



PHILIPPINE Fiesta

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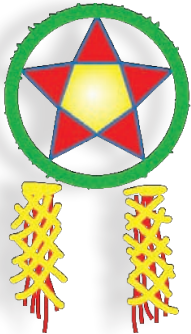
Merry Christmas!

P6 An Open Door

I'm Dreaming of a Brown Christmas

BY DR. ROBYN MAGALIT RODRIGUEZ

Queso de Bola. Bibingka. Parols. Simbang Gabi. These are some of the things I associate with celebrating Christmas as a Filipino. Yet these associations, for the most part, don't come from my lived experiences as a Filipino growing up in America, but associations that come from my parents and grandparents' memories of Christmases spent in the Philippines.



had too few Filipino businesses, too underdeveloped cultural organizations, too little representation in the Church to be able to purchase seasonal food items like Queso de Bola or bibingka, learn how to make parols or go to mass for Simbang Gabi. Yet, despite what we lacked, I was fortunate to benefit from endless stories about Christmas in the Philippines, stories that filled my head with dreams not only of a white Christmas of America—the white Christmas of snow and mistletoe—but dreams of a brown Christmas in the Philippines, surrounded by loving relatives and other kababayan, peeling back the red wax and savoring the pungent smells of slices of Queso de Bola on a fresh-from-the local bakery roll of pan de sal, eating a sweet-savory round of bibingka topped with itlog na maalat after an early morning service of Simbang Gabi while walking home along a brightly lit street crowded with parols.

Continued on page 2

Much of what I do recall from our celebrations of Christmas in this country was the longing and nostalgia for celebrating Christmas in the Philippines—a Christmas season that starts long before Advent and even past the New Year. Though I grew up in a predominantly Filipino neighborhood in Union City, California (a community in the San Francisco Bay Area), we still

FCSV's Election 2023

The Primary Goal is to Build the Community Center



Photo by Dave San Pedro

The Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity proved its worth as an organization last November 26, 2023, through a peaceful exercise of freedom of suffrage by the constituents. An election of officers and board members is a biannual practice of the organization to choose volunteers for different posts to serve as the Executive Board Members of FCSV.

BY MURRAY NAVARRO
FCSV Secretary

In this election, two slates raced for the different positions. One slate is the Alliance of Progressive Filipino Leaders (APFL) which is supported by President Dick Mazon. The group launched its electoral proposition at the Bayanihan Festival last October 8, 2023, at Elk Grove District 56 grounds. Pres.

Mazon provided the group with a booth to showcase the slate's agenda and individual credentials with personal backgrounds and their commitment to the community. The APFL slate has a vision for FCSV to become a more progressive and inclusive organization that will represent the needs of the entire Filipino community.

The leading contender of the said slate is Mina Guerra who ran for 2nd Vice President.

She has been with FCSV for 16 years and served as 2nd VP for 12 years during the terms of Past Presidents Aida Azurin and Mercedes Guerrero up to the current president. She spearheaded most the Mrs. Philippine's fundraising events. Theresa Lane who ran for the secretary position. An active Lion of District 4-C5 with 10 years of service in both public and private in the field of law.

Continued on page 7

VETERANO DAY



Photo by Dale Esperante

Sacramento State University's Kappa Psi Epsilon (KPsiE) brought cheer, dinner, chorus and gifts to host another fun-filled day for the Veteranos. Continued on page 9

VETERANS DAY



On 11 Nov 2023, at approximately 10 am, Sakura Gray from Sacramento's Channel 31 came to interview the veterans at Magellan Hall. Continued on page 8



BY DR. ROBYN MAGALIT RODRIGUEZ

From page 1

My actual experiences of Christmas in our household, truth be told, were not always the most idyllic. My parents were still relatively new immigrants to the United States when I was a child. They were the pioneers of the family. They were the migrant anchors here who bore the responsibility of bringing over everyone they could to join them and to play host to others who found other ways of getting here.

Christmas was a time of stress. Mom seemed to opt to work during Christmas, I'm guessing, to earn more, and even if that wasn't the case, it was a requirement of the job as a nurse to give up one or more of the holidays.

Dad often seemed especially masungit during the Christmas season, fielding phone calls, or pouring through Christmas-tissue-paper-thin letters from the homeland with updates on not only the political situation under Martial Law but all the economic hardships it was often characterized by – requests for money to cover the basics of medicine, school fees, house repairs and more, queries about the immigration process and requests for name-brand clothes (with Made in the USA labels), extra-large bottles of Jergen's lotion or extra bags of chocolate in the anxiously awaited Balikbayan Box.

My dad would work late, retreat to his home office and run the calculator again and again, trying to figure out how much he would have to send and spend, resenting the pressure of having to do it all as the eldest son and first in America, often taking the stress out on us. And yet, somehow, Christmas was still a joy. It was a time to listen to stories of a far-away place that we rarely visited (and cer-

tainly not for Christmas because it was too expensive), a place where we were loved, a place that we belonged to; stories that warmed our hearts.

It was also time where the labor and resources required to bring the family together across the ocean seemed to be put into motion with just a little more urgency with the hopes that the following year, the dreams of Christmas with relatives from the Philippines could be a reality because at the end of the day, Queso de Bola, bibingka, parols and Simbang Gabi weren't the things that my parents missed most about a Filipino Christmas. What they missed was their loved ones. What they missed was home.

Later in my childhood, we were joined by more and more relatives. My mom's long hours at the hospital, my dad's scrimping and saving, both of their meticulous attention to the details of immigration petitions, would allow my parents the chance to sponsor my grandparents and uncle. Other distant family members would find their own way to the U.S. and our house served as the place where they would land. Our house was a transitional hub, offering relatives a chance to get their bearings before moving out and on.

Soon enough, what were quiet Christmases of just our immediate family, were larger gatherings. Though we still didn't make parols or get to do Simbang Gabi, we had Minus One karaoke and if we were lucky, the tastes of Filipino Christmas smuggled in somehow by a newly relative or homemade with products that became more available as more Filipino stores opened in our town. I feel blessed to have these childhood memories to cleave to, my own version of Filipino Christmas in America.

I'm a grown woman now. I've raised my children, the second generation of Filipinos to be

I'm Dreaming of a Brown Christmas



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE SAN PEDRO

born here after my parents arrived the United States, what most experts identify as the immigrant "third generation" in America.

will fill his head with dreams of a brown Christmas?

The other day, though, on his own he called out "Hey Google,

This Christmas marks the second Christmas without both of my parents. We lost my dad in 2014. We lost mom in 2022. As the elders in our extended family, the home that served as the hub for the newly arrived and later for holiday gatherings has long since been sold and over the years, the gatherings would get smaller as different cousins passed through their reclusive teenage stages or went off to college or got partnered and went on to live their own lives.

Other older cousins have tried to take on the role my mom and dad once played; I'm trying to do my part as well. Sometimes, I feel saddened about what it means that the two people who served as the connection to my ancestral homeland are no longer in my life to retell familiar stories to a fresh audience, especially to my younger child who is in elementary school. Who

play Christmas songs," and began humming along with the tune that popped up. Wistfully, he told me he missed his Lola, then went back on to humming. I took it upon myself to do what my parents did for me. To share memories of my own childhood Christmases and those that I can recall of my parents.

Today, my son has what I didn't. Now competing Filipino grocery stores can be erected right across the street from each other. Queso de Bola and bibingka are plentiful. Cultural organizations organize parol making workshops. Filipino priests and deacons lead Simbang Gabi.

I feel gratitude for the institutions that members of our community have built over the generations to support my family and so many others to continue to be able to dream of a brown Christmas even when our loved ones are no longer around.

This Christmas, I encourage all of us to patronize Filipino businesses, and take time to provide a gift of support to a Filipino non-profit organization in addition to any offerings at church. Let's all ensure that future generations of Filipino children won't only dream about but also celebrate brown Christmases for years to come.



Editor's Note

December is the month that calls for a lot of celebrations, being the last month and the last issue of Philippine Fiesta News for year 2023! It is also the month celebrating the best holidays of all seasons, with gift giving and party gatherings with friends and families. It's a great time to reflect upon the year's past accomplishments and to do last minute catch up, ending the year with a great feeling, full of hope and aspirations for the year ahead.

But first, read through the pages of this December issue and be enlightened by our contributing writers' take of what the December season is about. Philippine Fiesta has always felt very blessed and grateful to have contributors willing to share their diverse insights and knowledge on particular topics, events, issues, and concerns evolving in our Filipino American community.

As we continue our second grant cycle and partnership with the Laban Group, in association with the California State Library, we stay committed to share our works with the main focus is on continuing to Fight and Stop Asian Hate.

