

Manila: Feast of The Black Nazarene



Devotees carry a cross of the statue of the Black Nazarene to a carriage before the start of an annual religious procession in Manila, Jan. 9. Police said about a million devotees thronged Manila to catch a glimpse or try to touch the centuries-old black statue of Jesus Christ at the annual religious parade. The wooden Black Nazarene, carved in Mexico and brought to the Philippines capital in the early 17th century, is cherished by Catholics who believe it performs miracles. (Picture: Erik De Castro / Reuters)

The religious festival of the Black Nazarene is a spectacular show of faith. The feast draws thousands of people wanting a glimpse of the Señor Nazareno. "Faith draws 2 million Catholics to the Black Nazarene Procession", reads the headline in Asiaone News today. But it does not come easy for the many who

pushed, squeezed and jostled their way through the streets of Manila yesterday for a touch, a kiss or even just a glimpse of the miraculous Señor Nazareno of Quiapo, the writer wrote.

The festival of the Black Nazarene is considered as one of the most spectacular religious feasts in the

Philippines.

The festival is centuries old and is one of the many religious feasts handed down by the Spanish. The Black Nazarene traces its roots in 17th-century Mexico. A priest bought the statue in 1606 from a Mexican woodcarver. Later, the first group of Augustinian friars sent to the

Philippines brought the dark colored statue of Jesus from Mexico.

What is the Black Nazarene?

The Black Nazarene refers to a life-sized, dark colored statue of Jesus Christ, genuflecting under the weight of the Cross. The image is known to be the work of a Mexican artist, which he could have carved in fine Caoba wood. Caoba wood is salmon colored when fresh that deepens with age to rich red or dark brown to deep black. Others believed that the galleon that carried the Nazarene to Manila caught fire, which burned the image, but did not consume it.

Though this image of Jesus has a charred color, the people preserved and honored the icon. Since then, miraculous things have happened to those who paid tribute to the image. The Quiapo Church, which was built in 1582, had amazingly withstood earthquakes, rebellions, riots and wars. Likewise, the Nazarene survived the great fires in 1791 and 1929, and the destructive bombings of World War I. As a result, people came to adore the Black Nazarene.

Tens of thousands of devotees would travel to Manila to join the religious festival so to snatch a glimpse of the centuries old black statue of Jesus Christ. "Because of the Black Nazarene, my son recovered from a car accident. He almost died," said Marcelina Eusebio, 59, who came from the central island of Cebu to join the choked procession.

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Aquino to study reimposition of death penalty

President Benigno S. Aquino III on Wednesday said he will study the re-imposition of death penalty in the wake of calls from various groups following several heinous crime cases recently.

In an interview at the 65th Founding Anniversary of the Liberal Party at Club Filipino in San Juan City, the

President expressed concern over the reimplementation of the capital punishment, saying that in the present judicial system, suspects who do not have the ability to secure the services of competent lawyers are prone to be wrongly convicted.

"I will have to study that, and I

don't know where the calls are emanating from but iyong essence nito, our judicial system, as you know, is not perfect," the President said.

The Chief Executive said that

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Cooperative News

Promotion for the month of January

In our effort to encourage shopping at Marché Coop, we are offering a \$5 discount for every \$35 of purchase of groceries excluding rice and before taxes. As we have not had the time to send them to all members and prospective members, we are extending this promotion to the month of February.

By sending a promotion letter, we also discover which addresses are no longer up to date. As we selected names from the latest membership list, we have only received two returned mail out of 50 letters. Our next target is to send letters to those who signed up during the earlier years so we might have a higher number of returned mail because the addresses may have changed after 3 or 4 years. Therefore, we have to call these members before sending them any letter in order to save on postage stamps.

If those members who read this paper have changed their addresses, please call us at 514-733-8915, or 514-485-7861 to advise us of your change of address.

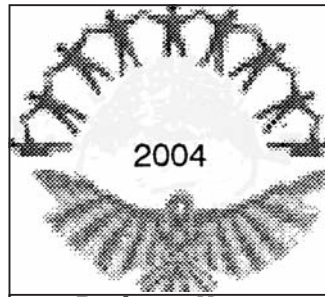
WE are still looking for more volunteer members who can devote even 3 or 4 hours a week in order keep Marché Coop open longer. We can invest in buying more stock if customers will come to buy them.

Our goal is to start offering something attractive enough so that more members will come to do their weekly shopping. We are planning on offering loyalty points, similar to collecting air miles. A specific number of points will be exchanged for a product that is worth at least \$15 to \$20. Perhaps a bag of rice of 8 kilos may be a worthwhile gift for a loyal customer. We are in the process of producing shopping cards so that people can keep them in their wallets and we will stamp them every time they come to purchase \$20 worth of groceries.

In order to see the results of our marketing campaigns, we will introduce a new one every three months. By giving our members time to notice our marketing efforts, we hope to be able to convince them to shop regularly at Marché Coop.

We wish to inform members that we will be calling a general assembly and election as soon as the financial reports are ready which we estimate to be within two or three months. Potential candidates for directors will be accepted from the floor during the general assembly.

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi
President (2008-2011)



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Entrance door to the Cuisine de Manille Restaurant is the same entrance to the Marché Coop in the basement.



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Editorial

Taxes and more taxes - can we do something about these?

It's been a well-known fact that there are only two certainties in life - death and taxes. It is also an irony that even to the death people are taxed. What a grim reality!

It is a common complaint that taxation has been used excessively for almost anything - from balancing the budget to punishing undesirable behaviours like smoking, using our cars, and consuming drinks that are harmful to one's health. At first glance, it would seem that the government is just looking after our welfare, but then we soon realize that taxes have almost become an automatic way to solve any kind of problems. We also know that during elections, politicians always promise that they will not increase taxes yet, soon after the ballots have been counted, this promise is always broken. They claim that it is beyond their control.

Perhaps, it is not just an issue about the increase of taxes but how the government uses them. But as everyone knows, transparency in government is hard to come by. We do not have whistle blowers who will be willing to expose where the waste of public funds is being perpetrated. Government bureaucracy is so huge and unwieldy. Although critics have constantly said that one way to reduce deficits is to reduce bureaucracy especially in healthcare and education this has not been done because it would cause labor problems as most government workers are unionized.

Quebec Finance Minister Raymond Bachand tries to console citizens by saying that the increase in sales taxes is better than increasing personal income taxes. He may have a point, however, the economic impact on small businesses must not be ignored. It is feared that small businesses already affected by recession may have to close down because consumers will be limiting their spending and they will most likely cut down on eating out, buying taxable items, like appliances, computers, and cars.

Questions can also be raised about the government's treatment of specific groups. Motorists are being asked to pay more not only for investing on the highway infrastructure but also to support public transit and encourage people to decrease the use of their cars, yet, there are no programs that will offer incentives for motorists to do so. According to CAA Quebec, "Although the government has announced it will create an accounting unit for the new FORT, separate from the consolidated

fund, where revenues from automobile taxes will be deposited directly, it has made sure the latter fund remains within its overall reporting environment, which means there is no guarantee for the future that these amounts will be sustainably reinvested in our road network. This does little to reassure the people who will be forced to pay the higher amounts."

The history about taxes indicated that they were supposed to be a temporary measure to support the war effort. Many years have passed since the last world war and taxes have not only remained intact but continue to increase. Many government critics have always pointed out that deficits exist because of the lack of control in government spending but what is not clear is what are the expenses that can be cut or avoided. Recently, it has been reported that government employees are paid higher than the average worker in other fields. Besides having better job security, public service jobs are compensated above their market value. Why has this been hidden from any scrutiny? The municipal government of Montreal is going to increase taxes according to the budget but we have also heard reports that municipal employees are too highly paid. Probably, it is too late to cut back their salaries now as it will certainly cause some political upheavals. It is rare for any politician to propose anything that will change the status quo.

Paying more taxes for less services are definitely not acceptable but it seems that people do not demand enough from their elected representatives. Hence, the cycle continues. On the other hand, if taxpayers demand their rights to be given an accounting of the taxes they pay, we believe that our government leaders will have to learn to be more accountable and transparent.

If we are not happy paying more taxes, we should not just complain but do something about it. The most logical step seems to be to communicate our dissatisfaction to our elected representatives in large numbers. If they do not listen, we should remember not to make the same mistake during the next election.

Finally, an important question remains - how many people will be willing to do the work necessary to force government to back out of imposing any more taxes?

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

The North American Filipino Star

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2011 brings tax and fee increases for all Quebecers

By Paul Delean, Montreal Gazette

Montreal, Dec. 28, 2010 -Count your pennies. You're going to need them.

Starting next week, Quebecers will be hit with a number of tax, deduction and contribution increases that together add up to hundreds of dollars a year per person.

the maximum annual cost to \$623.22, up from \$587.52 in 2010.

Canadians in other provinces pay more for EI - a maximum of \$786.76 in 2011 - but don't have the additional cost of QPIP.

Another Quebec distinction, the public prescription drug insurance plan,



Big ticket items will cost more in the new year as Quebec's sales tax increases to 8.5% from 7.5% on Jan. 1. Photograph by: Allen McInnis, Montreal

The first hit will come if you buy a transit pass. They're increasing throughout the Montreal metropolitan area in 2011. You'll generally shell out \$1 to \$2.75 more for monthly passes in and around Montreal.

The next jolt will come when you buy your first coffee and muffin of 2011. The provincial sales tax rises from 7.5 to 8.5 per cent on Jan. 1. The impact will be minimal on small purchases, but not if you're buying a new house or car.

Your first paycheck of 2011 also will bring some changes.

Weekly deductions for Employment Insurance, the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan and Quebec Pension Plan are rising in 2011.

QPP contributions will be calculated on the first \$48,300 of earnings in 2011, up from \$47,200 in 2010, so that the maximum payable by Quebecers will rise to \$2,217.60 from \$2,163.15 in 2010.

For the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan, the earnings threshold rises to \$64,000 from \$62,500 and the employee contribution rate increases to 0.537 per cent from 0.506 per cent, boosting the maximum source deduction to \$343.68 from \$316.25 in 2010.

Employment Insurance dues will be calculated at 1.41 per cent on the first \$44,200 of income, up from 1.36 per cent on the first \$43,200 in 2010, raising

also had its maximum annual premium increased to \$600 from \$585, though Quebecers who use the plan won't face that cost until they file their provincial income-tax returns next spring.

It's on top of the provincial health contribution announced in the last Quebec budget: \$25 for all tax filers on 2010 returns and \$100 in 2011.

The cost of private health and dental coverage also is going up for many employees in 2011, since Quebecers are using health-care services increasingly as they age, and insurers pass on the cost of additional claims to clients.

Fees for licences and services provided by the provincial government all have been indexed for 2011. As a result, a driver's licence renewal will cost \$87.25 next year, up from \$86 in 2010, and vehicle registration will set you back \$263.05, up from \$261 in 2010.

People relying on government pensions to help them cover all the additional costs will see their cheques increased slightly in 2011. The maximum Old Age Security pension for Canadians 65 and older will be \$524.23 a month, up from \$516.96, and the top Quebec Pension Plan and Canada Pension Plan benefit rises to \$960 a month, up from \$934.17.

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Published by Filcan Publications, Inc.

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The opinions expressed by the writers and columnists do not necessarily reflect that of the management of the North American Filipino Star and its editors.

Scammed Montreal nanny reunites with family

A Montreal nanny will get a second chance to have a Christmas family reunion this week, after her original plans to bring loved ones from the Philippines were dashed by a dishonest travel agency.

"It resonates with my family," Modafferi said. "My grandparents did the same thing. My father-in-law did the very same thing, left a very young family, came here, worked, was able to succeed to bring the family here finally."



Elenor Diaz lost \$4,000 to a travel agency scam.

Thanks to the generosity of a perfect stranger, nanny Elenor Diaz will get the chance to spend the holiday season with her family for the first time in years.

Diaz, who came to Canada in 1997, left her husband and three kids in her native Philippines. Working as a nanny, Diaz has been saving her money in the hopes that she could one day bring the family back together.

But Diaz told CTV Montreal's Paul Karwatsky that her dream turned into a nightmare when the \$4,000 she spent on plane tickets was not honoured at a travel agency in Manila, Philippines.

Diaz said that her family showed up at the airport on Christmas Day, they were told that the tickets had been cancelled by the travel agency, which is titled Honour Travel and Touring.

The agency also apparently no longer existed, vanishing and taking Diaz's money with it.

When the story made headlines in Montreal and beyond, the city's Filipino community also rallied around Diaz.

Among those in Montreal touched by the nanny's plight was Larry Modafferi, who operates a money-wiring company that often deals with the Filipino community.

Modafferi decided to give Diaz a Christmas present and help make her hope a reality by purchasing plane tickets for the family.



A photo of Elenor Diaz's family

That's what sparked it."

Now, the Diaz family is expected to arrive in Montreal on Wednesday morning. They flew to Vancouver Tuesday, and are now waiting for a connecting flight to Montreal.

Diaz, meanwhile, is getting ready for the big reunion by stocking her fridge with food and getting ready for a Christmas celebration.

"A great miracle now starts," she said. "A new life for my family."

Diaz hasn't had the chance to thank the Good Samaritan in person, but she already knows how she will thank him.

"I want to thank and give him a hug," she said, noting that she did have a brief phone conversation with Modafferi.

Modafferi says he was touched by her reaction.

"She blessed us," he said. "But we're already blessed, you know? It's her turn." ■

Bongbong distances self from US court's ruling on Marcos victims



Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

The son and namesake of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos Sr. on Thursday said his family is not party to the case where an American judge approved the distribution of \$7.5 million to the more than 7,500 human rights victims during Marcos' reign.

Speaking at the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines' (FOCAP) "Prospects for the Philippines" conference, Sen. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said the court ruling involved Jose Yao-Campos, a perceived Marcos crony, and not his family.

"The latest judgment in terms of the human rights cases was really a compromise settlement not with my family but with the family of JY Campos... It was between their lawyers and lawyers of the human rights group when this settlement was carried out. We are not party to it," said Marcos.

"We were not involved in that final settlement," added Marcos, the first member of the family to get elected to a national position ever since his father was swept out of power in Feb. 1986.

At present, former First Lady Imelda Marcos sits as Ilocos Norte representative (2nd district) while Imee, the Marcos couple's eldest daughter, is incumbent Ilocos Norte governor.

