, "We're friends, we don't want to quarrel with you, we want to maintain the presence of warm relationship, but if you force the issue, we'll go to war."

That did it. In no uncertain terms, Xi made it clear that the two nations' friendship is second only to China's territorial claim in the

WPS. Xi's veiled message was: "Don't touch the West Philippine Sea. It's ours."

When he was back home he said that some groups in the country were pressuring him to take stronger action to assert the Philippines' ownership of the WPS. He told them, "We cannot afford a war. We cannot win a battle against China and I would only lose maybe thousands of my troops and policemen."

That was the gist of Duterte's foreign policy vis-à-vis China.

Chinese province

It's interesting to note that when Duterte spoke before an audience of Filipino-Chinese businessmen on February 19, 2018,

he said: "If you want, just make us a province, like Fujian." The businessmen applauded Duterte's statement while Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Zhao Jianhua grinned approvingly.



In July 2018, residents in Manila and other cities woke up to see red banners hanging from footbridges reading, "Welcome to the Philippines, province of China."

In July 2018, residents in Manila and other cities woke up to see red banners hanging from footbridges reading, "Welcome to the Philippines, province of China," complete with the Chinese flag and Chinese characters. Nobody knows who put up the red banners. However, many see it as a protest to Duterte's failure to assert the country's rights in the disputed waters.

China Dream

Though, the Philippines isn't a part of Xi's "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) strategic initiative to link Asia, Europe, and Africa, which is modeled after the "Silk Road," it is now part of



President Rodrigo Duterte and Chinese President Xi Jinping

OBOR's ancillary routes. As its now apparent, OBOR is the answer to Xi's "China Dream" to reshape global trade with Beijing at its core. China would be the world's new imperial power.

Indeed, OBOR's expansion into the Philippines has drawn various industries. One of them is offshore gaming known as Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations (POGO), which was established after Duterte took over the government in 2016. Chinese gaming companies have "invaded" the country. There are now more than 50 POGO licensees, many of which are Chinese groups.

The influx of Chinese gaming companies has created another industry – real estate. Due to the demand for POGO facilities, offices and houses by the Chinese expats, property values have skyrocketed. Incidentally, POGO companies employ mostly Chinese nationals. According to a property consultant, the growth is phenomenal. POGO groups use almost quarter of a million square meters of office space.

Cruise ships, which were non-existent in Philippine waters just a few years ago, have contributed to the country's tourism industry. Junket players -- heavy-betting Chinese gamblers -- are also contributing to the profits of POGO companies



Xi's "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) strategic initiative to link Asia, Europe, and Africa, which is modeled after the "Silk Road." The Philippines is now part of OBOR's ancillary routes.

One of the giants in the casino industry, Chinese casino Galaxy Entertainment Group would soon open its expansion by building a

\$550 million casino in Boracay.

When the Duterte administration invited telecommunication companies to bid for a third concession, three major Chinese communication giants were looking for Filipino partners to qualify to bid. This is because the Philippine Constitution requires 60% ownership of all Philippine-registered corporations. And this is where "dummy" stockholder and partners are coming in.

Massive arrival

Government records show that more than three million Chinese nationals were allowed to enter the Philippines since 2016. Many have attributed the influx to Duterte's shift in foreign policy since the beginning of his presidency.

In an attempt to regulate or curb the steady stream of Chinese nationals in the Philippines, Sen. Leila de Lima filed a resolution urging the Senate to investigate the "problem" that she said "not only steals jobs away from ordinary Filipinos but also triggers property surge on many developed areas."

Meanwhile, Philippine Ambassador to China Jose Santiago "Chito" Sta. Romana has been advocating the relaxation of visa restrictions "to encourage tourism on both ways on mutually beneficial terms."

But all things said, there is a long history of mistrust of the Chinese, fueled by China's territorial claims in the WPS. And as China continues to bully the Philippines over the territorial disputes, China will never be seen in the eyes of Filipinos as a friend. Indeed, the threat of war or invasion has made "friendship" with China untenable.

Chinese colonization

In my article, "Who discovered the Philippines?" (April 13, 2007), I wrote: "In 1405, during the reign of the Ming Dynasty in China, Emperor Yung Lo [also Yong Le] claimed the island of Luzon and placed it under his empire. The Chinese called the island "Lu-

song" from the Chinese characters Lui Sung. The biggest settlement of Chinese was in Lingayen in Pangasinan. Lingayen also became the seat of the Chinese colonial government in Luzon. When Yung Lo died in 1424, the new Emperor Hongxi, Yung Lo's son, lost interest in the colony and the colonial government was dissolved. However, the Chinese settlers in Lingayen — known as "sangleys" — remained and prospered. Our national hero Dr. Jose P. Rizal descended from the sangleys."

With historical incidents of Chinese colonization of Luzon, and the present-day massive arrival of Chinese nationals assimilating into the various industries in the country, many are concerned that they



Chinese Emperor Yung Lo claimed the island of Luzon and placed it under his empire in 1405.



"Emperor" Xi Jinping is depicted in the Economist's cover page in a few years ago.

would soon control the wealth and patrimony of the nation. It makes one wonder: Just like 600 years ago when China claimed and placed Luzon under her empire, is she now in a position to claim the Philippines as her province or vassal state? Or has Chinese colonization begun?

(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

PerryScope
 By Perry Diaz

For 32 years after her late husband, dictator Ferdinand Marcos, was toppled from power, Imelda Marcos was never convicted of the crimes she allegedly committed during the reign of Marcos. Of the approximately 100 cases of graft and corruption filed against Imelda, the Philippine government lamely prosecuted her only to let her go. Indeed, from the time the government allowed her to come home from exile to bury her deceased husband in 1989, she was untouchable. She even ran for president in 1992. She lost but proved that her husband's following – the “Marcos Pa Rin” crowd – has remained loyal to her.

Yes, she defiantly stood up against the establishment, the same people who ousted the Marcoses from power. But that didn't discourage her to give up Philippine politics; after all, she and her husband were the conjugal rulers for more than two decades. They had it so good that they didn't see it coming from, of all places, right under their noses in Malacanang Palace. It was no other than Marcos' Minister of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile and his Chief of Staff and cousin Lt. General Fidel V. Ramos who led the People's Power Revolution in 1986.

Exiled to Hawaii at the urging of their best friend in Washington DC no less than the late President Ronald Reagan himself, who ordered then-Sen. Paul Laxalt to telephone Marcos. After trying to persuade Marcos to step down, Marcos finally asked him, “Should I step down? Senator, what do you think?” It was what Laxalt was waiting for. Laxalt then replied with his famous line: “Mr. President, I am not bound by diplomatic restraints. I am talking only for myself. I think you should cut and cut cleanly. I think the time has come.” There was a long pause. Then Laxalt asked, “Mr. President, are you still there?” “I am still here, senator,” Marcos replied. “I am so very, very disappointed.” Thus, the longest presidency in Philippine history came to an end. The Marcoses were flown to Hawaii in



Imelda Marcos reacts to her conviction.

exile. Marcos died in September 1989 leaving the fabled Marcos loot behind for his heirs. Marcos also left behind billions of dollars in real estate and business assets. But the Philippine government sequestered them all. Although some have been sold, a large number remained unsettled.

National politics

And this is where Imelda and her two children, Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. and Imee Marcos, have inched their way to national politics, while retaining complete control of politics in their home province of Ilocos Norte. Currently, Imelda is in her last term as congresswoman of the Marcoses' bailiwick, the second congressional district, while Imee is serving her last term as governor. Both will be termed out in 2019. Then what?

Meanwhile, Bongbong, who lost to Vice President Leni Robredo in the 2016 elections, has protested the results of the election to the Supreme Court working as Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET). At one time it was rumored that the PET will declare Bongbong winner without the benefit of a recount. But how can the PET make a ruling without a recount? There were talks that the Marcoses bribed some justices to do just that. But it must have fizzled out since the PET started recounting a pilot area comprising of three provinces. The recount is still ongoing. However, depending on the outcome, a full recount is very much likely to happen, which means it



Imee Marcos assists Imelda on a wheelchair.

won't be completed until after the 2020 elections rendering it moot and academic.

