

**Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon
 Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year**



Christmas lanterns (parol in Filipino language) hang in front of most houses and buildings in the Philippines during this time of the year.

Misa de Gallo (Dec. 16-24)
 Traditionally, Christmas Day in the Philippines is ushered in by the nine-day dawn masses that start on December 16. Known as the Misa de Gallo (Rooster's Mass) in the traditional Spanish, and these masses are also more popularly known in Filipino as Simbang Gabi, or "Night Mass". The Simbang Gabi is the most important

Filipino Christmas tradition. These nine dawn Masses are also considered as a Novena by the Catholic and Aglipayan faithfuls. This refers to the Roman Catholic and Aglipayan practice of performing nine days of private or public devotion to obtain special graces. In some parishes, the Simbang gabi begins as early as four



in the morning. Going to mass this early for nine consecutive days is meant to show the churchgoer's devotion to his faith and heighten anticipation for the Nativity of the Lord. In traditional Filipino belief, however, completing the novena is also supposed to mean that God would grant the devotee's special wish or favor.

After hearing Mass, Filipino families partake of traditional Philippine Christmas delicacies, either during breakfast at home or immediately outside the church, where they are sold. Vendors offer a wealth of native delicacies, including bibingka (rice flour and egg based cake,

See Page 4 Philippine Christmas

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EDITORIAL

In spite of it all, it's time to enjoy and share our blessings with others

The economy is in a bad state, and it is quite impossible to pretend that we are not worried about it. We are apparently facing a recession - our manufacturing industries which are the main engines of the economy, are closing down. The auto industry, both here and in the U.S. is in need of a bail out but critics say that this may just be delaying the inevitable - people do not buy cars as much as they used to. How will the auto industry recover from their big losses if people do not start buying cars again? What is the best strategy to stimulate the economy? Is it more spending by the government even if this will result in a big deficit? Where will be the best place to start? Lowering taxes, and interest rates are considered to be the first measures to help the economy because they will allow people to have more disposable income but these are certainly not enough. Obviously, there is a need to evaluate economic policies and see which must be revised, and which must be adopted to produce the desired results.

The government has a big responsibility to lead us to economic recovery. As private citizens, we may be inclined to stand by and watch what happens next. But perhaps, we can also take the initiative of pitching in by way of using credit wisely. We may also learn to take advantage of economic opportunities. For those who follow the trends more attentively, they will probably figure out a way of helping themselves. For example, those who have money to invest may start building their equity in real estate or in good stocks, or open a small business that answers the needs of people in a weak economy.

On the other hand, with the holiday season in full swing, we should still find the time to enjoy it for it only comes once a year. We need to rejuvenate ourselves and have the time to reflect on our blessings and be inspired to look forward to the coming year. It is often said that while there is life, there is hope. Problems that come up today have a way of being resolved over time. After all, necessity is the mother of invention. Solving problems is a way of making sure we are thinking, and developing a strong character.

This holiday season is also a good time to take an accounting of

what we have done. Having been so preoccupied with our daily activities, we may have forgotten to do something for others. There are many ways by which we can make it up. We can give to our favorite charity, to the church, or to give something to a homeless person. We may also send a gift to a relative or to a friend whom we have not seen for a long time. Can you imagine what joy that brings to that person?

There is no lack of inspirational stories during this time of year. One only has to listen to the radio, watch TV, read some magazines, newspapers, or books, and even surf the internet and search for inspirational messages. This will certainly nourish our mind and soul, leading us to appreciate our relationships with our loved ones. The insights we get from the quotes, messages, poems and the like, will enhance our feeling of kinship with all humanity, deepen our faith and strengthen our character to cope with any challenges we may face during our lifetime.

To put ourselves into the mood of celebration, we decorate our homes and offices. The main motif is a Christmas tree that is decorated beautifully and artistically. This is where we place our gifts to our friends and family. What a joy to behold when we open those gifts on "Christmas morning. Then we drink our eggnog and have a Christmas breakfast together. It's a great pleasure to have this one day of the year when we can be with our family, relax and have the time to talk to one another.

Another feature of the season is preparing a Christmas dinner and sharing it with family and friends or neighbors. If we do not enjoy cooking, we can always go out to a nice restaurant and save ourselves the trouble of cleaning up the kitchen.

There is no doubt that Christmas is a very important occasion not only for Christians but for all others who are not. They also value the spirit of giving and sharing the beauty of the holiday season. We all become like children at this time of year for it allows us to forget our worries even for one day of the year.

Wish you all a very wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New Year May there be peace on earth and good will to all..

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi



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COOPERATIVE NEWS

Making our plans to promote the Filipino Coop

We are about to sign a contract with the refrigeration company that will install the equipment in the Filipino Coop. It took some time before we could get an affordable price for the job to be done. We are looking forward to seeing the completion of this project in a week or two.

When all the reorganization of the store is finished, we will plan a publicity event where we will invite important people who may be interested in helping the Filipino Coop. Perhaps, our fellow citizens and compatriots will take notice of this occasion and begin to lend us their support as well. Besides, they will not have any more excuses when we fill up the store with everything they need including fresh meat and vegetables.

We are also going to follow up our members to submit their ID size photos so that we can start using the ID card system in keeping track of our members purchasing record. As it is part of the Cooperatives Act that we do business with our members, we have to find ways of making this happen. Why have we not yet succeeded in convincing most of our members to buy their groceries from the Coop? Where do they shop for their Philippine food?

We would like to call our members and ask them these important questions - what will make you buy from your own Cooperative? What are the things you buy from the other stores? If we carry these items they buy, what prices do they normally pay for them? Their answers to these questions will help us make choices what to sell and what prices to offer them.

We also think that the store must be opened longer hours once we have completed the refurbishing of the store. As we do not have enough cash to hire people, we have to rely on volunteerism. We are therefore soliciting members who are retired or do not have a full time job. They will be called to a meeting and give them some training on the operation of the cash register and the use of the bar code reader. We also need volunteers to code our products so that they can be scanned easily at the cash register.

To give our members an idea of how many volunteers we need, we would like to have about 10 members

to volunteer during the weekdays, and 8 to volunteer during weekends and statutory holidays. Our employee, Rosa Basilan, works from 12:30 to 8:30 P.M. Monday to Friday, therefore we need volunteers to be at the Coop either during the morning or afternoon or evening. On weekends, we also need two people for each shift, one in the morning and one in the afternoon as we should open the store from 9 a.m. to 12:p.m., for one shift, and 12 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the second shift, and 6 to 8 p.m. for the evening shift. At present, I am manning the store on Saturday from 12 to 8 p.m. but I oftentimes I stay until 10 p.m. because of other things that I do like checking stock and prices, arranging displays, etc. On Sundays, Magnolia Camat usually opens the store at 1 p.m., but sometimes it is only open at 2 p.m. Closing and opening times are not as regular as it should be. Oftentimes, I hear people from the West Island tell me that they shop at other stores because they are open when they come.

It seems clear that the Filipino Coop must be regularly operated from morning to evening, 7 days a week, 12 hours a day at least in order to cover its overhead costs and have some profits to pay off its debts. I have advanced a considerable amount of cash and guaranteed credit with the bank. I took the big risk to my own financial welfare in order to keep the Coop open for as long as it takes in order to achieve a dream - to unite our community and build a legacy for all future generations. I believe that the potential is there to achieve a certain degree of economic power, if only we could all believe that we must support one another. We have the numbers to do this. It just does not make sense to throw your support to other businesses whose only goal is to make more profits for themselves. They will never share them with you while in the Cooperative business, members are the ones who will reap the benefits in the form of dividends from your stock and your patronage. Jerry Estrada has been writing about the power of the Cooperative movement since January 2007, but sadly, the response from our community is not as good as it should be. How much longer do you all have to wait before coming aboard the Cooperative movement? ■

If the record can speak for itself for the month of December, we have only received four new members, three of whom are fully paid, and the other one will be paying on installment.

The following are our recently recruited members this month:
0672-08 - Balansi, Rey L.
0673-08 - Del Rosario, Joyce
0674-08 - Nool, Marissa Hosana
0675-08 - Nunez, Marly Vega

Mrs. Del Rosario sent me a very comforting message, expressing her trust in me. I wish to thank her for this kind gesture.

The balance of the list of members during the year 2005-2006: continued from the previous month's issue of the Star are the following:

The balance of the list of fully paid members is as follows:

0109-05 - Rojo, Maria Lourdes
0249-05 - Rosales, Lourdes
0455-06 - Rosario Del, Pocholo
0204-05 - Rosello, Manuel
0205-05 - Rosello, Virginia
0515-06 - Royo, Julius
0195-05 - Ruano, Julieta
0026-05 - Salinas, Eugene
0284-05 - Salvador, Elvira
0293-05 - Salvador, Ruben
0436-06 - San Pedro, Merly
0193-05 - Santos, Reuben
0496-06 - Sinoy, Maria
0384-06 - Soriano, Elizabeth
0507-06 - Subido, Merlyn
0225-05 - Sumabat, Maria Victoria
0187-05 - Sy, Leonardo
0188-05 - Sy, Montserrat
0220-05 - Tablan, Carmen
_____ - Tabunar, Caridad
0360-05 - Tamonan, Generosa
0418-06 - Teodosio, Jonalyn
0046-05 - Timbreza, Pedro
0546-06 - Toyota, Violeta
0123-05 - Tuvida, Noemi
0280-05 - Ullah, Esmat
0152-05 - Verginiza, Somiso
0196-05 - Verginom, Nida
0330-06 - Villalonga, Juditho
_____ - Villanueva, Magdalena
0182-05 - Villoso, Eden
_____ - Ward, David
0370-06 - Woolmer, Bonnie Rosales
0223-05 - Zubieto, Darleen

The following list is our record of NOT FULLY paid members. On the other hand, if anyone listed below has fully paid, please present your receipt so that we can correct our records:

0311-06 - Abad, Luz
0291-05 - Abayon, Teresita
0320-06 - Abello, Simeona
0144-05 - Abrea, Luzviminda
0523-06 - Aguilar, Susan
0433-06 - Alberto, Angelina
0512-06 - Alfaro, Lalaine
0541-06 - Allana, Cristita
0246-05 - Alvarez, Cherry
9486096 - Amores, Daven

0419-06 - Amores, David
0299-95 - Amper, Annabelle
9491-96 - Andino, Fredo
0338-06 - Andres, Eugenia
0410-06 - Andres, Eugenia
0410-06 - Andres, Jacqueline
0549-06 - Andre, Melania
9558-06 - Antoni, Kavin
0315-06 - Antonio, Gemma
0403-06 - Antonio, Macaria
0122-05 - Apuli, Josie **
0339-06 - Aquino, Joanne
0149-05 - Aquino, John
0377-06 - Aquino, John Ryan
0553-06 - Araza, Leonida
0162-05 - Arce, Alicia
0080-05 - Arcillas, Edna
0326-06 - Arevalo, Christopher
0506-06 - Asuncion, Elizabeth
0462-06 - Aviles, Anecita
0385-06 - Axiabal, Elisa
0414-06 - Ayson, Ma. Elena
0175-05 - Azuelo, Elizabeth
0234-05 - Baccay, Fredeizminda
0451-06 - Bactol, Alberto
0135-05 - Bade, Carlito ***
9166-05 - Bade, Celerina
0113-05 - Bade, Gerarda
_____ - Bade, Jocelyn ***
0134-05 - Bade, Manuel
0137-05 - Bade, Marilou
0133-05 - Bade, Mark Gil
0168-05 - Bade, Rodolfo
0142-05 - Bado, Evangeline
0511-06 - Bajao, Ann Mercy
0544-06 - Balag-ey, Carolina
0143-05 - Balagot, Neil Carlston
0382-06 - Balani, Luz
0057-05 - Baldelovar, Leah ***
0191-05 - Baltazar, Corazon
0421-06 - Baltazar, Jose
0260-05 - Baltazar, Roderick
0282-05 - Banawa, Rolando
0408-06 - Batres, Jose Ricardo
0244-05 - Bautista, Marites
0262-05 - Bautista, Merlita
0407-06 - Bautista, Roseville
0130-05 - Bautista, Chris
0079-05 - Belaro, Lilia
0397-06 - Belgar, Divina
0308-05 - Belino, Lilia
0179-05 - Benedicto, Ma. Maxima
0022-05 - Bermejo, Virgilio
0050-05 - Bernabe, Lydia
0559-06 - Binala, Leonila
0138-05 - Bravo Bade, Alberto ***
0136-05 - Bravo, Bade Marlon ***
0155-05 - Brigaudit, Delia
0156-05 - Brigaudit, Ma. Rowena
0519-06 - Briones, Rosemarie
0088-05 - Buenavista, Leila
0302-05 - Bueno, Myra
0458-06 - Buiza, Nena
0334-06 - Buloron, Chona
0400-06 - Bumanlag, Juvy
0106-05 - Bunda, Mercedes
0552-06 - Cabahug, Medy
** - Paluagan overpayment
*** No record of amount
(To be continued next issue)



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From Page 1 Philippine Christmas

cooked using coals on top and under), puto bumbong (a purple sticky rice delicacy which is steamed in bamboo tubes, with brown sugar and coconut shavings as condiments), salabat (hot ginger tea) and tsokolate (thick Spanish cocoa).