Marcos' family is accused of pilfering billions from government

coffers at the height of its power. In 1972, Marcos declared martial law, which clamped down political dissenters and muzzled the press.

Last week, US District Judge Manuel Real approved the distribution of about \$7.5 million to more than 7,500 parties to the class suit. They are to get \$1,000 each.

The Associated Press had reported that "the funds come from a \$10 million settlement of a case against individuals controlling Texas and Colorado land bought with Marcos money. Legal fees and a payment to the person who located the properties will consume most of the remaining \$2.5 million of the settlement."

The need for Charter change

Also on Thursday, Marcos said he is in favor of moves calling for the amendment of the 1987 Constitution.

The present charter was ratified a year after former President Corazon Aquino succeeded the younger Marcos' father. Aquino is the mother of incumbent President Benigno Aquino III.

"Personally, I am supporting such effort," he said, citing the need to "look at systematic changes."

However, he did not mention if he is backing a parliamentary form of government, which will be headed by a prime minister.

During his father's regime, the 1973 Constitution was ratified a year after martial law was imposed. The 1973 Charter virtually paved the way for the elder Marcos' one-man rule.

During the administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, calls to amend the Constitution were widely associated with efforts to perpetuate Mrs. Arroyo in power by shifting the form of government from presidential to parliamentary, with Mrs. Arroyo sitting as prime minister. Various moves for Charter change did not prosper at the House of Representatives.

Mrs. Arroyo, whose term as president ended in June 2010, currently sits as representative of Pampanga province's second district.

■

Army tightens security after foiled NPA spring plot

The Philippine Army has tightened security measures at its headquarters following what it claimed to be a foiled attempt to spring a ranking communist rebel from detention.

A report by radio dzBB's Sam Nielsen on Thursday said Gate 2 of the Army's headquarters in Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City will be only partially open.

The report added that the Army will also subject persons and vehicles entering its headquarters to

stricter inspection procedures.

Philippine Army spokesman Col. Antonio Parlade Jr. said security also remains tight at the Fort Bonifacio Hospital where captured New People's Army leader Tirso Alcantara is confined.

Alcantara head the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee's Regional Operational Command and former spokesman of the Melito Glor Command and the Communist Party of the Philippines. He was captured by government forces in Lucena City

early this month.

On Wednesday, the Army claimed to have foiled an attempt to spring Alcantara, with the arrest of an alleged NPA member who tried to sneak into Army headquarters.

The Army identified the NPA rebel as Romulo Luna, who it said was arrested Tuesday night after getting past sentry guards stationed at the camp's Gate 2. Luna is reportedly a security escort of Alcantara.

Parlade said Luna initially denied

that he is a member of the NPA, but later admitted his ties with the underground movement when he was identified by the five members of the Morong 43.

Two other men, believed to be Luna's accomplices, stayed outside the gate and fled when Luna was apprehended, Parlade said.

Alcantara's release is among the conditions set by the National Democratic Front (NDF) for the resumption of peace negotiations with the government. ■



Any Which Way

Bernardo "Budz" Sarmiento

Community's lone pariah calls BS persona non grata

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION – As part of my New Year's resolutions for 2011, I will try my best to keep this column free of harsh words and phrases, particularly when referring to identified or identifiable people. I will adhere even more seriously to the rules of responsible journalism and stick to the issues rather than the persons of my adversaries. There might still be some provocation to test my resolve, but it's all right with me. In the meantime, it's still my pull-no-punches style of writing and my usual sockdolagers.

ME, PERSONA NON GRATA? I DON'T THINK SO! – In his article ("Persona non grata at UPS elections," Page 34, December 2010 Edition, Filipino Forum), Fraud Crass Magallanes claimed that I was persona non grata at UPS elections held on November 21, 2010. That got me thinking how I could be a persona non grata at UPS election when I was quite acceptable and welcome to both Mrs. Nene Francisco's and Mrs. Warlie Basbacio's camps. Even to the UPS COMELEC composed of Melle Lugod and Rey Balansi, among others. If there's one particular group that I am most likely unacceptable and unwelcome it is the Magallanes/Parado group, but I know that already and cannot care less about it. In fact, I highly regard such exclusion as a blessing, and definitely, not as a disaster.

I can firmly say that Fraud's story is a prevarication woven by no one but the best in the business presumably to spite me for ignoring their demand that I stop taking pictures of him and his wife. I refused to go along with their demand because I believed that I had an inalienable right to take photos at any function held in public. Besides, and more significantly, I wasn't taking their pictures. Why waste my time and memory card on people who are obviously not fond of me? I was taking the pictures of a much larger crowd of participants in the election of the United Pilipino Seniors (UPS) organization. I was there not only as a voter in the election, but also as a reporter for this newspaper. I had to take some pictures that would accompany my news report about the event.

If I were a persona non grata at the UPS elections, would I be able to circulate and socialize with much enthusiasm with different people or groups of people present at the event the way I did? Would Mrs. Nene Francisco and her staunchest supporters gladly pose for the photos that I would like to take? Would the UPS COMELEC ask me to take pictures of the proceedings, particularly of the counting of the ballots? Wouldn't they rather see me leave the premises faster than they could say "Get out!"? Would members of the Knights of Columbus from St. Malachy who were tasked to keep the peace and order during the election protect me from the raging Brujulita Parado that afternoon? Wouldn't they kick me out of the building

right away instead? And would the re-elected UPS President Mrs. Warlie Basbacio herself invite me to a victory dinner at Kam Shing at Plaza Cote des Neiges even though they knew that I voted for Mrs. Nene Francisco on account of her daughter-in-law who happened to be my ex-wife? Mrs. Basbacio would later give me a complimentary ticket to her induction at Ruby Rouge Restaurant on January 7, 2011. All of those wouldn't have been possible or wouldn't have made sense if I were indeed a persona non grata. Would it, Mr. Fraudulent Crass Magallanes?

It's clear that the ill-advised editor-in-chief was out with his spurious story just to discredit me. He can discredit me all he wants, but he will never succeed because the Filipino community, along with the truth, is always behind me. People already know that his stories, including the one that many women booed me, are all wet. Assuming that there were women who booed me, it's most likely only his wife, des Parado and Angie Ogerio who did that. Only three women and three are hardly many.

Anyway, this is what happened that afternoon of November 21, 2010: I was taking photos of the different sections of the crowd. I was doing fine and unmolested until I reached the section where Fraud, his wife Pat and des Parado were seated in. They were with many other people whose pictures I took. While shooting, I was yelled at by Pat Magallanes as if she was high up there in the boondocks. "Napakawalanghiya mo" (You're so shameless) she shouted, and demanded that I stop taking pictures. Firmly convinced that I was well within my right to do what I was doing, I continued shooting, and that irked Fraud, Pat and Brujulita.

Anticipating that the situation might degenerate into a full blown confrontation, Mrs. Josefa Nicolas, a known associate of Magallanes and des Parado, approached me and kindly asked that I stay away from des Parado. Initially, I resisted the idea because it wasn't me who was causing all the trouble. I thought that it was Parado whom Mrs. Nicolas should whisk off to a place away from me instead. But Mrs. Nicolas was so proactive that I eventually acceded to her request. She accompanied me to a room where we cooled off for a few minutes. I then went back to the social hall to rejoin my friends and acquaintances only to be startled by des Parado again. Feeling harassed and smart enough not to whack a woman on her face, I told her that I would call the police if she wouldn't leave me alone. "Go ahead, call the police" dared des Parado. But before I could do that, cooler heads prevailed, and the termagant disappeared from view.

OH, MY GOD! JULIE PARADO A TRUE GEM? – In his November 2010 editorial, Fraud Crass Magallanes brashly proclaimed Brujulita des Parado "one of community's true gems." If the ever

humorous editor-in-chief were a gemologist working for Zales, the popular jewellery company, or De Beers, the largest diamond company in the world, his license to practice his trade would have been revoked and he would have been fired for not being able to tell a true gem from a phony one, or a true diamond from a shard from the bottom of a Nescafe glass jar. (Just imagine me blowing a raspberry.)

Calling des Parado "a true gem" and "community's treasure" is a pretty bold declaration. It's akin to Richard Nixon's infamous parting one-liner "I am not a crook." Only des Parado's most loyal friend or someone who is going through waterboarding at Guantanamo would say that she is a true gem. She cannot even be classified among the cheapest, substandard, artificial and zero-carat gemstones usually found at a dollar store or at the flea market in St. Eustache, much less a true gem. So claiming that des Parado is a true gem and community's treasure is obscene and almost criminal.

JAMES DE LA PAZ: BALIK-PAHINA NG FORUM – Pagkalipas ng mga ilang isyu ng Filipino Forum muling pinag-initan ni Fraud Crass Magallanes ang nananahimik nang si James de la Paz. Wala na sigurong maibato sa akin ang dakilang punong-patnugot ng there's-nothing-like-it at numero unong diariong Filipino sa buong Canada kaya muli n'yang pinagbalingan ng pansin ang dating presidente ng FAMAS at ng FFCAQ.

Sa unang paragraph ng kanyang article na may titulong "De la Paz: the man behind BS," sabi ni Magallanes, "The Filipino Forum will be making a mistake if it focuses all of its fire on Bernardo ("BS") Sarmiento." I can't help feeling delirious that Magallanes seems to have finally come around and practically admitted, albeit begrudgingly, that literally tussling with this writer was an exercise in futility. He has probably realized that our "war of words" is not going anywhere except perdition or mutual destruction. It has probably occurred to him that I will only stop if he stops. If there's no action from him, there'll be no reaction from BS. By the way, the only man behind BS is BS, himself, and no other.

Magallanes further wrote, "Yes, he deserves abuse for attacking anybody without provocation, without reason." First of all, I didn't – and still don't – attack anybody; I simply defend myself against those who mercilessly attack me. That's all. I wouldn't have reacted if there was nothing to react to.

Magallanes called me James' accomplice. Since the word "accomplice" connotes criminal partnership with someone, it isn't nice and fair to be so called. Firstly, I am not James' – and for that matter, anyone else's – accomplice. Secondly, James and I never did anything

unlawful, either jointly or individually. Magallanes also wrote this: "De la Paz unleashed BS, a deluded man whose sense of self-worth is as breathtakingly shocking as his writing success is dependent on tormenting people." In my opinion, Magallanes doesn't have the moral ascendancy to talk about self-worth, let alone about "writing success being dependent on tormenting people." He has been tormenting a great many innocent people for close to 30 years. I'm "tormenting" the only two tormentors in the community, namely Fraudulent Crass Magallanes and Brujulita des Parado.

MAGALLANES COULDN'T BE MORE CORRECT – I agree with Magallanes that going to court is an expensive proposition, not to mention time-consuming, energy-sapping, and emotionally draining, for both plaintiffs and defendants. That's why most people, including this writer, neither wish to be hailed to court nor hail someone to court. However, I'll leave it up to Magallanes' son Paul to decide on what course of action he would like to take. If he doesn't really mind getting involved in a potentially lengthy litigation, rehash what really took place and dragging his former employer, his former union, the family of his former patient whom he allegedly stole from, and many other people to court, it's his call. This corner prefers to let the sleeping dog lie, but Paul has the last word on whether or not he would like Pandora to reopen her jar.

PARA SILANG MGA PATAY-GUTOM – Isang grupo ng mga prominenteng miembro ng Filipino community ang diumano'y nagmistulang mga patay-gutom sa kanilang ginawa sa isang pagtitipon. Ayon sa balita, hindi pa raw tapos ang party at meron pa ngang mga panauhin na inaasahan pang darating ay nagsisilid na sila kaagad ng mga gusto nilang putahe. Meron nga raw isang Pinay na asawa ng puti ang nagpaalala na huwag na muna silang magbalot ng mga pagkain dahil hindi pa naman tapos ang party and baka may dumating pang mga panauhin at mapaibig silang kumain. Pero wala raw halaga sa nasabing grupo kung tapos man ang party o hindi. O kung may darating pang panauhin o wala. Basta ang mahalaga sa insensitibo at matakaw na grupong ito ay ang makapagbalot nang makapagbalot ng mga pagkain na maiuuwi nila.

Talagang ugali na raw ng grupong ito ang mag-uwi ng mga pagkain na inihanda sa mga party na kanilang dinadaluhan ganoong hindi naman sila sadyang naghihirap. Kung бага sa sakit, maniac na sila. Kung ang shoplifting ay kleptomania, ano kaya ang foodlifting? Eh, kung ipangalan ko kaya sa lider ng nasabing grupo na para bang binigyan ko s'ya ng award, after all alam

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Any Which Way



Me Rosanne M. Luciano

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EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers
About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: Are Atlantic bluefin tuna really about to go extinct? What are the contributing factors and what is being done to try to head off this tragedy? -- Edward Jeffries, Norwalk, CT

According to many marine biologists, Atlantic bluefin tuna, one of three closely related bluefin tuna species, are in danger of going extinct within a decade if the governments of the world can't come together to ban catching and/or selling the lucrative species. The non-profit International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which maintains an international "Red List" of threatened species, considers the Atlantic bluefin "Critically Endangered" given that its population numbers have declined by upwards of 80 percent since the 1970s. Even recently instituted stricter restrictions on allowable catch levels may be too little too late for the huge migratory fish.

The trouble began in the 1960s when fishing boats using purse seines and long lines to pull in fish for the canned tuna market harvested huge numbers of juvenile Atlantic bluefin. This highly efficient method of fishing decimated generations of Atlantic bluefin, constraining their reproductive capacity accordingly.

Today catch limits for Atlantic bluefin—even more in demand worldwide for sushi—are implemented and enforced by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), a multinational group of fisheries regulators charged with maintaining sustainable levels of tuna throughout the Atlantic and neighboring waters. In 2007, ICCAT set the international annual catch limit for Atlantic bluefin at 30,000 tons; double what the commission's own scientists recommended. More recently, ICCAT's scientists recommended lowering the limit to 7,500 tons; ICCAT compromised with fishing interests and settled on a 13,500 ton limit. But despite these rules, analysts estimate that the fishing industry is actually still harvesting around 60,000 tons of Atlantic bluefin annually. ICCAT says that if stocks have not rebounded by 2022 it would consider closing down some tuna fishing areas.