If that would be the case, Bongbong -- hedging his political future on the recount -- would be out of the presidential race. And this is where his sister Imee would come in -- she would run for president. And that's probably the reason why she is running for senator in 2019, a stepping stone to the presidency. Recent polls showed her in 7th or 8th place among the senatorial wannabes vying for 12 seats.

Battle royale

The question is: whom would she be facing in the 2022 presidential elections? Who comes to mind are Vice President Leni Robredo, Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Grace Poe, and the President's daughter Sara Duterte-Carpio. There could be more; but these aspirants, in my opinion, are now weighing their chances.

But because of Imee's support among the formidable Marcos loyalists and her mother's vaunted mega-wealth, she'd be put on the top tier of presidential candidates, a battle royale between Robredo, Duterte-Carpio, and Imee Marcos.

But Duterte-Carpio, too, has a very strong backing from her father's loyalists, the more than 16 million who voted for him in 2016. She can add her growing base of loyal followers. She can be very formidable indeed.

Robredo, being the incumbent

Will Imelda's conviction bring down the Marcoses?



Comeback of the Marcoses: Imee, Bongbong, Imelda, and Irene.

vice president, is presumed to have the support of those who voted for her in 2016. She narrowly defeated Bongbong, which is now the basis of Bongbong's electoral protest.

With the conviction of Imelda, the millennials could be turned off and put their support behind Duterte-Carpio who had proven that she could be as forceful -- if not more forceful -- than her father. And this is also where “blood is thicker than politics” plays an important aspect in the presidential election. Indeed, Duterte -- whose alliance with the Marcoses is strong -- has no other option but to get behind his daughter's candidacy. As they say, nothing is permanent in politics. Strange as it may seem, your friends today could be your enemies tomorrow; and your enemies yesterday could be your friends today. It's a strange world indeed.

Wrecking ball

And this where this writer believes that the conviction of Imelda would affect the upcoming battle royale. Could it be that there are powerful people who are trying to discredit Imee by way of Imelda? Could the conviction be used as a wrecking ball to demolish Imee's presidential aspirations? As opposition Senator Risa Hontiveros said in a statement, “I hope this ruling would serve as a crucial electoral guide to our voters this coming election.”

It's interesting to note that Imelda still has all the political connections and topnotch legal representation to influence the corruption cases against her. The fact that none have succeeded in the past 32 years is a testament to her inherent power to avoid convictions until now, which begs the question: Where did the judge who convicted her get the courage to convict a high-profile and seemingly untouchable defendant? Just imagine the tremendous amount of pressure the judge was subjected to rule for acquittal.

Indeed, looking at past court decisions, no judge had the cojones to declare Imelda guilty and issue a warrant of arrest. This time the court found her guilty of

seven counts of graft -- after a trial that took 28 years to prosecute -- each punishable by a minimum of six years in prison. She was sentenced from a minimum of 42 years to a maximum of 77 years in prison for making seven bank transfers totaling \$200 million to Swiss foundations -- which the Marcoses opened in 1968 in violation of the Philippine Constitution -- during her term as Metro Manila governor between 1972 and 1984.

She's also automatically disqualified from holding any public office. That means that she cannot run for her daughter Imee's governorship of Ilocos Norte, which she filed her candidacy last October.

It is expected that Imelda would file a motion for reconsideration. And if the judge sustains Imelda's conviction, she could then appeal to the Court of Appeal and if that fails, then it goes to the Supreme Court.

It is interesting to note that the Sandiganbayan (anti-graft court) had once convicted Imelda of graft in 1993, but the Supreme Court overturned the anti-graft court's decision in 2003; thus, saving her from a 12-year prison sentence, which begs the question: Would the current Supreme Court do the same thing for her? Indeed, the Supreme Court also did the same thing for Gloria in 2016, after she was detained for several plunder cases against her in 2011.

Presidential reaction

In reaction to Imelda's conviction, Duterte's spokesman, Salvador Panelo, said: “While we note that there are still legal remedies available to Congresswoman Marcos, this latest development underscores that our country currently has a working and impartial justice system that favors no one.” Panelo also said, “The ruling against Imelda Marcos was proof that Duterte ‘is not in the business of exerting undue interference or influence’ on courts, and he respects the decision.” The hidden message is crystal clear -- Duterte isn't prone to support Imee.

At the end of the day, one wonders: Will Imelda's conviction bring down the Marcoses? (PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

Philippine Fiesta

916) 708-3462 (916) 835-1450 (916) 215-7077

E-mail: philippinefiesta@fivedarts.com

Website: philippinefiesta.net

Five D's Arts, LLC (Publisher)

Web Designer: Rees Retuta

Managing Editor

Editorial Assistant

Layout and Design

Photographer

Dinnah S. San Pedro

Dane San Pedro

Dave San Pedro

Dave San Pedro

CONTRIBUTORS

Carleton Enloe

Faina Abaya

R. Carado Dizon

Nancy Bautista

Cynthia G. Garcia

Sarah T. Enloe

Jose Abaya, Jr.

Gabriel Ortigoza

Perry Diaz

Dale Esperante

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BY CYNTHIA GARCIA

An Unexpected Joyride And More...

Joy in its simplest meaning, whether in the spirit of the coming Christmas season or just in our day-to-day routines, is manifested in many different ways. It certainly means many things to many people. What maybe joyful in my eyes may not be seen by someone else in the same context. It is all very relative, quite subjective actually and it depends on the person's mind set and open-heartedness at any given time and place.

Several days ago, I found myself in a couple of instances that at the time were uneventful until they became as eventful as they could be. To a few readers out there, this may seem trivial and inconsequential but I think it is worth writing about with one hope that after a thoughtful read, it will at least bring home to everyone out there that joy is everywhere around us, during Christmas season or otherwise.

As recently as two Saturdays past, in one of those times that I needed to do some personal errands, I started off early that particular Saturday morning with a simple goal of accomplishing two items on my "to-do list" of things for that weekend. I thought I'd begin "my walk" early enough so that I could be back to my home base and just spend the rest of the day reading or watching an old movie.

I put on my outerwear for the anticipated sunny but cold day and so off I headed to the bus stop to catch the next one as scheduled that Saturday. A bus bearing that familiar exterior paint colour and built was on sight immediately when I got to the corner and being a creature of habit, I boarded the bus without even looking at the destination route posted. I have used this weekend bus many times before and I am very familiar with its route until it made a turn to the street before my chosen stop. The detour caught me by surprise as well as the other passenger seated across from me. Then to my amusement, I realized that instead of taking a regular bus, I accidentally hopped into a community bus that specifically caters to servicing the senior citizens of the municipality where I am presently based at. It also explained the easier way for me to get on it due to its wider front door and low structure to the

ground. And the turn the bus operator made was not a detour but one of his usual runs that Saturday morning. I glanced at my watch and decided that I'd go along for this short ride since it was going to the same shopping mall anyway. I had plenty of time to get my little plan on the go and I was also curious as to where this bus was going around the bend.

However, it was not a short run because the bus snaked into all the streets where retirement facilities and other apartment buildings that are homes to the elderly population of the city are located. I remained seated in my corner and watched with a renewed sense of appreciation the way the neighbouring streets and roadways are laid out that I never had the chance to see all these years as the bus was making its rounds.

