

FCSV Joins "Stop the Hate Rally"



The Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity

BY LILIA RIVERA

The Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity (FCSV) along with other Asian Pacific Islanders organizations in Sacramento joined a successful show of unity on March 27, 2021 in a Rally from 9 am to 11 am at the former Sears parking lot at Florin and 65th Street.

Councilwoman Stephanie Nguyen, Executive Director of Asian Resources Inc, (ARI) and the Asian Resources staff and volunteers from the community planned and took the lead in calling for everyone to join the Rally. The different groups representing 25 organizations gathered in three parking lots (ARI Headquarters, Happy Gardens and Sacramento Chinese Indochina) to decorate and prepare to join others. The cars were decorated with bal-



Stephanie Nguyen and the Asian Resources staff with Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg.



FCSV Pres. Dick Mazon

loons, posters, and flags to draw attention to the cause. The procession of decorated and loud music from the caravan drew the attention of people

along the way. Police escorts in their motorcycles also alerted the people to make way for the caravan.

Mayor Darrell Steinberg led the various speakers denouncing the violence against people of Asian descent specially against the elderly, followed by Council Member Eric Guerra of District 7. In addition, some of the leaders of the different groups and organizations took turns speaking at the make-shift stage

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Rob Bonta nominated to be California attorney general, would be first Filipino in role

BY SHAWN HIBLER

Gov. Gavin Newsom has appointed Mr. Bonta, an East Bay assemblyman, to fill the remaining term of Xavier Becerra, who became the U.S. Health and Human Services secretary last week.



Rob Bonta at Ruby Bridges Elementary School in Alameda, Calif., last week. On Wednesday he was named the state's new attorney general. Credit...Jeff Chiu/Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom of California on Wednesday named Rob Bonta, a Democratic state legislator and loyal political ally, to succeed Xavier Becerra as attorney general, placing an advocate of criminal justice reform and a rising Asian-Ameri-

can progressive at the helm of California's largest law enforcement agency.

The announcement came slightly less than a week after Mr. Becerra's narrow confirmation as health and human services secretary for President Biden.

It also came at a politically fraught time for Mr. Newsom, who has been under pressure to shore up his base in the face of a recall campaign and to take a hard line on recent racial violence against Asian-Americans.

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China Backs Away as Philippines and U.S. Send Impressive Fleet to West Philippine Sea



USS Theodore Roosevelt

BY LINO ALVARO LIMOS

China's pulled out most of its ships at Julian Felipe Reef.

In a surprising move, the Philippines sent its strongest response yet against China's expan-

sion into the West Philippine Sea. Not since 2012 has the Philippines moved its naval forces to the West Philippine Sea to challenge China's militarization of the area. The move is a highly coordi-

nated response with the United States.

In March, the Philippines reported the presence of 220 Chinese vessels at Julian Felipe Reef. That number has been reduced to fewer than 10 as of April 13.

"The Chinese have blinked," retired U.S. Navy officer Jerry Hendrix told Forbes.

The Philippines sent four of its most advanced warships to the West Philippine Sea to challenge China's increasing activities at Julian Felipe Reef. Among the units it deployed are its two

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Second Cold War looms!

PerryScope
By PERRY DIAZ

Nobody expected that the first US-China high-level meeting in Anchorage, Alaska would lead to an open adversarial situation. Facing each other, the two groups seemed to suggest that the two superpowers were locked in a new Cold War in a tumultuous start sans the usual diplomatic courtesies that happen when diplomats meet for the first time. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and their counterparts Wang Yi and Yang Jiechi took uncompromising positions for the whole world to see.

After both sides displayed a belligerent and uncompromising stance, they seemed to have reached some minor concessions without any radical change in China's political system or foreign policy.

The basic problem with US-China relations has always been China's totalitarian society against America's democratic foundation. It's the same problem that the US had during the First Cold War when the US was trying to stop Soviet expansionism. Now, the US is trying to contain China's expansionist moves around the world. It's the same playbook with different adversaries.

First Cold War

During the First Cold War, which began in 1947 with the implementation of the Truman Doctrine -- America's foreign policy goal of containing Soviet geopolitical expansion -- and ended in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

This led to the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 among the US, United Kingdom, France, and 11 other European countries. They agreed that an armed attack against any of them would be considered an attack against them all. Later on, Greece and Turkey joined NATO. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 10 former Warsaw Pact members joined NATO in 1997. Eventually the alliance expanded to 30 members, the largest military alliance in the history of the world.

It must be remembered that back in 1960, the late Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev told the United Nations General Assembly, "Socialism is replacing capitalism." Sixty years later, Chinese President Xi Jinping said, "The East is rising, while the West is in decline." Evidently, Xi believes in it, which gives him a false sense of security that could lead to US-China military confrontation knowing that China would take advantage of any demonstration of weakness on the part of the US.

Cuban missile crisis

This reminds me of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 when war between the US and the Soviet Union almost broke out when the Soviet Union attempted to bring Soviet nuclear missiles to Cuba. When President Kennedy found out about it, he directed a blockade of the Russian ships. For 13 days, the world watched the stand-off in the Caribbean Sea.

Finally, Khrushchev backed down and ordered the ships withdrawn. In 1964, the Kremlin stripped him from power for his recklessness that led to the Soviets'

embarrassment during the Cuban missile crisis.

The ascendancy of Biden to the presidency changed the dynamics in US-China relations, which has reached a boiling point with China's increasingly aggressive posture against Taiwan, which she claims as a province of China. She warned the US to stay away from Taiwan or face the consequences. But the US has made it clear that she won't sit by and abandon a nation that she has formally committed to support and protect.

In the waning days of the Trump administration, an arms deal was sent to Congress for approval. Beijing claimed that the weapons are offensive, which could be used to attack the Chinese forces' assembly area on the mainland coast before departure or their vessels while crossing the Taiwan Strait in the event China decides to invade Taiwan. China is angered by the deal saying it "seriously damages China's sovereignty and security" and threatened to retaliate. The US is obligated by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act to provide Taiwan with the means for defense, hence the series of weapons deal that the two countries had inked in the past that included 66 F-16 fighter jets worth \$8 billion, the largest weapons sale in recent history.

Chinese Dream

But the Taiwan question is just the tip of the iceberg. China has always been jealous of American superiority. When Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, he envisioned the "Chinese Dream" as the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." It is described as achieving the material goal of China becoming a "moderately well-off society" by 2021, and the modernization goal of China becoming fully developed nation by 2049, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic. So far China is on track.

The rapid deterioration in US-China relations has taken many by surprise. US-China rivalry has always been moderated by the need to work together on economic, financial, and geopolitical issues. But their relationship has gone awry due to recriminations over the coronavirus pandemic, which has exposed the depth of their mutual mistrust.

China thinks the US is bent on containing China to prolong the declining power of the US while denying China her rightful place in the sun. Meanwhile, the US has increasingly believed that China is threatening US security interests; thus, undermining her prosperity, interfering in her democracy, and challenging her values. Didn't we go through this same exercise during the US-Soviet Union rivalry?

World dominion

But world dominion, which has always been communist China's global ambition, is hampered by the existence of the US, which China is trying to replace as the sole superpower. But the US is hard to replace. Its democratic foundation is solidly unshakable, whereas, China's ruling body has to impose a communist and totalitarian rule over her 1.3 billion people. Simply put, democratization of the Chinese society is hard -- if not impossible -- to accomplish because of the



corrupt and godless ruling class. Eventually, China would find herself in the same situation as the Soviet Union, which has brought her own downfall by incessant internal power struggle.