With ICCAT's limits having little effect on the animal's decline, environmentalists took their case to the United Nations' Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in hopes of getting an international ban on the harvesting and sale of Atlantic bluefin. But in March 2010, 68 nations voted down the proposal; 20 countries, including the U.S., voted for it, while 30 others abstained. The leading opponent of the ban, Japan—which consumes three-quarters of all bluefin tuna caught around the world—argued that ICCAT was the proper regulatory body to sustain Atlantic bluefin population numbers.

As for what concerned individuals can do, the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program recommends avoiding bluefin tuna—sometimes called hon maguro or toro (tuna belly) at the supermarket and at restaurants—altogether. And that would not only be a good environmental move but good for your health, too: The non-profit Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a leading environmental group, recently

issued a health advisory recommending www.emagazine.com/subscribe; Request

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No cigarettes, not even those grown organically, are good for you, but brands like American Spirit, shown here in a magazine ad, at least eschew the chemical fillers." ATIS547, courtesy Flickr

that people avoid eating Atlantic bluefin due to elevated levels of neurotoxins including mercury and PCBs that can be found in the fish's tissue. It seems the only way we can continue to live with bluefin

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Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that organic tobacco production is booming in the U.S.? And are cigarettes made from



Atlantic bluefin tuna, popular as sushi, are in danger of going extinct within a decade if the governments of the world cannot come together to ban catching and/or selling the lucrative species." Yusuke Kawasaki, courtesy Flickr."

tuna and so many other at-risk marine wildlife species is to live without them on our dinner plates.

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organic tobacco any healthier for smokers? -- Nanci R., Petaluma, CA

To say business is booming would be an exaggeration, but it is true that many American tobacco farmers are beginning to transition to organic growing methods. Given the hard times growers have faced in recent decades—most

Americans now revile smoking and farmers in other countries can produce higher volumes for substantially less cost—going organic is one way to keep charging premium prices. While growing organically costs more and yields a slightly less marketable product, farmers can make up the difference and then some since their organic tobacco will command double the price of their competitors' conventionally grown, chemical-laden variety.

Companies like Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company and Organic Smoke, Inc., for example, are willing to pay this premium for the privilege of marketing the resulting "natural" cigarettes—which also avoid the chemical fillers and even extra nicotine of the standard smoke—as friendlier to the environment. Of course, buyers beware: No cigarette is good for you, whether it contains organic tobacco or not. If you have to smoke, a so-called "natural" cigarette will expose you to fewer toxins overall, but the primary risk still comes from the inhaled carcinogenic smoke of the burning tobacco leaves.

For its part, Santa Fe, maker of the American Spirit brand of "natural" cigarettes, has seen sales increase 10 percent yearly over the last decade to the point where its sales account for about 0.6 percent of the total U.S. cigarette market. During its first year of business two decades ago, Santa Fe bought and processed 4,000 pounds of organic tobacco. In 2008, the company processed two million pounds. Upwards of 100 different farms spread across the U.S., Canada and Brazil now provide Santa Fe with organic tobacco leaf.

Besides buying only organic tobacco and eschewing chemical fillers, the company walks the socially responsible talk, too, powering its facilities with clean energy, extending benefits to same-sex domestic partners, and donating funds and volunteer time to the clean-up of New Mexico's Santa Fe River.

But what even some of its own customers may not know—you won't find it on the packaging—is that Santa Fe's profits are all going toward the bottom line of its corporate parent, Reynolds American, an outgrowth of longtime leading cigarette maker R.J. Reynolds, purveyor of such esteemed conventional brands as Camel, Winston and Salem. Reynolds American, which today sells one out of every three cigarettes sold in the U.S., rolled up Santa Fe as part of a major reorganization in 2004 and has been reaping the benefits of the growth in sales of cigarettes made with organic tobacco ever since.

Growing organic tobacco also benefits the burgeoning organic farming business overall: "Organic certification allows the growth of other high-value seasonal crops, which can demand a premium price on the ever-expanding organic market," Santa Fe's leaf director, Fielding Daniel, told the trade publication Tobacco Farm Quarterly, adding that growers are heartened by this new and profitable market and worry less about the cost of, and risk of mishandling, synthetic chemicals.

CONTACTS: Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company, www.sntc.com; Organic Smoke, Inc., www.organic-smoke.com; Tobacco Farm Quarterly, www.tobaccofarmquarterly.com.

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From Page 5 Any Which Way

ko naman kung sino s'ya at kung sinu-sino ang kanyang mga kasama. Ah, huwag na lang, baka mahabla pa tayo ng paninirang-puri kahit wala na naman silang puring masisira!

FRED FINALLY ADMITS HE'S RESPONSIBLE

For the last several months until a few days before Christmas, I had been trying hard to make Magallanes acknowledge that the Quebec Press Council found him guilty of irresponsibility in journalism. Applying a little psychological warfare, I deliberately exaggerated the number of his convictions from "one" to "several" just to ferret out the truth from the horse's mouth. But he proved to be very elusive and wouldn't even mention it in his articles until the December 2010 Filipino Forum. He finally admitted, albeit begrudgingly, that he was indeed reprimanded by the Quebec Press Council in 2005 for irresponsibility in journalism. However, he took pain in qualifying the Press Council's decision by insisting that he was reprimanded only once and not more than that, and only when he wrote something unfavorable about Salvador Cabugao, a former Philippines honorary consul for Montreal.

What Magallanes wrote in his December 2010 article was only a tiny bit of the whole truth. Firstly, he was not merely reprimanded but was found guilty of breach of journalistic ethics. Secondly, he was found guilty not only because of what he wrote about Cabugao but also, and more importantly, because of the myriad other untruths he wrote about many things and many other people. For example, he told the Press Council: "Whenever de la Paz does something

good, I write it in the paper." On closer examination, though, the Press Council found out that it was a lie. Among other things, here's what Magallanes actually wrote: "The park on Clanranald for which James successfully lobbied to be renamed after Dr. Jose Rizal was small, and it was a place where dogs can defecate on." Obviously, Magallanes, for a reason of his own, tried to minimize James' accomplishment rather than extol it.

Fraud Crass Magallanes appealed and tried to talk the Press Council into reversing its decision. For that purpose, he wrote this memorable line that may be haunting him now: "Once a writer is caught lying, that is the beginning of his end." The Press Council didn't buy his indirect plea for leniency. So, in September 2005, his appeal was unsurprisingly denied.

It does not matter whether Magallanes was found guilty of breach of journalistic ethics one or five times. The bottom line is that the decision of the Press Council has put to rest lingering question whether Magallanes is an irresponsible journalist or not.

(Readers' comments are welcome. E-mail address: badosarmiento@yahoo.com)

Opening of the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Sports Centre: A \$15-million investment in the heart of Benny Farm

Montréal, Friday, January 14, 2011 – Gérard Tremblay, Mayor of Montréal, and Michael Applebaum, Mayor of Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (CDN—NDG) borough, today inaugurated the brand-new Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Sports

Centre, located at 6445 avenue Monkland, just steps from Benny Farm. Also attending the event were Raymond Bachand, Québec Minister of Finance, Minister of Revenue, Minister Responsible for the Montréal region and MNA for Outremont, and Kathleen Weil, Québec Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities and MNA for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

"This Sports Centre is an important facility being added to a neighbourhood that is fast being revitalized," Mayor Tremblay stated. "The entire community, and families in particular, will benefit from a modern complex that will be accessible 12 months a year."

For his part, Mr. Applebaum said: "With this new infrastructure, we are guaranteeing high-quality local services to our residents, as well as encouraging the young and young-at-heart alike to partake in physical activity in a healthy environment. With this achievement, we are also helping to build bridges between generations and promoting the establishment of a closer-knit, more united social fabric in the very heart of a neighbourhood with

Minister Eric Hoskins Speaks Out Against Federal Funding Cuts To Immigration And Settlement.

By Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ontario's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

Ontario is fighting a federal government decision to cut \$44 million from 35 community agencies that help new Canadians get job-ready and strengthen Ontario's economy.

Before the holidays, ten Toronto-based community agencies received a letter from the Federal Government informing them that they would lose 100 percent of their funding. 25 others are facing significant cuts. This decision was made unilaterally by the federal government, without consultation or warning.

The impact of these cuts on both newcomers and the community agencies that serve them are devastating. Not only will hundreds of dedicated settlement workers—many of whom are immigrants themselves—lose their jobs, tens of thousands of new Canadians will lose access to the vital services they need to succeed and contribute to our economy. These

a rich history."

Completion of this new sports facility, built at a cost of \$15 million, is the result of a partnership between the Ville de Montréal (\$3 million), the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (\$5 million from its support program for sports and recreational facilities) and the borough of Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (\$7 million). The Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Sports Centre is equipped with two pools accessible 12 months a year (a six-lane, 25-metre pool and a multipurpose pool) as well as a gymnasium, a weight-training room and two multipurpose rooms.

Citizens of Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce who wish to visit the new Centre can do so starting tomorrow, Saturday, January 15, from noon to 4 p.m., and also on Sunday, January 16, during the same hours.

Registration for the various activities will be held from January 17 to 19. The start of regular activities is scheduled for January 24. To find out more, please consult the borough website at www.ville.montreal.qc.ca/cdn-ndg.

federal cuts – if not reversed – will hurt Ontario's economic recovery and, ultimately, Ontario's future prosperity.

Immediately upon learning of these cuts, I organized an urgent meeting with the affected community agencies. They told me that the federal cuts mean that they will have to lay-off settlement workers who help immigrants in their own language, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Amharic, Tagalog, Spanish, and others. These cuts mean more than jobs lost; they mean that immigrants speaking those languages will effectively be cut-off from services that will help them integrate into Ontario's economy.

In total, Minister Jason Kenney and the federal government are cutting nearly \$44 million from settlement agencies in Ontario, and \$53 million nationwide. This funding is used to support language training programs, job search, mentorship, and other programs that help newcomers integrate into Ontario's economy, with many of them going on to start their own businesses, creating new jobs to

See Page 23 Minister Hoskins

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COMMUNITY NEWS

An affair to remember for the godchildren of Benjie and Maggie



Seated, from left - Ray Odulio, Benjie Calcetas (the Ninong), Danny Cambia, Budz Sarmiento and Jun Contaoe. Standing, from left - Al Abdon, Remy Eugenio (holding grandson Ethan Samuels), Josue Agustin, Jr., Virgilio Pablo, Napoleon Morales, Lindbergh Borja, Ted Calcetas, Leon Padida, Jericho Espiritu (holding son Remy)

Blessed with an uncharacteristically warm temperature, the godchildren of Benjie Calcetas and Maggie Belleza Calcetas had a delectable, lip-smacking lunch together

vegetation would when devoured by a swarm of locusts.

At ten months old, Ethan Samuels was the youngest among those who were present. He is the son of



Seated, from left - Letty B. Eugenio, Linda P. Agustin, Karen T. Claveria, Alexandra C. Sarmiento, Joy A. Jorja, Daphny H. Odulio and Michelle H. Odulio. Standing, from left - Connie A. Fernandez, Melanie Eugenio-Samuels, Maggie B. Calcetas (the Ninang), Evelyn R. Barlizo, Cherry P. Cambia, Lily D. Padida, Zeny F. Kharroubi, Eires E. Espiritu (holding her baby Jerica), Mierfe H. Morales and Cora B. Pablo

at Cuisine de Manille on January 8, 2011. The reunion of "mga kinakapatid" and their respective families was a howling success, so successful that the event was extended by at least an hour.

The highlight of the event was the joint celebration of all the January-born among the participants, namely Michelle H. Odulio (January 3), Alexandra C. Sarmiento (January 4), Katherine T. Claveria (January 6), and Raymundo Odulio (January 23).

A brainchild of the doting godparents, the four celebrants shared a large cake baked by Connie Fernandez. The cake was so moist and delicious that it disappeared as fast as crops and

Andrew Samuels and Melanie Eugenio, and the grandson of Remy and Letty Eugenio. While Ethan did not mind having his true age revealed, nobody among the adults was keen and courageous enough to admit who the oldest one was.

Mrs. Zeny F. Kharroubi, the publisher and chief editor of the North American Filipino Star, was the guest of honor.

After the get-together, many of the participants did some groceries at the Marche Coop which is just a few stairs right below the restaurant.

Winners of the Biblioclip competition



Left to right: Zoey François, 2nd Prize winner in the secondary school category of the Biblioclip contest, Xia Jie He, 3rd winner in the contest, and Helen Fotopulos, Ville de Montréal Executive Committee Member Responsible for Culture, Heritage, Design and the Status of Women

Helen Fotopulos, Ville de Montréal Executive Committee Member Responsible for Culture, Heritage, Design and the Status of Women and Councillor for the Côte-des-Neiges District, had the pleasure of presenting the 2nd and 3rd prizes in the secondary school category of the Biblioclip competition to two residents of the Borough of Côte-des-Neiges—

Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. Entrants in the competition, run by the Réseau des bibliothèques publiques de Montréal, had to create a short video (running time 30 to 90 seconds) on the theme "Bibliothèque Monde" ("The Library and the World"). All of the winning videos can be viewed on the competition's web page at www.biblioclip.com.

More chess tournaments for aspiring grand masters

The Fil-Can Chess and Social Club (FCCSC) has announced that it will hold more tournaments in the weekends of January 22-23 and 29-30, 2011 at the Fireside Steakhouse at 4759 Van Horne where all future games may be held until the Club has found a permanent venue.

More chess-enthusiasts from all levels of ability are expected to sign up to this mentally-challenging two-player board game.

At the CDN/NDG Borough Council Meeting held at 5151 Cote St.

Catherine Road on January 17, 2011, Albert Floresca, president of FCCSC, thanked the Borough Council, particularly Borough Mayor Michael Applebaum and Councillor Marvin Rotrand, for authorizing the payment of a one-time financial contribution of \$1000.00 to the nascent association to help it organize creative activities for 2011.

The FCCSC has more than 100 members to date, and growing.

Contributed by Alberto Baens Santos



FCCSC President Alberto Floresca during the Q & A at the CDN/NDG Borough Council on 17 January 2011 at 5151 Cote Ste. Catherine Road, Montreal.

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Wikang Pambansa: Nanganganib na Sari (Blg. 3)

Sa pagpapatuloy ng pagsusuri, "Ang pagbabago ng alpabeto ay dapat lang samahan ng angkop na rebisyon sa mga tuntunin sa paggamit ng alpabetong ito. Sentral sa mga pagbabagong ito ang nauukol sa paggamit ng walong dagdag na letra, ang pinakamatingkad na manifestasyon ng modernisasyon at intelektuwalisasyon ng Filipino, bagaman, siya ring ugat ng maraming kalituhan at debateng pangwika. Ang 1976 Tuntunin, ang 1987 Patnubay at 2001 Revisyon ay dapat na tingnan bilang patuloy na pagsisikap na ayusin at pinuhin, gawing kapaki-pakinabang at katanggap-tanggap ang mga gabay sa pagbabaybay lalo na ang nauukol sa walong dagdag na letra."

