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PHILIPPINE Fiesta

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Filipino Women's Club Page 11

House OKs lowering crime liability age threshold to 12

BY DELON PORCALLA

Voting 146-34, the House of Representatives passed on third and final reading yesterday the measure lowering to 12 the minimum age of criminal liability for children found to be in conflict with the law.



Lawmakers approved House Bill 8858 that

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo endorsed upon the call of President Duterte, who wants to amend Republic Act 9344 or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 following a reported increase in minors' commission of crimes. HB 8858 lowers the minimum age of "social responsibility" to 12 from the current 15 years. The seven-member Makabayan bloc along with several other House members from the administration vehemently opposed the passage of the bill, which they said is not the solution to eradicate crime.

"Crime, when committed by a child, reflects not any evil or failure on the part of the child, but rather reflects the evil in his environment and the failure of parents, the state and society as a whole," former House deputy speaker Miro Quimbo of Marikina City said.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman said lowering the age of criminal responsibility "will just encourage criminal syndicates to use even younger

children." "Neuroscientific research documents show that brains of children don't fully develop until their early 20s." Women's group Gabriela Rep. Arlene Brosas stressed "this proposal defies all logic, science and statistics on conflict with the law and child's development."

Oriental Mindoro Rep. Doy Leachon, chairman of the House justice committee who sponsored in plenary HB 8858 that was passed on second reading last week, said their overwhelming concern is for the safety of children. "Definitely, we cannot deny that there really are children who are in conflict with the law. And this is a perfect law that can cater (to these cases) and fix the system so that we can rehabilitate and reform them," Leachon told reporters in a briefing.

The panel earlier approved lowering the age of criminal liability to nine years old, but this was pegged at 12 after numerous lawmakers opposed the idea, insisting the threshold age passed is too young for a minor to suffer any penalty.

Meanwhile, insertions on the measure include provisions to ensure funding for the development of Bahay Pag-asa, a 24-hour child-caring institution to provide short-term residential care for children in conflict with the law.

Comelec warns Ronald 'Bato' dela Rosa over biopic



Former police chief Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa

BY SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

MANILA, Philippines — The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has reiterated that former police chief Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa could be disqualified

from the May 13 senatorial polls over his biopic being shown in movie theaters starting today.

Comelec spokesman James Jimenez said if the Rosa could be disqualified

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Military launches offensive against Abu Sayyaf in Sulu



Attack helicopters have been deployed to Sulu for airstrikes against the Abu Sayyaf.

BY ROEL PARENO

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines — Artillery shells and rockets from helicopter gunships rained on Abu Sayyaf jungle positions in Patikul, Sulu on Tuesday in what the military said was an execution

of President Duterte's order for an all-out offensive against the terror group, following the Jolo cathedral bombing last weekend.

The air strikes followed a ground offensive that began within days of Duterte's is- Continued on page 5

Aida Azurin installed as the new president of Filipino Family Fraternity



The Filipino Family Fraternity new officers for 2019-2021 at Casa Ignacia, RVMS residence.

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Child, criminal

BY MICHAEL L. TAN

The last few days have seen heated debates around a bill to amend our minimum age of criminal liability. On first reading, the minimum age was lowered from 15 to 9; but, maybe because of the intense negative public reaction, it went up to 12 on second reading.

Internationally, there is a term used, complete with an abbreviation, which I think better captures what we're debating: minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR). I prefer this term because it shifts the focus away from "liability," which in the Philippine context is so focused on getting caught and punished. In Filipino, "Hala! Lagot ka!"

I also prefer "responsibility," because the debates should not be only about prosecution, but also about the state's responsibilities to help young people who get into trouble with the law.

I went to the website of the Child Rights International Network (CRIN) to look for MACR information, expecting to find more developed countries having a higher minimum age.

My hunch was wrong. Within the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the richest member countries have the highest MACR: 7 in Brunei and Singapore. The MACR in the other countries are 8 in Indonesia, 10 in Malaysia, 15 in the Philippines (at least for now) and 16 in Vietnam and Laos.

The MACR in African countries is generally higher than in Asia, hovering around the age of 13, with only a few below 10.

Among the developed countries, the MACR is 10 in England and Wales, 12 in Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands, 14 in Spain and Italy, 15 in Denmark.

The most shocking figures for developed countries come from the United States, which leaves the MACR to individual states. There, 33 of the states do not even prescribe a minimum. CRIN comments that, theoretically, in these states children of any age could be held criminally liable. Among the remaining states that do have an MACR, North Carolina has the lowest at 7, while Wisconsin has the highest at 10.

As an anthropologist, I look at all this in relation to the



Act.

Countries also incorporate concepts of maturity. Muslim Sharia (also spelled Syariah) laws will invoke puberty as the dividing line for criminal liability (and, incidentally, eligibility for mar-

riage).

Maturity is described in various ways, with Brunei and Malaysia explicitly stating: "sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of their actions at the time of the offense." The existing Philippine law on criminal liability uses "discernment," a good term.

Finally, in several countries, MACR laws are oriented toward defining what the state's role is. Will it be mainly as punisher? Remember that in 1961, Marcial Perez, better known as Baby Ama, was convicted for murder and executed by electric chair at the age of 16. A movie was even made about him, titled "Bitayin si Baby Ama (Execute Baby Ama)."

Many countries' laws define MACR in relation to "social protection," meaning children can be taken into custody to protect them and to provide rehabilitation.

I understand this is what Filipino legislators are trying to do right now, but I still worry. Our jails are now globally notorious for their subhuman living conditions, made worse in recent years because so many people are being arrested in the war on drugs. A law that allows 9- or 12-year-olds to be detained, even if in the name of social protection, and even if the children are separated from adult criminals, could mean the creation of juvenile hells.

dilemmas we face around the definition of "child" and of morality. Among animals (yes, we are animal), humans have the longest period of offspring being dependent on their parents, during which we want to assure children's rights, such as having adequate food and shelter and access to education, as well as not having to be married off at an early age.

At the same time, we think of childhood as a time when values and morality are formed, when children learn to distinguish between right and wrong, and to be responsible for what they do.

Some cultures are stricter with children than others, and I thought that maybe the more authoritarian ones would have a lower MACR. But both North and South Korea have the same MACR of 14. China's MACR is 16, while, surprisingly, in Hong Kong it is 10.

As I looked through CRIN's information, I realized that many of the MACR laws do have important clarificatory provisions on criminal responsibility. These provisions address three issues: the nature of the crime, concepts of maturity, and the state's responsibility.

Several countries qualify that the MACR may be lowered for serious crimes like murder. Malaysia dispenses with the MACR for violations of the Internal Security

Your heart

BY PHILIP S. CHUA

HEART, the symbol of love, of Valentine's Day, even of religious adoration, is always fascinating but still a mystery to most of us. The amazing facts about our most loyal and dedicated heart are mind-boggling and a constant source of wonderment. Winning hearts, stealing hearts, breaking hearts, and for us cardiac surgeons, mending hearts, are easier to understand and do, than to comprehend fully the wonders of this hard-working, ceaselessly pumping, untiring, and unique muscle in our body.

How large is our heart?

The size of the adult heart is about the volume of two hands clasping each other, with the fingers intertwined. In children, it is the size of the kid's one fist. The heart is located, not to the left, as often thought of, but in the middle of your mid-chest, enclosed in its own compartment, an envelope called pericardial sac, and located between the left and right chest cavity, where the left and right lungs are, respectively. Its tip is pointed slightly to the left.

Does the heart ever rest?

The heart beats about an average of 70 beats per minute, 4,200 an hour or about 100,800 times in one day, roughly about 36 million times in a year. In an average life span, the human heart will beat about 2.5 billion times. But contrary to what seems obvious,

the heart rests for a split second in between beats. This happens between contractions, when the heart relaxes to accept more oxygenated blood from the lungs, and prepares to pump blood out of its chambers again.

How powerful is the heart contraction?

The heart contraction is so powerful that it approximates the force one needs to give a tennis ball a hard and full squeeze with all your might. The cardiac muscles work twice as hard as the leg muscles of a person running full speed. The hydraulic force generated is necessary to propel rapidly the blood that circulates about 13 kilometers per minute, or 780 kilometers per hour, about four times the speed of the fastest racing car there is.

Will an isolated heart beat on its own?

The muscle of the heart is a specialized one that beats on its own (automaticity) and one that has its own rhythm (rhythmicity), even when cut off from the body and lying on a surface. The isolated heart in this situation will beat continuously until its own residual energy is used up, which is within about 4 minutes. It then ceases movement.

What is the normal heart rate?

This varies from individual to individual, depending on the age, condition of the body, and the health of the person. A well-conditioned athlete may have a heart rate of 35 a minute and feel great, but this rate would cause almost all of us, non-athletes, to feel faint and pass out, or



in the very least, feel very dizzy and weak. On the average though, the

normal resting rate (medically speaking) is from 60 to 100 beats per minute. Anything below 60 is called bradycardia (too slow heart rate), and a rate higher than 100 is tachycardia (too fast a heart rate). Among children the range is between 90-120 beats a minute.

How much blood does a person have?

The adult human body has about 5.6 liters (6 quarts) of blood in the circulation. These 6 quarts completes a full round of circulation throughout the body about every 20 seconds. The blood travels a total of about 19,000 kilometers (12,000 miles) in 24 hours, which is about four times the distance from California to New York, or roughly five times the air miles from San Francisco to Manila. About one million barrels of blood is pumped by the heart in an average life span, a volume enough to fill more than three super tankers.

Where does the blood go?

The blood pumped by the heart goes out through the ascending aorta, the largest artery in the body (about half the size of an average wrist), that is connected to the heart, and circulates through the various arterial branches and capillaries to the brain and to all other vital organs (liver, pancreas, kidneys, adrenals, intestines, sex organs, etc.).

The capillaries are terminal or end arteries, the size of which is about one-tenth the size of the human hair.

Continued on next page



Editor's Note

It is the month of love and here it is, out of labor of love, our February issue of PF news. But don't be surprised, as we say about our plans for what has to become of it, after 17 years in our Filipino-American community. As we keep up with the world of technology, we want to share that our plan after this issue, is to go completely online. The hard copies will be the thing of the past, but PF news' online presence will stay the same.

As we make the transition, our next online issue will not begin until May 2019. Once uploaded to Philippine fiesta.net website, they will be on PDF format, and can be printed, as you wish, on your personal printers at home. They can also be easily shared, as we have already been doing, with our friends and families all over the internet, by sharing the link with them.

Times may have changed but we are true in our intention to continue with our mission to acknowledge the accomplishments of our fellow Filipino-Americans in our community, and to promote and remain proud of our Filipino culture and heritage.

As we begin our 18th year with Philippine Fiesta news and God willing, we wish you all love, good health, and joy for what you all do to be of service to our fellow Filipino-Americans in our community.

*With love always,
Dinnah S. San Pedro*

Jolo under total lockdown

Duterte orders military to prevent repeat of terror attack

BY MARTIN A. SADONGDONG

The entire town of Jolo in Sulu province has been placed on total lockdown following the two explosions that hit a church, killing at least 20 individuals and injuring 112 others, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said Monday. Outraged by the twin blasts in Jolo, President Duterte ordered the military to implement more stringent safety measures to prevent a repeat of the incident amid lapses in security.

PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said the lockdown was agreed upon by the police top brass to contain the situation in the area.

“Nagbigay order ang NHQ [National Headquarters] para sa lockdown. Total lockdown sa Jolo, Sulu, kaya makita natin walang tao at sarado ang mga tindahan (The National Headquarters ordered the lockdown. Jolo, Sulu was placed under total lockdown that’s why we can’t see people around and business establishments are closed),” said Albayalde, who flew to Jolo

to personally oversee the ongoing investigation.

“Kapag nag-normalize, doon tayo mag-lower ng alert status (If the situation goes back to normal then that’s the time we lower the alert status),” he added.

Luzon, Visayas on alert

Police forces in Luzon and the Visayas were also placed under heightened alert status in an apparent attempt to prevent a spillover of bomb attacks.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said the President wants the troops to ensure the safety of the people after deploring attempts by groups to sow terror and derail peace efforts in the south.

Duterte is scheduled to visit Jolo Monday afternoon, a day after the explosions at a church left several people dead.

“He’s outraged,” Panelo said during a Palace press briefing when asked about the President’s reaction to the Jolo bombings.

N “Of course, he was so angry for one, for another he is so disappointed that de-



PNP Chief Police Director General Oscar Albayalde inspects the blast site at the Jolo Cathedral in Sulu.

spite the movement to tread the path towards peace and development, there are still some forces in that region who sow terror and kill and murder people,” he said.

“He has issued directive to the Armed Forces of the Philippines to secure the safety of the citizenry and to attend to the injured and to provide succor to the families of the victims,” he said.

He added that the President directed the military “to undertake measures so that this incident will not happen again.”

Who’s behind the attack?

A top Philippine government official told The Associated Press that an Abu Sayyaf commander, Hatib

Sawadjaan, is one of the main suspects. At least four of Sawadjaan’s men were filmed by security cameras near the bombed area, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the investigation.

Sawadjaan is based in the jungles of Patikul town, near Jolo, and has been blamed for kidnappings for ransom and beheadings of hostages, including two Canadian men, in recent years. Sawadjaan’s faction has aired ransom-demanding videos that used Islamic State-styled black flags as backdrops.

The SITE Intelligence monitoring group said an IS communique claimed the attack was carried out by two

of its suicide bombers who wore explosive belts, one detonating inside the church and the other in the parking lot. The claim could not be independently verified.