Christmas Eve

For Filipinos, Christmas Eve on December 24 is the much-anticipated Noche Buena -- the traditional Christmas Eve feast after the midnight mass. Family members dine together around 12 midnight on traditional Noche Buena fare, which includes: queso de bola (Span. literally "ball of cheese"; edam cheese), "Tsokolate" (hot chocolate drink) and hamon (Christmas ham), and some would open presents at this time.

In different provinces and schools throughout the Philippines, Catholic devotees also reenact the journey of Joseph and the pregnant Blessed Virgin Mary in search of lodging for the soon-to-be born Jesus Christ. This is the traditional Panunuluyan, also called Pananawagan and Pananapatan.

This street pageant is performed after dark on Christmas Eve, with the actors portraying Joseph and Mary going to pre-designated houses. They chant wika wika bang bang is god traditional songs which are meant to wake up the owner of the house as they ask for lodging, but are turned away by the owners, also in song. Finally, Joseph and Mary make their way to the parish church where a simulated manger has been set up. The birth of Jesus is celebrated at midnight with the Misa de Gallo, together with hallelujahs and Christmas carols.

Christmas Day

Christmas Day in The Philippines is primarily a family affair. Prior to the ticking of 12 midnight on 25 December, Misa de Aguinaldo is being celebrated. It is usually attended by the whole family. Misa de Aguinaldo is the Holy Mass celebrated to signify the Birth of Jesus Christ, the Roman Catholic Church and Philippine Independent Church (Aglipayan) in the Philippines' main means of celebrating Jesus Christ's birth.

Misa de Aguinaldo is also celebrated at dawn or in the morning immediately after sunrise before 10 AM, this schedule is preferred by Filipinos who choose to celebrate Christmas Eve with a night-long celebration of Noche Buena.

Preferably in the morning, Filipino families visit members of the extended family, notably the elders in order to pay their respect. This custom has been an age-old tradition in the Philippines called Pagmamano, this is done by touching one's forehead to the elder's hand saying Mano Po. The elder then blesses the person who paid respect. Aguinaldo or money in the form of crisp, fresh-from-the-bank bills is given after the Pagmamano, most usually to younger children. Although traditional in the country, some families no longer practice it.

A Christmas Lunch usually follows after the Pagmamano. The lunch is heavily dependent upon the finances of the family. Rich families tend to prepare grand and glorious feasts that consist of Jamon de Bola, Queso de Bola, Lechon and other Filipino delicacies. Some poor families choose to cook simple meals, nevertheless still special. When the family is settled after the lunch, the exchange of gifts is usually done. Godparents are expected to give gifts or Aguinaldo to their godchildren.

When nighttime falls, members of the family usually take part in family talks while listening to favorite Christmas carols. Some may opt to have a glorious Christmas Feast for dinner.

Niños Inocentes

Niños Inocentes is commemorated on December 28 as Holy Innocents' Day or Childermas in other countries. The innocents referred to are the children who were massacred by order of Herod, who was seeking the death of the newborn Messiah.

New Year's Eve (Dec. 31)

On New Year's Eve ("Bisperas ng Bagong taon"), Filipino families gather for the Media Noche or midnight meal -- a feast that is also supposed to symbolize their hopes for a prosperous New Year. In spite of the yearly ban on firecrackers, many Filipinos in the Philippines still see these as the traditional means to greet the New Year. The loud noises and sounds of merrymaking are not only meant to celebrate the coming of the New Year but are also supposed to drive away bad spirits. Safer methods of merrymaking include banging on pots and pans and blowing on car horns. Folk beliefs also include encouraging children to jump at the stroke of midnight so that they would grow up tall, displaying circular fruit and wearing clothes with dots and other circular designs to symbolize money, eating twelve grapes at 12 midnight for good luck in the twelve months of the year, and opening windows and doors during the first day of the New Year to let in the good luck.

Three Kings (First Sunday of the year)

Christmas officially ends on the Feast of the Three Kings (Tres Reyes or Tatlong Hari in Tagalog), also known as the Feast of the Epiphany. The Feast of the Three Kings was traditionally commemorated on Jan. 6 but is now celebrated on the first Sunday after the New Year. Some children leave their shoes out, so that the Three Kings would leave behind gifts like candy or money inside. Jan. 6 is also known in other countries as Twelfth Night, and the "Twelve Days of Christmas" referred to in the Christmas carol are the twelve days between Christmas Day (December 25) and the coming of the Three Kings (January 6).
Decorations

The Filipino Christmas would not be complete without the traditional Philippine Christmas symbols and decorations. Christmas lights are strung about in festoons, as the tail of the Star of Bethlehem in Belens, in

shapes like stars, Christmas trees, angels, and in a large variety of other ways, even going as far as draping the whole outside of the house in lights. Aside from Western decorations like Santa Claus, Christmas trees, tinsel, etc, the Philippines has its own ways of showing that it is the holidays.

Parol

Though not strictly a custom, every Christmas season, Filipino homes and buildings are adorned with beautiful star lanterns, called parol (Span. farol, meaning lantern or lamp-Merriam Webster Spanish- English English- Spanish Dictionary). The earliest parols were traditionally made from simple materials like bamboo sticks, Japanese rice paper (known as "papel de Hapon") or crepe paper, and a candle or coconut oil-lamp for illumination; although the present day parol can take many different shapes and forms. The parol is also traditionally made of lacquered paper and bamboo, but others are made of cellophane, plastic, rope, capiz shell

Three Wise Men or Three Kings (Tatlong Hari in Tagalog). Parols are to Filipinos as Christmas trees are to Westerners- an iconic symbol of the holiday.

Belen

Another traditional Filipino Christmas symbol is the belen -- a creche or tableau representing the Nativity scene. It depicts the infant Jesus Christ in the manger, surrounded by his parents, shepherds, their flock and the Magi Belens can be seen in homes, churches, schools and even office buildings. The ones on office buildings can be extravagant, using different materials for the figures and using Christmas lights, parols, and painted background scenery. A notable outdoor belen in Metro Manila is the one that used to be at the COD building in Cubao, Quezon City. In 2003, the belen was transferred to the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan when the COD building closed down. This belen is a lights and sounds presentation, the story being



Typical sight during Christmas time when people go to church at dawn and then buy their favorite snack after mass at a nearby vendors stall.

and a wide variety of materials. Making parols is a folk craft, and most Filipino kids have tried their hand at making a parol at one time or another, maybe as a school project or otherwise. The most basic parol can be easily constructed with just ten bamboo sticks, paper, and glue. These lanterns represent the Star of Bethlehem that guided the Magi, also known as the

narrated over speakers set up and most probably using automatons to make the figures move up and down, or turn, etc. Each year, the company owning it changes the theme, with variations such as a fairground story, and Santa Claus' journey. Construction for this year's show started around September 1.

Source: Wikipedia

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Holiday spirit

By Raul J. Palabrica



Filipino boys play outside their makeshift store that sells Christmas lanterns in suburban Manila, Philippines on Sunday Dec. 14, 2008. Many Filipinos have now decorated their homes with Christmas ornaments as they prepare for the holidays

The crowds in the malls may be leaner, the gifts less expensive and the prices of goods higher, but, global recession or not, Christmas remains the happiest season for most Filipinos.

This is the time of the year when pessimists, skeptics and all kinds of people who find joy in making life difficult for others take a breather and grudgingly go with the mood of the community.

With Dec. 25 and New Year's Day falling on a Thursday — in the process "sandwiching" the succeeding Friday between a holiday and a weekend — an 11-day holiday is in the offing.

For those with relatives and friends in the provinces or elsewhere who have no professional commitments to tie them down, it's an opportunity to visit and rekindle ties.

If there are financial constraints for such activities, the layover can be used for rest and relaxation in the company

of the people who matter most in their lives.

It will be business as usual, however, for government personnel tasked to maintain peace and order, or keep vital public service facilities going while the rest of the nation enjoy the holiday.

The same thing goes for employees of private companies who have to do maintenance work, close the financial books or attend to activities that can best be done when the offices are empty.

Holiday feeling

In most business capitals of the world, if Christmas Day and the following day fall on working days, the staff is usually given the day off on the 25th to enable them to celebrate it, depending on their personal beliefs.

But they have to report for work the

next day unless they earlier asked and were given leave to extend their vacation.

Otherwise, the rest of the staff trek back to work so it's not unusual for office buildings to be bursting with activity right after Christmas Day.

For Filipinos, however, Christmas is not only Dec. 25; it includes the succeeding days up to New Year's Day. For the hopelessly sentimental, that sometimes extends to Jan. 6 or what used to be celebrated as Three Kings Day.

During that period, most Filipinos are in a celebratory (read: lazy) mood that will not tolerate interruption except for very good reasons.

Unless it involves emergency work or a promise of extra benefits, any businessman who disrupts that state of partial hibernation by calling his employees back to work risks getting their silent ire.

Workaholic

I once worked on a loan agreement involving a syndicate of banks based in New York and Tokyo that required discussions up to close to the holidays.

In the evening of Dec. 23, I sent an email to the banks, informing them of my position on some items of the loan. I ended my letter with a Christmas greeting and told them I looked forward to hearing from them, if possible, by Dec. 27.

Boy, did I get a quick reply to my email. The New York bankers said they planned to work up to 4 p.m. on Dec. 24, take a break on Christmas Day, and go back to work on the 26th.

They even gave me their home numbers in case I wanted to talk to them about the loan on Christmas Day! Talk of workaholic or obsessive compulsive people.

With characteristic politeness, the Japanese bankers wrote that they will be available for discussions everyday until Dec. 30 when they break off for the yearend celebration.

Their response did not surprise me, after all Christmas is not part of their culture or religion.

I replied "thanks but no thanks,"

the loan can wait while I enjoy the holiday season, Filipino style.

Tradition

The length of our Christmas celebration and the amount of effort put into it has been a source of amusement and amazement by some foreigners.

For Asians who have their own share of colorful traditional activities, the season, except for the motif, strikes close to home. It's no big deal.

Whenever I hear disparaging remarks from Westerners about the time and money "wasted" during this period, I am quick to point out that they're small compared to what Europeans do in August every year.

During that month, which is summer by their standards, they go on vacation to every available beach or resort in the continent. Business and government offices are practically on a standstill.

It's the worst time of the year to do business in Europe because members of the skeletal force that remains to put a semblance of normalcy in operations are either in a bad mood for being left behind or have their minds elsewhere than their work.

Despite the month-long break, however, the rest of the world has learned to accept and adjust to the August habit of the Europeans.

During the celebration of the Lunar Year, life goes on a slow mode for at least two weeks in China and other countries with strong ethnic Chinese presence.

The cities are emptied of people who, in keeping with tradition, go to their ancestral homes to visit their relatives.

Neither industrialization nor globalization has prevented the Chinese and their ethnic relations in other parts of Asia from observing this annual ritual. And the rest of the world has and continues to respect it.

Regardless of what others may say, the Christmas season is ours to enjoy.

Happy Holidays! ■

DR. EMILIA ESPIRITU

CHIRURGIEN DENTISTE / DENTAL SURGEON



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The People

Davao del Sur is home to a host of ethnic groups whose culture and way of life have been preserved. These are the Bagobos, the Mandayas, the Mansakas, the Atas, the Kalagans, the Tagakaolos, and the Mangguangans. Their arts and crafts are on display in museums and shops.