I was about to get up and ask the operator to be dropped off at the next stop until the bus made a turn to the third building where three well-dressed elderly women with fashionably coiffed hairstyles aided by their walkers were waiting for their ride in front of the designated area of this apartment building. It was clear that they were all residents in the building and were good friends because they were all huddled together in deep conversation and giggling at the same time without a care in the world. I watched this scene smiling the whole time. The gentleman manning the bus with his easy and quiet demeanour safely put the brakes to the metal, manipulated the hydraulics for the ramp connecting the bus to the pavement so that these three beautiful elderly women could push their walkers going up to the ramp and be seated in the bus. The bus operator was on hand to assist each one as needed and once each lady was seated comfortably, he reversed the hydraulics process, closed the doors by a button on his panel and we all went our merry way again. He made several more stops in his route picking up two elderly gentlemen, two more women and all of them with their ambulatory means and another one in a motorized wheelchair and each time, the hydraulics actions were at play and handled efficiently by the bus driver. This exercise went on for a while until he made all his scheduled stops and pickups whether there was a passenger waiting or no one at all. The entire process was slow and needed to be done safely. I saw all these before my eyes and witnessed the bus operator display his expertise in driving the bus. He was responsible for the lives of eight elderly folks and two other passengers and I was completely in awe of him because not once did I see him lose his cool and patience. He showed an aura of joy, an unmistakable bearing of it in the way he carried out his

responsibility. He took great pride on his job that to most people borders on the monotonous. I suppose it takes a person with a dynamic personality to do what he or she is bound to do in dealing with the senior citizenry of the population. The interaction between the driver and the old folks that day in the bus was so smooth and in sweet harmony that every one was all smiles as the driver patiently helped each one alight from the bus and accompanied one passenger at a time to a safe spot in the shopping mall. If luck would have it for that happy group of seniors, the same bus and driver might be the same one to pick them up again from the mall and drive them back to their respective apartment buildings. Joy was indeed in the air that day. It was present in the bus and it's still there as the bus left the shopping mall to do exactly the same route probably three more times that day until his shift was done. It definitely made me realize the importance of that social service being provided by the city. I did my errands that day feeling upbeat and quite joyful.



Illustration by Dave San Pedro

My anticipated 7-minute bus ride that Saturday became a joyous and a pleasant 45-minute trip to the shopping mall. It was an experience that will remain with me for a while. I absolutely had no expectations about anything that day because it's commonplace for me to do simple every day things on weekends that I just don't have time to do on weekdays.

It's strange how an ordinary day can be made somewhat extraordinary by just watching a simple, real and actual episode on how people can be good to one another. There is no substitute for being an eyewitness to a man's simple act of kindness. This man, this bus operator could have been impatient and abrupt in dealing with his elderly passengers because there was no team supervisor to monitor his actions. He was left to his own devices and could have chosen to treat his passengers with disdain and contempt but instead carried

out his responsibility joyfully and with dignity. I do think that his kind and self-effacing behaviour set the tone for that 45-minute ride and every passenger including yours truly responded in the same way. Kindness begets kindness and kindness spells joy in spirit.

This real life anecdote reinforces my faith in human kindness.

And so as I continue on with my daily activities juggling post retirement contract work on weekdays and attending to my personal undertakings, I found myself again in another pleasant adventure this time

in an Uber ride being manned by this nice fellow of Middle Eastern background.

I don't drive and at this stage in my life to learn how to be a licensed driver is already moot considering that people like myself have now been given the chance to avail ourselves of having the option to be in the comfort of a car or to use the public transportation system. To say the least, I have the best transportation systems at my doorstep, an excellent public bus service and Uber. It also helps that being a senior citizen has proven to be very cost effective as most of my contemporaries will attest.

The minute I got into the Uber service car as it pulled over the driveway, Mr. Uber said and I quote... "kumusta ka" and those friendly words so familiar to my ears put a big smile on my face and I politely replied to him... "mabuti po" which he also understood to my amazement. I immediately followed my response to him by adding that he must have quite a few Filipino friends to be able to say his greeting effortlessly and understand what my reply to him meant. He chuckled and smiled back and said to me that being a Dubai resident gave him the opportunity to meet and mingled with a good number of Filipinos who are working in Dubai whom he said are the nicest and the most friendly, happy people he'd ever met, never complaining and always ready to lend a helping hand. And when he said that there are five hundred thousand Filipinos working in the service industry in Dubai, I was completely dumbstruck by that piece of information. I had no idea that in Dubai alone, our kababayans in that huge number play a significant role in making what Dubai is now.

The rest of the half hour ride to my destination was quite cheerful with our topics ranging from his family back in Dubai to his school schedules and doing Uber to augment his expenses. He did emphasize the fact that he's absolutely grateful about being accepted in Canada under the stu-

dent visa program to complete his MBA designation. He struck me as someone with the smarts and good family upbringing, willing and able to do hard work, get his diploma and find a job to be completely self-sufficient for his own young family.

It may seem to be too quick and an easy assessment I had about this man and probably it was but there is such a thing as seeing the good in everyone first before jumping to conclusions. It was indeed only a half hour ride but it was a pleasant one nonetheless.

The use of Uber car service had given me the window to meet all kinds of people of different nationalities and life experiences shared within a brief ride period and for the most part it had been quite a pleasant and joyful experience. I have yet to meet someone with a dismal outlook and attitude in life or am I being an eternal optimist? There is a lot of good in seeing a glass half-full instead of half-empty.

It was mid-November when I started writing this piece to meet my deadline for my contribution for the Christmas edition of Philippine Fiesta. I have come to really enjoy my little role in Dinnah and Dave San Pedro's monthly publication, an endeavour that they have been doing for the last 17 years. I am not at all privy as to how Philippine Fiesta came about, its inception and ultimately its publication but the length of time The San Pedros had devoted to it together with the amount of individual effort given to come up with a monthly publication is a testament to their unwavering commitment and the kind of service they have given the community over the years. They obviously are and have been so active in their community's events and affairs.

Philippine Fiesta is their pride and joy.

I am not at all out of bounds when I say here, right now that Philippine Fiesta's goals and achievements over the time it has been in publication have been an enormous source of joy for the entire San Pedro Family. The short period of time I have been a member of its contributing writers staff has given me great pleasure in knowing that I can add some value to its mandate however small my contribution is.

I have joy in my heart and endless gratitude to The San Pedros for this opportunity.

**A GLORIOUS AND A BLESSED,
MERRY CHRISTMAS
to everyone, everywhere and
anywhere around the world.
May peace reign supreme at
all times.**

Kristina Balneg and Benjamin Abaya

Wedding Celebration

BY FAINA E. ABAYA

Marriage has biblical origin, supposedly a religious covenant between a man and woman to live together under any circumstances that they might encounter in the course of their married life. However, with the advent of liberal enlightenment in many aspects of human perception marriage is now perceived differently based on social orientations which has been accepted in some jurisdictions as the norm of conduct legally and religiously.

Regardless, we shall always respect human behavior that could not possibly conform into what other people believe in. Moreover, although we have different religious beliefs, yet we all adhere to our faith to respect and love one another in accordance with the Holy Scripture as handed down by the omnipresent almighty Lord. Of course, this is with due respect to other religions that do not believe to such concept because it does not jibe with their beliefs.

If we are to peruse the pages of our Holy Bible, we will find out that there are many verses about the relationship of a man and woman indicating among others their obligations as husband and wife in the rearing of their children and on family matters.

Prominently mentioned among the several verses were the biblical passages that led to the union of man and woman, stating that "Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man". The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh for she was taken out of man. That is why a man leaves the father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh" Therefore, "what God has joined let no one separate".

Just like any Christian marriages, biblical passages on marriage are mentioned by the officiating priest, pastor or minister of the church during the actual ceremony or as a eucharistic homily to inculcate into the minds of the bride and bridegroom on how the union of a man and woman has come into being before the altar of God.

On October 19, 2018 at the Church of Christ on Lemon Hill Avenue, Sacramento, the most memorable day on the lives of Benjamin



Kristina and Ben Abaya



Ben Abaya family



Parents of Kristina and Ben



Kristina Balneg family

Abaya and Kristina Balneg occurred in accordance with the Holy Scripture binding them together as husband and wife.

As expected, the church was traditionally decorated with colorful variety of well-arranged freshly cut flowers placed on the edge of every pew on both sides where the bridal entourage passed through from the main door of the church up to the altar where the marriage rite will be performed.

