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 NOVEMBER 26, 2023

**P2 Samahang Magkakaisa**

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**PHILIPPINE Fiesta**

A Division of Five D's Arts, LLC

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**P16 We Celebrate with You**

## Tug of War Game Between Philippines and China could be costly and dangerous

BY BENJAMIN ABAYA



Philippines Vs. China

The Tug of War between the Philippines and China for possession of tiny islands and fishing space which is obviously part of the West Philippine Sea could become a real shooting war between the two countries, if it will not be properly handled diplomatically. The sea space under question is in the 200 nautical miles economic zone of the sovereign territory of the Philippines as adjudicated by the United Nations International Tribunal for the law of the Sea. As such, it has jurisdiction over living and

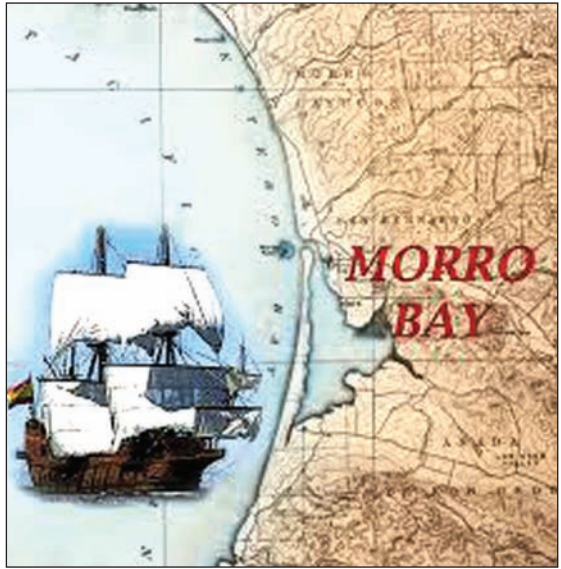
nonliving resources within such sea space. On Several occasions, the powerful China Coast Guard ships shot cannon waters against much smaller Philippine Coast Guard ships on their way to supply much needed food and other necessities for the civilian residents and military personnels assigned at the tiny islands in Scarborough Shoal. It is also the place where the Sierra Madre shipwreck is permanently aground.

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## Filipino-(Native) American History Month (Part 1)

BY DR. ROBYN MAGALIT RODRIGUEZ

The theme for Filipino American History Month, as declared by the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS), whose advocacy efforts gave rise to the marking of October as Filipino American History Month for many Filipinos in the United States is, "1898: Recognizing 125 Years of Philippine-American History." As the FANHS website elaborates:



1587—During the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade era, the Manila Galleon landed in Morro Bay, California. The landing party included Luzon Indios, indigenous Filipinos, who worked as sailors on board.

The year 2023 marks the 125th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Paris – an agreement between Spain and the

United States that ended the Spanish American War and led to the U.S. annexation of the Philippines. With the signing of the treaty, Cuba was also granted independence from Spain, while Puerto Rico and Guam were ceded to the US. Notably, the Philippines was purchased for \$20 million.

This month's article is the first part of a two parts where I reflect specifically on how the colonization of the Philippines by the United States was deeply connected to the displacement, dis-

Continued on page 2

## FWC Pista sa Nasyon 2023

The Filipino Women's Club (FWC) presented their Reyna Ng Pista Sa Nasyon 2023 to Julie Vergara on the evening of September 16, 2023 at the Rizal Community Center Sacramento, CA.

Julie's involvement in the community began in the early 2000's when she joined the Lions Club International under the Golden State Lions Club. She is also a member of various community organization and enjoyed performing at community events through her passion of dancing.

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The Filipino Women's Club, as one of the most active Filipino American community organization in Sacramento which is currently led by President Leila Pereira.

Photo by Dale Esperante





BY DR. ROBYN MAGALIT RODRIGUEZ

From page 1

October was specifically set aside for Filipino American History Month for two reasons. The first, is that October 25th is the birthday of Filipino American labor leader, Larry Itliong. Manong Larry's leadership has often been overlooked by most mainstream historical accounts in favor of Cesar Chavez or Dolores Huerta, his two Chicano colleagues and collaborators in the founding of the United Farm Workers (UFW) in the late 1960s, the organization that successfully fought for some of most significant gains in farmworkers' rights to date. Advocates like FANHS and scholars like late Filipino American historian, Dr. Dawn Mabalon, have been able to preserve and promote Larry's legacy. Were it not for the efforts of FANHS, Dr. Mabalon and others, Itliong's contributions might still be unknown to or forgotten by most people. A second reason that October is Filipino American History Month is because on October 18, 1587, Filipinos were among the landing party of a galleon ship at Morro Bay. For many Filipino Americans, the Morro Bay landing is significant in part, because Filipinos presence in America is, as Filipino American writer and commentator, Emil Guillermo writes in a 2017 piece, "some 33 years before the Pilgrims landed." He continues, "Filipinos may not have had the power, but first is first." Here is where I invite us to take a different approach to thinking about

Morro Bay – whether it was the Filipinos or the Pilgrims—neither was ever “first.” The land we now call America had long been tended—for tens of thousands of years—by different groups of indigenous people. In fact, Native Americans, have been stewards of the land that comprises the United States for many more generations than anyone who claim lineage to the Mayflower Pilgrims or even those who might claim lineage to the Morro Bay Filipinos for that matter. One of the issues that comes with claiming “first is first,” is that we end up participating in minimizing the existence of thriving Native American communities. In our desire to gain historical visibility because we have been forgotten, as Larry Itliong's story makes painfully clear, we need not enact a form of forgetting on another minoritized group.

It's interesting to read an account of Morro Bay from a different perspective. Lately, I've been trying to be better about being in solidarity with Native American people. I've decided to live more closely with and off the land. My family now lives in a rural community north of Sacramento and we've decided not only to learn how to farm so we can feed ourselves, but we are also trying to support the regeneration of the land to reverse the ravages of industrial agriculture. Though I have tried to be in solidarity with Native American people by centering their history through land

# Filipino-(Native) American History Month (Part 1)



The Plaque Dedicated to the Morro Bay Expedition

spect to Filipinos' landing in Morro Bay, it is perhaps the first connection between Filipinos and Native Americans; a first connection between people colonized by the Spanish and people soon-to-be colonized by the Spanish. Later, we would connect with Native Americans through a different set of colonizers—the Americans. After Spain claimed California for Mexico, the Americans would later claim California for itself. It became a state in 1850. California statehood marked the fulfillment of “Manifest Destiny,” the notion that it was white Americans' God-given fate to settle the entirety of the continent. Not long after reaching California, the United States would set its sights on manifesting its “destiny” across the Pacific with the colonization of the Philippines in 1898.

