

Ethnic press council holds first training and development seminar for members



Markham, Ontario - The Rt. Honorable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, was the keynote speaker and guest of honor during the gala event on November 22, 2009 that highlighted the intensive training and development seminar of 150 journalists from different ethnic backgrounds. The National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada (NEPMCC) organized this 3-day seminar held on November 20-22, 2009. Certificates and awards were handed out by the Prime Minister to a selected number of members. Two Filipino Canadian newspapers, namely, the Philippine Reporter and the North American Filipino Star were among the recipients. In his speech, the Prime Minister cited the important role played by the ethnic press and urged journalists "to pursue truth, shine light into dark corners and assist the process of holding governments accountable."

The Prime Minister was named

From left: Thomas Saras, president & CEO of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada. Mr. David Agnew, president of Seneca College presenting a plaque to the Rt. Honorable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, during the gala night, November 21, 2009.

See Page 4 Ethnic Media

A Filipino wins 2009 CNN Hero of the Year title plus \$100 000 prize



Efren Peñaflorida receives his award from Hollywood Star Eva Mendes

MANILA – For bringing education to poor Filipino children through his "Kariton Klassroom," Filipino Efren Peñaflorida has been awarded the 2009 CNN Hero of the Year at the conclusion of "CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute" at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on Saturday night.

According to CNN Web site, Peñaflorida has been selected after getting the highest number of online

votes. More than 2.75 million votes were cast for 7 weeks.

He bested nine other contenders from different countries. Hollywood star Eva Mendes presented the award to him.

The Filipino received \$100,000 to continue his work with his group, Dynamic Teen Company, according to CNN. The \$100,000 cash prize is on top of the \$25,000 he got after his

name was included on the top 10 CNN Heroes.

In his acceptance speech delivered before 3,000 people, Peñaflorida encouraged the crowd to unleash the "hero in you."

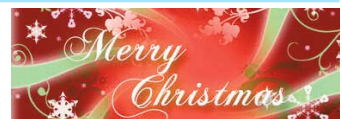
"Our planet is filled with heroes, young and old, rich and poor, man, woman of different colors, shapes and sizes. We are one great tapestry," Peñaflorida said. "Each person has a hidden hero within, you just have to look inside you and search it in your heart, and be the hero to the next one in need."

He also urged them to "serve well, serve others above yourself and be happy to serve."

"As I always tell to my co-volunteers ... you are the change that you dream as I am the change that I dream and collectively we are the change that this world needs to be," he added.

During the gala night, the top 10 CNN Heroes, chosen by a blue-ribbon panel from an initial pool of more than 9,000 viewer nominations, were each honored with a documentary tribute and introduced by a celebrity presenter, according to the Web site. Each of the top 10 Heroes received \$25,000.

CNN reported that presenters



Contents

Cooperative News	3
Editorial	3
Environment	6,7
Home Business	9
Star Photo Gallery	2,14
Ask The Video Guy	10
Philippine Cuisine	15
Personality Profile	20
Showbiz Gossip	18
Classified Ads	21

included Nicole Kidman, Kate Hudson, Neil Patrick Harris, Pierce Brosnan, Dwayne Johnson, Mendes, Randy Jackson, Greg Kinnear, George Lopez and Julia Louis-Dreyfus.

Grammy Award-winning artist Carrie Underwood, R&B crooner Maxwell and British pop sensation Leona Lewis performed during the gala event.

See Page 4 CNN Hero

The North American Filipino Star PHOTO GALLERY



Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi, North American Filipino Star editor & publisher, receives a certificate of achievement from Prime Minister Stephen Harper, November 21, 2009, during the gala event that highlighted the NEPMCC seminars held on Nov. 20-22, 2009, Markham, Ontario.



The executive board of the FNAQ during their Christmas Party at Ruby Rouge, Dec. 12, 2009 (Photo taken by Al Abdon)



Birthday celebrants of the FNAQ cutting their cake together at the Ruby Rouge Restaurant during their Christmas Party, December 12, 2009. Photo taken by Al Abdon.



From left: Hermie Garcia, Mila Astorga-Garcia of the Philippine Reporter, Thomas Saras, President, Asha Rajah, Vice-President of NEPMCC, and Zenaida Kharroubi, N.A. Filipino Star.

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EDITORIAL

Being grateful for both the blessings and challenges makes it worthwhile to continue the struggle

Since July 2006, when the Filipino Solidarity Cooperative was left in shambles by its first president, the bitter after taste of the experience of fellow Filipinos has not changed much. They still have not fully come on board to support it. Out of 700 members, only a handful are participating. Most of those members who signed up during the years of 2005 - 2007, have not come to buy from the Coop as they claim there is not enough stock to buy, yet, there are things that have expired, vegetables that are spoiled for lack of customers to buy them. Lately, we have not been able to keep the Coop open longer for lack of personnel but even though we have had a full time cashier until May 2009, we have not seen many members come and shop here anyway. It seems as if there is always an excuse for members not to shop at their own store. To make it even worse, members who have not visited the store for years some times come and ask "What happened to my \$100?" That has long been spent by the previous administration. This store should have been closed long time ago and no one could claim anything if it had been dissolved.

But it was not our idea to run away from any obligations. Our hope and our goal is to make it work so that one day, we would be able to meet those obligations that were incurred during the first year of the foundation of the first Filipino solidarity cooperative in Canada. We have a great ambition for our community to be united and work together for our common prosperity. But the idea that a cooperative will benefit the community has not yet really convinced enough people, specially those who we can call as community leaders. It seems that saving the cooperative from closing down is like a cry in the dessert - no one seems to be listening.

In spite of many challenges we are facing, we have not yet given up hope. Over the period of five months that we are still obliged to honor our lease, we shall attempt to have a vigorous campaign to wake up our members and others who may want to sign up for membership to understand why we need to keep the cooperative not only alive but to be vigorously operating more effectively. We shall keep on knocking on doors, so to speak, to promote our store. We shall keep on calling all of you to come and buy even a few dollars a week from our small stock of goods that we try to replenish from our limited funds. Perhaps, when we have shown you our determination to succeed, you will be convinced that we are worthy of your support, no matter how small it may be. We need every little bit of help we can get to survive. May you find it in your heart to come and support your only cooperative in Canada sooner than later.

Our deep faith has sustained us over the hardships we have experienced and we are grateful for being able to last this long. We thank the Lord for both the blessings and the challenges. We wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Prosperous, Happy New Year

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

Post New Year Get Together for all Members and Prospective Members of the first Filipino Solidarity Cooperative in Canada

Date: Saturday, February 6, 2010
 Time: 5:00 P.M. "Pot Luck Supper"
 Place: 6767 Cote des Neiges, CRC Bldg. Room 602
 We will invite a resource person to speak to members.
 Please bring your favorite dish. All members, their friends and prospective members are welcome
 R.S.V.P. 514-485-7861 - Leave a message with your name and phone no. so we can acknowledge your call.



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 Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi
 Executive Publisher & Chief Editor

COOPERATIVE NEWS

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi, Coop president, 2008-2011

New strategies for the future of the Coop introduced



Rayan Alipato, a Coop volunteer, explains to the general assembly how the Coop can be rebuilt.

On Sunday, December 6, 2009, we have had our General Assembly. Zenaida Kharroubi was the presiding officer with Angie Ogerio as the emcee for the meeting. We read the Financial Report for 2007 which showed a drastic drop in sales and a big deficit. Outside infusion of Cash Flow, from well meaning membership, which we have been relying for the last three years to help the cooperative afloat is no longer feasible. Mrs. Kharroubi reported the amount that was borrowed from the bank to pay for all the overhead costs and merchandise. Since the time she joined the Co-op, first to replace the treasurer in 2007 and then became president in 2008, no additional infusion of capital was made either through additional capitalization from existing membership nor from recruitment of new membership either. We asked the membership for new ideas on how to prop up activities at the Co-op so we can spur more business out from the membership. A volunteer Rayan Alipato came up with a plan and presented to the general membership. The plan calls for each and every member to make an effort to purchase from the Co-op an average weekly purchase of \$50.00. The membership is to make a concerted purchase of their popular day to day products such as the common staple rice. But, first of all a membership campaign has to be initiated. We have the responsibility as a member to invite existing members and recruit new ones. The life of the Co-op is dependent on having members who understood the concept of Cooperativism and be a dedicated member. These can only happen if we improve within us

and by doing by example.

Rayan's plan is to start and focus on the most popular product which is rice. Most people would appreciate someone delivering this to them. By delivering rice to members, they will also order other items along with it. We can even go a step farther by soliciting orders already on a weekly basis, That way Volunteers can pack the orders, can deliver on time and we as a co-op can only order what we have orders with. This saves a lot in terms of logistics.

To start, we should be focusing more on reviving the Co-op's membership base. If we could target a couple of hundred families to be in the program we will be able to save the co-op and make it a thriving business as we increase the membership, our product offering and our services. The students from Gilmore College International, which is owned and operated by Mrs. Kharroubi has been called to volunteer to head up a telephone campaigns Rayan's idea is an excellent way to make the Cooperative work but will need more help from as many volunteers to carry out his plan.

The meeting ended on a positive note and that only augurs well for the future of the Cooperative.

2010 looks promising for the Co-op. Gilmore College International will open its doors to the community and will be inviting resource speakers that will help the community understand the importance of having a cooperative, teach new immigrants new skills that will help them integrate in the new country and other life skills. (Jess Perucho) ■



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From Page 1

NEPMCC

Honorary Life Chair of the NEPMCC. The NEPMCC is a non-profit media organization of 650 members from across Canada representing editors and publishers of diverse cultural backgrounds. The organization promotes excellence, understanding and cooperation among its members.

The Government of Canada is providing funding toward the seminar through the Canada Magazine Fund's Support for Industry program. This program invests in industry-wide or association-based projects that contribute to the long-term viability of the Canadian magazine and periodical industry.

"Our government will continue to collaborate with cultural media and communities in pursuit of a common vision of a stronger, richer sense of Canadian citizenship," said the Prime Minister.

But after the Prime Minister's speech, he was not available for questions from the media that covered the event unlike MP Justin Trudeau who stayed on to allow the audience to ask him anything after his keynote address. Most people were impressed by his vision of Canada that "includes everyone." He said that "unity" in "diversity" is what makes Canada stronger.