Post-blast probe

According to Albayalde, investigators are having difficulty finding pieces of evidence at the blast site since the explosion caused a massive destruction.

As of writing, only parts of a mobile phone were discovered inside the church so police are considering that the bombs were detonated electronically. Earlier, police claimed the bombs used were improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

“Wala pang masabi kung anong klaseng bomba dahil walang ma-recover na residue although may mga nakuha silang parts na cellphone. Pero hindi pa nila masabi kung cellphone-detonated, most probably cellphone detonated.

Ang timing ng blast is 12 to 15 seconds so talaga itong electronically detonated (We cannot say what type of bomb was really used because there was no residue although we found parts of a cellular phone. However,

we cannot say that it was cellphone-detonated, most probably it was. The timing of the blast is 12 to 15 seconds so it is probably electronically detonated,” Albayalde said.

He also said around two kilos of explosives were used in the bomb attack. According to ground reports, a mass was ongoing at the Jolo Cathedral when the first bomb exploded at 8:58 a.m. Sunday.

Lax security?

Whether the bomb was already installed prior to the mass or it was thrown by the suspect is a matter that has yet to be determined by the authorities.

As such, concerns were raised whether the security troops manning the cathedral have committed lapses.

According to Albayalde, the soldiers and police ensuring the security at the cathedral have shifting schedules.

“Kapag may nagma-mass, ang arrangement sundalo ang nasa inner perimeter at mga pulis ang nasa labas (If there is a mass, the soldiers are assigned at the inner perimeter while the police are outside),” Albayalde said.

Your heart

These are the tiny vessels that actually bring blood to the tissues and cells of the various parts of the body.

How does blood get oxygen and nutrition?

The nutrition and oxygen in the blood are used up by the tissues and cells. The used blood (now containing much less oxygen and more carbon dioxide, lactic acid and other “waste products”) travels back from the tissues and cells to lungs for oxygenation. Then blood goes

to the heart for pumping to all organs, like the liver where toxins will be detoxified, to the kidneys that will filter the waste products and passed out through the urine, to the stomach and intestines where it will be replenished with new nutrition. The used blood then flows back to the lungs. After the oxygenation, the blood flows into the heart, ready to be pumped back into the circulation once again. And the cycle goes on.

How strong is our heart?

A healthy heart can take a

lot of beating (no pun intended). It is one of the most powerful pumps in the world, even when compared to the mechanical ones built by man. Self-contained, self-propelled, energy-efficient, the heart works without stopping, and can survive grave insults and abuses we, humans, subject it to day in and day out.

Is mechanical heart better?

Certainly not. Not yet, anyway. The man-made hydraulic-driven artificial or mechanical heart prosthesis available today is still no

match to the one we were born with. Besides being a bulky foreign body and made of hardware not as soft and tender as our body tissues, it also requires electrical energy from outside the body and the use of anticoagulants to prevent thrombosis (blood clots, which can cause stroke). The mechanical heart is also prone to infection and not as durable as a natural heart. At present, the artificial heart leaves too much to be desired.

When is artificial heart used?

Mechanical heart is helpful as a bridge to heart transplantation, implanted temporarily (for a few weeks or so) while a transplant patient waits for a human donor heart, but not as a long-term, permanent, heart replacement. Obviously, of course, a suitable permanent mechanical heart with as close inherent features as those of the human heart is the ultimate goal of ongoing researches around the world. When that day comes, a dying cardiac patient would not have to wait for a compatible donor to die before

getting heart transplant. The cardiac surgeon then would simply ask the operating room nurse for the appropriate size artificial heart from the shelves (much like asking for a pacemaker today) to be implanted on the patient. By then too, coronary bypass, heart valve surgery, and most cardiac surgeries, would be a thing of the past, and millions of lives lost annually around the globe today from severe and end-stage heart diseases would be saved. As a cardiac surgeon, I can’t wait for that dream to come true.



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Philippines ranks 50th best country in the world

BY CONSUELO MARQUEZ

Manila, Philippines — The Philippines was ranked 50th in the 2019 Overall Best Countries Ranking by the U.S. News and World Report, an American web-based media company that publishes news, opinion, consumer advice, rankings, and analysis



The survey was based on global perceptions that define countries such as trade, travel and investment, and other values and attributes including human rights, gender equality, religious freedom and the environment.

The overall ranking of best countries measures global performance on a variety of metrics which includes adventure, citizenship, cultural influence, entrepreneurship, heritage, movers, open for business, power and quality of life.

The 2019 Best Countries report and rankings are based on how global perceptions define countries in terms of a number of qualitative characteristics, impressions that have the potential to drive trade, travel and investment and directly affect national economies. The report covers the perceptions of 80 countries.

A set of 65 country attributes – terms that can be used to describe a country

and that are also relevant to the success of a modern nation – were identified. Attributes by nation were presented in a survey of more than 20,000 people from across the globe. The participants then assessed how closely they associated an attribute with a nation.

Switzerland maintained its No. 1 ranking for the third year followed in order by Japan, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom. In 2016, it was Germany that occupied the No. 1 spot.

The United States was at the 8th place, Singapore (15),

China (16), Thailand (26), Malaysia (38), Vietnam (39) and Indonesia (43).

The Philippines with a GDP of \$313.6 billion, a population of 104,918,000 and a GDP per capita of \$8,360 was ranked 50th. The Philippines was at the 49th spot in the 2018 ranking.

U.S News and World Report partnered with BAV Group and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania to develop the study and model used in ranking the 80 countries.

Marijuana bill passed on final reading

BY BEN ROSARIO

The House of Representatives on Tuesday passed on third and final reading the proposed bill legalizing the use of marijuana strictly for medical purposes.



Marijuana

With 163 affirmative votes and five negative, House Bill 6517 or the Philippine Compassionate Medical Cannabis Act hurdled final reading. Three congressmen abstained.

However, House approval of the measure does not guarantee enactment as the Senate has yet to pass its own version of the bill until the end of session in June.

Isabela Rep. Rodito Albano, principal author of the bill, remained optimistic that senators will act on the measure although he admitted that the window for approval is slim due to the election break that will start February 8.

“If the Senate fails to pass its version within the 17th Congress, then it will be back to zero in the next,” said Albano.

House approval of the bill came quickly after it was endorsed by former president and now Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Reigning Miss Universe Catriona Gray had also declared her support to the legalization of medical marijuana.

Aside from Albano, other principal authors of the measure are Reps. Reps. Johnny Pimentel (PDP-Laban, Surigao del Sur) and Tom Villarin (Akabayang

Partylist).

HB 6517 provides for the compassionate and right of access to medical cannabis. It also proposes the expansion of medical research into its medicinal properties.

Albano said the proposed measure contains strict provisions that would guarantee that no raw marijuana leaves will be used in treating patients with serious medical conditions, particularly those suffering from extreme pain.

He explained that under the bill, only the government can cultivate marijuana plant for medical use.

“Sale of raw or dried marijuana that is not in medicinal form is prohibited. Smoking the substance remains illegal under the bill,” said Albano.

In an interview last week, Arroyo said she used a “pain patch” also known as cannabis patch, to relieve the severe pain caused by her cervical spine condition.

“I really believe in medical cannabis. As you know I have my problem here (cervical spine) and when I’m in a country that allows it, I put a pain patch,” she revealed.

The former chief executive was quick to clarify that she does not use the effective pain relief patch in the Philippines because it remains prohibited under the law.

Arroyo said she filed the medical cannabis bill because of her personal experience.

“So I authored that bill because I believe that it can help me and many other people but there was a lot of objection to the bill from the House and from the Senate,” she stated.

Gray voiced out her support to the proposal when she won the title.

“I’m for the use (of marijuana) in the medical use but not so for recreational use because I think if people were to argue what about alcohol and cigarettes, well, everything is good but in moderation,” the Filipina beauty said before a live television audience.

Albano said Arroyo and Gray joined top American basketball stars of the National Basketball Association.

It will be recalled that Coach Steve Kerr of the two-time NBA champion Golden State Warriors supported the lifting of the league’s ban on medical cannabis for players.

Albano said Kerr has predicted that the on-going move to lift the prohibition will “happen eventually.”

He disclosed that Minnesota Timberwolves star Karl Anthony Towns and former NBA Commissioner David Stern also came out with statements urging the NBA to allow the use of the substance for professional cagers representing cities where medical marijuana is legal.

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China warns the U.S. over its provocative naval maneuver

BY SHEETAL SUKHUJA

With trade tensions already high between the world's two largest economies - the U.S. and China - an issue that has been intensifying simultaneously over the last ten months, is now threatening to heighten the rift.



USS McCampbell

This week, China issued a stern warning to the U.S., to abide by its 'One China' principle and refrain from conducting international 'Freedom of Navigation' exercises in the waters that it claims.

The warning came after the U.S. sent two of its warships, USS McCampbell and replenishment oiler USNS Walter S. Diehl through the 110-mile-wide Taiwan Strait on Thursday - which became the first such operation conducted by Washington this year.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet said that American Navy vessels passed through the Taiwan Strait on Thursday.

U.S. Pacific Fleet spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Tim Gorman said that the guided missile destroyer USS McCampbell and the USNS Walter S. Diehl "conducted a routine Taiwan Strait Transit" that was "in accordance with international law."

He added, "The ships' transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The U.S. Navy will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows."

The Taiwanese government said that the U.S. warships moved in a northerly direction and added that their voyage was in accordance with regulations.

According to Taiwan's defense ministry, Taiwan

it is bound to help the country defend itself by law.

The U.S. is the main source of arms for Taiwan and the U.S. President Donald Trump recently signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act reaffirm-

ing the U.S. commitment to Taiwan, including arms sales.

The operation conducted by Washington this week was seen as a sign of the Trump administration's support for Taiwan - which comes at a time when ties between Taipei and Beijing have grown increasingly troubled.

China, which has stepped up pressure on Taiwan since the President of the self-ruled island, Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, has warned that it could use force to bring Taiwan under its control.

In the past few years, Beijing has regularly sent military aircraft and ships to circle the island on drills.

Earlier this month, the Chinese President Xi Jinping said that his country reserves the right to use force to bring Taiwan under its control. However, at the time, the Taiwanese President vowed to defend the island's democracy and called for international support to protect Taiwan's way of life.

Meanwhile, Washington's naval maneuver in support of Taiwan, in defiance of China's warnings, also comes at a time when tensions between the two countries have been mounting.

The U.S. has responded to China's military build-up in the South China Sea, by con-

ducting frequent freedom of navigation exercises.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency said in a report that China has undertaken a series of ambitious military reforms and has acquired new technology.

The report by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency noted that modernization steps were driven primarily by "Beijing's longstanding interest to eventually compel Taiwan's reunification with the mainland and deter any attempt by Taiwan to

declare independence." It said, "Beijing's anticipation that foreign forces would intervene in a Taiwan scenario led the (People's Liberation Army) to develop a range of systems to deter and deny foreign regional force projection."

While the U.S. does not have any formal ties with Taiwan,

to attend the premiere at 8 p.m. at SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

The timing of the movie is being questioned due to its proximity to the 2019 senatorial elections.

To accommodate the movie premiere in his schedule, the Chief Executive arrived on time for the groundbreaking of the new site of the San Lorenzo Ruiz General Hospital along Panghulo Road in Malabon. The schedule was adjusted 30 minutes earlier to 4:30 p.m.

While the Palace has denied that Duterte has been campaigning, he even returned to the stage to endorse the bid of local officials and one senatorial re-electionist.

Comelec warns Ronald 'Bato' dela Rosa over biopic

From page 1

movie is still being shown in cinemas when the campaign period for national candidates starts on Feb. 12, rules on electioneering shall have been violated.

"Bottomline is exhibition of cinematographic works, from the start of the campaign period moving forward, that is when it becomes a violation," he noted.

But Jimenez maintained that disqualification, in case of campaign violation, is not immediate and would have to go through a process that will determine who should be held liable for such a violation.

"I don't think that he will personally cause the exhibition of these materials. But

if the lines of accountability are clear and traceable all the way up to the candidate, then the candidate might be called to answer for it," he said.

Under the Fair Election Act, no movie, cinematograph or documentary portraying the life or biography of a candidate shall be publicly exhibited in a theater, television station or any public forum during the campaign period.

Duterte went last night to the movie premiere of the biopic, "Bato," which stars action star Robin Padilla about the life story of Dela Rosa.

Amid calls to boycott the movie, Duterte's schedule was adjusted to enable him

Military launches offensive against Abu Sayyaf in Sulu

From page 1

suing the order after visiting last Monday the bombed-out Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Jolo.

Two MG520 attack helicopters unleashed rockets and heavy machine gun fire as 30 Abu Sayyaf members were reportedly spotted in the mountain jungle in Barangay Latih.

The military also pounded the Abu Sayyaf positions with several rounds of 105mm howitzer shells.

Col. Gerry Besana, spokesman and civil military operation chief of the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said the offensive began Tuesday morning after ground troops detected the presence of 30 Abu Sayyaf terrorists

in the thickly forested area.

He said ground troops sought air and artillery support after encountering difficulty penetrating the thick vegetation.

"Air sorties were conducted and nine rockets and machine gun fire support were launched against the position of the Abu Sayyaf," Besana said.

Authorities said an Abu Sayyaf-linked group called Ajang-ajang was also using the forested areas as temporary base.

Besana said there was still no report of casualty on the side of the government, especially ground troops.

The Westmincom spokesman also emphasized the ongoing offensive would

not affect civilian communities.

