

# Montrealers urged to support “Impacting Young Lives for a Better Tomorrow” project

(Reported by Z. F. Kharroubi)

The second consultative meeting of the Friendship and Fellowship Filipino Youth Center located on 3737 Van Horne, formerly called the Pomerantz House, a 2-storey building that used to be a Hebrew School was held. on Saturday, February 4, 2012 which was attended by students from Ecole Lavoie, their parents and volunteers Pastor Orland Racacho, and his wife, Lucy, a retired registered nurse, not only made the big step of acquiring the building but also serve as the prime movers behind a formidable project that will undoubtedly make a change in many people's lives. The Center was inaugurated last November 13, 2011 with the presence of the Borough Mayor Michael Applebaum. The Youth Center will provide services that will focus on the following objectives:

1) To promote mental health among the Filipino youth in our



**Pastor Orland Racacho is flanked by youth volunteers and the Star editor who visited the Friendship & Fellowship Center on February 4, 2012. Ms. Manon-og and other community leaders had already gone when this photo was taken.**

community; 2) To provide guidance and counselling for career opportunities; 3) To promote genuine camaraderie among Filipino youth especially among the new arrivals; 4)

To help the new immigrants integrate into the mainstream of Canadian

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Youth Center

## Aquino puts on hold ‘very good’ news on economy



**BALER, AURORA, FEBRUARY 21, 2012 (INQUIRER) By Christine O. Avendaño, Kristine L. Alave - Taking a brief pause from his increasingly**

heated verbal skirmishes with Chief Justice Renato Corona, President Benigno Aquino III on Sunday promised Filipinos “very good” news about the country's economy in the next few days.

For now, all the President would say was that it concerned Philippine competitiveness in comparison with other economies.

“In the next few days, I will give you news that is very good concerning the economic sector,” Mr. Aquino said in a speech on the capitol grounds here during a visit to attend the 33rd founding anniversary of Aurora province.

He said he received the news two days ago and it had to do with a survey done by the Japan External Trade

Organization, a group made up of Japanese businessmen.

He said the survey concerned competitiveness and “how easy it is to do business” in certain countries. He said the Philippines fared very well in 14 of 15 categories listed in the survey.

“There is only one category where we really have to work a little more,” he said, declining to elaborate. He said he would also have a piece of good news about the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, a government agency that extends assistance to export-oriented industries.

Protecting environment

Not all the good news is about the economy.

Environmentalists on Sunday said that when it came to environmental

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Good news economy



**See Page 3 - Arroyo pleads not guilty to electoral fraud**



**See Page 3 - Ash Wednesday Ritual**



**Parliamentary Secretary Deepak Obhrai is greeted by Philippine President Benigno Aquino at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Academy for Aviation Training in the Cebu Freeport. Canadian Ambassador C. Thornley is also in the photo. See Pages 4-5**



**SWIS (Seniors of the West Island) is born By Fely Rosales-Carino - See Page 8**



# GOLDEN PHOENIX

## MILAGROSA

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GOLDEN PHOENIX



# Editorial

## Building a center of action for youth empowerment is a challenge

The inauguration and opening of the Friendship and Fellowship Filipino Youth Center recently in our community is a sign that something good will happen and help to find solutions to common problems faced by families from disadvantaged economic groups. We have an increasing population, all concentrated in Cote des Neiges. But the majority of people settling down here are mostly low wage earners. In order to meet their personal needs and that of their families, most of them have to find a second and third jobs for the extra income that they need. Consequently, their busy schedules become conducive to having delinquent teenagers who are usually found wandering around with the wrong company. This is one of the reasons why Pastor Orlan Racacho and his wife have found themselves involved in building a youth center where these young people can find a place to gather and engage in more wholesome activities than loiter around the Metro stations.

Managing and operating a youth center such as this is definitely a big challenge which will require the support of the whole community. The Borough Mayor Michael Applebaum may be one of the sources of support but what seems to be more important is the support of every community leader. It goes without saying that the whole is only as strong as its parts. Pastor Racacho has been calling for more volunteers in implementing the activities as he envisioned but he also welcomes other people's input as to how we can make this Center fulfill its mission - to make our young people our leaders of tomorrow. As he pointed out, we will not be here forever and we must prepare our youth to take over. The question is - how do we prepare them to have leadership skills?

It is common knowledge that the children's first lessons begin at home and that the family still remains as the center of their development into mature, responsible individuals. Unfortunately, some families are dysfunctional due to divorce, conjugal violence, drug and alcohol addiction, poverty, and psychological or mental problems. Even though there are agencies run by the government and non-profit organizations, not everyone can be catered to and be given the help he or she needs. Thus, our community is indeed lucky to have someone like Pastor Racacho who has the vision to make the first step to establish a Youth Center to help make a difference in young people's lives.

There are many issues that concern us but we need to focus on each one according to priorities. Top on the list of Pastor Racacho is delinquency which he started to define and analyze its causes. The first one he underscored is the lack of

parenting skills. He believes that all parents want to have children who are going to be successful but there are times when they do not know what to do. In this case, it is our responsibility as a community to extend a helping hand. By means of workshops or seminars, we may be able to communicate and impart knowledge that will enable parents to acquire the skills they need to help their children.

It has been cited and written in some journals and books about an important principle of childhood development. All children live by the example they see around them. The debate as to which one is stronger - heredity or environment - has not been completely settled by empirical studies but it would appear that both play crucial roles in a child's life. We cannot do anything about heredity or the genes that one has but we can all do something about the environment. Whether we like it or not, we are living in the same planet, in the same neighborhood. We all breathe the same air, eat food from the same source. If one of these things is contaminated, we all suffer the same fate. In other words, we are all interconnected both physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

With a Youth Center in our midst, there is no more reason to think that the Filipino community cannot be united for a common goal. There is no more reason to work in isolation, nor to waste time in endless rumors and political games. We have no time to waste. A big job is waiting to be done, and we all can use our energy in finding a way to help others. By doing so, we will surely forget all our past conflicts and be motivated to work together. But this all depends on each and everyone's willingness to accept and recognize what is more valuable and important in life.

Filipinos in Montreal have organized hundreds of associations. We are echoing the call of Pastor Racacho to get them all involved in making the Youth Center a successful venture. Both seniors and youth groups would be an ideal combination to form work teams in helping the Youth Center become a growing institution of learning, sharing, and caring for one another.

We hope that our readers will become interested in the Youth Center's potential of becoming the first and the best place to develop young leaders who will not only become the prime movers of change in Montreal but also in Canada and in the world.

We congratulate Pastor Racacho and all the members of his Ministry in having established the Youth Center. We are certain that it will help make this world a better place.

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

## Letter to the Editor

### Harper Sets his Sights on Our Pensions

It seems all but certain that Stephen Harper is set to hike the qualifying age for the Old Age Security (OAS) from 65 to 67. For our most vulnerable seniors, that means they will go without \$30,000 of much needed support for two additional years. For you, it may mean significantly altering your plans for retirement.

And you are not alone. Over the next 10 years, more than 4 million Canadians will be turning 65. Unless you are set to retire with an annual pension of over \$112,000, Harper is telling you to rethink your plans.

Harper is blaming the baby-boomers. But as the retirement wave peaks in 2031, the increase spending on the OAS will only increase by 0.7% of Canada's overall economy.

So why is Harper doing this? Because fundamentally, Stephen Harper believes that the government should have no hand in helping seniors in their retirement, and no hand in helping Canadians plan for their retirement. He's still the same guy who said the Canada Pension Plan should be scrapped back in 1998. Government involvement in the financial security of Canadians stands counter to Harper's ideology.

As Conservatives choose to take benefits away from seniors, Liberals will continue to fight for balanced pension reforms that will ensure Canadians financial security in their retirement. Liberals will fight for a voluntary supplemental Canada Pension Plan that will provide a low-cost, high-return, universal option that Canadians can rely on.

Hon. Judy Sgro, MP  
Liberal Party Critic for Seniors and Pensions

### Students protest against tuition fee hike



The Canadian Press Montreal, February 23, 2012 - Student demonstrators temporarily blocked access to a Montreal bridge amid protests over tuition-fee hikes Thursday, triggering a brief showdown with riot police.

The shutdown of Jacques Cartier Bridge, a key access point to Montreal, compelled riot police to move in and clear the area to avoid a monster rush-hour traffic jam.

Police banged batons against their protective shields as a warning for the students to move along, and the bridge gradually reopened. Some protesters who got too close, linking

arms and taunting the officers, were pepper-sprayed or shoved away.

The incident at the bridge involved a small crowd of students and it came after a far larger, more orderly protest throughout the afternoon.

A much bigger group comprising thousands of students had been marching peacefully through the downtown streets while police kept their distance.

Officers decided to step in once they detected potential for traffic chaos.

"(Protesters) blocked the bridge in both directions so the bridge wasn't open

See Page 23 Student Protests

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## GMA pleads not guilty to poll fraud

By Perseus Echeminada (The Philippine Star) Updated February 24, 2012 MANILA, Philippines - Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Charged along with Arroyo were former Maguindanao governor Andal Ampatuan Sr. and former provincial election supervisor Lintang



Former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo leaves the Pasay City court escorted by policemen after attending her arraignment on Thursday and pleading not guilty to charges of electoral fraud. Photo by Erik De Castro, Reuters

yesterday pleaded not guilty to the crime of electoral sabotage, and vowed to clear her name during her arraignment at the Pasay City Regional Trial Court (RTC).

Arroyo, now a Pampanga representative, wore a neck brace and an all-white ensemble as she arrived at around 8:30 a.m. for the proceedings in the courtroom of Pasay RTC Branch 112 Judge Jesus Mupas.

She was accompanied by her husband Jose Miguel, son Juan Miguel and a medical team from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center where she is currently detained due to her spine ailment.

The arraignment lasted less than an hour.

Arroyo's lawyer Benjamin Santos said his client waived the reading of information on the charges against her since she fully understood the indictment.

After the case number was announced, Arroyo said, "Not guilty."

Pre-trial was set on April 19.

Arrested in November, Arroyo is facing electoral sabotage charges filed by a joint panel of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) for allegedly manipulating the results of the 2007 midterm polls in Maguindanao to favor the senatorial bets of the then administration party.

She faces life in prison if convicted.

Bedol.

In a statement issued prior to her arraignment, Arroyo vowed to clear her name and that of her family and abide by the rule of law.

Arroyo also called on the Aquino administration to respect the rule of law in prosecuting cases against officials of the previous government and other perceived enemies.

"Despite the continuous and massive vilification campaign against me and my family, I have always said that I will dispute all charges in the proper forum," Arroyo said.

"I am submitting myself to this process not only to clear my name but also as part of my commitment to respect and abide by the rules and orders of our courts," she said. "It is my fervent hope that our leaders uphold and our people have faith in the Constitution and the rule of law," she said.

Arroyo was seen smiling as she entered the Pasay City courtroom but her husband said the former president is frustrated over the case.

"She feel it's an injustice... there is no case, she is frustrated," Mr. Arroyo said.

Hundreds of Arroyo's supporters, who also wore white, converged in front of the city hall to show their support for the former leader.

"We will not abandon you," their streamers read.

Speedy trial

Santos told the court his client waived her right to appear in the next hearings of her case.

He also said they are requesting a speedy trial – at least three hearings a week.

But clerk of court Joel Pelicano said the court can only handle two trials per week because of their tight schedule.

The arraignment of Arroyo had earlier been moved from Feb. 20 to March 19 but Santos filed a motion to proceed with the arraignment for security and health reasons of his client.

Plea expected

With Arroyo's not guilty plea, the Comelec yesterday said it is prepared for a court battle with the former leader.

In an interview, Comelec spokesman James Jimenez said they had expected Arroyo not to admit the offense during her arraignment yesterday.

"That was expected. That's why we have been preparing hard because we know it is not going to be handed to us on a silver platter. We expected this 'not guilty' plea and we are ready to prove that she is, in fact, guilty," he said.

Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares also said he expected the not guilty plea.

"After all, she had been covering up all accountability issues raised against her during her nine-year presidency," he said.

He said he expects Arroyo to deny any and all charges filed or to be filed against her.

He said the former president's arraignment would not have taken place had impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona succeeded in allowing her and her husband to leave the country last Nov. 15.

The Arroyos went to the airport and tried to board planes for Singapore and Hong Kong, but immigration officers

prevented them from leaving.

Gabriela party-list Rep. Luzviminda Ilagan, for her part, said the administration should not forget to prosecute Arroyo for plunder and violation of human rights.

One step closer

Malacañang, meanwhile, welcomed the arraignment of Arroyo on electoral sabotage charges – to which she pleaded not guilty – and hoped that a ruling would come out within the current administration's term.

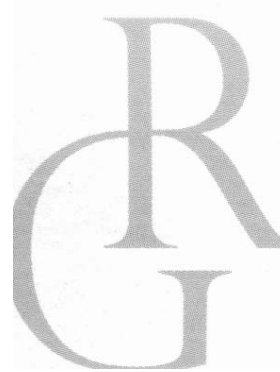
Presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said Arroyo's arraignment "brings us one step closer towards attaining closure to the many controversies that have hounded our country during the previous administration."

"Accountability escapes no one. This is the very foundation of the rule of law: The scales of justice should tip towards no one; her blindfold must continue to shield the system from being susceptible to the temptations of pandering to those with power and influence," Lacierda said.

He said the Comelec-DOJ task force that investigated the alleged role of Arroyo in the cheating during the 2007 senatorial elections would not press any charges if there was no prima facie case of electoral sabotage.

"Now that she has been arraigned, she is now under the jurisdiction of the court, so we can expect the trial to move on. Arraignment is the very first step towards trial on the merits," Lacierda said. – With Paolo Romero, Sheila Crisostomo, Jess Diaz, Reinir Padua, Aurea Calica

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# From Page 1 Youth Center

society; 5) To provide fellowship that will help the Filipino youth develop a wholesome attitude towards their peers, parents and authorities, and ultimately lead them into a spiritual understanding of divine truth, love and fear of God.

Besides the announcement in the newspaper, about 1000 flyers were distributed by youth volunteers to advise everyone of the existence of the Center and its availability during its open house every Saturday from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. A new pingpong table is now available at the basement of the Center.

During this second consultative meeting, a proposed schedule of activities for 2012 was included in the folder handed out to parents and other community leaders who attended the meeting. Amy Manon-og an instructor of the PAB/PSW program at Gilmore College International and active FNAQ member, has graciously accepted to be the overall volunteer coordinator while Medianera "Medy" Maningding, a Retired Military Officer has been designated Youth Coordinator.