Ata people live in some areas of Davao City all the way to Davao del Norte and Bukidnon. They are related to the Manobos of Cotabato and include sub-groups such as the Talaingod of the Kapalong forests in Davao del Norte and the Matigsalug. Numbering about 222,000, Ata men wear long-sleeved shirts, carry spears,

hunt, log and grow crops. Their womenfolk wear native blouses, "malong" skirts and accessories of brass bracelets and bead necklaces. Mandaya and Mansaka are culturally related groups who are highly musical - playing the five string bamboo guitar, two-string lute, violin, flute, gong, drum and bamboo jew's harp. They are also excellent silversmiths crafting breastplates, jewellery, daggers and knives. The Mandayas are famous for their colorful abaca fiber weaves embroidered with tribal motifs.

In both groups, women generally wear handwoven abaca tube skirts, embroidered blue cotton tops and heavy jewellery. Men sport wide blue or white fringed and embroidered trousers and a loose shirt. Red is a color only for a headman ("bagani") and for women of high status.

Bagobos live in an area that extends from Davao del Sur and South Cotabato to the foot of Mt. Apo and Davao City all the way to the land bordered by the Davao and Pulangi rivers and up to northern Cotabato and southeast Bukidnon. Numbering about 80,000, their traditional costume is woven from abaca fiber and heavily ornamented with beads, shells, metal discs, embroidery and brightly-colored geometric applique. Though Bagobos have the most stunning costumes



Tudaya Falls, one of the highest in the country



Scenes from the Kadayawan Festival Parade in Davao City, held in August each year. A dancer (Top left), is dressed up in traditional Bagobo.



The Philippine Eagle is a giant forest raptor endemic to Mindanao. It is considered one of the largest and most powerful eagles in the world. Unfortunately, it is also one of the world's rarest and most critically endangered vertebrate species.



A Philippine Eagle with spectacular Mt Apo in the backdrop

among the Davao ethnic groups, they wear them only on special occasions. Like the Mandayas and Mansakas, they shave their eyebrows to a thin line and file and blacken their teeth. Bagobo smiths cast little bells which are attached to pouches, bracelets, jackets, anklets and inlaid metal boxes.

Tagacaolos number about 23,000 and occupy the area between the western shores of the gulf and the slopes of Mt. Apo. This is one of the tribes which resisted Muslim conversion and maintained a highland animistic culture.

Kalagans are a Muslim group related to the Tagacaolos. Numbering only about 7,000, they live along the shores of the Davao Gulf.

Manguangans are now only 3,000. They can be found in Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte.

Activities

There is a wide choice of white sand beaches and resorts. In the city, there are numerous hotels and inns. Dining is good and varied. Nightlife is fun.

Some of the popular sports activities are golf, watersports, and mountain climbing.

Located in the southeastern corner of the country's southernmost island of Mindanao, The province is composed of sandy beaches and outlying islands; agricultural plains and valleys; rainforests; swamps; rolling hills and mountains including the Philippines' highest peak, Mt. Apo (3,144 meters).

Davao City, the premiere city of Mindanao, is located in the northeastern part of the province, at the head of the gulf. In terms of land area, Davao City is the world's largest city (244,000 hectares). The mighty Davao river runs through the city.

Davao enjoys a mild, pleasant climate all year round, there is no

pronounced wet of dry season, and the province sits outside of the typhoon belt.

Davao del Sur is an ethnic mix of Muslims, Visayans, Tagalogs, Chinese, Japanese and Spanish with a number of indigenous tribes scattered in the central plains and the western shores of the Davao Gulf. The city of Davao has a population of 892,000 inhabitants spread across a vast land. Cebuano is the main language although English and Pilipino are widely spoken. B'laan, Bagobo, Manobo, Tagakaolo are the local tribe dialects. The Atas (numbering 220,000) and the Bagobos (around 80,000 people) are the largest tribes.

The colorful artistic heritage of Davao stems from the rich culture of its tribes. The Bagobos, for instance, are famous for their aesthetics in the meticulous carving of weapons; the elaborate decoration of inlaid metal boxes with bells; and the ornamentation of their abaca fiber dress with embroidery, shells, beads and metal discs.

A fabulous time to witness the rich cultural heritage and arts of the local people is during the **Kadayawan Festival**, held every third week of August in Davao City. Kadayawan is the festival of festivals in Davao. Showcasing are tribal inspired street dancers and authentic *Lumads* (indigenous people).

Davao Del Sur is also famous for :

-White-Sand Beaches

Take your pick from the fine beaches in *Sta. Maria, Malita, Jose Abad Santos, Sarangani, and Balut Island.*

-Tudaya Falls

Located in Sta. Cruz, one of the highest waterfalls in the country.

-Cultural Tribal Villages

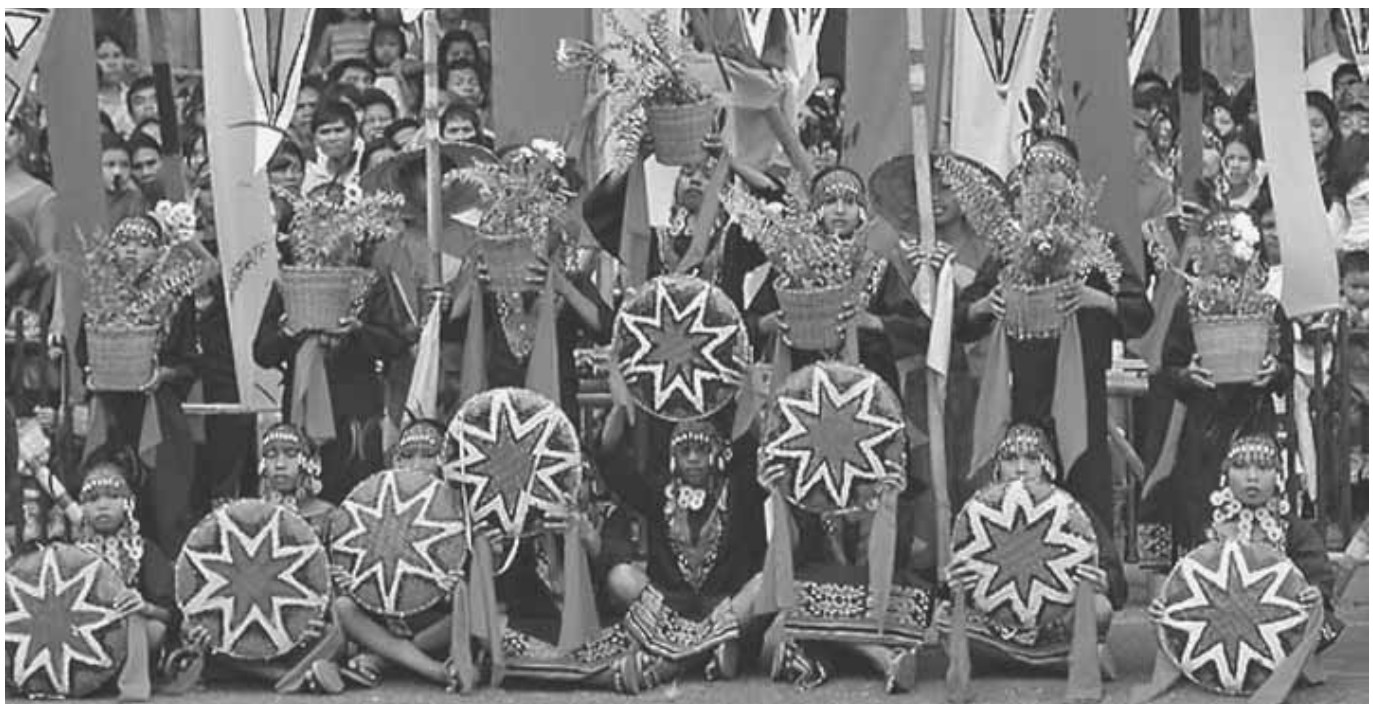
-Crocodile Park

Probably the country's richest in terms of biological diversity, Davao is now also known to be the habitat of crocodile

The mountains of Mindanao also offer incredible **trekking** experiences. ■



Trekking around Mt. Apo one is rewarded with great views



Tagalog Classes in the South Shore

A joint Filipino Language & Heritage Project

Brossard, November 16th -

The Quebec Association of Canadian-Filipino Teachers (QACFT) and the Filipino Canadian Community of the South Shore (FCCSS) launched their joint Filipino Language and Heritage Program on Sunday, November 16, 2008 at the Centre Communautaire Nathalie-Croteau, 2210 Andre Street in Brossard. Present at the opening were the following officers from QACFT: President Nancy Karidis, Language and Heritage Program founder and ex-officio president Carmen Caro, Director without Portfolio Elma Bulatao, Director for Membership Mellany Perez, and Director for Youth and Sports Rainier Omayao. The FCCSS was represented by Phil Villafranca, Mely Villafranca and Chito Calma. Students and their parents were also in attendance.

The students were arranged into three age groups - elementary, high school and adults. Ms Perez took the elementary-age group; Mr. Omayao took the high school-age group while the adults sat down with Mmes. Caro, Karidis and Bulatao. Altogether, there were about twenty students among the three classes.

The first day went without a hitch. Thanks to QACFT Secretary Daisy Bertiz, copies of the first day's lesson materials were prepared beforehand. The students were full of enthusiasm and showed genuine interest in the Filipino language and culture.

The QACFT originally launched its Filipino Language and Heritage program in September, 2007 at the St. Malachy's Parish Hall, 5330 Clanranald Street, Montreal where it maintains a makeshift office. This program continues and classes are still being held at St. Malachy's every Sunday, from 12:30 to 1:30 P.M. The Filipino classes in Brossard are an extension of this QACFT program and are held every Sunday at 3:00 to 4:30 P.M. The QACFT teachers for these programs are purely volunteers and are not remunerated.

If you live in the South Shore and would like more information on the Filipino classes in Brossard, call Phil at (450) 671-6992.

ONE MILLION ACTS OF GREEN

One million acts of green congratulates Canadians

CONGRATULATES CANADIANS ON REACHING HALF-WAY MARK OF 500,000 ACTS REGISTERED

CBC and Cisco proudly announce that One Million Acts of Green (OMaG) has reached a significant and impressive milestone. We have just surpassed 500,000 acts of green registered online at

www.onemillionactsofgreen.com. This represents a reduction of near 25,000,000 kg of greenhouse gas.

This campaign milestone has been achieved far more quickly than we anticipated - in less than two months - thanks to the eager participation of Canadians, and, at last check, we have reached 520,000 acts in our goal to get to one million. It has been the dedicated work of communities, schools, businesses and green-minded individuals who have actively and creatively participated in the OMaG challenge to get us to this point. For example:

* Trent University is proving that it is taking the lead as green schools go - they have 443 members on the OMaG site with 13,651 added acts and a green house gas reduction of 679,122.65 kg.

* Manitoba-based MTS Allstream has been super active as a company group, committing over 6,000 acts.

* Look out for some healthy competition in Alberta over the month of December as the town of Okotoks issues a formal challenge to the town of Airdrie on December 15. It will be the first city/town challenge issued on behalf of OMaG and clearly "The Greenest Town" title is on the line.

Mike Holmes, Canada's favourite handyman has been actively involved with sustainable community builds near Okotoks, and he has discussed his own acts of green when he's been interviewed on The Hour with George Stroumbouloupoulos. We've had various, international celebrities pitching in along side Canadians to get the word out - Tim Robbins, Jason Priestley, Alanis Morissette, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and David Foster are among the list of celebrities who have shared their greentips and pledges for the campaign while on set of The Hour.

It's easy to get involved, and it's not about overhauling your life; it's about one act from each individual amassing to a million. In the past month alone, we have launched our French language companion site - Un Million De Gestes Verts (UMGV) - www.unmilliondegestesverts.com, and introduced a new Facebook application so all acts of green can be shared in users Facebook status updates and encourage other Facebook friends to act. Based on helpful user feedback to the OMaG site, we have added new acts and soon, we'll launch seasonal acts some of which include:

- * Recycle Your Christmas Tree
- * Reuse or Make Your Own Wrapping Paper
- * Send an e-Card Instead of a Paper Card
- * Avoid Using Disposable Plates, Glasses, and Cutlery
- * Avoid Excess Packaging, by Giving Gift Alternatives
- * Buy Carbon Offsets

There will be continued updates and new material added to the OMaG

site as the campaign continues.