Behind the success of the seminar are people who are too numerous to mention but we need to cite in particular the work of Mr. Thomas Saras, president of the Council, and his administration who negotiated with the Ministry of Culture (Canadian Heritage) for several months in order to have this training seminar funded. Not to be overlooked is the administrative support provided by Ms. Asha Rajak, Vice-President of NEPMCC. Also to be acknowledged are the collaborative efforts of Seneca College headed by Mr. David Agnew, president. His staff members provided some of the expertise in the fields of law, marketing, journalism's best practices, digital technology and website development. In fact, Mr. Agnew was delighted that the conference has given the College the opportunity to share its expertise from several programs with "an important industry, whose members reflect the diversity of our own staff and student population, and to provide them with information to better serve their communities." Expressing his appreciation of the work done, Thomas Saras, President and CEO of NEPMCC, hailed the important partnership between Seneca and NEPMCC saying that Seneca College has developed sessions designed "to meet the needs of ethnic media, tying together our objectives of better marketing ourselves, encouraging and recognizing excellence in content, and encouraging professional and business development in the field."...

The event was attended by a large number of dignitaries including Honourable Jason Kenney, M.P., Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Honourable Peter

Kent, MP, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Canada, Honourable Bob Rae, M.P, Honourable Justin Trudeau, M.P, Honourable Gerry Phillips, M.P.P., Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Timothy Hudak, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and Mr. Scott Shortliffe, Director, Policy and Program, Canada Magazine Fund.

On the last day of the seminar and the last session, an important presentation was made by Ms. Louise De Jourdan, Director, Advertising Coordination & Partnership. She explained how advertising of the government is given to newspapers. After her presentation, the NEPMCC President Saras specifically questioned why government



Ms. Louise De Jourdan making her presentation on the last day, last session of the seminar.

advertising allotment heavily favors the mainstream media establishment, despite the fact that ethnic media plays an important role in Canadian society. He pointed out that while the mainstream media that included The Toronto Star, Globe and Media, Toronto Sun and three other organizations received \$100 million a year in federal advertising, the country's ethnic media – comprising 650 organizations – received only \$800,000, "not even one million dollars," Saras said.

Saras further pointed out that even in the recent government information campaign regarding H1N1, he said he had counted at least several full page ads in the Toronto Star and Globe and Mail coming out almost daily, with one page costing at least \$68,000. Saras turned to the ethnic media audience and asked how many had received an ad, and a resounding response was "None" and "nobody."

"The demographics of the country has changed," Saras said, noting that over 51 per cent of Torontonians speak languages other than English or French, and relied on ethnic media for their news.

Saras said that even the prime minister and the other government ministers accepted that reality, referring to the speeches of political leaders during the first and second day of the seminars, where the important role of the ethnic media was alluded to.

Saras likewise complained about the Department's practice of hiring consultants to advise on what publication would be receiving advertisements in the ethnic media. "If you have to do something for us, you

need to consult us," Saras said.

Saras said six times this year since June, he had received a call from six different ministries regarding their respective advertising campaigns, which Saras said he had followed up on behalf of the organization. Yet, no advertising came, he revealed.

"I called Cossette Media, I called the ministries," Saras said, and he was told they had submitted their recommendations to Public Works.

Cossette Media is the official agency that the Department deals with regarding media advertising. Ms. De Jourdan said during her presentation that less than one-half of the members of the ethnic media organization were receiving advertisements because of their failure to apply and register with

Cossette Media. Certain requirements had to be met for eligibility for government advertising, it was pointed out.

Saras said the 30 per cent that agencies get as commission from advertising "is unacceptable," as it eats up on what should go to ethnic media.

"You cannot come to us and say you don't have money," Saras said. "If you don't have money, close down,"

De Jourdan responded, saying she was obliged to do so as a representative of the government of Canada. She said it was not her department that determined the allocation of advertising money, but it was the decision of each and every department concerned.

Although she admitted that her office centrally receives and approves the advertising recommendations coming from each Department, she denied having to do with decisions made regarding advertising.

"I would like to invite anyone of you and audit any advertising file to see what decisions are made," De Jourdan said.

Saras expressed his frustration and said that he had tried to do what he could and would be willing to step down at the end of his term but most members still present at this late hour rejected his intention to leave his post.

It was past 3:30 p.m. when the 3-day seminar ended with the last session that revealed how important it is to be able to deal with government bureaucracy in order to receive a share of the advertising given to the mainstream media. ■

From Page 1

CNN Hero

The event was broadcast on Thanksgiving, November 26, at 9 p.m. ET/PT on the global networks of CNN. "Kariton Klassroom"

Peñaflorida first came to the public's consciousness when his group, the Dynamic Teen Company, won the Bayaning Pilipino award for its heroic work in bringing education to poor children in Cavite.

The group later began the "Kariton Klassroom," which is a mobile classroom that brings around all their teaching materials to the different areas they service.

Since 1997, more than 10,000 volunteers are now helping in educating more than 1,500 kids in depressed areas in Cavite.

Because of this campaign, Peñaflorida was included on CNN's list of heroes for this year.

'Start within themselves'

Prior to the announcement of winners Saturday night, Peñaflorida was interviewed by ABS-CBN North America News Bureau.

During the interview, he said, if Filipinos wanted to see change, they should start within themselves.

"Kasi hindi naman po magagawa ng isang tao lang ang pagbabagong inaasam natin sa bayan natin. Iyong pagbabago kasi magsisimula iyan sa sarili natin. So kung gusto nating baguhin ang country natin, mag-i-start iyon sa puso natin. And then collectively, iyong pagbabago na iyon ay talagang magiging malaki," he said.

And now that he is the recipient of the 2009 CNN Hero of the Year award, more poor and uneducated Filipino children will benefit from his award.

"Iyong 90% cash grant mapupunta sa Dynamic Teen Company. Iyong 10% sa church.... Nothing for me," he said.

He said he was there as a representative of the children and the volunteers he works with.

"Nandito po ako para i-represent ang mga bata, iyong mga dedicated volunteers, iyong mentor ko, iyong selfless and hardworking Filipinos," said Peñaflorida.

Peñaflorida may be a star to many, but for the 2009 CNN Hero of the Year, the real heroes are the volunteers.

"Personal hero ko is iyong mga dedicated volunteers na kasama ko sa Dynamic Teen Company at sa Club 8586 na walang sawang tumutulong at sumusoporta sa amin. Of course ang Panginoon, ang Diyos, na talagang nagdala sa akin dito at Siyang dahilan bakit ako nandito rin." – With reports from Yong Chavez, ABS-CBN North America News Bureau, and TJ Manotoc, ABS-CBN News as of 11/26/2009 1:43 PM ■

WANTED

Cooperative members who can be trained to be volunteer cashiers during weekdays and weekends to keep the Coop open longer hours from 10:00 a.m to 8 p.m. We will offer training sessions by appointment only. Please call and leave a message at all times 514-485-7861

Dark Christmas for fleeing Mayon folk

Albay officials have begun moving thousands of villagers out of harm's way near Mayon Volcano after it oozed lava and shot plumes of ash late Monday.

Officials said the villagers would probably spend a bleak Christmas in an evacuation center.

Government volcanologists raised the alert level on the cone-shaped, 2,460-meter volcano overnight to two steps below eruption after ash explosions and dark orange lava fragments glowing in the dark trickled down the mountain slope.

Nearly 50,000 people live in the "hazard areas" within an eight-kilometer radius around Mayon, and authorities were ordering them to leave in case the volcano erupts, Gov. Joey Salceda said.

In Barangay Matanag, the first batch of evacuees, made up mostly of women, children and the elderly, boarded a police truck at 3 p.m. Tuesday. They clutched luggage, plastic bottles of water, mats, pillows, blankets, firewood and kitchenware

"We cannot disobey this order. We

are one with the provincial government's zero-casualty goal," said Bienvenido Belga Sr., the barangay captain.



Lava continues to flow down the slopes of the Mayon volcano, seen from Legazpi city in Albay province

20,000 evacuated

As of 6 Tuesday night, 4,552 families or over 20,000 people had

been evacuated, officials said.

Salceda said he decided to cancel a trip to Copenhagen, where he was to attend a UN climate conference to discuss his province's experience with typhoons and other natural disasters.

He said he would appeal for foreign aid to deal with the expected influx of displaced villagers into emergency shelters.

The first of 20 vehicles, including Army trucks, were sent to villages to take residents to schools and other temporary housing, according to Juke Nuñez, a provincial emergency management official.

"It's 10 days before Christmas. Most likely people will be in evacuation centers, and if Mayon's activity won't ease down we will not allow them to return to their homes," Nuñez said. "It's difficult and sad, especially for children."

Worsening state

Magma had been rising in the volcano over the past two weeks and began to ooze out of its crater on

Monday night, but it could get worse in coming days, said Renato Solidum, head of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

"Now lava is trickling down, but if the ascent of magma is sustained there will be lava flows," Solidum said. "There is also the possibility of an explosion."

Belga said 362 families in Matanag had to be evacuated to the Albay Central School in the city.

The villagers hardly slept since Monday night. "Everyone is anxious about the volcano," Belga told the Inquirer.

Most people are afraid of Mayon, which brought tragedies in the past, Belga said. In 1993, the volcano erupted and killed more than 70 people.

Belga said barangay officials had been making the rounds overnight to warn people through a megaphone to stay alert because the volcano could erupt anytime.

The order to evacuate came the next day, Belga said. ■

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Bold green minds shine at the UP Lantern Parade



Manny for the win. A giant Pacman wows the crowd, Dec 18, 2009.

All work and no play makes Isko a dull student. Thus, the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman makes sure that its community of students, teachers, and staff get a huge dose of fun during the Christmas season.

In your face. Despite the festive vibe, the UP community retains its activist flair with startling creations. Carmela Lapeña.

The famed Lantern Parade of the University of the Philippines, which was held last December 18, 2009, takes hours. With more than 20 schools and colleges going around 2.2-kilometer Academic Oval of the Diliman campus, it's no surprise that it begins in the afternoon and ends way past sunset.

Working under the theme, "Kapaskuhan, Kalikasan, Kinabukasan," this year's parade featured ecologically conscious floats. Artistic

renditions of the newsmakers of 2009, such as boxer Manny Pacquiao, were also incorporated in the floats' design. Even the ghastly symbol of the Ampatuan massacre was highlighted in the parade. Indeed, a number of



In your face. Despite the festive vibe, the UP community retains its activist flair with startling creations.

backhoes were incorporated in the floats.