Another factor that has detrimental effect on Chinese military power is that China's navy -- although far more warships than the US -- is inferior to the US simply because the US has more experience in actual naval warfare than China. Besides, American naval weaponry is far better in technology.

A few years ago, Rear Admiral Luo Yuan, a supporter of communist orthodoxy and rabidly nationalist, anti-American, and anti-Western, said that the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is the weakest link in the Chinese armed forces. But what surprised -- and shocked -- his audience was his statement, "Although my country's military strength has improved significantly in recent years, there is still a clear gap between China and the United States and Russia. Although our country is recognized by all countries in the world in terms of the army, our country is far inferior to the United States and Russia in terms of the navy."

US-China naval confrontation

Last April 9, the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group and the USS Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit -- ready for action -- sailed to the South China Sea to lend support to the beleaguered Philippine Navy, which was sent by the Philip-

pine government to monitor the 220 Chinese vessels that were parked off the Julian Felipe (Whitsun) Reef, which is within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

By the time the combined US Navy and Marine Corps team reached the vicinity of Julian Felipe Reef, only 10 of the Chinese vessels remained. Apparently, the Chinese militia force ran off to avoid confrontation with the Americans.

Rear Adm. Doug Verissimo, commander of Carrier Strike Group Nine, said in a statement, "The combined Navy and Marine Corps team has been a stabilizing force in this region for more than a century and will continue to support all who share in the collective vision of peace, stability, and freedom of the seas." Touché!

Late last month, Secretary of State Blinken affirmed the U.S. commitment to defending the Philippines if she was attacked. He issued a statement, saying, "The United States stands with our ally, the Philippines, in the face of the [People's Republic of China]'s maritime militia amassing at [Whitsun Reef]. We will always stand by our allies and stand up for the rules-based international order."

Many geopolitical experts believe that the South China Sea is where the next global conflict is going to be. For as long as China claims the South China Sea as her territory, there would always be territorial disputes among the six claimants -- the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan, and China. And with the US affirming her commitment to defend the Philippines if attacked, the region could spark a shooting war.

Are we seeing the start of a Biden Doctrine, which is: To contain Chinese geopolitical expansion? With that, it would seem that a Second Cold War looms ahead.

(PerryDiaz@gmail.com)



Editor's Note

My last editorial note from February 2020, which was more than a year ago, appeared to be very promising. It was not knowing, we were facing an impending doom. COVID-19 hit, and the entire universe went silent!

Fast forward to today, with all the roller-coaster kind of emotions and uncertainties, we can finally see some light, with the vaccine release and administration.

As much as we would like to dwell in all our losses, whether from the death of family members, friends, acquaintances, or job losses and career change, we have to stay resilient and strong, and prepare ourselves to face other challenges ahead.

Asian hate has become brutal, fatal, and it hits in any time of day. It is a must to stand against! If it happens to us, would we know what to do to protect ourselves and the people around us?

Our Filipino-American community members have been quite commendable, as they remained visible in all these challenges. They've become experts in Zoom meeting, virtually making plans and making things happen, and taking actions when need to -- such as in senior food distributions and participating in rallies to stop Asian hate.

The Sacramento Filipino Fiesta virtual event is being planned for June 6, with this year's theme to honor the Filipino American Healthcare Heroes.

In ending, we say a big congratulations to our very own Filipino-American community leader, Cynthia Bonta, in the assignment of her son Rob Bonta, as California's Attorney General. You make us all very proud!

With love always,
Dinnah San Pedro

Community pantry: ‘Not charity, but mutual aid’

BY NIKKA G. VALENZUELA

Manila, Philippines — The Maginhawa Community Pantry is not just a small bamboo cart containing fresh produce and other food, but a powerful idea that has come out during this time of sweeping pandemic when many Filipinos don’t have the means to feed themselves and their families.

It is no wonder that in just four days, the idea had spread far and wide. From Maginhawa Street in Teachers Village in Quezon City, the community pantry has been replicated in Sikatuna Village also in Quezon City and all the way to Sampaloc, Manila, to as far as Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya.

The community pantries that had sprung up in various neighborhoods all go by the original Maginhawa tenet of “Magbigay ayon sa kakayahan, kumuha batay sa pangangailangan,” or “Give whatever you can, take only what you need.”

The idea is simple enough. People drop off whatever food they could donate — fresh vegetables, sweet potatoes, canned goods, etc. — at a central location in the community and those who can’t afford to buy their own only have to line up to get what they need for free.

The community effort works as simply as its core principle: Everyone is free to donate as much as he can, but no one should get more than what he needs.

The Maginhawa pantry is open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is restocked throughout the day, either by donors or by Ana Patricia Non, the young entrepreneur who started it.

Around 3,000 served

In less than a week, the pantry served around 3,000 individuals. Ordinary folks have gone to Maginhawa, a street famous for its holes-in-the-wall, to help sustain the cart. In other parts of the metro, as well as in the provinces, ordinary citizens have set up similar pantries on tables or just plain cardboard boxes.

“This is not a charity. This is like a mutual aid. We’re all

helping each other,” Non told the Inquirer in an interview on Saturday.

Shortly after the two-week enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) was “modified” in Metro Manila and surrounding provinces, Non scouted for a place where she could set up a pantry where people were free to give and take food.

The 26-year-old furniture business owner said she was concerned for the poor like the jeepney drivers and vendors who were struggling under quarantine restrictions and finding it hard to feed their families during the two-week ECQ.

Her own small shop that makes chairs had suffered a two-month slump due to a localized lockdown and the recent ECQ.

When she got permission to use the sidewalk in front of 96 Maginhawa Street, she brought a bamboo cart with some grocery items she had bought, plus the “ayuda” she had received and opened the pantry on April 14.

She posted what she did on social media and immediately received remarkable responses and praises.

‘Acts of resistance’

According to sociologist Athena Charanne Presto, a community pantry is the ordinary citizen’s way of taking action in the face of a crisis.

“Community pantries can be seen as acts of resistance against three things: first, against a government that fails to adequately address citizens’ needs; second, against a biased and discriminatory view of the poor as selfish and greedy; and third, against aid initiatives from institutions that are difficult to trust,” said Presto, who teaches at the University of the Philippines.

Presto said the community pantry is also another form of collective response by the peo-



People line up to get free food supplies at the Maginhawa community pantry in Quezon City on Saturday, April 17, 2021, after the project went viral this week as more people donate food stock on a small shelf where underprivileged people can access it but are told to only get what they need.



A Quezon City resident installed a “Community Pantry” along Maginhawa using a bamboo cart, so those in need can have free food and supplies.

ple when institutions fall short in providing aid.

But what is important to point out in the Maginhawa community effort is that many of its supporters are not from rich households, she said.

There were farmers who donated a sack of sweet potatoes all the way from Paniqui, Tarlac, and tricycle drivers who volunteered to repack donated rice.

“It goes beyond the mainstream and elitist notion that in donation drives, only the rich provide for the poor,” she said.

Built on trust

The pantry system is built on trust, and Non believes that people will only take what they need and will be patient enough to stand in line to get it.