Also in this issue, includes FCSV election coverage and several Filipino American Veterans events and activities. And, everyone is invited to FCSV's Induction of New Officers on Dec. 10, at the Jose Rizal Community Center, in Sacramento.

From our family to yours, may spending time with families be as joyful as ever this holiday season and all throughout the year!

With love always,
Dinnah S. San Pedro

ICC drug war probers in PH: Just a ‘matter of time’

BY KRIXIA SUBINGSUBING

MANILA, Philippines — It may be only a “matter of time” for the International Criminal Court (ICC) probers to come to the Philippines given the renewed push to convince the Marcos administration to cooperate with the court’s investigation into alleged crimes against humanity committed in the conduct of the drug war during the term of former President Rodrigo Duterte, lawyers for the drug war victims said on Monday.

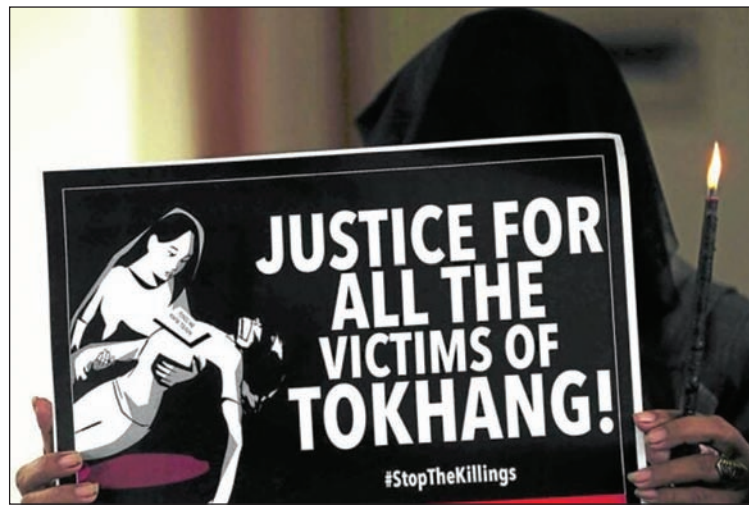
Former lawmaker Neri Colmenares and Kristina Conti, who both serve as legal counsels for the families of victims of extrajudicial killings (EJK) under the drug war, also affirmed their commitment to “support the investigation to the most extent possible.”

While they did not say whether ICC probers have already contacted them, Colmenares said they “expect to be informed” should they come to Manila.

Colmenares pointed out that during the House hearings on the resolutions asking the government to cooperate with the ICC, the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) said it would not cooperate but would also not interfere with the ICC prosecutor.

“So I think it’s a matter of time that they’ll get here,” he noted. “This would further strengthen their case as the families of EJK victims and their witnesses will now have access to ICC prosecutors.”

As to whether the ICC has al-



DRUG WAR Relatives of victims of extrajudicial killings under former President Rodrigo Duterte’s drug war gather at St. Joseph Parish in Bagong Silang, Caloocan City, on Jan. 27, 2018, to denounce the revival of the government antidrug drive “Oplan Tokhang.” —Nino Jesus Orbeta

ready requested the government to cooperate was still unknown, according to Conti.

On Friday, Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra said there was no reason to bar representatives of the ICC from entering the country so long as they would not do anything illegal here.

In an interview with CNN Philippines, Guevarra, who was justice secretary from 2018 to 2022, added that it was up to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau of Immigration (BI) whether they would let ICC representatives enter the country.

But he pointed out that the country’s immigration laws have “a wide latitude of discretion on the part of our immigration authorities to admit or not to admit certain persons whom they think may be considered undesirable.”

“From my point of view, for as long as there will be no [ille-

gal] activities to be conducted here, that they have the proper travel documents, I do not see any reason why they should be prevented from coming in because they’re going to interview certain persons, gather certain documents, so forth and so on,” Guevarra said.

He also told the Inquirer on Friday that collecting documents such as affidavits could not be considered an illegal activity. Rejoining Rome Statute

It has been five months since the ICC’s Appeals Chamber rejected the Philippine government’s appeal to stop Prosecutor Karim Khan’s investigation into the alleged crimes against humanity committed during Duterte’s war on drugs from 2016 to 2019, and the period when he was Davao City mayor from 2011 to 2016.

Even if the Philippines is no longer a member of the Rome Statute, the ICC will likely send a request to cooperate (including an official request

to enter the country and talk to government officials) through diplomatic channels.

Under the Rome Statute, however, governments must keep such requests confidential, “except to the extent necessary to execute the request,” Conti said.

“If the ICC asks the state to cooperate, the state must keep the request confidential. It is the ICC which can choose to break confidentiality by announcing or publishing the request,” she pointed out.

“Unfortunately, in more ways than one, discreetness benefits an ongoing investigation, especially with regard to security,” she added.

Colmenares had earlier floated the idea that the ICC must already ask the Philippines to cooperate after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. himself admitted that his administration was studying the option of returning to the fold of the Rome Statute.

Probe drug links

In the Lower House, Kabataan party-list Rep. Raoul Manuel on Monday called for a probe of Duterte’s alleged link to the illegal drug trade following the claims made by retired Davao policeman Arturo Lascañas, saying this was a “necessary” step in providing context to the possible investigation by the ICC.

Manuel noted that should Lascañas’ claims on the former president’s links to the illicit drug trade be proven, it would show that Duterte’s war on drugs was fake.

He said in Filipino: “If [Lascañas’ allegations are] true, it would seem that the war on drugs was intended to go after (narcotics industry) rivals and ensure monopoly of the illegal drug trade by virtue of the powers of Malacañang.”

“This should be clarified in the ICC investigation, which is why it should proceed,” Manuel said, noting though that Congress “should also conduct our probe in this matter.”

The lawmaker called on other possible witnesses to come forward and make public what they know of the drug war, similar to Lascañas who submitted an affidavit to the ICC.

Manuel appealed to people who served as right-hand men or enforcers in the war on drugs to identify the “masterminds” and perpetrators of extrajudicial killings to “give justice to thousands of youth killed [during Duterte’s drug war] and shed light on why they were killed.”

Late last month, the House committees on justice and on human rights agreed to adopt three resolutions urging the government to cooperate with the ICC investigation.

These were House Resolution (HR) No. 1477 filed by Manila Rep. Bienvenido Abante Jr. and 1-Rider Rep. Ramon Rodrigo Gutierrez, the Makabayan bloc’s HR 1393, and Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman’s HR 1482.

“Cooperating with the ICC underscores our commitment to upholding human rights,” Abante said.

Philippine Fiesta

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Photo by Dave San Pedro



BY BENJAMIN ABAYA

Hate Enhances Global Cycle of Violence

Hate has been with us since biblical time. Ironically, it was during the reign of Emperor Herod the Great, who was the ruler of the Roman province of Judea when he ordered the killing of children under the age of two around his realm of Bethlehem. This despicable edict was to ensure the elimination of the birth of Jesus Christ who was already proclaimed by believers of His coming to become King of all Kings.

The insatiable greed of power by ancient world rulers has established a pattern of how powers from one country to another changed their leaders, through a cycle of bloody confrontation between the incumbent and would be opponent. In our time, we have seen shameless demagogues engaging in war against smaller and much weaker countries to extend their territorial domain and to subjugate its people into submission by its tentacles of tyranny and oppression.

When me and my wife Kristina together with close friends were in Europe particularly Paris, France last November 2023 for a short vacation we had a glimpse of a mass peaceful demonstration calling for the end of the Israel Hamas War in Gaza, calling for a ceasefire. News in Paris daily newspapers and television programs have shown vivid destruction of dwellings and infrastructures as well as casualties on both combatants and civilian collateral deaths in the conflict. We were told that the demonstrations were participated in by the members of the French Parliament, Jews, Muslims, leftists and many other factions calling for the cessation of hostilities between the warring parties.

In August of this year, folks from Oak Park, Sacramento gathered to show solidarity in the first ever Blasian March joined by about 120 people

from business owners to residents living in the historic neighborhood. This marks a significant moment as the city collectively works together to show awareness and empathy towards people with biracial identities.

The term “Blasian” typically refers to individuals who are of both Black and Asian descent. While there may not be a specific documented history of Blasian individuals in Sacramento, the broader history of multicultural communities in the city can provide some context. One of the main purposes of the march was to show solidarity of any possible surging of hate crime against Asian which has been observed to be increasing nationwide, blaming them for all their personal predicaments.

Oak Park has a rich history, and the African American community has played a significant role in shaping its development. After World War II, there was an increased migration of African Americans to urban areas, including Sacramento. The African American population in Oak Park grew, and the community faced both challenges and opportunities. Redlining, a discriminatory practice by which banks and insurers would refuse loans or coverage to people in certain areas based on their racial or ethnic composition, affected neighborhoods like Oak Park. Like many urban areas, Oak Park has faced economic challenges. However, community leaders and organizations have worked to revitalize the area. Redevelopment efforts, including investments in housing, businesses and infrastructure have aimed to create a more vibrant and inclusive community.