"Our ground forces are very much aware of the safety of the community and it will not just launch any bombardment if the area if inhabited by civilian community," Besana pointed out.

Lt. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, Westmincom chief, vowed an intensified military operation until the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu is obliterated.

"Expect that, with the pronouncement of the Commander-in-Chief, we will intensify our focused military operations to pound down the remaining terrorists and penetrate strongholds of the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu," Dela Vega said.

The report by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency noted that modernization steps were driven primarily by "Beijing's longstanding interest to eventually compel Taiwan's reunification with the mainland and deter any attempt by Taiwan to

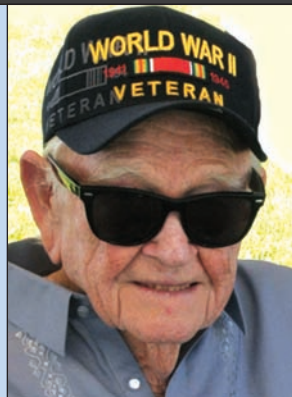
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Maharlika Lions Club Crab & Shrimp Feed



On Saturday, January 26, 2019 the Maharlika Lions Club held their annual Crab and Shrimp Feed at Jose Rizal Community Center in Sacramento, CA. Well attended by members, friends and community leaders of different organization. Proceeds of the event will benefit their Medical Mission, Migrant Workers, My Sister's House and other community projects.

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'He Can Build a Wall, but We'll Just Build a Tunnel'

BY ALEXIA F. CAMPBELL

RALEIGH—Trump has often boasted that in his first day of office as president, he will start building a “big, beautiful, powerful wall” on the border with Mexico and start sending millions of undocumented immigrants back south. That will be a problem for the construction industry, which relies heavily on undocumented laborers.



A U.S. worker inspects a section of the U.S.-Mexico border wall at Sunland Park, New Mexico.

On the day after the election, I visited a construction site in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, where a cluster of big tech and science companies have opened offices, making it one of the fastest growing metro areas in the country. About 70 percent of the state's urban construction workforce is made up of immigrant laborers—the remaining 30 percent are mostly their American supervisors. Though it's hard to know how many of them have legal work status, researchers at the University of North Carolina interviewed 125 Latino construction workers in the Raleigh-Durham area, and found that the majority were likely undocumented.* This is something general contractors get away with by subcontracting with other companies to hire laborers, therefore making someone else liable for the workers who don't have valid papers.

I spoke to about a dozen workers who are building the roof on a new 1-million-square-foot retail, restaurant, and office building in the area. Most of them were from Mexico and Central America, and most came to the United States illegally. To my surprise, none seemed afraid of Trump moving into the White House or what his victory says about how Americans view them. “Pssh,” says one Mexican worker, whose identity is being withheld because of his immigration status. “We always knew Americans didn't want us here,” he said in Spanish, loading equipment into a van after an 11-hour shift building ceiling frames. “They use us, but that's okay because we use them too for the money.”

His colleagues, wearing hard hats and safety vests, nodded their heads. They seemed to agree with the idea that it doesn't make much of a difference if the next president is a Democrat

or Republican. “[All presidents] break their promises, they all want to deport us,” said another worker, who declined to give his name. He was likely referring to the record number of deportations during President Obama's administration. Their reactions are a sharp contrast to those of other undocumented groups, such as the generation of younger immigrants who grew up in the United States and view themselves as Americans. Those who received temporary deportation relief through Obama's DACA program are particularly frightened about the likely scenario that Trump will revoke the protection and deport them. The construction workers I spoke to seemed more resigned, more cynical—yet also defiant—about their own situation. What about the wall, I asked them, do you really think Trump will build a wall?

“He can build a wall, but we'll just build a tunnel,” said Magdaleno Santos, a Salvadorian man who arrived in the United States illegally more than two decades ago, but adjusted his immigration status in the late 1990s. “If we leave, the entire country will fall apart. Have you looked around? Who do you think is building everything here? It's the Latinos. American workers just want to walk around with a clipboard, sipping from their water bottles. They don't want to do what we do.”

Earlier in the day, I had walked over to the makeshift offices where the contractors and subcontractors had set up shop. I chatted with Neal Fisher, the subcontractor overseeing electrical work on the retail complex. Is it true that he can't find Americans to do this work? “That's part of it. But if Bobby comes looking for a job, he's going to want \$24 an hour, and these guys will do the same work for \$12.”

The company he works for subcontracted with another company to hire the laborers, so he didn't know the legal status of the Latino workers. When he started working in the construction industry 38 years ago, he only worked with one or two foreign laborers, he says, now all of them are immigrants. He seemed torn by the dichotomy he faced: his company's need to stay competitive, and his clear disdain for the immigrant workforce. “Honestly, if you can't speak English, you shouldn't be allowed in this country,” said Fisher, who voted for Trump. (A spokesman for the development company in charge of the construction project declined to comment for this story).

Immigrant laborers in North Carolina hold no illusions about how their employers view them with contempt, while also understanding how necessary they are to a company's bottom line. At a workers' center near the construction site, I spoke with undocumented immigrants from Mexico as they waited for pickup trucks to come by and drive them to jobs in landscaping, home remodeling, or house painting. They too were not alarmed by Trump's victory and his threats to deport them. “If he deports me, I will just leave with my children,” said one man, who declined to give his name because of his immigration status. “But [Trump] can't get rid of all of us; there are too many of us. This country will starve without us,” he says, pointing out that immigrants harvest most crops grown in the United States.

Another man, who has crossed the border illegally several times, laughs at the idea that a border wall will solve anything. “Trump can build the tallest wall that he can, and we will find a way to fly over it, just like birds.”

Asian now outpace Mexicans in terms of Undocumented Growth

BY J. WESTON PHIPPEN

Someone tell Donald Trump that he's picking on the wrong immigrants. Turns out that, since 2000, unauthorized immigration from Asia has grown at rates much faster than from Mexico and Central America. That's according to a new report by the Migration Policy Institute. So Trump will need to amend his ideas for “securing our nation's borders.”

At 6 million, Mexicans still represent the majority of the 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the country. But the percentage of those arriving has slowed since the recession. During that time, however, Asian unauthorized immigration has increased considerably. From 2000 to 2013, it increased 202 percent, according to the report.

A curious reason for this, says Marc Rosenblum, deputy director of U.S. immigration policy at MPI, and coauthor of the study, is that income in some Asian countries has risen. “That can be counterintuitive,” he says, “since you often think of immigration is something that low-income people do.”

In the 1990s, the unauthorized population in America doubled from 3.5 to 7 million. It reached its apogee in 2007 at 12.2 million. Then the recession hit.

As demand for low-



Chinese, South Koreans, and Indians among the fastest-growing segments of undocumented immigrants.

skilled, low-wage workers waned, so did the number of those who came to the U.S. and traditionally filled those roles. In greater numbers than any other group, the unauthorized Mexican immigrant population has dropped after the recession. “I think it's safe to say that the unauthorized immigrant Mexican population is unlikely to return to the high growth rate that it did in the 80s and 90s,” says Rosenblum.

In that same time, the number of African unauthorized immigrants doubled. Similarly, the number of unauthorized immigrants from Asia tripled.

What happened in that time, Rosenblum says, is that as the economies thrived in places such as China, South Korea, and India, people there could now afford to migrate to the U.S.—both legally and illegally.

For example, in 1990, there were an estimated 28,000 unauthorized immigrants from India in the U.S. There's now more than 284,000. Those numbers mirror the rising share of legal Indian immigrants coming to the U.S., and also America's growing Indian-

American population.

The Asian countries with the largest growth are India (306 percent), South Korea (249 percent), and China (148 percent).

In fact, if stretched back to 1990, India's unauthorized U.S. immigration growth far outpaces any other country's, reaching 914 percent.

Asians now represent about a third of the foreign-born population in America—equal with the Mexican foreign-born population. They also represent 14 percent of the unauthorized population. That number, by the author's own projections, will grow in the coming decade.

So what does this mean? First, the political emphasis on securing the U.S.-Mexico border might lose importance—at least in reality, if not in rhetoric.

“I think we can say that given what we know “... it probably does receive disproportionate emphasis,” Rosenblum says. “It would not be at the top of my to-do list, whether in national security or combating unauthorized immigration.”

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PerryScope

BY PERRY DIAZ

Just as the year 2018 was coming to end, several events happened that put into question the future of Philippine-US relations, particularly defense relations that is the linchpin of the Philippines' military strategy.

On December 21, 2018, Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin met with U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo in Washington DC. In a statement release by a State Department spokesperson, "Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Locsin also explored opportunities to increase people-to-people ties between our two countries, our longstanding commitment to human rights, and our cooperation to strengthen the Philippines' energy security." The two top diplomats discussed "ongoing efforts to address regional issues such as the South China Sea, North Korea, and counterterrorism," he said.

On the same day, Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, in his yearend briefing, "stressed the need to review the US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) given the ambivalent stand of the US on the country's maritime domain and territorial issue in the West Philippine Sea." He wanted the US to give a definitive stand on whether it would support the Philippines in the event of a confrontation with other claimants. He said that the MDT should cover certain areas of the South China Sea that the Philippines has sovereign rights. Lorenzana said that it's about time that both countries review the provisions of the 67-year-old MDT, particularly the mounting security concerns in the South China Sea, to see if it is still relevant to the Philippines' "national interest." He said the review is needed in order to make the alliance with the US stronger. "It is the only country we have an alliance with," he said.

Mutual Defense Treaty

The MDT was signed in 1951 and has remained in effect even after the 1947 Military Bases Agreement (MBA) expired in 1991 and its extension rejected by the Senate. In 1994, the Visiting Forces

Agreement (VFA) took effect, which allowed a small presence of US Special Forces in Mindanao to help in the Philippines' counterterrorism campaign. In 2014 the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) was signed. However, it has yet to be implemented other than identifying eight bases for its use.

Article IV of the MDT states that an attack on either party will be acted upon in accordance with their constitutional processes and that any armed attack on either party will be brought to the attention of the United Nations for immediate action. Once the United Nations issues the orders, all hostile actions between the signatories of this treaty and opposing parties will be terminated.

idly by wouldn't be an option. But without US forces on Philippine soil, authorization has to come from the US Congress. By then, China would have firmly occupied the country.

With MDT rendered inutile for now, the EDCA's eight bases around the country would allow interoperability, capacity building towards AFP modernization, strengthening AFP for external defense, maritime security, maritime domain awareness, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response. In other words, EDCA would have been more effective than MDT in defending the Philippines' sovereignty and territorial integrity. But the problem is: It has been politicized; thus, making it a "paper tiger."

Lorenzana's candid and blunt assessment of the US vis-à-vis Philippines' security situation must have alarmed Malacanang and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Secretary Locsin immediately went to Washington DC to meet with US National Security Adviser John Bolton. The Philip-

But here's the rub: The Security Council has 15 members, five of which are permanent members with veto power. Russia and China are veto-wielding permanent members. The other three are the US, UK, and France. Therefore, in the event that China attacks the Philippines, China could veto any measure to restore peace, which would leave the Philippines at the mercy of the Chinese invaders.

The problem is -- unlike the NATO's automatic retaliation in the event a member is attacked -- the MDT doesn't have an "automatic provision." It merely provides for consultations according to its constitutional process after one of the parties is attacked. But had the US forces been allowed to stay in 1991, the US forces stationed in the Philippines would have to respond immediately to an attack. All it would take is for the US President to say, "Go." Sitting

pine Embassy in the US capital issued a statement saying the two officials recognized the role of the two nations' alliance in maintaining regional peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Price of sovereignty

In my article, "What price sovereignty?" (January 20, 2014), I wrote: "The question of Philippine sovereignty has been debated over and over again since 1991 when the Philippine Senate voted to reject the retention of American bases. The nationalists were convinced that the Philippines didn't need the protection of the U.S. against foreign invasion. They asserted that continued presence of American bases was an affront to Philippine sovereignty. However, they didn't demand for the rescission of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), which obligated the U.S. to defend Philippine territory in the event of foreign invasion. It's like them saying, 'We don't want you around but we expect you to defend us if we were invaded.' Indeed, it's a love-hate relationship that is nurtured to this day.

"But two years after the U.S. bases were closed in 1992, China seized the Panganiban Reef (Mischief Reef) in the middle of the night. And the Philippine Armed Forces couldn't do anything to take it back."

Now that the MDT's effectiveness is put to question, is the Philippines ready to defend itself? Probably not. But MDT would not suffice, simply because it is weak. On the other hand, EDCA would provide an almost "automatic response"

China eyes Palawan



Palawan's beautiful natural landscape.

mechanism to an attack on Philippine territory. What fails me to understand is what's taking it so long to make EDCA operational?

Chinese interest on Palawan

It is interesting to note that last November, President Duterte told the Palawan provincial government that he would be compelled to expropriate the franchise of independent power producers in Palawan and sell them to "big players" to end the power outages in the province. "China is itching just to get a hold of development here," he said. Duterte also decided not to allow any country to stockpile arms and ammunition in Palawan.

In my opinion, this would be the first step for China to get a strong foothold on Palawan, especially so



Map of the Philippines shows island of Palawan on the left.



Chinese troops ready for deployment.



Opening ceremony of the Balikatan joint US-Philippines military exercise.

that there is a plan to break Palawan into three provinces. Anders Corrs, a European-based international risk analyst said, "If China wants a military base on Palawan, mining rights, or fishing rights, after breakup it would have multiple officials with whom it can negotiate or bribe, playing one against the other."

