



P3 Bongbong Marcos and Sarah Duterte

PHILIPPINE Fiesta

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P8 Remembering Bataan

Bagong Pilipinas won't allow lazy, dishonest people in gov't - Marcos



Bagong Pilipinas kick-off rally

BY FAITH ARGOSINO

MANILA, Philippines — Government officials who are lazy, dishonest, and oppressing others have no room under “Bagong Pilipinas,” President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said on Sunday.

During his speech at the Bagong Pilipinas kick-off rally in Quirino Grandstand, Marcos stressed that government officials should be open to feedback and prioritize the welfare of Filipinos.

“Sa mga kawani ng gobyerno una bawal ang tamad at maku-pad sa pamahalaan. (Government employees who are lazy and slow are not allowed under this administration.) Services must be fast, projects must be completed on time, deadlines must be met per schedule, dis-

truss calls must be responded to without delay,” the chief executive said.

Another trait a government official should have is honesty and efficiency in utilizing people’s money.

“In what ever government of- fice red tape must be replaced with red carpet [...] Bawal ang mga hindi tapat at nangungu- limbat kapag pera ng bayan ang nawala dahil sa katiwalian ang mga tao paglalaanan sana ng pondong naglaho ay nanan- akawan sa Bagong Pilipinas bawal ang waldas.” Marcos said.

(Those who are corrupt are not allowed because the money that should be for the welfare of the people should not be stolen. People using the govern- ment’s money have no place in Bagong Pilipinas.)

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Community groups launch ad campaign led by Filipino artists to fight Asian hate

BY ARI PLACHTA

Sacramento grocery stores, casinos and Golden 1 Center will soon be adorned by an image calling attention to a single word: Kapwa. In Filipino, the word means fellowship or togetherness.

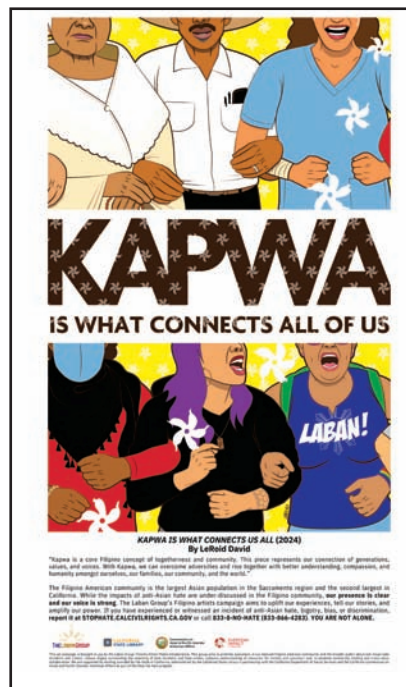


Sacramento Asian American community leaders and local Filipino artists gathered to launch the Laban Group’s 2024 ad campaign to combat anti-Asian hate in midtown on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024. Ari Plachta aplachta@sacbee.com

The colorful, comic-esque digital illustration of six people linked arm-in-arm in struggle marks the first advertisement in a new campaign by local Asian American community groups launched Saturday in midtown Sacramento to combat Asian hate.

“When we have an issue, solving it takes a community not just an individual,” said LeRoid David, one of eight artists whose work will be featured each month as part of the Laban Group campaign funded with a state grant. “I hope this will trigger folks to find out about it and live in the spirit of kapwa.”

A digital illustration by Sacramento artist LeRoid David that will be featured first in the Laban Group’s 2024 Filipino artist campaign to spread awareness on anti-Asian hate, launched Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024.



A digital illustration by Sacramento artist LeRoid David that will be featured first in the Laban Group’s 2024 Filipino artist campaign to spread awareness on anti-Asian hate, launched Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024. Ari Plachta aplachta@sacbee.com

Launched more than a year ago, the Filipino media collaborative led by Everyday Impact Consulting includes the Asian American Liberation Network and Filipino Fiesta News. Its “Reclaiming our Visibility” ad campaign last year featured photographs of Sacramento AAPI leaders.

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, America saw a dramatic uptick in violence against Asian Americans spurred in part by racist rhetoric. In California, hate crimes against Asian Americans increased by 177.5% from 2020 to 2021, according to the state Department of Justice.

It prompted Gov. Gavin Newsom and the AAPI Legislative Caucus to create an Asian and Pacific Islander equity budget the same year.

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The Filipino Women’s Club



FWC Induction of New Members and Installation of Officers and Board Members for 2024-2025

BY LEILA PEREIRA

The Filipino Women’s Club (FWC) kicked off 2024 with a well attended first meeting on Saturday, January 20, 2024 at the Magellan Hall. The main agenda was the Induction of New Members and the Installation of the 2024-2025 Officers

and Board of Directors.

Special thank you to Lions Club International District 4-C5 Governor/Past FWC President, Zenny Yagen, for the distinct honor as the inducting and installing officer.

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People are the ultimate arbiter in political conflict for common good



BY BENJAMIN ABAYA

If we are to peruse the pages of our history book on political upheavals in many countries, we will surely come across bloody confrontations between the civilian and military authorities. When the opposition becomes stronger and confrontational on many issues, the incumbent administration can declare Martial Law to silence them.

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BY CYNTHIA BONTA
Founding Director
Philippine National Day Association

There was nothing tentative about Sorcy. No “in-between;” No “somewhat only;” No “maybe.”

So when she cared for you, she cared all the way, your imperfections included.” But being the teacher she instinctively was, she could turn any moment into a teaching/learning encounter sparking a process of transformation, slow though it may be. She knew very well most of us resist changing, would rather stick to our comfort zone. So she did not expect change to happen over night. But she was fierce in her determination, in her consistency, that you actually changed without realizing when it all happened. You just felt good about yourself.”

I do not mean that she picked on us as individuals to change, it was us as a group of individuals drawn by our common interests, by our community service, and of course, by Sorcy’s cooking. What did she affect? Our values, our culture our perspective, our world view.”

Sorcy turned controversial to popular.

When Becca was five years old or so, Sorcy entered her in Little Miss Philippines, a beauty contest sponsored by the Philippine Consulate. She was without question the cutest! But wait a minute, you say. Are you kidding? Sorcy was not the type who would perpetuate queen contests. Oh

no, this denigrated the image of a woman! A woman is not a decorative object!

When it came to the interview and Becca was asked, “Why do you think you should be Little Miss Philippines?” This is what Sorcy prompted her to say. It was all rehearsed before hand. Becca answered, “Because I was born in 1986- the year of the EDSA Revolution when Filipino People’s Power overthrew the Marcos Dictatorship.” So unexpected coming from a 5 year old. A response that no one could possibly upstage. A response so bold, it defied any remnants of pro-Marcos sentiments in the

crowd. REBECCA APOSTOL WON LITTLE MISS PHILIPPINES!”

Sorcy was revolutionary by being vulnerable.

We were not only witnesses to

our thoughts and feelings and questions and doubts. We stumbled and fell and rose again together through growing pains with our other family, our revolutionary family. Our sacrifices were worth it, we toppled a dictatorship. “But I

speak of another dimension of our lives together. A lesson we learned together that we both wish to share. Even in the closest of families there always can be brokenness but to regain wholeness is always possible. Compassion for the other person who caused you hurt and disappointment will enable you to understand what might have caused the seeming abandonment. This can allow your heart to forgive releasing that person from all the blame. By so doing your heart lets go of power and control of the other leaving you vulnerable. This act that leaves you vulnerable is revolutionary!!! In our vulnerability love can come in to be received and to be reciprocated.

Sorcy wears the color lilac, a shade of purple. Sorcy was gorgeous in lilac!

Sorcy’s message to us in the Sacramento Filipino American community is always empowering. When she talks about our culture and our history it makes us proud and uplifts us. History happened, it is the truth. It defines who we are as a people and us descendants of a people who determined their destiny as a free people at every era of oppression. A community empowered by love is something to be deeply grateful for. This has always been the goal of Sorcy’s community leadership that she has left us to continue:

Lead In Love And Community”

The Essence that is Sorcy



Consorcia “Sorcy” Concepcion Apostol



Sorcy and husband Bo



Rinabeth, Sorcy and Rebecca

Community groups launch ad campaign led by Filipino artists to fight Asian hate

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With \$166.5 million in investment over three years to help agencies combat Asian hate, the Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs has offered 168 grants to community organizations to highlight awareness.



Megan Sapigao

who teaches political science at San Joaquin Delta College. “Hate has no place in our communities and in the state of California.”

Megan Sapigao, co-founder and executive director of the Asian American Liberation Network, noted that Friday marked the anniversary of the 1930 Watsonville riots, where white mobs attacked Filipino farm workers.

“Anti-Asian hate didn’t just start (with) COVID. There is a deep history here and oftentimes we don’t learn it in a classroom,” Sapigao said. She said the ad campaign is meant to help the Filipino and greater

AAPI community to see their stories in local media, have access to resources and find community.

“What I’ve learned is that communities need trusted messengers to see ourselves with a cultural nuance that white-centric media doesn’t capture,” she added. “Making our ads community-led and -centered is how we’ll get our message across and build trust.”

Caucus Commissioner Cirian Villavicencio celebrated declines in recorded hate crimes against Asian Americans over the past two years. But community leaders were quick to point to the need for continued attention on such incidents, many of which go unreported.

“We need to remain vigilant and unrelenting in our advocacy,” said Villavicencio,



Editor’s Note

It has been a beautiful beginning of the year! Our Filipino community never ceases to amaze me. A big round of applause for the Filipino Community of Sacramento and Vicinity’s successful Kickoff event, held just last week, with another event lined up already for February. More to say, is the upcoming June 7 event, a re-imagined event from the 2002 Sama-Sama Fashion Show, which will involve everyone in our Filipino community. It’s going to be one of the biggest fundraising events for our Community Center Building Project. We have prospective models or participants to invite, but if anyone would be interested to participate, please let us know. As the chairperson of the event along with the other cochairs and committees, we’re looking forward to another successful fundraising event. Please join us and be part of our Filipino Community Center’s groundbreaking moment!

A big congratulations also to the Laban Group’s second round in our Filipino community, in which the Philippine Fiesta News is affiliated with, in our pursuit to Stopping Asian Hate incidences and crimes.