“I think that we should integrate with basic masses so that we can get to know them, so it can dispel our preconcep-

tion that they are greedy (let’s focus on those who are truly self-serving and those who owe the citizenry),” Non said on Facebook in response to concerns that some of the poor would take advantage of the free food and get more than what they need.

She said she saw a homeless man who took only two oranges from the cart despite encouragement from other people to get more. The man told them:

“This is all I’m going to eat.”

Two street sweepers who each got one head of cabbage said that was just enough for a sauté for their families.

Non observed that some had taken more than what they appear to need, but she withheld judgment.

Temporary solution

“Maybe we are not in the right position to judge others when we can afford to eat three times a day. Our struggles and privileges may be different. It’s possible that [the person taking more goods] has a big family, or he lost his job, or he doesn’t know where to get their next meal,” she said.

Non said that she’s happy with how her efforts had been appreciated and adopted, and with how people in communities were uniting to help each other.

At the same time, she was sad that such community pantries had to be established in the first place. They are sprouting in other areas because many people are going hungry and need help to get food, she said.

“This community pantry is only a temporary solution for empty stomachs. Food security, services, those are different things and normal citizens do not have the budget to initiate those big projects,” Non said.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said the community pantry was “laudable” and showed that Filipinos could band together during a crisis.

“It exemplifies the Filipino ‘bayanihan’ spirit during this challenging time of COVID-19,” Roque said in a statement.

“As we have said in numerous occasions, we cannot defeat the COVID-19 pandemic alone. We need the support and cooperation of everyone,” he said.

Roque said the government was giving P1,000 cash assistance each to 22.9 million low-income earners affected by the ECQ in Metro Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal.

Some government critics see the emergence of community pantries as an indication of inadequate government assistance during the pandemic.

Non noted that some cities and villages have set up community pantries and asked for donations. She discourages that as local governments have money to allocate for the food security of their constituents.

“If people shoulder [the cost of] these projects, that would be redundant because we already shoulder the taxes,” she said.

‘Wake-up call’

Non said that the growing number of community pantries was a “wake-up call” that is telling the government about the people’s great need for aid.

The community pantry has been open for less than a week, and Non said that the bamboo cart on Maginhawa Street would stay there as long as there was some food to spare, and someone was in need.

“It can be there every day. Maybe it won’t contain anything for a day, but on the next day, it may have a lot. As long as we have extra food in our homes, I know where I can place that extra food and I know someone who needs it can take it,” she said.

Ramon Tulfo says gov't running PH like a 'headless chicken'

BY ZACARIAN SARAO

Manila, Philippines — Newspaper columnist and the country's special ambassador to China Ramon Tulfo has said the government is now steering the country like a "headless chicken" that is "running without direction."

"Hindi maganda 'yung pamamalakad ngayon,'" said Tulfo in interview over News5 on Tuesday. (The administration is not good right now.)

"Parang 'yung gobyerno, parang manok na naputulan ng ulo. Takbo lang nang takbo, walang direksyon,'" he added.

(The government right now, is like a headless chicken that is running without direction.)

Tulfo, a known friend and ally of President Rodrigo Duterte, added that he would rate the govern-



Special envoy to China Ramon Tulfo attends a Senate hearing in this file photo taken on March 2, 2020.

ment's response to the COVID-19 pandemic at a four on a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the highest.

He also expressed concern over Duterte's health, after the President disappeared for exactly two weeks before reappearing in a pre-recorded briefing on Monday.

Tulfo said it is important for the people to know where their leader is, especially during a time of crisis.

"Para din sa kaniya yan, para magtiwala din 'yung

tao sa kaniya," said Tulfo. (That is also for his sake so people will still trust him.)

Tulfo said he hopes Duterte will not copy late former President Ferdinand Marcos, who kept his severe illness secret to Filipinos.

According to a recent survey released by the Social Weather Stations on Monday, 65 percent or almost two out of three Filipinos believe that Duterte's state of health is a public matter.

When will PH get enough COVID-19 vaccines? 'I really don't know,' Duterte says

BY KRISSEY AGUILAR

President Rodrigo Duterte on Thursday admitted that he himself does not know when the Philippines would receive an ample supply COVID-19 vaccines.

"Itong atin atin dito, wala pa tayo nakuha except for yung nakuha natin sa China," Duterte said in a pre-recorded message. (What we got so far are those from China.)

The Philippines has also received vaccines from the World Health Organization-led COVAX facility.

Airport employees push a cart carrying first shipment of Covid-19 jabs at the Pristina International Airport on March 28, 2021. - Kosovo received on March 28, 2021 its first shipment of Covid-19 jabs which were de-



livered through the UN-backed Covax scheme to help poorer nations that had delays in reaching Balkan nations. The batch of 24,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine was delivered as Kosovo, like the rest of its Balkans neighbours, is fighting a significant surge in the number of coronavirus infections. (Photo by - / AFP)

"Mayroon tayong nakuha at may darating pakonti konti. (We are receiving vaccines in trickles.) To our sadness, the stocks that are coming in are barely enough to in-

oculate the health workers. Sila man talaga ang priority. Now, when will have that stock sufficient to vaccinate the people? I really do not know. Nobody knows," Duterte added.

"Do not be afraid, government is working. Government is busy doing everything, not nothing. Government is trying to get the things fixed for all of us," Duterte said.

In order to achieve herd immunity, the Philippines must vaccinate 70 percent of its population or around 70 million people.

Vaccine czar Carlito Galvez Jr. said the government is targeting to vaccinate 50 million to 70 million individuals this year to give Filipinos a "better Christmas."

The country, however, has so far vaccinated only over 1 million individuals.

China Backs Away as Philippines and U.S. Send Impressive Fleet to West Philippine Sea

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brand-new missile-guided frigates, the BRP Jose Rizal and the BRP Antonio Luna. It also deployed warplanes to monitor the area.

Meanwhile, the U.S. also sent its aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt to the area. But an American aircraft carrier never travels alone. With every sighting of a U.S. carrier, you can expect it brings along a large escort of submarines, destroyers, and cruisers protecting it from other vessels. This is on top of the dozens of aircraft it carries (it can carry up to 90 aircraft and can accommodate 4,500 personnel).

The U.S. also deployed the USS Makin Island, a formidable assault ship that can carry up to 20 attack aircraft or stealth strike-fighters. It also has its own escorts of submarines, destroyers, and cruisers.

In March 2021, the Philippine Coast Guard raised the alarm over the presence of 220 Chinese ships forming a phalanx at Julian Felipe Reef, which is within the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

By April, the Chinese vessels have dissipated to a couple of dozen, a clear sign of China backing down in response to the forceful reaction from the Philippines and the U.S.

China used the same strategy in the past whenever it wanted to militarize a Philippine reef: It would send a large flotilla of paramilitary "fishing boats" to the area to scare away other vessels, then its dredgers would follow, destroying precious corals



Philippine Coast Guard raised the alarm over the presence of 220 Chinese ships forming a phalanx at Julian Felipe Reef,

als to create artificial islands over the reef. Julian Felipe Reef would have ended up with the same fate.

An Unexpected Philippine Response

Ever since the 2012 standoff at Scarborough Shoal between China and the Philippines, the latter has opted not to send warships from the navy but relied on vessels from the Philippine Coast Guard instead to assert its presence in the West Philippine Sea. It was because of the ongoing international arbitration with China that the Philippines eventually won in 2016—the Philippines did not want to jeopardize its case and be construed as an aggressor.