For American colonizers, there was no real distinction between Filipinos and Native Americans. As documented by Filipino American authors, Abe Ignacio, Enrique De La Cruz, Jorge Emmanuel, and Helen Toribio in *The Forbidden Book: The Philippine-American War in Political Cartoons* (T-Boli Publishing, 2004), representations of Filipinos and Native Americans were nearly identical. Other Filipino scholars of the Philippine American war, like Luzviminda Francisco, document the fact that the “heroes” of the Indian Wars would ultimately take leadership in the Philippine-American war including General Arthur MacArthur Jr. (the father of Douglas MacArthur). Later, the colonial education system set up by the Americans in the Philippines, would draw some of its logics from the schooling of Native Americans, the purpose of which was to sever their connections to ancestral forms of knowledge and thus their very sense of self. (End Part 1)

If there is a significant “first” with re-



## Editor's Note

It has been an exciting beginning week of October. A good way to start celebrating the Filipino-American History Month.

Congratulations to the very first Bayanihan Festival and its organizers for what looked like a very successful event held last week in Elk Grove. This week lined up are the 3rd Magkaisa Event on Oct. 13 and the FCSV's FIL-Am History Event on Oct. 14. Philippine Fiesta will be participating at both events, so come and join us.

It's going to be a memorable month for us Filipino-Americans, just the way it should be, as we make history with our continued and progressive presence in our community.

The ongoing conflict and war in Israel with the Hamas is heartbreaking. So many lives have been lost. Let's pray for peace around the world, for those who are suffering from griefs, hardships, and all kinds of trials.

Happy Filipino-American History Month!

With love always,  
Dinnah S. San Pedro

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**NOVEMBER 26, 2023**


VOTE

**SAMAHANG MAGKAKAISA**



# Philippines, US begin annual drills in disputed South China Sea

Agence France-Presse

MANILA, Philippines (Updated 4:22 p.m.) — The Philippines and the United States launched annual joint naval war games on Monday, days after the latest diplomatic row between Manila and Beijing over the disputed South China Sea.

More than a thousand sailors from the two allies are taking part in the annual “Samasama” (Tagalog for Together) anti-submarine, surface and electronic warfare drills off Manila and the south of Luzon, the main island of the Philippines.

China’s assertiveness in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost in its entirety despite a 2016 international ruling that it has no legal basis, has become a growing concern for Washington and its regional allies.

US Seventh Fleet chief Vice Admiral Karl Thomas told sailors at an opening ceremony in Manila that the rights of all nations to ensure national sovereignty were “under attack every day on the high seas”.



Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Dewey (L) preparing for a replenishment-at-sea with the Henry J. Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oiler USNS Pecos (R) in the South China Sea. The US warship USS Dewey sailed near a reef claimed by Beijing in the South China Sea, a US official said, the first such operation by US President Donald Trump’s administration in the disputed waterway. The Chinese government charged later on May 25 that the US warship had entered its waters in the South China Sea “without permission”, prompting China’s navy to warn the vessel to leave.

The “rules-based international order” that guaranteed regional peace for decades has been “ripped at and tagged at and tested to benefit not all nations but one nation,” he said, without mentioning China specifically.

“There’s no better way to ensure sovereignty and security than to sail and to operate together,” Thomas said.

Asked at a news conference to

whom he was referring, Thomas said it was important to maintain the right to sail through the area “free from worries about being attacked” or “intimidated”.

Beijing has deployed patrol boats in recent weeks that Manila says harass Philippine coast guard vessels and Filipino fishermen in what it refers to as the West Philippine Sea.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos ordered a special operation last month in which coast guard personnel cut a rope tethering a floating barrier at the Chinese-controlled Scarborough Shoal.

Manila said the barrier had prevented Filipino fishermen from entering the fish-rich ring of reefs, which China seized in

2012.

Beijing responded by warning Manila “not to provoke or stir up trouble” and restated its sovereignty and maritime rights to what it calls Huangyan island.

Philippine Navy chief Vice Admiral Toribio Adaci said the Samasama exercise “equips us to face an array of threats together”.

US Navy officials said the guided missile destroyer USS Dewey would take part in the exercises over the next 12 days, along with a dry cargo ammunition ship and P-8 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft.

A Philippine Navy guided missile frigate would also participate, along with a Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force destroyer and the Royal Canadian Navy frigate HMCS Vancouver.

Britain, Japan, Canada, France, and Australia are also sending personnel to tabletop exercises as part of the drills, while New Zealand and Indonesia are sending observers.

# Two Filipinos killed in Israel-Hamas conflict

BY GAEA KATREENA CABICO

MANILA, Philippines Two Filipinos were killed amid the fierce fighting between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas, the Department of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday.

“The Philippines condemns the killing of two Filipino nationals and all other acts of terrorism and violence as a result of Hamas actions against Israel,” Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said on X. No further details were provided.

Israeli Ambassador to the Philippines Ilan Fluss also confirmed the death of two Filipinos and added that four individuals remain unaccounted for.

“I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families, but also to express our gratitude to those Filipinos and generally speaking to overseas Filipino workers in Israel who are staying there with other families, elderly people,” Fluss said in an in-



Smoke billows and debris flies in the air as the night falls on Gaza City during Israeli airstrikes on Oct. 9, 2023.

terview with ABS-CBN News Channel.

Philippine Ambassador to Israel Junie Laylo said in an interview with CNN Philippines Tuesday that authorities received a report about a Filipino caregiver who might have died after Hamas launched a surprise attack. They were verifying the report at the time.

“The Philippines is ready to work with other countries towards a long-lasting resolution to the conflict, in accordance with pertinent United Nations Security Council resolutions and the general principles of international law,” Manalo said.

The country’s top diplomat also assured that the government will continue to provide assis-

tance to distressed Filipinos in Israel and Palestine.

Around 30,000 Filipinos reside in Israel, with most living outside the conflict area in the southern region near the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, about 150 Filipinos are in Gaza.

Filipino workers in Israel and their families can contact the DMW’s hotline +63 2 1348 or the following What-

sApp and Viber numbers: +63 9083268344, +63 9271478186 or +63 9205171059 for emergencies.

The Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv is available at +972-54-4661188 or +972-50-911-4017 for further assistance.

The death toll in Israel has surpassed 900 from the worst attack in the country’s 75-year history. Gaza officials reported 900 people killed so far, and Israel’s army said the bodies of roughly 1,500 militants had been found. — with report from Agence France-Presse



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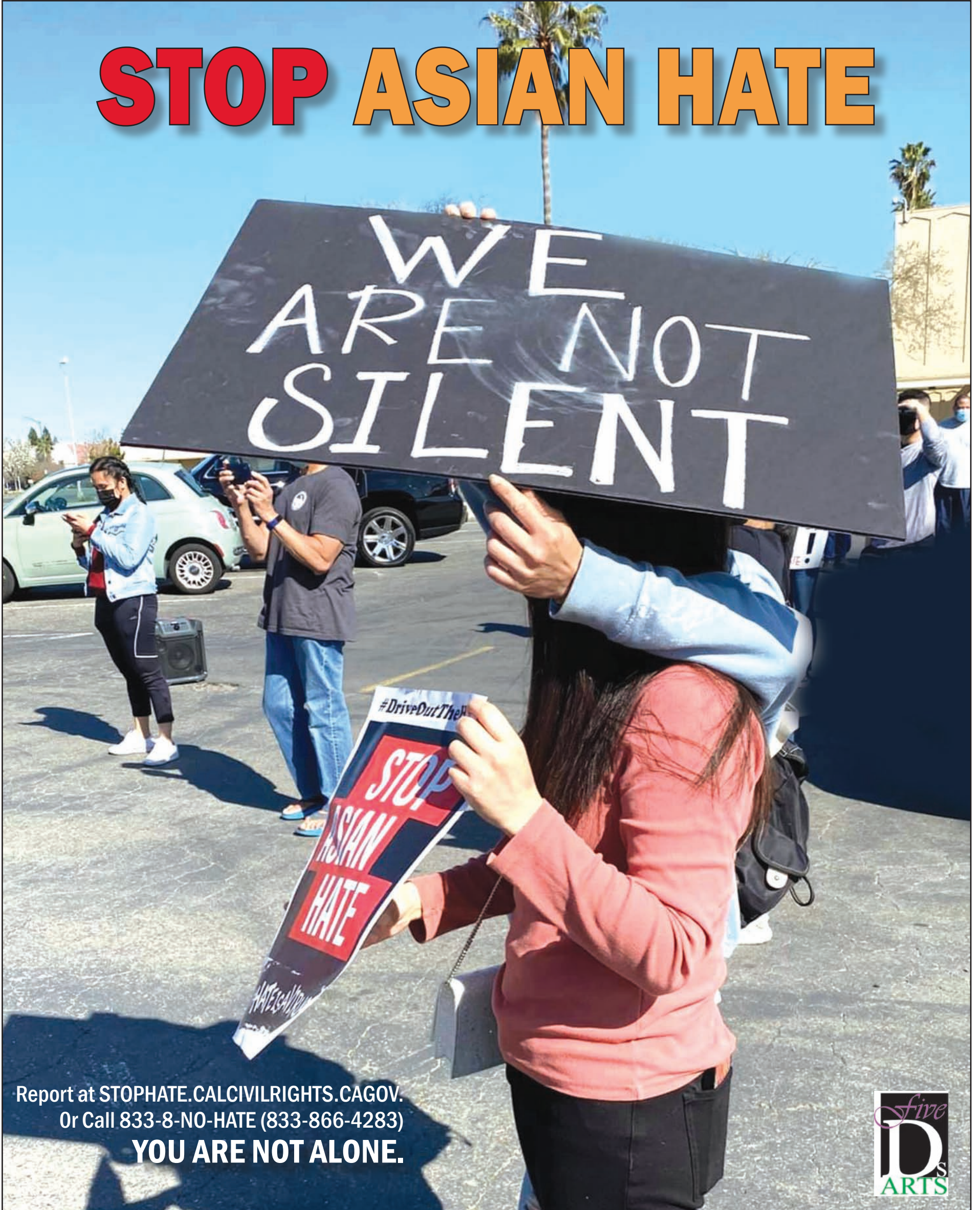
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BY BENJAMIN ABAYA

# Tug of War Game

## Between Philippines and China Could be Costly and Dangerous



A Philippine supply boat, center, maneuvers around Chinese coast guard ships as they tried to block its way near Second Thomas Shoal, locally known as Ayungin Shoal, at the disputed South China Sea.

It has been observed that several Chinese fishing boats have been wantonly within the economic zone of the territorial waters of the Philippines harvesting its rich Coral reefs at the West Philippine Sea that resulted in empty places where school of fishes are supposed to spawn. Coral reefs are also called the rainforest in our seabed, they are important as they provide food, medicine and jobs for millions of people. Likewise, they also prevent erosions on the seabed during storms and turbulent high tides.

At Bajo de Masinloc shoal near the province of Zambales within the economic zone of the Philippines, China placed floating barriers around the shoal to discourage entry of Filipino fishermen within the area. These long barriers posed danger for the fishermen whose fishing boats and equipment could be entangled against the barriers. Just lately, despite the sterned warning from China, the Marcos administration ordered its removal to let Filipino fishermen continue without impeding their usual fishing activities.

While the situation is only likened to a game of Tug of War for the moment, however, there is a great possibility that this condition will be altered that could trigger a real shooting conflict between the two countries. In such a situation, other powerful nations allied with the Philippines will surely involve themselves, especially, the United States which has a defense agreement with the Philippines.

Undoubtedly, if the situation escalates into a real shooting war between the two countries, other nations will be dragged not as spectators but will surely align themselves with one or the other depending on the economic and ideological impact of the conflict for their national interest. The United States will not be intimidated with the bullying tactics of China, but it will be the other way around. China is aware of the strong

ties politically and economically between the United States and the Philippines.

The presence of the United States Navy and other allies such as Australia, Japan and South Korea in a joint maritime exercise with the Philippines will make China think deeply of its intention in the West Philippine Sea. Besides, if China prefers war against more powerful allies, its economic progress as the second richest country in the world after the United States will be at stake. Certainly, war will be economically and politically risky on the part of China because it will be costly and have no positive result.