On Duterte's decision to keep Palawan free from foreign arms stockpiles, Corrs said, "It would leave Palawan militarily vulnerable to the advantage of China." Indeed, China has been eyeing Palawan for at least three decades now, which makes one wonder: Without MDT and EDCA what do you think China would do next? Geographically speaking, Palawan is only 100 miles away from China's militarized artificial islands in the Spratlys while there is the large Sulu Sea that separates it from the rest of the Philippines. And without MDT and EDCA, Duterte might just as well kiss Palawan goodbye.

(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

Perryscope BY PERRY DIAZ

'Whatever Xi wants, Xi gets'

Some call it "debt-trap diplomacy." Some call it "debt-book diplomacy." But it doesn't sound diplomatic at all. The key word here is "debt." And in most cases, when the debtor fails to repay the loan, it leads the lender to take over the collateral.

Take the case of the much-publicized Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka. It started with China using "soft-power diplomacy" to attract Sri Lanka into doing business with her. Once Sri Lanka agreed to develop the Hambantota Port, the next phase kicked in, which was "debt-trap diplomacy."

China uses "debt-trap diplomacy" to lure poorer countries by offering "cheap loans" for infrastructure projects. It involves certain conditions that greatly favor Chinese banks, to wit: no bidding process, project to be done by one of China's state-owned companies, the workers to be Chinese nationals, cost overruns to be renegotiated (that usually ends in higher interest rates), and others including asset-based lending practices.

When these countries are unable to keep up with their repayments, China can then play "hardball diplomacy," which is to demand economic or political concessions in exchange for debt relief. This was what happened when Sri Lanka failed to repay her \$13-billion debt to a Chinese state-owned bank. Sri Lanka was forced to lease the port and 15,000 acres of land around it for a period of 99 years. For that, China gave Sri Lanka \$1.12 billion in debt relief, which was the original cost of the Hambantota project. Hardly equitable, is it?

China's playbook

Not surprisingly, the Hambantota

project ran into big problems including cost overrun and delays. And each time the cost increased, a new loan was renegotiated ending in higher interest rates. There is no open bidding. China chooses one of her state-owned companies to do the work including the hiring of Chinese workers exclusively. That's exactly what's in

China's playbook. Now, with a 99-year lease on the port and 15,000 acres of land surrounding the port to be used purportedly for industrial use, what is the likelihood that China would eventually build a military base on that land? Although Sri Lankan officials said that the agreement clearly rules out China's military

use of the site, Sri Lanka's huge debt could be used to dangle a debt relief. With the current debt hovering over \$45 billion and growing, Sri Lanka doesn't have too much of a choice, does she? And it is at this point that China switches strategy again. It's time for "hardball diplomacy," which basically translates to "Either you agree or else..."

Predatory lending
In the case of the Philippines, she

got past the "soft-power diplomacy" easily last November when Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Rodrigo Duterte signed 29 agreements in Manila.

Not long after the agreements had been signed, the Chinese Foreign Ministry held a press briefing in to give the just concluded "soft-power diplomacy" a glossy veneer of lacquer. "China's loans only account for a very limited share of the Philippines' foreign debts. It's impossible for the Philippines to fall into the so-called 'debt trap' due to these loans," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang said in a press briefing in Beijing. One reason why China addressed "debt trap diplomacy" was to counter allegations that Chinese lending is "predatory," designed to attract countries into a "debt trap."

But regardless of the sad experiences of those countries who fell into China's "debt trap," there is an aura of optimism among Philippine government officials. Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno said the country would not fall into a debt trap with China in reaction to US Vice President Michael Pence's warning that China's loans to poorer nations came with strings attached and could build up staggering debt. Diokno also said that the Philippines only has 49% Debt-to-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio, which indicates the country has the ability to pay its debts. The Philippine government debt stands at around \$140 billion today. But borrowing is at \$800 million a month or \$9.6 billion a year. The total debt service was 12.61% in 2016 (the latest data available).

"Pay, Pay, Pay"

Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" program has identified 75 proposed infrastructure projects at an aggregate cost of \$180 billion.



President Xi Jinping and President Rodrigo Duterte

But because of China's predatory lending practices -- Chinese loans are 1,100% more expensive than ones from Japan -- it could plunge the debtor into perpetual indebtedness.

The cost could easily skyrocket if the project incurs cost overruns due to delays, errors, and construction changes that could easily increase interest rates, just like what happened to Sri Lanka and

One Road' (OBOR) Initiative which supposedly gives access to coveted infrastructure investments."

IBON also warned of another lopsided condition in Chinese loans, which is a requirement that the agreement as well as the rights and obligations of both parties be put beyond the scope of Philippine laws and transparency in the public domain.

IBON also warned that China's Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been known to stipulate the collateralization of resources and state assets should a country default on its loan payments. As former Congressman Ruffy Biason said, "Protection and preservation of national interest compels us to reject the Chinese concept of using natural resources as loan collateral. It's obvious that this is their mode of territorial expansion, as experienced by countries who fell into the Chinese debt trap."

Caveat: "The current administration is surrendering sovereign immunity in connection with any loan obligations-related arbitration, is committing to follow China's laws [not the Philippines' laws]. It also agrees to subject disputes to the decision of the



Xi Jinping's signature "One Belt, One Road" Initiative.

Djibouti. While Debt-to-GDP ratio is only 49% today, Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" Project could end up in a "Pay, Pay, Pay" situation.

An American report by Harvard University researchers identifies 16 states vulnerable to China's so-called "debt-book diplomacy" and economic coercion, including Vanuatu, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Tonga and Micronesia. Indeed, "Chinese loans worth hundreds of billions of dollars are saddling Australia's smaller regional neighbors," the report said. In fact, there were reports that China was moving to create a military base in Vanuatu, which sparked panic in nearby Australia. If China succeeds in creating a military base in Vanuatu, she'd be able to project power in the entire South Pacific all the way to Hawaii.

IBON warnings

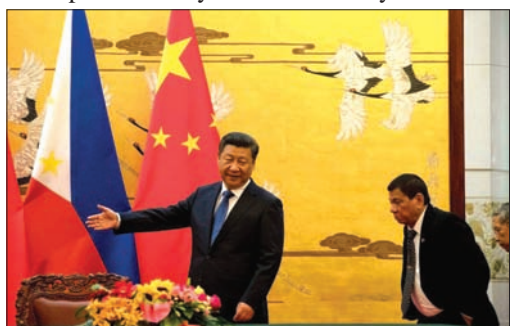
Recently, the Philippine-based non-profit IBON Foundation warned: "The Duterte administration has been easing the way for China's interests in the disputed waters in its eagerness to raise billions of pesos for its 'hyped' infrastructure program." IBON is also concerned with the government's "willingness to give up its territorial resources in the South China Sea to secure China investments and loans, including efforts to be part of China's One 'Belt,



China's Debt Trap.

China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC)." And this begs the question: In the event that the project goes to arbitration, does anyone think that CIETAC would rule in favor of the Philippines? As they say in boxing: "Beware of hometown decisions."

What China has been doing is "economic imperialism" and she's been very successful in achieving it without going to war. However, if she encounters resistance, she can then apply "hardball diplomacy" and use all her resources including military to achieve what she wants. Indeed, whatever Xi wants, Xi gets. (PerryDiaz@gmail.com)



President Rodrigo Duterte's first state visit to China



Failed Hambantota Port project in Sri Lanka.

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Congratulations to the Newlyweds & their Families

Meet

Dane & Amanda

By **CARLE and SARAH ENLOE**

There are many joys in reporting on the happenings in the Filipino community for the Philippine Fiesta. We can experience firsthand the accomplishments and special moments of families, individual triumphs, and enjoy many wonderful events. Needless to say that the following story will demonstrate what we are talking about.

Recently, we received a very special wedding invitation to the wedding of our dear friends, Dave and Dinnah San Pedro's son, Dane and his beloved fiancée Amanda Newsum.

This beautiful couple's story is like a fairy tale! Dane and Amanda met in 2014 when he interviewed her for a dance teacher position. Upon meeting, they had the feeling they were destined to do great things together, and eventually rise to success, which they did with their nonprofit organization, after school program, and dance studio, all under their Rize All aegis. Dane said... "As soon as I saw you, I knew...an adventure was going to happen."

After four years of love and success together, it was clear that it was time to take their life adventures to the next level. So, Dane proposed to Amanda in front of nearly a thousand onlookers! Amanda happily said yes!

The elegant wedding celebration was held at the exclusive Arden Hills Resort Club and Spa, 1210 Arden Hills Lane, Sacramento, CA 95864, on December 30, 2018, in front of an imminent guest list of family and friends from both families. For those of us who are unfamiliar with the venue, we must say that it was perfect for the celebration!

The wedding chapel was intimate and perfect for the occasion! The floral wedding arch was decorated with draped and flowing white, black, green, and mauve delicate silk tulle material topped with a beautiful floral arrangement, and with two large white floral decoration at the top of each corner and two white trees, one on each side.

At the appointed hour, Officiating civil servant Dan Williams asked the Guests to rise and greet the Wedding Party as they made their

grand entry. Dave and Dinnah, escorting Dane, the man of the hour in a stunning black and white tuxedo, entered first and took their appointed place on the right of the altar. They were followed by the Bride's and Groom's Entourages listed below.

Bride's Entourage:
Man of Honor: Benjamin Newsum; Couple of Honor: Jessica and Chris Skube; Bridesmaids: Jazz Newsum and Amber Motley.

Groom's Entourage:
Maid of Honor: Deidra San Pedro; Couple of Honor: Jason and Jennifer Magsuci; Groomsmen: Ryan Rivac and Simon Magsuci.

Following the Bride's and Groom's Entourages were the Junior Bridesmaids; Flower Girls; and the Ring Bearers, listed below:

Junior Bridesmaids: Lilia Esquilin; Lily Magsuci; and Eden Richards. **Flower Girls:** Miah Magsuci and Addelyn Skube. **Ring Bearers:** Jeremy Magsuci; Landen Roque; Kyson Roque; and Kaden Roque.

Finally, the moment everyone had been waiting for had arrived, the bride's entry. A beautiful and radiant Amanda, in a beautiful full-length off white-colored wedding gown and crown, appeared in the doorway, escorted by her parents, Glenn Newsum and Lorrie Williams. They proceeded to the altar where they presented Amanda to Dane. What a radiant couple, they lit up the room!

Civil servant Dan opened the wedding ceremony by welcoming everyone and then read a brief passage for the bride and groom. He then announced that he wouldn't be doing the traditional wedding vows because Dane and Amanda had prepared their special wedding vows for each other. At this point, he turned over the ceremony to Dane and Amanda who read their beautiful and meaningful vows for each other and then exchanged wedding rings. Following their vows, Civil servant Dan declared them husband and wife and declared Dane could kiss his bride,



Dane and Amanda San Pedro

which he did with gusto! He then introduced Mr. and Mrs. Dane and Amanda to all the guests!

As the newlyweds made their exit, the guests were invited to join the wedding party at the scheduled cocktail hour in the adjoining ballroom. The ballroom was decorated exquisitely and indescribably elegant, fit for royalty, to include a full hosted bar. Every detail was covered, and nothing was left to chance for the wedding party. The bar also prepared three specialty mixed drinks with special names for the newlyweds and their guests plus a complete full bar. Here are their drinks: Dane's Old Fashion: Jack Whiskey, Bitters, and Simple Syrup; Amanda's French Kiss: Absolut Vodka, Chambord, and Pineapple juice; and New San - gria: Cabernet Wine, Grand Marnier, Chambord. What a special and classy touch to include

delicious served appetizers of: Bacon Wrapped Prawns; Deviled Eggs; and Chicken Lumpia. The Sacramento City Little - Big Band provided the music during the cocktail hour.

A short time later, the Master of Ceremonies (MC) Jason Almazan announced the Bride and Groom's Grand Entrance as Dane and Amanda made their entrance with a flourish and proceeded to the front of the room where their raised throne awaited the beaming couple. After their introduction, Dane and Amanda made their way to the dance floor where they took their first dance as husband and wife. It was a very special choreographed dance that thrilled the guests.

Following their dance, Dane and Amanda, MC Jason announced that the traditional wedding toasts would begin with Deidra San Pedro, the Maid of Honor and Dane's sister, who made a brief toast to Dane and Amanda. Ben Newsum, the Man of Honor and brother of Amanda, followed with his toast. On behalf of the Groom's Couple of Honor, Jason Magsuci, made a few comments to the newlyweds and a toast. On behalf of the Bride's Couple of Honor, Jessica Skube, gave her toast. Dinnah San Pedro, mother of the Groom, recognized her family members who traveled all the way from Virginia Beach, VA. to be with Dane and Amanda for their wedding, afterwards she gave her toast. Lorrie Williams, mother of the Bride, gave her toast followed by Papa Glenn Newsum, Grandfather of the Bride, gave his toast. Wendy Payne, Amanda's aunt, gave her toast. Afterwards, Dane and Amanda thanked everyone for joining them for their wedding and gave their toast which was the "Idea of Life" and concluded with they would "Dance thru Life Together".

MC Jason invited the guests to enjoy a delicious buffet style dinner consisting of Herb Chicken; Prime Rib; Roasted Potatoes; Pasta Salad; Cranberry Almond

Salad; and Fresh Fruit. There was also Chicken Tenders and French Fries for the children. Naturally, dinner was made more enjoyable by the music provided by DJ Jason. He continued throughout the entire evening to play a delightful selection of easy listening tunes; easy to dance to; and in tune with the mood for the evening.