Despite progress, challenges such as economic disparities, education gaps and issues related to systemic racism persist. The Oak Park community continues to demonstrate



In August of this year, folks from Oak Park, Sacramento gathered to show solidarity in the first ever Blasian March joined by 120 people from business owners to resident living in the neighborhood.

resilience and determination in addressing these challenges through local initiatives and collaboration with community leadership regardless of nationality if they work for the common good.

Sacramento, like many other cities in the United States, has a diverse population with various ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. The history of multiculturalism in Sacramento is shaped by migration patterns, like the gold rush era and subsequent waves of immigration. In the 19th century, the Gold Rush attracted people from all over the world to California, including both African Americans and Asians.

The Central Pacific Railroad, part of the First Transcontinental Railroad, was built with significant contributions from Chinese immigrant laborers. During the American regime in the Philippines, hundreds of thousands of Filipinos were brought to Hawaii for its sugar cane and pineapple plantations. Subsequently, many more were brought to California and many other parts of the United State to augment works usually not favored by other Americans to work.

Over the years, the city has continued to attract a diverse population through various economic opportunities. The social and cultural landscape of Sacramento has evolved, and with it, the emergence of multicultural communities. Interracial relationships and marriages, including those between Black and Asian individuals, have become more common over time.

These relationships contribute to the rich tapestry of Sacramento's cultural diversity. It's important to note that the experiences of Blasian individuals are highly individualized, and the community itself is diverse in terms of cultural practices, languages spoken and familial backgrounds. For the past few years hate crimes were just isolated if there were any because of the strong stand by the residents and the on-guard vigilance of the law enforcement agencies.

Sacramento's history is ongoing, and the presence and contributions of Blasian individuals likely continue to shape the city's cultural identity. If you are interested in more specific and up-to-date information, you may want to explore local community organizations, cultural events, and resources that focus on multiculturalism and diversity in Sacramento. Undoubtedly, the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity is the biggest and most active organization within the area whose mission is to promote the common good for all nationalities as reflected by the number of active members.

Together with Filipino regional organizations and FCSV within the area, they hold social, civic and religious activities as they show their great tradition, culture and custom shown in the beauty, grace and elegance of their dances, songs and unique attire. Likewise, they also bring to the fore their sense of charity to help others who are in need. And Filipinos are also known for their godliness by celebrating religious festivities especially during the Christmas

Season.

Feeling of oneness with Filipino Americans as they easily assimilate themselves in times of health crisis such as the Covid 19 pandemic by following necessary protocols to avoid being infected with the deadly disease. It did not stop there, as another crisis surged emanating from deranged minds who waged violence against one another simply because the victims came from the country where the perpetrators believed to have caused their miseries. Accordingly, for the past many years Sacramento and its outlying areas have only experienced fewer hate crimes against Asians compared to other cities of the same size. Our profound gratitude to our law enforcement agencies for their vigilance and always on guard in any eventualities that could surge such despicable criminal acts. Indeed, their selfless dedication and sacrifices make our community a peaceful place to live in.

Our highest respect to our community leaders, members and residents for their steadfast united stand against hate crimes and all discriminations that could result in property destruction and even the loss of lives. Kudos to Dinnah and Dave San Pedro with Editorial Staff of the Philippine Fiesta News online for openly disseminating information especially hate crimes committed in the community and beyond.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ONE AND ALL. MARAMING SALAMAT PO!!!

A Historic Connection Between Two Peoples

BY DALE ESPERANTE

One day at a Sacramento social function, Mayor Darrell Steinberg and Derek Ledda had a conversation that shed light to a connection between the Jewish and the Filipino peoples. Derek is the nephew of Noel “Sonny” Izon. “Sonny was a Filipino American documentary film maker and producer who garnered awards for his work in film. Through his films, Sonny captured the Filipino perspective during WWII.

In his documentary *An Open Door: Holocaust Haven in the Philippines*, he worked relentlessly to shed light on the humanitarian role that the Philippine Commonwealth and its president Manuel Quezon played in saving 1300 Jews by providing them with a home and safe haven in the Philippines just before the outbreak of WWII.” The quoted information above was derived from the Open Door Program. This conversation between the mayor and our very own Derek Ledda led to two peoples connecting again on the evening of November 19, 2023, at the Crest Theater in downtown Sacramento.

Listed on the Program and the Notables who were seen on film or on stage:

- Theme from Schindler’s List: Susan Lamb Cook, Cellist.
- Introduction: Barry Broad and Derek Ledda.
- Kristallnacht and Jews in Nazi Germany: Barry Broad, President, Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region. Barry shares the background of Kristallnacht and the experience of Jews in Nazi Germany.
- Why Sanctuary in the Philippines Matters Today: Derek Ledda, Board Member, Sacramento Filipino American Lawyers Association. Derek explains the importance of Sanctuary in the Philippines During World War II and why it is important today.
- Darrell Steinberg, Mayor of Sacramento: He didn’t know too much about this history until he had that social evening conversation with Derek Ledda. One thing led to another, and the Jewish and Filipino communities joined up again on this special evening at the Crest Theater.
- Tribute to Noel “Sonny” Izon.
- An Open Door: Holocaust Haven in



Community Leaders with Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta

- the Philippines: Film Screening.
- Panel Discussion: Moderator: Dr. Bonnie Harris, Suzanne Sommer, Jack Simke, Ralph Propper, Derek Ledda.
- Rob Bonta, the 34th Attorney General of the State of California. The first Filipino descent and the second Asian-American to occupy the position.
- Musical Performance: Rogeniv Marnauag, Musician: Dahil Sa Iyo.
- Reception.

THE SPONSORS:

- Sabra (\$1000): Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region, Derek Ledda, Ray and Lori Nalangan (In honor of our daughter Layla & in memory of her Lola Emma).
- Sampaguita (\$500): Barry Broad, Josie Patria, Lilia Rivera, Dick Weitzenberg, Mary Ann Wong.
- Ylang Ylang (\$200): Eddy Aducayen, Christopher Cabaldon, Leila Pereira,



Photos by Dale Esperante



Melita, Brian, Lilia, Josie and Derek

Edna de los Reyes, Filipino American Veterans Association, Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity, Filipino Fiesta of Sacramento, Filipino Women’s Club, Leonard Friedman Bar Association, Organization of Chinese Americans, Pacific Rim Heritage Foundation, Sacramento Filipino American Lawyers Association, Sacramento Maharlika Lions Club, Sacramento Midtown Lions Club.

Plumeria (\$100): Aida Azurin, Maria Bahoric, Albert Balingit, Cynthia Bonta, Jessica Braverman Birch, Danette Brown, Marianne Budin, Stephen Chan, Rosalie Crandall, Alex and Joyce Eng, Sarah Enloe, Laura Izon, Carol Munar, Jennifer and Josephine Patria, Adriene Stone, Bill Tamayo, Dave Tamayo.

In Memoriam: Noel “Sonny” Izon, December 16, 1946 – October 25, 2023. On October 25, 2023, Sonny passed

away in Milan, Italy, a place he loved to visit. His wife, Kathryn, and family members were with him in the hospital where he received care after a sudden cardiac arrest. Sonny was a valued partner of the US-Philippines Society for over a decade and a valued supporter and advisor to the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project. His impact of bringing Filipino history to light will be long lasting and he will be deeply missed. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Kathryn, their daughters Laura and Juliette, and members of the family. Sonny was 76.

The source of this article is the program of the evening’s event: *An Open Door, Holocaust Haven in the Philippines*, Directed by Noel M. Izon.

A quote attributed to Edmund Burke: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”



Noel “Sonny” Izon



FCSV's Election 2023

The Primary Goal is to Build the Community Center

BY MURRAY NAVARRO
FCSV Secretary

The APFL slate supported seven contenders for the Board of Directors as follows: Marcy Basila, Luz Daclan, Tim Fenkell, Liz Fenkell, Shane Gitmed, Kathy Pflaum, and Mylene Simons.

On the other hand, Samahang Magkakaisa (SM) listed a complete lineup of officers from the president, 2 vice presidents, 2 secretaries, 2 treasurers, 2 auditors, 4 peace officers, and 18 board members. The SM slate pushed for an aim "Together Toward Tomorrow: Pursuing Unity in Building the Community Center." There are only two opposed positions against the other slate. Dinnah San Pedro and Margarita "Ging" Pasalo competed for the 2nd Vice President and secretary positions, respectively. The rest of the officers were unopposed by the other slate.