The United States acquired the Philippines as colony by virtue of the Treaty of Paris in 1898, immediately after the defeat of Spain in the war against the United States, the former was also indemnified in the amount of 20 million dollars for useful works and buildings erected during the time of Spain rule. It did not take long for the Filipinos to rebel against their new colonizers as pockets of resistance ensued from as far as Mindanao to Cagayan valley against the American occupation. Military rule was immediately proclaimed, and the American and Filipino war began which ended only after three years that resulted in the death of combatants on both sides and the defeat of the Filipinos, thereby making the Philippines as a colony of the United States.

Even during the colonization of the Philippines, the United States launched a pacification policy to attract influential Filipinos who did not believe General Emilio Aguinaldo was thinking of going on with the war. The United States introduced peaceful programs, such as economic undertakings and promised for self-rule to full independence.

Eventually, civilian rule was installed with the American Governor General as head of State and the executive department. The other branches

of government were the two bicameral legislative branches and the justices of the Supreme Court. The set of government was patterned after the United States with checks and balances among the three branches of the government. As promised in the Jones Act of 1916, the Philippines was granted the self-rule under the Autonomous Commonwealth kind of government where elections were held with competing political parties such as the Liberal Party and Nationalist Party.

The elected President in the first nationwide election in 1935 was Manuel Quezon of the Nationalist Party beating Emilio Aguinaldo and Gregorio Aglipay, thereby becoming the second president of the Republic of the Philippines after Emilio Aguinaldo. There was a lull of peace during that period. However, the peaceful bright sky suddenly darkened when Japanese fighter planes without any declaration of war made a sneak attack almost simultaneously against American military assets in Hawaii and Philippines to shield Japan in seizing oil deposits and facilities in southeast Asia. The aerial attack was bloody and destructive against the United States idle airplanes and ships anchored on the shores of Hawaii and planes at the airstrip of Clark airfield in San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines.

Immediately, national mobilization was called, and thousands of Filipinos signed to join forces with American sol-

diers against the impending invasion of the Japanese Imperial army. At this time, the Philippines was still a colony of the United States that made the joint military forces to be commanded by the highest-ranking officer of the country, American General Douglas MacArthur, who became the Supreme Commander of the USAFFE. The military planner for the defense of the Philippines made the Bataan peninsula and the small island of Corregidor to make their stand and defense perimeter while waiting for possible reinforcement. However, the overwhelming air, sea and ground military superiority of the Japanese army prevailed and after 99 days of battle and thousands of casualties on both sides, the defenders surrendered.



US, China in a diplomatic tug-of-war for Marcos

where he uttered his famous promise to the Filipinos and Americans whom he left, saying "I Shall Return." The surrender of the Filipino and American soldiers pictured to us the brutalities of war which happened when they were to walk more than 66 miles to reach their destination where they were supposed to be transported to a concentration camp. The infamous "Death March" made the prisoners of war who were weak and sick left along the way to die, those who tried to escape were shot and bayo-

neted and worst the Japanese soldiers even played with their prisoners in a game which resulted into their brutal death.

True to his promise, General MacArthur returned to the Philippines with the largest military assets ever assembled in a war together with Serio Osmena succeeded Manuel Quezon who died in the United States as the second president of the Autonomous Commonwealth and Carlos Romulo who later became president of the United Nations General Assembly, the Philippines finally liberated from the Japanese occupation. On July 4, 1946. The Philippines became an independent state. Additionally, the Philippines became a strong ally and always supported the involvement of the United States in military conflict against other countries such as the Persian War, Iraq War, Korean War and Vietnam war by sending both civilian and military personnel for the United Nations Command or just in support with the United States military contingents. Today, it is estimated that there are more than 4.5 million Filipino Americans living in the United States plus many more green card holders. There is no doubt that the bond of friendship between the United States and Philippines is stronger today than any other period in our history.

Filipino Americans and immigrants have been assimilated profoundly into the American way of life. Traditionally, Filipinos are hardworking, law-abiding and peace-loving people that when they reached their destination, the United States of America, they easily assimilated in the community where they have chosen to establish themselves with other nationalities regardless of race, religion, political affiliation and social status. And, as part of the community the Filipinos are proud to show the beauty, elegance and gracefulness of their tradition, culture and custom as shown in their dances, songs and festivities, which other nationalities, surprisingly enjoy them too.







The Filipino Community of Sacramento & Vicinity, Inc.

# Celebrating Fil-Am History Month

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BY DALE ESPERANTE

# Magellan Hall

In 1949, the Filipino Farmers and Labors Association realized their dream of constructing a building for the Filipino community. Their dream became a reality and the Magellan Hall Community Center was born. After completion, they gifted in perpetuity the building to the newly formed American Legion Post 604 comprised of Filipino American WWII veterans. The building became known as Magellan Hall and it has served the community at large since “1950”.

Our present goal is to raise 100K. Before the arrival of the rainy season in the wintertime, we must replace

the facade of the building that was torn down due to rot and decay. Without a new facade, rainwater would easily seep in under the threshold of the building causing more interior damage. Not only do we need a new facade, but we also need our gravel parking lot paved for the safety and welfare of our older veteran community.

We are reaching out to the community and beyond to help us achieve our goal.

As proud American Veteran Legionnaires we will continue to promote local fund raising efforts to meet our goals but we cannot do it without your help.

The needs of Magellan Hall are immediate, please consider donating. Our commitment to you is that 100% of every dollar we raise will be used to preserve this proud Historical building that has served our community for the past 70 plus years.



## Veterans Day

On the 11th Hour of the 11th Day in the 11th Month, in 1918, the world celebrated the end of World War I. After four years of the war, a truce was signed ending what was called the “War to End all Wars”.

November 11 was named “ARMISTICE DAY” in the U.S. to remember the sacrifices those male and female service members made, during the war for peace. It was a joyous occasion in cities all across America, families and friends celebrated the rerun of their loved ones. Those who survived the war marched in a parade through their home towns on that day, politicians and veteran officers gave speeches and ceremonies of thanks for the peace they had won. Congress voted Armistice Day a federal holiday in 1938, 20 years later after the war ended. Unfortunately, the “War to End All Wars was not the last one. World War II erupted in 1939, setting off another struggle for world peace.

After the war, Armistice Day continued to be observed on November 11.

Ironically, the name “VETERANS DAY” did not originate in Washington or from any congressional leaders. Residents in the small town of Emporia, Kan., localized the holiday by renaming it “VETERANS DAY” to pay homage to the veterans in their town. Congress later followed suit and passed a bill that was “VETERANS DAY”.