"Sa pinakahuling rebisyon, halimbawa, pinaluluwag ang paggamit ng walong dagdag na letra. Ano ang kahulugan nito? Sa 1976 Tuntunin at 1987 Patnubay, nalilimitahan ang paggamit ng mga dagdag na letra sa pagbabaybay ng mga (1) katutubong salita mula sa iba't ibang wika sa Pilipinas, (2) salitang pang-agham at teknikal, (3) mga simbolong pang-agham at (4) mga salitang Ingles at iba pang banyagang wika na makabubuting pansamantalang hiram sa orihinal na anyo tulad sa kaso ng mga salitang malayo na ang ispelang kung sakaling baybayin ayon sa alpabetong Filipino. Sinasabing maluwag ang 2002 Revisyon dahil, bukod sa nabanggit na kondisyon, pinagagamit na rin ang walong

dagdag na letra maging sa pagbabaybay ng mga (1) salitang may internasyonal na anyong nakikilala at ginagamit, at (2) lahat ng hiram na salita, anuman ang varayti nito, kasama ang hindi pormal at hindi teknikal na varayti, o iyong tinatawag na karaniwang salita."

"Isang mahalagang konsepto sa rebisyong ito ang paghahati ng mga dagdag na letra sa dalawang pangkat: iyong may ponemikong katangian gaya ng F, J, V at Z, at iyong may kinakatawang higit pa sa isang tunog tulad ng C, N, Q at X. Sa pagbabaybay ng mga hiram na salita sa Filipino, gagamitin lamang ang mga letrang may ponemikong katangian. Sa ganitong paraan, napapanatili ang halos ganap na ponemikong katangian ng dating 20 letrang abakada. Batay sa ganitong tuntunin, madaling pasyahan kung paano babaybayin halimbawa ang figurasyon, fragmentasyon, formalismo, fetisismo, familyarisasyon, sabjek, vernakular, volyum, varayti, variedad, voltahe, zoolohiya at iba pang espesyalisadong terminong hinihiram o inaangkin natin sa Filipino. Gaya ng mahihiwatigan sa mga halimbawang salita, ang bagong tuntunin ay higit na mapakikinabangan sa mas matataas na lebel ng pag-aaral, sa antas na higit na kailangan ang panghihiram ng mga konsepto bunsod na rin ng mga espesyalisasyon ng kaalaman."

"Ang kontrobersiyal sa bagong tuntunin ay ang tungkol sa mga hiram na salita na dati nang binago ang

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Sariling Wika

Common mistakes and confusing words in English

By Bernardo Sarmiento

run amok vs. run amuck

We've all heard people criticize parents who permit their children to run amok in public places. Or do those badly brought up children run amuck?

The first recorded use of the phrase to run amok in English dates from the 1670s. The word amok is from Malay amuk, "attacking furiously." The expression as we use it now usually means "to run about in a wild manner." As a noun, amok can mean "a murderous frenzy."

Before the phrase came into use, the word was used in its Portuguese form amouco or amuco to mean "a frenzied Malay."

The OED points out two uses by Dryden and Byron in which the word was used erroneously (without the prefix a-):

And runs an Indian muck at all he meets. - Dryden
Thy waiters running mucks at every bell. - Byron

A web search shows plenty of examples of both amok and amuck. There's a blog with the title "Running Amuck," and a 5K race called the "RunAmuck Mud Run."

Here are some other examples:

People who permit their children to run amuck in places of business should be locked in a cage with an angry gorilla.

HOAs are a good idea run amok

As a caregiver, plaintiff has allowed the children to run amok in neighborhoods where they lived.

So which is the "correct" spelling?

Writing in the first half of the last century, H. W. Fowler preferred amuck. He classed the spelling amok, along with sati and Khalif for the more familiar spellings suttee and Caliph, as a "didacticism."

Dictionary devotees whose devotion extends to the etymologies think it bad for the rest of us to be connecting amuck with muck, & come to our rescue with amok.

On the eve of the year 2010, however, the spelling amok seems to have won. A web search gives amuck

694,000 hits; amok garners 4,350,000.

wait for vs. await

The first difference is in the grammatical structures that are associated with these two verbs.

The verb 'await' must have an object - for example, 'I am awaiting your answer'. And the object of 'await' is normally inanimate, not a person, and often abstract. So you can't say, 'John was awaiting me'.

The verb 'wait' can come in different structures. Firstly, you can just use 'wait' on its own: 'We have been waiting and waiting and waiting and nobody has come to talk to us.'

Another structure that is very common is to use 'wait' with another verb - for example, 'I waited in line to go into the theatre.'

Very often, with 'wait', you mention the length of time that you have been waiting - for example, 'I have been waiting here for at least half an hour.'

Finally, speakers often mention what or who they have been waiting for - so, if a friend was really late you could say, 'I have been waiting for you for two hours!'

The other difference between the two verbs, 'wait' and 'await', is the level of formality. 'Await' is more formal than 'wait' - it would be used in formal letters, for example.

If you want a tip about using these two verbs, I would suggest that you should use 'wait for'; use 'await' only in cases where you are absolutely sure that you have heard good users of the language using it, and in cases where things are quite formal.

fine with me vs. fine by me

What's the difference between "fine with me" and "fine by me?" A quick answer would be - not a lot. Both obviously mean I accept that/I agree with that. Possibly and maybe here I'm simply looking for a distinction, with me is more personal than by me. If, say among friends, you agree to accept a plan/arrangement, you would say: That's fine with me.

If the government has agreed to

See Page 11 Common mistakes



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Al Abdon



What we got in 2010 - The Apple iPad

When Apple introduced the iPad in the US in April 2010 many computer geeks and Techno Freaks approached this tablet with skepticism and suspicion. I for one felt that this device wouldn't survive a year or two. But the product made a breakthrough into Mac World magazine and even PC magazine took notice. To satisfy my curiosity, I visited an Apple store in Plattsburgh, NY because during that time iPad was not available in Canada. I tried all its Apps (there were few then) and made comparison with other devices (w/o 3G). I was amazed how easy it is to browse and utilized their friendly applications. That is when I was convinced that this tablet has a future for a long time. No wonder it sold 80 million devices in just 80 days.

The iPad is a tablet computer designed, developed and marketed by Apple primarily as a platform for audio-visual media including books, periodicals, movies, music, games, and web content. At about 1.5 pounds, similar to the weight of smartphones and small laptop computers.

According to a report released by Strategy Analytics, the Apple iPad had gained a 95 percent share of Tablet PC sales at the end of second quarter 2010. During the second quarter 2010, Apple had sold 4.19 million iPads around the world.

The iPad runs the same operating system as the iPod Touch and iPhone—and can run its own

applications as well as iPhone applications.

Like iPhone and iPod Touch, the iPad is controlled by a multi-touch display—a departure from most previous tablet computers, which used a pressure-triggered stylus as well as a virtual onscreen keyboard in lieu of a physical keyboard. The iPad uses a WiFi data connection to browse the Internet, load and stream media, and install software. Some models also have a 3G wireless data connection which can connect either Telus, Rogers or Bell Network. The device is managed and synced by iTunes on a personal computer via USB cable.

Description

The iPad's touchscreen display is a 9.7 in (25 cm) liquid crystal display (1024 x 768 pixels) with finger print



resistant and scratch-resistant glass. Although you can buy an extra protective sheet for \$12. Like the iPhone, the iPad is designed to be controlled by bare fingers and not normal gloves, that prevent electrical conductivity.

The display responds to two other sensors: an ambient light sensor to adjust screen brightness and a 3-axis accelerometer to sense iPad orientation and switch between portrait and landscape modes which I find cool!. Unlike the iPhone and iPod touch built-in applications, which work in three orientations (portrait, landscape-left and landscape-right), the iPad built-in applications support screen rotation in all four orientations.

In total there are four physical switches on the iPad, including a home button below the display that returns the user to the main menu, and three plastic physical switches on the sides: wake/sleep and volume up/down, plus a third which, acts as a mute switch. Initially this switch was utilized to lock out the screen rotation function (reportedly to prevent unintended rotation when the user is lying down). However, with the update, this functionality was removed and rotation lock is now controlled with a software toggle via the iOS task switcher.

The iPad uses an internal rechargeable lithium-ion Polymer (LiPo). The batteries are made in Taiwan and Dynapack Technology. The iPad is designed to be charged with a high current (2 amperes) using the included USB 10-watt power adapter. While it can be charged by a standard USB port from a computer, these are limited to 500

milliamperes (half an amp). As a result, if the iPad is turned on while connected to a normal USB computer port, it may charge much more slowly, or not at all. High-power USB ports found in newer Apple computers and accessories provide full charging capabilities.

Apple claims that the iPad's battery can provide up to 10 hours of video, 140 hours of audio playback, or one month on standby. Like any battery technology, the iPad's LiPo battery loses capacity over time, but is not designed to be user-replaceable.

The iPad was released with three options for internal storage size: a 16, 32, or 64 GB flash drive. All data is stored on the flash drive and there is no option to expand storage. Apple sells a camera connection kit with an SD Card reader, but it can only be used to transfer photos and videos.

The side of the Wi-Fi 3G model has a micro-sim slot (not mini-sim). Unlike the iPhone, which is usually sold locked to specific carriers, the 3G iPad is sold unlocked and can be used with any compatible carrier.

The way I look at it, iPad is an iPhone without a telephone.

In the Philippines especially, Manila and suburbs, iPads are popularly used by business travelers and balikbayans alike. Give them a try and you'll see how it works wonders. They are available in Apple store, BestBuy and FutureShop in Canada.

Cheers!

Al Abdon
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From Page 9 Sariling Dila

Sa pagpapatuloy ng pagsusuri Filipino. Sa 2001 Revisyon, ang mga salitang ito ay mananatili ngunit ituturing lamang na lehitimongvaryant ng ispelang. Tinatanaw ang panahon na ang mga salitang ito ay magiging makaluma, hindi karaniwan at diyalektal. Halimbawa rito ang salitang pabrika, pamilya, paborito, posporo, prutas, baka, bakasyon, baso, bintana, Biyernes, sapatos, at iba pa. Marami ang naniniwala na na dapat na itong manatili lalo't napalahok na ang mga ito sa isang mapagkakatiwalaang diksiyonaryo. Kung hindi magkakaroon ng mas malinaw na tuntunin, maaaring magresulta ito ng mas maraming kalituhan at sigalot." (Prof. G. S. Zafra)

Matutunghayan sa susunod at katapusang labas ng pagsusuring ito kung bakit pinamagatan ko ang mga artikulong ito ng ganoon. Hindi lamang ang mga pagpipilit ng mga kabataan tulad ng bagong usong wikang Jejemon at pagbabalikwas ng mga panlapi sa mga kataga noong araw ang sanhi ng nanganganib na sari: ang Wikang Pambansa. Hindi rin nakapagtataka na ang survey na ginawa sa bungad ng paksang ito ay nagdulot ng napakababang resulta.

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From Page 9 Common mistakes

raise taxes and you agree that this is acceptable, you would say; that's fine by me.

data vs. datum

This isn't so much a common mistake as a common cause for arguments (as is often the case with words of Latin origin).

The dictionaries treat data as a group noun, meaning information, especially facts or numbers, collected for examination and consideration and used to help decision-making, or meaning information in an electronic form that can be stored and processed by a computer. Then they go on to confuse matters by giving the following kind of example:- The data was/were reviewed before publishing. So, which is it, was or were? Strictly speaking 'datum' is the singular form and 'data' is the plural form. If you're writing for an academic audience, particularly in the sciences, 'data' takes a plural verb.

For example:- The data are correct. But most people treat 'data' as a singular noun, especially when talking about computers etc.

For example:- The data is being transferred from my computer to yours. And I have to be honest, I've never heard anyone ask for a datum.

enquire vs. inquire

There is a very simple answer here - there is no difference in meaning. The spelling with 'e' is British, the spelling with 'i' is North American. The same goes for the nouns, 'inquiry' and 'enquiry'.

There are of course other differences in spelling between American and British English. The most common ones are words that end with 'our' in British English and are spelled 'or' in American English - labour (labor), honour (honor), and so on. Another common difference is words that end in 're' in British English and are spelled with 'er' in American English - theatre, centre.

And finally, words that end with - 'ize' in American English and are often spelled with - 'ise' in British English - sympathise, criticise, and so on.

Luckily, my spell checker accepts both!

if vs. whether

We use both 'if' and 'whether' in indirect questions, so you could say, 'I don't know if she's coming', or, 'I don't know whether she's coming'.

But in some circumstances we can only use 'whether'. For example, before infinitives with 'to', we only use 'whether'. We say, 'I don't know whether to tell him', but you wouldn't say, 'I don't know if to tell him'.

We also only use 'whether' after prepositions. So we say, 'We had a long discussion about whether to go by car or by train'. We couldn't use 'if' in that sentence.

We also prefer 'whether' when the clause beginning with 'whether' is a subject or a complement. So you say, 'Whether you are agree or not makes no difference to me'. (The 'whether you agree or not' is the subject of that sentence.) We use 'whether' with 'or'. So we say, for example, 'I didn't know whether I should laugh or cry'. Now some people who think

pass this important legislation without delay and before further boats turn up on Canadian shores."

For more information, please visit: www.publicsafety.gc.ca.

Statement by Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff and Liberal MP for Mount Royal Irwin Cotler on the attack of five Jewish institutions in Montreal

OTTAWA – Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff made the following statement today on the attack of five Jewish institutions in Montreal:

"The attacks on four synagogues and a Jewish school in Montreal on Sunday were hateful and systematic acts, and represent an attack on an entire religious community. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jewish communities across Canada who once again feel that their congregations and the children in their schools have cause to fear for their own safety.

"The government must do more beyond short term projects to help provide adequate safety and security provisions for religious communities, and it must work closely with the RCMP and CSIS so hate crimes in Canada can be eradicated once and for all."