Surpassing 500,000 acts is massive. Congratulations and appreciation goes all Canadians who have taken the time and interest to commit one act of "green" (or more), then register those acts. Here's to the next 500,000!

www.onemillionactsofgreen.com & www.unmilliondegestesverts.com -30-

About Cisco - Cisco is changing the way people work, live, play and learn in new and more sustainable ways. Through our technology, we enable people to make powerful connections whether in business, education, philanthropy or creativity. Our technology forms the foundation of the Internet and the Internet isn't a network of computers, it's a network of people. We call this "The Human Network" - a network of people with the power to change the world we live and work in. We believe change is a good thing, and that technology can and should improve life. Because of Cisco's solutions, people can come together in ways never before imagined. It doesn't matter whether walls, borders, mountains, or oceans stand in the way, over the network, people can come together and transform business, communities, governments, schools, and lives. Together, we are more powerful than we ever could be apart. When the human network sets out to solve a problem, the result is a Human Network Effect. www.cisco.com/ca

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where, and when Canadians want it. www.cbc.ca/thehour

The meaning of the 12 days of Christmas

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not allowed to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning, plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality, which the children could remember.

- The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.

- Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.

- Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.

- The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

- The Five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.

- The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

- Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit; - Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution. Leadership, and Mercy.

- The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

- Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control.

- The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

- Eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

- Twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed

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Fil-Am media based in Washington feted to luncheon



Seated from left: Nony Mendoza, PinoyGlobal & Fi;ojino Image Magazine; Rita Gerona-Adkins of Philippine News, Jennie L. Ilustre of Asian Fortune; Becky Pagsibigan of Manila Mail, Ambassador Willy C. Gaa, Mrs. Linda Gaa, Bing Branigin of Manila Mail, Lito Katigbak of the Philippine Star. Standing from left: Minister & Consul Ariel Rodelas Penaranda, Minister and Consul General Domingo "Ding" Nolasco, Rodney Jaleco of ABS/CBN, Rene Calandria of Pinoy Herald, Adolfo Paglinawan of Pinoy Global, and Minister Carlos "King" Sorreta, Deputy Ambassador and Char d'affaires. (Pinoy Global Photo)

Washington, D.C. - Dec. 18 (Pinoy-Global) - Filipino-American journalists based in the Nation's Capital were hosted today to a sumptuous luncheon at the residence of the Philippine Ambassador to the United States Willy C. Gaa, and his charming and hospitable wife, Mrs. Linda Gaa.

"I wish to welcome the members of the Fourth Estate to his luncheon honoring the Filipino journalists in this area," stated Ambassador Gaa. He also added that he is open to any query from the guests.

The Ambassador was joined by several senior staff members of the embassy, among them Minister Carlos

"King" Sorreta, Consul General Doming "Ding" Nolasco, Consul Ariel Penaranda, Consul Gines "Ging" Gallaga, Press & Information officer Consul Rico Fos, Cultural Officer.

The Fil-Am media were presented by Nony Mendoza, PINOYGLOBAL, & Filipino Image Magazine: Rodney Jaleco of ABS-CBN, Lito Katigbak of the Philippine Star, Rita Gerona-Adkins of Philippine News, Jennie L. Ilustre of Asian Fortune, Bing Branigin of Manila Mail, Rene Calandria of Pinoy Herald, Adolfo Paglinawan of PINOYGLOBAL, and Becky Pagsibigan of Manila Mail.

REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS OR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS



The Filipino Solidarity Cooperative cordially invites you to a post Christmas Pot Luck Supper
When: Sunday, January 4, 2009
Time: 5:00-8:00 P.M.
Place: FAMAS Building
4708 Van Horne Avenue
Tel.: 514-733-8915 for information



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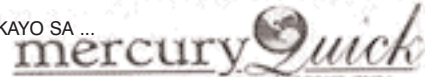
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PROMO ENDS JUNE 27, 2009.



Isaac T. Goodine

Global Perspectives



Human migration: one looks back

At the beginning of this year the heading for this column was All about Migration in 2008, and I wrote that the Society for International Development, celebrating 50 years, devoted the December 2007 issue of its Quarterly to the issues of migration and development. Throughout this year global issues related to human migration have dominated election campaigns and occupied the hearts and minds of many people all around the globe. Each migrant has a story to tell. Here is one from the Messenger, published by Parkdale United Church, Ottawa, in December 2008.

TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION
by Gloria Goodine

Someone once said, "Real life can be more remarkable than invented tales." . . . such as in the case of my own life.

It was Shanghai, 1954. I was barely 3 months old and Dad, Mum, Grand Dad and 3 siblings (all under 6 years) were on a ship bound for Hong Kong. You see, life had become more restrictive for Westerners (my Grand Dad being from England) and Eurasians (my parents being of English/Chinese ancestry) under the Communist regime, and the family had decided it was time to leave Shanghai while they still were able to do so legally.

The voyage to Hong Kong took several days and was quite eventful. The seas were rough and Mum was in bed with seasickness. Bill, the eldest (who was 6) was given the responsibility of washing diapers, while Janet (4 years old) guided our partially-blind Grand Dad carefully around the ship and Robert (2 years old) charmed the ship's passengers and crew with his command of the Chinese language. And what of baby Gloria? Mum would recall this tale often during family gatherings and end by saying, ". . . thank goodness, Gloria was such a good baby!" In fact, this was closer to the truth than you can imagine, as apparently I was a contented baby and happy to stay in my crib most of the time, so much so that Mum (who you will remember was seasick) occasionally forgot to feed me!

Back to the story --We had finally made it to Hong Kong and freedom, unable to bring much in the way of material wealth with us, except for a few pieces of luggage and some gold jewelry that was smuggled out of

Shanghai in my diapers! Our exhausted and bedraggled family was met at the docks by members of a Christian association (that was affiliated with the Emmanuel Church in Shanghai where my family attended services) whose responsibility it was to assist refugees coming out of China . . . and thus began our new life in Hong Kong with our extended Christian family.

Dad quickly found a job with help from the local Christian community, while Mum stayed home to raise the family and take care of Grand Dad. Fast forward and ten years later (1964) Dad was among several church members gathered at a plot of land with spade in hand, to plant trees and to officially inaugurate the Kowloon Baptist Church. One year later, the Kowloon Baptist Church was erected and formally dedicated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Over time, our family become more and more involved in the life and activities of the church -- Dad became a Deacon, the Church Treasurer, taught Sunday School, Mum became the Church Secretary and President of the Women's Missionary Union and my siblings and I (now 6 in total) were baptized by full emersion, attended Sunday School and sang in the choir.

Some of you may recall I traveled to Hong Kong last October to visit my sister and brother. During my brief stay, Janet and I returned to the Kowloon Baptist Church for the first time in about 20 years. The visit brought back many memories, especially the fine hymns that we could still remember after all these years -- Equally amazing was the fact that we recognized our former neighbor (and church organist) well into her eighties, singing in the choir!

We are nearing the end of 2008. I am thankful to have led such a "remarkable" life, starting with my birth in Shanghai and growing up in Hong Kong, having lived and worked in 9 countries, and now nicely settled in Canada, and all the while, behind the scenes, who has been guiding me? I am reminded of one of my favorite hymns -- "All the way my Saviour leads me, what have I to ask beside? For I know what e'er befalls me, Jesus doeth all things well."

He most certainly does!

Mall crazy Philippines

Three of the world's 10 largest shopping malls are now in the Philippines.

The great malls of China--South China Mall in Dongguan and the Golden Resources Shopping Mall in Beijing are the two biggest.

But coming in a respectable third place, thanks to a 90,000sqm extension that opened this month, is the SM City North Edsa in the Philippine capital.



A visit to a mall--and I'll say right off that I would not recommend SM City North Edsa--is a must on a trip to Manila, along with the old Spanish walled city of Intramuros and a baywalk stroll at sunset.

The country's jumbo-size mall chains--SM and Robinsons--were founded by Filipino-Chinese taipans: SM by Henry Sy; Robinson's by John Gokongwei. Both are living legends here, who helped shaped this country's vibrant retailing landscape.

The big malls typically have vast food courts; exhibition centres; multiplex cinemas, some with as many

as 12 screens; amusement arcades; skating rinks or bowling alleys; health and wellness centres; and, of course, floors of shops from local retailers to famous international names like Marks & Spencer and Ralph Lauren.

On Sundays, Catholic masses in this predominantly Christian country are held in the walkways, where shoppers squeeze past worshippers.

Inside the box, there is not a lot of difference between the two chains: The SMs malls have a shaper look; Robinsons a cosier atmosphere.

Manila's first malls were built back in the 1970s. Rising disposable incomes among the middle-classes spurred a mall boom in Manila (population:12 million) over the past two decades. That malls are now springing up at a rapid rate in the larger provincial towns is an encouraging sign of how the economy is faring, despite the current gloom.

It is unlikely that malls would play such an important part in the lives of ordinary Filipinos-- both for shopping and killing time--had it not been for the billions of dollars sent home by the several million Filipinos living and working overseas.

This year, their remittances, despite the global financial meltdown since the fourth quarter, is expected to exceed a record US\$15 billion. That's about a tenth of the country's entire gross domestic product to put in perspective. ■

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Philippine Cuisine

Paksiw na Pata (Pork Hocks)



- 1 kilo pork pata (washed & chopped)
- # 1 liter stock
- # 1 cup vinegar
- # ? cup soy sauce
- # ? cup brown sugar
- # 2 laurel leaves
- # ? cup dried banana blossoms (soaked)
- # 1 small head of garlic (minced)
- # Pinch of oregano
- # Pinch of salt & pepper

Instructions

- # In a pot, boil pork legs and discard water.
- # Pour in stock and bring to a boil.
- # Pour in vinegar, soy sauce, brown sugar, laurel leaves, oregano, garlic, salt & pepper, and banana blossoms.
- # Simmer until pork is cooked and tender and sauce thickens in consistency.
- # Serve hot.

Crispy Pata

Preparation & drying: 4 hours to 1 day

Estimated cooking time: 20 minutes

Crispy Pata Ingredients:

- * 1 Pata (front or hind leg of a pig including the knuckles)
- * 1 bottle of soda (7Up or sprite)
- * 1 tablespoon of salt
- * 2 tablespoons patis (fish sauce)

sauce)

- * 1/2 tablespoon baking soda
- * 1 tablespoon of monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- * 4 tablespoons of flour
- * Enough oil for deep frying
- * Enough water for boiling

Crispy Pata Cooking Instructions:

- * Clean the pork pata by removing all hairs and by scraping the skin with a knife. Wash thoroughly.
- * Make four to five inch cuts on the sides of the pata.
- * On a deep stock pot, place the pata in water with soda and salt. Bring to a boil and simmer for 20 minutes. Then add the baking soda and continue to simmer for another 10 minutes.
- * Remove the pata from the pot and hang and allow to drip dry for 24 hours. An alternative to this is to thoroughly drain the pork pata and refrigerate for a few hours.
- * After the above process, rub patis on the pata and sprinkle flour liberally.
- * In a deep frying pot, heat cooking oil and deep fry the pork pata until golden brown.

Crispy Pata Dip Sauce:

Mix 3/4 cup of vinegar, 1/4 cup soy sauce, 2 cloves of crushed garlic, 1 head of diced onion and 1 hot pepper. Salt and pepper to taste.

Roasted Chicken



Recipe

Estimated cooking time: 1 1/2 to 2 h

Roasted Chicken Ingredients:

- * 2 kilo dressed chicken (broiler)
- * 2 cups of lemon grass (tanlad)
- * 3 tablespoons of cooking oil
- * 2 tablespoons of salt
- * Make sure the chicken is clean with no remaining small feathers and no insides.