Before the election day, both slates organized their Meet and Greet events. The APFL organized a Meet and Greet last October 22, 2023, at the Florin Partnership office while SM met at Magellan Hall last November 4, 2023. There was a misunderstanding of the former event because the board was not involved in the preparation of the event even though it claimed to be a general membership meeting of the FCSV. Since the current board was left out during the planning stage, most of the candidates of SM (who are currently board members) did not attend the meeting which allegedly boycotted the meet and greet of APFL. The candidates during the forum were asked three questions and given 3 minutes to share their impromptu answers and ideas. While SM candidates during their Meet and Greet event shared their opinions on how they will personally contribute to achieving the FCSV's #1 goal in the next couple of years to raise and build the Filipino Community Center.

For the campaign episodes, both slates adamantly maximized the usage of social media particularly Facebook. A modern and convenient manner to facilitate voters' necessary information to know and be aware of the candidates' backgrounds and credentials. But the election was not spared of heavenly peace in the campaign process. There were some outrageous verbal attacks and vocally stated opinions from

one end to another. Another dispute was the venue of the election. The APLF slate requested to have a second venue to accommodate LGBTQ+ members from not voting at the Sheriff's office. The FCSV board denied the request during an emergency online meeting. Nevertheless, everyone turned out to be in a safe place for the election.

During election day, 217 out of the 440 registered members of FCSV came to vote at the Sacramento County Sheriff Service Center, 7000 65th St. #B, Sacramento CA 95823. The last day to register as members with a capacity to vote was August 27, 2023 (which is ninety days before the election day). The last day to file an intent to run for office was September 26, 2023 (which is 60 days before the election day).

The Chairman of the Comelec was MD4-C5 Lion Dave Pevny and the Election Staff was led by Past President Mercedes Guerrero and Camellia Lion Peggy Kwong and her club members. The Service center was opened at 9:00 AM for voters to cast their ballots and ended at 1:00 PM. Voters were treated with heavy snacks from the candidates. Then, the counting of votes started immediately. The election staff checked each ballot for official emblems, watermarks, and ballot numbers. The chairman read the voter's choices for the different positions and tallied by two official representatives from each slate Cleo Sabarre-Ner for SM and Allison Padilla for APFL and Lion Peggy tallied the results at the board. Some bystanders observed the counting from start to finish. The last ballot was read at 7:20 PM (more than 6 hours of counting the votes). Those candidates who were not opposed were officially announced after one or two votes.

The results were officially announced by the Chairman. The following newly elected officers and board members are the following: President-Elect Murray Navarro, 1st Vice President-Reelect Vince A. Sales, 2nd Vice President-Elect Dinnah San Pedro with 130 votes against Mina Guerra with 75 votes, Secretary-Elect Margarita "Ging" Pasalo with 131 votes against Theresa Lane with 72 votes), Asst. Secretary-Elect Leila Pereira, Treasurer-Reelect Aurora Ramos, Asst. Treasurer-Reelect Alberta



The Chairman of the Comelec was MD4-C5 Lion Dave Pevny and the Election Staff was led by Past President Mercedes Guerrero and Camellia Lion Peggy Kwong and her club members.

THE FILIPINO COMMUNITY OF SACRAMENTO AND VICINITY									
TALLY SHEET									
ELECTION DATE: November 26, 2023 TIME: 9 AM - 1 PM									
PRESIDENT									
Navarro, Murray									
1ST VICE-PRESIDENT									
Sales, Vince									
2ND VICE-PRESIDENT									
Guerra, Mina	15								75
San Pedro, Dinnah	21								130
SECRETARY									
Lane, Theresa	17								72
Pasalo, Margarita	25								131
ASST. SECRETARY									
Pereira, Leila									
TREASURER									
Ramos, Aurora									
ASST. TREASURER									
Pena, Alberta									
AUDITOR									
Domondon, Mena									
ASST. AUDITOR									
Aglubat, Erlinda									
PEACE OFFICER									
Avera, Alex									
Cordero, Carlos									
Munar, Melchor									
Pena, Leonardo									
BOARD OF DIRECTORS									
Aglubat, Bobby	15								127
Avera, "Ling" Estelita	16								127
Bahoric, Maria	18								128
Baloyos, Rejie	18								113
Basila, Marcy	20								82
Borromeo, Bembet	21								134
Crandall, Roselie	22								133
Daclan, Luz	25								172
De Castro, Anthony	27								116
De la Cruz, Rose	27								143
Delos Reyes, Edna	27								141
Dolar, Jinky	27								116
Enloe, Sarah	27								84
Fenkell, Liz	27								88
Fenkell, Tim	27								84
Fortis, Sylvia	27								127
Gitmed, Shane	27								77
Munar, Carol	27								137
Munar, Carol	27								126
Pasalo, Rick	27								73
Pflaum, Kathy	27								78
Ramos, Priscilla	27								134
Simons, Mylene	27								161
Solomon, Remy	27								133
Yagen, Zenny	27								133
Zabal, Frank	27								131

The newly elected officers of the Filipino of Sacramento & Vicinity

Pena, Auditor-Reelect Mena Domondon, Asst. Auditor-Elect Erlinda Aglubat and Peace Officers Alex Avera (Elect), Carlos Cordero (Reelect), Melchor Munar (Reelect) and Leonardo Pena (Reelect). There are 25 candidates for board members, but CBL dictates just to have 20 board members. Here are the top 20 candidates with their corresponding numbers of votes. Luz Daclan (172), Mylene Simons (161), Edna Delos Reyes (143), Sarah Enloe (141), Estelita "Ling" Avera (137), Carol Munar (137), Bembet Borromeo (134), Priscilla Ramos (134), Rose dela Cruz (133), Remy Solomon (133), Zenny Yagen (133), Roselie Crandall (132), Frank Zabal (131), Maria

Bahoric (128), Bobby Aglubat (127), Sylvia Fortis (127), Rick Pasalo (126), Anthony De Castro (116), Jinky Dolar (116), and Rejie Baloyos (113). Candidates who did not stay on the cut are Liz Fenkell (88), Tim Fenkell (84), Marcy Basila (82), Kathy Pflaum (78), and Shane Gitmed (77).

SM candidates for officers and its 18-board-member candidates were elected.

The newly elected officers and board members will be inducted and installed on December 10, 2023, at Rizal Community Center from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM. The guest inducting official is Assembly member Stephanie Nguyen of District 10. She initiated the \$880,000 building money from the state through her office. With the newly elected FCSV Executive Board Members and the cooperation of the community members, may the long dream of the Filipino community of Sacramento become a reality to have our center to be called "Our Own Sweet Home."



Victory Party of the elected officers last December 3, 2023.

Lastly, Samahang Magakakaisa held their Victory Party last December 3, 2023, for an election with a landslide result. All the



BY DALE ESPERANTE

Veterans Day at Magellan Hall

In 1954, President Eisenhower signed the bill proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day, a national holiday. Some of us will use this national holiday as a chance to stop and reflect. Enjoy the workday-off if you have it, to catch up on whatever you need to do. Enjoy the freedom but remember that freedom is not free. On this holiday, the men and women who signed up to serve in the military for our national defense should be thanked for their service. Remember that ALL who served gave SOME (sacrifices), but SOME had to give ALL (life) to preserve our freedom. Veterans Day honors all veterans who are still with us, and those who have passed.

On 11 Nov 2023, at approximately 10 am, Sakura Gray from Sacramento's Channel 31 came to interview the veterans at Magellan Hall. A video of the visit is available on the website of Channel 31's Good Day Sacramento. Thank you to Sakura Gray, a reporter of Good Day CBS 31, Jonathan Meris, and the all-important camera man for including Magellan Hall on their Veterans Day coverages.

At a little past the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, Emcee Esperante of The American Legion Magellan Post 604 asked for everyone's attention to begin the program: the posting of the colors, national anthem, Chaplain Esperante's opening prayer, and welcome address by 1st Vice Commander Al Garcia.

The three speakers who honored us with their important, inspiring, and enlightening information:

Mr. Joseph Reyes Flores, an army veteran who rose up in ranks in the Veterans Benefits Administration. He has been promoted to Public Contact Coach in November 2019 to the present. As an army veteran, he has been deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom in Kuwait from October 2001 – May 2002, to Kosovo from December 2002 – August 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom in Baqubah, Iraq from February 2004 – March 2005. He was again deployed to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn from November 2010 – November 2011. After his speech, he gave every veteran in attendance a Vietnam War pin and a copy of a proclamation letter signed by President Biden, commemorat-

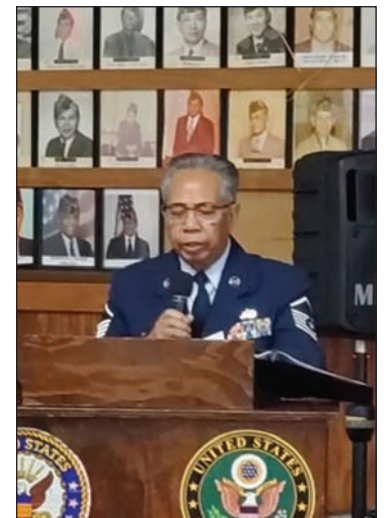
ing the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

Christopher Cabaldon, a Filipino American politician from California who served as mayor of West Sacramento, and the only mayor who has served the longest in the city's history. In his speech, the mayor mentioned that Veterans Day is celebrated a day before his birthday on November 12. The emcee took note of it and invited everyone, after the speech, to serenade the mayor with a medley of a slow and then a rocking happy birthday song. Mayor Cabaldon reacted so gratefully with a big smile, a bow and hand gestures while turning and receiving a big applause from everyone. It was a harmonious fest moment.