Liberal Human Rights Critic Irwin Cotler, as Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism which just concluded its second international conference in Ottawa last November, and as the MP representing the constituency where the five institutions were attacked,

that there are correct and incorrect ways of speaking English think that you shouldn't use 'whether' with 'or', but actually most people these days do use it. And lastly, 'whether' does tend to be more formal than 'if' so then in the cases where you could use 'whether' or 'if', if you are speaking more formally, you would probably use 'whether'.

can vs. could

This is a common area for questions, as these verbs can have several functions. Without going into too much detail, I'm going to try and illustrate the key uses for you.

Firstly, we use 'can' for something that is possible or to show that somebody has the ability to do something in the present and future. For example:

We can see the park from our house. Or: Ella can speak fluent Japanese.

The negative here is 'can't'...as in: He can't swim very well. In this case, 'could' is generally used as the past form of 'can'. So, Ella could speak fluent Japanese when she was young, and she can speak several other languages now too. Or: When I was a child I could run fast.

We use 'could' for general past ability, but be a little bit careful here, because when we're talking about what happened in a particular situation, we tend to use 'was/were able to' for past ability instead:

For example: The fire spread quickly, but luckily everybody was able to escape.

We also use 'could' to talk about possible actions now and in the future -

here the function is possibility (not ability) - and this is what tends to cause the confusion around these words. For example, if you are expecting some friends to visit, but they have been delayed, you might say 'they could arrive at any time now', or if you're trying to make progress with your work you might ask 'Could we talk to the boss again? For this function of possibility, we need to watch out for the past form, as this doesn't work in exactly the same way. If we want to express past possibility, we need to use could + have and the past participle (have done, have been etc). Let's imagine you've received a letter or card from a mystery admirer, and you're trying to work out who sent it to you. As the sending happened in the past, we are speculating about a past possibility. 'John could have sent it' but perhaps 'James could have written it'...we are not sure who, but think there are some possibilities.

Finally, let's look at how we commonly use can/could in question forms to make requests (or ask for things). If we go shopping for clothes, we might ask 'can/could I try that dress on please?' or 'could I see those shoes in blue.' Here, either 'can' or 'could' may be used without significant difference. The only thing worth noting is that in terms of register, that is (style and formality), 'could' is considered slightly more formal or polite.

So, to recap, three of the main functions for 'can/could' are to talk about: ability, possibility (with the change in the past form to remember) and for requests.

Minister Toews updates Canadians on efforts to prevent human smugglers from abusing Canada's immigration system

Vancouver, January 19, 2011

— Today, the Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety, reiterated the urgency of passing the Harper Government's bill Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act, following new information which suggests that several syndicated criminal networks are organizing migrant smuggling ventures potentially destined for Canada.

"We see that Canada is a target for increasingly sophisticated global human smuggling networks and further action is needed now. Our message is clear: Canada opens its doors to those who work hard and play by the rules, while cracking down on those who seek to take advantage of our generosity."

The Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act would complement existing efforts by Canadian law enforcement to prevent human smuggling operations before they leave for Canada. This legislation would strengthen Canada's ability to prosecute human smugglers, deter those who would seek to jump the queue, and maintain the integrity and fairness of our immigration system.

"Canadians have spoken loud and clear regarding the abuse of our generous immigration system by human smugglers: it has to stop," continued Minister Toews. "As such, we call on all members of Parliament to

added:

"The concerted assault on Jewish religious, educational and communal institutions – targeted precisely because they are Jewish – constitutes a clear anti-Semitic hate crime.

"On Raoul Wallenberg Day in Canada – a day set aside to reflect and act upon the heroism of Canada's first honorary citizen, a man who stood up, confronted and combated the worst of hatred and prevailed – these attacks should act as a call to mobilize against the forces of hatred and anti-Semitism."

Decarie Boulevard scheduled to close January 24, 2011

The City of Montreal has announced that Decarie Boulevard to through traffic between Saint Jacques Street and Maisonneuve Boulevard will be closed on January 24 to permit the construction of 3.6-meter collector sewer.

One southbound traffic lane will remain open on Decarie Boulevard, between Crowley Avenue and Saint Jacques Street, to allow for local traffic and MUHC trucks.

Customers, merchants, and residents who wish to access Decarie Boulevard must do so via Prud'homme and Crowley Avenues or, as well, Upper Lachine Road and Crowley Avenue (new access).

Significant work will also be done during the next five (5) months at the intersection of Saint Jacques Street and Decarie Boulevard. This underground infrastructure work will consist of the construction of water

mains and sewers and their associated works as well as the reconstruction of the pavement and sidewalks. More specific information regarding the impact of this work will be communicated shortly.

Information about the project is available online at the montreal.qc.ca/chantiers and by subscribing to the RSS feed. You may also call info-travaux at 514-872-3777 between 8:30 and 4:30 p.m. or email info-travaux@ville.montreal.qc.ca and get updates on Twitter at twitter.com/Mtl_Circulation.

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The North American Filipino Star Photo Gallery



Part of the crowd who went shopping at Marché Coop after the get-together party of the Calcetas family and close friends.



Maggie Calcetas read the agenda, introduced everyone and led the prayer before the buffet lunch.



From left, Maggie Calcetas, Al Abdon and Daphny Odullo posing for souvenir of their shopping trip to Marché Coop, January 8, 2011.



Al Abdon (partly hidden), Mierfe Morales and Napoleon Morales. Magnolia Camat (back to the camera) is busy working on the cash register while others wait for their turn.

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Dinengdeng (mixed vegetables)



Dinengdeng (also called inabraw) is a dish of the Ilocano people of the Philippines, similar to pinakbet. It is classified as a bagoong soup based dish. Unlike pinakbet, dinengdeng contains fewer vegetables and contains more bagoong soup base.

The dish contains the following vegetables: jute leaves, the pods and leaves of the horseradish tree, the leaves and fruits of bitter melon, the calabaza squash and blossoms, alakon blossoms, amaranth leaves, sweet potato tubers and leaves, kabatiti gourd, string beans and shoots, talinum, chayote squash and shoots, chili peppers, banana blossoms, corn, West-Indian pea blossoms, tabungaw gourd, winter melon, eggplant, okra, winged bean, parda beans, lima beans, various mushrooms like oyster mushrooms, whole taro, cassava tubers, purple yams, and wild potatoes.

Some add leftover fried fish, or

other meats, to the dish
DINENGDENG INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup rice washing
- 2 cups squash, cubed
- 4 medium-size, tomatoes, quartered
- 1 cup patani (local beans)
- 2 cups malunggay fruit, skinned then sliced into 1/2-inch lengths
- 2 medium-size eggplants
- 1 ampalaya (bitter melon), sliced into

squares
1 bangus (milkfish), fried or broiled

DINENGDENG PROCEDURES

1. Pour the rice washing in a pot.
2. Add the squash, tomatoes and patani. Bring to a boil.
3. Allow the vegetables and rice washing to simmer for 5 minutes more. Add the rest of the vegetables.
4. Adjust eh seasoning if needed. Allow to simmer for several more minutes.
5. Add the fish. Simmer for 2 more minutes.



La Paz Batchoy

Batchoy's true origin is inconclusive. Documented accounts include the following:

* The dish was concocted in the La Paz market in 1938 by Federico Guillergan, Sr.[2] His recipe called for a mixture of broth, noodles, beef and pork. The soup later evolved into its present form which has become Iloilo City's most popular dish. Federico Guillergan, Jr., the son of the soup's inventor, states that his father at first jokingly called the dish "bats" when asked for its name. Later, he added "choy", from the vegetable dish chopsuey.[3]

* Teodorico Lepura opened his first batchoy shop at the La Paz public market in 1945. Run by Lepura, his wife and their children, the shop sold the original La Paz batchoy at that time priced at 20 centavos per bowl. In the 1930's, as a teenager, Lepura learned the basics of making La Paz batchoy while working for a Chinese merchant, and eventually concocted his own

version of the dish.

* Other sources state that the dish originated from the Chinese community in La Paz.

Preparation

Ingredients include pork organs (liver, spleen, kidneys and heart) crushed pork cracklings, vegetables, shrimp, beef loin, shrimp broth, chicken stock and round noodles or miki. The noodles are similar to spaghetti, but are generally a bit finer.

Oil is heated in a stock-pot. The pork organs, shrimp, chicken and beef are stir-fried for about a minute. Soy sauce is then added. The shrimp is

then added and left to simmer for a few minutes. This broth is then added to a bowl of noodles and topped with leeks, pork cracklings (chicharon) and sometimes a raw egg is cracked on top.

Eating

Most Filipinos eat the soup using spoon and fork, although it may undoubtedly be eaten using chopsticks as well. The solid ingredients (noodles and meat) are generally consumed first, the liquid broth rounds out the meal. Diners are encouraged to ask for a second, third, or even a fourth helping of kaldo (Hiligaynon, "broth").



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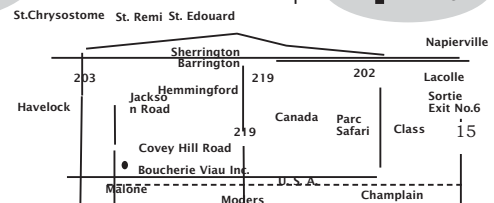
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Aquino for Roxas in 2016? Palace denies endorsement



Manuel Roxas II (left) & Pres. Aquino

When is an endorsement not an endorsement? Apparently when it is made by the President.

President Benigno Aquino III on Thursday said that it was too early for him to be making political endorsements, even as he had told his Liberal Party mates the night before that his defeated running mate, former Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, might be his successor in 2016.

Television news reports said Mr. Aquino had endorsed Roxas for the presidency in 2016 during the Malacañang party marking the Liberal Party's 65th anniversary on Wednesday night.

But the President said in a text message to the Philippine Daily Inquirer that "endorsements at this point are too early."

Communications Secretary Ricky Carandang said he spoke to Mr. Aquino and asked him about his reported endorsement of Roxas.

The President, according to Carandang, admitted speaking to his party mates of an LP "beyond 2016."

"Malay ninyo come 2016 siya na ang umupo (For all you know come 2016 he will be taking over)," was what President Aquino had said in reference to Roxas, according to Carandang.

"The President raised the possibility that Sen. Mar Roxas might succeed him without explicitly endorsing him," said Carandang in a phone interview.

Mr. Aquino's kind words for Roxas came just hours after he had told reporters that he needed the former senator to help him with the many problems he was facing.

President Aquino said he wanted Roxas to assist him in taking care of "overlapping" problems besetting members of his Cabinet, including Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa Jr., problems that the President himself had to handle at times.

For his part, Roxas said he was ready to help Mr. Aquino. He also said that there should be no factions in Malacañang or this might spell trouble for the administration.

Roxas is said to head the Balay group of Aquino supporters, while another group, the Samar group, is reportedly led by Vice President Jejomar Binay and Sen. Francis Escudero.

Escudero campaigned for Binay, running mate of former President Joseph Estrada, instead of Roxas. Binay defeated Roxas.

Thursday, Ochoa welcomed the impending entry of Roxas to the administration.

Speaking on a television program that was also aired on government radio dzRB, Ochoa said that both he and the President "welcome all kinds of help that we can get" given the "Herculean task" faced by the presidency.

"There is no harm if eventually after the election ban... if he would be part of the Cabinet," he said of Roxas.

Ochoa, who is said to belong to the Samar group, said he believed the President would tap Roxas as an adviser as well as ask him to perform certain tasks for him.

"No single person, including the President, can really solve everything within a span of six years. So I think the President saw Senator Mar Roxas's expertise and will get his help," Ochoa said. ■

Miriam wants protection for online journalists, bloggers



Sen. Miriam Santiago

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago on Wednesday said online journalists and bloggers should be given the same kind of protection afforded to regular members of the broadcast and print media.

In a press statement, Santiago said online journalists and bloggers should be included in Senate Bill No. 455 seeking to protect journalists.

"There is no reason why only members of the broadcast and print media should be included in the proposed law. Due regard must also be given to practitioners of the 'digital media,' or those whose mode of communication is the internet and mobile phones," she said.

Santiago said the fast and accessible nature of the digital media has encouraged traditional print and broadcast media giants such as ABS-CBN, GMA, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the Philippine Star, and the Manila Bulletin to venture into their own websites and mobile phone programs to disseminate information.

"Many newspaper journalists also post socio-political commentaries using their own web-based journals," the senator said.

"Further, with the popularity of

blogs and video-sharing websites such as YouTube, there are now a lot of people who regularly post sensitive political commentaries online, with content similar to those traditionally published in newspapers or broadcasted over the television. Even though they are not traditionally referred to as members of the media, they may actually be exposed to the same dangers encountered by institutional media practitioners," Santiago explained.

Santiago cited as an example the case of Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks, who was reportedly subjected to harassment and threats after his website published sensitive and confidential information, including hundreds of thousands of US diplomatic cables.

The senator also cited the 2009 case of an online journalist in Russia who was forced to go into hiding after receiving threats for an article critical of the Russian government, which he published on his website.

"It is clear that practitioners of the digital media are exposed to the same dangers that print and broadcast media practitioners are exposed to, so they should likewise be given protection by the law," Santiago said.

Santiago proposed that the bill include in its scope all media practitioners in general. She said that media practitioners should include print journalists, television journalists, photojournalists, online journalists, radio journalists, novelists, screenwriters, playwrights, feature filmmakers, documentary makers, television production, professional photographers, professional videographers, and public relations contractors. ■

President Aquino defends Llamas appointment

President Benigno Aquino III on Thursday defended his decision to appoint Ronald Llamas as presidential adviser for political affairs.

He said Llamas, president of left-wing group Akbayan, will serve as a bridge between political parties and various sectors of society.

"He belongs to Akbayan, which is a major coalition partner," the President said in a text message to ABS-CBN News.

He said members of the ruling Liberal Party have other assignments they can focus on.

"Mr Llamas can devote full attention to this function enabling the others to concentrate on their core functions," Aquino explained.

He added that Llamas also needs to step down from his previous post as board member of the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Llamas' background

According to Akbayan, Llamas was a student activist at the University of Santo Tomas, where he studied

Journalism.

He headed the University Student Council and was a writer for the Faculty of Arts and Letters department publication and the university's official publication.



Ronald Llamas

Llamas later helped organized labor unions, urban poor communities, peasant groups, and other basic sector organizations.

He later served in various organizations such as the Center for Education and Research for Government Employees, the Center for Popular Empowerment, the Freedom from Debt Coalition, Institute of Politics and Governance, Center for Agrarian Reform and Transformation, and Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services, Inc.