Cooking Instructions

- * Wash thoroughly and pat dry with a paper towel
- * Rub the whole chicken with cooking oil as well as the inside cavity.
- * Next apply salt all over, again, including the insides.
- * Fill the cavity with lemon grass

- * Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit
- * Place the chicken on an oven rotisserie. * If you don't have a rotisserie put the chicken on an elevated rack on a baking pan - breast side up (so the bottom of the chicken does not touch the baking pan).
- Bake for 1 hour or until the chicken is golden brown. When you prick between the chicken thigh and body and the juice runs clear (not bloody) the chicken is done.
- * Serve with mashed potatoes,

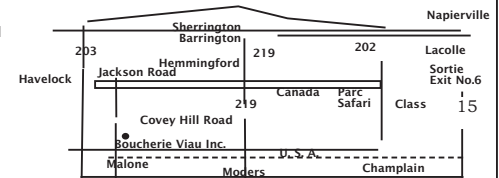
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The North American Filipino Star

PHOTO GALLERY

December 2008



Gilmore students decorate the Christmas tree just before their annual year-end party, December 14, 2008



Souvenir photo of Gilmore's Christmas get together: Susana Cordova, Maricel Fonacier, Esmeralda Roldan, Leo Miranda, Martin Riendeau holding baby Emilien, Marivel Riendeau, Zenaida Kharroubi, Bernard Demol, Margie Tagyam, and Alice Lee of Ajennat Coiffure



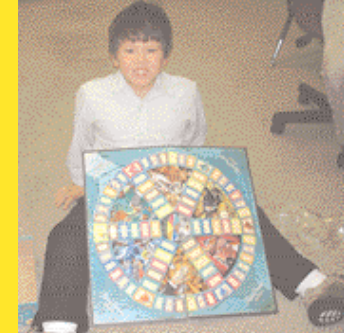
Liseth Barrios holding a pina collada drink in a restaurant in Montego Bay, Dec. 6, 2008 during Pro Travel int'l. training event.



Hard to catch that baby smile - Emilien Riendeau with his mom, Marivel during Gilmore's Christmas party, Dec. 14, 2008.



Karaoke singer, Juvy Vales-Durocher, during the Gilmore College Christmas party



Mark Alexandre Durocher posing with the Trivial Pursuit game that he just unpacked.



Members of the Vigie Asiatique committee attended the annual workshop or day of reflections on the security needs of the Montreal community and other important subjects that concern the SPVM (Société policière de la ville de Montréal) on December 3, 2008. SPVM Director Mark Parent (2nd from right, second row) and Sgt. Nathalie Tetrault, coordinator, (2nd from left, second row) pose for souvenir with the committee. The Vigie Asiatique committee is composed of 14 members, two from each of the 7 ethnic communities, namely, Bangladesh, China, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Shri Lanka, and Vietnam. They meet every 3 months or more often when needed.



Ambassador Jose Brillantes is cutting the ribbon during the inauguration of the new office of Mercury Quick Financial, on Saturday, December 6, 2008 at 4781 Van Horne Avenue. He is flanked by Mr. Ramil Ramesh and Mr. Jhun Zapanta, business partners.



Standing from left: Valent Lloyd-Hughes, Cres Ruiz, Norina Quenneville, Ramero Emboscado, Mary Dufresne, Mercy Remegio, Tina Solamo, Cirila Goel, Haydee Sarcon, Portia Madriaga, Diding Verginiza, Felix Salazar and Ex-chairman Vincent Quiblat. Sitting from left: Ex-chairperson Marlene Birao-Schachter, Visitor Filipino Author/Historian Greg Hontiveros (Inducting Officer), New Chairman Nereo Ruiz, Linda Helwig, Anita Lo and Ex-chairman Paul Imperial.



Montreal visitor, Greg Hontiveros, a Filipino author/historian was in town last November 1, 2008 for a symposium on "gold links in the Philippines" sponsored by the Kalihukang Bisaya held at the Philippine Center. He is the author of two historical books, Butuan of a Thousand Years and A Fire on the Island. He is shown seated fourth from left.



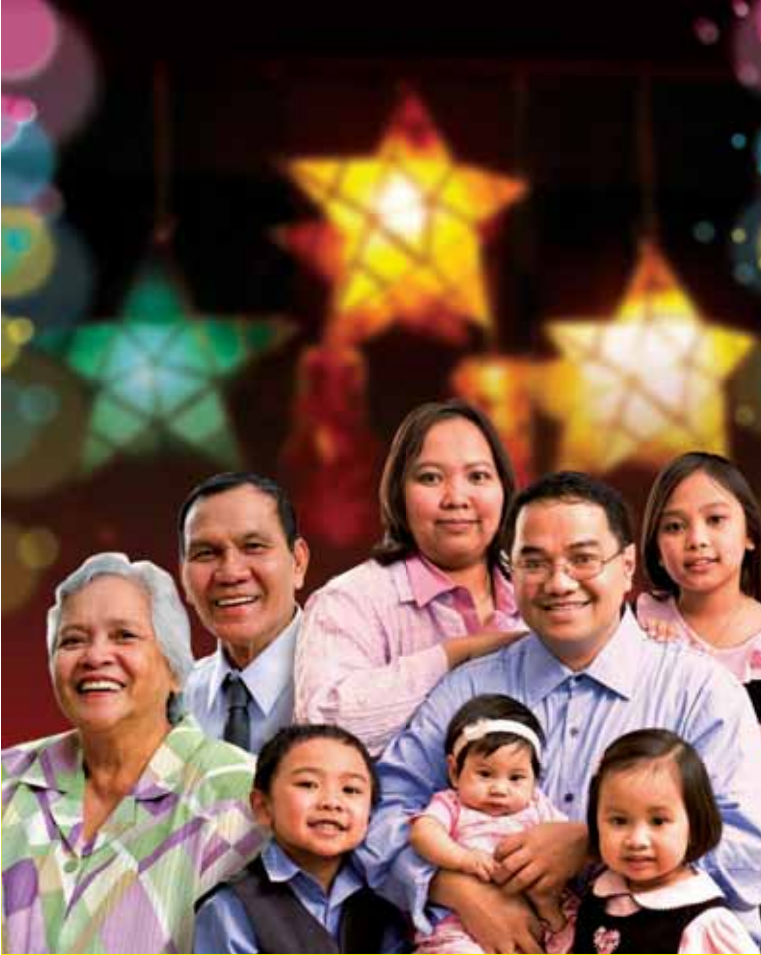
This big, delicious chifon cake is given by Nancy Alcantara for the Christmas party.



Filipino author/historian Greg Hontiveros receiving a plaque from Kalihukang Bisaya chairperson Marlene Birao-Schachter



KB ex-chairman Paul Imperial receiving a plaque from Marlene Birao-Schachter with KB director Valent Lloyd-Hughes.



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Entrepreneurs' way of thinking

Too many people are trying to start their home businesses with an ordinary employee's way of thinking. This has become a common reason why not long after sitting down and giving it a fair look into even the most lucrative business opportunity they bump into, they put it away and decide not to take any chances.

What has happened here is the most lucrative business opportunity has been looked into by an ordinary 9 to 5 worker who appears NOT to be business-minded. If you are like most people, you have probably considered starting your own business yourself. But above all, you have to understand that to make into successful Business Entrepreneur, one has to change their way of thinking first.

FIRST: DO NOT EXPECT FAST CASH Beside gambling or winning a lottery, working as an employee is the only way to get fast cash..."fast" as in 25 working days'. This kind of cash is always certain to come as long as you work for your boss. But as you probably already know it, as soon as you stop, the money stops.

True entrepreneurship-minded people know that it takes time to develop an attack plan for their businesses. It takes time to build a strong and solid business which delivers ongoing income through many years. True Business Entrepreneur hold on to this truth. "We reap, what we sow, but the harvest is never in the same season as the planting."

SECOND: AIM FOR JOB SECURITY OR FINANCIAL SECURITY?

Employees would rather have job security. Why? Simple: the income is secure. As long as loyally works for your boss, you will be certain to get

your cash! The problem with the typical job is that when you stop, the money stop. The stark fact is: one day you might get sick and won't be able to get back to work. Sooner or later you will retire. Companies get broke and have to release their employee. No matter what the situation, as soon as you stop working, the money will surely stop coming. So much for secure income...!

A job with secure income is necessary for those who has not set up their business yet. True, but a true Entrepreneur won't settle merely for job-security. They aims for more, such as financial security. No, they won't have fast cash and they won't have any secure income yet – at least not in the beginning. And often, they won't have any income for the first few months.

Business entrepreneur think of the big picture. What they do is building assets from which their money will come in month after month, year after year. The money will not come now, it might not even come for the next few month but as soon as the business is up and running, it will keep generating even when they chooses to stop working as long as they got the right business. And THAT is financial security!

THIRD: GENERATE PASSIVE INCOME Financial freedom is not measured by how much you earn by working, but by how much money come in with only little or no work at all. This kind of income is called Passive Income. This fact has been know for decades by real wealthy people. Successful and wealthy entrepreneur do only little work and sometimes it is even possible to do the work only once but still generating recurring income on it.

Imagine a song or a book writer. They write their songs or books once but get paid forever on it. This do-it-once-get-paid-forever type of income is called residual. Most people who have attained financial freedom have other people working to generate income for them. Earning money by other people's effort is called Leveraged Income.

As hard as it may seem, to create leverage income, you have to have your own business where other people work to generate income for you. Any business, whether it is a traditional business, franchise, networking or internet based business.

Employees work to generate secure income. Business Entrepreneurs works to build up assets with income streams which generates for him ongoing Passive Income (either residual or leverage income or both). In other word, Business entrepreneur works to build himself what I call "A Money Machine" which is designed to generate ongoing income.

FOURTH: INVESTMENTS, INVESTMENTS

It is common for people who seek job security to hesitate to invest. The reason is understandable; for some of us the risk of investing in a business are just too much to handle. A true Business Entrepreneur understands that in order to build -what I would call a 'money-machine', investments are necessary. There is just no such things as businesses without investments. They knows that it takes time and effort to develop a successful business. But they also knows that investing money is just as important!

Sometimes it takes the Business Entrepreneur months or a year before he can finally reap the big success. Sometimes even a bit more. It takes a couple of years of investing time, effort and money. But this is not too hard for them to handle. A true Entrepreneur thinks long term. They knows that in the end, This working and money investing will finally pay off!

A Home Based Business Entrepreneur would only have to invest just 5-10 hours a week for a couple of years and he would only have to make low budget investments into his home based business. And at the end of the time of working and investing, our Entrepreneur would have turned it into a significant amount of residual income stream!

I'm not talking about money that comes in today and is gone tomorrow but income that keeps coming in month after month, year after year... money that -as Gery Carson has put it-"when you've left this planet continues to provide for your spouse, children, or grandchildren."

By then you would think that all your valuable time and money you have spent would be worth it.

Commonly an ordinary employee, who fears too much to invest, works hard to receive his pay check every month. Most likely he even retires broke. Before he knows it, he leaves the planet with nothing to leave for his family.

A true Business Entrepreneur is prepared to invest. He knows by www.filipinostar.org

investing in his business he is building assets that would generate passive and residual income for him throughout his years on this planet and the years of his grandchildren. Change your way of thinking: **THINK LONG TERM: START SMART INVESTING!**

A Successful Filipino Entrepreneur with Chicken Inasal

Only an Ilonggo know an authentic chicken inasal should taste. This is what Treena Cueva-Tecson, a genuine Ilongga, born and raised in Bacolod, carries with her when she opened her Tambokikoy Restaurant which sell authentic chicken inasal – cooked and prepared the way a genuine inasal should be.

"The inasal in Manila are sweet, dry and not cooked well." Ilonggos would really know the authentic taste of



inasal" said Treena who have a full time marketing and PR career before giving it up to be a full time wife and mom two years ago. Being a business minded woman, Treena applied blue ocean strategy in her business by offering something that the saturated market does not have yet; a whole chicken with an authentic inasal taste.

Treena started his Tambokikoy just last year, armed only with a P250,000.00 in capital, her mom's recipe and her husband's full support. Tambokikoy which means chubby in Ilonggo is envisioned by Treena as a take-out place that will sell authentic-tasting whole chicken inasal.

With a very ideal location and right promotional approached, responded has been very good. Office people and families have been dropping by to order take out, starting lunch time until dinner. Treena cooked her chicken inasal rotisserie-style over charcoal and not on electric grill. By chopping it two minutes after it cooked, she said the juice goes back and it does not dry out. Treena is expecting to recoup her investment in a month or two. This early, inquiries of franchising have already been received. ■

Arroyo praises military for staying away from politics

Estrada on Legarda as VP: What offer?

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has praised the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for staying away from politics as she noted that national leaders must focus on the economy amid the global financial crunch.

Speaking before the military and guests at the 73rd founding anniversary of the AFP in Camp Aguinaldo, Arroyo thanked Military Chief of Staff General Alexander Yanu for crushing "the enemy that is called politics" within the military.