But ever since then, the country had downplayed Chinese incursions into the West Philippine Sea.

The latest development proves significant, not only because the Philippines actually challenged China, but also because it is the first time it has sent a weapon of war to assert itself. To the Chinese generals, that is something to be very serious about. Historically, China respects force, no matter how seemingly small it is.

China Respects Force

According to professor and geopolitical analyst Richard Heydarian, China respects power.

"Chinese statecraft has contempt for the weak

and the naive," Heydarian told Esquire Philippines in 2020. "But China grudgingly respects those with strategic dignity and courage."

For example, Indonesia, which has taken a very strong stance against China on its sea disputes and even sunk a number of confiscated Chinese vessels, has already received 1.2 million initial doses of the vaccine delivered from China in November. Another 1.8 million doses were delivered in January, and more are expected to come.

It also helps that the U.S. has specifically stated any attack on Philippine vessels would trigger its Mutual Defense Treaty obligations.

"An armed attack against the Philippines armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the Pacific, including in the South China Sea, will trigger our obligations under the Mutual Defense Treaty," the U.S. State Department warned.

In the past, the U.S. had been vague about the Mutual Defense Treaty and its scope, saying obligations would only be triggered if they happen within the Philippines' territorial waters, not its EEZ. It looks like they are changing that position now.

In any case, it looks like China will not be militarizing Julian Felipe Reef anytime soon.

Déjà vu all over again

PerryScope
By PERRY DIAZ

Last March 7, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported that more than 200 vessels – believed to be manned by Chinese militia personnel – were observed moored in line formation at the Julian Felipe Reef within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf. However, the reef, which is also called Whitsun Reef, is within the Spratly islands in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) or South China Sea, which is within the nine-dash line that delineates China’s disputed territorial claim. The reef is about 175 nautical miles from Palawan, clearly within the Philippines’ 200-nautical-mile EEZ, over which the Philippines “enjoys the exclusive right to exploit or conserve any resources, including fossil oil and natural gas.” An international tribunal had invalidated China’s claim to 90% of the South China in 2016, but China does not recognize the ruling. Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, and the Philippines are the other claimants to some parts of the South China Sea.

In 2014, China built seven artificial islands on reefs in the disputed waters, and constructed airfields and harbors on at least three of them. And guess where did the Chinese get the rocks and soil to build the artificial islands? From Mindanao, and the Philippine government didn’t do anything to stop it.

The PCG observed that the Chinese vessels did not show fishing activities. So what were they doing there?

Retired Supreme Court senior associate justice Antonio Carpio warned that the presence of hundreds of Chinese vessels near Juan Felipe Reef could be a “prelude” to China’s occupying of another island in the WPS. He was particularly worried that China could be using the same strategy in the occupation of the Panganiban (Mischief) Reef in 1995.

“I think the President will just allow the DFA [Department of Foreign Affairs] to protest, will allow our military to make noise, but he will not do anything,” Justice Carpio told CNN Philip-

pines. “Because President Duterte doesn’t want to incur the ire of President Xi Jinping, because he loves [him],” he added. He also said that President Duterte considers President Xi Jinping as his best friend. “So how can President Duterte go against his idol?” he asked.

Justice Carpio reportedly said that President Duterte could have called and “berated” China’s ambassador to the country right away, saying that other heads of state do this if there are “encroachments” in their respective territories. “In situations like this, you immediately summon the ambassador of the other country. Here, we don’t do it,” Justice Carpio argued.

Duterte meets Chinese ambassador

Later on, Malacanang said that President Duterte has met with Chinese Am-



Julian Felipe Reef

bassador Huang Xilian, and that the two talked about the matter. The Chinese ambassador said they were fishermen and they’re there only because they were seeking shelter. However, the vessels didn’t look like fishing vessels.

The Chinese Embassy in Manila denied the alleged presence of Chinese maritime vessels in the WPS. In a statement, the embassy said that the area it called Niu’e Jiao is part of China’s Nansha Qundao, also known as Spratly Islands. Surmise it to say; since China claims it as its territory, China feels that it can enter the area freely without asking permission from anyone. China is using its old playbook again; that is, it claims sovereignty each time it intruded into an area.

It’s interesting to note that about the time the Chinese vessels entered Philippine territory, China donated one million doses of vaccines to the Philippines, which makes one wonder: Was the donation made to soften the Philippines’ resistance to the incursion? Hmm...

US support

As the standoff progresses, a US State Department spokesman issued a statement, saying: “The U.S. stands with our



Chinese vessels at the Julian Felipe Reef

ally, the Philippines, regarding concerns about the gathering of PRC militia vessels near Whitsun Reef. We call on Beijing to stop using its maritime militia to intimidate and provoke others, which undermines peace and security.”

But the Chinese Embassy in Manila reacted by criticizing the support of the US in the Philippines’ protest against the Chinese incursion. It said it could affect the “peace and stability” in the disputed territory.

The Philippine government then demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Chinese vessels. It noted that the lingering presence was a “blatant infringement of the Philippines’ sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction.” The Philippine military also ordered more navy ships to be deployed to the WPS. This led Philippine Senate President Tito Sotto to say that he is not worried about the presence of the Chinese militia vessels in the WPS because of Manila’s defense treaty with the US, its longtime ally. He said that the 70-year-old Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) should be invoked if hostilities escalate between the Philippines and China. He said that if China attacks the Philippines’ navy ships it’s a violation of the MDT, which says that if a Philippine government boat or any property is attacked, “the MDT takes effect right away.”

The lesson of Mischief Reef

In 1991, the Philippine Senate voted to reject the extension of the American bases agreement. The nationalists in the Senate were convinced then 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 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 are invaded.” Indeed, it’s a love-hate relationship that is nurtured to this day.

The following year, the US bases were closed when the termination took effect. Three years later, on February 8, 1995, Filipino fishermen observed a Chinese flag flying over the Mischief

Reef, which is only 135 miles from Palawan. Eight Chinese ships were also in the area and some were armed. And the Philippine Armed Forces couldn’t do anything to take it back.

As an afterthought to the Senate’s folly of booting out the Americans from Philippine soil, which left the Philippines at the mercy of a foreign country who’d use force to nibble at its territory, the U.S. and the Philippines signed a Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which would allow the stationing of American forces on Philippine soil. The Senate ratified it on May 27, 1999, which makes one wonder how the senators -- who voted to remove the U.S. bases in 1991 -- voted for the VFA eight years later? Once again the nationalists went up in arms claiming that VFA violates the Philippine constitution. But the VFA remained in force simply because the Philippine senators realized that they made a major blunder in terminating the bases agreement.

Makeshift structures

When the Chinese occupied Mischief Reef in February 1995, they built makeshift structures on stilts that they used as fishermen’s shelter. The Philippine government protested the incursion but the Chinese said that they’re using them to shelter all fishermen at night including Filipinos who might need it. In 1998, the makeshift structures were replaced with permanent buildings. Years later, a military garrison was built and troops were stationed there. Twenty years later, China built an artificial island on it and built a huge air and naval base. The Chinese call it their “Pearl Harbor” in the South China Sea. Justice Carpio said that he’s worried that “they will now start claiming, building on Juan Felipe Reef, just like what they did to Mischief Reef in 1995.”