And finally, we introduced Dinnah Santiaguero San Pedro, Owner, and Chief Editor of Philippine Fiesta News aka PF News. Dinnah and her husband Dave had to dig through a voluminous archive of PF News to find the history of Magellan Hall from its early years (1940s). The story started with 39 farmers and laborers who purchased the land with financial assistance from a Filipino businessman. The fledgling Filipino community founded their own gathering place where they could feel safe and welcomed. After WWII, the aging farmers and laborers decided the responsibility of owning the property to the returning war veterans. Ownership condition included the obligation to raise funds to pay for the monthly bills and maintenance. If anyone would like to donate for the preservation of Magellan Hall, the GoFundMe fundraiser for the "Veterans Magellan Hall" can be found online. Or you can mail your donation to: The American Legion Magellan Post



Sakura Gray from Sacramento's Channel 31 interview the veterans at Magellan Hall



Director Rey Ado



Veteran Joseph Reyes Flores



PF News Editor Dinnah San Pedro



Former City of Davis mayor Chris Cabaldon



Veterans spouses



Family of Comrade Joe Gonzales, wife Carina with two sons and Joe's brother Virgil

604, POB 292091, Sacramento, California 95829-2091. Any amount will be appreciated and used for the preservation of this historic Filipino American monumental property.

Besides speakers, the following performers also delivered: Sofia Palomar with her fresh rendition of I Who Have Nothing. Her uncle is Director Rey Ado, an officer and active member of Magellan Post 604. The medical students of Bayanihan Clinic

from U.C. Davis demonstrated a cultural dance called Tinikling, showing off their skills in evading the treacherous bamboo poles from catching their ankles. Their hours of preparation evident as they displayed their rhythm and agility. Another singer, Adin Selby delivered I'm proud to be an American, that resonated with the veterans in the audience who served in the United States Armed Forces. Finally, the salute to all the vet-

erans, a ballroom dance number performed by Mr. and Mrs. Jeff & Elsie Greene. The fluidity of their performance topped with the salute at the end made this veteran, and I'm sure I wasn't alone, feel so proud.

Surprise: Every speaker and performer received a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Commander Thomas B. Amaba and Adjutant Esperante of Magellan Post 604. Continued on next page

VETERANO DAY

BY DALE ESPERANTE

Veterano Day is an annual celebration started by Kappa Psi Epsilon (KPsiE) of California State University, Sacramento, in 2011 according to the current president, Chloe David. Its purpose is to recognize the contributions of the Filipino Americans who served in the United States Armed Forces.

On 18 Nov 2023, the veterans and their spouses, widows of veterans, and members of Unit 604 members spent another special day of honor, thanks to the KPsiE members and their supporting friends from Chi Rho Omicron.

Approximately fifty or more years ago, Filipino men and women who were probably still in their teens, signed up to become members of the American military for various reasons. Besides Duty, Honor, and Country, the list of reasons may include the following: adventure, training, educational opportunities, job security, travel, the uniform, an assignment to Clark AB or Subic Bay, economical, or even warfare. As



Kappa Psi Epsilon (KPsiE) of California State University with Filipino American veterans and spouses Photos by Dale Esperante

for being recognized fifty years later for our military service by the young college students of today, it is a blessing beyond our imagination. Most of us are grateful for still being here to experience the many gifts of life.

The special celebration we received from the sorority and fraternity members of Sacramento State University is a light that opened our eyes to see the smiling faces of our free society. America's freedom flourished because of the sacrifices of many. The years that the veterans served are worth it, thanks to the reminder of KPsiE's Veterano Day.

The veterans and their spouses would like to thank every member of Kappa Psi Epsilon and Chi Rho Omicron for giving them a day to look forward to every year, Veterano Day. The future looks bright ahead seeing first-hand the talents of KPsiE and XPO, the next generation.



Cheerful volunteer servers



Happy raffle winners



President Chloe David



The President and the photographer



Commander Tom Amaba

Veterans Day at Magellan Hall

The commander also was surprised when the 2nd Vice Commander and the adjutant presented him a certificate of appreciation for his record 12th year as Post 604 Commander. Finally, Operation Shutterfly as indicated on the official program began.

We remembered Joe Gonzalez, a two-time commander of the Post, who passed on 12 Sep 2021. We called on Carina Gonzalez, widow of Joe, accompanied by her two sons (Jazel & JV), and Joe's brother Virgil. The adjutant read the special certificate of appreciation to Carina Gonzalez, sometimes stopping because of the emotional moment. It reads, "The phrase, BEHIND EVERY GREAT MAN THERE'S A GREAT WOMAN, resonates clearly when we remember Comrade Joe Gonzalez, nicknamed Joe or Pepito, who unselfishly served the nation, the veterans, and the civilian community. Joe retired as a Master



Speakers and guests



The Missing Man Table with Bill Bostock



A beautiful song by Sofia Palomar



Tinikling by Bayanihan Clinic of UC Davis

Sergeant, a senior non-commissioned officer, from the United States Air Force. As a retiree, he served various leadership roles in the community. For

Magellan Post 604, he served as part of the Officer Committee that led him to being a two-term Commander. Carina, thank you for sharing Pepito with us. We

will never forget Commander Joe Gonzalez." PRESENTED BY MAGELLAN POST 604, DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA, THIS 11TH DAY OF

NOVEMBER 2023. More surprise, the family also received a special customized Shutterfly album designed by the chaplain and approved by the commander. The front cover of the album is a large photo of Joe in his air force uniform holding his wife lovingly close to him, titled - Memories of Carina's Joe. We will continue our mission to never forget our veteran friends and families.

After the official program, every guest enjoyed a luncheon courtesy of the Post. The DJ continued the music that moved some to exert their energy on the dance floor. Another memorable observance of Veterans Day, thanks to the organizing committee chaired by Oscar Meris, counseled by Commander Tom Amaba, Director Rey Ado, and Adjutant Esperante. The teamwork between the leadership and membership of Magellan Post 604 contributed to the success of our Veterans Day 2023.

The Knights of Rizal Sacramento Landmark Chapter

BY IRVIN ISRAEL NOVAL

The Knights of Rizal-Sacramento Landmark Chapter is an Order of Chivalry from the Philippines chartered under Republic Act 646.

The officers paid a courtesy call visit to the consulate last November 28, 2023, and in attendance were Consul-General Neil Frank R. Ferrer, Consul Rowena R. Pangilinan-Daquipil, Vice-Consul Adrian Audrey L. Baccay, KOR Chapter Commander Sir Cesar Sotto, Lady Remelyn Sotto, Deputy Chapter Commander Sir Brian Pastor, Chapter Pursuivant Sir Irvin Israel I. Noval, Chapter Chancellor Sir Loreto Paragas and Chapter Auditor Sir Winston Almojuela.

The group are active leaders and participants in serving the community, most specially in propagating the ideals and teachings of our National Hero Dr. Jose Rizal to the youth and to our fellowmen. They laid out their plans and programs to collaborate with the Consulate's services and activities. They



are excited to accomplish next year 2024, the "Consular Outreach Program" which is to bring consular services to Sacramento including Passport re-

newal, Dual-Citizenship application and voter's registration. Their long-term goal is to hopefully erect a Jose Rizal Bust or a Monument. Upcoming Dec.

30 will be the Rizal-Day which is a Philippine national holiday commemorating life and works of José Rizal, our national hero. Let us not forget this day as his

legacy continues to inspire us. Non-Omnis Moriar, "Not everything in me will die".