In his own speech at the AFP anniversary, Yanu had assured Arroyo that "the enemy called politics and political ambition" has been slain within the military.

Even as she cited the country's 4.6 economic growth as other countries fall into recession, Arroyo noted the need to focus on the economy.

"The national leadership must not be on politics but on the economy," she said.

Arroyo also announced additional benefits for soldiers, including doubling their hazard pay and increasing their subsistence pay.

"Upgrading will continue particularly in training," she said. "We will make Philippine defense work to stop insurgency by 2010."

As Christmas approaches, Arroyo urged the Filipinos to remain optimistic.

"This Christmas, let us all count

our blessings and look at the future with hope, confidence and optimism," she said.

Politics, Yanu said, "has enticed the ambitious to interfere in the realm



of pure politics while still clad in the soldier's uniform and while still bearing arms."

But, he added, in his speech at ceremonies marking the 73rd anniversary of the Armed Forces, "The Filipino soldier understands his scared duties and knows that intervening in political processes and conflict while still in active service in the AFP is not one of them."

Nevertheless, Yanu admitted there are "continuing efforts" by some sectors to "entice" soldiers with the lure of political power as he warned the "merchants of political wares" to

"leave the AFP alone."

Yanu said the Filipino soldier "does not lust for military glory, so neither would the dangling of political perks lead him to abandon his sworn sacred duty to God, country and people."

"Our commitment is to never tire in the performance of our mission, not to ever deviate from our focus," Yanu said. ■

Former president Joseph Estrada simply laughed off reports Senator Loren Legarda won't join him as running mate should he decide to run in the 2010 presidential polls.

"I have not even declared that I will run for president, how can I say that I will run with Loren as my running mate?" Estrada said in a statement Monday.

Legarda on Sunday reiterated her earlier declarations that if she does run in 2010, it will only be for the No. 1 post.

Estrada said he only mentioned that Legarda could be a good vice president but denied saying he wanted her as running mate.

"There is no doubt that Senator Legarda has the qualifications to be not only a good vice president but even a good president," said Estrada.

"Who knows, if she tops the surveys and if she maintains her performance as a top senator, I might even endorse her for president in 2010. But I never said she would be my running mate," Estrada added.

Legarda was among the Senators in 2001 who voted for the opening of an envelope that would supposedly prove claims Estrada plundered millions and placed it in his bank account.

The non-opening of the envelope televised a crying Legarda, and has spurred what is now called the EDSA 2 people power revolution, which overthrew Estrada.

Estrada was convicted of plunder and detained for over five years. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo granted him executive clemency in 2007.

During the 2007 elections, Legarda however joined the United Opposition, an Estrada-headed coalition. ■

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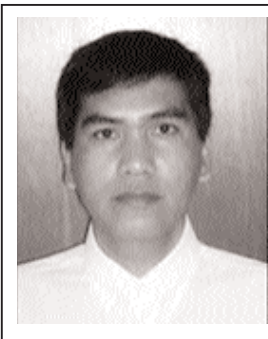
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Empowering the people

By Jerry O. Estrada

Collaboration Towards A Better Life

Two days left before deadline and I still didn't know what topic I should write for this month until I remembered that there are three sources of learning: books; media (print and broadcast); and other peoples' experience. Later, I found myself browsing some Philippine news on the web.

It seems that the news look all the same to me - Christmas is on the air; the lives of people in the Philippines are also the same, but with a difference - there are three types of people in our country: those who have nothing (have-not) and wish to take what others will give to them; those who have not enough (have-less); and those who have much (rich) and who wish to have more.

My memory dates back to the early years when I can recall the hardship of many of our fellow Filipinos in our country that still prevail until now. The people in the rural areas grow vegetables, breed cattle and propagate seafoods. Of these they sell the best and very often they still starve themselves.

Although the Philippines has rich natural resources, outside multinational companies own the businesses that exploit them. Our people do the cuttings for a small wage; the lumber is taken away while their own houses are small and cold. The wealth created by village (barrio) folks in their community is not being used to benefit their community.

Factories and shopping malls were built in the urban areas. They employed people from the rural areas and the wages they paid were low. People worked long hours and food had to be bought from a store and all out of their tiny wages. They became dependent on their wages but often sank into depths of greater poverty. On the other hand, people who immigrated to other countries, particularly, to Canada have a better quality of life than those who had no other choice but to keep on struggling on their meager income.

For the nth time, I have been mentioning in this column the advantages of collaboration, the need for Filipino organizations to link with each other for us to attain a purpose - a better life for Filipinos. We feel lucky that we enjoy a good standard of living and it is about time that we give back to the community a share of our good fortune.

Organizations that are political

in nature have a good effect if it works with organizations that are economic in purpose. In order to succeed in any business endeavor we need "business-friendly" laws and support from the government especially in its early stage. Likewise, to give meaning to any political efforts it must be converted to something that benefits the people. There is an adage that says - "He who owns the gold rules the world."

We need a business enterprise that is essential to people's welfare like what the majority of our Chinese, Jews, and Vietnamese friends are doing. They are successful in financial matters because they have learned the secrets of managing a business and they help one another.

It is good that some organizations that are political in nature like FAMAS (Philippine Association of Montreal and Suburbs) is involved in promoting the businesses and community activities of Filipinos through the efforts of Riza Esmeralda Sarto, Director of Public and Government Relations, Claro Bermudez (President), and FAMAS Directors.

Salve Desprez (President of Philippine Centre Foundation of Greater Montreal) and husband, Abel are helping a business enterprise like the Filipino Coop. There, I also met Pat and Fred Magallanes (Publisher of Filipino Forum Newspaper). It was there I knew that the Magallanes family is a close-knit family friend of Sen. Nene Pimentel, who happens to be a family friend, too of my former boss, Atty. Mordino Cua. It's nice to see Mr. and Mrs. Magallanes there supporting the Coop.

If there are more people to collaborate and extend their help either in terms of talent, skills and time, the Filipino Coop will thrive because the Coop is owned and managed by its members. If the Coop will succeed, the surplus (net income) will be distributed as dividends and refunds to its member-owners. Let's patronize, help it and someday we could say that we've done something worthwhile for the people and to the community.

We all know that it takes time to create a business enterprise like a co-operative. Let's remember that even the church is not built in a day. It is not to be finished without a struggle. Expect that and be patient.

Below is a summary of Calgary Co-op's history and governance. Let's

learn from their experience how they built a strong future for the people - the co-operative way.

THE CALGARY CO-OPERATIVE EXPERIENCE

Locally owned and managed, the Calgary Co-operative Association was organized in 1955. It operates 22 grocery stores, 26 gas stations, 11 travel offices and 15 liquor stores in Calgary. Today, Calgary Co-op is one of the largest retail co-ops in North America with 413,000 members, 4,000 employees, with \$314 million in assets and annual sales of \$884 million.

Calgary Co-op is proud of its local roots and its reputation as one of the best grocery retailers in Calgary. It has built reputation on its strong commitment to member-customer service and the communities it serves through financial and other community services.

The 9 board of directors supervises and manages the management of the business and affairs of the Calgary Co-op in accordance with the COOPERATIVE ACT, Regulations, Articles, and by-laws.

Elected directors serve for a three-year term or as required to fill any vacancies. The term of office for director positions expires on a staggered basis each year, ensuring that experienced directors remain on the board to assist and mentor newly elected directors with their roles and

responsibilities.

Annually and in collaboration with the executive management team, the board reviews the Vision, Mission and Values for Calgary Co-op, and sets strategic direction for a five-year planning period and annual goals. It continues to practice corporate social responsibility, including investing in communities. In fact, in 2004, over \$1.5 million was extended to help and support its community where its members and employees live and work.

If the example of the Calgary Co-op can inspire the 12 000 Filipinos who live in Cote des Neiges in close proximity to the Filipino Coop, it will not take long before we can see it become a viable business enterprise. ■

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Pasko na Kapamilya...ABS-CBN 55th Anniversary Christmas Special

Dumating na ang panahon ng pagbibigayan ng bawat pamilya at magkakaibigan. Ngunit ang pinaka-importante ay ang pagsasama-sama ng buong pamilya sa pagdiriwang ng pag-ibig para sa isa't isa at pagpapasalamat sa mga biyayang natanggap mula sa buong taon.

Ipinagmamalaking ihandog ng Kapamilya network ang isang napaka-espesyal na regalo para sa bawat Kapamilya - ang 'ABS-CBN 55th Anniversary Christmas Special' sa Big

Dome! Ang Kapamilya Christmas Special ngayong taon ang siya ring nagmamarka sa 55th Anniversary ng nangunguna at pinaka-malaking media network. Doble selebrayon, doble saya!

Ang musika ay handog ni maestro Ryan Cayabyab at ng kanyang orchestra at may higit sa 100 Kapamilya stars ang hahataw at kakanta sabay ang nakakaenganyong tugtugin.

Sa pangunguna ng ABS-CBN

President na si Charo Santos Concio, hindi lamang pagbibigay aliw ang handog ng Christmas Special. Ipinakita rin dito ang ilan sa mga highlights ng matagumpay na nationwide feeding program, ang 'Bayanijuan' at performance ng theme song nito ng iba't ibang artists.

Kasama ang mga opisyal at empleyado ng network, kasama ang mga fans at supporters ng mga Kapamilya, kumpleto ang mga nakaka-kilig na love teams sa kanilang performance habang ang mga pinakakilalang comedy icons sa bansa ang hihirit at magbibigay saya. May kasabihan nga na 'talent runs in the family' kaya naman

magpapakitang gilas ang ilan sa mga 'celebrity families' sa kanilang very special musical number. Bigay todo ang cast ng lahat ng teleseryes, sitcoms, talk shows at musical programs ng Kapamilya network.

Masasaksihan din ang pinakakilala at paboritong noontime show, ang Wowowee habang magdadagdag ningning naman ang Star Magic talents.

Makisali at makisaya sa ABS-CBN 55th Anniversary Christmas Special na mapapanood sa Disyembre 21 sa Sunday's Best.. ■



FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

New beginning for Karylle



ABS-CBN hosted a welcome presscon for Karylle after she signed up a one-year contract with them.

"There was a time I was afraid to face the press," she confesses. "Kasi pino-process ko pa noon ang mga nangyari. But now, tapos na 'yun, so I'm ready to face now whatever question you'll ask of me."

It can't be denied that her career that was on a status quo at GMA-7 got a boost it badly needs due to her controversial breakup with Dingdong Dantes. ABS is now casting her as Kristine Hermosa's cousin in the TV remake of "Maruja." She has signed up for a new album with EMI Records. Bench Body also got her as underwear endorser. What can she say about this?

"Well, as they say, everything happens for a reason. I'm in a new home now, this is a fresh start and I'm thankful for this. When something bad happens to you, it's up to you to dwell on the past or leave it behind and move on para may blessings na dumating. I also changed my manager. Nasa Stages na ako of Audie Gemora and I trust their strategies for my career."

What can she say to some comments that she seemed so nervous and was not at her best when she sang the National Anthem in the Pacquiao fight?

"I'm really surprised when I heard that pag-uwi ko rito. Kasi doon sa Las Vegas, right after I sang, people flocked to me, Pinoys, Americans, even Mexicans, congratulating me as they liked the way I sang the song."

Her sexy pictorial for Bench will be unveiled at Trinoma this Saturday. Did

she go sexy to prove to Dingdong, also an underwear model, that she can do what he does?

"No naman. At this point, naging mas adventurous lang siguro ako and I'm really flattered kasi I didn't think puede pala akong mag-endorse ng underwear until the Bench offer came. Maganda naman ang kinalabasan ng pictorial and I'm proud of it. Now, may offers din from Maxim and FHM but I'm not ready for that yet."

Will she drop the businesses where she and Dingdong are associates?

"No. Nag-uusap naman kami and, also, we have other partners, the Garcias, who are the ones really running Centerstage in Timog and Makati. Fully booked nga kami for the holidays. We also have a new restaurant, Mei Lin."

She was quoted she'll never reconcile with Dingdong because she has realized some things about him that she didn't acknowledge before. What are those?

"That's between the two of us na lang. My dad taught me never to wash your dirty linen in public and that's something I'll never do."

So does she still feel the pain of the breakup?