To this day we continue to give thanks for peace and remember the men and women in uniform who have served and sacrificed for it. In keeping with the spirit of tradition, there are ceremonies and speeches and many Americans will observe a moment of silence at 11:00 AM, the 11th Day of November.

On November 11, 2023, when you meet a veteran, greet them with a simple “THANK YOU”.

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# An Open Door: Holocaust Haven in the Philippines

## A Film About How the Philippines Saved 1300 Jews

BY DERREK LEDDA

On Sunday, November 19, the Filipino and Jewish Communities of Greater Sacramento will come together in faith and fellowship for a very special showing of the award-winning documentary “An Open Door: Holocaust Haven in the Philippines”.

The full-length film, which is directed by Noel Izon, depicts the remarkable act of courage, compassion, and humanitarian action by the Philippines in saving over 1300 Jews and consequently their 13,000 descendants. Before the outbreak of WWII, the Jewish people were experiencing the escalating hate and violent persecution that the Nazi regime had made national policy. The Nazis’ plan for driving Jews from Germany and Europe depended on the public zealously participating in the state-led relentless campaign of dehumanizing antisemitic conduct. There was no safe place in the “homeland” for the Jews who were no longer considered German citizens. The dark horror of the holocaust was still ahead. The life and death quandary for the Jews was that there was nowhere for them to go because no nation was willing to take them.

It was only the Philippines, still a commonwealth of the United States and not yet a nation, led by then Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon, with the passionate support of the Filipino people, who were all too familiar with their own brutal mistreatment under Spanish and American colonial subjugation, that opened its doors to the Jews, simply because it was the right thing to do. The historic event continues to be a source of great pride for the Filipino people and of immense gratitude for Jews around the world while also offering profound lessons for our troubled times about the pervasive antisemitic, anti-Asian, and Filipino hate and violence that the film asks all people to reject.

The Sacramento Open Door Steering Committee, which is hosting the event is composed of leaders from the Jewish and Filipino communities and supported by numerous organiza-

tions from both communities, as well as others who share the film’s intent to reaffirm the power of love and respect for life and the basic truth that people are more united by their common values and needs than they are separated by their differences. Director Izon’s connection to “An Open Door” is even more personally inspiring because his own life was made possible because a doctor who saved his father’s life before he was born during the years following the war was one of the Jews who lived because the Commonwealth and the Filipino people gave him refuge and a place to practice medicine in the Philippines.

Although the film will have heightened meaning for Jews and Filipinos, it will appeal to all people who believe that we are very much each other’s brothers’ and sisters’ keepers and are part of one universal human family. All are therefore invited, especially young people, to watch the Sacramento film premier of “An Open Door” and celebrate what it says about the best of what we should aspire to be. In addition to the showing of the film, the event program will include comments by the Director and a panel of guests as well as remarks by Retired California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg and California Attorney General Rob Bonta. The event will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. on Sunday, November 19 at the Crest Theater located at 1013 K Street in Sacramento. A reception will follow.

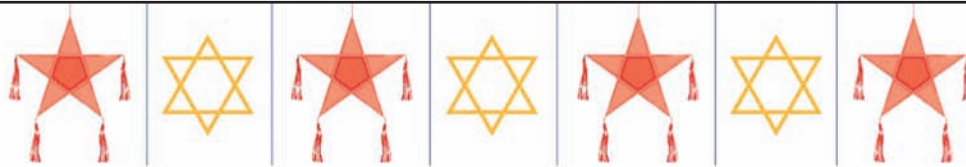
Although there will be no charge for admission to the event, anyone wishing to attend must register in advance. Information about online registering will be provided in the November issue of Philippine Fiesta Newspaper or you can call, text, or email any of the contact persons listed below to RSVP. For those who are interested in helping to fund the event, \$10 voluntary donations are welcome. Organizations are encouraged to sponsor for \$200 and individuals, businesses, and Foundations are encouraged to donate at the \$100, \$200, \$300, or \$500 and more levels.



European Jews in the Philippines after escaping the Holocaust

For More Information,  
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## AN OPEN DOOR: Holocaust Haven in the Philippines

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2023, 3:00–6:00pm**

**Crest Theatre, 1013 K Street, Sacramento CA**

With the rise of the Nazi Regime in Germany and Europe, European Jewry were in peril. With the passionate support of the Filipino people, President Manuel Quezon offered safe harbor to refugee Jews, simply because it was the right thing to do. This courageous and humanitarian act opened the door to more than 1300 Jews and made it possible for them to flee Nazi occupied Europe. This inspiring and timely story is captured in this feature-length documentary film, *An Open Door: Holocaust Haven in the Philippines*.

- **FILM SCREENING** [Click here to view the trailer \(https://vimeo.com/188316754\)](https://vimeo.com/188316754)
- **PANEL DISCUSSION** with filmmaker Noel (Sonny) Izon and renowned Holocaust historian, Dr. Bonnie Harris, along with Holocaust survivors and families
- **RECEPTION TO FOLLOW:** Filipino Pika-pika and Jewish Nosh

Everyone is welcome! Bring friends, families, and colleagues. We ask for suggested donation of \$10 to help us defray costs and present this film to anyone who wishes to see it. If you can make a larger contribution to help defray the costs of this event, please consider a sponsorship! **For security reasons, advance registration is required.**

**PLEASE RSVP + DONATE HERE** (<https://jewishsac.org/an-open-door/>)

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Photographs by Andri Tambunan



# LEGACY OF PRIDE

## FILIPINO AMERICAN SERVICE & BRAVERY

**ALLEN S. DAWANG** enlisted in the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment “L” Company US Army during WWII. Pictured are his proud wife of 62 years Bienvenida Pedraza-Dawang and his great-grandchild Aleaya Simmons. In 2017, Allen was awarded posthumously his Congressional Gold Medal by U.S. Congress, which honors Filipino soldiers who fought alongside American forces during WWII.

More than 260,000 Filipino and Filipino American soldiers answered President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s call to defend the United States and the Philippines during World War II. Allen was able to get his citizenship after enlistment and after the war he worked as a farm laborer at a pear orchard in California. He retired at age 85 in 1997. His wife describes him as a hard worker and his great-grandchild continues his legacy of service as a Senior-level Girl Scout.