Pastor Racacho emphasized the importance of the cooperation of other community leaders in his project. For this reason, he acknowledged the attendance of this writer and asked if I would like to be a speaker in the workshop in March with the theme: How to be a successful student. I accepted the challenge without hesitation as I am convinced that Pastor Racacho's project should be widely supported. Mr. Jose Calugay, a very avid community worker, also attended this meeting. He was given other tasks related to his field of expertise.

The proposed calendar of activities is listed here for the purpose of recruiting volunteers in the different areas where their expertise may be of help to the Youth Center:

January - Leadership Training  
February - Meeting with Elementary and Secondary School Management  
March - Seminar & Workshops - "How to be a successful student"  
April - Seminar & Workshops - Career Opportunities  
May - Special Classes - Cooking & Baking  
June - Letter Writing to Friends & Relatives in the Philippines  
July - Outdoor Sports Activities  
August - Family Picnic (Youth & Parents) - Mackenzie King Park  
September - Seminar - Grooming & Personal Hygiene  
October - Seminar - Youth and the Law  
November - Seminar: Parent-Child Relationship  
December - Christmas Celebration - Poems, Testimonials, Verses

The last Saturday of every month has been selected as the regular monthly consultative meeting and workshop to be held from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. after which refreshments brought in by parents and other volunteers are served. The first workshop will be held on March 31, 2012.

Pastor Racacho delivered an informative lecture on juvenile delinquency, the signs that tell parents

if their sons or daughters are not in their right path. He also dealt with one of the causes of delinquency - parents who lack parenting skills. He said that he does not want to criticize anyone but he wants to offer his help in providing parents with the skills to help their children succeed in life. He pointed out that "we cannot afford to sit and stand-by. And if I say any concern about Filipino community leadership or lack of it, I say it with sincerity to challenge all Filipino organizations, civic-minded and professionals to roll our sleeves and put our priority on community services by helping our own people, especially our youth. Instead of damaging and throwing dirt at each other and playing the dirty game of politics for self aggrandizement, let's practice the 'true spirit of bayanihan' and the genuine Filipino Character referred to by the Filipino hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, 'the Filipino Youth is the hope of our country or community.'"

Pastor Racacho is not only asking adults to volunteer their services but also the young people. He believes that young people can develop leadership skills, become a better person by being a volunteer in community centers and hospitals. Besides, who gets hired when a job opening comes up is usually the one who already has been volunteering his or her services, he added.

If more community leaders of different organizations come forward and join in this project, it will undoubtedly change not only people's attitudes towards one another but may dramatically reduce social problems that are often hidden from public view.

Rev. Pastor Racacho, a full time ordained Minister of the Fellowship Bible Baptist Church, and his wife, Lucy Bermejo Racacho, have always been involved with projects for the youth. They created a youth program in the late 1990's in conjunction with the CLSC and Lavoie Elementary School a guidance and counselling program.

Pastor Racacho is a psychology graduate, entrepreneur, mental health worker and former director of therapy at the Douglas Hospital. He was also a past president of FAMAS (Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs), past national chairman of the United Council of Filipino Associations in Canada (UCFAC), and recipient of the Silver Medal Award in Ottawa on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the ascension of Her Majesty the Queen to the Throne, presented to him, 1952-1977. Mrs. Racacho is a retired nurse since 1997. Together, they have worked passionately for a cause that makes them a powerful force that may encourage Filipino Canadians to become more united for a common goal - to help our youth become our leaders tomorrow.

For more information about the church and the Center, call 450-466-8711, Pastor Orlan Racacho.

**'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.'**  
(Proverbs 22:6)

# From Page 1 Good news economy

protection and addressing pollution, the Philippines had made strides in past two years, based on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) that measures the environmental policies of 132 countries.

According to the EPI, the Philippines now ranks 42nd among 132 countries when it comes to protecting and managing the environment, placing the country under the "strong performer" category.

The EPI was prepared by Yale and Columbia Universities in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and Joint Research Center of the European Commission.

The latest ranking represented a jump for the Philippines over its performance in 2010, when it was ranked 50th and listed as a modest performer.

Switzerland tops list

Based on the 2012 results, the Philippines retained its ranking of eighth in the Asia-Pacific region, higher than South Korea, Australia and Singapore, which ranked ninth, 10th and 11th, respectively.

The EPI measures a country's performance in maintaining environmental health and ecosystem vitality. The data were based on studies across 10 policy categories, including air and water pollution, climate change, biodiversity and forest management.

The studies also took into account human-related indicators, such as child mortality and access to drinking water and sanitation.

Switzerland topped the list of governments addressing the problems of sustainable management of natural resources and air and water pollution.

The bottom five places in the ranking were occupied by South Africa, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan

and Iraq—all grappling with deteriorating environmental resources.

The EPI showed that the Philippines' environmental policies in the past decade had improved. Specifically, the Philippines received a high mark in managing agriculture, with an overall rank of seventh. The country also made valiant efforts in decreasing air and water pollution, the study said.

However, the Philippines' positive performance did not mean that the country excelled in other matters involving environmental protection. The study pointed out that the Philippines still faced problems of deforestation and proper watershed management.

Paje pleased

"We are pleased that the international community has recognized our efforts on environmental protection and management," said Environment Secretary Ramon Paje.

"We would like to share this achievement with all sectors and stakeholders, including other agencies of the government, who have collaborated with us in our programs, particularly in cleaning the air and water, forest protection, national greening program, biodiversity conservation and other environmental protection initiatives," Paje said.

He said Executive Order No. 23 and No. 26 issued last year, which imposed a moratorium on cutting trees in natural and residual forests and mandated massive replanting, should help the Philippines gain more forest cover.

In 2011, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, other state agencies, local governments, private sector and civil society planted 69 million seedlings in more than 118,000 hectares of land nationwide under the national greening program.

## Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deepak Obhrai visits Philippines



**(Left) Parliamentary Secretary Deepak Obhrai is greeted by Philippines President Benigno Aquino at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Academy for Aviation Training in the Cebu Freeport. Canadian Ambassador C. Thornley is also in the photo.**

January 31, 2012 - Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deepak Obhrai, visited the Philippines from January 21, 2012 to January 25. During this trip, P.S. Obhrai participated in many productive meetings with key individuals in the Filipino government, including President Benigno Aquino

and legislators. His visit highlights the strong and growing relationship between Canada and the Philippines. This mutual friendship has been strengthened by the contributions of the over 500,000 Canadians of Filipino descent and by the fact that the Philippines are now the top source country for immigrants



## U.S. to deport Taiwan envoy who abused Filipina maids

(Reuters) - January 27, 2012 A U.S. federal judge ordered the deportation on Friday of a high-ranking official from Taiwan who pleaded guilty last year to human trafficking charges for abusing her two Filipina maids, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Hsien-Hsien Liu, the 64-year-old director general of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Kansas City, Missouri, was arrested in November and charged with fraud in foreign labor contracting in connection with her treatment of the two maids.

Liu ultimately admitted to forcing the two women, whom she hired in the Philippines and brought to work for her in the United States between 2009 and 2011, to toil day and night for significantly less pay than promised in their contracts.

U.S. District Judge Greg Kays sentenced Liu, who has been in custody since her arrest, to time served and ordered her deported back to Taiwan as part of a plea deal.

Prosecutors said Liu told one of the women she would pay her \$1,240 a month to work eight hours a day, five days a week -- but only paid her \$450 a month and forced her to work 16 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

She also installed surveillance cameras inside her home in Johnson County, Kansas, to monitor the woman, did not allow her to leave without supervision or permission, and seized her passport and visa and refused to return them.

According to an FBI affidavit filed in the case, Liu also warned the woman she "was friends with local law enforcement and well known in the community, so if the (female victim) acted out, she would be deported."

Liu pleaded guilty to the charges last November.

In addition to the deportation order, the judge also ordered Liu to pay \$80,044 in restitution to the women, as well as an as-yet unspecified fine, and to cover the full costs of her incarceration and deportation, including round-trip airfare for the U.S. immigration agents who escort her back to Taiwan.

Liu's two former maids are eligible for T-visas, designed to help victims of human trafficking who cooperate with prosecutors. The visas will allow them to live and work legally in the United States and to apply for permanent residency after three years, the U.S. attorney's office said.

(Reporting by James B. Kelleher; Editing by Cynthia Johnston)



Parliamentary Secretary Deepak Obhra with Philippines legislators at the Congress of the Philippines

## Government of Canada taking action to support newcomers

Vancouver, British Columbia, February 22, 2012—The Government of Canada today announced the launch of a three-year pilot project that will make it easier for internationally trained professionals to have their credentials recognized and find jobs in their fields.

The announcement was made by the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism also participated in the announcement.

"Our government's top priority is job creation and economic growth," said Minister Finley. "In the Economic Action Plan, we made a commitment to help internationally trained professionals cover the costs of having their credentials recognized. Today we are delivering on that commitment."

"Today's announcement is part of the Government's commitment to making it easier for immigrants to join the Canadian labour market," said Minister Kenney. "We want newcomers to be able to use their skills as soon as possible in Canada and work to their full potential. It's good for them and good for the Canadian economy."

For many internationally trained

professionals, the cost of licensing exams, training and skills upgrading can present a significant barrier to credential recognition. The Foreign Credential Recognition Loans Pilot will develop and test innovative projects that provide financial assistance to internationally trained professionals to lessen some of these financial burdens. Delivered in partnership with community organizations, the loans will make it easier for internationally trained professionals to find jobs that best suit their skills and experience.

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. British Columbia, where Minister Finley made the announcement, is one of several partners across Canada to receive support through this pilot. Similar agreements were also announced today in Ontario and Saskatchewan. Today's announcements are part of an \$18 million commitment that the Government of Canada made in its 2011 budget for the Next Phase of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

"Internationally trained workers, including skilled immigrants and Canadians with international training or education, make an important contribution to Canada's job market and the economy," added Minister Finley.

## Pinoys troop to church for Ash Wednesday - 1st day of Lent begins



**PHOTO - A Roman Catholic nun uses ash to mark a cross on the forehead of a believer during Ash Wednesday in front of a Catholic church in Paranaque city Feb. 22, 2012. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. It is a season of penance, reflection and fasting which prepares believers for Jesus Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. Source: Reuters]**

MANILA, FEBRUARY 23, 2012 (ABS-CBN) Millions of Roman Catholic Filipinos trooped to churches today for Ash Wednesday, signalling the start of the Lenten season.

Masses were held continuously throughout the day, as Catholic churches were filled with people from different walks of life, lining up to get their foreheads marked with ash.

Among them is Boy Caña, who said he religiously attends Mass every Ash Wednesday.

"Nakaka touch siya eh, kinikilabutan ako," he said. "Lahat naman ng tao nagkakasala ang mahalaga 'yung pagsisi."

According to Church tradition, the practice of placing ash on the foreheads of the faithful is a sign of mourning and repentance to God. The ashes used are

supposed to have been gathered from the burned fronds from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

Fr. Joel Buenviaje, assistant parish priest of the St. Peter's Parish and Shrine, explained the special meaning behind the use of the ash.

"Reminder 'yan sa atin na tayo ay alabok, at babalik din sa alabok, so it keeps us humble," the priest said.

He said he is elated that many young people are still following this Church tradition, especially during these times of great uncertainty.

"In the midst of turmoil, of disasters both natural and man-made, kailangan tayo mag-reflect at magbalik loob sa Diyos," Fr. Buenviaje said.

The Lenten season ends on Easter Sunday on April 8. Report from Atom Araullo, ABS-CBN News



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# EARTH TALK™

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E - The Environmental  
Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: I read that car makers had agreed to up fuel economy standards to an average of about 55 miles per gallon by the year 2025, and that specifics were due to be hammered out by the end of 2011. Did this happen and where do things stand now? -- Scott Ellis, Norwalk, CA

1.5 million barrels or more a day by 2030.

"The standards are going to lead to large investments and a rebirth of the U.S. auto industry [as] global leaders in innovation," says Roland Hwang, director of the Transportation program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, one of the six environmental groups (along with Environment America, the National Wildlife Federation, the Safe Climate Campaign, the Sierra Club and the Union of Concerned Scientists) behind Go60mpg. Hwang figures the new rules will generate \$300 billion in extra revenue to the U.S. auto industry, not to mention lining consumers' pocketbooks with an estimated \$200 billion in fuel savings. "This is a big deal [and] something that will keep the



**The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) defines a "disease cluster" as an unusually large number of people sickened by a disease in a certain place and time. Toxic exposure by industrial activity is usually suspected or blamed. Along with the National Disease Clusters Alliance, NRDC reported in 2011 that it had identified 42 disease clusters in 13 U.S. states. Credit: Natural Resources Defense Council**

After years of wrangling on the issue, auto companies, regulators and policymakers have finally come to terms on increased Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for vehicles plying American roads. According to the plan as formulated by the Obama administration, automakers will double the average, unadjusted fuel-economy rating of their car and light truck vehicle fleets to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025 from today's standard of 27 miles per gallon. Automakers which don't meet the standards will be penalized \$5.50 per 0.1 miles per gallon they fall below, multiplied by their total production for the U.S. market. Congress is likely to sign the new rules, which will start taking effect for the 2017 model year, into law this summer.

According to the White House, the higher standards will likely lead to price increases of some \$2,000 per vehicle to cover the costs of more expensive technology, but drivers should save an average of \$6,600 in gas over the life of a vehicle. Environmental advocacy groups allied as the Go60mpg Coalition report that the new rules will create almost half a million new jobs while cutting domestic oil consumption by

U.S. auto industry on the forefront of manufacturing innovation."

In addition to the new CAFE standards for cars and light trucks, the White House is calling for a 20 percent cut in greenhouse gas emissions from large trucks and buses by 2018. The fuel economy bump inherent in these new truck rules will translate to some \$73,000 in fuel savings for truckers over the lifetime of a new 18-wheeler and some 530 million barrels of oil saved for all large trucks and buses made between 2014 and 2018.

Critics point out that no one can be sure how much new technology will add to the cost of vehicles, let alone how fluctuations in gas prices, consumer tastes and the overall economy could impact what types of cars people want to drive. While the new rules represent a gamble in regard to these variables, enough Americans see the benefits of more fuel efficient vehicles outweighing the trade-offs. Of course, environmentally conscious consumers can already buy more fuel efficient vehicles—Priuses, Volts and Leafs are already all over American roads. And if Congress goes along with its intent to pass the new rules, greener cars will be standard and the U.S. will be on the forefront of



**In a plan formulated by the Obama administration, auto makers will double the average, unadjusted fuel-economy rating of their cars and light trucks to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025 from today's standard of 27 miles per gallon. Congress is likely to sign the new rules, which will start taking effect for the 2017 model year, into law this summer.**

**(Credit: Hemera Collection/Thinkstock)**

automotive innovation once again.