The Chinese occupation of Mischief Reef serves as a lesson to President Duterte. Today, he is faced with a dilemma: What would he do if China refuses to withdraw its 200 vessels from the Julian Felipe Reef and starts building fishermen’s shelter just like it did 26 years ago on Mischief Reef?

It seems like it’s déjà vu all over again. (PerryDiaz@gmail.com)

FCSV Joins "Stop the Hate Rally"

From page 1

the back of a truck, to call for unity and actions to stop the hate targeting the Asians.

FCSV president Dick Mazon, Jinky Dolar, and Rosie Daus were among those who also spoke strongly their support for call for action. Roselie Crandall supplied the red, white and blue balloons, and she with Carol Munar took care of the group's refreshments, while Leila Pereira, FCSV secretary, Edna Delos Reyes, Vice-president came prepared with all sorts of colorful materials to decorate the vehicles. Carlos Cordero rallied the Kapitbahay group to join.

They even coordinated the color of their attire (white top) and red, white and blue masks. Dave and Dinnah San Pedro came prepared to take photos. Overall, the show of unity and camaraderie was a



Rosie Daus of PNDA satisfying experience for all! The spark of vigilance is on!!! Watch out Kababayans!!



Filipino community leaders Dick Mazon, Edna delos Reyes, Lilia Rivera, Leila Pereira, Carol Munar, Cleo Sabarre Ner and Dave and Dinnah San Pedro.

Rally at Elk Grove with FCSV family!



FCSV boards and members



With Councilwoman Stephanie Nguyen, Executive Director of Asian Resources Inc, (ARI)



Doing humanitarian work at ARI Resources for Good Friday. With Atty. Derek Ledda and FCSV board members, Cleo Sabarre Ner, Myrna Agbunag, Vicky Debord, Leila Pereira and Edna de los Reyes.



Asian Pacific Islanders and other organization at the Stop the Hate Rally.

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Rob Bonta nominated to be California attorney general

From page 1

The son of civil rights activists, Mr. Bonta, 48, was born in the Philippines and will be the first Filipino-American to hold the office. He grew up in California's Central Valley, where his parents helped organize farm workers before moving to the Sacramento area. Mr. Bonta, who called the appointment "an honor of a lifetime," is a graduate of Yale University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in history and his law degree.



The Bontas share a laugh in the spotlight at a Filipina Women's Network gala. Photo courtesy of Cynthia Bonta

A former San Francisco deputy city attorney, Mr. Bonta served briefly on the Alameda City Council before running for the State Assembly, where he has represented the East Bay since 2012. As a legislator, he carried bills to eliminate the use of cash bail — a measure that the state's voters overturned in November — and to phase out California's use of private prisons. He also was among numerous co-authors of an unsuccessful constitutional amendment to repeal the death penalty.

"Rob represents what makes California great — our desire to take on righteous fights and reverse systematic injustices," Mr. Newsom said in a statement. "Most importantly, at this moment when so many communities are under attack for who they are and who they love, Rob has fought to strengthen hate crime laws and protect our communities from the forces of hate."

Mr. Bonta will be the state's second Asian-American attorney general, after Vice President Kamala Harris, who is of Jamaican and Indian descent. Progressives and organized labor play a critical role in mobilizing Democratic voters in California, and no state's population except Hawaii's has a higher percentage of Asian-Americans, who make up about 16 percent.

The nomination is subject to confirmation by the state's Assembly and Senate within 90 days.

Mr. Becerra, who took office in the wake of Donald J. Trump's

2016 presidential election, filed more than 100 lawsuits against actions taken by the Trump administration on matters ranging from immigration to auto emissions standards. With Mr. Biden, a fellow Democrat, now in the White House, allies had encouraged the governor to name an attorney general who might complement, rather than fight, presidential priorities.

Mr. Bonta was endorsed by Democrats seeking to overhaul the state's criminal justice system, which in recent years has swung back from tough-on-crime policies. Mr. Bonta shares the governor's opposition to the death penalty and supported a new law that will require him as attorney general to investigate fatal police shootings of unarmed civilians.

The attorney general's office in California is viewed as a reliable springboard to higher office, and past occupants have included Ms. Harris and former Gov. Jerry Brown. Competition had intensified as it became clear that Mr. Becerra, a former congressman, might return to Washington.

The new state law giving the attorney general a pivotal role in police shootings also heightened interest in the appointment, as civil rights advocates pushed the governor to name someone who would aggressively investigate police misconduct, while law enforcement groups lobbied for a traditional law-and-order candidate.



FWC Pista sa Nayon, Rob Bonta as guest speaker for Outstanding Filipina Award.



Activist mom and middle child "Robbie" four decades earlier. Photo courtesy of Cynthia Bonta

Against that backdrop, the attorney general vacancy was less a political plum than an opportunity to disappoint factions. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had urged Mr. Newsom to appoint Representative Adam Schiff, who has long aspired to statewide office, and who, as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, managed Mr. Trump's first impeachment. Mr. Newsom also was urged by various groups to name an African-American, a woman, a member of the L.G.B.T.Q. community, another Latino or an Asian-American or Pacific Islander.

Supporters of other candidates noted that Mr. Newsom had already made history with several appointments: In November, he appointed Martin Jenkins, who is African-American and openly gay, to the California Supreme Court. In December, as Ms. Harris was about to be inaugurated, he named California's secretary of state, Alex Padilla, to serve the remainder of her term in the U.S. Senate, the first Latino in California history to hold that office.

Later the same day, he appointed Shirley Weber, who represented San Diego in the State Assembly, as California's first African-American secretary of state.

Mr. Bonta, who has never campaigned outside the Bay Area, will have to run statewide in two years for re-election, as will the governor's appointees for Senate and secretary of state and the governor himself, if he is not recalled in special election expected later this year.

State ethics watchdogs last year also questioned Mr. Bonta's use of a nonprofit to raise money for other nonprofits where his wife worked — an aggressive but legal maneuver that prompted an author of California's Political Reform Act to recommend a change in

the state law.

A group of lawmakers and local elected officials renewed their push for Mr. Newsom to appoint an Asian-American or Pacific Islander to the post following last week's shooting in Atlanta. They said that amid a rise in anti-Asian violence and harassment, the state's "top cop" should understand the nuances and concerns of diverse communities, many members of whom may not trust law enforcement officers.

California, they said, should be a model for addressing those concerns.

"We need leadership across our state and the nation to take action," David Chiu, a member of the Assembly, said in a virtual news conference. "We need to stand up against these hate crimes."



The American Legion Magellan Hall Post 604 Updates

BY DALE ESPERANTE

Greetings to all! It has been about a year since I've written for Philippine Fiesta's community service. How do we restart our connection with the community?

Because of COVID-19, things have changed and became more challenging. I began writing this on 4 April 2021, Easter Sunday, a day our plan failed to attend a live mass at St. Charles Borromeo Church. We signed up too late for the mass because there were no more seats available due to social distancing and legal limitations. We had to settle watching the livestream mass. Though we couldn't participate mass in the church this day, it's encouraging to learn that California churches just recently reopened their doors albeit to limited capacity. We also still long for the carefree days like traveling, community events, dancing, live meetings, health club, indoor dining, live sports, and socializing with our family and friends. We hope and pray for the continued gradual return of the normal; however, we also pray for our friends who succumbed to the challenges of the past year. They will be greatly missed.