Llamas, former University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo, and UP Sociology Professor Randy David co-founded social democratic group Bukluran sa Ikaunlad ng Sosyalistang Lipid at Gawa (BISIG).

"On top of these, he was a leading personality behind Laban ng Masa, a broad democratic left formation that fought the excesses of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," according to Akbayan.

'Beyond partisan ideological politics'

"We are honored by this pronouncement as it proves once more

the sincerity, intensity and expertise of our leaders and of our political party in working towards the fulfillment of our people's aspiration of a democratic and people-oriented government committed to reforms," the group said.

"The choice of a reputable progressive leader hailing from the democratic left shows that President Aquino can actually go beyond partisan ideological politics and extend its hand of solidarity to forces of change willing and fully committed to meaningfully contribute in the deepening of democracy, the eradication of corruption and the fulfillment of indispensable reforms," it added.

"It also displays that the democratic left is a serious and relevant political actor capable of making its mark on the political process and in becoming a significant force of change, contributing towards and firmly establishing the hegemony of the people's interest through participatory democracy and governance." ■

Aquino exposes rice scam

Just one person or group appeared to have earned a windfall when the outgoing Arroyo administration allowed the private sector to import 200,000 metric tons of rice last year, President Benigno Aquino III said on Wednesday.

The Philippines, the world's biggest rice importer, bought from abroad a total of 2.47 million metric tons of the grain for its requirements in 2010, an election year. The state-owned National Food Authority (NFA) imported the bulk of the country's staple.

"(Administrator Lito Banayo) is puzzled why the manager's checks of those who were given a chance to import came from only one bank," Mr. Aquino said on Wednesday in a speech at the 65th anniversary celebration of the Liberal Party.

Click here to find out more!
"And it allegedly doesn't stop there. The checks were in sequential order. It appears that only one group or one person benefited there," the President said.

He also said the volume of rice that the country imported last year was not only three times more than what was needed but was also overpriced.

Sought for comment on who or which group could have cornered the rice importation quota for the private sector, Mr. Aquino begged off from revealing any more information.

"Pasensya na (Sorry). We want to ensure the facts before we accuse anybody," the President said in a text message.

Asked how much money was covered by the checks that paid for the rice imported by private traders, Mr. Aquino said, "a more formal audit is currently being conducted."

"Once completed, we will inform all of you," he added in the text message.

Banayo wasn't immediately available for comment on Mr. Aquino's remarks.

First-come-first-served

In his report to Mr. Aquino last week, Banayo said the private importation deals were given to favored contractors supposedly through a questionable first-come-first-served scheme.

"Among the findings were: fictitious cooperatives and corporations were given the quotas, and qualifications standards were extremely liberal," Banayo said in his executive summary submitted to the President.

In the same report, Banayo said an audit of NFA importations during the Arroyo years showed that rice was overpriced by an average \$60 (\$\$76.86) per metric ton over 10 years.

In the last three years, Banayo said the overprice was \$125 per metric ton. Excessive, overpriced

The NFA chief said the huge overprice and excessive importation of rice pushed up the NFA debt to P177 billion. NFA losses largely stem from its sale of rice to the poor way below the actual cost.

"We bought more rice than what we needed in 2010. It was estimated that we needed 1.3 million tons of rice. That's why we imported more than two million tons of rice—almost 2.5 million tons," the President said in his speech Wednesday before his party mates.

The President said the authority to import was "times three of what was needed."

"What's painful is that the overprice was estimated at \$60 to \$125 compared with the benchmark prices of the (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)," he said.

"Just multiply the factors. My calculator can no longer handle it," he added, to show how huge the amount involved was.

During the global cereal crisis in 2008, huge Philippine importations of rice increased the cost of the grain on the international market. ■

It's going to be a rainy summer; no dry season

Summer is supposed to be the dry season in the Philippines. Not this year.

It's going to be a wet summer that will have typhoons due to the La Niña phenomenon that has been spawning rains in the Philippines since December, the weather bureau said.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said large parts of the country would get above-normal rainfall in the summer months of March, April and May.

Tropical cyclones

"This means that we expect to have a rainy summer. We expect to have tropical cyclones," Flaviana Hilario, chief of PAGASA's climatology and agrometeorology division.

She said weather models and advisories from various national meteorological centers forecast La Niña to last until May, with the peak occurring in February.

The months from March to May are considered the height of summer in the country, when millions troop to the beaches. These months are usually the driest months, with typhoons making an appearance only in mid-May.

Typhoons in March-May

Citing meteorological models, Hilario said there was a "slim chance" that a typhoon would enter the Philippine area of responsibility next month.

PAGASA expects one typhoon in March, two in April and another two in May. June, the start of the rainy season, is expected to have two to three typhoons, Hilario said.

La Niña arrived in the Philippines last October. The phenomenon, the opposite of El Niño, occurs when the surface temperature in the Pacific Ocean gets colder. El Niño refers to the increase in the surface temperature in the Pacific Ocean.

The Philippines will be under heavy cloud and will experience cooler temperatures in the next five days as a result of the combined effects of the tail end of the cold front and the northeast monsoon.

Five-day forecast

Robert Sawi, a PAGASA weather forecaster, said that "for the next five days, most parts of the country will be affected by the northeast monsoon." He said north and central Luzon would have rains on Thursday.

The skies will gradually improve on Friday, but the weekend will bring rains again, he said.

By Sunday, Sawi forecast that the cold front would prevail in Luzon, while the wind convergence zone will hover over Mindanao.

In the Western Pacific, La Niña results in stronger storms and heavier rains. This is evident in parts of Australia, specifically Queensland, where continuous rains have inundated coastal towns and cities.

The last time the Philippines experienced a severe La Niña was in 1998, after a harsh El Niño year.

Above-normal rainfall

The Philippines received "above-normal" rainfall in the summer months of 1998, Hilario said, noting that this scenario is expected to be repeated in 2011. ■

Death toll from Philippine floods hits 57

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"He belongs to Akbayan, which is a major coalition partner," the President said in a text message to ABS-CBN News.

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Journalism.

He headed the University Student Council and was a writer for the Faculty of Arts and Letters department publication and the university's official publication.



Residents watch as a vehicle traverses a flooded road in the town of Sto. Domingo, Albay province, southeast of Manila

Llamas later helped organized labor unions, urban poor communities, peasant groups, and other basic sector organizations.

He later served in various

organizations such as the Center for Education and Research for Government Employees, the Center for Popular Empowerment, the Freedom from Debt Coalition, Institute of Politics and Governance, Center for Agrarian Reform and Transformation, and Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services, Inc.

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our leaders and of our political party in working towards the fulfilment of our people's aspiration of a democratic and people-oriented government committed to reforms," the group said.

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Family doubt Department of Justice report on Leonard Co killing

The family of University of the Philippines (UP) botanist Leonard Co on Friday said it doubts the findings of a government fact-finding panel that absolved the military in the deaths of Co and 2 others last November 15, 2010.

In a text message, the Co family's lawyer, Attorney Evalyn Ursua, said the Department of Justice-National Bureau of Investigation (DOJ-NBI) panel's findings were based on the Armed Forces' testimony of the incident and not the word of other witnesses.

She added that the Co family will not rest until it is proven that the military killed Co.

"No administration has been brave enough to pinpoint liability to its military. The challenge to us working on the case is to prove that the military killed Leonard Co and his 2 companions. We will work hard towards that ...to end the culture of impunity in this country," Ursua said.

Co, forest guard Sofronio Cortez, and farmer Julius Borromeo, were conducting research work for the Energy Development Corporation (EDC) last November 15 in Upper Mahiao, Lim-ao, Kananga Leyte when they were allegedly caught in the crossfire between an Army patrol and New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas.

EDC, formerly owned by the Philippine National Oil Co., is part of the Lopez Group of Companies.

In a 26-page recommendation submitted to Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, government prosecutors said the bullets that killed Co and his 2 companions could not have come from the side of the military.

Backing the military's claim that a crossfire occurred, the fact-finding panel said the bullets that killed Co, Cortez and Borromeo came from the lower area where alleged communist rebels were positioned.

It noted that the ballistic examination conducted on the slugs recovered from the bodies of the victims yielded negative results from any of the firearms submitted by the members of the Army's 19th Infantry Battalion, who operate in the area.

The committee said the military or state forces could not be charged with criminal acts because their activities in the area were due to a legitimate military action.

Instead, government prosecutors recommended that officials of EDC be held liable for reckless imprudence for their failure to take necessary measures to secure Co's group.

The committee noted that EDC officials were aware of the past and present threat of communist rebels



Slain botanist Leonard Co

to the company facilities and equipment but failed to act accordingly.

It also recommended that the NPA rebels that the government troops encountered should also be made liable for the incident once they are identified and arrested. It said murder charges may be filed against the communist guerrillas.

'Sloppy work'

The leftist Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), meanwhile, slammed the DOJ-NBI report absolving the 19th Infantry Battalion in the deaths of Co and 2 others.

In a statement, Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said the report conveniently ignores the testimonies of the 2 survivors - Ronino Gibe and Policarpio Balute - who said they did not see any NPA rebels in the area at the time of the shooting.

"The DOJ-NBI report reeks of unsubstantiated conclusions, sloppy investigative work resulting to fantastic claims. Department of Justice Secretary Leila de Lima should not approve the findings and recommendations and should look deeper into the case," he said.

His statement echoed that of the Advocates of Science and Technology for the People (AGHAM) whose fact-finding mission also revealed that there were no NPA rebels in the area during the alleged encounter.

Reyes said that there were many inconsistencies in the report of the DOJ-NBI panel, some of which twisted the facts and testimonies of the survivors.

In its report, government prosecutors said the military asked Gibe where his armed companions were. This alone, according to the report, was proof that the military was running after the NPA.

Reyes, however, said the military's question only showed that Co and his group were the targets all along.

"Gibe was asked where his 'armed companions' were because the military thought he was an NPA member. He was even asked why he was in the forest and with a map and GPS device. It was only after showing his identification that he was recognized as an EDC employee," Reyes said.

According to the panel report, the AFP was occupying higher ground, the alleged "enemy position" was at the lower ground, and somewhere in between was the team of Leonard Co.

The DOJ report said that 33 trees had bullet marks with 30 bullet trajectories coming from higher ground to lower ground. It also says there were two bullet trajectories allegedly from lower ground to the position of the victims and four bullet trajectories from the lower ground to the position of the AFP.

"The DOJ-NBI team did not show how they determined the trajectories of the bullets. It is also strange that while the vast majority of the bullet trajectories came from the higher ground, the DOJ-NBI ruled out the possibility that the shots that killed Co and his companions came from the AFP position," Reyes said.

'Military bullets didn't hit Co'

The Bayan official also expressed doubt about the military's claim that they fired 245 rounds of high-caliber ammunition during the incident but failed to hit Co and company who were in the middle of the crossfire.

"The report says that the military spent 245 rounds of high-caliber ammunition during the incident yet it concludes that it was not possible

for even a single shot from the military to hit the EDC team. Amazing!" Reyes said.

He said independent reports also documented bullet marks at the trees where Co and his companions hid. One tree had at least 3 bullet marks while another tree had at least 6 bullet marks. The trajectories appeared to come from higher ground.

As for the bullet fragments found in Co not matching any of the guns turned over by the military, Reyes said this was no longer surprising since he did not expect the military to turn over the actual weapons used during the operations. "Surely they will cover up their tracks to sabotage the ballistics tests," he said.

He said even the AFP storyline on how they stumbled on the alleged NPA position is fantastic.

"The military says after discovering the NPA, the soldiers positioned themselves on higher ground as they observed the alleged rebels for 30 minutes. The military occupied higher ground had the tactical advantage and element of surprise, but amazingly they say that it was the NPA who fired the first shots when the NPA 'sensed' their presence," he said.

EDC dismayed at findings

EDC Corporate Communications Manager Fernando Diaz de Rivera earlier said the company was surprised and dismayed at the reported results of the DOJ-NBI fact-finding team.

In a statement, the firm said it had coordinated well with the military in protecting employees and contractors. "EDC continues to be firm that it adhered to its security protocols and coordinated with the military to protect its employees, consultants and contractors," de Rivera said.

He said Cortez was a valued and loyal employee while Borromeo and Co were not just contractors or consultants but "EDC's partners in the company's efforts to protect the environment."

De Rivera said EDC has yet to review a copy of the DOJ-NBI investigation report and as such, it cannot comment on the reported results.

"Notwithstanding these disconcerting developments, EDC will continue to fully participate in the investigations that will shed light on what truly transpired," he added.

■

24 Filipino seafarers seized by Somali pirates safe and unharmed Philippines DOH to train 10,000 nurses to provide healthcare in poor regions

A Cyprus-flagged, Greek-owned bulk carrier, with 24 Filipino seafarers aboard, was seized by Somali pirates as it sailed through the Gulf of Aden about 490 nautical miles southwest of Salaam in Oman on January 17, it was confirmed Wednesday by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

The local manning agency of the "M/V Eagle" assured the DFA that the Filipinos are safe and unharmed and their respective families apprised of the incident. The Office of Migrant Workers Affairs is said to be closely coordinating with the Philippine embassies in Manama, Nairobi, and Athens for any further developments.

The DFA said the Philippine government has undertaken measures to minimize the exposure of Filipino seafarers to piracy attacks, including making arrangements with ship

principals and manning agencies for vessels to travel along a safety corridor.

The corridor is patrolled by friendly foreign navies such as the United States and Japan. Last year, the Philippines also deployed a naval liaison officer with the Combined Maritime Fleet in Manama, which coordinates the naval patrols.

The issue of maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Aden and in the Indian Ocean has also been taken up before the United Nations and other international organizations.

According to DFA official records, a total 119 Filipino seafarers on 11 vessels seized separately in the past months are still held captive by Somali pirates. It is believed that negotiations for their release succeed only if ransoms are paid by vessel owners. ■



Recruitment commences on January 17 and goes through February 4.

DA Philippines Department of Health (DOH) concept will soon start recruitment for the new program, Registered Nurses for Health Enhancement and Local Service (RH Heals).

According to Health Secretary Enrique Ona, 10,000 nurses are being sought to be deployed to the more than 1,200 depressed areas around the country to provide health care to those populations.

The DOH says the programs

goals are two-fold: to provide health care to poor communities in rural areas and employment to the many jobless nurses.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) will begin the recruitment process beginning next Monday, January 17th. See the DOLE website for more information.