Dear EarthTalk: There are many areas around the U.S. where "disease clusters" have occurred, whereby unusually large numbers of people have gotten sick, usually because of proximity to a polluter. What if anything is being done to remedy the situation? -- Michael Sorenson, Natick, MA

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) defines a disease cluster as "an unusually large number of people sickened by a disease in a certain place and time." The organization, along with the National Disease Clusters Alliance (NDCA), reported in March 2011 that it had identified 42 disease clusters throughout 13 U.S. states: Texas, California, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Florida, Ohio, Delaware, Louisiana, Montana, Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas, all chosen for analysis, states the report, "based on the occurrence of known clusters in the state, geographic diversity, or community concerns about a disease cluster in their area."

State and local health departments respond to some 1,000 inquiries per year about suspected disease clusters, though less than 15 percent turn out to be "statistically significant." Epidemiologists explain that true cancer clusters typically involve one type of disease only, a rare type of cancer, or an illness not usually found in a specific age group.

A classic example of a disease cluster is in Anniston, Alabama, where residents experienced cancerous, non-cancerous, thyroid and neurodevelopment effects that they believe were caused by releases of various chemicals, including PCBs. The culprit: a nearby Monsanto-owned chemical maker, according to NDCA. And, indeed, a 2003 study in and around Anniston by the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry did find that one in five locals had elevated PCB levels in their blood.

Clusters are controversial "in part because our scientific criteria for proving that exposure A caused disease B...are extremely difficult to meet," says Donna Jackson Nakazawa, author of *The Autoimmune Epidemic*. "People move, or die, or their disease is never properly diagnosed. How can we prove, with all these variables, that a toxic exposure in an area caused a group of people to fall ill with a specific set of diseases?" Nakazawa is hardly skeptical about the existence of disease clusters. She is part of a growing chorus of voices calling on the government to not only remediate existing sites but to also prevent disease clusters in the first place by developing more stringent standards regarding chemical usage and disposal.

"European environmental policy uses the precautionary principle—an approach to public health that underscores preventing harm to human health before it happens," Nakazawa reports. In 2007 the European Union implemented legislation that forces companies to develop safety data on 30,000 chemicals over a decade, and places responsibility on the chemical industry to demonstrate the safety of their products. "America lags far behind, without any precautionary guidelines regarding chemical use," adds Nakazawa.

NRDC says "there is a need for better documentation and investigation of disease clusters to identify and address possible causes." Armed with better data, advocates for more stringent controls on chemicals could have a better chance of convincing Congress to reform the antiquated Toxic Substances Control Act of 1975 and bring more recent knowledge about chemical exposures to bear in setting safer standards.

**CONTACT:** NRDC report, [www.nrdc.org/health/diseaseclusters/files/diseaseclusters\\_issuepaper.pdf](http://www.nrdc.org/health/diseaseclusters/files/diseaseclusters_issuepaper.pdf). EarthTalk® is written and edited by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of E - The Environmental Magazine ([www.emagazine.com](http://www.emagazine.com)). Send



# COMMUNITY NEWS

## CDN-NDG Borough donates \$2000 to the Philippine Disaster relief fund

Councilor Marvin Rotrand sent the following e-mail message on January 27, 2012 advising us of the contribution that he and Mayor Applebaum proposed to the City:

"In the wake of tropical storm Washi which devastated the island of Mindanao in December, Montrealers responded by contributing to the disaster relief fund.

I am pleased to inform you that the City of Montreal through the Borough of Cote des Neiges - Notre Dame de Grace has given \$2000 to Development and Peace, the charity coordinating relief efforts from the province of Quebec. The motion authorizing the donation was brought by Michael Applebaum, seconded by myself.

I have attached a letter sent January 22 to Angelita Ogerio of the Federation of Filipino Canadian Associations of Quebec, Inc which

convened several meetings to alert the community to the need to respond and which met with Development and Peace last month to transfer funds raised.

Also attached is a letter I received yesterday from Leslie B. Gatan, Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Canada. Ambassador Gatan's letter of December was widely circulated across Canada and was instrumental in educating the public to the scope of the disaster.

I have not yet met Ambassador Gatan but it is my hope that we can host him at City Hall at some time in the near future and that the City can enjoy the same cordial and productive relationship which we had with his predecessors Ambassadors Benedicto and Brillantes."

\*\*\*\*

## SWIS is born

By Fely Rosales-Carino



Seated from L to R: Purita Fausto, Nerie Ajero, Mary Bangalan, Pina Palma, Rogerio Ajero (SWIS Chairman), Connie Fabro, Remy Aquino, Cesar Bayan, Val Zarate. Standing from L to R: Jovito Marcelino, Manny Fausto, Ike Bas, Chit Bas, Dr. Jean Viloria, Paz Viloria, Feix Salazar, Lucy Salazar, James Aquino, Cora Zarate, Fely Bisares, Emy Bayan

At a well-attended picnic last summer at a West Island Park, the SENIORS OF THE WEST ISLAND and SUBURBS (SWIS) was born. Enthusiastic attendees pushed for the election of officers. Hence, the 2011-2012 Executive Board were elected: Roger Ajero (chairperson), Manny Fausto (Vice-Chairperson), Olive Torres (Secretary), Mary Bangalan (Assistant Secretary), Pina Palma (Treasurer), Pat Jayme (Assistant Treasurer), Cely Dagsaan (Auditor), Guia Torres (Assistant Auditor), Connie Fabro (Events Coordinator), and Lucy Salazar (Assistant Events Coordinator). Voted as Board of Directors are: Leonardo Alberto, Remy Aquino, Cesar Bayan, Ike Bas, Pete Ison, Sonny Macalanda, and Val Zarate. Advisors are Dr. & Mrs. Jean Viloria.

Last February 3, 2012, the organization held a very successful Valentines Party at the Olympia Reception Hall (West Island). The party highlighted "Wedding Anniversaries and Renewal of Vows." The pairs who

renewed their vows were Pete Ison & Perla Castillo (1st); Vito Marcelino & Connie Fabro (4th); Michael & Concordia Pasia (10th); Alfredo & Anita Reyes (20th); Joey & Nelia Tioseco (22nd); Flor & Rose Rillo, Abet & Julian Tan, Noel & Lally Fenol (25th); Roger & Nerie Ajero (29th); Max & Anita Nemeth, Nilo & Edith Valenzuela, Jerry & Josie Palma (32nd); Manny & Purita Fausto, Greg & Pat Jayme (40th); Val & Cora Zarate, Felix & Lucy Salazar (45th); Ike & Chit Bas (48th); James & Remy Aquino, Pete & Mary Banagalan (49th); Jean & Paz Viloria (51st); Pina Palma (59th). Father Francis McKee officiated in the renewal of vows.

The SWIS Dancers, Glee Club Members, Manny Fausto's baritone voice, Danny Garcia's Frank Sinatra interpretation, and Remy Aquino's nostalgic Tagalog songs provided the musical numbers. Manny Fausto's and Remy Aquino's emceeing to the J-Den Sound System made many dancing pairs a-jumping way past midnight.

## Government introduces Internet Predators Act

OTTAWA, February 14, 2012 – The Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety, and the Honourable Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, today introduced in the House of Commons the Protecting Children from Internet Predators Act, a Bill that would provide law enforcement and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) with the modern investigative tools they need to help fight crime and national security threats, while strengthening safeguards to protect the privacy of Canadians.

"Our Government is committed to keeping our streets and communities safe. Rapid changes in technology mean crimes and national security threats are more difficult to investigate. As a result, criminals, gangs and terrorists have found ways

to exploit technological innovations to hide their illegal activities," said Minister Toews. "This legislation would give law enforcement and CSIS the investigative tools they need to do their jobs and keep our communities safe."

Bill C-XX would require telecommunications service providers (TSP) to:

- implement and maintain systems capable of lawfully intercepting communications in order to support the police and CSIS when needed; and
- provide basic subscriber information in a consistent and timely fashion to designated police, CSIS and Competition Bureau officials upon request (limited to subscriber name,

See 21 Internet Bill



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# For Filipino professionals in Malaysia Job perks matter, not permanent stay

By Jeremiah Opiniano

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—THERE is a swagger in Roy as he bends his left hand to hold a circular tray filled with used plates and wine glasses.

As he sees a Iranian woman customer who is almost full eating breakfast, the Iloilo province native says with an English twang, "I will take care of your plate Madam."

He is also very kind in directing traffic to Bangladeshi workmate Zaif and fellow workers at Warisan Café inside the Royale Chulan Hotel here. He tells a fellow foreign worker to bring a pitcher of cold water right away even before the customer can think to ask of it.

The adrenalin's up from this brown-skinned Filipino, now on his 14th straight day —without relief— working at the hotel that gives the "usual" rate of RM5 (Php 70 at RM1 = Php14) an hour.

Roy started at 7 a.m. and ended at 5 p.m. that Wednesday. The energy level was perhaps a result of the amnesty that this former irregular (or what Malaysians call "illegal") migrant worker just got weeks ago from Malaysian Immigration.

After a day's work, Roy went to the posh Pavilion mall behind Royale Chulan —in rugged shorts and house slippers— while local and foreign buyers sport their flashiest office wear and shoes.

I still believe I am a professional, says this BS Industrial Technology (majoring in Electronics) graduate of the Western Visayas College of Science and Technology. "From the once many Filipinos who worked there when the hotel first opened shop two years ago, a few of us remain. My bosses even like my work ethic."

All that Roy currently has — the "proper" English accent (American or Filipino style), the work ethic, the praise from supervisors, and yes, the legal immigration status— has made Roy's market value shot up.

Now that a Malaysian government-owned corporation has launched a program where foreign talent and skill in identified sectors may be given up to a ten-year residence pass to stay in Southeast Asia's second largest economy, Roy doesn't have any more reason to hide in fear.

In the end, though, it is about a Malaysian company's ability to give foreign professionals like Roy a better work package. "If neighboring hotels can offer me better rates," says the 35 year old, "I am ready to take it."

## Needed

SKILLED foreign workers like Roy and Allan Cabiles (a graduate of Automotive Engineering Technology at the Technological University of the Philippines in Manila) are what Malaysia needs to further

economic growth.

Stock of immigrants (2010) 2 . 3 million

Stock of country's emigrants (2010) 1.4 million

Estimated number of Filipinos (2010, as per the Commission on Filipinos Overseas)

316,273

Overseas Filipinos' remittances from Spain (2000 to 2010) US\$666.726 million

Sources: World Bank-Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011; Commission on Filipinos Overseas; and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Cabiles and over-20 other Filipino workers, in fact, were sought after by The Otomotif College, an international school for the automotive industry. "I have been to Manila many times," says Otomotif chief executive officer Adelaine Foo, a Malaysian-Chinese at the sidelines of an education conference here.

Most of TOC's foreign employees are Filipinos, including one of Foo's trusted aides Cabiles, who heads TOC's training division. The Filipino's educational qualifications, claims Foo, also suit TOC's needs and, not surprisingly, his English proficiency is his added value.

"You can't be a teacher at TOC without the appropriate college degree," says Cabiles— "lucky" that his salaries and benefits are "competitive" and have kept him at TOC.

Retaining foreign and Malaysian talent while trying to attract over-300,000 overseas skilled Malaysians back home are among the initiatives of the year-old Talent Corporation (TalentCorp) that Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Razak formed. Others may find surprising that skilled locals are leaving Malaysia and head to "better-paying" countries such as Singapore, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, the United Kingdom, the United States, and New Zealand, a World Bank-Malaysia office report showed. Even a 2011-2012 competitiveness report by the World Economic Forum showed that the brain drain incidence in Malaysia and Singapore is higher than the Philippines.

Which is why TalentCorp launched, among other programs, a Residence Pass (RP) program where "highly-qualified" foreign talent who have been in Malaysia for at least three years can apply for this pass so that they can stay for up to ten years [Expatriates, or what Malaysians call skilled foreign workers, renew their RPs annually].

As well, the RP will not be revoked if these expatriates change employers while they are not yet

renewing it. These expatriates who have their spouses and children under 18 years old with them will also be awarded the same benefits and flexibility in finding work.

These talents must be working in 11 sectors that the Malaysian government identified as National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) in Tun Razak's Economic Transformation Programme since becoming Malaysia's sixth prime minister in 2009. These sectors are: oil, gas and energy; palm oil; financial services; business services; electronics and electrical; wholesale and retail; education; healthcare; communications, content and infrastructure; tourism; and agriculture.

## Better terms

ROY and Allan are working in the tourism and education sectors, making them eligible to apply for that 10-year residence pass.

But salaries do matter for them. Old 2006 data from the Philippine Overseas Labor Office show that an engineer can earn a low of US\$420 to a high of US\$840 monthly; senior engineers can get a low of US\$840 and a high of US\$1,400.

Wait 'till one Filipino expatriate becomes a manager (low of US\$1,600 to a high of US\$3,200), or an executive (low of US\$3,200 to a high of US\$25,584). Filipino expatriates' rates, says POLO data, are higher than counterparts coming from other labor-sending countries.

This package from TalentCorp will be good news to over-4,000 professionals and technical Filipino workers as well as to a few hundred administrative and managerial workers [see Table]. Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) heading to Malaysia are mostly female domestic workers, all "protected" by a Philippine ruling that foreign employers must pay trained domestic workers a minimum of US\$400.

But knowing Filipino workers

here, Consul Renato Villa of the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur thinks they will look for better-paying employers while noting that the package offered by TalentCorp is not permanent residency but a temporary residence permit.

Singapore's not far away for Filipinos, too, Villa told the OFW Journalism Consortium.

Malaysian skilled talent themselves reflect the difference: of the over-300,000 professional Malaysians who went abroad, around 60 percent of them went to Singapore, says World Bank-Malaysia's April 2011 economic monitor report.

And like these skilled Malaysians who went elsewhere, a new lease of life dropped down on Roy since arriving in peninsular Malaysia two years ago as a tourist. Occupational mobility is his newfound source of confidence.

He reported for duty on a Thursday, his 15th straight day at work. He sported a dark brown waiter's polo, though his English fluency and hard work bellowed the dining hall —winning for Roy friends like Bangladeshi co-worker Zaif. "He (Roy) teaches me a lot of things," Zaif says, "and he's kind, too."

Roy is yet to wear what his supervisors are sporting: a black suit with a bow tie. But his bosses have given Roy their trust: one time, Roy cleaned the most sought-after suite of Royale Chulan.