Buhay Pinoy

Komiks by Dave San Pedro



Lasang Pinoy Puto Bungbong

- Ingredients**
- 1 1/3 cups sticky purple rice
 - 1 1/3 cups glutinous white rice malagkit
 - 2/3 cup long grain purple rice
 - 6 cups water for soaking the rice
 - 3/4 cups muscovado sugar
 - 1 1/2 cups freshly grated coconut
 - 1/2 cup softened butte

- Instructions**
- Combine all types of rice in a large mixing bowl. Pour water. Soak for 2 days. Drain the water by pouring the contents of the bowl into a large sieve. Put the soaked rice in a large food processor. Start to grind the rice until it becomes very fine. Note: It took me around 10 minutes to achieve this consistency. Fill your puto bungbong steamer with water halfway through. Apply heat and then let the water boil. Meanwhile, fill each bungbong (bamboo tube) with powdered rice. Note: Do not compress the rice so that steam can pass easily. Once the water starts to boil rapidly, arrange each bamboo tube on the steamer. Continue to cook until steam comes out of the tube. Remove the tube from the steamer. Arrange the contents over a piece of banana leaf. Spread butter all over and then top with freshly grated coconut and muscovado sugar.

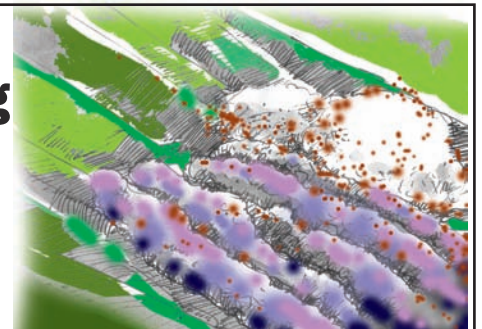
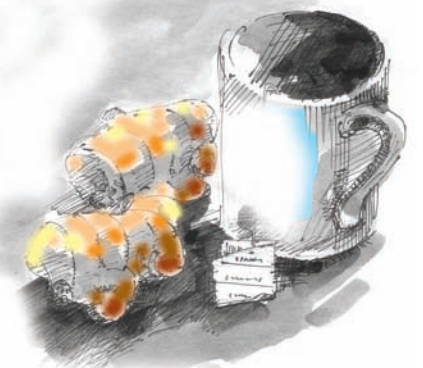


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE SAN PEDRO

Salabat



Boil the water, ginger, and brown sugar together. Reduce heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Add more water if tea is too strong. Strain and serve hot or cold.

STRONGEST



TOGETHER

KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE. If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of anti-Asian hate, bigotry, bias, or discrimination, report at [STOPHATE.CALCIVILRIGHTS.CA.GOV](https://stophate.calcivilrights.ca.gov) or call **833-8-NO-HATE (833-866-4283)**. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**



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.

What You Should Know About Qualified Charitable Distributions

Presented BY MARITES AVILA

A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is a payment made directly from an IRA to a charitable organization. Specific requirements and circumstances must be met before an IRA owner can make a QCD. To help you understand the ins and outs of this charitable distribution, we've summarized the rules and best practices below.

What Are They and How Do They Work?

Generally, regular IRA distributions are considered taxable income for the IRA owner. Qualifying amounts that you donate as a QCD, on the other hand, are excluded from your taxable income. As such, you can use QCDs for lowering your taxable income and, perhaps, minimizing taxes in retirement. To make a QCD, the IRA owner must be age 70½ (the distribution must be made on or after the date he or she reaches 70½). In addition, QCDs made by IRA owners age 73 or older will count toward their required minimum distribution (RMD) for that year.

Although there is no limit on the number of QCDs that can be made each year, the maximum allowable amount per year that can be distributed as a QCD is \$100,000. Any donation amount above \$100,000 will not be considered a QCD and will not qualify for the QCD tax benefit. For married taxpayers filing a joint tax return, \$100,000 can be donated from each spouse's IRA.

The receiving charity must be an organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. Charities that do not qualify include private foundations and donor-advised funds. Be sure to check with your tax preparer or with the organization to confirm eligibility before making the distribution.

Be Aware of These Limitations

QCDs can only be made from



traditional IRAs and traditional inherited IRAs. If making a QCD from an inherited IRA, you would still need to be age 70½ to qualify. QCDs cannot be made from active retirement accounts that you may have with your employer (e.g., SEP IRAs, SIMPLE IRAs, or qualified retirement plans, such as 401(k)s and 403(b)s). One exception to this rule is for inactive SEP and SIMPLE IRAs. QCDs are available from a SEP or SIMPLE IRA plan if the plan has been terminated with the employer or you're no longer employed with the company sponsoring the plan.

Secondly, although a QCD is not taxed, it cannot be claimed as a charitable deduction. A tax advisor can help you determine whether a QCD or a charitable deduction provides the most benefit based on your situation.

Lastly, QCDs are calendar-year transactions. In order to receive a benefit, the distribution must be processed by the end of the calendar year that applies to that particular tax year. There is no option for a QCD to be distributed and applied to a prior tax year.

Special Processing and Reporting Requirements

To qualify as a QCD, the payment must be made directly from your IRA to the charity. So, when issuing a check from the IRA, the check must be made payable to the charity. The funds cannot be distributed to you directly and then later donated as a personal check. Typically, the check is mailed directly to the charity. In some situations, it can be mailed to you, and then you can then send it to the charity (again, the

check must be payable to the charity).

Some custodians allow check-writing features on IRA accounts. You might think this is a convenient way to make a QCD, where you just write a check from your IRA to your desired charity. While this will satisfy the QCD requirements, it's not recommended—for two reasons:

- Sometimes taxes are withheld automatically on checks written against IRAs and withholding taxes from QCDs is not advisable.
- IRA custodians report the distribution only after the receiving charity cashes the check. If the charity fails to cash the

check in a timely manner, the distribution may not be reported as you intended.

All distributions taken from the IRA will be reported on the Form 1099-R issued to you and to the IRS. There is no special coding on this form that designates a distribution as a QCD. It's recommended that you notify your tax preparer of your intent to make a QCD so the tax preparer can report the distributions accordingly. In general, a QCD is reported on Form 1040 as follows:

- Enter the full amount as a charitable distribution on the line for IRA distributions.
- On the line for the taxable amount, enter zero if the full amount was a QCD. Then, enter "QCD" next to this line.

The charitable organization may provide you with a receipt for the payment, which can be included with your tax filing as proof of the donation.

QCDs from Roth IRAs and IRAs with Non-deductible Contributions

Under certain circumstances, a QCD may be made from a Roth IRA. Roth IRAs, however, are not subject to RMDs

and distributions are generally tax free. So, you should consult with a tax advisor to determine if making a QCD from a Roth is appropriate for your circumstances.

In the event you have IRAs with both deductible and non-deductible contributions, distributions made under the QCD provisions will be made from the deductible (pretax) portion of the IRA before the non-deductible (after-tax) portion.

This material has been provided for general informational purposes only and does not constitute either tax or legal advice. Although we go to great lengths to make sure our information is accurate and useful, we recommend you consult a tax preparer, professional tax advisor, or lawyer.

Paragon Financial Services
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Lake Holon

BY GABRIEL ORTIGOZA

My Lake Holon adventure began with a thrilling 5 km habal-habal (motorcycle) ride followed by a 7 km uphill trek of 4,700 feet to the pristine 304-hectare lake. Renowned as the cleanest lake in the Philippines, Lake Holon boasts a majestic ambiance.

Access to the campsite is facilitated through various trails, with my group choosing the Kule Trail. Then a paddled boat ride to the campsite.

A strict 10 PM curfew ensures a serene atmosphere, prohibiting loud music and noise, allowing guests to rest.

At 4 AM, church leaders from the Tboli tribe lead a devotional to worship God before sunrise. Bonfire was set up due to cold weather.

The lake accommodates 200 guests, managed by the municipality of Tboli, requiring preregistration for entry.

The package includes a trekking guide, two meals, one snack, and transportation to/from Central Mindanao. The guide team efficiently sets up and disassembles guest tents, while porters are available at 30 pesos per kilogram to carry luggage.

To enhance comfort, my recommendation for the Tboli government to install clean restrooms with ample water supply for the 200 average week-



end guests.

Lake Holon adventure, organized by SUBiDa for some adventurous and nature loving members of Human Resources of North Cotabato capitol, stands out as the most well-organized adventure, offering an unforgettable experience in the lap of nature.

Feeling alone?

5 tips to create connection and combat loneliness

BY ALLISON AUBREY

Loneliness can cause health problems.

Around the globe, about 1 in 4 adults says they're lonely. And the consequences of long-term social disconnection can be dire — everything from an increased risk of heart attacks to dementia and premature death.

But social isolation isn't new or uncommon. And pangs of loneliness aren't catastrophic. In fact, they're nearly universal. What's critical is how people respond to these feelings when they arise.

"Just like thirst is a signal you need hydration, loneliness is a signal that you need human connection, says Dr. Jeremy Nobel, a primary care physician and author of the new book *Project UnLonely*, which offers a road map to make connections, using creative expression as a means to communicate.

Dr. Jeremy Nobel's new book, *Project UnLonely*, offers a road map for making social connections.