Other big events in our community is the Filipino American Veteran Association’s 35th Anniversary celebration to be held on Feb.9, the Maharlika Lion’s Club Crabfeed on Feb. 23, Rize All’s Clairvoyance Art Show on Feb. 3, and I’m sure there are many more but didn’t just make it to our printing.

Here’s hoping that the month of February is as exciting as it has always been for our community!

With love always,
Dinnah San Pedro

Foul-mouthed Duterte at it again, spits venom at Marcos and calls him 'drug addict'

BY HERBIE GOMEZ

Cagayan De Oro, Philippines – Former president Rodrigo Duterte cursed at President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and repeatedly called him a “drug addict” at a protest rally organized by Duterte supporters in Davao City on Sunday night, January 28.

In a show of force dubbed as Davao’s “opposition” to the Marcos administration’s push for charter change via people’s initiative, the foul-mouthed ex-leader said Marcos was constantly high, “bangag.”

Duterte said, “Bongbong, bangag ‘yan. That’s why sina-sabi ko sa inyo. Si Bongbong Marcos bangag noon. Ngayong presidente na, bangag ang ating presidente. Kayong mga military alam ninyo ‘yan, lalo na ‘yong mga nasa Malacañang, alam ninyo. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, alam ninyo. May drug addict tayo na presidente! Putang inang ‘yan!’”

(Bongbong, he’s high. That’s why I’m telling you. Bongbong Marcos was high back then. Now that he’s the president, he’s still high. You in the military, especially those in Malacañang, you know it. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, you know it. We have a drug addict for a president! That son of a whore!)

Duterte alleged that he even saw Marcos’ name in the list of drug personalities of the Philippine Drug Enforcement

Agency (PDEA) when he was mayor.

PDEA: So why did you not name him?

PDEA, in a statement carried by the Philippine Information Agency, “categorically” stated that the President “is not and was never” on its watch list.

Being a relatively new agency, PDEA said it was established in 2002 and shortly after came up with its database of drug personalities called the “National Drug Information System.”

Marcos “was never in our NIDS,” PDEA said.

Duterte had served as mayor from 1988 to 1998; then from 2001-2010, and then from 2013 to 2016, PDEA noted. When he became president, Duterte released his own narco-lists which, PDEA noted, never mentioned Marcos.

As president from 2016-2022, Duterte regularly released to the public his so-called narco lists of top drug users, protectors and smugglers. By December 2017, PDEA said Duterte’s narco list already contained at least 6,000 names.

However, Duterte’s own son, Davao City 1st District Representative Paolo Duterte, was also linked to illegal drugs and was probed by the Senate for his alleged role in facilitating drug shipments in Mindanao. He was eventually exonerated. Duterte’s beef

After cursing Marcos at the Sunday rally, the Davao strongman talked about his real beef with the President: the current administration’s decision to not get in the way of the International Criminal Court’s probe



Foul-mouthed Duterte at it again, spits venom at Marcos and calls him 'drug addict'

into Duterte’s alleged crimes during his brutal anti-drug campaign as mayor and president.

Informed sources have said that ICC probes came to the Philippines in December. Asked about the possibility of a visit then, Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra said he saw “no reason” to prevent them from entering the country.

“Bakit ako nagkaroon ng kaso ng ICC? Sabi nila pinapatay ko daw ang mga drug pusher at drug addict. Mabuti na lang wala na ako sa puwesto baka kasali ka pa,” a fuming Duterte said.

(Why am I facing charges in the ICC [International Criminal Court]? They say I had drug pushers and addicts killed. Good thing I’m no longer in office, or you might be among them.)

Foul-mouthed Duterte at it again, spits venom at Marcos and calls him ‘drug addict’

His youngest son, Davao City Mayor Sebastian “Baste” Duterte, also hit Marcos over the ICC probe of his father in a speech at a program prior to the rally. How could Marcos do it when Duterte allowed a hero’s burial for the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, the President’s father and namesake, the younger Duterte said. It was also in that speech where he asked the President to resign. Not the first time

Duterte has been dropping hints about Marcos and drug use. That he would eventually “expose” him has been in the political grapevine for months now.

In November 2021, he took jabs at an unnamed 2022 presi-

dential candidate, whose traits matched Marcos, calling him a cocaine user. Duterte made the remarks after his daughter Sara became Marcos Jr.’s running mate, a decision that upset the then-president, who wanted her to run for president and succeed him.

On November 18, 2021, Duterte claimed that the leading presidential candidate at that time used cocaine and was a “weak leader” who heavily relied on his father’s political name. He did not identify the candidate at that time.

Responding to Duterte’s 2021 allegation, Marcos had himself tested at the Saint Luke’s Medical Center on November 22, 2022, and the result showed him negative for cocaine.

Marcos said the results were submitted to the police, PDEA, and National Bureau of Investigation.

Days before Duterte’s blind item, Marcos Jr. also tested negative for shabu (meth). The November 10, 2022 test was made because it was a requirement for a gun permit.

In the same Sunday rally, Duterte said that First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos and Speaker Martin Romualdez were behind the move to change the charter (Cha-Cha). He warned the President that he might face the fate of his ousted father should he push through with the Cha-Cha.

Duterte himself had pushed for Cha-Cha as president, but COVID-19 prevented him from seeing it through.

– Rappler.com

UniTeam is intact, vibrant and working – Marcos

BY HERBIE GOMEZ

The “UniTeam” of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. and Vice President Sara Duterte remains intact, the Chief Executive said on Tuesday.

“If you remember ‘Uniteam’ is not just one party of two parties or three parties. It’s the unification of all political, hopefully all political forces in the Philippines to come together for the good country,” Marcos said.

Marcos and Duterte ran and won under the “UniTeam” banner



Bongbong Marcos and Sara Duterte

in the 2022 national elections.

“And that is still there. It is

still vibrant. It is still working, and we will continue,” Marcos added.

The vice president’s father, former president Rodrigo Duterte, had earlier accused Marcos of being a drug user, claiming that he had been shown evidence of his narcotics use.

Asked in an interview Vietnam where he is on an official visit how his relationship with Sara Duterte is, Marcos said “it’s exactly the same.”

According to Marcos, Vice President Duterte has echoed none of her family members’ statements, so nothing has changed.

While the vice president did not explicitly state if she agreed

or disagreed with her brother Davao City Mayor Sebastian Duterte’s call for Marcos to resign over the weekend, she justified that her brother’s did it out of brotherly love.

“I can only surmise that he is coming from a place of brotherly love, coupled [with] the common sentiment that I do not deserve the despicable treatment that I am receiving from some sectors within the circle of the President,” Vice President Duterte said in a previous statement. *Inquirer.net*

Bagong Pilipinas won’t allow lazy, dishonest people in gov’t - Marcos

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And lastly, he emphasized that officials like him should serve the people and not oppress them.

“Pangatlo, bawal ang mapangapi at naghahari harian you are servants of the people not their lords wag natin pahirapan ang ating taong bayan bagkus suklian ang kanilang tiwala ng magalang na panunungkulan,” Marcos stressed.

(Third, government officials who are oppressing others

should not be allowed as well. You are their servants and not lords; return their trust with humble service.)

Marcos is joined by other government officials such as Senator Jinggoy Estrada, Senator Lito Lapid, Senator Ramon Revilla, House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, Pampanga Representative Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Executive Secretary Chief Luke Bersamin, Presidential Communications Secretary Che-



loy Garafil, First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos, and his son

House Senior Deputy Majority Leader Sandro Marcos.

Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte also appeared hours before Marcos but left to join the prayer rally held in Davao City.

During the event, registered individuals availed of various assistance from the government, such as the “Serbisyo Fair” for beneficiaries of the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation of the Department of Social Welfare and Development

and eCard enrollment verification of record, loan application, and housing programs under the Government Service Insurance System.

Other services include civil registration services under the Philippine Statistics Authority, Philippine Identification System Registration and the ePhilID Issuance, and issuance of clearance for jobseekers under the National Bureau of Investigation, according to the Presidential Communications



BY BENJAMIN ABAYA

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Most of the democratic form of government Martial law could be imposed by the president of the executive branch calling the armed forces of the country to help quell the widespread violence and unabated disturbances to return the country into its original peaceful place to live in. As expected, civil liberties are suspended, and they are superseded by military rules and regulations. When such a situation happens, military tribunals are set up where the civil judicial system fails to function to put into trial those who are criminally charged as provided by existing laws.

Conversely, if the civilian authorities abuse its power and are unable to govern as constitutionally mandated, the president who is supposed to implement the laws can be legally removed from power through impeachment by the legislative body of the government. In the same manner, the civilian authorities can be superseded by a military rule by staging a Coup d'état, which forcibly makes the armed forces of the country to hold power until civilian authority is restored through a clean and honest election.

Undoubtedly, political turmoil across the world is no longer started by political ideology, racial and religious differences but it can also emanate from the leaders themselves whose personal greed for power is immeasurable. In such a situation, the segment of the people who suffered most are the poor who are always neglected and sidestepped for better living. The world witnessed such a despicable political situation in 1972 during the second term of the late Ferdinand E. Marcos of the Philippines who declared Martial Law and ruled the country through Presidential Decree.

It was alleged that the grounds for the declaration of Martial Law was the growing strength of the opposition led by then Senator Benigno Aquino of the province of Tarlac. It was even alleged that he and his political party were in connivance with the National People's Party (NPA) to destabilize the government for possible takeover. Likewise, the Moro National Liberation front (MNLF) also joined the opposition when it was reported that Muslim soldiers were massacred in the island of Corregidor who were on training for a possible foreign country military involvement. Such speculation was never proved after the incident was investigated. Nevertheless, the Muslim organization became a military arm to separate part of Mindanao from the Republic of the Philippines sovereignty to become a Muslim country of their own.

To add on the political and economic problems of the country was the assassination of the opposition leader senator Benigno Aquino at the tarmac of the Manila International Airport in 1983 when he arrived from the United States for his medical problem. That was the start of a bigger mass demonstration against the Marcos dictatorship.

Since then, almost daily mass demon-

People are the Ultimate Arbiter in Political Conflict for Common Good



The People Power Revolution in the Philippines, also known as the EDSA Revolution, was a series of nonviolent and largely spontaneous protests that took place in Manila from February 22 to 25, 1986.