Carry on our ancestors’ bravery and resilience to adversity. If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of anti-Asian hate, bigotry, bias, or discrimination, report it at **STOPHATE.CALCIVILRIGHTS.CA.GOV** or call **833-8-NO-HATE (833-866-4283)**. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

*\*Data pulled from the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project.*



The following ad campaign is brought to you by the Laban Group: Filipino Ethnic Media Collaborative. This group aims to promote awareness in our beloved Filipino American community and the broader public about anti-Asian hate incidents and crimes; reduce stigma surrounding the reporting of hate incidents and hate crimes; enhance understanding of resources for victims and survivors; and, to promote community healing and cross-racial collaboration. This collaborative is funded by the “Stop The Hate” campaign from the California State Library in partnership with the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs. Learn more at [linktr.ee/labangroup](http://linktr.ee/labangroup).



# Filipinos were first – to America

By rights, it really should be called the United States of the Philippines.

BY EMIL GUILLERMO

**And so who's on first, as the joke goes, but we all know it was Filipinos. History says so.**

But this year's Filipino American History Month was even more special when I made a pilgrimage to a special landmark that you may miss—unless you happen to be looking for the only public restroom at a particular vista point in Morro Bay, California.

For Filipinos, maybe even for all Asian Americans, maybe it should be considered our Mecca.

Or perhaps our blarney stone to kiss in order to receive that gift of history.

Morro Bay is the place where the first Asians landed on what would become the most Asian American part of the nation.

Now I've been to Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts before, and I must say this is much more exciting.

In Morro Bay, a special rock marks the original landing of Filipinos to America on Oct. 18, 1587, some 33 years before the Pilgrims landed.

1587? The first Filipinos from Asia landed in America? Yes, and they didn't grab a thing. At least, not for themselves. They even gave the indigenous Indians they met food and clothing, as peace offerings as fellow "Yndios." They were the "Un-colonizers."

And yet, we still make such a fuss about those Mayflower folks with their big hats and buckles, as if that's something to be thankful for.

And those First Filipinos? Well, as usual, it's still the same old story, a theme modern-day Asian Americans are surely familiar with.

We just don't count.

Filipinos may not have had the power, but first is first.

Technically, they were the hired help, the deckhands of Pedro De Unamuno, who sailed for Spain, as he landed on Morro Bay, close to San Luis Obispo on the Central Coast of California.

While Unamuno, not a Filipino, is only partially obscured in history as one of those "have-boat-will-travel" New World explorers, the Filipino parts of the story are almost totally obscured.

The turning point in all this has been the original research of Unamuno's logs published in UCLA's *Amerasia Journal* in 1996 by Eloisa Gomez Borah, a librarian and a trustee of FANHS. She makes the case for a Filipino presence, telling the story of how Unamuno was part of a Spanish expedition led by Francisco Gali in 1584. When Gali died, Unamuno lost command of the two ships he in-



In Morro Bay, a special rock marks the original landing of Filipinos to America on Oct. 18, 1587

herited after taking a side trip to Macao. Stranded in Asia, Unamuno was finally able to buy another boat, described by Borah as a "single-deck three-masted vessel" named *Nuestra Senora de Buena Esperanza*.

And the help, of course, were mostly from the Philippines.

On July 12, 1587, Unamuno headed for points east and was at sea until the end of his voyage on November 22, 1587 in Acapulco, Mexico.

But there was a brief three-day land excursion between October 18-20 that turned out to be their foray onto California's central coast.

Unamuno sailed with the Franciscan Father Martin Ignacio de Loyola, nephew of the founder of the Jesuit order, a few priests, and soldiers.

The logs also reveal the presence of at least eight Filipinos identified as "Yndios Luzones," or Luzon Indians from the northern Philippines island of Luzon.

They were jacks-of-all-trade seamen, seen as the brawny manpower of the ship. In an email exchange, Borah told me too often they were left off the logs.

"Filipinos present on these early explorations and trade ships were overlooked in captains' logs," Borah said. "Even in Captain Unamuno's log, which I chose because he did mention 'Indios Luzones' (it was spelled both with an 'I' and a 'Y'), documenting the presence of Filipino natives was inconsistent, as my count in the article provides the proof."

Borah counted "Yndios" appearing in the logs 42 times total. In 23 times, it was a reference to the native Californians encountered, but 19 times it described the crew.

But they mattered on Sunday, October 18. That's when Unamuno, after anchoring off the California coast in a place he called Puerto San Lucas, formed a landing party.

It was 12 armed soldiers led by Father Martin Ignacio de Loyola, cross in hand. But even before the cross, up ahead of them all were two Filipinos armed with swords and shields.

It was their typical formation.

But note: The Filipinos were first. Being fodder comes with some privilege.

On day one, the expedition climbed two hills, saw no settlements or people, and took possession of the land for the King of Spain.

On the second day, October 19, eight Filipino scouts led a priest and 12 soldiers for further exploration.

It was on the third day, October 20 that the expedition encountered violence. But not before there was an effort from the ship's barber and some Filipinos to make a peace offering of food and clothing.

Maybe the natives needed clothes, a meal and a haircut?

Borah said it was fine until the Indians tried to kidnap the barber, and that's when a violent exchange ensued. The log noted one soldier was killed, but so was one unnamed Filipino, by a javelin, his blood spilled on American soil.

Unamuno didn't stay long. He left by daybreak on October 21 for Acapulco.

The significance of three days?

Borah calls it the unique evidence of a Filipino presence that is too often obscured when historians fail to identify or differentiate among non-Europeans in their crew.

When I contacted her last year (when I wrote my original piece on Unamuno for this blog), she was adamant.

"Filipino natives, among the non-white Indios of that era, did not write the logs or the letters to the king or any other contemporary documents," Borah wrote

me in an email exchange. "However, Filipino Indios were 4 out of 5 who worked the Spanish galleons (Schurz, 1939) in crossing the Pacific for 250 years, and they were the advance guard in the land expeditions and provided the information evidenced in Captain Unamuno's log."

She added, "What needs to be done now is the championing of our history, because while Filipino 'crabs' snipe at our history that is documented by academic research, the Chinese are championing fable in 1421: *The Year China Discovered America* [by a former British Navy officer Gavin Menzies]."

Borah was referring to a much discredited story that suggests China discovered America before Columbus.

So it's interesting that Filipinos are still forgotten, unremarked upon and ignored, even as they exist as nearly a quarter of the more than 20 million Asian Americans today.

And yet of all the Asian Americans, Filipinos were here first. They even spilled blood, yet left empty-handed after three October days in California, 1587.