With melodious hymnal song from the church choir, the bridal entourage started to enter, and all the church goers stood up to greet them as they walked on the middle aisle of the church towards the altar. First to enter were the parents of the bridegroom Jun and Faina Abaya and they were followed by the bride parents Johnny and Luz Balneg. Just behind them were the sponsors; Raquel Gayton, Ka Dina Felisilda, Ka Lydia Reynolds, Ann Kroll, Cary Collada, Ka Pastor Felisilda, Jojo Abaya and Jeremiah Kroll.

Likewise, they were followed by the Maid of Honor, Jonna Julian, Best Man John Marie Abaya; Bridesmaids Hannah Howarton, Lauren Goddi and Jennifer Madamba and the Groomsmen were Nino Abaya, Ronald Balneg and AJ Tejada. All the gentlemen were



Rings bearers and flower girls



With friends

wearing their navy-blue color suits with matching ties and brown pair of shoes, the chosen colors of the marrying couple for them to wear while the ladies were showing their elegance with their formal designed dresses.

When members of the bridal entourage were all in their respective places, the music and hymnal song from the Church Choir continued as ring bearers Lennox and Korben Abaya entered together with flower girls Reia Golmon and Emily Collado who scattered multicolor of fresh flower petals on the way of the bride escorted by her father. The bride was wearing all white sleeveless floor length bridal gown intricately hand embroidered matched with a silver necklace dotted with beautiful sparkling gems showing and projecting her grace, beauty and elegance. And when she reached near the altar where the groom

was standing in wait extended his hand and lovingly embraced her.

The marriage ceremony was officiated by Church Minister Joey Jujag-Ay who emotionally reiterated the biblical words of the Lord on their obligations in the course of their married life. The marriage ceremony was witnessed by the parents of the newlywed, the immediate members of their families, relatives and close friends.

From the Church of Christ where the marriage ceremony was performed, the newlywed, bridal entourage, relatives, friends and invited guests proceeded to Crocker Art Museum. The venue of the reception is a beautiful building on O street, Sacramento where we can view the State collection of master drawings, European paintings, international ceramics collections in the US as well as Asian, African and Oceanic Arts. Inside the building is a spacious

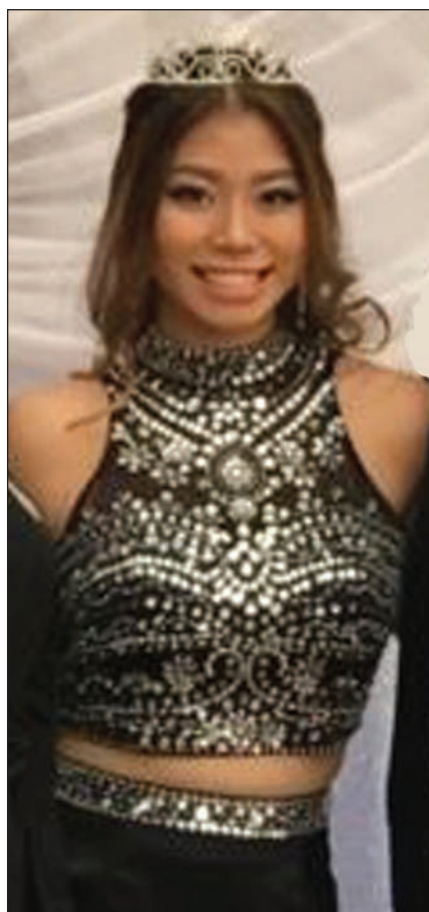
reception hall where social gatherings can be held.

The museum social hall was meticulously decorated with enough well-arranged tables having a seating capacity for about 150 people. And as soon as the hall was filled up with expected number of people, they were welcomed by Raven Adalla and Olivia Su who acted as Emcees of the evening impromptu program. They thanked everyone and expressed the gratitude of Ben and Kristina for graciously accepted their invitations to enjoy with them for the celebration of their first night as husband and wife.

All the tables were filled up with favors such as miniature clay made animals and air plants that can be found in the jungles as well as give away different flavors of French Macarons courtesy of Jumpy Hieu. Videos about the families of the newlywed were shown, especially, when Ben and Kristina were young which drew some laughter's from everyone. John Abaya and Ron Balneg were also called up to narrate some serious and funny stories about Ben and Kristina which likewise drew laughs from their listeners.

Games were played such as trivial questions about the lives of both Ben and Kristina, especially, when they were still dating and later as an engaged couple. The catered sumptuous dinner was served consisting of Steak and Salmon with verities of vegies and while everyone was enjoying their dinner, the Emcees requested all to stand up for a toast for the happy and successful married life of Ben and Kristina.

The newlywed met during one of their Church activities and from that time on they were inseparable in all matters pertaining their religious and social undertakings. Kristina is presently employed with the UC Davis Hospital as a nurse. She is a graduate of the University of California School of Nursing and current taking up her master's degree in nursing. Ben is presently working with IDEXX company and currently enrolled in college taking up Bachelor of Science in Film Making.



Julie SooHoo

Sweet 16th Birthday


On November 17, 2018, we celebrated the sweet 16th Birthday of Julie SooHoo. It was a fun filled event held at the Valley Oak Ballroom at the Wackford Aquatic Center In Elk Grove. Julie is our current emperatriz Sta. Elena for the Filipino Family Fraternity. She is a sophomore at St. Francis high school . Her parents are Sheldon and Lyn-da SooHoo. She is also the grand daughter of Aida and Segundo Azurin.



Lu's 80th Birthday Celebrations



Lucrecia Capuchino celebrated her 80th Birthday on November 24 at Lions Gate Hotel in McClellan, Sacramento, CA with relatives and friends.



Happy Holidays



Bhaby Vergara

It was a special Birthday Celebration for Bhaby Vergara on November 25, 2018. The celebration was held in Elk Grove, California with relatives and closed friends.





(Top) Col.(AFP ret.) Mon Veridiano returning back to the Philippines was treated with a dinner at Red Hawk Casino restaurant by Henry and Tina Bambao. They were accompanied by Jun and Faina Abaya.



(Bottom) Col. (AFP, ret.) Mon Veridiano welcomes Senador Manny Pacquiao during the Cagayan Valley Athletic Meet in Tuguegarao, Cagayan, Philippines.



86th Birthday of MERCEDES LAGASCA BELVIS taken at her residence in Tracy, CA on October 14, 2018



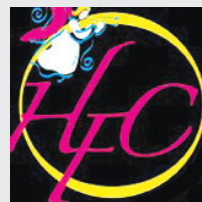
The GOLDEN HIPS at a costume party, celebrating the birthdays of Marilyn Lopez and Gigi Martin at Elna and Val Discipulo's residence in Elk Grove, CA. (L to R), Kim, Cion, Marilyn, Helen, Elna, Elvie, Liz, Fely, Laurie, Mel, Gigi and Nancy.



ELVIE CASWELL celebrated her 70th birthday with her family and friends. Laurie, Judy, Elna, Marilyn, Gigi, Elvie the celebrant, Mariflor, Liz, Kat, Helen, Marita and Nancy Bautista.



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Dr. Francisco J. Marasigan

opportunities for their future family. In 1978 Dr. Frank entered the US Air Force as a Commissioned Officer joining the Medical Corps at Mather Air Force Base.

After 16 years of service as a Major in the Air Force and Air Force Reserves he was honorably discharged in 1996. In 1979, Dr. Frank moved his family to Elk Grove and opened medical practices in Sacramento, Elk Grove and Galt and was an attending physician and surgeon at Methodist Hospital for over 30 years. He was known for being upbeat and generous: often singing on the job, performing magic tricks for his young patients, and waiving fees or accepting payment in fruits and vegetables for patients who did not have insurance or money to pay for services.