1. Gilmore Perla, US Air Force Retired, WWII Bataan Death March Survivor, Post 604 Past Commander, 52 Years Member of The American Legion (AL), lived 99 Years, RIP 30 May 2020
2. Pastor Engkabo, US Army, Korean Veteran, Post 604 Past Commander, 39 Years Member of AL, lived 89 Years, RIP 13 Apr 2020
3. Alex Estioco, US Marine, Korean Veteran, Post 604 Past Commander, 32 Years Member of AL
4. Dionisio T. Tonel, US Army, WW II Veteran, 39 Years Member of AL
5. Joseph Ventura, US Navy, Vietnam Veteran, 7 Years Member of AL
6. Salvador Rose, US Navy, Vietnam Veteran, 12 Years Member of AL
7. Federico Calindas, US Army, Vietnam War Veteran, 18 Years Member of AL, lived 82 Years, RIP 27 Dec 2020
8. Carmelita Calindas, Wife of Federico Calindas, Member of The American Legion Auxiliary Magellan Unit 604, RIP 7 Dec 2020

On 3 April, the 2nd Vice Commander of The Post was kind

enough to share his privilege in serving the veteran community of Magellan Post 604. Vice Commander Al Garcia's personal connection with Magellan Post 604 dates back to 1965 when he started practicing Tang Soo Do Karate under Grand Master Mariano Estioko. He became an official member of Post 604 just prior to COVID-19. Post Commander Tom Amaba granted Comrade Al the privilege to rent the hall allowing him to teach Tai Chi to a group of seniors. The following information about Magellan Post came directly from Vice Commander Al:

- *The Magellan Post has served the community for 70 years.
- *Originally built by the Filipino Farmers and Laborers Association in 1949.
- *It was deeded over to the Filipino Veterans Magellan Post 604 in 1959.
- *It has served as a community center and assembly hall.
- *The venues have included wedding ceremonies, veteran and community events.
- *Veterans Memorial Services
- *Martial Arts Classes

In addition, Comrade Al said that because of COVID-19 restrictions, our revenue at the post has been decimated and our budget nearly depleted. Housing Magellan Post is a 70 year old sturdy building. The roof on the building is in need of repair. Renovating the building will be costly. Upcoming events are:

- *April 13th memorial for Comrade Pastor Engkabo
- *Intersection Community Church signed a contract for 5 years to start leasing the Hall effective April 7th. They will have Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services.
- *Tai Chi Practices are every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 9am. Cost per student is \$65 a month.
- *The Stockton Multistyle Escrima holds practices on Monday evening from 6:30 – 8pm. They are a non-profit and classes are free. Donations are accepted.
- *The facility is also used by the Women's Auxiliary Group. Meetings correspond with the Post 604 meeting times.
- *The facility is also used by Filipino American Veterans Association (FAVA). Prior to COVID, their meetings were held on the first Friday of the Month at 6:30pm. Live meetings are planned starting next month.

We also talked about fundrais-



The Magellan Hall with members and volunteers

Photos by Dale Esperante



Veterans and the Sac State's Kappa Psi Epsilon.



Filipino Beteranos



Multistyle Escrima classes



Veterans on Consulate on Wheels

ing. We are in the hopes of kicking off a fundraiser to raise 30K for roof repair and other needed maintenance costs. The proposal is as follows: 300 tickets sold for \$100 each will raise \$30,000.00. 1st Prize \$3000, 2nd Prize \$1500, and 3rd Prize \$500.

"Membership is critical to the Post's viability. The Magellan Hall has a rich cultural history and has for the past



American Legion officers and new members

70 years been a focal point for the Filipino community. The av-

erage age of the members is now in the 60s and 70s." Without the infusion of younger members, Magellan Hall may slowly fade into the sunset, perhaps never to rise again. Filipino and American veterans are invited to join in our struggle in preventing Magellan Hall fading slowly away.

If anyone is interested to join and/or assist, please contact me via this media.

Pastor S. Engkabo Jr.

September 11, 1930 – April 13, 2020

BY DALE ESPERANTE

On 13 April, a Celebration of The Life of Legionnaire Pastor Engkabo Jr. was held in the hallowed hall of Magellan Post. Commander Tom Amaba assigned me as the Chaplain of the Day. Legionnaire Area Leader and Magellan Post Board Member, Will Williams, delivered the opening and welcoming remarks, introducing the Post officers and distinguished guests. The national anthem was provided by the music director, Paul Cordero, also a post member.

As chaplain, I delivered the invocation:

Dear Lord, please Bless all those who are gathered here for this Celebration of The Life of Pastor Engkabo Jr. May your Holy Spirit guide this ceremony in honoring a man loved by his family, respected by his friends, and admired by all. Remind us Dear God that as we stand here in the hallowed Hall of Magellan, so did our Comrade Pat. Thank you Almighty Creator for those times shared by our late comrade Pat, a beloved family member, a friend, and a man respected by all in this Sacramento home of Filipino-American veterans. We pray in the Name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. Amen.

Since the deceased was a friend who I truly admired and respected, my voice started choking with emotions near the end of the prayer.

Commander Amaba then led the Pledge of Allegiance. Afterwards, the nephew of Pastor Engkabo Jr, Jay Paular, assumed his duties as Master of Ceremonies, introducing the family and friends who shared their stories, followed by a family video.

For the American Legion Memorial Ceremony, the commander began with these words, Another Legionnaire has been called to the High Command, and has gone to report to the Commander of us all. I followed the commander by rendering the Legionnaire's prayers: Let us pray. Eternal God, Supreme Commander of us all, Lord of the far-flung battle line, to whom the ranks of life report, we bow before You with reverent hearts and in sublime faith, knowing



Photos by Dale Esperante



You lead us on in death as you have in life.... (this was just the opening line of the solemn Legionnaire prayer). Again my voice sounded touched by emotions because I knew Comrade Pastor. This was the first time I felt personally touched out of the many times I've prayed publicly in the past.

After the commander delivered his closing remarks, he directed the honor guards to post for the ceremonial unfolding and refolding of the American flag. Legionnaire Area Leader, Will Williams, explained the significance of the flag-folding ritual to the civilian attendees. The Legionnaire Honor Guard Team consisting of Fred Amper, Ray Ado, and Walter Nolasco professionally executed their duties. Commander Amaba honored me the privilege to receive and present the flag after it's been refolded to achieve its precise triangular-shape. Upon receipt of the flag from Legionnaire Walter Nolasco, I executed the following: ceremoniously rotated the flag horizontally between the palms of my hands until the apex of the triangle was in the forward position, raised it formally then respectfully clasped it upon my chest with the apex

in the upward position, walked reverently forward then stopping a step away from Pastor Engkabo the 3rd, the seated son of Legionnaire Pastor Engkabo Jr. There, I solemnly proclaimed: On behalf of a grateful nation, this flag is presented in memory of the good and faithful service performed by our late comrade, your dad, Pastor Engkabo Jr. Everyone, including myself, was moved by the transfer of the flag to the son.

The official program ended, MC Jay Paular invited the family and guests to stay for the reception.