Participating nurses will attend learning and development sessions to equip them with needed skills. Those who finish the training and complete the necessary requirements will be given certificates of competency and employment by the DOH, DSWD, and the Professional Regulation Commission.

The benefits to the registered nurse who participates in this program are basic allowance of P8,000 per month, P2,000 worth of allowances and benefits, board and lodging and health insurance through PhilHealth. ■

Pinoys warned against online job offers

The Philippine embassy in London yesterday warned about a new illegal recruitment scam involving online job offers.

According to a report by the Philippine Nurses Association-United Kingdom (PNA-UK) to the embassy, the new recruitment scam involves online job offers sent by email to prospective victims, mostly nurses, who have previously submitted their resumes to public job search websites.

The supposed employer then sends the victim follow up emails containing a job offer, a contract of agreement with an attractive salary and benefits package, a certificate of employment, and a blank certificate of good moral character.

Upon submission of documentary requirements, a detailed procedure of sending processing fees through wire transfer is then sent to the victim.

The supposed employer's solicitor

usually identifies himself as a member of a prominent legal firm. In some cases, the employer sends photographs of his family in the UK via email in an attempt to assure the applicant that the process is legitimate.

Once the applicant has paid the fees, the fraudulent employer and the solicitor terminate all contact with the victim.

This modus operandi is similar to other online scams earlier reported by the embassy involving job offers for nannies, hotel staff, store managers, salespersons and engineers.

The public is advised to always verify job offers in the UK with the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA).

They may also send an email request for job offer verification to the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) at polo.london@yahoo.co.uk or embassy @philemb.co.uk ■

Philippines to offer medical tourist visas

The Philippines said Tuesday it would introduce special medical visas for foreigners, as the country seeks to grab a bigger share of Asia's booming health tourism industry.

The medical tourist visas, to be introduced this year, will allow foreigners to stay in the country for six months without having to apply for extensions as regular tourists are required to do, according to the Bureau of Immigration.

"The visa will help the Philippines become competitive in the lucrative medical tourism market in Asia now dominated by Taiwan, Singapore and Thailand among others," immigration bureau deputy head Ronaldo Ledesma told AFP.

The government is banking on its English-speaking and internationally trained doctors among its advantages, as well as

medical and surgical costs that are up to 50 percent cheaper than the United States or Europe.

"We are blessed with a rich pool of doctors, nurses and other health professionals and we might as well exploit this opportunity to cash in on the medical tourism boom," Ledesma said.

"We are optimistic that once we begin offering this visa, we will have more visitors from Europe and the United States."

The Philippines' health department launched a programme in 2004 to promote medical tourism by encouraging state hospitals and specialised private institutions to compete with medical organisations elsewhere in Asia. ■

Peso falls anew as traders see China economy cooling down



The peso fell on Thursday after making a temporary rebound on Wednesday as expectations of a cooling down China prompted investors to dump Asian currencies in favor of the US dollar.

The local currency closed at 44.5 against the US dollar, down by 24 centavos from the previous day's finish of 44.26.

Intraday high hit 44.34:\$1, while intraday low settled at 44.51:\$1. Volume of trade reached \$1.35 billion,

up from \$937 million previously.

Traders said the speculations that Chinese monetary officials might implement

measures to decelerate growth of the Chinese economy and temper inflation prompted investors to withdraw funds from emerging Asian countries and invest in dollar-denominated assets.

Concerns that inflation may accelerate in China and other developing Asian countries have driven expectations that economic managers in the region may implement policies that will temper inflation, a move that could slow down growth.

Moreover, traders also said reports about rising corporate earnings in the United States have attracted some fund owners to shift to the dollar. ■



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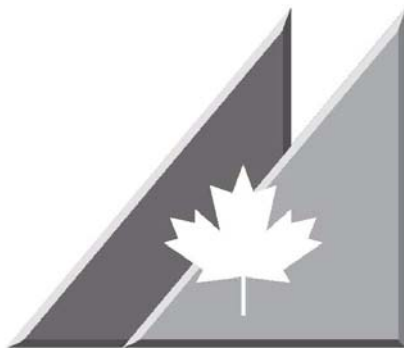
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- Protected Persons & Refugees
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FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

'Glee' creators say Charice back in a big way



There have been conflicting reports on when Charice will be back on "Glee". But in an exclusive interview with ABS-CBN, the show's creator shared details on when and how the young star will return as Sunshine Corazon.

"Glee" creator Ryan Murphy said: "She's coming back in a big way. We're finishing the year with her. She's coming back for five episodes at the end of the year. She's gonna be great. Lots of big, big ballads for Charice."

Charice's co-stars are excited to work with her again.

Another "Glee" creator, Kevin McHale, added, "Charice is awesome, we love her. We can't wait till she comes back."

The show's other stars also gave "Glee" scoops: The so-called 'Asian love team,' Harry Shum Jr. and Jenna Ushkowitz, talked about what's coming up for one of "Glee's" favorite couples.

"A little bit of drama, but nothing serious, they're still going strong. They get to spend Valentine's Day together," Ushkowitz said.

"Jenna has a really cute song that she sings for me that I think people will love. It's very interesting. She gets to

play her comedic and dramatic talents," said Shum Jr.

"Glee" will be back on TV in February, and it's going to be a "Thriller" of a show. They are performing Michael Jackson's iconic hit song.

Amber Riley of "Glee" added: "Our next episode is the big Superbowl episode. An hour-and-a-half episode and we're really excited about it. It's really big. We're dancing, we're on the football, there's zombie make-up, there's people being shot out of the cannon. People are gonna love it."

Golden Globes Best Supporting Actor winner, Chris Colfer, shared his thoughts on what's next for his character "Kurt" and his onscreen relationship with the character played by Fil-Am star Darren Criss.

"Whatever makes Kurt happiest, I'm all for. If that means a relationship with Blaine or with someone else, or maybe friendship, is what he needs with Blaine, but whatever makes Kurt happiest I'm great with," said Colfer. "If we do hook up on the show, we should do the love melody from 'Moulin Rouge'. We should." ■

Pia not leaving 'Eat Bulaga'



Pia Guanio

It's confirmed! Top comedian Vic Sotto and fellow "Eat! Bulaga" co-host Pia Guanio are no more.

Likewise, it's confirmed that Pia is now frequently seen on dates with a fellow – a good-looking businessman – much younger than Vic. The guy reportedly was with Pia and her family when the Guanios left for China for the holidays.

With the current change in her lovelife, will Pia still continue hosting "Eat! Bulaga"? Someone close to Pia gave this answer: "Of course naman. Both of them are professional naman," our source answered, "Besides, the break-up appears amicable." ■

John Lloyd gives Shaina expensive watch



John Lloyd Cruz and Shaina Magdayao

Is it true that actor John Lloyd Cruz gave his girlfriend actress Shaina Magdayao an expensive gift?

Following the reports that Cruz gave his girlfriend a luxury bag as a gift for Christmas, speculations now thrive that the actor has given the actress a watch worth half a million pesos.

Cruz said the price of gifts he

gives Magdayao does not really matter because it's always the thought that counts.

"You know hindi na tayo kumportable na dini-disclose ang mga ganyang bagay. Hindi naman dapat nagma-matter [kung ano ang regalo]. No matter how big or small yung amoung ng binibigay mo, it's really the thought na nagka-count dapat," he said.

He said he does not have a plan yet on how he and his ladylove will "Wala pa. Kung papalarin at bigyan kami ng pagkakataon na magsama on that day, well and good. Kung hindi mangyari, okay lang din. Trabaho lang muna," said Cruz.

He was also asked to comment on the budding romance of his former onscreen partner Bea Alonzo with actor Zanjoe Marudo.

"I couldn't be happier for them. Lagi ko naman sinasabi kung saan ka masaya, mas doble yung saya namin bilang kaibigan mo para sa iyo," he said. ■

Sarah Geronimo breaks silence over rift with Cristine Reyes



Sarah Geronimo

Pop Star Princess Sarah Geronimo finally broke her silence on Friday over a rift with sultry actress Cristine Reyes which started last year.

During a press conference for her upcoming Valentine show with Martin Nievera, Geronimo failed to evade the entertainment media when she was asked for a reaction to Reyes' posts in the microblogging site Twitter last December.

Reyes used Twitter to vent her anger against Geronimo, her "ASAP XV" co-host, over an alleged remark by the Pop Star during the dress rehearsals for the musical variety show. Geronimo reportedly said that sexy women are always after men who are good dancers.

According to Geronimo, Reyes' tweets caught her off-guard. She said that she does not speak behind someone's back, and if she has something against someone, she directly approaches the person to confront him or her.

"Kaya po nagulat po ako talaga ako sa nangyari kasi ako po totoo po lahat ng pinakikita ko. Hindi ako marunong mam-plastic ng isang tao. Kung may galit ako, kung may sama ako ng loob, sasabihin ko sa 'yo. Nagulat na lang ako," Geronimo said.

The singer stressed she was not insinuating "something" during the controversial "ASAP XV" rehearsal.

"Sabi ko naman ho, ako ay wala talaga akong intensyon na makasakit ng tao, na mang-insulto ng pagkatao ng isang tao. Hindi ko nakita sa mga magulang ko 'yon. Nagulat lang po ako na magkakaganoon," she said.

Reyes already apologized via Twitter for the fuss she had caused. Geronimo, meanwhile, refused to comment about the said apology.

"Ayaw ko po muna sumagot, sumasakit ang dibdib ko. 'Wag na lang muna po natin pag-usapan," she said.

The singer-actress also revealed that she and actor Rayver Cruz are not on speaking terms after the latter admitted that he was the one who told Reyes about Geronimo's remarks during the rehearsals for the musical variety show.

Asked if she would like to clarify the real status of her relationship with the actor, she said: "Saka na lang po ako magsasalita. Pag-ako nagsalita bonggang bongga salita. (Kelan yan?) 2012...ha ha ha ha."

The Pop Star Princess claimed that she does not want people to think that she is just using the issue to promote her forthcoming Valentine concert.

Although there was never a confirmation, Cruz and Geronimo were repeatedly rumored to have been a couple. Reyes is currently the girlfriend of Cruz. ■

Kris Aquino, James Yap now OK? Still no closure for Nyoy, Nina



Kris Aquino

Television host-actress Kris Aquino has clarified speculations that she and her estranged husband, James Yap, are now on good terms.

"Alam mo kasi sabay naman kaming nagbantay sa ospital [noong magkasakit] si Baby James. I'm not going to say we are close friends now. I think that's a process. Matagal pa 'yon. Pero hindi naman kami magkagalit," she said.

Aquino, the youngest sister of President Aquino, made this clarification after greeting the PBA (Philippine Basketball Association) player during Tuesday's episode of game-variety show "Pilipinas, Win na Win!"

During the show, Aquino uttered: "Get well soon sa tatay ni Baby James si James Yap. In-operahan siya sa ilang kasi nandoon ngayon si Bimby (Baby James) kung saan nandoon ang ospital. Dinalaw niya ang papa niya. Sabi niya, 'Mama you greet my Papa.' So, get well soon."

Aquino maintained that she did it for the sake of their 3-year-old son. "Para matuwa si Bimby nag-greet ako. Nag-text ang yaya ni Bimby, si Gerbel. Sinabi niya, 'Thank you daw po sabi ng papa ni Bimby.'"

Aquino also said there's no truth

to rumors that Yap still has personal stuff at the house he previously shared with the TV host-actress.

Rumor has it that Yap was having a hard time getting them, forcing him to shop for his personal things while on vacation in the United States.

"Ano naman ang gamit niyang nasa bahay namin? Lahat ng things niya nasa kanya. 'Yong ibang mga gamit naka-box. Anytime puwede niyang kunin and pinabalik naman ng judge. Hindi ba nasa bahay namin lahat? Unfair to accuse me of getting his things," she retorted.

'Bimby is sick again'

In a message posted in her Twitter account, Aquino, meantime, bared that her youngest son is suffering from fever again.

"Bimby has a 39 Fever. I'm so worried. Will confine him. Last week lang he was sick, now sick again," tweeted Aquino.

Just last week, the 3-year-old son of Aquino and Yap was brought to St. Luke's Hospital in Global City. According to the actress-television host, the toddler's platelet count went down.

On September 15, Aquino said her son was cleared of dengue, typhoid and pneumonia.

"Slept w/ Bimby in the hospital. Viral infection but clear of dengue & typhoid. We can go home later & next week ready for school na sya!" Aquino tweeted.

Belo endorser

Meanwhile, Aquino made a comeback as Belo Medical Group's celebrity endorser.

When asked if people would see a new Aquino, the host replied: "Ayokong baguhin kasi feeling ko maganda na ako ngayon. Pero mas gaganda pa ako."

Aquino and cosmetic surgeon Vicki Belo, owner of Belo Medical Group, had a falling out years back after Belo's receptionist was rumored to be having an affair with Yap. ■



Nina & Nyoy Volante

Ex-lovers Nyoy Volante and Nina are still at it.

Four years after their bitter parting allegedly because of money, they are yet to reach closure on the issue, going as far as to discuss it incessantly and publicly despite the matter having reached the courts already.

Just recently, the Soul Siren yet again told media that Nyoy and his parents are yet to settle the P1.4 million they allegedly owe her.

"Hindi pa," said she via PEP.

"Feeling nga nila, wala silang utang sa akin. They think they don't owe me anything."

The singer added in the same interview that Volante and his parents are said to be battling other cases involving money.

"Drinop na sila ng mga abugado nila. May warrant of arrest na sila, "she was quoted as saying.

"May utang sila sa pari, sa second cousin nila... Hindi lang pala sa akin."

"Kumbaga, marami silang inutang na bukod sa akin," were Nina's words.

She said that she shares these details not because she's mad at Volante and his parents, but she just wants her money back.

"Pag may galit ka pa rin kasi sa katawan mo, parang may pagmamahal o may iniisip ka pa rin na memories," she insisted.

"Wala akong galit or whatsoever, ang concern ko na lang ay maibalik sa akin ang pera ko. Ibalik na lang nila. Yun lang ang kailangan nilang gawin—bayaran ang dapat nilang bayaran para tapos na ang lahat. Pinaghirapan ko yun."

In a press conference yesterday, Jan. 20, Volante refuted his former sweetheart's accusation.