Hotel supervisors, Roy claims, want him promoted. "But at the right price," Roy said. "We can talk over coffee."

Source: OFW Journalism Consortium

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## Sariling Dila, Sariling Diwa



ni Mang Bert



## Mga Puso Nina Pichu at Pechay

**Pichu:** Wow! Peach! Pulang-pula ang suot mo, ah. Talagang pang-Valentine na 'yan.

**Pechay:** Aba, pa Peach-Peach ka pa ngayon ha? Bakit ikaw? Hindi ka nagsuot Kupido?"

**Pichu:** Ayoko nga! Karamihan ng litratong nakikita ko ay hubo si Kupido.

Pilipinas pa, kapag dumarating ang Pebrero 14 ang karaniwang pasyalan ay sa Luneta. Parang hantik sa pagkaromantik ang lugar na ito lalo na't kumakanlong na ang araw sa Manila Bay.

**Pechay:** Si Lolo Charlie at Lola Sin ba 'yang tsinitsismis mo?

**Pichu:** Makinig ka na lang at hindi tsismis



Larawan: kuha ni Butch Dizon, Lolo ni Hailey

**Pechay:** Mahiyain ka namang masyado, Kuya. Ni hindi pa nga tayo pinapayagang kumain ng tsokolate.

**Pichu:** Bayaan mo, bibigyan na lang kita ng bulaklak. Amuyin mo na lang. May alam ka na kung ano itong Valentine's Day na pinagkakabuluhan nila?

**Pechay:** Ay naku, Kuya, matagal na matagal nang panahong nagsimula ang mga ulat tungkol diyan. Diumano ay may isang pare na sumibol noong 270 A.D. Ang pareng ito ay hindi nakasundo ni Claudius na Emperador ng Roma noon at naghatol ng kamatayan. Hinirang siyang martir ng Papa Gelasius ng Roma kaya't tinawag siyang St. Valentine. Maraming pagbabago ang ginawa ng Papang ito at noong 496 A.D. ..."

**Pichu:** Teka, teka, Pechay...ang haba pala ng sagot mo. Biro mong buhat pa noong 270 A.D. nagsimula iyan! Baka sa isang buwan ka na matapos ng paliwanag. Saan mo ba napag-aralan ang 'kinukuwento mo sa akin?

**Pechay:** Aha! Pechay na ako uli sa iyo dahil nauutakan kita, ha? Di ba't sa ibabang palapag namin nakatira si Lelong? Natural 'pag may gusto akong malaman ginu-google niya. Ha! ha!

**Pichu:** Hoy! Ang Lolo't Lola ko sa West Island ay may kuwento rin tungkol sa 'Araw ng Mga Puso.'

**Pechay:** Sige nga, ikuwento mo naman.

**Pichu:** Noon daw panahon nila at nasa

ito at kuwento lang nila. ---Uso pa raw noon ang transistor radio o Walkman para dala-dala nila ang paboritong tugtugin.

**Pechay:** Oh boy! How exciting naman! Tiyak Justin Bieber ang CD na dala.

**Pichu:** Ang labo mo naman, Pechay. Wala pa si Bieber mo. Si Rico Puno ang sikat noon at may kanta siyang ".....namamasyal pa sa Luneta."

**Pechay:** Oo na. Hindi na ako sasabat kung hindi mo ako tanungin. Ituloy mo na lang.

**Pichu:** Habang kinakanta ang popular na tugtugin sa darating naman ang isang tindero, "Balut! Penoy!" . . . O, alam mo ba kung ano ang balut at penoy?

**Pechay:** Ah,'yun ba? Ang balut alam ko. Ang penoy ang hindi.

**Pichu:** Pareho silang itlog ng pato, Pechay. Ang balut kapag maliit ang sisiw at nababalot ng puti ay balut sa puti ang tawag. Ang penoy naman ay nilagang itlog din pero wala pang sisiw. Minamarkahan ng tindero ng 'x' ang mga penoy para hindi siya malito sa pagtitinda.

**Pechay:** Ang dami palang 'kinuwento ng mga Lolo at Lola mo. May alam ka pa ba tungkol sa itlog?

**Pichu:** Oo, may isa pa. Ang itlog na pula ay paborito din ng mga Pinoy. Intindihin mong mabuti, Pechay... Pinoy at hindi penoy. Pero hindi nilalako ito sa Luneta at sa palengke nabibile. Itlog na maalat ang tawag nila.

**Pechay:** Ay, alam ko 'yang tinutukoy mong itlog ... 'Yan yata ang tinatawag na Easter Egg...!

Abangan sa mga susunod na labas ng pitak na ito ang pagbabalik-aral, kahit pasapyaw-sapyaw, ng ating Wikang Pambansa.

Magagalak ang komunidad ng mga Pilipino sa balitang ngayong Pebrero ay gaganapin ng Pasuguan ang Consular Services kung saan mayroong bandila ng Pilipinas na wumawagayway.

\*\*\*\*\*

Malugod kong binabati si G. Budz Sarmiento sa kaniyang pagkakabatikos ng pagbitay ng ating kalahi sa Tsina at ang pagpakawala ng Intsik sa Pilipinas.

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## Travel Agency opens for business downtown



Photo taken during the official opening of Ravi Tours travel agency. From left: Grace Zhang and Joseph Perez.

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# Ask the Video Guy

**Al Abdon**

## Shooting on Winter Wonderland

While we're only halfway through the coldest season in the Northern Hemisphere (and we envy those of you who are experiencing summer in the Philippines), the days are getting longer, which means we're tempted to go out more (with our cameras), so we've compiled a basic list of winter video tips.

What are winter conditions, anyway?

To give some context of what we're talking about when we say "winter" (and we realize that there are probably many, many readers who have very little experience with the concept of "snow"), first of all, winter is cold, and when we say cold, we mean below freezing – frostbite weather. Winter can also be wet. In some places, such as the Yukon, it can turn from rain to sleet, to snow – and back to rain again, very quickly. Cold and wet can be very hard on your camera. Beautiful winter light

But winter can also be beautiful. Depending on how far north (or south) you are, the sun is typically lower in the sky, providing beautiful

light with plenty of contrast and plenty deep, beautiful colors. Snow is also beautiful in its own right, and sunlight reflected off of snow can help add warmth and vibrancy to videos and photos.

Winter shooting tips

Here are a few tips for shooting in winter:

### 1. Stay dry

Possibly the single biggest challenge when shooting in winter is to keep your equipment dry. While rain is the obvious enemy, so is snow: snow will melt once you move your equipment indoors, with serious consequences for your camera's electronics.

One solution is to use a ziplock bag (sturdier than a regular plastic bag) to protect your camera – cut one end out of it for your camera's lens

2. Keep your equipment at a constant temperature. As mentioned, if it's snowing, snow will end up on your camera, and it will melt. But if you're shooting in colder weather, sudden

changes from warm to cold can wreak havoc on your camera's innards. For example, changes in humidity can cause condensation within your camera. Try gradually warming up or cooling down your camera in an external jacket pocket.

The moisture, believe it or not, is likely going to be caused by your own breath, and the closer you are to your camera or camcorder (say, if you use a viewfinder rather than the LCD panel to set up a shot) the more moisture will accumulate on or in your camera.

### 3. Watch your exposure

Shooting in snow can be very difficult. While many cameras have automatic "snow" settings that take the guesswork out of exposure, it's not going to help you if your shoot with the sun in front of you – the sun and reflection off the snow will provide some truly overpowering backlighting. Of course, if you can, use a polarizing filter or a lens hood.

That's all for now. If you have any awesome winter shots, send them our way!

Al Abdon  
Hollywood Junkies  
Tel.: 514-264-8706

## PRESS RELEASE

### Policy to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle: ACTION!

Montréal, 4 February 2012 –

Mr. Marvin Rotrand, the Councillor for the district of Snowdon and leader of the majority, officially launched the Action Plan for the Policy to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle while at the first Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Sports Festival. Adopted last January 16th by Borough Council, this plan is composed of the various measures to be put forth by the Borough to encourage its citizens to adopt and maintain healthy eating habits and physically active lifestyles.

Amongst those measures are the gradual removal from municipal facilities of foods containing artificial trans fats; the creation, upgrade, and maintenance of infrastructures available to citizens for physical activity; and the broadening of available services in sports and leisure activities. Moreover, the Sports Festival constitutes one of the first measures to be implemented with the aim of encouraging youth to be more

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physically active. Indeed, the result of a partnership between community groups and the Borough, the Sports Festival is an opportunity for youth aged 6 to 13 to participate in their first wide scale sports competition.

Aside from providing an environment conducive to healthy lifestyles, the Borough's elected officials have taken to heart the goal of persuading citizens to adopt healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle despite busy schedules and a lack of time.

Mr. Rotrand thus calls on the population: "We know that many citizens have already adopted healthy lifestyles and that is why we invite them to send us short video clips showcasing their tips for eating well and staying fit."

These clips will be broadcast on the Borough's YouTube channel so that they may serve to inspire fellow citizens. The clip submission procedure is detailed on the Borough's web site at the following address: [ville.montréal.qc.ca/cdn-ndg](http://ville.montréal.qc.ca/cdn-ndg).

The Policy to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle was elaborated following a plea by the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire, for municipal governments to increase their promotion of healthy lifestyles. The Borough of CDN?NDG was the first to respond to the provincial government's call.

Source : Arrondissement de CDN—NDG

Renseignements : Caroline Langis, chargée de communication  
Arrondissement de Côte-des-Neiges/Notre-Dame-de-Grâce  
Office: 514 868-4018 Cellphone: 514 229-9618

## HARPER GOVERNMENT HELPS TO KICK START CANADIAN ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES

OTTAWA, Ontario, February 3, 2012 — The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, and Jacques Gourde, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec, are pleased to announce that the Government of Canada has pre-qualified 36 innovations that it may buy and test as part of the second round of the Kickstart program, also known as the Canadian Innovation Commercialization Program.

"Our Government is focused on creating conditions to promote jobs and economic growth," said Minister Ambrose. "That is why we're committed to supporting Canadian entrepreneurs who help to keep the Canadian economy moving."

"The Kickstart program is ensuring that Canadian small and medium-sized businesses can grow and prosper," said Parliamentary Secretary Gourde. "We are proud to continue our encouragement of Canada's tremendous entrepreneurial spirit through this successful program."

Successful businesses will see their pre-commercial innovative products and services tested within government departments, and will be given valuable feedback from users participating in the pilot program. Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) will work with government departments to match innovations with the right test departments, and will be entering into negotiations with the selected companies to put contracts in place to test their innovations, should a suitable department be found. This will facilitate Canadian companies in moving their innovations into domestic and international markets. In March 2011, 19 innovations were announced as part of the first round of the CICIP. An additional eight innovations were subsequently announced in July for a total of 27 innovations selected in the first round. "Twenty-one of the innovations from the first round have been successfully matched with government departments which brings these Canadian companies one step closer in moving their innovations into domestic and international markets," said Minister Ambrose. "We're committed to building the jobs and the industries of the future by creating the conditions for continued success of industries that are the foundation of Canada's prosperity."

Launched in 2010 as part of the Economic Action Plan, the CICIP is a \$40-million pilot program created to help Canadian businesses by testing their innovative products and services within the Government of Canada before taking them to the marketplace.

Federal departments will test innovations that fall within four key areas: environment, health, safety and security, and enabling technologies. For further information on the program, please refer to the CICIP background.

- 30 -

Ce texte est également disponible en français.

For more information, media may contact:

Michelle Bakos  
Office of the Honourable Rona Ambrose  
819-997-5421  
Media Relations  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
819-956-2315

PWGSC news releases are also available on our Internet site at <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/medias-media/index-eng.html>.

## Kickstart / Canadian Innovation Commercialization Program

Launched in 2010, the Kickstart / Canadian Innovation Commercialization Program initiative (CICIP) is a \$40-million pilot program that is a part of the Government of Canada's commitment to promote Canada's economic growth and support entrepreneurs.

As part of the Economic Action Plan, Kickstart was created to bolster innovation in Canada's business sector, was designed to help companies bridge the pre-commercialization gap for their innovative products and services by:

- awarding contracts to entrepreneurs with pre-commercial innovations through an open, transparent, competitive and fair procurement process;
- testing products or services and providing feedback to entrepreneurs on their performance;
- providing innovators with the opportunity to enter the marketplace with a successful application of their new products and services; and
- providing information on how to do business with the Government of Canada.

Kickstart targets innovations in four priority areas:

- environment;
- safety and security;
- health; and
- enabling technologies.

Kickstart has two complementary components. The first identifies Canadian innovations to test within federal operations in order to support businesses as they move their innovations to commercialization. The second builds on current efforts by the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME) to improve small and medium enterprises' (SME) access to federal procurement activities, and enables companies to showcase innovative products and services to potential government users.

Proposals related to the opportunity to test innovative products and services are accepted through competitive Calls for Proposals. The first round of Calls for Proposals was successfully announced in October 2010, and the second was announced in July 2011.

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) continues to work with all stakeholders to ensure that SMEs receive the vital government support needed to thrive in today's evolving economy.

OSME, through its network of headquarter operations and six regional offices, assists SMEs as they navigate through the government procurement system. It is strengthening access to government business for SMEs by collaborating with industry associations and individual businesses on training, providing information, developing support tools, and recommending procurement policy changes. OSME is also working with SME organizations to identify and pursue opportunities that encourage the introduction of innovative products and services to the marketplace.

## First Round of Calls for Proposals

On February 4, 2011, the Innovation Selection Committee (ISC), in the final stage of evaluation of the CICIP competitive procurement process, met to validate the ranking of proposals based on the independent reviews of the National Research Council Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP). Members of the ISC, 70 per cent of whom are from the private sector, were chosen based on their experience in investment and entrepreneurship, knowledge of innovation and commercialization trends, and knowledge of international business practices.

In March 2011, 19 innovations were announced as part of the first round of the CICIP. An additional eight innovations were subsequently announced in July for a total of 27

See Page 14 Harper Government

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# STAR PHOTO GALLERY



Valentine Party jointly organized by Gilmore students and Marché Coop members. Seated: L to R: Edelwina Washington, Magnolia Camat, Zeny Kharroubi, Ramon Vicente, Ester Vicente. Standing: Linda & Jojie Perez, Arlene Manalo, Raquel Medrano, Mayette Danao and Desirée Fernando.