A few days later, Sherina Paulsen, one of the daughters of our late comrade, Pastor Engkabo Jr., sent this message: Thank you Post 604, the Family of Pastor Engkabo (Pat) will forever be grateful for this tribute and love shown through this heartbreaking time. We are honored to know that our Dad touched so many lives—that his love extended beyond his family. I pray peace and joy be with you always. With love and gratitude, the Engkabo Family. Magellan Hall responded to Sherina: Thank you for the privilege of honoring our comrade, your dad. We miss him greatly.



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Who Is Melanie Perkins, the Canva Billionaire Who Plans to Donate Her Wealth Away?

At 34, she's already one of the wealthiest women in the world.

BY ANRI ICHIMURA

Just a few years ago, Canva co-founder and CEO Melanie Perkins was named the youngest billionaire in Australia. Now, she's one of the richest. Canva's valuation is now a whopping \$15 billion, and since it's still a privately held company, it's made billionaires out of majority shareholders and co-founders Melanie Perkins, COO Cliff Obrecht, and chief product officer Cameron Adams.



Melanie Perkins

The 34-year-old founder has been getting attention for a while, not only as the face of Canva but also as the inspiring female business leader at the helm of the one of the few profitable unicorns. Of course, there's also that fun little fact that she's part Filipino through her paternal grandmother. Born in Australia to an Australian mother and Malaysian father (who's also of Sri Lankan descent), it's no wonder her company has gone international, with one of its lead offices based right here in Metro Manila.

A leading figure in startups, here's everything you need to know about Melanie Perkins, billionaire and businesswoman.

1| She's married to her Canva co-founder, Cliff Obrecht. Co-founders Perkins and Obrecht tied the knot in January 2021 on Rottneest Island in Australia. The two have been together since their youth, with Obrecht supporting Perkins from her very first business, Fusion Books, a yearbook publisher.

2| Perkins and Obrecht have a shared net worth of \$6.18 billion. Following their marriage and Canva's latest funding round, the two have a shared net worth of \$6.18 billion. Despite going through 13 rounds of funding for Canva, the founders have managed to keep a controlling stake in the company, which is still privately held. The two are now considered among the top 10 richest individuals in Australia, on the same level as Australia's mining, mall, and media tycoons. The couple is already richer than every billionaire in the Philippines save for Manny Villar (\$7 billion).

3| Despite their massive wealth, the couple plans to donate all of

it away

Obrecht proposed to Perkins with a \$30 ring in Turkey, so it's clear money and prestige mean little to these billionaires. In fact, they're already planning to set up a foundation to facilitate all of their donations and contributions. The two plan to donate most of their wealth away to causes like climate change and global wealth inequality.

As explained by Obrecht, "It's not our vibe to hoard money."

4| Their staff also have a share of Canva's massive valuation. Not only are they sharing their wealth with charities, they're also ensuring their employees get a slice of the pie as Canva's valuation continues to increase. Employees at Canva have a stock option that allows them to participate in a share plan that comprises about five percent of Canva's total equity. With Canva's valuation currently at \$15 billion, that puts five percent at around \$750 million. Talk about employee perks.

5| Canva is Perkins' second startup. Perkins' first startup is actually Fusion Books, a yearbook published which is still around today. In fact, it's now one of the largest yearbook publishers in Australia. Perkins started this startup with Obrecht when they were only 19 and made their company headquarters from her mother's living room in Australia.

6| She dropped out of college to pursue her passion. But in order to pursue her first startup, Melanie decided to drop out of college to dedicate all of her time to Fusion Books. She was previously enrolled in the University of Western Australia studying communications, psychology, and commerce.

7| She built her first business at

14

While Fusion Books was her first (registered) startup, Perkins was already practicing her hand at entrepreneurship before high school. When she was only 14, she started a small business selling handmade scarves at markets in Perth. No doubt, that creativity would come in handy in the years to come.

8| She was rejected by 100 venture capitalists.

The road to success isn't easy, as every startup founder knows. One investment is often preceded by at least 10 rejections, but in Perkins' case, it was 100 rejections. In Canva's early days, Perkins decided to stay with her brother in San Francisco for a while to tap the pool of venture capitalists in the area. She was rejected by 100 investors, who we're sure are regretting that decision now.

9| Her first investors were Hollywood celebrities. After failing to impress the Bay Area's venture capitalists, Perkins tried her hand with another group of people, namely Hollywood celebrities. Some of her first investors were Woody Harrelson and Owen Wilson, whom she met at a kite-surfing retreat of all places.

10| She learned kite-surfing just to impress a possible investor. In a bid to get the attention of an investor the couple was eyeing, Perkins learned how to kite-surf to impress Silicon Valley venture capitalist Bill Tai, an avid kite-surfer. Perhaps impressed by their tenacity, Tai invited the two to his kite-surfing gatherings with tech leaders. One thing led to another, and the two met something better than an investor: future Canva co-founder and ex-Google employee Cameron Adams. The three then went on to make history.

San Jose, California names park in honor of Filipino farmworkers



BY JALEEN RAMOS

A new park in San Jose, California will be named "Delano Manongs" to honor the Filipino American community in the city.

Delano Manongs Park will be the first park in San Jose to honor Filipino-Americans after the city council unanimously approved the naming during a meeting on Tuesday, April 13, according to CBS News.

"Our Filipino population in the city of San Jose has contributed greatly not only to the city, but to the country," said Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco, who represents the district where the park is located. "To be able to recognize our Filipino ancestors in such a way is a great honor."

The name honors thousands of Filipino farmworkers who organized and participated in the 1965 Delano Grape Strike in California's Central Valley.

Over 1,000 Filipino workers in the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee worked alongside activists Cesar Chavez to organize the strike protesting the poor working conditions and low wages.

"The recognition of the Filipino farm workers and especially those who stood for equality, justice, and human rights in Delano of 1965 is overdue," said Ben Menor, a

representative of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)s, in a KRON 4 report.

In the Philippines, "manong" is a term of respect for Filipino elders and "elder brother" in the Ilocano language.

Some Filipino community leaders were also present in solidarity in condemning the recent hate crimes against the Asian Americans community.

"While the Delano Manongs Park in San Jose honors the history of Fil-Ams, this history moment comes at a time when we see ourselves fronted with increases of hate and violence targeting AAPI communities, even within our own backyard," Alex Chu of LEAD Filipino told KRON 4.

"This gesture shows that the community of San Jose's commitment to standing against hate together, not once, but twice, with 72% of the votes, the Manongs Delano Park was voted the number one name."

Carrasco, meanwhile, said the name for the park was also ideal as it is located in a ZIP code with one of the highest populations of Filipinos in San Jose.

Based on the census data, Filipinos make up 5.6 percent of San Jose's population and over 13 percent of the residents in the park's ZIP code.

Heart Evangelista's parents break down: 'Escudero is an opportunist'

BY MARINEL R. CRUZ

Cecile Ongpauco, mother of actress Heart Evangelista, is demanding an apology from Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero for being supposedly disrespectful and arrogant and for "manipulating" her daughter into "going against the family."

Evangelista was a "victim," she said, and appealed to Escudero again to "leave my daughter alone."

In a phone interview with the Inquirer Wednesday afternoon, Ongpauco said Evangelista, the youngest of her six children, had moved out of her (the actress') condominium unit in Makati City. The Ongpaucos have their own unit in the same building.

"We don't know where she is," the actress' mother said, adding that before the misunderstanding, she had a "beautiful relationship" with her daughter.