Recycled art. This gingerbread house is made up of plastic bottles. Carmela Lapeña.

Though it started in 1922, the parade didn't acquire its

activist flair until the 1960s, when it became an alternative venue for protests. The lanterns are not just lanterns, they're statements. This is what makes the UP Lantern Parade different from other holiday spectacles—it's committed to injecting social



Recycled Art. This gingerbread house is made up of plastic bottles

relevance into the festivities.

But the activism doesn't put a damper on the fun. A variety of food booths are also set up on the campus grounds during the parade. Parade-goers can munch on everything from rice meals to peanuts, and of

course, the famous fishballs.

Manny for the win. A giant Pacman wows the crowd. Carmela Lapeña.

Arguably, the lantern from the College of Fine Arts is the main attraction of the parade. Their creations are expected to steal the show. For a time, they were inducted into the parade's Hall of Fame and excluded from the contest. They had, after all, monopolized the grand prize for so many years.

Eat your heart out, Optimus Prime! UP College of Engineering takes home the grand prize for its robot lantern. Carmela Lapeña.

This year, the College of Engineering took home the top prize for its robot lantern. The parade then ended on a high note with the much-awaited fireworks display ■

Bikes, trains, and fewer cars with LRT's Bike O2 project

From his New Manila home, bicycle enthusiast Jojo Gutierrez used to ride a jeepney to LRT-2's Gilmore train station. These days, however, he has been happily pedaling his way to and from any LRT train station to reach his destination for the day.

Anyone who has a folding bike can easily follow Gutierrez's tracks, thanks to the "Bike On, Bike Off" or "Bike O2" project of the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) that was launched last Nov. 8. The project allows passengers to bring foldable bicycles inside the train to cut travel time and lessen carbon emissions from motor vehicles.

"We are able to save on transportation costs by using bikes as an alternative to cars," said Gutierrez, who heads the University of the Philippines' Mountaineers Padyak Project. "The project's also good for the health because it promotes exercise, and for the environment because it reduces pollution."

Under the novel scheme, the last coach of every train has been dubbed as the "green zone" to accommodate folding bike users at no extra cost.

The LRT has two routes: the LRT-Line 1 (yellow line) that stretches from Baclaran in Parañaque City to Monumento in Caloocan City, and LRT-Line 2 (purple line) that starts from Recto in Manila City and ends at Santolan in Marikina City.

Businessman-cyclist Pio Fortuno also waxes enthusiasm about the new opportunity. "If we can convince one



Cyclists are enthused that the LRT Yellow and Purple lines have gone "green" by allowing them to hop onto the trains with their folding bikes in tow.

person to leave his car and use the bike instead to go the LRT, that's one less car off the road. It lessens the traffic and we have better air," he said.

Fortuno is a member of Padyak as well as the Firefly Brigade, a group of bicycle enthusiasts. They are now starting to organize the Tiklop Society, which promotes the use of folding bikes to ply Manila's streets.

in the foldable bikes inside the train during rush hours, Fortuno said the benefits far outweigh them.

"So far, everything has been positive. Everything is do-able. You can also prevent the minor inconveniences because the bikes can fit between your legs," Fortuno said. Only four bikes are allowed if the coach is too crowded.

To cope with Manila's chaotic traffic and undisciplined drivers, Gutierrez said the UP Padyak is also thinking of ways to reduce the risks for cyclists as they pedal around the city's streets.

"We have been plotting safe routes for the bikers to avoid vehicles making a mad dash on the streets," he said.

In a statement, LRTA administrator Melquiades Robles enjoined motorists to leave their vehicles at home, hop into the trains, and use bikes instead of walking when going to their destinations.

"While one can use the LRT and enjoy economy and speed, one still has to walk to his intended destination. But with the Bike-O2, you can enjoy fast, efficient, economical and environmental friendly mode of transportation while at the same time giving you the same personal mobility that you enjoy with a car, not to mention the health and environmental benefits that you will gain from it," Robles said. ■

A former resident of New York City, Fortuno said the Bike O2 project in the Philippines is the realization of a dream. "I used to take the subway in New York, where I first experienced something like this. I once dreamed that this will come true in Manila," he enthuses.

While he acknowledges some difficulties, such as having to squeeze



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Minister Kenney proposes significant improvements to the Live-in Caregiver Program

Toronto, December 12, 2009—Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney announced today proposed regulations to better protect the rights of live-in caregivers and to make it easier for them and their families to obtain permanent residence in Canada. The announcement follows extensive consultations with caregiver groups from across the country and testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

The first proposed change to the Live-in Caregiver Program includes eliminating the requirement for live-in caregivers to undergo a second medical examination when applying to become permanent residents, a change advocated by the late Juana Tejada.

Ms. Tejada developed cancer while working as a live-in caregiver and was initially denied permanent resident status when she did not pass her second medical examination. It was only through special ministerial intervention that she gained status in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

"Our government fully supports these new regulations. We propose to implement this change in her honour, to ensure that this painful experience is no longer repeated," said Minister Kenney.

Another proposed change will allow live-in caregivers who work overtime to apply for permanent residence sooner. Currently, live-in caregivers must work for two years within the first three years of entry into the program before being eligible to apply for permanent residence in Canada. Unfortunately, certain events – such as pregnancies or loss of employment – have resulted in some live-in caregivers not satisfying the two year requirement.

Under the new measure, live-in caregivers would be eligible to apply for permanent residence after 3,900 work hours – the equivalent of working a standard work week over two years. This would also allow a portion of their overtime hours to count toward the work requirement and allow caregivers to apply for permanent residence sooner. Equally important, these changes would also extend the time live-in caregivers are allowed to complete the work requirement from three to four years.

"These important changes help fulfil Canada's duty to those who care for our young, our disabled and our elderly," Minister Kenney said. "The Government of Canada is taking action to protect foreign workers from potential abuse and exploitation."

The proposed regulations will also require employers of live-in caregivers to pay for:

- travel costs for live-in caregivers to come to Canada;
- medical insurance until live-in caregivers become eligible for provincial health coverage; and
- workplace safety insurance and any recruiting fees owed to third parties.

Additional administrative changes to the program will require that employment contracts spell out these employer-paid benefits. They will also require that contracts include mandatory clauses clearly outlining job duties, hours

of work, overtime and holidays, sick leave, and termination and resignation terms.

In addition, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) will work closely with caregiver groups to improve information packages for live-in caregivers that are given to caregivers before they depart for Canada. CIC will also establish a dedicated live-in caregiver hotline. Emergency processing of work permits and new authorization requests from employers to hire a live-in caregiver will help caregivers when they need to change employers urgently. Live-in caregivers will continue to be able to apply for study permits when they wish to take courses longer than six months; they do not need to apply for study permits for courses of a shorter duration.

Today's announcement builds on recently proposed regulatory changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Employers found to have provided significantly different wages, working conditions or occupations than were promised may be put on a blacklist making them ineligible to hire a live-in caregiver for two years under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Employers on this blacklist could be identified on the Citizenship and Immigration website in order to inform prospective and current temporary foreign workers of ineligible employers.

The Live-in Caregiver Program assists Canadians in recruiting caregivers to live and work in the homes of those they care for in order to provide child care or support for seniors or people with disabilities. The program facilitates the entry of qualified caregivers into Canada when there is a shortage of Canadians or permanent residents to fill available live-in caregiver positions. Due to Canada's ageing population, we expect the program to grow in the years ahead. In 2008, Canada admitted 12,878 live-in caregivers.

The proposed changes to the Live-in Caregiver Program will be published in the Canada Gazette on December 19 for a 30-day comment period open to all Canadians. Final regulatory changes will be published after this period. For more information on the proposed regulations, consult the following link: (Link to RIAS on CIC web site) For further information (media only), please contact: Alykhan Velshi Media Relations, Minister's Office Communications Branch, Citizenship and Immigration Canada Alykhan.Velshi@cic.gc.ca 6 1 3 - 952-1650 CIC-Media-ions@cic.gc.ca



A souvenir photo of Rufina Hizon and Louis Olivier of their attendance at the annual Christmas party of Gilmore College International on Sunday, December 13, 2009 at the Fireside Restaurant, 4711 Van Horne, in Montreal.

The Boroughs of Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and Ville-Marie Will Be Served by Firefighter First Responders Starting December 7

Montréal, November 26, 2009 – Serge Tremblay, Director of the Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal (SIM), is pleased to announce that the ninth and last cohort of firefighter first responders will be ready for service starting December 7, 2009, in the boroughs of Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and Ville-Marie. This step marks the end of the implementation of this service throughout the territory of the Montréal Agglomeration.

The Director is very pleased with the deployment of the cohorts of firefighter first responders on the territory of the Montréal Agglomeration. "The implementation of the medical first responder service has successfully followed its course. It will very soon be reaching its final phase, with the launch of this last cohort. Approximately 1700 firefighters of the Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal will now be certified medical first responders. This service will help SIM firefighters save more lives and will help make residents feel safer."

The new firefighter first responders will be working at Station 4 (5260, rue Van Horne), Station 27 (5353, rue Gatineau), Station 34 (5369, chemin de la Côte-Saint-Antoine) and Station 46 (4760, avenue Cumberland) in the borough of Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce; Station 10 (1445, rue Saint-Mathieu) and Station 25 (1212, rue Drummond) in the borough of Ville-Marie as well as Station 78 (6815, chemin de la Côte-Saint-Luc) in the City of Côte Saint-Luc.

Starting December 7, all fire stations within the Agglomeration will be offering medical first responder service. All residents on the island of Montréal will be able to benefit from this service. "The fast response of firefighter first responders in critical emergency situations can make all the difference, because in such situations, every second counts. On the strength of the introduction of eight other cohorts of medical first responders since 2007, we have the confirmation that this service meets the needs of the population and that its beneficial impact was well worth the efforts invested," added Mr. Tremblay.

Operating as a complement to Urgences-santé crews, firefighter first responders stabilize the victims' condition while awaiting more advanced medical care from paramedics. Their response to victims in critical emergencies helps save lives and reduces potential damage. Once the medical first responder service has been completely phased-in on the territory of the Montréal Agglomeration, this will mark a transformation in the entire pre-hospital services sector in Greater Montréal.