"It's not true na hindi ako nagbabayad, dahil meron akong katibayan na nagbabayad talaga ako," Volante maintained.

"I have the evidence at madali kong maipresent yun," he added, without divulging the exact amount he means.

Volante went on to wash his hands off the matter saying, "Kaya naman hindi ko inaamin na may utang ako kay Nina every time na may nagtatanong sa akin ay dahil hindi naman talaga ako ang may utang, kung hindi ang parents ko."

"I want to clear this up na this is not me. I'm not actually the third party. Unfortunately, this issue is about her and my parents," he said.

Volante said he called for the conference to defend his parents as they are "hurting" with the very public attack on their persona.

"I know how frustrated my parents because of this issue."

"Siempre, hindi naman puwedeng wala akong gagawin for them. Of course, even if hindi ako yung may utang at ako ang nagbabayad, of course, parents ko pa rin yun."

Volante said he is perplexed on why Nina keeps on talking about the issue to the media given their efforts to settle the matter via local courts.

"Of course, I realize na hindi matatapos ito hanggang hindi fully paid. Alam natin 'yan. Alam po nating lahat 'yan. But I want the people to know the truth. It's not really paid yet, pero nasa prosecutor na 'yan, nasa prosecutor's decision na 'yan. It's not our decision anymore." ■

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November remittances climb 10.5% to \$1.61 billion

The money sent home by the more than 8 million Filipinos abroad rose 10.5 percent to \$1.613 billion in November 2010, supporting consumption in the Philippines' \$161-billion economy.

Remittances totaled \$17.3 billion in 2009.

Remittances, equivalent to about a 10th of the gross domestic product, help finance spending on cars, homes and mobile phones in the Philippines, where the World Bank estimates one out of four people live on less than \$1.25 a day.

"The seasonal factor played a big role" in the remittance growth, Emilio Neri, an economist at Bank of the Philippine Islands, said before the report, referring to the practice of sending money home for the year-end holidays.

Purchases account for more than two-thirds of the Philippines' GDP. The economy probably expanded as much as 7 percent in 2010, the fastest pace in three years and exceeding the government's 5-percent-to-6-percent target, Economic Planning Secretary Cayetano Paderanga said on Dec. 23. The government will report the full-year GDP data on Jan. 31.

"Going forward, given the steady levels of remittances through November this year, the projected full-year 2010 remittance level will likely be achieved," Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

The remittances in November were up from the \$1.459 billion recorded

during the same month in 2009, but slightly lower than the monthly record high of \$1.673 billion posted in October 2010.

The central bank said the November figure pushed the total remittances to \$17.069 billion in the first 11 months of 2010, an 8.2-percent increase over the \$15.78 billion total the year before and slightly above the bank's 8-percent forecast.

The Bangko Sentral, which monitors only the money coursed through banks, was expecting full-year remittances to have reached about \$18.7 billion in 2010.

World Bank senior economist for the Philippines Eric Le Borgne estimated that the total remittances in 2010 contributed about \$21.3 billion to the economy and supported a gross domestic product growth of 6.8 percent that year.

The government has yet to release the full-year GDP growth for 2010, but data from the first three quarters showed a 7.5-percent growth.

Barclays Capital said it expected the remittances to be in the range of \$19 billion this year, which would support the Philippines' balance-of-payments position.

Victor Abola, an economist with First Metro and University of Asia and the Pacific, said the remittances this year would likely to reach \$19 billion and support a current account surplus representing 3.4 percent of the gross domestic product. ■

No minimum wage increase this year, says Labor Dept

The Philippines will not raise the minimum daily wage in Metro Manila despite the looming increase in transport fares, Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz said Thursday.

"We're not coming out with any pay increase at the moment," Baldoz said in a phone interview.

Inflation was within target, Baldoz said, citing data from the central bank.

The Labor Department hadn't received any wage increase petition, and it was "too early to speculate" on an increase this year, she said.

Baldoz said the minimum wage earners in Metro Manila would have to wait until July for a possible wage raise because it was only seven months ago that the government made a wage adjustment.

The government granted the last adjustment in June 2010, which consisted of a 22-peso increase in the daily wages of private sector workers in Metro Manila.

That increase effectively brought the minimum wage to P404 a day, or P13,042 a month, for an employee working six days a week, Baldoz said. The increase was based on the inflation projections for January 2010 up to July 2011, she said.

The National Capital Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board also said there was no plan to increase the 404-peso minimum wage in Metro Manila because there was no reason

for it.

But Labor Department spokesman Nicon Fameronag said former Senator Ernesto Herrera, secretary-general of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, will file a petition for a 55-peso increase in the minimum wage.

There are some 4.2 million workers in Metro Manila, the National Capital Region, of whom 2.18 million are minimum wage earners, according to the department. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 'Death Penalty'

President had many discussions regarding the issue, including that with his mother, the late former President Corazon C. Aquino.

"I had so many discussions from way back, siguro close to two decades, and including discussions with my mother in that aspect. At the end of the day, I used to support death penalty. But I really witnessed also justice that was not perfect, so I have to change my position that since we cannot turn back the clock if we execute somebody, then we shouldn't, in the off chance that we might render that penalty to somebody who was not guilty," the President noted.

Capital punishment in the Philippines was abolished on June 24, 2006, the second time since 1987.

Since it was reintroduced in 1993, seven people have been executed. Abolition of the death penalty has generally occurred in correlation with increasing democratization in nation-states around the world.

As of 2005, a majority of states (122) were abolitionist, and a minority (73) retained the death penalty. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 'Black Nazarene'

The Feast of the Black Nazarene

Last Sunday, millions came to escort the Black Nazarene. Devotees of the Nazarene started gathering 24 hours before the feast. The religious celebration started when the huge door of the Basilica opened for the

two long ropes and pulled to make the carriage move. As soon as the rope was unrolled, the procession moved to snake through the narrow and congested streets of the Quiapo district. Devotees waved white hankies or towels while yelling "Viva Señor". Many attempted to touch the life-sized, dark wooden statue of Christ, while it was paraded through the city streets. Other devotees settled to wipe their hankies to a replica of the Nazarene

walked barefoot to show repentance. As a result, many suffered from lacerations and punctures. Others were hungry and thirsty. 708 devotees were injured in the Black Nazarene Feast.

Thousands of devotees join this Philippine festival with banners in maroon and gold proclaiming themselves as "Hijos Del Señor Nazareno" (Sons of the Lord Nazarene). Every year, during the

able to kiss or touch the foot of the image. Afterwards they dive into the human torrent. It is their yearly devotion. It is a dangerous thing.

Some devotees identify with the Nazarene, not necessarily because He is black, but because He is not white. His church, which attracts thousands of people, has an ambience that transcends divisions by class and race. Moreover, all profess that the Black Nazarene could grant them love



Devotees clamber onto a carriage to touch the statue of the Black Nazarene during an annual religious procession in Manila, Jan. 9.



Black Nazarene to pass. As soon as the image was in full view of everyone, the people yelled "Viva Señor".

Procession participants garbed in maroon tops, grabbed the

statue, hoping to acquire graces.

The millions of devotees who came to pay tribute to the image of the Black Nazarene last Sunday endured a 16-hour-long procession. Some

annual festival the streets in the Quiapo district become a torrent of human bodies pulling the float here and there. Not content with this, many men climb over the others just to be

and harmony, long life and good health, and peace and prosperity. ■

From Page 7 Minister Hoskins

keep Ontario strong. These cuts are in addition to \$207 million which the federal government promised to Ontario's newcomers under the Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement, but which it has failed to spend.

Commenting to media after these cuts were announced, federal Minister Jason Kenney said that he was redistributing funding to reflect the fact that some immigrants are choosing to settle in other provinces.

But let's be clear — the federal government is unilaterally imposing a \$53 million nationwide cut. There is no redistribution of these funds. It is a massive national cut in funding for settlement services, at a time when immigration levels are increasing in Canada. The bulk of this cut, \$44 million, is hitting the province of Ontario, which still accepts more immigrants each year than the next two provinces combined.

Furthermore, Ontario welcomes many "secondary migrants," immigrants who land in other parts of Canada but then move to Ontario in pursuit of opportunity and ties to their communities. Ontario receives no

funding for these secondary migrants.

Immigrants to Ontario deserve a level of support from the federal government that is fair, and that reflects how much we value the contributions new Canadians make to this province.

The federal cuts mean that immigrants to Ontario will not get their fair share. Quebec receives approximately \$5,011 to help each immigrant, and Ontario only receives \$3,248, less than two-thirds of what Quebec receives. Why do Ontario's immigrants deserve less support from the federal government?

And now is the worst time to cut back on supports to help people find work. Just when the economy is turning the corner you don't turn your back on helping people train and find jobs. The federal government should be working with us to support new Canadians, many of whom go on to start their own businesses, creating new jobs and helping our economy grow stronger.

In the days and weeks ahead, I will continue to fight on behalf of Ontario's newcomers, and all Ontarians, by calling on Minister Kenney to reverse these devastating cuts and treat Ontario fairly.

Nonito Donaire, Fernando Montiel see HBO fight as a big deal for the little guys



WBC/WBO champion Fernando Montiel, left, and Nonito Donaire pose during a news conference in Las Vegas on Monday Jan. 17, 2011

Nonito Donaire of the Philippines lacks the two world title bantamweight belts belonging to his Feb. 19 opponent, Fernando Montiel of Mexico, but he does have the awareness to recognize what the 118-pound bout at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas means.

"The little guys have been deprived of getting big fights on HBO," Donaire (25-1, 17 KOs) said Tuesday at a news conference at the downtown Biltmore Hotel. "This is our shot."

The Filipino is riding the momentum of three 2010 stoppages, including a superb Dec. 4 fourth-round knockout of former

world champion Wladimir Sidorenko at Anaheim's Honda Center. As a result, Donaire, 28, has landed the first bantamweight main event on HBO since 2006 against Montiel, a respected veteran who's been a world champion since 1999 — two years before Donaire's pro debut.

Donaire is a 2-to-1 favorite to beat the 31-year-old Montiel, according to Las Vegas sports books.

Donaire hails from Manny Pacquiao's hometown of General Santos City, and recognizes the road Pacquiao traveled to superstardom — win repeatedly

Palace: Aquino intends to keep his Porsche



A Porsche 911

President Benigno Aquino III intends to keep the Porsche luxury sports car that he has bought despite the continuing controversy it has stirred, a Palace official said Tuesday.

The President sparked an uproar earlier this month when he acknowledged that he had bought a "third-hand" Porsche for P4.5 million, a move critics said was a sign of extravagance and an unnecessary flaunting of wealth amid the massive poverty in the country.

None of the critics accused the President of anything illegal, but they said his "expensive toy" was insensitive to the plight of the poor Filipinos who continued to struggle to survive.

Even the international news organizations and blogs have picked up the story of the Porsche owned by the President, an official who has always been known for his frugality.

Deputy Presidential Spokesman Abigail Valte said Mr. Aquino had not said anything about selling the car.

"As far as I am aware, the President has not mentioned anything about disposing of his purchase," Valte said.

She insisted that Mr. Aquino had done nothing wrong.

"We maintain that what the President does with his personal funds is his own [business]," Valte said.

She declined to say where Mr. Aquino parked his Porsche.

"I cannot tell you that," she said.

In a radio interview Tuesday night, Presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said that since President

Aquino had just bought the car, it was likely that he would keep it—at least for now.

Earlier, Malacañang said President Aquino bought the Porsche 911 Turbo with P4.5 million of his own money, and then sold his old BMW X5.

Mr. Aquino said he was at least entitled to experience the rush of driving a sports car while he still could.

Valte sidestepped former Senator Ernesto Maceda's comment that Mr. Aquino had paid more than P4.5 million for the car.

In his column, Maceda said that, according to Porsche dealers, the going price for a second-hand Porsche Carrera 911 Turbo, with a low mileage such as the 10,000 kilometers on the President's car, was about P7.5 million.

"I don't have the figures on the transactions because we never asked him about that," Valte said.

Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago defended the President, saying he could do what he wanted with his money. What was important is that the car was not a gift from someone doing business with the President. She then compared the purchase to "buying an expensive girlfriend."

"It's no business of the public if you want a trophy girlfriend for example or a trophy wife," Santiago said.

"So imagine, if you are a President and there is no girlfriend to share your life with, you can buy a sexy car."

But Kabataan Party-list Rep. Raymond Palatino and several columnists said Mr. Aquino had shown "sheer insensitivity" to the poor.

"He burdens the people with toll, fare and price hikes," Palatino said in a statement.

"He wants us to be calm about the increases as he delights himself with a luxury sports vehicle."

Last month, Mr. Aquino issued a memo prohibiting all agencies from acquiring or using luxury vehicles.

He ordered government officials "to be more prudent in spending government funds, especially in the acquisition of motor vehicles[,] to maximize the utilization of scarce government resources." ■

and impressively against respected opponents.

"I know what to do," Donaire said. "I want to see where my talent takes me and if it's beyond Montiel. Boxing is a different game for me now. I have a nutritionist, a sprint coach, a strength coach, doing good things to make me as good as I can be."

Donaire's promoter Bob Arum mentioned world featherweight champion Juan Manuel Lopez as a possible future opponent.

Montiel (44-2-2, 34 KOs) won all four of his 2010 fights by knockout or TKO.

"This is a rare opportunity that I have to take advantage of," said Montiel, who noted he was told after a 2006 loss to Johnny Gonzalez at the Home Depot Center in Carson that he'd never be back on HBO. "It's a question of me being able to get [Donaire] to fight my fight, to not let him think, to not let him do anything."

"My experience — 21 world-championship fights — is important. I'll be intelligent. I'm a smart fighter." ■

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Seated from left: Edith Fedalizo, Amy Manon-og, PAB instructors, Zenaida Kharroubi, director-general, Clarisa Mackay and Sophie Toledo, PAB instructors. Standing (backrow) Ethel Tugna, Annie Signey, Janeth Haydock, Lourdes Lubang and Annabelle Allosa, PAB students doing their practicum at St. Margaret CHSLd on Hillside Avenue in Westmount.



Mrs. Clarice Mackay (seated) poses with her students in the PAB course



Seated from left: Bunsong Ung "Ti", Zenaida Kharroubi, Sokhon Chou, Standing: Sopheap Chann, Ninh Sam, Sereyoth Veng, and Channa Huot. These are full time students from Cambodia and are studying English and French at Gilmore College.

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