The People Power Revolution highlighted the importance of democracy and the active participation of citizens in shaping the political destiny of the nation.

strations of the alleged abuse of power of the armed forces were reported in every media outlet vividly describing the violence and brutality on how peaceful rallies, the constitutional right of the people to express their grievances were dispersed. It was also crystal clear that graft and corruption were rampant in every governmental department of the Marcos administration. It was also revealed that while most of the Filipinos suffered from economic woes, the Marcos family and their cronies were enjoying their extravagance and opulent living.

Eventually, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Fidel Ramos and National Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile joined the opposition and called Ferdinand Marcos to step down and to hold snap election for his successor. For such a surprising shift of power, President Marcos was immobilized to call the military even the most loyal for him to order them for a possible way out on how the precarious situation the military could possibly solve the complicated problem.

The final blow to the presidency of Marcos was the surprised involvement

of Cardinal Jaime Sin who used the pulpit calling all catholic and Christian Filipinos to assimilate themselves with the opposition to put down what he called a dictator authoritarian regime. Eventually, the almost two million Filipinos who were in unison chanting "alis dian Marcos pwe ; (destined words saying, move out Marcos) in all walks of lives who bravely occupied the entire length of Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (EDSA) from Quezon Boulevard junction to Ayala Avenue and Mendiola Street, Metro Manila finally won on their objective sending Marcos to Hawaii, USA with the help of the United States Air force stationed at Clark Airfield in Pampanga, Philippines avoiding a possible civil war between Filipinos themselves.

The roots of the People Power Revolution can be traced back to 1972 when Marcos declared martial law, allowing him to rule by decree and curbing civil liberties. The opposition to his regime grew, fueled by economic hardships, human rights abuses, and a desire for democratic reforms.

The People Power Revolution in the Philippines, also known as the EDSA

Revolution, was a series of nonviolent and largely spontaneous protests that took place in Manila from February 22 to 25, 1986. The revolution marked the culmination of years of discontent and opposition to the authoritarian rule of President Ferdinand Marcos. The revolution is celebrated as a shining example of people's collective action for democracy and change.

This year marks the 38th Anniversary of The People Power Revolution protest and although it happened decades before, the reverberation of that moment has lingered into today's modern political landscape in the Philippines. It is often considered a significant event in the country's modern history, to the point where today's current president of the Philippines is Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr., the son of the infamous Ferdinand Marcos.

In many ways, The People Power Revolution highlighted the importance of democracy and the active participation of citizens in shaping the political destiny of the nation. It demonstrated that people could bring about change through peaceful means. Furthermore, the mobilization of various sectors of society, including religious groups, business leaders, and ordinary citizens, showcased the strength of civil society in advocating for political reform and human rights. Also, the role of media, particularly radio and television, was crucial in disseminating information and rallying public support during the revolution. The media's influence in shaping public opinion remains a key aspect of contemporary Philippine politics.

Advocacy plays a crucial and multifaceted role in the United States and across the globe, in various domains, including politics, social justice, healthcare, environmental issues, and more. While the People Power Revolution brought about positive changes, it's important to note that the Philippines, like any other country, has faced ongoing challenges in its journey toward a more stable and inclusive democracy. The impact of the revolution continues to be reflected in the country's political, social, and cultural landscape.

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KAPWA

IS WHAT CONNECTS ALL OF US



KAPWA IS WHAT CONNECTS US ALL (2024)
By LeRoid David

“Kapwa is a core Filipino concept of togetherness and community. This piece represents our connection of generations, values, and voices. With Kapwa, we can overcome adversities and rise together with better understanding, compassion, and humanity amongst ourselves, our families, our community, and the world.”

The Filipino American community is the largest Asian population in the Sacramento region and the second largest in California. While the impacts of anti-Asian hate are under-discussed in the Filipino community, **our presence is clear and our voice is strong.** The Laban Group’s Filipino artists campaign aims to uplift our experiences, tell our stories, and amplify our power. 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.**



This 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. We are supported by funding provided by the State of California, administered by the California State Library in partnership with the California Department of Social Services and the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs as part of the Stop the Hate program.

Overseas Filipino Workers: Living on the edge

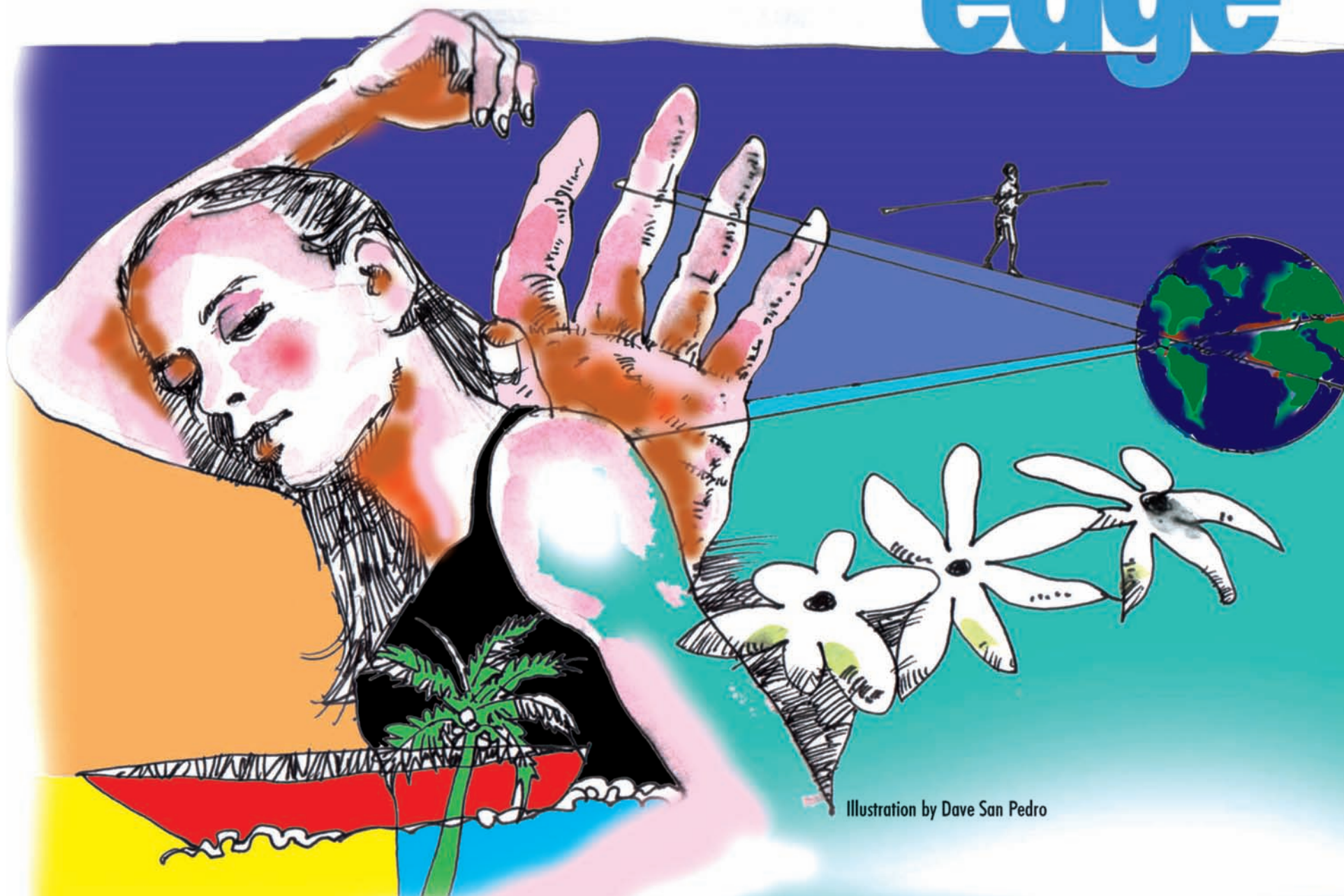


Illustration by Dave San Pedro

BY LAURA GATMAITAN PEREZ

What stand out in airport arrival areas, soothe the senses, are grown in the Philippines and squeezed dry abroad? The correct answer is sampaguita. Anybody who answered “Filipinas” is likely to be challenged GABRIELA, a Philippine-based organization campaigning against the trafficking of Filipino women and children for prostitution, as they seem more like purple roses, “genetically engineered for the pleasure and profit of others.”

The US annual report on trafficking in persons discloses that thousands of Filipino women fall prey to modern-day slavery in their search for better jobs outside the Philippines. Enticed with false promises of legitimate employment, they are sexually exploited when they reach their destinations across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America.

Of the estimated seven million Filipinos working in 193 nations, 70% are women, ranking Filipinas among the most mobile or migratory in Asia, a University of the Philippines sociologist said. Our countrymen started leaving night after Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972. A year later, they took advantage of the Labor Export Program to flee Marcos repressive regime.

Historians have since called this an “exodus”, comparing Filipinos to Israelites who, fleeing Egyptian bondage, headed for a land anipping with milk and honey.

But whereas the Jews had Moses as leader, the Filipinos had nobody to guide them save for their survival instinct. They embarked on a perilous journey on their own, enduring discrimination in any place that promised employment, crossing time zones and language barriers, surviving freezing and scorching temperatures.

Thirty-odd years afterwards, limping from the effects of the Gulf war, September 11 terrorist attacks, Iraqi war and the SARS epidemic, OFWs are being hailed as the Philippines’ new heroes for filling government coffers with over US \$8 billion remittances, never mind if their soul had been sold for

thirty pieces of silver.

Flor Contemplacion. Sarah Balabagan. Mary Jane Ramos. Glenda Lorio. Countless others who had been killed, raped, or unjustly imprisoned. An average of six OFWs arriving in coffins in NAIA airpon everyday, mostly mysterious deaths, according to Migrante International.

The government has dodged the issue and shifted its focus on our nurses who are fast becoming the country’s torchbearers. Philippine Labor Secretary Patricia Sto Tomas says our nurses now represent the new wave of Filipino migrant workers, a niche once occupied by domestic helpers and seamen.