For further information: Division des communications et des relations avec les médias

Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal
Media line: 514 872-7687, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Pager: 514 749-7746, evenings and weekends

Michelle Lao wins Fil-Can Idol 2009



Grace Yip, president of the Federation of Phil-Can Trade & Commerce of Quebec, (left) presents trophy to the 2009 winners: Michelle Lao, adult category and Chloe Malvar, 3rd runner up junior category, assisted by Patricia Rimok, president, Intercultural Advisory Council of Quebec during the grand finals held on Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009 at the Vanier College Auditorium

Montrealers were treated to an afternoon of music, song and dance performed by the finalists in the annual Fil-Can Idol competition held on Sunday, December 13 at the Vanier Auditorium. All the contestants were outstanding in their performances. The judges had only praises for all of them. However, for every competition, there are winners although in reality no one was a loser at all. They all had the opportunity to show their artistic abilities.

The results of the competition are: Junior Category:

Lea Zipagan - winner; Elisa Jane Cullarin - 1st runner up, Rizia Tucay, 2nd runner up; Chloe Malvar, 3rd runner up and Jaya Angelica Opendo, 4th runner up. Adult Category: Michelle Lao - winner; Rochie Banaag, 1st runner up, John Eric Bulandos, 2nd runner up, Julienne Dalais, 3rd runner up, and Jenica Joy Tandoc, 4th runner up.

The judges of the competition are: Maude Paradis, Amelia McMahon, and Matthew Ricketts.

Z. Kharroubi



all about **Home Business**
by: Jean Janete Aguilar

Seasonal Businesses That Can Be Up and Running The Whole Year

In business, we all struggle with highs and lows, but for seasonal businesses – those that make the bulk of their profits at certain times of the year – knowing how to optimize the lows while riding the highs requires a particularly innovative and diligent entrepreneur at the helm.

Some small business ideas are seasonal in nature. If you pick the right business you can work really hard for a couple months out of the year and take it easy the rest of the year. That doesn't usually mean you're not working at all, there's usually quite a bit of preparation the rest of the year for those few months of crazy business. Some businesses are just slow certain times of the year, but you still have to be there and open for business.

Seasonal businesses do have their drawbacks. One of the biggest drawbacks is cash flow. It can be hard not to spend when you have cash in hand, but you do have to budget for the off months. There may still be rent to pay, and other fixed costs that you'll have to have cash for when there is little or no cash coming in the door.

That's not to say that you can't make a wonderful business out of something seasonal. There's definitely money to be made there. You just need to be extra careful to set up your business plan and your budget to include some down time.

As the old carol says, Christmas comes but once a year. But for Filipino entrepreneurs who manufacture Christmas décor, it's actually a year-round business that needs to be attended to every single day.

Much more hardworking than even the indefatigable Santa Claus, Christmas décor makers and exporters are this early already in different stages of production for products targeted to roll out all the way to the year 2010. They are sinking in huge sums of capital for operating expenses, and in the face of the spiraling raw material and fuel oil costs, theirs is a tough balancing act indeed! On top of these woes, the Christmas décor entrepreneurs also have to contend with the emergence of cheaper foreign sourcing alternatives for their products. Indeed, mention of China, Thailand, and Vietnam now encroaching on what used to be their exclusive turf immediately sends shivers down their spine.

For all these challenges, however, the manufacture and export of holiday products remains a profitable business. As Antonio M. del Carmen, director of the Ateneo Center for Continuing Education Entrepreneurship Program, says, there's no

such thing as a seasonal business for a seasoned entrepreneur. "A business enterprise involved in cyclical products or services can normally sustain its viability through the proper allocation of its resources and revenues over the whole-year period," he explains. He continues: "To use a figure of speech, you have to make hay while the sun shines and save up for the rainy days. This is easier said than done, of course, since everything really depends on the level of profitability of the enterprise during the on-season operations. But if the business makes enough margin to cover overhead expenses during its off-season operations, efficient cash flow management should enable it to sustain its viability."

Here are some of the strategies to keep seasonal enterprises viable the whole year through:

1. Conduct off-season sales. Jackets, sweaters, rubber boots, and other rainwear are often put on sale during summer months. Conversely, swimwear, summer outfits, and swimming paraphernalia go on sale during the rainy season. The objective of an off-season sale is obviously to generate cash flow even at a minimal or negative profit margin just to cover fixed operating expenses. To move inventory, businesses doing Christmas or other seasonal décor may also hold export-overrun sales or garage sales.

2. Generate advance orders. To provide enough time for production and shipment, Christmas décor is normally marketed to the United States, Canada, or the European countries as early as the second quarter of the year. Another good way to get advance orders is to sell corporate Christmas giveaways, which can be ordered as early as the third quarter of the year.

3. Reinvent, re-engineer, innovate. Entrepreneurs need to be more creative, continuously reinventing or re-engineering their seasonal products and services to create demand even during off-season periods.

Tips and Advice

For some businesses it is easy to identify when the busy period is likely to be. If you run a toy or gift business, you are probably working very hard right now in the run up to Christmas. How can you prepare for the busy season in your business?

- Before your busy season hits, make sure you're prepared. You should do anything you can do ahead of time to make your life easier during your busy season. Check your inventory, make up anything you can ahead.

- Clear your calendar to make the most of your busy season. Don't plan vacations in the middle of tax season if you're an accountant. Plan to be open for business, and ready to work when the customers are

looking for your services.

- Hire and train your employees before the busy season hits. Training your employees when you have the time is much easier than trying to train them while you have 10 impatient customers staring at you. How can you prepare for your businesses slow season?

- Save some of the money you made during the busy season to help pay the bills during the slow season.

- Take care of paperwork, maintenance, and any other activities you can so you can focus on keeping your customers happy and making money during your business season.

- Learn more about your business during the off season. If you need to take classes, or learn more about your market, the off season is a great time to do it.

- Make notes on how you can work smarter, and improve your next busy season. Lastly; Success is in the Off-Season

A seasonal business has to some extent an advantage over a year round business. When operations stop, there is a quiet time to regroup and refocus. Unburdened from having to run their businesses, many seasonal business owners use their off-season to plan out the operational and fiscal goals for the following year. Others use it to update systems or material or for the maintenance and repair of equipment. Off-season is also a time to begin preliminary sales and marketing activity.

In short, running a successful seasonal business means thinking ahead and having a lot of flexibility. Though it may be a challenge the rewards are great.

Business Idea:

Startup Costs: Under \$2,000

Home Based: Can be operated from home. Part Time: Can be operated part-time.

Christmas Decorations:

Starting a business that manufactures Christmas ornaments can

provide you with a fabulous part-time seasonal income just when you need it the most Christmas time. Christmas ornaments such as tree decorations and door wreaths are very simple and inexpensive to make, and can be sold in various ways including to retailers on a wholesale basis or directly to consumers at a sales kiosk in a mall or at craft shows. The business is ideally operated from home and the overheads are virtually nonexistent. While manufacturing and selling Christmas decorations on a part-time, seasonal basis may not make you rich; it can potentially generate an extra income of \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year.

Freelance Photography:

There are two very good reasons why the internet has breathed new life into the freelance photography industry. First, using e-mail, it is now very easy to send pictures to publishers, editors, copywriters, marketers and designers all around the globe in a matter of moments. Second, billions of photographic images are needed to fill the now more than four billion (and climbing) web pages. In addition to the internet, there are millions of print publications, media companies, retailers, marketers, organizations, government agencies and others who need new photographs every day to add meaning to newspapers, newsletters, magazines, brochures, catalogs and presentations. Needless to say, people with professional photographic skills have the opportunity to earn a great living taking and selling photographs. You can contract with publishers, or post your photos on any one of the many stock photography services online, where people can browse the selection and purchase the images they need. You are paid a one-time fee, or a royalty each time the image is downloaded, depending on

See Page 10 Home Business

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Ask the Video Guy

Al Abdon

What is Blu-ray?

Technology has brought us light years speed at this age when we can watch movies in crystal clear multi colors with high fidelity sound right into our living room.

History repeated itself when it started in the late 70s when Sony Betamax was challenged by VHS format and we all know that VHS won. Two years ago HD-DVD and Blu-ray fought for the standard bearer of HD format and this time Blu-ray format won leaving HD-DVD into oblivion.

Today HD-DVD format movies can be sold for \$5.99 at Zellers or Walmart ie if there are still on the shelves or on line at www.inetvideo.ca.

Blu-ray, also known as Blu-ray Disc (BD) is the name of a next-generation optical disc format. The format was developed to enable recording, rewriting and playback of high-definition video (HD), as well as storing large amounts of data. The format offers more than five times the storage capacity of traditional DVDs and can hold up to 25GB on a single-layer disc and 50GB on a dual-layer disc.

Why was it called Blu-ray?

Two years ago I always confused with Blue tooth and Blu-ray. Until lately I have to condition myself to distinguish between signal terminology and media.

The name Blu-ray is derived from the underlying technology, which utilizes a blue-violet laser to read and write data. The name is a combination of "Blue" (blue-violet laser) and "Ray" (optical ray). According to the Blu-ray Disc Association the spelling of "Blu-ray" is not a mistake, the character "e" was

intentionally left out so the term could be registered as a trademark. The correct full name is Blu-ray Disc, not Blu-ray Disk (incorrect spelling). The correct shortened name is Blu-ray, not Blu-Ray (incorrect capitalization) or Blue-ray (incorrect spelling). The correct abbreviation is BD, not BR or BRD (wrong abbreviation)

How much data can it hold?

DVD

A single-layer disc can hold 4.7 GB

A dual-layer disc can hold 8 GB

Blu-ray

A single-layer disc can hold 25GB.

A dual-layer disc can hold 50GB.

Will Blu-ray replace DVD?

It will eventually. The Blu-ray format has received broad support from the major movie studios as a successor to today's DVD format. In fact, seven of the eight major movie studios (Disney, Fox, Warner, Paramount, Sony, Lionsgate and MGM) have released titles in the Blu-ray format. Many studios have also announced that they will begin releasing new feature films on Blu-ray Disc day-and-date with DVD, as well as a continuous slate of catalog titles every month.

So there you go. Planning to buy a BD player? Today is the time and lots of bargain prices out there as low as \$125 CDN.

Treat your self this holiday season in your living in full vivid colours of Blu-ray.

Wishing you all a warm and joy filled Christmas!

Al Abdon

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discontinued styles and colors as well as collecting broken tiles from local building and renovation companies. Of course, the latter options would be excellent choices, as most could be purchased at very low or no cost, not to mention the fact that you'll be recycling an unwanted waste product. Marketing the mosaic tile

From Page 9 Home Business

your agreement with the image broker.