Right after dinner, Dane and Amanda held the Cake Cutting Ceremony of their beautiful four tier cake that had the bottom and third tier decorated in subdued white icing with a gold overlay design of icing and the second and fourth tier were decorated in the subdued white icing. The cake was a dual Churro Cake with Caramel and Banana Cake with Chocolate. It was a work of art. As the cake was cut, Amanda received the first piece and Dane received the second piece. Interestingly, as Amanda was giving Dane a bite of her slice somehow Dane magically got the rest in his face, HA! HA! Of course, the guests were delighted. To compliment the Cake, there was also an Ice Cream Bar with Strawberry and Chocolate flavors. Very classy.

During the Cake Cutting Ceremony, the Photo Booth was opened so the wedding party and guests could get free complimentary photos to remember this beautiful wedding and evening.

After the Newlyweds had freshened up, they returned to the Ball Room to perform a special dance routine aptly titled "Dane and Amanda" for the guests. It was a fabulously choreographed routine that impressed the guests. Following their performance, the parents dance were held. Of course, as these dances ended the entire Bridal Party and guests took to the dance floor to dance the night away. A late-night snack, "Taco Bar", was served. It was a beautiful wedding and a very memorable night for Mr. and Mrs. Dane and Amanda San Pedro, the entire Bridal Party, and their guests.

Dane and Amanda would like to send their wealth of gratitude to their Wedding Sponsors: Ninong Dante and Ninang Pennet San Pedro; Ninong Avelino and Ninang Emerlita Santiaguell; Papa Glenn and Grammy Kathy Newsum; and Grammy Anne Williamson. Thank you for your support and helping to make this day amazing!

We would like to end our article with a very special tribute written by Ms. Cynthia Bonta, a guest; a very dear friend of the San Pedro Family; and an acknowledged leader in the Filipino Community, who submitted the following comments from her to give a com-

Continued on page 12

Filipino Women's Club

BY DALE ESPERANTE

On 13 Jan 2019, the Filipino Women's Club of Sacramento officially installed their new officers at the community meeting room of the Sheriff Department, County of Sacramento, in the Florin area. Mona Pasquil, the Governor of California's Appointment Secretary, accepted the invitation to be the Installing Officer.

After the official induction of the officers, Ms. Mona Pasquil said a few words. Paraphrasing Ms. Pasquil, As I was growing up, you were and always have been and still are the pillar of the community ... the people the community goes to when there is a need.... Everything you do, thank you. But please continue...only when you do that, you'll continue to see the next generation succeed...because of the path that you paved for all those who come after us.... When I do my work, I remember the work that you do. You are the heroes... It's time...it's past time for us to show the next generation who paved the way.... So thank you so much. Mona's speech was appreciated and applauded tremendously.

President Yagen followed to share important information...such as... this year being FWC's 80th anniversary year. Paraphrasing the president's briefing, it is an exciting year to celebrate the anniversary of the second oldest Fil-Am organization in Sacramento, second only to the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity (FCSV). September 13 is currently the schedule of the anniversary celebration. We need to share what was done in the past... the story and contributions of our moms and aunts. Let us continue the legacy that started 80 years ago. Let us invite people to come to our only community event this year, the anniversary celebration. Let us invite the younger women, the next generation, to come and join us....

The esprit de corps of the Filipino Women's Club was quite evident throughout the course of the afternoon. After all official business was done, the ladies switched their bimonthly meeting into a fun and entertaining gathering for all. Everyone sang for the members celebrating their birthday in January and February, the celebrants: Carmelita Pangilinan, Maria Baboric, and Leila Pereira. After the birthday song and cutting the cake, Secretary Cleo turned the



The Filipino Women's Club, one of the most active Fil-Am community organization of Sacramento installed their new officers for 2019-2020.



Mona Pasquil, the Governor of California's Appointment Secretary and FWC Pres. Zenny Yagen.



Members and Officers of Filipino Women's Club.

Photos by Dale Esperante

Congratulations to the 2019-2020 Officers:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| President - | Zenny Yagen |
| 1st Vice President - | Leila Pereira |
| 2nd Vice President - | Ann Viernes |
| Secretary - | Cleo Sabarre-Ner |
| Corresponding Secretary - | Rose Basos |
| Treasurer - | Aida Azurin |
| Asst. Treasurer - | Lee Ramirez |
| Auditor - | Mercy Guerrero |
| Sergeant-at-Arms - | Vickie Debord & Sylvia Fortis |
| Parliamentarians - | Josie Patria & Sarah Enloe |
| Public Relations Officer - | Vicky Johnson |
| Directors: | Erlinda Aglubat Remy Solomon
Carol Munar Linda Gibson |



Melita Esperante and Josie Patria



Members celebrating their birthday for the month of January and February.

Beats Audio up and a group of ladies started dancing frolicsomenly in front of the large community meeting room. A conga dance line started to form headed by 2nd Vice President Ann Viernes, circling the whole room until the music stopped.
FWC is not only an organization, it is also a sisterhood. It is a propi-

tious place where everyone shows support for each other. As Mona Pasquil said, FWC is the pillar of the community where everyone goes to when there is a need. The official meeting had no hint of politics nor any discussion that ended up in a suffocating endless debate or dissension. The ladies accomplished a pleasant and profes-

sional meeting, one that members were happy to attend! The delicious lunch (thank you Madame President), the successful official agenda supported by the positive attitude of all, the desserts, the tortes (thank you 2nd VP Viernes), and the fun that followed—Well Done Ladies! Continue the legacy Filipino-American Ladies, contin-

ue to set a great example, continue to be the pride of our community as well as the mainstream community! The Philippine Fiesta aka PF News is grateful for the privilege to cover your 2019 Installation of Officers Meeting. Mabuhay at Maraming Salamat sa mga Kababaihan ng FWC!

The Lagasca Family Reunion

BY FAINA E. ABAYA

Filipinos are traditionally known for being very close to their immediate family members and usually shown on their high degree of respect, support and immense love for each other.

Conversely, just like their predecessors, the Filipinos have unique perception of the word family, simply because for them, anyone can be a member of their family basing on how close the person is to the family, the reason why they call such person Tito (Uncle) or Tita (Auntie), although she or he is not in any way to have blood relationship with them.

Likewise, the Filipinos are very fun of getting together with their families that include their relatives and close friends which, as observed, they too are also part of their family circles. Indeed, during family gathering, the expected attendants for the occasion could be beyond the host expectation because one relative could bring his close friends just like the other relatives will do. Nevertheless, it is usually a practice for the host to give a leeway to prepare food more than the number of expected attendances.

That was in the mind of Liz Lagasca Belvis when she decided to give a mini reunion for the Lagasca Family at her residence in Tracy, California on December 28, 2018 which, of course, includes relatives and friends within the orbit of the so-called family circle.

The gathering was also the best opportune time to visit the matriarch of the family Clan Mercedes Lagasca Belvis who despite her advanced age at 85 and now under the care of her children still becomes the example and inspiration to everyone. In her younger years while struggling in the United States to start a new life for her family, Mercedes has



The servers

shown determination, resiliency and perseverance to overcome tremendous obstacles and challenges until she attained a degree of success which paved the way and encouraged the Lagascas who were all highly educated to follow and became successful themselves in their professional fields, such as Medical doctors, Dentists, Lawyers, Accountants, Engineers and many also worked in the government and private sectors.

To be different from their usual gatherings, the host with the help of Bessie Samaniego, Ruby Saucedo, Ditas Forlanda and Marylou Peterson prepared variety of Filipino food such as salted eggs with diced tomatoes, eggplants covered with fried eggs, grilled steak beef, chopped lechon, pinakbet, dinuguan, pansit fried fish and grilled chicken with tropical Filipino fruits such as mangoes, pineapples, melon, strawberries, grapes and sliced papaya.

The spacious residence with large backyard and swimming pool has accommodated at least 50 relatives and closest of friends and the food was prepared Boodle Boodle style to capture the latest craze in the Philippines on how they held their family and friends' social

gatherings. In the Philippines such occasions are usually being held in open spaces at their backyards, parks, beaches and river banks.

The words Boodle Boodle are taken from a Military parlance called Boodle fight describing how Filipino soldiers usually eat their food when they are in open spaces during their field operations. Variety of food recipes are placed on clean banana leaves spread atop a made shift table where everybody will stand to pick their food and eat with their bare hands.

The chilly cold weather has constrained the host to hold the boodle boodle inside her residence with all the trimmings on the way to eat, however, many have used their usual cutlery to take and eat their chosen recipes.

As expected, the gathering's center of conversations was about the nostalgic ways of living in



Lagasca Clan



Rudy and Sonia Delizo, Danny and Anita Lagasca, Faina and Jun Abaya and Mercedes Belvis.

the Philippines, especially, in Baguio City, the summer capital of the country and the small town of Naguilian, La Union where most of the Lagascas have traced their roots.

In attendance during the mini reunion were different family names yet they just interlinked with the Lagasca family through marriages and close friendship which went down from their children's children. Thus, present during the gathering were family names such as Estioco, Abaya, Delizo, Samaniego, Atienza, Dela Cruz, Sy, Saucedo, Forlanda, Regalado,

Pasaoa and many others. Most of the attendees were from California while others came from as far as New York and Colorado except for Danny and Anita Lagasca who just arrived from the Philippines where they are enjoying their retirement after residing and working for a long time in the United States where they got their pensions.

It is even humbling to reminisce that the Lagasca family was one of the early pioneering families from the low land to have migrated in Baguio City and helped in its growth and development. For many years the late Jean Lagasca Cruz known for her civic, charitable and social works has represented the family to various gatherings for the best interest of the place where they have found comfort to live and built a strong foundation of their family. Such foundation has endured the test of time that made the members of the family closer and all those warmly and heartily associated with them.

The get together happily ended with an assurance that such gathering will be repeated soon which will be bigger and better to strengthen the bond of relationship of the Lagasca clan and their closest of friends that has been going on for many generations.

Dane and Amanda

From page 10

community perspective to incorporate into our Article for the Philippine Fiesta News!

"I witnessed Dane growing up. The Sacramento Community, a mix of generations of Filipinos is one Big Family. Philippine National Day (PND), now the Filipino Fiesta, was one event in June that gathered us all to celebrate our cultural and historical heritage; recognize Filipino American contributions to this country; and address issues that face Filipinos locally and/or nationally.

As a boy, Dane was nurtured within a family who was into the Filipino Community as leaders and contributors of their artistic talents.

We all know Dane's Dad, Dave, for his talent in the Fine Arts, and Mom, Dinnah as a Health Professional and together as the publishers/proprietors of the Philippine Fiesta Newspaper. And in another light, we know Dave and Dinnah as a striking couple in any dance floor, dancing to their own exclusive rhythm as one.

Seeing Dane vow to love his chosen partner for his lifetime, I

behold this human being who has so much to say and expressing it most eloquently in dance; even in the way he designed his wedding ceremony; and even going further to pointing out the nuances of the meaning of dance as integral to life.

I remember Dane saying that his dream was to find someone who could be his life partner and dance partner at the same time as his Mom and Dad were. For someone who has amazed us in accomplishing so many things like awesome magic and giving rise to RizeAll, nothing is impos-

sible for this extremely talented; community minded educator; and visionary!

I speak for my generation of community leaders, when I say we are very proud of Dane and what he will be contributing to the artistic development of our children and empowering our Filipino community. Dane is a bright star in my book!"

On this day, before family and friends, Dane and Amanda tied their knot and vow to love each other for the rest of their lives. They are honored to have your

presence and look forward to the amazing world that they will create together.

We wish Dane and Amanda a wonderful journey as they begin their lives together, forever! We will end with Dane's vow to Amanda... "How long will I Love You" "As long as the Stars are Above You" "And Longer if I Can"

Awww...what a wonderful world indeed! We wish both a life of everlasting happiness.

Filipino Family Fraternity



The Filipino Family Fraternity elects new officers for 2019 - 2021 terms on January 12, 2019 in Casa Ignacia RVMS residence. It was officiated by Father Joyle Martinez pastor of St. Paul Church Sacramento, Ca. with sister Josie Tanudtanud as the spiritual advisor.



Elna Discipulo Birthday Celebration

With another milestone to cherish, Elna Discipulo celebrates her 65th Birthday with her family-most especially her husband Val, a bunch of youthful co-workers and friends, held on January 26, 2019, at their residence in Elk Grove, CA. Happy Birthday Elna!



Anniversary



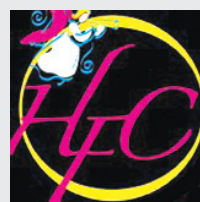
DR. TONY and REMY SOLOMON
37th Wedding Anniversary, February 17



FAINA and JUN ABAYA
55th Wedding Anniversary, January 26



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BY CYNTHIA GARCIA

Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is celebrated annually every February 14th. Originating as a Western Christian feast day honouring one or two early saints named Valentinus, Valentine's Day is recognized as a significant cultural, religious and commercial celebration of romance and romantic love in many regions around the world, although it is not public holiday in any country (Wikipedia).

Since this popular day that is observed around the world is about romance and romantic love, it is not so totally out of the ordinary to say that it is also about a celebration of friendship for there is friendship in married couples, between siblings, cousins, a teacher and a student. It can even be found in some unlikely circumstances - between political rivals. There is always a certain degree of fellowship formed within a group of people even in the most unexpected situations.

Aristotle, one of the greatest philosophers in history identified three kinds of friendships: those of utility, pleasure and virtue (Wikipedia).