The Philippines is now the largest exporter of nurses, says the World Health Organization. There are reportedly some 300,000 Filipino nurses working overseas, mostly in the United States, Great Britain, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Australia. Educated along an American training model and fluent in English, they are highly regarded by foreign employers for their hard work and tender loving care in an industry teeming with hardened, impersonal staff.

Such has been the great de-

mand for our nurses that even our doctors are taking up nursing courses in droves, a reverse human resource development phenomenon found only in the Philippines. Apparently, it is easier to do not automatically qualify as doctors in America. Bent on living the great American dream they swallow their pride, take the state board examination for nurses and spend months as interns.

When hired, some only get half the salary that their white counterparts receive but they hold on because the pay is still way above what they can hopefully get in the Philippines.

Canada also has a critical need for nurses. In the 1960s and 70s, the Filipino nurses who went there were able to practice nursing upon arrival with permanent landed immigrant status. Today, our nurses have the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) as their best option to enter this country.

Under this program, they must work as 24-hour nannies and home support workers, not as nurses. Holding only temporary status in Canada, they are vulnerable to de-skilling, exploitation, and undercompensation.

Whether Filipinos go overseas

as lopnotch professionals or blue-collar workers, the risk to life and dignity is great aside from alienation from the family they leave behind. Despite the odds, an estimated 2,500 Filipinos leave the Philippines daily to work abroad. In their adopted countries, most of them make good and eventually for naturalized citizenship but they continue to grapple with stereotyping that hound immigrants from Third World countries like the Philippines: Boaters. Pineapple pickers. Salmon cannery workers, Domestic helpers. Caregivers. Mail-order-brides. Japayukis. Flips. Coconuts (brown on the outside but white in the inside).

But like the Canaanite woman rebuked and later commended by Christ for her great faith, Filipinos are not sidetracked by labels nor do they seem to mind eating the crumbs that fall from their master’s table as long as their loved ones would survive. Indeed, the OFWs’ raison d’etre should be obvious by now.

*Laura Gatmaitan Perez is a freelance writer who is pursuing a master’s degree in Behavioral Science.





The Filipino Women's Club



Newly inducted FWC members with inducing officer, Zenny Yagen, and FWC President, Leila Pereira

BY LEILA PEREIRA

The Filipino Women's Club (FWC) kicked off 2024 with a well attended first meeting on Saturday, January 20, 2024 at the Magellan Hall.

The afternoon began with a warm welcome by incumbent president, Leila Pereira, who thanked everyone who attended despite the cold and rainy weather.

The main agenda was the Induction of New Members and the Installation of the 2024-2025 Officers and Board of Directors.

Special thank you to Lions Club International District 4-C5 Governor/Past FWC President, Zenny Yagen, for the distinct honor as the inducing and installing officer.

Congratulations and welcome to the new FWC members who were inducted:

- Bembet Borrromeo
- Mena Domondon
- Nerissa Fox
- Margie Pasalo
- Noemi Vinoya-Aguinaldo
- Anabel Gibbs
- Evelyn Flores

Congratulations and best wishes also to the newly installed 2024-2025 officers and board of directors:

- President: Leila Pereira
- 1st VP: Edna de los Reyes
- 2nd VP: Remy Solomon
- Secretary: Mercedes Guerrero
- Corresponding Secretary: Melit Pangilinan
- Treasurer: Maria Bahoric
- Asst Treasurer: Aida Azurin
- Auditor: Erlinda Aglubat
- Sgt-At-Arms: Sylvia Fortis, Nerissa Fox

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Board of Directors: | Advisers: |
| Ling Avera | Zenny Yagen |
| Roselie Crandall | Sarah Enloe |
| Carol Munar | Josie Patria |
| Priscilla Ramos | Rose Basos |
| Julie Vergara | |

The celebration continued with dinner, dancing and merriment.

A special thank you to everyone's contribution in making the evening a success: Roselie Crandall and Carol Munar for catering and to Remy Solomon, Sylvia Fortis, Mena Domondon and Roselie Crandall for bringing the salads and desserts; Cleo Sabarre-Ner for taking care of the sound system and providing the music; to everyone who came in early to help setup and for everyone who helped cleanup; but most of all, for everyone's presence in making the evening a fun and memorable occasion. FWC is blessed to have such dedicated members.

Last but not least, a very special appreciation to the 2022-2023 Executive Board and members whose active participation and support made the 2022-2023 administration years memorable and successful:

- President: Leila Pereira
- 1st Vp. Edna de los Reyes
- 2nd VP. Remy Solomon



Oath taking by FWC 2024-2025 Officers and Board of Directors



New members: Bembet Borrromeo, Nerissa Fox, Mena Domondon, Margie Pasalo, Noemi Vinoya-Aguinaldo, Anabel Gibbs, Evelyn Flores



Newly installed FWC 2024-2025 Executive Board



FWC 2024-2025 members

- Secretary: Cleo Sabarre-Ner
- Corresponding Secretary: Melit Pangilinan
- Treasurer: Aida Azurin
- Asst Treasurer: Fridaleen Lou-Dizon
- Auditor: Ling Avera

- Sgt-At-Arms: Roselie Crandall, Sylvia Fortis

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Board of Directors: | Advisers: |
| Maria Bahoric | Zenny Yagen |
| Luz Daclan | Sarah Enloe |
| Vicky Johnson | Josie Patria |
| Carol Munar | Rose Basos |
| Priscilla Ramos | |

Here's a summary of the projects and activities FWC participated in:

- Started the year with the first online (zoom) induction and Installation in January, 2022
- Celebrated Our Annual Mother's Day honoring our Mother of The Year and Grandmother of the

- Year
- Led the VIP Reception during our annual Filipino Fiesta Celebration
- Held our International Night on September, 2022, honoring our Mrs Filipino Women's Club, Erlinda Aglubat, and inducting 10 new members
- Participated in the annual All Souls Day celebration as a major sponsor
- Participated in the annual Community Christmas party as a sponsoring organization
- Celebrated our September, 2023 Pista Sa Nasyon honoring our first FWC Reyna Ng Pista Sa Nasyon, Julie Vergara
- Was a sponsoring organization to the special documentary showing of "An Open Door: Holocaust Haven in the Philippines"

We plan to continue these works in the 2024-2025 with the highlight of celebrating our 85th Anniversary on September 21, 2024, honoring our Outstanding Filipina 2024, Jinky Dolar.

Looking forward to everyone's continued support.



BY DALE ESPERANTE

REMEMBERING BATAAN

In October 2023, Commander Tom Amaba of The American Legion, Magellan Post 604, asked the adjutant to invite a special veteran advocate to be the guest speaker for their upcoming Veterans Day event on November 11, 2023. Regrettably, she was not available for Veterans Day because of other commitments already scheduled. Fast forward to 21 Jan 2024, for the first time in the history of Magellan Post 604's general membership meeting, community friends were invited to sit in at a meeting with the veterans to welcome the distinguished guest speaker from Berkeley, Cecilia Gaerlan. Her contributions to the veteran community include, but are not limited to:

- a. - Executive Director, Bataan Legacy Historical Society (BLHS), Apr 2012 – Present, BLHS's mission is to educate the public on the historical significance of Bataan and WW2 in the Philippines by presenting the war from different perspectives, Filipinos, Americans, soldiers, civilians, and other nationalities.
- b. - Member Board of Trustees, Aircraft Carrier Hornet Foundation, Nov 2021 – Present, Alameda County, California.
- c. - Founding Member, USS Telesforo Trinidad Campaign Commissioning Committee, Nov 2020. Worked on organizing the campaign to name the first U.S. Navy ship after a Filipino sailor who received the Medal of Honor in 1915. SECNAV Carlos Del Toro named DDG – 139 after Telesforo Trinidad on May 19, 2022.
- d. - Member, Executive Committee, USS Telesforo Trinidad Commissioning Committee since October 2022. The board includes flag officers as board members.

On January 21, Cecilia Gaerlan arrived early with her husband, Jeff Shuttleworth, and cousin, Alvin Gaerlan. The veterans welcomed them as they checked the equipment and the sound system necessary for her presentation.

The general meeting started with the opening ritual. Commander Tom Amaba declared the meeting of Magellan Post 604, Department of California, officially convened at 3:15 PM.

With great honor, the commander introduced the Executive Director of the Bataan Legacy Historical Society - Cecilia Gaerlan.

Ms. Gaerlan started by sharing how her dad used to tell stories about his Bataan ordeal. Her father included his own sound effects that made little Cecilia and whoever else around laugh. Years later, when she heard someone interpret the WW2 meaning of the flashing V as a hand sign "To Vacate" instead of Victory, she took this personally. She told herself, as well her friends, who wanted to do something about it, that we



The American Legion Magellan Post 604 opening ritual.



Everyone's attention captured. Photos by Dale Esperante



The head table listened to the distinguished guest speaker, Cecilia Gaerlan.



The presentation of a special American Legion Certificate of Appreciation.

should do something about it now. She also talked to her husband, Jeff. Encouraged by Jeff, Cecilia decided to research extensively on what really happened to those who fought in Bataan. Initially, she did this for her aging father.

Her research shed light on the history and the legislation acts that affected the Filipino veterans. The United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) was organized on 26 Jul 1941. It consists of 110 thousand Filipinos, 20 thousand Americans, and 12 thousand Philippine Scouts (part of the US Army but most officers were Americans)

The USAFFE Filipino troops were ill-equipped, issued with WW1 guns and ammunitions. More than half of the ammunition did not work. Rations started with one half food ration in January, February found no more quinine, by March the food ration decreased to a quarter ration, and the rations depleted by the end of March. In April, the fresh Japanese reinforcements/troops who just arrived from their homeland started carpet bombing Bataan. Bataan, once a jungle, was denuded after a few days.

On April 9, 1942, Major General Edward P. King was forced to surrender the Filipino and American troops. 63 thousand Filipinos and 12 thousand Americans were forced to surrender and walk the 65 miles to Camp O'Donnell in Tarlac. The majority suffered from massive diseases and starvation. An estimated 5 to 10 thousand Filipinos, and 250 – 650 Americans died along the way of the Bataan Death March. Upon reaching Camp O'Donnell, a more exact number of 1600 Americans, and 20



Adjutant Esperante, Alvin Gaerlan, Jeff Shuttleworth, Cecilia Gaerlan, Commander Tom Amaba, and Judge Advocate Will Williams. Photo by UC Davis Bayanihan Clinic member Adrien Luis Uriarte.

thousand Filipinos died in the camp. It was the largest single surrender in the history of the United States military.