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Business ideas: parol making, photography,

based location, but this business is also very inexpensive to initiate. Best of all, interesting home and office decoration products are always in high demand. Create unique mosaic tile designs; everything from tabletops to mosaic tile picture frames. Your only limitations will be your imagination. Mosaic tiles can be purchased ready to install or you can create your own simply by buying

creations can be by way of traditional advertising media, as well as by renting a weekend sales kiosk in a market or mall. Additionally, be sure to contact interior decorators in your community to introduce them to your unique product line.

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The Star Photo Gallery



Cubs and Scouts of Laging Handa 0592 play the game of the unity rope - they have to be in synchronized move to stand up together holding on to the rope.



Gilmore College International annual students and teaches Christmas Party held at the Fireside Restaurant, on Van Horne Ave., December 13, 2009



Donning Santa's cap are teachers of Gilmore College International, from left: Amy Manon-og, Clarice Mackay, Terry White, Zenaida Kharroubi, and Sophie Toledo.



Mary, the generous lady who supports the Scouts at all times, gives out Christmas gifts to all the children during their party on Saturday, December 5, 2009 at FAMAS.



Betty Corpuz and her friends at Gilmore's Christmas Party, December 13, 2009



A souvenir of Laging Handa Scouts Christmas party with Michael Belanger and his wife who assisted in the investiture of new Cubs and Scouts with their new leaders Jovanni Ortiz and Ernel Lebario. Chief Scout Leader Romy Valenzuela (4th from right) has been a volunteer for the past 6 years since the establishment of the first Filipino Canadian Scout group in 2003.



A group of 8 Filipino contract workers visited FAMAS on December 2, 2009. Mr. Benoit Vezina and his wife, Chantal (third and 4th from right) have helped them settle down and tried to make them feel welcome by introducing them to other Filipinos, directors and members of FAMAS.

The Star Photo Gallery

RP 2010 Presidentiables



President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo confers to Efen Penaflorida, who was adjudged Hero of the Year by CNN, the Order of Lakandula, in a ceremony at Malacanang Palace in Manila, Philippines Friday Nov. 27, 2009.



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Bro. Eddie Villanueva



Sen. Manny Villar

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Nursing Aide students who are currently doing their practicum at St. Margaret CHSLD in Westmount, Quebec, pose with their teachers, Amy Manon-og, Josie Toledo, and Director General Zenaïda Kharroubi. Not in photo are Ms. Clarice Mackay and Ms. Terry White.



Collège Gilmore International



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“Sisig”



- Ingredients:
- 2 cups granulated sugar
 - 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter or margarine
 - 6 eggs
 - 1 cup milk
 - 1 cup premium coconut cream (Thai)
 - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 - 3 cup rice flour
 - 2 tablespoons baking powder

Procedure:
Preheat the oven to 350 deg F. Cream the butter and sugar well (around 5 minutes on medium speed). Slow down the speed and add eggs one at a time.

Meanwhile, mix flour and baking powder. Mix the milk and coconut cream. Add this to the egg-cream mixture, alternating with the dry ingredients a little at a time. Add the vanilla and stir. Pour into two 9-inch round pans. Bake immediately for 35-45 minutes (keep checking!)

Since this is a fusion of Filipino and American cuisine, I did not use banana leaves (I do not have them anyway!) nor charcoal, but used the oven instead. Sisig is truly Filipino. From what I heard it was concocted by the food loving folks in Pampanga. In fact there's a place in Angeles City, about 10 minutes drive from Clark, where you will find authentic sisig being served. Some even claim this was the place where this humble dish originated.

Originally, sisig was made from chopped parts of a pig's head — ears, snout, the brain, etc. Over the years it was reinvented into simple minced meat served on a sizzling platter with chili, liver, onion and seasoned with calamansi and vinegar.

Different orders of sisig come in pork, chicken, tuna, chorizo, bangus, and tofu. Adding raw egg on the dish while it's sizzling hot heightens the flavor as well.

Here's a simple sisig recipe taken from a Kapampangan Food Recipe page:

Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 lbs pork cheeks (or 2 lbs deboned pork hocks)
- 1/2 lb beef or pork tongue

- 1/2 lb beef or pork heart
- 1/2 lb liver (pork, beef or chicken)
- 2 cups water (for boiling)
- 1 cup pineapple juice (for boiling)
- 1 tsp whole black peppers (for boiling)

Marinade seasonings:

- 1 cup chopped onions
- 3-4 finger hot peppers (siling labuyo) (seeded and chopped)
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup calamansi juice (lemon juice)
- 1/4 cup pineapple juice
- 1 tbsp minced fresh ginger
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp whole black pepper (crushed)
- 1 pc bay leaf (crushed)
- Salt to taste

Preparation:
Hot sisig plate

* Combine pork cheeks (or deboned pork hocks), heart, and tongue in pineapple juice, salt, water and crushed whole black pepper and bring to a boil; simmer for about 1 hour or until tender.

* Drain and cool to room temperature.



Bibingka

Ingredients

- * 1/2 cup melted margarine
- * 1 1/2 cups sugar
- * 4 pcs eggs, beaten
- * 1 can coconut milk (12oz) or 1 1/2 fresh coconut milk
- * 1/2 cup fresh milk
- * 2 cups rice flour
- * 4 pcs salted eggs, sliced
- * Grated coconut

Directions

Ingredients

- * 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- * 1 pound ground pork
- * 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- * 1/2 cup chopped onion
- * 1/2 cup minced carrots
- * 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- * 1/2 cup thinly sliced green cabbage
- * 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- * 1 teaspoon salt
- * 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- * 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- * 30 lumpia wrappers
- * 2 cups vegetable oil for frying



LUMPIA

Directions

1. Place a wok or large skillet over high heat, and pour in 1 tablespoon vegetable oil. Cook pork, stirring frequently, until no pink is showing. Remove pork from pan and set aside. Drain grease from pan, leaving a thin coating. Cook garlic and onion in the same pan for 2 minutes. Stir in the cooked pork,

carrots, green onions, and cabbage. Season with pepper, salt, garlic powder, and soy sauce. Remove from heat, and set aside until cool enough to handle.

2. Place three heaping tablespoons of the filling diagonally near one corner of each wrapper, leaving a 1 1/2 inch space at both ends. Fold the side along the length of the filling over the filling, tuck in both ends, and roll neatly. Keep the roll tight as you assemble. Moisten the other side of the wrapper with water to seal the edge. Cover the rolls with plastic wrap to retain moisture.

3. Heat a heavy skillet over medium heat, add oil to 1/2 inch depth, and heat for 5 minutes. Slide 3 or 4 lumpia into the oil. Fry the rolls for 1 to 2 minutes, until all sides are golden brown. Drain on paper

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Makati businessmen pick Aquino-Roxas tandem

Senators Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and Manuel "Mar" Roxas II are the candidates favored by the Makati Business Club (MBC) to win the presidential and vice presidential races.

A mailed survey, conducted among MBC's more than 800 members from Dec. 8 to 18, revealed that 61 percent would vote for Aquino, while 78 percent would vote for Roxas.

"I think (Noynoy was chosen by the majority) because corruption was the No. 1 issue that we want addressed, and Noynoy seemed the most fit to do that," MBC executive director Alberto Lim said Monday.

Lim said Aquino had shown that he would make a good president, based on what the senator had been saying publicly about his platform of government.

"It's not just bloodlines that he has going for him," Lim said. "We've had a lot of very intelligent people lead us before—(Ferdinand) Marcos and (Gloria) Arroyo. We should learn from the past and focus not just on intelligence. What matters more now is good governance."

Aquino emerging No. 1 in the MBC survey was actually not surprising, he said, as this followed the national trend, based on surveys conducted by different groups.



Lim said what was more surprising was former Defense Secretary Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro landing on the second spot instead of known businessman Sen. Manuel Villar.

"Gibo has a cleaner image than Villar, as Villar is being linked to various issues of corruption," Lim said.

Teodoro got the nod of 14 percent of the respondents, while Villar only had 7 percent.

Others who figured in the survey were Sen. Richard Gordon with 3 percent and former President Joseph Estrada with 1 percent. Fourteen percent of those surveyed were still undecided.

For the vice presidential survey, Roxas led all other candidates by a margin of at least 68 percentage points. He garnered the votes of 78 percent of the respondents.

Lim said this was not at all surprising.

"Mar comes from business—he used to be an investment banker—so businessmen are comfortable with him. Also, he made a sacrifice to give way to Noynoy. He also has a clean image, not tainted by corruption," Lim said.

Other vice presidential aspirants that MBC members said they would vote for included former Metro Manila

Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando (10 percent), Sen. Loren Legarda (3 percent), Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay (1 percent), and former Optical Media Board Chair Edu Manzano (1 percent).

In the conduct of the survey, the respondents were not given a list of candidates to choose from. Instead, they were asked an open-ended question: "Who among the candidates running in the 2010 elections would you prefer to see as the next Philippine president and vice president?"

Of MBC's more than 800 members, 13 percent participated in the survey. Of this number, 85 percent were Filipinos and 7 percent were foreigners. The rest failed to indicate their nationality.

Apart from their presidential and vice presidential candidates, MBC members were also asked to name the three most significant issues that they wanted the next administration to address.

Topping the list were corruption (79 percent), peace and order (35 percent), and infrastructure (24 percent). Other important issues mentioned were the economy (20 percent), poverty (17 percent) and fiscal deficit (15 percent). ■

DND says politicians stockpiling weapons

Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales Sunday said that some local politicians in the country have been monitored purchasing weapons heavily apparently in preparation for the coming May 2010 elections.

"This is happening even in provinces not previously known for election violence," he said.

"If left unchecked, this situation will result in the subversion of the true will of our people," Gonzales further said, as he pointed out that there was already a pattern of daily political killings in the country even before the election season.

Gonzales also said the Department of National Defense and the Commission on Elections are currently working on a new memorandum of agreement that will

put the Armed Forces of the Philippines at conduct the full disposal of the poll body "to safeguard the sanctity of the 2010 elections."

The defense chief said the new MoA, which will replace the 2007 agreement between DND and the Comelec, will redefine the role of the military during elections to check private armed groups in many areas and help prevent the repeat of another tragedy like the Maguindanao massacre last November 23.