L to R: Gildo Manon-og, Bert Santos, Alex Sy, Minerva Santos, Au Osdon, Gina Medina, Linda Corpuz, Amy Mano-og, Dr. Gene Santander, Sophie Toledo and Zenaida Kharroubi. Souvenir photo of the Valentine Party, February 19, 2012 at Gilmore College International



Gilmore College Alumni, Yani Gacutan (2nd from left), holding her son, James, who celebrated his 2nd birthday with family and friends on Saturday, February 18, 2012 at Cuisine de Manille.



Dr. Monika Spolia (second from left), Bhart Times Editor, and her husband, Manes, were guests during the Valentine Party at Gilmore College, February 19, 2012.



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## PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH

### Avelino dismisses the notion that a beauty pageant is an exploitation of women

by W. G. Quiambao

Being chosen as one of the twelve finalists, out of more than 200 contestants, in the Miss Teen Quebec held in Longueuil last month, is a major accomplishment for Romina Gabrielle Avelino.



"I really didn't prepare much for the competition," said Avelino. "It sounds cliché but I just tried to be myself and enjoyed my time there."

Born in the Philippines, Avelino, 18, came to Canada about five years ago. The FAMAS Miss Teen held last year was her first experience in beauty pageant. She joined the pageant just for fun. But to her

surprise, she placed second, bagging three special awards: Miss Photogenic, Best Talent and Miss Congeniality. After placing second in the competition, her mom encouraged her to try her luck in the Miss Teen Quebec last summer.

Although Miss Teen Quebec started last summer, the final was held only last month because of elimination process which was long and rigorous. However, Avelino admitted that she learned a lot from her experience.

"Others think that beauty pageant is all glamour but it's not true," said Avelino. "It's more than that. It's not easy being on the stage and being interviewed by the judges in front of the audience. It's not being easy judged based on poise and personality."

Asked if she thinks beauty pageant is an exploitation of women as claimed by feminists, Avelino quickly responded, "I've joined two beauty pageants and I've never felt exploited," said Avelino. "Instead, the pageants gave me confidence. I'm opening up, I'm more talking about myself."

"Other beauty pageants, like Miss America, candidates have platforms that they can promote," continued Avelino. "If I'd be given a chance, I'd like to promote the importance of education. Nowadays, it's important, indispensable. A person can go anywhere if she or he has an education. In the Philippines, usually, only the rich can afford to go to school. In

Canada, everybody has a chance to be educated. But the person has to be determined to achieve it."

When Avelino was asked if she plans to compete in the other beauty pageants, like FAMAS Miss Philippines and Miss Earth which has been held a few times in the Philippines, she replied that she is focused on her studies now. "Next September, I'm planning to take up Commerce."

Avelino epitomizes a woman with beauty and brains.

From Page 11 Harper Government

innovations selected in the first round.

To date 12 first round innovators have been awarded contracts:

2G Robotics, Waterloo, Ontario; Amika Corporation, Ottawa, Ontario; Breviro Caviar Inc., Pennfield, New Brunswick; CTV Corp., Sainte-Julie, Quebec; DataGardens, Edmonton, Alberta; Edgewater Computer Systems Inc., Ottawa, Ontario; ERACTS Inc., Toronto, Ontario; Inversa Systems, Fredericton, New Brunswick; LED Roadway Lighting Ltd., Halifax, Nova Scotia; MDA Systems Ltd., Richmond, British Columbia; Sage Data Solutions Inc., Ottawa, Ontario; Virtual Marine Technology Inc., St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Victoria, British Columbia.

#### Second Round of Calls for Proposals

On November 9, 2011, the ISC, in the final stage of evaluation of the CICP competitive procurement process, met to validate the ranking of proposals based on the independent reviews of NRC-IRAP.

There are now 35 pre-qualified Canadian innovators that form a part of the CICP's second round:

3833364 Canada Inc, Gatineau, Québec; Adventure Lights Inc., Beaconsfield, Québec; Aeryon Labs, Inc., Waterloo, Ontario; Akoostix Inc. of Nova Scotia, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; Alain Coulombe, Montréal, Québec; Aurora Control Technologies Inc, North Vancouver, British Columbia; B-Temia Inc., Québec, Québec; Ballard Power Systems Inc., Burnaby, British Columbia; Biopeak Corporation, Kanata, Ontario; CDVI

Americas, Laval, Québec; Clinemetrica Inc., Westmount, Québec; Desiree Stockermans, Great Village, Nova Scotia; Edgewater Computer Systems, Inc, Ottawa, Ontario; IntelliView Technologies Inc., Calgary, Alberta; LBi - Lab\_Bell inc., Trois-Rivières, Québec; MANTECH INC., Guelph, Ontario; Mawashi Protective Clothing Inc., Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Québec; Morgan Solar Inc., Toronto, Ontario; National Optics Institute, Québec, Québec; OnLogics, Ottawa, Ontario; Oracle Telecomputing Inc, Carleton Place, Ontario; Plurilock Security Solutions Inc., Victoria, British Columbia; Privacy Analytics Inc, Ottawa, Ontario; Pro-Oceanus Systems Incorporated, Bridgewater, Nova Scotia; QSDM Inc., Mississauga, Ontario; Reach Technologies Inc., Victoria, British Columbia; Resolution Optics, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Rheolution inc., Montréal, Québec; Scotia Weather Services Incorporated, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; SunCentral Inc., Richmond, British Columbia; Solana Networks Inc., Nepean, Ontario; Tektrap System Inc, Gatineau, Québec; Temporal Power Ltd., Mississauga, Ontario; Wedge Networks, Calgary, Alberta; Xiphos Systems Corporation, Montreal, Québec.

For descriptions of the innovations:

<https://buyandsell.gc.ca/initiatives-and-programs/canadian-innovation-commercialization-program-cicp/pre-qualified-innovations#5>

PWGSC will be working with government departments to match innovations with the right test departments, and will be entering into negotiations with the selected companies to put contracts in place to test their innovations, should the right department be found. Marking the first sale for these innovations, these contracts will also facilitate Canadian companies in moving their innovations into domestic and international markets by having the Government of Canada as a first client "reference."

## Sugaring off time - Cabane à sucre



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# Philippine Cuisine and Favorite Food

Compiled by Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

## Ginger Chicken and cauliflower



Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp (15 mL) canola oil
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) grated fresh ginger
- 1 tsp (5 mL) ground coriander
- ½ tsp ( 2 mL) ground cumin
- ½ tsp ( 2 mL) ground turmeric
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) freshly ground black pepper
- 1 ½ lb (750 g) bone in chicken breasts, skin removed (about 2 large

- breasts)
- 4 cups (1 L) cauliflower florets (about 1 small head)
- 2 carrots, cut in small chunks
- 1 small red onion, cut in 8 wedges
- Directions:

In small bowl, combine 1 tsp (5 mL) of the oil, ginger, coriander, cumin, turmeric and pinch of the pepper. Rub all over chicken.

Toss cauliflower, onion and carrot with remaining oil and pepper. Place chicken and vegetables on parchment paper lined baking sheet or roasting pan. Roast in 425F (220 C) oven for about 40 minutes or until juices run clear in chicken when pierced and vegetables are tender-crisp and golden. Cut chicken breasts in half to serve with vegetables.



Laing or dried taro leaves cooked in coconut milk is a popular dish in the Philippines. I have been trying to cook this dish for a while now using different recipes, but nothing compares to the Spicy Laing Recipe that I recently learned from a Bicolano friend.

This is one of the dishes wherein availability of ingredients can be an issue to some. Fortunately, there are packaged dried taro leaves nowadays, and I can easily grab them from Filipino stores. It is nice to have some dried taro stalks in the pack though. As for the “gata”, I used canned coconut milk and cream.

This is the simplest of all the recipes that I have tried; it also tastes really good. Instead of using “bagoong” or shrimp paste to add flavor, I got some salted dried fish (daing). You may use any kind of salted dried fish, but I will recommend dried “labahita” because it has more meat compared to the others. I also used a ton of Thai chili to spice-up this dish. It is all up to you if you prefer a Spicy Laing as indicated in this recipe.

There are some important things that I learned while searching for the best laing recipe. The first important advice that I got was about the procedure in cooking the taro. You should not stir the taro leaves until it is fully cooked to avoid the itchy sensation in the mouth while eating. I also learned that Laing tastes better with time. No, we will not preserve this dish for a long time. What I am trying to say is it tastes better if you refrigerate it and wait for a day or two before eating. Adding a teaspoon of vinegar might also help to preserve it a little longer. Last and the most important, a cup of rice is not enough for this dish.

Try this Spicy Laing Recipe and let me know what you think.

Spicy Laing Recipe  
Ingredients

- 1 pack (4 ounces) dried taro leaves
- 1/2 lb pork belly, thinly sliced
- ¾ cup salted dried fish (daing), shredded
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 4 cups coconut cream
- 15 pieces Thai chili
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tablespoons ginger, sliced into strips
- 2 pieces long green chili

salt and pepper to taste

### Cooking Procedure

Combine pork, dried fish, garlic, onion, ginger, coconut milk, and coconut cream in a cooking pot.

Apply heat and let boil.

Add the dried taro leaves and Thai chili (do not stir). Simmer until the liquid almost dries out. Note: This will take about 40 to 50 minutes. When you notice a strong scent of coconut, this can be a sign that its ready.

Put-in the long green chili, salt, and pepper. Gently stir the ingredients and cook for another 3 minutes.

Transfer to a serving plate.

Serve. Share and enjoy!

Number of servings (yield): 8

## Bibingkang Galapong (Rice Flour Cake)



### Ingredients

- 4 eggs, well beaten
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup melted margarine
- 2 cups rice flour
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup coco cream, 1/4 cup sugar for topping

### Directions

Add sugar to beaten eggs. Combine salt and flour; add to egg mixture. Add melted margarine, coconut milk, and baking powder. Pour into banana leaf-lined mold. Bake in 375 degrees Fahrenheit oven. When half-done, take it out from the oven and brush top with coconut cream and sugar and bake until golden crust is formed. Yield: 3 large bibingkas.

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# FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

## Yet another half-Pinoy makes waves on American Idol



The latest season of "American Idol" will apparently be an interesting musical spectacle especially to Filipinos as another half-Pinoy contestant made it to the Top 24 cut of the hit show.

16-year-old Filipino-Mexican student Jessica Sanchez from Chula Vista, California said after judges Jennifer Lopez, Randy Jackson, and Steven Tyler informed her of her "Idol" fate, "This is the biggest thing that happened to me. I've been watching this show since I was little. And I made it. It's crazy."

A report from Entertainment Weekly dubbed Sanchez as one of the "early frontrunners for hairgraphy, cuteness," alongside 17-year-old Deandre Brackensick, who also has "big" hair. The two, along with their team mate Candice Glover, wowed the judges during the Las Vegas round for their performance of "Doesn't Matter Anymore."

Young as she is, Jessica, who joined "America's Got Talent" when she was 11 years old, said she has been singing all her life. She recalled in her "Road To Hollywood" interview that she was just about seven when she first performed for a crowd "for a little concert, a little event that someone had put together."

Her "Idol" dream, however, began a little earlier. A fan since the show began in 2002 (she was just five then), Jessica's favorite "Idol" moment was Kelly Clarkson's glorious win in Season 1, singing her finale piece "A Moment Like This."

But it's Season 3 finalist Jennifer Hudson whom Jessica idolizes the most among all the "AI" contestants.

"I just love her voice... And I've gotten comments like 'you sound like

her,' [and] that's just a really big deal for me..." she said in the same interview.

More than a dream come true, Jessica sees her "Idol" stint as an opportunity to "fully" support her family, whom she's tired of seeing "struggle."

"My family has spent so much money on me. They've sacrificed so much time. My mom is unemployed because of my music career. Knowing there's a possibility of me being able to help my family in this situation, that's why I'm here, that's why I'm working hard," said she.



With R&B, urban, and soul leanings, Jessica believes that she stands out from the current "Idol" crop because of her "sense of style."

"I think my tone is a lot different from others," she added.

Asked why she thinks she's the next "Idol," Jessica said, "I believe I have something different and I'm just ready to go out there and show the world my whole talent. I'm ready to bring it and be on stage and perform in front of millions of people. I'm ready to record..." she enthused.

The previous season of "American Idol" saw promise in 17-year-old Filipino-American Thia Megia, who made it to the Top 12 of the competition. Other half-Filipino finalists in "Idol" history include Jasmine Trias, Ramiele Malubay, and Camille Velasco. ■

## Piolo: Better than ever



Piolo is at peace'.

Breaking months of silence, Piolo Pascual faced the cameras anew with a fresher and more positive perspective in life.

After figuring in a controversial breakup with actress KC Concepcion months ago, Pascual seemed to have finally regained his footing.

"Basta dasal and having a positive outlook. You have to love yourself," he emphasized in a taped interview with "TV Patrol" aired on Feb. 23.

Though loveless this past Valentine's Day, the hunk actor boldly declared that he's content with his life.

"I'm at peace," he enthused.

"Just let go and focus on everything positive," he said, seemingly words he lives by.

Curiously, as if he hadn't gone through a rough time in his life, he has managed to stay in shape.

"I eat everything I want, including a lot of rice," he said, adding that he simply offsets his recent gorging of steaks by working out.

Pascual is currently shooting for his upcoming Kapamilya series, "Nang Dahil sa Pag-ibig," which also stars Jericho Rosales, Maricar Reyes and Cristine Reyes. He is also working on his latest film with Angelica Panganiban, with working title "Every Breath You Take."

Aside from that, as a producer, Pascual currently busies himself with projects under his company, Springfields.

In a previous Bulletin Entertainment report he related that, "[The sequel for] 'Kimmy Dora' is shooting already and we have a movie here in ABS[CBN] and another movie outside [the network]. Iniisip na namin kung anong ipa-prioritize namin because maraming naka-line-up."

Pascual also related in the same interview that he looks forward to his son Iñigo's graduation in June.

"I'm attending his graduation first in the States and hopefully he'll spend some time here after that," said he. ■

## John Lloyd Cruz handles fame like money



John Lloyd Cruz says he's perfectly happy right now

While other celebrities seem to brush off fame in order to remain grounded, John Lloyd Cruz welcomes the concept of popularity in a relatively fresh perspective.

"I try to handle it like money... Meron siyang silbi. Hindi lang siya parang, 'Fame, wag mong isipin 'yan.' Hindi. Part 'yan ng brand mo... ng pangalan mo... ng kung sino ka. And you have to use it wisely... 'Yun 'yung reality eh," said the multi-awarded Kapamilya actor in his interview with "Bandila," Feb. 9.

Asked if he ever got swell-headed—given the slew of box-office films and highly patronized soap operas under his belt—John Lloyd gave an indirect response.