The greater significance of the Battle of Bataan according to Cecilia: "Despite the suffering from massive disease and starvation and fighting without any air support, USAFFE was able to delay the 50-day timetable of the Imperial Japanese Army by holding on to Bataan for 99 days (about 3 and a half months)."

Lesson in legislation, the Philippines Independence Act aka the Tydings-McDuffie Act affected the Philippines to prepare for their independence. However, it was a misnomer. The Agriculture Sector lobbied for it to prevent the agricultural goods of the Philippines to compete with the US. This changes the status of Filipinos living in the US from nationals to aliens. When WW2 broke out, the Filipinos working in the fields could not enlist right away. It took a military order for the 1st and 2nd Filipino Regiments to be formed. Because of this legislation, only 50 Filipinos a year could be allowed in the US legally, and it also established the military bases in the Philippines. The Act had a long-lasting impact on the Filipinos.

The fading years of long ago finally found an opportunity to immortalize the heroes of

Bataan. In 2014, the California Department of Education decided to revise their curriculum framework. A revision only happens every 10 to 12 years. Ms. Gaerlan, along with a group of veteran advocates and organizations, participated in the revision process. The Superintendent of the California Department of Education, Tom Torlakson, met with the group. Several committees handled the revision process, with a series of public hearings. So many attended and only one minute is given to every speaker. The real battle took place in the public sector arena, press releases, events

(2014 – 2016). The approval came on 14 Jul 2016.

Only two events were initially included: the Bataan Death March, and the Battle of Manila. A mere two lines in the curriculum framework. However, by the end of the revision process, all events during WW2 in the Philippines were included, a page and a half in the curriculum framework. It is now a part of Chapter 16 of the Grade 11 US History Framework. Ms. Gaerlan encourages all, "ask the teachers of your children to inquire if they are going to teach this. Resources are available online for free. Go to www.BataanLegacy.org."

The following is an invitation by Cecilia: The 82nd Anniversary of Bataan Death March will be commemorated on Saturday, April 13, at 10 AM, at San Francisco National Cemetery at the Presidio. There will also be a Congressional Gold Medal Award during the ceremony.

The American Legion Magellan Post 604 veterans along with the community friends who came to hear and listen to Ms. Cecilia Gaerlan, were impressed, and moved by the history as shared by one of our greatest guest speakers.

When Ms. Gaerlan found out that a younger group of UC Davis students was part of the audience, she directed this request to them: (Paraphrased) "Make time to talk to your elder family members. Write down what they tell you, so the path taken by them for you to get here will never be forgotten. Think of the next generation, they need to know our history." What inspiring advice! Salamat Po Ms. Cecilia Gaerlan, Jeff Shuttleworth, and Alvin Gaerlan for gracing Magellan Hall with your presence.



PerryScope

BY PERRY DIAZ

The Sham Trials of the **GOMBURZA** Martyrs

On February 17, 2006, we commemorate the 134th anniversary of the execution of the three Filipino martyrs, Fathers Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos and Jacinto Zamora; known as the GOMBURZA.

Acknowledged as the event that inspired the Filipino people to rise against the colonial rule of Spain, little has been said in our history books about the series of events that led to their heinous execution by “garrote,” a device reserved mostly for rebellious priests. They were accused of plotting to overthrow the colonial government and for leading the “Cavite Mutiny” on January 20, 1872.

What our history books did not talk about was the friction between the Filipino secular clergy and the four monastic orders — Dominicans, Augustinians, Franciscans and Recollects. When Queen Isabella II issued a royal decree in 1859 allowing the Jesuits -- who were banished 91 years earlier by King Carlos I - to return to the Philippines, they were assigned to Mindanao which displaced the Recollects who were then reassigned to Cavite and Manila which in turn displaced the Filipino secular priests from their parishes.

When Fr. Pedro Pelaez, a Filipino mestizo, who was then the Parish Priest of the Manila Cathedral, became the Acting Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Manila upon the death of Archbishop Jose Aranguren on April 18, 1862, he was torn between his ecclesiastical duty and his concerns for the displaced Filipino clergy. Fr. Pelaez decided to write Queen Isabella II requesting her to revoke her royal decree and reinstate the displaced Filipino

priests in their old parishes. His action infuriated the friars which led to a series of attacks against Fr. Pelaez. On June 3, 1863, an earthquake shook Manila and the Cathedral was shattered killing Fr. Pelaez while he was having his weekly confession. Fr. Burgos, a protégé of Fr. Pelaez, who was at that time the Parish Priest of the Manila Cathedral, took the cudgel of leadership for the Filipino clergy and continued Fr. Pelaez’s advocacy for them. Meanwhile, the friars continued their attacks on the deceased Fr. Pelaez. This led Fr. Burgos to write the “Manifesto to the Noble Spanish People” and published it on a Manila newspaper.

In his Manifesto, he defended Fr. Pelaez against the friars’ accusations. He then accused the friars of “enrichment, greed and immoralities.” From that day on, Fr. Burgos was a marked man.

The Rev. Dr. Josemaria Luengo in his book, “History of the Philippines focus on PELBURGOMZA: Galvanizers of Filipino Freedom and Independence 1812-1872,” published in 2000, detailed the events that led to the sham trials of Fathers Burgos, Gomez and Zamora. His book was the product of years of research and perusal of original documents.

In 1871, Archbishop Gregorio Martinez, a Spanish secular priest, was informed the friars that Fr. Burgos was suspected of being the leader of the rebellious “filibusteros”



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE SAN PEDRO

outlaws — who wanted separation from Mother Spain. However, Archbishop Martinez was sympathetic to the plight of the Filipino clergy. He sent a letter to Queen Isabella II asking her to reconsider the request of the late Acting Archbishop Pelaez to revoke her royal decree displacing the Filipino priests. When the friars found out about his letter, he was branded as their enemy.

Archbishop Martinez tried to placate the irate friars. He asked Fr. Burgos and the Filipino priests to sign a pledge of adherence and loyalty to Spain. Fr. Burgos obliged and composed the document. He was able to gather the signature of 300 Filipino priests. However, the friars construed their act as seditious and declared the 300 signatories as traitors, revolutionaries, and “filibusteros.”

On January 20, 1872, a group of

about 200 soldiers, from the Cavite arsenal revolted due to the imposition of taxes that they were previously exempted from. They seized the Fort of San Felipe and killed the Spanish officers. Governor-General Rafael de Izquierdo immediately sent several peninsular regiments to quell the mutiny. The following day the rebellion was over. The mutineers were summarily executed.

In the aftermath of the mutiny, Governor-General Izquierdo ordered the arrest of those suspected — 12 Filipino priests and 42 civilians — of complicity in the rebellion. They were brought to trial in a military court-martial and were only given 24 hours to prepare their defenses.

Fr. Burgos was tagged as the mastermind of the “Cavite Mutiny.” He was also accused of campaigning for the separation of the Philippines from Spain and of forming a republic of which he will be the president. In addition, he was charged of receiving \$50,000 from the United States to kill all Spaniards in the Philippines. After all the testimonies against Fr. Burgos were heard, Fr. Burgos’ attorney, Jose Arieta, instead of presenting a defense, asked the court for mercy. He explained later that it was not possible to plead otherwise because it was in his opinion that Fr. Burgos had admitted his guilt. Fathers Burgos, Zamora and Gomez were sentenced to death by “garrote,” a gruesome viselike device that slowly breaks

the neck. On the other hand, the convicted civilian “accomplices” were either shot by a firing squad or sent to exile in far-away colonies.

Thus ended the lives of the three Filipino martyrs, an event that remained indelible in the minds of the Filipinos. “GOMBURZA” became the rallying buzzword for the brewing revolutionary movement. Dr. Jose Rizal, who was ten years old at the time of the execution, wrote “Noli me Tangere” and “El Filibusterismo” - the latter to the GOMBURZA - which were published in Europe in 1887 while he was studying in Madrid: They were subsequently banned in the Philippines but copies were smuggled in by returning “ilustrados.” The contraband novels, which exposed the abuses of the friars, inflamed the revolutionary fervor of the Filipinos.

For that, Rizal was arrested and exiled to Dapitan upon his return to the Philippines in 1892. When the Katipunan started the revolution on August 29, 1896, Rizal was accused of being an accomplice and was charged with treason. He was found “guilty” in a hasty trial held on December 26, 1896 and was executed by firing squad on December 30, 1896. By 1898, Spanish colonial forces were defeated and the Philippine Republic was born.

But 134 years after the execution of the GOMBURZA, the final chapter of the saga of the three Filipino martyrs has yet to be written. We can only end the final chapter with the exoneration of Fathers Burgos, Zamora and Gomez of the false charges against them.

Our historians and scholars of history should petition the Philippine government to request — nay, demand — the Spanish government to apologize and clear the good names of the GOMBURZA martyrs. It is the right thing to do. We should not settle for less. (PerryDiaz@aol.com)



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Photo by Dave San Pedro

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60th Silver Wedding Anniversary



In a simple yet happy reunion and celebration of the 60th Silver Wedding Anniversary of Jun and Faina Abaya held at the residence of Jumpy and Hieu Ngo attended by the family clan, relatives and closest of friends led by Dave and Dinah San Pedro. Others enjoying the occasion were Pinky Valentine with children Mark and Mickey; Jong Abaya with wife Sheryl, Elizabeth Jones and Husband Joseph with children Everly and Tristan; John Abaya and wife Audrey with children Lennox and Korben; Benjamin Abaya and wife Kristina; Luz Balneg, Joseph and Bewerly Estepa; Nathaniel Ngo and friends; Jojo and wife Michell with son Christopher; Elizabeth Belvis and Bessie Samaniego; Mike and Rio.

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Love Letters and Red Roses on

St. Valentine's Day

BY JOSE P. ABAYA, JR.

Cupid, that naughty half-naked child angel with bow and arrow who only appears on St. Valentine's Day is now again ready to shoot his arrow into the heart of those loveless individuals who are desperately looking for someone to love or be loved.