At the same time, Gonzales said the new agreement will help prevent a repeat of alleged poll cheating involving some military officials during the 2004 and 2007 elections.

"A technical working group is now going into its details," the defense chief said. "The new MoA will replace the

2007 agreement between the DND-AFP and the Comelec which prohibits soldiers from escorting candidates and election paraphernalia during elections, among others." "Instead of shying away from their responsibility, our armed forces will meet the challenge head on.

We will show that the AFP is the true protector of our democracy and our people's will. We will prove the detractors of our soldiers wrong," Gonzales emphasized.

Last week, the Comelec en banc approved a new resolution allowing a maximum of two soldiers to protect candidates in election hot spots, rendering the 2007 MoA moot and academic. The poll body has also announced a total gun ban during the election period.

Gonzales said the defense department and the AFP held a dialogue with the poll body in response to Comelec Chairman Jose Melo's expression of need for "an environment that will allow Comelec to do its work."

Gonzales, who is concurrently National Security Adviser, earlier noted that there are at least 132 private armed groups in the country and about one million loose firearms.

The Defense chief has also expressed concern as he revealed that the country's intelligence sector was monitoring heavy purchase of weapons by local politicians apparently in preparation for the forthcoming elections. ■



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FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Krista Ranillo sits down with Korina Sanchez



Krista Ranillo in an exclusive interview with Korina Sanchez

The elusive Krista Ranillo has sat down with "Rated K" host Korina Sanchez, but her first television interview since returning home did not discuss her rumored affair with boxing icon Manny Pacquiao.

In the "Rated K" episode aired Sunday, Ranillo instead talked about her life off camera, her family, and the charity organizations she supports.

The 25-year-old actress disclosed that her father, actor Mat Ranillo III, had initially opposed her plan to join the world of show business because of the intrigues, among others.

The actress, however, was adamant. She explained that ever since she was young she knew what she wanted, which is to perform. Her grandmother, Gloria Sevilla, had also encouraged her by "honing her talent."

"At first, ayaw niya [na mag-artista ako]. Now, I understand why," Ranillo, who grew up in the United States, said. "Nasa dugo ko na 'yong show business. Even sa lola ko, siyempre Queen of Visayan Films, siya talaga ang naghohone ng talent ko."

Against her father's wishes, she joined the industry. However, she went on leave for 4 years to get a degree. She took up Interdisciplinary Studies at the Ateneo de Manila University where she graduated in 2007. She was also a Dean's lister.

After graduating from college, a new Ranillo returned to the entertainment industry. Sporting a sexy image, she graced the covers of numerous men's magazines clad only in very skimpy bikinis.

In real life, however, she is a total opposite of her sexy image, she said.

"Yong totoong Krista, simple lang naman ako, totoong tao, hindi ako complicated. At masayahin [ako]," said the actress.

Ranillo stressed that her sexy image is just part of her work as an actress.

Her decision to go sexy did not sit well with her father, but they eventually

patched things up.

She also said that up until now her father still has the last say on her career.

She said: "I really respect him that much. And knowing that he's been in the business for so long, it means a lot also. Tsaka 'yong mga advice niya, he only wants the best for me."

"Daddy's girl kasi ako because when I was born my dad was at the peak of his career. He stopped showbiz for me. He's very hands on and he will always be the love of my life," she added.

Aside from acting, she is also open to the possibility of hosting her own show.

Share her blessings

The other side of Ranillo that is also unknown to the public is her generosity.

"I'm very selfless kasi. Parang if I earn something, parang shini-share ko agad sa family ko. As an Ate, I'm very protective," she said.

She said she also shares her blessing with other people.

Ranillo, who has a sibling with a cleft palate, is an active supporter of Philippine Band of Mercy. It is an organization that helps less fortunate children with physical disabilities and other illnesses.

Also, she regularly participates in outreach programs that assist young cancer patients.

Even her Christmas wish is not for herself.

"Siguro it's for everyone; that everyone will find siguro contentment in life and peace, love and happiness."

Unmindful of the intrigues, Ranillo continues with her work. She plays a villainess in "Wapakman," which also stars Pacquiao. She is currently shooting for her upcoming TV series, ABS-CBN's "Tiagong Bayawak."

On Sunday afternoon, Ranillo also guested on musical variety show "ASAP '09" where she performed Madonna's "Revolver." ■

Bong on pursuing Hayden case: 'It's not personal'



Senator Ramon Revilla

Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. clarified that there's nothing personal about his determination to make Hayden Kho Jr. face the consequences of his sex video scandal.

Bong denied using his influence as a public official to prompt the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to revoke

Hayden's medical license.

The PRC, in an official statement, said that they revoked Hayden's license because they found him guilty of "immorality and dishonorable conduct" for recording his sex escapades with various women without consent.

"Hindi ko ginamit ang impluwensiya ko sa PRC. Ginawa lang nila kung ano 'yong tama. Dapat lahat ng nanunungkulan manindigan sa tama," Bong said on "Startalk."

The "Titanic Action Star" backed the veracity of reports that Hayden was recently found in a maudlin state of mind at a pineapple plantation in Silang, Cavite.

"Ayoko namang isipin ni Hayden na pine-personal ko siya. Meron talagang nangyari [na ganun]. Sinabi sa'kin ng Provincial Director ng Cavite.

"Hindi ko alam kung lasang o kung anuman. Basta ang sa'kin lang kailangan sa lahat ng bagay para di ka mapahamak, 'wag kang magsisinungaling," Bong stressed. ■

Hayden feels most guilty for involving Vicki



Hayden Kho Jr.

Of all the people he has besmirched with his sex video scandal, Hayden Kho Jr. confessed he feels most guilty for involving his ex-girlfriend, cosmetic surgeon Vicki Belo, in the brouhaha.

"Para sa'kin si Vicks pa rin eh. Sa lahat ng nangyari, ang pinakakasalanan dun 'yong pagtataksil ko. Tapos si Vicks din [kinasuhan pa]," said Hayden in an interview on QTV's "TweetBiz," a snippet of which was aired on "Startalk."

He added that the guilt was compounded by her family's kindness to him.

"Ang bait nilang lahat sa'kin. Kaya nga nakaka-guilty din on my part, [kasi] pati sila nadamay sa kasuhan," he said.

Although the two have

maintained their friendship, Hayden believes it would be better if he stays away from her for now.

"It's for her safety and the peace of mind of the people around her."

Hayden admitted he feels a tinge of pain seeing Vicki with other men.

"Para sa'kin masakit pa rin na makita na may kasamang iba 'yong minamahal mo," he admitted.

For 2010, the embattled ex-doctor said he will live up to his "HIS" bracelet, which serves to remind him to be a person of "humility, integrity, and service."

While he hopes to be forgiven by his enemies, Hayden said he holds no ill feelings for any of them, especially Lolit Solis, who, in last week's "Startalk," uttered sharp comments against him.

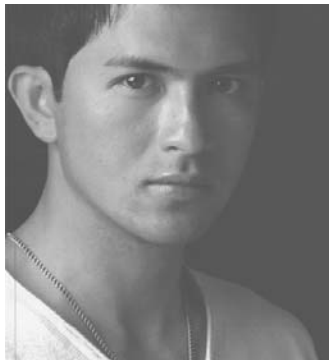
After the airing of Hayden's VTR, Lolit dared Hayden to prove his claim by granting her an interview.

"Kung talagang hindi siya galit sa'kin, mag-guest siya dito at magpa-interview siya sa'kin. [Kasi] kung sinasabi lang niya pero di niya ginagawa, sinungaling siya," she challenged.

She added that Hayden "believes his own lies" and questioned the sincerity behind his resolutions.

"Pano siya magkakaroon ng ganong qualities (humility, integrity, service) kung may ginawa siyang kababuyan?" she blurted. ■

Dennis Trillo: 'Heart is Christine Reyes jittery in kissing scene worth pursuing'



Dennis Trillo

In an interview during the press conference of his upcoming film "Mano Po 6: A Mother's Love" with Sharon Cuneta as its lead star, Trillo said he is still waiting it out. He added that this will be his first Christmas without a girlfriend.

"Medyo hindi pa (ako ready). Although first time kong magki-Christmas ng walang girlfriend. Pero sa tingin ko hindi naman lagi girlfriend ang nagpapasaya sa iyo," Trillo said.

(I'm sort of not ready to fall in love again. Although it's my first time to celebrate Christmas without a girlfriend. But I think a girlfriend is not the only one that will make you happy.)

Good Heart

Though he isn't ready for a love life yet, he hasn't seemed to shut out future prospects.

Trillo is romantically linked to actress Heart Evangelista, a co-star in the movie "Mano Po 6".

Asked what the real score is between him and Evangelista, Trillo said: "Sa interview niya sinasabi niya na hindi pa din talaga siya ready. So ang magagawa natin ay respetuhin ang desisyon niya. Kasi hindi naman

natin puwedeng pilitin ang isang bagay kung wala pa talaga sa oras."

(In her interview, Heart said she also isn't ready. So what we can do now is respect her decision. Because we can't force something if it's not time for it yet.)

The actor, who described Evangelista as good person, admitted however that Evangelista is "really worth pursuing."

Priorities

In the same interview, Trillo said he has patched things up with ex-girlfriend Cristine Reyes. He described that chapter of his life as a "closed book."

"[It's a] closed book. Nag-usap na din kami. Naayos na namin lahat. Sa tingin ko, ganoon na lang muna ang mas mabuti. Magkaibigan na lang. At least ngayon ay mas maayos at magkaibigan kaming nag-usap," the actor said.

(We talked already. We fixed things. In my view, that's what's good for now. To be friends. At least, now, everything is okay because we talked as friends.)

Trillo said he has learned to prioritize important things in his life, including his career and his son Calix, whom he had with former girlfriend Carlene Aguilar.

"Naha-handle ko ngayon ng tama yong oras ko sa bawat isa sa mga dapat bigyang halaga talaga. Pero kung love life 'yong ano eh, ayaw kong pilitin dahil masaya ako ngayon. Baka masira o madiskaril ulit kapag pinilit kong magkaroon ng love life," he said.

(I can manage my time now for things that are important. But if it's my love life you're talking about, I don't want to force it because I'm happy now. It might wreck or derail things if I force myself to have a love life.) ■



Christine Reyes

Christine Reyes tried to play it cool as she prepared to lock lips with Vic Sotto but she now admits she was extremely nervous during her one and only kissing scene with showbiz' Bossing. She plays Vic's lady love in "Ang Darling Kong Aswang," OctoArts Films, M-Zet Productions and APT Entertainment's Metro Manila Film Festival entry.