Many factors can increase vulnerability to loneliness, including trauma, sickness or being part of a marginalized group. The bent toward individualism and independence, woven into U.S. culture, may play a role too. The mindset of pull yourself up by your own bootstraps and fend-for-yourself autonomy, "it is part of the American psyche," Nobel says.

Of course, it's possible to be both independent and socially connected, but in recent decades, as societal norms have changed, there are countervailing forces that may make some people more susceptible to loneliness.

"A hundred years ago, your identity was almost fully de-

finied by your gender, your religion and your status," Nobel says, and there wasn't much flexibility to alter it. Now, people have more freedom to chart their own course and create their own identities. "It's both a set of opportunities and a set of challenges," he says, since the process of determining who you are and where you fit in can be disorienting or confusing.

When there's not a prescribed way to "belong," finding connection can be tough. Many people are hesitant to put themselves out there, or they have a hard time communicating what's on their minds. "This is where the arts can be very powerful because they act as a catalyst to make it easier," Nobel says. Drawing a picture may seem like a solitary act, but it can be a bridge to connection, a way to express what's on your mind.

Nobel is a poet. "I feel like I'm in a conversation with a reader I'm imagining when I write a poem," he says. It's one of the art forms that helped him overcome the trauma and loneliness he experienced as a teenager after his father's death and as a young adult after the death of two close friends. As a believer in the medicinal power of creative expression, he founded the Foundation for Art & Healing about 20 years ago.

Some of his earliest work was with active-duty service members and veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with post-traumatic stress. They gathered in small groups to engage in artistic expression and mindfulness activities. At this point, Nobel's main focus was helping people deal with trauma. "People began tell-

ing us that not only were they less stressed out, but they felt more connected to each other, something I later realized was addressing a certain kind of loneliness," Nobel says.

Project UnLonely now partners with community-based organizations to develop evidence-based creative expression programs, which can include music, painting, drawing and beyond. Nobel says the options are endless. "Culinary arts is a big one," he says. Many people find creative expression through cooking and baking. There are also textile arts such as knitting, crocheting or quilting. Even gardening is a form of artistic expression. "It's what a friend of mine calls the world's slowest performance art form," Nobel says.

Research shows making art or even viewing the work of other people reduces levels of the stress hormone cortisol. It also increases levels of the feel-good hormones, including dopamine, endorphins and oxytocin. "So what the arts do is they relax you and put you



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE SAN PEDRO

in a good mood," Nobel says, which can help create an inviting vibe to connect. One of the goals of *Project UnLonely* is to encourage people to get started on their own. Here are some tips to get going.

1. Be curious

It's easier to connect with people if you have shared interests or experiences, so start paying attention to what's on your mind. What are you thinking about? What motivates you? What excites you? Nobel says knowing yourself can be a first step to bonding with others. "I think connecting authentically with other people is best done — and perhaps only done — if you have some kind of authentic connection with yourself," Nobel says. If you know what's meaningful or fun for you, it may lead you to an activity or creative outlet that connects you to people who share your interest.

2. Make something

"When we say make something, people immediately say, 'Well, I'm not Picasso. I don't know how to do a fancy painting,'" Nobel says. And, of course, you're not! But the opportunities for creative expression are endless. "Do a doodle [or] a dance move," Nobel suggests. Resurrect your grandma's pie recipe, plant an herb garden, try a textile art. "Make something that puts your thoughts and feelings and vision about who you are and what matters into a tangible artifact that then can express those thoughts and feelings to others," he says.

3. Take a risk by having conversations

"Share something about yourself," Nobel says. "It doesn't have to be the biggest, darkest secret of your life, but just something you think other people might find interesting and compelling, and see where it goes." Even if you're nervous about being judged or dismissed, putting yourself out there requires a bit of a risk, and it's the first step to authentic connection. If you've made something — say your doodle or dance move or pie — this can be a catalyst to sharing. Simply explaining what you've made may make it easier to open up about who you are.

4. Find a group that matches your interests

Whether it's volunteering for a cause you believe in or playing frisbee or Scrabble, try to find others who share your interests. And if you follow your natural curiosities, you may find something new. In his book, Nobel describes an online group that has a quirky shared interest: a fascination with brown bears in Alaska, which led to Fat Bear Week.

"Share your thoughts and feelings in creative ways with other people who have that interest," he says. And, hopefully, in those interactions you can begin to reveal yourself and share the unique things that matter to you. "Then, other people recognize that, share their story in return, and it's like an electric circuit is connected," he says.

5. Other people's loneliness matters too

Loneliness can spiral. If the pangs of loneliness go unaddressed, people can end up in a world of hurt. "If you see someone who's experiencing loneliness, tolerate the risk of asking them how they're doing," Nobel says. Be kind. Be willing to share something about your own experiences of loneliness, and take that risk. "Other people's loneliness makes us lonely too," he says.

Explainer: How climate change is making the world sick

BY GLORIA DICKIE

Heat stress. Lung damage from wildfire smoke. The spread of disease-carrying mosquitoes into new regions as temperatures rise.

These are just a few of the ways that public health has been impacted and compounded by climate change - a focus for the first time ever at the annual U.N. climate summit COP28.

Government ministers are expected to discuss ways they can protect people from climate-driven health threats, which now threaten to undo decades of progress in public health.

From 2030, experts expect that just four of these threats - malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress - will push global death tolls up by 250,000 per year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

"Extreme weather events are becoming extreme health events," said Martin Edlund, CEO of global health nonprofit Malaria No More.

Here's how climate change is harming people's health across the world today, and what countries might expect in the future.

VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

Mosquitoes that carry viruses

including dengue, malaria, West Nile and Zika are shifting into new parts of the world as warmer temperatures and heavy rains create more hospitable conditions for them to breed.

Reported dengue cases have grown from around half a million in 2000 to more than 5 million in 2019, according to the WHO.

Just this year, cases in Brazil are up 73% against the five-year average, said Edlund, with Bangladesh suffering a record dengue outbreak.

Climate change is also having an unpredictable impact on malaria, with 5 million more cases registered in 2022 than the previous year - reaching a total of 249 million, the WHO's World Malaria Report found.

Floods in Pakistan last year, for example, led to a 400% increase in malaria cases in the country, the report said. The disease has also spread into the highlands of Africa that previously had been cold for mosquitoes.

Two new malaria vaccines



[1/4]Flames and smoke rise from a line of trees as a wildfire burns at the Dadia National Park on the region of Evros, Greece, September 1, 2023. REUTERS/Alexandros Avramidis

expected to be available next year offer some hope of combating the scourge.

MURKY WATERS

Storms and flooding wrought by climate change are allowing other infectious water-borne diseases to proliferate as well.

After decades of progress against cholera, an intestinal infection spread by contaminated food and water, case numbers are rising again, including in countries that had all but extirpated the disease.

Without treatment, cholera can kill within hours.

In 2022, 44 countries reported cholera cases, a 25% increase over 2021, according to the WHO, which noted the role

WHO said.

Diarrhoea, too, receives a boost from climate change, with increasingly erratic rainfall - resulting in either wet or dry conditions - yielding a higher risk, research has found.

Diarrhoea is the world's second leading cause of death among children under 5, after pneumonia, claiming the lives of more than half a million kids every year.

EXTREME HEAT AND SMOKY SKIES

Heat stress - one of the more obvious health impacts of global warming - is projected to impact hundreds of millions of people as temperatures con-

tinued to climb through the next few decades.

With the world already about 1.1C (2F) warmer than the average preindustrial temperature, people in 2022 experienced about 86 days on average of dangerously high temperatures, a report from the Lancet medical journal found last month.

If the world warms by 2C above preindustrial levels, the report said, yearly heat deaths could more than quadruple.

A July study in the journal Nature Medicine estimated that some 61,000 people died during European heatwaves in the summer of 2022.

The heat has also made forests drier, fuelling extreme wildfires that have swept across large swathes of the world in recent years.

During the decade starting in 2010, more than 2 billion people were exposed to at least one day per year of unhealthy air pollution from fire smoke, according to a September study in the journal Nature. That was up by 6.8% compared with the previous decade.

In the United States, wildfire air pollution now kills somewhere between 4,000 and 28,000 people annually, according to the American Thoracic Society.

Situation in Gaza 'getting worse by the hour' - WHO

BY EMMA FARGE & GABRIELLE TETRAULT-FARBER

A World Health Organization official in Gaza said on Tuesday the situation was deteriorating by the hour as Israeli bombing has intensified in the south of the Palestinian enclave around the cities of Khan Younis and Rafah.

"The situation is getting worse by the hour," Richard Peepkorn, WHO representative in Gaza, told reporters via video link. "There's intensified bombing going on all around, including here in the southern areas, Khan Younis and even in Rafah."