"You tend to look for quality, nagiging reasonable ka. Tumatanda ka sa business na 'to, tumatanda ka

sa edad mo, natututo ka, nagkakaroon ka ng konsepto mo ng para sa'yo at hindi para sa'yo," he related.

Nevertheless, he doesn't exactly demand or expect too much from others, but seeks to fight for what he wants "because alam mo, 'yun kasi ang tama so 'yun ang susundan mo."

John Lloyd, likewise, shared how he handles the acting process in the same interview. Readiness, he noted, is key to any project he delves into.

"[And] lagi lang dapat sincere. Sana kumapit muna sa'kin para tumatak sa iba... It's still acting, 'di ba? Pero you have to make it come from a place na sincere mong ilalabas sa sistema mo," he added.

Meanwhile, the "Unofficially Yours" lead actor hopes to work again with his former on and off-cam sweetheart Kaye Abad.

"Sa aspeto ng gusto ko siyang makatrabaho't mabigyan kami ng tsansa ulit na magkasama sa isang palabas, si Kaye Abad," he enthused.

John Lloyd and Kaye had a successful team-up in the youth-oriented series "Tabing Ilog." They had an onscreen reunion of sorts when Kaye had a cameo appearance in John Lloyd's 2010 romantic-comedy movie with Toni Gonzaga, "My Amnesia Girl." ■



## Aiko Melendez determined to fight back accusations

Aiko Melendez is not afraid to fall in love again despite her failed romances with Jomari Yllana, Martin Jickain and Patrick Meneses.

Actress Aiko Melendez is willing to exhaust her resources to fight the libel cases filed against her by ex-boyfriend Bulacan, Bulacan Mayor Patrick Meneses, and Pandi, Bulacan Mayor Enrico Roque.

"Nasubukan ko nang tumahimik eh pero inapi pa rin po ako. Dahil sa trauma na binibigay nila sa mga anak ko po, ipaglalaban ko 'to hanggang sa huling centavo na meron ako sa bulsa ko po ngayon. Kahit ipang-utang ko po ito, para lang lumabas ang katotohanan, gagawin ko po ito para sa mga anak ko po," said she in a no-holds-barred interview on "The Buzz" on May 1.

It seemed to Melendez that Meneses, her boyfriend of more than three years, sought legal action too quickly over accusations that she fabricated the "gay rumors" hounding him, along with her gay friend via Twitter.

Printouts of Melendez's purported online exchanges with her friend were presented to Meneses during his interview on "Paparazzi" last April 24. He, as well as Roque (who also got dragged into the issue), later on filed separate P5 million libel cases on April 28. The others who also face libel raps, according to a "Paparazzi" report on May 1, are Cesar Gella, Ogie Diaz, Pete Ampoloquio and Ronald Rafer.

"Nung inabot lang po sa kanya (Meneses) 'yung envelope, in two seconds hindi pa niya nababasa o naba-browse 'yung papel or 'yung content na 'yon sinabi niya isu-sue na niya ko? Asan 'yung tatlong taon po na pinagsamahan po namin na parang bale wala, tinapon lang niya sa bintana? Naniwala siya sa isang bagay na wala man lang siyang basehan," Melendez lamented.

Melendez admitted that she was less shocked than hurt over her ex-beau's charge, maintaining she's not guilty of the allegations.

"Yes, I deny it. Mata sa mata po, puso sa puso, dine-deny ko po 'yan. Dahil ako... that's not how I play my game," said Melendez.

Asked why she should be believed, Melendez said, "Hindi po ba katawa-tawa on national TV na malaman ng tao na pinagpalit po ako sa isang lalake? Hindi po ba kasiraan po din para sa akin 'yon at kasiraan din po na—ako po ay may [dalawang] anak—na pag-usapan ng ganoon, pag-piyestahan?"

Melendez vehemently denied that she commissioned the entertainment writer who allegedly proliferated the blind items about Meneses.

"Ang ini-imply po ni Patrick, bayad ko po si Pete Ampoloquio. I swear [on] my father's grave, I haven't spoken [or] talked to Pete Ampoloquio. Ang blind item could be [about] anyone... 'Pag blind item, hindi ka magre-react kung hindi ka guilty..." she said.

She also intimated that the whole brouhaha might've been politically

motivated.

"Hindi niya (Meneses) ba naisip na baka nagamit lang ako ng kalaban niya sa pulitika ngayong hiwalay na kami?" she said.



**Aiko Melendez is not afraid to fall in love again despite her failed romances with Jomari Yllana, Martin Jickain and Patrick Meneses.**

Melendez went on to cite her proof that she's not guilty: Meneses, she says, knows the password and email address she uses for her Twitter account; the 140-character limit on Twitter makes it impossible to write the so-called "script" allegedly used to discredit Meneses; and notes that her supposed co-perpetrator merely asked (through direct message) her about the breakup, which she eventually confirmed.

Melendez also added that she and her friend talked on the phone after the brief correspondence.

She further said, "Ang sabi nila nagpakalat daw kami ng email... para sirain si Patrick. Ang pinagseselosan ko po no'n ay babae. Eh bakit ngayon parang ang ini-issue lalaki na?"

It was also mentioned during a segment on "Paparazzi" that Melendez's Twitter account was hacked.

Above all else, the actress does not believe that her ex is gay to begin with.

"Now it's coming from my mouth, no [he's not gay]. I never doubted his gender. No," she firmly stated on "The Buzz."

Melendez also cried foul over the resolution signed by 21 Bulacan mayors declaring her persona non grata in the province.

"Wala po akong sinabing pangit ang Bulacan, wala po akong sinabi na nakaka-demean sa imahe po ng Bulacan. Ito po ay between me and Patrick," she said.

The actress opted to stay silent in the months following their breakup last Feb. 14 in hopes that she and Meneses could rekindle their relationship.

"Three years is three years... kahit 'yung huling bahara ko po tinaya ko kay Patrick, which I never did dun sa dalawang exes ko po na naging tatay ng anak ko. Kay Patrick ho, hindi ako nagtira kahit ni katiting para sa sarili

ko," said Melendez.

She described their relationship as "good," and hoped it could have lasted. However, their romance began to dwindle in December as the

communication they "used to have before wasn't the same anymore." Despite her attempts to save their relationship, their big fight on Valentine's Day eventually spelled the end of their romance.

"For the first time 'yung sigawan talaga po... and then sabi niya 'I don't want this anymore. I want an option.' Normally when we fight I asked him why, [but] he didn't wanna give me any reason," she recounted.



**Patrick Meneses**

Melendez clarified that she also did not have anything to do with spreading the news about their breakup, saying that she and Meneses agreed not to publicize it.

"Common sense, sino ho ba ang unang nagpa-interview? 'Di ba si Patrick? Kung hindi naman siya nagpa-interview hindi malalaman ng tao kung ano talaga ang nangyayari sa amin," said she.

Despite all this, Melendez hopes she and Meneses can still be friends.

"I just hope and pray that Patrick would think and would be enlightened na sa tatlong taon namin at kalahati na nagsama, kilala niya ang pagkatao ko," she said. ■

## Piolo's son reveals inner turmoil over dad's breakup with KC



**Iñigo says he is closer than ever to his dad, Piolo**

Iñigo Pascual, son of actor Piolo Pascual, admitted that he got hurt over insinuations hurled against his father amid the latter's highly publicized breakup with actress KC Concepcion last year.

The young Pascual revealed in an exclusive interview with a magazine that he felt "really bad" at the time inasmuch as that he wasn't able to do something about it and help his dad.

"You know that feeling when you want to say something but you can't?" he was quoted as saying by Star Studio Magazine. "It makes me feel really bad and mad at the same time. Sometimes I just want to say stuff and tell them [media] off."

Pascual said that the only thing that stopped him from doing so was his fear that his involvement might worsen the situation.

He hopes for his dad to find the right girl – someone not from showbiz.

"I want him to find someone who's simple, someone who I can talk to, and someone who I know really loves him for who he is and someone who will take me as I am and for being my dad's son," he said. ■

## 12-year old Pinoy novelist launches second book



**Young author Nigel Willem Canlapan**

Making waves in Saudi Arabia is 12-year-old Filipino Nigel Willem Canlapan, who launched his second book, "Snowstorm and the Bond," at the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh recently.

According to an Embassy release, "Snowstorm and the Bond" follows Canlapan's, "Snowstorm: The Wolf," published in 2009. The series is about a wolf that would do everything, even to the extent of self-sacrifice, to protect his brood. Echoing Jack London's "White Fang," the book traces the wolf's steps as it evolves in relation to its surrounding particularly his growing bond with a human friend.

Aside from writing, Canlapan is also into music, particularly rap. He plays several instruments and dreams of recording his compositions someday. ■



## Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.17*

### PNoy gifts newlyweds Shalani and Roman with wine glasses



**PNoy says Shalani and Roman are 'right' for each other**

Although he was a no-show at their wedding, President Noynoy Aquino has gifted his ex-girlfriend Shalani Soledad and her now-husband Rep. Roman Romulo with eight wine glasses.

The number eight is perceived not only as a lucky number but also a romantic one. Nevertheless, Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Abigail Valte deemed that the number of wine glasses that the newlywed couple received from PNoy was coincidental.

"Normally set po kasi 'yun talaga eh. Mayroon pong pagpipilian usually—parang for a set of four, set of eight, or set of 12... So tingin ko, wala naman po sigurong significance... Baka 'yun lang din po 'yung napili talaga na number," she said in a recent radio interview.

Spokesperson Valte then seemingly suggested the usefulness of the eight wine glasses.

"Just in case, baka naman may mga guests sila—'yung bagong mag-asawa—when they entertain..." she said.

In early January, the chief executive related that his staff had brought the gift for Shalani and Roman.

The couple invited PNoy to their wedding, which was held last Jan. 22 at the St. Benedict Church in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. The president is believed to have gone to Baguio City that day.

Asked if PNoy's absence at the Roman-Shalani nuptials was intentional, Presidential Spokesperson Edwin Lacierda admitted in an interview last month that he's clueless.

"I wouldn't know the schedule of the President over the weekend..." he was quoted to have said.



**Newlyweds Roman Romulo and Shalani Soledad**

In spite of his high-profile split with the pretty Valenzuela councilor in late 2010, PNoy wished Shalani and Roman well in their journey together as husband and wife. He also related in a previous interview that the two are "right" for each other.

Shalani and Roman spent their honeymoon in Rome, Italy. ■

### Hayden Kho, Jr. Back at one, keeps his options open



**Hayden Kho, Jr. is said to have been a 'good boy' of late**

Hayden Kho, Jr. is back in the limelight by granting interviews lately, albeit cautiously, after the controversies that hounded him a couple of years ago. Now with STAGES, Inc, he has been taking one-on-one workshops in acting and hosting though he, himself, is unsure if it will lead to the resurrection of his interrupted career in show business or not.

"I don't wanna jump into the boat again gaya ng dati na parang bigla na lang ako sumalang. Let's see how the workshops will turn out – how I'll develop – then we'll take it from there," he told Bulletin Entertainment and other members of media at the first Talent Agents' Organization's (TAO) Party "Skin: The TAO Model's Party" held Feb. 7 at Genting Club inside Resorts World Manila.

Asked if his fiancée, Dr. Vicki Belo, approves of his move, Hayden admitted that she is a bit "scared" of it. Hayden knows where she is coming from as he, himself, once told her "if ever maisipan ko bumalik sa showbiz, pigilan mo ako."

Apparently, though, Vicki thinks Hayden "has been a good boy" of late

and it's enough reason for her to support his renewed endeavor in making show business an "option."

"Sabi ni Vicki, ang importante ay alam ko kung bakit gusto kong bumalik," he said.

Wounded by but wizened from his experiences, Hayden acknowledged that some people don't like him but he assures them that he is "stronger" now and will be more "careful" to "guard" himself.

"Everything is possible...people can change," he said. "Di na ako magkakamali."

Asked about lessons he has learned from the past, Hayden said that in show business "no one tells you about the downfall...that it's all about the good life."

"But look at me, di ba? In just weeks, months, biglang nawala na lang lahat as in talagang flat on the floor ako."

How was he able to move on?

"Hindi ko alam kung paano sasagutin ang tanong na 'yan. After kasi ng mga nangyari - and that was a long time ago - wala naman akong choice kundi mag-move on."

"Naisip ko lang na I can't be stifled forever. Eventually ay magkaron ako ng pamilya so I can't be living my life afraid of what people say about me."

He added: "I have to get out there, prove everyone wrong, and win hearts back. Pwede naman akong magbago."

The "Skin" party which Hayden graced, featured around 100 of the top-high fashion, commercial, and print models. According to a release, the party gave attendees "the ultimate sensory experience that lives up to the glamor and stylishness of the modeling world" while underscoring how TAO "understands the basic essentials of requirements in modeling." ■

### Charice plans tribute to Whitney, recalls meeting her idol

To sing with her idol Whitney Houston onstage was what Pinay international singer Charice dreamt to accomplish. Sadly, it will remain a dream as the great singer, 48, was laid to rest Feb. 18 (Feb. 19, Manila time) in a private ceremony.

Charice, who is a self-confessed fan of the late singer, grew up singing her songs in amateur contests. Now that her idol is gone, the 19-year-old singer could only recall the memory of meeting Houston for the first time about year and a half ago at the backstage of her show at Beverly Hilton Hotel, the same hotel where Houston was found dead on Feb. 11.

She told ABS-CBN News, "Sobrang bait po niya, as in nanginginig ako that day dahil kilala niya ako. Sabi niya napanood niya ako sa DVD tapos nagjo-joke pa siya. Sabi niya, 'Kinanta mo 'yung mga kanta ko na effortless.' Kaya everytime naisip ko siya, talagang naisip ko yung nag-meet kami dahil sobrang bait niyang tao."

The "Louder" singer is preparing for an upcoming Asian tour, which



will kick off in Dubai on March 2. But before doing so, Charice vowed to pay tribute to the late music icon.

"Gusto ko pong maging special siya talaga. Pero siyempre, talagang gusto kong gumawa ng something para po sa kanya. Maybe magiging emotional talaga. Ang hirap pa rin tanggapin kasi parang nawalan ka ng kamag-anak. I mean na-discover po kasi ako kasi siyempre dahil kinanta ko 'yung mga songs niya," Charice said in the same ABS-CBN



**A fan of US pop diva Whitney Houston signs a giant mural with a portrait of her idol displayed at a mall in Manila**

News report.

A video of Charice's "tribute" to Whitney Houston was circulated on the internet two days after the "I Will Always Love You" hitmaker's death.