"Kinabahan ako. Kasi simula nung bata pa ako pinapanuod ko na si Bossing so na tense talaga ako. Nakikinig lang ako habang nagbibigay ng directions si Direk Tony Reyes pero sobrang kinabahan ako sa loob," she reveals. "Isang beses lang 'yung kiss at hindi siya passionate pero maraming anggulo."

She really feels lucky that she landed the part. Bossing, she says, made her feel special on the set and that's one of the things she will always remember. "Maalaga siya sa akin sa set. Hindi ko rin makakalimutan 'yung mga advice niya na mag focus ako sa work, pati 'yung mga simpleng kuwentuhan sa set."

She also considers being cast in the comedy – her first – as a Christmas gift.

"First time. Happy ako kasi comedy naman ang movie ko at hindi pa-sexy,"

she excitedly says. "Buong pamilya makakapanuod sa akin, pati mga bata."

Her leading man said it was a collective decision that Cristine play the leading lady and she really fits the role of a mesmerizing creature.

"Why not? She's one of the hottest. I can see she's got a long way to go in the field. Apart from that, the role of an aswang fits her to a T. She's got that enigmatic, quiet persona and white complexion which characterize a creature of the night. She does well as the female lead Eliza," says Vic.

Vic also admires Cristine's professionalism.

"The role requires her to be on a harness for her numerous flying scenes. One time, she was on the harness for almost a day and I noticed she was quiet. It was only later that I found out she wasn't feeling well but opted to finish the sequences instead of begging off from the shooting. Had it happened to other female stars, the shooting could've been packed up. But Cristine knew it was a big scene so she finished it. I take my hats off to her," he relates.

Christine says it's not a stretch for her to be in a comic movie. In real life, the 20-year-old is a funny gal.

"Walang challenge 'yung mag comedy kasi kung makikilala ako in real life, makulit ako. Very relaxed ako in real life. Natatawa nga sila Angel (Locsin, her friend) kasi patawa raw ako ng patawa lagi. Hindi effort sa akin 'yung wholesome," she smiles.

Cristine is excited when she learned that Vic has plans for the movie, especially if it hits it big in the box office. The MMFF box-office king says he is thinking of "some sort of a sequel" after "Ang Darling Kong Aswang" and Cristine is open to it.

Well, based on Vic's track record –undisputed MMFF box-office king for seven years – the project is as good as done. ■

Katrina Halili: I forgive Hayden Kho but...



Katrina Halili

Actress Katrina Halili may have already forgiven controversial doctor Hayden Kho, but she said she is not withdrawing the criminal case she filed against him.

Halili, who accused Kho of violating Republic Act (RA) 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act, maintained that the doctor must face the consequences of his actions.

In October, the Department of Justice lodged a case against Kho before a Pasig

court. The case stemmed from the spread of copies of sex videos showing Kho engaging in sexual acts with several women, including Halili.

The DOJ said that while Kho repeatedly claimed that he was not responsible for the spread of the video, the video recording of his sexual acts "clearly shows and manifests his lack of respect for women."

"He cannot simply justify said act with a disclaimer that the videotaping was not meant to be shown to anyone. He should own up and be responsible for his actions particularly when it affects another person's right and dignity," the resolution read.

Meanwhile, Halili returned to Calayan Surgicentre Corp., a strong competitor of Belo Medical Group (BMG), to become one of its celebrity endorsers.

Halili and BMG owner Dr. Vicki Belo, Kho's former girlfriend, had a falling out following the sex video scandal. ■

Showbiz - continued Page 21

Ruffa G. files for annulment, seeks custody of kids



Ruffa Gutierrez

"Shake, Rattle, & Roll XI" star Ruffa Gutierrez has filed a petition to annul her marriage to Turkish businessman Yilmaz Bektas whom she married in 2003.

"Custody hindi dahil sa monetary support kundi para ma-legalize lang," she stressed.

Ruffa reported that she has received an email from her former husband, saying "he doesn't want anything to do with me anymore."

She added that Yilmaz told her to not visit Turkey nor talk to his Turkish kin and friends to keep the peace between them. ■

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PERSONALITY PROFILE

by Zenaida Kharroubi

On his 75th birthday, Bert Abiera's achievements recalled



President Fidel Ramos presents Philippine Centennial Movement plaque to Bert Abiera as president of the Centennial Commission, Quebec Chapter, in 1998 that commemorated the 100th year of Philippine Independence.

Bert Abiera, who was the former publisher of the Filipino Star, sent me a message, reminding me that I forgot to attend his birthday party. At the same time, he sent a request to have his birthday photos published. But I had a better idea. I do not recall ever seeing any write up about him. I thought he deserves some recognition for his past achievements as he is one of the pioneer leaders in the community. I then requested him to send me a sketch of his life.

Bert Abiera started to work as cub reporter for Manila Times after his college days. He then worked for Manila Chronicle's advertising agency as a production man. In 1968, he moved to Guam and worked as a secretary to a Filipino Guam legislator. Later, he moved to the mainland U.S.A. and found himself in Montreal by 1971.

Having mingled a lot with the Filipino community, he was elected as FAMAS director in 1976 along with Ador Rosales, Robert de Guzman, Linda Baltazar and Jake Maguigad. He was also elected as director at the St. Urbain Community Center and published a St. Louis community newspaper along with Dr. Elmer Ordoñez. During this time, the Filipino community was still small and was not identified as Filipino in the census statistics of Quebec but belonged to "others."

Although he lived in a one-bedroom apartment, he was always receiving many Filipinos into his home, in particular, Filipino seafarers and domestic workers who used to come during weekends. Every time a ship captain would report a jump ship crew, Immigration officers would come to his place and look for them there. Once he was even handcuffed for harboring illegal persons and brought to the office for

interrogation. Not only was he helping these people but also served as a witness to marriages which were sometimes for convenience but some of them turned out to be lasting for life.

As he had some experience in journalism, Bert thought of publishing a newspaper called "Bulalakaw" along with Dr. Ed Farlon and Tony Fernandez. Later on, the newspaper's name became "Tamaraw Times." A disagreement on content arose between him and Tony. He then put up in 1978 the "Filipino Star," while Tony Fernandez continued with the "Tamaraw Times" but eventually it was discontinued and Tony joined him in the Filipino Star as editor. In 1997, he closed down the Filipino Star which I eventually took over as its publisher and chief editor in April 1998 up to the present day under a slightly different name, the North American Filipino Star.

With the forthcoming centennial celebration of Philippine independence, Bert began reprinting all historical articles published in the Philippine papers to make people aware of the event. He also thought of making a fitting tribute to the monumental celebration by recognizing our National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. He discussed his idea with Tony Fernandez and James de la Paz who became enthusiastic about installing a marker of Dr. Jose Rizal in the City of Montreal. He and Tony worked on articles pertaining to the project while James de la Paz used his influence and connection at City Hall.

During the APEC conference in Manila, Philippines, President Ramos hosted the Canadian delegation headed by the then Prime Minister Jean Chretien along with 11 provincial premiers. Bert stood up and invited President Ramos to include Montreal in his itinerary to visit Vancouver the following year to attend the APEC conference there. President

Ramos would have not gone to Montreal had he not broached the idea to him. According to Consul General Tony Villamayor, Montreal was not in his schedule. Present at the conference were Emily Aristores and Manding Villapando of Asian Times.

Bert said that President Ramos was not happy with just a marker for our National Hero. He promised to have a bronze bust of Dr. Jose Rizal. But obtaining the Rizal bust was not easy. He had to go home to the Philippines three times and went back and forth to the Centennial office on Kalaw Street, as well as to the other offices in Pasig city, and Quezon City. Furthermore, the first bust that was sent to Montreal was not weather resistant, hence, he had to go back to the Philippines for replacement.

I recall how much publicity and controversy this project entailed but in the end, the result is what matters. The monument to Dr. Jose Rizal is now properly installed at MacKenzie King Park which is the favorite place of Filipinos to gather together and hold barrio fiestas and other events.

Bert Abiera held different posts in the community. He was appointed as Philippine Centennial President (Quebec Chapter, elected vice-president of FFCAQ, president of FAMAS, 1st president of PBAM. He also received many plaques and citations, namely, Community Service Award from the Philippine Benevolent and Scholarship Society of Quebec, Outstanding Member Award from Kahirup Association of Montreal, Outstanding Filipino in North America from Washington, DC, Best

Chapter Award Outside Philippines from Philippine Centennial Movement, Plaques of Appreciation from the Filipino Seafarers Brotherhood of Montreal, Philippine Basketball Association of Montreal, and Filipino Caregivers Association of Montreal. He has been inducting officer of FFCAQ, FAMAS, PBAM, Filipino Seafarers Brotherhood of Montreal, Batangueno Association of Montreal, Filipino Pioneers Association of Montreal, Filipino Caregivers Association of Montreal, Kampampangan Association of Montreal, and Kalihukang Bisaya of Montreal.

According to Bert, his legacy to the community is the realization of the monument of Dr. Jose Rizal. Although he did not work on this alone, he considers it an accomplishment because he helped a lot in realizing it with the cooperation of the whole community. Tony Fernandez wrote articles pertaining to the project, James de la Paz used his connection and relations with the Montreal City government. He also credits those who helped in the centennial celebration - Jose Calugay for his generosity in entertaining the advance party of the Philippine Centennial Movement coordinator, Mr. Jose Morales, Nestor Ambas for his work on TV Pinoy, and the FCAWI and Filipino South Shore Association for their participation in the joint celebration of the Philippine Centennial in June 1998.

Those who are at war with others are not at peace with themselves.

William Hazlitt



The United Filipino Seniors (UPS) held their November monthly social with 'LUAU' festival, November 6, 2009, featuring Filipino Seafarers. Hawaiian dancers from left: Danny Florentino, b-day celebrant Bert Abiera, Freddie Baculina, Warlie Basbacio, UPS president, Gary Pantaleon and Glen Severino.

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Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.19* **Hosting takes a lot of hard work, says Boy Abunda**



Boy Abunda

There are no limits, no palpable boundaries to Boy Abundas conversations and always the host goes for the "Bottomline."