"We were together almost every day. She would cook breakfast for me and her dad (Rey Ongpauco). We were OK," she said. Mother and daughter were last seen together when the actress renewed her talent contract with GMA 7 early this month.

Evangelista playfully refers to Ongpauco as her "mommyger," or short for mommy and manager. During the contract signing, Ongpauco told the media: "Heart is 28 (years old now) and very capable of making her own decisions ... She's a woman now; I've had to adjust [to this]."

Still 'innocent'

But on Wednesday, Ongpauco was saying something to the contrary, expressing grave concern for her daughter, whom she said was "still young and innocent, overprotected as a child."

Evangelista "does not have a mature mind and still thinks like a young girl," the mother said. "She is easily swayed by people who prey on her insecurities and lack of confidence."

Ongpauco added: "My husband decided to come forward and discuss the issue because he can no longer take it. This is the first time he's speaking publicly in all the years that Heart has been in show business."

The Inquirer tried to get a reaction from Escudero on Wednesday but his staff said the senator was "not issuing any statement anymore" other than what he said on Tuesday.

'Mortified'

In a statement she sent to the Inquirer, Ongpauco said the family was "mortified" about the way Evangelista defended Escudero in her own statement on Tuesday. "We have the right to defend ourselves against unfair accusations made by Heart, under the dictation of Chiz, who clearly wrote (what Heart signed)."

Ongpauco cited her family's reasons for finding Escudero's relationship with Evangelista "unacceptable." Top of the list was Escudero's inability to give Evangelista a church wedding. The senator's first marriage—to singer Christine Flores—was annulled by the court last year. Ongpauco pointed out, however, that Escudero could not yet remarry in church.



Sen. Chiz Escudero and his girlfriend Heart Evangelista are caught in this photo apparently having no cares in the world except for their love for each other, Evangelista's mother, Cecile Ongpauco, claimed the senator was "manipulating" her daughter to go against her family.

Personality problem

She also accused the senator of having a personality problem: "He projects himself as a wholesome candidate, but we know better." She challenged Escudero to "stop hiding behind Heart's skirt and using her to shield yourself from very serious questions about your character (sic)."

In the statement, she raised the issue of Escudero being an "alcoholic," recounting the first time that she and her husband met the senator:

"Heart called her dad very late at night, saying this man wanted to meet us. Rey relented. When Mr. Escudero arrived, he was reeking (of) alcohol. I was shocked to see him slouched on the sofa, his legs spread out. Heart's dad is very conservative. He doesn't even drink. Mr. Escudero asked him what he did for a living, as if it was a job interview."

Her husband asked to be excused, Ongpauco said.

The second time, according to the statement, Escudero was drunk again. "He

was carrying a bottle of red wine" and like the first time, "he hardly spoke a respectful word."

First lady in 2016?

The statement continued: "To this day he hasn't formally asked for our daughter's hand, or discussed how he will support her and his (former) wife at the same time."

Ongpauco said Escudero had "seduced" Evangelista into thinking he would become the President by 2016.

"And then she [would] be 'first lady.' Furthermore, he once boasted to Heart that he ran a lucrative law office, and that a multinational [company] was poised to pay the law firm over P200 million a year for [services]."

She said Escudero also claimed he had the financial backing of "a businessman listed among the 10 billionaires of the Philippines, but who is under investigation by the Senate." Evangelista believed all this, Ongpauco said in the statement.

Using her Benz

Clearly, Ongpauco pointed out, Escudero was an "opportunist." He had "virtually moved into [Evangelista's] condo unit," the angry mom said, "using her Mercedes Benz at will."

She admitted, however: "Heart encourages this behavior from Chiz, as she did with her prior boyfriends." Then she revealed that her daughter had been diagnosed as a "needy personality," but refused psychiatric treatment.

Ongpauco said Escudero had previously "urged" Evangelista to fire her as her talent manager.

Jekyll and Hyde

"All these acts indicate that his public persona is far from his real character," she said. "My husband and I are in the process of gathering evidence to prove that he is a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality, as suggested by a print columnist."

Ongpauco said the family was considering filing a libel case against the senator "for claiming that he [was] caught in the middle of a family feud, when [he] is the very source of our family feud. We might also file an additional criminal complaint for incriminating an innocent person."

The family was likewise poised to file "a civil complaint for damages under the Civil Code (against Escudero) for meddling with, or disturbing the private life of another."

Chiz says...

In a text message to the Inquirer on Tuesday, the senator said in Filipino: "It is enough to say at this time, that, even though I am slightly involved, as much as possible, I don't want to meddle in the misunderstandings between parents and their daughter ... I am not part of show biz. I don't combine work with my personal life and I don't allow anything personal to affect my job."

Evangelista has backed Escudero, saying, "Chiz and his family have shown me nothing but goodness and affection. There is no reason for them to get dragged into this." The actress said this was not the first time her parents had publicly opposed her relationships.

She said she "gave in" to their wish for her to leave actor Jericho Rosales because "I wanted them to be happy ... but now I believe I already have the right to decide how to live my life, who to love and to be with."

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT EVERYTHING IS IN CHAOS. THE EARTH OPENS...

BY MEREMEL ASIS HECHONA

So suddenly the world is quiet. Rarely you see people, the sound of rushing vehicles, the hurried steps, the clashing, the shouting, the destructions, the so familiar noise created by mankind day and night, nowhere to be heard. The earth turned eerie, cold, deafening..

Instead you hear the sound of silence. The ticking of the clock, The birds singing, the gentle swaying of leaves creating a beautiful magnitude of peace, contentment, satisfaction..

So suddenly families gather in one place. The house is full. Gone are the days that you barely see one member of the family brought about by work conflicts, lifes activities, outside influences..

Now families talk. Family that you sometimes ignored, neglected caused by too many distractions is back. With all the time in your hands you learned

how to listen. Intently. Their concern, their aspiration, what made them smile. You discover the opportunities to nurture and flourish. You see that one can create things unknown to you, surprisingly beautiful that you allow it, heartwarming, bringing lights, smile and happiness throughout. Seeing your childs delightful response that you are now with them constantly, that you have time, so suddenly you realize that you can be a parent and you're good at it which brings warm pride and encouragement..

The world has reach its standstill. Steady, slow, calculated. You dont have to rush anymore. You move as you please. Everything comes as spontaneous without having to worry that you have to finish things in time, not concerned either what difficulty tomorrow may bring. You learned how to slow down. You walk at your own pace, not forced, never wanting to hurry. You learned how to appreciate the things around you. How the flowers looked beautiful in your backyard, how the cascading water will surprisingly give

you a sound so peaceful it relieves..

You discover how your child sleeps, how you have the time to hear his breathing, how he sometimes smile and made a silly talk while he sleeps. You see the warm glow in your spouse eyes, devoted, love overflowing, all realizing that you dont have to pattern his schedule to yours to fit everyday struggle. You are one now. Everyday. Together..

How nature now take its course. Painful, terrifying, sickening, teaching mankind a lesson to value life and ones sacrifices, to observe discipline and to love one another with utmost respect.

However bad the situation maybe, a surprisingly good comes out of it. It heals the wounds. It repairs conflicts, it corrects mistakes and misunderstandings. It brings back moments of reality, togetherness where love, peace, devotion reigns. FAMILY..

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