The chilly cold and dense morning fog weather in February is really conducive for romance between lovers. Sending bunch of fresh red roses to the girl whom you are in love is an old way to say what you have felt in your heart. It could be today's unconventional way of expressing your undying love to your loved one, instead, of doing it demonstratively and privately between yourselves.

Indeed, there are many ways to say what you have felt to someone whom you loved but the most conservative way to say it, is through a hand written love letter expressing in words what you really feel deep into your heart. And, what is more appropriate time and date to send those love letters or red roses than on February 14, when lovers celebrate St. Valentine's Day?

It is still fresh in my memory, though, it happens many years ago across vast ocean in a place where the weather can easily melt a cold cold heart. It was also the place where I met the woman I have fallen in love. How can I forget the day when I have my first glimpsed on her big beautiful eyes, waist length black hair and slight touched of make up on her blushing red cheeks as I extended my hand to shake her cold and introduced myself. After the introduction, she left with sweet smile but I was frozen and speechless and could not utter a single word, although, deep in my heart I would like to say something but I could not find the proper words and could not simply come out from my mouth.

After so many days of not seeing her, I decided to write a letter, a simple hand written message telling her how much I really missed her and hoping that I could possibly see her again at the place where we met. The rendezvous was not a lover's lane or an isolated place but in the middle of the university campus where students lazily sit on the ground huge Acacia trees. I gave the letter to a friend to deliver to her personally but sadly, I did not receive any answer that made me feel lonely and the more I was missing her.

My nights turn into days because I could not sleep, concentrate and even forget things that I should easily remember. One day, while I was in a hurry to go into my classroom when suddenly I saw her passed by and waved at me. My heart palpitation tripled and I tried to wave but I could not raise my hand

which became so heavy and motionless.

The days became weeks, the pain and agony were unbearable because where ever I turned, I could see her image always smiling and waving at me as if to indicate that she was all over the place teasing my inner most feeling that my world could just crumple without her in my life. I am now pushed to a wall and my whole being is being consumed day after day for not seeing her, as if my world has been separated from the realm of fantasy to the labyrinth of human emotion.

February, the month everybody is waiting because of the very special day on the 14th when lovers celebrate and express once more those simple words to their loved ones, saying I love you and continue loving you with all my heart. While those who are just looking for someone to love are just restless as I am because there is only emptiness devoid of any feeling of excitement for that special day. Obviously, such emotional condition makes one to be feeling lonely and could perceive to be an outcast from the kingdom of those who are happily in love.

Finally, emboldened by my desire to see and talk to her, I decided to write a letter again and let a neophyte of our confraternity deliver to her personally at any place within the university campus where she could possibly see her. The mission was accomplished but the waiting period for her possible answer made me nervous that even went into the inner most of my nerve.

My letter was crafted simply but meaningful and the true expression of the feeling of a man smitten with love to a woman whom he dreamt to be his partner in life. Many events have passed but did not obscure a bit the still vivid words I wrote in my letter which went this way... My dearest, I know you will be surprised to receive this letter from someone that you only met once but I can no longer hold the feeling of loneliness without telling this, I love you from the bottom of my heart since the time I first met you. You are the embodiment of the woman of my dream and my life will be empty without you as my partner until the end of time. Will you be my partner on February 14 when our confraternity celebrates Valentine Day? I will meet you on that date at the place where we were introduced, I hope you will be there ... Missing you, I am.

On Valentine's Day, one hour before



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE SAN PEDRO

the designated time I was already at the meeting place under the huge Acacia tree in the middle of the university campus waiting for her. Every girl that comes near the place, my heart palpitates rather abnormally and only subsides when I have a better look at the passing girl. At the exact time when I am expecting her to arrive, I prepared myself putting into my head the first words to say when I will be facing her but to my bitter frustration she did not come. I waited for several hours more, the light of the day slowly becoming dark to indicate that the Sun is descending from the horizon.

As darkness envelopes the whole area of the campus, my feeling of sadness becomes intense and it seems my world is crumbling into pieces. I am now inclined to accept my faith that my dream for the girl I have fallen in love from a distance is now far away and unreachable. But, as I am about to leave the place, I saw a silhouette from a distance, a very familiar figure in my dreams as well as in person. Her sudden appearance purme in trance and I became speechless as she approached me and recognized her to be the woman I am longing to see.

She was wearing a red blouse with a

symbolical heart shaped brooch on the lapel and a matching skirt. Instinctively, I extended my right hand holding the three red roses that she immediately took it with smile, then to my surprise without uttering any word she held my right arm, of course, there was no need to say anything because action speaks better than words as we walked away, all set for our first Valentine's Day date. That was the beginning of a lasting love affair and the ending will never be written.

St. Valentine's Days is not only for young lovers but also for the young at heart. It is therefore, celebrated by all regardless of gender, age, social status, political persuasion or religious belief because love transcends human boundaries as it emanates from the heart and no one can possibly pierce except the love potion arrow of that naughty half naked Cupid. On February 14 St. Valentine's Day, better watch out that heart piercing arrow of Cupid, you could be the one to be hit but be sure not to dock it because it is really good for your heart.

**TO EVERYBODY WHO ARE IN LOVE
OR LOOKING TO BE LOVED,
HAPPY ST. VALENTINE'S DAY !!!**

A Heartwarming Welcome

BY GABRIEL ORTIGOZA

My mother, Daisy Celestial Ortigoza, dedicated her life to Christian teachings and served as a bible teacher at Southern Baptist College in Mlang, North Cotabato, Philippines, until her retirement.

During the 1970s and 1980s, American Baptist missionaries were sent to Southern Baptist College annually. These missionaries, whether teaching the Word of God, science, biology, music, or sports, brought joy to the campus. My mother collaborated closely with them, fostering strong bonds that extended beyond the professional realm.

As a testament to their close relationship, American missionaries often invited our family for meals at their mission houses. Growing up, we, the children, formed lasting friendships with their kids.

In 2007, my mother relocated to California, living with my sister who had petitioned for her. Since my home was just five minutes away, she also spent time with me. News of her move reached some American missionaries in Dallas Fort Worth, prompting a heartfelt invitation for a warm welcome.

The event, orchestrated by Karen Hopper and Ate Glo, was hosted by Miles and Jean Seaborn and their family. Among the attendees were Mr. and Mrs. Braughton, Sheryl Spencer and family,



Anita Helms and family, and others. Fely Arzaga, a cherished neighbor from Mlang, and her family were also part of the gathering, making it a total of about 40 attendees.

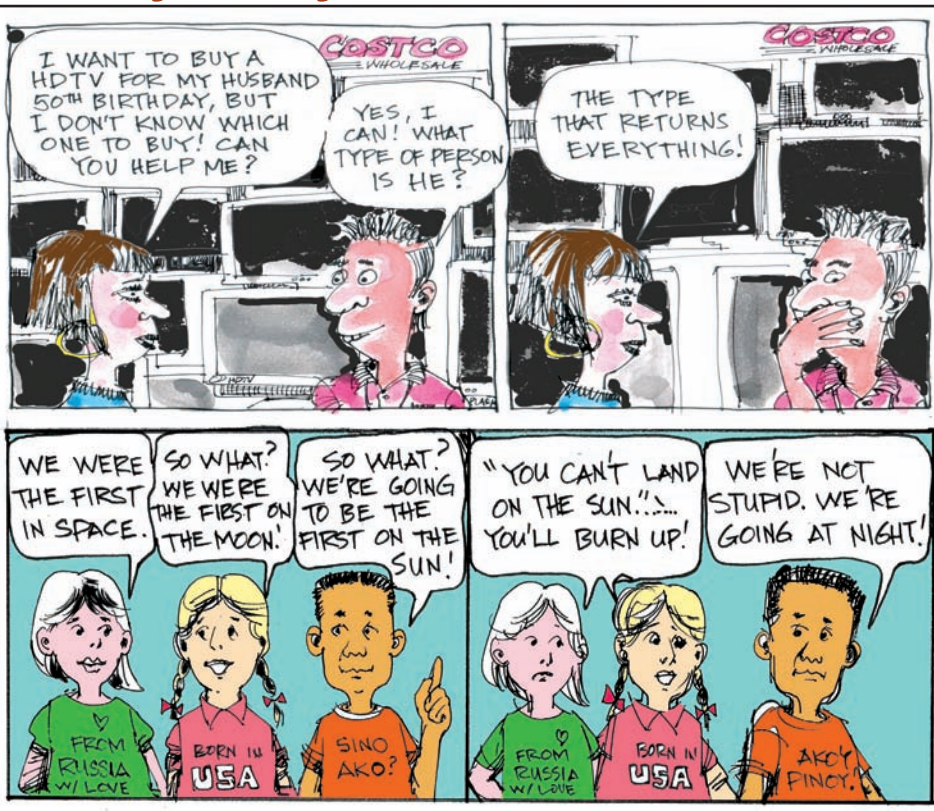
This welcoming celebration marked a unique and cherished moment. To the best of my recollection, it stands as the only occasion where a large group of former American Baptist missionaries gathered to extend a warm welcome to a former co-worker in Christ—my mother.



Groups of American Baptist missionaries gathered and welcome former co-worker in Christ (Seated Center), Daisy Celestial Ortigoza.

Buhay Pinoy

Komiks by Dave San Pedro



Embrace the Filipino Art of Wrapping

BY GIANCARLO ANGULO

In an era saturated with generic plastic or synthetic packaging, discovering products that still embody packaging rooted in cultural practices can be a challenge. In the Philippines, amidst the prevailing trend of plastic wraps, there are still food items that maintain a connection to our natural and cultural heritage. The value of food is not usually limited to the food itself; the wrapper or container also narrates a story. Supporting these foods with unique packaging adds sustainability, bolsters local economies, and ensures that these stories continue to be told. While there may be numerous food products with wonderful packaging, wrappers, and containers, here are some that Lokalpedia has encountered.



Perhaps the most widely known food item on the list, **suman sa ibus** is a rice cake often served for breakfast or as a snack. It is also a staple in many special occasions such as All Souls' Day, birthdays, fiestas, and barrio weddings. Suman sa ibus wrapping is a unique art in itself, done with buri (*Corypha utan*) leaves. While there are many styles throughout the archipelago, one unique variant can be found in Quezon, where the rice cake wrapper is designed with long tails to propel when thrown during the Mayohan festival.