In one of our in depth conversations a few months past, a trusted friend whom I have forever admired made an off-the-cuff remark to me when I casually mentioned what to write about for my next article for this publication. With her usual sweet way of impressing upon her thoughts in me, she paused and said... "how about Friendship for the February issue in time for Valentine's Day? Naturally, it takes her thoughtful and creative mind to come up with this excellent idea, so here I am with the task at hand composing my little contribution to Philippine Fiesta's February issue and hoping to live up to her expectations. Yes, I am always trying to impress her, win her tacit approbation on certain endeavours of mine as a matter of personal choice so that I do not find myself stagnating in my ripe old age. She is without a doubt, my yardstick - the long and short of it.

Aristotle's classifications do capture the essence of the kinds of friendships that we all find ourselves engaged in from as early as our grade school years and all

through our old age. I have often heard that if one had found one true friend in one's lifetime, he or she is considered one of the few ones, lucky enough to find one.

How many among us can honestly say that we have found one real, trusted and loyal friend in our lifetime?

Aristotle's first two classifications are for sociologists to categorize in more definite terms and structure. I do however will delve into the third one for obvious reasons and personal experiences.

I will begin then by saying that I just simply cannot imagine anyone going through life without friends, even one or two. As the English poet John Donne said, "no man is an island."

The friendship of virtue is where many of us identify with. In this wonderful world of friendship, our initial and natural tendencies are greatly influenced by and founded on our core values. It is about goodness, kindness, integrity, propriety, loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness and all the immeasurable attributes that instinctively move two people toward one another as the friendship starts to blossom and becomes a lifelong one.

I have been fortunate enough to continually experience the joy of wonderful friendships with wonderful people and I will never hesitate to state here unequivocally that in essence, I have nurturing kinships with smart, intelligent, witty, fun-loving, down-to-earth women whom I have known for most of my life.

Having said that February 14th is also a celebration of friendship, I will celebrate this special friend of mine for the first time after all these many years through this article. It was a particular period in my academic years when things were a lot simpler - no social media, no cell phones, no Facebook or e-mails but was certainly full of fun and excitement. It was a friendship between two people in their late teens who brought to the table different perspectives as they experienced the changing times of that era moving forward into their early twenties. They were both full of promises and shared the same idealism. They talked about the future, confident that they would be employed immediately after graduation, to be in touch once they found their footings in the business world.

However, it turned out that Mother Nature had other designs for both of them.

I was very good friends with a classmate from my university years in the '70s whose friendship I lost many years ago to a very tragic event and whose wit, intellect, sense of humour and open-mindedness I still miss every now and then. He was the one friend who would always recognize my

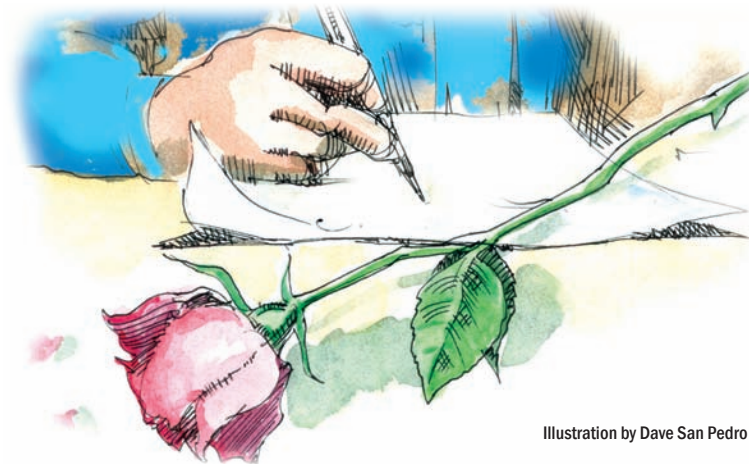


Illustration by Dave San Pedro

voice just on my first hello from my end of the phone line regardless of the length of intervals of letters between us because back then, the only form of communication was through the postal system.

I remember the many bus rides we did together going home after our afternoon classes in our last school year particularly those times when missing my home curfew meant admonishment from my old man. The few occasions when I was his personal mail delivery carrier of his love letter(s) to a classmate of ours who caught his eye and the teasing I gave him after he told me that his feelings were not reciprocated by her are moments to cherish. The after-classes walks at Plaza Lawton just talking as he escorted me to the bus stop outside of the campus grounds are indeed happy memories for me. We compared notes about our professors as to who landed in our favourite lists and those who didn't. These were but some of the many fun times we had. He often visited at our family homestead in Pasay City and he was considered a member of my large family. In my treasure trove of mementos, rests his very first letter to me a few months after I arrived in Toronto. It is tucked away together with the many old letters, cards I received over the years from family and friends in the Philippines and in the States. Yes, I keep all these beautiful parts of my wonderful life in this distant shore.

Old age truly does wonders in recalling some of life's precious moments. They come to the surface from within to be spoken of as if they just happened the day before. This Valentine's Day this year is the time to write about him and our friendship. He shall remain nameless here but he will forever live in my memory.

We are who are friends are and in my little world of friendship is a select group of wonderful women who had given me and still does a deep sense of belonging outside of family.

My friendship with each one of them started during my high school years from first to fourth and my four years in the university and from that first day, a lifelong friendship was born. In spite of the fact that we all had led separate and different lives due to the natural order of experiencing life in its early stages - from getting married to starting a family, raising children, job opportunities both at home and abroad - we tend to gravitate back to one another whenever the opportunity presents itself for reconnection. We live in different continents but we all manage to keep our communication on a regular basis particularly now that the magic of this modern technology is at our fingertips. We are also members of the baby-boomer generation hence we now

enjoy our retirement.

They are women of substance, special in their own individual ways and always willing to share their thoughts and sentiments with me when certain issues abound in our simple lifestyles. They had shared with me their own experiences that only made me appreciate more a lot of the things beyond my own being the only unmarried member in the group. It is indeed a unique circle that I had personally formed with each one of them in varying degrees and stages.

Two of these women are now in the single-blessedness of life having lost their beloved husbands after years of caring for them due to ill health. They were true to form when they declared their marriage vows of... "through good times and bad, in sickness and in health." They are living proof that love endures for they dealt with the challenges thrown at them with fortitude and resilience during those difficult times. They have my utmost admiration for having the wherewithal to deal with the issues involved in providing home care for a loved one. It is selflessness personified.

Some had chosen to uproot their western way of life to which they had been accustomed to for years for the simple reason of living their retirement years in the Philippines, their country of birth. They had adjusted back quite well to the local conditions and amenities. It takes raw courage to make those changes of huge proportions and against many odds. I am in awe of them because I know for sure that I am not capable of making such a giant leap.

Then the quiet one in my inner circle is having the time of her life with her two daughters who are now young women in their early twenties. She is steadfast in her beliefs and convictions, very loyal to her friends and knows how to make her views known on issues that matter through her unassuming ways. She is a devoted wife and a doting mother to her two girls who also dote on her. She has been enjoying her retirement for a few years now and she manages her leisure time by meeting up with former office mates and old friends for lunches or dinners.

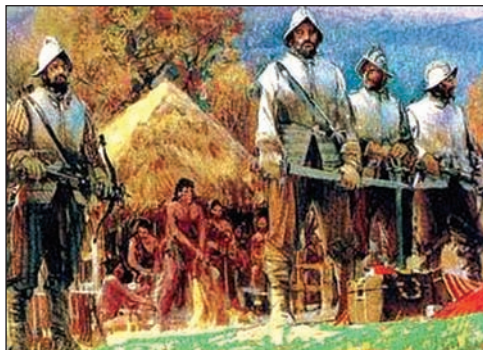
And in the southern part of California resides a lifelong friend from my university years in the '70s. She moved there in the '80s, found good work for the county, met her husband and from that blessed union two lovely children were born, a son and a daughter. She is also a doting grandmother now to her two beautiful grandsons from her equally beautiful daughter. She and her husband of more than twenty-five years are now enjoying retirement, she from the San Diego County and he from the military service.

Continued on next page

PerryScope
By Perry Diaz

Colonialism from within

When Ferdinand Magellan arrived in the island of Homonhon in Samar on the feast day of Saint Lazarus of Bethany in 1521, he named the group of islands Las Islas de San Lazaro in honor of Saint Lazarus. Twenty-two years later in 1543, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos reached the same islands and named them Las Islas Felipinas in honor of the Prince of Asturias, the then Philip II of Spain.



Spanish Conquistador Miguel Lopez de Legazpi colonizes the Philippine Islands.

But Spanish colonization didn't start until 1565 when Miguel Lopez de Legazpi became the first Governor General of the Spanish East Indies, which included Las Islas Felipinas (The Philippine Islands) and other Pacific islands. In 1571, Legazpi named Manila the capital of the Spanish East Indies.

To populate the Philippine Islands with Hispanic people, he attracted them from Nueva Espana (New Spain), which is now Mexico, by giving them land ownership. Most of them came without families. Needless to say, these single men intermarried with native women.

In my article, "The Landed and the Landless" (October 21, 2005), I wrote: "Land ownership, the Filipinos' ultimate dream, has been the exclusive domain of the rich.

Truly, 'land ownership' separates the rich from the poor — the landed from landless.

"Land ownership for the rich has its beginning when Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, upon colonizing the Philippines, instituted the Encomienda system. He divided the archipelago into large parcels and assigned each parcel to a favored Spaniard for administration and care. Encomienda, which means 'to entrust,' was adopted in Spain to reduce the abuses of forced labor. It was implemented in Spanish America and the Philippines to take care of the economic and spiritual welfare of the natives. However, its benevolent purpose was circumvented and abused by the Spanish grantees — the 'encomenderos.' They collected tribute from the natives. Pretty soon the tribute became rents to powerful landlords and the natives became share tenants. In the end, the natives became virtual slaves of the encomenderos. In 1674, the Spanish Crown abolished the Encomienda system in all of its colonies. However, for more than 100 years after its abolition, it remained in effect in the Philippines.

"The Encomienda system evolved into the Hacienda system. Land grants were given to the 'hacenderos' — 'Filipinos' (pure Spanish), 'mestizos' (mixed Spanish and native 'indio'), and the favored families (the 'indio' elite). The hacenderos expanded their influence in all sectors of the economy. They became the political masters, second only to the Spanish masters.

"When Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States at the Treaty of Paris in 1898, the Americans were precluded from touching the Friar lands because the treaty bound the US to pro-



Gen. Douglas MacArthur lands in Leyte during World War II.

tect the land owned by religious orders. When Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo established the first republic in 1899, he promised to confiscate large estates particularly the Friar lands. But that did not materialize because he spent his time fighting the Americans until he was captured and forced to pledge allegiance to the new masters.

"During the commonwealth period under American colonial rule, the Rural Program Administration, created in March 1939, provided for the purchase and lease of haciendas and their sale and lease to tenants. However, the tenants were so poor, they simply could not buy the land they were farming.



The late Pres. Ramon Magsaysay

"When the Philippines gained its independence from the United States in 1946, the hacenderos had complete control of the economy. They also became the political masters of the new republic. They constituted the new aristocracy and the oligarchy, all bundled into an exclusive class.

"The new Philippine government grappled with the problems of land ownership. Numerous agrarian re-

forms were instituted. During the presidency of Ramon Magsaysay, former HUK dissidents and landless farmers were resettled and given land ownership. His untimely death stopped the program."

Communist insurgency



Young New People's Army recruits practice shooting

Today, Philippine society is still divided between the landed and the landless. Large segments of the rural population are still poor and landless. They work for the landed — the hacenderos. But many of them look up to the insurgents for deliverance.

It did not then come as a surprise that the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its military wing, the New Peoples' Army (NPA) thrive because of their toehold in the rural areas where dissidence is common and unemployment high. They have been successful in attracting young men and women into the ranks of insurgents that have been at war with the government since the Philippines gained independence in 1946. In fact, they're the only communist insurgency that exists in the world today.

Recently, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Executive Order No. 70, which ordered the creation of a national task force that would seek to "end local communist armed conflict." The EO reads, "There is a need to create a national task force that will provide an efficient mechanism and structure for the implementation of the whole-of-nation approach to aid in the realization of the collective aspiration of the Filipino people to attain inclusive and sustainable peace. Towards this end,

the Government shall prioritize and harmonize the delivery of basic services and social development packages in conflict-affected areas and -vulnerable communities, facilitate societal inclusivity, and ensure active participation of all sectors of society in the pursuit of the country's peace agenda." The President shall chair the task force, while the National Security Adviser shall serve as vice-chair. While it's commendable that Duterte has finally focused on ending the communist insurgency that has been taking a high toll on the social and economic agenda of the government, this author believes that there is one element missing in this "whole-of-nation" approach to achieve peace and prosperity.

Social Justice

It's interesting to note that what made the then Secretary of Defense Magsaysay successful in breaking the back of the Huk communist movement was his "Land for the landless" program, which by the way, was "borrowed" from the Huks' own slogan, "Land for the Landless." For each insurgent who surrendered his weapon, the government gave him a carabao, a plow, and several hectares of arable land in Mindanao. Within two years, the communist insurgency was defeated.

The anti-Huk campaign propelled Magsaysay to national fame. In 1953 he ran for president against his former boss, President Elpidio Quirino, and won with the support of 68.9% of the voters.

The social problem that Legazpi imposed on the "indios" in 1571 still exists today -- two classes of people — the landed and the landless, the rich and the poor. The Philippines is still a rural and agricultural society. And this situation



Filipino farmer and his carabao.

provides a climate for dissatisfaction and resentment against the ruling elite. And that's the reason why the country is still fighting an insurgency that seeks social justice, which by the way, was enshrined in the Constitution.