That's why the Filipino American National Historical Society is championing the cause. And why not? Columbus was in the West Indies, not on the continent. Unamuno and the Filipinos were before the Pilgrims, before Jamestown.

But most of us know of the *Nina*, the *Pinta* and the *Santa Maria*, the boats of Columbus, the Italian who sailed for Spain and landed somewhere other than North America.

And come November, we fuss over the Pilgrims and their Mayflower.

But Unamuno's *Our Lady of Good Hope*, loaded with Filipino crewmen? How many of us know this fine point of history?

We should all see annual public reenactments of the kidnapping of the barber and the javelin death of the Filipino. (Maybe the Filipino Sondheim can do a musical or an opera? "The Barber of Morro Bay"? Can you hear it?)

It deserves to be much more than a footnote, if not a bank holiday, don't you think?

And we might as well have an October feast day as well. Let us savor history and celebrate with a big Filipino meal in honor of the first Filipinos to America, 430 years ago, October 18, 1587.

After all, first is first.



# A Guide to Benefits Decisions When Changing Jobs

Presented BY MARITES AVILA

If you're making a job transition, it's likely you have a lot on your mind. As you focus on wrapping up work with your previous employer and prepare for a new role, it may be easy to let important benefits-related decisions fall by the wayside. If that happens, you could miss a limited opportunity to sign up for new benefits or miss out on the potential for making wise changes to your plans. To stay on track financially during a career transition, be sure to review the status of your retirement accounts and other valuable employee benefits.

## Qualified Retirement Plans

Many employers offer qualified retirement plans, such as 401(k) and 403(b) accounts. ("Qualified" means that these plans qualify for tax advantag-

es per IRS rules.) When transitioning to a new job, you're entitled to keep the vested balance in your qualified retirement plan, including contributions and earnings. You're also entitled to keep any employer contributions that have vested according to your employer's schedule.

What can you do with the money? The following options are available:

- Leave the funds in your current employer's plan if your vested balance is greater than \$5,000. If the balance is less than \$5,000, the plan could require that you roll over or distribute your assets.
- Roll over the funds to an individual IRA or, if allowed, your new employer's plan.
- Withdraw the funds and pay any taxes due along with any applicable penalties. (It's wise to consider carefully any decision to withdraw and spend your retirement savings.)

Accumulation rights. If you wish to roll over the funds, consider the accumulation rights you may be giving up by switching to a different plan. Accumulation rights offer shareholders the potential for reduced commissions when purchasing additional fund shares. If you have such rights with your current plan, they could become important if you plan to purchase a sizeable amount of shares.

Potential penalties and fees. It's also important to consider

the possibility of premature distribution penalties, as well as any fees and expenses a new plan may impose. If you've separated from service in the year you turn age 55 or at any later age, any assets distributed from your old employer's plan aren't subject to the standard 10 percent penalty. Once funds are rolled into an IRA or a new plan, however, the 10 percent penalty may apply to any subsequent distributions if you're under 59½ at the time, unless you can claim an exception.

Rolling funds over to an IRA.

The benefits to taking this action include:

- IRAs generally provide more investment choices than employer plans.
- IRA assets can be allocated to different IRA accounts. There is no limit on how many direct transfers you can make from one of your IRA accounts to another IRA account in a year. This means you can easily move money between IRA accounts if you're dissatisfied with an account's performance or administration.
- While 401(k) distribution options depend on the plan terms, IRAs offer more flexibility. Still, you should be aware that when you reach age 73, you must start taking required minimum distributions (RMDs) from traditional IRA accounts. There are no RMDs from Roth IRAs during the account owner's lifetime.
- When you roll funds over a 401(k) to a Roth IRA, taxes will need to be paid on the pre-tax contributions. Any future distributions from the Roth IRA may be tax free if IRS requirements are met.



**As we celebrate Indigenous People's Day, we have the opportunity to reflect upon and appreciate the profound values of love, faith, and interconnectedness that are at the heart of Indigenous cultures and PICO California.**

To be Indigenous and an American is a difficult journey many must walk to find their way home - spiritually and physically. We know that California is home to the largest population of Native Americans in the country because of systemic displacement and relocation policies of the federal government.

This physical, and generational, displacement has led to a spiritual displacement as well. The healing path home can be fraught with



problems and tensions, but it is necessary for all of us to walk in order to find the sanctity in our interconnectedness and our responsibility to one another in all of this.

Our Indigenous communities have long embodied a radical love, cultivating deep connections with the land, each other,

and the spirits that guide our way of life. Love for the Earth, with its rivers, mountains, forests, deserts, and ice caps has shaped our stewardship of the environment; reaffirming that Home is Sacred because the Earth is our home and it is indeed sacred.

Faith, in Indigenous cultures,

goes beyond religion; it is a deep trust in the interconnectedness of all living beings. Commitment to communities and traditions reminds us of the strength that comes from a sense of belonging. It empowers us to value our roots, to embrace our diverse backgrounds, and to foster a world where everyone feels they belong.

As we honor Indigenous People's Day, let us not only celebrate the rich contributions of Indigenous cultures but also draw inspiration from the profound dedication to love and community. By embracing these principles, we can work together to build a more compassionate and inclusive California where these ideals are at the forefront of our initiatives and everyone finds their way home.

In Love and Respect,

Terry Supahan  
Executive Director  
True North Organizing  
Network, a Federation of the  
PICO California Network



# Fil-Am artists to celebrate Filipino heritage at Spotify showcase in NYC

BY MARY VILLEGAS

We're not even in the middle of October but the series of Filipino American History Month celebrations are here to fill up your calendar. Even Spotify is joining in on this month's Fil-Am heritage celebration featuring artists with Pinoy blood in an upcoming series of shows in New York City.

In case you've been living under the rock, October isn't just about pumpkin spice lattes and Halloween; it's also Filipino American History Month. And Spotify is paying homage with a fun celebration to be held

at SOB's in New York City from Oct. 20 to 27.

The event promises a show hotter than the Manila sun as Fil-Am artists will take the stage throughout the week. Dubbed Jasmine Presents, the first-ever live showcase of Spotify's "a genreless flagship playlist that highlights Asian and Pacific Islander music communities around the world" will see eight Filipino artists distill their heritage in music form.

"October is a special month to celebrate



RINI, Lyn Lapid, MBNel, No\_4mat, and P-Lo will join EZ Mil in a melodic fusion of Fil-Am greatness

one of the first groups of Asian immigrants to immigrate to the United States. The vibrant and diverse Filipino community is highlighted in the breadth of our playlist and this year's

showcase, with talents in hip-hop, pop, electronic, and more," says said Ronny Ho, Spotify Head of Dance and Electronic Development, in a release.