The video shows a sobbing Charice while performing "I Have Nothing" with David Foster on the piano.

Charice, who rose to fame due to her powerful rendition of Houston songs like "I Will Always Love You" and "I Have Nothing," clarified that the video was just a clip from the last stop of the US tour of "David Foster and Friends," where she happens to be one of the performers.

"Medyo mali nga 'yung ibang information... Actually, 'yung video nga na 'yan 'yung iba last year, 'yung iba like 2009," she said.

Charice's "Infinity" album tour comes to Manila on March 9. Previous stops include Singapore, March 5; Jakarta, March 7. Charice will also be touring Hong Kong, March 19; and Korea, March 21.. ■



## Camille Villar: Loyal by nature, low key with her celeb status



**Camille Villar has no plans of entering politics just yet**

No amount of teasing can sway the loyalty of "Wil Time Bigtime" co-host Camille Villar from the show.

"Sa ngayon ay dun lang po muna ako sa 'Wil Time Bigtime' nakatutok and that's where I want to be," Camille said in a recent interview when asked if she'll accept offers from other networks or if she plans to try out acting or dancing or even singing.

She explains that her stint on the show gives her the chance to be of more service to the public the way her family has been doing whether through politics or other ways and for many years now. Camille, herself, for now, isn't even thinking of entering politics, saying that having two public servants in the family [her father, Senator Manny Villar; and brother, Las Pinas City Congressman Mark Villar] is more than enough.

"Besides, you don't need to go into politics to help people," quipped she who manages one of her family's businesses in the morning before heading to TV5 studios for "Wil Time

Bigtime" in the afternoon.

Asked about her experience in hosting the show so far, Camille said that she has been learning a lot from Willie Revillame who always reminds her to "just be yourself and have fun." She admits getting butterflies in the stomach just before she steps before the cameras but these fade away the moment she sees how accepting her co-hosts and the audience are of her.

"You just really have to love what you're doing and the rest will follow," she said, smiling.

Camille denied rumors that Willie is courting her. She points out that he has been a family friend for the longest time and that his innate kindness towards his female co-hosts often leads people to think that he is making his moves on them.

"Wala po talagang ganung [romantic] angle," she said.

And while some have a negative impression of Willie, Camille would rather point out his good points.

"Willie is very hard working and he knows what he's doing. He is into every detail of the show that's why it's but right to say that he has earned whatever success he enjoys."

Camille added: "I also admire his energy. Napakataas lagi na para bang di siya napapagod sa ginagawa niya."

How does her hosting style differ from Shalani Soledad's?

"Medyo pareho nga kami in some ways dahil we got into this for the same reason and that is to help people and not make a career out of it.

"At lagi pong nakaalalay sa akin si Shalani as with the other hosts so di malayo na may mapick-up ako sa style nila. They are all very nice to me," Camille said. ■

## Pauleen Now 'Okay' After Collapsing On Tv



TV hosts Ruby Rodriguez and Allan K both revealed that their "Eat Bulaga" co-host Pauleen Luna is now fine after losing consciousness while hosting the show's Monday episode.

Ruby posted on her Twitter account (@rodriguezruby) on Monday, "To all who are concerned about Pauleen, she is fine na. Spoke with her already, she just needs to eat and rest. The heat got her."

During the show's Feb. 13 episode, Pauleen suddenly collapsed

while interviewing the contestant together with Allan K and Paolo Ballesteros for the show's remote segment "All for Juan, Juan for All" in San Juan, Davao City.

The segment was temporarily halted, as ordered by Vic Sotto, one of the show's main hosts, who happened to be in the studio in Manila, so that the staff could tend to Pauleen.

When the commotion was over and Pauleen was brought to the hospital, Vic asked Allan K to explain what happened to Pauleen.

"Alas dos ng madaling araw, nasa bahay 'ko na. Nakisabay siya sa akin papuntang airport. Pagdating ng hotel, natulog lang kami ng very, very light, dumiretso na kami sa venue. Kaya 'yun nahilo," recalled the Allan K.

He also added, "Tsaka mainit lang talaga ang panahon, Bossing." ■

## Matet gives update on superstar mom Nora Aunor's condition



**Matet De Leon**

Matet de Leon has yet to talk to her mother Nora Aunor, but she happily reported that the latter's voice has now improved.

On Jan. 8, the Superstar left the Philippines for the US to undergo throat surgery in Boston. Recall that her throat was damaged allegedly due to a botched surgery in Japan two years ago.

"Yung yaya niya [Nora], nandu'n, nakakausap ko. Maganda na raw ang boses ni Mommy," she told PEP in an interview posted on Feb. 3.

"Kausap niya [yaya] sa telepono daw, sabi niya, 'Matet, ang ganda na ng boses ng mommy mo agad!' Hindi naman siya kinantahan sa phone, pero 'yung ano siyempre, yung boses, luminaw ang kanyang ano [pagsasalita]," she continued.

Matet is glad about this development especially since her mom has planned to hold a concert in May. However, the actress clarified that her mother hasn't gone through with the operation just yet.

"Actually, hindi yata siya in-operahan! May pinasok lang na parang kamera sa loob. Kamera or

something... may something lang na pinasok. May ginanu'n lang, ginanyan-ganyan," she was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, Matet is set to star in the upcoming GMA-7 afternoon soap, "Broken Vow" as lead actress Bianca King's best friend. However, she revealed that ABS-CBN has approached her about a week before the offer for "Broken Vow" came.

"Actually 'yung isa, mas ano siya... kasi nanay nu'ng bidang bata. Kaya lang, sa akin kasi, 'andito na ako sa GMA, kumbaga nakasampa



**Nora Aunor**

na rin ako dito, so maintain ko na siguro muna 'yung ano ko dito," she related.

PEP reported that Matet has no contract with GMA-7, and is only managed by TAPE Inc. exec Malou Choa-Fagar.

"Napag-usapan namin [ng manager ko] na, 'Sige, diyan ka na lang!' 'Opo, dito na lang ako muna!' Kasi ang bait nila [GMA-7] sa akin, sunud-sunod [ang projects], o!" Matet told reporters. ■

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## Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.19*

### Grace Lee: PNoy courts 'like any normal guy'



**Grace Lee says PNoy is the most intelligent man she's ever met**

Following President Noynoy Aquino's admission that they are dating, TV and radio personality Grace Lee has become more open in disclosing some details about their burgeoning bond.

Despite holding the highest post in the country, PNoy's courtship style remains "normal," according to the Philippines-based Korean.

"I don't know about calling everyday, I don't wanna divulge too much details, pero yes very normal, like any normal guy," Grace said in an interview on "24 Oras," Feb. 2.

She has also received "a couple of chocolates and flowers" from the chief executive.

"He's just very sweet," Grace added.

Although she's been part of the entertainment industry for some years now, Grace is still surprised by the outpour of attention she's receiving. Reporters and photographers of international wire agencies, such as Agence-France Presse, were seen tailing her on Thursday, "24 Oras" stated.

It took a while for the GMA-7 showbiz reporter to speak up about PNoy because she "wanted this to be more private."

"We're still at the stage of getting to know each other. And I didn't want so many people having so much to say about what's going on between us... I don't think I'm gonna waste my time, spending hours of my day trying to know a man if I was not interested at all," she related.

She may have evaded the question about PNoy's chances on winning her heart, but Grace generously attached positive adjectives to him. At one point, she said, "He is a wonderful person..."

Grace did not reveal when she and PNoy began dating. It can be recalled though that their paths first crossed June last year at the inauguration of Korea Electric Power Corp. power plant in Cebu. She hosted the said event.

The 29-year-old DJ had a closer,

longer encounter with the president before Christmas through an interview they did for her radio program. According to "24 Oras," their conversation ranged from serious topics like his visions for the country, to lighter ones such as his taste in music.

"He's brilliant, he is the most intelligent man I've met in my life," Grace enthused.

She appreciates that PNoy admitted that they are "seeing each other."

"He's such a gentleman. When he acknowledged it, I think that was out of respect for me because he doesn't need this... but he did and that tells you a lot about what kind of man he is.

"He's such an inspiring character," Grace said in a separate interview with "TV Patrol," adding, "To be liked by a man who leads a country is very flattering."

While things are looking up for the two, Grace, as well as her family, are



**President Benigno Aquino III and Grace Lee**

"worried... on the public attention."

"I just didn't think it was gonna happen this fast," she said.

She also got concerned about their racial difference. Nevertheless, "it's the reason why I fell in love with the Philippines in the first place, so accepting and so understanding."

Grace merely laughed off speculations that PNoy has already proposed to her.

"We are starting so sana everyone would give us time and space to get to know each other more," she said.

Reporter Mario Dumaul then told Grace, "love knows no age gap or age differences."

"At least whatever we have right now will serve as an inspiration to a lot of people out there. But aside from that, I would like to believe so as well," she said with a smile.

For PNoy's 52nd birthday on Feb. 8, Grace said, "What can you give the President, right? It's so difficult. But I'm brewing something up. Surprise na lang."

"You can give your love," Mario teased her.

Laughing, she responded, "Oo nga eh, puwede rin."

Her manager, Arnold Vegafria, deemed that the recent turn of events marks a big change for Grace.

"But the most important dapat, guard your heart," he pointed out on "24 Oras." ■

### Ogie shares how he helped Regine deal with postpartum depression



**Ogie Alcasid revealed he let go off his pride just so Regine Velasquez can get over her postpartum depression**

After giving birth to their son Baby Nate, singer Regine Velasquez experienced postpartum depression with husband Ogie Alcasid helping her through it all.

"You just have to be there for your wife," Ogie said on Showbiz Central," Feb. 5. "Sabihin mo lang, 'Hon, 'yung ginagawa mo [ay] tama,' kasi first-time mom siya so she'll always have self-doubt. 'Tama ba itong ginagawa ko sa pag-alaga ng baby?' Siyempre, breastfeeding, that's the first thing you wanna do. And then, you know, minsan walang gatas na lumalabas. You get frustrated. You just have to be there. I tried to be there as much as possible. Lunukin mo na lang 'yung pride mo. Ganon lang 'yon."

Ogie revealed that her daughters from a previous marriage, Lila and Sarah, are going to meet him, Regine and Baby Nate in Singapore.

Needless to say, Ogie is happy that her daughters with beauty queen Michelle Van Eimeren are seeing their sibling soon.

"Masaya siyempre kasi 'yung dalawa kong anak gustung-gusto nilang magkaroon ng kapatid na lalaki. Ngayon meron na silang isang bagong kapatid. Actually, hindi kami sa Australia magkikita kundi sa Singapore. This year siguro [kami magkikita]," he shared.

Ogie shared how Regine is overly attentive to their son.

"Actually, 'yung asawa ko sobrang tiyaga niya sa anak namin. I always catch her. Alam mo 'yung maalimpungatan ka ng 4 a.m., 2 a.m., 5:30 a.m...gising siya. Inaalagaan niya 'yung baby namin."

In a video clip, Regine shared how Ogie caps his night by bonding with her and their baby.

"Bago matulog sa gabi he likes to talk to me. He talks to me about his day o kung me nabasa siyang bagong book o meron siyang nasagap na bagong tsismis."

She thanked Ogie for "helping me out with Nate kasi kahit pagod na pagod siya, ibe-burp pa rin niya si Nate kasi magaling siyang mag-burp. That's his job. Kahit sobrang antok na antok na siya, he'll find time to spend with Nate and me. Thank you very much for being a loving father and a loving husband."

Michael V, Ogie's co-actor in "Bubble Gang," shared, "Napakabait na tatay niyan."

"Alam mo bang si Lila at saka si Sarah, eh, regular niyang bisitahin sa Australia. Talagang minsan nakikita ko alam kong pagod na pagaod na siya dahil sa dami ng trabaho pero hindi nakakalagpas 'yung pagbisita niya sa Australia. Eh, di lalo na itong bagong baby," Michael said. ■

### Pinay singer holds voice lessons for American Idol hopefuls



**Louie Reyes**

Behind a number of "American Idol" hopefuls is Filipino singer Louie Reyes, one of the members of popular group from the '70s, The Minstrels.

Reyes, dubbed as the Philippines' Queen of Jazz, revealed in a recent radio interview that she holds voice lessons for "AI" wannabes in Los Angeles, California. The singer seems highly dedicated to her endeavor, as the daily classes often last until 9 p.m.

"American Idol" is already in its 11th season and has held auditions in South Carolina, Pennsylvania,

California, Colorado, Texas, Oregon, Missouri, and New Jersey. Currently seating in the judges' panel are record producer Randy Jackson, Aerosmith front man Steven Tyler, and Latina superstar Jennifer Lopez.

In one of these auditions, 26-year-old Filipino-American Ashley Robles impressed the judges with her take of Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You." Robles, a single mother who works as an insurance accountant by day and a club DJ by night, eventually got her golden ticket.

Meanwhile, Reyes is currently in the country for a reunion-cum-pre-Valentine concert with her fellow Minstrels members Ding Mercado, Eugene Villaluz, and Ray-Ann Fuentes. Members of another hit 70's show band Circus—Jacqui Magno and Pat Castillo—will also be part of the said show. Both groups made waves during the said era along with the likes of Hotdog, Juan de la Cruz Band, and VST & Company.

The Minstrels' early hits included "Buhat" and its rendition of The Stylistics' "You Make Me Feel Brand New." Reyes and Villaluz also had a hit called "Nothing I Want More." ■





## Debunking the Top Five Wine Myths

By David White

"Red wine with fish?" muses James Bond, as he confronts the villain in *From Russia with Love*. "Well, that should have told me something."

James Bond may be a great spy, but he wouldn't make a great sommelier. Believe it or not, fish sometimes works with red wine -- and white wine often works with meat.

This is just one of the many wine myths that remain omnipresent. Here are the top five:

**Myth #1:** Serve white wine with fish and red wine with meat.

James Bond wasn't entirely wrong. As general rule, it isn't a terrible idea to pair lighter foods like fish with white wine. But plenty of seafood dishes work better with red wine. If your fish is meaty or charred -- or served with tomatoes, mushrooms, or a fruity sauce -- it'll likely be complimented best by a delicate red like Pinot Noir.

Similarly, plenty of meats

work better with white wines. Spicy cuisines like Chinese, Thai, and Indian demand rich, high-acid wines like Riesling and Gewurztraminer.

**Myth #2:** Sparkling wines like Champagne are only for special occasions.

France's big Champagne houses have spent millions trying to convince us that Champagne is best enjoyed when celebrating. That might be true -- after all, wine shops see a huge spike in sales around New Year's and Valentine's Day -- but sparkling wines can be enjoyed all year long.