Dr. Frank was also deeply committed to community service and in 1979 was a founding member of the Mabuhay Lions Club (later named Mabuhay Foundation International), where he served as President from 2001-2007. For over 20 years Dr. Frank led medical missions that brought medicine, equipment, clothes, toys, and a team of health professionals and volunteers to the Philippines to provide much needed free medical and dental services to thousands

of under-served Pilipinos. At his core, Dr. Frank was a family man. He taught his children to be respectful and strong, and raised them among a tight network of relatives so that they embodied the principle that family always comes first. His children and their cousins fondly remember how would take them to the public pool, roller skating rink, and ice cream parlor, and how he was the life of the party, often singing, dancing and telling jokes, even occasionally break dancing at family gatherings to get laughs. When Dr. Frank retired from his medical practice in 2014, he enjoyed gardening, golfing, and walking with friends in the neighborhood. He will be remembered for his kindness, sense of humor, humility, and his unwavering commitment to care for his loved ones, patients, and his community.

Dr. Frank is survived by his wife of 50 years, Dr. Erlinda Marasigan; their three children Lynn, Frank Jr and wife Angie, and Lorraine; grandchildren Kainoa, Josiah, Jude, and twin grandchildren on the way, Thomas and Frankie; siblings Perry, Aurora, Erlinda, Evelina, Teodolfo and Lutgarda; and many nieces and nephews. (SacBee 11-11-18)

Dr. Francisco J. Marasigan, age 80, passed away peacefully on November 4, 2018 in his home in Elk Grove surrounded by his loving family.

Known as Dr. Frank to his patients and colleagues, Francisco was a dedicated husband and father, a skilled and compassionate physician and surgeon, and a beloved community leader. Born and raised in the Calaca, Batangas in the Philippines, Francisco pursued his dream of becoming a doctor and received his medical degree in 1966 from Manila Central University. During his medical internship, he met fellow intern Erlinda Rodrigo, whom he would later marry. In 1968, the newlyweds emigrated to the US to complete their residencies in Chicago, IL and pursue better

Ben Fenkell

It is with our deepest sorrow that we share the passing of our beloved friend, Ben Fenkell. As we grieve together for this tremendous loss to our community, we want to share our deepest love and support to Ben's family and friends. For anyone that had the blessing and honor to know Ben, you'd agree that he was definitely one of the best people this world had to offer. We will miss you, Ben. (PNDA)



A final salute to my HERO...

Rolando Gantan

October 4, 1953
October 27, 2018

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Magellan Post 604's Congressional Gold Medal Recipients

BY DALE ESPERANTE



Norberto Tablada Adviento

Norberto Tablada Adviento:

On October 13, 2018, decades after his military service, Norberto's wartime service was finally recognized by the Congress of the United States through the award of the Congressional Gold Medal.

MSgt Adviento served in the United States Armed Forces of the Far East in 1941 through the end of WWII. After surviving the Bataan Death March and WWII, he then continued serving in the United States Army until his honorable military retirement in 1967. He passed away at age 71 in 1994.



Ruby Cayabyab, wife of American Legion Magellan Post 604 Member, Gene Cayabyab, received the award of the Congressional Gold Medal in behalf of her father MSgt Norberto Tablada Adviento.

Gilmore Perla:

On October 26, 2018, Magellan Post 604 Commander Marcos Evangelista, fellow officers, family members, and friends visited Gilmore at Sunrise Adult Facility in Fair Oaks for a presentation ceremony. 98-year old Gilmore met and welcomed the visiting group with a salute and a big smile.

Every visitor (granddaughter Analisa McMath, Past Service Officer and Gilmore's friend Howard Williams, 1st Vice Commander Tom Amaba, this writer, Grand Chef de Gare Will Williams of 40 & 8 (Honor Society of American Legion), in-law RJ McMath, and assistant photographer Melita Esperante) said a few special words of hello to Comrade Perla. With the initial formalities out of the way, Commander Marcos asked Comrade Perla to be seated for the official ceremony.

The American Legion National Headquarters issued a Certificate of Appreciation to Comrade Gilmore Perla for his 50-Year Membership as an American Legionnaire. First, Commander Marcos read a congratulatory follow-up letter from SacFilVet for the recent presentation (13 Oct 2018) of the Congressional Gold Medal to Mr. Perla. Then Commander Marcos officiated the presentation of The American Legion's National



Comrade Gilmore Perla with Commander Marcos Evangelista



Comrade Perla and members of the Magellan Post 604

Recognition of Comrade Gilmore Perla's 50-Year Membership. Commander Marcos read a congratulatory preface the presentation by acknowledging the service as well as the challenges experienced by his elder comrade.

After the ceremony, a congratulatory cake was then brought in by the staff of the care facility, followed

by photo and video ops. For those who are interested in watching a video of the presentation visit, it is available for viewing on YouTube Channel, SenPin TravMom, titled: WWII Veteran and Bataan Death March Survivor. Congratulations to our BAYANI and KABABAYAN, Gilmore Perla!

In dying hours, 'Kumander Liwayway' asks for PH flag

BY TONETTE T. OREJAS

In his last act of patriotism, former Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Hukbalahap) commander Arcadio Ramos asked for the Philippine flag a few hours before he died of kidney failure at 1 a.m. on Tuesday at the age of 93.

Ramos may have been the last surviving Hukbalahap commander in Lubao town, and was a participant in the "Battle of San Vicente" during World War II.

His daughter, Elsa, fulfilled the Huk leader's death wish by securing the flag from the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) in this Pampanga capital and draping it on her father's coffin.

"He instructed me that when he is gone I should go at once to PVAO and arrange for the burial assistance and get the flag that has been set aside for him. That's precisely what I did today," Elsa said.

Fighting the Japanese

PVAO files show that Ramos joined the Hukbalahap, a homegrown anti-Japanese army, in August 1942 when he was just 17. He served as an intelligence officer, with the rank of lieutenant, in the second platoon of Company C, Second Battalion of the 7th Regional Command—first under Abelardo Dabu, alias Senti, and then under Ignacio Dabu.

His last commander was Silvestre Liwanag, alias



Arcadio Ramos

Linda Bie, according to declassified Hukbalahap files of the Philippine Archive Collection from the US National Archives.

According to PVAO records, Liwanag, testifying on behalf of Huk leader Luis Taruc in 1979, confirmed that Ramos served in the intelligence department of Squadron 18, one of Hukbalahap's pioneer units.

Ramos, who used the nom de guerre "Liwayway" (sunrise), said the Battle of San Vicente might have happened sometime in 1943.

It began when 15 fighters of Squadron 18 ambushed 10 Japanese soldiers in Sto. Domingo, a village across a river in San Vicente.

Nine Japanese soldiers were killed. But the Japanese Army sent reinforcements via railway that linked the Pampanga Sugar Mill (Pasumil) central at Del Carmen, Floridablanca town, to what is now Sitio Tramo in San Francisco beside San Vicente.

Ramos and his comrades,

augmented by reinforcements sent by Liwanag, mounted a surprise attack that lasted until nightfall, killing dozens of Japanese soldiers.

Peace

"After those two consecutive fights, the villages were at peace," said Ramos, who joined the Huks to fight the atrocities of the Japanese invaders, especially the rape of women and girls.

Squadron 18 also looted Pasumil for sacks of sugar to give to barrio folk, and burned two Japanese planes at Barangay Landing (now Basa Air Base in San Jose, Floridablanca).

Ramos left the Huks in December 1945, joining the police force in the time of then Gov. Jose Lingad and, for years, as security aide of then President Diosdado Macapagal.

"When I'm alone and I recall the past, I wonder why I am still alive. I credit that to civilians. They protected us Huks," Ramos said.

Aliga named to national veterans advisory committee

BY RACHEL RASKIN-ZRIHEN

Vallejo resident Nestor Aliga was named to serve on a national veterans advisory committee, it was learned this week.

The retired U.S. Army Colonel, said he believes he may be the first Vallejo resident to serve on the Minority Veterans Committee.