## California's 3rd Annual Magkaisa celebration unites the Filipino community

Uniting the California community through a two-day celebration of Filipino cuisine, art, performances, and cultural exchange

BY KRISTEL SAMBILE

"Magkaisa" or "to unite" in Filipino serves as both the name and the guiding principle of an annual celebration that has been captivating Elk Grove, Sacramento and neighboring areas since 2021. This two-day Magkaisa celebration has become a symbol of unity and cultural pride as well as inclusivity.

Day one of Magkaisa promises an evening filled with performances that showcase the immense talent of the Filipino community. Attendees can savor mouthwatering Filipino cuisine, explore a variety of retail vendors, and tap into valuable community

resources.

As the sun sets, the event transforms into an outdoor art haven, featuring live painting and artworks. The outdoor amphitheater will be alive with performances, and guests are encouraged to bring their blankets, banigs (traditional mats), and lawn chairs to comfortably enjoy the show.

On day two, Magkaisa shifts gears to focus on education. This free event offers workshops tailored for all ages, delving into crucial topics such as Filipino culture, health and wellness, and social justice. It's an opportunity for community members to learn, grow, and engage with issues close to their hearts.

**Save the Date!**  
**Magkaisa**

**Culture** **music** **islands** **Performances**  
**COLONIALISM** **Resources**  
**Education** **Community** **family** **Brown heritage** **Food**  
**HISTORY** **Art** **Identity** **RESISTANCE**  
**Generations** **Intersectionality** **Vendors**

**Friday, October 13 & Saturday, October 14**  
Laguna Town Hall,  
3020 Renwick Ave,  
Elk Grove, CA 95758

**Join us for the 3rd Annual Filipino American History Month Celebration in Elk Grove & Surrounding Communities!**  
**More partners to come!**

Asian American Liberation Network | Sacramento Filipinx LOSTQIA+ | COSUMNES | FilAm | JSV Events | PNDA | EVERYDAY IMPACT CONSULTING



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Photo by Dave San Pedro

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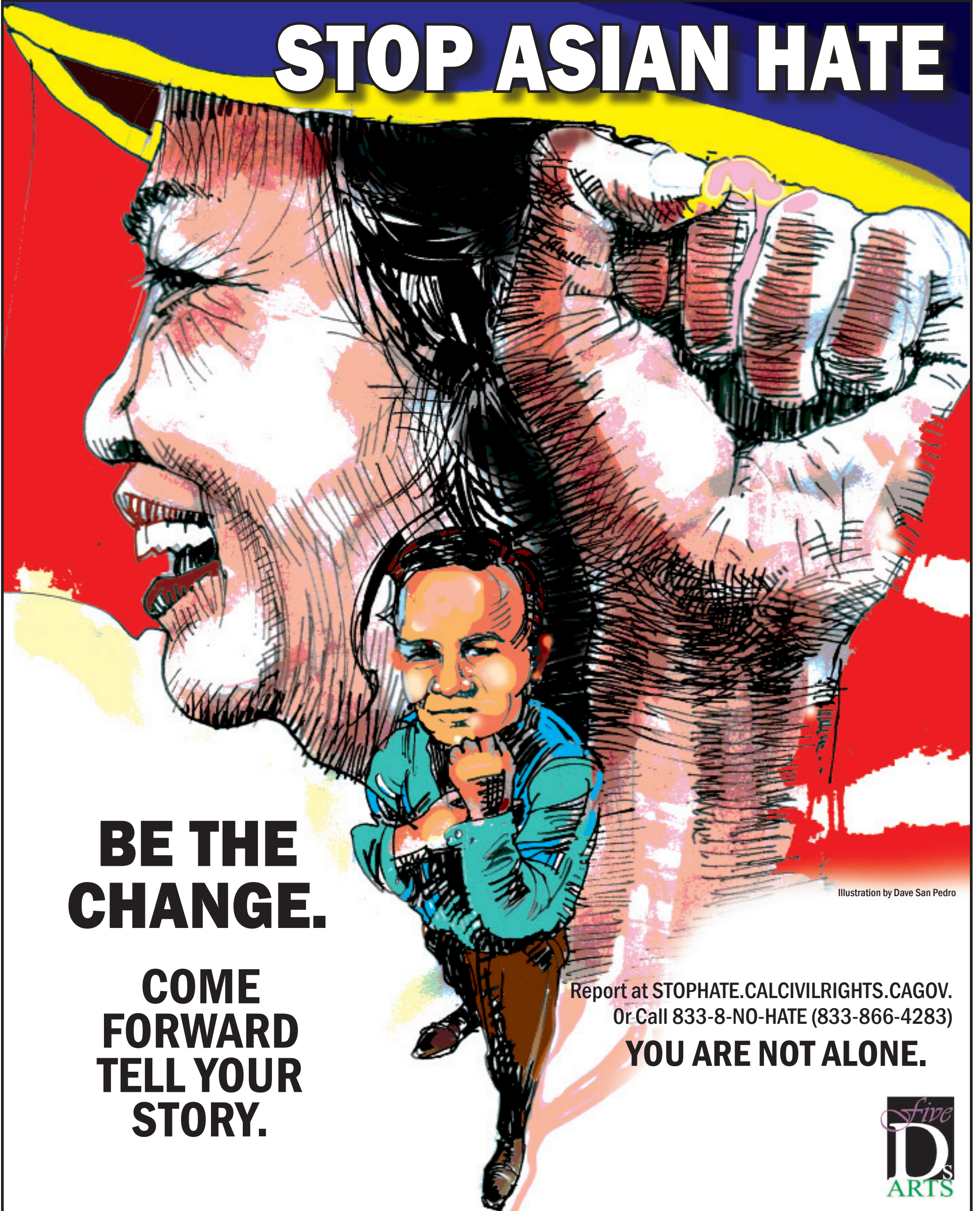
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Or Call 833-8-NO-HATE (833-866-4283)

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

Illustration by Dave San Pedro







# Philippine Fiesta

A Fil-AM community news publication by Five D's Arts LLC Newspaper

## Filipino American History Month

*We celebrate with you!*



Photos by Dave San Pedro

Dinnah S. San Pedro / Dave P. San Pedro

916.708.3462 / 916.215.7077

philfiesta.net

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