Most sparklers are characterized by vibrant acidity and freshness, so they work with variety of dishes. Sparkling wines can cut through spicy food, complement savory food, and elevate even the simplest of dishes. Burgers and Champagne, anyone?

**Myth #3:** Sophisticated wine drinkers avoid Chardonnay and Merlot.

Among self-appointed wine experts, it's become fashionable to bash Merlot and Chardonnay. This isn't entirely without reason.

When Americans started developing a taste for wine in the 1990s, Merlot became the go-to grape for red, and Chardonnay became the go-to grape for white. So the market quickly became flooded with cheap, nondescript wine devoid of varietal character.

For Chardonnay, this resulted in wines that tasted mostly like butter and oak -- leading many to declare themselves members of the "ABC Club" to let people know they'd drink "Anything but Chardonnay." Meanwhile, oceans of Merlot were simply bland and boring.

Thing is, both Chardonnay and Merlot are responsible for some of the greatest wines in the world. Sure,

both demand the right soil, the appropriate climate, and skilled winemaking. But when those demands are met -- as they often are -- both grapes can produce remarkably delicious, complex wines.

**Myth #4:** There are no good wines for less than \$20.

The world is awash in affordable, great-tasting wine. But many drinkers insist on contending that it's difficult to find a good wine for less than \$20. They're not just wrong; they're delusional.

Sure, it's difficult to find a good Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon for less than \$20, just as it's difficult to find affordable caviar. But there are plenty of delicious options from the world's unheralded wine regions -- places like Portugal's Douro Valley, Washington's Columbia Valley, the Languedoc-Roussillon region of France, and virtually all of South Africa.

Even to seasoned oenophiles, these regions can be overwhelming. So don't hesitate to ask your local wine shop for advice.

**Myth #5:** Serve white wines chilled and red wines at room temperature.

This is probably the most pervasive wine myth. And it's why most people -- and even most restaurants -- serve red wines too warm and white wines too cold. beverage. Today, most Americans keep their homes at about 72 degrees -- a temperature that'll make even the finest red wine taste rough and alcoholic.

Legend has it that white wines are served "cool" because historically, they came straight from the cellar. A cellar, of course, is warmer than your average refrigerator -- most of us set

our fridges at around 35 degrees. Serving any wine this cold will mask its flavors.

Fortunately, you don't need a fancy thermometer to serve wine at its optimal temperature. If you're drinking a red wine, pop it in the fridge for 25-30 minutes. If you're drinking a white wine, pull it out of the fridge about 25-30 minutes before you're going to drink it.

David White, a wine writer, is the founder and editor of Terroirist.com. His columns are housed at Wines.com, the fastest growing wine portal on the Internet.

From Page 7 Internet Bill

address, telephone number, e-mail address, the Internet protocol address, and the name of the service provider).

The proposed legislation would help to protect the security and privacy of Canadians by imposing strict limits on the number of CSIS and law enforcement officials who are permitted to make basic subscriber information requests, and apply new requirements for recording, reporting, and auditing those requests.

In addition, the Bill would:

- streamline the application process when court orders or warrants need to be issued in relation to an investigation that involves interceptions;
- update existing offences in the Criminal Code to ensure that they are able to cover new ways of committing old crimes;

See Page 23 Internet Bill

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## Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.20* Mark Bautista still 'okay' with Piolo Pascual



**Mark Bautista: Immune to intrigues**

Singer-actor Mark Bautista has already put behind him the malicious rumors that dragged him in the middle of the high-profile breakup of his good friend Piolo Pascual and KC Concepcion last year.

He has even remained friends with Piolo despite having been alleged to have caused the split of the so-called "fairytale" couple.

"Nagkakausap naman kami.... Okay naman kami, wala namang... Tsaka ayoko nang i-elaborate pa ngayon ah, kasi tapos na at naka-move on na lahat, at naka-move on na ako," said Mark on "Paparazzi Showbiz Exposed," Feb. 18.

Speculations on his true sexuality—an issue that boomed in his early days in showbiz—has made the Kapamilya-turned-Kapuso performer immune to

such nasty intrigues.

"At first, medyo taranta ako... Shocks, bakit ganito? Bakit ganyan? Pero ngayon, okay [na 'ko]..."

"Of course tao lang din naman ako... Sabi ko, tahimik naman lahat so ang pangit pa kung magsalita pa ko't may sasabihin pa ko... Buti na lang hindi ako nadi-depress ng mga ganung bagay. Buti na lang pinapalagpas ko lahat sa tenga ko... Kasi kung iisipin ko pa 'yon, baka kung sa'n ako hanapin ngayon," he said with a chuckle.

He also realized that in the industry he's in, "hindi mo maiiwasan so tanggapin mo na lang na 'yun talaga 'yung puwedeng sabihin sa'yo."

While other celebrities would prefer to face issues hurled at them head-on, Mark opted to take the silent route. This, he deemed, led him to learn who his real friends are.

"Yun lang 'yung maganda sa mga pangyayari, kasi ang dami ko lang mga kaibigan na sumusuporta sa'kin, nagko-comfort... [Pati] pamilya ko... at may mga nakakausap din ako. So okay naman," said he.

Mark—who had been linked to Sarah Geronimo, Rufa Mae Quinto, and Jef Gaitan in the past—told "Showbiz Central" two years back that he's confident of his sexuality.

"As long as you're confident about yourself... your sexuality, there's no need for you to worry," said he. ■

## John Lloyd, Angel Locsin to do 'intimate' scenes in 'Unofficially Yours'



**Unofficially Yours opens Feb 15**

Upcoming film "Unofficially Yours" will stay close to reality in portraying sexual intercourse between two people, director Cathy Garcia-Molina said.

In an interview with Push.com.ph, Molina explained why there are several bed scenes in the movie starring John Lloyd Cruz and Angel Locsin.

"Nilagay ko 'yung intimate scenes not for anything, pero kasi kailangan ko sa kwento. At nilagay ko 'yun hindi para sabihin sa young viewers na 'ito ang gawin niyo.' Nilagay ko 'yun kasi 'yun ang realidad,'" Molina said.

In order to depict "reality," Molina went to certain lengths she said were challenging and daring for John Lloyd and Angel.

Recounting her previous project with John Lloyd ("My Amnesia Girl"), Molina said the young actor's role in "Unofficially Yours" had him much less clothed in comparison.

"Talagang walang natira sa kanya (John Lloyd). Hindi ko naman ito-totally nude siya," Molina said. "'Yun ang iiwan ko sa imahinasyon niyo.'"

"Actually, hirap na hirap kami kasi in reality, kapag nag-se-sex ka naman wala ka namang balot eh, wala ka namang takip. But this is film and you want the audience to watch nang hindi naman sila na-o-offend. Lalagyan mo ng cinematic light, but as much as possible we want to show what's true and what's real."

This "true" and "real" treatment of the subject made Angel very nervous, as it entailed her to bare more skin than she is used to for her role.

"Si Angel talaga kinabahan. Namumula siya at grabe ang lamig-lamig ng kamay niya. Kasi first day of shooting love scene agad," Molina said.

"Paano niya na-overcome 'yung nerbyos? Kailangan nararamdaman niya na protektado siya, na hindi siya nababastos, na kailangan ko siya maghubad at mag-plaster kasi kailangan ko sa eksena. Hindi dahil gusto ko sabihin 'Oy si Angel nakahubad o!', hindi eh. It's never the intention of the film or any of us."

What the film intends, Molina said, is to show the reality of being in a casual relationship, albeit with a touch of "comedy to lighten up the feel" of the story, which she terms as "matapang."

For her part, the box office director said that "at the end of the movie, naniniwala pa rin ako do'n sa regular type of relationship, 'yung traditional kind na girlfriend-boyfriend."

"Unofficially Yours" will be showing in theaters on February 15, under Star Cinema. ■

## Manny Pacquiao To 'Hang Gloves Up' For Good?



**'Faith' changed Pacman for the better**

Eight-division world champion Manny Pacquiao is pondering retiring next year.

Pacquiao said his upcoming bout with undefeated American boxer Timothy Bradley Jr. on June 9 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas might be his last fight.

According to him, it was by virtue of the "Word of God" that he realized the negative implications of his profession.

"Word of God, tapos 'yung trabaho natin masama nananakit tayo ng kapwa natin so buti na 'yung hindi na tayo [gumawa ng ganon]," the Sarangani representative revealed in a taped interview aired on "Umagang Kay Ganda [UKG]," Monday.

He continued, "Ok na 'yun, kumbaga sa ano, ok na 'yung binigay sa aking blessings ng Panginoon."

After having recently accepted Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines' offer to become their Bible Ambassador, Pacman said in the "UKG" report that he may just focus on his duties as a public servant and continue reading the Bible.

That said, does this mean goodbye to the dream fight between Pacquiao and American Floyd boxer Mayweather Jr.?

### 'Changed man'

Last month, Pacquiao disclosed during a one-on-one interview with Dyan Castillejo that he has "renewed his faith" and has turned his back on "vices, including womanizing, gambling and drinking."

Many have been amazed about the improvement that Pacquiao's been exuding as of late ever since he started reading the Bible. It seems that the boxing champ is really taking into heart his newest designation from the Church.

"Napaka importante ng Bible basahin. [Hindi dapat] tinatago sa isang sulok, kun'di talagang binabasa ang Bible."

"Yan ang susi para sa kaligtasan. 'Yan ang susi ng pintuan para makapasok ka sa buhay na walang hanggan," preached Pacquiao in a report by PEP.

More practically, though, he highlighted that when one reads the Bible, "you're building up a relation to God" and "improving your faith."

Even his wife, Jinkee Pacquiao acknowledged the positive changes in Pacman.

She even shared in a separate PEP report that he is, "Laging nasa bahay, nagbabasa ng Bible, nanonood ng sine at ng TV" and "mas madami ng time sa mga bata." ■

## Jennylyn Mercado set to slightly reinvent herself as singer



**Jennylyn Mercado**

Jennylyn Mercado has signed up with PolyEast Records which she hopes would help in her bid to reinvent herself as singer.

In an exclusive interview with Bulletin Entertainment, Mercado admitted that while other singers, especially the younger ones, have gone on to explore different musical styles, she remains within the confines of ballads and pop genres.

"Hindi ko alam kung kaya kong makipagsabayan pero I want to challenge myself this time around by experimenting a bit with my sound,"

she said.

Mercado signed up with PolyEast Records because she likes it that the roster has such progressive artists as Zia Quizon, Kyla, and Bamboo. She believes the label is capable of helping her march towards a new direction, one that "babagay sa akin kahit na medyo bago ang tunog."

Asked if she feels that her acting and hosting careers have somewhat eclipsed her singing, Mercado hopes not, saying that among the three, she'd choose her music anytime and hands down.

"Galing po kasi ako sa family of musicians at sa singing naman talaga ako nagsimula. Para sa akin at pamilya ko, para bang mortal sin kung hindi ka din lang sa music mapupunta. Malaking part po ng buhay ko ang music."

Mercado, in fact, has at least 8,000 songs in her iPod. Just before the interview, she was "researching" for new songs at the PolyEast Records office. ■



## From Page 21 Internet Bill

- create new, carefully tailored investigation tools, such as production and preservation orders in the Criminal Code and the Competition Act;
- enable Canada to ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime and its Additional Protocol on Xenophobia and Racism; and
- add the safeguards of reporting and notification for the interception of private communications in exceptional circumstances.

"New technologies provide new ways of committing crimes, making them more difficult to investigate. We must ensure that law enforcement has the investigative tools to bring to justice those who break the law," said Minister Nicholson. "This legislation will enable authorities to keep pace with rapidly changing technology, without diminishing the legal protections currently afforded to Canadians with respect to privacy."

The proposed legislation is consistent with that of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, and will improve Canada's ability to work with its international partners to combat crime and terrorism.

At the January 2012 Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Justice Ministers meeting in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, the ministers unanimously agreed on the need to enhance and modernize the investigative capability of law enforcement and urged the federal government to move forward on enacting previously introduced legislation.

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## From Page 4

## Students

at all, so the riot team just dispersed the people," said Montreal police spokesman Daniel Fortier.

Organizers said they planned to take their protest to Quebec City next week to the steps of the national assembly; they said 55,000 students had agreed to support their ongoing general strike, joining the ranks of those who have already left their classrooms.

Those striking students oppose the provincial government's move to nearly double tuition fees over a five-year period, to \$3,800 from the current in-province rate (Canadian students from other provinces pay significantly higher rates to study in Quebec) of \$2,200. They say the increase

## Harper Government program helps at-risk youth stay away from crime

Winnipeg – February 21, 2012 – Shelly Glover, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and Member of Parliament for Saint-Boniface (Winnipeg), on behalf of the Honourable Vic Toews, Canada's Minister of Public Safety, today announced that the Youth Gang Prevention Fund is ready to receive applications for its next funding intake.

"We are fulfilling our Government's commitment to building strong, safer communities by investing in community-based projects that help those who are most at risk of offending," said MP Glover. "This program will continue to provide youth in gangs, or those at risk of joining gangs, with

will limit access to education, which should be a fundamental right.

"Increasing tuition fees means rejecting thousands of people from the universities of Quebec -- persons who have the talent to study but may not be able to pay," said protest spokesman Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois.

"We think education is a right, we think everyone should go to university if they have the talent to do it and increasing tuition fees that fast is totally blocking that right."

The government points out that tuition fees in Quebec are so much lower than in most other provinces that -- even with the hikes -- they will still be among the lowest in the country, well below the national average for in-province students.

Only a minority of Quebec

life skills to help them make smart choices and stay away from gangs and crime." The deadline for applications is April 9, 2012.

The objectives of the Youth Gang Prevention Fund are to:

- support proven and promising crime prevention initiatives that address youth violence and youth gangs in communities where these issues exist or are emerging trends;

- promote targeted interventions such as mentoring, counselling, skills development and recreational opportunities, to provide young people with alternatives to joining gangs; and

- develop and disseminate knowledge to encourage other communities to prevent youth violence and youth gang activity in Canada.

The Government of Canada's 2011 Budget, The Next Phase of Canada's Economic Action Plan, included a number of

university students have joined the strikes.

Other students have expressed frustration with them and voiced sympathy for the tuition increase as a necessary step to improve the quality of universities.

Quebec has embarked on a university funding spree thanks partly to the tuition hikes; but student protesters say there's plenty of money available elsewhere, perhaps in the form of higher mining royalties, to pay for better universities without increasing tuition.

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(Ethel Tugna, March 2011 graduate)



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