"Wala na. Pero noon, I was really hurt and what helped me is that I faced the pain head on. Rather than drown in self pity, I listened to self-help audio books, turned to running to lessen the stress and sought the help of a priest friend na pinakuha ako ng retreat where we did a lot of sharing and I opened up about my feelings. I can say now that I've moved on." ■

Rufa Mae focuses on career after break up



Rufa Mae Quinto

After her break up with her Mexican-American boyfriend, actress-comedienne Rufa Mae Quinto said she's now focused on her career and admitted that she's not dating anyone.

"Wala akong date, [pero] at least, ang dami kong awards. Magandang sign, lalo na ngayon magpapasko. Magandang Christmas gift ito sa akin," Quinto said after she received two awards from this year's Star Awards. Quinto received on Sunday

from the Philippine Movie Press Club (PMPC) the Star of The Night Award and the Best Comedy Actress for the weekly gag show "Bubble Gang."

The actress, who just ended her almost one-year relationship with Bobby Lopez, a Mexican-American national, said that she always believe that her Mr. Right will eventually show up.

"I always believe na mayroon isa diyang para sa akin," she added.

The actress said that to focus 100% on her career is her personal choice.

"Mas choice ko ngayon... finally ngayon gusto kong itodo na i-focus ang sairli ko, ang 100% sa career ko. I'm always professional, I love my job pero hati though masarap may inspiration, pero happy ako ngayon kasi I'm back with my family," Quinto said.

The actress said that after almost nine years of being independent, she's now back with her family, especially with her grandmother.

"Kasi for nine years, hindi kami magkasama, una sa lahat, na miss ko sila. Close ako sa family ko. Medyo nawalan lang ako ng oras, at the same time nagdadalaga ako," she ended. ■

Lorna Tolentino denies cashing in on Daboy's legacy



Lorna Tolentino

Multi-awarded actress Lorna Tolentino dismissed rumors that she is using the name of her husband, late actor Rudy Fernandez, to promote various projects such as a photo exhibit, movie, album and many others. In an interview, Tolentino said all the initiatives named after Daboy were really made for the memory of her husband by people who really loved and supported the actor.

She said the HOPE album was recorded with the help of Daboy's closest friends including Sharon Cuneta, Senators Bong Revilla and Jinggoy Estrada, Philip Salvador, Tiro Cruz III, Christopher de Leon, Edgar Mortiz, Ricky Davao and even Aga Muhlach.

"Proceeds of the HOPE CD will go to a good cause. At the same time it's not really about Rudy. The HOPE CD is for cancer patients who will be going through chemotherapy and if they feel impatient, they can listen to music that will inspire them to fight and to hang on," she said.

On the other hand, she said the new movie "Magkaibigan" with Estrada is "Jinggoy's way of immortalizing their friendship." The senator earlier dedicated the movie to Daboy.

The actress, who is gearing up for a big television project with Gabby Concepcion, said that she will also find time to read Daboy's autobiography, which was written by his sister Marie Fernandez. The autobiography recounts the childhood life, trials and triumphs of the country's "Prince of Action" before he succumbed to cancer early this year.

Tolentino said she will visit Daboy's tomb on Christmas Day as part of her healing process. She also shared her plan to go back to work starting this January 2009.

"Ang process of healing ko ay asikasuhin ang maraming bagay kasi hangng December na lang tapos gusto ko ng magwork na ng January hopefully sana. Sana ay matapos ko lahat itong Decemeber. Ang dami pa kasi at I feel hindi ko matatapos by December," she said. ■

Cory The Musical: a tribute to a beloved President



Isay Alvarez plays the part of Cory

Cory The Musical is a tribute to one of the Philippines' most beloved Presidents. It is about the life of Cory Aquino — as wife, mother, Filipino citizen, and hero. The musical traces Cory's happy moments as Ninoy's wife and mother to five children, her adjustments to the rough-and-tumble world of Ninoy's politics, her suffering under the Marcos dictatorship, her trials upon Ninoy's martyrdom, her dilemmas as de facto leader of the opposition against Marcos and eventually as President of the Philippines.

This is history performed by

Bea sheds 'Betty' braces for new drama flick



Bea Alonzo

Actress Bea Alonzo is trading in

accomplished singers and thespians — Isay Alvarez (as Cory), Sherwin Sozon (as Ninoy), Robert Seña (as Ferdinand Marcos), Pinky Marquez (as Imelda Marcos), Tommy Abuel (as the reporter), Sheila Parducho, Lou Veloso, Andy Bais, and Rito Asilo. Nestor Torre directs the musical. Lourdes "Bing" Pimentel is the musical's composer and producer.

The musical is Mrs. Pimentel's everlasting gift to an ailing Cory — "a tribute to a beloved President from a grateful nation." Although the musical is about a turbulent past of our history, it still entertains. Some songs are angelic and solemn; others are stirring. Some scenes are plaintive; others are happy and hilarious. And there are segments in Cory that hint of Cameron Mackintosh's production of *Les Misérables*.

For many who attended the gala, the musical brought nostalgia and provoked deep reflection. The musical's ending message is that the fight is not over. To the crowd's cheering, Cory spoke during the curtain call. What she said in Pilipino was moving—that despite the physical hardship imposed on her by colon cancer, she assured us of her active support in the continuing fight for freedom and democracy.

Cory The Musical reminds us how Ninoy's martyrdom and the fierce, noble resistance of the woman in yellow galvanized the Filipino people to topple the Marcos dictatorship. Cory, the person, also symbolized the collective action that defeated Fidel Ramos's plan to extend his term as president and the collective action that forced Joseph Estrada to resign.

Cory The Musical will be performed at the Meralco Theater on Dec. 1, 2008, Jan. 16, 2009, and Jan. 17, 2009. ■

her "Betty La Fea" braces to star in the new Star Cinema drama flick "And I Love You So." In an interview, Alonzo said the movie is her first to be paired with actor Sam Milby and will be a far departure from her usual light, romance films. "Medyo dramatic siya compared to sa mga nilalabas na Star Cinema ngayon na light. This one ay medyo dramatic talaga," she said.

Aside from drama, the actress also shared that she was challenged with her role as a glamorous lady who's the complete opposite of Betty La Fea, the character she portrays in the hit TV series "I Love Betty La Fea."

"And glamorous ako dito away from Betty La Fea," she added.

Alonzo started her first shooting day for "I Love You So" on November 26. The movie, directed by Laurenti Dyogi, also stars hunk actor Derek Ramsay. ■



Ramiele Malubay

American Idol finalist Ramiele Malubay arrived last Friday and was presented to the press last Sunday by the producer of her concert with Ogie Alcasid, Brian Sombero whose company, Underground Studio, aims to mount more concerts here.

Ramiele came with her boyfriend, Austin Torres, who wants to join local showbiz so she was warned by friends that he might just be using her to get a break here.

"Hindi manggagamit ang boyfriend ko," she says in fluent Tagalog. "Sinamahan niya ko rito to support me. Kung mag-aartista siya, he'll do it by himself and start from the very beginning. When I met him in California, he didn't even know who I am. Also, he'll have to learn Tagalog first kasi English lang ang alam niya. Ako, I learned how to speak Tagalog kasi our parents taught us and also, may TFC kami sa bahay."

She seems quite controversial as

Dingdong Dantes 6th on E! World's Sexiest Men list



Dingdong Dantes

her sexy pictures circulated in the internet. She's with other women, insinuating she's a lesbian. "My mom saw the pictures and she said there's nothing wrong with them so I should not worry about it. She knows the girls in the photos are good friends of mine and we were just hanging around and having fun. We weren't doing anything objectionable at all. Once and for all, hindi po ako lesbian. Babae po ako."

While she's here, Ramiele will visit her dad's hometown in Polillo Island in Quezon and her mom's relatives in Zamboanga. Her boyfriend's family is from Apalit, Pampanga and they also plan to go there. "My parents and I are all spending Christmas here so we'll be going around a lot as I know there's so much to see."

Ramiele stands only 4'11" so she's dubbed by the "American Idol" jurors as the "Big Voice from the Small Adorable Idol." Born in Dammam, Saudi Arabia on Sept. 6, 1987, her parents are engineer Roger Malubay and nurse Alicia Macrohon. She was 4 when their family moved to Miamar, Florida, USA. She's been singing since she was 2 and she quickly became a favorite guest in Pinoy gatherings in Florida. She did front acts for Pinoy singers who did shows there, like Martin Nievera, Kuh Ledesma, Basil Valdez, and others. She was only 16 when she first joined "American Idol" auditions and was rejected. She joined again this year and finally made it. She's in third year nursing at Broward College but her studies are now on hold while she gives showbiz a try. "I have a meeting with the Disney Channel when I return to the US," she says. ■

Dingdong Dantes has been voted one of the 25 Sexiest Men of the World. He's in the top half of the elite list, giving him the honor of being the highest-ranked Asian celebrity hunk.

Dingdong, star of the top-rated GMA soaps *Marimar* and *Dyesebel* and one of the country's top product endorsers, was a spot below Oscar nominee Djimon Hounsou (*Amistad*, *Blood Diamond*), but several slots ahead of Hollywood stars Ryan Reynolds, Oliver Martinez, and Enrique Iglesias who is half-Filipino.

The E! (Entertainment Television) world's 25 hottest blokes voted by 20 judges was topped by UK football superstar David Beckham, with Johnny Depp taking the second place. Both Beckham and Depp said they are flattered by their inclusion.

Dingdong, has recently broke up with long-time girlfriend Karylle whom he just might meet in Las Vegas where she's singing the National Anthem at the Pacquiao-dela Hoya bout.

E! is one of the most widely viewed cable networks, available to 80 million cable and direct broadcast satellite subscribers in the US, and in 600 million homes internationally. ■

More Showbiz Gossip - SEE PAGE 20

Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.19*

Lovi blooms with new music



Lovi Poe

Lovi has grown up. Since she released her debut album three years ago, when she was just sixteen years of age, Lovi has proven to the public what it takes to be a star.

She is not just the daughter of Fernando Poe, Jr. She has proven to the public that she has the talent to match her name.

Happy to be back in the movies



Maricel Laxa: "My husband is my No. 1 fan."

After 10 years of absence, award-winning actress Maricel Laxa is back doing movies.

She's in the cast of Jose Javier Reyes' "Magkaibigan," which also stars Dawn Zulueta, Christopher de Leon and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada. It is Maverick Films' entry to the 2008 Metro Manila Film Festival, which opens this Thursday.

Maricel was last seen in the 1998 drama "Minsan Lamang Magmahal," starring Edu Manzano and Maricel Soriano. The movie was also megged by Reyes.

What made you say yes to "Magkaibigan"?

Direk (Reyes) is our ninong. (she is married to former actor Anthony Pangilinan.)

What was Anthony's reaction?

He said, "It's about time." He was just waiting. Ako ang mapili. I'm so protective of my time in the house. I

Just recently, she filled up the Music Museum in her debut concert, which also served as the launch of "Bloom," the title of the second and latest album of today's youngest female multi-media star Lovi.

With the release of "Bloom," the teenager proves that her recording success was not a fluke. With 11 newly recorded songs, Lovi shows her versatility as she shifts from Tagalog ballads on the Vehnee Saturno tracks "Dito sa Puso" and "Sa Pag-isa" to sophisticated English ditties: "Second Time Around" penned by Viktoria and her revival of "Love on a 2 Way Street." In "Sana," the album's first single and the track Lovi is currently promoting, she sings with the wishful thinking of a 15-year-old. But then she starts showing her maturity in tracks like "Not for Sale" and "Save the Sunlight."

There are also the Ogie Alcasid songs in "Nais Ko" and "Paulit-Ulit" which the singer co-wrote with Alcasid. In "I'm Your Friend," Lovi becomes a woman who's in love in the same tradition of Mariah Carey or Celine Dion. ■

really believe that kids need the full attention of their parents.

And what did they say?

They're all excited. Natutuwa ako kasi may blessing nila.

What was it like facing the cameras again?

I had fun on the set. It was like I just went to a party that was 12 days long.

Are you also ready for TV now?

Time is really the issue here. I have to balance a lot of things. I can't be tied to a project that will require me to work until the wee hours for several days a week.

I have four kids. They're into competitive sports. They train regularly. My daughter Hannah is a gymnast. She won first place in a competition in the United States just last summer.

My family runs a company involved in conducting seminars on parenting and corporate training. We also have a foundation that works with NGOs whose advocacy is education. We bring in around 5,000 youth leaders every year and train them in leadership. Right now, I'm also taking up my doctorate in communications in UP.