Pusô, also known as 'hanging rice,' is rice wrapped and boiled in a casing made from woven palm leaves. This method imparts a distinct flavor to the rice, resulting in a compact, portable serving of carbohydrates. Pusô is commonly served in regions like Visayas (such as Cebu) and Mindanao.

Pusô comes in intricately woven, complex forms. Some recorded pusô designs include kinasing (a two-strand pusô resembling a diamond), binaki (frog-like), pudol (blunt end), binosa (wine glass-like), badbaranay (to unravel or opening), manan-aw (orchid), and minanok (chicken-like). In Panay, Capiz, where they have a unique variation of pusô – glutinous rice sweetened with nipa (*Nypa fruticans*) syrup – the designs come in two variants: female (blunt end) and male (pointed).



Lambanog is a traditional Filipino alcoholic beverage distilled from the sap of the flower buds of coconut trees. It is one of Quezon Province's flagship products. Mallari Distillery, believed to be the country's oldest lambanog distillery, offers lambanog in beautifully crafted packaging called nilalang uway/rattan (*Calamus* sp.), made by local artisans.



Sundot Kulangot is a traditional candy made with coconut jam or kalamay, enclosed in small round containers or bao crafted from the seeds of a native tree called bitaog or bitaoy (*Calophyllum inophyllum*). The halved seeds are then wrapped with red papel de hapon. Afterwards, the shells are held together with bamboo sticks.

While Sundot Kulangot is commonly found in Baguio City, it is primarily produced in Lingayen, Pangasinan.



Patupat is a rice delicacy from the Ilocos region and provinces with an Ilocano population, such as Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, and Isabela. It is made from glutinous rice cooked in sugarcane (*Saccharum officinarum*) juice. The glutinous rice is placed in a rectangular woven pouch made with coconut or buri palm leaves.

Please take note that Patupat can also refer to a rice cake wrapped in a coned banana leaf.



In Bulacan, **pastillas de leche**, a type of candy made with sugar and carabao's milk, comes in an intricately decorative wrapper called borlas de pastillas or pabalat. The process involves drawing patterns on strips of papel de Hapon and slowly cutting the patterns to reveal delicate designs reminiscent of Mexican papel picado.



Kalamay sa buri, also called parak or pinarak, is a sweet delicacy made from buri palm sap that can be found in Southern Iloilo. It is similar to Pakaskas of Batangas in terms of the process and materials used. However, unlike pakaskas, kalamay sa buri has square containers made from buri leaves.

Lokalpedia

The 6 Most Controversial Filipino Celebrities of the '90s

These stars were in the limelight for all the wrong reasons

By Esquire Philippines

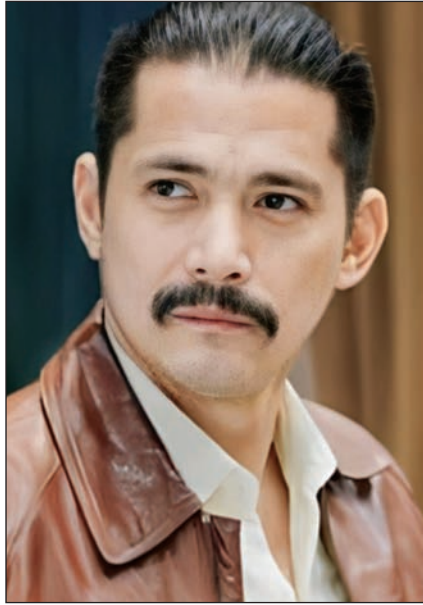
The '90s was a transformative decade that left an indelible mark on pop culture worldwide... and the Philippines was no exception. In the midst of the vibrant entertainment scene emerged a cadre of controversial Filipino celebrities who became the talk of the town, sparking debates, scandals, and headline-making drama that resonated throughout the country.

Get ready to revisit the most talked-about stars of the '90s as we unravel the controversies that surrounded them and explore the impact they had on Philippine showbusiness. From high-profile court cases to the rise of scandalous actors generating unexpected controversies, the '90s in the Philippines witnessed a whirlwind of events that captivated the public's attention.

Here are the most controversial Filipino celebrities of the '90s.

President Corazon Aquino. Back in the '90s, she made waves with a scandal that unfolded when the then-23-year-old announced her pregnancy on national television. The problem? The father of her unborn child was actor Phillip Salvador, more than 20 years her senior and still legally married with three children from his estranged wife. The revelation of Aquino's pregnancy brought forth a tidal wave of scrutiny.

Robin Padilla



The action star faced controversy when he was charged with Illegal Possession of Firearms and Ammunition in 1992. The legal battle reached its climax in 1994 when he was convicted and sentenced to 17 to 21 years in prison. It all took an unexpected turn in 1997 when former President Fidel Ramos granted him a conditional pardon. In 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte granted him an absolute pardon.

Anjanette Abayari



In 1999, while jetting off to Guam, actor Anjanette Abayari found herself in a real-life drama at the airport, accused of possessing an illegal amphetamine. Abayari vehemently denied ownership, claiming the ballpen containing traces of shabu belonged to her sister. Despite her protests and American citizenship, then-President Joseph Estrada declared her persona non grata. Detained for months and facing legal ramifications, Abayari paid a bail of \$9,200 for her release. Though later cleared by the Bureau of Immigration in 2003, the incident prompted her to return to the United States, stepping back from Philippine showbusiness.



Ruffa Gutierrez

Ruffa Gutierrez is no stranger to scandal. During the '90s, there were the notorious Brunei prostitution rumors, tying her name to a high-profile incident that fueled persistent speculations. Denials aside, the controversy cast a shadow on her public image. Adding to the drama, the 1994 Manila Film Festival scandal propelled Gutierrez into the spotlight for the wrong reasons. Winning Best Actress for Loretta triggered allegations of cheating, questioning the festival's integrity.

Kris Aquino

Before we knew Kris Aquino as the Kris Aquino she is today, she was once just a young actress and the youngest daughter of former



Gretchen Barretto became a household name for her tumultuous relationships and involvement in headline-grabbing controversies. From a four-month affair with married actor Bong Revilla during the filming of *Ako Ang Katarungan* in 1992 to her entanglement in the Brunei beauties scandal in 1993, Barretto was a fixture in the tabloids. However, it was her role as a whistleblower in the Manila Film Festival scandal of 1994 that truly thrust her into the spotlight, exposing rigged award announcements and implicating industry insiders. Of course, her pregnancy with married businessman Tonyboy Cojuangco's child also marked another scandalous chapter.

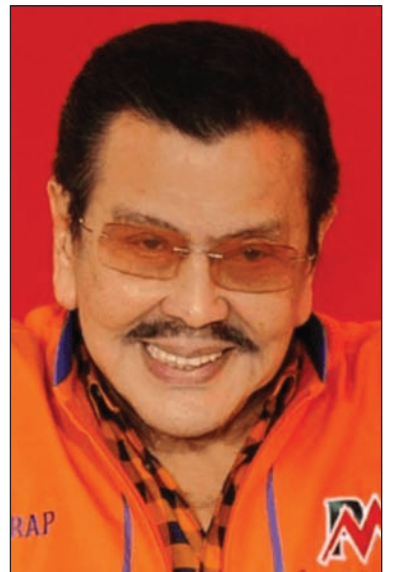


Gretchen Barretto

Erap Estrada

The actor and former President faced a political firestorm in the late '90s with his impeachment trial, stemming from corruption allegations, including the infamous jueteng scandal. The trial, which unfolded in the public eye, marked a turbulent chapter in Philippine politics and eventually led to Estrada's removal from office.

EsquireMag.ph






Sacramento Maharlika Lions Club

Crab & Shrimp Feed

VFW Post 67
2784 Stockton Blvd.
Sacramento, Ca 95817

\$65 Adults

\$30 Age 6-12

5 & under Free

Friday, February 23, 2024

Social 5:00 PM - Dinner 6:00 PM

No Outside Drinks Allowed

@Myrna-Aggunag



venmo

We accept Venmo as payment or
Zelle 916-335-1877

RSVP by February 15, 2024

Menu includes, Clam Chowder, Salad, Pasta, and Bread Rolls

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Sacramento Maharlika Lions Foundation is a 501(c)(3)
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Sarah Enloe (916) 769-8601 or Lynn Ventura (916)798-4423

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- Manage communication with internal and external stakeholders
- Work with Executive Director on programmatic visioning, strategic program development, community research, & policy advocacy thought-partnership



WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT

- Possesses a passion for community wellbeing, social justice, and collective liberation
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Donation \$70 / Attire - Formal
Beth Velasco: 916.502.2752 Ato Delacruz: 916.479.3622

Russian missiles strike Ukrainian cities, killing at least 5, Ukraine says

BY YULIA DROZD and KEVIN SHALVEY

Air raid sirens sounded in Ukraine's two largest cities just before dawn on Tuesday, as the Russian military again targeted residential areas with a barrage of missiles, killing five and injuring dozens.

Many residents of Kyiv and Kharkiv fled to underground shelters as missiles struck their cities, local officials said.

Russia launched at least 41 missiles, including 12 Iskander-M ballistic missiles, Ukraine said. Most of the 21 missiles targeted Kyiv, the capital, were shot down, including five ballistic ones, officials said.

Tuesday's attacks appeared to be a continuation of Moscow's strategy of striking Ukrainian locations that are seemingly without military targets.

A similar early morning strike earlier this month killed at least five and injured more than 100, Ukrainian officials said at the time. Russia had days earlier undertaken its largest overnight aerial assaults on Ukraine since the war began, killing at least 31 in residential areas.

"I strongly condemn yet another indiscriminate attack" by



Local residents stand near their apartment building damaged during a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine, Jan. 23, 2024. (Gleb Garanich/Reuters)

Russia, Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejčinović Burić said Tuesday, adding that the "barbaric acts have to stop."

At least one person was killed in Kyiv, where missiles struck two high-rise buildings, Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko said. Other buildings were damaged and rubble covered parked cars, he said.

"This is Russia's real intentions: the daily terror of civilians," Klymenko said on social media.