Peepkorn said the humanitarian aid reaching Gaza was "way too little" and said the WHO was deeply concerned about the vulnerability of the health system in the densely populated enclave as more people move further south to escape the bombing.

"We will witness the same

pattern of what happened in the north," he said, referring to an area of northern Gaza that was heavily bombed and nearly cut off from humanitarian supplies.

"That cannot happen ... I want to make this point very clear that we are looking at an increasing humanitarian disaster."

Thomas White, Director of Affairs at the U.N. Palestinian agency in Gaza, said a population of more than 600,000 had been ordered to move to escape bombardment.

"Rafah that normally has a population of 280K and already



Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli strike, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, December 4. REUTERS/Fadi Shana

hosting around 470K IDP (internally displaced people) will not cope with a doubling of its IDP population," White wrote on social media platform X.

James Elder, spokesperson for the United Nations children's agency UNICEF, said the areas

medicine and shelter," he told reporters via video link from Cairo after visiting Gaza.

"I've seen for myself these are entirely, entirely absent... These are tiny patches of barren land or they're street corners.

of Gaza designated as safe by Israel were nowhere near meeting basic requirements, warning an absence of sanitation and shelter have created a "perfect storm" for outbreaks of disease.

"It's a safe zone when you can guarantee the conditions of food, water,

They're sidewalks. They're half-built buildings. There is no water."

He added: "Only a ceasefire is going to save the children of Gaza right now," and called the Israeli approach to creating these zones "callous and cold".

The WHO's Peepkorn said the agency had complied with an Israeli order to remove supplies from warehouses in Khan Younis. He said WHO had been told the area would "most likely become an area of active combat in the coming days."

"We want to make sure that we can actually deliver essential medical supplies," he said.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Monday appealed to Israel to withdraw the order. Israel denied asking for the evacuation of warehouses.

Photograph by Andri Tambunan



YOUR LIGHT YOUR TRUTH

YOU ARE MULTIFACETED, YOU ARE BRIGHT, YOU ARE SEEN AND YOU ARE NEEDED. DON'T BE AFRAID TO SHINE YOUR LIGHT THE WAY ONLY YOU CAN.

"Trans and non-binary Filipinos exist. Our pre-colonial ancestors had spiritual leaders, the Babaylan (femme priestesses of any gender). They didn't follow colonial ideas of gender and gender roles and were highly respected in their communities. Today, they continue to challenge the status quo and fight for freedom. Knowing this history of our people makes me feel proud to be who I am." **KIANA AQUINO**

TO REPORT A HATE ACT, CALL (833)866-4283 OR VISIT CAVSHATE.ORG



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.

STOP ASIAN HATE



BE THE CHANGE.

**COME FORWARD
TELL YOUR STORY.**

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
Report at STOPHATE.CALCIVILRIGHTS.CA.GOV.
Or Call 833-8-NO-HATE (833-866-4283)



Photo by Dave San Pedro

Photograph by Andri Tambunan

November 2023

ILAW NG LIPUNAN

AAPI HATE AND VIOLENCE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS FILIPINA WOMEN AS THEY ACCOUNT FOR 55% (247) OF THE REPORTS IN CALIFORNIA.* But that darkness cannot dim our light. Proudly burn bright to lead our community. 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)**.

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*Data pulled from the Bulosan Center's report on California Filipinos which gathered data from Stop AAPI Hate

SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 20, 2024

THE LABAN GROUP LAUNCHES YEAR TWO

SAVE THE DATE and join us on SATURDAY, January 20 to start off the new year with us!

We can't believe it's already been a year since our first Laban press conference and ad campaign launch! Our January Kick-Off event will recap our first year and highlight the necessity of continued support for ethnic media. We will also be unveiling some exciting updates for our second year, as well as launching the first ad for our 2024 campaign.

Light bites will be served!
More details to come.



CALIFORNIA AY PARA SA LAHAT

Upang mag-ulat ng isang mapoot na gawa Tumawag sa (833)866-4283 o bisitahin ang CAVsHate.org

Call 833-8-NO-HATE or Visit CAVsHate.org

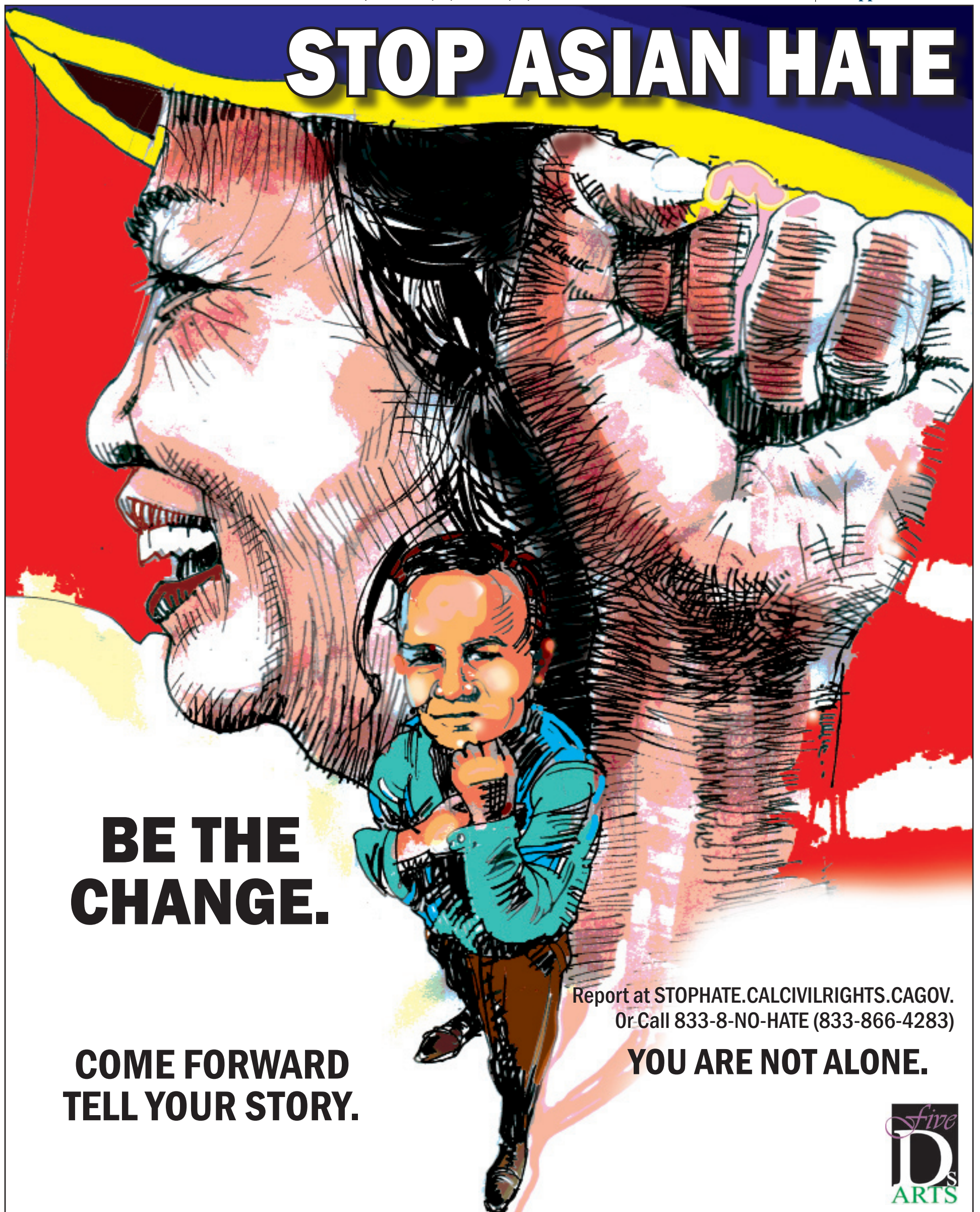
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TO REPORT A HATE ACT, CALL 833.866.4283 OR VISIT CAVSHATE.ORG

Photo by Dave San Pedro

STOP ASIAN HATE




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YOU ARE NOT ALONE.





FCSV

CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE

INDUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF NEW FCSV OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Time: 5:00-10:00 PM
Date: Sunday, December 10, 2023
Location: Rizal Community Center 7320 Florin Mall Dr., Sacramento, CA 95823

Hear our plans for the coming year, enjoy a sumptuous dinner, and join in the fabulous entertainment.
 \$25 Donation

RSVP by Thursday, Dec. 7
To: Murray Navarro @ 916-230-7809

Attire: Filipiana, Business Casual, Cocktail

FCSV CHRISTMAS PARTY



DEC. 16, 2023
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SACRAMENTO, CA

RSVP
ROSELIE CRANDALL
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