Was becoming a Born-Again Christian also a factor in your slowing down in show biz?

When you become very involved in your faith, you realize that you have a bigger purpose in life. My faith is important to me. Before I became a Christian, I did films left and right, without even considering if they're good material or not.

Was marriage another factor?

I was 23 when I married a person I was very much in love with. I was

happy to just be his wife. But my husband, who is also my No. 1 fan, said, "Hindi pwedeng matapos ang buhay mo kasi nag-asawa ka lang." I continued taking projects, until we had a baby three years later.

Now that you're back, are you also ready for intrigues?

Anthony and I are not defined by what people say we are. We just do our

work as well as we can, then live with whatever intriga comes. What's important is that my husband and I know what is really happening.

"Magkaibigan," written by Reyes, is loosely based on the life of the late action star Rudy Fernandez, who died of cancer early this year. Also in the cast are Tirso Cruz III and Bobby Andrews. ■

Vicky Belo's ex-bf in hospital after suicide attempt?



Vicky Belo with ex-beau Hayden Kho

Hayden Kho, the singing doctor who joined "Celebrity Duets" then went into acting in soaps like "Marimar" and "Kim Sam Soon," was taken to the Makati Medical Center recently, allegedly because he tried to kill himself after his girlfriend, Dr. Vicky Belo, broke up with him.

His camp denied this and said he just suffered from over-fatigue since right after he came home from a vacation in the US with Dr. Vicky, he went straight to work and did surgery on some patients until 11 p.m., so he really got so exhausted and collapsed.

But someone close to the Belos say it is obvious Dr. Vicky's daughter, Crystalle Henares, is very happy these days now that her mom has called it quits with Hayden. She's always been against the relationship as she felt Hayden is just taking advantage of her mom, something which Hayden has repeatedly denied. It's said their rift started while they were on holiday in the US where they watched the Pacquiao fight. Dr. Vicki reportedly got some damning evidence that Hayden indeed had a fling with Katrina Halili, a Belo model with whom Hayden appears naked in their print ad. (Wonder what Katrina has to say about this?)

Our source said Dr. Vicky has vowed she'll just concentrate on her beauty businesses this time and will forget about love. Before this, she also got burned with another guy whom she also trusted so much. ■

Jean Garcia finds new love



Jean Garcia

After she broke up with Polo Ravales, Jean Garcia is said to have found a new love in businessman Jojo Manlongat, who has had other actress-girlfriends before, notably Sunshine Dizon and Angelu de Leon. Of course, Jean will deny this, like the way she denied Polo before, but just last week, she was seen canoodling with Jojo at the Embassy Bar in the Fort.

Jean and daughter Jennica are both in the cast of "Shake, Rattle & Roll X" but they don't get to act together as they belong to different episodes. Jean plays an avenging ghost in the "Class Picture" episode, while Jennica is with Marian Rivera in the "Nieves" episode about engkanto. Jean, Jennica, Polo and Krissa Mae Arietta (said to be Polo's new squeeze) are all in GMA-7's hit show, "Gagambino," and it's reported that Jean and Jennica give a cold shoulder to Polo and Krissa Mae during their tapings, but Jennica denies this.

"Hindi totooang nagdededmahang kami sa set," she say. "Kung totoo mang may issue between Polo, Krissa, and my mom, labas naman ako doon. Natatawa nga ako when I heard that my mom is always crying at naglalasing pa raw dahil pinalitan na siya ni Polo kasi it's not true. She's very much okay dahil ang dami niyang trabaho ngayon kaya ang saya-saya niya. No reason for her to get drunk."

Is it true Jean has found a new love in Jojo Manlongat?

"Ay, hindi ko po alam. Basta ang alam ko, marami siyang manliligaw ngayon. I just don't know kung may sinagot na siya." ■

Iza Calzado talks about breakup with BF



Iza Calzado

Sa presscon ng Desperadas 2 noong December 15, hindi nagawang magsalita ni Iza Calzado tungkol sa breakup nila ng boyfriend niyang si Jerry Garcia.

Sa Showbiz Central kahapon, December 21, live na nakapanayam ni Mo Twister si Iza. Sinubukan ni Mo na mag-open up si Iza tungkol sa totoong estado ng kanyang love life.

Napabalita kailan lang, sa Showbiz Central din, na binili ni Iza ang bahay ni Rufa Mae Quinto, in preparation for having a family of her own. Pero kailan lang din, napabalita ang breakup ni Iza with her longtime non-showbiz boyfriend na si Jerry Garcia.

Break na nga ba sila?
"Sorry ha, idadaan ko na lang sa pangiti-ngiti," biro ni Iza. "Siguro you'll assume na lang on what is on my face. Sa ngayon siguro, I don't wanna give

a concrete answer. We're taking... We're giving each other a lot of space. That's it! That's what we are now—we're giving each other a lot of space."

May chance pa ba na magkabalikan sila

"Yeah, I think so. It's a good way of saying it," sagot ng aktres.

So, break na sila, pero open for reconciliation?

"Yeah, of course," pagsang-ayon ni Iza. "Life's like that. You don't know what God's plans for you and you can't say ever, ever, never! You can't say that."

Ayon sa ama ni Iza na si Lito Calzado, a choreographer, hindi raw ito maniniwala hangga't hindi mismong galing kay Iza ang kumpirmasyon. How open is she with her dad tungkol sa mga relationship?

"I'm actually very open with my dad," sagot ni Iza. "But at that time, when I kept on saying, 'Can we not talk about it yet it's because I'm not yet ready?' Actually, I'm still in the process of really, thinking things through."

"And you know what, siguro mas masasagot ko ito nang maayos after ng Holidays. Right now, like what I said, I hope that people will just give me time and enough respect to really think things through and think about the things that we want."

Ano ang naging reaction ng daddy niya nang malaman nitong break na sila ni Jerry?

"My dad is like, 'You're old enough to know what you want. Just think things through.' Alam mo yun? Huwag padalus-dallos. So, yun lang. And he was like, 'Seek spiritual counseling.' And thanks to my cousin and my friend Karylle, doon niya ako nili-lead sa direction na yun. So,

kinikilala ko pa ang sarili ko lalo," saad ni Iza.

Kilala na ba niya ang sarili niya para masabing open nasiya for a new relationship?

"Ay, hindi pa! Hindi ko pa yata ganoon kakilala ang sarili ko," sagot niya.

Dugtong niya, "Pero ang hirap, e. Baka when I say, the minute I give this na, 'O, one year,' the next thing, somebody will pop up. So, I don't wanna say anything about that. Just livelife."

Would Iza say na ang long-distance relationship nila ni Jerry ang isa sa reason ng breakup nila?

"I guess, the long-distance setup is finally taking its toll. It's hard but,

you know, I guess Jerry and I will say, we did well. Four years... So, thank you to Jerry for being the kind of guy that sticks with me. But we both need space.

"And a friend told me, every breakup is a breakthrough. And you know, if you look at it at a perspective na this may be good for you for now, then yun ang mangyayari talaga," pahayag ni Iza.

It sounds na friends pa rin sila ni Jerry. Are the actually friends?

"Yes. He's one of my best friends," sabi ni Iza.

Kailan sila huling nag-usap?
"Kanina, magkausap pa nga kayo, di ba?" natatawang pambubuko ni Mo kay Iza. ■

Heavy drama to test Kim, Gerald



Kim Chiu

Hope," "Kimerald" will soon go the next level by taking mature dramatic roles that tackle an important theme.

Though the network remains mum on details, Kim and Gerald will soon become the lead characters of the upcoming primetime soap "Tayong Dalawa," a heavy dramatic outing that will soon put their acting abilities to the ultimate test.

In fact, they are both deep in preparations for this project. Kim is involved in acting workshops and has consulted with nutritionists and dietitians to keep her in tip-top shape during the upcoming tapings.

Asked about her role, Kim said: "Sa wakas, hindi naman ako masyado poor dito. May kaya na kami kahit papano."

Gerald, on the other hand, is spending time with families in the Baseco compound to internalize his character, an impoverished soldier, which is a departure from all the roles he has done before.

"Sobrang na-excite talaga ako kasi bagong challenge na naman ito for me," Gerald said.. ■

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Filipinos exult in Pacquiao's win over De La Hoya

From five-star hotel lounges to army camps to Manila's slums, Filipinos celebrated a victory by Manny Pacquiao that gave this country a break from its financial worries.

richest and most marketable star in boxing during a 16-year span. He had a big reach advantage and towered over Pacquiao, setting off fears he could outpunch the Filipino. Pacquiao's mother, Dionisia, could



Manny Pacquiao (right) punches Oscar de la Hoya during their welterweight showdown at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 6. The Filipino boxing icon Pacquiao has stopped his rival with a brutally dominant performance.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, a key supporter of Pacquiao, congratulated him by phone after he beat Oscar De La Hoya in Las Vegas.

"His triumph is again a great unifier of Filipinos," Arroyo spokesman Jesus Dureza said. "While he was an underdog to bookies and matchmakers abroad, he was already a winner to all Filipinos."

not bear to see her son fight such an opponent.

"I was nervous in the beginning because Oscar De La Hoya was big," she said. "I didn't want to watch and I just ran to the prayer room with my friends," she said. "Our prayers were powerful."

Pacquiao came up two weight classes to fight De La Hoya and



Pacman celebrates after defeating De la Hoya

a roar in many parts of the country. Fans yelled Pacquiao's name, waved Philippine flags and threw punches in the air.

Enrique Ancheta, 67, was among some 2,000 fans who jammed a small

stadium in the agricultural city of Cauayan, about 175 miles from Manila.

"Superb," he said. "That's David slaying Goliath." ■



Manny Pacquiao and President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo flash the thumbs up sign as Pacquiao presents her a personally-autographed champion's belt during his courtesy call at the Presidential Palace in Manila, Philippines, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2008.

Amid many problems hounding the country, Pacquiao was a "saving grace," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

"The winnings of Manny Pacquiao always come at the proper time," Ermita said. "We have this economic downturn, suddenly the morale of the Filipino people is promptly boosted."

De La Hoya has become the

raised his record to (48-3-2, 36 knockouts). De La Hoya (39-6) dropped down to meet him at 147 pounds.

During the bout many of the usually bustling Manila streets were empty of traffic and police reported few crimes. When De La Hoya declined to come out after the eighth round, the cheering and jeers rose to



Filipinos wave a Philippine flag as they celebrate Manny's victory while they watch it beamed live via satellite at the Tondo Sports Complex in Manila, Philippines on Sunday Dec. 7, 2008. From five-star hotel lounges and army camps to Manila's burgeoning slums, Filipinos gathered in huge numbers to cheer the country's boxing icon, as officials say the victory provided the country a momentary respite from financial worries.



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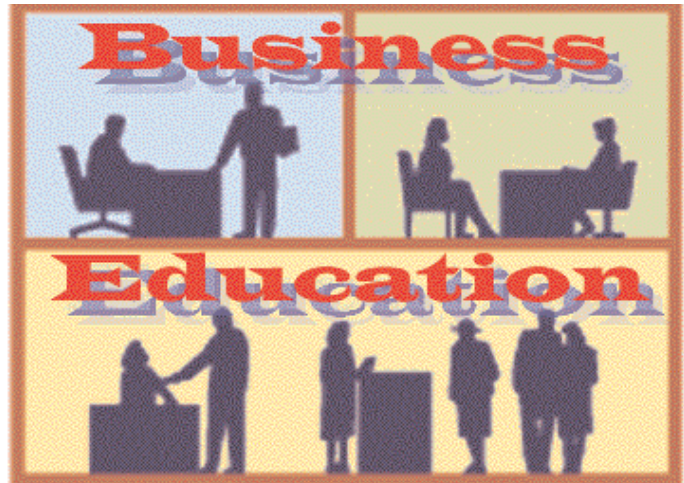
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P.A.B. students (standing behind) from left: Adelia Lascano, Melanie Bangit, Salvacion Battad, Leilani Galsim, Concepcion Dupali, Joyce Liwaliw and Milet Daquioag with their teachers (from left) Clarice Mackay, and Nina Schiff, and Director-General, Zenaida Kharroubi. Another teacher, not in photo is Amy Manon-og. The students have just completed their theory courses and are ready to do their practicum at St. Margaret CHSLD Residence starting on November 30.

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