But the old colonialism is no longer around. It's the present-day colonialism from within that hinders our progress. Indeed, the elite today are the new encomenderos. (PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

Friendship and Valentine's Day

They are both quite involved in the lives of their young grandchildren.

To make this a complete celebration of friendship is to do a special mention of The One I always fondly call "Teach." She completes this small circle of lifelong friends of mine. Her words of wisdom and guidance and sense of humour had never wavered over the years. Her mind is as sharp today as it was from the day she mentored me and countless others.

She is my North Star.

Making friends is a natural progression as we journey through life. It is a part of our social values.

When Dumas said that "Friendship is forgetting what one gives remembering what one receives", Montaigne said it more succinctly, "Friendship, the highest degree of perfection in society,"

To my Women of Substance and their families, here's wishing you LOVE, JOY IN YOUR HEARTS and CONTINUED GOOD HEALTH.

I celebrate each one of you on this Valentine's Day.

Cynthia Garcia continues to enjoy her role as a contributing writer to Philippine Fiesta. During the winter months in Toronto, Canada where she is currently based, she loves to read and still very much an avid fan of those old Hollywood classic movies. Her friends think that she is an old soul for she also loves listening to the tunes of the '40s to '70s era.

Bringing Home The 8 Million Boys After WWII; Operation Magic Carpet

The ELLY FARELLY

Victory in Europe – what happens next?

After victory had been declared in Europe and the Second World War had come to an end with the surrender of Japan there remained the enormous task of bringing home the thousands of military personnel scattered across the globe.

Under the codename Operation Magic Carpet, the efforts to repatriate the newly demobilized soldiers involved as much military planning as many of the battles of the preceding war years.



USS Wasp adapted for carrying passengers.

In December 1945, at the start of the operation, almost 8 million Allied military personnel were waiting to begin their journey back home. During the 14-months of Operation Magic Carpet, an average of 435,000 military personnel were being transported back every month. The record for a single ship was set by the aircraft carrier Saratoga which repatriated a total of 29,204 soldiers.

Among the British aircraft carriers, HMS Glory made one of the longest voyages including one from Manila in the Philippines to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, a journey of more than 6,000 miles.

The operation was launched in June 1945, but planning began well beforehand. The War Shipping Administration was in charge and had started planning as far back as 1943. It understood the scale and complexity of the task and the need to bring servicemen and women home as quickly as possible. The operation also involved returning German and Italian POWs to Europe. Around half a million POWs were repatriated in the course of Operation Magic Carpet.

In September 1945, the Pacific phase of the operation began to bring back those who were stationed in South East Asia and territories in the Pacific Ocean. Four battleships accompanied by two aircraft carriers set out from Tokyo Bay for Okinawa to collect the soldiers of the U.S. Tenth Army and

ferry them back home across the Pacific

Mass Mobilisation

In total around 370 vessels were involved in Operation Magic Carpet. These included aircraft carriers, battleships, and destroyers. Even Luxury passenger ships were drafted in to help with the effort. The Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary, which had been called into service at the beginning of WWII, and had swapped their usual bold colours for drab grey camouflage. This caused the Queen Mary to be referred to as the “Grey Ghost”. These massive ships made several voyages across the Atlantic to bring the troops home.

Warships, especially those which had been designed primarily as destroyers and aircraft carriers, had to be adapted to make them more suitable for the task of carrying a large number of passengers. Conditions were certainly not luxurious with soldiers packed into bunks, some as many as five tiers high in order to get as many home as quickly as possible.

Get them Home for Christmas!

In September 1945 there were 2,000,000 American army personnel eligible to be relieved of their wartime duties and wait-

ing to be returned home. As the year wore on hopes were raised of getting the troops home in time to spend Christmas with their families. The task (sometimes referred to as Operation Santa Clause) was never going to be easy and was hindered further by heavy storms which delayed travel by sea.



The hangar bay of the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6) during a “Magic Carpet” voyage to bring U.S. servicemen back to the U.S. from Europe in late 1945.

Once the American troops returned to their homeland they faced further delays crossing the continent to reach their homes. Their initial destination was one of the many repatriation centres along the West Coast. Al-



“The Magic Carpet”

though not “home” these centres provided temporary accommodation while officials ensured that all the paperwork to release the service men and women from their duties was processed correctly. While it must have been hard to be so close to home yet still so far away, many were just glad to be back on American soil.

To make matters worse, there were traffic jams across the country as well as train delays of between 6 and 12 hours. In addition to the delays, there were simply not enough trains to accommodate all the soldiers trying to make their way back home.

On 24th December 1945 almost all the passengers (94%) travelling in trains from the west coast were recently released veterans. Those who did not make it back to their own homes were offered hospitality by locals living near the repatriation centres.

Kindness of strangers

The soldiers were touched by the generosity of strangers who opened their homes to them, sharing their Christmas dinner. Others ate the Christmas dinner provided in the separation centres while others celebrated the holiday still on board the ships that had brought them, now docked in the harbour. Although they were still not back with their families, in the words of one returning soldier, just being back on American soil was the best Christmas present he could ask for.

Those attempting the journey home were also overwhelmed by the generosity and support shown to them by their fellow countrymen. There were impromptu parties thrown for them in towns where the trains had to make a stopover. There were stories of civilians giving up their own places on the trains so that the returning veterans could travel in their place.

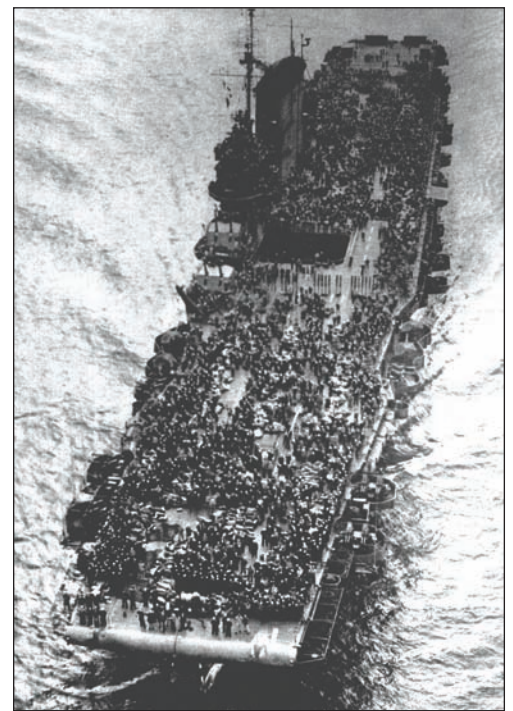
Because trains were overcrowded and many soldiers were unable to get tickets, local truckers and taxi drivers stepped in, volunteering to take servicemen and women home even although it meant they would miss spending time with their own families at Christmas. A taxi driver from Los Angeles took a group of six veterans all the way to their home in Chicago – a journey of 2,000 miles – while another transported his passengers from LA to The Bronx and Manhattan.

Both drivers accepted only the cost of the

gas they had used for the journey as payment.

The Final Phase

In total, there were over 8 million Allied soldiers waiting to be brought home from their stations in the European Asian and Pacific Areas and the operation to return them all took eighteen months to complete. The European phase of Operation was completed by February 1946, but it took until Sep-



The U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS Saratoga (CV-3) during her role as a troop transport in operation “Magic Carpet”. By the end of her “Magic Carpet” service, Saratoga had brought home a total of 29,204 Pacific War veterans, more than any other individual ship.

tember 1946 to complete the final Pacific phase.

As a whole, it was a massive operation made possible by a great deal of careful planning and helped by the goodwill of civilians who appreciated the sacrifices the returning troops had made on their behalf.

Author’s note: Operation Magic Carpet is also used to refer to an operation between June 1949 and September 1950 that brought 49,000 Yemenite Jews to the new state of Israel. This was an entirely separate operation.

Meaningful Vacation



BY GABRIEL ORTIGOZA, PHD

My wife and I spent a 10-day vacation to the Philippines with significant purposes to accomplish.

On 04 December 2018, we escorted my 84-year old mother from Elk Grove, California to my hometown in Mlang located in Southern Philippines. It was winter time in the United States and my mother always struggles with cold weather. It is therefore appropriate for her to live in a beautiful tropical island of the Philippines as she verbalized her intent to go home for good. After a 13-hour straight flight via Philippine Airlines from San Francisco to Manila plus an hour and 45 minutes connecting flight via the same airlines from Manila to Davao and an additional 3-hour land trip to Mlang, we finally arrived home.

Attending "Kawayanan" Festival

The following day at 5 o'clock in the morning, I was awoken by loud musical sound from a Catholic Church on the southeastern side of my house adjacent to the municipal plaza. The church regularly plays the music the same time everyday. It made me get up from bed and start to prepare for the day's festivities. At 7 o'clock in the morning I heard beats from marching band which signaled the start of annual parade. I brought with me my cousin and relatives to watch the parade. We stayed with the crowd where senior citizens comfortably situated



Mlang, Cotabato

under a century old acacia tree.

Meeting the Entire Municipality

When the drum and bugle corps approached the band stand I stood up from the mono-block chair where I seated and went closer to the route of the parading groups to see up close and personal the people of Mlang. The first group of people following the bugle corps was the municipal officials led by the mayor, vice mayor, and municipal councilors and barangay (village) chairmen.

Mayor Atty. Russel Abonado saw and greeted me with a snappy salute followed by a hand shake. Vice Mayor Lito Pinol, and several council members to include my childhood friend Daniel Berja and his nephew, a newly elected barangay chairman of poblacion A Peeps Bilbao, also extended

their warm hand shakes. They invited me to join them in the band stand but I refused saying I want to stay with the crowd to feel their pulses. I felt very much welcome by the local government unit officials.

The next group in the parade following the municipal officials was that of municipal villages which comprises 37 barangays represented by their chairmen then the group was followed by public and private schools, local government, and



Street fruit vendor

gundadato was represented by his nephew, Maguindanao provincial board member King Mangundato while Atty. Francis Tolentino was represented by Tagaytay City vice mayor Raymond Ambion. King Mangundato traces his maternal roots in Mlang. His late mother Gigi, who was slain together with the journalist in that infamous Ampatuan Massacre, is from Mlang.

SAP Bong Go brought with him movie actor Philip Salvador and a Davao City taxi driver impersonator of President Rody Duterte. As usual, these candidates brought truck-load of pack meals distributed to the people.



Lechon (grilled whole pig)

Lechon Contest

Filipinos love lechon (grilled whole pig). It is always present in major parties as a symbol of success. Parading teams were fed during lunch time by their respective group leaders with lechon aside from other Filipino dishes with unlimited

rice to fill the hungry tummy. I learned

from a municipal official Bernardo Tayong that next year the town will participate in Guinness World Record for the longest lechon grill contest. Magsaysay Avenue in Mlang is proposed to be the venue.

Going home for a vacation always excites me for the reason that it brings joy to see the place I grew up and meet the locals who are always welcoming.

non-government organizations. I basically saw the entire municipality as represented in the parade.

Guest Speakers

Three senatorial candidates were invited as guest speakers for the festival. Only Senior Assistant to the President (SAP) Bong Go physically came to speak with the local people. The two other guests were represented by their chosen people. Cong. Dong Man-

Lasang Pinoy

Sinampalukang Manok

Sinampalukang Manok is a chicken soup dish with a sour broth. It is has similarities to Sinigang, which happens to be one of the most popular Filipino dish. This dish has minimal ingredients yet it is very flavorful. Tamarind leaves are traditionally used to make the broth sour. These are boiled until the flavors are completely extracted. In this recipe, I made use of tamarind flower buds. It provides a mildly sour taste, which I think is the same when tamarind leaves are used.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. chicken cut into serving pieces
- 3/4 cups tamarind flower buds or tamarind leaves
- 1 large red onion
- 4 pieces long green pepper siding pansigang
- 3 thumbs ginger sliced
- 4 cloves garlic crushed
- 1 20 g. Knorr Sinigang sa Sampaloc Mix, original
- 1 Knorr Chicken Cube
- 3 tablespoons fish sauce
- 6 cups water

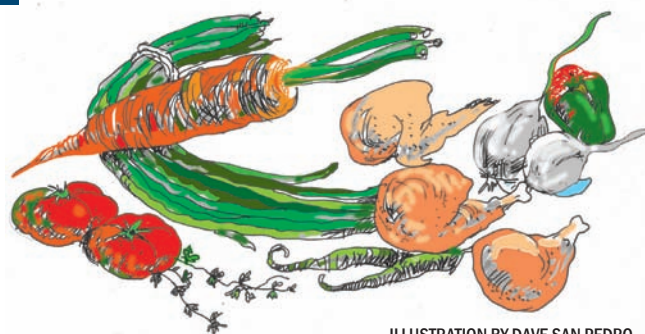


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE SAN PEDRO

Instructions

- Heat cooking pot and then sear the chicken. Continue to cook until most of the chicken fat are extracted. Remove the chicken from the pot. Set aside.
- Using the extracted oil, sauce garlic, onion, and ginger. Once the onion becomes soft, add the chicken back to the pot.
- Pour water. Let boil. Seal the tamarind flower buds in a cheesecloth and tie using a kitchen twine. Add the cheese cloth with tamarind flower buds in the pot. Stir.
- Add Knorr chicken cube and long green pepper. Cover the pot. Cook in medium heat until the chicken gets tender.
- Remove the tamarind flower buds. Add Knorr Singing Mix. Stir.

Pinoy Kasi Komiks by Dave San Pedro



PH wins 1st Miss Intercontinental crown after 47 years



ANOTHER PINAY BEAUTY QUEEN – Miss Intercontinental 2018 Karen Gallman waves a small Philippine flag after winning the title Sunday, the first ever for a Filipina.