"I applied for it last April," said Aliga, husband of Vallejo City Councilwoman Rozzana Verder-Aliga. "I think I'm the first ever from Solano County for this Minority Committee. Delphine Metcalf-Foster served in the Women's Advisory Committee."

A Vallejo native, and daughter of a Buffalo Soldier, Metcalf-Foster became the first woman commander of the Disabled



Nestor Aliga

American Veterans in the state. She also completed a four-year appointment as a member of the Secretary of Veterans

Affairs Advisory Committee on Women Veterans in November 2015, according to the DAV website.

Aliga said he was alerted to his appointment by mail.

"I received this letter on Oct. 15 and I'm very excited to serve as a member of the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans through June 2020," he said.

The committee advises

the Secretary of the VA on the department's "effectiveness in delivering and administering benefits, programs, and services to minority Veterans," the letter says. "The Committee reviews reports and studies pertaining to compensation, health care, rehabilitation, outreach, and other benefit programs administered by VA."

Aliga said that as a Marine Corps and Army veteran from 1974 to 2008, a member of several local and national veterans groups, and as "a volunteer for serving and honoring war veterans, I believe I have a well-rounded knowledge of veterans' issues. My main goal is to advocate for improving culturally competent outreach and services particular to Asian Americans and for all Veterans."

Aguinaldo's 'death summon' to Heneral Luna surfaces

A telegraph dated June 4, 1899, purportedly sent by President Emilio Aguinaldo to Gen. Antonio Luna summoning him to a conference in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, where he would later be killed by Aguinaldo's own men in one of the most controversial episodes in Philippine history, has surfaced and it will be auctioned off by León Gallery on Dec. 1.



Gen. Antonio Luna: Bloody end from Aguinaldo's Kawit platoon

The telegraph appears to be the smoking-gun evidence that historians have been looking for to establish that Aguinaldo himself engineered the assassination of Luna by his own Kawit platoon, said writer and León consultant Lisa Guerrero-Nakpil.

The platoon, whose members were Cavite provincemates of Aguinaldo, had an axe to grind against Luna for dressing them down and even spanking them for lack of discipline.

The telegram is lot 122 of the auction and is titled, "The Extremely Important Heneral Luna Telegram, from Aguinaldo Summoning him to his Death."

Provenance is the estate of Grace Luna de San Pedro, who married the famous architect Andres Luna de San Pedro (1887-1952), the son of Juan Luna, Antonio's brother.

The telegram is reportedly one of four sent by Aguinaldo in various points of Luzon to locate Luna.

His aides said Luna had been summoned to Cabanatuan by Aguinaldo for a meeting, but this was denied by Aguinaldo.

In "Malolos: Crisis of the Republic" (1960), historian Teodoro Agoncillo said Aguinaldo could not have been responsible for Luna's death. "The mystery of Luna's death hinges on a telegram that he

purportedly received from Cabanatuan," he wrote. "The telegram is missing, and no one has seen a copy."

Lot 122 is not the Cabanatuan telegram, but it is one sent from Dagupan allegedly by Aguinaldo himself.

Aside from Dagupan, a telegram was sent from San Juan Bautista in Tarlac, which reportedly is in the Felipe Hidalgo collection. Two others—sent from San Fernando, Pampanga, and from Cabanatuan—are missing.

Agoncillo quoted the statement of telegraph operator Teodoro Cada on the authenticity of the Dagupan telegram based on Cada's letter to the editor of Pagkakaisa newspaper on Oct. 28, 1928.

Cada said Aguinaldo approached him wearing only his undershirt and shorts. In the auction catalogue, Guerrero-Nakpil writes that Aguinaldo's "disheveled" looks probably "reflect(ed) his sleeplessness over a terrible decision."

According to the catalogue, the telegram in Spanish read, "President of the Republic to the Secretary of War, Dagupan. Paging for an important meeting, therefore, you are ordered to come here immediately... It is really an emergency."

Luna's reply

Luna had famously exploded in a cabinet meeting and slapped

Buencamino, Aguinaldo's foreign secretary, calling him a coward for proposing to negotiate with the Americans.

Arriving in Cabanatuan on June 5, 1899, Luna found Buencamino who told him Aguinaldo had left. The two exchanged heated words and when a shot rang outside,



Luna's telegram from Aguinaldo

Luna went down and found Kawit officer Pedro Janolino whom he had previously disarmed for insubordination. Janolino swung his bolo at Luna and the other Kawit guards shot him. Luna died with more than 30 wounds.

Including Spanish military paraphernalia captured by Luna and also coming from the Grace Luna de San Pedro estate, the controversial telegram will be auctioned off with a floor price of P500,000.

Luna and his fiery character and devoted patriotism has captured the popular imagination, especially after the 2015 movie, "Heneral Luna." Directed by Jerrold Tarog, the movie portrays Luna, powerfully played by John Arcilla, as a swashbuckling devil-may-care general who's intolerant of incompetence and indiscipline of some of Aguinaldo's other officers, who are portrayed as operating based on clannish, regionalistic and ultimately self-serving interests.

The movie earned at least P200 million in the box-office, and its producers this year released a follow-through, a biopic of Gen. Gregorio del Pilar, Aguinaldo's favorite general whom the movie depicts as his henchman.

Tejeros, Naik documents

Also to be bidden out are historical documents related to the infamous Tejeros convention of 1897, including the Acta de Naik, in which Andres Bonifacio and 41 others said that the Tejeros meeting was a "betrayal" of the revolution. Both documents (Tejeros and Naik) each has a floor price of P1 million.

Also to be bidden out is the 4x7 feet copy of Juan Luna's "Spoliarium" made by Antonio Dumlao. Dumlao (1912-1983), restored the "Spoliarium," when it was repatriated by Spain in 1958.

Plaza Cuartel History: 143 Americans massacred, 11 Survived

"Have you ever heard massacre/mass killing? How about Ampatuan Massacre? Horrible isn't it? It makes you scared or somehow sadness. It opens your chest and it opens up your heart and it means that human mass killing is really a sensitive issue."



On December 14, 1944, soldiers of the Japanese Imperial Army poured fuel on the prisoners and set them on fire in a tunnel.

In addition to the memorial marker, there was the Palawan Massacre Monument. The monument was created by Don Schloat, a World War II veteran and was one of the survivors in Plaza Cuartel.

How about looking back the history of Palawan Mass Killing of 143 American as Prisoner of war (POW) during WORLD WAR 2?

"In this place which was a military fort of World War II, the burning of more or less 150 American POW was done by Japanese soldiers on December 14, 1944. Some managed to survive by swimming their way out from the sea to Iwahig. The remains of those who died were brought and buried in



Plaza Cuartel in Palawan.



The statue created by Don Schloat, one of the survivors.

Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, Missouri, United States, 1952." These are the words that you can read if you visit plaza cuartel in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

The Tagalog information what plaza cuartel is? A grim reminder to all of us that once in Palawan, there was a devastating event

happened during the Era of Japanese. The first Era was Spanish, the American took after that, up until the Japanese Era came that leads the mass killing of the American. The Japanese decided to kill the POW veterans by burning them in a tunnel. Luckily 11 out of 143 was able to escaped by swimming going to IWAHIG w/c is currently popular as a prisoner

swimming going to IWAHIG w/c is currently popular as a prisoner

colony .Plaza Cuartel was a military fort in World War II .After the world war, the Americans took control of the place once again until it was passed on to the Constabulary. Later on, it was given to the National Police. In 1997, it was renovated and became a leisure park.

Plaza Cuartel is located along Taft street, in Barangay Liwanag, just across the Immaculate Conception Church. You will see a gate and the tourist police are also posting on that area for assistance. Moreover, the place looks like your ordinary park with concrete pavements, towering trees and benches.As you enter the gate , you will see the garrison and tunnels that are witness the sigh of the Americans during the mass killing. The 143 POWs aka Prisoner of wars were kept in the tun-

nel during World war 2 up until their last breath.

The List of the names of the survivors are listed also in the park. The remains of the burned Americans were brought to the US.