"Bottomline is a hybrid production. It is produced by the best people from the Current Affairs and Entertainment Departments of ABS-CBN," Boy explains. "This is a show I'd like to grow old with."

Much like "Private Conversations," Boy explains that guests will range from social scientists, philosophers, spiritual leaders to political figures people he cannot interview in the "Buzz" and "SNN."

"Interviewing is my core as a host. Everyone has a story. It is in how you tell a story. In an interview, whether riveting or dismal, I always take full responsibility."

Before facing the cameras for "The Bottomline," Boy watched the works of the masters Barbara Walters, Larry King, Oprah Winfrey, Christiane Amanpour, Diane Sawyer, Wolf Blitzer, among others. "I intently watch how they phrase questions, how they listen, how they judiciously interrupt unstoppable guests, how they deliciously relish verbal calisthenics. They are superb teachers."

He also said that to be an effective interviewer takes a lot of hard work. "You need to know when to needle guests gently when you feel you are not getting anything. You need to phrase and deliver your questions in a way that would encourage raw, honest answers. And you have to be quick and sensitive enough to recognize the strengths and limitations of your guest so you know how and where to propel the talk. Its a complicated dance," he said.

"When I do my interviews, I have no agenda, but I crave to go to the bottom of things. Yes, I do my research and I have a set questions. What I actually have is a game plan which is always open and flexible. It is a plan that is cognizant of the fact that you are talking to someone who is verbose or the quiet type so its up to you not them to steer the conversation. Its a verbal calisthenics of words and silences," he added.

Boy asks his guest every imaginable question. "When I am on air, I am an interviewer first. The responsibility of the interviewer is to his public so that the public will have a more enlightened view. And there are no stupid guests, only stupid interviewers."

Vince Rodriguez, "Bottomlines" production manager said that the central concept of the show is Boy Abunda. "He is really the central figure."

"Bottomline" opens with a group of people from different persuasions brainstorming about the show. The "bottomliners," as they are called, throw in their questions, comments, and after the interview assess the whole activity. "At the end of the conversation, we go back to the questions that have been asked during the course of the show to get to the bottomline," Boy added. ■

Karylle speaks up about Internet scam



Karylle

Singer-actress Karylle has expressed her sympathy to an American who was reportedly scammed by a Filipina in the Internet.

Karylle said she felt bad for American Allan Toor.

Toor was reportedly duped by a Filipino woman who used the actress-singer's photo to lure her victims in a dating Web site.

Reports identified the suspect as 29-year-old Arkishra Toribio Manuel.

Toor, who fell in love with the suspect, had reportedly asked Manuel to marry him, and then sent her around P100,000 to process her papers.

The American only found out about the scam when Manuel failed to show up at the airport in the United States on October 16, the scheduled arrival of the suspect. This prompted Toor to file a complaint against Manuel before a local

police.

When she learned that someone was using her photo in a dating Web site, Karylle said she initially thought that it was a joke. She said she only learned about the gravity of the situation after reading the reports about the scam.

She told The Buzz: Siyempre naaawa ako doon sa taong puso niya [binigay niya], nagbigay pa siya ng pera. Foul na.

She maintained that, although times are hard these days, nobody has the right to deceive others.

Kailangan hindi tayo gumagawa ng masamang bagay at nanggagamit pa tayo ng ibang tao. Siyempre dindadaya mo pa ang ibang tao, she added.

Karylle said as of now she is not yet thinking of filing a case against Manuel for unauthorized use of her photo. ■

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Aquino solidifies lead

Sen. Benigno "Noy" Aquino III consolidated his "sizeable" lead in the presidential race, but Senators Loren Legarda and Manuel "Mar" Roxas II were locked in a close fight for the vice presidency, according to the latest Pulse Asia survey.

Forty-five percent of 1,800 adults interviewed nationwide from Dec. 8 to 10 said they would vote for Aquino if elections were held at the time.

Nearly 50 million Filipinos will select a president, a vice president, nearly 300 lawmakers for the two houses of Congress and more than 17,500 local positions in the May general elections.

Considering the survey's margin of error of plus-or-minus 2 percentage points, Aquino's rating was virtually the same as the 44 percent he got in a similar survey in October.

"The support for Senator Aquino remains virtually unchanged," Ana Maria Tabunda, chief research fellow of Pulse Asia Inc., said in a statement,



Senator Benigno 'Noy' Aquino speaks during a Liberal Party (LP) joint meeting with the LP National Executive Council and National Directorate in Manila last month.

comparing the latest results with the previous survey.

Way behind Aquino were Sen. Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. (23 percent, up 4 points) and deposed President Joseph Estrada (19 percent, up 8 points).

At the bottom were former Defense Secretary Gilberto "Gibo" Teodoro Jr. (5 percent, up 3 points), Sen. Richard "Dick" Gordon (1 percent), and evangelist Eduardo "Bro. Eddie" Villanueva (1 percent).

Other presidential candidates got less than 1 percent each.

Escudero factor

Tabunda said it was possible that votes for Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, who announced on Nov. 24 his decision to drop out of the 2010 presidential race, went to Estrada and improved his rating.

"While it was expected that votes for Escudero would be proportionately distributed to the remaining presidential candidates, support for

Villar did not go up that much, possibly because of his party's decision to support the senatorial campaign of Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. and militant party-list Representatives Liza Maza and Satur Ocampo," Tabunda said in an interview.

Marcos is the son and namesake of the late dictator who jailed Ocampo and other political activists during martial law.

Pulse Asia asked respondents to choose from a list of 15 presidential, 15 vice presidential and 80 senatorial hopefuls. They were allowed to make up to 12 senatorial preferences.

Last week, the Commission on Elections approved the certificates of candidacy (CoCs) of eight presidential aspirants, the CoCs of eight vice presidential hopefuls, and the CoCs of 58 senator wannabes.

Boxing icon Pacquiao joins Mindanao looms as the swing vote in 2010 elections



Seven-time world boxing champion Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao, seeking a seat in the lower house of Congress in next May's elections in the Philippines, has joined the opposition party, his lawyer said on Friday.

Pacquiao, widely regarded as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world, took his oath as a member of the Nacionalista Party led by billionaire lawmaker Manuel "Manny" Villar late on Thursday in General Santos City, Franklin Gacal told Reuters.

"Manny decided to join Villar's camp because he was convinced the senator can help solve the country's poverty problem," Gacal said, adding the two shared the same rags-to-riches story and have an almost identical platform on poverty alleviation.

Gacal said Pacquiao met with Villar during his 31st birthday party on Thursday in General Santos City, where the deal for the boxer's entry into Villar's party was sealed.

He said Pacquiao kept his friendship with pro-administration

officials and political patrons -- Mining Secretary Lito Atienza and Luis "Chavit" Singson, deputy national security adviser -- even after he joined the opposition.

It was Pacquiao's second attempt to win a seat in Congress after he lost in 2007 to an incumbent lawmaker, Darlene Custodio, who belongs to a prominent political clan in General Santos City.

Pacquiao is facing a tough opponent supported by the three biggest political and business families in Sarangani, who also have close links to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and the party's standard-bearer, former defense chief Gilberto Teodoro.

Analysts said Pacquiao has a better chance of winning inside a boxing ring than in a political arena, but the backing of a large political party could boost his candidacy. ■

Mindanao is emerging as the new battlefield among the candidates in next year's elections, with some opposition bets claiming that the massacre of 57 civilians there last month is boosting their candidacy while dimming the chances of the ruling party's candidates.

Mindanao had 10.65 million voters in 2007, and those numbers appear to be more than enough to draw the attention of all the presidential candidates except deposed President Joseph Estrada, the standard-bearer of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino.

They claim visiting Mindanao almost every week to boost their chances in 2010, although it appears that only the ruling Lakas-Kampi CMD's presidential bet, former Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro, dares to visit the island's wilder areas like Maguindanao, where the 57 people, including the family and supporters of Vice Mayor Esmel Mangudadatu, were butchered.

"It is in Mindanao that the command votes still matter," Sarangani Gov. and Lakas-Kampi CMD party president Miguel Domingo said.

"Whatever the political leaders and party whips say, the constituents [there] take heed."

Nacionalista Party spokesman Gilbert Remulla, a senatorial candidate, disagreed, claiming that in 2004 the late actor and opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. won in Mindanao when most of the governors and other leaders there were affiliated with the administration party.

He claimed that last week's defection of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao to the Nacionalistas from the ruling party was proof that Senator Manuel Villar, the party's presidential candidate, was gaining ground in Mindanao. Pacquiao deserted the administration party to run for Congressman in Sarangani.

"Senator Villar is making a lot of headway in Mindanao in terms of his candidacy and popularity," he said.

"With the addition of Manny Pacquiao in our fold, it shows that the campaign of the Nacionalista standard-bearer is picking up," he told Standard

Today.

Villar has two senatorial candidates in Mindanao: Adel Tamano of Lanao and Gwendolyn Pimentel of Cagayan de Oro. Even his running mate, Senator Loren Legarda, is an "adopted princess" of Mindanao. Villar has also fielded a priest, Diosdado Tabios, who is running for governor of Bukidnon province.

The Liberal Party's Benigno Aquino III similarly has two senatorial candidates in Mindanao: Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III and former Bukidnon Rep. Nereus Acosta.

Estrada, who was driven from power in 2000 and convicted of plunder in 2007, has always claimed that Mindanao is his bailiwick. In 2004, while under house arrest, he smuggled out tape-recorded messages from Tanay to campaign for Poe, who won in most parts of Mindanao except in Maguindanao, where President Gloria Arroyo won as a result of her alliance with the powerful Ampatuan clan.

The Ampatuans are the main suspects in the murder of the 57 people in Maguindanao, including 21 women and 30 journalists, in the worst attack in the country's history of political violence. The 30 journalists who were killed represented the highest number of reporters slain in a single attack anywhere in the world.

Teodoro was among the first to denounce the massacre and the man who expelled the Ampatuans from the Lakas-Kampi CMD party.

He is in Mindanao almost every week, his last visit there being Wednesday last week to fetch a one-year-old baby who needed to be taken to a hospital in Manila from Maguindanao.

Villar was last seen in General Santos on Thursday, when Pacquiao took his oath as an NP member and endorsed Villar for president.

"Seriously, I have lost count," Villar said when asked how often he visits Mindanao.

"Like I said, even when I was an ordinary congressman, I had been visiting Mindanao and getting to know the leaders of the area." ■

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