BY ROBERT R. REQUINTINA

The Philippines made another pageant history when Bb. Pilipinas Karen Gallman won the elusive Miss Intercontinental crown, the first for the country in 47 years, in the pageant held at the Mall of Asia Arena in Pasay City which started Saturday night and ended early Sunday morning.

Gallman, 26, of Ubay, Bohol, won over 84 other candidates for the crown. She had earned the right to represent the Philippines in the international competition after she won Bb. Pilipinas Intercontinental last March 18, 2018.

It was the second time for Gallman to join the Bb. Pilipinas pageant, the first time being in 2012 when she was a finalist.

Just like reigning Miss Universe Catriona Gray, Gallman is an Australian-Filipino beauty. She is also the last Binibini among the current batch of winners to compete in an international contest.

During the final question-and-answer portion of the Miss Intercontinental 2018 pageant, the contestants were asked: "How do you define success?"

Gallman answered: "For me, success is not just about winning in life but setting goals and achieving your dreams and working hard for everything you want, and always looking up to God and being thankful for everything. For me that is success."

Other winners last Sunday were: Miss Costa Rica Adriana Moya Alvarado, 1st runner-up; Miss Slovak Republic Laura Longauerova, 2nd runner-up; Miss Colombia Hillary Hollmann, 3rd runner-up; Miss Vietnam, Ngan Anh Au Le, 4th runner-up; and Miss Ethiopia Bella Lire Lapso, 5th runner-up.

Candidates who finished in the Top 20 semifinals were from Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Ukraine, Mexico, USA, Paraguay, and Ecuador.

From top 20, the number narrowed down to six: Ethiopia (Continental Queen, Africa), Philippines (Continental Queen, Asia and Oceania), Slovak Republic (Continental Queen, Europe), Costa Rica (Continental Queen, North America), and Colombia (Continental Queen, South America). Miss Vietnam was awarded the people's choice.

At the MOA, in full force to congratulate Gallman were Binibining Pilipinas

Charities, Inc., chair Stella Marquez Araneta, her husband Jorge Araneta, president and CEO of Araneta Group; BPCI Executive Committee Vice Chair Conchitina Sevilla Bernardo, Raymund Villanueva, and Betsy Westendorp de Brias.

During the pageant's preliminaries, the 5'6" tall beauty queen picked up two special awards — Media's Choice and Standout Beauty.

Gallman was trained with the Kagandahang Flores beauty camp of Rodgil Flores. The beauty queen is engaged to her longtime boyfriend Ian Galton.

Before Sunday, no Filipino had won this international competition. The highest placement of a Filipino contestant in Miss International was 1st runner-up, won by Katarina Rodriguez (2017) and Christi Lynn McGarry (2015).

In September, 2018, Miss Gallman was appointed by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process as one of the country's peace ambassadors.

The new beauty queen considers peace, education, and children's welfare as the causes she's most passionate about.

PH 'jeepney' artists stalked by extinction

BY AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Bernardo de la Cruz casts his eyes around the nearly silent workshop where he used to toil overtime hand-painting custom decor on jeepneys, the singularly Philippine minibuses facing the scrapheap.

These rolling art galleries adorned with images of everything from Batman to babies, as well as disco lights and chrome wheels, have for decades provided cheap transport for millions.

But pollution and safety concerns have led to a modernisation programme, with jeepneys 15 years or older to be taken off the streets by 2020.

"This is an act of treachery against fellow Filipinos," said de la Cruz. "This is a uniquely Filipino product. We were born with it."

When he began 45 years ago, there were hundreds of artists giving the vehicles their famously boisterous paint jobs. Now there are estimated to be fewer than a dozen left.

He has seen orders decline from a high of up to 80 a month in the 1980s to just one or two now.

His canvas is being replaced by eco-jeepneys, powered by electricity or lower-polluting diesel motors.

Riders of old jeepneys currently have to climb in through a hatch in the rear, cramming into the benches inside with no respite from the heat and roadside pollution.

On borrowed time

The jeepney's successor is being billed as a big improvement.

It has doors, individual seats, air-conditioning, and enough height to stand up. But it will be mass-produced and look just like a public bus.

Skipping over the jeepney's bespoke production process in small workshops means a loss of the individual style and flair that made them global symbols of the Philippines.

"It's one of the most genu-



Jeepneys, which are rolling art galleries adorned with images of everything from Batman to babies, as well as disco lights and chrome wheels, have for decades provided cheap transport for millions of people in the Philippines.

ine forms of modern folk art that we have," Bernie Sim, a Manila-based graphic designer and co-author of a 2014 book on jeepney art, told AFP.

French fashion designer Christian Louboutin launched a jeepney-themed handbag collection last year, while Swedish furniture giant Ikea painted a jeepney in its signature blue and yellow to announce plans to open a Philippine store.

But the vehicles, which were first made from left-over US jeeps after World War II, have been on borrowed time for years.

Jeepneys are highly polluting, and the Philippines is desperate to improve air quality in its traffic-clogged cities.

Their drivers are also notorious for ignoring traffic rules, and the vehicles have few safety features.

On top of that, Manila ushered in internet-based ride-sharing services in 2014, and three years later President Rodrigo Duterte said the jeepney must evolve or disappear.

'I cry quietly'

"They have all but stopped making jeepneys," said 52-year-old jeepney artist Vic Capuno, based in San Pablo town south of Manila.

As a result he and a colleague at Armak Motors now paint just three of four jeepneys a month.

De la Cruz worked on nine in the last year. He's the only painter left at Ma-

nila's Sarao Motors, once the country's biggest producer.

Two of his siblings were also jeepney artists, but they died from diseases he believes were caused by years inhaling fumes from the paint.

Yet he is still passionate about the vehicle's importance in Philippine history.

"When the jeepney disappears a piece of Filipino culture will also die," de la Cruz warned.

A self-taught painter, he was inspired by the work of renowned local artists such as Carlos Francisco and Fernando Amorsolo.

His jeepney designs, still seen on the streets for now, chronicle the rapidly changing landscape of his home — Las Pinas — from a farming and salt-making backwater into a highly urbanised area.

"It's a pleasing sight. It brings us back to a time and place that is no more," said de la Cruz.

After raising four children on the pay earned painting, he now also creates canvases and makes storefront signs as a sideline.

He conceded he could have a decent life without the jeepneys, but was heartbroken by the government's decision.

"I would like to appeal to the authorities not to outlaw it," de la Cruz said. "At times I cry quietly when I think about what is happening."

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Luis Manzano, scolded for eating Bible-prohibited food, claps back: 'So, see you in hell?'

BY CODY CEPEDA

TV host and actor Luis Manzano brushed off the comments of one netizen after the latter called him out for a recent Instagram post — about food.



Luis Manzano

Manzano took to the social media site last Jan. 25 where he shared to his 2.5 million-strong fans the day's gastronomic spread, which included shrimp, squid, grilled pork and fish, and corned beef, among others.

"Pusit – hipon – inihaw na baboy/isda – corned beef – kamatis at sibuyas – toyo – kanin (not in pic)," shared Manzano. "Sara-aaaaaaap."

Many of Manzano's fans practically drooled over the feast and shared to their idol that the food was some of their favorites.

"Ang sarap ng ulam, lucky ka [talaga]," said one netizen (@mitsugonomama). (Those viands are delicious! You're really lucky.)

"Napakasarap naman po nyan!" said another (@jenille). "Lahat ng paborito ko." (Those are so delicious. Those are all my favorites.)

It was a post that was made out of good fun, but it seems some were not receptive to it. A certain Jaime (@jaime_ruj), in a now deleted comment, pointed out to Manzano that the food he shared was prohibited in the Bible.

"These are one of what God said, 'do not eat, it is unclean for you,'" the netizen wrote, quoting the Old Testament.

Manzano seemed irked at the netizen's comment and wrote back in sarcasm, "So

paano? Kita tayo impyerno? What time ka una? Paiwan nalang bukas gate ha."

(So what now? Will we see each other in hell? What time are you going ahead? Just leave the gate open, will you?)

"I didn't say that brother. God said," the netizen, in a deleted comment, repeated.

"Kaya nga, kita kits pre! (Exactly, see you there, bro!) Text me when you get there," replied Manzano.

Other fans came to Manzano's defense and called out the netizen for his out of place comment. "Be thankful instead, ang dami alam (you know too much) @jaime_ruj," said one fan (@mynameis_dm).

A certain Kat (@kat_eugenio) also reprimanded the netizen, saying they were quoting laws from the Old Testament. In some verses in the New Testament, it was said that Jesus Christ has since declared all foods as "clean" (Mark 7:17-23).

"I know what you are referring to and I'm telling you that you have misunderstood it dahil sa Old Testament ka lang nag base (because you only based it in the Old Testament)," she wrote.

In the end, the netizen, seemingly out of bullets, told Manzano to just "move on" — a response the TV host found laughable.

"@jaime_ruj natawa ako sa move on," said Manzano. "Di ka nga maka-move on sa pusit at hipon."

(You made me laugh as you say, "Move on." You cannot even move on from the squid and shrimps.) JB

Arjo Atayde 'exclusively dating' Maine Mendoza

BY JAN MILO SEVERO

MANILA, Philippines — Kapamilya actor Arjo Atayde broke his silence and admitted that he and Kapuso actress Maine Mendoza are "exclusively dating."



Maine Mendoza and Arjo Atayde

On Tuesday at the press conference of his upcoming movie "Tol," the actor was asked by the media if he and Maine are now in a relationship, as Pep.ph reported.

"No, but we are exclusively dating and I'm the happiest right now. Hanggang doon na lang po muna," Arjo said.

When asked what he likes about the "Eat Bulaga" host, Arjo said, "Everything. I'm just really happy."

Some fans of Maine and Alden Richards' loveteam (AIDub) who are not in favor of the brewing romance between her and Arjo expressed their dismay on social media, with some saying that the Kapamilya actor is riding on Maine's popularity.

In response, Arjo challenged his critics to do the bashing to him in person so that

he can defend himself.

"I don't know how to get mad. I don't know how to disrespect people. I despise disrespectful people. If they disrespect me, it's fine, though. But for my family to get affected, for Maine to be disrespected... that's not okay with me. Do it in front of me, try it. I dare you guys. I dare you!" Arjo said.

Arjo and Maine have been spotted together in different establishments during the last quarter of 2018 which fueled speculations that they are dating. The two reportedly met on the set of Maine's Metro Manila Film Festival movie "Jack Em Popoy: The Puliscredibles."



PERSONAL INJURY and IMMIGRATION

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A New Year at Magellan Hall

By Dale Esperante

The New Year's Eve Celebration to welcome 2019 by the American Legion Magellan Post 604 evolved to an evening of pure active dancing. Well, almost all evening anyway. The traditional Mrs. New Year's Pageantry that used to be the highlight of the New Year's Eve at Magellan Hall necessitated a break from tradition, resting this year. The organizers of the Post offered instead a new program for the members, friends, and supporters of Magellan Hall. The affair proved to be successful based on the number of guests who attended and actually enjoyed the change. Thanks to the organizers who were able to invite one of the community's popular dance instructors (DI). The increasing popularity of Mr. Benjz Hisoler played a substantial role in the successful turnout for the celebration. The energetic dance leader not only danced with willing partners, but he also led a number of exhilarating line dances. The passing hours and rhythmic changes also required a number of shirt changes for Mr. DI. He looked fresh and ready for more footloose every time he stepped out on the floor wearing a new shirt.

For a special number, Benjz invited all couples to take part in a group Paso Doble dance. All eyes were on the DI maestro for guidance. Without prior dance experience in the Paso Doble, everyone managed to somehow follow and move the right way as the maestro intended for everyone to move. The exciting music, the flair and the partnership of the dance, the ambient of the moment, seemed powerful enough to fill Magellan's hallowed hall of sounds akin to a crowded Spanish arena booming with thunderous cheers for the victory of the toreador, or the Toro! 'Ole! Who knows? One thing was certain for sure, everyone who participated in the intriguing dance enjoyed the marching and the flamenco-like qualities. Essentially, the Paso Doble dance involves role-playing. It is a Spanish military march, and also a modern dance that emulates the movements of a bullfight. This two-person dance form has the man performing as the bullfighter and the woman as the cape." (Source: Wiki-



Photos by Dale Esperante

pedia). Very entertaining for the participants and the audience as well!

Breaks in the dancing came courtesy of a couple talented guests who provided their singing prowess to entertain the seated and resting guests, raffle prizes awarded to the lucky winners, best dancing couple award (Mr. and Mrs. Oineza), and best-dress recognition (Mercedes Guerrero), and an early (eleven-ish) midnight porridge and champagne toast. Importantly, since music and

dance were the evening's main draw, thumbs up to the Music Maestro, Mr. Edward Cordero. And of course, a special salute to the Maestro of Dance, Mr. Benjz Hisoler, for his stamina and electrifying energy! Fulfilling everyone's expectations, it is appropriate to recognize all the attendees (guests and members) who supportively enjoyed the evening's agenda. Young and Old alike blended in harmony to bid farewell to 2018, to welcome 2019. Grandchildren and children joyfully danced with their grandparents and par-

ents or joined in the line dances, showcasing that music could bridge generations.

On behalf of Philippine Fiesta aka PF News, congratulations to the organizers of Magellan Post 604. A special nod to the program suggested by 2nd Vice Commander Fred Amper and supported by members of the Executive Committee and members of the Post.

Mabuhay at Manigong Bagong Taon Sa Lahat!

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