Plaza Cuartel looks like your ordinary city park with concrete pavements, towering trees and benches. Yet darkness story underlies within the beauty of it.

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Plaza Cuartel looks like your ordinary city park with concrete pavements, towering trees and benches. Yet darkness story underlies within the beauty of it.

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Hypertensive Crisis

BY GABRIEL ORTIGOZA, PHD

When I posted my two photos lying on emergency department bed with my blood pressure of 203/89 at the headboard monitor screen hundreds of my friends were concerned and sent prayers for fast recovery, get well wishes, and some advised me to slow down and even retire from work. I am considering all those advises.

While working day shift on Tuesday, November 13th, I felt lightheaded and my blood pressure was high. I sent message to my primary care physician about my symptom and BP. After being off from my maintenance BP medication which is Amlodipine for 10 days as advised by my PCP because of palpitation, the same doc changed it to Losartan.

During my last 15-minute break I went down to pharmacy to get my new prescription. I took one tablet right away. When I rechecked my BP around 1400 it was going higher to 163/101 then 174/98. I endorsed my patients to the break relief RN and my charge nurse escorted me to ED.

At the ED my BP went up even higher to 203/89 with the mean pressure of 116.

The ED doc made standard assessment to include neuro check because he was concerned of stroke



180/120 or above with organ damage. The symptoms are the same with hypertensive urgency but has consequences on brain, heart, and kidney. Vision is affected, there is numbness in the face, extremities. Patient also develops weakness. Encephalopathy (brain disease) is another consequence of hypertensive emergency which caused cerebral edema.

The treatment is important. Usually patient is given intravenous medication to quickly lower the blood pressure to prevent damage to target organs like brain, heart, and kidney. IV dilator, calcium channel blocker, and beta blocker are ordered by the physician. Patients with hypertensive crisis are usually managed at the intensive care unit or closely monitored setting.

The ED doctor offered me two choices. To be admitted for observation or to be discharged home and for me to observe myself at home. I chose the later. So far, everything is on guard.

This time I was on the other side of the fence as a patient. It was a learning opportunity for me to improve management on patient care as I experienced it.

Thank you very much for your prayers, concerns, and well wishes.

and end organ damages. 12-lead EKG and labs were ordered. EKG showed sinus bradycardia which is normal for me having a heart rate in the 50s. My labs came back and my creatinine went up to 1.7 which indicates that my kidney is slightly affected by hypertension.

Back to the main topic, hypertensive crisis happens when BP rises quickly. There are two categories of hypertensive crisis.

The first category is called hypertensive urgency. In this situation the BP is super high at 180/110 or above however there is no organ damage. The symptoms are headache, lightheadedness, chest pain, and short of breath.

The second category is called hypertensive emergency. In this situation the BP is also super high at

Fil-Am becomes only woman city councilor of Artesia, California

BY RAE ANN VARONA

Los Angeles – Filipina American Melissa Ramoso on Wednesday, November 21, declared victory on winning a seat as the only woman on the Artesia, California City Council.

Since election day, Ramoso had held onto her position as one of the top three vote-getters in the Council elections where she was the only woman on the Nov. 6 ballot.

As the last rounds of outstanding ballots were counted by the Los Angeles County Registrar of Votes, Ramoso placed a solid third place.

“It has been such an incredible journey, and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone before the Thanksgiving Holiday for their love and support. I am deeply humbled to be one of Artesia’s newest Council members,” said Ramoso in a statement. “I promise to work hard to justify Artesians confidence in me, keep residents informed about what the city is doing, and ask for their input as new projects and issues arise. My door will always be open.”

Ramoso has worked for federal and state legislatures for 14 years. She intends to work with the same enthusiasm in the city of Artesia where she has long been a local resident, having graduated from the ABC Unified School District’s Richard Gahr High School before attending



Artesia, California City Council's new member Melissa Ramoso.

the University of California, Irvine.

“I love the hometown feel that it has, and the people, and pride that many residents show and express,” Ramoso previously told the Asian Journal during her campaign. “I want to keep that spirit, in addition to making the city grow and be innovative as our families grow as well,” she added.

Ramoso’s city council agenda combines leadership and public service experience to bring Artesia forward.

Being one of Los Angeles County’s Gateway Cities, Artesia is home to numerous ethnic enclaves, including the Filipino community which makes up the majority of Artesia’s Asian population.

There are also the Portuguese and Dutch communities who first settled in

the area in the early 1920s and 1930. The burgeoning South Asian community along Pioneer Boulevard is the largest Indian enclave in Southern California.

Throughout her campaign, Ramoso stated that her top priorities was making City Hall more accessible, improving the quality of life for all Artesia’s neighborhoods and strengthening its local economy.

Artesia, Ramoso told Asian Journal, was where she first experienced a sense of community brought by culturally diverse businesses like Goldilocks, which first opened its doors not too far from where she currently lives.

“I can’t wait to get to work for all Artesians,” Ramoso said in a statement upon winning her seat. “Artesia’s best days are to come!”

Meet the first Fil-Am elected to Harvard overseers board

BY LOIDA NICOLAS LEWIS

New York — Geraldine Acuña Sunshine is the first Filipino American to be elected by some 26,000 Harvard University Alumni to the six-member Board of Overseers, to serve for a six-year term.

Next to Harvard Corporation, the Board of Overseers is the second governing body of the Ivy League university to set direction, advice administrators, approve the actions of the Harvard Corporation, in short “to maintain the highest standards as a place or learning.”

Previous members of the Board of Overseers included Franklyn D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Al Gore,

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Born in Roxas City, Philippines, her family lived in Manila where she studied in Poveda for grade school.

Her family moved to Texas during the martial law years in the 1980s. After high school, she received her Bachelor of Arts Cum Laude from Harvard College in 1992, her master’s degree in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government in 1996, her Juris Doctor at Columbia University Law School in 1999.

She met her future husband Gabriel Sunshine in Harvard College who graduated in 1991. He is the



Geraldina Acuña Sunshine was elected to the Harvard Alumni Board of Overseers.

co-founder of the hedge fund Bracebridge Capital in 1994. It has more than \$10 billion assets under management, including en-

dowments from Yale and Princeton.

Atty. Acuña Sunshine served as Senior Counsel in Alternative Investments for Bracebridge Capital based in Boston for over 13 years. Prior to that, she served as adviser to the late Jovito Salonga when he was Senate President in the Philippines, to Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan, and the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry.

Presently, she is the president of Sunshine Care Foundation for Neurological Care and Research, a not-for-profit organization intended to give free clinical and neurological care in rural parts of Asia.

She was inspired to establish the foundation when her brother was stricken with X-linked Dystonia Parkinsonism (XDP) five years ago. It is common

among men in the Visayas who in their 30s become debilitated by the disease. She and her husband and their three children live in Boston.

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Thank you and God speed, Stan Lee!



Stan Lee

BY JOSEPH R. ATILANO

How can you sum up someone's career in the comic book industry that started as early as the 1940's before it crossed over to popular entertainment? The answer is you don't.

For me, Stan Lee will forever be the man behind Marvel Comics.

Stan Lee single-handedly created and also co-created alongside legendary comic book artist Jack Kirby the greatest comic book super heroes and super villains the world will ever have seen and get to read about in comic books.

If it were not for Stan Lee, almost all of the Marvel comic book characters you have been reading in the comics and watching on the big screen would never have existed. I know so well Captain America, The Mighty Thor, Namor The Submariner, The Incredible Hulk, The Invincible Iron Man, The Amazing Spider-Man, The Uncanny X-Men, Avengers, The Fantastic Four, etc. because I have been avid comic book collector since the early 90's!

The list of Stan Lee's phenomenal characters goes on and on. He truly created enough comic book characters to last multiple lifetimes for Marvel fans going from one generation to the next. His legacy will forever be cemented in the annals of our history as human beings and that enduring legacy goes well beyond the pop culture realm but importantly into our daily lives. Yes, that is how much Stan Lee's Marvel Comics have affected our lives. His legacy is permanent. It is ever lasting. It is forever.