Another person was killed in a strike in Pavlohrad, in the Dnipropetrovsk oblast, and three others were killed in Kharkiv, where an apartment building was destroyed, officials said.

Rescue workers were searching early Tuesday in Kharkiv for people trapped under the rubble at several locations, including an educational facility, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine said.

Twenty-seven people had been pulled from the ruins of destroyed buildings, the service said. At least 42 people, including four children, were injured in Kharkiv, officials said.

A total of more than 60 people were injured, Olena Zelenska, Ukraine's first lady, said on social media.

"We must find the power and fight," she said. "Promises do not protect us, weapons do." *ABCnews*

Emergency declared in San Diego due to flooding from record rain

BY LAUREN IRWIN

San Diego's mayor has declared a state of emergency after record rainfall Monday caused destructive flash flooding.

Torrential rain hit much of the state of California, and floodwaters in the southern part of the state swept away vehicles, caused cars to pile on top of one another and overwhelmed houses, The Associated Press (AP) reported.

The Mountain View, Shelltown and Southcrest neighborhoods of San Diego were hit with several feet of water. Many roads, including Interstate 15, were impacted or closed due to the flooding.

The National Weather Service (NWS) station in San Diego reported that the nearly 3 inches of rain that fell on Monday made it the fourth-wettest day on record. As of Monday afternoon, NWS said the San Diego River was actively flooding.



The mayor declared a state of emergency as nearly 3 inches of rain Monday left standing water around multiple locations.

"Please stay safe. Stay home if possible and never attempt to travel on flooded roads," San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria posted online.

People were pulled to safety after water rushed into homes in Spring Valley and Casa de Oro. Others escaped by wading through waist-high water with their pets, the AP reported.

"Flooding is pretty widespread out there," San Diego County Sheriff Lt. Zee Sanchez said.

The Red Cross has established an emergency shelter site for people impacted by the flooding and storm damage, the city said. In the northern part of the state, the mountains around Lake Tahoe could see more than a foot of snow. The Sierra Avalanche Center in Truckee, Calif., issued an avalanche warning but said while the storm fell "way short" of expectations, triggering an avalanche still may be possible. *thehill.com*

Filipino soldier killed in Gaza blast

BY PIA LEE-BRAGO

An Israel Defense Forces soldier of Filipino descent was among 21 IDF members killed in a massive explosion in Gaza on Monday, according to the Philippine embassy in Tel Aviv.

Sgt. First Class Cydrick Garin, 23, was from San Mateo, Rizal and spent most of his life in Israel.

He died along with 20 other IDF soldiers when a massive explosion caused a building to collapse on them, bringing to 219 the number of Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza.

Garin was a combat sergeant



Sgt. First Class Cydrick Garin in the 8208th Battalion of the 261st Bsrigade. In April 2021, he received rec-

ognition from the Southern Command as an outstanding soldier in the Givati Brigade.

His mother, a native of Isabela, resides in Tel Aviv while his father is from General Santos City.

The Israeli embassy in Manila said it is facilitating the travel of Garin's father to Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday vowed that Israel would not stop fighting in Gaza until "absolute victory" after it sustained its highest single-day death toll in the Palestinian enclave. *Philstar.com*

Leaders and blue bloods descend on Brunei for royal wedding climax



Prince Abdul Mateen and Yang Mulia Anisha Rosnah sit during their wedding reception at Istana Nurul Iman in Brunei's capital Bandar Seri Begawan on January 14, 2024. AFP / Iqbal Dato Hj Selamat

BY MARTIN ABBUGAO
Agence France-Presse

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei — Lavish celebrations for the wedding of Brunei's Prince Abdul Mateen and his wife reached a climax Sunday with a glittering ceremony attended by government leaders and blue-blooded guests from Asia and the Middle East.

Mateen, 32, wore a ceremonial uniform while his 29-year-old bride was in a long white dress and sparkling jewels for the event at the sprawling Istana Nurul Iman palace.

They made their first public appearance as a married couple in a procession through the normally sleepy capital Bandar Seri Begawan in front of thousands of onlookers.

The popular prince was one of Asia's most eligible bachelors until he tied the knot with Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Isteri Anisha Rosnah, who is from a prominent family in Brunei.

Mateen's father is Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, the world's longest-reigning monarch and once the richest man on the planet.

There was a festive atmosphere in the city with free ice cream on offer and soft drinks for sale as people began to take positions along the parade route hours before it began.

Wearing a traditional formal outfit and matching songkok hat, retired banker Haji Suhaimin Abas, 66, was among the elite Bruneians to receive an invitation to the wedding ceremony.

"This is a very big celebration," he told AFP as he ate breakfast before going to the palace.

Royalty from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Bhutan were listed among the reported 5,000 guests.

Malaysian Prime Minister

Anwar Ibrahim, Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos were among government leaders in attendance.

'Once-in-a-lifetime moment' Sunday's celebration is the highlight of 10 days of pomp and pageantry in the tiny country, whose extreme wealth is derived almost entirely from its enormous oil and gas reserves.

Mateen, a British-trained military officer in Brunei's armed forces and a helicopter pilot, held court with his wife at the elaborate ceremony before invited guests.

The ceremony was steeped in tradition drawn from Brunei's centuries-old history as an Islamic monarchy.

The couple stood in the back of an open-top Rolls-Royce waving to onlookers as they weaved through the capital, where their images have been displayed on street arches and building facades for days.

Many of the sultan's subjects lined the streets under a scorching sun to catch a glimpse of the couple.

Hajah Aminah Abd Morsidee, 91 who has seen five royal weddings in her lifetime, said she was "happy to see Prince Mateen marrying the beautiful Anisha".

Schoolteacher Norliha Mohamad Din, 37, said it was a "once-in-a-lifetime moment".

"I have seen Prince Mateen since he was small," she said. "I'm very happy for him. This is one way of showing appreciation to the royal family."

As the 10th child and fourth son of the sultan, Mateen is unlikely to ever ascend the throne.

But he appears to have taken on the unofficial role of presenting a modern face for the royal family in a bid to connect with a younger generation of Bruneians raised on social media.

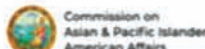
Mateen's matinee idol looks and well-chiselled body have earned him a massive following on Instagram, where carefully curated photos and videos show him playing polo, dabbling in photography and posing in military uniform.

Photograph by Andri Tambunan



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](https://stophate.calcivilrights.ca.gov) or **CALL 833-8-NO-HATE (833-866-4283)**.

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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.

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

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Photo by Dave San Pedro



KAPWA

IS WHAT CONNECTS ALL OF US



KAPWA IS WHAT CONNECTS US ALL (2024)
By LeRoid David

"Kapwa ay ang pinakapuso na nagbubuklod sa isang samahan. Ito ang naglalarawan ng ugnayan ng mga saling lahi, kahalagahan ng bawat sangkatauhan at mga tinig na marapat na pakinggan. Sa salitang KAPWA, mapagtatagumpayan natin ang lahat ng pagsubok at sama-samang maiangat natin ang ating pangunawa, paninindigan at pagdadamay sa bawat isa, sa pamilya, sa bawat pulo at sa buong mundo."

Ang kapuloan Fil-Am ay isa sa pinakamalawak na samahan sa rehiyon ng Sacramento at pumapangalawa sa pinakamalaki sa buong California. Hindi man gaanong nabibigyang pansin at napag-uusapan ang mga karahasan na nagaganap sa mga kapwa nating Pilipino, **ang ating pagkatao ay malinaw ang ating tinig ay umaalingawngaw.** Ang Laban Group's Pilipino dalubhasang manlilikha ay naglalayon na itaguyod ang ating mga karanasan, ilahad ang ating kwentong palawakin ang ating kakayahan. Kung ikaw ay nakaranas ng pangraapi o naging saksi na pagmamalupit o karahasan, di pantay na pagtingin dahil sa iyong kulay at paniniwala at paninindigan, pagbigay alam mo sa cavshate.org o tumawag ka sa **833-8-NO-HATE (833-866-4283)**. **HINDI KA NAG-IISA.**



Ang mga sumusunod na patalastas at paghahayag ay inihahandog sa inyong Laban Group: Filipino Ethnic Media Collaborative. Ang kapulungang nagnanais na pukawin ang damdamin ng ating mga mahal na kababayang Pilipino-Amerikano at sa buong madla ukol sa nakakabahalang pagkamuhi at karahasan dinaranas ng mga Asyano; bawasan ang batik ng pangamba at pagwawalang bahala na udyok ng marubdob na galit sa karahasang natamo bagkus marapat na ipaalam; at paigtingin ang ating pangunawa na may nakalaang tulong sa sinomang naging biktima nakaligtas man o pumanaw sa krimen; pagibayuhin ang pagbibigay lunas ng komunidad sa pamamagitan ng pagtutulungan ng magkakaiba pang pang lahi. Ang lahat ng tulong pananalapi ay itinataguyod ng State of California, pinangangasiwaan ng California State Library at sa pagtutulungan ng California Department of Social Services at ang California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs na kabahagi ng Stop the Hate program. Ipaalam ang pangyayari sa CAVSHATE.ORG





Filipino Community of Sacramento & Vicinity
Cordially invites you to its
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5 to 10 pm

Pat O'Brien
Community Center

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- Carol Munar (Chair) @ 916-837-8548
- Mylene Simons (Co-Chair) @ 916-206-7735
- Luz Daclan (Co-Chair) @ 916-216-9357
- Aida Azurin (Co-Chair) @ 916-616-1040
- Carol Raneses (Co-Chair) @ 530-218-8023

KAPWA

The Laban Group is proud to present our first ad of 2024 with a piece created by digital artist LeRoid David titled "Kapwa is What Connects Us All."

"Kapwa is a core Filipino concept of togetherness and community. This piece represents our connection of generations, values, and voices. With Kapwa, we can overcome adversities and rise together with better understanding, compassion, and humanity amongst ourselves, our families, our community, and the world."

The Filipino American community is the largest Asian population in the Sacramento region and the second largest in California. While the impacts of anti-Asian hate are under-discussed in the Filipino community, our presence is clear and our voice is strong.

The Laban Group's Filipino artists campaign aims to uplift our experiences, tell our stories, and amplify our power.

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

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