For me, Stan Lee is the Father of Comics. In fact, he was much more than that; he is a "father figure" for all of us comic book

nerds way back even before it was deemed to be cool to be one. Stan Lee helped change the notion of close-minded and uninformed people who would judge negatively those who collect and read comic books. We were no longer geeks. He guided us in many ways when it came to becoming a massive comic book reader and collector. He is the man!

And, people like me will forever be thankful and grateful to him because without him the world would have been a much darker, lonelier, and scarier place to be in. His super heroes gave us the inspiration, the motivation and that "inner fight" to survive our daily struggles in life. He took our mind away from the stress each time we opened and turned the pages of a Marvel Comic book. Stan Lee let our mind escape into the marvelous worlds that he created because Stan Lee himself, first and foremost, was a comic book artist. In fact, and remember this always, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby were the very first comic book artists of Marvel Comics.

I believe that deep down all of us, we would like to possess powers and abilities that would enable to web-swinging from building to building; shoot beams from our eyes; to be a telepath; to be able to project energy bursts from our hands; to phase through solid matter; to absorb the powers of other people; have the gift of flight; have retractable adamantium claws with the healing ability, of course, included; and to be able to have super strength to lift and throw away literally and figuratively the hurdles we encounter in our lives, whether man-made or not.



Reading Marvel Comics


made me think and dream that supernatural powers and abilities are possible and having thoughts like that did fill my mind with wonderment because once you read comics on a regular basis as I do it does bring you into a different realm... A world far, far from ours. And that is one of the greatest things about comic books... they afford us an escape from a hum-drum reality.

To the man, Stan Lee. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for making me believe that super-heroes do exist in our world because you are a perfect example of one. I am just one of the countless people from all over the world who want to thank you for the gift you have bestowed upon millions of people since the early 40's when you created Marvel Comics and the comic book characters in them. And, as my generation grows older, we will pass our precious Marvel Comic Books to our loved ones who represent the next generation and tell them stories that will be etched in their hearts and fill their world with fantasy, lore, and imagination... the very qualities that you, Stan Lee, possessed and will always be remembered for.

You may be gone but each time we open the pages of a Marvel Comic book and watch a Marvel movie, we will fondly remember and think of you, Stan Lee. Through these comics and movies you will live on forever in our hearts.

I know God right now is marvelling upon, and is so pleased, to be with one of His greatest creations. That is you, good Sir, Stan Lee! Thank you and God Speed, Stan Lee!





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Story behind Jose Mari Chan's 'Christmas In Our Hearts'

BY REGINA MAE PARUNGAO

The Christmas season is upon us once again. Malls from all over have started decorating, Pinoys have gone gonzo over completing shopping list, and ham and Queso de bola are flying from shelves.

It's also that time of the year when we hear "Christmas In Our Hearts." Like God, it's everywhere. The song takes us back to more innocent times, one that reminds us "to never forget the love we have for Jesus."

The voice behind this iconic Christmas song is no other than Jose Mari Chan.

Decades after "Christmas In Our Hearts" was first released, Jose Mari – or simply Jomari – has once again revealed the story behind it.

"That song has a long history," he began. Jomari recalled it all started in 1988 when he had just returned from 11 years of doing sugar trading in the United States. He got a phone call from good friend Chari Cruz-Zarate, asking for help to create a melody for a poem she wrote.

"She phoned me and she said that her high school class was celebrating their silver jubilee. She had written a poem titled "Ang Tubig Ay buhay." She wanted me to send it into music because she and her classmates would sing it during their homecoming (party)," he narrated. "It was a very lovely poem, the words are very meaningful. It took me about two days to put melody to it."

Two years later — fresh from the success of his album "Constant Change," which contains the song "Please Be Careful With My Heart" — Jomari shared the late Bella Dy Tan, then head of Universal Records, called him and suggested he should come out with a Christmas album.

Then and there, Jomari agreed and proceeded to collect favorite Christmas song from his childhood. However, Bella said he needed to include his original composition.

"Then I remembered the melody of 'Ang Tubig Ay Buhay,'" he disclosed.

One particular Sunday morning, Jomari had just attended a Sunday Mass when a young woman knocked on his car window and said: "Sir, may I introduce myself. My name is Rina Cañiza, I'm a budding songwriter. Hopefully one day, you and I could collaborate for a song."

He kept Rina's card. And when he got home, he thought maybe they could set up a meeting and work on his original Christmas song.

Jomari then revealed Rina wrote the first line of "Christmas In Our Hearts," which goes "Whenever I see girls and boys, selling lantern on the streets..."

"After few days of going back and forth, we finished the song," he said.



Jose Mari Chan

A 'perfect' duet

Jomari said he felt the recording would be ideal as a duet.

The first name that came to his head was Lea Salonga, who was very popular at the time because of her successful stint on "Miss Saigon."

Jomari called her up and let her hear the melody. "She liked it and agreed to do the duet," he said.

Unfortunately, Lea's recording company didn't allow her to cross labels.

The "Father of Christmas Songs" then contacted theater actress Monique Wilson — whom immediately agreed to do the duet.

"Unfortunately again, she traveled to Tagaytay and she called me, saying she lost her voice. That's a day before we were supposed to record," he shared.

Next thing Jomari knew, he was knocking the door of his 19-year-old daughter Liza. He asked her: "What are you doing? Can you learn this song for me?"

At that time, Jomari said Liza was cramming for exams, but didn't decline, even he revealed they will record the song the next day.

It was all successful.

Did you know that "Christmas In Our Hearts" received an unprecedented "double diamond" award (20 times "platinum," with a sale of more than 800,000 copies so far — and counting), making it the biggest-selling album in Philippine recording history?

"I always believe the hand of the Holy Spirit was there from the very beginning. 'Christmas In Our Hearts' was really meant to be a father-daughter song. It's a perfect combination for the celebration because Christmas is all about family," he said.

Jomari will have a Christmas concert titled "Going Home To Christmas" with Louie Ocampo as musical director, and Rita Daniela as special guest.

"Going Home To Christmas" is on Dec. 22, 8 p.m. at The Theatre at Solaire.

PNP revives support for 'Ang Probinsyano,' wants more 'realistic' show



Coco Martin as P02 Ricardo Dalisay

BY CATHRINE GONZALES

"Ang Probinsyano" can now again use police uniforms, equipment, and facilities after the Philippine National Police (PNP) restored its support for the television series.

But PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said they wanted the show to be more "realistic" in portraying the police force.

The PNP earlier banned the show's producers from accessing police personnel and equipment for supposedly putting the force in a bad light.

"Hindi natin sinabi na ang ilalabas puro [good things about the PNP, but] what's reality basically, for the story to be more realistic lang," he said in a press briefing on Monday.

(We did not say they should always show what's good about the PNP, but what's reality basically, for the story to be more realistic.)

The conditions were made official as the PNP and executives of the ABS-CBN Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to iron out differences between them on the show.

"Until the succeeding season of Ang Probinsyano, we hope to put all the animosity and clashing opinions between us and in-

troduce to our countrymen the true to life Filipino police officers imbued with the finest tradition of valor, service and sacrifice for God, country, and people," Albayalde said.

He said "changes" on the show would most likely be seen in the next episodes of the series.

Albayalde also said that the provision of uniforms, equipment, and facilities would now be supervised by the PNP.

"Parang consultative ang dating (It will appear as consultative)," he said, noting that the supervision would cover interventions on the way the show's characters wear the uniform and their posture as police officers.

"Eto yung mga tinitingnan natin. In regards to the story, wala tayong sinabi kung ano ang dapat nilang gawin," he said.

(These are what we are looking at. In regards to the story, we didn't say how they should do it.)

Asked if the PNP and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) still eye lawsuit against the show's producers, Albayalde said: Well, sabi nga ni PIO [Chief Supt. Benigno Durana Jr.], All's well that ends well."

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